

## 75 - BOY WHO WAS YOUR MASTER? CHARACTERISTICS AND PECULIARITIES OF THE MASTER FORMATION IN THE HISTORY OF CAPOEIRA.

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### 1. Historical singularities

The capoeira, Brazilian immaterial cultural patrimony, has as reference of her history, peoples the made their life's the capoeira, bringing marked on their bodies all the cultural arcabouço of this resistance praxis, styling it and adapting it to the bad weathers of socio-cultural development.

Since her beginning in the senzalas and quilombos, until the first decades of the XX century, the capoeira incorporated the vagrancy as a synonym and characteristic, an art predominantly lucid that posses the principal characteristics of the game, brings some synonyms, according to CORTES (1999), apud (Huizinga):

"The game is not current life, not even real life, its like it was an interval in our daily life; it distinguishes it self from the common life as much for the place as for the duration that it occupies, it has by characteristics the isolation and the limitation, another of its characteristics, maybe more of a mark, refers to the fact that, in the double unity of the game and culture, the game comes first: he creates order and he is order. In the game, it is verified all the lucid characteristics: order, tension, movement, change, solemnity, rhythm and enthusiasm. In which weight are these esthetically marked characteristics and in which weight the fact that the game, as such, is put beyond the domain of good and evil, the element of tension confers it a certain ethical valor, in the measure in which are put to the test the qualities of the player: his strength and tenacity, his ability and courage and, equally, his spiritual capacities, his loyalty. In the game, it does not exist the possibility to a manifestation of any skepticism."

It is noted that we could change, in the citation above, every word "game" by "capoeira" and we would have a reference about the concept of game in the art of capoeiragem. It is certain that these characteristics lose sense in the moment in which the capoeira is no longer a game and entertainment and becomes a personal defense, a fight. Master Curió, in a very simple and reachable way, defines this change "...the Capoeira is mandinga, vagrancy, entertainment, but, in the time of pain, it becomes a very violent form of fight."

In a ideological resistance plan the capoeira agressed many codes of dominating cultures, as many martial arts had an origin quite different from the sportive practices. According to Falcão it is the most important symbol of black resistance against the domination, it is even confused, with the process of emancipation of Brazil.

Understanding the environment of capoeira, trough a constructive perspective, where the game and the dance mask the fight, and we have an inversion of values from weak to strong, right from wrong, noticing that the person enters the capoeira circle upside down, this way it proportionate a different vision of the world. In this scenario of malice and entertainment, it is formed, by the passing years, important figures as much to the development as to the preservation of Capoeira that are called Masters. And it is justly this formation that serves as a problem to this work. How they began? Which is the formation process? Which is the importance before their pares and society? Trough the bibliographic and imagistic research, it was possible to describe a little of these process, searching to answer the formulated questions.

### 2. The master's formation: Boy who was your master?

*Menino, quem foi teu mestre?*

*Que te deu essa lição?*

*A ele devo respeito,*

*Saúde e obrigação*

This process of expansive evolution of capoeira, manifestation of popular culture, as originated in function of the work of diverse social actors, people that had not only the knowledge of capoeira, with a lot of life experience, renowned by their communities In which they were inserted, in most of the cases with a certain degree of veneration by their pares, these actors were responsible fro transmitting, preserving and recreating the lucid aspects, martial and musical of capoeira in the passing years, utilizing these attributes from the memory and the orality.

In terms of the function of memory as a link to the past, Rosário (2002), affirm that " the part of memory is not only of recognition of the past contents, but an effective revival that has in its whole or in part of this past, and thanks to the faculty of remembering we can escape death." Thinking the oral memory as a complex of sensibilities, feelings and that is always going trough the collective, we have then this knowledge of ho the relation between our generation and the witnesses of the past.

"Master: expert or someone who knows that teaches; professor. Men of great doctrines; luminary; guide; ...principal; fundamental."

According to the dictionary of Brazilian folklore of Luiz da Câmara Cascudo, Master is every great manual worker, that who teaches or a title to members of a community that exercises a profound relationship with any knowledge, in form of respect. In capoeira, the appearing of these social agents, transmitters of knowledge filled with empiric sense in their trajectories of life, mostly trough orality, it was of great importance so that today it is possible to know this art. In this upside down world, they were and are the principal responsible for the propagation and dissemination of the Capoeira trough the world.

