



PART 1

The 1980s agenda in Brazil

Reflections on Culture, Heritage and Preservation

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Since culture is the subject of this seminar¹ I would like to begin with a discussion of the commonsense notion of culture. As CONDEPHAAT is charged with formulating cultural policy, it is important to understand commonsense meanings of the term in order to be better able to reach the most diverse public possible. This is relatively easy to do because commonsense notions of culture are part of our own understandings of the concept. Could one of you please give me a commonsense definition of culture?

(From the audience): *"For the majority of people culture is somehow intangible and far above ordinary things. It includes painting, music, theatre, cinema."*

This is a good definition and contains important points for us to analyze. First of all, it reveals that culture has to do with the elite. It is sophisticated and therefore requires sophistication to be understood. But this elitist conception of culture contains two dimensions: that of the nature of cultural goods themselves, somehow spiritual and elevated; and that of the special ability that only a few people have to be able to appreciate them. "To be cultured", according to commonsense views, means having a certain amount of knowledge and information that aren't necessary for day to day life and also having a special ability to appreciate culture and to make use of it. In addition, culture so defined tends to be highly valued, not only by intellectuals but people in general, who show respect and admiration for people considered cultured, even if this attitude may contain some degree of ambiguity. Those who research in working class areas know about this. The fact that

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most people see researchers as highly educated and cultured means that they are treated with a certain respect but also possibly with a degree of suspicion or even hostility as if they were unable to understand the problems of ordinary people. Even so, the idea that the social world is split between “those who know” and “those who don’t know”, those who “are cultured” and “those who are not” is an idea shared by all.

(*From the audience*) – “Do you mean to say that the Secretariat for Culture operates on the basis of this meaning of culture?”

I believe so. Apart from anything else, the Secretariat is composed of people who “are cultured”, who tend to think that they alone are able to define what culture is. In the case of CONDEPHAT, this means deciding what should be included as a part of cultural heritage and what should not.

Coming back to the basic understandings of the concept of culture, we can conclude that it covers diverse aspects. In the first place, the idea that culture is valued and should be preserved establishes a bridge between the interests of CONDEPHAT and those of the people as a whole who give legitimacy to preservationist policies. Secondly, it is important to recognize the multiple referents of the concept of culture, including objects, knowledge and abilities. This second aspect is important because it formed the basis for the way anthropology came to reformulate the term, creating an entirely new concept. The fundamental shift consisted of “de-elitizing” the notion of culture, removing the idea that culture consists of special and superior knowledge produced by certain people of a particular social class. All of the commonsense meanings of culture were maintained but they were extended to include the entirety of human production and all social behavior.

The commonsense notion of culture recognizes that certain goods are considered superior and of great symbolic complexity. The anthropological concept of culture starts from the premise that such qualities impregnate all human behavior: in the ceremonial of official receptions as much as in the relations between workers and their bosses; in the painting of a picture as much as the cooking of a cake; in the understanding of a book on geography as much as the ability to move around a city.

By classifying all behavior as culture, anthropology presupposes a distinction between nature and culture. The basic idea of the anthropological

concept of culture is that human beings are very special animals, whose specificity lies in the fact that most of their behavior is not genetically transmitted. Thus, collective social action is organized through symbolic systems. In this way specific forms of adaptation come into being, producing knowledge and regular patterns of behavior that are learned, transmitted and also transformed from generation to generation.

All human behavior is in this sense “artificial” and not “natural”. Human beings are animals who build artificial environments through the development of symbolic systems, in which they live. Culture, then, is the creation, transmission, reformulation and transformation of these artificial environments.

There is something very democratic about the anthropological notion of culture, based as it is on the recognition of the immense creativity and the abilities of all human beings. This can be seen clearly through a consideration of language. Languages are an extremely rich and complex cultural creation. Almost all humans learn to speak and are, therefore, “cultured”. Anyone who is able to learn something as complex as language is fully able to manipulate symbolic systems and thus participate in any cultural activity.

Recognizing the importance of the symbolic dimension of human behavior allows us to reposition certain aspects that we found in the commonsense notion of culture. One of them points to the *products* of human activity, in particular the production of material goods: paintings; monuments; objects. But one must also take into account specifically symbolic production that involves the manipulation of language: literary works; scientific theories; religious systems; judicial codes. The notion of *symbolic production* is fundamental because it allows us to focus on the central problem of the concept of culture: the question of meaning.

Seen from the perspective of meaning, the distinction between material and symbolic production disappears. It is easy to see how material goods carry symbolic meanings and that it is the wealth or importance of these symbolic meanings that characterize those goods defined as culture under the commonsense definition of the term. A work of art, and by extension any material product, is simultaneously the matter out of which it is made and the meaning it crystallizes and expresses.

But there is another aspect of the concept of culture which I could like to discuss. The commonsense definition of culture covers not only goods, but

also the human ability to make them and to enjoy them. When we say that someone is cultured, we mean to say that he or she is well informed and that he or she is able to enjoy cultural goods.

A cultured person is someone who goes to a concert and feels pleasure when he or she hears a symphony. So the concept of culture is not passive. It includes not only cultural goods but also the actions surrounding them. Since its inception, Anthropology has been concerned with the dynamic aspect of culture through the study of *custom*.

The concept of custom is slightly different from the concept of a symbolic good, because we are not talking about the product of human action, but the very nature of such action; a standardized action that is organized through rules which are symbolically coded and thus, as is the case of cultural goods, bearers of meaning.

This is the dimension of culture, which, I would argue, is fundamental. It implies a definition that is based on the regularity and meaning of behavior that have resulted from the manipulation of symbolic systems.

If we think of culture in this way it is possible to compare it to the notion of work in Marxian theory. When Marx refers to work he is thinking of material production. But by analogy we can think of symbolic production. One important aspect of work is its cumulative nature: through work, men not only establish a relationship with nature, extracting from her useful goods that may be immediately consumed, but they also produce tools, knowledge and techniques (acquired bodily abilities) that constitute the means of production. Culture is like this. Once it has been created it establishes the basis for future creativity. But there is another important factor in the notion of work and, particularly that of means of production, namely that any good contains dead work that may be brought to life by further work. For example, a pen is the product of work. If it is kept in a drawer this work is effectively dead. But if the pen is then used to write an article through this additional work it becomes an instrument of production.

We can think of culture and symbolic production in a similar way. Symbolic products also possess a certain concreteness. But if they are not used, the work that brought them into being is in a sense dead. This is the case of an article that was never published nor read by anyone. But once published, read, discussed and contested through additional “cultural work”, it becomes an integral part of culture. The basic idea I am trying to impart

is that culture is not so much goods themselves, but their utilization. We should think of culture as a process through which human beings are obliged constantly to produce and utilize cultural goods in order to be able to act in society. This is the only way that collective life can be organized.

Mendel's theory of heredity is a good example of what I am trying to say. As we all know, Mendel's theory was ignored for a long time. It was in a way dead. It existed. It had been written. But in effect it was dead because no one knew about it or used it. When it was rediscovered and people began to undertake genetic experiments and to interpret the world in terms of the theory, it became alive as a part of culture, a tool for men to act on the world and for them to relate to one another. It may even be understood as a consumer good since I am sure that certain people derive pleasure from understanding Mendel's theory even if they do not utilize it in practical terms.

This notion of culture as something that is constantly recreated and re-utilized, a basic instrument for all human action provides us with a powerful analytical perspective just so long as it is not employed in an exaggeratedly utilitarian mode.

Culture satisfies more than material necessities. Indeed, much of what we call culture has no practical utility whatever. In most societies, people spend an inordinate amount of time producing things that are economically useless but which are esthetically satisfying and have the effect of establishing social relations. Take body painting for example. Among many indigenous peoples of Brazil a great amount of time is dedicated to painting elaborate designs on faces and bodies. But the adornment survives only two baths. There is clearly no practical utility involved. It is however a source of esthetic pleasure and a way of bringing about social relations. People admire one another, sometimes competitively. Painting a son or husband can show affection. A particular pattern might indicate the member of a kin group or a position in the social hierarchy. Painting bodies may also have important ritual significance. All cultures are full to the brim with apparently useless and frivolous activities. Look at our own habit of baking elaborate cakes, especially for birthdays and weddings. An enormous amount of work is invested in producing cakes that will immediately be consumed. Yet it is such activities that are the pleasure of living, exactly because they celebrate social relations. It is true that everyone worries a lot about making sure they have the basic necessities. Yet whenever possible even these are

subject to “superfluous” elaboration.

An example of this is provided by the way the Trobriand islanders studied by Malinowski deal with their yams at harvest time. You might imagine that once the harvest is over the yams are simply stored for future consumption. But that is not what happens. Once they have been harvested, the yams are carefully cleaned to the extent that even the filaments are shaved off. Then they are arranged in huge pyramids with the largest and most beautiful yams on the outside so they can be easily admired. A shelter is then constructed to protect them. After a few days and much admiration, the pyramid is broken down and most of the yams are transported with much pomp and ceremony to the house of the farmer’s sister’s husband where the pyramid is rebuilt to receive more admiring visitors. Finally the yams are stocked in large granaries, which surround the central patio of the village. They are elaborately constructed out of trellised wood with the largest and most beautiful yams on the outside. Thus, food is produced not only to satisfy hunger but also to mark out social relations and to provide esthetic pleasure.

We are not so different. In our own society the exhibition of large quantities of highly elaborate foods constitutes the very soul of our celebrations. So it is clear that we cannot understand culture in utilitarian terms. Even the most useful of material goods are immersed in a dense web of social relations, esthetic elaborations and ritual forms from which so much satisfaction is derived.

Returning to the notion of culture as signifying action that relies on the manipulation of symbolic tools, we can now try to apply it to the notion of cultural heritage. To do this, we must define heritage in terms of the meaning that it has for the population at large, on the understanding that the meaning of a cultural good depends on the way in which it is *used* in society. We should understand cultural heritage as a series of crystallizations of “dead workers”, that has become important again with an investment of “cultural work”, through which the good in question acquires new uses and new meanings. Indeed, one of the characteristics of this process of cultural construction lies in the fact that the greater the symbolic charge conferred on the past of a cultural good, the greater the possibility of its future use. So we can agree that there are certain special goods that deserve a special effort to preserve them for future generations because of the meanings they have acquired.

While it is relatively easy to discuss all this in general terms, the problem

becomes more complex when we turn to the constitution of heritage in our own society. Here we must return to the discussion at the beginning of this talk, namely the elitist nature of the concept of cultural heritage under the commonsense definition of culture. When working with primitive societies this problem ceases to exist since they tend to be relatively homogeneous and egalitarian—all members of the society know the same things, use the same techniques and have equal access to the material and spiritual resources of the culture, which is thus a collective heritage available to all. In a differentiated society such as our own, the question must be asked in a different way. The culture, which is produced by society as a whole, is still a collective heritage. Yet distinct groups and social classes do not have the same access to this heritage, just as these diverse segments of society contribute in their own specific way to this heritage. To a certain extent this is inevitable since the social division of labor has led to such a wealth and complexity of cultural production that no one individual is able to cover it alone. In a differentiated society, different forms of work, regional and ethnic differences, together with various historical traditions contribute to an increase in heterogeneity. In the very process of nation building, groups and classes appropriate specific cultural elements that are frequently used to differentiate one group or class from another. Such cultural differences are often highly valued by the groups concerned and lead to the development of specific moral and esthetic patterns.

It would however be disingenuous to suggest that these phenomena are fully reciprocal. The fact that social relations are permeated by power means that certain groups manage to impose their tastes, deciding what is good for the others or, inversely, restricting the access of dominated groups to highly prized cultural goods. In effect, the dominant classes direct material and cultural production, which they then have the privilege of appropriating for themselves.

This means that dominant groups in society have access to cultural goods that are different, but also often better and more elaborate than those available to the others. A certain amount of leisure and material resources are needed to be able to acquire and use a sophisticated cultural good, above all those that are considered superior because of the quality and quantity of work that has been invested in their production. The building of a house requiring specialized labor, architects, engineers and a wide range of material

resources, is quite different from building a house in a *fafavela*. Great creativity can go into building a house in a *fafavela* but the material resources will be limited. A considerable amount of creativity and work is required to produce a technically adequate solution for a dwelling. This is true for cultural goods as a whole. Owning and appreciating a cultural good requires a certain amount of training, the right education, a certain amount of leisure time and the necessary material resources. This is why class differences are not qualitatively equivalent. The elitist component of the commonsense definition of culture contains a grain of truth in the sense that it recognizes that dominant classes have the privilege to possess the resources, the time and the knowledge necessary to appropriate and appreciate the most elaborate cultural goods.

Members of the working class lack these resources. Often they are obliged to produce their own cultural goods with much difficulty and shortage of resources. As this kind of cultural production is not stored, it can rapidly be lost. Thus, working class memory tends to be short because it depends entirely on word of mouth. The history of Brazilian trades unions is a case in point. The vast majority of Brazilian workers have not the slightest idea of trade union history. Those who do are the intellectuals in the universities who have the time, resources and training necessary for safeguarding it. So what are workers' chances of recovering the memory of their struggles and traditions? This will depend on the word of mouth within the unions themselves. They lack the time and training to study trade union history. That is why they tend to have access only to recent data. This is not the case of the dominant classes. We work with much greater historical depth. We are privileged classes because we are able to produce and utilize cultural goods of this nature.

Looking at things from this point of view enables us to envisage with greater clarity the sort of policy on cultural heritage that might be developed in a society that aspires to democracy. It is based on the notion that cultural heritage which in effect is produced collectively should be appropriated collectively as well. This means that ways must be found to make sure that members of all social classes gain access to those elements of cultural heritage that are symbolically charged and yet which have until recently been monopolized by the dominant sectors of society. When I think of cultural policy I don't simply in terms of folklore and the populist celebration of popular

culture. Surely we must give value to popular culture, but we must also ensure that so-called high culture ceases to be the monopoly and privilege of any one class. A collective heritage must be available to all. Bricklayers, tile layers, plumbers, etc produce great works of architecture. Yet the dominant classes use these buildings investing them with symbolic importance. A more democratic conception of cultural and historical heritage would diminish this kind of class privilege.

Heritage policy in Brazil has two important aspects. In the first place, the history that is preserved tends to be the history of the dominant classes. The monuments that are preserved are the ones associated with the historical and cultural achievements of these classes. The history of the dominated is rarely preserved. Looking again at working class movements, it is easy to see that the long history of past political action is not marked by physical objects (monuments, museums, exhibitions, commemorations) that would serve to keep them alive in people's minds.

