

RESCUING TRADITION AT THE PIERRE VERGER CULTURAL SPACE: TEACHING
AND LEARNING AFRO-BRAZILIAN CULTURE THROUGH MUSIC IN BRAZIL

by

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Abstract

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Rescuing Tradition at the Pierre Verger Cultural Space: Teaching and Learning Afro-Brazilian Culture Through Music in Brazil.

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This study investigates how the Pierre Verger Cultural Space (PVCS), an educational organization dedicated to teaching Afro-Brazilian culture in Bahia, uses music to construct a sense of Afro-Brazilian self. Located in a poverty-stricken neighborhood of Salvador, Bahia, the PVCS sees its mission as “rescuing” (*resgatar*) an Afro-Brazilian sense of identity and it promotes a sense of self based on African descent that can contribute to the possibility of greater social inclusion among marginalized Afro-Brazilian youth. Learning music is an essential part of this rescuing mission. Based on fieldwork conducted in Bahia between 2007 and 2009, this dissertation describes how the PVCS facilitates Afro-Brazilian music teaching and learning, examines the effectiveness of teaching and learning music in relationship to the stated goals of the PVCS, and identifies some of the problems encountered in such an environment. Data analysis takes into account educational and cultural dimensions of Afro-Brazilian music, which are interrelated and intrinsic to the researched community. Results show that Afro-Brazilian music teaching and learning (1) mediates African and Afro-Brazilian cultures, and (2) rescues Afro-Brazilian culture for PVCS students. Results suggest that in future investigations on music teaching and learning ethnomusicologists and educators must be mindful of the interconnections between education, ethnicity, and culture.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Within the last 20 years in Brazil numerous non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”) with cultural and educational purposes have been created to address the issues of street children and marginalized youth. Many of these organizations constitute informal schools that teach arts as a first step to attract and recruit street children, and potentially lead them to other forms of education. Many of these programs use, among other arts, traditional folk and popular music as an educational tool to fight social exclusion and rescue tradition. As my research interests have long been driven by my passion for Brazilian music rooted in Africa, these initiatives inspired my work as an educator and greatly strengthened my belief in educating *through* music. Although a few of these organizations have proven to be highly successful, several of them have struggled to accomplish their stated goals and many have even given up.

While this harsh reality challenged my deep-seated interest in creating a similar program in Brazil, it increased my interest in discovering why these organizations failed and why certain approaches succeeded in their mission. Shortly after embarking on my doctoral studies it became clear I wanted to conduct fieldwork at one informal school in Bahia that worked with Afro-Brazilian music and also applied Paulo Freire’s pedagogical principles in a highly flexible curriculum. I travelled to Salvador, Bahia in the summer of 2007 with the intent of visiting a number of possible field sites. On my way to Bahia I stopped in São Paulo and visited *Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo* (MAM), one of Latin America’s most prominent art museums, where I had the opportunity to see an exhibit of Pierre Verger’s photography and was deeply

captivated by it. Shortly after my arrival in Bahia I heard about an informal school that followed principles of Verger and Freire, the Pierre Verger Cultural Space (PVCS). It sounded like an interesting program. Within two hours of visiting its facilities I realized the PVCS was the place I had been looking for. The rest is history and what follows is a snapshot of this history. This study emerged entirely from ethnography of experience.

Ethnography of Experience

Timothy Rice, in *Shadows in the Field* (1997) observes that “the experience of fieldwork, whatever its methods or even in the absence of methods constitutes the sine qua non state of being an ethnomusicologist” (Rice 1997: 105). Rice is referring here to the third aspect of Bruno Nettl’s credo: “we believe in fieldwork” (Nettl, 2005: 105), and he goes further, saying that fieldwork is not only a belief, but also an experiential method that transforms the non-ethnomusicologist into an ethnomusicologist. It is important that the ethnomusicologist never forgets that it is the researched that owns, carries, and has the ability to communicate knowledge. The fact that an ethnomusicologist expands his/her individual knowledge does not mean that the ethnomusicologist constructs and legitimizes a body of knowledge that is “wiser” than the knowledge the researched has about the music he/she makes.

My ethnography focuses on teaching and learning, and my goal is to introduce readers to real life individuals and communities, and explain how I came to understand them in large part through their interactions during teaching-learning processes. This dissertation does not intend to conceptualize musical structures or performance practices. Rather, it examines the elements of experience and interaction, and treats music as one form of expressive culture. The analysis

consists of “reading” the culture of the PVCS in order to interpret their community dynamics and their responses to circumstances in an ever-changing world. The narrative herein presented reflects much of my own experiencing with the participants and how I interpret and understand those experiences.

This dissertation begins by introducing the PVCS and its stated philosophy rooted in the work of Pierre Verger. It tells how the cultural space originated and describes its teaching and learning system. I present my views of the PVCS, constructed through three consecutive summers of fieldwork, and then present the basic principles of education, according to Freire, and how the PVCS applies them. Chapter I describes the infrastructure, teachers, management and integrated thematic design of the organization and how the program is based on Afro-Brazilian traditions. In order to demonstrate how African culture is compatible with the researched community goals of rescuing tradition, Chapter II examines African history and identifies structural elements in African societies that configure worldviews, which I claim are the African roots of Afro-Brazilian culture; Chapter III explains the reshaping through hybridization of these worldviews in contemporary Afro-Brazilian culture. Chapter IV narrates the voices of the researched community, which express, explicitly and implicitly, their interpretation of those worldviews, and the practical application of those structural agents within their teaching and learning environment. Chapter V analyzes how these structural agents function within the framework of music teaching and learning in relation to music’s role in mediating cultural clashes and rescuing tradition. Additionally, it discusses the effectiveness of the organization’s music teaching strategies in relation to its stated philosophy, and some of the problems associated with its educational goals. Chapter VI presents concluding thoughts and the relevance of this study to ethnomusicology and education.

Fieldwork Site

The Pierre Verger Cultural Space (PVCS), located in the city of Salvador, Bahia, provides access for underprivileged children to educational opportunities – workshops – that encourage a high level of spontaneity. The Pierre Verger Foundation created the PVCS in 2005, in order to increase awareness in the local community about Afro-Brazilian culture. The cultural space is located in Vila América, a neighborhood with nearly 500 years of history and a fertile social background, but poorly equipped culturally and economically. The PVCS program places great emphasis on children and youth, and it also intends to promote socio-cultural development in the community. PVCS educators want students to become acquainted with different artistic methods and with Verger's outstanding photography and research work as well. The cultural space highlights Afro-Brazilian culture through freely accessible education of different artistic means to residents from Vila América, and from other Salvador boroughs as well.¹

Pierre Verger (b.1902 – d. 1996) – A Messenger between Two Worlds

French photographer Verger arrived in Bahia in 1946 and was immediately seduced by the hospitality and the cultural wealth of Salvador and decided to settle there. More than mere protagonists of his photographs, Afro-Brazilians became his friends, whose lives he sought to know about in detail. Verger identified in the Afro-Brazilian religion of Candomblé the source of vitality of the people of Bahia, and engaged in meticulous research on the rituals and mythology

¹ Surrounding districts: Engenho Velho de Brotas, Vasco da Gama, Federação, Engenho Velho da Federação. More distant districts: Tororó, Sete de Abril, Paralela and Abaeté (Itapuã).

of the *Orixás*.² He dedicated the last 50 years of his life to researching the links between Afro-Brazilian and African cultures, ultimately becoming a messenger between the two worlds.

Verger entered the sphere of academic research when his interest in religions of African origins was rewarded with a research grant to study their rituals in Africa in 1948. Since then he kept travelling back and forth between Bahia and West Africa until his health no longer permitted.

His photography and research findings became milestone references for studies of Afro-Brazilian culture and history.

Verger's intimacy with Candomblé initiated in Bahia facilitated his contact with priests and local authorities in Africa. In Africa in 1953 he became a *Babalaô*, diviner of Ifá prophecies, as he had access to the core of the *Yoruba* oral traditions. Such religious initiation led to his spiritual "rebirth" earning him the name *Fatumbi*, which means "one who was reborn for *Ifá*." It was at that time that he started his new career as a researcher. Not satisfied with the 2,000 photographs Verger already presented as results of his research, Théodore Monod, the director of *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire* (French Institute of Black Africa), requested from Verger a written account of the observations he made during his African travels. Verger had no choice other than to accept the task and in 1957 he published *Notes sur le culte des orixás et voduns* (Notes About the Cult of Orishas and Voduns). In doing so, he unintentionally entered the sphere of scientific research, a universe in which he was passionately interested and to which he remained attached for the rest of his life.

² *Orixá* (also *orisha*) is the term for "god" or "deity" in the mythology of Candomblé, the Afro-brazilian religion. Many authors consider *orixá* a specific designation in *funfun* religion. In Brazil the term is used for all main gods and goddesses of Candomblé mythology.

PVCS – Stated Philosophy

The PVCS follows the principles established by the Pierre Verger Foundation, which in itself is an extension of the photographer's work. The PVCS stated philosophy could be summarized as a teaching and learning organization that intends to be an identity marker, where preservation and reinvention of tradition generate socio-cultural, pedagogical, artistic, and musical movements. The PVCS offers cultural activities, goods and services that seek to strengthen five inseparable links of the same chain: creation, production, dissemination, access, and enjoyment of cultural expressions. It aims to inform and educate about, and safeguard the direct links between contemporary Afro-Brazilian culture and its ancestral African cultures. Research participants are primarily children and youth who will become the next generation of adults in the Vila América neighborhood.³

The Pierre Verger Cultural Space -- An Afro-Brazilian Arts School

The initial idea of opening a cultural center came from Pierre Fatumbi Verger. Angela Luhning, who has been living in Vila América since 1988, and who worked as Verger's personal assistant until his death turned the idea into reality. Currently a college professor of ethnomusicology at Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), Luhning took on a mission to fulfill Verger's wish to establish an interaction between the foundation and the community. She is the PVCS administrative and education director. She realized that, while national and international visitors came to PVCS, the local community knew next to nothing about its activities. When

³ Vila América is a neighborhood located in one of Salvador's boroughs (also known as "districts"), namely Engenho Velho de Brotas.

Verger died in 1996 new residents and families had already moved into the neighborhood and these people did not know what the Foundation was all about. Around 2000, the Board of Directors of the Pierre Verger Foundation realized that they had to do something to remedy this lack of awareness about the Foundation's role. In 2002, during the celebration of Pierre Verger's 100th birthday, Luhning gathered a group of neighborhood kids and taught the first workshop in one of the rooms of the Foundation. She taught a combination of art, education, theater, and music over the course of one to two months. She also took the group out on a bus provided by Salvador City Council to the 100th birthday exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art (MAM). Although people from all walks of life came to the exhibition, ironically the actual neighbors had no idea about that exhibition. They were not accustomed to attending exhibitions and even if they had wanted to, they would not have had the means to do so.⁴

In 2003 a group of youngsters at Vila América expressed interest in a singing workshop. At that time, one of Luhning's graduate students was about to begin her teaching practice. Luhning liked her student's pedagogy proposal originally intended for Pracatum,⁵ a vocational music school in Salvador, and asked that student to teach at the PVCS to fulfill the kids' interest. Afterwards another teacher came to teach a workshop on recycling. They managed to launch the first sponsored project and soon they were able to run two workshops. Then the kids requested an African dance workshop with Negrizu⁶. Later came another request for guitar classes, followed by a music workshop and the cultural center became a school. However, there was no

⁴ Angela Luhning, interview by Anne Sobotta, Pierre Verger Foundation, Salvador, Bahia, July 14, 2006.

⁵ Community-based music school created by musician Carlinhos Brown in the neighborhood of *Candeal*, in Salvador.

⁶ Afro-dance teacher, who had worked with Pierre Verger, and was already involved with the Foundation.

proper facility in which to hold classes. As Luhning reports,

Our classroom became too small to accommodate all the students, plus my co-workers at the Foundation started complaining about the noise. We couldn't continue like that. The president of the Foundation himself saw to the development of the workshops. We decided to create this new space in the lot next door to the headquarters of the Foundation, and he personally guaranteed the conclusion of the project.⁷

Planning on getting a bigger space, the Foundation submitted a proposal to Brazil's Federal Ministry of Culture (MinC), which was approved and which provided sufficient funds for carrying out their project expansion. Classes were held in improvised spaces while the construction work was in progress until the Pierre Verger Cultural Space was inaugurated in November 2005. At that point the Center had virtually no equipment nor furniture. These have been purchased gradually as additional sponsorships have come on board. Although all is not yet fully ready, Luhning accomplished what she had initially intended: to attend to the social function of the foundation and to instill a wider knowledge about Afro-Brazilian culture within the Vila América community. Luhning eventually crystallized Verger's original intention of engaging in exchange programs with Africa through mainly promoting and researching Afro-Brazilian culture, not only through exhibitions and publications but also in a practical, socially interactive way at the foundation headquarters. "We took chances and came out successful," she concluded.⁸

⁷ Angela Luhning, interview by Anne Sobotta, Pierre Verger Foundation, Salvador, Bahia, July 14, 2006.

⁸ Ibid.

Workshops – *Oficinas*

The Pierre Verger Cultural Space offers free workshops, called *oficinas*,⁹ to children and young adults. Luhning indicated that the term *oficinas* was chosen instead of *aulas* (classes) as a strategy to increase attendance. Children in that community associate the term *aulas* with “formal school,” she observed. Regular schools in the district are mandatory, but “inefficient and disorganized, whose effect in children’s perspective is boredom.” Additionally, since they completely lack art and music education the concept of *aulas* is translated as an absolutely unattractive obligation. Calling the workshops *oficinas* instead helps to dissipate the negative meanings attached to mandatory education, while it becomes associated with “attractive, fun, voluntary artistic work.” This conceptual maneuver has proven effective so far, as the attendance has continuously increased since the workshops’ inception.

The workshops approach subjects based on Afro-Brazilian culture, and teachers use various artistic languages to address the issue of good citizenship through the reinforcement of youths' self-esteem. All *oficinas* are the equivalent of “after-school courses” -- as they are labeled in the US -- with classes ranging between 1.5 to 2 hours beginning at 2pm and ending at 8pm. As the public school system in Brazil gives students the options of attending mornings or afternoons, PVCS students can attend both their regular schools and PVCS classes without scheduling conflicts. Because of adults’ job commitments and their inability to afford child supervision, this strategy maximizes class attendance; at the same time this minimizes children’s roaming the streets, which consequently reduces the risk of their marginalization. *Oficinas* such

⁹ *Oficinas* means the same as “workshops” or courses. It is a current buzzword in Brazil for informal education.

as *capoeira*,¹⁰ Afro-Dance, and Guitar are taught twice a week, and others such as Percussion and Musical Experimentation are taught once a week. Storytelling does not have a set schedule; it is presented according to other events throughout the school calendar.

The program is designed to allow students to attend several different *oficinas* concomitantly, which can keep students busy during the entire 6-hour period. Around 5:30 pm free meals are served to all participants: students, teachers and staff. Musical instruments and all other class materials are provided and maintained by the Pierre Verger Foundation and are readily available in the classrooms, with no cost to students. A few of these instruments are constructed in one of the *oficinas*, Instrument Construction, and are incorporated into the school's teaching materials. PVCS offers 3 yearly terms – 2 semesters, plus the winter trimester (Jun – Aug). No *oficinas* are offered during summer (December – February).

Integrated Thematic Design – Coexistence

The *oficinas* follow an integrated thematic design, and the themes are all based on Afro-Brazilian traditions. A new theme, for instance *A Chegada de Obatalá* (The arrival of

¹⁰ *Capoeira regional*, or the Bahian regional fight, has its origin in the fusion of the *capoeira* that today is known as *angola*, and *batuque*, an African martial art that is practically extinct, known today as *bate-coxa* (hit-thigh). There are three main roots of the *capoeira* born in Bahia. From the Africans came the heritage of the fundamental ritual movements of Candomblé (from the *Yoruba* people came the *ijexá* rhythm and the tonal rhyme at each three stanzas, and from the *Bantu* came the *berimbau*). The Portuguese enter the scene with the popular improvised dance called *chula*, which uses the *pandeiro* (tambourine) and the *viola* (folk guitar). From the Brazilian natives, *capoeira* inherited the nomenclature of the movements, the themes of the songs, the ritual, and the methods of teaching. Bahian *capoeira* is characterized by movements performed to the sound of the *ijexá* rhythm, commanded by the *toque* (stroke) of the *berimbau*. The movements simulate intentions of attack, defense, and escape, requiring ability, strength and self-confidence from the fighter. The game occurs between two people, and the role of each one is to demonstrate superiority in relation to his partner. The *ginga*, during which the practitioner must stay in constant movement, is the base of the choreography. The various *toques* executed, the accompaniment of the chorus, and the beat of the clapping by the audience – all these play a key role in the performance.

Obatalá),¹¹ is introduced at the beginning of each term, worked in tandem by all classes, culminating at the end of the term in presentations/performances that involve all students, teachers, and staff in a collaborative interdisciplinary production process. While each workshop approaches the common theme within its subject matter, teachers collectively coordinate the project through exchange of ideas throughout the term. At the end of the term, rehearsals for the final performance begin, when students from various workshops join to collaborate, cooperate, and coexist with teachers, staff, families and visitors.

A great asset in the PVCS program, in my view, is the opportunity it offers to students to interact with renowned local professional artists who are invited and/or voluntarily share their experience with the PVCS community. Musicians, composers, artists, journalists, and others are often invited to perform, or to give lecture demonstrations. These guest lecturers are an invaluable source of information; their experience, unlikely to be found in books, is shared interpersonally. The most significant aspect of this approach is that through personal interaction they share their real life experience, their knowledge and spiritual beliefs following oral tradition. Occasionally, open panel discussions are organized, involving guest lecturers, instructors, and students. Many of them are living cultural treasures with knowledge of the history of Afro-Brazilian music and arts, as well as of Candomblé practices. They willingly join the students for rehearsals, greatly enriching students' experiences, both by teaching and sharing their skills on the stage with students in performances. PVCS "productions" are presented to the general public at school and also at outside venues. Such performances provide the students with doorways to potential professionalization, as well as serve the school as fundraisers. Additionally, they help raise awareness about PVCS work and the social need for such an

¹¹ *Obatalá* is one of the most important *orixás* (gods) in Candomblé mythology.

educational approach in Bahian society.

PVCS: Infra-structure, Teachers and Management

The PVCS is located next to the Foundation's lot, which was rented in 1999 and remodeled to suit the school's purposes. The basic infra-structure consists of a gated lot with various multi-purpose classrooms: a music room, used for classes and rehearsals; a large dance room, also used for theater classes and performances; an arts and crafts room also used for Afro-aesthetics¹² workshops; an audiovisual room for guest-lectures; a large covered patio for outdoor classes and performances; an instructional technology (IT) room with multimedia equipment; a photo lab, a community library; two guest rooms to accommodate visiting researchers; a fully equipped kitchen, administrative office, housekeeper's house; and two bathrooms.

The sheltered open space, a covered patio, periodically holds different cultural activities that Pierre Verger used to call *les Libres Rencontres Artistiques* (Free Artistic Meetings), *capoeira rodas* (circles), music and dance performances, and so forth. Each one of these rooms/spaces was named after prominent promoters and scholars of Afro-Brazilian culture, whose majority were Pierre Verger's real-life friends. For example, Jorge Amado library, Roger Bastide IT room, and *Mestre Bimba* open space. The PVCS yard includes a large community garden with a plum tree that is almost one hundred years old, bamboo, other fruit trees, and medicinal plants used in Afro-Brazilian cults. The medicinal plants culture is soon to become an

¹² *Afro-aesthetics* comprises the aesthetics of the Afro-Brazilian outer appearance and body language, including Afro-hairstyling, Afro-dressing, make-up featuring African body features, and so forth, sometimes referred to as "Afro-fashion."

additional workshop.¹³ The PVCS employs a range of 16 to 20 instructors and the *oficinas* are offered each semester according to enrollment. Most regular teachers are paid by the foundation; some hold college degrees, and others work as volunteers, to bolster their teaching practices and their masters and doctoral research. The PVCS management/staff consists of a director of education, administrator, a pedagogy specialist, a logistics specialist, a cook, and a housekeeper.

Community Library

On March 31, 2006, the Pierre Verger Cultural Space inaugurated its community library, named after Jorge Amado, a veteran writer from Bahia. The Pierre Verger Foundation created the library, in collaboration with the *Instituto Brasil Leitor* (Brazilian Readers Institute) that developed the *Ler é Saber* (Reading is Knowledge) project. According to the general coordinator Angela Luhning, the library “increases the possibilities of instilling into the community the pleasure of reading, in a region of the city where there is scarcity in the access to books.” Children, adolescents as well as instructors have access to more than 1,500 books in the Jorge Amado Library. Its book collection enriches the teachers with the possibility of consistent lesson planning and activities that can benefit the entire community. Núbia Lourenzo was chosen as the librarian because of her flair for reading and for her suggestions on ways to attract the public to the “world of books.” “People within my community will not have to pick up books from the dustbin as I did to read,” said Núbia. The library reached the mark of more than 300 registered users in less than three months after opening, which they considered a very satisfactory number for such a short length of time.

¹³ More detailed information about the PVCS facilities can be found in Angela Luhning interview, on Appendix X. It explains the beginning of the project as well as Pierre Verger’s commitments to the local community.

PVCS Sponsors

The PVCS is currently being supported by various sponsors, including the Ministry of Culture (MinC), which sponsors the project *Pierre Verger no Centro da Cultura Afro-Brasileira* (Pierre Verger in the Center of Afro-Brazilian Culture), as a *Ponto de Cultura/ Cultura Viva* (Culture Site/Live Culture), and the *Secretaria de Cultura e Turismo do Estado da Bahia* (Bahia State Department of Culture and Tourism). Any interested sponsors or collaborators for the projects run by PVCS do so by contacting Angela Luhning by telephone or e-mail.

PVCS Student Body

PVCS students are mainly Afro-Brazilian children and adolescents who live in quasi-socioeconomic exclusion. In Bahia's demographics they are considered an at-risk group because they lack the economic means to attend formal school, have no adult supervision, and are constantly threatened by drug dealers, underage sub-employment and prostitution. They are growing up in a community where the number of uneducated and unemployed persons is high, and where "marginal" and often illegal activities abound. Their attendance at PVCS allows them to engage in social interaction, experimentation, and development of creativity through rediscovery and reinvention of Afro-Brazilian cultural identity. My collected data and interviews conducted with children and youths of Vila América's community resulted in testimonials describing experiences and impressions that the workshops provided to them. These interviews, presented in Appendix 1, added to video-recordings, reflect the PVCS in the eyes of its protagonists: the students and their teachers.

PVCS: A Non-formal School

PVCS is unique in terms of its origin, purpose, and results achieved. It is a non-formal school,¹⁴ a socio-cultural space where blacks, whites, and people from other ethnic backgrounds coexist. The PVCS proposes that learning music and other arts that carry expressive elements of Afro-Brazilian culture is a fundamental tool to safeguard cultural heritage. The roles of music and dance are integral to the educational purpose of the PVCS, but not necessarily more so than storytelling, *capoeira*, dance, instrument construction, photography, and other art forms, because the school's approach is holistic. According to the pedagogy specialist Jucélia Teixeira, PVCS is a holistic non-formal school that teaches Afro-Brazilian arts “with the intent of building in its students an individual sense of self.”¹⁵

PVCS would be considered to be a non-formal school because its program is independent from the formal school system, is delivered within a wide range of methodological flexibility, and addresses the needs of a disadvantaged group. Non-formal education became part of the international discourse on education policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At this time there were moves in UNESCO toward lifelong education and notions of ‘the learning society.’ What emerged was an influential tripartite categorization of learning systems: *formal*, *informal*, and *non-formal* education. Based on this categorization, *non-formal* education is any organized educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve identifiable

¹⁴ See Fordham, P. E. (1993) 'Informal, Non-formal and Formal Education Programmes' in YMCA George Williams College *ICE301 Lifelong Learning Unit 2*, London: YMCA George Williams College, and UNESCO (1972) *Learning to Be* (prepared by Faure, E. et al), Paris: UNESCO. (Reproduced from the Encyclopaedia of Informal Education [www.infed.org])

¹⁵ Jucélia Teixeira. Interview by the author. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 17, 2007.

learning clienteles and learning objectives. Therefore, what distinguishes a non-formal school from a formal school is its specific learning goals and clientele within a specific social context. According to Fordham (1993), four characteristics are associated with non-formal education: (1) relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups; (2) concern with specific categories of person; (3) a focus on clearly defined purposes; (4) flexibility in organization and methods. PVCS is also part of a non-governmental organization (NGO). NGOs are organizations that preserve and promote cultural diversity. Many of them pursue goals UNESCO has outlined with purposes of promoting social inclusion through some form of education. The number of NGOs has increased substantially over the last two decades in Salvador, a city where 87% are Afro-Brazilians, and where the majority of its 3 million residents live in poverty.

Integrating Subjects with Activities

The PVCS program unfolds through a common link between all educational aspects. Subjects and processes are treated as parts of a unified whole, where they are interrelated and interdependent. This integration reflects traditional African ethos, according to authors like Pierre Verger (1996) and Eduardo Oliveira (2006), as discussed in Chapter II. Oliveira states that music, dance and education are interwoven in the context of socialization and sociability. This interdependence originated within the Sub-Saharan African worldview, stresses Oliveira, and the construction of self is “a collective process, a social responsibility; the preparation of a person to live in society is a task that is engendered collectively” (Oliveira 2006: 55). Indeed, among contemporary Afro-Brazilians who participate in the activities promoted by PVCS, that is often the case. Following African tradition, music and dance pieces are created and/or arranged to be

performed by, among, and for friends in participative, improvisatory community gatherings (Shields 1997; Fox 2000), such as the music of Candomblé, *samba-de-roda*, and *capoeira*. While making music, participants are educating themselves “informally” through these practices. Most of this education crystallizes implicitly, through a “just happens” spontaneous kind of process, sometimes collectively, and most of the times with the guidance of a master. PVCS *capoeira* instructor *Mestre* Sizinio, for instance, is a teacher who has experience, knowledge, and skills within Afro-Brazilian cultural heritage, and for that reason he became a respected leader. Sizinio expressed in interviews that his teaching status at the PVCS context expanded from “*capoeira mestre* to educator.”

My View of PVCS

My observation during a period of three years lead me to believe that the PVCS is not only a program that intends to promote, rescue and reinvent tradition, but also a space where participants can acknowledge and accept that they are free to rediscover such tradition. PVCS is a space for the coexistence of black, white, mulatto, poor, rich, academic, traditional, educated, and non-literate Brazilians. It also welcomes researchers, educators, and artists from all walks of life to interact, teach and learn from each other. It is a space of mediation between cultures, principally, but not exclusively, African and Brazilian cultures. PVCS educators see local participants first as Brazilians, and second as Afro-Brazilians, because they accept and understand that Brazilian society is composed of multicultural identities that, in spite of historical clashes, blended, intermingled, and constructed new identities.

The PVCS does not intend to impose either African or Portuguese (European) ethos on

participants. Instead, it promotes communication, interaction, and awareness of interrelationships between these two worlds. Its ethos is the culture that resulted from the interaction between Brazilian society and African cultures. Its educational mission is to serve the community through providing a teaching and learning space for multicultural coexistence in the present time, which can potentially lead to a future with greater social inclusion for its participants. While it intends to fight social marginalization of Afro-Brazilians, it also intends to increase awareness in other Brazilians about Afro-Brazilian culture. It intends to show that Afro-Brazilian arts are a manifestation not only of Afro-Brazilian culture, but also expressions of Brazilian cultural identity that must be acknowledged as essential constitutive elements of Brazilian society. Although it might at first appear as if they are exclusivists of Afro-Brazilian or African cultures, PVCS teachers do not promote being “less Brazilian” or “more African.” They see the PVCS as just as Brazilian as any other cultural expression within Brazilian society.

Paulo Freire (1985[1970], 1996): “Teaching–learning”

This study investigates and treats music teaching and learning as an interdependent process because that is how PVCS educators treat it. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1996) exposed the notion of interdependence and mutual influences between teachers and learners as the author of books that have achieved international resonance, such as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1985[1970]) and *Pedagogy of Autonomy* (1996). These books were inspirational to numerous educators, including PVCS educators. Freire argues that the educator and the learners are equal participants in the learning process developed by a continuous dialogue. Freire proposed education as a horizontal process where knowledge is constructed collectively through

integration of all parts involved, as opposed to vertical, in which knowledge is constructed by and descends linearly from dominant groups. As a result of Freire's work in Brazil educators often use the term *ensino-aprendizagem* (teaching-learning), which conveys a bi-directional process. Freire, who repeatedly claimed that Brazil could only develop as a nation through improving its education system, did not believe in the effectiveness of linear education because it did not promote social inclusion. Instead, it increased poverty, since marginalized youth in Brazil are already exposed to all sorts of oppressive social relations.

Paraphrasing Paulo Freire (1970), PVCS is a space where "those who believe in transcendental movements do not dichotomize them in the world" (Freire 1996). In other words, PVCS educators share a viewpoint based on a common belief that teachers and learners cannot get "there" (Africa) unless they depart from "here" (Brazil). If "here" is the place where they find themselves able to speak of "there," then it is from "here" that they depart, not from "there" (Freire 1996).¹⁶ In other words, PVCS is a place that departs from Brazilian culture and engenders a movement toward Africanness, but never forgetting its ontological Brazilianness. That means that they are fully aware that they teach and learn about Afro-Brazilian culture as key actors or agents of Brazilian culture, rather than being agents of African culture.

Given this unique approach advocated by the PVCS, in which this institution effectively mediates African and Brazilian cultures, before examining the researched community in depth, it is first necessary to look at the African roots that inform Afro-Brazilian culture. Chapter II surveys structural elements of African cosmology that ultimately point to pathways of

¹⁶ Paulo Freire, video interview, in which he expresses the concept of Ontology within *Liberation Theology*. In simpler words, Freire speaks of the genuine expression of *Liberation Theology* thought, which brought his education philosophy "closer" to Marx's Dialectical Materialism. Video Reference: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Wz5y2V1af0>

organization of Afro-Brazilian life, followed by Chapter III, which outlines some of the ways in which African cosmology is synthesized into a new ethos that can be described as Afro-Brazilian.

CHAPTER II

AFRICAN ROOTS OF AFRO-BRAZILIAN CULTURE

Before analyzing the data collected at the PVCS and reporting on my fieldwork, it is necessary to examine the African roots of Afro-Brazilian culture. This chapter discusses aspects of worldviews that sprang up from West African cultures to become structural agents in Afro-Brazilian culture. After they crossed the Atlantic on board Portuguese slave trade ships, African worldviews were continuously reshaped as a result of African descendants' adaptation to circumstances within colonial Brazil. In order to understand the significance of such worldviews it is crucial to examine African history that precedes the colonization of the Americas. Chapter III explains the reshaping and the manifestation of these worldviews in contemporary Brazilian society. In these two chapters I will briefly survey recent contributions made in history, sociology, philosophy, and anthropology, in order to demonstrate how African culture is compatible with the PVCS goals of rescuing tradition. Chapter IV presents the collected data and identifies these structural agents of Afro-Brazilian culture within the PVCS program. Chapter V analyzes how these structural agents function within the framework of music teaching and learning.

The term "Africa" is used broadly in this discussion to refer to a specific region of that continent,¹⁷ the sub-Saharan region, which from the tenth to the fifteenth century, was ruled by

¹⁷ For further reading on the history of the African empires see: Lambert (2001); Oliver (1994), and Silva (1992). About African Cultural Philosophy see: Appiah (1997); Sow et.al. (1982); Griaule (1938, 1966); Frobenius (1952); Maurier (1985); Van Sertima (1983); Silva (2002), and Nascimento (1994).

the so-called Big African Empires: Ghana (700s – 1200s), Mali (1300s- 1400s), and Songhai (1400s – 1500s). All three empires were situated between the Sahara and the Sahel.¹⁸ The term “Africans” is used to refer to a group of people consisting of a variety of ethnic groups, who spoke different dialects and had cultural differences and similarities. According to Kwasi Ampene (2005), in Ghana the *Akan* were “traditionally regarded as states” (2005: 1). The groups include the *Asante*, *Dahomey*, and *Oyo* kingdoms in West Africa, plus the *Kongo* Kingdom, and the states of *Ovibundo*, *Ndonga*, *Kacongo*, *Lunda*, *Luba*, and other *Bantu* states. However, the groups that are most relevant in Afro-Brazilians’ ancestry are the *Yoruba* in present day Benin and the *Bantu* in present day Congo and Angola. In its mission of rescuing culture, PVCS music teaching and learning aims to build links between contemporary Afro-Brazilians and these two African cultures.

Although the three big African empires can provide historical examples that would aid in the understanding of Afro-Brazilian ethos, such historical analysis, however, is beyond the scope of this study, so I will limit this section to identifying structural elements in those societies that configure African worldviews. African worldviews are actualized in expressive culture, especially music making, and in the modes of social organization of Afro-Brazilians. The African worldviews that have informed Afro-Brazilian culture are intimately associated with (1) the ethnicities that played a major role in this process, (2) their social and political dynamics, and (3) the international context at the time European colonization began.

¹⁸ *Sahel* (in Arabic *Sāhil*) is a semiarid region of western and north-central Africa extending from Senegal eastward to the Sudan. It forms a transitional zone between the arid Sahara Desert to the north and the belt of humid savannas to the south. The Sahel stretches from the Atlantic Ocean eastward through northern Senegal, southern Mauritania, the great bend of the Niger River in Mali, Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), southern Niger, northeastern Nigeria, south-central Chad, and into the Sudan.

African and Western Worldviews: Distinct Semiotic Systems

As Clifford Geertz (1973) puts it, human culture incorporates traditions and customs of given groups of people: the worldview that undergirds who they are as persons, how they perceive their humanity, how they regard other people who do not belong to their group, and how they pass on their customs as a legacy to future generations within their group. Culture is a composite of values, morals, taboos, and rules, written and unwritten, that are embedded in language, practices, childrearing and training traditions, rituals, symbols, rites of passage, clichés, proverbs, songs, dances, and folk tales. Culture shapes who people are, gives them personal identity, unites them, and provides them with a sense of meaning and direction.

In examining African roots of Afro-Brazilian culture it is imperative to consider some of the signs and symbols that shaped the practical realities of African societies, the meanings associated with them, as well as the African contexts from where they originated. Semiotic analysis is not the purpose of this study. However, in order to avoid reification of culture, I will draw from the definition of culture presented by Geertz (1989): culture is semiotic, public, and contextual. It is semiotic because it encompasses signs; public because signs are always created collectively; and contextual because signs incorporate meanings according to the socio-cultural context.

As it will be demonstrated in the following chapters, cultures can become problematic, however, when people in a particular culture group perceive themselves as better than those in other groups, when they force their cultural way of life on others, and when they fail to engage in self-examination. Western culture is aggressive and competitive. It is influenced greatly by a Euro-American worldview that holds such beliefs as “rugged individualism, competition,

mastery and control over nature, a unitary and static conception of time, religion based on Christianity, and separation of science and religion.”¹⁹ With these values, it has built world economies, conquered and ruled, and succeeded in making the world more Western through media and communication. Essentially, African ethos and Western ethos are distinct because they operate and are operated by, distinct semiotic systems. The African cultures discussed here function in a clearly distinct way from Western societies to the point that African cosmologies corroborate the categorization of Africa as a “non-Western” place. One aspect that is specifically relevant to this study, however, is the guiding principles of African cosmologies that inform PVCS’ Afro-Brazilian music teaching and learning for its students to continuously reshape themselves and their culture, which in turn continues to reshape their reality. Those fundamental principles support an ever-changing capacity of adaptation to circumstances. They are constantly being treated by the principle of integration. According to Eduardo Oliveira (2006),

An important characteristic of African societies is the non-separation between nature and politics, or power and religion. That is, there is no stratification between these important layers of societal life. Everything is seen according to the principle of integration, in which various elements interact and complement each other (Oliveira 2006: 39).²⁰

Because they are so well integrated, these principles survive over centuries because they continue to be reshaped and yet do not lose their fundamental purpose. Oliveira argues that an African worldview can be seen in concrete social actions, such as everyday behaviors, socialization processes, and all activities of daily life (Oliveira 2006: 39). Afro-Brazilians teaching, learning, creating, and producing music is oriented by an African worldview and it is detectable as behavior that distinguishes them from other social groups within Brazilian society.

¹⁹ See Sue, Derald and Sue, David, 1999, 34-35.

²⁰ In this dissertation all citations of sources originally written in Portuguese language were translated into the English language by the author.

Afro-Bahians, for instance, display a behavior; a way of being that is unique and easily detectable by Brazilians from other regions.

The terms “tradition” and “traditional” occur frequently in the writings of the Western social scientists and contemporary African scholars cited in this dissertation. However, all the scholars seldom, if ever, define the terms outright. “Tradition” and “traditional” are usually presented in contrast to terms like “modern” or “Western.” For example, Smith and Inkeles (1966) defined “modern” as a “set of attitudes and values, and ways of feeling and acting, presumably of the sort either generated by or required for participation in a modern society” (1966: 353). Similarly, the African scholars surveyed for the purposes of this study give much attention to examples of African “traditions” and “traditional African culture”, yet seldom if ever clearly define the terms. For the sake of clarity and the general purposes of this dissertation, and as an expression of what I understand the general definition of the term to mean to the African scholars I cite, I will employ the following working definition of “African worldview” or “traditional African culture:” generally widespread sub-Saharan African core values, beliefs, cultural themes and behaviors as they existed prior to European contact; and as they still exist, especially in the rural areas and to a lesser extent in the urban areas of Africa; and upon which many, if not most, fundamental thought processes and behaviors of contemporary sub-Saharan Africans are based and continue to be derived from. The sub-Saharan cultures that have mostly influenced Afro-Brazilian culture are the *Yoruba* from present day Benin, and *Bantu* from present day Kongo and Angola (See Figure 1).



Figure 1. African Language Groups.

Most of the African scholars' works cited in this dissertation have not come from social scientists. African scholars I have spoken with believe the lack of social science involvement in

this area of research is due, in large part, to an inadequacy of resources in African university social science departments to support indigenous social research. They also believe it is due to the generally oppressive nature of post-independence African central governments when it comes to academics and their students studying and exposing various social issues, including government corruption, incompetence and criminality. Kenyan philosopher Masolo argues that this “suppression of knowledge and the resultant brain-drain remain Africa's foremost cause of underdevelopment and sociopolitical instability” (Masolo 1995: 50). Therefore, since the mid-1960s, African scholars in philosophy, history, and education have made greater strides in this area than their colleagues in the social sciences primarily because central governments have seen them as engaging in “academic” or “purely intellectual” pursuits, as a result, less threatening to the status quo than are social scientists. African governments, therefore, have allowed scholars other than social scientists greater intellectual freedom of expression.

The African scholars focused on in this paper include the following: Senegalese Leopold Senghor (1963 and 1966); Ghanaians G. K. Osei (1971) and Kwame Gyekye (1988; 1996); Kenyans John S. Mbiti (1969; 1992), Kihumbu Thairu (1975), J. M. Nyasani (1997); and South Africans Augustine Shutte (1993) and M. W. Makgoba (1997). The works of these writers span a period of thirty-five years and come from three of Africa's major sub-regions--West, East and Southern--where the largest number of contemporary African scholars have intellectually pursued the issues associated with pan-African cultural traits and adaptive processes. As such, these works are regarded to represent serious and significant scholarly efforts on the part of Africans to describe and/or analyze pan-African cultural traits and widespread patterns and processes of African cultural adaptation, which in many aspects mirror the adaptation of African descendants in Brazilian society.

A number of other important works published during the past twenty years by contemporary African scholars offering analyses and solutions to Africa's current political and socioeconomic problems were reviewed and considered for inclusion. However, they are not cited in this study because they make little or no reference to pan-African and pan-Afro-Brazilian cultures, or patterns and processes of African and Afro-Brazilian cultural adaptation. These include: P. M. Mutibwa (1977), Gideon S. Were (1983; 1992), R. I. Onwuka and A. Sesay (1985), Philip Ndegwa (1985; 1986), Thomas R. Odhiambo (1988), P. Anyang' Nyong'o (1990; 1992), Thabo Mbeki (1995), and Eric M. Aseka (1996). In limiting the scope of this dissertation to the works of scholars from Africa and from Brazil I am not discounting the efforts of Western scholars such as Aidan Campbell (1997), Richard Werbner and Terence Ranger (1996), Verena Stolcke (1995) and Eric Wolf (1994), for example, who continue to make significant contributions to the study of African and non-African ethnicity and individual and group identity. I have simply deferred in order to place my findings within the contemporary intellectual context that includes African scholars writing on African ethnicity and identity, and Brazilian scholars writing on Afro-Brazilian culture, and more specifically, on music.

From the early sixties to the present, African scholars outside the social sciences have consistently claimed that there have been and will continue to be widespread cultural themes and patterns that are unique to sub-Saharan Africa. They also argue that these broad themes and patterns are undergoing rapid change in a similar manner and most often for the worse throughout most of Africa and its Diaspora. The strength of their commitment to these concepts is reflected in the fact that scholars persist in their efforts despite a historical intellectual context that eschews such inquiry. My survey reveals they have done so to clarify and praise the virtues of what it means to be African in the face of increasing global Westernization, and to identify

and promote the importance of “Africanness” in African national and regional development. This view matches and/or parallels the perspective most Brazilian scholars have on Afro-Brazilians who are attempting to rescue their Africanness. African scholars also seek to reassert Africa's importance in the broader cultural evolution of humankind. Although some of the works contain significant methodological shortcomings, most of the scholars’ assertions and arguments are well reasoned and extremely compelling when they are cross-culturally compared with the arguments of Brazilian scholars.

