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AfroReggae and Grupo Cultural Afro Reggae
A Study of the Early Years
Sarah Soanirina Ohmer

The following study of AfroReggae and Grupo Cultural Afro Reggae (GCAR) calls attention to Brazilian presence and community organizing into the field of Hip Hop studies with a long memory framework: placing AfroReggae and GCAR in a long history of Africana resistance through music in Latin America. The 1990s GCAR group arises when reggae and Hip Hop music had become new global forms of solidarity among urban marginalized youths worldwide, making use of old and new strategies of social healing (Fernandes 2011). A close look at lyrics from the Hip Hop fusion band and the associated nonprofit organization shape the concepts of performance movement and re-membering in the flesh, to support further studies on resilience through performance in the African diaspora. Like most Hip Hop and reggae music, the band and the organization choreograph what I call a performance movement of resistance against politics of genocide, and a movement that is both therapeutic and rooted in a tradition of resistance.

1. There is a distinction in spelling between "AfroReggae" (the band; spelled with one word) and "Afro Reggae" (the association; spelled with two capitalized words).

2. Other studies on Afro Reggae, like Yudice (2001), Neate and Platt (2010), and José Junior's Da Favela para o mundo: A historia do grupo cultural Afro Reggae, refrain from...
From the late 1800s on, politicians, European Positivist architects, chroniclers, journalists, and Federal Police have had their eyes on favelizing—or keeping lower-class, Indigenous, and Black Brazilians outside of urban centers. Presented as a criminalized and/or a diseased space, the favelized space continually stands as a necessary evil in order to sustain the civilized yet tropical paradise myth of Rio de Janeiro, from hosting the World's Fair in the early 1900s, to hosting the World Cup in 2014. In the 1990s, the focus of this brief study of the creation and first years of AfroReggae and GCAR, the impact of both entities shows an arguably limited attempt to deconstruct stigmas, through cultural projects that resist a government's policies to ensure that the favelized are never meant to survive (Costa Vargas 2008).

**On Methodology: Favelized Spaces, Long Memory, and Mocambo Epistemology**

In the 1990s' context of sociopolitical tension and physical survival, one of AfroReggae's songs, "Nenhum Motivo Explica a Guerra," establishes a global connection between urban marginalized neighborhoods in a state of exception. The rapper's lyrics introduce the current conditions in United States, Brazilian, and British metropolises. The song, part of a transnational movement of Hip Hop, calls attention to war—urban wars in which youth battle one another, police, and/or military forces:

War, what is it good for?
Who is it good for?

outlining Afro Reggae's cultural contributions, or its therapeutic abilities. The following discussion adds to their body of work.

3. Although referencing different time periods, this study focuses on the early to mid-1990s—the conception and early years of AfroReggae and GCAR. The late 1990s through 2014 make up a second and third phase of the AfroReggae and GCAR, during which both witnessed a boom, then criticism, death threats, and radically different approaches. Associations with conservative presidential candidates and alleged associations with drug trafficking, and the overall direction of nonprofit organizations in Rio de Janeiro, make up the body of a forthcoming study on the reception of GCAR's activities in its later years.

4. The testimony *Nenhum Motivo Explica a Guerra*, by José Junior, one of the founding members of Afro Reggae, reveals the military state of the favela in the 1990s, with 48,000 men, armed, none of them belonging to the state's armed forces. This group of men makes up Rio de Janeiro's largest group of organized crime at the time, with three factions: O Comando Vermelho (CV); the best located group, Terceiro Commando (TCP); and the Amigos dos Amigos (ADA), the most violent group. Junior includes numerous examples of daily violence, where the state's law has been lifted, and citizens have become victims of any type of violence, never meant to survive, in conditions reminiscent of the Agambenian state of exception.
When is it good for?
You being good poor
Or me being good poor
It's never been good for
Us in the hoods
Or favelas

In the verse "us in the hoods or favelas," the British guest rapper highlights commonalities between United States and British "hoods" and Brazilian "favelas," slums, or marginalized or favelized communities. Instead of favela, I will use the term favelized space. A favela is a slum community, a populated and marginal urban space, very common in Brazilian urban areas, and comparable to other agglomerations worldwide. The term favelized space underlines the phenomenon whereby a group of people were purposefully pushed into the margins by the state. The favelized space is not just a symptom of global and local affective, sociopolitical, and economic marginalization, but also a site of subversive power, meaningful growth for solidarity, community organizing, and Black cultural renaissance. Where a war is waged that is not good for "us in the hoods, or favelas:"

A hyperbole underlines the global spread of war waged on favelized spaces: "Every single inch of this earth is considered turf / to be fought to the death over." Marginalized urban youth, "the powerless," are the victims: "Who gets the left overs? / And who is left over? / The powerless while politicians brush their left shoulders / Now, wait a minute." In Rio de Janeiro, AfroReggae denounces the war's consequences on their marginalized communities, and ask youth to "wait a minute," or to vouch for alternative options and change their communities.