This is not the result of purposeful mystification. Many of these events and cultural achievements are not even perceived by the members of the dominant classes who control heritage policy and who are led, often unconsciously, to think only of their own history and those symbolic goods closest to their own experience. To a certain extent these attitude can be justified by the fact that such cultural artifacts are effectively more elaborate, more "monumental" than those produced by subaltern segments of society. Yet it is true that this process leads to the loss of innumerable cultural goods whose importance has not been perceived by the elites. Thus, significant and important historical events that are important for understanding society as a whole are forgotten.

Although my presentation of these cultural phenomena is somewhat simplified and schematic, my talk aims to draw attention to a few issues that seem relevant to those who are interested in formulating new policy for the preservation of our historical and cultural heritage. In the first place, I argue that we should give importance to the use of this heritage in such a way as to ensure that the "dead work" that has been invested in it can be transformed into new symbolic investments. Secondly, we should democratize collective cultural heritage in two ways: by eliminating the material and educational barriers that exclude the vast majority of the population from gaining access to cultural goods that tend to be monopolized by the dominant

segments of society; and by preserving and disseminating the cultural work of the working class, making sure that members of this class have access to the tools required for this work, for communicating it to society as a whole and for transmitting it to future generations.

These are the ideas I wish to put forward.

Excerpts from the debate

A question from the public: You observed that the cultural goods of the dominant classes are more elaborate and require more work to produce. From the point of view of anthropology does this mean that they are really better? In addition, is there any anthropological criterion for determining which heritage items should be given priority for preservation?

Eunice – Two difficult questions. The reply to the first is that there are no such criteria. It is possible to evaluate the technological processes involved, but even this depends on a plethora of criteria. For example, you could devise as criterion the survival and expansion of the group that carries the culture. If you did that you would be giving value to the arts of war. You could argue then that barbarian culture was superior to Roman culture because it was able to destroy it. The history of humanity is full of examples of cultures that have disappeared because the groups that developed them were destroyed by others. So a truly objective criterion exists. But you may not wish to adopt it (as I would not). I would expect more from a culture than its ability to conquer others. But this is an objective fact that cannot be denied. For example, the technological developments of the Industrial Revolution had the effect of eliminating the possibility of the survival of older technologies. This is a historical reality. We may not approve of all that came with this revolution, but it took place. Lévi-Strauss has argued that this criterion marks two fundamental periods of human history. He pointed to two revolutions that led to fundamental changes in the way natural resources were appropriated and, consequently, in social relations also. The first was the Neolithic Revolution that involved the domestication of animals and plants, the development of pottery and metal working. The second was the Industrial Revolution. In fact we could add a third revolution that Lévi-Strauss does not do. The first revolution was the production of fire, the first industrial revolution, in fact. But

the Neolithic Revolution changed the relations between peoples to such an extent that those groups that first embraced it gained such an advantage that the people who did not adopt agriculture, the herding of animals and other Neolithic techniques were relegated to distant and inhospitable regions of the earth. They were therefore in a totally disadvantageous position when the Industrial Revolution arrived. On the eve of the Industrial Revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries, these were the hunters and gatherers of Australia, the pygmies of the African forests, the San of Southern Africa, and the peoples of Patagonia. Groups who had developed in one way or another the techniques of the Neolithic Revolution had dominated the rest of the American and African continents and all of Asia and Europe. So in a way an objective criterion exists, or rather two: one is the degree of control over nature, the other, related, is the possibility of dominating other groups.

The Industrial Revolution brought about such an enormous transformation that societies it passed by lost all competitiveness. While we must recognize that societies compete with one another, this criterion is relative. We cannot deduce that the “winning” culture is *better* than others. You may say that it is more competitive than others. But by other criteria, even technological prowess, one cannot say that one culture is better than another. In Western societies, for example, the technique of working with feathers that had been developed in the Inca empire does not exist. Those adornments can no longer be made because no one knows how. Even the societies of the Amazonian forest have sophisticated techniques for working with feathers that we do not. For certain forms of artisan work, techniques do not vary along with general development; basketry, for example. The best examples of basketry are made by primitive people and not by our own artisans. The same is true of pottery. The ceramics produced in the empires of Mexico, the Maia, Toltec, Aztec, etc. are simply wonderful. The ceramics of the Assurini, a Brazilian Indian society, are also truly wonderful and esthetically highly elaborate, even if somewhat limited by the fact that this small group produces them only for utilitarian purposes. This limits variability.

When turning to symbolic production, ritual for example, there are no criteria for excellence. Indeed many anthropologists suspect that the development of western civilization had a negative effect on people’s lives. Recent calculations show that members of primitive societies worked generally for four hours per day, using the remaining hours for flute-playing, rituals

and other intense social activities. Exhausting work occupied a relatively short amount of time. Even if people died earlier they spent most of their time enjoying themselves. On the other hand, it is clear that the Industrial Revolution ushered in a daily working day of 16 hours in dangerous filthy environments. Manufacture was increased but with it a brutal exploitation of labor. So, returning to judgments of value, we can say that they exist and yet don't exist. As far as technical goods are concerned, a more objective view is possible. You can say with objectivity a pot that is worse than another is the one that cracks when put on the fire. It is also possible (with a certain effort on account of highly variable patterns) to admire the esthetic refinement of certain goods. As Boas wrote, "an artistic good is one that shows a particular rhythm allied to excellence in manufacture". It is possible to judge material objects in this way. Among primitive people, where all production is by artisans, these patterns are shared so that there are commonly shared criteria for evaluating production. The best work is thus recognized. This is the opposite of what happens when such objects become tourist items. This is because the tourists, who have no knowledge of native criteria of quality, often prefer goods considered by them to be inferior. This leads to the almost inevitable deterioration of artisan crafts.

While one may define certain goods as better or worse, this is not possible for other ones. What, for example, would be the criterion used to claim that a monogamous family is better than a polygynous one or even a polyandrous one? None. It just is not possible to compare them, saying that one is better adapted, or more natural or whatever. They are different. In this case no comparison is possible. That was the first question. I took a long time to reply. The second question?

P - I asked if there were criteria for creating priorities for the preservation of material goods.

E - Well, I think that here also we have two answers. One reply is to say that it depends on the meaning it bears; its historical significance. Some goods that are full of meaning. These can easily be re-appropriated and reutilized. They are always at the top of the list of heritage items to be preserved. The other answer is that it depends on politics. We tend to preserve those things whose political significance is greatest. They may be monuments to the achievements of the dominant classes or the dominated ones. Then there is, I think,

a tendency to preserve the greatest variety of cultural products, because so much of human creativity is easily lost. In our own society less is lost because of our tendency to document everything. I recall again Malinowski when he drew attention to the importance of tradition for the Trobriand islanders. He argued that we had to imagine how their elements of tradition had been obtained and preserved with great sacrifice. In the case of an epidemic that kills four key members of society, they might not be able to build a canoe again. Say there are two specialists who know the sacred myths. Should they die without passing them on, this heritage is lost. All that humanity has created was in effect brought into being with great effort and in large part with the gross exploitation of many people. The possibility of recovering and developing this heritage as something that circulates in cultural action must be taken into account in the planning of the institutions responsible for cultural policy.

P - How would you relate the preservation of cultural heritage and the nation?

When was the nation born?

E - Well, in the modern sense of the term, the Nation-State came into being through an act of domination. It was based on the fictive existence of a common cultural heritage, which is evidently a gross fabrication. A common cultural heritage was created through the action of the State. Take the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for example. What we call the United Kingdom resulted from the brutal conquest of the Welsh and the Scots who still refuse to see themselves as truly part of Britain; not to mention the Irish. The same is true of France, where, especially after Napoleon, regional languages and place names were prohibited in the name of a common culture. Until quite recently you couldn't register your child by a Basque name. From the point of view of the nation builders, cultural particularities are loci for the crystallization of political opposition such as the Walloons in Belgium and the French speakers of Canada.

I am not sure whether this was exactly the question you asked. In Brazil the same process is very clear. The Portuguese conquerors expropriated and destroyed indigenous culture and the very Indians themselves. After this, similar efforts were made to eradicate the cultural forms brought by slaves from Africa. Slavery is one of the most violent forms of cultural destruction. Absolute control was established to impede the reproduction of African

culture and to bar slaves from access to the dominant culture. The immense black contribution to Brazilian culture is nothing short of a miracle; the miracle of survival in the face of the most hostile circumstances. These are the negative aspects of nation building.

But there are also positive aspects. In general the contact between two groups results in cultural enrichment. Most inventions do not occur independently in distinct groups; rather they pass from one to another. This applies to productive techniques, myths, histories, games, hairstyles, bodily adornments etc. Human beings are good imitators like their closest kinsfolk, apes and monkeys. Contact heightens the imagination. Cultural exchange has been continuous throughout the history of humanity. This has two implications for any nation state: the weakening of specific manifestations due to the denial of internal cultural difference; or a strengthening of many diverse cultural aspects that are in their turn appropriated by diverse groups. So as far as culture is concerned, no easy recipe for action exists. It all depends on you're your aims are.

P – I am interested in the way you see culture as an ideological issue. When I visited the United States I was impressed by their museums. I was a bit shocked to find that they had appropriated cultural items from all over the world and put them in their museums, as if to say, we possess the world's cultures, it is not by chance that we are who we are...

E – It is not by chance that we have the world's cultures; we have them because we are who we are, right? Well the question is a difficult one. In the first place I would argue that each people should struggle for its own heritage. But the accumulation you mention is somewhat inevitable. If you think about dominant societies throughout history you will see that they systematically took over the cultural production of the groups they dominated. That was the source of the wealth of Babylonia, of Assyria, of Egypt, of Greece, of Rome, of the Holy Roman Empire, of the British Empire, of the United States. Those who have shall have more and there is no way of avoiding this problem. The only way is to have more yourself. The competition for power implies competition for resources. So I would argue that we should leave behind moral indignation and enter the political arena, recognizing that those who have most power have more, right? Let us see if we can be a bit more powerful. There is no other solution. You might prefer that the United States

had never bought the works of art that they now show off in their museums. But what would you do? Would you develop a moral attitude of restriction? I think it is unreal to think in these terms. We have to protect our national heritage to avoid it being exported. But to imagine that it is possible to stop countries buying from other countries is a little simplistic.

The question of ideology is a complex issue. I am somewhat tied up in this having spent three years trying to write an article about how to distinguish between culture and ideology. To tell you the truth, I don't really like ideology as a concept because it has two meanings with which it is difficult to work. It contains the notion that ideology is mystification. You can't work with the concept of ideology without this idea creeping in, forcing us to begin by distinguishing between what is being mystified and what is not being mystified. As an anthropologist, I start from a different point of view. I prefer to use the term ideology in a wider sense, as a vision or project for ordering society as whole. When we talk of a liberal ideology or a socialist ideology the term makes sense. But for other ends, I prefer to use terms such as cultural relations, cultural policies or political aspects of cultural relations.

You went to the United States, right? Go to Mexico. There you will find is a constant utilization of popular culture and indigenous culture as a way of glorifying the State through the so-called Mexican Revolution. En passant one might observe that this is something of a hoax. The truth of the matter is that nation states are built on the cultural creation of a common heritage and a common identity. There is no other way to build a society. States do this to a great extent to benefit the dominant classes. You can't get away from the fact that the states themselves operate in this way. Since nations are organized by states and since nations can only function through a common heritage (this is what expresses the idea of nation) this process is inevitable. I see no other way forward. We may say that we should act politically to make this process less exploitative, less violent and less likely to destroy existing cultural diversity. This would be an ideological attitude, a political attitude I would defend. It is, I argue, a necessary cultural policy. Take the case of Brazilian history: a history of the dominant classes. This creates serious problems for the members of the working class who have no access to this history.

During recent research I have been interviewing members of segments of the working class, especially those living on the periphery of São Paulo, to see how they understand their relationship to the State. The complex way in

which this issue is thought through will not however result in a satisfactory political project because there is a lack of general information. When you talk to these people the State appears as so distant that any attempt to influence it would be impossible. Well this is not a false perception. It is correct because the State is indeed distant and there are no mechanisms available for influencing it. But people do not distinguish between the Legislative Power, the Executive Power and so on. It is important to understand why they do not have this information. This kind of knowledge is power. And members of the working class are only too aware of the importance of acquiring such knowledge if they are to improve their living conditions by obtaining resources through and from the State. The notion of ideology is complex also because it is ubiquitous in the sense that it is always associated with specific interests and political projects. In fact everyone has an ideology. The concept only really works well when related to major projects for social organization. On the other hand, I do not see the possibility of organizing a society that is culturally totally segmented. This is not because it would be economically unviable, but because it would create unnecessary conflicts. I think that all should have access to all cultural goods and that all of them will be ideologically contaminated. This seems inevitable also.

P - I understand that dominant groups were interested in preserving things that identified the dominant within the wider historical process. So one would think that a central interest of these groups would be to preserve what we call historical heritage in order to strengthen their own identity. Yet in practice this does not happen. How do you see this question?

E - We should look at the present moment. The Brazil we have today is a very recent Brazil, fundamentally post 1945. We must not forget that industrialization brought about a major change in the composition of the dominant classes and their interests. Their interests are different, they are of distinct social origin and their histories are also different. And there are certain specificities in the Brazilian situation, which I find difficult to explain. In Brazil there is a fascination for all that is new. In other countries there is a greater interest in the past. This is not exclusive to the dominant classes. Everyone is enchanted by novelty. I still remember the introduction of louvered windows. It was madness. Everyone removed their venetian shutters to put in louvered windows. It was an immediate success. I remember also when it became

fashionable to paint walls in different colors. This was also a success in Brazil. It began among the dominant classes but five years later it reached the town in the hinterland where I came from. Soon every wall was in a different color. You would go into your friends' houses and all the walls were different colors and the windows were all louvered; a total success.

I undertook my first research project in the hinterland of the states of Espírito Santo and Minas Gerais soon after the opening of the main road linking Rio de Janeiro to Salvador, Bahia. It amazed me to see the building of lots of little houses along the road, all built in "modern" style; the popular appropriation of what was called "modern": with geometric designs on the façades, all in different colors. Impressive. The same applies to clothing fashions.

I really can't explain why this is the case in Brazil. People love all that is new. This is not the case in Mexico, so much so that I have the impression that this is because in Mexico the State was so active in promoting an interest in national heritage as a form of strengthening the state and building national identity.

P – Isn't this the central issue?

