

JONGO, FEMALE NOUN, IN MUSICAL SCENES

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Abstract

This article has as its objective showing the female protagonism in contemporary *jongo* sessions in Rio de Janeiro, highlighting the fact that women have assumed roles previously and exclusively male dominated in this scenario, especially since the beginning of the 2000's. When women play the drums – a sacred element of *jongo*, compose and challenge men to sing, they effectively turn *jongo* into a female noun. In order to perform the investigation, we have used two methodological paths: the cartography of five *jongo* sessions in Rio de Janeiro city; and, to complement it, interviews, based on the theoretical indications of oral history. The ultimate purpose is to perceive the musical scene of *jongo* in Rio de Janeiro city and the female protagonism in these places of multiple meanings.

Keywords

Jongo; Musical Scene; Female Protagonism; Rio de Janeiro

Introduction

This paper assumes the hypothesis of the leadership of women in the contemporary jongo and has as its focus the female protagonism in this musical scenario of Rio de Janeiro. Crossed by many issues, such as the claiming for more female roles, the contradictions that emerge in the various roles that women play (mother, housewife and work market professionals), are reflected in the participations of *jongueiras*¹, also considering the intertwining of traditions, contradictions, disputes and existing actions in the movement.

A fact which stands out is that some participants of the group use *jongo* performances and its tradition as elements as a way of seeking for transformation, mainly those who belong to the dominated groups. Using the elements of the *jongo* tradition, women literally take the floor while participating more actively in the circles, which included actions that were before considered exclusive to the male universe. Thus, women turn their musical performances – playing drums, singing and composing music – into weapons of struggle and inclusion in the *jongo* world. This space which women claim for themselves constitute a type of metaphor for the place they begin to occupy in the world.

This is the movement this paper proposes to illuminate through a dual methodological choice: the cartography and interviews. This paper is part of a broader research about contemporary jongo² in Rio de Janeiro (Aguiar, 2018) which privileged the cartography of the circles (Alvarez and Passos, 2009) as its central methodological proposal. Therefore, we consider as determinant to our analysis a travelling gaze which lingers in certain moments to listen to those who are chosen as central actors, and, meanwhile, we let this same gaze flow throughout the proposed and uncovered paths in the development of the study. Furthermore, to better comprehend this universe, the movement of hearing the other is fundamental. For this reason, throughout this paper, we reproduced some excerpts of the utterances of the jongo circle members from Rio de Janeiro, which were collected through the realization of interviews carried out according to the theoretical principles of the oral history (Alberti, 2004; Amado, 1997; Ferreira, 2006; Joutard, 2006; Portelli, 1997; Ribeiro, 2015; Rouchou, 2008), which were quintessential to the development of the original research (Aguiar, 2018).

Five *jongo* circles of Rio de Janeiro were investigated. We aimed at characterizing *jongo* as a communicational practice, perceiving such as proposed by Martin-Barbero (2004, p. 13), the contemporary cognitive maps which lead us to archipelagos without boundaries, forming multiple islands which interconnect. This perception was determinant for us to prioritize the principles of the cartography as fundamental to this research process, allowing the entrance of the gaps and breaches of the expressions of *jongo* women and being able to access their communicabilities.

Female Protagonism

When we approach the female protagonism in the circles of jongo, we are mainly referring to the performativities (Butler, 2016) of black women which act in what we consider nowadays a musical scenario, though it essentially refers to the life styles and struggles of the slaves. This understanding required a series of interpretations, according to which it is not possible to forget the connections of the jongo with the tradition, the reproduction of modes of thinking and feeling the world through another

¹ *Jongueiras* (female) and *jongueiros* (male) are the participants and performers of *jongo* circles, rituals and traditions.

² Jongo is a circle dance, always performed by a pair. It was introduced in Brazil in the 18th century by the slaves. Multiple municipalities of Rio de Janeiro have jongo circles. The main ones in the city of Rio de Janeiro are: Lapa jongo, Dandalua, Afrolaje, Companhia de Aruanda. Those groups present themselves in scheduled dates throughout the streets of the city, composing a communicational scenario and a peculiar sonic-musical territory (Herschmann and Fernandes, 2014). Regarding the historicity of the jongo in a general way, GHreferência). R. ...cf. Mattos and Abreu (2016, 2015). Regarding jongo as composing a communicational scenario and a sonic-musical territory cf. Aguiar (2018).

logic, as indicated by Sodr  when reading the significations of the nagô philosophy to interpret the afro-descendent religious system existent in the terreiros of candombl ³ in Bahia (Sodr , 2017).

