Uma Cultura para a democracia
Seminar Concludes in Rio de Janeiro
Joint initiative by LASC and Brazilian Ministry of Culture
by Roxana Patiño
Project Coordinator and LASC Fall 2001 Post-Doctoral Fellow

In Rio de Janeiro, on October 18-19, 2001, LASC and the Ministry of Culture of Brazil held the Final Seminar of the Project Uma cultura para a democracia, a three-year joint initiative that began in 1999 and was made possible through funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). This activity forms part of a major project launched by LASC in 1995, A Culture for Democracy in Latin America, which has among its main objectives the development of research and drafting of specific proposals designed to strengthen institutions and forums for social democracy in Latin America. This initiative resulted from a Hemispheric consensus defining democratic culture and social development as two of the most powerful dynamic forces to sustain economic growth and democratic stability. The project consists of a network between academic researchers from Latin America, Latin Americanists who reside in the United States, representatives from governmental and non-governmental organizations, and members of international organizations.

Democratization in Latin America has always been one of the main topics of research on the LASC agenda. Its immediate background includes a project entitled Represión y reconstrucción de la cultura en el Cono Sur (1984-1994), a series of meetings and conferences held both in Maryland and in countries within the Southern Cone region during their respective processes of democratic transition. The following books grew out of these debates: Argentina: represión y reconstrucción de la cultura; La cultura uruguaya: represión, exilio y democracia; Cultura, autoritarismo y redemocratización en Chile; Brasil: O Trânsito da memória; Hacia una cultura para la democracia en el Paraguay; and Cultura y sociedad: encuentros y desencuentros.

The main objective of the project Uma cultura para a democracia has been the study of key aspects within the realm of culture that can be used to promote public policies favoring the consolidation of a State and social democratic forums in Brazil. In this vein, three working modules were designed and tailored to different areas of interest:
Module I: Promotion of democratic culture in Brazil;
Module II: Perspectives of State Reform in the cultural and communications sectors;
Module III: Cultural integration with MERCOSUR.

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As their titles suggest, the first two modules focused specifically on Brazil while the third integrated Brazil with the MERCOSUR economic block. Modules I and II were held simultaneously and their conclusions presented at a seminar held in São Paulo in November 2000. Two volumes entitled *Cultura e democracia*, which bring together the final reports from these investigations, were presented during the Rio Seminar. The topics of Volume I, which correspond to Module I, are as follows: “Estrutura institucional do setor cultural no Brasil”, by José Álvaro Moisés; “Política e estrutura institucional do setor cultural na Argentina, Bolívia, Chile, Paraguai e Uruguaí,” by Enrique Saravia; “Estrutura institucional: práticas democratizantes”, by Hermano Roberto Thiry Cherques; and “Participação política e organizações da sociedade civil em novas democracias”, by Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro and Luís Antônio F. Souza. The topics from Volume II, which correspond to Module II, are: “Educação e valores democráticos” by Celso de Rui Beisiegel; “A cultura política dos jovens universitários”, by José Texeira Coelho; “Televisão e cultura democrática”, by Gabriel Priolli; and “O poder público ausente: a TV nas mãos do mercado”, by Renato Janine Ribeiro. Both volumes have an introduction by José Álvaro Moisés and Saúl Sosnowski, Co-Directors of the Project, entitled: “Uma cultura para a democratização no Brasil.”

Module III covered two main areas of particular importance to the process of democratic integration within MERCOSUR:

1. **New identities and cultural integration**
   
   During the closing seminar of the Module, held in the Museum of National History in Rio de Janeiro, conclusions were presented on the work that had been carried out. The Seminar was inaugurated by the Director of LASC and International Programs at the University of Maryland, Saúl Sosnowski, and the Secretary for Audiovisual of the Ministry of Culture, José Álvaro Moisés. The first day of the Seminar was dedicated to the topic *New Identities and Regional Integration*. The following presentations took place: Elizabeth Jelin (Argentina): “Ciudadanía y movimientos sociales. Más allá de la Nación. Una mirada desde Argentina”; Line Bareiro (Paraguay): “Los oreñande. Viejas y nuevas identidades en el Paraguay”; Maria Lucía Montes (Brasil): “Un desafío em uma cultura para a democracia: o lugar do negro”; and Gerardo Caetano (Uruguay): “MERCOSUR y organizaciones sociales. Sindicatos, empresarios y organizaciones no-gubernamentales.” Mauro García, former president of TV Educativa, joined Saúl Sosnowski and Roxana Patiño, Director and Coordinator of the Project, respectively, as moderators.