Many African social scientists regard African culture as part of a long-standing and concerted Western effort to suppress and dominate Africans (See especially Thairu 1975 and Nyasani 1997). In contrast, African scholars’ approaches outside the social sciences have been theoretically and methodologically eclectic and intended to protect and liberate Africans, not dominate or control them. For example, Kenyan medical doctor and author Kihumbu Thairu (1975) offers a personally challenging approach that focuses on the need for Africans to rediscover who they are, independent of their assimilated Western values and ways of thinking and behaving. These scholars believe there are categories and processes of thought that are unique to Africa. African scholars also believe that the African way of organizing and cognitively engaging the world derives from a strongly restrictive indigenous socio-cultural milieu, and that this approach to social life and the broader world has been negatively effected by Western cultural influences. Regrettably, however, these African scholars sometimes use what is normally regarded to be social scientific terminology in making reference to what they regard to be widespread African cultural characteristics, yet do not clearly define or qualify such usage. With the exception of Gyekye (1988), they also fail to clearly and consistently link their assertions and arguments to historical and ethnographic data. For example, Nyasani (1997), in

his vaguely defined references to the “African mind” and its characteristics, believes that

In the same way reference is made to the Greek or Roman civilization, it must be quite appropriate and legitimate to refer to a particular strand of mind that is quite peculiar to Africa and which shapes the prevailing conditions or permits itself to adapt to those conditions. (...) (T)here is a distinctive feature about the African mind which seems to support the claim that the mind in black Africa may not necessarily operate in the same strict pattern as minds elsewhere in the world... (I)t is the way our mind functions and operates under certain conditions that we are able to arrogate to ourselves a peculiar status, social identification and geographical label (Nyasani 1997: 51-55).

According to Nyasani African minds are products of unique “cultural edifices” and “cultural streams” that arose from environmental conditioning and long-standing cultural traditions. Within the African cultural stream, he claims, are psychological and moral characteristics pertaining to African identity, personality and dignity (Nyasani 1997: 56-57).

Makgoba (1997) goes further and argues that throughout the African Diaspora,

Peoples of African descent are linked by shared values that are fundamental features of African identity and culture. These, for example, include hospitality, friendliness, the consensus and common framework-seeking principle, and the emphasis on community rather than on the individual. These features typically underpin the variations of African culture and identity everywhere. The existence of African identity is not in doubt (Makgoba 1997: 197-198).

Among Brazilian scholars I chose to emphasize the work of Oliveira alongside other Brazilian authors, because they not only look at Afro-Brazilian culture as a vehicle of contrasting paradigms to Western worldviews, but also explain Afro-Brazilian culture from the perspective of Brazilians, which is an insiders’ perspective. Although African authors may articulate an explanation of African cultures according to African insiders, and although some of their views about African Diaspora parallel Afro-Brazilian worldview, they seemed more generalized, and less fit to the specific sub-culture researched in this study. It became apparent that, unless African scholars had lived (or perhaps done fieldwork) in Brazil, it would be difficult for them to capture the views that Brazilians have about Brazilian society. My concern here is not so much

to match Africans and Brazilians when explaining African worldviews, but rather express Afro-Brazilians' interpretation of those worldviews, because the goal of PVCS is to rescue culture according to a concept of culture based on knowledge about Africa that has been constructed by Brazilians. This interpretation approach follows the views of Paulo Freire, who said: "those who believe in transcendental movements do not dichotomize them in the world" (Freire 1996). We cannot get "there" (Africa) unless we depart from "here" (Brazil). If "here" is the place where we find ourselves able to speak of "there" (Africa), then it is from "here" (Brazil) that we should depart, not from "there" (Freire 1996). Likewise, PVCS is a space that departs from Brazilian culture and engenders a movement toward Africanness, but never forgetting its ontological Brazilianness.²¹

The African Worldview

Senghor (1966), in comparing Africans and Europeans, argues that there is a unique African worldview focused on what he describes as "being" and "life forces." He writes,

(T)he African has always and everywhere presented a concept of the world which is diametrically opposed to the traditional philosophy of Europe. The latter is essentially static, objective, dichotomous; it is, in fact, dualistic, in that it makes an absolute distinction between body and soul, matter and spirit. It is founded on separation and opposition, on analysis and conflict. The African, on the other hand, conceives the world, beyond the diversity of its forms, as a fundamentally mobile yet unique reality that seeks synthesis. This reality is being, in the ontological sense of the word, and it is life force. For the African, matter, in the sense the Europeans understand it, is only a system of signs which translates the single reality of the universe: being, which is spirit, which is life force. Thus, the whole universe appears as an infinitely small, and at the same time infinitely large, network of life forces. (Senghor 1966: 4).

Shutte (1993), like Senghor, argues that the force or energy of life (*seriti*) is at the center of the

²¹ See Chapter I of this dissertation, pp. 18-19.

traditional African worldview. As such,

It is the most fundamental (feature) in traditional African world-views. (...) It is moreover a dynamic system in that the force of everything, at least all living things, is continuously being either strengthened or weakened. Human beings continuously influence each other, either directly or indirectly by way of sub-human forces or through the ancestors (Shutte 1993: 52-54).

From Nyasani's perspective, the worldview of the African under colonialism became one where African cultural traditions, beliefs and behaviors were regarded by Africans to be inferior when compared to non-African ways. This, he says, resulted in self-loathing among Africans. In fact, he asserts, the worldview of most contemporary Africans was replaced by and therefore is in many ways indistinguishable from the European worldview (Nyasani 1997: 97-100).

Similar Views of Scholars about Africans and Afro-Brazilians

The views of African scholars about Africa are similar to the views of Brazilian scholars about Afro-Brazilian culture especially in the sense of Afro-Brazilians being viewed as a people who can only succeed and realize their potential by being controlled, policed, nursed and guided by mainstream Brazilian society. For instance, Makgoba (1997) clearly identifies the motives behind the interest of the larger world of non-Africans as follows:

Knowledge about African people is always political, useful in maintaining intellectual neo-colonialism, propagates Western culture, helps generate and perpetuate an inferiority complex (in Africans), fosters individualism amongst Africans, disrupts organization and unity in the (African) community because there is inherent fear of a united, organized Afro-centric community, or a combination of all of the above. In short, we are (regarded to be) a people who can only succeed, realize our potential and destiny by being controlled, policed, nursed and guided by Europeans. We are (therefore) incapable of being masters of our own destiny (Makgoba 1997: 205).

Culturally, it is as if the traditional African script of “submit to family and community authority and immerse yourself in and partake of all group values and norms” was rewritten during the colonial period. Through force, Western education and missionary proselytizing, the colonialists

subordinated traditional African authority and the values and norms of African communalism in the minds of Africans. This new anti-African script, argues Nyasani (1997), remains deeply embedded in the minds of contemporary Africans:

They have adopted and assimilated wholesale whatever the West has to offer. The end result is not just a cultural betrayal but a serious case of self-dehumanization and outright self-subversion both in terms of dignity and self-esteem. Indeed there is no race on earth that abhors its own culture and is so easily prepared to abdicate it and flirt with experimental ideas which promise no more than vanity, to a large extent, like the African race. (...) Africa is simply overwhelmed and decisively submerged by the never-receding tide of cultural imperialism (Nyasani 1997: 126-128).

In my experience as a Brazilian born and raised citizen, I have often witnessed Afro-Brazilians (especially Afro-Bahians) being viewed as naturally benign and docile. However, this characterization has a negative connotation, because it is associated with being “less productive,” and “slow” in the Western sense. Psychologically, Nyasani argues that the Africans’ “natural benign docility” contributed to and exacerbated Africa’s widespread social and cultural demise via Western acculturation. He argues that “it would not be difficult to imagine the ripe conditions encountered at the dawn of European imperialism for unbridled exploitations and culture emasculations which left many an African society completely distraught and culturally defrocked. Indeed the exploiting schemers must have found a ready market glutted with cultural naiveties for quick but effective alienation” (Nyasani 1997: 113-114). The post-colonial era has been no different, he says, in that contemporary “black Africa is painfully crucified on the cross of blackmailers, arm-twisters and their forever more enslaving technologies and each nail of the cross belongs to the economic aid donor nation” (Nyasani 1997: 96).

Regarding the impact of Westernization on African community and family life, Preston Chitere, Kenyan rural sociologist at the University of Nairobi, offers the following observations by Kimani (1998), regarding the current state of the African family in Kenya, a state or condition

that exists in many other sub-Saharan African nations:

The effects of capitalism are already being felt in our families. Individualism in society is increasing. Even families in rural areas like to operate in isolation, and those who offer any help are keen to help their immediate families only. The (conjugal) family is becoming more independent. The loss of community networks and the development of individualism have resulted in (increased occurrences of) suicide, loneliness, drug abuse and mental illness. The communal system is breaking down. The extended family had certain functions to perform, for instance, to reconcile couples at loggerheads with each other, but this is no longer the case. It is no one (else's) business to know what's happening in one's marriage today (Kimani 1998:1).

The emphasis on Africa's traditional past in the writings of Nyasani and other African scholars, however, is not without its African detractors. Kenyan philosopher Masolo (1995), for example, in his discussion of “ethno-philosophy” (formal efforts to systematically describe traditional African beliefs and practices) finds little in Africa’s past that can be applied to the present and future of the continent. He believes,

Philosophers who are seeking to revive and reinstate the traditional African philosophy as the appropriate philosophy for Africa today are (...) doing disservice to Africa in trying to pretend that that philosophy is still sufficient or useful or applicable to Africa’s needs, i.e., that it is able to cope with the new and modern problems and issues facing Africa today as brought in with encroaching modernization. And because this encroachment requires new methods of investigation and analysis, which must be diversified due to the complexity of the situation, ethno-philosophy just has no place in it (Masolo 1995: 225).

Similarly, Gyekye (1996) abhors the fact that ancestors continue to be of paramount importance in modern and traditional African life. He also recommends that for Africa to progress scientifically and technologically, “science should be rescued from the morass of (traditional) African religious and mystical beliefs” (Gyekye 1996: 174). Nevertheless, Gyekye insists there are many “cultural values and practices of traditional Africa (that) can be considered positive features of the culture and can be accommodated in the scheme of African modernity, even if they must undergo some refinement and pruning to become fully harmonious with the spirit of modern culture and to function (...) satisfactorily within that culture” (ibid.).

Dominance Does Not Mean Exclusive Existence

Oliveira claims that the first step toward understanding Afro-Brazilian ethos is to recognize that the current dominant system of globalization, to which he refers as “Integrated Global Capitalism” (IGC), has elected itself as the “Only Reference Universe,” imposing itself over other value systems, and presenting itself as the only pathway to social and economic organization. According to Oliveira, globalization constitutes a powerful sign system, but it is not the only system of signs in the world. Oliveira asserts that hegemony does not mean omnipotence, and dominance does not mean exclusive existence.

African worldview configures itself within a different semiotic system, that sets in motion desires and promotes values, which are at least antagonist to the ones promoted by (...) the dominant system of signs, [which] is structured (...) on an ontology (being), a linguistics (signifying), and an economy (capital) that override other value systems. This system’s logic generates the binary categories of right and wrong, good and evil, god and devil, sacred and secular, pure and impure, original and mestizo, etc., disqualifying the singularizing differences, vulgarizing the complexity of the real, and attacking the self-referential ethical subjectivities (Oliveira 2006: 16-17).

On the other hand, the dominant system’s powerful centrifugal forces generate what Oliveira calls “fugue lines of thinking” that are tangentially escaping from its sphere of semiotic dominance and opens space to the creation of new models (Oliveira 2006: 17). This is also a view that supports my choice of emphasizing Brazilian scholars’ views about African worldview. Their views seem to tangentially escape from the semiotic dominance often imposed by North American and European scholars.

My choice is also supported by current debates among ethnomusicologists. For instance, see the “Call-and-Response” article “Disciplining Ethnomusicology,” written by Tim Rice in

Ethnomusicology Journal (2010),²² and the responses of Kofi Agawu, Suzel Ana Reily, and Ellen Koskoff. Agawu argues that ethnomusicologists can no longer “postulate a canon of methodologies and field knowledge (...) that all practitioners [are] expected to be in possession of” (Agawu 2010: 326). Secondly, because this dissertation is data-driven, then “it is not immediately clear why the view of [African] identity developed from [African authors in regards to African places] ought to form the basis of a study” (327) of Afro-Brazilian music teaching-learning in Bahia. My theory is dependent on the findings of Brazilian sub-cultures’ studies. “Detaching theory from the ethnographic data that served as its ecology is often a way of claiming power for the theory in question. Should my “paper be rejected automatically” because it is based on Brazilian authors (perhaps unknown to North American ethnomusicologists) and because it makes “no reference to Rice’s list, (...) or might there be a point to hearing a voice that, while different from our own, is equally cogent on the subject?” (328). Suzel Ana Reily posits,

We are children of the post-modern era, are we not? We shy away from ‘grand theory.’ Our world is complex and contradictory, multifaceted and multi-temporal, dialogic and polyphonic, dynamic and continuously changing--it is, in effect, ungraspable in its totality. Thus, how could it possibly be encompassed by some overarching ‘theory’? (...) While I welcome the challenge that we situate our work more clearly in relation to the propositions of other colleagues, I would hope that our intertextual dialogues be as wide-ranging as possible, encompassing SEM’s journal as well as other ethnomusicology journals, and not only those in the English language. (...) To understand human musicality in all its dimensions--is best achieved through inclusive efforts (Reily 2010: 332-333).

Koskoff asks, is Rice “saying that ethnomusicology needs to discipline itself by theorizing its themes into specific paths/rules, or risk the consequences of being punished (i.e., losing academic ‘clout’)?” (Koskoff 2010: 330).

²² See *Ethnomusicology Journal*, 54(2): 318-325, 2010.

Although Afro-Brazilian culture has somewhat escaped from semiotic dominance by following these fugue lines, it nevertheless has pushed Afro-Brazilians toward the margins of society. Music teaching at PVCS aims to fight such marginalization that results partly from epistemological barriers that are rooted in Western myths about Africa and Africans.

Western Myths about Africa as Epistemological Barriers

African culture and religion – in contrast to the so-called big religions, like Christianity and Islamism, have long been despised, ridiculed, and even dismissed by European scholars. It has sometimes been completely ignored or seen as unhistorical. Hegel saw African and tribal cultures generally as outside history, as ‘undeveloped spirit’, a viewpoint still implied by many historians. The well-known historian Arnold Toynbee, for instance, in *Mankind and Mother Earth* (1976), barely mentions the African continent, and it is significant that one rarely finds books on Africa in New Age bookshops. Over the past century, however, anthropological research has provided us with numerous ethnographic studies, both of specific religious traditions, exemplified by such classic studies as Evans-Pritchard’s *Nuer Religion* (1971), as well as of religious movements in Africa and their impact on social and political life. Although some African scholars have seen such ethnographic studies as biased and anachronistic, as based on a limited understanding of the local languages, and as marred by deep-rooted western prejudices, it is rather churlish to deny the pioneering intellectual efforts of such scholars as Evans-Pritchard, Fortes, and Monica Wilson. They have indeed, as Maxwell Owusu (1997) admits, provided an important scholarly legacy to Africa, even though, as social scientists, they may have got some of their social facts wrong and their interpretations may be debatable.

The peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, with a population of over 600 million, are characterized by a great diversity of religious beliefs, concepts, and ritual practices. They have long felt the impact of what is now described as “modernity,” and both Islam and Cristianity have long historical trajectories in Africa; both religions are now an intrinsic part of the religious consciousness of people in many parts of Africa. But local expressions of religion are often identified as “traditional” and there has thus arisen many books that attempt to outline what is thought to have been African traditional religion, usually seen as a “worldview” or as an “underlying cultural unity” (Mbiti 1969; Idowu 1973;²³ Zuesse 1979). These texts are often written by religiously inclined scholars and thus tend to equate African culture and thought with specific peoples’ religious cosmologies. Whether it is feasible to speak of an African philosophy or religion has long been the subject of debate, particularly among African scholars, there is a corpus of beliefs and practices that are common and widespread throughout Africa and Brazil, which, to some degree, constitute an underlying worldview. As Igor Kopytoff puts it: Sub-Saharan Africa exhibits to a striking degree “a fundamental cultural unity” (1987: 10). This viewpoint, however, has been challenged by Paulin Hountondji (1983), who considers the idea of an African religious worldview or philosophy to be a fiction, an imaginary construct of scholars eager to satisfy the western craving for exoticism. Kwame Appiah expresses a similar view, arguing that there is no cultural unity in Africa and that Africans do not share a common religious culture (Appiah 1992: 41.) Nevertheless, as Gyekye states, although there is undoubted cultural diversity within sub-Saharan Africa, “threads of underlying affinity do run through the

²³ African theologians have been at pains to demonstrate that Africans traditionally did indeed have a religion, that it was not merely “magic,” but that it had a creator God who provided for the needs of humanity. John Mbiti began his book *African Religions and Philosophy* with the words: “Africans are notoriously religious” (Mbiti 1969, 1). Bolaji Idowu of Nigeria wrote, “Africans are in all things religious” (Idowu 1962, 1-10) and even “Africans are incurably religious” (Idowu 1973).

beliefs, customs, value systems and sociopolitical institutions and practices of the various African societies” (Gyekye 1987: 192.)

The different views expounded above contribute to a clarification of epistemological barriers rooted in Western myths about Africa. Before describing the African elements that continue to influence the lives of Afro-Brazilians today, it is pertinent to discuss the effect of some these epistemological barriers in Brazilian society. Only in 2003 the Brazilian congress passed a law that mandated the formal school system to educate Brazilians about Afro-Brazilian history and culture. Within the last seven years, however, Brazilian schools still haven’t been able to accomplish this educational task because teaching Afro-Brazilian history demands teachers capable and/or trained well enough to do it. This dilemma reflects the total absence of Afro-Brazilian culture and history in formal school curricula. This situation is directly associated with epistemological barriers driven by three Western myths about Africa: (1) Africa is a-historical; (2) the African continent is “outside history,” that is, historians disregard history built solely by Africans and (3) miscegenation is the sole cause for development.

The first myth originates, as mentioned earlier, in the views of many authors of the nineteenth century, among them German philosopher Georg W. F. Hegel (1980 [1830]), who considered Africa to be an a-historical continent, characterized by the most “primitive” of natural systems, “tribal” social structures, and a lack of innovation.²⁴ The second and third myths are heavily ideological. They propose that “Africans are essentially passive and incapable of building their own history” (Oliveira 2006: 25), as if advancements of high level of social,

²⁴ In his *Course About Philosophy of History*, in 1830, Hegel declared, “Africa is not a historical part of the world. It does not have movements, progress to show, nor its own historical movements. This means, that its northern part belongs to European or Asian worlds. What we understand precisely as Africa is the a-historical spirit, the undeveloped spirit, still embedded in natural conditions, and that it must be presented here as on the threshold of world history.” In: Ki-Zerbo, J. *História da África Negra*. Ed. Biblioteca Universitária, 1980.

cultural, and political developments in Africa were solely built by people originating from the West (Phoenicians, Persians, and so on), or due to non-blacks, or not generated by them alone.²⁵

This notion about miscegenation in Africa and Brazil became not only an epistemological barrier to the understanding of Afro-Brazilian socialization, but also an ideology that suppressed effective multi-racial relations in Brazil and has helped keep Afro-Brazilians marginalized. In the case of Afro-Brazilian music, the multi-racial relations problem manifests through the dancing body of the *mulata* (*mulatto*, or mixed black and white woman), as it is discussed later in Chapter III. “Binary oppositions such as pure/impure, Negro (impure) / mulatto (mestizo) served as a powerful weapon for domination in the hands of the elite” (Oliveira 2006: 25).

Two Distinct Kinds of Slavery: African and Western

There were fundamental distinctions between slavery in Africa before and after the Islamic and European invasions. Before the invasions slaves were not forced to reject their gods, their languages, or their means of production. The slave, stresses Oliveira, “was incorporated into the clan, family, or city-state. That is, the post-conflict social hierarchy [would be reshaped as] the Patriarch, the Ancestor, the Sons, the Employees, and the Slaves” (Oliveira 2006: 26). Although in the lowest social rank, slaves participated in society rather than being marginalized.

In the European civilizing dynamics the slave was objectified in his/her existence, (...) being exploited, as it was the case in Brazil, more than an animal would be.²⁶ (...) In pre-colonial Africa, on the other hand, the slave had a different function. [As] a prisoner of war, the “slave” was integrated into the [civilizing] dynamics of the victorious ethnic

²⁵ This prejudice against black Africans was also formulated as follows: Northern Africans have history, but because of their miscegenation with the whiter skin Arabs, is an Islamized, Arabicized history, while the sub-Saharan Africans would be totally “primitive,” since their miscegenation with white people was almost non-existent (Oliveira 2006: 25).

²⁶ Because the general way of thinking among the rural elite in colonial Brazil was to consider slave labor as the “most primitive,” it was replaced by animal traction. Historical commentaries indicated that the work conditions to an ox were more favorable than to an enslaved African.

group. The slave was not [objectified] in the valorization of his or her existence (Oliveira 2006: 27).

After European and Islamic contact, however, a different approach to slavery developed. In Songhai enslaved individuals became property of the State or King. A well-built taxation system that accepted slaves as payment made the State the owner of a large contingent of slaves.

In spite of its cultural foundations staying connected to African traditions, [Africans] had to adapt to the demands of trade development, to the Arab advances, and to a more recent European oppression. [Africa] becomes a curious hybrid: on one side it loses its typical traditionalist means of production; on the other side it keeps the traditional life of its rural population. This created a dilemma that was not resolved with the fall of the Songhai Empire (Oliveira 2006: 38).

The adaptation to new circumstances while keeping tradition alive is a common characteristic in Africans and Afro-Brazilians. Such ability to adapt is a direct consequence of the dilemma of cultural clashes and it involves many aspects of culture, the arts, and socialization. As will be shown in this dissertation, music plays an important role as cultural mediator in Afro-Brazilians adaptation to new circumstances.

Faithfulness to Religious Traditions and Diversity

The African empires formed as a defense strategy and a critical response to Islamification imposed by the Berbers. The majority of the region's populations, especially the rural population, remained faithful to the traditional African religions. Whereas the Arab civilizing dynamics emphasized war, destruction, proselytism, and homogenization, African worldviews emphasized diversity, production (wealth), the logic intrinsic to each place, and the cultural values of each clan (Oliveira 2006: 27). The strengthening of Arabic military power in order to control Saharan trading routes, gold mining, and the agricultural production at Sahel encountered solid African resistance, due to the cultural idiosyncrasies of ethnic congregation, continental

solidarity, and ultimate faithfulness to their religions and to the promotion of social well being. In contemporary Afro-Brazilian culture, as it will be discussed later in this dissertation, music making plays a significant role in ethnic congregation, community solidarity, faithfulness to religions, and especially, social well being.

Assimilation through Dissimulation

Two important kinds of responses to the Arab world were, as Oliveira stresses, key to understanding African worldviews: (1) radical opposition to Islamism (by the *Soso* in Mali); and (2) superficial assimilation of Islamism (by the *Mandinka* in Ghana) (Oliveira 2006: 36). In the specific case of assimilation there was actually a strategy of dissimulation, through which the black population dresses up an Islamic coat in order to preserve their traditional religious practices. This kind of response is particularly relevant to Afro-Brazilian ethos, because a similar strategy, nowadays referred to as “syncretism,” was triggered in colonial Brazil; African slaves disguised their African religions under a coat of Catholicism, managing to keep and reshape traditional religious practices throughout nearly four centuries in order to preserve their African beliefs, which are celebrated in Candomblé rituals in contemporary Bahia.

As Oliveira puts it, an influential factor in Africans’ internal political divergences that led to the fall of the third empire was the international context at that time. The world conflict between Islam and Christianity propelled Islam to seek expansion in the region, and the Arabs took over the region of the Sudan, increasing the presence of Muslims in the African continent. On the other hand, Christians also manifested interest in the region, thus Africans had to defend their sovereignty not only against the Islamic threat at the trans-Saharan routes, but also against

the imminent arrival of the Portuguese who were advancing rather quickly from the African West Coast inward. The regional instability was caused by the international context (Oliveira 2006: 36). The fifteenth century was a century of turbulence with increasing conflicts between African ethnic groups seeking hegemony in the region until the 1500s. With regard to Afro-Brazilian culture it is important to note that in this period the trend of black African slaves increased and soon the Portuguese became prominent agents in the slave trade process, as the sugar cane business in Brazil was growing rapidly.

Plurality of Religious Conceptions

Although the Songhai saw increasing Islamification of nobility, miscegenation, and social stratification, there was no predominance or hegemony of an ethnic group. Politically speaking, the Songhai continued African traditions. The great rituals that reinforced political organization remained within African traditional religions, which were all practiced with music and dance. Even with the intensification of Islamic conversion, the elites converted only superficially. From a macro-sociological perspective, this conversion was more a political game than a religious allegiance in the strict sense (Oliveira 2006: 37). African empires were born out of a confederation of ethnic groups that represented various African cultures organized around an imperial power conducted by one single ethnic group. The important aspect here for the sake of this study is that, under an apparent ethnic unity, there was a plurality of religious conceptions. The ethnic differences coexisted and people cooperated to construct a productive social, economical, and political life.

Elements that Support African Worldviews

In the *Yoruba* cities south of the Sahel there was a constant reference to ancestry to explain the origin of their society. The leaders were chosen according to lineages, and in most cases these lineages were organized into matrilineal societies. Ampene reports, however, that the *Yoruba* constituted patrilineal societies.²⁷ Because they were diversified, African communities responded contextually to the needs and characteristics of each region, and seldom imposed a hegemonic model of socioeconomic organization. Instead, they allowed several organizational expressions to take place in the continent. This model of political organization in the African continent showed that: (1) there is a cultural hybridism between people from diverse cultural matrices; (2) African logic, facing a situation of domination, covered Islamic government institutions with a layer of traditional native religiosity; (3) ecological principles were preserved; (4) African response was creative and inclusive, since it made use of alien institutions to maintain its basic culture and the well-being of its people; (5) the creation of city-states cannot be seen as “humankind evolution,” but as a response to a specific circumstance (Oliveira 2006: 39).

Absence of Dichotomies and Dualities: Integration

One important aspect in these African cultures was the non-separation between nature and politics, religion and power; that is, there was no stratification between these important layers of societal life. All things were seen and conceived according to a principle of integration, in which several elements mutually complemented each other. For example, development was not anti-ecological; royal palaces were built in the midst of sacred forests.

²⁷ Ampene, Kwasi. Personal conversation, November 16, 2010.

Another aspect of this kind of social-religious organization is that the individual, regardless of social status, was an integral component. Initiation rites were collectively engendered, allowing for the construction of self to occur fundamentally within a religious context. Societal initiation unfolded through a process of collective construction.

The wisdom embedded in all these aspects was that sacred power emanated from nature. There was no duality between man and nature, everything was interconnected, and thus everything interacted, one was whole and the whole was one. The profane had a sacred dimension and the sacred manifested in the profane. There was no eschatology. The ancestral time was past and present times (Oliveira 2006: 39).²⁸ Accordingly, in Bahian music, both traditional and modern, sacred and profane music are intimately connected, and therefore connect contemporary Afro-Brazilians to their ancestral time.

African worldviews emphasized diversity instead of the imposition of universal models. In the case of monarchies, while political power was symbolically centralized on the *Obá* (king) and on the villages' chiefs, in actuality power was somewhat decentralized. Power was divided among various ethnic groups, which abided by a predominant group, with the intent of exercising power more efficiently. There was no domination through elimination, but hegemony through competence. What prevailed was the promotion of otherness (Oliveira 2006: 41). The *Ibós*, for instance, organized themselves around the villages, coordinating the policy of housing and land occupation. This gave villages autonomy, since there was no centralized power ruling over that aspect.

²⁸ When I presented my dissertation proposal, one of my mentors, Ghanaian Professor Kwasi Ampene, clearly stressed that there were no dichotomies in African cosmology.

African political organizations and urbanization strategies were highly developed. When the Portuguese arrived in Benin in the 1500s, they declared being surprised by the “superiority” demonstrated by African urban centers. However, a significant portion of Africans political structures and economic development was dismantled by the subsequent three centuries of slave trading. Oliveira points out that it wasn’t the State-like societies that offered the strongest resistance to colonization, but the nomadic organizations instead. This is a reminder to avoid overvaluing one single model of political organization, such as the State, and to pay attention to the potentiality of other forms of power structures. Oliveira refutes the evolutionist thought that claims that human development happened linearly – from nomadic societies, considered primitive, to State societies, considered advanced. He stresses the coexistence of different political models with the intent to demonstrate how African worldviews promote diversity and singularity of experiences without ratifying evolutionism, but instead valuing the intrinsic modes of each political organization in the context of the cultural logic of each group (Oliveira 2006: 41).

Social and Cosmological Pillars of African Societies

The brief historical overview above shows that, prior to European invasion Africans were developing and experiencing their cultures relatively autonomously, despite various outside influences and internal frictions. The next step is to identify some social and cosmological elements that functioned as structural agents of African societies. These elements are crucial to this study, because they not only reveal links between different African societies and cultures, but they have survived and have been rediscovered and reinvented especially through music

making after Africans crossed the Atlantic. These are the elements that comprise an African ethos that, in spite of historical ruptures and changes, continues to structure the contemporary life of Africans and of Afro-Brazilians. It is important to note that only elements that are related to the PVCS mission of rescuing Afro-Brazilian culture through music are included here. Several other elements, equally important in African societies, are not discussed because they are less evident in contemporary Afro-Brazilian culture. With regard to African religious conceptions and practices, according to Brian Morris (1987) there are five elements or components that go into the making of African religion: “a belief in god, cults associated with various divinities or nature spirits, rituals and beliefs focused around ancestral spirits, a belief in magic and efficacy of medicines, and the fear of witchcraft” (Morris 1987: 149).

God

A central aspect of African worldview was the idea of god, which was invariably linked to the sky, and associated with such phenomena as lightning, rainfall, and thunder. As Mbiti puts it, “practically all African peoples associate God with the sky, on one way or another” (1969: 33). Therefore, god is often seen as a transcendental being, remote from daily life, and is not usually associated with specific rituals. On the other hand, god is also seen as immanent, or manifested in natural objects or phenomena. Thus African scholars suggest that god is conceived both as a pervasive presence, a real being immanent in the world, and as a spirit somewhat remote from human affairs. Although conceived of as essentially an anthropomorphic being, Mbiti affirms that as far as is known, “there are no images or physical representations of God by African peoples” (1970: 23). But the attributes and manifestations associated with the divinity – as creator, guardian or protector, moral adjudicator, and so on – are extremely variable among

African peoples. Yet there is a general sense in which people's relationship with god is, as Mbiti writes, "pragmatic and utilitarian rather than spiritual or mystical" (1969: 5). Incidentally, African conceptions of deity have been variously interpreted: as a form of pantheism (Mazrui 1986), deism (Kalilombe 1995), and monotheism (Idowu 1973).²⁹

Divinities

Although not universal, African religious conceptions invariably entail, as with the Greeks, a belief in a variety of divinities or spirits associated with specific natural phenomena, and often with clearly defined functions. They are often contacted through spirit-mediums and may be the focus of elaborate cult rituals. (Morris 1987: 150). The Ashanti for example, have a pantheon of spirits, known as *abosum*, which are thought to derive their powers from god and are usually associated with lakes and rivers. Many of these divinities have wide significance, and elaborate rituals are held on their behalf. A priest or priestess acts as a medium for the spirit, and the spirits' help is sought to cope with misfortunes and afflictions (Gyekye 1987: 73-74).

Ancestral Spirits

Throughout Africa, cults and rituals associated with ancestral spirits or spirits of the dead play an important role in the social and cultural life of local communities. Contacted through dreams or rituals, the ancestral spirits are intimately concerned with the health and well being of their living kin and centrally involved in upholding the moral order. Following Monica Wilson, African people generally have a "very lively sense of the presence of the dead," to which regular offerings are made (Wilson 1971: 29). To express this intimacy Wilson refers to the spirits as

²⁹ For further reading on conceptions of god in Africa, see Danquah 1944; Idowu 1962; Daneel 1970; Mbiti 1970.

“shades”; Mbiti as the “living-dead” (1969: 83). Although of crucial importance, the cults of the ancestors do not constitute African religion per se, nor do people “worship” their ancestors in any meaningful sense. What is clearly evident, however, is that African people tend to make a clear distinction among the deity, divinities, and the ancestral spirits.

African Conceptions of the Universe: The Visible and the Invisible

According to Brazilian anthropologist Ronilda Ribeiro (1996), for Africans “the visible constitutes a manifestation of the invisible. Reality, meaning, and the being that manifests through the appearances can all be found beyond appearances as well” (Ribeiro 1996: 39). The universe is “pregnant” with sacredness, and what is unseen is as much a part of the universe as what is revealed. In African worldview all things and events, either visible or concealed, equally compose the universe. Africans interpret the universe as a multiplicity of correspondences, analogies and interactions between man and all the other beings that compose this totality (Oliveira 2006: 42). Ribeiro claims that the African universe is synchronic and non-linear. Through a cross-cultural comparison, the anthropologist affirms that Western thought is linear because it separates the subjective from the objective, believes in evolutionary lines, and bases its rationale on the principle of causality. Africans, on the contrary, base their thinking in synchronicity, which carries “a peculiar interdependence between objective, as well as between subjective (psychic) events in the observer or observers’ minds” (Jung 1987 [1970]).

Ribeiro refers to the African universe as an immense spider web that follows fundamental ecological principles. “We cannot touch the smallest of its elements without causing vibrations on the whole web. Everything is connected to everything else; every part is connected to the whole. All contribute to form a unity” (Ribeiro 1996: 41). This fundamental unity emphasizes

careful respect for ecology and the well being of people. The natural environment and social well being are in harmony with the unified vision of the universe. “Everything is in all. Everything participates in all. Everything influences all. The whole is each one of its parts, and each part participates in the whole, and *is* the whole. The whole is the unity of all parts. All differences are respected” (Oliveira 2006: 44). Africans take into consideration the whole set of things, the universe in which they participate and on which they depend. African synchronic thinking constructs the universe as a spider web, in which all objective and subjective events are interconnected. According to Ribeiro, the totality of these events corresponds to the conception of universe in African tradition. Rather than a dichotomy, the profane and the sacred compose a unity. The sacred, in fact, permeates all spaces of the African universe. With its vital force the sacred impregnates all spheres of community life of black Africans, as well as Afro-descendants in the Diaspora. In Africa, however, the sacred emanates from ancestry. Ancestry, thus, is in the core conception of the universe. As the universe interconnects all things, ancestry permeates all beings that compose the universe. Ancestry is an expression of the sacred, which manifests itself through a “vital force.”

Vital Force

The vital force is one of the most important categories that structure the African worldview because it is interpreted as the primordial source of energy that engenders the natural order of the universe, and behaves according to each specific African society. According to Fábio Leite (1984), “The divine origin of the vital force and the awareness of the possibility of its participation in the historical practices explain the notable importance that is attributed to it,

and even the sacralization of various spheres in which it manifests itself” (Leite 1984: 34). The vital force encompasses not only the relationship of man with nature, but also between all beings.

The vital force has been associated with the *Bantu*, but its importance is also recognized in West African and East African cultures.³⁰ Leite researched the vital force among the *Agni*, of the *Akan* group, and the *Senufos*, two agrarian cultures in West Africa, in a region now populated by the *Yoruba*, from whom a large portion of Afro-Brazilians descend. According to Leite, the vital force “refers to that energy inherent in all beings, which configures the ‘power of being’ or ‘being power,’ with no separation between the two instances, which in this way constitute one single reality” (Leite 1984: 34). The vital force mediates the relationships between man and nature, man and the supernatural, and social relationships as well.

The vital force existed *before* the world was created, thus it can be referred to as “the preexistent.” Africans believed that “the preexistent created the world,” reports Leite. As it creates it, the preexistent injects the world with its sacredness, the vital force. Consequently, each created being becomes a holder of the vital force, and must carry it throughout its individualized life (Leite 1984: 46). The vital force connects all elements of the universe. In this conception there is no dichotomy between spirit and matter, sacred and profane. As the sacred permeates all spaces of African life, this force is not exclusively physical or corporeal, but a force of the total being. Its expression includes also material progress and social prestige. But how do Africans acknowledge the manifestation of this force’s vitality? Through the “word,” states Oliveira.

³⁰ About the Vital Force among the *Bantu*, see Tempels (1949).

The Word

The word often appears in African cosmology as fundamental in the creation of the world and carries the force that animates and vitalizes the world. Thus man, as he is created, receives the vital force and the power of the word, which are equivalent, since the word is conceived as energy capable of generating things (Oliveira 2006: 47). Since African cultures are essentially oral, in most cases “word” implies the “spoken word,” as in storytelling, or the “sung word,” as it is articulated in incantations. In this way, “the tripartite ‘vital force-word-breath’ is a constitutive element of personality that fully emerges when man creates language and exteriorizes it through the voice” (Leite 1984: 36-37).

“Breath,” or “breathing,” is seen as a form of manifestation of the word, especially when Africans place themselves in the context of the primordial factors of creation, and consequently, of viability and multiplication of life.³¹ Therefore, “since the word carries a parcel of the vitality of the preexistent, it is necessarily a force inherent to the total personality, thus its usage must be carefully guided, because once some of this force is emitted, it detaches itself from man and reintegrates itself into nature” (Leite 1984: 37). The uses of the word in contemporary Afro-Brazilian musical expressions are distinct in sacred and profane contexts; these distinctions reflect criteria based on careful guidance. Besides being an expression of the preexistent, the word is intimately connected to history, which unfolds through the transmission of knowledge. That is the case, for instance, for the specialists in transformations (blacksmiths and sewing artists), the manifestations of spiritual life (ancestral cults and divinities), the specific domain of

³¹ Pierre Verger books on African mythology are filled with events about the creation of beings and things through the breath of a deity onto or into another element of nature.

the word (traditional historians), and the explanations of certain realities (esoteric knowledge, divinations).

The word has divine origin, but as Leite points out, it is significantly related to human activities, and cannot be only considered as a source of knowledge. The word is an instrument of knowledge, but “its vital character grants itself the status of manifested power of creation as a whole, transmitting vitality and unraveling interdependences” (Leite 1984: 38). The word functions as the creator of the universe, expression of the vital force, and organizer of the political sphere, as much as in relation to the community as in relation to the family. It generates and moves energy, which demonstrates its power of transformation. It constitutes any activity in time, be it sacred or profane. It is the primordial energy that supports life. (Oliveira 2006: 48). The African universe correlates the sacred and the profane, the world of the living and the world of the dead. They are interdependent, as everything else. The world of man and the world of ancestors exist, each in its own time, but they are related. How is “time” conceived in African worldview?

African Conception of Time

As opposed to modern societies, which are future-oriented, traditional African societies are past-oriented. According to Ribeiro, the African conception of time is bi-dimensional, that is, is “constituted by the present, a long past, and a virtual absence of future” (Ribeiro 1996: 50). This means that Africans place more emphasis on the past than on the future. The answers for the mysteries of the present time lie on the past, because the past holds the ancestors’ wisdom. “It is only in the past that the African finds his/her identity” (Oliveira, 2006: 48). The conception of

time in African worldview is dynamic and susceptible to reformulations and changes. Tradition is continuously reshaped and actualized. The “voice” of the past is heard and deserves full attention, but always with the intent to guide and organize the present. To the African, “the treadmill of time moves more backward than forward” (Ribeiro 1996: 50). The African conception of time is also explained by the research done by J. S. Mbiti (1969), who uses two concepts constructed according to Swahili vocabulary: *Sasa* and *Zamani*.

Sasa constitutes a complete dimension of time, including a near future, a dynamic present, and an already lived past. *Sasa* encompasses the time lived by the individual and the community. It is the most significant period for the person; it is the time of now and mainly the time already spent in the individual’s lifetime. *Sasa* only ceases when the person is completely forgotten by the subsequent generations. At this point in time, the person enters the *Zamani* dimension of time. *Zamani* is the mythological time, in which both present and future are included. The cosmological myths belong to *Zamani* time. *Zamani* holds the explanation for the things that are happening now (1969: 53).

According to Ribeiro there is nothing in traditional African mythology that narrates the end of the world. “To the African, the end of the world is unthinkable, because the end of time is unthinkable. The idea about the future is generally restricted to a few days following the present day or, at the most, to the following months” (Ribeiro 1996: 56-57). This statement is corroborated by the fact that *Griots*, as reported by T. Obenga (1982), “rarely work with a chronological thread. They are more interested in man caught in his existence, as a holder of values, and acting in nature in a timeless way” (1982: 91-104). *Griots*, who hold highly regarded positions in several African cultures, narrate history less focused on time periodicity and linearity and more attentive to events experienced in their communities.

Mythic time is actualized in rituals, where mythological heroes indicate behaviors and attitudes that must be incorporated according to each specific real life situation. “Africans find in myths the meaning of life, and the appropriate actions to take when facing mysteries of life.

Sacred time enlightens profane time. The difference between sacred space and profane space lies precisely in rituals and initiation rites, which transmute profane time into sacred time. But let us remember that both belong to the same space, unlike, for instance Christian rituals, where secular and sacred spaces are separate; the church is the house of God. In African traditional communities the space used for sacred and profane times is the same. As Ribeiro indicates, “time is only one, however sustaining in its unity its different manifestations. *Sasa* and *Zamani*, in fact, are complementary dimensions of time” (Ribeiro 1996: 51).

African time, like the African universe, is impregnated with ancestry. The same ancestry that permeates all beings on the planet (African universe) inhabits the mythological past and the present time. Just as the invisible and the visible are not separate in the *Yoruba* conception of universe, the time of the dead is not separate from the time of the living. The ancestors regulate the lives of their descendants. To their descendants they deliver their life force, and the knowledge preserved by tradition is then transmitted through the word.