The participants of jongo themselves, when referring to the female presence in this context, relate this central position of the female subject to the one which already exists in the terreiros of candombl . This emphasis makes us reflect upon the female presence as part of the same ethos, which “would play a central role in the transmission of communitary values and of the ax , indispensable to the continuity of physical existence”⁴ (Sodr , 2017, p.151-152).

In the circles of *jongo*, the lasting experience of women emerge through their gestures and acts - during the musical scenario, but also before and after its realization – reaffirming their role as protagonists, realizing the gestures they always performed in the circles – as, for instance, the providers, but mainly in acts considered exclusive to men. Among these acts, we may highlight the fact that they play the drums, which may be considered a symbolic gesture of greater appropriation of the *jongo* heritage.

To think the performative, as emphasizes Judith Butler (2016), is to reflect about the named body, regulated and marked; a body which appears in the gestures and in the scenes developed in the temporality of the *jongo* circles, considering the uniqueness of the identified movements and immediately named by the feminine (such as the spinning skirts) or others which relate to the statement of their own leadership (as, for instance, organizing and protecting the circle).

The performative and the performativity thought as language allow us to reflect upon the matter of the sex, the gender and the body. It is about perceiving the discursive elements which accompany those moving bodies, producing a proper language that emanates from this singular and plural space.

The configuration of the contemporary jongo scene, when traced by female acts, is a nodal and essential element to the reconfiguration of the jongo throughout the 21st century, producing a rupture that is fundamental in the universe of jongo practices seen as communicational actions. This interpretation moves away from the tradition of sustainability⁵, which women have always performed in jongo groups, thus, getting closer to a dimension of visibility which the women assume in the contemporary jongo scenario. On the other hand, when they occupy central positions, they end up resignifying the traditions, since women have always assumed key positions in the jongo scene. This movement does not happen in detriment of the valorization and struggle for the preservation of jongo traditions, which elements are essential to this scenario.

We may affirm that the women “take the floor”, meaning that they start to assume a central role in the jongo musical scenario, playing the drums, singing or disputing demandas⁶. In other words, women perform acts which realize the performative function of language, which is responsible for the perception of the symbolic differences existing in the jongo ritual (Sodr , 2017).

When mentioning the word in the nagô-ketu liturgical system, Muniz Sodr  (2015, p. 246) emphasizes the fact that it is permeated with existence and history and at the same time it is “kept by the female principle, by the women who possessed and could transmit the propitiatory force.”⁷, converting itself in an expanded dynamic of the group. To the author, the feminine power assures the continuity of the existence and values of the terreiro.

³ *Terreiros* are yards/houses used for religious candombl  ceremonies.

⁴ Freely translated from: “desempenhariam papel central na transmiss o de valores comunit rios e do ax  imprescind vel   continuidade da exist ncia f sica” (Sodr , 2017, p.151-152).

⁵ Traditionally, in *jongo*, women have always been responsible for the actions that, in a way, provisioned the circle’s needs or were even responsible for the constitution of the circles.

⁶ In *jongo*, a *ponto de demanda* is a simulation of a dispute, when a *jongueiro* defies their rival to demonstrate its wisdom.

⁷ Freely translated from: “zelada pelo princ pio feminino, pelas mulheres possuidoras e transmissoras da for a propiciat ria” (Sodr , 2015, p. 246)

In jongo, women are transmitters of the existing force of the circles, which is generated by a series of real and symbolic places women begin to occupy: the announcement of the beginning of the dance, the organization of the participants, the guarantee of the circles' security and the fulfillment of their position as the providers. However, a contemporary movement may be noticed in the musical scenario⁸: foundational roles exclusively destined to the jongo before, such as taking part in *pontos de demanda* alongside the men, besides also acting as composers and especially becoming responsible for playing the drums.

Women assume the protagonism, transforming the circles in places of the "female principle". Opening possibilities to the performance on the streets, scenarios of inversion are constructed by the female universe: from the house to the streets; and from the streets to the protagonist positions in these scenarios.