   The second day of the Seminar was dedicated to the area of **Cultural Industries and Regional Integration**. Talks were given by Ticio Escobar (Paraguay): “Paraguay: Industrias culturales y democratización” and Oscar Landi (Argentina): “Buenos Aires. Industrias y políticas culturales.” The moderators of these proceedings were Enrique Saravia and Gabriel Priolli, researchers who participated in the first two modules of the *Uma cultura para a democracia* Project. The third volume of *Cultura e democracia* will be published in mid-2002 and will include these texts.

   This project is more than a series of studies with regards to the paradigmatic relationship between culture and democracy in different fields; following the completion of these studies, the implementation of concrete proposals and recommendations will be presented to the Ministry of Culture in Brazil. This is a research-action agenda which proposes the dynamic articulation of academic, government and non-government interests in the promotion of democratic culture in Latin America. In this regard, the task will be continued even after this project has ended. LASC is currently exploring new initiatives in this direction.
The following is the opening excerpt from Chapter One, “The Vargas Era and Culture Wars.” Culture Wars was published this year by Duke University Press.

At the height of the authoritarian Estado Novo, the infamous Department of Press and Propaganda published an essay, written by Oswaldo Teixeira, director of the National Museum of Fine Arts and well-known painter, which acclaimed Getúlio Vargas as a peer to Cósimo de Médici, the wealthy fifteenth-century banker who helped make Florence into the political and cultural epicenter of the Italian Renaissance. Crediting the Revolution of 1930 and the Vargas state with rescuing Brazilian society from a descent into cultural confusion and political disorder, Teixeira portrayed Vargas as a modern-day Renaissance prince. “Getúlio Vargas is the only President who has confronted the full range of problems facing Brazil with a clear, optimistic, and brilliant vision, guided by tranquility, equilibrium, and the truest principles of Brazilianness [com os mais sadios princípios de brasilidade],” declared Teixeira.¹

Teixeira was not alone in praising Vargas for a national cultural renewal. In 1940, the arts column of the regime’s highbrow political review, Cultura Política, observed that the president’s goodwill had afforded Brazilian artists the kind of official support that could be bitterly contested elsewhere. “The ‘conquests’ [of state patronage] won in other countries, typically granted only in the most dramatic and dire of circumstances, have come to Brazilian artists as goodwill gifts from the Chief of State,” explained the journal.² Even Gustavo Capanema, the influential minister of education and health and Vargas’s closest advisor on subjects concerning official cultural programming, credited the president-dictator with the cultural gains won since 1930. At the March 1943 inauguration of the Imperial Museum, Capanema praised Vargas for his role in the flowering of Brazilian arts and letters, echoing Teixeira’s earlier remarks in characterizing the chief of state as a peer of Pericles, Augustus, and Louis XIV — “great men who have filled History with the fanfare, honor, and joy of the human spirit.”³

The image of a national cultural flowering cultivated by Vargas was very alluring, but in truth, the minister of education managed federal cultural policy, bestowing personal and institutional favors on some of the most important cultural figures of the 1930s and 1940s. It was the minister who actually changed the nature of cultural policy making. Vargas’s interests in cultural patronage were generally limited to ceremonial galas, inaugurations, and civic parades. He rarely took a proactive stance in cultural matters. Looking back at the first Vargas regime, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Capanema’s chief of staff, stated bluntly, “Vargas could not care less [for cultural programming] . . . . Capanema’s accomplishments, which today are credited to Getúlio, were merely tolerated by the President . . . . His great concern was signing papers and making politics.”⁴ As the mineiro poet suggests, the cultural renovação that took place after 1930 must be credited to the initiatives coordinated through the Ministry of Education, not the Presidential Palace. Vargas clearly knew this, but he never disavowed the perception that he was a savior, protector, and patron of Brazilian culture.

