

Samba de Enredo and the Afro Brazilian Carnival

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Ilú Ayê (Norival Reis, Portela Samba School)

This 1972 Norival Reis samba song pays homage to Brazilian carnival's African heritage and the Afro-Brazilian influence in samba schools. *Ilú Ayê* from the Yoruban dialect of Nagô means "distant land", "land of life". This expression is often used in reference to the nostalgia of the African motherland felt by the black population of Brazil. The song is divided into three parts and it describes the trip slaves were forced to take journeying from their home countries to Brazil as well as the emerging sense of nationalism and belongingness.

The *samba de enredo* begins by painting the life of Nagô people in Africa singing among their "*odara*" (good people) until they were imprisoned in *senzalas* (slave prison) where they cried *Ilú Ayê*. The second verse entails early Afro-Brazilian cultural practices such as playing capoeira, batuque and praying for Afro-Christian Gods during the process of abolition. The final verse of the song illustrates black Brazilians dancing on the avenue (carnival) bringing life to parties and owning the modern carnival.

Norival Reis's samba which earned Portela Samba School 3rd place on Rio's 1972 carnival reassures the importance of Afro-Brazilians in establishing the sound and culture of Brazilian Carnival and how it differs from its European roots. The music instrumentation is lead by an orchestra of cavaquinhos that emphasize the song's harmony tracing back to early European influenced *choros* and *modinhas*. The cavaquinho 16th note rhythm and its syncopated accents are characteristic of Rio de Janeiro's early 1920's sambas. Doubled by the *pandeiros* the 16th note pattern augments the lower syncopated *tamborins* and *surdos* which play rhythmic patterns more directly found in African rhythms such as the *jongo* and *lundo*. This mixture of African and European musical traditions characterizes the changes in Brazilian carnival culture in the early 20th century thanks to groups such as "*Turma do Estácio*" which slowly introduced samba music and dancing into the European modeled party.

At the early days of carnival there was a lot of police persecution of black Brazilians who celebrated their music in the streets. These were mostly people living in the *morro* (slums) where their geographic segregation allowed for African practices to be preserved and developed away from the bohemian Eurocentric *Zona Sul* of Rio de Janeiro (Raphael, p. 74). With time the *sambista* was characterized as a mischievous person who is liked by everyone and outsmarts the law. The *sambista* characterization helps to define the current Brazilian cultural identity known as the "*jeitinho Brasileiro*" (Brazilian way). These characters described by samba lyrics and lived by *sambistas* were so likeable and identifiable that the population started praising samba music coming from the morros more than their white counterparts (which often purchased songs from black artists). Another element in the legitimization of samba schools and Afro-Brazilian carnival was the 1930s nationalist dictatorship. The mayor of Rio de Janeiro Getúlio Vargas who would later become president of the country was responsible for the nationalist movement was attempting to create a sense of national belongingness among the Brazilian population (Raphael, p.77). He saw Afro-Brazilian carnival and samba schools as a good opportunity to create a national culture and helped to make official these institutions. He also required samba schools to center their parade based on a theme of national heritage encouraging the composition of songs such as *Ilu Ayê*.

This increase in valorizations of African heritage conflicted with Rio de Janeiro's intent of becoming the Paris of the Americas in emulating European architecture, culture and celebrations. The outcome was the international recognition of Brazilian carnival as a unique cultural expression that is much more celebrated than its European origin. It is this conflicting history that samba songs such as *Ilu Ayê* commemorates in the avenues of Rio de Janeiro in the early 70s. Today Brazilian carnival is a large international phenomena infused fueled by tourism and big corporations. For many the institutionalization of carnival ruins the initial celebratory intent as well as it's African fusion heritage.

Samba de Enredo

It is hard to describe exactly how a genre of Brazilian music such as *samba de enredo* was invented because the lines that differentiate among Brazilian genres aren't defined themselves. The major difference between *samba de enredo* and other forms of samba is its context rather than any particular rhythmic pattern. *Samba de enredo* is a subgenre of samba played in carnival parades, its orchestration often includes large rhythmic sections with *cuícas*, *surdos*, *tamborins*, *pandeiros* and *reco-recos*. The harmony is provided by *cavaquinhos* and the melody is usually sung by a combination of soloists and a large choir. *Samba de enredo* is often played in fast tempos in order to encourage cheerful dancing and its lyrics often covers themes of national stories due to parade theme requirements.