However, the word Master, or the title of Master, begins to appear in capoeira since the beginning of the XX century, until then, this conception doesn't seem to exist. We have as reference tales like the one of Master Pastinha, telling how was the beginning of is learning in Capoeira, there isn't a moment where he does reference or uses the word Master, but he does called as "an old African" evidence that the term appears in the XX century.

We the passing of times socio cultural changes that emerge transform and break paradigms, that create new dogmas that make new forms of life conceptions. Mostly today, with all the technological evolution and the global access and none stop information; these changes are very evident and constant. So an analysis about the process of formation of the Master is needed, articulating with the nuances that come from the exercise of life.

Beginning the analysis from the XX century, historical moment in which political questions were bursting, in the recently created, Republic and, by consequence, a series of social questions was happening. In this environment, the Capoeira,

in the state of Bahia, resisted firmly to diverse attempts of submit her practice, gaining refuge in backyards, where guardians of its secrets passed their practice to some fortunated few. Trough the verbalization of knowledge's, observation and imitation, these few people became disciples and in recognition to their services they gave the title of Master to the one who had the knowledge for the biggest amount of time, according to Adib (2006):

"The Master is the one that is recognized by its community, as the one who has a knowledge that incarnates the struggles and sufferings, joys and celebrations, defeats and victories, pride and heroism of the generations past, and have the almost religious mission of making available this knowledge to those that come to it. The Master has in its own body, the ancestrally and the history of its people and assumes, by this reason, the function of poet that, trough is singing, is capable of restituting this past with renewing force, that erupts to dignify the present and conduct the constructive action of the future."

Until the middle of the XX century the conception of the master was related with its formation in the middle of marginality, in difficult conditions of life, suffering of the most absurd cases of discrimination, in view that they were mostly black and poor. Their formation as capoeirist was very bonded to their existential trajectory, where the experiences of life and the recognition of the other factors very determinant to "be" a Master. The knowledge of traditions, the handling of the instruments, the dexterity of the improvisation of the songs, the agility in the game and the efficiency in the struggle were put together..

A second phase that we must think is from the dissemination of the capoeira regional of Master Bimba, where the process of formation suffers some modifications that change in some way the configuration of the transmission system of knowledge existing until then, for the physical training and some technical pre requisites that were and are fundamental to the practice of capoeira. For that it is needed to understand how the process of creation of the Luta Regional Baiana was and, trough her, the appearance of two of the most respected and known Masters of all times.

### 3. Master Bimba and Master Pastinha: Two paths of a same capoeira.

*"...Mandingueiro, cheio de malevolência.*

*Era ligeiro o meu mestre.*

*Jogava conforme a cadência.*

*Do bater do berimbau.*

*Salve o Mestre Bimba, criador da regional..."*

*(piece from the music Iaiá loiô)*

Manuel do Reis Machado, the "Master Bimba", was the creator of one of the slopes of capoeira the "regional". Since is birth, in 23 of November of 1990, is nickname was Bimba. Born and raised in the bairro de Engenho Velho in Salvador Bahia, where before he was twelve years old started in the Companhia Baiana de Navegação. After four years of learning Bimba passed to teach Capoeira in the Capitania dos Portos da Bahia, where he stayed for more than ten years.

However, it was from the end of the XX decade, that Master Bimba started to modify all the capoeiristic, political and cultural scenario of the city of Salvador and then of all Brazil. In the middle of a society notoriously racist and classist, master Bimba suffered in the skin the persecution given to the capoeira, as to the other African culture manifestations, it was so true that the practice of capoeira was a criminal activity present in the penal code at the time like it was seen before. In this way Bimba noticed that the capoeira was becoming a mere folkloric act, losing its marciality and many of its practitioners.

So, he separated the traditional capoeira, practiced since slavery, with some of the blows of an African fight called Batuque, in which is father Luiz Cândido Machado was a great fighter, baptizing this new style Luta Regional Baiana escaping from its marginality. This new style was propagated with the name Capoeira Regional, obligating a bigger characterization of the old Capoeira that begins to be called Angola, as a reference to its origin, from notorious African roots.