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Interview with Barbara Weinstein

by Phyllis Peres, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies and member of the LASC Steering Committee

History professor Barbara Weinstein joined the University of Maryland faculty in 2001. Dr. Weinstein first became involved in studying Latin America at Princeton, where she researched the Uruguayan Tupamaro guerrilla movement. During her graduate studies at Yale, she turned to Brazil as a field of research. In this interview with Dr. Phyllis Peres on June 18, 2001, she discusses different aspects of Brazilian history and culture.

PHYLLIS PERES: Your initial public work looked at the Amazon. What aspects interested you?

BARBARA WEINSTEIN: I focused on the rubber boom period from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the 1920s. What I was interested in, initially, was the whole issue of boom-bust cycles as a standard feature of Brazil’s social and economic history, because the Amazon rubber boom seemed like the absolute classic example. It was a huge upsurge in commercial activity, with many people migrating to the area and all kinds of money being made. Then the price of rubber drops and it becomes a semi-ghost economy. So, first of all, I was interested in whether this kind of boom-bust narrative was real. In fact, in my mind, I was already assuming that this was a kind of exaggeration. This was also the heyday of dependency theory, which I felt gave way too much agency to foreign intervention. What will determine the particular trajectory of the economy is not simply a function of the demands of foreign capital or totally a function of outsiders’ interests, but also a function of social and economic arrangements in a particular location. That was the larger intellectual question I began my study with. And I think ultimately what I showed is that of course foreign interests were very important in the Amazon timing of the boom and this was a reflection of the global economy; but at the same time, the particular way in which the economy was arranged—you know, how the rubber got produced, who produced it, under what circumstances, who they sold it to, who then sold it to whom, and so on—was a reflection of struggles going on in terms of different local groups and power relationships within the Amazon that to some extent preceded the rubber boom. So again, it’s not like you have nothing happening, and then this huge boom, and then everything disappears. There is continuity.

PP: And in a way, that’s how most people tell Brazilian history, from a boom-bust perspective.

BW: Exactly, so maybe the history I was telling doesn’t make as good a story.

PP: Without the highs and the lows, right?

BW: I think it’s a more historically compelling story.

PP: So in a way, from the very beginning, you were wanting to put into critical paradigms the terms in which Latin America had always been looked at: the ways in which modernization theory told one story, the failure to develop and what happened; and then dependency theory, which was supposed to explain it all.

BW: I think part of it is, that I had already rejected the modernization paradigm. But I felt that dependency in some ways was just turning modernization upside down, saying it’s true, we’re backward, but we’re backward because it’s their fault. It seemed to me to give events outside of Latin America much more weight, and it made Latin America a kind of blank slate that everybody could write everything they wanted on. I felt that it was much more important to consider how the people actually involved in this economy saw their role, what kind of choices, what forms of resistance, for example, the rubber tappers developed. Even my adviser was somewhat taken aback, because the typical portrayal of the rubber tapper in the Amazon—the person who actually went out and cut the rubber trees and collected the latex—was that of a poor, oppressed soul, and what I was trying to show is that they had a great deal of autonomy.

PP: In that particular period of time.

BW: Yes, whereas this was not the image that most people had. People were sort of taken aback when I came up with this. And now I think it’s widely ac-

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savior, protector, and patron of Brazilian culture.

Several developments in the evolution of public administration and federal policy making bolstered the image that the Vargas regime, if not Vargas personally, was dedicated to a national cultural renaissance. Thanks to Capanema, the regime fully integrated cultural programming into the lexicon and practice of federal power, making Brazilian culture and charge of the state. Federal culture managers—an entirely new category of civil servant—directed a remarkable amount of energy toward the stimulation, proliferation, and officialization of cultural activities deemed expressive of a national ethos. A systematic approach to cultural management created or expanded nearly two dozen federal institutions tending to the performing and visual arts, historical preservation, museums, letters, and civic culture. Significant federal expenditure accompanied this institutionalization of cultural management and patronage. In addition to the investment of financial and administrative capital into the cultural arena, the federal government plowed substantial amounts of symbolic capital into the patronage of the national cultural patrimony.

