

Funk carioca's pedagogies: God and Devil in the land of sound

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Abstract

This article aims to start a discussion about the different pedagogies involved into the diffusion of the musical genre known as funk carioca. In this sense, it uses as reference such authors as Sodré, Rousseau, Mészáros, Freire and Boal. The empirical part is based on the in locus observation of two events with distinctive nature: the launch of the booklet of MCs *Liberta o pancadão* and a slum funky ball organized by a gang of drug trafficking. The first section introduces the two pedagogical sides of funk carioca; the second presents two subtopics, describing the event to launch the booklet and the examination of their contents; the third section describes the funky ball; the fourth initiates a discussion about the pedagogical possibilities of funk based on the chosen authors.

Keywords: media studies, pedagogy, popular culture, Rio de Janeiro, funk carioca

1. Two sides of funk carioca

On Saturday, December 19th of 2009, the author of this article experienced the two sides of funk carioca. Although one can say into a less Manichaeian form that the funk is a great metropolis' cultural element that has a complex and multifaceted character as an object of study, their internal contradictions point towards two most obvious and paradoxical sides, in symbolic terms, that help to build an identity of funk as a cultural element. Every time this researcher says publicly both in academic events (such as congresses, conferences and classes) and other personal life environments that studies funk carioca as an object in his Ph.D. course, the expressions on people's faces use to assume an aspect that stays between the curiosity and the perplexity. Because it is a controversial and a bit exotic element to the middle and high classes of Rio de Janeiro's society, taking academically seriously the funk produced mainly in the slums of Rio de Janeiro, into a precarious form when considered by a technical point of view of musical production and diffusion², it causes fervor and excitement to people, but rarely apathy and yawns as reactions. This lead the researcher to think that when "taking

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² Musical production and diffusion are processual stages of the relation between men and music in the 20th century, which means since music started to be mainly a product of mass consumption. In this respect, there are importante academic works such as from Jambeiro (1975), Janotti Jr. (2006; 2007) and Negus (2005), authors that understand the process of making a song as being part of commercial circulation context that involves many extra-musical aspects. Despite of that, Janotti Jr. and Negus disagree about the monolitical concept of "cultural industry", understanding that only the commercial aspects don't explain all the decisions taken in the process of

seriously” this popular rhythm/musical genre so much contemporary to the researcher himself and to the historical moment in which the research takes place, he is also taking seriously the constitution of his city from a cultural/communicational point of view.

The counter-hegemony of funk carioca is not exactly that of an organized movement for the sake of improvement of slums and the promotion of consistent changes that turn the slums into better worlds into a viewpoint of hegemonic acceptance of social-cultural terms. The funk develops itself into an everyday existence in which concert halls do not exist and that proper places for the melodic-harmonic musical execution (considering the European point of view that has developed towards the tonal song in the second millennium last centuries) of several audible content are improvised on the basis of dance balls, which means that on brief and almost non-contemplative *aesthetical experience*³. It is always good to remember that, in spite of the specificities of Rio de Janeiro in the constitution of funk carioca as a cultural element, there are also similarities in its aesthetical/social-historical development in relation to other types of art and popular/massive culture born in the 20th century’s second-half, on different parts of world. The idea of post-modern art, as it appears in different authors (ANDERSON, 1999; BAUMAN, 1998; EAGLETON, 1998), is defined by some characteristics identifiable by these authors, such as: a) technological advances post-Industrial Revolution⁴; b) non-linear narrative sequences/aesthetical appreciation⁵; c) ephemeral and less contemplative experiences. In fact it is a moment, as Umberto Eco says in his text “Culture as spectacle” (ECO, 1984), in which participation into “artistic/cultural event” is more important than the content itself of the art piece(s) in question.

On the other hand, if there are similarities between what is produced in the funky

nowadays massive music production and diffusion (or circulation).

³ In this respect, so much interesting and relevant is the academic work of Richard Shusterman (1998) about the north-American funk. Through a pragmatist philosophy which is clearly influenced by John Dewey, Shusterman advocates the viewpoint that art must be experienced, instead of only being contemplated. In this sense, both the north-American and carioca funks and other afro-American rhythm/musical genres may be considered art. As Shusterman says, “Dewey emphasizes that the aesthetical experience is a totally corporal pleasure, involving ‘the entire creature in its unified vitality’ and rich in terms of sensorial and emotional satisfactions, defying the spiritual reduction that does the aesthetical pleasure a mere intellectual delight” (SHUSTERMAN, 1998, p. 46).

⁴ In this respect, the “technical reproduction” analysed by Walter Benjamin (1994) may seem to be the most significant consequence from Industrial Revolution to the production and circulation of artworks since the 19th Century.

⁵ During the 20th Century, mainly during its second half, non linear and less contemplative artworks have gained importance in terms of market and even so (in the case of plastic arts) in which refers to artistic prestige. The interaction with the audience becomes an important factor in the appreciation of the artwork (ECO, 1984). With respect to the plastic and pictorial arts, one can cite the example of the artistic installations, that have gained importance within the time quoted; in respect to literature, one can cite the different game-books or from “wraps-and-rolls-out”, that have different endings and oblige the readers to make the choices while they’re reading it; in respect to music, the best example may be the proliferation of creations based on “bricolage”, as a result of a

context and what is produced in diverse artistic/cultural movements all over the world, there are significant differences between the art produced by the elites and the art produced into places with precarious conditions of urbanization. As temporary solutions (in theory) to great metropolis absence of housing, the carioca slums show varied differences in terms of social context for the places in which take place the carioca society high and middle classes arts development. According to a female slum resident (in an informal talk with the author of this paper⁶), “at the slums, laws are other”. The cultural codes and even the constitution of parallel powers and coercive forms occur as a consequence of an absence of the hegemonic power itself⁷. A kind of parallel world, linked to the rest of the city by the own localization and by a little artificial historical sense of development. As Bauman says that different European ethnical communities were subjected in the process of unification that constituted the formation of European National countries between XVI and XIX Centuries (BAUMAN, 1999; 2003), one can say that, in fact, different Rio de Janeiros coexist under the same name. Not all of the “cities” (or urban settings) contained in the same idea are much similar and the problems are much different, when compared to each other.