This central position in the circles is recognized by the participants of the group. When interviewing them, references to the fact that the women have the protagonism as providers of the circles were constant. Remembering the beginning of the circle of the Lapa Jongo, for instance, the founder of the group declares that another participant, Vanusa, was, in fact, the providers of the circle.

She was the maintainer of the circle. The drums weren't hers (...). The drums were mine, the drums were borrowed by someone, the drums belonged to a player called Marcelo Matos, who worked with Seu Felipo, who supported us a lot, really, in the beginning of the circle, seu Felipo. (Marcus Bárbaro. Founder of Lapa Jongo. Interview to the author on May 21st, 2015. Emphasis added)

Therefore, the strength of women arises not only from the fact they have an active voice, but also from many instances when they vehemently give orders to organize the circle or protect them from possible intruders. The strength comes mainly from the fact they participate of the essential and fundamental performativities of jongo: the singing, the composing and the playing of the drums.

The jongo constructs the possibility of these women becoming visible to others and to themselves, assuming the awareness of the strength they possess and which they demonstrate through the performative acts around the musical scene⁹. They are strong not because they fight to organize the circle, but because they are capable of winning a "demanda" of playing the drums and of composing songs.

*Sometimes I'm taken as aggressive because I...I don't bear...how can I say that...if I have to fight in the jongo circle, for a demanda, I will send my message, because jongo, it is the arrow of the message, this arrow which goes there and pokes people in the eye. I'm talking about – I don't know if you were present in the last circle – I ordered three *pontos de demanda*, one after the other, and then there is this moment of relaxation, of joy, and there comes the jongo song, anyways, and then... (...) We start to take action in some spaces, we start to lead things. Because the Lapa Jongo, it is not only that, it is not only that, it is a continuity, post-circle, pre-circle, we have our encounters, we have our meetings, our celebrations, so we became a jongo family (Sílvia Reis. Participant of the Lapa Jongo. Interview to the author on January 30th, 2017. Emphasis added.)*

Being capable of "order[ing] three *pontos de demanda*, one after the other" is to make visible for the members of the group her capacity and all other women's capacity as well. This strength naturally leads to the taking of actions and to leadership, not only during the circles, but also before and after them.

Besides being capable of composing, improvising and winning *demandas*, women begin to play the drums, as already stated previously. The drums, a sacred object of the circles, which so far only

8 According to Herschmann and Fernandes (2014), in the concept of the musical scene, we may indicate as its main characteristics the identifications, the affectivities and the alliances built by the individuals of their groups.

9 For the concept of musical scene, cf. Janotti Jr. (2012).

recognized the male hands are now played by women. From the circles and women's firm and self-assured hands, strong sounds emerge, which are followed by the syncopated rhythm of the female canticles.

If initially the visibility of the women's role, in regards of the performative acts, was restricted to the canticles and the dances, some functions which were previously part of universes considered exclusively male gradually started to be realized by women.

Feminine action and *jongo* essence

Out of the nine women interviewed, at least six systematically play the drums. Besides that, in performances in Meier, a carioca suburb, the female presence is even more dominant since all the *jongo* foundations are executed by women. In all the groups, the leadership is female, even when they can occasionally share this role with a man.

When marking the music as a fundamental element to the transcendence of the mind/body duality, Muniz Sodré affirms that any philosophy of music can only be a philosophy of the sensible (Sodré, 2017, p. 140). The melody, harmony, rhythm, timbre, tessitura and other elements produce, according to him, matrixes of sound, which are "contemplated by the imagination and susceptible to absorption by the body"¹⁰. Thus, "the sound images are both auditory and tactile"¹¹.

In the case of the afro liturgies, according to Sodré (2017, p. 146), the music is primarily vibratory, what makes the percussion fundamental. The body assumes a preponderant role. As a diasporic music, *jongo* is also "originated in the rhythmical and gestual organization, in a body matrix which is deterritorialized and travels actioned by joy"¹². In this sense, the sound is turned into word, "which is expressed in the intention of the Other, to disappear right after and be reborn, renewed, in the repetition that is implied in the ritual"¹³.

Muniz Sodré (2017, p. 155) also emphasizes the association, in the Afro Arkhé, of the ancestral mothers with the birds. The adoption of this perspective from the "above", according to the author, "privileges the unfolding of the surfaces of collective body", having two main objectives: the expansion and the protection. In the heights, the bird, through a female entity, represents "the symbolic control of the ancestors and contemporaries". According to the author, it is about a "conceptual image of the transcendental field (the sacred) of the group". The image of the bird is complemented by the image of the fish, which, with its scales, would represent the prole or the lineage.