The Self and Socialization

According to Ribeiro, the African notion of self is understood as the product of the articulation of strictly individual inherited and symbolic elements. “The inherited elements situate the self within the family and clan lineages, while the symbolic elements place it in the cosmic, mythic, and social contexts” (Ribeiro 1996: 44). Thus the study of the self cannot be dissociated from the study of institutions and the modes of social organization that support individual life. That is, it is impossible to dichotomize self (individual) and society (collective). Indeed, the self is singular, but even the singularity that it characterizes is forged within the

collectivity, within the social environment. According to Ribeiro, “material components plus other immaterial, intangible, and invisible components blend with the transcendental, intangible, and invisible self to form a tangible and visible body” (Ribeiro 1996: 44).

According to *Yoruba* tradition, the physical body (the visible representation of the spiritual essence), the heart (the vital principle), and the breath (not only the corporeal breath, but also the divine breath) constitute the real essence of self, that is, the human being. According to Marco Aurélio Luz (1995), when one refers to the conception of self in *Nagô* cosmology, each element that constitutes the *ara-ayiê* (living being) is the result of “matter detachments from the *orixás* (mythic ancestors) and deceased relatives, from which was extracted the *egun-ipori*, the substance that molds the self” (Luz 1995: 57). The self emanates from both divine and natural forces. Its essence is connected equally to divinity and nature, in such a way that it cannot exist in one or the other separately. Thus the self is the synthesis of all beings that compose the universe, the expression of *Obatalá*’s will, and it cannot, therefore, be understood as an individual entity. The self is the result of collective action. As Ribeiro stresses, self and collectivity cannot be separated, one’s identity is forged within social threads. While the self is the result of the interaction between the sacred and nature, the identity is constructed within the social environment.

Among Africans, “socialization” is the process of formation of individuals and their personalities, according to conventions that are traditionally established in their societies. “The formation of personality in the Black African civilizations is the responsibility of society as a whole” (Leite 1984: 42.) Initiation rites involve all members of the community. The preparation of the individual to live in the social environment is a task embraced collectively and it follows ancestral rules. It is the ancestry’s logic that orients the socialization of individuals (Oliveira

2006: 55). These initiation rites, rooted in ancient time introduce living individuals into the core of their communities.

Death

Funeral rites remind Africans of the elements that extrapolate death itself, that is, the entrance of the deceased individual into the sacred realm in the core of his/her family's ancestral home. The entire society participates in funeral rites, not only the family of the deceased. The entire community witnesses the redistribution of the vital energy released from the person, who died before the natural elements, like the dirt that will embrace his/her body. The vitality of the deceased is transferred to the natural elements that will contribute to community life. Death presents itself essentially as a factor of disequilibrium, because it promotes "the dissolution of the vital force, which contained all the constitutive elements of the human being, whose living status configures the visible existence" (Leite 1984: 43).

Death permeates the most important spheres of African life. It encompasses the conception of being human and the need to continue the most important social roles, like the chiefs of clans and political governments. Once death strikes, the community's balance is challenged, since the deceased individuals synthesize the historical actions of the group. At this moment funeral rites become crucially important, as they help communities to quickly reorganize themselves, reestablishing social equilibrium (Oliveira 2006: 56).

Funeral rites act not only upon the psychological dimension, but also on society's capacity to gain control of the disorder caused by death, and allow continuity of life through "constructing ancestry, and placing human immortality precisely in a vital relationship with the

social group” (Leite 1984: 44). Funerals are, at the same time, rites of passage and permanence. They transform the dead into an ancestral being; this is a rite of permanence, because human life, not the vital force, was undone. The vital force returns to the community to support it. This way, death is seen more as a gain than a loss. The community loses a member, but gains his/her vital force. The vital force that previously inhabited the body of the deceased now resides in the lineage of his or her family.

Family

In Africa, “family” means extended family. Families are organized through matrilineal or patrilineal lineages. In the case of matrilineal lineages, which are the majority in Africa, it is common to find in the core of families the ancestral women who generated them. It is due to this familial configuration that rights and duties are institutionalized and transmitted from mother to daughter, sister to sister, aunt to niece, and in the case of males, from brother to brother, uncle to nephew (Leite 1984: 45). This model of group organization is based on blood relationships and confers high authority to women. The mother is the pivot of familial organization; it is through her lineage that power and responsibility are transmitted. This model also applies to society as a whole. Government and administration of interests, material or spiritual, of all members of the community will necessarily pass through matrilineal lineages. “Family is the privileged *locus* for Africans to experience their culture. Their divinities, as well as their subsistence, are born from it. Family is the primeval nucleus of society” (Leite 1984: 45). The rites, in turn, reflect the organizational singularity of each group; ethnic identity, for instance, is defined in the *útero*

(womb) of society (family). The *útero* generates both spiritual and material life through what the Western world calls “production.”

Production

In traditional African societies the production of anything is understood as being much more than a mere material task. Production is intimately connected with the sacred conception of the world, the main feature in African worldviews, and for that reason the guiding principle for production emanates from ancestry as well. In Africa production processes are essentially based on sufficiency destined to fulfill vital and specific community needs. There is no intent in producing more than the necessary to live, thus there are no exceeding articles, nor building of extra reserves (surplus). That explains why traditional Africans did not follow the Western principle of accumulation. The communal nature of production is formulated as a decisive element of social reality. Land is the principal element of production, it is considered “like a divinity, and its fertility seen as a gift from the preexistent” (Leite 1984: 46). Because of its divine character received from the sacred vital energy, man cannot own the land; he can only occupy it. Thus it is typical in African societies that land is not really owned by individuals and there is a duty to transfer it to future generations.

The African Soul

Africans perceive the human soul as holistic, inseparable from the rest of the universe. Baldwin defines African psychology as “a system of knowledge (philosophy, definitions, concepts, models, procedures, and practice) concerning the nature of the social universe from the

perspective of African cosmology.” It is clear, therefore, that African psychology is the interweaving of all human processes, from the individual’s spirit, mind, body, behavior, and genetics to socio-political issues, and to interaction with nature, God, and the whole universe. African cultures arise out of the belief in the interconnectedness of humanity with the environment and with past generations. African communities are undergirded by a worldview that is “ecosystemic at heart [with] no division between the animate and the inanimate, between spirit and matter, between living and non-living. Everything is in constant relationship with one another [as well as with] the invisible world.” Essentially, African cultures have a holistic perspective on life and community, with an interdependent, inseparable human-nature relationship. Africans seek balance and harmony among the various aspects of the universe. The survival of the family and the community is more important than individual fulfillment. Spirituality, communal responsibility, and cooperation are some of the most basic African values.

Numerous core values, cultural themes and patterns of cultural adaptation unique to Africans have been presented in this chapter, as identified in the writings of selected African and Afro-Brazilian scholars. Most of the writers effectively argue that there is a widespread pattern of social and cultural mal-adaptation within African societies evidenced by continuing national under-achievement and less than optimal regional socioeconomic integration. The majority of the writers regard this under-achievement as a post-colonial legacy, the result of ongoing external interference, and a now endemic and intense African admiration of Western culture over African culture. The African scholars’ prescriptions for Africa's future focus on economic independence through educational processes that combine Western techno-economic theory and practice with the best of African socio-cultural traditions. Overall, the efforts of the African scholars examined

in this chapter are significant and provocative contributions to understanding Africa and its peoples. However, their works, excluding Gyekye (1988), are not clearly or consistently tied to ethnographic and historical data. This omission weakens their insights and arguments.

From African Worldviews to Afro-Brazilian Culture

The brief historical investigation presented above serves as a background to a culturally informed comprehension of African worldviews. They elicit a deeper understanding of the roots of Afro-Brazilian culture as the Afro-Brazilian way of seeing the world, life and reality originate from these worldviews. These elements will also inform the later discussion about the rescuing of Afro-Brazilian culture engendered by PVCS. In order to understand the role of music within contemporary Afro-Brazilian culture, the next chapter will discuss two main aspects related to the manifestation of such roots in contemporary Brazilian society: (1) the definition of Afro-Brazilian culture according to scholars, and (2) how African-Brazilian communities see themselves and interpret their world through their festivals and their religiosity.

CHAPTER III

AFRO-BRAZILIAN HYBRID CULTURE

Afro-Brazilians are neither fully African nor fully Western. When Africans were brought to live in a Westernized society dominated by Portuguese, the interaction between African and European worldviews generated a unique intercultural relationship. Colonization processes, slavery, and cultural clashes built barriers to communication between two major groups of people who have been constructing Brazilian society; black Africans (slaves) and Afro-Brazilians on one side, and other groups of European descent on the other.³² These cultural clashes are relevant to the discussion of African roots in Brazil as this dialectical relationship constitutes the essence of an Afro-Brazilian ethos, a new cultural entity that goes far beyond a pure sense of “cultural hybridism” aforementioned by Oliveira. In this chapter I will show how music has long played a mediating role between African and Brazilian cultures.

³² Indigenous groups played a significant role in the cultural clashes, but mostly during the first years of colonization. During that period, the majority of these groups were either exterminated or fled inland toward the jungle. The Portuguese acculturated a relatively small number of Amerindians, and indigenous influence in the construction of Brazilian society played a relatively minor role, in comparison to Africans. Around 1530, the Portuguese began to bring African slaves -- *Yoruba* from present day Benin and *Bantu* from present day Congo and Angola -- into colonial Brazil, constituting the largest importer of African slaves in the history of the Americas. The slave trade continued until nearly the beginning of the Twentieth Century, and thus the role played by Africans and their descendants in the cultural clashes has been the most significant one.

Adaptation to Circumstances: Integration

I argue in Chapter II that in order to understand Afro-Brazilian culture and to construct knowledge about Brazilians and Afro-Brazilians it is necessary to reexamine Brazilian history through the lens of the African legacy. The African inheritance significantly changes the discussion about Brazilian identity. Ontologically neglected in any part of the world, African cultures were labeled as underdeveloped, animists, folkloric, barbarian, primitive. These labels are evidence of the prejudice that was historically directed towards Afro-Brazilians. In Brazil, as Oliveira indicates, “the whitening theory, the ideological advocacy for racial democracy, the hindering of the unfavorable reality to the Afro-descendants denote the fallacy of harmonious racial coexistence and the absence of racism in Brazilian territory. (...) It would be a mistake to know Brazil without knowing the history of its Afro-descendants” (Oliveira 2006: 18). Therefore, I will discuss some aspects of Afro-Brazilian history.

Afro-Brazilians adaptation to circumstances has a long history in Brazil. As Muniz Sodré (1998) puts it, historical records show that since the beginning of the 1800s in Bahia slaves were frequently dancing and playing loud and “dissonant” *batuques* throughout town; “in the festivals and parties [Afro-Brazilians] took over the dance space, interrupting any other rhythm or singing” (Sodré 1998: 12). However, as Afro-Brazilians increased their presence in Bahia’s urban society through *crioulização* (creolization) or *mestiçagem* (racial mixture), they were forced to use new strategies of preservation and continuity of their expressive culture.

The *batuques* were modified, either to be incorporated into the folk festivals of European origin, or to adapt to urban life. African music and dance transformed themselves, losing some elements and acquiring others, to adapt to the social environment. This way, since the second half of the nineteenth century began to appear in Rio de Janeiro, headquarters of the Imperial Court, traces of a Brazilian urban music – *modinha*, *maxixe*, *lundu*, and *samba* (Sodré 1998: 13).

As Ricardo Albin (2003) observes, “consolidation of Brazilian popular music constitutes a phenomenon that is contemporaneous to the birth of the cities” (Albin 2003: 22). An essential factor in the birth and growth of Brazilian cities was the migration of former slaves from rural to urban areas, after the plantation business declined. At the end of the nineteenth century the socioeconomic marginalization of Afro-Brazilians was already evident; the systematic exclusion of Black individuals from schools and factories became an obstacle to joining the workforce in an increasingly industrialized urban society. Such exclusion wasn’t purely technological, but also cultural; “customs, behavioral models, religion, and even skin color were signified as negative *handicaps* by the socialization process of the industrial capital” (Sodré 1998: 14).

Afro-Brazilian adaptation to circumstances was exemplified by the dance places of nineteenth century Brazil’s society. One of these places, for instance, was the residence of a famous *mulata*, known as *Tia Ciata*, located in Rio de Janeiro. *Casa da Tia Ciata* (Aunt Ciata’s House), according to Sodré, symbolizes the Afro-Brazilian strategy of musical resistance to marginalization.

[*Tia Ciata*] was a well-respected *babalaô-mirim*, and her house symbolized the musical resistance to the curtain of marginalization lifted against the Afro-Brazilians after Abolition. According to some of its oldest frequent guests, the house had six rooms, a hall, and a *terreiro* (backyard). In the front room they would dance ballroom genres (polkas, lundus, etc.); in the back rooms, samba *partido-alto* or samba-*raiado*; in the *terreiro*, batucada (Sodré 1998: 15).

This account also explains the gradual split between religious and secular manifestations of music and dance. While in Africa there was no separation between sacred and secular music, in Brazil they began to be practiced in different spaces, in order to survive in the new culture. As in the entire history of Afro-Brazilians, white authorities often persecuted both their social and religious meetings. However, resistance was cleverly and solidly implanted in strategically less vulnerable places like *Casa da Tia Ciata*. Her house’s spatial distribution represents a metaphor

for the resistance posture adopted by the Afro-Brazilian community. The house contained the elements that were ideologically necessary to mediate acceptable contact with the whole society.

Tia Ciata was married to a black medical doctor. Because the couple's residence held a "respectable" social status, due to her husband's high status profession alongside her lighter skin color, *Tia Ciata* was granted greater social inclusion. Having greater access to society allowed her to mediate prejudice and cultural clashes. In the dance parties that happened in the front room, they played well known and more "respectable" music (waltzes, polkas, mazurkas); in the back rooms and backyard they played sambas for the black elite to dance *ginga* and *sapateado*, and also batucada with religious content for the older Afro-Brazilians (Sodré 1998: 15). The front room's activities clearly served as protective shields, or as "cultural *biombos*,"³³ as Sodré puts it. This way, even though in the back of the property, the Afro-Brazilian religious practices could take place within an upper class neighborhood without being considered a "threat" to society. This configuration also reflected the hierarchy of socially accepted practices; while in the front rooms the music was more acculturated, in the back the music was more closely associated with its African roots.

The semiotic structure of the house, that is, its special distribution and strategic functions, turned it into a dynamic field of rearranged elements of African traditional culture. This configuration generated meanings that constructed a new mode of insertion for Afro-Brazilians in the urban society. Therefore, samba no longer was a mere musical expression of a marginalized social group, but an effective weapon for the affirmation of black ethnicity in the framework of Brazilian urban life (Sodré 1998: 15-16).

Additionally, the *mulata* (*mulatto*, or mixed black and white woman) is a symbol of greater acceptance of African roots in Brazilian society. Brazilian social historian Gilberto Freyre (1986[1933]) discussed the special place of the slave woman in the sexual life in colonial

³³ According to Merriam-Webster dictionary: "Biombo" means folding screen, room divider.

Brazil, both as the masters' mistress and the sexual initiator for their white sons. *Mulatto* individuals originated from these relationships. Freyre exposes a key factor of class relations in Brazil, where the links between color and class are particularly clear:

With reference to Brazil, as an old saying has it: "White woman for marriage, mulatto woman for f -----, Negro woman for work," a saying in which, alongside the social convention of the superiority of the white woman and the inferiority of the black, is to be discerned a sexual preference for the mulatto (Freyre 1986[1933]).

Freyre's work has generated scholarly debates and disagreement, because it has been interpreted as proposing an easygoing and humanized relationship between masters and slaves. While I reject the proposal of Brazil's version of slavery as "soft,"³⁴ I have to agree that certain peculiarities, which reveal profound ambiguities within these relationships, still play a stigmatizing role in contemporary Brazilian society. Afro-Brazilian musical resistance through adaptation to circumstances has been strongly informed by this social convention. The *mulata* is also an iconic metaphor for the mediation qualities of music in Brazilian society. It manifests largely through a sexual connotation, and that is how Afro-Brazilian music reaches a higher level of social inclusion. Through the lens of the dominant system, the *mulata* is a desirable lover, but she is not sought as a wife. Analogically, in the eyes of the Brazilian dominant classes, Afro-Brazilian music, although highly sensual and desirable, remains in the "out of wedlock" status in Brazilian society.

In Brazil the cultural elements that remained purely African or too closely associated with slavery were denigrated. As Donna Goldstein (2003) points out,

Despite the economic legacy of slavery, poverty in Brazil is conceptualized as a class problem rather than a race problem. (...) In spite of the absorption of some elements, which sometimes legitimated and elevated previously denigrated African traditions,

³⁴ See Harris (1964), chap. 6, "The Myth of the Friendly Master," in which he rejects Tannenbaum's (1947) notion that slavery was "soft" in Brazil.

blackness – dark skin color and African racial features – continue to be associated with slavery and are considered ugly (Godstein 2003: 105).

Afro-Brazilians had greater chances of participating in Brazilian society when they absorbed structural elements of socialization configured by Portuguese tradition, for instance the town central square. Known as the *praça*, the public square has been an important space in the process of social inclusion of Afro-Brazilians. There was a striking resemblance between the Brazilian *praça* and the New Orleans Congo Square. Both clearly reflected African cosmologies with regards to land occupation and socialization. The public square constituted intersections, which provided relational supports. The *praça* was a place for meeting and communication between different individuals. “It was a space with flexible boundaries, where the territory (land) was collectively owned – as opposed to the rigid differential system characteristic of the European space” (Sodré 1998: 17). To the Portuguese colonizers, the *praça* was the principal urban unit. It was the place not only for important community events – political, economic, festive -- but also the space to meet people at night to walk, flirt, and to demonstrate musical abilities. “It is understood, this way, how former slaves could use it as a convergence center for their socialization movements” (Sodré 1998: 17).

Problems Defining Afro-Brazilian Culture

Can Afro-Brazilian culture be defined? If so, what elements can be used to construct such a definition, since culture is a complex universe made up of various human dimensions and various influences? A review of the literature on the subject reveals an essentially problematic issue with regards to establishing common views about Afro-Brazilian culture through the lens of music making. Part of the problem originates in the aforementioned epistemological barriers.

When something African-derived emerged as part of Afro-Brazilian tradition, it was eventually adopted and absorbed into the broader definition of Brazilian identity (Ortiz 1986). That kind of absorption contributed to dissipating the African or *Afro* character of Brazilian music. Many Afro-Brazilian religious traditions, especially *Umbanda*, which is sometimes referred to as the national religion of Brazil, as well as musical traditions such as samba, provide examples of this kind of appropriation and de-Africanization.

Another part of the definition problem has to do with how academia in Brazil has treated the spontaneity and informality of folk and popular music making. This is related to yet another problem; because most Afro-Brazilians are socially marginalized (in more radical terms, socially excluded), their voices and/or discourses have not been heard or understood by scholars. The questions of miscegenation explained in Chapter II play a fundamental role in the discussion about the worldview that emanates from the African matrix in Brazil, because stigmatized Afro-Brazilian identities permeate the entire history of Afro-Brazilians, and academia has followed this historical trend. As a non-hegemonic tradition, Afro-Brazilian culture and many styles of Afro-Brazilian music have been neglected in the field of ethnomusicology in Brazil.

Such neglect and/or stigma is largely caused by the (not uncommon) tendency Brazilians in general have to associate crime, violence, and drug trafficking with Afro-Brazilians, because the majority of Afro-Brazilians are uneducated and live in extreme poverty. The logic behind this assumption is that most of these social problems occur in poverty-stricken areas that are considered dangerous and largely populated by Afro-Brazilians. Whether this assumption configures a myth or not, the fact of the matter is that it plays a significant role in the Brazilian way of being, and it is directly related to the epistemological barriers discussed in Chapter II.

Afro-Brazilian culture is seen as “popular” culture and as such, treated as a manifestation “outside” the “official” culture. As Donna Goldstein (2003) puts it,

Brazilian anthropologist Roberto da Matta (1994), writing on the characteristics of popular culture in Brazil, relates popular culture to that which is not official culture, to what is often referred to in Brazil as *o povo*, a word that can invoke everything from the folk or the people to the majority or masses of the population belonging to the subordinate classes. While it was once common to link that elite culture always moved downward toward the masses and that the masses merely mimicked the elite, there is now greater interest in tracing the effects of elite and popular culture on one another (Goldstein 2003: 11).

Goldstein and Da Matta are referring to the notion of circularity, an idea that refers to the interactions between popular and elite cultures. Mikhail Bakhtin (1984[1965]) describes circularity as a “grotesque realism” that has been difficult for historians to capture:

We cannot understand cultural and literary life and the struggle of mankind’s past if we ignore that peculiar folk [culture] that always existed and was never merged with the official culture of the ruling classes. While analyzing past ages we are too often obliged (...) to believe its official ideologists. We do not hear the voice of the people and cannot find and decipher its pure unmixed expression (Bakhtin 1984[1965]: 474).

From the point of view of official culture these popular aesthetic forms – including those of the *o povo* in the Brazilian context – represent a form of “bad taste” and, because of that distinction, are more difficult to read as part of the official history. Popular aesthetic forms in Brazil lack what John Kaemmer would describe as “legitimacy” (Kaemmer 1993: 66).

The “Brazil is Different” Refrain

“Brazil is different” not only is the popular Brazilian view but also seems to be the refrain of many contemporary scholarly analyses that deal with race relations. This claim is especially true for many scholars who are cautious about the kinds of comparison they make between Brazil and the United States. Nonetheless, although racism is not sanctioned in Brazil, the

structures of racism are present in everyday experiences. Race is a problematic issue in scholarly work in Brazil, and because Afro-Brazilian culture is intimately connected with the issue of race, it also becomes problematic. The issue of race, in turn, affects the discussion on sexuality, as demonstrated by the abovementioned views of Gilberto Freyre. After Freyre, states Goldstein,

The coupling of race and sexuality all but disappeared from scholarly work concerning sexuality, as if the topics taken together are just too difficult to address. Even though in the last twenty years there has been much groundbreaking work on sexuality in Brazil, discussions of race are conspicuously absent from this scholarship (Goldstein 2003: 120).

In his revised preface to *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (1993[1974]), Thomas Skidmore declares, “Brazilian scholars, especially from the established academic institutions, continue for the most part to avoid the subject of race, in virtually all its aspects, at least for the twentieth century. Indeed, Brazilians often regard non-Brazilians who pursue the subject as having misunderstood it” (Skidmore 1993: xi). If race alone, and thus the Afro-Brazilian culture, is a troublesome topic, it is because of the ambiguities involved in the sexualization of racialized bodies.

Problematic Representations of Black Bodies

Key problems related to the Afro-Brazilian body, which in Brazil has been interpreted and/or discussed through stereotyped forms like Brazilian images of Black women, particularly the representation of the sexually “hot” *mulata*, have largely remained unexamined, particularly in the space of Afro-Brazilian popular culture. While scholarly writings surely had addressed these images, the mainstream usage of the term has become problematic. As Goldstein points out,

Few Brazilians can see themselves as racist in a highly conventionalized political economy of interracial desire. Mixed-race or black women (or idealized representations of such women) with certain “whitened” characteristics are appreciated for their beauty and sensuality, while the majority of low-income mixed-race and black women are barred from economic and social mobility. They are trapped at the bottom of several hierarchies at once – including that of race/color and class, even while they are exalted as hot, sexual *mulatas*. The construction of colonial “desire” in Brazil was between landowners and their female slaves. Black and mixed-race men are also trapped at the bottom of a number of hierarchies, but they are not exalted for their sexual appeal in the same ways as women (Goldstein 2003: 118).

When Gilberto Freyre contributed to the image of the *mulata* as something positive and transformative of the young nation of Brazil, “nobody came along and pointed out that domination, coercion, and rape were perhaps the more accurate depiction of Brazilian miscegenation” (Goldstein 2003: 119). Indeed, much of Brazilian interpretation of the Afro-Brazilian body hinges on the construction of the *mulata*, because the *mulata* is the positive sexualized product, the celebration of miscegenation, which according to Goldstein is a representation that Brazilians recognized and embraced, and which other countries denied. The *mulata* is appreciated not only for her lighter skin, graciousness, sensuality, but also especially for her way of dancing samba, one of the most iconic musical manifestations in Afro-Brazilian expressive culture. It is precisely this embracing of racial mixture that has enabled Brazilian intellectuals to still argue that the “Brazil is different” claim is a valid one. “While placing the *mulata* at the center of national ideology was a historically radical step in some ways, it was also problematic” (Goldstein 2003: 119).

Indeed, Afro-Brazilian folk music is inseparable from the body, because it is essentially dance music, and one of the most stereotyped icons of samba in Brazilian society is the image of the swinging hips of the *mulata*, often depicted in skimpy clothes and with radiant smiles. Bakhtin pointed to the ways in which the folk would play with the body in its “low” form, in a

manner that inscribed the body as a source of comedy or sexual appeal. The Bakhtinian world, a world that celebrates the rituals of the folk, which in Brazil corresponds to the Afro-Brazilian Carnival, embraces so-called “bad taste.” Carnival is a time when Afro-Brazilian culture is permitted to broadcast its commentary, mustering all its power through controversial views that, depending on which social layer they come from, range from lowness or bad taste to highly exalted and appreciated iconic constructions of the Afro-Brazilian body.

Conflict and Violence as Central Conditions of Musical Knowledge Production

Poverty-and-crime and poverty-and-violence issues also stick out among the aspects that express the problem of studying Afro-Brazilian culture in an intellectually stratified society like Brazil. As Brazilian ethnomusicologist Samuel Araújo (2006) affirms, these issues have created a gap between academia and its “internal others.” Araújo proposes an alternative, a new path for studies that highlight conflict and violence in the field of ethnomusicology.

It entails taking both conflict and, to a certain extent, violence as central conditions of knowledge production, which includes the production of musical knowledge and cultural analyses of music and music making. In saying so we will refer and pay tribute to the work of Brazilian pedagogue, the late Paulo Freire, author of (...) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Educational Action as a Liberating Practice*, both written in the conflictive 1960s and inspirational to a small but selective number of ethnomusicologists, from Catherine Ellis in Australia (Ellis 1994) to Angela Impey in South Africa (Impey 2002). In Freire’s work conflict and violence are already inscribed in all sorts of oppressive social relations which make knowledge not only hostage to dominant groups, including the dominants among their own kind, but also unviable *a priori* once any truly theoretical treatment of conflict as a socially produced fact renders impossible the perpetuation of dominance itself. If we dare to summarize Freire’s postulates in a single sentence, we perhaps should say that without a radical reconfiguration of the community of knowledge producers in a veritable horizontal fashion one can only hope that conflict and hostility may not stomp onto one’s front yard at any minute (Araújo 2006: 289-290).

Araújo is referring here to a “dialogic ethnography of sound practices” in Rio de Janeiro, which is a metropolis much like Salvador, embedded in social problems, such as drug trafficking related violence. Araújo points ethnomusicologists toward a dialogue between academic and non-academic producers of knowledge. In accordance with Araújo, such dialogue entailed Freire’s dialogical pedagogy, reflexive ethnomusicology, and participative ethnomusicology (proposed by Angela Luhning (2006), the director of PVCS; see Chapter IV). Araújo and Luhning are part of a group of Brazilian ethnomusicologists who subscribe to a philosophy of research that opens the doors to insiders of cultural traditions, which in the specific case of this study, applies to Afro-Brazilian music makers, teachers and learners. This study is relevant to applied ethnomusicology scholarship because it advocates for the cause of education, and is relevant to the researched community. I conducted fieldwork at PVCS with a conscious intent of establishing a dialogue between the researcher and the researched.

The Myth of Tri-racial Miscegenation

The problem of defining Afro-Brazilian culture is also closely related to the myth of tri-racial miscegenation constructed by several historians. More recently, Brazilian historians began departing from it via a characterization of Brazilian society as a “*mulatto* civilization.” This characterization has influenced Brazilian music historians a great deal. As Albin affirms,

The history of Brazilian Popular Music (*MPB*) was born in the exact moment when, in some slave quarters (*senzala*) the aborigines begin to clap along with the captive blacks, while the white colonizers let themselves be absorbed by the magical singing of the curvaceous black women. This amalgam, which matured sensually and slowly for over four centuries, would have reached a defined result at about one hundred years ago, when *choro* was created in Rio, and when *maxixe*, *frevo*, and samba appeared” (2003: 10).

Albin argues that, from this point in time, these last one hundred and some years that followed Abolition (1888) and the Proclamation of the Republic (1889) saw the consolidation of a cultural transformation: “the dramatic ascension and formation of the *mulatto* civilization in Brazil, and with it, the birth of its dearest and the most comprehensive primogenital child, the MPB” (Albin 2003: 11).

MPB’s history is also the history of prejudice and “twisted noses of the official culture, castled in the bourgeoisie and in the oligarchic aristocracy,” as Albin (2003: 11) puts it. He explains that at the beginning of the twentieth century, Brazilian (high) society imposed much suffering onto popular and folk musicians and poets. That was a struggle that according to testimonies of the fathers of *choro* and samba, João da Baiana, Pixinguinha, Donga, and Heitor dos Prazeres, culminated with being arrested for carrying a *violão* (acoustic guitar) on the streets. At that time, the guitar was seen as “an instrument of the Devil,” thus the authorities considered such act “a sin, a thing of *capadocio* (contemptible scoundrels), of vagabond *negralhada* (lazy blacks).” Or they would be forced to enter the Copacabana Palace Hotel (Rio de Janeiro) through the back door, because they were musicians and “even worse, they were blacks,” in the 1920s. This situation persisted even after Pixinguinha’s Band, *Os Oito Batutas* (The Eight Cool Virtuosos) had performed with great success in Paris, the center of culture and of the “behavioral insolence of the roaring twenties (*années folles*)” (Albin 2003: 12).

Afro-Brazilian: A Dyad?

The problem of defining Afro-Brazilian culture is also associated with its very label. The hyphenated character of the term “Afro-Brazilian” configures a dyad, and thus a concept that

expresses a bi-cultural hybrid. According to British sociologist Paul Gilroy (1993), hyphenated terms, like “African-American,” “Anglo-American,” (and I take the liberty to include “Afro-Brazilian”), express first a “limiting reductive dyad” which overshadows their cultural “hybridity.” “The modern world is a cultural hybrid,” affirms the sociologist. He claims that because music making allows us to examine the self-understanding and the symbolisms articulated by music makers, it provides insights not only into external manifestations of intangible heritage, but also about its inner realities. He demonstrates that any true understanding of black Atlantic culture must recognize and account for its very cultural hybridity. (Gilroy 1993: 8). Music is important not only because of its popular status, but also because it is equal to language and discourse as “preeminent expressions of human consciousness” (Gilroy 1993: 74). Gilroy does not simplify music into a matter of influence from prominent centers to new arenas, but rather shows how ideas and styles can travel, interact, and become part of a transnational dialogue about authentic identity.

Brazilian scholars Gey Espinheira (2002) and Angela Luhning (2008) claim that the term “Afro-Brazilian” is problematic because it was created by academic discourse and most Afro-Brazilian insiders have not embraced it. When speaking of their own ethnicity, Afro-Bahians prefer to use the term *negro* (black male) or *negra* (black female). That was the case with PVCS Afro-aesthetics instructor Taís, who affirmed that in Bahian worldview these terms signify black pride.³⁵ The so-called “politically correct” term Afro-Bahians have embraced is *afrodescendente* (Afro-descendant). Its short form *Afro* is also widely used to express Africanisms, such as the denomination *Bloco Afro* applied to organizations like *Olodum*, and *Ilê Aiyê*. *Afro-Brasileiro(a)*

³⁵ Taís. Interview by author, Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, October 6, 2009.

(Afro-Brazilian), however is a term that puzzles Afro-Bahians, as they do not know exactly what it means, and thus opt not to use it.

Africanness and Afro-Brazilian Music: Pierre Verger's Legacy

Pierre Verger's findings indicate that the Brazilian musical universe owes a great deal of its inherent captivating and enduring powers to the African roots of Afro-Brazilian culture. He was a pioneer in raising awareness through discourse about cultural links between Africans and Afro-Brazilians. According to Lula Buarque de Hollanda (2006), "Verger served, literally and metaphorically, as a messenger between the life ways of Afro-Brazilians and Africans" (Hollanda 2006).³⁶ Verger researched the history, customs and religions of *Yoruba* peoples in West Africa and their descendants in Bahia, and his findings indicate that, in its beginnings, Afro-Brazilian music owes to African roots specifically within the liturgical music of Candomblé that follows *Yoruba* tradition. Especially the rhythm denominated *ijexá* and its variations, which derive from such traditional music, has greatly influenced several styles of Afro-Brazilian secular music, including *samba-de-roda*, *capoeira*, *Samba-reggae*, *afoxé*, and *Candomblé-de-rua*. Verger's work exposed such connection between African roots and a broader conception of Afro-Brazilian music. Additionally, his interest in plants began the 1950s, when he was initiated as a *Babalaô* and learned from the African masters the use of the medicinal and liturgical plants. His writings provide the words that must be pronounced during the rituals, a fundamental point in *Yoruba* liturgy. As Verger explains, "in Candomblé, the most important thing is the matter of

³⁶ Lula Buarque de Hollanda, Director, *Pierre Verger: Mensageiro Entre Dois Mundos* (Pierre Verger: Messenger Between Two Worlds), 2006.

which leaves and plants are used during initiation. Nature is always present during the ceremony. Before it starts, a bath in water infused with herbs must be taken in order to gain *axé* (energy) the essential force they contain” (Verger 1960).

Verger’s “Flux and Reflux” – African and Brazilian Diaspora

During his numerous trips back and forth between Africa and Bahia, Pierre Verger reported on the striking resemblances between the people he photographed on both sides of the Atlantic: physical appearance, way of talking, walking, and customs, through which he saw the tangible proof of interwoven histories. He was so passionate about this theme that he ended up playing an essential role in the re-establishing of the links between West Africa and Bahia. In order to understand in depth the historical reasons for those resemblances, he devoted himself during several years to the study of the slave trade that tore millions of Africans out of their birth lands, and after the abolition, caused the return to Africa of many of their descendants. The result of his studies constituted one of his main works: in 1966, his dissertation *Flux et Reflux du Trafic des Esclaves entre le Golfe du Bénin et la Baie de Tous les Saints* was defended at the Sorbonne. A self-taught man who quit school at the age of seventeen, he received his Ph.D. in African Studies. *Flux and Reflux* revealed previously obscured aspects of the slave trade, for instance, that, during the last years of traffic, the slaves were almost exclusively *Yoruba*, and the return of Brazilian descendants to Africa. Many Blacks, who returned as free men and women to Africa with Brazilian customs, created there a kind of Brazil, in the same way as a kind of Africa had been created in Bahia (Verger 1960). His work continues to promote breakthroughs in the domain of links between Africans and Brazilians, for it remains one of the most important

sources of information for the Bahians and African people willing to know about their own history. Collaborating with film director Jean Rouch and ethnomusicologist Gilbert Rouget, Verger produced in 1958 numerous recordings of holy chants in *Yoruba* and ritual African and Afro-Brazilian music at the Candomblé *terreiro Oxumaré*. Pierre Verger died on February 11, 1996, leaving the Pierre Verger Foundation incumbent of carrying on with his work.

African Roots Actualized by Afro-Bahians

The Afro-Brazilian culture is rooted in African traditional religion, a sub-culture that essentially follows the principle of integration, in which the sacred and the profane are distinct but not separate. The religious aspect permeates, therefore, all life and not just part of it. Africans are essentially religious, and so are Afro-Brazilians. Among them religion is coextensive with life and experience and intensely practical. It is not based on words, concepts, and notions, but in experiential living, which is transmitted from generation to generation. Experiential living allows Afro-Brazilians to look at the “other” and see with the same eyes the “other” sees.

The study and understanding of oral tradition is central to the understanding of African cosmology, and so it is to the understanding of the Afro-Brazilian culture. African worldviews are perpetuated among Afro-Bahians through oral transmission, which occurs at the very moment Afro-Bahians participate in the rites and celebrate the myths. Myths are celebrated through the practice of the rites, the constitutive elements of the folk festivals, which therefore become sacred spaces. The rites that drive the festivals allow Afro-Bahians to reach a full sense of self. Through ritual dance, Afro-Bahians manage to transcend the present to reach the realm of their origins and thus of their ancestry. It is through dancing, or acting, reacting and interacting

with music kinesthetically (entrancing) that Afro-Bahians actualize a temporary change of ethos, from Afro-Brazilian to an imaginary African. In other words, it is through rituals like the *Yoruba* liturgy that Afro-Brazilians get into trance, and since Afro-Brazilian music induces Afro-Brazilians into trance, whether in a sacred or profane context, music becomes a channel for transcendence between present and past. According to M. Siqueira (1995), Salvador, with a multifaceted cultural identity, has solid roots in African culture. “Clearly, there is in Bahia an African cultural continuity of mythological and historical foundations from different regions of Africa. In its contemporaneous character, at the same time that it reinvents itself, Afro-Bahians preserve and strengthen their African roots” (Siqueira 1995: 7).

Africanness is one of the main bricks in the construction of Brazilianness. Africanness reshapes and redefines Brazilian national identity, and along with it, its cultural background. Africanness is undeniably one of the main ingredients of Brazilian music. In spite of being excluded from Brazilian society’s academic and political discourses throughout the centuries, the influence of African experience in Brazil has played a fundamental role in the construction of Brazilian nationality and its musical identity. The civilizing principles of African culture, its cultural forms, its symbolic assets, especially its music, have been richly and creatively re-elaborated by the Afro-Brazilians. Reciprocally, Brazilian Afro-descendants who returned to their ancestors’ homeland in Africa, brought with them several elements of Brazilianness. As Verger reports,

A second and lesser known aspect in the relationships between the two sides of the Atlantic had also fascinated me, namely the Brazilian influence on the western coast of Africa, particularly in Dahomey and Nigeria - following the return of the freed slaves. They returned, as Gilberto Freyre points out, “Brazilian-ized” and lived in their homes Brazilian style, similar to how they were used to living with their former masters, whose

names they kept. They celebrated the Festival of *Senhor do Bonfim*³⁷ on the same day it was celebrated in Bahia. And, like in Brazil, their twins were traditionally named *Cosmos* and *Damian*. They even ate Brazilian style (Verger 1982 [1951]).

The Role of Music in the Cultural Clashes Dilemma

What role does music play when Afro-Brazilians face the dilemma of adaptation to circumstances? Music making alone may not resolve this historical and ideological dilemma. In the specific case of Vila América community, however, as this study will show in Chapters V and VI, Afro-Brazilian music has functioned as a channel for transcendence to the youth that attend PVCS *oficinas*. At PVCS, music teaching and learning (as well as dance, *capoeira*, and storytelling, among other activities) mediates cultural clashes that occurred between Afro-Brazilians and Brazilian society as a whole. Music's intercultural mediation power helps the two cultures to interface, interact, engage in dialogue, inform one another, and ultimately blend to recreate themselves without eradication of their cultural roots.

In a broad philosophical perspective, the cultural clash dilemma is one of the core elements in the continuity of African worldviews in Brazil, and the development of the Afro-Brazilian ethos. Black Africans and Afro-Brazilians continued responding to clashes with Portuguese (Western) culture with cultural hybrids until today. Was the dilemma resolved? According to Oliveira, “the dilemma between traditional culture and modernization will remain a problem in attempting to decode the responses provided by Afro-descendants in Brazilian

³⁷ *Senhor do Bonfim* (Our Lord of Bonfim) Festival, popularly called *Lavagem do Bonfim* (Washing of Bonfim) is Bahia's largest festival and one of the most striking evidence of syncretism between Catholic and Candomblé beliefs; it takes place on the Thursday before the third Sunday in January. Carrying vases filled with water and flowers, Candomblé devotees climb the 8-kilometer-long path from the church *Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia* in the lower part of town up to the *Igreja* (Church) *do Nosso Senhor Bom Jesus do Bonfim*. Thousands of people, among them drummers and other musicians, accompany the procession. On reaching the crest, they wash (“lavagem”) the steps of the church. Afterwards, a daylong public festival begins.

society; the categories of pure/impure, original/mixed, and so forth, will continue setting up ideological traps to the comprehension of African worldviews” (Oliveira 2006: 38).

Candomblé

Although African religions were prohibited for nearly four centuries, Afro-descendants managed to keep their spiritual beliefs alive by cleverly concealing their dormant pantheon under well-groomed strategies of syncretization. Since 1888, when slavery was abolished in Brazil, Afro-descendants have gradually reawakened their *orixás*, retaken their religious practices, completely remodeled their pantheon,³⁸ and ultimately reshaped their mythologies. Afro-Brazilians safeguarded with their resilient spiritual beliefs the influential link between Afro-Brazilians and their African roots: the infallible link of their intangible cultural heritage. Central to those beliefs and to contemporary Afro-Bahian culture, is the rekindled pantheon of Candomblé, the Afro-Brazilian religion, in which music and dance form the expressive core. Founded in the 1910’s³⁹ and widely practiced in Salvador, capital of Bahia, Candomblé has been transmitted essentially through oral culture, and more recently through some forms of education. According to Alexandro Reis (2006) *Candomblé* is not just a religion; “it is a

³⁸ The *Yoruba* pantheon is constructed by several *orixás*. In Brazil, the most known are: *Exú* (Esu), *Ogum*, *Ode*, *Erinle*, *Otin*, *Logun*, *Ossanha* (Osanyin), *Omolu*, *Obaluaye*, *Oxumaré*, *Xangô* (Shango), *Oya*, *Obá*, *Yemanjá*, and many others.