The violence of drug trafficking in addition to the precarious health and housing conditions make funk carioca to assume characteristics directly linked to this social context. This characteristics range since the order of songs to the MCs by the parallel powers leaders to restrictions related to the live presentations of determined MCs that reside in a slum in areas dominated by rival parallel power groups⁸. There are lots of variations to the same theme, and the fact is that funk carioca meets the socio-historical determinations of the power rivalry urban configurations that happen before it appears as a musical genre (although they continue to

technique known as remix.

⁶ It occurred in 2009 December, during the event (funk danceball) that will be mentioned later in this article.

⁷ It is necessary to consider the recent occupations of public power in carioca slums as a new sociological element that may change this scenario in the next years. However, despite of the wide media coverage occurred in 2010 related to some of the most significant of these occupations (particularly those from Penha and Alemão Complexes of slums), it is early to make a significative evaluation about the consequences of this occupations and of what this will be in terms of reflex over the conception, production, diffusion and reception of funk carioca. It is possible to point some future possibilities and some initial indications, but it is not the purpose of this article.

⁸ Rio de Janeiro, at the beginning of 2011, is a city where multiple types of parallel powers coexist, and mostly of them may be classified in two large different groups: a) the drug trafficking, composed by narcotic traffickers, which involves an international scheme of consumption of illicit recreational substances, and whose geographic territory dispute is made between factions; and b) the militias. These are most recently and constitute themselves as groups of members or ex-members of the official power (State), but acting in an unlawful manner and managing some underhand dealings from another nature: gambling, gas distribution among other.

develop and to refigure after its emergence as a cultural element).

This way, as the Strong paradox showed on Glauber Rocha famous movie's title, "God and Devil in the land of sun", the funk carioca shows (including in its own lyrics) two sides: one is positive, romantic, light, and even pragmatic of fighting for working reasons and social issues; another one is negative, of extreme pornography and exaltation of the parallel powers.

On December 19 of 2009, the author of this paper had been in front of these two sides of this musical genre. Firstly, staying for more than five hours at the launch of the primer related to the MCs' copyrights, titled *Liberta o Pancadão (Frees the Big Beat)*. This event officially celebrated, also, first year anniversary of APAFunk⁹, involving social movements activists, artists, college students and researchers. After this event, in the early hours of Sunday, December 20th of 2009, the author of this paper had been for a little more than two hours at Nova Holanda Slum's funk dance ball, inside the Maré Complex of Slums. Promoted by the criminal faction Comando Vermelho (Red Command), this dance ball takes place in the middle of Nova Holanda main streets and the dominating music is the funk carioca of pornographic strand.

The importance of that discussion is that do exist many funk carioca pedagogies, or at least two more recognizable: one positive and other negative. If nowadays clearly exists an organized movement rounding the best working conditions to the MCs that touches on important social questions to artists and dance balls attending people from slums, does exist on the other hand another side (which is mostly exploited by media vehicles) that involves a negative pedagogy of funk: a song or patched together song¹⁰ that teaches "who gives the rules" in the slums by mentioning the components of the parallel powers and stimulating individualist relations between people from an affective point of view, emphasizing the sexual subject. Funk carioca is MPB (Popular Brazilian

⁹ The Funk Professional and Friends Association (APAFunk), founded in 2008 by MCs (composers and performers) belonging to first generation of funk carioca while musical genre, has been fighting for a recognition of funk carioca while cultural element of contemporary Rio de Janeiro and also for better working conditions to these MCs and other professionals involved in the funk scene. Additional information about APAFunk is available at: <http://apafunk.blogspot.com/> and <http://www.funkderaiiz.com.br/2008/12/fundao-da-apafunk.html>, both consulted for the last time in 2011's March 31th.

¹⁰ There are many funk carioca songs with plenty movement in danceballs and even in CDs, DVDs and radio stations that differ from songs in a more traditional sense. Without meeting consumption formulas or well-defined aesthetical forms, they are composed through a repetition that saturates the constitutive elements of the song itself. The sound editing songs and the *non sense* type of funk are nice examples of this and characterized a cultural moment in which the *remix* and the aesthetical experience from danceballs are more importante than the accurate development of a new and extensive content.

Music) in another kind of sense: of “Provocative Brazilian Music”, “nervous”, “neurotic”, “on blast”¹¹, full of contemporary Rio de Janeiro own vicious.

2. The “A side” of funk carioca: MCs’ Primer

2.1 The releasing event: funk and politics in Cinelândia

The releasing day of the Primer titled *Liberta o Pancadão (Frees the Big Beat)* happened on a Saturday, December 19th of 2009, and took place at Manoel Congo Occupation¹² (nº17, Evaristo da Veiga street, City Center). Although it was scheduled to the 12:00 p.m., the researcher arrived there by 13:00 p.m. and realized that the things were still being stowed. Already opened to the public, the event would be constituted of shows of the MCs linked to APAFunk, such as the duo Júnior and Leonardo, Mano Teko, MC Julinho among other including rappers from Santa Marta slum and the Maré Slums Complex. Accompanying the MCs and the rappers, there was a DJ with appropriate sound equipment for the shows and a Uruguayan percussionist that brought his congas and his timbau to play along the electronic beats that came from the DJ pick-ups and the artists that would make their show.

In the beginning, there was very few people, but since the researcher stayed at the place until a little bit after 18:30 p.m., when the event was already finishing (with the last MCs shows happening), he had the opportunity to see a major number of people arriving and leaving the event. The doors of Manoel Congo occupation stayed open during all that Saturday’s sunny afternoon and some of the event participants went in

¹¹ There are different slang nowadays in the context of carioca slums that participate of funky poetry. The word “bolado” (there is no literally translation, but could be something like “balled” or “hit by a ball”, in English) means worried about something, but also it can mean enraptured by something (including a positive sense, when someone composes a so cool song that the other becomes “bolado”). “Nervoso” (“nervous”) may mean choppy, but also violent. “Neurotic” is a kind of superlative of nervous and may mean that the person is obsessive in consequence of the drug abuse as cocaine, for example, but not necessarily. There are two interesting points in relation to these slang: a) in a lot of times (or uses of the same) they mean almost the same thing, which indicates that the sequential use of more than one of them occurs to emphasize a situation (“the stuff was neurotic, nervous, super balled”); b) all of these slang have simultaneous meanings, but these are mainly placed in the central paradox that seems to permeate contemporary Rio de Janeiro’s informal language, which means that each one of these slang can, depending on the phrasal context in which is being used, to mean something or exactly its opposite. In terms of language, which means, by definition, the correspondence between the thoughts (the platonic plane of ideas) and the things in the world (the facts in Kantian sense), the situation of the carioca slang is much peculiar and indicates a less defined reality, mixed, where things seem not to have a set status from a structural point of view, but only when placed together in act. In this respect, the author of this article intends to develop in the future a more systematic paper.