The participation of women composing, playing drums or challenging the men to the *pontos de demanda*, in our understanding, is constituted as a differential role exerted by women in the contemporary *jongo*. This does not mean that there is an absolute rupture to the role of the women in the practices related to a more lasting symbolic universe. For these reasons, we are intitling this female action as the taking of the *jongo* essence.

Wallace Freitas, participant of the Lapa *Jongo*, an experienced and recognized composer, when mentioning the creative process of the composition of the points, emphasizes the creativity of the female composers, some of whom were his partners. He also reminds that Sílvia Reis, participant of the Lapa *Jongo*, sent him her own compositions so he could give his opinion about them. If, initially, Silvia asked for his feedback about the compositions, after some time she stopped doing it, because she "knew how

¹⁰ Freely translated from: "contempláveis pela imaginação e passíveis de absorção pelo corpo" (Sodré, 2017, p. 140).

¹¹ Freely translated from: "as imagens sonoras são tanto auditivas como táteis". (Sodré, 2017, p. 140).

¹² Freely translated from: "origina-se da organização rítmica e gestual, de uma matriz corporal que se desterritorializa e que viaja acionada pela alegria" Sodré (2017, p. 146).

¹³ Freely translated from: "que se expressa na intenção do Outro, para desaparecer logo em seguida e renascer, renovada, na repetição em que implica o ritual" Sodré (2017, p. 146).

to do it”.

Silvia, when she did the points, in the past, she sent them to me – “is it ok?” Then, sometimes, “take that off”, and she “No, I won’t, but keep commenting” – “Can I really? Because when I say that I didn’t like it, the person doesn’t send me the points anymore. But then she stopped sending them to me, because I always said like “it’s good”. Then when she came into the circle with a point of *jongo* and sang it, I said: “Silvia, that’s it, Silvia! That’s what I’m talking about, that’s what you have to do”. She came in with a *wonderful point, all ciphered*, and then I said: “That’s *jongo*, not the thing you sent me”. Because *she knows how to do it*. (Wallace Freitas. Participant of the Lapa *Jongo* e composer. Interview with the author in January 31st, 2017. Emphasis added.)

In the same excerpt, Wallace recognizes the creative capacity of women in this new role – the composers of *pontos de demanda* of *jongo* – narrating the episode in which the solution for a problem in his composition was solved by one of the participants of the Lapa *Jongo*. Milena, who already created a *ponto de demanda* whose importance was marked by the fact that Wallace remembered it, signing the lyrics of the song during the interview. This fact emphasizes Milena’s condition as his partner.

Milena made a point in which she talks about the mouse that gnaw something – “The swindler is in the *terreiro* and wants to gnaw my flippers, I’ll warn my swindler, take off the leather peel in my backyard”. This is Milena’s. We did a point together. I had a point that I wanted to change the beat, these things that we try to change, and then I couldn’t do the chorus anyhow, everything seemed terrible... “No, why don’t you do it like that?” – and then I said, “Wow, man” and then I did the chorus. *Then the point was ours right? I wrote a part and she wrote the other one*. (Wallace Freitas. Participant of the Lapa *Jongo* and composer. Interview with the author in January 31st, 2017. Emphasis added.)

If “before there were less women in the circles”, as also indicates Wallace, and, back then, the canticles were dominated by the male voice, progressively the female voices started to echo more and more in the songs. He also describes the solidarity existing in the female group. In order that Milena could win the *demanda*, Silvia sometimes sang in her ear, giving her a “hint” of what she should answer. By the way, this is a common practice in the group and which, during the research, could be observed several times.

But the girls help themselves: one sings in each other’s ears. Silvia is one of those who sings in the ear – “sing it like that, sing it like that, yada yada yada...”. I met Silvia, like that (...) then Silvia became very sharpened in the *demandas* and one responded the other and no one sang in the circle anymore, only us both. *And Silvia answered me all the times*. All of them! *All the points I’ve sang, Silvia responded me*, even one that I sang and she started “I don’t know for sure what is the peeve of the woman, but it might be the man”. The girl I dated wanted to go home and she grabbed my arm and led me out of there. Then Silvia started laughing at my face. And then she became a laughing-stock, and she started mocking me, but I couldn’t do anything about it. But that’s *jongo*. It’s not only about knowing how to do the *ponto de demanda*, right, you have to have a point. There’s no usefulness in knowing how to do the point and what you are going to say if someone, for example, if some older master comes, if I do something wrong in the circle and the master says that I did something wrong, it’s ok, I did it. I can know how to do the point, but I have to have the argument too: it’s not only about knowing how to make music, but you have to have argument. (Wallace Freitas. Interview to the author in January 31st, 2017. Emphasis added.)