Historiographies of the evolution of favelas demonstrate that socioaffective marginality, living in a state of exception, and vouching to "wait a minute" and find another way to live, start long before the 1980s "war on drugs." Favelized spaces of Rio de Janeiro were originally quilombos, communities built by individuals of African descent who deservedly opted out of life in bondage, fought for their basic human right to life, and resisted the established socioeconomic system. They called themselves mocambos. Values attached to communal life in the imperial

Later on colonization were added promote social

Some mention their own

In favelized spaces, AfroReggae does not use the term mocamb

6. Quilombo originally means camp or fort in Bantu. In 1740 imperial legal terms, quilombo loses this meaning to refer to an illegal establishment consisting of any group of more than five black runaways, while they opted to call themselves cerca or mocambo. The first favela is recorded as a place where mocambos start a new life close to the city, where they pass easily

as freed people to markets and sales ever, that GC...
attached to their space labeled as quilombo were values such as group survival, communal living, and an alternative mode of organized living in contrast to the imperial order and life in bondage.

Later on, the values of solidarity, military resistance, independence from colonization, and interracial community (between Indigenous, Jews, Blacks) were added onto quilombo. The lyrics of “Nenhum motivo explica a guerra” promote similar values: group survival, communal living, solidarity, independence and an alternative mode of organized living in contrast to the neoliberal order and life in a space of exception. With performance at the center of their activism, AfroReggae and GCAR make up a performance movement that promotes the mocambo epistemology of resistance.

Mocambo voices continue to be favelized in Brazil and around the world. Some members of GCAR travel to help other marginalized communities fashion their own tools for empowerment, while AfroReggae sometimes tours to perform their musical comment on the effects of neoliberalism. At home, in favelized spaces of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the band and GCAR both work to cultivate self-esteem in communities that have been historically marginalized and guilt-ridden. From the labyrinthine favela often called boca sem saída, voices of hope break through, and perform the Hip Hop philosophy of doing. Doing regardless of being favelized.

AfroReggae and GCAR breathe life into a long memory of community organizing throughout which musical communication played a role in fashioning an identity during and after the shock of forced migration from various parts of West Africa to the Americas. A metacommunication for survival, rebellion, and cultural rebirth, the foundational pre- and anti-discursive constituents of Black metacommunication in the Americas are the basis of Africana performance movements (Gilroy 1993, 75). Thus it is important to perceive AfroReggae as pre- and anti-discursive constituents of Black metacommunication that call attention to a long memory of Africana Latin American music (Aretz 1984), and at the same time to note how GCAR contributes to community activism in Rio de Janeiro that originates asquilombos,

as freed people, avoiding men who commonly chased mocambos in rural areas. There have been records of both rural and urban quilombos; the latter evolved, in several cases, into favelas.

In an interview, a member of GCAR also brought to my attention that there is a wide array of performance-based nonprofit organizations in Rio de Janeiro. I would point out, however, that GCAR was originally unique in its ability to propel its performers onto the global market and into global nonprofit organizations.

On the history of the stigmatization of the morros, or favelas, see Fischer (2008).

Translated literally, this means a mouth shut; but a flytrap, like the plant, could also serve as another translation.
outlying and outlawing spaces. AfroReggae and GCAR re-member traumas and addresses them with an empowering Black art form.

By the end of the nineteenth century, regardless of the abolition of slavery in 1888, Black Brazilians make up one fifth of the population in Rio and mostly live in spaces that the state labels a parallel state [Estado paralelo] (Campos 2005, 21). By the mid-twentieth century, urban spaces resemble modern European cities, while undeveloped favelized spaces look down on the upper class and administrators' obvious disdain for its wider population (Ventura 1994, 14). Meanwhile, Brazilian media portray individuals of African descent and other favelized inhabitants as guilty, diseased, lazy individuals (Campos 2005, 25-26). Groups working against marginalization and stigmatization historically mobilize with difficulty, with community associations recorded as first established in the 1950s.11

Aside from distorted media representation, the once mocambo then favelized spaces remain devoid of a legal recognition, and activists often choose survival-based over ideology-based action (McCann 2006, 152; Zaluar 2003, 163). Neighborhood associations become increasingly authoritative and sometimes benefit from government collaboration (McCann 2006, 153; Perlman 2006, 161), although without the power to settle property lines, distribute state resources, appoint government employees, or drive out undesirable representatives (McCann 2006, 154). Organizations face difficulties in resolving major issues within the favela, like the problem of citizenship. AfroReggae's songs and GCAR's mission recognize this lack of legal representation and citizenship. Their social healing attempts to work on two levels, proposing an alternative citizenship of beat-citizenship (Yudice 1994), and undoing affective marginality or stigmatization (Herlinghaus 2009). The music of the band AfroReggae reveals images of police violence, exposes and protests its cruelty, and overturns the marginalizing policies enacted in the favelas. One scene of the documentary Favela Rising portrays the band performing a song "Tô Bolado," about the massacre of twenty-three innocent residents. They perform at an elementary school. Their performance proposes something to get done while at the same time gives pleasure to those who participate in it or observe it (Schechter 2004, 69). GCAR and AfroReggae's work in the realm of the spectacle works at a level where stereotypes affect children, young adults, and their far wherein gras "performative mobilizing is...

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To this lack of citizen issues are not ing an eco helping activate his tral movement.

11. The Associação dos Moradores (1960s); the Federação das Associações das Favelas do Estado da Guanabara held several associations: the FAFERJ, Federação das Associações das Favelas do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (1975); later more "spontaneous" organizations—for example, Afro Reggae fits. See McCann (2006).

AfroReggae illustrates a performance movement that resists forces that work against individuals of African descent, thus articulating a mocambo performance movement. I use the term "performance movement" rather than "performance" to denote a distinction from performance art, from staged performance and from street performance, for several reasons. Firstly, AfroReggae exists as an institution both on and off stage. Their message is political beyond being an art form that revolutionizes the aesthetic and institution of art; it is more than performance art.