¹² Manoel Congo was an important “quilombola” (ex-slave) leader, responsible for a revolt in Rio de Janeiro in 1838 (in the region that nowadays is placed Paty do Alferes city), being hanged on the following year. The Manoel Congo occupation is placed on Rio de Janeiro downtown, close to Cinelândia subway station.

and out constantly. One part of the public stayed at the street, in front of the event's door, and they were talking, drinking beer, soft drinks or water (all of them sold at the bar improvised by DPQ¹³ members).

While the audience and even APAFunk members were arriving to the place, the researcher started informal conversations with some of the present people. It's worth to outstand the talking with Mano Teko, APAFunk vice-president and the main interlocutor of this researcher in terms of activities promoted by the association since the initial contact made in July of 2009. During this conversation, it was visible the tiredness of the MC, who was composer, singer and a political articulator of funk carioca. He works in a tire manufacturing from Michelin French enterprise. Living on Irajá neighborhood, Teko has at least two very well known songs in his generation (people that nowadays have between 32 and 37 years old), sung with a lot of vibration by almost everyone in the event, when the MC did his show near to the end of the event, around 18:00 p.m. At that moment, though, near 14:00 p.m., Teko showed tiredness and interrupted our conversation after few minutes, because, as he said, he needed "to find out a hidden corner to get some sleep". He was tired and, in his own words, "almost sleepless"¹⁴. Teko often works until dawn, in some nights making shows as a funk carioca MC and other working as a "proletarian" (in his own terms) of the tire manufacturer.

The event was crowding of people and before the MCs presentations there was a lunch served by popular prices and the beginning of the drinks selling at the improvised bar. By the side of the bar cash register, where a female law student and DPQ member sold the drinks, there was an MC primer pile, which was the main reason for this event to happen. Above the booklets pile, a hand-written poster indicated the place where the primers were, with a large arrow pointing down. There one could read that the booklets cost R\$ 3,00 to the general public and were for free to funk carioca professional (or "0800", as the poster indicated in an informal language). In fact, almost everything in the event was quite informal.

Nevertheless, it is worth to notice the political speeches realized by different MCs who performed that afternoon, mainly MC Leonardo, APAFunk President and,

¹³ DPQ is an acronym to the name of the organized social movement "Direito Pra Quem?" ("Right For Whom?"), a group that fights for the working class rights and includes lots of Law students as members, promoting nowadays an important partnership with APAFunk.

¹⁴ The slang "turned down" already has been used for some decades on Rio de Janeiro. To be "turned down" means not to be asleep at night, which means to be awaked since the day before.

together with Teko, leading political articulator from the funky movement in the last three years. Leonardo had many of his songs (composed and recorded with his brother Júnior) played on the radio stations and even on movie screen (such as the “Rap das armas”, which was the song played in the beginning of 2007’s blockbuster movie “Tropa de Elite”, from the director José Padilha). Something that should be highlighted both in the many Leonardo and Teko speeches on microphone that afternoon is the Marxist character of many statements, that applied words and terms such as “class struggle”, “capitalism”, “large enterprises”, “record companies”, “hegemonic media”, “exploitation”, “working class” among other. This language in some sort of way may be found also on the pages of MCs primer, which demonstrates that there is a political articulation theoretically based in such fundamental authors and works from Sociology and Political Science on the APAFunk activity. Another proof of this was the presence in the event of the researcher and teacher from the History Department in the Fluminense Federal University Adriana Facina and other academic and social movements members in the event. In the political speeches before mostly of the artists presentations, lots of critical appointments to the Public Power both of the city and the State of Rio de Janeiro appear, repeating strikingly the explicit critic from funkiers and rappers to the Mayor Eduardo Paes’s Shock of Order¹⁵ and to the occupation of the slums by Pacifying Police¹⁶. There were also congratulations to APAFunk’s first year birthday and its conquests in this first year of activities¹⁷.

Specifically about the musical performances, one can say that the event showed itself democratic to the present funkiers and rappers, who could perform singing their own songs or songs from other funkiers that were not there. It’s interesting to notice that there was a predominance of conscious/politicized funks and raps. There was some space to funk *melody*/romantic songs, although in minor quantity. None of the MCs sang pornographic or criminal narrative lyrics in the event described here. The only profanity words heard during the performances were from rappers, in some moments

¹⁵ It was started in January of 2009.

¹⁶ It was started in December of 2008 with the occupation of the Santa Marta Hill’s Slum, at Botafogo.

¹⁷ The APAFunk managed to establish a concrete articulation between funk carioca professionals and the Public Power, reworking texts of law that forbade funk danceballs in low-income communities in a legalized way. The APAFunk also managed to funk carioca to be publicly (officially) recognized as a cultural element instead of

when they made a speech protesting against Public Power and the social inequalities. Another important thing: none of the performers played religious (evangelic) funks nor *non-sense* funks. All the played songs had well elaborated lyrics and much of them touched directly in social questions as the difficulties faced in Brazil and/or in Rio de Janeiro by the black, slum resident, poor or member of other social minorities citizens.

Beyond the speech presented into the played lyrics, it is important to talk about the sound that echoed that afternoon during the event. It is undeniable the relation between funk carioca, mainly the most recent ones (from 2000 decade) and the samba. Since the funk beat began to branch out and was taken by carioca DJs, it happened a rapprochement between this rhythm, the afro-Brazilian religions drumbeats and the samba beats. This was evidenced in this event, because beyond the “tamborzão”¹⁸ performed by the DJ, the presence of the Uruguayan percussionist gave a musical touch closer to samba and afro-Brazilian religious events. Besides, some of the songs were totally or partially performed by the MCs accompanied only by the quoted percussionist.