Admitting his defeat, even though he tries to argue that it happened because of his leaving the circle for a personal reason, Wallace recognizes the competence of Silvia as a truly defiant during the *pontos de demanda*. This foundation is – without a doubt – what confers its greatest importance to the *jongueiros* in the circles (besides playing the drums); the process of autonomy, which started to be part of the women’s actions, may also be observed. If initially the *demandas* were restricted, women started to defy more and more new participants, so that afterwards they could be considered victorious next to the

more experienced ones. Besides making music, they started to be recognized as holders of indispensable arguments for someone to become victorious.

According to José Messias, “*jongo* is empowering”, when referring to the *jongo* movement as a vehicle of strength for the women, citing the traditional groups and its female masters. To him, the phenomena is a result of the quantity of women in the circles, but he believes that they will, indeed, lead the groups. He approximates what happened in the circles to what happens in society. According to him, the body and the strength that the woman generates in the circles is what produces their impulse towards leadership.

But like, for example, in Barra do Piraí, the master there is a woman, In Pinheiral, the leadership is also female (*sic*), in Minas Gerais, *jongo*, I can't recall the name of the place, but there also was a woman, in the Porciúncula *jongo*, which also has women in its leadership, and in the Lapa *jongo*, I think it is not different. If you observe, even in the circles that happen before the Lapa *jongo*, you see women all around. Anyways, I believe that from a time now, who will command will be the women, I believe even for the great majority of participants being female and for this empowering process which *jongo* promotes, the Lapa *jongo*, in fact, promotes this empowerment to women. (...) They have to play, I think it is nice that you play, I think it is nice that you sing, I think it is nice that you conduce it, so nice that nowadays many are offering workshops, are teaching *jongo* workshops, so many people cherish that very much. (José Messias. Leader and Participant of the Lapa *jongo*. Interview to the author on 23rd January, 2017. Emphasis added).

In his speech, the reference to the women's act of playing the drums as symbolically important to the recognition of the strength of the women in *jongo* is feasible. The claim for the playing of the drums is, without a doubt, an act of occupation of the most important place in *jongo*, while the singing, which initially also belonged to a male domain, was equally being dominated by their voices. Therefore, both main places of *jongo*, which could be qualified as communicational forces that govern it, started to belong to the female domain.

Without a doubt, the strength of *jongo* comes from the drums, the clapping hands which accompany the canticles, the rhythm of the instruments, and the singing. Singing in the circles is not purely a performative act. It is more than that. Singing represents not only making oneself present by one's voices, but also to make present the importance of *jongo*, to sensitize and captivate the audience.

To the women, the dancing is almost a natural place – and, therefore, the first they occupy - for their insertion in *jongo*. Occupying other spaces, as the drums and the singing, requires a more extensive process. Only with time the female explosion in the singing spaces occurs.

Because, for me, *jongo* is there, in the singing. Dancing is really nice in *jongo*, but *jongo* started here, in the act of speaking. The dancing, of course, is important, but it has to preserve the *umbigada*, the couple dance, the playing of the drums, but if there isn't this exchange, because all of those things give you strength to think, rationalize at the moment and everything else, and sometimes there are some people who can't do this. Sometimes *jongo* doesn't move them that way, so if you notice, in these groups, they focus more in some other popular dances, not *jongo*. (Wallace Freitas. Interview to the author in January 31st, 2017).

When emphasizing the need of preserving the *jongo* rituals, Wallace Freitas highlights the meaning of the existing communicational exchange in all its foundations. Even the dance, the couple dance, is a dialogue through *umbigada*, which is sensualized and reminds participants through its gestures of the act of the encounter between men and women. But the hit of the drums also establishes an explicit dialogue, inviting participants to the narrative plots that are developed in the circles: the opening canticles, the *demanda* canticles when the narrative climax occurs and the channeling to the end, with the rites that

close the circle. In this moment, everyone transforms the circle in a line to say goodbye to the drums.