Praised by high-ranking culture managers, the state’s investment in culture faced opposition from many camps. For critics of Vargas-era cultura policies, censorship, political repression, social control, and cultural authoritarianism fueled the regime’s thirst for managing a national cultural renewal. To their critics, federal culture managers, and most especially Vargas, were not humanists, but rather brutal thought police. In 1942, for example, the leftist U.S. publisher Samuel Putnam (1892-1950) spoke out for several Brazilian authors, including prominent novelists Jorge Amado and Graciliano Ramos, who had been silenced through federal government’s proclivity for harassing intellectuals and literary figures deemed a threat to the regime’s political and cultural supremacy. Relaying what would surely have been censored in Brazil, Putnam cited a 1941 speech made while in exile in Argentina in which the Bahian novelist denounced the Vargas regime for its draconian cultural policies of mind-control and cultural repression. In a thinly veiled allusion to cultural policies implemented by the German National Socialists, Putnam characterized the Vargas regime’s program of cultural management as *kulturkrieg*.²

Teixeira’s Cosimo had been transfigured into a book-burning Savanarola.

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BW: I didn’t go into the rural areas except to a few areas where there still were people doing rubber tapping, so virtually all my information came from archival resources in Rio and in Belen and some from the National Archives, the Library of Congress, and the New York Public Library. There was a lot of interest in the rubber economy in the U.S. But most of it is from Belen. Local newspapers, political records, some correspondence, but a lot of business records. I went into some notarial offices and looked through notarial records to see what kind of arrangements were being made. When you think of people going to do research in the Amazon, typically you think of them out in the rainforest...  

**PP:** Out in the jungles...

BW: Yes, I was in the city almost the entire time. It was still very hot and humid and there were still a lot of big bugs.

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Modernity and Popular-Class Leisure in Salvador, Bahia (1936-1954)

Scott Ickes, Ph.D. candidate, Department of History

During the summer of 1996, while a graduate student in the History Department, I happily received a FLAS fellowship from the Latin American Studies Center at the University of Maryland to study Portuguese in Salvador, Bahia, a city of some 2.5 million people in the northeast of Brazil. In today’s global tourism market, Salvador is well known for its tropical beaches, dynamic music scene, Carnival, and African-Brazilian culture, in particular the religious practices of Candomblé and the African-Brazilian martial arts dance Capoeira. Mãe Aninha, an African-Bahian intellectual of the 1920s and 1930s referred to Salvador as the Black Rome. Inside Brazil, Salvador is additionally identified in the public imagination as a relaxed, carefree city with its energies galvanized more by its annual cycle of popular festivals than by any productive work regime. Salvador, with its large Afro-Brazilian population, penchant for producing orators and poets, and its history as the first colonial capital where the “three sad races” initially mixed, languorously fulfils the role accorded it in the popular refrain — Rio is the heart of Brazil, São Paulo the brains, and Bahia the soul.

Shortly after arriving in Brazil, I realised that leisure seemed to characterise Salvador as much as anything else, and that studying the ways in which Salvadorans organized, practiced and experienced their leisure activities could prove an excellent point of entry for analyses of popular-class culture and social relations more generally. My presently ongoing Ph.D. thesis is a social history of the largely Afro-Brazilian popular class of Salvador, in which I examine a variety of popular cultural activities that may be considered leisurely, as they were not directly concerned with the workaday world. The particular activities chosen for this study are those most frequently described by informants during oral history interviews, as well as those identified from the available print sources.

The thesis begins with the yearly cycle of city-wide popular festivals, climaxing in the four-day celebration of carnival. The study then moves on to include the activities of associative groups, such as religious organizations or working-class men’s clubs; the incipient leisure industry of music, cinema, sport, circus and local fair; and informal activities such as dancing, drinking, market-going, gambling, dating and sex.

Of primary interest are the ways in which these activities changed over time, “modernizing” in certain aspects, but drawing on “tradition” and custom in others, resulting in a certain ‘hybrid’ modernity. A significant element in this dynamic of hybrid modernisation was the efforts of local elites in targeting popular-class cultural activities for eradication, reform or co-optation. This project examines the ensuing dynamic of contestation and negotiation between local elites and popular Salvadorans during the Vargas Era, a watershed period in Brazil’s twentieth-century history.