E – Now we identify ourselves through things that are new instead of things from the past. That is what is happening.

P – But things that are new cannot constitute an identity because they are ephemeral. Is all that is new really new? I don't know.

E – You've raised a very interesting problem. I have no ready explanation but it would be interesting to investigate this in relation to the cultural history of Brazil, which is not my specialty. But what I observe is that people identify themselves by their willingness to adopt novelty. If you are working with people who have just arrived from the rural areas and compare your interviews with the opinions of others who have lived for a longer time in the towns, you will see how extraordinarily ready they are to accept change. I also think that this has not always been the case in Brazil, but it is a characteristic....

E – I would just like to mention one more little thing. I am not sure whether all this is new or whether it arrived on the last boat.

P – This is old.

E – Yes, very old. I think it is a bit of both. In fact it is not just that which has arrived on the last boat but also something of the novelty produced here in Brazil. In the modern world the economy is internationalized and national cultures have to be looked at relatively. We should not think that each country will produce its own little culture. There is movement always in two directions, at once of uniformization and of differentiation. I cannot present this as a general theory, but as something to be investigated in concrete cases.

And just to reply again to another question, I would like to insist that the dominant classes are not monolithic. They are diverse and open to criticism. Indeed the ability to elaborate a critical position is also an example of class privilege since critical faculties are also social constructed. Also, this is often associated with power struggles between distinct segments within the dominant classes. And, finally, it is a powerful weapon in the hands of the intellectuals as they struggle to move into a privileged position in this process. Criticism is this also.

Translated by Peter Fry

Reference

- ARANTES, Antonio A. 1984. “Cultura, patrimônio, preservação.” In: A. Arantes (ed.), *Produzindo o passado: estratégias de construção do patrimônio cultural*. São Paulo: Brasiliense/CONDEPHAAT, pp. 23-58.

On the crossroads of preservation

Revitalizing São Miguel Chapel in
a working class district of São Paulo

Antonio A. Arantes

Abstract

The seventeenth century São Miguel Chapel, located in a working class district of São Paulo city, had been in disuse for around 10 years. In the second half of the 1970s, the body managing this listed building faced the problem of how to revitalize it given the profile of the surrounding local population. The response to this problem, grounded on an initial ethnographic survey of local cultural production, involved mobilizing a substantial number of popular artists from the city's East Zone and led to the emergence of the Popular Movement of Art. Through an account of this experience and a debate with technical staff from CONDEPHAAT, the article explores some of the issues that situate the preservation of cultural heritage within a field of conflicting interests and ideologies.

Keywords: cultural heritage, revitalization, mobilization, participation, popular movement.

Resumo

A capela seiscentista de São Miguel, localizada em bairro popular da cidade de São Paulo, manteve-se sem uso por cerca de 10 anos. Na segunda metade dos anos 1970, colocava-se ao órgão gestor desse bem tombado o problema de sua revitalização em face do perfil da população do seu entorno. O equacionamento dessa questão, a partir de levantamento etnográfico sobre a produção cultural local, acarretou a mobilização de um número significativo de artistas populares da Zona Leste e a emergência do Movimento Popular de Arte. Por meio do relato dessa experiência e em debate com técnicos do Condephaat, são explorados alguns temas que inserem a preservação do patrimônio

cultural num campo de conflito de interesses e luta ideológica.

Palavras chave: patrimônio cultural; revitalização; mobilização; participação; movimento popular.

On the crossroads of preservation

Revitalizing São Miguel Chapel in
a working class district of São Paulo

Antonio A. Arantes

Here I provide a brief account of a project conducted in São Miguel Paulista in 1977-1978.¹ As will become clear over the course of my lecture, the revitalization of a listed building poses problems in various directions. I defer exploration of these *various directions* to our later discussion: I believe this will be more productive for everyone.

The events originated from a proposal by the São Paulo Prefecture's Department of Historic Heritage, which looked to obtain a socio-cultural profile of the population living in the city's East Zone, combining this survey with the revitalization of buildings of historical interest located in the area. This concern was related to the broader issue of revitalizing monuments in areas occupied by sectors of society that did not necessarily share values that, for the conservation bodies, justified their protection.. As a researcher, it promised to be an excellent opportunity for me to explore the insertion of 'historic heritage' in the cultural dynamics of the working classes, specifically in relation to the planned appropriation of a building of particular significance to the history of São Paulo and even of Brazil.²

¹ Lecture followed by a debate held in July 1983 during the seminar *Culture, heritage and preservation*, organized by technical staff from CONDEPHAAT (Historic, Artistic and Tourist Heritage Defence Council) of São Paulo State. The sound recording was transcribed by Mada Penteado, revised by the author and published in Arantes, 1984. The text was revised by the author for the present publication. The conflict between the preservation agencies, the Diocese of São Miguel Paulista and the Popular Movement of Art, which underlay the process described here, was explored in Arantes & Andrade, 1981.

² São Miguel Church is located in the area of the former village of São Miguel de Ururaí, founded in the mid-1560s, today the district of São Miguel Paulista in the municipality of São Paulo. Dedicated to the Archangel Michael (São Miguel Arcanjo), it was run by Jesuits until 1750. The first chapel, built around 1580, was replaced by the current chapel in 1622, as inscribed on the lintel of the main doorway. The porchched building with its single nave, main chapel and beamed ceiling was constructed from adobe and

The proposal set out from a premise that, in my view, was false: namely that the population that lived in the area where this building was located, São Paulo's East Zone, was culturally poor and that their forms of expression were slight or virtually non-existent. One of our first clashes occurred precisely around such conceptions, derived from preconceived notions of what 'art' or 'culture' are or should be.

Given this situation it struck me as fairly unproductive to engage in an abstract discussion of deep-rooted conceptions concerning what 'culture' or 'art' were, and I proposed a kind of adventure, primarily involving an attempt to discover what so-called 'local cultural production' amounted to from the viewpoint of the people concerned – what they would effectively consider to be 'art.' In other words the research proposed to identify *in situ* the material on which the agents of the conservation body would work when developing a revitalization project. Clearly an enterprise like this, which took revitalization to be an intervention and sought to 'excavate' the site where this process would take place – i.e. explore its local cultural production in search of something that was not immediately visible to the administrators – is a long-term project. We decided, therefore, to limit the research field to an area around a single building, choosing the São Miguel Paulista Chapel for this purpose.

A research assistant³ and I went to live for a period in São Miguel with the aim of mapping the political field of cultural production in the neighbourhood, the context for the planned 'revitalization' process that, in our view, would have to be implemented through a project developed in collaboration with its intended future users – a somewhat daring proposal at a time when Brazil was still living under the military dictatorship.

All excavation work – cultural archaeology, so to speak – necessarily begins with what is visible on the surface. Our starting points were the neighbourhood associations, churches, football clubs, a surprising number of networks of every kind that we discovered there. This was the first surprise. The sheer number of formal institutions found in the district was the first sign that we were going in the right direction. In fact given that most of the

covered with a gable roof. Inside there are pieces made from carved jacarandá wood, officially registered by IPHAN, CONDEPHAAT and COMPRESP. The building was listed at federal level in 1938, state level in 1974 and municipal level in 1991.

³ Tadeu Giglio, then an undergraduate student of Social Sciences at Unicamp. His collaboration has been essential to the accomplishment of this project's goals.

population of São Miguel Paulista, the overwhelming majority of which is working class, only returns home late in the evening and leaves very early, often before dawn, to work outside the district, the number of active associations and entities was very high, just as their purposes were extremely diverse.

However, it was not actually with the formal associations that we wished to work, in part because we had observed that they were already in contact with various theatrical and musical groups in São Paulo city. Clearly life did not stop on the borders of Penha...⁴ Many of these groups indeed took advantage of these contacts to promote and develop their own work. Moreover our focus was on the potential users of the space in question, since we deemed it unlikely that residents from other more distant districts or from the middle or upper classes would take any active part in revitalizing a 'dead' space, so to speak, in an outlying place like São Miguel Paulista.⁵ Indeed, in contrast to what was being planned,⁶ we thought it reasonable to consider future use of the Chapel in conjunction with local residents, particularly those without access to the facilities needed for 'artistic' production.

So we began the research. Firstly we more or less arbitrarily delimited the area in which we would map the activities of interest to us. We observed that the Penha district was a significant limit, along with Itaquera and Itaim. The social and cultural boundaries of this area of the city are partly defined by the clubs people know, the *terreiros* that they frequent. Students who go more or less to the same schools and courses, people who share the same problems like a lack of adequate public transport, the poor state of public roads, the rundown housing, the lack of hospitals. Sharing these impoverished conditions made people feel identified with each other and develop some sense of commonness.

Having delimited the territory through social (rather than administrative) criteria, we deepened our 'excavation.' Setting out from this network of more visible institutions, we looked to unearth the initially invisible mesh-work where culture is produced in everyday life. Our goal was to encounter groups with whom we could discuss the Chapel's revitalization. We began by

⁴ A reference to the district that at the time had the highest concentration of public services and commerce in the East Zone.

⁵ The distance by car between the middle and upper class districts in São Paulo and the São Miguel Chapel is over 40km across the city centre.

⁶ The revitalization proposal with the most backing among the preservation agencies was to install a Museum of Popular Sacred Art in the chapel.

conducting several formal interviews with directors of neighbourhood associations, Rotary Clubs, the Lions, and we were told to contact various people in the district renowned as experts of its history. In the process we collected some really very beautiful testimonies that allowed us to chart a series of historical events deemed significant by local residents. We continued until eventually we began to locate the tips of these roots in the dance halls, barber shops, bars, street corners, squares and markets and in the most unexpected places – including an Esperanto School!

However this was only possible after the initial superficial survey and from the moment when we began to live in the neighbourhood. We rented a small room in a kind of slum tenement. Despite our endless explanations, we were almost immediately identified as vendors. People created a history for us, they changed my name, calling me Toninho instead. This process of incorporating newcomers through forms of local sociability was extremely interesting! When you attain this degree of proximity, the social differences among the people with whom you are living become visible and stand out, but at the same time they are culturally elaborated by the group and by ourselves, including even changes of name. I was rebaptized, so to speak: I became Toninho the Bookseller. However much I insisted that I was not, I was a university professor and conducting research, this made little sense to them. They really did not believe me. So I continued to be a ‘seller’ for a good while until my work as a researcher turned into a reality for them. Unlike other residents, I spent the whole day in the neighbourhood: in other words, I did not leave for work in the morning to return only at night – or go out looking for a job. That made a big difference for them.

The first prolonged contacts took place on Saturday mornings, when local people generally met up. In São Miguel, residential blocks with a number of rooms are very common, one built next to another with a passageway between, a shower and a water tank for collective use. So neighbours meet each other at the tank, when going to take shower or in their doorways... The first positive sign of contact we received was on a Saturday morning when a note pushed under our door invited us to an Esperanto course. It came from a neighbour who attended classes on Saturday mornings. This middle-aged man was one of the first to lead us into these informal neighbourhood networks. The other was a barber who after attending to his last customer, at around nine in the evening, would shut the shop doors and, accompanied by two or three other musicians, would play and sing *chorinho* deep into the night.

So we gradually encountered these small groups and worked with them to try to understand how cultural production unfolded in São Miguel Paulista, seeing things from a different angle; not from the viewpoint of the institutions that had been the most visible when we first arrived. We began to identify another dimension, equally structured, only in a different way. It is more fluid, much more tenuous, precisely because it lacks the physical infrastructure, institutions, personnel and equipment to make it visible. Very often their *raison d'être* is this very invisibility, which, in the circumstances of São Miguel Paulista under military repression, was almost a condition of survival. Faced with conditions extremely adverse to the exercise of freedom and the use of creative spaces, in sum, adverse to pleasure, this is precisely what happens: expression is diverted to the bars, the backyards, to sporadic and occasional encounters. And in fact this was looked down on by the neighbourhood's more prominent people. After a month and a half or two months had passed, we left São Miguel having already set down roots there and we began to return specifically for encounters, meetings or interviews, or to make our observations on weekends.

This initial network began to expand and we changed the original research area since there were certain places where the relations were more dense, forming clusters of closely interconnected networks of musicians, poets, painters, illustrators, theatre groups, dance groups, circus performer groups, the aforementioned Esperanto group: numerous people who dedicated themselves individually or collectively to some form of artistic expression, not on a professional basis but regularly in their spare time, or in some cases even during work hours. For example, one duo who we knew first met in the factory bathroom. One was humming a tune, the other replied. They greeted each other and soon formed a musical duo that went on to enjoy considerable success in São Miguel. A theatre group, for its part, was formed in a section of Nitroquímica, a factory that also comprises one of the landmarks in the district's history. Two men who worked there came up with the idea of assembling a theatre group, writing a play and performing it. Their theatre group in fact lasted for 13 or 14 years and became highly popular. A couple who performed *caipira* music also ran a theatre group that was active for many years. Their group also kept records of its history, ranging from meeting minutes to financial reports, photos and newspaper cuttings.

It is also interesting to note that almost all these people had a box of keepsakes with souvenirs and objects representative of their memory and that of the group. Once a more friendly, frank and direct relationship had been established, people would bring a shoebox with papers inside. “*Look, perhaps this will be of interest to the research.*” These were unpublished poems, or theatre plays that had never been performed, some handwritten, others typed or photocopied. In this way we gradually made close contact with their histories and experiences. Though it was not our objective, this history started to interest us since we noted that the landmarks that appeared in the reconstruction of these individual and collective trajectories more or less coincided with the history of the district’s urbanization. Indeed people very often used the reforms of the square as temporal markers in their individual and group histories. “Ah, it was in Adhemar’s time when they did that...”; or: “it was when they constructed that bandstand in the square”; or: “it was when they added those flower beds to the square...” So this intersection of the trajectories of the groups and the history of the district’s central square, where the historic Chapel is situated, became something of real interest to us.



Couple in Padre Aleixo Square, with a side view of São Miguel Chapel. Photo by Antonio Saggese, 1977.⁷

⁷ All the other photos published in this article were taken by an unidentified photographer and belong to the archive of the São Paulo Prefecture’s Department of Historical Heritage (DPH). They are presently published with DPH’s permission.

The moment had arrived, then, when, in my view, we had the conditions to ask people explicitly: "What do you think of the Chapel? How do you think it could be suitably used?" The Chapel had been closed for around ten years without any regular activity. For them it was an empty space in a square that over time was being increasingly excluded from the daily life in the district. Excluded by the reforms; excluded by the intensity of the surrounding traffic; and excluded above all because the life of local inhabitants was mostly located outside the neighbourhood, i.e. around the factories and workplaces. In other words, there was a general trend towards confinement of these workers in rented rooms and, to a certain extent, this confinement was reinforced (in terms of the district's history) by the history of the square.