Wallace Freitas marks the importance of the singing. According to him, dancing is important, but it is the speech in which we may find the essence of *jongo*: speaking through a canticle, many times cyphered, is how, for instance, the questions and answers of the *pontos de demanda* are established. The act of speaking the *jongo demandas* the quick wits to answer the questions which must be deciphered in the turmoil of sounds which emerge from the playing of the drums. But the dialogue is also produced in the composition of *jongo* songs. To him, *jongo* is profound elaboration, more than a simple act of playing or dancing. Thus, the taking of singing position was not easy. They had to overcome various barriers and, at the same time, gradually prepare themselves for the explosion of their singing. To sing in the *jongo* circle is to communicate a reasoning and express the emotion.

Entering the circle is, therefore, more than participating of a dance movement: it is about positioning oneself in a ritual that possess lasting connections - and many times inexplicable to these participants.

In the *jongo* universe, it is necessary to recognize the dialogue and the exchanges which are established in a musical plot, which relates contemporary issues to others which do not belong to the temporal universe of the present time. It could be simple "teasing" exchanged during a *demanda* or a reference to the sadness of the captivity times. It is necessary to know the plot which is unfolded in a *jongo* circle to effectively own it.

The dedication and the struggle for the insertion of the women in the *jongo* universe represent, therefore, the need of improvement of the knowledges about *jongo*, which are indispensable to everyone in their evaluations, to the effective occupation of the most representative spaces in the circles. For this reason, it is necessary to know the traditions, learn with the masters of the *quilombos*, closely observe the movement of the elderly and effectively learn to play the musical instruments

Many identify aspects in their daily lives in the canticles. They see in the lyrics a political dimension. The messages which they transmit are indispensable for them to own those canticles. Jessica's description, participant of the Lapa *Jongo* and of *Dandalua*, represents the woman and what she entitles "new generational movement of *jongo*". The connection that *jongo* establishes with a world of struggles and the need for transformation is what makes Jéssica stop sing in a low voice and start to actually intone the songs out loud. The singing entered me and I reflected politically about the canticles of *jongo*. *Man, this song is me! It's me working, it's me at home, this song is a debt, this song is the racism I suffered. Then I started to possess the song.* It started slowly, I still sang in a low voice. (Jéssica Castro. Integrante do Jongo da Lapa e do Dandalua. Entrevista à autora em 12 de janeiro de 2017. Emphasis added.)

Juana Elbein dos Santos (2002) marks that oral language is "indissoluble" to the gestures, expressions and the bodily distance. Thus, in oral transmission, the word, an always remarkable formula - and that is why it is a formula, is accompanied by symbolic gestures which are proper and necessary to pronounce in the course of of a ritual activity. Emphasizing the orality as "a tool in service of the *nagô*", she also indicates the existence of a dynamic in the system that is constantly reupdated as a communicational process.

Therefore, each professed word is unique, and it is born and fulfills its function and then disappears. Each repetition is a unique resultant. Thus, the oral expression is constantly reborn, being the product of two levels: the individual and the social. Inside a dynamic of orality, the word is professed to be heard, emanating from a person to reach many others, communicating from mouth to ear the experience of a generation to the other, transmitting the voice of the ancestors to the generations of the present. (Santos, 2002, p. 47).

Besides becoming many times composers, as we observed previously, the *jongo* women have a

fundamental role when singing the points. The identification of the canticles with those participants which execute them is paramount to the success of the song in the circle.

These women that take part in the *jongo* movement are not asking for equity in relation to men, but they are more worried with symbolic issues such as the centrality and the practices; such as supplying the circle of maternities so that it can actually happen. They are worried with the continuity of the *jongo* traditions.

The taking of positions observed in the descriptions of this paper are not planned acts of the female agenda, but of bodies entitled as female and which are in movement. Bodies that fight for spaces of continuities and bodies that also produce ruptures. These are bodies which present their children as “circle’s children”, heirs of the *jongo* principles, or even when they say that one day they will be “masters” or will be in the place of “pretos velhos as master Darcy¹⁴ has become”.

By saying that, we do not intend to affirm that the social causes are not part of the reflexive core of some of those women. But in the description of their own selves, they emphasize some qualifiers: “I’m a mother”, “black woman”, “teacher”, “capoeiristas¹⁵”, “wife”, “jongueiras”. These are women who are in society, in the work market, building families, raising their children and defending *jongo* as a cause. Women who are living “life as a whole” (Heller, 1985).