A second objective of this thesis is to tell the story of popular-class life and Afro-Bahian culture, with special emphasis on the limits and possibilities determined to large extent by race, class position, relationships between the sexes and other divisions within the popular class, immediately prior to Salvador’s industrialization in the 1950’s on the back of an emerging petro-chemical industry. This industrialization, it should be noted, remains “incomplete” to this day, a structural characteristic of Salvador’s particular hybrid modernity, and tourism plays a central role in the city’s economy. The sources relied on for this work are the newspapers, government documents, police and court records, and 30 oral history interviews.
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PP: Given that one of the main architects of Brazilian dependency theory was the president of Brazil, in terms of the way in which he later turned his back on dependency theory, how do you see new paradigms in Brazilian history emerging? You mentioned the fact that you weren’t a cultural historian...

BW: Well, I think Fernando Collor de Melho was arguing for was a kind of modified form of dependency theory, in which the emphasis was that unless one radically restructured the world’s economy, Brazil couldn’t develop. Before he came into formal politics, he had broken with that and said no, Brazil clearly is capable of entering the ranks of leading capitalist producers even within the current local situation. You can think about this shift in one of two ways. I mean, the depressing side of it is that you can reintroduce modernization theory: all we have to do is adopt the exact same practices as more advanced economies and eventually we will become a more advanced economy.

PP: And democratic.

BW: And democratic, yes, I think that’s one side of it. For me, the rejection of a certain notion of backwardness is more appealing; saying no, we’re not situated as a dependent economy, that Brazil is not less modern. In fact, the problem with modernization theory is that it says Brazil is not modern. I would argue that Brazil is plenty modern. I don’t think that’s the problem. Now, one of the emphases in Brazil is shifting the weight from the kind of structural constraints brought on by the old sort of dependency model to political and cultural constraints. And by cultural I don’t mean, well, we don’t act modern enough. I mean the forms of cultural hierarchy and power that make it difficult to reorganize Brazilian society in a way that makes it not only more developed but also more equitable. So I think it’s bifurcating between people who say that this is what it’s all about, what we need is liberalism and those who say no, what we need is to rethink issues of citizenship and rights and so on.

PP: Do you see some sort of compromise between the two?

BW: The way I see it, there will have to be. I don’t think there’s any way in the near future can imagine neoliberalism being completely discarded. I think there is very widespread agreement that the sort of statist developmental project that the 50s and 60s has collapsed, and so far, nobody’s really come up with an alternative for it. Certainly the socialist revolution doesn’t have the stature it once had. I suspect that some sort of modus vivendi has to be worked out between these two camps. But it’s hard to imagine.

PP: If the State is not meeting certain requirements for survival, people will—people WILL.

BW: And I think to some extent that the wealth in most European countries make it a different circumstance although some European countries, like Portugal, are not vastly more wealthy than some Latin American countries. Europe does offer an alternative society where in most ways, the market determines some of the economy but there still is a great deal of legitimacy given to the welfare state, to civil society and to the demands of civil society.

PP: Does that have special resonance with places like Brazil in which there is such a wide gap between socioeconomic classes?

BW: Well, I think it does, although sometimes it can be depressing to contemplate how huge that gap is, and how much more would need to be done in Brazil. I mean, given the enormous poverty of a very huge portion of the population. If you are thinking about raising a very substantial portion of the Brazilian population to a middle class lifestyle, then it seems overwhelming and impossible. But one of the things I am always struck by, is we have a tendency to overstate how profound poverty is. In fact, a lot of people who we think of as miserably poor don’t think of themselves as miserable. That’s not their image of themselves, and I think if they were in a situation in which they had a steady job, they could eat meat a couple of times a week and they could send their kids to school, it would be an immense improvement in their lives, and certainly even more so in their chil---

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Salvador da Bahia Study Abroad,
Winter Term 2001

Christina Guidorizzi, LASC Program Manager

Our meeting place was at the departure gate of National Washington Reagan Airport. Everyone was a bit agitated with the new experience, but full of energy as they exchanged information on cameras, how many rolls of film to take, the size of the luggage, and other issues. We had already spent a week studying the language and African Brazilian culture; now was time for logistics. In New York, where we changed planes, the rush to the phone to say good-bye to parents, friends, and significant others set the reality of the eventful trip ahead of us.