It was when I sat face-to-face with the people with whom I intended to discuss – with them and not with others – what to do with the Chapel that I revealed my objectives more clearly, not without some embarrassment over the fact I had not been able to do this openly from the beginning.

We had got on well before, but from that moment on, when I introduced the issue of what to do with the empty Chapel, our relations gradually became structured differently. We started to meet in a group of five people, who represented five fairly well-known music and theatre groups. Little by little we introduced other participants. After almost a month we began to hold meetings in the Chapel, which were open up to anyone interested. We already had a starting point for discussion. Prior to this, the meetings had taken place at the Esperanto Club, or in the shed used by an amateur theatre group, the Corpo Cênico Parque Paulistano.

At these meetings it was decided that they did not want to elaborate an abstract project for occupying the Chapel. They wanted, in fact, to occupy it effectively and in doing so express and explain their idea of how it could be used. It was possible at the time to negotiate this proposal with the municipal authorities and with the Diocese, which owned the property, and an agreement was reached for us to put together an experimental program. I had already suggested this possibility in my first contacts with the DPH (Historical Heritage Department) because, despite the good intentions of the people coordinating the work at the time, I had no faith at all in made-to-order plans, which materialize as though out of the blue. The groups also thought that way and, rather than develop a project, preferred to undertake a series of activities that demonstrated what they wanted in practice.

They formulated some general principles on how the experimental program should be organized, and this was implanted in more or less two months of production. The programmed activities took place during the course of December 1978. I wish to quickly present some of the principles established by the groups for organizing this activity, which are interesting since they make explicit the ideology that little by little took shape. It should be added that shortly before the start of this final phase of meetings, we had already been using the Chapel at certain times, which is why it had become urgent to begin some kind of activity to ensure access to the space granted.

The decision was taken to draft a document to be distributed during the program, in which these people canvass others who wanted to take part in these events, explaining their intentions and the issue of the Chapel's revitalization. According to them, the revitalization was not a question to be resolved by one, two or fifty people vaguely interested in that matter, but by those taking part in the activities. This was why it was very important for there to be no prior divulgence by the newspapers, radio or television. They believed that it would be extremely artificial to include people from other regions of the city, since although they might bring ideas, they would certainly not follow the process for too long.

They produced the document and before releasing it publically, the inevitable question arose: "Who signs it?" At that moment what they themselves would later refer to as a Popular Movement of Art (explicitly not a movement of popular art, which was a more widespread idea at the time) had already taken shape. In other words, over the course of this process a nucleus of debate and activity was effectively formed around the question of access to cultural production facilities in the East Zone of São Paulo, with all the characteristics of a popular movement: groups with similar needs, without affiliation to a specific political party and with diverse experiences, working towards common objectives.

The document contained the following. At the top of the pamphlet is written 'Popular Movement of Art' and below, where the author's signature usually appears, is written 'Free entry.' Here I should acknowledge that much of the wording that follows is clearly my own handiwork as an attempt to express the views of the assembly:



“Our objective is to draw the attention of the residents of São Miguel Paulista to the existence of local popular artistic production and to the problems that its producers have been facing. This experimental program is the first activity developed by our movement. As well as offering a sample of what currently exists in this area, we wish to unite people interested in the popular arts and to promote debates on the best ways of stimulating and developing them.”

One point was considered fundamental by the group: they did not want the issue of the Chapel to be posed specifically or exclusively. Now as before, they did not want to focus their concern or the movement's *raison d'être* on the Chapel, access to which was problematic. Their main issue was their own musical and theatrical productions. Here it is worth adding a side note. As can be seen, the processes of reflection and activity were focused much more on cultural production in São Miguel Paulista – and, in this context, the possible uses of the Chapel – than on the Chapel itself. The focus was not the Chapel, but the social movement that had formed around its use.

The document went on:

“As well as exhibitions and presentations by the groups, there will be a meeting at the end of each working day to discuss how our activities are progressing. In this way we intend to assess the interest of the residents of the São Miguel region concerning the use of the Old Church [the term local people used for the Chapel] for the development of local arts and for exchanges with groups from other localities. If, as well as watching the program, you wish to present a work or take part in the debates, ask for us at the Chapel entrance.”

This movement drew together various individuals and groups linked to theatre, dance, music, poetry, fine arts and so on, forming a collective that, at a given moment, took the following decisions concerning use of the Chapel during this program:

“1. Use mainly the interior of the Old Church, as well as the side and front porches, the churchyard and Padre Aleixo Square, in accordance with the specific characteristics of each activity.” Even when thinking about the Chapel, the focus and object of interest was the Chapel in the Square. For them, the Square and Chapel formed a single unit.

“2. Simultaneously present more than one activity in different locations, so that the public is encouraged to move around the space.” This is an idea reinforcing the first, that the Chapel was not to be used at one moment and the Square the



next, but that people should circulate continually between the Chapel and the Square, the porch etc., and that, with this aim in mind, the main door should be left open, meaning that some kind of windbreak should be used. A suggestion was made to hang some kind of fabric in the entrance, which ended up being a very beautiful patchwork quilt. They also placed a small table there with a cardboard sign declaring "Free entry." This was actually very important since many people did not dare enter the Chapel, believing they would have to pay a large entrance fee to do so as usually happened.

"3. Organize permanent shows to avoid reducing the flow of visitors at the weekends and leave the Chapel open every night so that it can be visited after work hours." Because, of course, everyone works, arriving home after eight in the evening. So if they left the Chapel open during the day, during the week, it would be left to the children – which was good – or the flies. So it was decided to keep the Chapel open at night.

The Chapel was lit externally by the Regional Administration, which also wired the inside of the building, since electricity was also needed for the spotlights and sound system. In addition, after much insistence, the authority also constructed around 15 benches as the space was completely empty. Once it could be opened at night, a rota system was organized among the participants to ensure the physical integrity of the building. This is very interesting since, as time passed, people began taking control of the building and making it clear that they assumed responsibility for it. The local council staff were responsible for looking after the Chapel during the day, while the key was left at night with members of the Movement who took turns according to the pre-established rota. They ended up sleeping in the Chapel: they did not want to leave. At night, after work – and this is fascinating – people came to see the exhibition and stayed their talking, mainly in the front porch, which began to be used regularly as a meeting point. People met, talked about the program, of course, but also about everything else. And this helped create a climate highly conducive to the revitalization of a space that had been closed for such a long time. There was a horrible smell of insecticide, fleas, leaks, it even rained inside. On the night of a show by a group from Ferreira – set to present a very beautiful *bumba-meу-boi* – it poured down and everyone was soaked. End result: the group was unable to perform because of the rain!

The document continues:

"4. Concentrate the live shows by groups on holidays and weekends, since on



these days there is a higher flow of visitors and the artists themselves work during the week." The group presentations were made at the weekends, while during the week there was always an exhibition of drawings, paintings, carvings, leatherwork, and so on, and a form of artistic expression with which I was unfamiliar, which they called *poesia de varal*, 'washing line poetry.' This involves suspending a cord from which people hang texts with their poems, much like a washing line. Funnily enough an officer from the local council was with us the day that the suggestion was made: "*Shall we do some varal poetry?*" He corrected them: "*No, cordel poetry*" ('twine poetry,' referring to a genre of pamphlet-based poetry typical of the Brazilian Northeast). They said: "*No, it actually is varal,*" explaining that the sheets were hung on the line like clothing. It was incredible. They put up a clothes line in the church porch, just like in someone's backyard, then another going in another direction, then another, until finally the line stretched across the entire nave, through the side altar and beyond, extending further and further. Every day someone else would arrive and hang up a poem; they changed the poems, left one for a few days and then replaced it with another; they left messages on one another's poems: "*I read your poetry, I liked it,*" "*I thought this was rubbish,*" etc. Some brought drawings. These activities flourished.

"5. Distribute the activities to increase over time, so as to facilitate production and meet the probable growth in visitors." This is another relevant aspect. The group's intention was not to equip the Chapel in such a way that they would become dependent on the facilities, all the paraphernalia needed to produce any kind of work. Their idea was for the Chapel to have water and electricity, and no leaks, so that they could continue their activities with their own equipment. All they requested was the installation of electrical lighting and some benches for people to sit on. No infrastructure was assembled. The loudspeakers came from one group, a microphone was lent by a man who ran a street advertising service. In other words, the equipment used in the program was what the organizers were able to find, borrow and place in the space. The program had to adapt to this independent form of production.

Next came: *"Free public access to the activities with no entrance fees or collections."* This principle was very significant since residents from the district are extremely reluctant to enter the Chapel, given that, at least during the decade after the church's closure as a religious venue, a number of exhibitions, book launches and other activities took place that were very clearly



elitist by the standards of the Movement's participants. The people visiting the Chapel now had not 'dared' to enter in the past. Some had been afraid: they thought that inside "there were just mosquitos, bats and Indian skeletons" and that entering was extremely dangerous. Others considered that the place had nothing to do with them, they were excluded. Some people would look from afar and would ask things like: "But can you enter?" "How much does it cost?"

"As far as possible, avoid competition in the program, encouraging contact and collaboration between the different participants, and between them and the wider public." This idea of community is common in social movements. For them there was no sense in creating an award for the season's best musician or the best drama group. Instead the idea was to bring together and unite people around common interests, people who shared the same needs and interests.

"Participants must provide whatever is needed for their presentation, asking for assistance from others where necessary. In the final resort, in order to meet the basic requirements for the program's production, they may ask for assistance from the Regional Administration or the DPH, the public bodies to which the Chapel and Square are directly connected." This justified the requests for electricity, benches and exclusive access to the public toilets located underneath the bandstand in the square, which were closed and being used informally.

"As well as the programmed activities, stimulate new affiliations and ensure the conditions for the participation of new groups and artists, both immediate and more long-term, which includes allowing the additional space and time needed for staging a theatre play, for example." Various groups were included over the course of the program. The idea was to bring together groups and collectively develop ideas on the use of the Chapel.

"As well as neighbourhood groups and artists, stimulate the participation of outside groups who can contribute to the proposal's development." A group from Ferreira also became involved. One of the high points of the program was the encounter between the Ferreira group and the groups from São Miguel Paulista. Firstly because of the encounter itself, and secondly because of the Ferreira group's work, which has its origin in the work of Solano Trindade, and is very strongly linked the question of *negritude*, which is immediately relevant to São Miguel Paulista's residents.

"Hold frequent meetings with the participants at least weekly, freely open to the widely public, to evaluate the progress of the work. Ensure that some members



are always on hand and hold at least one meeting at the end to discuss the results and publicize the program, in the district and region especially, as a means of assessing the likely public for any long-term program of activities. Use billboards and mobile services for this publicity..." – which was basically what was used: a mobile loudspeaker service – “...so long as they are free. Do not issue formal invitations or involve media coverage so as not to distort the public and the purpose of the experiment.”

Following these guidelines, therefore, the Chapel was occupied for around a month, at the end of which it was closed again and the electricity switched off. From January the 1st 1979, the authorities were once again faced with the problem of the “revitalization of the São Miguel Paulista Chapel.”

The experiment was highly productive since it showed that, in contrast to the Martins Penna Theatre in a nearby district, for example – which then had a maximum average public of one hundred people per month, despite promoting activities with schools, diploma award ceremonies, and very often attracting highly-rated theatre companies or musicians from the centre – the flow of visitors in São Miguel’s case was really astounding, way beyond our expectations. During the second or third week of the program, we decided to leave a visitors’ book for people to sign and collected more than 4,000 signatures in two and a half weeks. On one hand, this revealed an enormous demand in the region for activities of this kind. On the other hand, and in contrast to what is usually thought, it showed a large capacity for mobilization among the informal networks in which ‘cultural activities’ are produced on an everyday basis. It also showed the capacity to organize around common objectives, informed by a political knowhow that did not make access to the Chapel the sole objective.

In fact they continued to be involved in this dispute until 1982. They have insisted on this demand because, in fact, the Chapel is a space with this historical connection, because it has to do with the neighbourhood’s identity, because, until the moment when the square was cut off from the neighbourhood’s life, it was the central space in the area, because it was a place where things happened and people met, fought, dated, went to mass, and where children played – the local meeting place par excellence.

By chance I was in São Miguel around two months ago and it was startling. They had installed a fun park on the square, on top of the flower beds. There is an enormous carousel in the churchyard. I was left speechless.



I believe that this experiment showed all this potential. In fact, as had been proposed initially, the movement continued outside the church. Following the Chapel's closure – the authorities claimed it was closed for restoration, or some such – they carried on working and meeting in other places.

I do not wish to go on too long, but another aspect worth highlighting is the desacralization of the Chapel. Obviously the Chapel is a place of religious worship and many people were baptized and married there. By definition, it is a space where the sacred is produced. The idea of the Popular Movement of Art was that the program should begin and end with much noise, like almost any rite. It was, so to speak, a ritual of inversion which we lived in the Chapel over the space of a month. The district's samba school, though very low profile, thought that they ought to appear at the front of the church and the drum section in fact marked the start of the activities one Saturday afternoon. They thought that the samba school should enter the Chapel and that the people assembled there would form a procession after the drums. And that is what they did. Clearly it was a scandal from the viewpoint of the Diocese, but not from the viewpoint of the residents, i.e. the actual users.

I find this implicit knowhow embedded in social action extremely interesting. It was precisely a rite, in all its different phases, beginning with the separation between the time of the festival and the time of daily life in which



the Chapel was seen as an empty and haunted space. By being reused for other purposes, the Chapel underwent an interesting process of reform and redefinition without being perforated by a single nail. The walls, communion table and wooden carvings inside the building were respected at all times – demonstrating a much greater respect, in fact, than the public authorities and the Church itself, officially responsible for maintaining the building, had shown it. They reinterpreted all the spaces inside the chapel. The vestry was turned into a dressing room, the main altar into a stage. Utilized in this way, the chapel became a theatre with a meeting room, which was previously the side altar, and a lighting cabin, which was the choir area. What is interesting here is that the spaces of the chapel and the theatre, being structurally alike, allow this process of re-elaboration that begins precisely with the rupture with its religious use.