2.2 Frees the Big Beat: funk pedagogy as an emancipation instrument

The researcher/author of this paper acquired the MCs primer, titled *Frees the Big Beat*¹⁹, in the event described on the subtopic before. Composed by twelve pages, pressed in color and in a good quality paper, the texts were all written by Adriana Lopes, Antônio Bastos, Bruno Freitas, Daniel Bezerra, Diana Neves, Guilherme Pimentel, Manuela Meirelles, Marcela Munch, Maurício Machado, MC Leonardo, Mano Teko and Verônica Freitas. All the illustrations presented in the primer were made by Maurício Machado and the layout was realized by Mariana Gomes and Caio Amorim. The primer was pressed in the 3graph graphics and publishing house. All the information included in this paragraph is in the bottom of page 11, in the space intended to publication credits. Beyond the information already quoted, in this space is also the information that this is the first edition and that the initial print was of 2.500 copies. All the pages of the booklet are numbered, except for the pages 1 and 12 (front and back covers).

In the front cover (or page 1, not numbered) of the primer, one can find, on a black background, a colored illustration of an MC with an APAFunk hat, holding a microphone with

criminal, in September of 2009.

¹⁸ It is a funk carioca beat created in Rio de Janeiro by a local DJ and which nowadays predominates as a percussive basis to funk carioca music. About the creation of “Tamborzão”(“big drum”), see Essinger (2005).

¹⁹ This primer may be accessed (in a complete digitalized version) at: <http://direitopraquem.blogspot.com/2010/01/cartilha-de-direitos-autorais-para-mcs.html> , last query in

the left hand raised. The color of the MC's skin is brown and his pose, which is associated to this information about the color of his skin, refers to the Black Panthers'²⁰ gesture. There is a series of double and single musical patterns²¹ inside white bubbles in the air surrounding the MC and, beyond the main draw, there is the title in orange tonal colors above the MC's head and an White outlined Orange seal to the side of his body (on the lower right side of the page), where is written: "funk artist's defense handbook"; "the MC's rights".

Occupying all the page 2, there is a rapid HQ story in black-and-white titled "This is funk", which relates the pursuit of the funk to Afro-American rhythms such as the blues and afro-Brazilian such as the samba and questions about the reasons of so much persecution. At the end, it presents a draw of a war tank shooting music, and it says that: "a DJ and MC's army will strikes-back with more music. Hey, sucker, the gang goes to delirium!!!" The purpose of this history is to show that it does not matter chasing the popular culture, because it subsits, as it did before, in other times and places.

The page 3, with a light green background, presents a kind of editorial, titled "What's this primer for?", written by APAFunk, DPQ and *Vírus Planetário* review. The text quickly tells the story of APAFunk and of the primer itself, saying that "through this booklet, We intend to inform the funk professional of a little bit of these culture history and which are the procedures that one should have to protect his rights". There are also thanks to the people that collaborated with this primer confection.

Between pages 4 and 5, one can find an HQ colored story titled "The history of funk", that tells about its creation as north-American musical genre in the 1960s until its metamorphosis into funk carioca at the end of the 1980s, passing through the Miami Bass. Some important names of funk appear in the form of drawing²² and the story ends with the emergence of APAFunk to protect the rights of the MCs and funk artists in general.

Between pages 6 and 10 there is another HQ story, also colored and very educational titled "The step-by-step guide to the funkier". In fact, it is almost a brief

03/31/2011.

²⁰ Founded n the middle 60's and having been existed until middle 80's, the Black Panthers emerged as a social movement which fought for the civil rights of the afro-American people.

²¹ The quarter notes are figures from European musical notation developed in the Modern Age, being used on the registers of melodies in documents known as music sheet.

²² The MCs duos Wilian and Duda, Cidinho and Doca, Júnior and Leonardo, all belonging to the first generation of funk carioca which played on the radio stations and recorded its own original records, in the middle of the 90's. There is also the draw of MC D'Eddy, composer of "Rap do Pirão" and winner, with this song, of one of the first funk festivals, in 1992. There is also a draw of DJ Marlboro, because of the importance of the álbum that he produced, *Funk Brasil* (1989), which is considered funk carioca's first album.

illustrated survival handbook to MCs that teaches important procedures that should be adopted in which refers to the registers and editions of songs composed and/or performed by MCs that live or intend to live by funk carioca. It is the most important part of this primer, because it discusses the working rights into a pragmatically and realistic form, serving for much of the MCs that have a low level of scholarship and do not know the professional aspects of phonographic market to acquire basic knowledge about how to guarantee their professional phonographic rights, both in which is related to intellectual property as in which refers to general aspects of financial part. The story is subdivided in three chapters, presenting the same main character in all of them: a young black funkier (generic), with 1970's black power style and using dark glasses. The first part of the story is titled "What are copyrights?", presenting the main questions related to the music and lyrics registration; there is a second part of the story, titled "musical editors and companies", that discusses the fundamental aspects of this relation between record company and artist, mainly in which refers to the edition and phonographic playing of the songs, stimulating the funk artist to guarantee his autonomy and, if possible, his phonographic independence; the story ends presenting a brief part titled "the creation of cooperatives", in which two frames show the advantages of integrating a music cooperative.

Still in the end of page 10, below the story quoted on last paragraph, the handbook presents two boxes: the first, in green color, offers some useful addresses and telephone numbers related to the facts presented in the last story, such as the National Library, Rio de Janeiro Federal University Music School and the ECAD; the second box, just below the first one and in red color, indicates (addresses and phone numbers) of six associations of copyrights and related subjects rights (SICAM, ASSIM, SBACEM, AMAR, SOCINPRO, UBC).

Page 11 indicates the partners involved in the making of this primer: APAFunk, DPQ and the *Vírus Planetário* review, presenting a brief historical of each one of them and their respective addresses on the internet. Just below, a rectangle that contains the imprint, with the information's described on the first paragraph of this subtopic.

The back cover (not numbered, but corresponding to page 12) presents a draw of

the well-known Leonardo Da Vinci's frame "Gioconda", but the famous Mona Lisa is acting like a DJ, using earphones and operating a mixer and two pick-ups²³. One can read above her head: "Funk is art". Below the refer draw are the logos of the primer's manufacturers and supporters (PSOL State Deputy Marcelo Freixo, PSOL Congressman Chico Alencar and the Union of Education Professionals of Rio de Janeiro). It is the only explicit mention to political parties in all over the booklet.