On January, 2001, for the first time, the University of Maryland offered a Winter Term Course in Salvador, Bahia, in conjunction with the Universidade Estadual da Bahia (UNEB). Guided by Dr. Phyllis Peres of the Department of Spanish & Portuguese and myself, the intensive three-week African-Brazilian Culture course introduced students to the history, religion and art of the African diaspora, as well as to Portuguese language. There were 12 students; a few had basic knowledge of the language, while others, with skills in Spanish language, quickly learned how to establish basic communication. The interest of the students in the language was so high that during classes we devoted a large portion of the time answering questions on words, sentences, expressions that they picked up talking to Brazilians they met. I had never seen so much interest in foreign language learning!

The coordinator, José Limeira, from UNEB, developed a rich agenda, with daily afternoon talks by academics in the field of history, arts, religion and literature. The students also visited museums, candomblé houses, and theatrical and musical performances. They also observed dance education at Projeto Axé, an NGO that educates street children in Salvador. The teachers were children who had been through the program. A dance class, in a private studio, was also part of the curriculum, and it left us all drenched in sweat, tired and full of admiration for the energy of the professional dancers and drum musicians. Actually, José Limeira not only offered a fine program coordination; the sound of his drumming and the sound of his poetry were also filled with the same energy and richness of Bahian African culture.

It was very interesting to see the students moving around Salvador. I had been there several times before, but had never seen it with so much excitement and color as through the eyes of these American students. Everything was new to them; some things were not to be touched, as certain foods with spices and ingredients that seemed to be a bit strange, such as caruru (containing shrimp, okra, coconut milk, and roasted ground peanuts as main ingredients). Other students did not hesitate to eat acarajé from the bahiana on the streets. They attempted to feed some street children as we ate at the restaurant tables set on the cobblestone streets open to pedestrians only. However, as the restaurant owner politely prohibited them from carrying it out any further, they asked to have the food packed and later tried to find the kids to offer them some dinner. With great affection they also fed a kitten found on the streets. They expressed their cultural perception when confronted with a different living reality.

The students participated in dances and learned how to play drums with Ilê Ayê, a musical group that was preparing for carnival at the time and carrying a competition on the music that was going to be the central piece of their parade. Ilê Ayê, a Yoruba expression that means “house of the spirits”, names the music group that maintains the African diaspora in their drumbeat.

Limeira and his wife, Betty, welcomed the group warmly by accompanying us everywhere and opening their house to offer us a very nice farewell party where many people involved in the program came to say good-bye, including Igor, who drove us night and day through the streets of Salvador and bought them a small turtle as a pet for the group. We had a night of poetry where some of the students showed their talents through words and acting! Limeira offered us a few of his poems, some of which had been translated years ago by Dr. Phyllis Peres.
Bahia
by Rahsaan Chisolm

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PP: Right. What I’ve done when I’ve taught Brazilian culture in the past is try to teach a class that uses perspectives from insiders and outsiders. Because she writes from the perspective of someone who is not an insider, but who is a Latin American, it’s an interesting text to use and it works very well. And what are you working on now?

BW: I’m hoping I’ll be able to write a book in the spring looking particularly at the role of race and gender in the construction of regional identity in São Paulo. The argument is, in effect, that São Paulo’s regional identity has been based on an assertion of greater modernity, which is also linked to an image of greater whiteness.

PP: The city or the state?

BW: Both. I’m looking at Brazil’s extremely uneven form of economic development. So much of industrial and agricultural development is concentrated in São Paulo, a city that still accounts for about 50% of all production in Brazil. If you surgically removed São Paulo from Brazil, and of course the paulistas themselves very much like to think of it in these terms, it would be pretty much a first world country. It would have great poverty, but of course that’s because the northeasterners come here, and they’re poor. And

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Poem by José Limeira

Translated from the Portuguese
by Christina Guidorizzi with Phyllis Peres

José Limeira, UNEB Coordinator of the LASC Salvador da Bahia Study Abroad Program, is an exponent of African Brazilian Culture. His verse is filled with the historical and present issues that affect this community, as evidenced in the poem below.