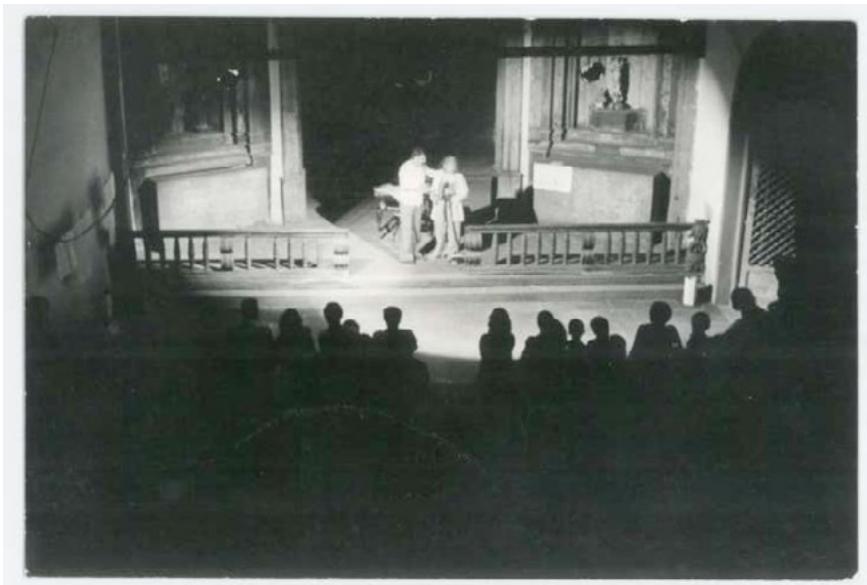
Excerpts from the debate

Question from the audience: What was the outcome of this proposal to revitalize the Chapel?

Antonio: There were various meetings after the 2nd of January, already held away from the church, in which the experimental program was evaluated. The idea was that the program would be a starting point for us to consider how to use the Chapel. And a proposal was made. At that time the idea was as follows, according to the research report sent to the DPH by myself:

“1. Given the difficult working conditions of the groups under study, we are in favour of creating the conditions in the Chapel for developing the day-to-day activities of these groups, such as: rehearsals, a laboratory of dramatic arts, and, having resolved this technical aspect, an art studio and photographic laboratory, activities in which a large number of people are already involved.” Fitted with basic facilities and equipment owned by various groups, the old church could become a workshop for the artistic groups and, simultaneously, a space for presentations and leisure use by residents from the region in general, since they could be offered activities like those included in the experimental program.

“2. Interferences from the public authorities should be minimized in terms of guiding activities and the latter should be developed as far as possible with the resources of the groups themselves.” This interference is undesirable because, coming from sectors of society other than the direct producers of these activities and



their public, it will tend to dilute their basic meaning : their structural and symbolic rooting in local social practices.

“3. Impede the absorption of the entity organizing these activities by the public administration, since this would undoubtedly lead to its stabilization and increase the possibility of it being manipulated for purposes other than the cultural development of the popular sectors, handing over more space to vested interests based on nepotism and political-ideological control, as has occurred in São Miguel Paulista, just as the present research shows.”

These were, we could say, the directives that the group decided to present to the Prefecture. In fact, at the group's request, my report was discussed before delivery since at this moment it had become a political document. So copies were made and reading and discussion groups were organized over the space of two days. It was discussed chapter by chapter and I forwarded to the Prefecture what had been approved in the meetings. For me it was a striking experience.

Q: Did the proposal not receive any form of continuation within the DPH?

A: No, but these ideas were useful for projects implemented by the group elsewhere. They moved to the front of São Miguel Market, which has a reasonable space on the sidewalk, they performed in other neighbourhoods, at the neighbourhood associations, at unions, at São Miguel Church, at the Morumbi Stadium (when they were invited to take part in a welcome ceremony for the Pope). So they continued to work in line with these conceptions, only in other places.

Q: My question is intended to help clarify the earlier one. You had the proposal and you had a document produced by the local population. Did you send it to some government body for it to be implemented? And what was their reply? Why wasn't it implemented? Did they explain why the Chapel wasn't put into use?

A: I think this is to do with the place occupied by the building in the city's political-administrative space. It's a very difficult Chapel. In fact this was not the first proposal made to revitalize the building. There were others, various proposals and intentions. But it involves a tricky convergence between the municipal administration, the Church, which owns the Chapel, and the residents of a district with whom communication is very difficult, since it involves precisely the exclusion experienced by them and which

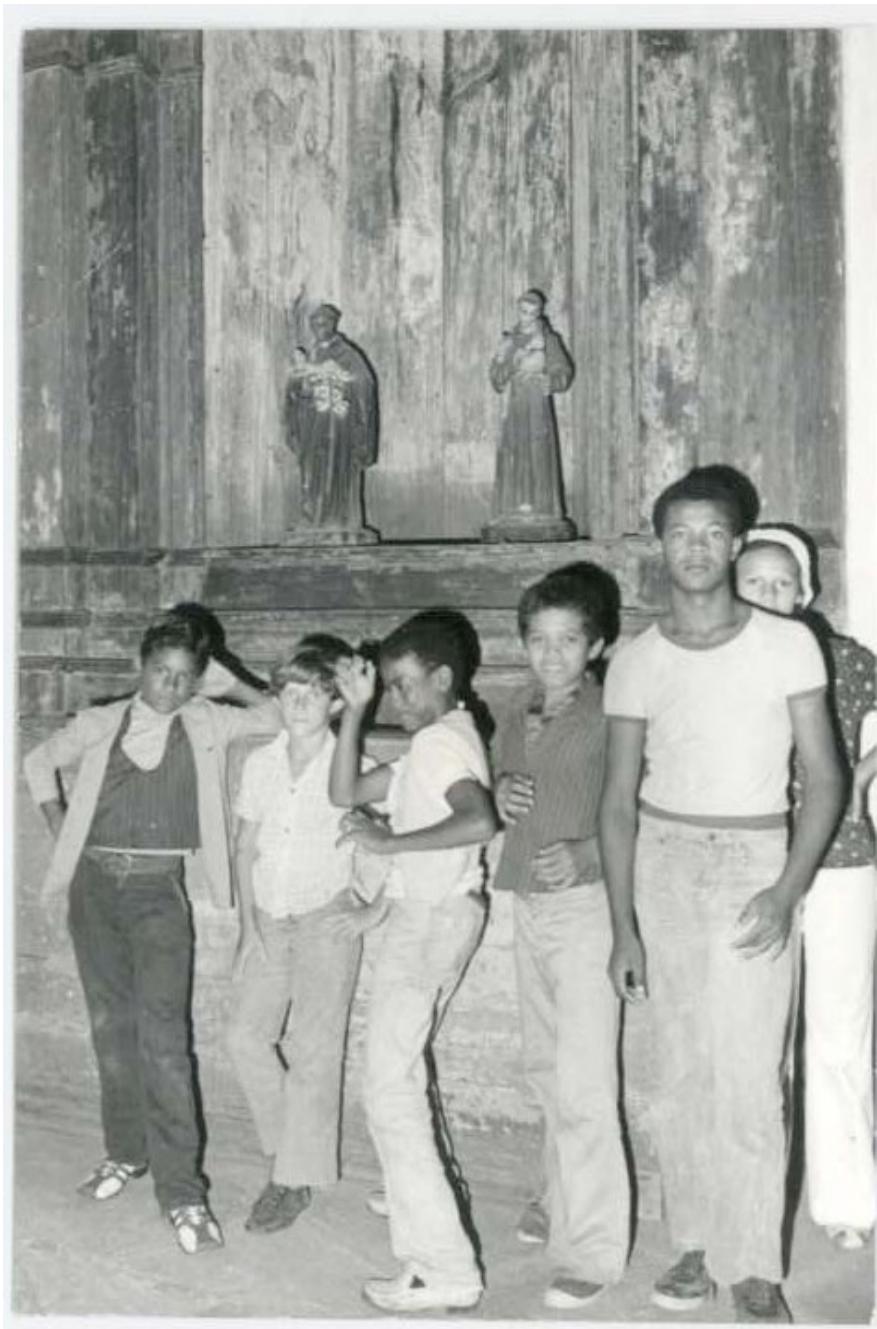


is inscribed in the history of the square, as everyone knows and recounts. Dialogue has become practically impossible. This is why I said that we experienced a ritual of inversion during this month spent occupying the central space of the district, a space of wealth and privilege, so to speak. It is a bit like “the slave quarters invading the manor house.” From the political viewpoint, it requires a very long process for this to happen and the obstacles are more or less of this kind. I don’t think there are good guys and bad guys in the story, but there is an enormous structural difficulty surrounding the São Miguel Paulista Chapel, which arises from the fact that it is, in a way, completely out of place. Were it in an upper class district like Morumbi, for example, there would be far fewer problems in terms of its revitalization. That’s what I mean.

Q: I think that you managed to develop a research project with some autonomy from the public authorities, though indirectly linked to the DPH and other bodies. Now that we, or you, are working within a State apparatus, how would you see this type of experience, given that the decision was taken to avoid any interference from the State or from other figures who could encroach on local production, or on the specific production of São Miguel Paulista?

A: In my view, this project is dated. There is no question of reheating and implanting it. However there do exist some conceptions that have lasted and today are found on the side of power. And how is it being done, what is being done now? I think we are trying to face this question concretely in the case of Iporanga,⁸ which in some ways is very similar to São Miguel Paulista. There we find, on one hand, a city opposed to preservation, for various reasons, where preservation is taken as a form of constraint, a strait-jacket, a sham. And on the other hand, our conception that it is our duty to preserve the city, insofar as it involves listed buildings. It is listed historical centre, considered of regional and national interest, and we have to respond to this interest. However we intend to highlight the question of preservation, the relation between preservation listing and use: use by the owner and use by the people who lives in the preserved site. I think that, structurally speaking,

⁸ I refer to the challenges posed for reconciling the need to shelter the homeless population and the recuperation of a cluster of 69 wattle-and-daub buildings listed by CONDEPHAAT that had recently been severely damaged by rains and the flooding of the Iporanga River. This urban centre was originally a mining hamlet formed in the 17th and 18th centuries.





preservation falls in this gap between listing, protection and use. So you have to work within this tension. It is an intellectually interesting challenge. And politically, can one deal with it?

Q: I wanted to ask a question which is perhaps a bit specific and academic. Did the group's process of reappropriating the Chapel not allow – beyond all those cultural manifestations that form the everyday life of this community – some other connection to be established with the listed building, one that can be traced back to its origin? I think this question is interesting because situations like that of São Miguel are in some ways clearly marked. They must stay in the memory, transforming and acquiring another meaning that, perhaps, is revealed even in the fear that you mentioned some people had of entering the chapel because Indians were buried there... And again I would say that these locations are clearly marked, citing the example of Carapicuíba⁹ where there is a very lively artistic manifestation that refers back to its origin in the dance of Santa Cruz.

A: Yes, people spoke a lot about the festivals once held on the Largo da Igreja [the churchyard], the festival of Santa Cruz especially. Some people had taken part in these festivals and recalled them. I focused quite a bit on

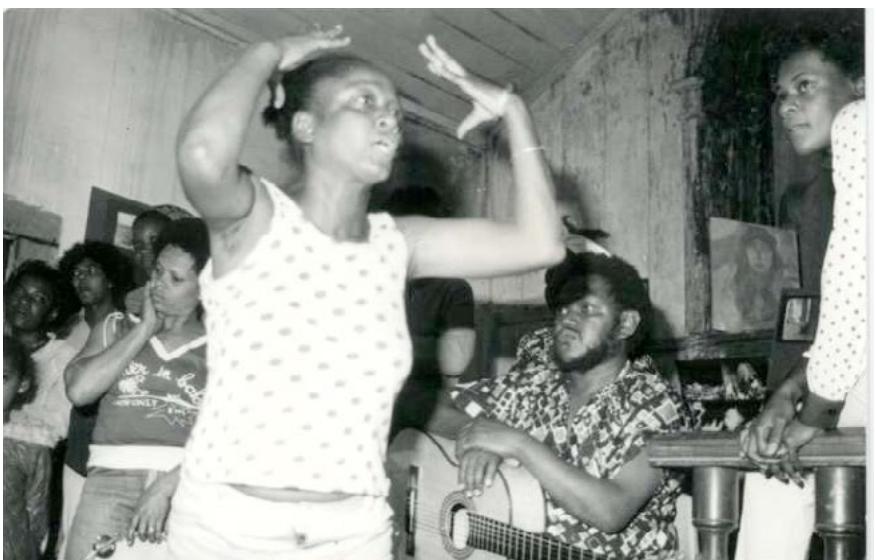
⁹ An architectural complex formed by the Jesuit village formed at the end of the 17th century to confine an indigenous population. Listed by IPHAN and CONDEPHAAT.



this question because in their view – and I agree – the problem was that the festivals had turned into shows. Like the square, the festivals were gradually isolated, separated from the life of the neighbourhood. Much was said about them, though. And they returned during the course of our activities – obviously reworked over the month – specifically in terms of the distribution of food. Someone always turned up with buns or coffee – this idea of commensality between the participants of ritual celebrations – this became recuperated during the program, though obviously on the scale of the occupation that we were involved in, only very weakly. A *reisado* dance was also brought in. People knew that an old man who works in a crèche had an Alagoan *reisado* group with which he would regularly perform. They went there... and invited the *reisado*. They went to fetch the *reisado*, they went to fetch their traditions, so to speak, such as they were able to reconstitute them. It is worth mentioning that the following year the neighbourhood's samba school chose 'São Miguel de Ururaí' as its storyline, a nativist theme on the origin of São Miguel.

This work, in fact, posed a number of questions and dug up some of the site's origins as well as this question of the earliest foundations of São Miguel Paulista, which was the theme of the samba school, there is the origin of the migrants. We received the proposal to put on five or six theatre plays on the migrants, how they arrived and so on, why the district has so many residents who migrated there relatively recently. So this question of origins was touched on during the occupation of the Chapel.

Q: I wanted to ask about this reutilization of the chapel for purposes other than religious. You said that it was transformed and that there is a structural relation between the stage and the altar, the vestry and the dressing room: the space can be reutilized because there is a common structure that enables this to be done. I think this idea is interesting that a space can have multiple uses and, in the end, it is the community and the use that confer this meaning; confer it, but not in a random way. There is a structural base that allows this or that use to be given. Now, if this use that was given, a more cultural use, the cultural activities of the community itself, in a way, did your proposal not contain a kind of cultural agitprop? Was the population not persuaded to attribute this use? Where did the religious use go, so to speak? Was it not possible to perceive through the research whether there had been a conflict or not? Because there is a conflict, in fact, to



decide what the final use of the building will be. Did the need for some kind of religious use not surface?