³⁹ The first *terreiro* to become officially established as a religious site was *Ilê Axé Opó Afonjá* (House Supported by the Power of Shango). Located in São Gonçalo do Retiro, Salvador, *Opó Afonjá* is one of the country's oldest religious communities, founded in 1910 by a dissident group of the *terreiro Casa Branca* (White House Yard), located in *Engenho Velho*. With spaces for religious celebrations and other for housing, the yard is surrounded by extensive areas of closed vegetation, which occupy more than two thirds of the total area of 40 thousand square meters. *Ilê Axé Opó Afonjá* was listed as a national historic site by *Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* (IPHAN) in July 2000.

powerful force that unites various peoples: the *Nagô*, the *Bantu*, the Afro-indigenous, the Afro-Brazilians, and all others who are involved in organizations that compose the *Movimento Negro* (Black Movement) in Brazil. This movement encompasses Candomblé, *quilombo*, *capoeira*, *hip-hop*, and so many other Afro-Brazilian manifestations” (Reis 2006: 5).

When referring to belief systems, Costa Lima (2003) quotes Edison Carneiro and Pierre Verger to define Candomblé. Carneiro states that the place where blacks of Bahia hold their typical religious festivals, which now has the name of Candomblé, “formerly signified solely the annual public festivities of the African sects, and to a lesser extent, the names of *terreiros* (yards), *roças* (gardens), or *aldeias* (villages), the latter reflecting the Amerindian influences.” Verger affirms that Candomblé is the name given in Bahia to the African ceremonies. “It represents, for its worshippers, the traditions of their grandparents who lived in a far away country, out of reach and almost fabulous. The struggle to keep their traditions is what gave them the strength to preserve themselves, despite the prejudices and disdain and the obligation to participate in the religion of their slave masters” (Lima 2003:18).

Lima recognizes, however, that virtually nothing has been kept intact in the tradition of Candomblé: neither its ideology, which was undeniably affected by concessions to the pressure of dominant classes, nor the symbolism of its rites and myths, “which in many cases lost their original significance, and were reinterpreted or re-created through the sacred language of its chants and ritual formulas, identifiable in its structure and its lexicon, but certainly modified in their semantic and phonetic values” (Lima 2003: 19). African traditions changed in the process of acculturation in Brazil, especially due to the transformation of socioeconomic structures of the classes that practiced Candomblé, “which in turn transformed the very functionality of these religious groups. Nonetheless, they remain tightly structured as socially inclusive groups, which

is an important factor in social integration,” observes Lima (2003: 19).

Verger and Candomblé

Verger declared that Candomblé was interesting for him because it was “a religion exalting the personality, where one can be truly him/herself, and not as the society would like one to be. For those who have something to express through the unconscious, the trance allows it to manifest itself” (Verger 1982 [1951]). During his intimate contact with Candomblé and the world of the *Orixás*, Verger as an admirer, friend and initiate (*Babalaô* and *Oju Obá*) acquired great knowledge and was granted respect and protection. To honor the trust invested in him, he spent the rest of his life collecting legends, liturgies and ritual sequences, all scrupulously documented in his books and photographs, that became an invaluable source of information for other researchers and followers of the cult.

It was only in 1948, two years after his arrival in Bahia and following a long trip to Recife, Haiti and Dutch Guyana, that Verger started to realize the importance of Candomblé and the role it played in conferring a special dignity to the majority of the African descendants living in Bahia. It was also in 1948 that he went for the first time to the *terreiro Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá*, shortly before his departure for Africa, where he was given a grant to deepen his research on the multiple links between Brazil and West Africa. *Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá*’s head priestess *Mãe Senhora* lent his head to *Xangô*,⁴⁰ marking the beginning of Verger’s long friendship with Candomblé

⁴⁰ Initiation to Candomblé is effected by an “obligation” accepted by the initiated person. In Candomblé, every initiated has his/her father or mother-of-saint, and therefore, a grandparent of the saint, great grandfather or great-grandmother, and so on. All their children are considered brothers. Children of brothers are nephews, and so on. The religious relationship has exactly the same structure of contemporary Western non-religious kinship. When a father-of-saint dies, the children should “take from their heads the hand of the deceased,” as they say. At that ceremony, the priest who replaces the deceased becomes the new father or mother-of-saint of the orphans. The first initiation is

worshippers.

In Africa, he met with descendants of ancient kings who were at the origins of the *Yoruba* myths, visited sacred places, witnessed and participated in numerous rituals. Back in Bahia, he continued his apprenticeship:

What is interesting is to share people's lives, to do the same things as they do and to participate without intending to understand. When one participates, things become completely different. This is what happened with me. I was living with the community at the *terreiro Opô Afonjá*, doing the exact same things people did there, without knowing why or how. I was living with them, sharing their concerns and beliefs (Verger 1982 [1951]).

Besides the *Opô Afonjá*, Verger frequently visited many other *terreiros*, such as those of *Casa Branca*, *Joãozinho da Goméia*, *Joana de Ogum*, and *Catita*, where he made many friends. Then a few years later he helped his friend *Pai-deSanto* (Father of Saint) Balbino Daniel de Paula to found the *Opô Aganju*. Until the end of his life, Verger declared himself to be a skeptic devoid of “strong religious feelings, a rationalist Frenchman who's not buying into that” (Hollanda 2006), but to many, the depth of his knowledge, associated with a bare lifestyle and a mysterious personality would turn him into a reference as well as an example.

Street Candomblé -- Secularization

Through familiarizing themselves with their ancient roots as expressed in their traditional musics and religions, Afro-Bahians have been exposed to their ancestral mythology, replete with symbolic meanings. Since the 1960's exclusively religious Candomblé, widely practiced among Afro-Bahians has gone through a process of secularization. In the effort to preserve, revitalize,

by "making" for initiation, the second is for adoption by “obligation”. “I gave obligation with *Mãe Maria de Oxóssi*” means that now he/she lent his head and his/her saint is now under the care of *Mãe Maria*.

and expand Candomblé traditions, Afro-Bahian communitarian organizations known as *Afro-Blocos*⁴¹ overcame resistance offered by more conservative religious groups and began to perform the music of Candomblé in street folk festivals in Salvador. The Afro-Brazilian religion has since undergone a process of secularization and consequent popularization. Several Bahian music groups, sprouted within community organizations with social inclusion intent, perform music that derives directly from Candomblé. *Afro-Blocos* such as *Filhos de Gandhi*, *Ilê Ayê*, and *Olodum* brought Candomblé to the streets of contemporary Bahian carnival. Bahians call it *Candomblé de rua* (street Candomblé). This movement, which started timidly in the peripheral Bahian neighborhoods forty years ago, has become a central attraction in one of the most popular and appreciated folk festivals in Brazil. The music that once was solely played and heard within *barracoons*⁴² of Candomblé *terreiros*⁴³ in the periphery, has taken over the streets of Salvador's downtown.

Afro-Brazilian Music and Identity Intimately Connected With the Body

Exú (Eshu), the lowest rank deity in Candomblé, is considered the most “human” of the Orixás. He is the communicator, as Candomblé rituals establish that the first step in order to communicate with higher rank *orixás* is to make offerings to *Exú*. Anyone asking for spiritual help or guidance has to obtain permission from *Exú*, who can open the doors of communication

⁴¹ Among the most prominent *Afro-Blocos* are *Filhos de Gandhi*, *Ilê Ayê*, and *Olodum*.

⁴² *Barracoon* is the English term for the Portuguese “barracão.” Originally, it was an enclosure in which black slaves were confined. Today, it is the name for the main house where Candomblé ceremonies take place.

⁴³ *Terreiros*, or *assentamentos* are the Candomblé ceremonial sites, which usually consist of land lots in which one finds several houses, one for each *orixá*. These houses represent the *orixás*’ temples, and they are used according to ceremonies established in each *terreiro*’s calendar of celebratory events.

with the other *orixás*, the ones with the specific power to protect and help worshipers. According to Muniz Sodré (2007), in *Samba, o Dono do Corpo*, “Exú is another name of the ‘owner of the body,’ as it is well known among practitioners of the *lei-de-santo* (law-of-saints), the cosmological principle of the dynamics of exchanges, communication, and individuality” Sodré 2007: 10).

Samba, according to Sodré, is “one aspect of Afro-Brazilian culture – an African *continuum* in Brazil and a Brazilian form of cultural resistance – that found in its own structure the resources for the affirmation of Black identity.” Sodré refutes discourse that aims to explain samba as “a consented survival, a mere raw matter for a cultural amalgam constructed from top to bottom” (2007: 10). Sodré makes a cross-cultural comparison between jazz and samba drawing from Duke Ellington’s famous statement that the blues is always sung by a third person, “the one who is not there.” Ellington claims that “blues songs are not driven by the two lovers (storyteller and listener, or storyteller and referent) implicit in the lyrics, but by a third person that is missing, who fascinates and pulls them in. The band-leader famous phrase is a metaphor for the irresistible motto of jazz -- the syncopation, the beat that is missing” (Sodré 2007: 11). As we know, syncopation is the absence of events on the so-called “weak” beat in the measure, which nonetheless creates a ripple effect on the following strong beat.

The missing beat could be the missing link that would explain the mobilizing power of black music in the Americas. Indeed, syncopation acts, as much as in jazz as in samba, in a special way, enticing the listener to fill the empty beat with body movement – clapping, jerking, swinging, and dancing. (...) Syncopation’s magnetic, or even compulsive, power comes from the impulse to replace a beat’s rhythmic gap with dynamic body movements in space (Sodré 2007: 11).

Kinesthesia driven by samba’s syncopation is the same one that slavery sought to culturally violate and repress in Brazilian history, the black African body. Whether in sugar

mills, plantations, or cities, samba was wherever blacks were. Samba dance movements were “an unequivocal demonstration of resistance to the social imperative to reduce the African body to a productive machine. It was also an affirmation of the African cultural universe continuum” (Sodré 2007: 12).

At the end of the nineteenth century the socioeconomic marginalization of the Afro-Brazilian was evident through the systematic exclusion of blacks from schools and factories, which would qualify them as workforce compatible with the demands of urban life. Such disqualification wasn't purely technological, but also cultural: customs, behavior models, religion, and even skin color were signified as negative handicaps for Afro-Brazilians through the process of urban socialization. Among the Afro-Bahian families, famous religious leaders – *ialorixás*, *babalorixás*, *babalaôs* – promoted dance encounters (samba) parallel to the religious rituals (Candomblés). The first samba composed by Carlos Cachaca around 1923, said, “You did not let me go to the samba in Mangueira, but you went out to have fun at the Candomblé.”...⁴⁴ (Sodré 2007: 14).

Music: Mediator of Sociability and Other Human Dimensions

From the perspective of a musician who witnessed Afro-Brazilian performed on the streets of Salvador, Afro-Brazilian music is in itself a culture of feelings as well as a culture of symbolism; music follows a basic principle of communication, it ensures the combination of hitherto separate elements. When music elicits communication between any two dimensions of human existence manifested in social life, it can be seen as a mediator. In this sense, music is a

⁴⁴ See *Jornal do Brasil*, August 6, 1977.

strong factor of social aggregation and organic solidarity, particularly in Bahian society. Afro-Bahians are very much celebratory of the body. Taking that aspect into consideration, music through dance in Bahia becomes a fundamental factor in social communication within social and cultural heterogeneity; therefore, music is a language that communicates shared emotions and leads people to share their emotions.

Gey Espinheira (2002) states, “The power of Afro-Brazilian culture (Afro-Bahian, in particular) is all too evident in its musical expression.” I witnessed, for instance, during a street parade enacted by the *Bloco Afro Didá*,⁴⁵ the organic character of solidarity inherent in drumming simultaneous multiple rhythms. The social effects of communication and sharing of feelings and emotions through body movements have high resonance in socialization and sociability as visible effects. It does not require any special knowledge to have that kind of experience, but in order to actualize it one has to be there. In the words of Espinheira,

Afro-Brazilian music can be translated as a necessary factor in socialization and sociability, in the development of social projects and in the strengthening of a sense of collectivity, citizenship and human rights. Through music, especially through the drums, whose sound evokes the tactile perception, Bahians explore the dimension of “touch”, the one that requires closeness, touching, typical of “epidermal” cultures, cultures of proximity like the Brazilian and Afro-Brazilian cultures, in which the bodies meet, touch, and are themselves signs of social communication. As promoted by Afro-aesthetics, music elicits the unification of elements that were apparently separate: music, historical and literary narratives, reading of the bodies through clothes, hairstyles, colors of ornaments, the playfulness of makeup, the odors and the perfumes matching the fabrics, the skin, the colors, and the gestures (Espinheira 2002: 5).

In the past three decades, *Afro-Blocos* have been agents of black consciousness, with social work helping individuals in their communities, raising collective pride and awareness of Afro-Brazilian culture, and speaking with a political voice in issues of racial discrimination. As a

⁴⁵ *Didá* is an all-female *Bloco Afro* that rehearses once a week outside of its headquarters in Pelourinho, Salvador downtown.

result, the political hegemonic nature of various concepts is being translated into acceptance and appreciation of ethnic and cultural aspects embodied by Afro-Brazilians, while at the same time people are refusing to submit to dominant class values. Within this perspective, “beauty” is based on Afrocentric notions of beauty, in counterpoint to prevailing white standards of beauty in Brazil, a country famous for slim supermodels and plastic surgery. Afro-Brazilian “femininity” and “look” (appearance) are based on dressing up in flowing African-style garments, displaying “black power” hairstyles, emphasizing and reinforcing Black African facial features. Dance, rhythm, and body language are based on gracefully performing traditional Afro-Brazilian dances to songs praising the beauty of black women and men. All these concepts are being redefined through the lens of African and African-Brazilian culture and religion, which are closely associated with spiritual beliefs that radiate from Candomblé.

A striking example among the manifestations of Afrocentric concerns is *Ilê Aiyê*’s Carnival queen, the *Deusa do Ébano* (Ebony Goddess),⁴⁶ which is a key visual and symbolic element of Bahia’s Carnival procession. The figure of the Ebony Goddess, representing a “black is beautiful” view of black women, resonates with women of African descent in Brazil, the United States and throughout the world of the African Diaspora. Taís, the Afro-aesthetics instructor at PVCS, who is also a dancer, was elected *Ilê Aiyê*’s 2002 Ebony Goddess. She stated, “the competition for the title of Ebony Goddess is part of a profound and personal search for identity and self-esteem.”⁴⁷ The Ebony Goddess contest is one among many other manifestations that play significant roles in the attempts to reshape the idea of beauty in Bahian society, in

⁴⁶ *Ebony Goddess: Queen of Ilê Aiyê* follows three women competing to be the Carnival queen of *Ilê Aiyê*, a prominent and controversial Afro-Brazilian group with an all-black membership.

⁴⁷ Taís. Interview by author. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, October 9, 2010.

which African descendants constitute the majority of the population, but which is pervaded by Eurocentric concepts of body aesthetics. While the concept of the Ebony Goddess proposes an alternative view of the black female body as beautiful, desirable, and talented, it ultimately seeks to promote social change at its most basic level: the individual sense of self.

Persecuted by the police and the media during its first years, and still controversial for only allowing blacks to parade with the group, *Ilê Aiyê* is now a renowned element of Bahia's pre-Lenten festivities. During Carnival, the group popularly referred to as *o mais belo dos belos* (the loveliest of the lovely) brings to the streets hundreds of musicians, dozens of dancers, and thousands of members. Although *Ilê Aiyê*'s songs are never played on the radio (unless they are recorded by a white performer) and their CDs have very limited commercial distribution, its songs enjoy high levels of popularity in Salvador. *Ilê Aiyê*'s music resonates intensely among Carnival crowds, who sing along to songs about the social concerns of African and Afro-Brazilian cultures.

Throughout the last 40 years, while Candomblé's traditional (sacred) music remained almost unchanged, and continued its traditions within *terreiros* and *barracoons*, the unique and captivating secular music of *Afro-Blocos* has gone through a dynamic process of reinvention, changes, and assimilation of various outside influences, including the North-American *Black Power* movement. As Afro-Bocos gained popularity, their music gradually moved from the periphery to the central stage of today's Bahian *Carnaval*.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ *Carnaval* is the Portuguese term for "carnival."

Afro-Brazilian Music and Dance as Alternative Education

The range of non-formal educational initiatives for street children is vast. Methods vary from using dance, music and sports to circus and art. Espinheira (2002), created in Bahia an education project for art and culture for the gregarious social life of adolescents and low-income youth of Salvador. Espinheira believes that programs like this, and for instance of the PVCS, offer multiple possibilities and achievements. They have been effective through various explorations of Afro-Brazilian culture, which through music, and through body expressions in dance and in everyday life, “made Bahia a great laboratory for the whole world” (Espinheira (2002: 1). Espinheira’s project aims “to engage youth in educational opportunities through Afro-Brazilian arts, especially music and corporeal narrative for the development of participatory, supportive, and cooperative social life, providing a jump in time and content across the moat dug by social disadvantages arising from adverse social conditions” of Afro-Bahians (Espinheira 2002: 1).

Espinheira and Angela Luhning are two scholars in Bahia who engage in participatory ethnomusicology, whose goal, as stated, is

To develop multiple and polysemic abilities among socially disadvantaged young people through a complex, and yet deeply entertaining, education anchored in pluralistic dimensions of aesthetics, particularly in the Afro-Brazilian aesthetics, drawing on Candomblé’s legacy of social structuring capacity and adaptation to circumstances (Espinheira 2002: 2).

Espinheira claims society *is* its cultural heritage and its expectations and these are given from the practicable possibilities of accomplishment. In recent decades in Salvador, there has been a strong trend of resistance to ludic (playful) educational practices, a movement that is grounded in culture, rather than in abstract political ideals (Espinheira 2002: 2). Espinheira believes that this movement, which emphasizes music performed in street parades, is a powerful channel for social

change. In the early 1980s Antonio Rizério (1981) referred to some of the principles of this new movement, quoting a statement from *Vovô* (Grandpa), one of creators of *Bloco Afro Ilê Aiyê*.⁴⁹

Our strongest message is the party, the spectacle. The people of the black Movement meet, meet, and meet, and don't get anything done. We, however, through *Carnaval*, without making speeches, have already been able to change much around here (Rizério 1981:19).

Rizério drew attention to the phenomenon of "Reafricanization" which was in the course in the 1970s, and which in the 1980s reached its consolidation as an inexorable trend from the grounds of ethnic movements, particularly the Afro-Brazilian. Reafricanization is not restricted to the *Carnaval* parades. "It is a much broader process; it means the 'Reafricanization' of life as a whole in Bahia. It is true that it reaches its climax during *Carnaval*, its most dense and colorful expression, but in no way ends there" (Rizério 1981:19).

How PVCS Works with African Roots

The PVCS program focuses on strategies to rescue cultural heritage through music education. PVCS is heavily drawing from Africanisms to transmit and rescue Afro-Brazilian culture. The school intends to create positive effects in the surrounding community by offering educational opportunities to its students, which include participating in dance, music, *capoeira*, arts, percussion, and storytelling classes that teach elements related to their ancestry - spiritual beliefs, ethnicity, traditional music and dance. PVCS plays a fundamental role in strengthening its students' identity. PVCS responds to a society marked by injustice and inequality such as

⁴⁹ Founded as a carnival *Bloco Afro* in the 1970s and headquartered in the borough of *Liberdade*, in Savador, Ilê *Aiyê* has become a socio-cultural organization that emphasizes the valorization of Afro-Brazilian culture and of the Black person; Ilê *Aiyê* is responsible for the strategy "black beauty".

Bahian society through promoting adaptation to circumstances, offering a space where participants can increase their socialization, reduce sources of tension and violence, increase self-esteem, and strengthen their individual sense of belonging. PVCS program unites its students, integrating the entire student body with instructors, guest artists, and researchers in collaborative performance. Such integration encourages conversation, which in turn stimulates students to increase awareness about themselves.

PVCS encourages students to improve and go further, experimenting with new possibilities, but there is another dimension of culture, as important as the others; the PVCS promotes cultural productions, presentations, and public performances. Cultural productions, more than mere showcases, are excellent communication tools. When the PVCS speaks of culture, it speaks of the essence of human life. It talks about the energy that moves people to build that culture. When the PVCS talks about energy and culture, it speaks also of something as vital as air, as nature itself. Therefore, it links culture to all dimensions of the human being. Some key people from the local community also build up a source of information, sharing experiences about their real life, their knowledge and spirituality.

PVCS education follows many principles established by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1985 [1970]). Freire promoted education without dichotomies. According to Brazilian educator César Augusto Rossatto (2005), Freire claims that teachers should be open to learning from students about their daily life experiences and the knowledge they acquire at home and in their communities (Rossatto 2005).⁵⁰ Rossatto studied with Ana Maria Araújo Freire, Paulo Freire's

⁵⁰ Rossatto published a second book, *Freirean Legacy Educating for Social Justice*, NY: Peter Lang Publishing (2002), in which he dedicates an entire chapter to successful projects with goals similar to the goals of PVCS, which educate about popular culture, using *capoeira*, samba and other styles to construct a sense of identity for street children in Brazil (p.c., October, 2010).

wife, for a period of three years. He reports that she is one of the founders of *Projeto Axé* (*Axé Project*)⁵¹ in Bahia, which teaches both teachers and learners how to use *capoeira*, samba, music, and popular culture, to construct, rescue, and strengthen a sense of identity for street children. *Projeto Axé* is a highly successful program. Both Paulo Freire and his wife trained *Axé* teachers in Salvador.⁵² *Axé* promotes art as a fundamental right of every human being, extrapolating the very concept of art as a mere educational tool. Following Freire's principles, art is conceived not only as a tool to educate, but also as education itself. *Axé*'s participants have access to several artistic languages with a dual purpose: education and professionalization. At *Axé* art plays a special role in the lives of teachers and learners who construct ethics and aesthetics as two harmonious pillars of a new life project. *Axé* educators strongly believe that ethics, aesthetics and art education constitute the most appropriate process to build a decent life for boys and girls who are socially excluded. Many of the PVCS teachers subscribe to similar beliefs as Freire, as will be seen in the next chapter, in which I present my research on the PVCS.

⁵¹ In 15 years of existence about 13,700 children and adolescents participated in *Axé*. Currently, *Axé* assists 1,547 children and youth from 5 to 21 years of age, approximately 40% are girls. Through the artistic and educational process, *Axé* fights to get youth away from sexual abuse and child labor. See <http://www.projetoaxe.org.br>

⁵² See YouTube video on the internet at <http://il.youtube.com/watch?v=XwAQb8524TE&feature=related>.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCHING THE PVCS

This Chapter presents the views of the researched community through the interviewees' own voices. Their interpretation of the worldviews discussed in the two previous chapters and the practical application of those structural agents within their teaching and learning environment are organized within nine aspects I considered the most relevant to this study: (1) Transmission of cultural heritage at PVCS; (2) the importance of teaching and learning *Samba-de-roda*; (3) raising awareness of students' ancestry; (4) Pierre Verger's principles in action; (5) tension between Candomblé and the evangelical church ; (6) the role of Candomblé; (7) increasing student interest through music; (8) gauging effectiveness; and (9) community response.

Vila América

Almost everyone in Bahia has heard Caetano Veloso singing one of his most popular songs, entitled "Beleza Pura" ("Pure Beauty").⁵³ It has a line that says, "Moço lindo do Badauê, beleza pura" ("Beautiful boy of Badauê, [who is] pure beauty"). "Beleza Pura" is an emblematic song that pays tribute to the *Afoxé*⁵⁴ *Badauê Ladeira de Nanã* ("Badauê Hill of Nanã"), which was headquartered in *Tororó* in Salvador. Tororó is one the several neighborhoods that compose the larger borough called *Engenho Velho de Brotas* ("Old Mill of Brotas"). Vila América, where PVCS is located, is the neighborhood practically next door to *Itororó*. Vila América is replete

⁵³ See Appendix 9, "Beleza Pura" – Lyrics by Caetano Veloso.

⁵⁴ *Afoxé* is a generic name of social organizations that promote traditional Afro-Brazilian culture, whose music is performed in Carnival parades and several other folk festivals in Bahia.

with steep hills running up and down, with curious names, place of numerous houses of Candomblé, *afoxés*, Carnival *blocos*, samba groups, and masters of Afro-Brazilian culture. It is a neighborhood full of history, but it is outside the “official” history, to the point that no one knows for sure why residents call the whole neighborhood “Old Mill of Brotas.” PVCS director Angela Luhning claims that it was not a sugar mill, but this is the explanation that received the popular stamp. This is a neighborhood with much history to be discovered, a low-income population, high unemployment, where domestic violence and drug dealing related violence went rampant within the last few years and is now growing almost out of control.

Luhning was very welcoming when we first met. When I arrived at PVCS, she could not see me right away, and while I waited, I had the opportunity to meet with Dona Ceci, PVCS storyteller. An Afro-Brazilian woman in her 60’s, Dona Ceci immediately introduced herself and promptly answered my questions. She was very receptive and seemed very wise. Later, I found out that Dona Ceci is the spiritual mentor at PVCS. While Dona Ceci and I became acquainted, there were many kids painting colorful wooden panels in the outdoors, and she explained that those panels would serve as the backdrop for her upcoming televised storytelling series. A public television channel, *TV Cultura* was scheduled to begin shooting live storytelling episodes in the PVCS’s central patio the following Monday. When Luhning became available, I had my first interview with her.

During our first conversation, she answered the phone several times, and kept talking from time to time with other PVCS employees and students. It was obvious that she was a very busy and dynamic woman. In the midst of so many things happening, I managed to tell her I was in Salvador to do fieldwork on Afro-Brazilian music teaching-learning, and wanted to check PVCS out. Luhning is an ethnomusicologist, so she was familiar with what I was doing, and

allowed me to observe PVCS activities. I could take pictures, but should not use the video camera until she gave permission, and briefly described the activities taking place the next few days. I liked what I saw the first few hours, and decided PVCS was going to be my field site. I was well received by teachers, staff, and students, as they were accustomed to being around visitors from all walks of life. As Portuguese is my native language and I was familiar with Bahian dialect I had no difficulty joining in their conversations. They would become more communicative once they found out I was Brazilian. Interaction with them became fluid as they became used to my video camera and that is how I obtained the information that follows.

Transmission of Cultural Heritage at PVCS

Luhning said that they advertise the workshops with flyers and invite the surrounding community to visit and learn about their own cultural tradition. PVCS offers a welcoming space, with basic and limited but adequate infrastructure; with a library open to the public; performances of music, dance, showcases; exhibitions of art and photography presented by the students. Occasionally, PVCS space becomes the stage for shows of visiting artists (for instance, inmates in rehabilitation programs), teachers and guest lecturers, all free and open to the public. PVCS also organizes tours to museums and other spectacles of Afro-Brazilian culture (providing transportation and guides / coordinators), and also receives and hosts guest researchers. Through these actions, Luhning added, PVCS manages to recruit new students, both through advertisement of the courses and word of mouth from its students and their family members.

PVCS provides education that enables students to assimilate content, but its methodology also encourages them to use their own socioeconomic and socio-cultural background to reflect

on various meanings that construct the world of Afro-Brazilian culture. To this end, Luhning pointed various aspects put into practice; PVCS instructors are exponents of culture and Afro-Brazilian art, since they are holders of traditional knowledge, not only because they learned from “insiders,” but also because they are themselves legitimate African descendants; they learned their craft and teach according to oral tradition. The PVCS educators encourage students to attend various workshops in tandem, stimulating the vision of the cultural context of Afro-Brazilian arts as a whole. Luhning states that they plan courses in a way so that students will participate in an integrated, interrelated manner, emphasizing multi and interdisciplinary approaches, allowing students to experience various learning activities, which allow them to see links between workshop contents and their socio-cultural contexts.

Luhning expressed on several occasions that the essential role of PVCS is to provide a service that not only teaches about culture, but also fulfills the community’s needs. The Vila América environment is embedded in violence, crime, and social exclusion, and that requires teachers to be utterly sensitive to students needs, which obviously goes far beyond the task of learning about culture. As in African communities, music serves a social purpose far beyond entertainment or even “education” in the Western sense of the term. Thus PVCS teachers allow students to be heard a great deal, much more than a formal school allows.

Luhning explained that while instructors educate youth, they take into consideration students’ needs and wants and their individual and collective potential. They emphasize the importance and relevance of content taught as essential elements of the Afro-Brazilian context, and as part of their local social life. PVCS pedagogy emphasizes experience through perception; music and dance are taught according to oral culture, with practical examples and demonstrations. This approach enables students to internalize several implicit meanings intrinsic

to Afro-Brazilian traditions. Luhning believes that this kind of experience is a basic foundation for the process of integral development of the student. She acknowledges the PVCS contribution to the transmission of cultural heritage, and to the transmission of Afro-Brazilian cultural values, and stresses that, while such transmission occurs explicitly and implicitly, instructors mainly emphasize the implicit modes of transmission. In simpler words, teachers are sharing knowledge mostly through experiential approaches, while the conceptual dimensions of the workshop contents are not sought as the ultimate goal of their pedagogies.

As I asked about the techniques used in classroom situations Luhning replied that PVCS provides an environment where learners can experience life through arts, but where teachers don't demand from students the ability or skill to verbalize it. She added that they promote amicable community life, striving for a less dangerous, oppressive, and fearful social context, always striving for coexistence and articulation of collective actions. "All of these approaches are integral and essential elements for the Afro-Brazilian cultural heritage," concluded Luhning. While Luhning expresses concern with collectivity, pedagogy specialist Jucélia Teixeira brings in approaches focusing on the individual. Teixeira says that PVCS program builds a sense of self through a multidisciplinary approach that provides artistic experiences, not only for the technical training of students, but for self-knowledge and knowledge of others. Teixeira explains that she considers the PVCS program successful when she observes growth in students' self-recognition, awareness of others, and a deeper understanding of their socio-cultural context.

PVCS pedagogy strives for students to increase their self-acceptance and acceptance of others, and boost their self-esteem. The practical application of this pedagogy consists in promoting the development of individual and collective potentials through social and artistic interaction, developing relationships between musical, body, and art expressions. Teixeira

believes that by providing students with elements and experiential activities that allows them to discover their own voices and bodies, PVCS helps students to construct a self-referential vision based on the identification and recognition of their inner voice (self). This individual self-referential approach is always placed in relation to the collective vision, especially in musical activities, because their ultimate goal is to gather all students to collaborate around the school term's final performance production.

Both Luhning and Teixeira made clear that a necessary and essential task of art educators is to provide their students with a space for transformation. With regard to music they indicated several aspects through which PVCS strives for students to transform themselves. They believe they can entice children into such transformation by means of metaphorical approaches, by proposing activities in which several elements transform themselves: words into light, color into sound, rhythm into kinesthesia, dynamics into dance, strength into lightness, intensity into stillness, and melody into emotion; vocal incantations into collective response; individuality into collective creativity. They propose to develop musicianship through the development of perception, acknowledging feelings, constructing a sense of self, and sharing sensibilities, silence, pauses, time and space. In their views, the rescuing and reinvention of Afro-Brazilian culture occurs when PVCS teachers recreate oral tradition approaches to education. This recreation crystallizes, for instance, through storytelling of Candomblé mythology, and performing music and dance that originated within the community as elements that resonate with meanings constructed by the students, in such a way that they build their own insights.

Librarian Núbia Lourenzo understands that books are not a traditional form of preserving oral culture, but she points out that “in our present time books can be a useful resource for rescuing it.” Lourenzo says that the interweaving of so many artistic forms (gestures and body

movements, the different rhythms, and so many melodies) all carry history. Researchers from all over the world visit the library and Lourenzo observes that so many nationals and internationals interested in matters that seem “common place” to Vila América community, encourages students to ask and understand why there is so much appreciation of cultural events that are part of their daily life. “As they begin to wonder how this information is kept whole, they realize that books are also a means of preserving oral culture. This is a clear example of how culture can benefit from the books. Although books don’t replace oral culture, they help to preserve it, and help the community to learn about itself,” states Lourenzo.

The Importance of Teaching and Learning *Samba-de-roda*

PVCS music and *capoeira* teachers unanimously claim that *samba-de-roda* is a highly effective activity in transmitting cultural heritage. Ossimar believes it is crucial to teach within the tradition, thus the importance of teaching *samba-de-roda*. Julio Góes, instructor of *pandeiro* and *caxixi* construction at PVCS reports that his Capoeira *mestre* and other Afro-Brazilian teachers taught him that *samba-de-roda* originated within Capoeira circles. It was a way to disguise a form of resistance to suppression of Capoeira, at the time when it used to be prohibited by law. Many of the PVCS instructors express that today *samba-de-roda* is likely the most popular folk samba style among Afro-Brazilians in Bahia.

Julio explained that Capoeira was outlawed in Brazilian society until at least the first half of the twentieth century to the point that it was considered a crime and whoever practiced it would be arrested. Ironically, it is one of the best-known Brazilian art forms in and outside Brazil nowadays. According to Julio, this is due to the fact that Afro-Brazilians never stopped

practicing it. When it was outlawed, he says, they practiced it in more secluded places, away from the eyes of the police, but always at risk of being caught and arrested. They knew they wouldn't be able to escape on foot once the horse-riding police spotted them. They also knew that, in spite of not being appreciated by the dominant white society, playing percussion, clapping, and singing in a samba circle was not against the law. "That is how *samba-de-roda* was born," avows Julio.

Both Sizinio and Julio agree that *samba-de-roda* is responsible for perpetuating Capoeira. Capoeira circles survived through repression, "thanks to the ability of Afro-Brazilian *capoeiristas*, who realized they could create an activity that disguised Capoeira," affirms Sizinio. As Julio explains, a few *capoeiristas* would stay put in strategic surrounding places to keep watch while others practiced *capoeira's* fight movements. At the first sign of police approaching, the Afro-Brazilian sentinels would announce it and the circle would quickly "metamorphose" into a *samba-de-roda* circle. According to Julio, both *capoeira* and *samba-de-roda* are strong manifestations of African heritage via Afro-Brazilian culture. Ossimar explains that through his teaching he helps to develop vocal abilities (already existent in the student) to provide a more effective, meaningful and authentic performance of *samba-de-roda*.

Guitar teacher Gustavo also believes that *samba-de-roda* is a great tool for cultural heritage transmission. He claims that when he and his students play and sing *samba de roda*, they are "immediately transported to a place and time in which they can play childhood games and sing childhood songs; this is a powerful resource for moments of fun and also for cohesive integration of the group." Gustavo observes that, regardless of musical training or experience, when children circle songs are performed, "it is like the children already know it without really knowing it," since they engage in the activity so naturally and spontaneously.

Gustavo told me that he is always amazed to witness this “learning by osmosis” phenomenon. It is clear to him that this kind of music is an integral part of this Afro-Brazilian community life, although perhaps not as practiced by younger generations anymore. Gustavo believes that younger generations could easily lose that practice if they did not attend classes like the ones offered by PVCS. He seems reassured by that because kids can easily pick up the *samba-de-roda* activity as if something that is in their cultural DNA, and sees PVCS work as strengthening the bridge between generations. Although it is likely that older generations practiced it more often than younger generations today, Gustavo observed that most of his students had never actually played that kind of music before they came to PVCS.

Gustavo is an ethnomusicology graduate student as well, so he took the liberty to share with me some of his views: because *samba-de-roda* originated as a form of resistance and adaptation to circumstances, when children hear and play *samba-de-roda*, “the music is being considered as a factor generated by behavioral patterns that are accepted by all, thus becoming a characteristic way to adapt to circumstances.” I saw on several occasions at PVCS that whenever *samba-de-roda* was played there was a prompt response from whoever was there at the moment. As soon as the music started, they engaged in music making, as if they were always ready to adapt, showing no concern about form, or hierarchy. The more knowledgeable ones naturally took the lead and the group spontaneously followed accordingly. The ones who were hearing the words for the first time just listened, while clapping and dancing during a couple of rounds, and joined in the vocals. The *call-and-response* typical of *samba-de-roda* functioned as a self-serving teaching and learning strategy. They quickly formed a circle and joined in the music making as if that behavior were part of a collectivity that celebrates life, that is, having survived in a harsh environment. Being there, and seeing these children making music gave me a clear

sense that they are continuing an African tradition, except that now it is within a new ethos, the Afro-Brazilian tradition.

Gustavo admits that this is an essentially experiential phenomenon. It is clear to him that rescuing tradition is largely an implicit process. Although he recognizes the difficulty in putting it in explicit terms, he attempts an explanation: “the student may perceive that the culture of his ancestors was built by constant adaptation to circumstances, and the integrated abilities of adaptation and playing is what makes Afro-Bahians naturally feel that they are part of a collectivity, and that they share community values. When this happens, there is an integration of all generations around the same cultural rites.” My fieldwork observation matches Gustavo’s perspectives, as I saw that even the youngest children at PVCS end up getting in touch with aspects of their cultural heritage. Gustavo boldly states that this happens as part of a subliminal process, and gives an example: “when they listen to music, students are moving through space, keeping in the circle, long and short steps, clapping along the beat of music, but with highly syncopated rhythms. This happens naturally. It is almost effortless to teach it, because the kids don’t ‘think’ that they need to ‘be trained,’ it is part of their cultural vocabulary.”

Music Theory instructor Maurício, on the other hand, recognizes that “even though music theory is not an Afro-Brazilian tradition, it is important for students to learn about other traditions. It also brings them closer to music education as it is taught in formal schools.” Maurício says that the theory course was not part of the initial proposal of PVCS, but it was created per request of some students who expressed a desire to learn reading music notation, which is based on Western tradition. This is a clear manifestation of coexistence at PVCS, demonstrating that Afro-Brazilian teachers and learners are not exclusivist, and that Afro-Brazilians are aware that they live in a society that has blended African and European ethos.

Storytelling teacher Dona Ceci says that she tells stories based on oral tradition, history, experiences and discoveries about the *way of being* Afro-Brazilian. She was Pierre Verger's assistant for several years, and her many years as a Candomblé practitioner naturally earned her the status of a spiritual mentor for PVCS community. She reports that she was able to develop an effective and meaningful practice of storytelling based on Afro-Brazilian tradition, African mythology and beliefs. Dona Ceci is a firm believer that she educates children by "stimulating the ability to listen and respect the elders." She claims that the first step to be learned at PVCS is respect and understanding of elders' wisdom, and "understanding that this wisdom teaches them to construct themselves as social beings that are aware of their origins and their cultural heritage."⁵⁵

As I witnessed it, Dona Ceci's work at PVCS goes beyond cultural work; it is largely social work as well. On a few occasions I heard children and adolescents calling her *mãe* (mom), and that made me think she was their biological mother. When I interviewed kids and heard them referring to Dona Ceci as their mom, I decided not to question it, although it seemed unusual for a woman in her late sixties to have very young children. When I interviewed her, it became clear that she is not actually any child's biological mother. She said she never married, and explained that kids treat her that way because she takes care of them in a motherly way. They come to her because they feel comfortable sharing traumatic and abusive events experienced in their home environments. Because they trust her, they tell her things they would not tell anybody else, she says. In her interview, she made sure she would not provide names or specific details. Instead, she would refer to "someone who had being a victim of a traumatizing event." It became obvious that she does not share those reports with anybody else. Kids are aware of her respect for their

⁵⁵ Dona Ceci. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, August 3, 2009.

confidentiality, and thus reveal their experiences to her, and she gives them emotional comfort, understanding, and guidance.

Many of the PVCS kids actually don't have a real mother, so Dona Ceci fulfills that role to some extent. Another explanation for Ceci to be called *mãe* is her involvement with Candomblé religion. Candomblé priestesses are referred to as *Mãe-de-Santo* (Mother of Saint) and their initiated disciples are treated as *Filha-de-Santo* (Daughter of Saint). Continuing African tradition, women hold most of the leading roles in Candomblé *terreiros*, and the relationships between practitioners are not limited by boundaries between sacred and secular environments. Seeing and treating older women as spiritual mothers is a common behavior among Afro-Brazilians who practice Candomblé.

PVCS children not only listen to Dona Ceci, they respect her as an authority, and most of the times abide by her guidance. Her *mãe* status greatly contributes to the effectiveness of her storytelling. Children listen attentively to what she has to say. In several occasions I saw her surrounded by children, who quietly paid full attention to her speeches. Actually, she is not always telling a story, but talking about principles of good behavior. Dona Ceci stresses discipline, good manners, respect for others, and good behavior. Often she draws from African, Afro-Brazilian, and Brazilian folk tales to make her point. Her storytelling is filled with characters representative of African mythology and Afro-Brazilian folk tales, which invariably express some aspect of a moral principle.

As Pierre Verger's assistant for several years, Dona Ceci learned a great deal about African cultures. She understands that Brazil is not Africa, and is always adapting her stories to the context of her young audiences. She says that her storytelling helps children to acknowledge their place in society. Her stories teach them "how to cope with adversity, how to overcome

obstacles,” and ultimately shows them philosophical perspectives to seek for a pathway toward a more promising socioeconomic status. Dona Ceci humbly sees herself as a servant to the community, and claims she is fulfilling one of the basic functions of PVCS education. Her intention is that the stories be incorporated in the imagination of children, in such a way that they elicit an appropriation of meanings. In her wisdom, Dona Ceci firmly believes that children need more than a conceptual understanding of words. Understanding Afro-Brazilian culture, she states, “requires a sensitive and musical body, a whole language, a body language besides a poetic language. When the drum sounds, the body automatically follows, it is irresistible.” That is why she is part of PVCS; she draws elements from the Afro-Brazilian universe and its mythology for her educational activity.

Afro-Dance instructor Negrizu affirms that he develops techniques to create a body that is more representative of the Afro-Brazilian performance of movement and dance. Instead of “African” or “Afro-Brazilian” Negrizu uses the term “Afro” when referring to his work. He also intends to make Afro-Brazilians aware that “they have a musical and sensitive body that expresses itself through a traditionally holistic language, the musical language of the Afro rhythm,” thus the choice to use the Afro-Brazilian and Candomblé universes for the *oficinas* he teaches. His dance classes begin by raising awareness and perception of body in space, the relationship between body and space, and between bodies. Then he introduces music and gradually helps his students to “understand the relationship between music, body, rhythm, and space, that is, “wake up” the (inner) process of connecting the body language with the rhythm of Afro music - the body movements, the rhythm of the movements of each individual, the perception (vision) of the other, the pauses, coordination, corporeal (not mental) memorization of

different movement sequences, placing the body before the other, and the interaction between bodies.”⁵⁶

Negrizu believes that his work is integral to transmitting Afro cultural heritage. He was one of the leaders and co-founders of the *Afoxé Badauê*, and his entire life he has been involved in both rescuing and reinventing African culture in Bahia. His most poignant statement, in my view, is that “loosely moving hips is a fundamental element of the Afro culture, but Brazilian society imprinted stiffness to the hips of Afro-Brazilians.” Negrizu’s statement encompasses a complexity of historical events that reflect the struggle for survival of African culture in Brazil: slavery, Portuguese (Eurocentric) domination, the clash of African and Brazilian cultures, and how Afro music and Afro-dance come in as mediators and communicators between cultures, and as rescuers of African cultural heritage. By “softening” his students’ hips, Negrizu means to bring them closer to their African heritage.

