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# The Social History of the Brazilian Samba

Lisa Shaw



## **The Social History of the Brazilian Samba**

**For Mum, Dad, Ian, John, Eddy and Alex, with love**

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LISA SHAW

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# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
Introduction	1
1 Samba: its Roots and Conventions	3
The thematics of samba lyrics - <i>Malandragem</i> : a lifestyle of idleness and roguery - Women and affairs of the heart	
2 The Vargas Regime (1930-45): Cultural Policy and Popular Culture	26
<i>Brasilidade</i> and the forging of a national identity - Censorship and propaganda - Radio and popular music	
3 Samba and the Nascent Music Industry	44
The birth of the music industry - Samba, bossa nova and MPB	
4 The Sambas of Ataulfo Alves (1909-69)	59
The discourse of the samba lyrics of Ataulfo Alves	
5 The Sambas of Noel Rosa (1910-37)	90
The discourse of the samba lyrics of Noel Rosa - Noel: the ' <i>cronista do cotidiano</i> ' - Notions of <i>brasilidade</i>	
6 The Sambas of Ari Barroso (1903-64)	143
The discourse of the samba lyrics of Ari Barroso - Ari Barroso and the <i>samba-exaltação</i>	
Conclusion	183
<i>Glossary</i>	186
<i>Bibliography</i>	197
<i>Index</i>	207



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Malcolm Floyd

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# Introduction

Between 1930 and 1945 Brazil and its people witnessed a series of dramatic social transformations, which irrevocably altered their identity. The revolution that brought Getúlio Vargas to power in 1930 was followed by the establishment of his authoritarian *Estado Novo* or New State in 1937, the regime which governed Brazil until Vargas's overthrow in 1945. A transition period in Brazilian society, which moved from a rural to an urban structure, centred on the changing capital of Rio de Janeiro and the rapidly growing city of São Paulo, it witnessed the birth of industrialization and the continued attempted integration of ex-slaves and their descendants, as well as European immigrants, into mainstream society.

The 1930s also saw the culture industry take shape in Brazil, with the rise of the radio, the talking cinema and the record industry. In the course of this book the evolution of samba will be examined in detail against this social and historical background, giving full consideration to the way the songs were written, the lifestyles and social position of the *sambistas* or composers, the impact of commercial and political constraints, and the respective position of each *sambista* in relation to the power structure of the regime. Samba lyrics constitute highly significant historical documents since they were initially the sole mouthpiece of uneducated blacks, and thus provide a unique record of their experiences and views. As samba became more commercialized in the 1930s, and was taken on board by the emerging middle class, the lyrics bore witness to the social and political changes taking place within *carioca* (Rio) society. The first three chapters of this book outline the social, cultural and musical origins of the samba genre, and explore the historical context of the Vargas era in greater depth.

In the remaining three chapters the work of three *sambistas* is analysed in detail, providing a revealing illustration of how popular music has traditionally articulated changes in community and identity in Brazil. Ataúlfo Alves and Ari Barroso, although born in the state of Minas Gerais, were adoptive *cariocas*, and along with Noel Rosa their music was inextricably linked to the Rio society of the 1930s and 1940s. Ataúlfo was a poor, black musician, and on his arrival in Rio at the age of 18 he lived in the Rio Comprido area of the city, near the district of Estácio de Sá. It was in the shantytowns of Rio that he met fellow popular musicians and

## 2 THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE BRAZILIAN SAMBA

participated in the carnival groups or *blocos*. Despite his humble origins, Ataúlfo perfected a highly professional, sophisticated image, and adapted successfully to the demands of the burgeoning radio and record industries and their middle-class audiences. In contrast, Ari Barroso came to Rio at a similar age to Ataúlfo to study law at university, with the help of a family inheritance. A gifted pianist, he became involved in the city's musical scene by performing in local cinemas, and later by composing songs for the theatre. A white university graduate, Ari became a media celebrity, as well as one of the most famous and accomplished singer-songwriters of the era. His image was that of a respectable, patriotic, well-liked family man, who nevertheless enjoyed Rio's night life to the full and was courted by the filmmakers of Hollywood in the 1940s. Finally, Noel Rosa came from a similar background to Ari, in that he was white, from the lower-middle-class northern suburb of Rio, Vila Isabel, and also attended university. His penchant for the bohemian night clubs and bars of Lapa, the city's then red-light district, however, took precedence over his studies and he soon dropped out of the faculty of medicine. In the bars of the socially mixed district of Vila Isabel he came into daily contact with other popular musicians and songwriters, and with the black *malandros* or spivs, who were part and parcel of the underworld of samba that so fascinated him in the late 1920s and 1930s. It was the *malandro's* marginal, alternative lifestyle that Noel adopted himself, and despite his relatively privileged background and widespread popularity he remained closely involved with the milieu of Rio's poorer quarters and never lost his irreverent attitude towards the authorities. His precarious health, which led to his untimely death in 1937, and a physical disability no doubt helped him to identify with society's outcasts.