3. The "B sides" of funk carioca: pornography and drug trafficking in a street of Nova Holanda

In the same day that happened the launch of the primer described in the last topic, the author of this paper had the opportunity of being in another event related to funk carioca. After had been into a party promoted by a Community Media, the author went, by night, to the residence of a journalist placed in the Nova Holanda slum, one of the 16 poor communities that integrate the Maré Slums Complex, in the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro. The visit did not have, at first, a scientific investigation character. The purpose was personal. Despite of that, on December 20th's down, around 01:30 a.m., emerged the possibility of knowing the funk dance ball promoted by the parallel power at that slum. As the researcher's friend was not a funk ball regular, she asked two of her cousins (also Nova Holanda slum residents) that guided our visit.

This empirical observation of the funk dance ball lasted a little bit more than two hours (between 2:30 a.m. and 4:30 a.m.). After walking through some alleys and narrow streets until arrive to the place of the ball, the group composed by the researcher himself, his female journalist friend and her two cousins won the presence of one more colleague local resident. The age of this group's members stayed between 22 and 32 years old, mostly of them closer to the 30s than from the 20s.

Despite of that, the age of the regulars varied a lot in the ball. It occurred in one of Nova Holand main streets, in the middle of the street, with sound trucks carrying the DJ equipment, forming a kind of dance floor that was the central spot of this event. Distant from this point, both to the left and to the right sides of the street, there was two stopped trucks closing each

²³ Both mixer and pickups are equipment used by professional DJs. The first one is a machine full of large buttons which allow to mix and/or to divide sounds coming from different sources (vinyl records players, CD players, samplers, musical instruments etc.) in the moment in which music is playing. The pick-ups are professional vinyl records players.

edge of the street, just in case of any police cars or enemy faction members appear. Talking to the quoted group's members, the researcher learned that the Nova Holanda situation is very specific in the context of Maré Slums Complex. It is a complex of different slums dominated by different drug trafficking factions, mostly of slums that integrate Maré are under the rule of Terceiro Comando (Third Command) or ADA (Amigos dos Amigos / Friends of the Friends). The Comando Vermelho, although it is the strongest faction in Rio de Janeiro, only commands two slums inside the Maré Slums Complex, being one of them the Nova Holanda. This puts the locations in situations of constant attention, because at any moment this slum may be target of an attack by some of the rival factions. Besides, there is always the possibility of the State to appear, mainly through BOPE (Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais / Special Police Operations Battalion) and its specialized vehicle, informally known as "Caveirão" (Big Skull)²⁴.

The male presence is predominant at the quoted ball, but not necessarily in a numerical sense. Although the researcher had the impression that there were more men than women in the street that the ball occurred, there was no way to quantify the ball members, because it was a free ball, so that did not have an entrance or exclusive access points. Despite of that, the male dominance was exercised independently of the present women and men quantities. It is a kind of event that has male characteristics, because there are a huge number of parallel power's members, carrying their enormous rifles and other great caliber fire guns from a ball side to another. They used to walk in groups and in a straight-line position, much times dancing by the sound of music into coordinated moves that included pointing their guns to the open sky at the same time. There was a constant tension climate in the air and more than once the researcher observed a group of Comando Vermelho members going together to the same alley, making a kind of reunion and returning to the ball. With no doubt, there was drug selling during the event, although the researcher could not clearly identify in which point of the ball or in its surroundings this sale took place. Anyway, a strong smell of marijuana came from some ball corners. The researcher colleague told that there was a trade of crack at Nova Holanda, which made that environment more uptight than other slums where this drug was not yet marketed. The crack effect was devastating in their users and it is a substance cheaper than cocaine, but which turns their users into chemically dependents much faster than this. A certain atmosphere of armed conflict hanged over the event, although the researcher, during the ball, did not see any explicit violence scene. Nevertheless, how did not consider violent the presence of so much guns?

²⁴ The movie "Tropa de Elite" (2007) (Elite battalion), from director José Padilha, turned the "Caveirão" ("Big Skull") and the BOPE very popular between Rio de Janeiro's urban middle class people.

Besides, the music played was exclusively of those prohibited funk carioca strands. The pornographic songs were played mostly of the time, being sometimes substituted by some criminal faction mentioning songs. A specific lyric called the researcher's attention: a semblance of song, with the constant repetition of the following part, "ajeita e bota com raiva, bota com raiva, bota com raiva" ("tidy it and put it with anger, put it with anger, put it with anger"), in a clear mention to an intense sexual relation. In a surprisingly way, the researcher observed that the women sung and danced this song with more emphasis than men. Including two members of the group in which the researcher found himself into, the female cousins of his journalist friend danced this and other pornographic lyrics with much sensuality. On the ball, coexisting with the intimidating presence of the shotguns, the pornography, or into funk carioca's own terms, the "bitchy" rolls free. Despite of that, the researcher did not see none clothing or act that should be considered immoral. In opposite of so many middle and high class dance houses, there was not couples kissing at the event and it was not found by the researcher any public sexual act. Nor even teenagers with no shirts were seen. Instead of that, the clothing was well diversified, mainly the women, but in general the people were dressed following carioca fashion tendencies. In men's case, as an example, it could be highlighted the official soccer jerseys, much of them related to foreign teams, which cost by that time around R\$ 150,00 if acquired in legalized selling at Rio de Janeiro's large shopping centers sports stores. The researcher was particularly intrigued with the dramatic number of shirts with Rooney's²⁵ name in their backs, both his club and national team shirts. The researcher did not imagine that a British soccer player was so popular in that urban context.

There was a particular interesting moment during the ball, which was not in one of its fullest nights, as the local residents said, what allowed a relatively easy offset even at the "dance floor", where the confusion use to be bigger: a kind of silence minute (that

²⁵ Wayne Rooney was traded for £20 million, in 2004, with the Manchester United and, since then, has been the main British football player in activity all over the world. Born in 1985, Rooney has already won major titles, such as the Premier League (three times), the Champions League (European club championship) and the FIFA Club World Cup, in 2008, when he was also the top scorer with three goals. He played two world cups: Germany 2006 and South Africa 2010.

lasted less than that) in honor to someone that recently passed away. The researcher didn't try to find out who was the person, but two local residents have made it clear that these tributes in general are linked to components of drug trafficking. The entire ball stopped during some instants to revere a "warrior killed in combat".