Mestre Sizinio says that *capoeira* is one of the oldest and closest practices to Black ancestry in Brazil. “It educates body and mind, and teaches students to play all the instruments used in *capoeira*.”⁵⁷ I observed several *capoeira* classes and saw students singing, dancing, and playing different instruments. Sizinio claims that, above all, *capoeira* teaches discipline and helps the student to relate to ethics, respect, and humility. All of this is achieved while the student is developing physical and mental endurance required by the *jogo* (game) of *capoeira*. *capoeira* transmits practices initiated by ancient *mestres*, and therefore, learning it helps the student to understand how the Afro-Brazilian culture has endured adversity, strengthened and

⁵⁶ Negrizu. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 19, 2008.

⁵⁷ *Mestre Sizinio*. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 18, 2007.

remained vibrant and active. Everyone has their moment in the center of the circle, and all are integral parts of the circle at any given moment during the practice/performance. The sense of hierarchy emerges from the wisdom and skill, and these qualities are abundant in the *mestre*.

Capoeira tradition has been transmitted through many generations. *Mestres* convey what they learn in the same way they did their ancestors. Sizinio stresses that “even with all the technological developments, the *mestre* will continue teaching orally, passing on the tradition. The *mestre* transmits knowledge, cultural resistance, endurance and character. Basically, *capoeira* teaches to survive in a society that oppresses the Afro-Brazilian in many ways, giving the student a sense of balance between several aspects: physical, social, community, melodic and rhythmic.”

Sizinio’s views resonate with many other PVCS educators’ views, like Luhning, Teixeira, Dona Ceci, and Negrizu. They see *capoeira* as a very effective form of holistic education, because it enables multi-disciplinary skills, as it engages several areas of human expression: vocal-corporeal, rhythmic-melodic perception, acuity of sound, space-body experience and oral culture itself. I would add that *capoeira* promotes a complete sound-voice-body practice, related to the technical-emotional-playful-poetic-folksong context. Sizinio is one among many *mestres* who affirm that “*capoeira* is the most African of Afro-Brazilian art forms,” because it continues African ethos through all these different elements. In summary, all interviewees agree that *capoeira* is the most complete and effective practice toward rescuing and transmitting African cultural heritage in Brazil.

Raising Awareness of Students' Ancestry

Percussion instructor Hermógenes says that through teaching rhythms like *ijexá*, *afoxé*, samba-reggae, and *samba-de-roda*, PVCS is allowing the students to make a connection with their ancestry, because these rhythms and these instruments were born and developed within the African and Afro-Brazilian cultures. However, Hermógenes does not mention “ancestry” or “tradition” in his classes. He believes the awareness has to be raised implicitly.

Sizínio, Julio, Ossimar, Gustavo, and Hermógenes all concur that *ijexá* and *afoxé* are rhythms that come from Candomblé ritual music. This configures a clear example of putting students in touch with their ancestry. I asked how explicitly they conveyed that connection to students, and all of them gave me the same answer: “there is no need to explain it, the music speaks for itself.” Gustavo added that conceptualizing intangible heritage like the one PVCS attempts to rescue is not effective in teaching his students. “Kids here get lost when we mention concepts like ‘ancestry’ or ‘heritage.’ It confuses them and ends up interfering with their ability to simply learn by ‘doing it’.”

Most respondents brought up the fact that Candomblé is the most African of all Afro-Brazilian cultural manifestations, thus exposing students to such rhythms automatically connects them with African heritage. In summary, participants expressed that music is an expression of life, of experience, which is ephemeral and at the same time profoundly transformative. All interviewees unanimously stated that through teaching and learning Afro-Brazilian music the awareness about ancestry occurs partly via explicit, and partly via implicit terms.

Pierre Verger's Principles in Action

According to Dona Ceci (storytelling) and Teixeira (pedagogy director), when Luhning founded PVCS, she was continuing Verger's work. I wanted to find out if Luhning incorporated Pierre Verger's principles when she conceived the *oficinas*. All interviewees responded affirmatively, so I asked them which were Verger's principles incorporated by Luhning. Dona Ceci answers this question pointing out that Luhning is one among many others at PVCS who met and worked with Verger. They worked with him for so long, because they believed in his principles, and therefore are applying his principles at PVCS program as well.

Dona Ceci mentions principles promoted by Pierre Verger, such as combining research, education and coexistence. Verger was a firm believer of listening to elders. "Pierre Verger spent time in Africa listening to Africans, and he developed a deep understanding of their culture. He was initiated in African religions and Candomblé, and he understood there was a great similarity between Afro-Bahians and Africans. He was a very patient person; he always listened, and constantly took notes. He valued everything elder Africans and Afro-Brazilians shared with him, because he understood they were providing knowledge that he could not find in any book." Dona Ceci's storytelling and mentoring work at PVCS promotes listening to the elderly telling about the past, about people and their traditions. She claims that telling children about their past allows them to discover voices that are usually silenced by the formal school system. "They are given the opportunity to see greatness in their ancestors, and this increases their self-esteem, and makes them be more interested in the Afro-Brazilian arts."

Teixeira summarizes Pierre Verger's principles as "attributing great value to Afro-Brazilian traditions." Teixeira says that PVCS draws from Verger's principles in the sense that it provides a space, which promotes discoveries of culture and of self. Its program allows children

to “discover new sounds, hear stories, including successful trajectories. In a deeper level, it motivates students to reflect upon their local culture as a valuable asset.” Verger wanted Afro-Brazilians, and Brazilians in general, to see the richness of cultural heritage originated in Africa. PVCS is a direct result of this principle, says Teixeira, “because it emphasizes the sense of belonging by bringing in positive role models to point kids toward less social vulnerability.”⁵⁸

Negrizu also worked for Pierre Verger organizing his photography collections, and he sees PVCS as a direct result of Verger’s groundbreaking research. Pierre Verger was open to diversity, not only to Afro-Brazilian culture.

He was an eclectic man, and he always made us reflect about the importance of living in different cultures as a means to understand humans, and ourselves, not by explaining the cultures verbally, but by behaving according to insiders. Verger repeatedly said that he would never ask “why,” he simply did whatever they told him to do, without questioning, and that is how he was able to present so much material to others.⁵⁹

Negrizu says that he applies Verger’s principles when he emphasizes diverse contexts related to music and dance as channels of “expression of feelings and struggles, besides being a possible pathway to the unknown, with a great potential for freedom, which is built on hope.”⁶⁰

Ossimar recalls the inherent aspect of Afro-Brazilian culture, which expresses that music and rhythm have to do with the body and its movement. “Music and dance connect teachers and learners to their ethnic roots and to various forms of multiple expressions, helping them to understand culturally important symbolic meanings,”⁶¹ Ossimar declares. He explains that some

⁵⁸ Jucélia Teixeira. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 17, 2007.

⁵⁹ Negrizu. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 19, 2008.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ossimar. Interview by the author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 10, 2008.

of Pierre Verger's photos became icons of Afro-Brazilian culture because they synthesize a complexity of African heritage elements, and "Verger's principles certainly support using art as an expression of culture."⁶²

Ossimar observes that Verger's photography is iconic by nature. However, he believes that Pierre Verger's principles are not directly associated to the music practices, because he wasn't concerned about specifying which elements from each art form were more significant representations of culture. "Verger had a holistic view about Afro-Brazilian culture," he says. "Verger was aware of the iconic power of music, because he took so many pictures of people dancing, and some of these pictures are very popular. It is natural for Bahians to relate to music and dance, and music undeniably is the most popular of the Afro-Brazilian arts."⁶³ Music speaks for itself, rephrases Ossimar. He is convinced that Afro-Brazilian music carries cultural symbols that are quite powerful among Afro-Bahians, "because people attach meaning to sounds, rhythms, and movements (body language). Some of these elements become icons to represent Afro-Brazilian culture. Although students' perceptions of the same symbol depend on their individual associations, when Afro-Brazilian music is played there is a sort of catharsis that clearly shows collective mental and emotional associations,"⁶⁴ concludes Ossimar.

Pierre Verger Foundation archivist Layla, recent graduated with a Ph. D. in ethnomusicology, complements Ossimar's views, affirming that melodies are related to urban, media-driven, rural, and ancestral universes as well. "Lyrics and symbols always open up pathways to universes that are not usually explored, but already preexisting in children's

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

experiences.” Layla sees Pierre Verger’s principles embedded in his photography, and believes that his pictures opened up new horizons for Afro-Brazilians to see themselves as carriers of a valuable, and furthermore, fundamental cultural heritage that has been constructing Brazilian society. Layla sees PVCS as a consequence of Pierre Verger’s work, and thus definitely an extension of the photographer’s principles.

Sizinio states that Verger was utterly an ethical man. At PVCS he is able to work with notions of ethics, civil rights in a social context where there is great disregard to respect, accepted rules, and great emphasis in power through violence. This context manifests “a distinct moral/ethics code,” asserts Sizinio, and PVCS applies Verger’s principles, because it teaches peaceful coexistence. Keyboard teacher Ricardo indicates that teaching music that includes elements and concepts of Afro-Brazilian culture, ancestry and citizenship, is directly connected with Verger’s principles.

Tension between Candomblé and the Evangelical Church

Ricardo, however, brings another element into the discussion about rescuing culture. One of his students, in his late teens, comes to class wanting to learn Evangelical hymns. His student “not only requests Evangelical church hymns, but also attempts to indoctrinate his classmates, talking incessantly about his faith, his church, how nice it is, and so on.”⁶⁵ Ricardo is not happy about it, but he sees no alternative other than to teach some of that material. He reports that his students, although Afro-Brazilians, ask him to teach hymns played in Evangelical church ceremonies, “because it is part of their belief system, and PVCS is here to elicit coexistence.” He

⁶⁵ Ricardo. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 19, 2008.

finds these situations difficult to deal with, because those hymns are not originally manifestations of Afro-Brazilian culture. Yet, many Afro-Brazilians practice that religion. “Evangelical churches are taking over religious practices among Bahia’s population, and their religious music has nothing to do with Afro-Brazilian culture.” I asked why he feels that he must teach music that does not belong to Afro-Brazilian culture. He sounded distressed. He is not a fan of such hymns, and rather not deal with them, but he feels he must teach it, because “PVCS is supposed to provide a service to the community, and you cannot exclude Evangelical hymns from our pedagogy, just because we practice or like better a different religion. Evangelical religion is not traditionally Afro-Brazilian, but in Bahia most of the churchgoers are Afro-Brazilian, and we cannot exclude anyone. PVCS is an open cultural space, we enroll students regardless of their creed, and we welcome everyone.”⁶⁶

Ricardo follows the principle of coexistence, but he does not know how to resolve that dilemma. “Tradition is an ever changing process, and continuing it means that we have to accept new developments,”⁶⁷ he says. When talking about the current state of religious practices in Salvador, Ricardo clearly sees Evangelical churches as “a threat to Candomblé practices.”⁶⁸ Indeed, I was astonished to see the fast growing power of several denominations of Evangelical churches. They have become an integral part of Salvador’s urban scenario. For instance, I visited one Candomblé *terreiro* located in Vila América, at a lot next door to one of these churches. I saw a large solid concrete building, whose front entrance displayed in big letters a “Welcome to the House of God” sign overshadowing the humble and small *terreiro* structure. In the *terreiro*,

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Candomblé practitioners expressed concern, because they see more and more of these big buildings appearing in their neighborhood, and the number of their believers seem to be growing quite quickly in the last ten years.

Gustavo, on the other hand, sees Candomblé strong and alive and admits the tension between religions, but he does not think Candomblé is losing believers, “because the culture of *orixás* is part of the Bahian cosmology, and it is reinforced by the syncretism with Catholicism, as many Bahians practice both religions.” Gustavo has the conviction that PVCS follows Verger’s principles. One of the aspects, he stresses, is the voluntary attendance. He believes that PVCS is growing gradually and steadily in attendance, because children do not feel the pressure to attend. Gustavo recalled one of Verger’s statements: “Candomblé is still alive today, because it does not intend to convince people about an absolute truth, as opposed to most religions.”⁶⁹

Luhning admits having created PVCS, but she diverges to some degree from Teixeira’s and Dona Ceci’s aforementioned statements. She states that its pedagogy does not derive directly from Pierre Verger’s principles. She recognizes the influence of the photographer on PVCS’s education philosophy. However, she humbly declared there is still much to do in that sense. “PVCS pedagogy and methodology is far beyond our reality,” she states. She said Verger did not consider himself a religious person. “He wasn’t a collector of art or any other object, neither a researcher inclined to applying theories. His main interest was the people, who in their historical dimension and in their socio-cultural context built the artifacts they used in their daily life and

⁶⁹ Gustavo. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 15, 2008.

religious rites, and above all, in the dignity they acquired from their religion, a motif he always highlighted when he talked about the Bahian Candomblé.”⁷⁰

The Role of Candomblé

Several elements taught at PVCS’s music, *capoeira* and dance *oficinas* were drawn from Candomblé rituals; for instance the rhythm *ijexá* and dance steps and choreography associated with specific *orixás*. However, it wasn’t clear to me whether these were deliberate choices to promote Candomblé or these elements just happen to be part of art manifestations outside the religious context. Among my research goals was to find out if the PVCS pedagogy has a focus on music of Candomblé as a basis for workshops in music and dance. According to Luhning, “although Candomblé may be seen by outsiders as the basis for the PVCS program, it is not the foundation for its pedagogical philosophy; such view can be explained through the degree of integration of all the different aspects approached in its pedagogy. The PVCS pedagogy aims to develop creativity, self-discovery, and seek integration between different activities and disciplines, rather than specialization.”⁷¹

Ricardo, who is an anthropologist specialized in indigenous groups in Brazil, corroborates Luhning’s views saying that all these elements are present because they are “inherent to African culture, which, like in so many other cultures, to speak about religion, one must speak of music, dance, arts, oral transmission.” PVCS education follows African cosmology in the sense that it integrates different aspects that often are dissociated in the

⁷⁰ Angela Luhning. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 2, 2007.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Eurocentric conception. In African cultures, adds Luhning, the diverse cultural aspects are intrinsically interconnected, forming an experiential unity, “which sometimes is very difficult to be understood by outsiders. Likewise, that is the case with the texts written by Verger, it is difficult to limit or separate the different themes, so we let ourselves be carried by a more natural flux of themes.”

Dona Ceci says that although she is considered the spiritual mentor at PVCS, she brings awareness about Candomblé because she seeks to provide to the kids a guidance that is based on a spiritual foundation. Ceci also tells me that, although Candomblé is ingrained in Afro-Brazilian arts, perhaps more explicitly through music, PVCS pedagogy is not intended to focus on Candomblé. Candomblé is presented from a cultural perspective rather than from a religious perspective. The views of Luhning, Ricardo, and Ceci all agree with views expressed by Pierre Verger. Layla states it is important to note that, when referring to the African ethnicities from which a large portion of Afro-Brazilians descend, Verger understood that he could not detach African culture from religion. She explains that nearly all of Verger’s texts (except the books about his photography) refer to the cultural context of the Yoruba, as much in Nigeria and Benin as in African diaspora. Candomblé is a blend of all these ethnicities’ religious practices.

In order to explain why Verger worked with so much dedication, and even obsession, with the Yoruba culture, Gustavo mentions Ulli Beier (1997), who became a close friend of Verger’s when he lived in Africa. According to Beier, Verger “observed, gathered data, and wrote extensively about these religions, in order to give shape to a written body to this vast orally kept knowledge, in order for the text-based cultures to pay more attention to it, to see it as equally important as all the other religions that have their sacred book in order to be respected. It was the will to document the wealth of the Yoruba culture and for it to receive the deserved

recognition that motivated Verger to emphasize its cosmology and religious structure, which is notably different from the big ‘revealed’ religions, as he used to call the religions transmitted through text” (Beier 1997).

Luhning states that *ijexá* is one of the main rhythms used in Candomblé and also the rhythm that most often is taken out of the religious context and played in secular and universal contexts. It is the rhythm that “permeates various contexts.”⁷² Luhning disagrees with anthropologists Roger Bastide (1961) and Melville Herskovits (1955), who affirm that the entrancing power of music in Candomblé only takes effect in religious contexts. Both authors believed that one can only be susceptible to spirit possession inside the religious and/or ritualistic context. However, Luhning reported that she personally witnessed people incorporating spirits (entering in a trance state) outside of the religious context. “It is a combination of factors that induces people into trance, but not necessarily in the sacred context of Candomblé *terreiros*. Certain rhythms that are associated with *orixás* can induce people into trance, even if they are in a secular environment,”⁷³ she says. Luhning’s statement not only counters theories of those two prominent anthropologists, but also affirms the transformative power of music. From her views I infer one of the reasons why PVCS so openly works with elements from Candomblé.

I asked her if she thought music could be an agent of spiritual transformation in situations not necessarily related to a ritual, like in the context of strictly teaching and learning. She smiled when she heard the word “strictly,” and replied that one of the keys to understanding music as a transformative agent in the context of Afro-Brazilian culture is to understand that music is not

⁷² Angela Luhning. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 2, 2007.

⁷³ Ibid.

dichotomized in African cultures. Besides, “there is nothing that will prevent an individual from getting into a musically induced trance, except the individual himself.”⁷⁴ Luhning brings up the discussion about the myth about music having the power to control human beings, overruling people’s self-control: “what happens is that in religious contexts the person who incorporates spirits is actually open and prepared for his or her body to incorporate. It is true that this predisposition can be unconscious, but still it doesn’t mean it is beyond the control of the human being.”⁷⁵

Increasing Student Interest Through Music

My research also investigates whether the process of learning music increases students’ curiosity so far as to make them return the next day with more willingness to learn and interact with the PVCS community. In summary, the responses I obtained from administrators, instructors, academics, parents, and students were all affirmative. Arielson, an eleven-year-old student of percussion, *caxixi* construction and a fifth grader, states that PVCS *oficinas* help him “very much” to achieve better results at regular school, because they “motivate” him to be a better student, make him feel “stronger inside” (more self-confident), and more comfortable learning regular school contents. I wanted to get a sense of the level of discernment Arielson had about the music he has been learning in the percussion workshop, whether it is traditional or non-traditional. In order to convey my question to a child at his age, I asked if he was learning “old”

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

or “new” music. He replied he was learning “both.” Then I asked if he thought he was learning rhythms that had to do with his grandparents, and he said, “some of them do, and some don’t.”

Hermógenes, the percussion instructor does not use the term “traditional.” He simply tells his students the name of the rhythm and of the instruments, and proceeds with his hands-on demonstration. Arielson may not be familiar with the concept “traditional,” but from his understanding about “old” and “new” music I infer that he is aware he is learning both traditional and contemporary music, however not in explicit terms. Thus I asked him how could he tell the music he is learning is old. “It is from my grandparents time,” he answers. I ask how Arielson knows it is from their time, and if he talked to his grandparents about it. He does not hesitate and boldly states, “The rhythm of the sound is lighter.” Those were his exact words. He was referring specifically to the sonority aspect of music. He meant that the older music is less polyrhythmic and not as loud as contemporary Bahian styles. That would make logical sense, because contemporary Afro-Brazilian music has several big drums that didn’t exist before the 1970s. The Afro-Bloco Olodum ensemble, for instance, is large and has several big *surdos*,⁷⁶ playing loud and upbeat complex polyrhythm, and this is a more recent development in Afro-Brazilian music.

Bruno, a seventh-grader in the local public school system has been student of percussion, *capoeira*, guitar, and construction of *caxixi* at PVCS for two years. He says that Hermógenes teaches the rhythms on the different instruments, but does not mention where the rhythms come from or how it started. He mentions he has learned “several rhythms, including *jembê*, *ijexá*, *afoxé*, and samba-reggae.” Arielson interjects, mentioning another rhythm, *curubi*, about which I have never heard before, so I ask him where does *curubi* come from, and he says, “it’s an

⁷⁶ *Surdos* are traditionally the largest drums in samba schools.

African rhythm.” But then when I ask from what part of Africa it comes, Arielson hesitates and says “Amazônia.”⁷⁷ Bruno laughs pretty hard, seemingly recognizing that Arielson is unsure about his geography knowledge. Thus I ask Bruno if Amazônia is located in South, Central, or North America. He answers, “Central America.” Then I give them a hint asking, “isn’t Amazônia in Brazil?” Bruno looks startled, “In Brazil? I don’t think so,” he says.

Bruno’s uncertainty surprises me; I did not expect to hear that an eleven-year-old Brazilian who attends school does not know in which continent the Amazon forest is located. The state of Amazonas, and the Amazon forest are in the core of one of the most controversial environmental issues of our time, so I am a bit distraught that young generations have no clue about it, considering that it is located not so very north of where they live. I realized I had assumed that because the Amazon is one of the World’s top wonders, whose largest portion is within Brazilian territory, that the Amazon forest would be part of public school’s curriculum content. I ask both Arielson and Bruno if they have studied South America geography in their regular schools, and both reply, “not yet.” I ask Bruno if he studies geography in the 7th grade, he says yes, while making hand gestures that imply, “so, so.” He explains that the geography class is once a week, and the teacher often misses class, so he does not have geography class, sometimes for 2 or 3 weeks in a row. I ask if teachers of other disciplines also miss class frequently, and Bruno says that the “geography teacher is the one who misses the most.” Interviews with PVCS kids like this one provide a good example of the reality of challenges within Bahia’s public school system. It also helps to understand the extension of the challenge PVCS faces when attempting to informally educate these youths.

⁷⁷ *Amazônia* is the Portuguese term for “Amazon forest,” which covers most of the Amazon Basin in South America. The Amazon forest covers the entire Northwest region of Brazil.

Gauging Effectiveness

Following up with students after they left PVCS is beyond the scope of this study, and knowing that PVCS is an informal school, I wanted to find out whether the school had any system or any formal strategy of monitoring results for the effectiveness of PVCS program. How does PVCS gauge its own effectiveness? PVCS staff and instructors participate in monthly meetings. I observed one of these meetings as it took place on the outside table in the outdoor patio for about 2 hours. The meeting's discussions covered a wide range of issues: logistics, pedagogy, and integration of contents, student evaluation, teacher self-evaluation, challenges, difficulties, and so forth. "This is PVCS basic strategy of gauging effectiveness,"⁷⁸ says Luhning. I asked participants if they thought PVCS is effectively achieving musical, artistic, and cultural training – that is, development of creativity and personal development through increasing knowledge. I was also interested in having a sense of how effective PVCS program leads to the discovery that arts are not only fundamental aspects of culture, but also a potential springboard to their future professionalization (career).

Teixeira told me that PVCS had a "sort of system on the PVCS computer," and that she would email me a copy of the electronic file. However, unbeknownst to me, I never received that information after asking for it in three separate occasions. Since it never came I thought it was good policy not to press on the issue any longer. Luhning later confirmed that there wasn't any formal way of following up on students' progress, except the reports she had to present to sponsors at the end of each funded project. However, she made clear that these reports were not

⁷⁸ Angela Luhning. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 2, 2007.

based on quantitative data. She indicated that PVCS sponsors are not concerned with specific numbers, but with overall educational and social progress, which in her view can only be evaluated qualitatively. Students who have been attending workshops for two or more years are well known within the PVCS community, and instructors know about their progress through plain observation, without the concern of keeping some form of document.

Luhning expressed the struggle with how to measure effectiveness in an organization like PVCS. She made clear that educational NGOs in the context of marginalized communities face a big challenge when attempting to measure their effectiveness, and that has to do with the emphasis sponsors traditionally have put on quantitative approaches of evaluation. PVCS, like most NGOs in Brazil document their effectiveness qualitatively. This is the whole culture of NGOs; in spite of my serious attempts to collect data that described the effectiveness of the program, I realized PVCS does it in the same way NGOs do it in the US. Therefore the qualitative documentation is crucial, and perhaps I would have had more success had I requested reports of any nature elaborated by PVCS administration. In fact, qualitative approaches to measuring are much more important and this study demonstrates the need to emphasize such approach.

In general, interviewees (largely parental figures or relatives) declare that, after at least six months of continuous attendance, students demonstrate progress in several aspects at home and at their neighborhood communities. In summary, respondents indicate that PVCS students show different levels of growth in “socializing skills, group integration, behavioral and learning discipline, and respect for and from others.” Some respondents mentioned progress with regard to “overcoming psychological limitations and expanding communitarian relationships,” as well.

Other respondents described similar progress as “greater self-esteem, and increased ability to perform tasks outside school, and to overcome obstacles and/or challenges.”

Community Response

I also wanted to find out how the community is responding to PVCS education. In addition to PVCS teachers, students, and staff, I interviewed members of the Vila América community in order to have a sense of how PVCS is viewed by those who are not involved in teaching and learning activities, including students’ parents and relatives, plus nearby neighbors. Parents and relatives were interviewed in the PVCS premises, while neighbors and other members of the community were interviewed in nearby bars and restaurants, at their homes, and in Candomblé *terreiros*. The overall reflexes or repercussions of PVCS education in Vila América are positive. The majority of members of the community, who have heard about it, and/or have some kind of relationship with a PVCS student, demonstrated good knowledge about the program. People who never entered PVCS facilities or haven’t heard much about it and don’t know any of its students, know very little about the program.

People who don’t come in PVCS, unless they have seen a flyer about its events, won’t know what PVCS is about, simply because there is no other way to obtain information about its activities. One who walks by its front gate won’t be able to see or hear the *oficinas*’ activities taking place inside, because the classrooms and the patio are situated in the area that is further away from the street. PVCS’s most effective advertisement is definitely the word of mouth of its students and their relatives, who inform others motivated by their enthusiasm.

Michele de Oliveira Pereira, mother of Jonatan and aunt of Weslen, both PVCS students, often comes to watch the classes they are enrolled in, and says that the percussion workshop is very good for her son and her nephew. Her son Jonatan is very happy, and she is too, “because he is so cheerful about that workshop. He arrives home all proud, showing what he has learned to my parents, grandparents, and uncles. He becomes so communicative with people, and that makes me feel great in bringing him [to PVCS]; he is doing so well in all he does, just what I hoped for, he’s happy, I’m happy. Love it! My nephew is also attending this class, after he saw his cousin coming home with so much enthusiasm, and I love that also. For [my nephew], it was love at first sight! Cheers to PVCS and to this *oficina*! My son and my nephew are both so happy!”

Maria Angélica Santos, mother of PVCS student Tyciane Cardoso Santos, says she loves the percussion class. Maria thinks it’s excellent and important to Tyciane, so she does her best for her daughter not to miss a class. She “always wanted” her daughter to take a course like this. “The teacher also is excellent; he teaches everything, step by step, with lots of patience, especially with the little ones, who are the ones who struggle the most to learn,”⁷⁹ she says. Maria thinks Hermógenes (percussion) is very talented as a teacher, and very good with young children, and she is not “the only one who thinks that, the other parents do too. Congratulations to PVCS!” Maria is very grateful for PVCS to be in her neighborhood.

Tatiana, musical experimentation instructor, thinks that the repercussion of her *oficina* in the surrounding community is indirect. Her work reflects more directly within the PVCS, because she helps kids “expressing themselves through musical experimentation. It helps them to

⁷⁹ Maria Angélica Santos. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, August 2, 2007.

have breakthroughs about their talents, capabilities, so this helps them to be better students in the other music classes they attend here.” Hermógenes has the conviction that whatever his students learn “will be applied in their lives outside PVCS; some of them become professionals and play significant musical roles in their community in Afro-Blocos, Afoxés, and Candomblé rituals.”

Mauricio, music theory instructor, states that he started teaching theory “because kids spontaneously asked for it, and they come to class, so it seems clear that this is a repercussion of PVCS in the community, and it is a good repercussion.”

Dona Ceci says she has dealt with many child abuse cases and other problems PVCS kids bring to her. They call her “mom”, because in many cases their real mom is absent. They feel comfortable coming to her to talk about these things, and sometimes their mothers do too. She says children know they can trust her, and “their secret is safe” with her. She makes herself available to them as much as she can. “They listen to me because I am older, and can give advice. I was able to see change in many of these cases.” It is a slow process, she says, but as long as they keep attending PVCS, she sees “more dramatic changes in the second and third years. Initially they seek comfort, emotional support, and Dona Ceci provides it to them. “They feel stronger and guided, and when they slowly begin to open up we refer them to a psychologist, so PVCS becomes a source of emotional support.” Ceci also encourages them to get involved in the workshops “because it helps them to overcome problems they face at home or with neighbors. After the initial stages of acquaintance, she explains, “they get a clear idea that everyone here at PVCS means well, that we’re not just educators of arts, we deal with everything. Students gradually overcome their shyness, and I stress to them that the spiritual dimension is important, I tell stories of Candomblé mythology, because it helps them to realize

their background, their ancestors' struggle, and how they endured so much suffering for so long in Brazil.”⁸⁰

Negrizu says that the very first class he taught at PVCS was created as a response to the community kids' request. Many of them knew him or knew of him, so he believes that his classes are fulfilling some of the community's needs. Some of his Afro-Dance students “are now professional performers, many of them semi-professional. Quite a few of them joined performing organizations and they get to tour nation and worldwide.” Now many of his students enroll in his class because they heard about their neighborhood achievers. “The young ones, of course, they can pursue a career.”⁸¹

The older ones often come to class with body issues, pain, and discomfort, and Negrizu teaches them to stretch, to be kind to their bodies. He says he always tells his students to do only what does not hurt. A lot of them did not realize that they could ever be in a class like that, because they are older, and never had a class like that. They come and get into doing the movements, I feel a very strong emotional response during class, and afterwards many of them express gratitude. So they understand how beneficial it is to move the body, and how much that helps in healing. The beauty of dance is that the healing is holistic, it does not only work on the body, it works with the emotional side of things and they are very much sensitized by understanding that this class is also therapy to them. You know, they cannot fathom paying for a psychologist, or for any school as a matter of fact. But PVCS fulfills a lacuna for them, we offer high quality teaching and they get it for free. They keep bringing more and more of their neighbors to class, so it is obvious that the community is benefitting from this class.

⁸⁰ Dona Ceci. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, August 3, 2009.

⁸¹ Negrizu. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 19, 2008.

Sizinio claims that he teaches students how to use their bodies well with rhythm, and with *ginga*, which is the name of the basic swinging movement in *capoeira*, and serves as the foundation to the more advanced practices. “*Ginga* is one of the most important movements in *capoeira*, because it literally tells people they can go around trouble, and overcome it. *Capoeira* nowadays is well known all over Brazil, and Afro-Brazilians now know enough about the many qualities *capoeira* offers as a learning tool. *Ginga* was the name of an important African Queen, a great warrior, strong and powerful, who had excellent skills of diplomacy, of *jogo de cintura* (hip swing), of circling around, mobility and dexterity. *Capoeira* symbolizes this attitude, this optimistic posture in life. It also symbolizes resistance, union, and friendship.” Sizinio is sure that the community knows *capoeira* is good. He notices parents wanting to see their kids doing it, and the kids asking for more. He sees, and I see it too, several mothers, sitting around the outside of the *capoeira* circle, watching their kids learning and practicing it. Sizinio affirms that although “they don’t enroll in the class, they learn a lot just by watching their kids learn.”

Julio says that he teaches kids to build first a small *caxixi*, and then bigger ones later. Julio makes his living is an accomplished musician and an artisan as well. He showed me some of his weed weaving pieces, like a five-foot tall *caxixi*, for instance, which although possible to be played by a fairy tale giant, is intended as decorative art, “an authentic representative of Afro-Brazilian culture,” as he puts it. He also makes various drums, like the *alfaia*, one of the big drums used in *maracatu* music. “Learning to weave the weed (like basketry) is a very useful skill, but I am not sure if this class causes any practical benefit in the outside community, other than enabling the student to develop artisan skills. I know that a few kids teach what they learn here to some of their friends. I don’t know if we are changing the world, but I can assure you that

the kids who learned music from me, learned a lot about the Afro-Brazilian rhythms.”⁸² I took *pandeiro* and *caxixi* lessons from Julio, and observed his classes as well. He explains to both grown-ups and kids where the rhythms come from, which is mostly from Candomblé, *capoeira*, *samba-de-roda*. “This helps them to make connections, and they become much more interested in representing Afro-Brazilian culture when they play music. At the same time, these rhythms are in their genes, so once they learn the technique, the rhythms develop naturally. Then, when they get out to perform, they see the responses of the audiences, and they realize how powerful this music is. So, yes, there are repercussions of our work in the community. I have no doubt about it, my son is an example of that,”⁸³ Julio concludes.

Theater teacher Teresa says that the activities she proposes can be highlighted by the use of acting out games. These include activities of “self-awareness, such as breathing and relaxation, reflecting about various meanings, exercising, preparing, and raising awareness about the physical and intellectual-intuitive body, to ensure the process of creation and expression.” Teresa encourages collective constructions based on collaboration. She explains that her students enact actual situations of contemporary life, such as crime, family conflicts, rape, depending on what they are interested. “Some students actually live such serious problems, and theater is one way to deal with these problems in a playful, cathartic, and therapeutic way. The feeling of oppression among Afro-Bahians is very real, though unspoken, and through addressing these issues the student has the opportunity to reflect on where and how the problems originate, and who caused them.”⁸⁴

⁸²Julio Góes. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, 19 July 2008.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Teresa. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 19, 2008.

Teresa recognizes that dealing with contemporary issues is not necessarily transmitting cultural heritage in explicit terms. Her work focuses on rescuing local community culture within its contemporary social reality. In her view “this type of work greatly impacts participants’ social awareness, therefore expanding this awareness within the broader community. PVCS participants live in a community where most face many questions, although they do not verbalize them.”⁸⁵ Teresa reports that many of her students wonder: “Why are things this way? Why do we live at the margin of a society in which we are the majority?” Somehow, she believes her work allows students to find some of these answers.

Guest Lecturer/Composer Moa do Katendê is a highly politicized artist. Besides interviewing him, I had the opportunity to have a few more informal conversations, in separate occasions. He sees himself as a source of “resistance against social oppression,” and he constantly expresses that his art is not just “art for the art’s sake.” He lives in the community that surrounds PVCS, and because of his political views and social consciousness I understood that he would be a great source of feedback about PVCS program’s repercussions in the local Afro-Brazilian community. Katendê has mixed feelings about PVCS program as far as the Afro-Brazilian community is concerned.

My question about the hesitation Afro-Brazilians demonstrated toward the right to education provoked an eloquent response: “In Brazil we have wonderfully designed laws that do not really create any positive change in the poor population’s daily lives. We live in a society full of theoretical principles that do not apply at all to marginalized people, mainly because these laws and rights are promoted by the classes that control the political and economic power. To

⁸⁵ Ibid.

know that there is a right offered by society is not the same as embrace it or exercise it. It is necessary to see its practical effects in our daily lives.”⁸⁶ Katendê smiles ironically whenever I mention civil rights, which obviously is an issue for Afro-Brazilians in Bahian society. In his view, it is obvious that Afro-Brazilians social improvement is not the reason why these laws were created to begin with. In fact, he stresses, “No Afro-Brazilian had the opportunity to participate in the elaboration of these laws. Afro-Brazilians were neither heard nor consulted about their real needs. That is why they are marginalized. The higher classes claim to have given them the right to education. That is the typical ‘Trojan horse’ gift, thus Afro-Brazilians are very reluctant to accept it. Because by accepting it they would be condoning their marginalization.”⁸⁷

Katendê stresses that he is not talking about just a socioeconomic marginalization: “It is ideological marginalization as well. Afro-Brazilians have learned to live in awareness of many rights that are not available to the whole society. They might turn on the TV and hear these beautiful upper class discourses claiming the existence of rights, and that they are available in the full sense of democracy to all society. Then they turn off the TV, and go outside, and what do they see? They see lack of access to society’s benefits. They see instead poverty, crime, and all sorts of social problems. Surviving is very hard in this environment. And yet, somehow they survive. But not thanks to a right handed down from higher powers.”⁸⁸

Katendê’s statements serve as a good explanation for Afro-Brazilians struggle to survive in Brazilian society. He made clear that they survive because they learned to cope with being

⁸⁶ Moa de Katendê. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 15, 2008.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

marginalized. As a Brazilian born and raised citizen I understand the depth of this issue in many levels. Afro-Brazilians are not the only ones who look at civil rights that way. Historically, Brazilians in general don't give much credit to this type of discourse. Katendê however, prefers to speak on behalf of his fellow Afro-Brazilians: "It all sounds like political campaign blabbing to them. Afro-Brazilians might not have much education, but they are not dumb. They have questions like, 'who created that right, or who made it available to the society as a whole? Was it originally meant for Afro-descendants in Brazil? Is it in fact available to them in accordance to all the freedom it is supposed to convey? Or is it just a figurative meaning to cover up the fact that the vast majority of Afro-Brazilians are marginalized? Why are they marginalized in the presence of such right?' The result is total discredit toward what seems to be a gift from, or an achievement within, a democratic society."⁸⁹ At the PVCS there is a general consensus that such a "gift" is not necessarily a gift or achievement in the eyes of Afro-Brazilians. "They know it does not empower them, it does not make them more organized toward a better social life. It is quite the opposite," concludes Katendê.

The work of PVCS instructors reflects the will to participate that originates from a sense of responsibility, and also from aspirations that were humanistic and socially oriented. They believe their work can and have to be engaged in goals of social transformation. PVCS educators are willing to examine the ways in which music pedagogy strategies can be key to the perpetuation of cultural values in an Afro-Bahian microcosm, I am convinced that this study has the potential to contribute to sustainable human development, mutual understanding among all peoples and thus to a new vision about broader effects of music-making.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

CHAPTER V

MUSIC AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN AFRICAN AND AFRO-BRAZILIAN CULTURES

This chapter examines more specifically the mediation role Afro-Brazilian music teaching and learning plays at PVCS and how music helps young people negotiate the cultural clashes of Afro-Brazilian culture. My analysis consists of evaluating how African structural agents as described in Chapter II function within the framework of music teaching-learning, which is synthesized by a two-hour dress rehearsal/performance the PVCS community engaged at the end of the Winter term of 2008. Two key scenes recorded on video were selected to evaluate the functioning of those structural agents. Additionally, in order to address the effectiveness of PVCS music teaching strategies, I discuss the role of Candomblé in synthesizing African structural elements reflected through two key activities at PVCS: *capoeira* and *samba-de-roda*. Lastly, I address some of the problems associated with teaching-learning music in the PVCS environment.

Music: The Most Popular of Afro-Brazilian Arts

Verger had a holistic view about Afro-Brazilian culture and was aware of the iconic power of music. Music is the most popular of the Afro-Brazilian arts and several research participants stated that music speaks for itself. Afro-Brazilian music carries powerful cultural symbols and meanings that are associated with sounds, rhythms, and body movements. Some of

these elements have become iconic representations of Afro-Brazilian culture. When Afro-Brazilian music is played there is a sort of catharsis that clearly shows collective mental and emotional associations. Many of these symbols and meanings were evident in three key activities at PVCS: a final performance's dress rehearsal, *capoeira*, and *samba-de-roda*.

The Principle of Integration

The PVCS follows the African principle of integration expounded in Chapter II, as its music teaching and learning promotes coexistence among students of any ethnic, social and cultural background. Its education is also based on the African principle of cooperation within several dimensions of social life. The PVCS students attend various workshops in tandem and are exposed to the cultural context of Afro-Brazilian arts as a whole. The PVCS students have the option to participate in them in an integrated interrelated manner, emphasizing multi and interdisciplinary approaches, allowing students to experience various learning activities. The end result of that strategy is students making connections between the workshop contents and their socio-cultural context. PVCS instructors take into consideration students' needs and wants alongside their individual and collective potential. They emphasize the importance and relevance of content taught as essential elements of the Afro-Brazilian context and as part of their local social life.

Through emphasizing contents that are essential elements of the Afro-Brazilian context, which are part of students' community life, the PVCS educators help rescuing and reconstructing culture via recreation of oral tradition approaches to teaching. These approaches are exemplified by storytelling embedded in Candomblé mythology, and performing music and dance, such as

samba-de-roda and *capoeira*. Both originated within the Afro-Brazilian community. Through these approaches PVCS teaching and learning resonates with meanings constructed by the students themselves, as these meanings have gone through a construction process outside of the PVCS facilities. Through making music inside the PVCS, which they know is also played outside school allows them to build their own insights. They carry these insights back to their home communities and vice-versa. This process reinforces their local community's culture.

The principle of integration through music can be seen in dance teacher Negrizu's work at the PVCS, since dance and music are interdependent and essentially an inseparable duo. His most poignant statement, in my view, is that "Loosely moving hips is a fundamental element of the Afro culture, but Brazilian society imprinted stiffness to the hips of Afro-Brazilians." By softening his students' hips he is helping them to literally embody their Africanness. Because his work focuses on rescuing the African body through dance, he is also reinforcing the kinesthetic qualities of music. Music, again in this case, becomes key to rescue tradition.