A: It surfaced, yes. I think, though, that these activities are not mutually exclusive. Not all non-religious activities harm the sacredness of the temple equally. One serious transgression, however, was the use of the drum in the church. The dances to drums in the church were considered forms of desecration... Apart from this, there was an immense degree of acceptance for the proposed use. It was not a problem because the idea was not to transform the church into a dance hall, but into a workshop – work that would be mostly shown outside the church. The idea was not to centralize everything inside the church. In the report I even transcribed comments from people who came to the church during the program, such as the following: “*To be honest, I would prefer that this location were used for its original purpose, that is, for religion, or for [registering] the past of these districts.*” To return to your question, a very strong proposal would be to form a research centre on the neighbourhood’s history – an oral history – on memory of the district. Going back to the comments recorded in the visitors’ book: “*...for religion, for the past of these districts, São Miguel, Itaquera, Guaianazes. But it is better it is used for the arts than remaining closed.*” Or again: “*I thought this exhibition was very good and used the chance to get to know the church that, though it may not seem like it, I have wanted to see for the past three years. It was really good indeed, those pictures, photos, and especially the poetry, since they don’t just teach us things, they show us a bit about ourselves*”; “*I thought it was cool, interesting*”; “*I liked it a lot because I was able to relax with my friends.*” People became involved because it was a place for meeting, relaxing and chatting.

Q: I can see that the physical space of the church is similar to the space of the theatre. I wanted to know if the project was concerned to make this similarity explicit.

A: No. The space in question is a church, a sacred space, a temple; but on the other hand it has the structural possibility of being explored as a theatre space. This latent possibility to a certain extent shaped its use. The first proposal, which I think is the most obvious one, was the transformation of the church’s space, the altar and nave, into a stage and audience area. This was modified over time as the group, from the outset, was concerned not to limit activities to the inner area of the church, but to develop them in the square too. Their objective was the square itself, the church for them is part



of the square. And there was more flexibility. The final proposal was for the church to be minimally equipped to be able to function as a workplace for the groups, which was a shift away from the original idea of occupying the church as a theatre. This is more dynamic.

Q: At any rate, if we return to the origins of the space – and I think this is very interesting – the *terreiro*, which is the most suitable name for the churchyard since it was a Jesuit *terreiro*, also had this role originally. Catechism was much more effective with an open space and the liturgy transformed into a dance with the indigenous peoples, rather than taking place inside the church. Some say that one dance was worth more than three hours of talk from Father Vieira.

A: That's true.

Q: The indigenous dance is performed in front of the church.

A: On this point, to be fair, one of the reforms made in the square that deserves highlighting is precisely the recuperation of the space of the *terreiro*, the churchyard, because it really allows the reconstitution of this original view of the whole. Now it just needs a complementary measure, diverting the traffic.

Q: Another thing occurred to me during this debate, after your talk: a building closed for a long time, but where attention remains concentrated, is never really uninhabited since the imagination ends up populating the place with a series of buried indigenous spirits, with ghosts. This building just became inhabited in another form. And, in some ways, this ends up creating a distance between the community and the building. To some extent it becomes seen as an object from a mythic universe. As the chapel becomes occupied, this provokes a dilution of these meanings created over time. My question is: were these elements evaluated in your work?

A: It amounts to an interference, for sure, an intervention. I agree that an activity like this creates new meanings for the space, changes its representations. People who associated the building with a mystery from the past, which is a value that should be preserved, were able to live in the space, enter it, look from the altar, open the vestry door and peer inside, touch the things there. This changes the relation. Moreover, if you propose a use different from the one originally intended for the building, the distance becomes even greater. But this isn't inevitable, because sometimes a building continues to be used for a purpose similar to the original... I am thinking, for example,

of those English constructions, the colleges, buildings constructed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which are still used today as schools. And that's interesting, because you live among the bats, the ghosts, stories are told about them, people visit the attics; everything is mysterious, but forms part of the history and, in some form, the present reality.

Q: It is integrated...

A: It is integrated with your life. The problem I see in relation to São Miguel is that it amounts to a segregated mystery: a mystery and a prohibition. People are not allowed to live with the mystery. In this sense I read the proposed use as a transgression: people really penetrated a prohibited space. As well as being mystery, it's prohibited.

Q: So some of the meaning attributed to the group's action in relation to the chapel leaks into other prohibitions. It begins to acquire a strong symbolic aspect.

A: Exactly, it disturbs the notion of a mystery associated with the past. Perhaps this is why this huge interest emerged concerning São Miguel's history, which was not only a theme of a samba school storyline, but also provoked a very large interest in forming a research centre on the history of São Miguel, on the history of its immigrant population..

Q: I find these aspects interesting, usually they are not taken into account, this sensation of mystery, these other inhabitants of the building. This I find extremely rich.

A: Yes. The silence, the emptiness, the need to fill everything in. The need to maintain the silence, the emptiness, the mystery, is not taken much into consideration. It is as though everything had to be filled in, unveiled.

Q: I wanted to return a bit to the research, when you talk about those more formal associations, the Lions, Rotary Clubs and so on. What happened in terms of the involvement of these groups? Did they dispute the use of the chapel too? How did the issue of the local leaders and the movement turn out?

A: They were disappointed because they wanted to appear at the big inauguration, which never took place. They exhibited some works and stayed there the whole time. But they did not keep up with the pace of the work, they were left behind.

Q: The movement itself, the process itself to some extent pushed them away...





A: It went in another direction and it became clear that it was difficult to share. In other words, the accent shifted, but they took part anyway, they exhibited works, appeared a number of times.

Q: But in the sense of manipulating this work politically, capitalizing on this movement, were there no problems in relation to these associations?

A: My impression is that the difficulty of continuing the group's work was not due to this factor, no. I think the problem was more the conflict generated between the movement, the bishop and the prefecture (Arantes & Andrade, 1981). But I would like to add the following: there was a positive outcome for the group since these conflicts, which lasted more or less two years, considerably strengthened the group's identity, because, clearly, identity is always contrastive and the *alter* of the group ended up being precisely these institutions, the Church and the Prefecture. These disperse networks, which I cited at the start of my talk, ended up forming a movement, a political entity in the neighbourhood, an entity that for a while occupied the political setting of the neighbourhood and that knew how to maintain its distance from electoral manipulations.

However due to the difficulties of implanting the project in that district, the problems of establishing an effective space (they even rented a house on one occasion), the movement gradually fell apart. But during the process the

group clearly formed a social and political identity. And the group always maintained itself as a ‘front’ – this is also very interesting – the idea never crystallized that it would absorb all the groups in a single political entity. Perhaps this was due to the fact that its strength came precisely from its constitution as a front that combined facilities made available by various partners.: one found space in a parish hall, another in a neighbourhood theatre, someone else a room in union offices, and so on. This formed a pool of resources enabling a collective proposal to advance. But afterwards the political setting changed too. This was a very specific period, since the military dictatorship and its repressive apparatus were still in force. Much changed after the elections, even during the electoral process, and soon after.¹⁰ It changed a lot. I don’t know if the group would have been interested in maintaining this sort of outlook and organization.

Translated by David Rodgers

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¹⁰ The Constitutional Amendment that re-introduced direct elections for governors and senators was issued in 1980, inaugurating a pre-electoral period that culminated with the elections of November 15th 1982.

Building senses of “community”

Social Memory, Popular Movements and Political Participation

Ruth Cardoso

Abstract

This lecture followed by a debate concerns popular movements, in particular those which the author describes as libertarian, emerging in the city of São Paulo in the late 1970s and early 80s. It focuses on the building of memory, its relevance in creating a sense of identity and of community, and the issue of political participation. The latter was one of the mottos during the democratization of relations between society and the State in Brazil, following the years of military rule, as well as being a major challenge to the creation and development of cultural policies in the country and, among them, those relating to cultural heritage.

Keywords: social movements, community, political participation, memory, urban anthropology.

Resumo

Esta palestra seguida de debate se refere aos movimentos populares, em especial aos que a autora qualifica de libertários, emergentes na cidade de São Paulo no final dos anos 1970 e início dos 80. São focalizadas a construção da memória, sua importância para a formação de sentidos de identidade e de comunidade e a questão da participação política. Esta última foi uma das principais palavras de ordem na democratização das relações entre a sociedade e o estado no Brasil após o regime militar, e um desafio importante à criação e desenvolvimento de políticas culturais no país e, entre elas, as relativas ao patrimônio cultural.

Palavras-chave: movimentos sociais, comunidade, participação política, memória, antropologia urbana.

Building senses of “community”¹

Social Memory, Popular Movements and Political Participation

Ruth Cardoso

When reflecting on the demands that social movements have been making towards the preservation of cultural heritage, it is very important to consider that these movements have become so widespread and embedded, that nearly everyone feels the need to create a memory for themselves.

In political science literature, a sense of “novelty” stands out. There’s talk of new political players; that social movements compete with the parties even wanting to them. The participants in the movements disagree of course. This very new aspect of movements is always highlighted when analyzing their political role. It obviously exists and is relevant. But when we come into contact with people who participate in social movements, neighborhood groups or any type of localized movement, what we observe is a search for history, a past, a memory and often the fabrication of that past. This seems to be a phenomenon of fundamental importance. This is curious, since these people don’t necessarily identify themselves as participating in something new in society, but always in something which has its roots far in the past and which has reached the present after confronting many difficulties. They do this to justify their actions, and to establish a common ground and identity among themselves.

It is exactly this characteristic that I find interesting to discuss. But, prior to that, I feel the need to explain what I refer to as “social movements”. Social

¹ This lecture was performed during a seminar held by the experts of CONDEPHAAT – Council for the Preservation of Historic, Artistic, Archaeological and Touristic Heritage of the State of São Paulo, on June 28, 1983. Document available at CONDEPHAAT’s Documentation Center, transcribed from audio recording by Mada Penteado in 1983, edited for this publication by Claudia Cavalcanti and revised by Antonio A. Arantes.

movements are not organized; they do not have specific rules and a rigorous structure. Exactly for those reasons, they are known as “movements”. Social movements can refer to a great number of things, so I agree to use that denomination in its broadest sense.²

They began appearing in association with the movements of the 1960s, which were quite innovative in their forms of political participation and were not directed necessarily against the State; they identified the powers against which they fought elsewhere in society, not exactly in the State, and brought together people who shared a common experience of discrimination. Here I refer to the feminist movement, the black movement, the hippie movement, the ecological movement, born at different times, yet all of them, to a certain degree, arising from the political transformation that occurred in society, especially in the capitalist world, in the 1960s.

I believe that these movements had at least two common features which allow them to be known as such: a certain spontaneity (they were at least perceived as movements that were born spontaneously, created by or appearing from a decision of the people, due to a perception of discrimination, be it against women, against blacks, etc.) and, at the same time – this being their main feature –, they were egalitarian movements, that avoided organizational structures and hierarchical distinctions; all their members participated equally, all decisions were made collectively. Indeed, their main objective was to combat hierarchy.

This is exactly why these and other social movements emerged as an outlet for a new way of doing politics, avoiding the political parties that are tiered, structured organizations with clearly defined paths of representation. It is impossible to imagine a political party that doesn't use some sort of representative mechanism, such as the election of delegates, delegates who elect other delegates, and so forth.

One of the main topics of discussion in these movements then was to question hierarchical mechanisms of representation and to establish egalitarian participation. Even if they didn't do so explicitly, they did it in practice. They created operational methods which were considered communitarian. In fact, this word was, and still is, of great importance. I believe that, in a

² R. Cardoso's essays on the formation of political communities and popular movements were republished in Caldeira, 2011.

distant future, when someone decides to write about the political history of this period, they will be impressed with how often the word “community” is mentioned, with various different meanings. But certainly this word became so widespread exactly because it represented something very important. It went on to be used as a counterpoint to any form of organization which based itself on representation, thus sustaining a hierarchy. It represented a vision that, at last, egalitarian participation was possible.

This also unchained the discussion on participation. And what is political participation? It is this fight against hierarchy, based on the principle that where there are hierarchical mechanisms there are also mechanisms that exclude the people from participation; and where people hold equal positions, all issues can be discussed by everyone so as to produce an opinion created by a group as a whole— the so-called community. In other words, representative mechanisms were being criticized by this ideology which was basically started in the 1960s, and which was basic to these social movements.

The implicit question, therefore, was how to establish truly democratic relations between society and the State? How can this relationship be forged? “Participation” is simply a word to describe this: the relationship between society and the State; and there are different ways of participation, according to the different channels through which this relationship may organize itself. It was this relationship that was being called into question, in the search for a more democratic mechanism for this communication among society as a whole, which at this point was already extremely segmented and extremely complex and featured very intricate communication mechanisms.

In the face of all this complexity, held together by the mass media alone, society suddenly struggled to find its identity. Discussion began on the heterogeneity of society and possible relations with the state. That was when this theme of a greater democracy emerged, based on the concept of equal participation by all members of a movement and the perception of a common experience. And here we also see a telling difference when compared to traditional channels of participation. I cite the parties as an example, but it could be trade unions, and it could be all institutionalized channels, which are based on mechanisms of representation.

The idea of a political party, for example, is that people agree on some key elements of their viewpoint on society that, generally, are expressed through a platform. The parties’ platforms are not always the same; the way they

carry out these platforms is not the same. Therefore, a party expresses a vision of society and people agree or disagree. The party doesn't care who they are, whether they are white or yellow, young or old, women or men. These segments are not included in this definition, at least not when related to affiliation to a party, or a trade union, or a professional organization.... If I'm a lawyer, I can belong to the Bar Association, and the Bar Association can represent me before the state, regardless of any other characteristics I may have. I am there merely as a lawyer or as a unionized worker, and so on.

In social movements, it doesn't work that way. People are there as people, in their full capacity, as participants of these movements. The very idea of the movement is that there is a common experience that must be shared. Thus, a women's movement is a movement that brings women together. It may include a few men who are sympathetic but, the truth is that no matter how much a man can contribute and fully support the feminist movement, his participation in this movement will never be equal to that of women. Why? Because they have experienced a type of discrimination that is exalted due to the fact that they lived through it firsthand. It is not an experience which can be fully understood by those who have not lived through it. Supposedly, men can rationally understand that women are discriminated against, but the movement's ideology is based on the experience of this discrimination, rather than the rational acceptance of it.

The same is true with the black movement. Although there are whites who support the black movements, they are nonetheless discriminated by this movement. They will always be supporting elements, and at some point they will be reminded that they did not live through the definitive experiences which would cause someone to "buy into" the movement entirely.