The underground side of funk carioca, with much of its infractions and prohibitions was present on that down in Nova Holanda, contrasting a lot with the discourses and attitudes observed by the researcher in last afternoon event, already reported in this work. It seems that a serious discussion about education that includes the funk needs to take into account these two sides, for not happening into a naive and less comprehensive way.

4. From the education in large metropolis: a dialog between Muniz Sodré, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, István Mészáros and Paulo Freire

The education is a fundamental theme in academic terms. In first place, for obvious reasons: it is the own pedagogical *praxis* what's the point on Academic environment, mostly of the time. As said by Sodré, into "O *Ethos* Mediatizado"/"The Mediatized Ethos" chapter on the book titled *Antropológica do espelho: uma teoria da comunicação linear e em rede / Anthropological of the mirror: a theory of linear and networking communication* (SODRÉ, 2002), Aristotle, when conceptualizing the three ambiances or fundamental existential genres at the Greek *polis*, presents the *bios theoretikos* or from the contemplative life. The theory, in this way, emerges from the observation and systematization of the everyday elements that compose the practice of any continuous and regular activity of the human being. In this sense, a theory needs to have a practice that feeds it, at the same time in which the practice in any field of social systems is tailored, sculpted, improved through the theory. So, there is no sense in a radical separation between theory and practice for the good functioning of both. In some sectors of social life this become more evident, as in medicine, where one cannot risk being a doctor without plausible explanations regarding medical procedures involved in activities related to social medicine. But it is even stronger the impression that the most appropriate place to discuss the educational practice is not the media or the media devices (which may only complement this discussion), but the own academic *locus*: the school and/or the university. It is an important theme that may be constantly discussed: the relation between communication and education, in addition to the different ways of

education involved in the constitution of the contemporary metropolis.

Besides, it is important to discuss education in a wider sense, because there are communicative elements spread in large scale through official or informal channels that end becoming constitutive elements of social identity in specific groups and even individuals in the contemporary metropolis. The media channels, the popular culture in a general way, including elements of popular prose founded in songs and contemporary musical variations are fundamental elements for understanding certain urban social contexts in nowadays. As said by Muniz Sodré (criticizing the attempt of creating an “Universal Men” since the Enlightenment, which by the way rescued the classical ideals from the Ancient Greece in what is related to the education), “every education is community”²⁶. Sodré indicates three important characteristics in relation to the education: 1 – Every education is local; 2 – Every education is community; 3 – Every education has the school as place. With these affirmations, Sodré is presenting a vision about the education that works, that is effective, and not about a generic abstraction that mostly of the times becomes obsolete for loosing the power of communication, of linking, the community and effective sense of its process. The role of the teacher, in this sense, is not the one of a content transmitter, but the one of a knowledge assistant, that professional who is designated and prepared to watch the student learning. As a consequence, all the education has an ethic character and is never neutral. It is necessary to take positions when teaching²⁷. In which refers to this subject, Augusto Boal presents an important distinction between the terms “education” and “pedagogy”:

To educate comes from Latin *educare*, which means *leading*. To educate means the transmission of unquestionable and unquestioned knowledge. It means to teach what exists and is given as right and necessary. Pedagogy comes from Greek *paidagogós*, which was the individual, in general a slave, that walked with the student and helped him to find the school and the knowledge. (BOAL, 2009, p.245).

²⁶ This statement was made by professor Muniz Sodré in his class from the course of Post-Graduate in Communication from ECO/UFRJ taught in 09/02/2009, in ECO/UFRJ dependencies.

²⁷ Sodré already discussed, until a certain point, the ethic-political relation involved on the educational processes, on the second chapter from the previously mentioned book, *Antropológica do Espelho*. On the chapter “A *hexis* educativa”/“The educational *hexis*” (SODRÉ, 2002), the author says that does not only resides in the educator dexterity the key to an effective education; the ethic-political targeting of this education is fundamental to its future results on the life of the individual involved in the educational process.

This way, as Boal says (id.), “education means the transmission of existing knowledge. Pedagogy, the search for new knowledge”. So, it is in the disputes and struggles for hegemony of the local thought that one can find the true basis of a discussion about dialectics “*ethos x hexis*” and its formative character. From a theoretical point of view, authors such as Sodré himself (2002), Rousseau (1999), Freire (1996) and Mészáros (2008) attest, each one in his own terms, that education does not lie only on the contents transference between teacher(s) and student(s). The real education, more than an informative character, needs the acceptance by the educator that he participates on the formative process of the metropolitan citizen, including the adult’s professional practice, in case of college courses. So, on the next lines will be presented some elements of the quoted authors thought about education, to auxiliare on the discussion about the pedagogic possibilities of funk carioca.

In *Emile* or *On Education*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau exposes a radical critic about the Eighteenth Century education in Paris and on the big French cities. In a light and humorous form (although it is a long book and after being completely read, one can note that it consists in a dense reflection regarding the formative character of education). Rousseau presents throughout five chapters a proposal of the individual/citizen ideal formation. It is a theoretical idealization based on empirical observation, as the author says and, as an extremely positive point, it is possible to highlight the valorization of the manual works in relation to the education based mainly on the intellectual aspects of the individual/citizen. Rousseau comes to even argue about the sentimental education of Emile, his fictional character, an ideal type to be educated by himself, as a preceptor. Although it is about another time and another social context, in which the figure of preceptor was common to certain sectors of French society, it is possible to understand much of Rousseau’s indications as being important critics to the learning system of the French big cities in the half of Eighteenth Century, when institutions as schools become, gradually, more prestigious as individual/citizen forms, as also attests the work of Foucault about the Disciplinary Societies (FOUCAULT, 1979; 1996a).

In a very synthetic and schematic form, what can be said about Rousseau’s book is that this important work was divided by the author in five chapters (or books) that develop his indications in respect to the education in chronological form.

In relation to the funk carioca elements, some of Rousseau’s affirmations in this book may be faced as starting points to a wider discussion. The French author says,

“there is not horrible objects anymore for who see them everyday” (ROUSSEAU, op. cit., p. 47). This statement, related to the importance of introducing the less than two years child to unpleasant objects and beings (insects, animals) for this child very early to get used to know not only good things in life, but also the bad things, may be reinterpreted under Rio de Janeiro’s current urban context. It does not cause horror to lots of carioca slums residents the talk about drug trafficking in so many funk carioca lyrics or even the presence of pornographic words, because these words and the situations involving the parallel power are constantly present in the life of many carioca citizens. There is no horror in daily life, no matter how horrible that is...