Gender Equality

Although gender is not the focus of this study it is worth to mention how PVCS works gender relations within its activities. In the dress rehearsal it becomes evident that PVCS educators emphasize gender equality in the sense of roles in the performance practice. Both girls and boys were playing musical instruments, as well as both were part of the group of dancers. The only visible hierarchies established in the group were based on experience and skill. PVCS intends to overcome the sexualization and/or racialization of the female Afro-Brazilian body. This is perhaps an implicit approach to gender equality within PVCS education, which attempts to de-emphasize the exploitation of the body of the *mulata*, as discussed earlier in this

dissertation. In its attempt to fight marginalization, PVCS does not detract from promoting gender equality. It is evident in Brazilian society that in the midst of the discourse of globalization, Afro-Brazilian women are under the effect of the impact on marginalizing women of color, economically, politically, and culturally. PVCS helps to dissipate the concept of globalizing discourses constructed through the history of enslavement and the racist policies in Brazilian society, as seen in its policy of whitening and the myth of Brazil as a racial democracy. The PVCS approach to gender equality leads students to implicitly analyze the historic and present day role of Afro-Brazilian women in the context of music and dance performance. The roles played by both genders in the performance posits that PVCS offers an alternate model of empowerment for Afro-Brazilian women that inverts their status as the most negated in the hierarchies of power. The role of Candomblé in this educational aspect seems crucial. As Rachel Harding puts it, the music that derives from Candomblé serves as one of the tools for “alternative orientations, giving special attention to the meaning of the religion [and religious music] as a resource for healing, community, and redress of power imbalances in a slave-based society” (Harding 2000: 99).

The PVCS term’s final performance is the combination of the works engendered by most *oficinas*, whose participants begin to rehearse a few weeks prior to the presentation. It is a work of collaboration and coexistence to celebrate expressive culture. The performance also functions as a ritual, which, as in Africa, reinforces the organization (the PVCS) while continuing tradition, and is practiced and performed with music and dance. The presentation, as in Africa, is performed by an ethnically diverse group, and responds contextually to the needs and characteristics of the community since it is narrating its own history. Additionally, it is multidisciplinary as it encompasses music, dance, *capoeira*, and spoken word. Another African

structural element is to allow multiple expressions to take place in the performance instead of imposing a hegemonic model of expressive culture.

The Dress Rehearsal

Scene 1

The large dance room at the PVCS (see Photo 1), namely *Mãe Senhora* (Mother Lady), is filled with people: students of music, dance, *capoeira*, and percussion, some of their teachers, PVCS staff, observers of all ages, insiders and outsiders. The dress rehearsal of the PVCS 2007 winter term's final performance titled *Sambas Juninos* (June Sambas), one of the most popular yearly festivals held in June in Bahia, began around 2:00 pm.

All performers were in the room, musicians in one section, and dancers in another in circle formation. This was the end product of the integrated thematic design of the PVCS. Several *oficinas*' teachers and students collaborated in this presentation. This was an event that clearly celebrated Afro-Brazilian culture, but one cannot tell this just by the demographics in the room. Rather than "Afro-Brazilian," one could more easily characterize these people as typically Brazilian people, since the Brazilian population is diversified throughout most of its territory. PVCS is an Afro-Brazilian arts education space, but even though most of its participants look Afro-Brazilian, there is a clear sense of diversity; there are blacks, whites, mulattos, foreigners, boys and girls, women and men of all ages, PhD professors and students, musicians, composers, dancers, and *capoeiristas*.



Photo 1. PVCS Dance Classroom *Mãe Senhora*. Photo by Jane Uitti.

Scene 2

Negrizu began the rehearsal by reading his script:

Do you know the history of *Engenho de Brotas* and its vicinities? Let us meet *Engenho de Brotas*! It was a very old district of Salvador. First, it was a cluster of few houses, perhaps an old mill, trees and banana trees, quite distant from downtown. On the other side of the dike of Itororó many women earned a living washing clothes in its waters, and many families grew gardens to sell vegetables and all kinds of flowers...⁹⁰

Because of a timing issue, rehearsal stopped in the middle of this scene. While a girl from the dance group walked around carrying a basket of flowers “for sale,” the background guitar music

⁹⁰ Vocês sabem qual é a história de Engenho de Brotas e dos bairros vizinhos? Vamos conhecer o Engenho de Brotas que era um bairro bem antigo de Salvador. Primeiramente, era um aglomerado de poucas casas, talvez um antigo engenho, entre árvores e bananeiras, meio distante do centro da cidade. Do outro lado, no dique do itororó muitas mulheres ganhavam seu sustento lavando roupa nas suas águas e muitas famílias cultivavam hortas para vender verduras, hortalças e muitas flores...(Translation into English by author).

entered a bit too late and Negrizu called for another run-through. Other performers interjected, apparently discussing other issues I could not discern, as I was in the opposite side of the room. Then Ossimar said, “Since we’re at it, let’s try the other piece instead, so that we can compare them.” The scene was reenacted, this time with an alternate guitar piece. Ossimar said, “I like this one [guitar excerpt/piece] better!” The singers and many others in the room, including observers, loudly agreed in chorus, “Yeeaaah!” expressing unanimous preference for the alternate piece. However, Negrizu, who seemed in favor of the piece played in the first run-through, was visibly not agreeing with the majority’s choice. He reacted to the group’s claim by making a “go away” hand gesture toward the musicians indicating something like, “Ok, whatever, guys,” and in a joking tone said, “I will go on with this alone, unaccompanied! I don’t need to have music in the background.” Everybody laughed because it was obviously an ironic statement. At the same time that Negrizu displayed reluctance in giving up his authority, he was in fact demonstrating tolerance, which helped ease the tension between performers and teachers. Nevertheless, the group decided to use the second piece, and Negrizu continued his leading role as one of the authors of the performance’s script.

This event demonstrates how Negrizu, a teacher and supposedly holder of more experience in “authentic” tradition, had to suspend his everyday social identity, neutralizing these attributes to engage in negotiation with other performers in an equal level of decision making. Obviously, in several aspects of Afro-Brazilian culture, Negrizu is much more knowledgeable than the younger members of the choir. However, his voice was overpowered by the voice of collectivity and thus he abided obviously to please both the audience and the performers of this production. From a music performer’s perspective, I assume he did this because he seeks success for his production and he understands that success is directly linked to

popularity. Performing music via teaching-learning, in this case, conveyed the fading away of implied hierarchies, which clearly suggests a new behavior that could be seen as a challenge to tradition. Does such an alteration of hierarchy weaken tradition and ethical behavior? Elizabeth Travassos (2004)⁹¹ reports that Brazilian *cantadores*⁹² learn, practice, and develop ethical behavior while performing the traditional art of verse improvisation. Travassos claims that the vitality of this tradition is closely linked to the ethics that structure its performance. “On entering the performance arena, [the singers] must strive to suspend their everyday social identities, neutralizing these attributes to engage with one another as poets, that is, as ‘equals’.”⁹³

Afro-Brazilian Ethos Structured by Improvisational Interaction

The ethos of the PVCS rehearsal/performance is structured by a combination of both pre-established and improvised interaction, that is, a dialogic approach between the two approaches, rather than by a sole previously established status quo. As in the case of *cantadores*, tradition is closely linked to the ethics that structure its interactive and improvisational performance. Furthermore, this ethical behavior potentially contributes to overcoming the psychological effect caused by social adversities and inequalities. In other words, “The real advantages that the rich have over the poor, whites over blacks, the educated over the illiterate, men over women can be reversed through talent in the art of (...) improvisation” (Travassos 2004: 129).

⁹¹ Travassos, Elizabeth, “Cantoria nordestina: música e palavra” (review), *Latin American Music Review* 25 (2004):126-129. Translated by Reily, *Ethics in the Sung Duels of North-Eastern Brazil: Collective Memory and Contemporary Practice* (pp 61-94), by Elizabeth Travassos, from the University of Rio de Janeiro (Uni-Rio), provides descriptions of sung poetic competitions in which two singers play guitar-like instruments and attempt to outdo one another in the art of verse improvisation.

⁹² Singers/guitarists who duel by improvising verses on the spot.

⁹³ Travassos, “Cantoria nordestina,” 126-129.

In this performance/rehearsal I observed similar phenomena. I noticed that while PVCS teachers and students were involved in, as Freire put it, a teaching-learning *process* within the realm of Afro-Brazilian music and dance, they are subliminally creating and/or developing a new culture-specific sense of ethics. This sense of ethics plays a big role in constructing a sense of self in the performers involved. Their ethics is constructed as a result of interaction and a negotiation of clashes. Music plays a mediation role in this process. As outside the PVCS the students and teachers are coping with adversity to survive and adapt to circumstances; inside the PVCS they show the same coping ability. As stated by Henry Fielding, “Adversity is the trial of principle. Without it, a man hardly knows whether he is honest or not.”⁹⁴ Adversity is present in every culture; it is an integral part of human life. Throughout history humans have faced it and often acknowledged it as a character building and wisdom acquiring experience. Popular proverbs express its value as a particular kind of “wisdom teacher.” For instance: “Adversity is the foundation of virtue;”⁹⁵ “Adversity brings knowledge, and knowledge wisdom;”⁹⁶ “A dose of adversity is often as needful as a dose of medicine.”⁹⁷

Through rehearsing and performing a choreography that portrays life in the local neighborhood, the act of interpreting music and character becomes intensely cathartic for PVCS participants and helps them to suspend, to some degree, their everyday social identities. Additionally, the identities interchange: He, who learns, teaches. Thus the term “teaching-learning.” Both teachers and students learn ethical behaviors by acting as equals within the

⁹⁴ Henry Fielding (1707-1754) was a British writer, playwright and journalist, founder of the English Realistic School in literature with Samuel Richardson.

⁹⁵ Japanese proverb.

⁹⁶ Welsh Proverb.

⁹⁷ U.S. Proverb.

teaching-learning context. In the same fashion as in the context of *cantadores* presented by Travassos, practicing music and improvisation at PVCS allows participants to construct a sense of mutual respect based on the musical and kinesthetic activities. In order to study, teach, and perform this music, participants engage in ethics that are governed not only by musicianship, talent, and dedication, but also by democracy.

Because sharing a sense of equality within the performance context contributes to the participants' overcoming of adversities caused by social inequalities, I point out that sharing such a sense of equality can contribute to greater social inclusion of PVCS students in Brazilian society. By playing traditional music, PVCS students are enticed to learn and follow procedures that encompass not only musicianship, but also ethics; the music they learn and perform is structured by ethical behaviors. Although such learning happens on a subliminal level, in order to practice and perform the music according to tradition, students inevitably learn the ropes of being ethical, and they also learn to exercise social, gender, and ethnic equality.

The experience of observing the dynamics within their rehearsal allowed me to reflect on some aspects of the historical development and social organization of teaching-learning music and dance among Afro-Brazilians at Vila América, looking at how they contributed to the forging of their Afro-Brazilian identities. The overcoming of social disparities implies that maintaining ethnic unity stands in direct contrast with the discourses in the wider Brazilian society in which miscegenation articulates the very essence of national identity. At the PVCS the Afro-Brazilian strategy of maintaining ethnic unity is revealed, for instance, within the context of Candomblé.

The Role of Candomblé

At Vila América, the majority of the population, and that includes the PVCS community, follows the African worldview of remaining faithful to the traditional religion of Candomblé. However, rather than religious homogenization, most people worship both Candomblé and Catholicism, and, a more recent development, the evangelical churches as well. This fact reflects the African worldviews, which emphasize diversity, the logic intrinsic to the place (Salvador), and the cultural values of each group (Oliveira 2006: 27).

Dona Ceci's storytelling is inspired in Afro-Brazilian tradition, African and Candomblé mythology and beliefs. She is also a Candomblé initiated practitioner and the spiritual mentor for PVCS community. She represents the sacred dimension of Afro-Brazilian ethos, and exemplifies the intrinsic influence of Candomblé beliefs in a secular organization. Although she is not preaching religion, she is guided by moral principles constructed in religious context. As a *Filha-de-Santo*, she is continuing the African tradition of matrilineal hierarchies, in which women hold most of the leading roles in the community. Because she is not limited by boundaries between sacred and secular environments, she is able to translate religious relationships into social and educational roles, which is also the case in Candomblé *terreiros*. Several participants brought up the fact that Candomblé is the most African of all Afro-Brazilian cultural manifestations. Incidentally, *Ijexá* is the main basic rhythm used in the music of *capoeira*. Various elements taught at PVCS's *oficinas* were drawn from Candomblé rituals; for instance the rhythm *ijexá* and dance steps and choreography associated with specific *orixás*, thus exposing students to Candomblé rhythms automatically connects them with African heritage.

Capoeira

Capoeira represents the largest body of Africanisms in Afro-Brazilian arts as several aspects of African worldviews stated in Chapter II are alive in this expressive cultural form. It is a source of social, ethnic, and cultural resistance because it fights notions about miscegenation in Africa and Brazil that have become epistemological barriers to Afro-Brazilians and fights the ideology that suppressed effective multi-racial relations in Brazil, keeping Afro-Brazilians marginalized. While it is a secular manifestation of Candomblé through its rhythms and chants, *capoeira* promotes diversity. It is a striking example of assimilation through dissimulation, since it has managed to keep and reshape traditional practices throughout nearly four centuries in order to preserve African and Afro-Brazilian beliefs, which are celebrated in festivals and rites in contemporary Bahia.

Reflecting African worldviews, *capoeira* responds contextually to the needs and characteristics of each region and does not impose a hegemonic model of organization. Instead, it allows several organizational expressions to take place in Brazil, since *capoeira* branched out in different styles and practices. Following an African model of organization *capoeira* shows that there is a cultural hybridism between people from diverse cultural backgrounds. *Capoeiristas'* response to domination was creative and inclusive, since they used all kinds of institutions to maintain the basic culture of *capoeira* and the well being of its practitioners. This is another striking example of African response to specific circumstances.

Capoeira's circle is a metaphorical space, where all things are seen and conceived according to a principle of integration, in which several elements mutually complement each other. The individual *capoeirista*, regardless of social status, becomes an integral and equal component of the context. Initiation rites and practices are always collectively engendered,

allowing for the construction of self to occur fundamentally within the *roda* (circle) context. In other words, initiation unfolds through a process of collective construction.

As in African cultures, in the *capoeira* game (formerly “fight”) there is no domination through elimination, but victory through competence. Practitioners establish their competence when they have their chance in the center of the circle, but they return to an equal status as soon as they return to the larger group that forms the circle. Following the views of the researched community, *capoeira* was born also as a secular manifestation of Candomblé. This perspective also matches the African worldview, in which the universe is “pregnant” with sacredness, and what is unseen is as much a part of the universe as what is revealed. The *capoeira* circle is a clear representation of an African universe that is synchronic and non-linear. Key statements made by the researched community assert that *capoeira* is the most complete Afro-Brazilian art form.

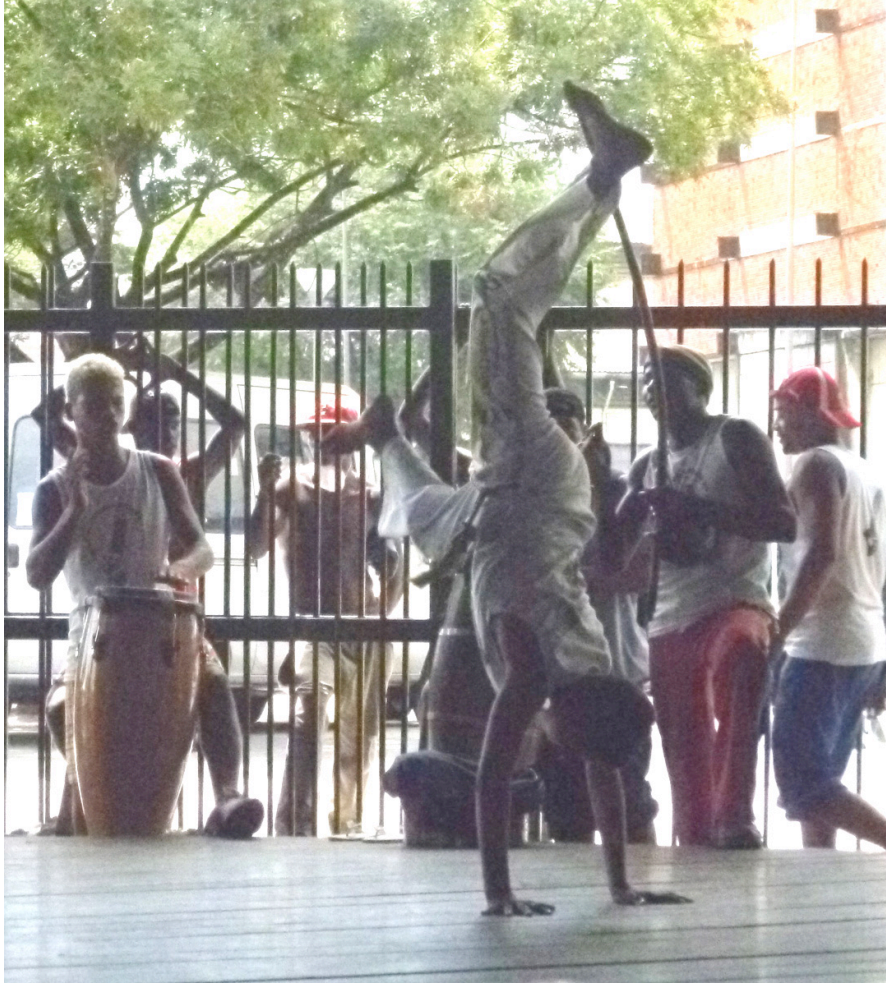


Photo 2. *Capoeiristas* at *Mercado Modelo* (Public Market). Photo by Jane Uitti.

Capoeira does its part in helping students construct a sense of self through transmitting knowledge, cultural resistance, endurance and character. Basically, *capoeira* teaches kids how to survive and overcome obstacles in a society that oppresses Afro-Brazilians. It also helps to construct a sense of individual self through musically training body and mind, providing the student a sense of balance between physical, social, community, melodic and rhythmic aspects. *Capoeira* is a very effective form of holistic education because it enables multi-disciplinary skills and it engages and develops several areas of human expression: vocal-corporeal, rhythmic-

melodic perception, acuity of sound, space-body experience and oral culture itself. It promotes a complete sound-voice-body practice, related to the technical-emotional-playful-poetic-folksong context.

Samba-de-Roda

My fieldwork observation and participation clearly corroborates what PVCS music and *capoeira* teachers claim: besides being perhaps the most popular folk samba style among Afro-Brazilians in Bahia, *samba-de-roda* is a highly effective activity in transmitting cultural heritage. I agree with Ossimar, who claims that teaching *samba-de-roda* is crucial to rescuing tradition, since *samba-de-roda* is so widely viewed as an authentic representation of Afro-Brazilian tradition. Furthermore, it was born as a form of resistance and adaptation to circumstances. It is plausible to deduce that *capoeira* and Candomblé were interwoven, since *capoeira*'s main rhythm is *ijexá*, which is prominent in Candomblé practices. Based on this observation, and added to the statements of both Sizinio and Julio, that *samba-de-roda* is responsible for perpetuating *capoeira*, I believe *samba-de-roda* is one of the earliest manifestations of secularized Candomblé, alongside *capoeira* itself. As seen in the use of *samba-de-roda* in the dress rehearsal for the final performance of the 2007 winter term, this musical form is played naturally and with a high level of spontaneity regardless of musical training or experience. Because it is enjoyable and easily accessible by anyone, *samba-de-roda* is also a powerful vehicle for socialization, since it engages people of all ages in the same activity, functioning as a tool for cohesive integration of the community.

As I observed the rehearsal, the choir played four different pieces of *samba-de-roda* and they sang the refrains (response) from memory, clearly showing that these are pieces that are part of folk life. The individuals singing the verses (the call) however, held sheets of paper to read the lyrics and follow the arrangement. Outside the PVCS, I observed in several areas in Bahia, *samba-de-roda* is performed often as an integral part of Afro-Brazilian community life, but not much practiced by the young people nowadays. Through practicing it at the PVCS, and then practicing it in their home neighborhoods, students help to preserve it outside the PVCS as well. The ultimate result of this process is that Afro-Brazilian music is becoming revived within a broader community of Bahians and strengthens the connection between generations. Additionally, *samba-de-roda* is played with great flexibility of form, in which the most consistent musical element is the clapping rhythm. The undeniably African rooted call-and-response typical of *samba-de-roda* functions as a self-teaching, autonomous expressive culture. This easily accessible character makes it welcoming and easily accepted. Ultimately, it constitutes a characteristic way to adapt to different circumstances in different communities. This allows at the same time for the generation of many stylistic variations in different locations while remaining a consistent musical activity.

While this music appears to be second nature for PVCS students, it proves to be very difficult for outsiders to perform it. My experience as a teacher of *samba-de-roda* in the U.S. clearly shows that clapping those syncopated rhythms while singing and moving in circle formation is not an easy task, even for trained musicians. As I witnessed this phenomenon, I realized that *samba-de-roda* and *capoeira* are both very effective gateways into other Afro-Brazilian manifestations of music and dance. My fieldwork alongside my familiarity with other areas of Bahia strongly support the claim that *samba-de-roda* is a form of expressive culture to

adapt not only to historical events. It reflects a contemporary process of constant adaptation to circumstances, while continuing African tradition within a new ethos, the Afro-Brazilian tradition. When it is performed Afro-Bahians naturally feel a strong sense of belonging to a collectivity because *samba-de-roda* allows them to share community values.

Music As a Mediator of Cultural Clashes: Coexistence

Despite clashes between African, Afro-Brazilian, and Brazilian cultures, the PVCS approach to integration contributes to a relationship of coexistence, a central principle in Afro-Brazilians ability to adapt to circumstances. A clear manifestation of Freire's principles at PVCS is teaching music-related content that is not rooted in Africa, such as Western music theory taught by music instructor Maurício and evangelical church hymns taught by keyboard instructor Ricardo. Freire promoted the idea that teachers learn from students via incorporation of local community values. Music theory and evangelical religious hymns were requested by students and PVCS teachers responded affirmatively, demonstrating that because their approach to education is not linear, their pedagogy should be inclusive and demonstrate the principle of coexistence. Furthermore, it reveals music to be a mediator of cultural clashes by encouraging educators to learn music from other sub-cultures while simultaneously bringing students from these sub-cultures closer to Afro-Brazilian culture. As such, this approach to music teaching-learning is blending African and Western ethos and even transforming the program of the PVCS, which was originally intended to teach Afro-Brazilian culture.

The Mediation Power of Popular Music

Exposed to mass media globalizing values, on one hand PVCS students desire the “goods” that television offers. On the other hand, PVCS offers a culture that stresses more traditional Afro-Brazilian values. The values emerging from these two sides often clash with each other. Music helps students to cope with those clashes. If music does not resolve those clashes, it at least presents a pathway toward a space of coexistence between globalized values and Afro-Brazilian culture. Because of pop idols such as Carlinhos Brown, Caetano Veloso, and Gilberto Gil, youngsters understand that music making can lead them in towards fame and success. They also understand it is still a big challenge to become a successful musician in a globalized modern society, but through music learning they realize they can overcome many of their limitations. As they improve their musicianship they reinforce the sense that they can overcome such challenges. Fieldwork interviews indicate that this positive effect of music is one of the main factors for continued attendance at PVCS workshops.

Music as the main factor for continued attendance

At PVCS students are free from the pressure of raising their learning curve, since they are not being graded. Quantitative measurements of performance are values supported by Western paradigms, which to many Afro-Brazilian kids symbolize not only their own oppression, but also submission to values that oppressed many of their ancestral generations. They submit to these values in the formal school system, and that has proven to discourage them from pursuing higher levels of education, as very few Afro-Brazilians finish high school. Then, if they drop out of the public school, most likely they will end up at the margin of society.

At PVCS instead, attendance is voluntary, and they are not being graded for their performances. Thus they have the opportunity to be in a psychological space, a comfort zone, where they can keep trying, no matter how many times they fail to learn. They are not being forced to learn or perform well, and that releases them from much of the fear of failure. Showing up is all up to them. Showing up is also a valuable social skill, whether in social settings or in the work environment. As they improve their skills they build a sense of self-reliance in coping with the challenges of learning and becoming successful. PVCS is a space that allows them to educate themselves without feeling overwhelmed or “sold” to the values that represent oppression. It is a stress-free space where they can redeem an ancestral identity, which outside of PVCS is denied or gagged.

In general, interviewees (largely parental figures or relatives) declare that, after at least six months of continuous attendance, students demonstrate progress in several aspects at home and at their neighborhood communities. In summary, respondents indicate that PVCS students show different levels of growth in socialization skills, group integration, behavioral and learning discipline, and respect for and from others. Some respondents mentioned progress with regard to overcoming psychological limitations and expanding communitarian relationships, as well. Other respondents describe similar progress as greater self-esteem, and increased ability to overcome obstacles and/or challenges outside school.

Some of the Problems Encountered in the PVCS Environment

What is the concept of “success” promoted by the organization and is it being accomplished? As stated above, the concept of success is relative, but mostly dependent on

continued attendance. The first and foremost component of this concept of success is attendance frequency, attendance and increments, and continuous attendance through an extended period of time (at least six months). Students who continued attending for a longer period of time showed visible progress in several areas and aspects. Behaviors like discipline and response to teachers is considered one of the most significant parameters to measure this concept of success, added to their social skills (relating to schoolmates at PVCS, and families at home, according to parents statements). Students who attended two years or more showed significant artistic and leadership progress, improving performance skills, and developing a more positive attitude toward social life as well.

PVCS educators' general explanation for that was the fact that students became more skillful in their performances, they knew everyone in school much better, thus as they became more understood and had their personal issues accommodated, they became more accepted and respected by teachers and classmates; they became more self-confident, and they matured to be quasi-role models to newer students. On the other hand, students with inconsistent attendance showed less measurable progress, because they would tangentially escape the ability of teachers to observe progress, since they tended to act more peripherally in the activities (sneaking in and out), tended to present behavioral and discipline problems, some recurring. They showed some progress in their socialization skills, but such behavior occurred usually when they had more adult supervision. Many of them reverted to indiscipline and aggressive behaviors that needed to be addressed by PVCS teachers and administration.

Are Afro-Brazilian Youth Losing Touch with the Roots of their Ancestors?

Afro-Brazilian oral culture survived throughout centuries of suppression by the dominant culture. However, my fieldwork indicates that part of the youth seem to be losing touch with their cultural roots. The usual assumption that the “educated” society makes is that this is due to the lack of access to formal education inherent to their socioeconomic status. The logic behind this line of thinking is that little or no schooling leads to little or no knowledge about history and traditional cultures, thus creating an intergenerational gap. I infer two possible causes for this problem: (1) the lack of communication created by the impossibility for Afro-Brazilians to attend formal school at all due to a lack of basic financial means, or (2) the impossibility to study their ancestors’ history, resulting in miscommunication about cultural roots since formal schools have followed the dominant culture’s version of history.

It was only in the first decade of the twenty-first century that Brazilian schools were mandated by Federal law to teach about Afro-Brazilian culture. In 2010 many schools still do not offer that kind of education in their programs, due to various reasons that are outside the scope of this dissertation. This reality corroborates the second assumption and also leads to the assumption that because of a lack of socioeconomic means to attend formal school, Afro-Brazilians will remain unable to know their ancestors’ history, even when it becomes part of the curriculum. This dilemma will take at least a few more decades to be resolved.

If oral culture was more effective in transmission until the first half of the twentieth century, when Afro-Brazilians had much less access to formal schooling, it would be logical to assume that oral culture transmission suffers or weakens when Afro-Brazilians increase their attendance at formal schools. The only possible way left for transmitting cultural roots is through oral tradition. It is plausible that the lack of education has weakened the intergenerational bonds

throughout time. But to what kind of “education” are we referring here? Formal or non-formal, written or oral? And whose education, and to educate whom? This dilemma caused UNESCO to call for non-formal education. The generation gap seems to have increased with the speed of technological developments, such as radio, television and the Internet. The non-formal education at the PVCS suggests that oral tradition is a way of overcoming this generational gap.

PVCS Educators’ Struggle in Accomplishing Their Pedagogical Plans

PVCS intends to serve as a doorway to cultural discoveries and knowledge for its students. However, while the philosophical focus is on culture, teachers⁹⁸ stated that they struggle in delivering their pedagogical plan because they have to dedicate a large portion of classroom time trying to discipline the kids without resorting to punishment. This implies having conversations with them about their hectic behavior, and making sure they don’t fight with each other, nor abuse or disrespect others. Once the students leave PVCS premises they circulate in an environment that is hostile, abusive, and with a sense of ethics that deviates from the societal “standards” of ethics. It seems obvious that this undisciplined behavior inside PVCS originates in their familial and social environments (outside PVCS), which are in most cases extremely abusive, and whose ethics reflect an environment that is often hostile and driven above all by survival. This ethic contrasts with the middle-class/educated ethic held by most educators working at PVCS.⁹⁹ Does that make PVCS goals detached from reality? Instructors’ attempts to teach their views of ethics sometimes seem to clash with the ethics practiced by the social group

⁹⁸ For instance, Tatiana (Musical Experimentation), Sizinio and Ivo (*Capoeira*), Hermógenes (Percussion), Ricardo (Keyboard), Jucélia (Pedagogy.)

⁹⁹ See Luhning (2006).

involved outside school. Does this mean that education in this school is bound to continue unfolding through a clash of contrasting ethics? Or does it mean the school should pursue a different approach to teaching ethics?

I believe that ethics is an important component in the formation of cultural identity. The ethics dilemma brings up the following questions: What sense of identity do the students experience outside PVCS, and what sense of identity does PVCS attempt to build through Afro-Brazilian music teaching-learning inside its premises? Is this a contradictory situation? In my interviews I have descriptions of situations such as conflicts between kids that expose the views Vila América's residents have about ethics, which is *their* ethics, not the same ethics the outside educators attempt to teach.

The challenge to traditional authority

PVCS is being effective in transmitting culture, since many of its teachers are insiders of Afro-Brazilian culture who specialized in the cultural capital they are teaching. However, PVCS *capoeira* teacher, *Mestre Sizinio*, exposes a paradox in his interviews. In traditional *capoeira*, the *mestre* is an authority, a ruler of the students' behavior, who does not accept being challenged. Traditionally, the *mestre* only accepts challenges when he is inside the circle, fighting/dancing with another contender. Indeed, in *capoeira* culture, the students will be taken under the *mestre's* wing only if they surrender to their teacher's instruction. They are bound to follow the *mestre's* beliefs, teaching approaches, techniques, and so forth. Mestre Sizinio explained that he gets frustrated about the fact that his authority is challenged over and over by children and youth simply because they do not listen to what he says. In his view, this is a challenge to his authority

and to his guidance. These children, who barely know a few *capoeira* steps pose a huge challenge in terms of discipline. This is an example of how a dialogic approach to teaching-learning can challenge the traditional authority of a culture bearer.

How did Sizinio solve this problem? His solution was to have Ivo, his assistant, teach all the actual *capoeira* moves, songs, and procedures. Ivo is much younger, and sometimes behaves much like a child, while Sizinio maintains his higher status. Ivo is a skilfull and experienced *capoeirista* and like Sizinio, he comes from a background of poverty, but the two of them differ in the sense that Sizinio grew up in an environment with less violence, abuse, drugs and crime. Ivo's daily environment matches Vila América's environment, and follows the ethics of that environment. Ivo does not have any problem in being authoritarian, raising his voice, or yelling at students. Actually, that is the kind of behavior that achieves respect among the kids, and so they abide by it. The kids fight and hit each other not only because of personal issues, but also because it is a power struggle. The physically stronger tends to use physical force to become feared, because he or she grew up in an environment embedded in fear, in which power, reputation and respect are built from fear. Ivo does not behave literally that way, but when he speaks, it becomes obvious he is speaking that kind of language that reflects the struggles for power in that social environment and the kids respond accordingly.

Whether or not Ivo's behavior is according to educational standards is beside the point to Sizinio. To him that is a strategic necessity in order to get his job done. By sanctioning that kind of behavior Ivo becomes the mediator between the students and *Mestre* Sizinio. Sizinio takes the role of having conversations with the students. In most cases, this talk unfolds through Sizinio's questions to students, like, "Why are you doing this? Why do you have to hit your classmate?" He is trying to make the students think about the meaning of their behavior, which in their mind

is just part of their daily life. Most of the times, after some hesitation, the student responds with some unconvincing justification for the unacceptable behavior. Sizinio then explains to the student that this is not the way to go about the situation that created the conflict. He encourages the kids to come to him and talk before getting into a conflict, and stresses that in his *capoeira* class he is the supreme power and they will not get away with trying to usurp it. He does not even attempt to stimulate problem-solving conversations amongst the students because he knows it would mislead kids to an even greater confusion and he would completely lose control of the situation. Only at this point a resemblance to a dialogic approach takes place. “You have to respect him/her, this is not the way to relate to your classmates,” Sizinio concludes. That is how he intends to teach behavioral ethics. Usually the student understands and respectfully abides, if only momentarily.

In the students’ minds, being reprimanded by Mestre Sizinio is shameful and humiliating in front of the whole group, so they seek to avoid being caught next time. This situation shows how Sizinio maintains his position of a respected *mestre*. That is how he manages to be heard and be seen as “someone you have to listen to” by the students. On the other hand, Ivo acts as the representative of an oppressive system of power. That is the system most of these kids are used to outside of the PVCS where they learn to “go around” and even disrespect authority, as long as they manage not to get caught. This represents a form of “success” in their community outside the PVCS. “Getting caught” is associated with failure and that is antithetical to survival. “Not getting caught” is not only a success, but also a pathway to greater power, granting an individual more respect from their peers. This is the kind of ethics of success in Vila América.

The meanings students attribute to key words like, “success,” “power,” and “respect” are informed by that kind of success and striving for that kind of success is interpreted as “good

behavior” because it is intended to keep one alive. Furthermore, it allows one to earn a living. If one earns a living and provides for one’s family and peers, then that is the ethical behavior to follow. Needless to say that this is the kind of ethics that potentially leads to crime, violence, and abuse. How can PVCS code of ethics be taught if it is not associated with success? The necessary first step would be to convey a new concept of success that can be understood by the students. The concept of success itself needs to be reworked. This is the kind of challenge to their educational mission that PVCS educators face every day.

The harsh environment surrounding the PVCS requires teachers to go far beyond the task of learning about culture. This is where they struggle the most with their teaching. For instance, although librarian Núbia Lourenzo believes that books are a form of preserving oral culture, I observed the library attendance, and it became clear that reading is not among the most successful activities at PVCS. Given the low attendance to formal school, and the high index of non-literacy (except for a small class of French language on Saturdays), books seem to be less meaningful in the PVCS community. In other words, although they could help to preserve oral culture, and could help the community to learn about itself, books are not being used or being effective in rescuing culture. This leads me to infer that the perceptual dimension of learning is much more effective in environments of low literacy. In order to teach concepts and to communicate important content, as Freire states, it is necessary to teach first to read and write. On the other hand, because music does not require that kind of literacy, it becomes an important medium for the communication of content through signs and symbols.

Fighting Social Exclusion

Following Freire's principles, teachers are highly sensitive to students' needs. As in African communities, music serves a social purpose far beyond entertainment or even education in the Western sense of the term. Thus PVCS teachers allow students to be heard a great deal, much more than a formal school allows. Its program ultimately shows them philosophical perspectives to seek a pathway toward a more promising socioeconomic status. Negrizu applies Verger's principles, emphasizing diverse contexts related to music and dance as channels of expression of feelings and struggles, a possible pathway to freedom and hope. Sizinio also follows Verger's views of ethics and civil rights in a social context in which power is typically achieved through violence. This context configures an ethical code that is distinct from established "educational" standards of ethical behavior in the broader society. Sizinio works to construct in students a stronger sense of Verger's principles through promoting peaceful, non-violent coexistence.

Several students I interviewed, like Arielson, stated that PVCS *oficinas* help them to achieve better results at regular school. The art studies at PVCS inspires and motivates them to be higher achievers in formal schools, because they feel more self-confident and comfortable learning regular school contents. Following up with students after they left the PVCS is beyond the scope of this study, but statements like Negrizu's support the idea of greater social inclusion through professionalization for students who attend or attended the PVCS. Some of his Afro-dance students are now professional performers, who have joined performing organizations. As they get involved in performing Afro-Brazilian dance they make connections and become authentic representatives of Afro-Brazilian culture.

Verger wanted Afro-Brazilians, and Brazilians in general, to see the richness of a cultural heritage that originated in Africa and the PVCS is a direct result of this principle. By following African paradigms that express human dimensions that cannot otherwise be as easily conceptualized, the PVCS offers to its students a pathway through which they can move from the periphery toward the center. It emphasizes the sense of belonging by bringing in positive role models to help lead kids toward greater social inclusion. In doing this, the PVCS not only rescues the African roots of Afro-Brazilian culture, but its human values, too, and lives up to a motto that the organization proudly displays on its wall:



Photo 3. Jucélia Teixeira, PVCS Pedagogy Coordinator, next to a wall sign disclosing PVCS mission. Photo by Jane Uitti.

“To preserve and divulge
Pierre Verger’s work, focusing
on human values within
Afro-Brazilian culture.”

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study has shown how the structural agents of African cosmologies that informs PVCS' Afro-Brazilian music teaching and learning help students to continuously reshape themselves and their culture, which in turn continues to reshape their reality. Those fundamental agents support an ever-changing capacity of adaptation to circumstances as they are constantly being treated to the principle of integration. PVCS educators promote amicable community life, striving for a less dangerous, less oppressive, and less fearful social context, always striving for coexistence and articulation of collective actions. All of these approaches are integral and essential elements for the Afro-Brazilian cultural heritage. The PVCS promotes listening to the elderly telling about the past, about people and their traditions. Hearing about their past allows them to discover voices that are typically absent in the formal school system. As they are exposed to the achievements of their ancestors, students increase their self-esteem and become more interested and engaged in Afro-Brazilian arts. This study has demonstrated how Afro-Brazilian music teaching-learning at PVCS plays an important role in mediating cultural clashes between African and Afro-Brazilian cultures, and rescues Afro-Brazilian culture. Ultimately, music teaching-learning helps PVCS to function as a gateway for the social inclusion of its students.

Rescuing Culture and Authenticity within Brazil's Musical Universe

Similar to the work of ethnomusicologist Suzel Ana Reily (2000), this study has shown “how Brazil’s musical universe articulates with the construction of identities within a specific sector of Brazilian society.”¹⁰⁰ My research also suggests how recent debates on the musical construction of identity within ethnomusicology are informing research on Brazil. In Reily's view, while most ethnomusicologists know very little about the work of Brazilian musicologists, they are instead, “very much aware of the latest academic trends emerging at the center” (Reily 2000: 6). As the center moves progressively toward an academic style in which ethnography is drawn upon primarily as a means of illustrating a particular theoretical perspective, in Brazil “it is the theoretical models that are fitted to the ethnography” (Reily 2000: 6). Herein, I believe, lies this study’s contribution to scholarship. Investigation of Brazilian music by Brazilian scholars is a relatively recent phenomenon that was instigated by the emergence of nationalist sentiments and started taking shape with the work of Mário de Andrade (1893-1945). In music research the Brazilian contribution relates to ongoing debates in Brazilian intellectual circles. Stressing “the myth of tri-racial ethnicity,” according to which Brazilian music would be “the loving flower of three sad races” (namely Amerindians, Africans and the Portuguese),¹⁰¹ Reily makes an important point:

[As] noted by João Hernesto Weber (1997) in relation to Brazilian literary historiography, the authors of histories of Brazilian music have frequently projected their own nationalist preoccupation into the past, and their narratives represent the past as a continuous and inevitable process, in which the music produced in Brazil is progressively

¹⁰⁰ See Editorial of the British Journal of Ethnomusicology 9(1) (2000): 6, co-authored with Martin Clayton. Reily holds a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from the University of São Paulo (USP) and is Senior Lecturer in Ethnomusicology and Social Anthropology at the Queen's University of Belfast.

¹⁰¹ As evoked in the final verse of the Parnassian poet Olavo Bilac's “Música brasileira.” Portuguese text and English translation of Bilac's poem.

nationalized. This process of nationalization has been represented through a chronological succession of styles, which came to acquire canonical status, defining what constitutes “authentic” Brazilian national music (Weber 1997).

Reily exemplifies this authenticity problem reporting that she had invited a Brazilian scholar to write on the musical activities of one of the major immigrant groups in the country, “but there was no one conducting such research” (Reily 2006: 6). As Reily makes clear, the process of defining an “authentic” Brazilian music has resulted in significant gaps in research. My own research has been motivated by a desire to overcome this problem of authenticity and instead address the more urgent need to “rescue” culture, as the PVCS describes it.

I believe studies of education are dearly needed nowadays because education should be part of a project for greater freedom. This study shows how music is helping individuals achieve greater level of freedom in their professional and social lives. Paulo Freire’s work greatly inspired me to investigate the connections between music and education because I believe in education *through* music, as opposed to music education. I also believe that research on education must be encouraged and developed because there seems to be little interest in understanding pedagogy as a deeply civic, political and moral practice - that is, pedagogy as a practice for freedom.

Many schools in the U.S. and in Brazil have become increasingly subordinated to a corporate order, and movements toward critical education have been replaced by training and the promise of economic security. Pedagogy is now subordinated to a regime of teaching to the test coupled with an often-harsh system of disciplinary control, both of which mutually reinforce each other. Therefore with this study I advocate for the need to study non-formal schools, as they are able to practice pedagogy with much more freedom than formal schools. In the formal school system in Brazil teachers become deskilled and an increasing number of higher education faculty

are reduced to part-time positions, constituting the new subaltern class of academic labor.

Nonetheless, there is more at stake. Many levels of schooling now lack critical thinking, self-reflection and imagination and are operated according to a corporate-driven media culture. Higher education mimics this logic by reducing its vision to the interests of capital and to redefine itself largely mainly as an accrediting institution. Under such circumstances, educators must ask themselves questions about how schools can prepare students to be not only informed citizens, but also to be self-reflective about the world in which they live. It seems that the goal of teaching youth to become capable of participating in making decisions that affect their communities has been repeatedly mentioned, but has not received serious consideration.