Samba itself is considered to be an evolution of *maxixe* and *lundu* dances which were brought to Rio de Janeiro through slaves living in the state of Bahia. The *maxixe* however was the most popular dance because it had been highly influenced by the "Brazilian Tango" which was a form of European Polka arranged with syncopated rhythms of African and Iberian origins. *Maxie's* new meaning was considered by black *Cariocas* living in the hillside to have been whitewashed in its trip to Rio de Janeiro (Fryer, p. 154). In 1917, as a response to the whitening of *maxie's* meaning, people living in the slums of Rio started using the term samba to describe not only a dance but also a music genre influenced by *choro*, *maxixe*, *lundu* among other dance and music styles. According to a publication by Ernesto Woquim Maria dos Santos and Mauro de Almeida the carnival song responsible for popularizing the word samba as a music genre was "*Pelo Telefone*" by Donga. The samba song lyrics talk about the phenomena of samba which puts a spell on people, makes them have fun and enjoy themselves while policeman who doesn't understand the joy of samba engage in brutality.

Samba quickly became the default term for this dance and music which seemed to move Brazilians in festive celebration. The genre grew in popularity and by the 1920s it was internationally known as Brazil's principal musical contribution to the world. During the early 20th century, samba separated into multiple sub-genres including *samba canção*, *samba de roda*, *pagode*, *samba reggae*, *samba rock* and *samba de enredo*. Today elements of samba can be found in most forms of Brazilian popular music, it can be heard and danced in the avenues of Carnival, at bohemian botecos (bar) tables and concert halls around the world.

Citation:

Book:

Raphael, Alison. "From Popular Culture To Microenterprise: The History Of Brazilian Samba Schools". *Latin American Music Review / Revista De Música Latinoamericana*, vol 11, no. 74, 1990, p. 83. JSTOR, doi:10.2307/780359. Accessed 30 Oct 2018.

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"Academia Do Samba - O Maior Portal Do Carnaval Brasileiro". *Academiadosamba.Com.Br*, 2018, <http://www.academiadosamba.com.br/passarela/portela/ficha-1972.htm>. Accessed 28 Oct 2018.

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Lyrics:

Ilu-ayê:

Ilu-ayê, Ilu-ayê, odara
Negro cantava na nação Nagô
Depois chorou lamento de senzala
Tão longe estava de sua Ilu-ayê

Tempo passou e no terreirão da casa grande
Negro diz tudo que pode dizer
É samba, é batuque, é reza, é dança, é ladainha
Negro joga a capoeira e faz louvação à rainha

Hoje, negro é terra, negro é vida
Na mutação do tempo, desfilando na avenida
Negro é sensacional, é toda festa de um povo
É o dono do carnaval

Pelo Telefone:

O Chefe da polícia
Pelo telefone manda me avisar
Que na carioca tem uma roleta para se jogar

O Chefe da polícia
Pelo telefone manda me avisar
Que na carioca tem uma roleta para se jogar

Ai, ai, ai
Deixe as mágoas pra trás, ó rapaz
Ai, ai, ai
Fica triste se és capaz e verás
Ai, ai, ai
Deixe as mágoas pra trás, ó rapaz
Ai, ai, ai
Fica triste se és capaz e verás

Tomara que tu apanhes
Pra nunca mais fazer isso
Roubar amores dos outros
E depois fazer feitiço

Olha a rolinha, Sinhô, Sinhô
Se embaraçou, Sinhô, Sinhô
Caiu no lago, Sinhô, Sinhô
Do nosso amor, Sinhô, Sinhô
Porque este samba, Sinhô, Sinhô
É de arrepiar, Sinhô, Sinhô
Põe perna bamba, Sinhô, Sinhô
Mas faz gozar, Sinhô, Sinhô

O ?Peru? me disse
Se o ?Morcego? visse
Não fazer tolice
Que eu então saísse
Dessa esquisitice
Do disse-me-disse

Mas o ?Peru? me disse
Se o ?Morcego? visse
Não fazer tolice
Que eu então saísse
Dessa esquisitice
Do disse-me-disse

Ai, ai, ai
Deixe as mágoas pra trás, ó rapaz
Ai, ai, ai
Fica triste se és capaz e verás
Ai, ai, ai
Deixe as mágoas pra trás, ó rapaz
Ai, ai, ai
Fica triste se és capaz e verás

Queres ou não, Sinhô, Sinhô
Vir pro cordão, Sinhô, Sinhô
Ser folião, Sinhô, Sinhô
De coração, Sinhô, Sinhô
Porque este samba, Sinhô, Sinhô
É de arrepiar, Sinhô, Sinhô
Põe perna bamba, Sinhô, Sinhô
Mas faz gozar, Sinhô, Sinhô