Second, "movement" connotes both physical and ideological action, with respect to the organization's mission. And because it is more than activism or social change, the label performance activism does not fit either. AfroReggae encompasses a nonprofit organization, a band and other performance groups, and a for-profit organization. All entities work on different fronts, on sociopolitical as well as interpersonal and psychological levels. They pay specific attention to raising cultural, political, and historical consciousness, and cultivate self-esteem in the youth of slum communities. For all of these reasons, I propose to label them a "performance movement." Hip Hop is a movement that does rather than writes its manifesto as a cultural movement (Chang 2006, x). It is a lived culture, not carried over through written discourse. It is a discourse constantly in motion, it is an embodied discourse or a performance movement that re-members specific values into the flesh of young adults.

To this day, the main issues at hand for favelized-space dwellers are the lack of citizenship, basic needs and rights, and internal colonization. Daily issues are not limited to drug dealing and violence, but are also about changing an economy of affect that supports drug trafficking, an economy based on production and consumerism fetishism, and whose focal points remain far from the favela, and an economy of affect that blames one part of the population for urban mismanagement since the early 1900s, and currently for national, even global, problems (Herlinghaus 2009, 14). Work on self-esteem, creativity, education about African history and Black Brazilian history, cultivating historical consciousness, are values recognized in Hip Hop, that help translate ideas into clear agendas and action, and shape a performance movement.

With roots anchored in *mocambo* traditions and values, over time favelized inhabitants have focused on meeting their basic needs in order to survive, rather than political representation. While many organizations had to choose between political representation and basic survival needs in Rio de Janeiro, AfroReggae and GCAR focus on identity transformation through embodied knowledge in the realm of the spectacle, and perform social healing by restoring beat-citizenship. Precisely because AfroReggae works both as an NGO and as a band, it enacts healing on several levels and makes room for ignored citizenships via the beat of youth's drum through *batidania*, or beat-citizenship: bodies that drum of citizenship of survival and empowerment.

Social Healing as Re-Membering in the Flesh

In the documentary *Favela Rising*, AfroReggae performs a song, “Tô Bolado,” about their community’s massacre, to an elementary school. Military police had allegedly responded to an influential gang’s offensive, in which some gang members allegedly shot four policemen, by invading the favela and attacking several parts of the neighborhood, killing twenty-three innocent residents. In “Tô Bolado [I’m Fed Up],” Anderson Sá addresses this traumatic event, the consequence of living in a space of exception. This was the first song that he wrote, a first step to re-member trauma to his community and city’s memory. Anderson’s narrative is especially poignant since the event had barely acquired full visibility in the media when he wrote the lyrics. Citizens knew about the massacre, but only later did the hypothesis that it was an act of vengeance by the police come out in the media. The performance is a result of coping with this traumatic event, which directly affected the singer, who had lost his brother, and from some of the community’s points of view, drug traffickers might not have been to blame.

The concept of re-membering in the flesh is used here to dialogue with voices of those who are marginalized and acting for visibility and true citizenship, working to become participants of a national community again, to be re-integrated into societies and nations, actively working to heal social and personal traumas. The healing process requires a text that wraps bodies around memories, that includes the *pre*-* and anti-discursive constituents of Black metacommunication*, and that provides a possibility for bodies or queloids—deeply repressed wounds or forgotten inherited traumas—to heal.

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13. The use of the word “flesh” echoes Black feminist and women of color discussions with/against the imposing logocentric system of written language.
The song’s title, “To Bolado,” (I’m fed up) alludes to the community’s collective frustration. It is also the chorus of the song, and with a fast-paced rhythm and aggressive guitar riffs, it nudges the audience—in the Favela Rising documentary, the audience consists of elementary school students—to dance away the frustration. The first stanza states the date, time, and a short description of the event, setting up the song as a witnessing of a traumatic event.

The second stanza reveals more details: one verse is dedicated to the victims ("moradores assassinados") and another to the perpetrators ("o ódio e a violência de policiais vingadores"). Each verse is separated by the singer’s breath. His breath breaks up the story into layers with first the cause of the trauma, the effects of violence, and the police force as a force of death—martial law in a space of exception or Agamben’s (1995) “concentration camp.” The third stanza has a similar construction, divided into effect and cause: “essa crueldade aconteceu porque [this cruelty happened because],” in contrast to “no dia anterior traficantes mataram quatro policiais [the day before drug traffickers had killed four policemen].” The relationship between effect and cause places the blame on the drug dealers’ violence. Is Anderson Sá’s frustration aimed at the drug traffickers? Are they to be blamed for this traumatic event? If so, then the song would only be replicating affective marginalization, placing guilt onto drug traffickers who live in Vigário Geral. Yet the last stanza debunks a rational cause-effect logic: life in the favela follows no rules.