Freire believed that all education in the broadest sense was part of a project of freedom, because it offered students the conditions for self-reflection, a self-managed life and particular notions of critical agency. Critical pedagogy is the practice of self-criticism about the values that inform teaching and a critical consciousness regarding what it means to convey analytical skills for students to be self-reflective about the knowledge and values to which they are exposed in classrooms. For Freire pedagogy always meant listening to and working with the poor and other marginalized groups so that they might speak and act in order to alter dominant relations of power. As Stanley Aronowitz (1998) puts it, in his analysis of Freire's work on literacy and critical pedagogy: "For Freire self-management could only occur when people have fulfilled self-reflection, which is an understanding of the world in which they live." (Aronowitz 1998: 11).

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APPENDIX 1

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

PVCS Educators

Angela Luhning. Interview by Anne Sobotta. Pierre Verger Foundation, Salvador, Bahia, July 14, 2006.

Angela Luhning. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 2, 2007.

Dona Ceci. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, August 3, 2009.

Gustavo. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 15, 2008.

Jucélia Teixeira. Interview by author. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 17, 2007.

Jucélia Teixeira. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 17, 2010.

Julio Góes. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, 19 July 2008.

Maria Angélica Santos[Parent]. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, August 2, 2007.

Mestre Sizinio. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 18, 2007.

Negrizu. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 19, 2008.

Taís. Interview by author. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, October 6, 2009.

Taís. Interview by author. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia October 9, 2010.

Ossimar. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 10, 2008.

Ricardo. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 19, 2008.

Teresa. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 19, 2008.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEWS (IN PORTUGUESE)

Angela Luhning. Interview by author. Vídeo recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 18, 2008.

Question 1

Through which actions do you think the transmission of cultural heritage is reached with the work done at PVCC?

Luhning: O PVCS existe para convidar a comunidade circundante a conhecer sobre sua própria tradição cultural, já que essa comunidade não tem acesso a esse conhecimento de outra forma. E no PVCS, antes de buscarmos ser ouvidos, permitimos que os alunos sejam ouvidos, permitimos que acima de tudo o aluno vivencie todas as atividades como um engrandecimento de sua experiência individual e coletiva. Acreditamos que a experiência é um fundamento básico para o processo de desenvolvimento integral do sujeito. Proporcionamos um espaço que viabiliza a exploração de possibilidades para que "algo nos aconteça", algo nos toque, algo nos faça refletir fazendo, praticando, e os significados desse fazer são raramente verbalizados, ou seja, a experiência é internalizada, mas não é explícita. Assim é que acredito estarmos transmitindo uma herança cultural. A cultura Afro-Brasileira sobreviveu 400 anos de escravidão exatamente porque soube transmitir seus valores implicitamente, onde muitas vezes nem se podia verbalizar a sua crença. Hoje vivemos numa sociedade governada pela ilusão de que para se vencer é necessário saber verbalizar bem, fazer bem as contas, etc., e por isso no PVCS buscamos oferecer uma alternativa a esse ciclo vicioso. Experimentar a vida através das artes, sem a

preocupação de verbalizar, requer um gesto de ruptura. A ruptura imprescindível para que possamos parar para pensar, parar para olhar, para escutar mais devagar, parar para sentir o outro e a si mesmo, interromper o juízo, a opinião para cultivar a atenção e a delicadeza. Parar para aprender. Aprender a ver o outro e conviver amigavelmente, sem medos e sem desejo de oprimi-lo. O que se cultiva aqui é a coexistência e a articulação do agir coletivo. Todos esses elementos eu considero partes integrantes da herança cultural Afro-Brasileira.

Acreditamos ser necessária a tarefa dos educadores artísticos de proporcionar aos seus alunos espaço para a efetivação do processo de transformar. Transformar, por exemplo, palavras em luz, cores e som, ritmo e dinâmica, força, intensidade, melodia. Encantamentos vocais. Criação individual e coletiva, musicalidade, percepções, sensações, processos de construção, compartilhar sensibilidades, silêncio, pausas, tempo e espaço. Formas de recriar a linguagem oral da cultura Afro-brasileira, usando a magia da mitologia, da música e da dança como elementos que possam ecoar dentro dos alunos, para que eles construam seus próprios insights.

Jucélia Teixeira. Interview by author. Vídeo recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 13, 2008.

Question 1

Through which actions do you think the transmission of cultural heritage is reached with the work done at PVCC?

Teixeira: A construção do ser através de uma abordagem artística multidisciplinar que disponibiliza experiências, não só para a capacitação técnica dos alunos, mas para o auto-conhecimento e o conhecimento do outro, o auto-reconhecimento, e o reconhecimento do outro e do meio sócio-cultural do qual se origina, a auto-aceitação e a aceitação do outro, e a auto-

estima. Promover o desenvolvimento das potencialidades individuais e coletivas por intermédio da interação social e artística, desenvolvendo as relações entre expressividade musical, corporal e artística. A partir destas experiências e descobertas vocais e corporais que compõe a presente pesquisa, foram estabelecidos alguns parâmetros para a identificação e reconhecimento da personalidade vocal de cada aluno.

Gustavo. Interview by author. Vídeo recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 19, 2009.

Question 1

Through which actions do you think the transmission of cultural heritage is reached with the work done at PVCC?

Gustavo: Ao tocar e cantar samba-de-roda, somos imediatamente remetidos às brincadeiras de roda da infância; esse é um recurso para proporcionar momentos de descontração e também, para a integração do grupo. Como as brincadeiras de roda, a música está sendo considerada como um elemento condicionado a padrões aceitos por todos, sendo uma característica peculiar a adaptação às circunstâncias. Ao experienciar isso, o aluno pode perceber que a cultura de seus ancestrais foi construída por uma constante adaptação às circunstâncias, e a capacidade de adaptação e a capacidade de brincar integradas é que fazem com que os baianos sintam-se naturalmente parte da coletividade. Quando isso acontece, há uma integração de todas as gerações em torno dos mesmos ritos culturais. Mesmo os mais jovens acabam entrando em contato com a herança cultural. Isso se dá como que num processo subliminar. Por exemplo: ao escutarem a música, os alunos deslocam-se pelo espaço, mantendo a roda, passos largos, curtos, batendo palmas na pulsação da música, mas com ritmos altamente sincopados, e isso se dá naturalmente, não precisa ser “pensado” o treinado, é parte do vocabulário cultural.

Ossimar. Interview by author. Vídeo recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 19, 2009.

Question 1

Through which actions do you think the transmission of cultural heritage is reached with the work done at PVCC?

Ossimar: Desenvolver capacidades vocais (já existentes no aluno) para propiciar uma forma mais eficaz, expressiva e autêntica na performance do samba-de-roda.

Tatiana. Interview by author. Vídeo recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 19, 2009.

Question 1

Through which actions do you think the transmission of cultural heritage is reached with the work done at PVCC?

Tatiana: A experimentação musical é essencialmente praticar elementos musicais derivados da música Afro-Brasileira, voltada para a descoberta de si mesmo e das suas capacidades de relacionamento tendo a criatividade musical como ponto de partida; e a capacitação da performance dos talentos individuais e coletivos, desenvolvendo capacidades e potencialidades vocais, instrumentais e corporais com o intuito de reforçar a consciência e a auto-aceitação da capacidade criativa e musical a partir de leituras e narrativa de textos, histórias, temas e enredos selecionados. Os exercícios escolhidos (experiências instrumentais e vocais) para a obtenção desses objetivos estão relacionados com o processo de autoconhecimento e capacidade de percepção do próprio ser, ouvido, corpo e da musicalização, visando oportunizar o desenvolvimento das potencialidades corpóreo-vocais e corpóreo-instrumentais. A percepção musical é desenvolvida usando música que representa as tradições Afro-Brasileiras.

Ensinando ritmos como Ijexá, afoxé, samba-reggae, samba-de-roda, estamos conectando os alunos com a sua ancestralidade, pois esses ritmos e esses instrumentos nasceram e se desenvolveram dentro da cultura Afro-Brasileira.

Hermógenes. Interview by author. Vídeo recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 19, 2009.

Question 1

Through which actions do you think the transmission of cultural heritage is reached with the work done at PVCC?

Hermógenes: Ensinando ritmos como Ijexá, afoxé, samba-reggae, samba-de-roda, estamos conectando os alunos com a sua ancestralidade, pois esses ritmos e esses instrumentos nasceram e se desenvolveram dentro da cultura Afro-Brasileira.

Fernando. Interview by author. Vídeo recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 19, 2009.

Question 1

Through which actions do you think the transmission of cultural heritage is reached with the work done at PVCC?

Fernando: Bem, esse curso de teoria, que não fazia parte da proposta inicial do PVCC, foi aberto para ir de encontro às necessidades dos alunos. A teoria está sendo ensinada para satisfazer o pedido de alguns alunos que expressaram o desejo de saber ler música, e mesmo que essa não seja uma tradição Afro-brasileira, é importante que os alunos se informem sobre as outras tradições.

Dona Ceci. Interview by author. Vídeo recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 19, 2009.

Question 1

Through which actions do you think the transmission of cultural heritage is reached with the work done at PVCC?

Dona Ceci: Histórias baseadas na oralidade, história, vivências e descobertas do ser Afro-Brasileiro; desenvolver uma forma eficaz e expressiva na prática de contação de histórias baseada na tradição, mitologia e crenças Afro-Brasileiras; estimular a capacidade de ouvir e respeitar os mais velhos, respeitar e entender a sua sabedoria, e entender que essa sabedoria ensina a construir um ser social mais consciente de suas origens, seu lugar na sociedade, e como superar os obstáculos através da sabedoria e vislumbrar caminhos para uma situação socioeconômica mais promissora; busca-se que as histórias sejam incorporadas pelo imaginário das crianças, ou seja, uma apropriação dos significados. Para que haja uma verdadeira apropriação é necessário mais do que a compreensão conceitual do significado das palavras, é necessário um corpo sensível e musical e uma linguagem inteira, uma linguagem corpórea, além da linguagem poética. Por isso a escolha do universo da mitologia Afro-Brasileira para esta atividade.

Negrizu. Interview by author. Vídeo recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 19, 2009.

Question 1

Through which actions do you think the transmission of cultural heritage is reached with the work done at PVCC?

Negrizu: Desenvolver técnicas corporais para subsidiar uma forma mais representativa do Afro-Brasileiro na performance do movimento e da dança; desenvolver a consciência de que se tem um corpo sensível e musical que tradicionalmente se expressa por uma linguagem inteira, a linguagem musical do ritmo Afro. Por isso a escolha do universo Afro-Brasileiro e do Candomblé para esta prática. Envolver-se em atividades de sensibilização e consciência espaço-

corporais. Aos poucos estabelecer e compreender a relação entre musica/corpo/ritmo/espço, ou seja, “acordar” o (já existente) processo de conexão da linguagem corporal com o ritmo da musica Afro - os movimentos corporais, o ritmo dos movimentos de cada um, a percepção (visão) do outro, as pausas, a coordenação, a memorização corpórea (não mental) das diferentes sequencias, a colocação do corpo perante os outros e a interação entre os corpos.

Sizínio: A capoeira é uma prática das mais antigas, e das mais próximas a ancestralidade negra no Brasil. Educa o corpo, a mente, ensina a tocar todos os instrumentos usados na capoeira, a cantar, mas acima de tudo, ensina a disciplina de praticar e ensina o aluno a relacionar-se com ética, respeito, humildade, e com muita resistência, praticando segundo os ancestrais dos mestres, e portanto, entendendo como a cultura Afro-Brasileira resistiu, se fortaleceu e se manteve vibrante e ativa. Todos tem o seu momento no centro da roda, e todos compõem a roda. O sentido de hierarquia emerge da sabedoria e da habilidade, e essas qualidades são abundantes no mestre. Os mestres de capoeira tradicional aprenderam oralmente, por muitas gerações, e transmitem o que aprendem da mesma maneira que fizeram seus antepassados. Mesmo com toda a evolução tecnológica, o mestre vai continuar ensinando oralmente, transmitindo a tradição, e o mestre transmite sabedoria, resistência cultural, resistência física e de caráter. Basicamente ensina a sobreviver numa sociedade que oprime o Afro-brasileiro de várias maneiras, dando ao aluno um senso de equilíbrio entre todos os aspectos, o físico, o social, o comunitário, o melódico e o rítmico. Essa é uma forma de educação holística, capacita à multidisciplinaridade porque pressupõe as áreas de expressão corpóreo-vocal, percepção rítmico-melódica, acuidade sonora, experimentação espaço-corporais e a oralidade propriamente dita, ou seja, práticas sonoro-vocais-corporais, relacionadas ao contexto técnico-emocional-lúdico-poético-cancioneiro.

Teresa: As práticas utilizadas destacam-se pela utilização de jogos teatrais, atividades de autoconhecimento, respiração e relaxamento, enfim, exercícios de preparação e sensibilização do corpo intelectual-físico-intuitivo, para garantir o processo de criação e expressão, incentivando a construção coletiva. Encenamos situações reais da vida social contemporânea, como crimes, conflitos familiares, estupro, dependendo do que os alunos estão interessados. Alguns alunos têm problemas sérios desse tipo, e o teatro é uma maneira de “tratar” esses problemas de uma forma lúdica, catártica e terapêutica. O sentimento de opressão existente entre os Afro-Bahianos é um fato real, ainda que não verbalizado, e ao tratar desses assuntos o aluno tem a oportunidade de refletir de onde os problemas vêm, como se criaram, e por quem foram criados. Talvez não se transmita herança cultural tratando de assuntos contemporâneos, mas vivemos numa comunidade onde muitos têm muitas perguntas, ainda que não as verbalizem. Muitos querem saber: por que as coisas são assim? Porque vivemos tão à margem de uma sociedade onde somos maioria? E assim, de certa forma, estamos permitindo ao aluno encontrar algumas dessas respostas.

Mestre Sízínio. Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, June 2008.

A capoeira que se ensina no ECPV é a chamada “Capoeira Angola.” É uma cultura essencialmente oral. Hoje, muita gente escreve sobre ela, mas ninguém aprende capoeira lendo livros. Só se aprende com os mestres, e eles só ensinam mostrando, convivendo com eles...Existem duas correntes que acreditam em duas teorias históricas diferentes: a de que a Capoeira foi criada pelos escravos foragidos, que se instalaram nos quilombos. Zumbi foi um dos personagens dos escravos negros mais famoso. Ele era chefe do Quilombo dos Palmares. Os escravos teriam desenvolvido a capoeira como forma de defesa contra os perseguidores, quando lá se encontraram com os índios, que os acolheram bem, e assim com o

intercâmbio eles desenvolveram as técnicas, e aprenderam a transformar a cabaça em berimbau. A outra teoria é de que a Capoeira veio de Angola, atravessou o oceano na memória dos negros, e sobreviveu o cativo, tomando formas diferentes da original, mas muito próximas. Na Capoeira Angola de hoje, o que se ensina é como usar bem o corpo, com o ritmo, e como usar a ginga. A ginga é um dos movimentos mais importantes na capoeira. O próprio nome vem de uma Rainha Africana muito importante, muito guerreira, muito forte e poderosa, que tinha dotes excelentes de diplomacia, de “jogo de cintura,” de rodeio, mobilidade e perícia. Quer dizer, a capoeira simboliza essa postura frente à vida. E também simboliza resistência, união, e amizade. A capoeira, bem como o Candomblé, era proibida, e por isso, os capoeiras treinavam às escondidas. E quem era pego jogando, pagava caro, a punição era dura, muitas vezes, a morte. Essa situação amedrontava aqueles que queriam praticar. A repressão aos capoeiristas fez com que fosse vista desde o início como baderna, zoeira, e coisas parecidas, e por isso a capoeira era muito desrespeitada. O mestre Pastinha, um dos grandes mestres fundadores da capoeira moderna, dizia que capoeira é “brincadeira de escravo, com ânsia de liberdade.” Os capoeiras que são bons, nunca brigam. Só jogam. Eles podem jogar duro, às vezes, mas no final se paertam as mãos e se admiram mutuamente. Mas no passado era diferente. Até bem pouco tempo atrás, os capoeiras eram perseguidos, lutavam entre si, viravam inimigos. E a maioria dos capoeiras na Bahia eram ligados ao Candomblé, é, eles precisavam da proteção dos orixás pra lutar e seguir sobrevivendo... Eles aprendiam os segredos da capoeira, dos orixás, e jamais se descuidavam das “obrigações” [esse é o termo religioso do candomblé, que indica o que as mães-de-santo mandam o praticante fazer, pra poder se livrar dos inimigos e espíritos inimigos].

O capoeirista que se preza, que respeita a tradição e os princípios da capoeira. Tem as suas mandingas, a sua malícia, a sua esperteza. A capoeira Angola é um elo de ligação com os ancestrais, com os mitos das tradições negras, como os cânticos do candomblé.

Outros dizem que a capoeira é de Cachoeira, Santo Amaro, cidades da Bahia. A mandinga é como um feitiço. Existiam os mandingas, que eram feiticeiros, diziam, e usavam patuás pra se proteger. “Quem não pode com mandinga, não carrega patuá,” é um ditado muito comum entre os capoeiras. Mas aqui no Centro Cultural [PV] a gente trabalha com crianças, a maioria bem pequenas, e isso é bom e ruim, ao mesmo tempo. Bom, porque a criança não tem malícia, não tem muita idéia formada, então aprende fácil, as crianças imitam muito bem, basta saber mostrar. Ruim, porque elas são muito dispersas, não prestam atenção como os mais velhos, você vê, aqui o que eles querem é brincar, fazer zoeira, e como a roda de capoeira é aqui no patio, todos que passam pelo patio acabam distraindo as crianças e isso também dá uma impressão às crianças que a capoeira não é muito séria. Cê vê, eu passo o tempo inteiro chamando atenção dos meninos, eles tão sempre querendo brigar, fazer troça, e capoeira não acontece sem disciplina. Então, essa é a minha dificuldade, fazer a disciplina imperar. Eu queria era fazer a capoeira num lugar fechado, ia ser mais fácil. Mas eu gosto dessas crianças, algumas já tão comigo há 3-4 anos, outros vêm e vão, mas a maioria é gente mais nova. Quando se faz capoeira com mais velhos, todos esperam a sua vez de jogar, prestam atenção nos outros, porque é assim que se aprende, olhando os mestres, e olhando os outros que já estão mais avançados. Num grupo de mais velhos não tem tanta gente. Aqui é muita criança, fica difícil controlar. O Ivo [contra-mestre] é que mostra mais as coisas. Ele conhece os cantos, toca os instrumentos, e vai mostrando aos meninos como se faz. Eu fico rodeando as crianças, chamando a atenção, porque a mim eles respeitam, quando eu achamo a atenção, mas é só virar as costas um segundinho e eles começam a zoar. E como elas são muito jovens, assim como em qualquer meio capoeirístico, elas aprendem sem entender muito bem os significados mais profundos da capoeira. No início, é o saber fazer bem, saber tocar o berimbau e cantar, tocar o atabaque...olha

só como eles respeitam o atabaque. É o tambor grande, então os meninos querem tocar porque se sentem mais poderosos. O berimbau é o instrumento mais falado da capoeira, mas o atabaque tem muito mais poder, mais importância. Pois é, no sul, você vê os capoeiras na rua, e eles têm pandeiro, berimbau, agogô, mas não usam o atabaque. Só usam, no local das aulas. É porque o tambor não é visto com a mesma importância que é visto aqui na Bahia. Cê vê todo esse ritmo, essa música axé, esses blocos-afros do carnaval, os afoxés, tudo isso, é porque o baiano sente a força do tambor, e deixa o tambor falar. Mas a capoeira não é só tambor, nem é só dança, nem é só pandeiro, nem é só agogô. É tudo isso junto, ao mesmo tempo. Assim você vê que a capoeira exige uma roda de várias pessoas. Não dá pra fazer capoeira só com 2 ou 3...quer dizer dá, pra quem é experiente, mas não é o indicado. Essa é a beleza do jogo. Essa integração de todos, numa roda, cantando, usando a "chamada-resposta" respondendo "iêê camará", porque cê vê, muitas dessas crianças são tímidas, tem vergonha de cantar, mas na roda você nunca tá só. Aqueles que tem vergonha, se sentem mais à vontade, e aqueles que sabem mais, querem se exhibir, mostrar o que sabem. E a riqueza da capoeira tá nisso, na roda todos são iguais, independente das habilidades. O mestre as vezes joga com um iniciante, as vezes com um avançado, mas ele não privilegia os mais avançados. Isso ajuda o capoeirista a ter mais confiança, ele sabe que vai ter uma chance, se quiser... se não quiser ninguém obriga, mas a pessoa mais cedo ou mais tarde se solta, e vai perdendo a timidez. Vai aprendendo. E aqui, a gente ensina muito os movimentos básicos, pros menorzinhos, mas procura ensinar como os adultos fazem, sem mudar seu estilo. Então, o que acontece é que todos convivem, diferentes experiências e capacidades, mas todos trabalham em conjunto, pra coletividade. Isso é o mais difícil aqui, porque as crianças não tem essa visão. Pra elas é diversão, então a gente mostra bastante a parte física, os movimentos, faz eles praticarem o mesmo movimento, um por um, e

assim eles tem educação física. E daí junta a parte musical, o ritmo, o som dos instrumentos e da voz, tudo tem que funcionar que nem uma orquestra, tudo no seu lugar. Cê vê? É uma lição sutil essa. Eles acabam fazendo tudo isso, e nem percebem todas essas diferentes funções que exercem...Pra eles tudo é capoeira. E é mesmo. Pra nós, macacos véios também. É isso que nos leva de volta pra África. Fazer a roda de capoeira soar e funcionar certo, pra que dois possam jogar no centro. E o jogo? Pois é, o jogo na Angola é esse molejo, esse contato com o chão, sentir que braços e pernas podem trabalhar juntos, todos tem a mesma força. E o jogo é o vai e vem de um que se aproxima, o outro que se afasta, as vezes os dois se encontram, mas não pode se tocar, então um tem que ser cortês e recuar...não se ensina a competição pela força na capoeira. A força tá na capacidade de manter a compostura, seja qual for as imperfeições dos movimentos. Cê vê, muitas vezes não é tão gracioso, os dois demoram a se entrosar. Mas o princípio é esse: você entra a roda é pra se entrosar. Ninguém sai ganhando, só experiência é que se ganha, e não se perde nada. Só perde quem não entra na roda. Então, não são todos, mas eu já vi muito menino se transformar na capoeira. Depois de alguns anos, eles ficam mais sociáveis, convivem melhor com os outros. E na capoeira, cê pode conversar, contanto que não atrapalhe. Mas na capoeira, não se precisa conversar. Tudo é definido pelos movimentos e pelas cantorias. Os olhos e o corpo funcionam. Não dá muito tempo pra pensar. E depois de um tempo, o menino tá jogando bonito, cantando bonito, batucando bonito, e aí o povo assiste e aprecia, e o capoeira começa a gostar, se sente apreciado, ...é, as vezes eles ficam cheios demais, se achando grande coisa, mas isso é parte da aprendizagem. Mais cedo ou mais tarde, eles tomam uma pernada, ou as vezes o mestre sai jogando com eles, e ali no meio da roda eles tomam uma lição de humildade. Muitas vezes, as coisas se resolvem assim, sem discussão, sem papo, só no jogo.

Moa de Katendê

Interview by author. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 24, 2008.

(Portuguese) Clip-2008-07-23 17;00; 46.mov

“Agora, pra contar sobre os Grupos Juninos: a minha história/trajetória começou assim: a rua do Dique era uma rua pequena, o Mestre Pierre Verger fez uma filmagem de lá, ele tinha pedido uma roda de capoeira, eu tinha feito a música pra ele, acho que em 1980-81, levei a turma da capoeira pra lá, chamei o meu Mestre Bobó e o Mestre Juventino; esses dois é que começaram as rodas das festas juninas aqui pra gente... quer dizer, pra eles muito mais velhos, a gente era criança e os seguia, eram 2 pandeiros, prato de mesa e faca, e iam cantando, de beco em beco, de casa em casa, tomando licor, e a gente ia atrás, né, e quando sobrava um restinho de licor, a gente ia atrás, aí quando ninguém tava olhando, a gente virava o copo rápido, se não a gente tomava carão, e aí pessoal ficava grogue. Aí, no dia seguinte, lá ia eu de novo, seguia eles até...até onde eles fossem, e essa coisa, ali eu já percebi que eu tava já herdando isso deles, do samba-de-roda, quer dizer, eu já tava herdando um sambinha, vc vê a importância que teve eu seguir eles. Então, meu mestre de capoeira e o cara que foi junto, tocando pandeiro, tocando samba junto com Mestre Juventino, então esses dois caras que faziam ali a zona do Dique, subia a ladeira do Pepino, do Monte Belo, depois subia a ladeira de Nanã, isso tudo perto de casa, ia pra casa de cumpade, casa de não sei quem, casa de não sei quem, etc. ia, ia, ia, e tinha um certo momento que já tava grogue, e eles continuavam, “que é que esse menino tem?” e era porque eles já tavam é bêbados, ficando todo assanhado, e começavam a dizer: “que é que esse menino fez? vai pra casa, menino!” e voltava todo mundo pra casa. E aí, no dia seguinte, continuava. Aí eles começaram a se afastar do samba, e a gente começou a puxar o samba, e aí nos colocamos nome de Dêgobá,; isso já era em ’74-’75; a gente já começou a botar camisa [uniforme] e tal, e “vamo

organizar”...aí convidamos eles. O Mestre Juventino, mais velho, já achou que nós tínhamos mudado muito – porque botamos o *timbau*, pandeiro, *repique* – e não acompanhava a gente. O que é que ele fazia? Ele saía mais cedo, tipo assim, 10 da manhã ele saía, pegava uma senhora que chamava Miúda, e que gostava de tomá umas que outras, e juntava os “coroas” da época, e fazia o samba antes da gente, a gente ficava atalhando, pensando, “os véios saíram na frente da gente” e resolvia deixar pra lá:”deixa os velhinhos, né?”, aí de tardinha, umas 2, 3 horas, era a hora da gente se agrupar, e o Mestre Bobó resolveu acompanhar a gente, né, dizendo: “eu não tenho nada com ele não, eu sou jovem,” quer dizer “jovem,” ele já tinha 50 anos, e a gente tinha 17-18-19 anos, e ele seguia a gente. Que bom, né? Era meu Mestre de Capoeira e tava ali, nos incentivando. E de lá pra cá começou a... bom, eu não digo que o nosso samba foi pioneiro. Meu irmão, o organizador, falou “fomos os primeiros do Dique”...mas eu não vou entrar nesse mérito não, mas a gente foi um dos primeiros grupos a saltar na frente, quando nem existia ainda a programação dos jovens, a formação do grupo União... e a gente saía pras ruas fazendo o samba junino... de lá pra cá... agora só tem dois grupos de Samba no Engenho Velho, que é o VivaBahia (? e o Jaqué (?), mas existia a Banda Mocó, perto da ladeira do cinema, depois Embora Mocó, vem Leva Eu, veio Jaqué, vem Mato Véio na Rua Chile, e começou a surgir os sambas aqui na Federação: Samba Pé, Samba Fama...aí depois na Vasco da Gama apareceu um monte de sambas.

Homem (s/ nome) (aparte): O Samba Pé ainda existe, tocaram no Pelourinho esse ano...

Moa: É? Que legal...

Gustavo (aparte): ...com guitarra e tudo...

Ossimar (aparte): O Samba Fama foi um que no final dos '80, lançou junto com Terra Samba um disco.

Angela: (pergunta): O grupo de vocês tinha nome?

Moa: Tinha. Era Dengo Obá. Sim, porque no Dique Pequeno existia também outro Bloco-Afro, que surgiu bem depois do Ilê, chamado Obá Gudu, que era Rei negro; e eu fazia meio que a direção desse bloco; aí saíram alguns components, e daí formamos o Dengo Obá, meu irmão é que deu o nome; meu irmão, que é “doente” pelo samba, não se conforma que o samba da Bahia se perdeu completamente.

Gustavo (pergunta): ouvi dizer que quando surgiu o samba junino, que eles saíam de casa em casa, porta em porta, era no período de Sto. Antonio, antes do São João, e depois e, tomando um “goró” e tal. E aí ...

Moa: ...mas fazia depois de S. João também...

Gustavo: ...era antes e depois de S. João...

Moa: ...é no início era de casa em casa, tinha louco que abria a sua casa... mas depois que os grupos de samba junino começaram a crescer muito, aí surgiu o “arrastão,” o pessoal entrava e saia levando tudo, colher, prato...é...levavam tudo, inclusive tinha uma mulher, a dona de casa que começou a não deixar mais entrar na casa, e aí que o Grupo União teve a idéia, alguém surgiu com a idéia de fazer o concurso (...) pra só depois vir o concurso do Tororó, da Federação, nem sei se existe mais, por causa da violência..., o Nordeste de Amaralina começou a fazer o concurso de samba junino, aí veio Liberdade, etc...Mas foi um momento muito precioso pra gente, né?. Aí a coisa se desgastou muito, a gente percebeu... veio uma outra... deram uma

injeção de desânimo na cultura Afro-Bahiana, no carnaval da Bahia, viu...começaram a organizar demais, tipo assim: “vamos organizar porque o carnaval tá muito bagunçado...”, que nada, era uma bagunça tão boa...foram se meter a organizar e aí virou uma porcaria, porque aí outros grupos de “potência”(elite) começaram a se interessar pelo carnaval, mas na verdade visando seus camarotes, a 1.500 Reais...

Ossimar (aparte): ...é, essa organização acaba excluindo, né, as pessoas que faziam o samba o carnaval, de uma forma mais espontânea, elas vêm e a coisa degrada, né...

Moa: ...é, essa coisa toda, aí cai no cotidiano, [fica trivializado]...também não dá pra dizer que foi só isso, tinha também outros fatores, como a violência, mas eu lembro que naquela época, quando eu tava no samba, eu tinha família, tinha um irmão do lado, eu não tava tão desgarrado assim, não entrei naquela coisa do menino que acha que não precisa disso, porque tem menino que é idiota mesmo, assim,” eu não preciso aprender não”...”não preciso disciplina, não preciso obedecer...” porque acha que disciplina é botar cabresto, é querer amarrar. Nós tá querendo dizer: “olha, vai por aqui, menino, pega uma (...) aqui. Isso é bom, pega, receba esse axé aqui, isso vai ser bom pra depois...E o menino: “não, não, eu quero tocar djembê, eu quero tocar alto, fazer barulho, e ocupa todo mundo,”...ele quer ser solista mesmo, quer dizer, ele não quer aprender, não quer fazer escola, porque ele viu fulano de tal, grupo “tal”, isso é, os caras que tem uma grana, pega um grupo de jovens, aplica uma injeção, e os meninos não estão preparados, fazem sucesso, um tchan, e depois a pessoa não tem estrutura, e a coisa descamba, né? Aí o menino começa a bater na dançarina, porque ela aparece mais, começa a bater na mulher que samba mais, então há falta de estrutura...Então, voltando à disciplina: até hoje eu recebo dos meus mestres, o meu mestre Bobó morreu, minha tia morreu, meu pai que era mestre, também

morreu, que era o mestre da minha música, mas eu tenho o mestre Bigodinho, o Mestre João Grande, o Mestre João Pequeno, pela parte da capoeira, que eu tenho que ouvi-los sempre. Na frente deles eu sou aluno, não posso me declarar “Mestre de Capoeira”, eu tou sempre com “amã”(?) e tou aprendendo mesmo com ele, e continuo aprendendo mesmo com eles. Então não há esse negócio de querer ser absoluto, esse negócio de “eu posso tudo,” não dá em nada, chega lá, no final se estrepa.

Angela: Deixa eu esclarecer para os meninos: “absoluto” quer dizer, querer ser o melhor, cada um pode ser o mestre de seus alunos mas quando chega perto do seu mestre...

Negrizu (entrando na sala): ... ele chora...

Angela (rindo): ...eles convidam você, então você tem que respeitar...

Moa: ...com certeza, isso...então é muito importante, quando vocês tão aprendendo violão, capoeira, percussão, é fundamental a disciplina. Ouça mesmo. Ouça bem. Um carão é bom, ou melhor, tem uma música da capoeira, um corrido, que diz assim: “é melhor apanhar na roda (isso é lá em SP, né) do que apanhar na ROTA”... Porque tem uma ROTA lá em SP, uma polícia braba que pega pra estrangular, matar mesmo. Na roda você toma um tapa, uma rasteira, uma cabeçada... na rua você tá plantado (como na capoeira) pra se defender, pra discutir, e defender seus direitos, talvez se defender, sair de baixo, sem socar o cara, conhecer seus direitos, perguntar, o que o senhor quer? O senhor quer documento, tá aqui o documento mas calma. Porque hoje, agora tá tudo tão acelerado, você tem que tomar cuidado também com policiais, porque tá tudo muito doido, hoje. Você tem que estar com seus guias protetores, que também são muito importantes, porque sem eles, a gente não é nada. Isso tá provado. Não adianta. Porque tá uma proliferação de igrejas loucas por aí, são loucos mas deixa eles pra lá. Vamos cuidar da

nossa vida. A gente precisa se proteger. Contra eles tudo bem, ou até pra ajudá-los. Porque as vezes, vem um cara e diz: “não, porque Jesus blablabla.” Como assim? De que Jesus você tá falando? Entendeu? Você tem que conversar com ele. Dizer você tá com Jesus, eu também tou com os Orixás, etc./ Enfim... Então, saindo um pouco dos sambas juninos, eu entrei na coisa do carnaval. Aí a gente perdeu as escolas de samba. A gente perdeu as escolas de samba, né? Quando eu vou pro RJ, os caras lá sabem que eu sou da minha bandeira baiana, não tem jeito. Mas agora eu tenho que dar a mão a palmatória. Eles dizem: “baiano, você tá por aqui, vamos discutir, e o samba da Bahia? Cadê o samba da Bahia? Eu digo: Não tem nem samba na Bahia. Tem samba do Recôncavo, tem samba junino. Eu tenho que me agarrar neles. Só tem esses aí, por enquanto, né? Eles dizem: “é, mas a gente vai pra lá...” eles vêm pra cá no Carnaval, eles vem cá pra ver o carnaval da Bahia!! Justamente com as entidades que receberam das escolas de samba, que receberam dos blocos indígenas, que receberam dos Blocos-afros, toda uma informação, e deram as costas também. Eu não sei por que, o bloco Alvorada, a gente ia lá, trazia os compositores, e eles viravam, de repente se transformaram, querem trazer a estrela do RJ. E eu falei com um representante do de um grupo famoso. Me disse: “legal, vamos trazer um cara do Rio...” Por que não bota Riachão lá em cima? Por que não bota um artista daqui? Por que não valoriza o artista da terra? (...)

Tem o Riachão (80 + anos) tem o poeta Batatinha, que já morreu, mas a obra não morre. A gente tava lá na Mangueira (RJ) e o pessoal falando de outros muitos grupos novos, etc. Perguntaram o que eu achava, eu disse: “legal, mas a gente tá perdendo muita coisa aqui também, por não valorizar os artistas locais, agente tá os abandonando. Aqui em Salvador, o que tem de compositor bom. É impressionante. Inclusive eu queria sugerir pra vocês, se puderem chamar o artista aqui da area também, o Muniz, que tem muita música, uma história, mais antigo do que

eu, tem muita coisa. Você pega um compositor como esse, põe uma música do cara. Vc vê esses grupos por aí, e eles não tem compositor, e também não procuram. Eles fazem tudo, arranjo, produtor, compositor, etc. Mas não sabem compor, as letras são frágeis. E o público em geral se acostuma com muita coisa, e vai perdendo a referência, e aí me dizem, você tá ultrapassado.[aqui Moa fala de frustrações de baiano sendo desconsiderado, inclusive pelo próprio Gil pela Ivete Sangalo]

Moa: Aqui a FPV tá preocupada em trabalhar o social, chamar a criançada, pra dar a visão do mundo através do ritmo, através da dança, da capoeira...

Angela: ...e da história do bairro...

Moa: ...e da história, que é coisa da memória, a memória tem que estar viva, porque senão vocês se perdem, perdem a referência. Vocês podem ir atrás (dos novos grupos, etc.) mas vai com consciência, pode rebolar. Mas tem que ter consciência, porque vai ter o momento da conversa...depois que a onda do samba murcha, você vai ter que saber das coisas daqui. O PV foi amigo aqui do bairro. Numa conversa, você diz: “eu sou lá do Engenho Velho de Brotas”...

- É mesmo? O que você faz lá? Voc tem que dizer mesmo, com orgulho: “Sim, eu faço parte da FPV, parte de um projeto. PV foi uma figura lendária, chegou, fez um encaminhamento [iniciação no candomblé], foi à África, correu o mundo fotografando tudo, e na Bahia ele se apaixonou e diga mesmo, lá tem a capoeira, porque foi o desejo dele, a dança era o desejo dele, e lá tem também o Moa do Katendê, que fez a primeira música pra PV, enquanto o cara ainda tava vivo, pode falar mesmo...

Angela: ... e já cantou?

Moa: Não, deixa pro final. Fiz a primeira música pro mestre Carybé. O Pierre Verger era amigo do bairro, de toda a area, ele abria pra todo mundo a visão dele, o conhecimento que abriu a cabeça dele...Se alguém disser: “não porque ela é problemática, etc...” E você responde: “E daí? não é problemática, e daí? Lá eu tou com Pierre Verger, com Carybé, com Negrizu, com Sizinio, com Ossimar, Gustavo...chama! Chama o nome deles com orgulho, porque senão te atropelam, vem umas conversas de lá (RJ)...

Ossimar fala que os grandes compositores da Bahia são desconhecidos, que os baianos conhecem mais os sambistas do RJ .

Eu perguntei sobre a polêmica da origem do samba, se foi na Bahia ou no RJ, por que as escolas de samba começaram DEPOIS das escolas de samba no RJ?

Moa responde que acredita que o estilo de escola de samba do RJ influenciou as escolas de samba da Bahia, mas que as fontes de samba rural do Recôncavo, a chula, o barravento, mas a escola de aprendizado, de tocar cuíca, foi influencia do RJ. Falou de quão rigoroso era o desfile daquele tempo, do Campo Grande até a Praça da Sé, e que exigia muita disciplina, e isso desmotivou os baianos, que queriam mais espontaneidade, e menos rigidez.

Ossimar intervem dizendo que a ala das baianas nas escolas de samba do RJ é uma influência da Bahia nas escolas do Rio.

Moa fala de Negrizu, do Badaué (Afoxé de Engenho Velho, dirigido por Moa) e que teve que ser meio autoritário dizendo pro pessoal que eles tinham que descer a ladeira, senão os Orixás iriam pegar, etc. e o pessoal acabou descendo, e assim o Badaué acabou crescendo. Depois alguns ilustres vinham aos ensaios (Caetano, Gil, A Cor do Som, etc). Moa fala que montar um

bloco era muito complicado, ele teve que ter muita fibra, e quando o Caetano vem, eles convidam o Caetano pra ser padrinho do Badauê, pra propiciar mais visibilidade na mídia, etc. Caetano foi convidado porque já tinha feito a música que fala do Badauê. Depois convidaram o Gil, Regina Casé, A Cor do Som.

Moa então fala do batizado de Negrizu (do apelido dele) que foi nomeado por Moa pra ser o diretor da dança e da coreografia do Badauê. E Badauê faz sucesso na avenida, explode na avenida, mas logo depois se implode também, começando a ter problemas internos, etc.

End of Clip-2008-07-23 17;00;46.mov

Moa de Katende.clip-2008-07-23 17;26;56.mov

Gustavo pergunta, quando que o Badauê teve esses problemas?

Moa responde que antes teve a época de ouro do Badauê. Em 79 ganhou o carnaval, competindo com uma música que homenageia os Filhos de Gandhi, que completava 30 anos de existência. E essa música foi que pipocou tudo, depois da vitória, saiu nos jornais que Moa tinha comprado a comissão julgadora, que era apadrinhado do Caetano Veloso, e por isso o Afoxé Badauê ganhou dos Filhos de Gandhi, e em contrapartida apareceu alguém dizendo: mas quem manda o Filhos de Gandhi competir? Eles já têm 30 anos, nem precisam mais competir. Isso deu um fuzuê danado... entre os jornais *Correio da Bahia*, *A Tarde*, e *Jornal da Bahia*. E esse atrito criou polemica, rumores, etc. dizendo que ganhou porque tínhamos uma ala chamada Filhos de Gandhi, e a gente vinha com uma toalha nas mãos e cantava (a música dizia):

Não chore Gandhi, não chore não

Você é um bom irmão

Eternamente será lembrado

Seu nome é abençoado

Filhos de Gandhi, Filhos de Gandhi,

Badauê canta pra você

Trinta anos de luta

De amor e paixão

Gracas à vontade divina

Hoje você é o maior

Deixa o Badauê

Enxugar os seus olhos...

E isso criou esse fuzuê na imprensa, e mais tarde o Badauê começou a ter rachas também dentro do Badauê. Moa fala de Ara Keto, que não é o mesmo Araketo atual. Outro grupo chamado Fogo Cultural (Negrizu era parte), Moa começa a ter rachas com Jorjão e mais tarde começa a se questionar por ter deixado de lado a capoeira, a dança, as composições, só pra compor e administrar o Badauê.

Osvaldo Barreto, apresentador de radio, programa muito popular, falou várias coisas sobre Moa, ele foi à radio tentar tirar a forra, e bater no Barreto, porque tinha temperamento selvagem. Os seguranças de Barreto disseram: “você tem que ser maior do que isso. Isso é crítica, tem que

aceitar a crítica.” Eu quis tirar os caras do Badaué, porque eu era ditador pedi pra 4.500 foliões (badauínos) dar as costas pra ele no desfile na Praça da Sé, Moa tirou satisfação do Barreto. Tinha o Acambi, outro bloco de dissidentes do Badaué. Moa começou a entender os ciclos da grandeza e do declínio.