I mentioned the two most obvious examples, women and blacks, which are based on visible biological and physical characteristics and, therefore, are easier to identify. But, when there are not such clear markers of difference, these movements create elements that imply and celebrate a common experience. That is why they are alternative. They always assume that they have a life experience that is of another nature, and that one must, in fact, have to go through this rite of passage, to have certain experiences in order to be regarded as a true member of these movements.

Take, for example, the hippie movement in the United States, and we'll see that the mix between the hippie movement and drug use created the

possibility of a highly celebrated and shared experience. This created a great political sense of direction, joining together different groups and distinct forms of activity. Of course, not all hippies were necessarily have to be users of the same drugs, but the shared experience of illegality, of the drug “buzz”, etc., was celebrated and considered a key element, since they were at the basis of society’s rejection,.

When we think of current-day Brazil, what comes to mind are not these movements, although they also exist. Here, when we talk about social movements – or at least in the opinion of sociologists and political scientists who discuss social movements –, we are referring more to the neighborhood groups, which make direct claims on the State.

I always like to draw a parallel between two things, which are sometimes artificially separated: movements which demand some type of action are seen as essentially political and positive, since they belong to the lower classes, and those other movements to which I referred, which are interpreted as interclass movements, a “middle-class thing”, something that we should be wary of.

I think it’s time for us to start looking at what similarities, if any, these movements present, and find the relevant aspects of these similarities, which I believe exist. I don’t mean that they are the same thing, but I think there are several similarities, which in their organizational modes, in the concept of basic equality for all its members. They share the spontaneity arising not from top down decision-making but from the bottom up. The language we use frequently suggests such ideas are born spontaneously, when people suddenly realize that they share certain experiences and situations.

And what are these shared situations for the popular movements that demand action from the State here in Brazil? The fact is that they have been deprived of something: neighborhoods on the outskirts of São Paulo are not connected to the citywater and sewer system, they lack schools, and their population is systematically discriminated against. And so, it’s exactly this language, which talks about these neighborhoods in a uniform way that creates this kind of “community”, fruit of the creation of ideological mechanisms. Here, I don’t mean to use “ideological” in a critical way, nor do I mean to say that it mystifies anything. There is no mystification. It results from this form of organization, a set of ideas that guide action without mystifying anything; on the contrary, they contribute to social action.

This ideology, forged as such, promotes equality between people, even when this equality is not effectively present. When we look at a neighborhood association, we often find people of quite different social and economic backgrounds, a much more diverse mix than we could probably find within a trade union, for instance. However, this diversity is often overlooked. It is systematically forgotten. Let us contemplate this ideology, which considers everyone to be equal. Although one is the owner of the bakery and the other is from a family living on minimum wage – it is clear that the level of income and consumption are quite different –, in fact they are equals because they are both residents of a low-income neighborhood, where everyone experiences the hardship of dealing with inadequate transportation, schooling, etc.

Of course they face quite different realities within that experience, but the fact that they face the very same challenges in their daily routines is greatly emphasized. This fact overshadows the differences, not because the differences cease to exist – obviously, the difference between minimum wage and five times the minimum wages is real and will continue to exist forever. But there is a way to work around this issue: emphasizing the common element of their life experiences. And that is why one can build a political player – neighborhood associations, church groups or whatever shape this organization takes – which can act as one. A common real experience, something that people have actually lived through is not an abstract identity. It is an identity that is always forged out of a specific discrimination and something that is considered to be an injustice; it brings people together and leaves aside the elements would normally drive them apart.

I believe that these features are common among the libertarian movements, interclass movements – such as women's and afro-descendant movements – and the popular movements that we see in the outskirts of our cities. These are the common features which authenticate a sense of community. All these people always speak on behalf of the community, always feel like a community and prevent, in many ways, the establishment of hierarchical distinctions. I'm not saying that their structure lacks authority, or that these groups don't have effective leaders guiding and/or shaping opinion. Of course that can still happen, but the shaping of opinions can happen in a variety of ways. It can happen within the hierarchical systems as well as with the egalitarian and democratic ones. It is possible to be very authoritative when working as a community, and this is what sometimes happens.

But that is not the issue. What I'm trying to do here is to highlight the fact that everyone is in the same boat, sharing a common experience, and therefore, everyone gives their opinion, and the group decides on how to act by consensus (there is always the need to create a consensus). And this is not always easy. This is exactly why in all these groups, both in the movements that I call libertarian (the black movement, against racism; the women's movement, against women's discrimination, etc.), as in the popular movements, the frequency of breakaway groups, splits and the emergence of new groups is quite high. If they reproduce through fission resulting in a multiplication of groups that at times compete against each other, only to join forces again later... Such schisms usually occur as a result of a breakdown of consensus and competition for leadership. Rupture usually takes place when one of the parties is excluded and when part of the group stops going to meetings, does not show up, or forms another group. It seems to me that this is a structural mechanism behind the expansion of all of these types of social movements. And that's why I think that comparing the actions of these movements with the actions of political parties and trade unions, is such a difficult task, since they are structured in different ways, and perform distinct roles within the political system. One could probably never replace the other. The idea of joining both is also extremely complicated, since the operating rules on either side are different and incompatible. In my opinion, they will feed on each other, but remain relatively isolated.

I'd like to expand a little on what I call community when I talk of social movements. It is based on the concept of shared experience. This is a basic element of all definitions of community: that people feel a part of it and share a sense of community, of being equals, giving and taking. It also implies collective action. People who have this sense of participation in the community are those who can make things happen, and they make it happen together. Without this, there is no community. So community does not only exist in people's minds. In fact, it's about action, whether demanding change in policy, denouncing discrimination, or simply enjoying doing things together, whether they be meetings of leisure activities,

It seems to me that the feeling of belonging together with purposeful activities is exactly what we refer to as its identity. These communities create a particular identity for their members and, as they begin to act as a group, they acquire a significant need to create mechanisms which strengthen that

identity and provide the evidence on which to anchor the idea of an identity that until recently did not exist.

And therein lies our question, as in nearly all cases groups construct stories that are often imaginary, mythical.

Nearly all social movements are such as those in the outskirts of São Paulo, where small groups end up demonstrating a keen interest in local history, in everything that surrounds the history of their neighborhood, celebrating the common experience of living in a particular place. When talking to them, they often tell us: "This was a jungle when I first came here". They claim that it was they would bring civilization to these places. They tell the tale of moving to this jungle, and how there was nothing there – just animals, snakes; they had to walk three hours to cross the river to catch a bus; and all of a sudden, these things were improving, partly due to their own doing, through their domesticating the environment.

In point of fact, these memories are largely inventions. But I believe that we shouldn't worry so much about that; instead we should try to understand why there is a need for such inventions. Certainly they are based on some facts, but the facts don't really matter, because we don't even know if the documented history is real. This element is the least relevant of all. The most important thing is to understand that memory creates identity, and that memory is essential to these forms of organization. But this process is not limited to the local level. For other movements, which are the movements that join people of different social classes, there is also a very similar process of trying to rescue the past. It's worth remembering, for example, that a large part of what was written during the feminist movement was the recovery of a history seen from the point of view of women, placing a greater value on women's role. Little-known heroines are re-discovered, taken to new heights, placed in a different context – sometimes in contexts which are widely questionable – women who actually played more masculine than feminine roles in order to gain past notoriety, are rediscovered as examples, as female role models. It would be practically useless, in my opinion, to discuss whether a supposedly 19th-century heroine does or doesn't show the qualities the feminist movement wishes to exalt – and the same could be applied to rediscovering the past from the point of view of the slaves or blacks, and so on. The important thing is this need to rediscover this past. The important thing is the ability to organize some facts which are more or less unrelated, and which depend on

how we connect them; how we build something to substantiate our identity.

It is this need to express this identity that seems relevant to me. One of the most entertaining accounts of this process was reported by [Manuel] Castells. While working in Spain with local urban social movements, he noticed that a housing project built by the local BNV on the outskirts of Madrid had been built over an ancient Spanish village, which apparently had disappeared around the 18th century, giving way to an industrial area, among other things. A residents' movement grew to demand a number of urban improvements. What happened, all of a sudden, was that people started to develop their identity mechanisms. They obviously had nothing to do with each other; they had been chosen for this housing project through their social characteristics as defined by governmental data. In their effort build their identity as a movement, they decided that there should be some type of festive activity and that it should have something to do with the place. They accordingly went to the public library in Madrid to research the type of festivities that took place in the ancient village over which the project was built. And they recovered and recreated these festivities, of course with modern aspects, since explicit documentation of the ancient festivities no longer existed. That is, they invented a new folklore and to this day they continue to celebrate their festivals.

We see this happening in São Paulo. The younger generation doesn't realize that many of the festivals celebrated today were not celebrated ten years ago and even less so when you go back twenty years. The newspapers talk about the San Genaro festival, Our Lady of Achiropita festival, and so on. I'm not saying those festivals didn't exist; they existed in the past, ceased to exist a long time ago and are today part of a memory that is being rediscovered from a distant past. I think this is a process that we should watch very closely. It would be quite interesting to think a little more about this process, and to do so not by focusing on whether such festivities they are accurate from a historical point of view, but learning more about their current meaning.

That, of course, does not mean that we should not take into consideration where the movement's members come from and how they organize. But that is not fundamental in defining them. The key is that these processes are a form of identity creation and that, with these fairs, festivals and even with the preservation of certain folk dances and so forth; they are creating a political identity, which is based on a common experience and which increases the

likelihood of collective action. In addition to the experience of being poor, having inadequate transportation and education services, they can also refer to other levels of experience, such as leisure, documenting history, or the preservation of some elements of the space where the community is settled. It is clear that this provides much greater material evidence of this sense of community, and I believe that this is a basic idea for the development of all these forms of organization.

What I'm trying to say with all this is that, when I mention the word community as a basic element in the definition of these social movements, I am not using the scientific concept of community (which certainly does not apply), but the idea that the people who participate in the movements want to express. In other words, I mean the idea that they all share a common experience that is the basis for collective action, which is political in nature. This political action is not in lieu of other forms of political action which take place in society; I believe that it is an important complement. Therefore, everything that we can identify as elements that consolidate and materialize the idea of community, and of something shared by all, is essential for maintaining the necessary conditions for organization and political efficacy.

Translated by Bureau Translations and revised by Peter Fry

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Anthropology and Cultural Heritage

Gilberto Velho

Abstract

The author argues that anthropology can help define a much broader, richer and culturally more diverse concept of heritage. He advocates for a more democratic and pluralist State policy that takes into account the diversity and complexity of Brazilian society, valuing traditions, symbolic systems and cultural manifestations from all sectors. The preservation of the Terreiro de Candomblé Casa Branca, in Salvador, Bahia, is presented as an example of recognizing the legitimacy of a tradition that was until recently subject to discrimination and persecutions. The author argues that this broadening of the concept of cultural heritage is crucial to the constitution of a Brazilian society that values democracy, human rights, citizenship and its own memory as a nation.

Keywords: cultural heritage, anthropology, preservation, policy, diversity.

Resumo

O autor argumenta que a antropologia pode contribuir para a definição de um conceito de patrimônio mais amplo, rico e diversificado culturalmente. Defende uma política de Estado mais democrática e pluralista, que leve em conta a diversidade e a complexidade da sociedade brasileira, valorizando tradições, sistemas simbólicos e manifestações culturais de todos os segmentos sociais. O tombamento do Terreiro de Candomblé Casa Branca, em Salvador, Bahia, é apresentado como um exemplo do reconhecimento e da legitimidade de uma tradição que já foi objeto de discriminação e perseguições. O autor defende que esta ampliação do conceito de patrimônio cultural é crucial para a constituição de uma sociedade brasileira que valorize a democracia, os direitos humanos, a cidadania e a sua própria memória como nação.

Palavras-chave: patrimônio cultural, antropologia, tombamento, política, diversidade.

Anthropology and Cultural Heritage¹

Gilberto Velho

*Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.*

T.S. ELLIOT

The issues surrounding the preservation of Brazil's heritage have led to a growing involvement of anthropologists in discussions and decisions that until very recently were the domain of architects and lawyers. Although the work to protect the country's historical heritage has included a broadly anthropological concern from the outset, today the development of Anthropology on one hand and the amplification of the concerns with cultural heritage on the other means that the more specialized knowledge of the professional anthropologist is needed. This new situation should be seen as positive, so long as we also strive to avoid dogmatisms and any corporativist sectarianism.

As we know, anthropology has many schools and diverse theoretical approaches, meaning there is no single 'anthropological formula' capable of responding to the issue of cultural heritage. I would argue, though, that anthropological thought as a whole involves a *relativizing perspective*, which allows us to think through a number of questions that, while not new, have become more pressing. A modern, complex and heterogeneous society like Brazil's is characterized by the more or less harmonious coexistence of different traditions and worldviews.² The observation of differences, diversity and sometimes contradictions does not imply being oblivious to the existence of a more encompassing sociocultural system linked to the very idea of *nation*.

¹ Originally published as "Antropologia e patrimônio cultural". *Revista do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional*, n. 20, 1984, pp.37-39.

² See Velho and Viveiros de Castro, 1978.

In this sense, a State cultural policy that aims to be more democratic and pluralist must adequately take into account the question of diversity. This is not an easy or immediately resolvable task. Traditions legitimized by the elites tend to dominate and these are unlikely to face serious polemics or doubts. But the problems become more complex when we turn to the customs and values of groups and sectors occupying subordinate and hierarchically inferior positions in society. The channels of communication themselves are precarious, and the meaning of certain demands and how to make them compatible with official policy often far from clear. It is here that the anthropologist's work and experience can be fundamental. The anthropological tradition has developed largely from a continual experience of *dealing with the other*, while perceiving the fragmentation that can exist in apparently monolithic units. This permanent interplay of estrangement and relativization³ may be a fertile path for capturing the symbolic importance of manifestations that do not automatically fit into the formulas existing today to protect the nation's cultural heritage.

One of the main, albeit not exclusive, focal points of anthropological work has been to investigate groups located on the margins of official history and the dominant culture. Very often their beliefs and values are transmitted through oral traditions. Dates may be imprecise and documentation slight or even non-existent. These are also groups with their own identity, marked by symbolic systems often inaccessible to the traditional elites. The task, therefore, is to interpret the meaning of rituals, sites, etc. within their specific contexts. This was precisely what enabled the recent preservation of the Terreiro de Candomblé Casa Branca, a famous candomblé temple in Salvador, Bahia.⁴ It was without doubt a rich and fascinating situation given the site's huge importance and significance for vast sections of Brazilian society and the fact it found itself under threat. The decision to list the temple implies recognition of the legitimacy of both a cultural tradition and a system of values that until relatively recently were subject to discrimination and sometimes persecutions. As a result of this initiative, Brazilian society is recognized to be much richer and more culturally diverse than the image afforded by a more traditional view of *heritage*.