Re-membering in the flesh denotes the ability to reintegrate traumatic memories into collective cultural memory and to repair identities through embodied narrative. A step away from the meaning of the common verb “remembering,” usually associated with the idea that the mind stores memories, the act of “re-memering in the flesh” places emphasis on body movement and collective shifts from social dismemberment to “polyglossia of sociability” (Yudice 2001, 56).14

In the early 1990s context of social dismemberment, a handful of young Rio de Janeiro inhabitants start a performance-based group for favela youths called Afro Reggae (1993) and create the association’s trademark band, AfroReggae (1995). It all begins with a young José Junior trying to make ends meet by organizing funk parties. After an arrastão, or mass arrest, in October

14. New identities arise that are more readily and available for favela dwellers, and this is what Yudice refers to as "polyglossia of sociability": new and multiple identities that disarticulate the national identity. Funk and rap paved the way to establish the polyglossia of sociability, he argues, to identify with identities other than the false unified national identity that marginalized and favelized them. In turn, this helps to work through the stigmatized identity and collective trauma.
1992, the culmination of a large fight between two factions at a funk party in Ipanema, the context for Rio mayoral elections seems fit to pass a law to ban funk parties. José Junior has to change his funk party organizing to a reggae parties, first a flop, but then a big hit (Neate and Platt 2010, 18-19). With friends, he decides to put together a free publication on reggae, music, and diaspora issues, AfroReggae Noticias, and to fund it with reggae party profits. Issue number zero comes out in January 1993. Shortly thereafter, the Vigário Geral massacre is the tragedy that sets forth more participation by the newsletter editors. They join Vigário Geral community meetings about how to cope with the aftermath of the massacre. Later in 1993, they establish the first Núcleo Comunitário de Cultura, precedent to the Grupo Cultural Afro Reggae (GCAR), aiming to give youth options other than joining factions in Vigário Geral.

In the context of the organization's foundation, Operação Rio ("Operation Rio") begins in 1994, taking away civil rights from favelized citizens. The social dismemberment persists. Military forces invade the favela streets, suspending favelized residents' civil rights as they point their artillery directly at the residents (Costa Vargas 2008, 63). This favelized space is in a postwar state at the time, comparable to how Agamben defines the concentration camp, in a state of exception where the law has been lifted (Agamben 1995, 29). Afro Reggae performs most of its activism, or re-membering the flesh, in a targeted part of the Vigário Geral district of Rio de Janeiro during the 1990s.\(^{15}\)

Over the course of ten years, and until today, GCAR and AfroReggae act to re-member trauma in the flesh. AfroReggae's second album, "Nenhum Motivo Explica a Guerra," illustrates how the band, as an embodied performance movement, enacts a re-membering in the flesh or a healing process of remembrance and social inclusion, that re-members or reincorporates the diasporic foundational experience into contemporary music, and that helps

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\(^{15}\) The group's performance and activism at this time can be seen as an attempt to redirect genocidal political projects that might affect community members' self-esteem, with Brazilian policies that function as genocidal politics that sustain the "fragmenting and domineering and globalized neoliberal heteropatriarchal capitalist White supremacist world" (Costa Vargas 2008), in contrast to a changing discourse that joins the White supremacist discourse today. Ten years later, the founding members have expanded into a large team, Afro Reggae has built four cultural centers that house events and workshops to connect youth to an Africanist style of performance, to provide a space and tools for agency in the context of a marginalized community, and to cultivate role models and upward mobility other than from professional sports or drug trafficking. The course of ten years, founding members of GCAR have learned to navigate the complexities of creating an organization in a marginalized space in Brazil, outlined in detail in José Junior's 2006 testimony Nenhum Motivo Explica a Guerra. Some have allegedly received death threats, and one cultural center has been closed in the Complexo do Alemão area.
individuals work through and witness personal and communal trauma. The album, analyzed in further detail at the end of this chapter, incorporates issues that have been widely discussed in the media, but from the standpoint of the band members and community members. The album mirrors the mission of the Afro Reggae organization. Both adapt foundational diaspora music to promote African diasporic values of self-esteem, cultural preservation, agency, and resistance as a part of Afro-Brazilian identities in the 1990s until today. In that way, Afro Reggae choreographs a performance movement to survive current challenges in Rio de Janeiro, and acts to re-member the community’s voice in the flesh.

The dash in re-membering in the flesh recognizes palpable identities with bodily and/or psychological wounds, points to forgotten citizens that re-form part of a community and re-shape the heterogeneity of the African diaspora, and reflects the essence of Hip Hop as fracture. Hip Hop as fracture implies a broken bone, a wound and a point of tension that communities of African descent have carried throughout history (Rose 1994, 21). First there was the transnational colonial economy based on the slave trade and forced migration of individuals of African descent. Then the industrialization and modernization of the Western hemisphere continued to marginalize groups of African descent, while the abolition of slavery remained questionable in both the United States and Brazil. Postindustrialism witnessed oppression of Afro-Brazilians through urban segregation, drug trafficking, and violence. Each era witnessed a parallel African diasporic voice of resistance. In postindustrial New York, Los Angeles, and other parts of the Americas, Hip Hop artists speak up to denounce the continuing oppression of the postindustrial era. Hip Hop addresses the socially therapeutic role of performance as Rose presents Hip Hop at the fracture or tension between two cultures (Rose 1994, 31). The whole concept of re-membering in the flesh encompasses the tension, binding ties, and social healing through embodied expressivity.

In “Todo Bolado,” Anderson Sá concludes that “o caminho certo é o caminho da sorte [the right way is the way of luck],” and the ‘wrong’ way, that is, the unlucky way, is the path to death (“o caminho errado pode te levar a morte”). This is the logic that makes the singer, and the favela community, fed up. It is impossible to determine what is lucky or unlucky at the site of the fracture or tension between neoliberalism and mocambó communities. The song ends with “my pride still resides in this community,” replacing stigma, sadness, shame, with pride and a sense of belonging to a community. In 1993 choreographing to survive and to re-member pride in the flesh, the performance releases lingering frustrations after the massacre. The lyrics reflect the lack of logic that rules favelized spaces, and urge the young audience to re-member
in the flesh a logic wherein the state of exception that governs their lives can be redirected, with pride.