It is interesting that Rousseau, at any given moment of the book, says: “Ordinary readers, forgive my paradoxes, we must commit then when we reflect; and, say what they want to say, I would rather be a man of paradoxes than to be a man of prejudices” (ROUSSEAU, op. cit., p. 91). This phrase earns a special sense when facing the funk as pedagogical element, because assuming all its contradictions, the fact of the academy to look in a serious way to the carioca funk, trying to understand it (it consists in a popular rhythm that comes from low-income communities) and to relate these contradictions to Rio de Janeiro itself and its socio-historical constitution indicates a combat to prejudice in which refers to the slums only as exclusion ghettos. It is the opposite of what the public policy of Rio de Janeiro itself has been doing nowadays, building walls and using external agents to promote a pacification with no dialog with the residents of the own community.

In this sense, another Rousseau’s phrase seems to be of extreme importance: “As soon as Emile knows what life is, my first concern will be teach him how to save it. Until now, I did not make the distinction between the conditions, the social positions and the riches, and either do I from now on, because the man is the same in all social conditions” (ROUSSEAU, op. cit., p. 247). Although it may not be possible to eradicate all the existent prejudices, the sense of education should be to minimize them as much as possible. A full education and a good humanitarian character need to like people, in opposite to the conservative transmission of content that keeps the capitalism operating at full steam, which indicates that the cultural elements from less rich social classes should be taken in consideration during the educational process. Moreover, as a larger goal, the education itself should accommodate heterogeneous students, from distinct social classes and with different life experiences.

Rousseau also points out that “in vain the calm reason makes us approve or

disapprove; only the passion makes us act” (ROUSSEAU, op. cit. p. 231). Although debatable if education should be guided by passion, an education that takes into account the individual passions, including the musical ones, may prove to be more complete than that which only takes the individual in training to decorate formulas.

It becomes evident in Rousseau’s book that his educational proposal operates an important dialectical discussion between the individual and his concrete needs of survival while a living being and the citizen and his social relations acquired in the city context. Starting with the senses, ending with the politics. Starting with the “big beat” playing, ending with the making of a booklet containing the labor rights. Of course this is not a univocal or direct relation, but an element that puts the senses in evidence, as the funk carioca (or any other popular rhythm) may be used as an element of political mobilization and of instruction even to adults, as the description in the previous topic primer demonstrates.

The question of a worker’s pedagogy becomes more evident in the work of István Mészáros (2008), *The education beyond capital*. As the author says, “in the kingdom of capital, the education itself is a commodity. Hence the crisis in the public educational system, pressed by the demands of capital and by the crushing of resource cuts in public budgets” (MÉSZÁROS, op. cit., p. 16).

The author discusses the weakening of public education as an effect caused by the own capitalism development, which, for working in a *metabolic* mode (which means organic), needs to increase the concrete ties between its *modus operandi* and its thinking structures. So, it is necessary to believe that consumption is valuable and a private education, “cliently”, strengthens this scenario. This is an education that ideologically shouts to the four winds that is necessary to form to the job marketing (even in high school). As Mészáros says, “the weakening of public education, parallel to the growth of the private system, took place at the same time in which the socialization turned from school to media, publicity and consumption” (MÉSZÁROS, op. cit., p. 16).

If the education is a community element, to weak the local social ties, exchanging them gradually by consumerist staging of the links, by the metabolic reproduction of non-living and by the spectacularization of social relations, is an strategy of capitalism as system, as the author says.

The saturation of signs and constant repetition of messages is not an exclusive

fruit of funk carioca. Although in a more pleasant, less direct and aggressive way, the mediatic publicity works over a political economy of sign, in which the information are exacerbated quantitatively without a pedagogical monitoring that makes possible a critical reading of the mass media communication vehicles, becoming difficult the interpretation of the phenomena into a critical form: “We live currently the coexistence of a previously unreleased mass of available information and a incapacity apparently unsurpassed of interpretation of the phenomena²⁸” (MÉSZÁROS , op. cit., p. 17).

The way out that Mészáros indicates to this situation is precisely an alliance between the political processes and the education, as complementary forces: “Only the largest of the education concepts can help us to chase the objective of a truly radical change, providing pressure instruments that break with the mystifying logic of capital” (MÉSZÁROS , op. cit., p. 48). At this point, the MC’s booklet previously described establishes a connection between a political movement and a pedagogical character that was turned to emancipatory issues of the worker. Urging the MCs to stay independent as possible as they can and strongly criticizing the great recording companies and the entertainment industry, the primer uses Marxist terms and language and approaches in much of what Mészáros points out as a connection between the education and the emancipatory politics. The release of the primer itself is already a victory, a result of a partnership between different non-profit organizations with the objective of politicizing the members of a musical genre with low schooling, creating articulating tools to the MCs themselves. As Mészáros says,

the paper of education is sovereign, both to the elaboration of appropriated and fitted strategies to change the objective conditions of reproduction, as to the *conscious self-change* of the individuals called to concretize the creation of a radically different metabolic social order. This is what it means the designed “society of freely associated producers”. Therefore, it is not surprisingly that on the Marxist conception the “*effective transcendence of self-alienation from work*” is characterized as an inevitably educational task (MÉSZÁROS , op. cit., p. 65).

And the author definitively concludes: “In this respect, two main concepts should be put in the foreground: *the universalization of education and the*

²⁸ In this respect, the work of the French author Jean Baudrillard (1991), *Simulacra and Simulation*,

universalization of work as self-performing human activity. In fact, none of them are viable without the other” (MÉSZÁROS , op. cit., 65).

In relation to Paulo Freire, this author is even more evident in which refers to a proposal of comprehension of the pedagogic possibilities contained in funk carioca. In first place, Freire points out to the relation of autonomy which is directly tied to an education of progressive imprint, and also to the processual character of education:

Nobody is subject of nobody’s autonomy. On the other hand, nobody matures suddenly, at 25 years old. We go mature everyday, or not. The autonomy, while ripening of the being to himself, is a process, is likely to be. Does not occur on the scheduled date. It is in this sense that a pedagogy of autonomy has to be centered in stimulating experiences from decision and from responsibility, it is good to say, in respectful experiences of freedom (FREIRE, 1996, p. 107).