³ See DaMatta, 1978 and Velho, 1978.

⁴ See "Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká – Casa Branca Temple" in the present edition.

Undoubtedly the key issue remains of whether official preservation orders are always the best way of dealing with cultural facts and phenomena in which past and present remain indissociable. It is essential for us to understand how different social groups perceive and represent what we define as heritage. This requires valuing a particular kind of qualitative research typical of the anthropological tradition, *participant observation*. Only such an approach enables us to capture the complexity of the singular features of specific groups, local and regional history, less privileged groups and traditions and worldviews more distant from the frameworks that have tended to guide most cultural policy decisions. On the other hand we need to avoid, at all costs, falling into a facile and demagogic populism, lacking criteria and frameworks discussed and elaborated through a systematic and interdisciplinary process of reflection.

It is not a question, therefore, of rejecting or disqualifying those aspects of cultural heritage that have thus far received greater attention from government agencies. But in the spirit of Mário de Andrade and other pioneers, this work needs to be amplified, allowing the Brazilian nation to recognize its own complexity. This is a process of research and debate that necessarily implicates different actors. At a time when the importance of civil society has come to the fore, we need to recognize it in all its diversity and density.

As bearers of specialized knowledge, anthropologists, like architects, lawyers, should not be mere mechanical spokespeople for the groups they study, nor should they relinquish their expertise, the outcome of study and experience, that in the long-term can be used in benefit of the same groups. Their role is to engage in an interpretative enterprise, working to make bridges between the different codes and value systems existing in a complex modern society.

At the same time, there is no hiding the fact that every cultural policy is inserted within a field of power, complete with interests, factions and often conflicts. But in recognizing this fact, we must avoid any sociologizing fatalism that could prevent us from transcending the immediatism of present circumstances. A long-term cultural policy that rises above our everyday disputes can only be achieved through an effective *policy of knowledge*, implying both research and reflection. Anthropology tells us that learning about cultural systems and beliefs is a laborious process demanding time and effort. When turning to the study of our own society, looking to make decisions

about our own cultural heritage, this care must be redoubled. Brazilian society, as has been amply proclaimed and attested, is constituted by groups widely differentiated in terms of their origin, trajectory and position in the social hierarchy, as well as significant local and regional differences. Where and how these different traditions and experiences meet is a polemical topic. Discontinuity may or may not signify conflict and shared participation in certain beliefs and values does not necessarily express harmony. The more or less tense coexistence of different perceptions of reality forces us to develop more sophisticated methods to account for the complexity of the cultural facts that envelop and constitute us.

Avoiding dogmatism or any claim to omnipotency and omniscience, anthropologists need to assume responsibility for implementing a policy designed to encompass the specific natures of the different identities of the diverse social groups making up national society. These identities are associated with worldviews whose singularity means that they may differ radically from the universe of values and knowledge inhabited by the elites, including scientists and researchers.

This observation, however, does not mean we are condemning to crystallize differences and valorize a cultural monadism. Remaining on the terrain of religion, for example, recognizing the specific ethos of candomblé, umbanda or Kardecist spiritism does not prevent us from perceiving the cultural continuities between these systems, or with popular Catholicism itself.

The anthropologist, though recognizing and calling attention to the specificities of distinct groups, is not unaware of their coexistence within the nation and the reality of the State and its implementation of policies and decisions.

For anthropologists, *culture* is a useful notion for conceptualizing heritage insofar as it allows us to account for the complex relations between what remains and what changes. As in the verse of Elliot cited at the beginning, past, present and future are subtly and intensely interconnected. In the realm of the cultural arbitrary, we need to stay attentive to these nuances.

By rekindling the debate on cultural heritage, we must be prepared for potential revisions to the legislation that allow support and protection without lapsing into inertia and paralysis. On the other hand, we need to engage in a reading of the existing legislation that facilitates and expedites our goals rather than inhibiting and confining them.

Expanding the concept of cultural heritage itself, as well as enriching and flexibilizing the means and instruments at our disposal, form part of a broader long-term project for democratizing Brazilian society. At issue is the notion of citizenship, the question of human rights, and, inevitably, the fundamental question of a nation's memory.

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Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká

Casa Branca Temple

This monument was inscribed in the Books of Designated Historical Heritage [Livros de Tombo] of the Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage on August 14, 1986. The temple is located at Vasco da Gama Avenue, Engenho Velho, Salvador, Bahia. The designation includes the total area of the temple measuring approximately 6,800 square meters, buildings, trees and sacred objects. Inscription Number in the Book of Designated Historical Heritage [Livro do Tombo Histórico]: 504 (Vol.1. F. 092). Inscription Number in Designated Ethnographical, Archeological and Landscape Heritage [Livro do Tombo Etnográfico, Arqueológico e Paisagístico]: 093 (Vol. 1, F. 043).

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¹ Vibrant thanks the kind and efficient cooperation of the COPEDOC researchers in preparing this presentation.



Central Pillar topped by the Crown of Xangô. Photo: Orlando Ribeiro, 1984.



Portrait of Ursulina Maria de Figueiredo
(Auntie Sussu). Reproduction: Antonio
Augusto Fontes.

ESTADO: BAHIA
MUNICÍPIO: SALVADOR
LOCALIDADE: ENGENHO VELHO
MONUMENTO: CASA: VASCO DA GAMA (AV.)
TERREIRO DA CASA BRANCA.

F. 105.632

URSULINA MARIA DE FIGUEIREDO, TIA SUSSU, QUARTA IYALORIXÁ
DO TERREIRO DA CASA BRANCA, NO PERÍODO DE 1890 A 1926



Ursulina Maria de Figueiredo
Tia Sussu

Reprodução. Ursulina Maria de Figueiredo (tia Sussu).
333.

Inscription on the reverse side of the portrait
on the previous page.

Ursulina Maria de Figueiredo, Auntie Sussu,
fourth Iyalorixá [priestess] of the Casa Branca
Temple from 1890 to 1926. Project MAMNBA,
July 3, 1981, photo 33, film 3, neg.33. Division of
Registration and Documentation, SPHAN.

Reproduction: Antonio Augusto Fontes, n.d.



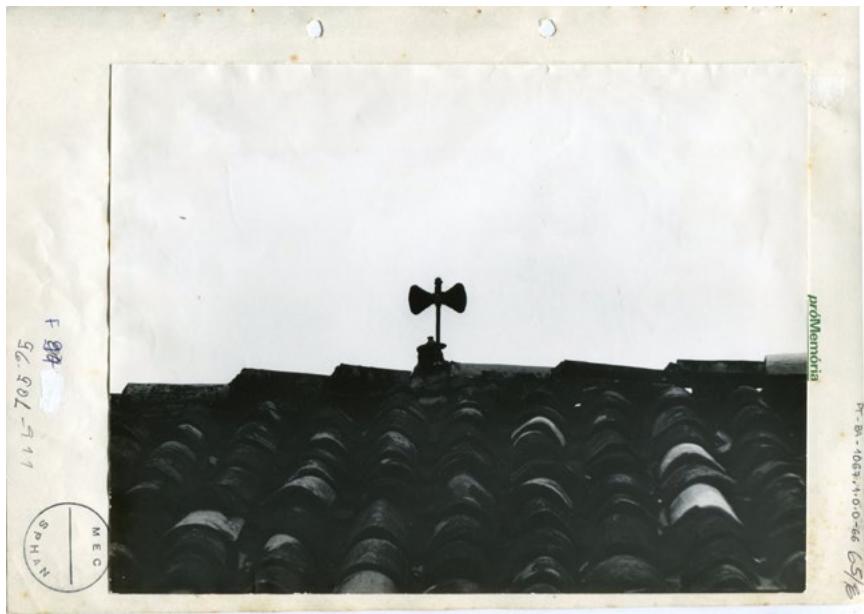
Staircase at the entrance to the Temple of Oxé with the Alá, placed there for the festival in honor of Oxalá. On the right, part of the boat and fountain of Oxum and above, the jackfruit tree and the Ilê [house] of Exú. To the left, part of the house of the President of the Beneficent and Recreation Society of Saint George of Engenho Velho. Unknown photographer, 1981.



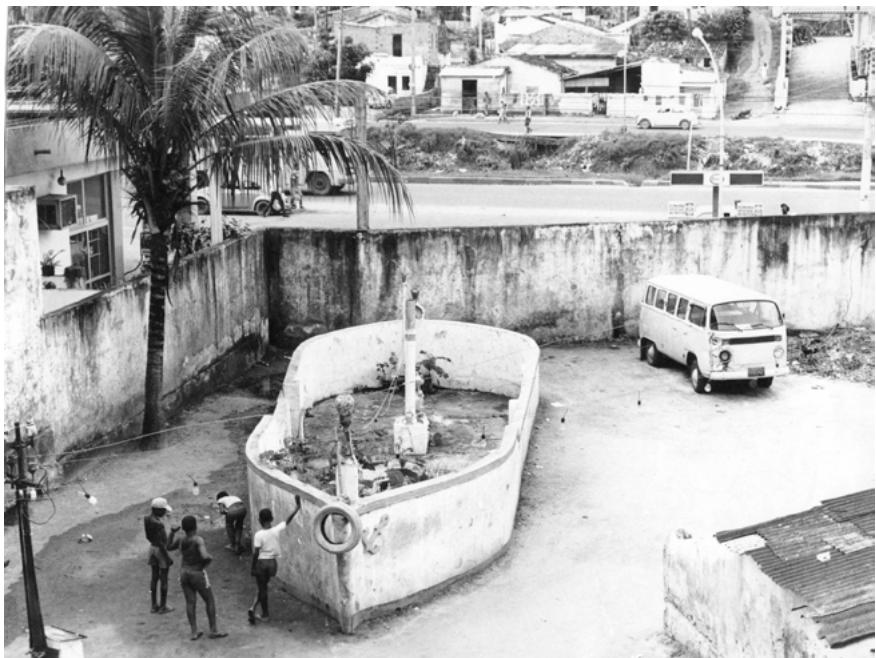
View of the temple of Oxé, with staircase.
On the right is the Ilê [house] of Exú.
Unknown photographer, n.d.



Façade of the temple of Oxé
and the Ilê [house] of Omulú.
Unknown photographer, 1981.



Detail of the roof of the temple of Oxé with the Axé of Xangô on top. Unknown photographer, 1981.



View of the Oxum plaza with Okô Ileaiê [Oxum's boat], with the gasoline station built on the land that is part of the Oxum plaza. Unknown photographer, 1981.



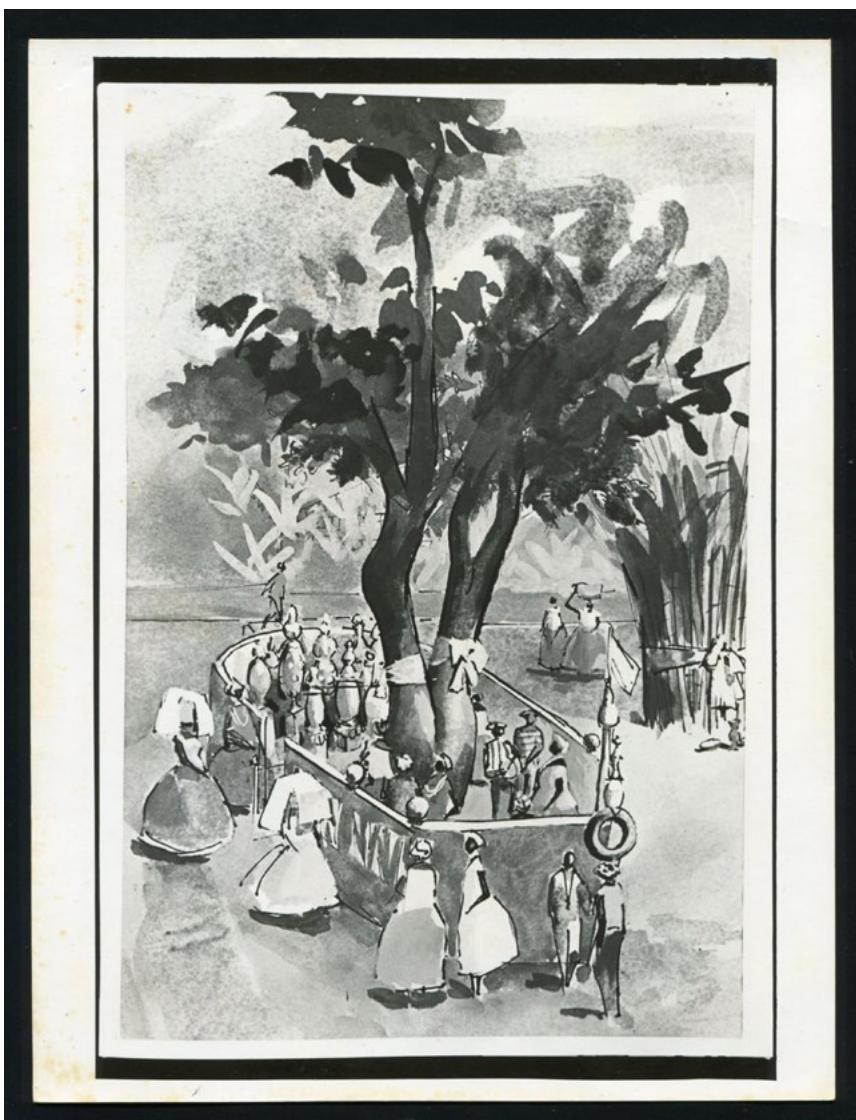
**Detail of the Okô Ileaiê [Oxum's boat],
including the Ilê [house] of Oxum, the
staircase leading to the temple and the
jackfruit tree of the Ilê [house] of Exú.
Unknown photographer, 1981.**



Ilê housing Oxum's fountain in Oxum plaza, with a painted mermaid. Unknown photographer, 1981.



Detail of the gameleira tree (Moraceae family) and Lokô in front of the temple, also the shrine to the Orixá. Unknown photographer, 1981.



Petê [food offering] to Oxum, in the Casa Branca
Candomblé Temple. Watercolor by Carybé.
Reproduction: A. A. Fontes.