Healing within the Realm of Spectacle: From Narco to Transformative Culture

A brief overview of the slum communities of Rio de Janeiro highlights a socio-affective context of marginality—marginalization through guilt—and a "state of exception"—a geopolitical space where the state’s law no longer applies. AfroReggae and GCAR enact a resistance to both, in Vigário Geral, where a war is being waged to defend (the privileged) society against a contaminating entity (the marginalized of African descent). Rio, the divided city with now two-thirds living in favelas (Ventura 1994, 13; Campos 2005, 92), is governed by genocidal policies (Costa Vargas 2006) and targeted abandonment by the state. A decade before GCAR is founded, in the early 1980s, the media remains a counterproductive source of stigmatization as it earns a central role in the daily life of late twentieth-century Brazil. In response, aside from working on material recuperation and survival, organizations in favelized spaces work on restoring empowering images within the realm of the spectacle, counter to the media coverage boom on drug trafficking in the favela (McCann 2006), in part due to a boom of drug trafficking in the 1980s, itself due to international policing changes, which turned Rio de Janeiro into an important export node for cocaine produced in Bolivia and Colombia. In a context of beach arrastões (mass arrests), onstage and street performances turn targets of moral stigmatization into vehicles of African diaspora culture and empowering tools for agency. They do so precisely in the realm of the spectacle, where the process of moral stigmatization occurs, where negative stereotypes have been reinforced, and police invasions have been legitimated (Yudice 1994, 54).

16. Ventura (1994) outlines the history of Rio as a divided city, tracing the growing divide between “modern” Rio and “barbaric favela,” throughout the twentieth century. Ventura refers to the Roman term “barbaric,” which meant “foreign to the empire.” Rather than stigmatizing the favela as backward, Ventura sets forth an image of the favela as set apart from the state, foreign to the empire.

17. A favela faixa, a collection of testimonies from favela dwellers, describes ongoing abandonment by the state, and the struggles against such abandonment, with activists’ stories and their efforts to improve local infrastructure, education, and public health.

18. Costa Vargas (2006) shows “the long history of negative racialized stereotypes associated with the favelas” and how the image of the favelized space has been “recycled by including the alleged effects of drugs on these supposedly already degraded, amoral, and violent communities” (63).
Anderson Sá, the lead singer of AfroReggae, addresses the same traumatic event in "To Bolado." When he founds the Grupo Cultural Afro Reggae, José Junior's actions and choices as co-creator and director of GCAR fit a paradigm that attempts to go beyond Westernized social circuits. Instead of prescribing immediate answers, the group looks for solutions based on social context. GCAR members communicate with and recognize the culture of the factions early on, along with the amount of knowledge and training acquired in factions, to resist stigmatizing a part of favelized spaces' realities. For example, in Da Favela para o mundo, José Junior draws a line between the representation of the favela community in Brazilian films and AfroReggae. In response to critics of GCAR who would put AfroReggae and the film Pixote in the same category, Junior notes a difference in intentional meaning. The narrative in Pixote disallows favela dwellers, portrays dispossession and marginalization, and fits José Junior's metaphor of a net that traps a child in a character rather than giving him the tools to "transform into a fish." The mission of GCAR is to shape young adults into independent, skillful, educated, and empowered individuals, and to break the Pixote stereotypes. The analogy of transformation suggests a re-membering in the flesh: transformation comes from the child herself, agent in the act of re-membering empowerment and agency to her favelized self.

The words of GCAR's founder underline favela children's potential, without discrediting drug factions' influence on children's identity-formation. He respects some of the values, structure, doctrines, and rules implemented in the factions (Junior 2006, 119). Counter to the national media narrative that feeds affective marginality, and that labels drug trafficking as immoral, Junior states how ex-drug traffickers acquire valuable skills as reliable leaders in GCAR. At the same time, he rejects the concept of "anti-marketing." Group members consume and wear brand-name clothes in order to "combat the image of the poor favela dwellers with dirty noses and rotten teeth," questionably in line with consumerism and capitalism (140).

Within the favelized camps, GCAR organizes youth programs and workshops to teach policemen about theatre, graffiti, and music, and consequently, that children from the favela are not inherently part of the drug army. The
funding comes first from the Ford Foundation, and over time has received sponsorship from Universal Music, Santander Bank, and Petrobras, becoming a business with an annual budget of 20 million Reals coordinated within the walls of a 5-million-Real headquarters office. The activities that take their community out of a state of exception, and out of socio-affective marginality, include music shows in marginalized areas, training in computer and employment skills for young adults, hosting and organizing academic conferences and workshops, and holding open discussion with and training for police.

In an online interview, José Junior explains, “Why all that? Because we need to build something to impress and show off. We are competing against drug trafficking. Our objective is to attract and recruit young people earning, sometimes, fifty thousand Reals a week.” Fostering projects that untangle the stigmatized identity of their community, Afro Reggae musicians and GCAR talk back to stereotypes, and talk back to the favelization of their communities as spaces undeserving of protection, public services, or self-esteem. They work to heal affective marginality.