Freire certifies the political character of any education, saying that is necessary to take advantage when educating. Moreover, the respect to the other appears on the choices from the most appropriate materials to the classes, related to the life of the individuals that are on the role of educating. It is necessary to approach to the other to better teach him and, after that, make this individual to learn other defined more complex contents. To educate on Rio de Janeiro, for example, in municipal elementary schools, is also to seek for elements of approaching between educators and students. In this sense, the funk carioca may work as a key-element, because its circulation occurs independently of the learning institutions. This does not mean that one must have to accept the funk carioca as a whole in this specific kind of pedagogy. The stimulus to the student needs to occur inside certain educational limits that take in account the positive values to be learned by this individual in its process of formation. To stimulate a determined type of song, to accept the funk carioca beats and to exercises the capacity of the students to create and to execute this songs may be very positive. Including serving as a basis to ethical discussions, in which some pornographic and drug trafficking apology contents exist as points to incite a discussion of negative elements to the formation of these individuals.

Freire also combats the “bureaucratization of mind”. To make conscious choices is to allow the adventure and the playful character that need to exist also at the pedagogical processes in different ages and contexts. As Freire says, there is a process of “bureaucratization of mind” (FREIRE, op. cit., p.114) that should be avoided. It is necessary to understand the teaching as an adventure, a process of exchange in which both the student and the teacher learn. In relation to

already pointed this issue in the early 80’s: “inflation of information, deflation of meaning”.

this topic, it is interesting to notice that stimulating the students to bring elements of their everyday life to specific purposes of the classes may be a much effective (and affective) exercise in this exchange process. If the funk carioca takes part in the everyday life of many children in Rio de Janeiro nowadays, it needs to be brought to the teaching classroom, with all its positive and negative aspects, because the discussion will depart from them.

Understanding the history while possibility and not as determinism, Paulo Freire is extremely political in his writings, and search for a change that is only possible when understanding the reality as it is, to start, from this point on, a conscious change: “I always refused the fatalisms. I prefer the rebellion that confirms me as people and that never ceased to prove that the human being is greater than the mechanisms that minimize him” (FREIRE, op. cit., p.115).

Final Thoughts: funk carioca inappropriate for minors

Although it is recognizable here that is necessary a subsequent deepening of the pedagogical discussion started in this paper, it is possible to sketch some considerations as a partial and temporary conclusion: as well as funk carioca show striking contradictions as a cultural element, and some of those contradictions seem to display the contradictory character of the city itself (or from the numerous “cities”) from the current Rio de Janeiro, one can speak about more than one pedagogy of funk carioca. Two particularly get imposed at this moment of the research: a positive pedagogy and a negative pedagogy.

The positive pedagogy found so far is related to the MC’s primer as a result and as part of a larger process of pedagogy of the citizen and worker that comes from the slums. This process involves the constitution of APAFunk and its recent achievements.

The negative pedagogy found so far is directly linked to the context itself in which funk carioca is generated and diffused: slums dominated by parallel powers where educational and housing conditions are not appropriate to a full formation (from a point of view of what would be desirable to non elitist standards, nor rigid, but conscious of the full possibilities of the human beings). The atmosphere of tension on the dance ball described on this paper works as a thermometer of this discussion. How would it be a music generated and diffused in this social context? Could it not be predominantly aggressive and “abuser”? About this aspect, the words of Simon Frith seem to be more than appropriate: “to understand cultural value judgments we must look at the social contexts in which they are made, at the social reasons why some aspects of a sound or spectacle are valued over others; we must understand the appropriate times and places in which to voice such judgments, to argue them” (FRITH, 1996, p. 21-22). And,

assuming the words of Shusterman, “in general terms, the aesthetic judgment is not pure, elevated and disinterested contemplation of form, how it is normally defined. Instead, it is deeply conditioned and ruled by political-social (including racial) interests and prejudices” (SHUSTERMAN, 1998, p. 177-178).

Funk carioca is judged, avoided and little discussed, just like it is also superficially judged, avoided and less discussed the carioca slums and their social problems. Despite of that, as Shusterman says in relation to art, following a deweyana perspective, “as experience, art is, of course, a part of our lives, a specially expressive form of our reality, and not just a simple fictional imitation of it” (SHUSTERMAN, op. cit., p. 45).

As experience, art should include popular culture as an constitutive element. The aesthetical experiences should not be confined to exclusively elitist criteria. It is in formal education that some value criteria establish to artistic judgment: “The education and the possibility of choice have a huge role, often forgotten, in the determination of the objects of pleasure. In a general way, we like what we are trained and conditioned to like and of which the occasions and circumstances allow us to guess good” (SHUSTERMAN, op. cit., p. 114).

Moreover, Shusterman also believes in the importance of the experience of popular art for rescuing (and not avoiding) the worldly pleasures as legitimate objects of desire. The idea of living the art points to this recovery and the term funk, in its North-American origin, as the author says, “used to characterized and praise many rock songs, derives from an African Word that means ‘positive sweat’ and express an African aesthetic of vigorous and community engagement, distant from unmotivated isolation” (SHUSTERMAN, op. cit., p. 118-119).

More than defend funk carioca as an art form, something that still deserves a specifically more in depth discussion, what this article tried to discuss from a theoretical basis with some empirical elements was the paradoxical contradictions of funk carioca as a cultural element, pointing towards the contradictions also paradoxical from Rio de Janeiro itself as a city. The same cultural element that motivated composers and musical performers to fight for their rights and mobilized academics and social movements activists in favor of a fight for labor rights, cultural recognition and reduction of the inequalities serves as a “motor” of “underground” weekly manifestations, helping to keep symbolically and concretely the strength of drug trafficking gangs. Concretely through dance balls where drugs are sold. Symbolically through the repetition of semblance of lyrics that are alienating, individualists and pornographic or making apology to the drug trafficking factions.

In positive or negative terms, however, there is a similarity: from what was seen

until this point, it gets the impression that funk carioca is music to the “older than 18”, which means to adults. The pedagogies analyzed until here show various elements unsuitable for minors...

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