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS

Interview with Débora

JCJ – Temos aqui a Débora... quantos anos você tem, Débora?

Debora – 8.

JCJ – 8 anos. E o que que você faz na Fundação?

Debora – Eu faço aula de *capoeira* e dança

JCJ – Faz aula de quê? Um pouquinho mais alto...

Debora – *Capoeira* e dança-Afro

JCJ - *Capoeira* e dança-Afro. Muito bem, e quanto tempo você tá fazendo... *capoeira*?

Debora – Humm, um ano e meio.

JCJ – Um ano e meio. E dança?

Debora – Também.

JCJ - Também. E o professor de *capoeira* é...?

Debora – É Sizinho, e Espantalho... (a classmate whispers in the background: “Ivo”!)... e Ivo.

JCJ – Espantalho é o Ivo?

Debora – Faz que sim com a cabeça. [Yes]

JCJ – Ah não sabia que ele tinha apelido de Espantalho.

Debora – Não, mas, também tem um professor que é Sandro, que ele viajou, e o apelido dele é Espantalho.

JCJ – Ah, tá. O Espantalho é outro, é Sandro.

Debora – É.

JCJ – E a última vez teve o Iuri, né?

Debora – É.

JCJ – Como convidado, né?

Debora – Como professor.

JCJ – Hum, hum... e você já sabe jogar *capoeira*?

Debora – Já, mas ainda tenho que aprender algumas coisas.

JCJ – Sim. Tem muita coisa pra aprender, né? E você já toca berimbau?

Debora – Tou aprendendo.

JCJ – Tá aprendendo, e os outros instrumentos, você toca?

Debora – Toco.

JCJ – Toca o que mais?

Debora – Toco...o tambor...

JCJ – ...o atabaque...

Debora - ...o atabaque...

JCJ – ...o pandeiro...

Debora - ...o pandeiro e...

JCJ – ...o agogô...

Debora - ...o agogô...

JCJ – ...o reco-reco...

Debora - ...o reco-reco... o berimbau eu ainda tou aprendendo...

JCJ – Certo. E na dança, você vai apresentar alguma coisa?

Debora – Vou apresentar “A Chegada de Obatalá.”

JCJ – “A Chegada de Obatalá.” Você tem algum papel...é...específico assim na dança ou não?

Debora – Hã...tenho.

JCJ –Tem?

Debora – Tenho, o do que faz o jogo...de....de “bizus”...

JCJ –...de búzios?

Debora – Búzios.

JCJ – Porque o Reginaldo uma hora faz papel de Obatalá, não é? Quem é que...O Reginaldo faz papel de velhinho, assim. Ele não faz papel de Obatalá?

(Another girl listening) – É...Ela não faz papel nenhum, não

Debora – Eu faço sim, Kaia. Eu...por enquanto, tem uma menina,, né?...que ela faz o jogo. Enquanto ela não tá, eu faço no lugar dela...

JCJ – E agora, quem vai ser a próxima entrevistada?

Debora – Kaia.

JCJ – Camila, vamo lá, Camila.

Camila – Eu não, eu não...

JCJ – Ué? Vocês gostam de ver a TeVezinha, e agora não gostam?

Camila – Eu não gosto...

JCJ – Kaia! (Kaia tries to look away, she's very shy and is refusing to be interviewed)

Debora – Kaia, olha pra cá

JCJ – Debora, a Kaia nao quis falar. Por que? Ela é tímida?

Debora – É... ela fica com vergonha...

Camila – Ela é burra, ha, ha...

Debora – Ela é muito envergonhada.

JCJ – Não... e a Camila? Camila tá com vergonha?

Camila – Eu não!

JCJ – Oh, a Kaia...

Kaia – oi, oi, oi...

JCJ - A outra moça bonita irmã da Débora, e a Camila... que escapuliu...

Debora – É que Kaia é muito...ela também nao gosta de ser filmada...

JCJ – ...é, eu tambem não gosto muito... e aqui tá o Matheus, que é um violonista, né, Matheus, você toca violão...

Matheus - Rapaz, a essa altura não sei mais o que é que eu sou, não...(ri)

JCJ - Ah, isso é uma grande coisa. A gente quando sabe muito o que é, é perigoso, né...o cara quando sabe o que é, aí já tá próximo...já tá prestes a passar pro outro mundo, né não?

Matheus – Viche Maria, eu, hein? não diz isso não... tem muita coisa ainda aí pra fazer...

JCJ – E aqui nós temos o Julio Góes, faz caxixi, tá trabalhando nos juncos, que é um cipó, um cipó que me deixa muito orgulhoso, poise u sou o João Junqueira, sou o João dos juncos. Sabia?

Interview with Kevin

JCJ – E aquele menino, qual é seu nome?

Kevin – É Kevin.

JCJ – Kevin? Pô, um nome [estrangeiro]? O que é que cê faz aqui na Fundação, Kevin?

Kevin – Percussão e Experimentação Musical.

JCJ - Percussão e Experimentação Musical. Você tá na aula da Tatiana também. Junto com a Kaia.

JCJ – Você gosta de tocar que instrumentos, Kevin?

Kevin – Atabaque e marcação.

JCJ – Atabaque e marcação. Que que é marcação? É surdo?

Kevin – É surdo.

JCJ – E a quanto tempo você já tá fazendo essas oficinas?

Kevin – Uns 4 a 5 anos...

JCJ – ...4 a 5 anos, já?

Kevin – É.

JCJ – Você já se apresentou, então?

Kevin – Já.

JCJ – É? Você gosta de se apresentar?

Kevin – Huhum. [Yes]

JCJ – E...a música é importante pra você?

Kevin – É.

JCJ – Por que?

Kevin – Faz parte da gente, né?

JCJ – Faz parte da gente. Muito bem. E quando você toca música, você sente alguma coisa diferente de quando você tá só brincando com as crianças?

Kevin – É.

JCJ – Por que? O que você sente?

Kevin – Várias coisas.

JCJ – Tipo...

Kevin – Tipo...como se eu fosse um percussionista, já...é só.

JCJ – Você acha que a música mostra pra você alguma coisa de raí, alguma coisa de onde vem seus avós?

Kevin – É.

JCJ – Cê sabe de onde seus avós vieram?

Kevin – Não.

JCJ – Você conheceu seus avós?

Kevin – Sim.

JCJ – Onde é que eles moram?

Kevin – Conceição de Salinas.

JCJ - Conceição de Salinas, onde é isso? No interior da Bahia?

Kevin – É.

JCJ – Ah, mas você nasceu e cresceu em Salvador?

Kevin – Sim.

JCJ – Quantos irmãos você tem?

Kevin – Uma irmã.

JCJ – Uma irmã. Ela faz oficinas aqui?

Kevin – Não.

Julio Góes – Conceição de Salinas é ilha, não é isso? Não é na ilha?

JCJ – Ilha de onde? Itaparica?

Julio Góes – Itaparica. Conceição de Salinas, e Salinas das Margaridas também.

JCJ – Itaparica é bonita, não é não?

Kevin – É.

JCJ – Quero ver se vou lá um dia desses. Qual é o dia melhor pra ir em Itaparica, que não é tão...

Kevin – Sábado e Domingo.

JCJ – Não é muita zoadada no fim de semana?

Kevin – Não.

JCJ – Você visita lá ainda?

Kevin – Visito.

JCJ – Como é que você vai lá, vai de Ferry ou vai de lancha?

Kevin – De lancha.

JCJ – Daí você fica lá o domingo, com a vó e com o vô?

Kevin – É.

JCJ – Que bom. Tá bom então, obrigado, viu?

Debora – O apelido dele é bizú!

JCJ – Bizú?

Kevin – Bizu.

Debora – Por isso que ele é assim tão gordo, ha, ha...

JCJ – Gordo ele? Você acha?

Debora – Acho...

JCJ – Achei ele elegante. Meu apelido é Barê.

Debora – Bareta.

Kevin – Bareta?

JCJ – Não, não tem ‘ta,’ é só Barê. ...

Interview with Arielson

JCJ - E vocês aqui? Posso falar com vocês um pouquinho?

Arielson – Pode.

JCJ - Qual é seu nome?

Arielson – Arielson.

JCJ – Arielson. Eu já falei com você o outro dia, não foi?

Arielson – Foi.

JCJ – Arielson já entrevistei outro dia. Faz capoeira...

Arielson – Não.

JCJ – O que é que voce faz?

Arielson – Percussão e aula de caxixi.

JCJ – Percussão e construção de instrumentos. E em que ano você tá, Arielson? Na escola?

Arielson – Quinta [série].

JCJ – Quinta? Você acha que as oficinas aqui ajudam você na escola?

Arielson – Ajuda, e muito.

JCJ – É? Como assim? Te ajuda em que sentido? Você vai na escola e....

Arielson – Me incentiva mais.

JCJ – Te incentiva mais. Você fica mais...é...você sente mais forte com você mesmo?

Arielson – É.

JCJ – E quando você faz percussão, você sente assim que tá aprendendo com uma música antiga, nova?

Arielson – Com as duas.

JCJ – Você acha que a música que você tá aprendendo tem a ver com seus avós?

Arielson – Algumas sim, outras não.

JCJ – Algumas sim, outras não. Como é que você sabe que tem a ver com seus avós?

Arielson – É do tempo deles.

JCJ – huhum...mas como é que você sabe? Eles falaram pra você dos ritmos ou...

Arielson – O ritmo do som era mais suave.

Interview with Bruno

(Interjections of Arielson and Débora about Geography Class)

JCJ – E você, qual é seu nome?

Bruno – Bruno.

JCJ – Bruno. Que que você faz aqui na Fundação, Bruno?

Bruno – Percussão, capoeira, violão e construção de instrumento.

JCJ – Percussão, capoeira, violão e construção de instrumento. Uau! Você gosta de fazer bastante coisa?

Bruno – Sim.

JCJ – E a quanto tempo você tá fazendo?

Bruno – 2 anos (showed 2 fingers on his RT hand)

JCJ – 2? Todas as quatro [oficinas]? Você tá em que ano, Bruno?

Bruno – Sétima.

JCJ – Sétima? E vocês estão na mesma escola juntos?

Bruno – Não.

JCJ – É escola pública ou particular?

Bruno – Pública.

JCJ – É aqui na Vila América?

Bruno – É no final de linha.

JCJ – No final de linha, lá em cima no Engenho Velho?

Bruno – É.

JCJ – Você mora no Engenho Velho?

Bruno – Não, eu moro em Brotas.

JCJ – Pois é, eu nunca entendo direito. Tem Engenho Velho de Brotas, tem Brotas Engenho Velho da Federação, tem Vila América. O que é o que? Qual é a diferença entre o Engenho Velho e Vila América, por exemplo?

Bruno – Vila América...eles dizem que é, não sei quem deu nome, é só aqui...

JCJ – ... é só na ladeira aqui...

Bruno – É só na ladeira.

JCJ – Mas o bairro é...

Bruno – Engenho Velho de Brotas

JCJ – E você, Bruno, você faz percussão, voce falou? Quando você toca percussão, você toca algum ritmo assim...é o Hermórgenes que ensina pra vocês, né?

Bruno – O que?

JCJ – O professor é o Hermórgenes?

Bruno – É.

JCJ – Quando ele ensina pra vocês alguns ritmos nos instrumentos, ele fala assim... daonde vem os ritmos, como é que nasceu?

Bruno – Não.

JCJ – Quais são alguns nomes de ritmos que vocês tocam?

Bruno – Jembê...

JCJ – Jembê...esse é um instrumento, não é não?

Bruno – Não.

JCJ – É o ritmo?

Bruno – É.

JCJ – Jembê. E ijexá, vocês fazem ijexá?

Bruno – Sim.

JCJ – Que mais? Afoxé,...

Bruno – Tem vários...

JCJ – ... samba-reggae...

Bruno – muito pouco...

Arielson – Curubi.

JCJ – Qual?

Arielson – Curubi.

JCJ – Daonde que vem o Curubi?

Arielson – É um ritmo africano...

JCJ – Vem de que parte da África?

Arielson – É...Amazônia...

Bruno – Amazônia, haha...

JCJ – Amazônia é na África? Haha, onde é que fica a Amazônia? Aula de geografia, vamos lá! Onde é que fica a Amazônia, Bruno? América do Norte, América do Sul, ou América Central?

Bruno – América...Central.

JCJ – A Amazônia?

Bruno – Eu acho que é.

JCJ – A Amazônia não fica no Brasil?

Bruno – Fica...não! No Brasil...?

JCJ – Então? Vocês já estudaram geografia da América do Sul?

Bruno – Não. Ainda não.

JCJ – E geografia do Brasil?

Bruno – Não.

JCJ – Não? Na sétima, que geografia vocês estudam na sétima?

Bruno – Estuda mas é assim... a professora vai um dia sim, um dia não..falta...

JCJ – Ah é? A professora falta muito é?

Bruno – Sim.

JCJ – São só os professores de geografia que faltam, ou faltam todos?

Bruno – Falta mais é o de geografia. Ela só vem um dia da semana. Ela fica sem vir quase 5 dias...

JCJ – Vamos lá, então, Amazonia fica na América do Sul. Onde é que fica o Brasil? Fica na América do Sul ou fica na África?

Bruno – Na América do Sul.

JCJ - Na América do Sul. Certo? Concorde, Arielson?

Arielson – Sim

JCJ – E a Bahia? Onde é que fica a Bahia? Na África ou na América do Sul?

Bruno – Na América do Sul...

Débora – ...África!

JCJ – A Bahia fica na África? Haha...Que bom, né? Eu acho que é a África que fica na Bahia. Não acha, não? Com esses ritmos todos que a gente tem aqui, e com essa música.

Arielson – Brasil.

JCJ – Bahia fica no estado da Bahia, que é um estado...

Arielson – Brasileiro

JCJ – E a Amazonia fica...no norte do Brasil. Né? Hein, Débora, voice já estuda geografia também?

Débora – A geografia só estudo na prova.

JCJ – Só na prova? Só pra passar de prova?

Débora – haha...ainda mais que a gente nem tem livro de geografia...

JCJ – E história? Vocês estudam história? Fala aí, Arielson, conta a piada pra mim que eu quero rir também...

Arielson – Foi nada não. [rindo muito]

JCJ – [brincando] Ele é egoísta. Conta a piada só pro amigo dele e não compartilha com a gente...

JCJ – (dando um pan na camera) Tá todo mundo fazendo caxixi hoje.

APPENDIX 4

INTERVIEWS (ENGLISH)

PVCS Administration

Interview by author. Video recording. Pierre Verger Cultural Space, Salvador, Bahia, July 19, 2009.

Question 2

Do PVCS teachers seek to raise awareness only about their students' ancestry or about the Afro-Brazilian ancestry as a whole? How is this awareness made/achieved? Explicitly or implicitly?

PVCS Administration: Music is an expression of life, of experience, ephemeral and at the same time profoundly transformative. Partly explicitly and partly Implicitly

Question 3

According to Dona Ceci (storytelling) and Jucélia (pedagogy director), Angela Luhning founded PVCC. Do you believe Angela incorporated Pierre Verger's principles when she conceived the workshops? If so, which were Verger's principles incorporated by Angela?

Dna. Ceci: Yes, combine research, education and coexistence; listening to the elderly telling about the past, about people and their traditions allows kids to discover voices that are usually silenced by structures of "respect/discipline," imposition and power in traditional schools where

Jucélia: Yes, value Afro-Brazilian traditions, discover new sounds, hear stories, including successful trajectories; motivate to reflection, emphasizing the sense of belonging by bringing in positive role models to point kids toward less social vulnerability.

Negrizu: Yes, reflecting about the diverse contexts related to music and dance leads to expressing feelings and struggles, besides being a possible pathway to the unknown, with a great potential for freedom, which is built on hope.

Ossimar: Yes, music and rhythm have to do with the body and its movement, connecting teachers and learners to their origins, to symbologies, to various forms of multiple expression.

Layla: Yes, melodies are related to urban, media –driven, rural, and ancestral universes as well; lyrics and symbols always open up pathways to universes that are not usually explored, but already pré-existing in the children’s experiences.

Sizinio: Yes, work with notions of ethics, civil rights in a context where there is little respect, accepted rules, violence, a different moral/ethics code ;teach peaceful coexistence.

Ricardo: Yes, teach music that includes elements and concepts of Afro-Brazilian culture, ancestry and citizenship.

Gustavo: Yes, Candomblé is still alive today, because it does not intend to convince people about an absolute truth, as opposed to most religions.

Luhning: NO. PVCS pedagogy does not derive from P.V.; pedagogy and methodology is far beyond our reality.

Question 4

The pedagogy of PVCC has a focus on music of Candomblé as a basis for workshops in music and dance?

Administration: NO, the pedagogy aims to develop creativity, self-discovery, and seek integration between different activities/disciplines, rather than specialization.

Instructors: NO, Dona Ceci is the spiritual mentor at PVCC; provides guidance to the kids, and awareness about Candomblé, but the pedagogy does NOT focus on music of candomblé.

Academics: NO.

Parents: Don’t know.

Question 5

The process of learning music increases students' curiosity to the point of returning the next day with more willingness to learn and interact with the institution?

Administration: Yes.

Instructors: Yes.

Academics: Yes.

Parents: Yes.

Question 6

Is there a formal strategy to monitoring results obtained with PVCC's educational purposes centered in the arts?

Administration: No.

Instructors: Yes.

APPENDIX 5

PVCS - OFICINAS



Quadro de horário das oficinas

Professor (a)	Oficina	Horário	Dia
Sandra, Helena e Rebeca	Artes Plásticas	14 às 15:30 e 15:30 às 17	Terça e Quinta
Sizínio e Ivo	Capoeira	17 às 19	Terça e Quinta
Tatiana	Experimentação Musical	17 às 18:30	Segunda-feira
Negrizu	Dança Afro (Infantil)	16 às 18	Sexta
Negrizu	Dança Afro (Adulto)	19 às 21	Terça e Quinta
Negrizu	Dança (Adolescente)	15 às 17	Terça e Quinta
Negrizu	Expressão Corporal	19 às 20:30	Quarta
Gustavo	Violão (turma 1)	18 às 20	Terça-feira
Gustavo	Violão (turma 2)	18 às 20	Quarta-feira
Gustavo	Violão (turma 3)	18 às 20	Quinta-feira

Ossimar	Violão (turma 1)	16 às 17	Quarta e Sexta
Ossimar	Violão (turma 2)	17 às 18	Quarta e Sexta
Lázaro	Fotografia Pinhole	14 às 16	Segunda-feira
Josmara	Fotografia Analógica	14 às 16	Sexta-feira
Joelma /Rose	Corte e Costura	14 às 17	Quarta-feira
Taís	Estética Afro	15 às 19	Segunda-feira
Ramon	Xadrez	16 às 18	Sexta-feira
Hermórgens	Percussão	9 às 11 14 às 16	Quinta-feira
Maurício	Teoria Musical	15 às 16	Terça-feira

APPENDIX 6

QUESTIONNAIRE (PORTUGUESE)

Questionário – Coleta de dados para Tese de Doutorado em Etnomusicologia

Tema da Tese: “Construção de identidade de afro-baianos através da música, dança e contação de histórias do Candomblé.”

Doutorando: João Junqueira

Caro participante do Espaço Cultural Pierre Verger:

Esse levantamento de dados (via questionário) é vital para a conclusão de minha tese de doutorado em etnomusicologia na Universidade de Colorado-Boulder, EUA.

Considero o trabalho do Espaço Cultural válido e necessário, e de bastante sucesso. Sou muito grato pela atenção, colaboração e paciência que lá recebi, e especialmente grato por ter conhecido todos que lá trabalham. Minha observação no trabalho de campo indicou claramente que os assuntos ensinados no Espaço são coerentes com os interesses e necessidades da diversidade baiana e brasileira.

Porém, minha orientadora e banca examinadora alegam que eu estou “demais” pró-Espaço, ou seja, que eu já estou determinado a “aprovar” e ser “seguidor” da sua proposta. Segundo eles, o problema que isso cria é que os dados levantados até aqui carecem do que eles chamam de suporte “científico e objetivo” mais substancial e convincente. Para que os examinadores dêem mais crédito a minha tese, a minha orientadora sugeriu então que eu aplicasse um questionário mais estruturado, que permitirá analisar os dados de maneira mais científica.

Então, o que eu busco com esse questionário é descobrir se a minha argumentação de tese vai ser apoiada ou não por alguma documentação adicional, ou algum depoimento, além da observação/participação. As respostas à esse questionário me permitirão não só ser mais científico, mas também mais crítico e auto-crítico no meu argumento. Eu gostaria de pedir a você que fique bem à vontade, em responder (ou não) as perguntas da maneira que mais lhe convir, lembrando que quanto mais detalhada a informação que você fornecer, melhor para os meus propósitos.

O assunto da minha tese é construção da identidade, portanto eu preciso saber mais sobre os efeitos da educação do Espaço Cultural Pierre Verger (ECPV) na vida futura dos alunos, porque essa informação serviria como “comprovação documentada” do desenvolvimento de alguns aspectos que desejo focalizar na minha tese, ou que não é possível tal “documentação,” ou ainda, que a minha hipótese não pode ser confirmada. Mais uma vez, muito obrigado pela sua colaboração.

APPENDIX 7

QUESTIONNAIRE 2 (PORTUGUESE)

Questionário

1. Existe algum projeto de acompanhamento dos resultados obtidos com a proposta do ECPV centrada nas artes?

2. Existe algum instrumento/mecanismo específico que pode detectar a caminhada dos egressos (ex-alunos) na vida pós-ECPV, na escola, no trabalho, ou nas artes em geral? Em suma, o progresso dos egressos é acompanhado de alguma forma?

Sabe-se que o ECPV incorpora elementos essenciais da cultura Afro-Brasileira em seu plano pedagógico. Levando isso em consideração:

3. Em que termos a questão da transmissão da herança cultural é alcançada com o trabalho do ECPV?

4. Os professores relatam descobertas, verificam os progressos dos alunos, ou seja, têm documentos ou depoimentos que demonstram o sucesso da proposta do ECPV? Como isso é feito?

5. Existe alguma pesquisa partindo do ECPV sobre os benefícios recebidos/conquistados pela comunidade (Vila América e bairros vizinhos) em termos de uma melhor qualidade de vida? Em caso positivo, explique quais benefícios e como você os observa.

6. As crianças e os adolescentes do ECPV conseguem uma melhor adaptação à vida social e ao trabalho? (Se for o caso, pode comentar sobre o aspecto “inclusão social”) Como e por que?

7. A cidadania é um resultado desejado e obtido? Como e por que?

8. Os professores do ECPV procuram conscientizar seus alunos sobre sua ancestralidade ou sobre a ancestralidade Afro-Brasileira como um todo? Como se dá essa conscientização? Ela é explícita ou implícita (tácita)?

9. Pode-se afirmar na tese: conquistas, resultados, transformações? Em caso positivo, explique como você observa esses aspectos.

10. Por que você tem certeza que o modelo educacional do ECPV dá certo?

11. Como são adquiridos os fundos que sustentam o trabalho no ECPV? O que o ECPV tem em mãos, o que pode oferecer aos patrocinadores, e que tipo de sucesso obtém com esse objetivo?

12. Dona Ceci e Jucélia, entre outros, afirmaram que as oficinas foram criadas por Angela. Em que Angela se baseou (dados referenciais e concepção) e como Angela traduziu operacionalmente a visão e filosofia do etnofotógrafo Pierre Verger?
13. A ação global do ECPV fortalece e/ou resgata a identidade individual e coletiva (afrodescendente, ou afro-baiano, ou afro-brasileiro) dos participantes? Como e por que você diria que isso acontece e por meio de que ações ou manifestações dos participantes?
14. A orientação pedagógica das oficinas do ECPV é toda baseada nos resultados da pesquisa do fotógrafo-pesquisador Pierre Verger sobre Candomblé e culturas africanas?
15. As oficinas de música e dança focalizam na música do Candomblé (seja o “Candomblé de rua” ou o de terreiro) na pedagogia do ECPV? Em caso positivo, qual é o papel do Candomblé (ou de sua música) na educação objetivada pelo ECPV?
17. Os elementos musicais (ritmo e melodia) e de movimento corporal (dança) do Candomblé são o centro temático (permanente ou esporádico) das oficinas do ECPV, ou são apenas usados como “pano de fundo”?
18. Por que ensinar música e dança derivada do (ou relacionada com) Candomblé? Você acha que esses assuntos deveriam ser ensinados fora dos terreiros? O que você sabe sobre a opinião de Ialorixás e Babalorixás a esse respeito?
19. O processo de aprendizagem no ECPV aumenta a curiosidade dos alunos ao ponto de fazê-los retornarem no dia seguinte com mais vontade de aprender – interagir com professores, colegas e funcionários – com mais alegria, maior interesse e maior dedicação?
20. Você considera que um dos resultados a longo prazo desse processo seria a emergência de maior capacidade de pensar, viver, trabalhar, se relacionar e até ter um melhor desempenho na escola tradicional. Em caso positivo, você acha que essa transformação se amplia para o âmbito da cidadania, ou seja, estariam os alunos se transformando em cidadãos com maior consciência e usufruto dos direitos de cidadania?

As perguntas seguintes são opcionais (mas não menos importantes para minha pesquisa). Suas respostas contribuirão para conclusões sobre inclusão social, desenvolvimento sustentável, e preservação da herança cultural intangível.

1. Qual é o nível de familiaridade ou experiência que você tem com os Iorubás, Bantus e Nagôs? O que você poderia me dizer (brevemente) sobre essa familiaridade ou experiência e como isso se aplica no trabalho educacional do ECPV?
2. Os professores do ECPV acreditam que seu programa de ensino promove maior inclusão social? Leva ao desenvolvimento sustentável da herança cultural? Ou esses aspectos não são explícitos nos objetivos de ensino?
3. Você acredita que o programa das oficinas do ECPV gera uma conscientização que aponta para uma aproximação ou reafirmação das práticas religiosas, e/ ou espirituais, e/ou culturais dos

ancestrais de seus alunos?

4. A observação e as entrevistas feitas no ECPV permitiram deduzir que o processo de aprendizagem se estende para além do contexto das oficinas do Espaço. As respostas às entrevistas estariam indicando, por exemplo:

1. que a aprendizagem dos assuntos ensinados no ECPV continua após o término das aulas, com o aluno trazendo os temas para o convívio de seus familiares em casa;
1. os alunos aumentam a sua curiosidade e o desejo de saber mais sobre sua ancestralidade;
2. os alunos retornam a seus lares com motivação para interagirem mais intensamente com seus familiares e sua comunidade;
3. ao interagirem com a família, os alunos do ECPV motivam (ou contribuem para) uma tomada de consciência por parte dos familiares no sentido da sua origem e do sistema de crenças, isto é, de sua identidade cultural;
4. o processo iniciado na escola intensifica a comunicação (diálogo) entre alunos e comunidade, resultando num maior intercâmbio entre gerações;
5. o processo de aprendizagem leva ao reforço do afeto e dos valores familiares, e promove o maior convívio na família.

As perguntas a seguir se referem as afirmações acima. (Escolha apenas uma):

- a) Você concorda com **todas** as afirmações? Por que?
- b) Você concorda com **algumas** destas afirmações? Quais e por que?
- c) Você **não concorda com nenhuma** das afirmações? Por que?
- d) Você não tem dados suficientes para concordar ou discordar. Explique por que.

APPENDIX 8

INTERVIEW WITH PIERRE VERGER (PORTUGUESE)

“Candomblé com Sotaque Francês”

Last Updated Tuesday, 26 August 2008.

Pierre Verger. Interview by Maria José Quadros, published in O Globo newspaper 16/08/1992.

Às vésperas de completar 90 anos, o etnólogo francês Pierre Verger, radicado na Bahia há quase meio século, se prepara para dar mais uma importante contribuição ao estudo da cultura afro-brasileira. Com a ajuda de uma especialista em botânica, ele prepara seu vigésimo livro, um trabalho inédito sobre as plantas medicinais usadas na costa do Benin, na África, e na Bahia, que deverá ser publicado também na Inglaterra e França.

O livro será lançado no final do ano, coincidindo com a inauguração da sede definitiva da Fundação Pierre Verger, que abrigará todo o acervo do etnólogo, há anos disputado por seis universidades da Europa, Estados Unidos e África. São 60 mil negativos fotográficos, três mil volumes de livros e documentos, um catálogo com 3.500 plantas medicinais e mais de mil horas de gravações sobre a cultura oral iorubá. Tudo isso está amontoadado na modesta casa onde ele mora há 32 anos, na ladeira Alto do Corrupio, em companhia apenas de um gato com nome de filósofo; Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Todos os parentes próximos de Verger já morreram.

Nascido Pierre Edouard Leopold Verger, em Paris, em uma família abastada, o etnólogo desprezou o cargo de diretor na empresa gráfica do pai, quando tinha 30 anos, em troca da liberdade de sair fotografando povos e costumes pelos cinco continentes. Considerado um dos maiores fotógrafos do mundo na época, fez vários ensaios par o Museu do Homem, de Paris, deu a volta ao mundo como fotógrafo do estinto jornal “Paris Soir,” virou correspondente de guerra da revista americana “Life,” Segunda Guerra e foi um dos primeiros fotógrafos da conceituada agência francesa Magnum.

Verger correu mundo sem pressa, até “descobrir” a África, onde passou anos estudando a cultura iorubá na Nigéria e na costa de Daomé, hoje República do Benin. Sua intimidade com a cultura daqueles povos, de onde saiu a maioria dos escravos que vieram para a Bahia, fez com que adotasse o nome africano Fatumbi, passando a se chamar Pierre Fatumbi Verger. Logo depois fez uma nova descoberta: a Bahia, de onde não mais saiu.

Verger já faz planos para novos projetos: vai ordenar os quilômetros e quilômetros de fita gravada com importantes registros sobre cultura oral que conseguiu em suas viagens pela África. Antes, em setembro, irá à França participar de um colóquio de antropólogos, onde falará sobre a sua convivência de dois meses no continente africano com o famoso antropólogo Roger Bastide, que o orientou em suas pesquisas. Filho de Oxaguian-Orixá jovem, que se caracteriza sobretudo pelo apego à liberdade e o espírito de justiça; Verger recebeu o título de Doutor pela Sorbonne e se tornou consultor do Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais da Universidade Federal da Bahia, tendo cursado apenas o antigo liceu.

O Globo: De que se trata o livro que o senhor está escrevendo?

Pierre Verger: O livro é sobre o trabalho de plantas e especialmente entre os iorubás e seus descendentes aqui na Bahia. Ainda não escolhi o título. São plantas medicinais e litúrgicas, mágicas também. Algumas são encontradas no Brasil. É sobre a medicina que se usa nas aldeias do Benin e da Nigéria, de onde saíram os negros que vieram para Bahia. As pesquisas científicas com plantas acontecem em todo mundo. Os laboratórios sempre estudam a composição das plantas, partem do que fazem as pessoas que têm conhecimento prático para chegar aos medicamentos. Os remédios sempre imitam a natureza. Já há farmacêuticos e outros especialistas interessados. O livro trará pouco mais de 400 fórmulas, descritas em quatro línguas. No total recolhi mais de duas mil combinações de plantas.

O Globo: Como o senhor conseguiu recolher tantas fórmulas?

Pierre Verger: É difícil conseguir informações desse tipo quando se quer. Eu aprendi sobre o assunto porque não queria saber. Cheguei a África, onde terminei vivendo 17 anos como fotógrafo. Acontece que para fazer boas fotos é preciso se deixar esquecer no lugar, esquecer de onde a gente veio, viver normalmente entre o povo da terra, para que tudo fique natural. É uma atitude um pouco passiva, a mesma que tive em minhas pesquisas.

O Globo: A passividade ajuda o pesquisador?

Pierre Verger: No meu caso, sim. Minha aproximação com os problemas é diferente do que os antropólogos em geral costumam fazer. Estes sempre têm uma tese, um plano de trabalho, estão procurando alguma coisa em particular. Usam sua energia para tentar conseguir as informações de que precisam, o que faz com que as pessoas automaticamente se fechem. Eu não estava interessado em coisa alguma em especial, não vivia fazendo perguntas. Mas terminei me transformando em aluno dos babalaôs, que são os “pais do segredo.”

O Globo: Em que consiste o segredo?

Pierre Verger: São as informações e o conhecimento da cultura iorubá, que só se transmite oralmente. Eu fui aceito como uma espécie de aluno, tinha não só o direito mas também o dever de aprender. Isso aconteceu na Nigéria e no Benin, inclusive numa pequena cidade chamada Kêto, de onde se originou a maioria dos terreiros de candomblé da Bahia. Quando encontrava coisas interessantes, eu anotava. Com os babalaôs, me iniciei no sistema de adivinhações dos iorubás, que se chama Ifá. É por isso que passei a me chamar Fatumbi, nome que significa “renascido pela graça do Ifá.”

O Globo: Há quem diga que as novas gerações de negros baianos começam a perder o contato com suas raízes africanas, que estão mais voltados para o que fazem os negros em outras partes do mundo. O senhor concorda?

Pierre Verger: Não há um Brasil, são muitos brasis. Reconheço que os estados brasileiros, que culturalmente são diferentes uns dos outros, começam a ficar parecidos, misturados, talvez por influência da televisão. Mas a Bahia tem um sabor particular, essa influência muito forte dos descendentes de africanos da costa do Benin. Essa terra ainda é muito diferente do resto do país. O que me atrai aqui é justamente essa mistura cultural, que faz com que na Bahia possam conviver pessoas de origens diferentes, sem problemas. Há problemas começando agora, mas são coisas que vêm de fora.

O Globo: Que problemas são esses?

Pierre Verger: Problemas inter-raciais, porque a Bahia passou a ter elementos que não tinha no passado. Elementos que vêm um pouco da atitude de certos intelectuais que vivem falando em racismo. Só pelo fato de falar no assunto, ele começa a se tornar realidade, começa a se criar uma situação que não existia antes. Porque, afinal, a Bahia é o lugar do mundo onde encontrei as relações raciais mais fáceis. Aqui não existem bairros negros, aqui se chama um amigo de “meu negro” para ser gentil, negro é uma palavra carinhosa. Isso se baseia no fato dos negros, mestiços e brancos terem uma vida em comum. Não é que o racismo não exista, mas a sociedade baiana discrimina menos do que resto do mundo, o que já é um progresso. Agora, tem aquela gente que não quer parecer negro, quer ser mais clara, ter cabelo liso... Isso é uma piada. Quando cheguei a Bahia, em 1946, nem notei que aqui vivia também gente branca. Só descobri que tinha branco tempos depois, quando tive de ilustrar um livro de um professor da Universidade Federal da Bahia, sobre elites de cor da cidade, publicada pela Unesco. O que eu acho é que na Bahia há um certo prestígio em ser negro, por causa do candomblé.

O Globo: De que forma o candomblé confere prestígio ao negros baianos?

Pierre Verger: O candomblé é admirado e respeitado também pelos brancos, e isso faz com que se tenha um certo orgulho de ser negro. Os negros ligados o candomblé não sofrem preconceitos raciais. Veja o caso de uma vendedora de acarajé: essas mulheres geralmente são filhas de santo, e por isso o pessoal vai lá com um certo respeito, as pessoas ligadas à seita beijam a sua mão. Cria-se uma atmosfera de apreço pela gente de origem africana.

O Globo: O senhor não vê nisso algum traço de folclorização da cultura negra?

Pierre Verger: Não acho que seja folclore, porque a cultura negra está presente na cidade. Alguns dos maiores edifícios de Salvador têm nomes de orixá Iemanjá, Xangô, Oxaguiam, Oxalufã. As pessoas que vivem ou trabalham nesses edifícios estão contentes com isso. Coisas desse tipo fazem com que os negros se sintam bem em sua pele. Pode haver algum tipo de racismo, mas que não se deve esquecer que existe também essa valorização da cultura chegada com os africanos.

O Globo: O senhor é muito respeitado nos terreiros. O candomblé é a sua religião?

Pierre Verger: Não sou muito religioso, por temperamento. O que me interessa é o papel que tem o candomblé ao conferir dignidade aos descendentes dos escravos. Aqui eles chegaram a ser gente mesmo, gente respeitada por suas próprias tradições.

O Globo: Como um francês, sem qualquer raiz racial na África, pode participar das cerimônias do candomblé?

Pierre Verger: Mesmo para as pessoas que não têm origem africana, o candomblé é importante, porque permite que elas sejam elas mesmas, em vez de adotar uma forma de viver que nada tem a ver com sua natureza. Há uma coisa muito interessante no candomblé: em princípio, um orixá é um antepassado da família, que às vezes se apodera da pessoa, em então ela cai no santo, com se diz, sem fingir, numa possessão verdadeira. Quem não tem sangue africano, como eu, infelizmente não é possuído pelo orixá. Há um caso único, que não sei explicar, de uma pessoa sem raízes africanas que foi possuída pelo santo. É uma francesa Giselle Cossard, que é mãe de

santo de um terreiro muito respeitado, nos arredores do Rio. Há pessoas sem sangue africano que também caem no santo, entram em transe. Mas é um transe de expressão, e não de possessão. O orixá é uma espécie de arquétipo do comportamento da gente. Quando se apossa de uma pessoa, ela revela o que está em seu inconsciente, passa a exprimir sua personalidade verdadeira.

O Globo: Então o transe, no candomblé, funciona como uma terapia psicanalítica?

Pierre Verger: O candomblé é muito importante do ponto de vista da psicanálise, com uma grande vantagem. Na psicanálise há o psicodrama, as pessoas são levadas a representar publicamente o que está escondido em sua personalidade, mostrar seu lado mais vergonhoso. Isso é horrível. No candomblé é o contrário, isso ocorre em clima de festa, a gente pode mostrar o que é e ser admirado, porque afinal de contas não é a pessoa que está fazendo ou dizendo aquelas coisas, é o orixá.

O Globo: Fale sobre sua juventude. A efervescência cultural na França das décadas de 20 e 30 não o atraía?

Pierre Verger: Sempre tive muita curiosidade por tudo que era diferente do que vivi na minha infância, no meu país. Depois, não gosto muito de intelectuais, eles parecem dondocas. Para viver no meio deles é preciso se expressar artificialmente, procurar as palavras. Com a gente comum é muito mais natural. Eu mesmo nunca quis escrever. Só comecei porque tinha recebido uma bolsa de estudos do Instituto Francês da África Negra, e o diretor exigiu que eu escrevesse sobre minhas pesquisas. Foi aí que comecei a envenenar minha vida, porque tinha de tentar com palavras o que via. Antes, bastava registrar em fotografia.

O Globo: Às vésperas de completar 90 anos, a idade o preocupa?

Pierre Verger: Não, não vejo grande diferença. É chato, porque até há pouco tempo eu conseguia me locomover melhor. Gostaria de ter mais agilidade. Às vezes esqueço o nome das pessoas, o que também é chato.

O Globo: O seu trabalho é reconhecido internacionalmente, mas o senhor vive em pobreza quase absoluta. A Bahia o trata mal?

Pierre Verger: Não vejo isso, pelo contrário. Não acho que viva mal. Tenho liberdade para fazer o que quero, comida, roupa e uma cama para dormir. Querer possuir mais do que isso é estupidez.

Fundação Pierre Verger

<http://www.pierreverger.org/fpv> Powered by Joomla! Generated: 28 June, 2009, 05:44

APPENDIX 9

Beleza Pura LYRICS

Written by Caetano Veloso

Não me amarra dinheiro não! Mas formosura
Dinheiro não! A pele escura
Dinheiro não! A carne dura Dinheiro não!
Moça preta do Curuzu Beleza Pura!
Federação Beleza Pura! Boca do rio
Beleza Pura! Dinheiro não!
Quando essa preta Começa a tratar do cabelo
É de se olhar Toda trama da trança
Transa do cabelo Conchas do mar
Ela manda buscar Prá botar no cabelo Toda minúcia, toda delícia.
Não me amarra dinheiro não! Mas elegância
Não me amarra dinheiro não! Mas a cultura
Dinheiro não! A pele escura Dinheiro não! A carne dura Dinheiro não!
Moço lindo do Badaué Beleza Pura! Do Ilê-Aiê
Beleza Pura! Dinheiro hié! Beleza Pura! Dinheiro não!
Dentro daquele turbante Do filho de Gandhi
É o que há Tudo é chique demais Tudo é muito elegante
Manda botar! Fina palha da costa E que tudo se trance
Todos os búzios Todos os ócios
Não me amarra dinheiro não! Mas os mistérios
Não me amarra dinheiro não! Beleza Pura! Dinheiro não!
Beleza Pura! Dinheiro não! Beleza Pura! Dinheiro Hié!
Beleza Pura! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! ... (10x)

Translation by author:

Pure Beauty by Caetano Veloso

I am not tied to money! But to beauty Not money! The dark skin.
Not money! Hard Flesh! Not money!
Black girl from Curuzu, Pure Beauty!
Federação, Pure Beauty! Boca do Rio, Pure Beauty!
Not money! ...When this Black girl starts to shape her hair
It is worth to look at her whole plot of braiding
Coolness of the hair, Sea shells She sends for,
to put in her hair. Every detail, every delight,

I am not tied to money, but to elegance.
I am not tied to money, but to culture.
Not money! The dark skin yes, but not Money! Hard flesh. Not money!
Gorgeous young Badauê, Pure Beauty! Of Ile-Ayé
Pure Beauty! Money yes! Pure Beauty! Not Money!
Inside that turban from Filho de Gandhi
It's all there, it is all very fancy, everything is very elegant
Tell them to put Fine raffia and everything is trance
All sea shells, all leisure hours.
I am not tied to money! But the mysteries.
I am not tied to money! Pure Beauty! Not money!
Pure Beauty! Not money! Pure Beauty! Money yes!
Pure Beauty! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah ! ... (10x)