On AfroReggae's second album, Nenhum Motivo Explica a Guerra, the first track speaks to undoing the state of exception and stereotype of the favela—healing affective marginality within the realm of the spectacle. A fast-paced, live-sounding Hip Hop fusion track with spots from UK rappers Ty and Est’Eile presents the album’s main argument: “War, What Is It Good For?”—a critique of the current global geopolitical order.

The critique begins with the first stanza of the first track, “Nenhum Motivo Explica a Guerra” (“War, What Is It Good For?”): “War, what is it good for? / Not for dough / Nor victory / nor vengeance, nor industrial progress . . . Nor territorial conquest” (v.1-4). “Conquista territorial” relates drug gangs fighting for territory with the global neoliberal world order, while the repetition of “nem (nor, not even)” emphasizes critique. The world order of war that marginalizes “us,” individuals speaking from the “hoods/favelas,” is ominous yet irrational.

Hip Hop demonstrates qualities of “flow, layering, and rupture” (Rose 1994, 22), which stand as both a reflection and a contestation of the roles that society offers to urban inner-city youth. Shifting power relations, establishing new configurations of knowledge and power, AfroReggae and GCAR use the two driving forces of Hip Hop defined by Rose to present the possibility of using performance and Hip Hop as a healing tool, specifically to heal affective marginality imposed through guilt (Herlinghaus 2009). There are two driving forces that fashion Hip Hop—social and political forces on one hand, and Black culture on the other (Rose 1994, 23). Afro Reggae and GCAR transform bodies that have served as “targets of moral stigmatization” into vehicles of African diaspora culture and empowering tools for agency.

There is both a first track—finding knowledge and purpose in their be something that verse repeated in t is about a preoccu individuals accepti The rapper affirms affective marginality.

With a world war for various re worldwide—to bre stigmatization—an las into spaces of “Pull out your gut bad as the rest / L a synthesis of the the justifications t explica a Guerra! [The song ends No More Trouble.” attention to their the public realm AfroReggae asks t image of narco-cu with a chorus of h “Nenhum Motivo versioning in Hip tional notions of a (in voice rather th privileges Bob Ma gaes versioning br where “a politics o images and symb succeeded in ‘cro responsibility”’ (H and collective resp tized since the 195 “repertoire of ima
There is both an ethical concern and an epistemological concern in the first track—finding the right solution and establishing new configurations of knowledge and power. "War, what is it good for," or the world order without a purpose in their community, relates to identity crisis—"No one needs to be something that they are not." This is the chorus of the song, and the only verse repeated in this song besides the chorus is "not race, nor faith." The song is about a preoccupation with the way war has affected identity, with some individuals accepting it as "national pride," "shame," or "population control." The rapper affirms an ethical stance against all of these discourses of socio-affective marginality.

With a world order based on "war," and individuals identifying with war for various reasons, lyrics urges the implicit audience—favela dwellers worldwide—to break free from both the stereotype—being a target of moral stigmatization—and the neoliberal world order that wages war and turns favelas into spaces of exception. The song concludes, directed at gang members: "Pull out your gun if you're looking for death / You're no better / you're as bad as the rest / Listen!" This call to the audience ("Listen!") is followed by a synthesis of the song's arguments; with a fast pace, the rapper lists all of the justifications to change and pauses to state his stance: "Nenhum motivo explica a Guerra! [No motive justifies war]."

The song ends with the chorus fading with the Wailers' "We Don't Need No More Trouble." The two theses of the album are exposed. AfroReggae calls attention to their affective marginalization and to the need to change it in the public realm of imagined narratives, through performance and music. AfroReggae asks to end the affective and the physical warfare, to turn the image of narco-culture into transformative culture. Starting with and ending with a chorus of homage to Bob Marley and the Wailers' track, the first track, "Nenhum Motivo Explica a Guerra," is a cry for peace and an example of versioning in Hip Hop remixing. The reworking of a track redefines traditional notions of authorship and originality. The sampling of "we don't need" (in voice rather than technological sampling) recontextualizes, highlights, and privileges Bob Marley's message in a fresh context (Rose 1994, 90). AfroReggae's versioning breaks down the global order of an affective economy of guilt, where "a politics of foundationalist assumptions, together with a repertoire of images and symbols for rendering evident guilty territories and bodies, have succeeded in crowd[ing] out the possibility of reason, care, and collective responsibility" (Herlinghaus 2009, 10). There is a possibility of reason, care, and collective responsibility. Though favelas have become increasingly stigmatized since the 1950s (and oddly a new destination for tourism in Rio), and the "repertoire of images and symbols" that renders favela residents guilty is part
of a drug war associated with sacred symbols, while drug trafficking and drugs connote evil in global narratives (ibid., 9), AfroReggae crowds in collective responsibility, and asks for peace. AfroReggae musicians and activists chose to perform a narrative repair of community trauma and guilt in contrast to other works of art, to turn narco-culture into transformative culture (Lindemann 2001, 66).

GCAR effects a healing of affective marginality in its activism with their own repertoire of images and symbols. The image of Orilaxé attests to the importance of transformation: "a cabeça tem o poder da transformação [the head has the power to transform]" (Junior 2006, 197). GCAR named its yearly awards after this Orixa (a Candomblé deity) that, aside from supporting neighborhood activism efforts, promotes their African diasporic culture and underlines the importance of transformation. José Junior also associates GCAR with the "Shiva Effect," moving from chaos to destruction to change.