THIRTEEN*

Tired of being served,
under tears sprayed with color and sound
for the tittering commensals,
who tear our values
with sharp teeth.
I want now, in this lucid moment,
to scream the necessary fact,
That the thirteens or thirteen
says nothing beyond what you, dear comates,
want to show, conceal, display.
colorful pictures,
festive commemorations
beats of drums and ‘atabaques**’ were created
to proclaim that we are
free, happy and accepted.
Foolish lies!
instead we are:
slivers of sweat
lacerations from whip
smells of stove
service entrances.
We need to do something, yes
In place of the
brutal paternalism
of the gentle little princess
there has to be freedom
to be able in reality to open
the door of these slave quarters
to have a party made of real color,
sound of the atabaques,
dances and bodies
that will crash the night
in a true song
for the ABOLITION that has not yet come.

* May 13, 1888 is the date of the abolition of slavery in Brazil.
** Atabaque is a drum introduced by the Africans. The conic atabaque is also known as timba.
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what’s interesting is that nordestinos who come to São Paulo don’t stop being nordestinos, they don’t become paulistas.

PP: I was going to ask you about that.

BW: So the regional, it’s really an identity, it’s not a regional location, because for an identity to have meaning it has to travel.

PP: How has migration and immigration played into this paulista identity?

BW: In very different ways. Immigration, because it was primarly European. Even when it was Japanese, I think the Japanese tended to get figured as white within the regular context of paulista society, I think that immigration posed some challenges to paulista regional identity, but not severe challenges, since the immigrants could be seen as being modern. Because paulista identity, it’s not an identity that’s heavily linked to folklore and culture.

PP: There’s the bandeirante.

BW: The bandeirante is the one figure in the book. And even there, it’s a historical figure, it’s not connected to any cultural practices, there’s no actual rituals in which people dress up as bandeirantes, or anything like that. Now, the immigrant can be folded into that, because the immigrant is white and European, and the image of the bandeirante is a rural figure who can absorb the Indian culture and its positive traits without losing his essence. So paulistas can absorb these Europeans, these Italians, these Spanish, these Portuguese, etc. and the Japanese and not necessarily lose their paulistiniedade. The Northeasterners, on the other hand, pose a very different kind of issue, because they don’t want to absorb them at all, they want to create boundaries. Of course they can be absorbed over time, but there’s sort of the notion that whatever social problems exist in São Paulo, be it poverty or illiteracy, are a function of the existence of nordestinos. I think that part of what moved me to do this study,—and it’s a historical study focused on the 1930s and the 1950s, so I don’t take it up to the present—was because of what I saw as a very persistent tendency among people in São Paulo to identify nordestinos as the source of all their social problems. It also struck me that this is one way in which Brazilians can talk about race, because as you know Brazilians are always reluctant to talk about race very explicitly, but one of the implications is that the nordestinos are not white. Now exactly what they are is another issue, because their actual racial identity seems to shift from one speaker to another, depending on the historical sources, sometimes they can be sort of imagined as black, sometimes they can be imagined as sertanejos, a sort of mixture...

PP: Bahianos.

BW: Well it’s interesting, because paulistas often refer to nordestinos as bahianos, and I think that that is to emphasize blackness in their description of nordestinos, because of course many nordestinos are not bahianos and are not identifiably black, but by calling them all bahianos, you sort of position them as being of African descent. So I don’t think it’s a coincidence, this tendency to refer to northeasterners as bahianos. I think it’s a way for the paulistas to emphasize their whiteness and emphasize the northerners’ lack of whiteness without using sort of the impolite terms of color that are not, as you know, endorsed for use publicly.

PP: Interesting too, that your work coincides with the emergence of Vargas as a national leader and with his suicide.

BW: In fact, Daryle Williams and I are going to coauthor an article. There is a book being done, it’s an anthology of articles on, basically, issues surrounding the deaths of various prominent people and the editor asked if we would be interested in doing one on Vargas’ suicide, since both of us have been interested in different aspects. One of the things we like to write about is the different response to his suicide in Rio vs. São Paulo, which has always had a much more complicated relationship with Vargas. It’s very interesting that Vargas’ suicide happens to occur practically midway through this fabulous year of celebrations of the 400th Anniversary of the founding of São Paulo. It ruins things again for them, you know.

PP: Exactly (laughter). I’m going to switch tracks a little bit here. How do you see your work fitting in at the History Department in Maryland and also at Latin American Studies?