The presence of master Bimba in the history of Bahia, according to Filho (1997), its much more meaningful that the figure of the creator of a method of quick learning of capoeira, it is the divider of waters, the responsible for the evolution of artisan learning in the popular circle of capoeira, to the systematic learning in a class of physical education recognized by the Ministry of Education. He was the one who introduced African costumes in the bosom of the youth in the dominating class of the baiana society of the 30 decade, so successful that the academics of Salvador would pump up their chests to the number of students of Master Bimba.

The importance of Bimba to the capoeira may be measured trough the some of his realizations like direct influence he had to the coming out of capoeira from the marginal scenario, after he founded is academy in 1932 in the Engenho de Brotas in Salvador. Called of Centro de Cultura Fisica Regional Baina, Master Bimba received in 1937 from the secretary of Education, Health and Public assistance the title of Director of the class of Physical Education, Salvador Bahia, primordial mark to the recognition of Capoeira as a sport.

The great difference of the Master was the creation of a capoeira learning method. The class of Capoeira Regional had a variable duration, from six months to a year, approximately, with classes of one hour, three times a week. In the class the capoeirist learned the ginga, the eight sequences and the despised waist with a "formado", that was like Mestre Bimba called the capoeirist that had concluded his class. Having learned the ginga, the beginner would pass trough sequences of learning, which consisted in pre arranged series of movements of attack and defense that the capoeirists would do in pares, simulating a capoeira game. In reality it was a big sequence, divided in eight parts, with an increasing degree of difficulty reuniting the main movements utilized in Capoeira, between dodges, traumatic and unbalancing blows.

Decanio Filho(1997) describes poetically Master Bimba:" I can't conceive Master Bimba... in the terreiros of heaven He would not fit in paradise... because he was the symbol... of the freedom of man! Its limit is the Universe... that includes heaven, Purgatory and Hell... where lived the discriminatory souls... who would not recognize the greatness of God.. that lives in each one of us... independent of color, culture or scolarity... Bimba would not trip the angels.. in earth or in heaven... because it is forbidden.. a master to make trip a beginner..."

*"Toda Bahia chorou, no dia que a capoeira*

*de angola perdeu seu protetor.*

*pastinha foi embora oxalá quem o levou foi pras terra*

*de Aruanda mais ninguém se conformou.*

*Chorou general menino chorou mocinha, doutor preta velha feiticeira,*

*orgãos e babalaô. Berimbau tocou iuna, um toque triste de morte,*

*e a capoeira foi jogada ao som de uma triste canção.*

*Na boca de um mandigueiro, no fundo do coração, mais nunca ouve na Bahia*

*quem cantasse esse refrão, camaradinha viva Pastinha."*

*(talk, Mestre Pastinha)*

In a very antagonist slope, with the creation of the Luta Regional Baiana and, with the legalization of Capoeira in the 30

decade, it began a very big process of loss of identity in capoeira. With the incorporation of elements from oriental martial arts in the Capoeira Regional, some capoeirists and historians that were more traditional, they attribute to that a process called of Falcão whitening of capoeira. And in response to this process, appear movements of preservation of the Capoeira Angola that was like the mother the matrix and retainer of all the original characteristics and fundamentals of capoeira. It also appears a Master that would mark history as the maximal icon of Angola, for being a great player, for preserving the traditions, but above all that is posture as a person.

Born in Salvador Bahia, in the 5 of April of 1889, Master Pastinha is the portrait of the ethnic and cultural miscegenation that formed capoeira and of the Brazilian people. Son of a merchant, descending from Spanish's, called José Señor Pastinha with a black descending from Africans, born in Santo Amaro of Purificação, called Raimunda dos Santos. Vicente Ferreira came to be one of the greatest Masters in the history of capoeira, known as the guardian of capoeira Angola.