The performance movement's use of transformational symbols cultivates self-esteem. Transformation redirects the discourse of narco-culture into a discourse of nurturing Afro Brazilian cultures. José Junior explains in his testimony: "The fact is that GCAR is inserted into this reality [of narcoculture]. We developed two basic strategies to ensure that the 'AfroReggae culture' consume the narcoculture, supersedes it and rises from there, a positive path to action." This is a redirection of the affective marginality into social affirmation and agency. For Junior, the narco-culture is a network beyond the favela, with tentacles that allow it to touch upon different social instances. It does not necessarily imply violence or illegal acts, and can actually reject those very aspects of narco-culture. Novels, chronicles, short stories, and films such as City of God or City of Men and some Hip Hop artists can be a part of narco-culture. Vice versa, the larger profits from narco-culture go to individuals who barely interact with and live far from the favelas.10 In that way, AfroReggae is a part of this culture, but at the same time, it reformulates narco-culture, recognizes the effects and reality of socio-affective marginalization, and proposes a nurturing form of culture: a Hip Hop-based performance movement that re-members in the flesh.

Rather than supplementing the neoliberal regime and feeding the tentacles that support narco-trafficking, AfroReggae embraces cultural values of the African diasporic macambo favelas. Its organizational structure is built around a gun to maintain a sense of power, a cædada percussionist! They shift from affective marginality into social affirmation.

From Affective Marginality

AfroReggae's lyrics or batidaria, to use the track of Nenhum Mi political tone. The song to build a narrative of bad news: I want to live in the upper classes who send cocaine abroad, and what goes on in the favelas has nothing to do with it" (Police official Marina Maggessi, qtd. in Platt and Neate 2010, 89).

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10. In mid-September 2005 several members of the upper-class Zona Sul carioca neighborhoods were arrested after 1.6 tons of cocaine were seized, along with 2 million Reals, later stolen from federal police headquarters, for which fifty-eight police were suspended. Later in December, a PSDB-party-related former mayoral candidate was arrested for trafficking 500 kilos of cocaine in Pará. The traffic in favelas was known to be much lower and local at the time: "It's the upper classes who send cocaine abroad, and what goes on in the favelas has nothing to do with it" (Police official Marina Maggessi, qtd. in Platt and Neate 2010, 89).
the African diaspora and performance, the same values upheld in the first mocambo favelas. José Junior and other organizers make use of drug traffic’s organizational structure, having new members earn their way through the association by rewarding them with increasing responsibilities. Rather than earning a gun to move up from kite flying to watchman, they shift from batucada percussionist to batucada section leader, to workshop leader, and so on. They shift from affective marginality to beat-citizenship.

From Affective Marginality to Beat-Citizenship

AfroReggae’s lyrics denounce and overturn a state of ban into beat-citizenship or batidania, to use George Yudice’s term. Still with a theme of war, the third track of Nenhum Motivo Explica a Guerra, “Mais uma chance,” conveys a strong political tone. The chords that open up the harmony are repeated throughout the song to build a harmonious, upbeat rhythm while a minor chord notes an unsettled feeling—the space of exception. The first verse presents a divide between the public discourse that describes his community, in contrast to his own life experience: “Porque nas segundas chegam noticias tão ruins / Quero expulsá-las da minha vida [Because in a matter of seconds we get such bad news / I want to get these news out of my life]” (v.1–2). He reveals how difficult it is to live in “bad news.” One verse is repeated besides the chorus, “gerações sem chance (generations without an opportunity).” These two characteristics—having private life exposed in the public realm, and lived as bad news, and feeling like a generation without opportunities—establish the song’s thesis. Living in a space of exception and affective marginality limits self-identity.

At the end of the song, the rhythm picks up for the bridge and rap “Damned heritage / Fighters, guerrilla fighters without a cause / There are so many mothers who cry / When they lose their children / I pray to a God whom I don’t know / But who surely knows who I am.” A melodic verse follows: “I want to have a tomorrow,” with this seemingly harmonious chord that ends on a sharp note—musical superimposition of hope in a space of exception. Backup singers wrap up with a harmony, with rapping reminding that “guerrilla fighters fight a war without a cause.” The note of hope, yet lack of solution, resolves in the following track on community unity, or beat-citizenship.

21. See Platt and Neate (2010) for testimonies from GCAR members, and detailed descriptions of skills that they make use of in drug trafficking as well as in GCAR.
“Quero só você [I only want you]” shifts Nenhum Motivo Explica a Guerra from critique to desire—desire for beat-citizenship. This is the first song in which the direct object pronoun “us” is associated with themes of dream and hope. This song shifts the album’s mood to one of a love song, first with the harmonizing backup voices at the beginning, then the chorus “quero só você [I only want you]” and the first lyrics “O que eu quero e o A do amor [What I want is the L of love].”

With this track, the sound clearly defines the band’s heterogeneity. AfroReggae splices rock music with rap music, reminiscent of early U.S. American Hip Hop that sampled rock music (long before Run-DMC’s use of samples from rock band Aerosmith’s “Walk This Way” in 1986). “Beats selected by Hip Hop producers and DJs have always come from and continue to come from an extraordinary range of musics” (Rose 1994, 52). Nenhum Motivo Explica a Guerra also features sounds and influences from reggae music, dancehall, and drum’n’bass throughout the album, expressing a plurality of new forms of identities to relate to, in order to work through the stigmatized identity that had been imposed onto them, and in order to identify with something other than the falsely unified national identity that marginalized them. AfroReggae, by putting music at the center of its social activism movement, shifts the Western epistemology of social activism to fit their plural context. Its fusion sound speaks for the “polyglossia of sociability” that is useful for their movement to work (Yudice 1994, 56). In other words, GCAR’s sociopolitical strategies, which included a hybrid music genre, spoke to the multiplicitous needs of urban youths, and met a need for heterogeneous strategies to provide social mobility to the youth.