On the other hand, we have to consider, following the theoretical postulations of Judith Butler (2016), according to whom gender is always a doing. Therefore, we may affirm that women who go to the circles are produced as *jongueiras*. When they took over all the places, they were acting as *jongo* women: women who defend and believe in *jongo* as a way of life and of being in the world. In their interviews, they always mention *jongo* as this transit in direction to a certain position which makes fundamental transmitting the lessons and ways of living to their children. Thus, the position that they occupy in the circle is placed beyond a physical space: it is about the trajectory throughout their lives. And for that to happen, being immersed in all the actions is essential. The most visible movement is a doing for oneself, not to the other. .

It is equally important to note the extensive lineage, with its evident transformations during this process, of the *jongo* with the African *Arkhé*, what requires us to consider it as a diasporic dance and, thus, including the inflections related to the female potency present in this universe. Being a woman for the participants of *jongo* includes, besides all the specificities that the female imposes, the fact that they fundamentally are *jongueiras* and from this fact on, being able to fight for a cause. They are acting women, mobilizing themselves with actions strengthened by the daily life; women who enter and act in the circles as social actors of the contemporary *jongo*, enchanting others with their performances which go much beyond their spinning skirts and the movements observed in the *jongo* practices.

Fully assuming their roles in the *jongo* universe, the women externalize this option for the complete immersion in his physical and symbolic place. Thus, it is also important to exteriorize, even after leaving the circles, the places where they come from and where they want to go to. *Jongo*, according to the interviewees, also gives this courage and makes them accept, with its full intensity, their own image.

Final remarks

It is worth briefly mentioning the issue of the territorialities, since that, when mapping and

¹⁴ Master Darcy, son of gramma Maria Joana, the main leadership and transmissor of the *jongo* tradition in Rio de Janeiro, expanded the *Jongo da Serrinha*, a tradition from the North Zone hill, located in Madureira, a Rio’s suburb, when she created the *Grupo Cultural Jongo Cultural*, in the late 60’s. Rufino (2014) distinguishes the *Jongo da Serrinha* and the *Grupo Cultural Jongo Cultural*, affirming the existence of *jongueiros* from Serrinha who were not necessarily participants of the *Grupo Cultural* (Rufino, 2014).

¹⁵ Performers and participants of *capoeira* presentations and rituals.

analyzing the *jongo* territories as communicational practices manifested in the narrative webs, we observe that at the same time that the city is transformed by the *jongo* movement, it also interferes in the enacting/playing of *jongo* performances in the spatial and territorial geography. When transforming the places in the city with its presence, they produce resignifications from them, choosing, many times, interdict zones, which they reconfigure and which, through music, acquire other territorialities. Thus, these *jongo* territories may be considered territories of breaches, meaning that they are spaces of multiple possibilities, not only those to which they were destined for. Under the trees, on the sidewalks, under the viaducts in the corners of the city, they manifest their music and their dance, occupying these places, but also subverting them, inverting them, making them other places, utopic even, because they are all mainly involved by the sensible atmosphere of the music.

The *jongueiros* possess pieces of the spaces of Rio de Janeiro, building an archipelago imbedded in the city, building a new territory, governed by the *jongo* territorialities; through the circles that have a series of significations, in which the construction of a community is stood out, and these communities produce acts of resistance to maintain their connections with those territories of breaches constructed in the city.

Considering the issue of the territories is to notice the musical territorialities present in the *jongo* scene. Built by subjects that, when attending certain places produce new meanings for these locations and for their own selves, reupdating lived and shared experiences. These subjects invert the meanings of those scenarios by building, through music, new forms of dwelling the city.

Music is constituted, therefore, as an agent of change, intervening and transmuting the meanings of the spaces of the city, producing for them new significations, the development of specific sociabilities, interfering in the physical and architectural organization of the space, and, finally, affirming a new soundscape (Schafer, 2001). This movement becomes more evident when we observe the circle of the Lapa Jongo: when performing its presentations around the Lapa Arches, it transmutes this place and its own architecture of the old aqueduct in a scenario whose *jongo* movements are framed as an integral part of a scene, which became predominantly musical. The *jongo* sound webs are made, thus, by the sounds that echo, evolved by the noises of the city, but that do not allow the silencing of the drums, the canticles and the clapping of hands which echo in the circles.