Is learning began at 8 years old, when a black African called Benedito decided to teach him the art of capoeira, since then is learning became eternal, he made the capoeira a philosophy and his vital energy. His importance is presented to us in a very expansive form by filho (1997), according to him, Master Pastinha is described like this: "Pastinha transcends in this way the human being... transform himself in a social agent... he beats the short duration of human life... he perpetuates himself by his work... transmitting is Dream to a Continuing Student... that is contaminated by his ideal... Without Pastinha... the capoeira would be today... only a new martial art... in a market dominated by the Orientals... Pastinha was the guardian of freedom of creation... of the innocence of lucid components... of the beauty of choreography... the genius that discovered... in words simple and pure... the mystical aspects of capoeira."

These two positions presented by the history of Masters Bimba and Pastinha, bring not only the problematic of capoeira with the passing years and, don't have as an objective to enter in the case of such collision, serving only as a point of start for a new structuration of the archetype of the Master of capoeira.

When talkin about Pastinha, we have as a diverse back round of other capoeirists, Masters, that firmed themselves in Capoeira Angola and maintained the process of formation very similar to what we have already seen, sure that it is always voluble to adaptations of time and society. Bimba marks the creation of grades, not him particularly, but one of his students, the Master Carlos Senna, responsible for the institution of strings or ropes as a mark of hierarchy of capoeira, it brings together a proliferation in mass of capoeirists and the lack of control on this system of hierarchy and we have the actual picture of capoeira, the Master forming by the string and not by the life and by capoeira.

#### 4. Final Considerations

The capoeira always has had the figure of the Master as a fundament of its ancestors and, as much as Master Bimba as Master Pastinha acted in an incisive way in the struggle for preservation and recognition of capoeira, in hostile times, that dignify even more their acts. The important it that we can, capoeirist or not, understand that the capoeira is above any pardon, it is nature, unpredictable, body and knowledge and t be retainer of its knowledge's the time and practice are never separated paths.

"the most important in this tradition is the breath, its what you are passing.. you're soul that you are transmitting [he makes a gesture like he was passing the soul trough is mouth]. Then you are not transmitting simply you're word, but the breath... the soul... then, when you receive that you are receiving a tradition of many and many forefathers, because someone already passed me that... now I am passing it to you, you will keep it in you, and then you will be able to pass the same thing to another, then it is much more than picking up a book and reading... there is a soul there, there is a gesture, a look, there is a form(...) all of this stays marked, because its nice to read a book, but the emotion pf someone that is being told something, passing you something, there is a whole gesture, a bright in the eyes, that you feel a soul being passed to you." (Cobra Mansa)

It is important that they are remembered as educators, with or without string, in times of unstoppable dissemination of capoeirists that with a few years of life call themselves masters, it is needed so to preserve these true entities of poplar culture, or better yet, of a Brazilian cultural patrimony, in academic works or simply in the improvisation of a music in the capoeira circle. Because the development and the expansion of this popular art are needed and it is a irreversible process, we have to attend to the transformations that come from time in a way that is possible to improve the relationship between these two processes, developing without losing the "soul", supporting always on the old back of true and immortal Masters.

"... the old narrator reviving is learning to die." Bosi(2003)

**Key Words:** Capoeira, formation, master, history.

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### **BOY WHO WAS YOUR MASTER? CHARACTERISTICS AND PECULIARITIES OF THE MASTER FORMATION IN THE HISTORY OF CAPOEIRA.**

#### **Resume**

Brazilian immaterial cultural patrimony, the capoeira brings with her synonyms of resistance, struggle, vagrancy and camaraderie. In this context, we have as protagonists, figures that incorporate their practice in such a way, that their life stories become very similar to the capoeira herself. These true social actors have had different process of formation during the years, its on the nuances of this process that are established the questions that lead this work. Which are the differences in the formation process of the masters in the history of capoeira? Which is the importance of these masters before their pares? Processes that distinguish themselves mostly by the first decades of the XX century, moment in what emerge two of the most important and recognized Masters in the history of capoeira: Master Bimba and Master Pastinha, from which, was described a little about their life's trajectory. The describing character, supported by oral elements and bibliographic revision, this the article here aims to a problematic about the formation of the Master differing it by the styles Angola and Regional.

Key Words: Capoeira, formation, master, history.