BW: Well, let’s start with the Latin American Stud-
During a meeting held at College Park, December 11-12, 2001, representatives of the academic, public and private sectors, many of whom had also participated in recent LASC seminars (See Front Page), met to discuss initiatives carried out through the "Culture for Democracy in Latin America" program and to propose future agendas.

The session began with individual presentations. Brazil was the most heavily represented country: José Álvaro Moisés (Ministerio da Cultura); Renato Janine Ribeiro (Universidade de São Paulo); Gabriel Priolli (Pontificia Universidade Católica de São Paulo); and José Teixeira Coelho (Universidade de São Paulo). The topics they discussed ranged from reappraisals of the transition to democracy to the potential use of television in the promotion of democratic culture.

Other participants were: Ticio Escobar (Museo de Arte Indígena, Paraguay); Gerardo Caetano (Universidade de la República, Uruguay); Marcelo Cavarozzi (Universidad Nacional de General San Martin, Argentina); Catalina Smulovitz (Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, Argentina); Antonio López Ortega (Fundación Bigott, Venezuela); Alberto Overa (Universidad Veracruzana, México), and William Smith (University of Miami, USA).

The perspective from Argentina was rather bleak, understandably so in light of the events that would take place in late December. Carolina Smulovitz, for example, questioned whether the concept of nation was currently strong enough in Argentina to sustain a democratic culture.

Despite facing adverse circumstances in Venezuela, Antonio López Ortega presented an encouraging vision of the possibilities opened up by linking democracy and culture. He distributed among the group copies of supplements scheduled to appear in a national daily newspaper, an idea that crystallized after Saúl Sosnowski presented it at a Caracas seminar. The inserts showcase different aspects of democratic society in Venezuela, for example "Freedom," as pictured on this page.

Finally, William Smith and Alberto Overa described different patterns of civic society resistance to globalization, the former in the context of international trade agreements and the latter, with regards to the recent political transition in Mexico.

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ies Program and Center. That is in some ways easiest, because I think all Latin Americanists are interdisciplinary, much more than historians. One of the things that attracted me to Maryland is that there are already was a major Latin American Studies Center here. It would be very difficult for me to imagine going to a place that didn’t have one. My undergraduate degree was in History and Latin American Studies, so I see myself as pretty much wanting to be involved in both the History Department and Latin American Studies. At the Center, one of the things I’m trying to do is build up the doctoral program. Daryle Williams, Mary Kay Vaughan, Stephane Palmie and I are trying to build up the doctoral program in Latin American history, and for me the Latin American Studies Center is a major instrument, what’s the word, a major advantage. . .

PP: Attraction?

BW: Yes. So the Latin American Studies Center is a major attraction for graduate students who don’t want to have the interdisciplinary boundaries raised too high. I think it’s impossible being in a particular discipline in a particular department because so much of your work is organized around that, but I would like to try and keep those barriers as low as possible and encourage my graduate students to work outside the Department and be involved.
Photographs by Raasahm Chisolm

An undergraduate student who participated in the Salvador da Bahia study abroad program during Winterterm 2000, Raasahm Chisolm shares his talents as a photographer with LASC in this issue.

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As a Title VI National Resource Center, we are in the process of creating a Web Calendar of Latin America-related events in the Washington, D.C. area. Please send pertinent information regarding place, date, and time, as well as the title of the event and a brief description, to: al68@umail.umd.edu

Briefly Noted

The Caribbean Research Interest Group (CIRG) was recently formed on the College Park campus. The recent brainchild of several graduate students who study the Caribbean region, CRIG was made possible through generous funding from the University of Maryland Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity. Under the guidance of Dr. Lynn Bolles of the Department of Women’s Studies, this organization will be dedicated to scholarship and research on Caribbean nations and the Caribbean Diaspora.

During the 2001-2002 Winter Program, Dr. Edy Kaufman of the Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) presides over an intensive program in Second Track Diplomacy and Conflict Transformation. This year, the program focuses on using “second track” or citizen diplomacy in searching for common ground between military and peaceful responses to terrorism.

Ed Schwartzman and Shelly Grow, graduate students in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology (CONS), were awarded $10,000 by the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora for work in Mexico and Honduras to review the taxonomy and distribution of the genus Guaiacum (the lignum vitae tree). They will be combining work at herbaria in Mexico with field work. This project is an outcome from CONS the problem-solving course last fall semester.