The *jongo* circles create, therefore, sound multiterritorialities, since that beyond its musical territoriality, they realize a movement of appropriation of the city, from the sound territoriality. Thus, more than a territoriality, the instauration of multiterritorialities is involved, which the music crosses, in its full meaning, other territorialities of the city, the significations and the affections.

The cartographer movements, next to the pause for the realization of the interview, had a singular importance in the conduction of the research. While trying to develop a cartography of the sociabilities of *jongo*, Rio de Janeiro is noticed as a *jongo* city in contemporary times, in which the movements of the groups go from Lapa, through the actions of a pioneer *jongo* group, in direction to other neighborhoods. On the other hand, considering the *jongo* archipelago also means noticing the fluid frontiers and proximations between the groups that are spread throughout the city, showing the connections, but also the conflicts, the disputes, the articulations and deviations that exist between those groups. Despite the differences, the proximations are seen from many angles, in a way that we may consider the existence of a certain "synthesis map", producing a peculiar cognitive archipelago around *jongo*.

In relation to the female presence in *jongo*, a particular movement allows the interpretation that these women in the contemporary *jongo* scene are taking the floor, even though this presence is related to a long-standing tradition, having always been pragmatically and symbolically sustained by specific characters. This means that, from the centrality that they occupy in the circles, starting to play the drums (before exclusive to a male territory), evoking words' duets during the demandas or publicizing their compositions, women also became responsible for the sacred spaces of *jongo*, occupying the centrality in

the rituals.

This female strength, which the participants all recognize as one, is seen by most of them as a concession made by the leader of the Lapa Jongo, which stimulated them to occupy their posts and remark the recording of the CD Pontos de Sinhá as the moment in which the female presence emerges in the contemporary circles. Punctually, some believed that the female strength comes from the streets and that there cannot be an authoritative proposition. In other words, they affirm the existence of a female protagonism, even before the recording of the CD. However, all of the women recognize that starting to be holders of the elements which constitute the jongo essence gives them an inexplicable strength. A strength that comes from a vibratory music and which travels actioned by joy (Sodré, 2006).

Thinking about these issues does not exclude the perception of the female experience in the circles, since women are perceived as a body which is visualized as female a priori: after all, the skirts are discursive strategies for naming those bodies, as they also are a sort of inversion of the places commonly assigned to women, as body guardians of the circles. In relation to this last statement, conflicts are emerged, since some men do not recognize the possibility of women exerting this role. There even is a pre-figuration of the feminine in the jongo circles, assigning them a naturally secondary role. As an answer to that, women not only exert their own actions in a male space, but, more importantly, in a complex process, they make jongo a place of the female word.

The women's protagonism in the jongo circles allows us to equally perceive how, from some specific actions, there emerges a male conception of subalternity of the women. When, for instance, they defy to play the drums with the male strength – making their hands bleed during the execution of the songs - they exert, indeed, an action towards making themselves dominant next to women who seem, according to their understanding, immersed in a subalternity. Even though this is evidently not explicit in the excerpts of the interviewed men, except for some breaches, it is also through the “performativity” (Butler, 2016) that we may perceive the potentiality of these fixed spaces where dual expressions constitute the female.

Finally, jongo articulates performativities in the urban scene of the city, through the construction of territorialities built around the sound and the music, creating possibilities for the women to present themselves in those scenes, expressing and experimenting in the circles an evident protagonism.

The music which embodies the jongo performance evidently is the reason and the cause for creating of this possibility. But why is this constituted? Firstly, because the music is a unique space of transcendence of the mind/body duality. Melody, harmony, timbre and other sound tessituras which are susceptible of absorption by the body. And the female body in the Afro Arkhé is, above all, a collective body which aims at the expansion and protection (Sodré, 2017).

Women's taking of the floor in jongo, therefore, means to put into action this collective body, aiming at the expansion and protection of the jongo practices, including the caring for the role of continuity in the actions and lessons which are primarily passed to their children, calling them the circle children. Besides, in jongo, the women are a sort of ancestral mothers, such as the birds, in the philosophical Afro perspective (Sodré, 2017). From the heights, they deem the jongo practices sacred and care for them, a process which also relates to the close permanence to their offspring.

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