### **JEUNE HOMME QUI A ÉTÉ TON MAÎTRE? CARASTÉRISTIQUES ET PARTICULARITÉS DE LA FORMATION DU MAÎTRE DANS L'HISTOIRE DE LA CAPOIERA.**

#### **Résumé**

Patrimoine culturel immatériel brésilien, la capoeira est synonyme de résistance, de lutte, de vagabondage et de camaraderie. Dans ce contexte, existent des protagonistes, des figures, qui incorporent leur pratique d'un mode tel que leurs histoires de vie se tournent très semblables de celle de la capoeira. Ces véritables acteurs sociaux ont eu des processus de formation différenciés au cours des ans. C'est sur les nuances de ces processus que sont basés les questions qui guideront ce travail. Quelles sont les différences entre les processus de formation des maîtres dans l'histoire de la capoeira? Quelle est l'importance de ceux-ci en relation à leurs pairs? Ces processus se distinguent principalement à partir des premières décennies du vingtième siècle, au moment où émergent les deux plus connus et importants maîtres de l'histoire de la capoeira : Maître Bimba et Maître Pastinha dont nous allons décrire les trajectoires de vie. De caractère descriptif, nous appuyant sur des éléments de l'oralité et sur une révision bibliographique, le présent article vise à problématiser la formation du maître en relation aux différents styles « Angola » et « régional ».

Mots clefs : Capoeira, formation, maître, histoire.

### **NIÑO QUIEN FUE TU MESTRE? CARACTERÍSTICAS Y PECULIARIDADES DE LA FORMACIÓN DEL MESTRE EN LA HISTORIA DE LA CAPOEIRA.**

#### **Resumen**

Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial Brasileiro, la capoeira trae consigo sinónimos de la resistencia, la lucha, el ocio y la camaradería. En este contexto, se extienden como protagonistas, figuras que incorporan su práctica de tal forma, que sus historias de vida se vuelven muy similares a la de la capoeira. Estos verdaderos actores sociales tuvieron procesos de formación diversos en el correr de los años, y es sobre el rastro de estos proceso que se establecen las cuestiones rumbeadoras de este trabajo. Cuales son las diferencias en los procesos de formación de los Mestres en la historia de la capoeira?Cuál es la importancia de los mismos frente a sus pares? Procesos distinguidos principalmente a partir de las primeras décadas del siglo XX, momento en que emergen dos de los más reconocidos e importantes Mestres de la historia del capoeiraje: Mestre Bimba y Mestre Pastinha, de los cuales, se describe un poco acerca de sus trayectorias de vida. De forma descriptiva, sostenido en elementos orales y de revisión bibliográfica, el presente artículo toma como objetivo de estudio la formación del Mestre diferenciandola por los estilos Angola y Regional.

Palabras Clave: Capoeira, Mestre, história

### **MENINO QUEM FOI TEU MESTRE? CARACTERÍSTICAS E PECULIARIDADES DA FORMAÇÃO DO MESTRE NA HISTÓRIA DA CAPOEIRA.**

#### **Resumo**

Patrimônio Cultural Imaterial brasileiro, a capoeira trás consigo sinônimos de resistência, luta, vadição e camaradagem. Neste contexto, têm-se como protagonistas, figuras que incorporaram sua prática de tal modo, que suas histórias de vida tornaram-se muito similares a da própria capoeira. Estes verdadeiros atores sociais tiveram processos de formação diferenciados no decorrer dos anos, é sobre as nuances desse processo que se estabelecem as questões norteadoras deste trabalho. Quais são as diferenças dos processos de formação dos Mestres na história da capoeira? Qual a importância dos mesmos perante seus pares? Processos que se distinguem principalmente a partir das primeiras décadas do século xx, momento em que emergem os dois mais reconhecidos e importantes Mestres da história da capoeiragem: Mestre Bimba e Mestre Pastinha, de cujos quais, descreveu-se um pouco acerca de suas trajetórias de vida. De caráter descritivo, apoiado em elementos da oralidade e revisão bibliográfica, o presente artigo visou problematizar a formação do Mestre diferenciando-a pelos estilos Angola e Regional.

Palavras-Chave: Capoeira, formação, mestre, história.