A desire for freedom, not charity, is a political message directed to the city’s behavior towards the favela dwellers, and NGOs perform acts of charity that do not emancipate in “Quero só você.” The chorus establishes that this

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32. Context-based heteroglossic social activism also has a history in Brazilian funk and rap critiqued society, proposed antinational identities and local citizenship (Yudice 1994). During interviews with Afro Reggae administrators and favela youth, DJ Marlboro’s name came up on several occasions. He was a famous funk DJ over ten years ago whose name still resonates as a central figure to rejuvenate the favela’s marginalized space, its state of constant war, and helps to transform it into a place where youth could find entertainment and come together to dance at funk parties. Other DJ names that were mentioned include Furação and DJ Romalo Costa.

33. Funk and rap critiqued society, important influences of AfroReggae, fashioning a new sense of antinational identity that claimed local citizenship, and providing a language that went against falsely unified national discourse, and spoke against the myth of mestipagem (or race mixing), while providing favela youth with new forms of identity—pluralistic role models that fit their social context. Funk lyrics speak to the context of the favelas, youth came together to express themselves through social dance at funk dance parties. New identities were readily available and relatable to favelized youth (Yudice 1994, 197).
song is about a way of life: "Quero liberdade / Não quero caridade / Que o vento nos carregue / Pra paz do nosso reggae (I want freedom/ I don't want charity / I want the wind to carry us / Towards our reggae's peace)." The association with the wind could be related to true freedom, being one with nature and unbound from a state of exception's boundaries. In the chorus, the possessive adjective "our" first comes up, which speaks to ownership, property, and is associated here with "reggae." Of what could "our" reggae—our beat-citizenship—consist?

The first stanza lists everything the poetic voice wants: love, good, a future with "you," well-being, no one else (other than "you"), understanding, peace helping "us." The first stanza sets up the utopia that the poetic voice strives for—a peaceful time, day and night, in which "you" would not abandon them. The lyrics in "Quero Só Você" set up the argument of the song to be about sanity, health, how beat-citizenship could flourish, or the product of beat-citizenship: "Quero o B do bem / . . . quero o bem estar (I want the G of good, I want well-being)." The bridge is made up of rap that breaks with the rhythm, and makes the song's main point. While backup singers accompany the harmony, they echo the beginning of the song and mark the poetic tone's changes. What was first setting up a romantic harmony now back up a political stance: "I'm on a destination-less road / Where all the paths lead to one / Roaming between mind and hearts / I look back with dignity / Enough with the tears / Enough with the conflicts / I can't find what I'm looking for / But I insist, I won't desist." This new path is a path of desire, of dreams, and the lack of destination suggests the possibility of going on with hope regardless of the lack of opportunities and conflicts. "I insist, I won't desist" being the last verse of this stanza, the only one with a rhyme, underlines the persistence not to let lack of possibilities put one down. The anaphora of "Chega (Enough)" also puts the critique behind, alluding to the two previous songs. One looks back "with dignity," rather than the anger of reading the news in "Mais uma chance." After this bridge, the first stanza is repeated and earns new meaning.

The call and response between two singers in this song, with the harmonizing singer and the rapper as two different voices, transforms the "you" and the desire. "I want only you," the second time around, refers to the transformative ability to dream, the strength of a community able to dream. The chorus returns ("I want freedom / I don't want charity / I want the wind to carry us / Towards our reggae's peace") to introduce the rapper's voice. The rapper's voice reiterates a sense of dignity, "head high," and this time around, he is not lost or wandering but calling to seize the moment: "this is the time, the time is now. A call to follow faith and desire and strive for unity, "for me, for you and everyone," transforming the perception of the relationship from just
a loving relationship between two people to solidarity within a community. "I want only you" now changes to mean you, a community full of faith, hope and pride, beat-citizens.

The two singers end with a call and response not stanza to stanza, but verse to verse, with the rapper saying verses first dedicated to the harmonizing voice. The song ends on a note of solidarity: voices intertwine, towards a hopeful future, resolving a questioning of identity prevalent in the previous songs as it defends historical agency, ownership, and the power to look back with dignity and look forward with hope.

Conclusion: Performance and “Collective Efficacy” as Social Healing

AfroReggae offers an Africana performance movement of empowerment in order to overcome affective marginalization and collective trauma. With components such as "our reggae," the polyglossia of Hip Hop sampling and beat citizenship, AfroReggae's Hip Hop imparts a discourse of hope, channeling an oppressive context and transforming it through performance, through embodied discourse. The performance movement echoes a history that to this day remains insufficiently heard, from geopolitical spaces that were once quilombos, spaces of political cultural resistances to the genocidal statist discourse, then and now. In a context of weakened or absent citizenship, under the threat of genocide, members of Afro Reggae and the community choose to re-member pride, hope, and agency to their identities. AfroReggae and GCAR create a performance movement that re-members in the flesh. With Hip Hop and performance movements that re-member trauma in the flesh, AfroReggae's performances and narratives promote a blend of Africana experience with a mocambo epistemology: survival, solidarity and cultural connection to Africana experience in order resist (neo)liberal and affective marginality and state political racism.

Bibliography