Chapter Four examines the work of Ataúlfo Alves, since it is the most typical of the time and thus serves to establish many of the tacit thematic and stylistic conventions of the samba genre. Chapter Five explores the unrivalled linguistic richness and complexities of Noel Rosa's sambas, for Noel toyed with these unwritten conventions and, socially, he bridged the gap between the ambitious, poor, black composers like Ataúlfo, and the educated, white *sambistas*, such as Ari Barroso. Finally, Chapter Six studies the discourse of Ari's lyrics, which helped definitively to establish samba as a respectable musical form, attuned to the refined palates of its new, middle-class audience.

## CHAPTER ONE

# Samba: its Roots and Conventions

Samba is widely thought to be directly descended from the *batuque*, a circle dance performed by the slaves of Brazil's colonial plantations, which was imbued with a spiritual force. It is thought that in the early seventeenth century African slaves began to perform rhythmic dances in order to disguise their religious rituals. The accompanying displays of percussion were given the generic name of *batuques* by the Portuguese. The slaves went on to perform *calundus* or *lundus* in the eighteenth century, dances which also had a religious significance and were often used to bring good luck.<sup>1</sup> Various regional offshoots of these *batuques* evolved, which all appeared to have a common feature - the *umbigada*, or 'bump with the belly button'. This was a movement taken from the dances of the Congo and Angola, where it was the culmination of the marriage ceremony.<sup>2</sup> The term samba is thought to have originated in Angola, where the Kimbundu word *semba* was used to refer to the *umbigada* dance step. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, whilst slaves continued to participate in the *batuque*, free blacks had developed an accompaniment to the dance played on the *viola* (a type of Portuguese guitar taken to Brazil by the Jesuits).<sup>3</sup>

Samba has always been intrinsically linked to the annual carnival celebrations held in Brazil, especially in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Both samba and *carnaval* emerged from a long process of cultural miscegenation, which brought together European influences from the Portuguese, and African influences from the slaves transported to the northeast of Brazil to work on the sugar plantations, and later moved south to provide labour in the mines of Minas Gerais and the coffee plantations in the state of Rio de Janeiro. The roots of carnival can be traced back to ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, where the Roman festival of Lupercalia was celebrated on 15 February in honour of the god Pan. In Brazil, some kind of pre-Lenten celebration has existed since the mid-sixteenth century, after the arrival of the Portuguese in 1500. The early carnivals in Brazil were based on the *entrudo*, a tradition which originated in the Azores and became popular in Portugal in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The *entrudo* involved various kinds of pranks and riotous antics, such as the throwing of stink bombs, and was outlawed in 1853 in Brazil. This form of celebration finally died out at the beginning of the 1900s.

#### 4 THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE BRAZILIAN SAMBA

In the early years of the twentieth century three separate carnivals were held in Rio: firstly, that of the poor in the central Praça Onze district of the city, secondly, that of the middle class in the Avenida Central (now the Avenida Rio Branco), and thirdly, that of the wealthy, white elite with their lavish costume balls and processions. There was still no single carnival music, and the samba and the *marcha carnavalesca* (carnival march) were created to provide a carnival rhythm. The *marcha*, often referred to as the *marchinha*, was of bourgeois origin, and was inspired by Portuguese marches, passed on to the colony via music hall. The samba, on the other hand, is believed to have grown out of the primitive rhythms of the *batuques* and *lundus* of the slaves of the sugar plantations, many of whom had been moved to the coffee plantations of the state of Rio after the decline of the sugar trade and gold mining. With the end of the coffee boom in the valley of the Paraíba do Sul at the close of the nineteenth century much of this workforce settled in the city of Rio, and by the second decade of the twentieth century a small Afro-Brazilian community existed in the port area and other central districts of the city. It was within this group that samba music evolved.

The Afro-Brazilian religious cult of *candomblé* has close links with samba, and both were outlets for black self-expression at the beginning of the twentieth century. Hilária Batista de Almeida, or Tia Ciata, as she was known, was the most famous *mãe-de-santo* (priestess) in Rio at that time. As well as being a religious leader in *candomblé*, she promoted meetings between musicians in her home, just off the Praça Onze, the square that became the centre of social life for Rio's poor black inhabitants in the second decade of the twentieth century and around which many *terreiros* or cult centres grew up. Tia Ciata allowed her home to be used for parties where 'decent' dance games and music were performed in the front rooms, but at the back of the house samba and religious ceremonies worshipping the African deities or *orixás* were practised in secret. The fact that she was married to a policeman no doubt enabled her to host such clandestine activities. It was in her home that a heterogeneous group of musicians and enthusiasts met and performed music, including semi-literate Bahian popular composers, whites and mulattos from Rio's lower middle class, such as the dance hall pianist and self-taught composer Sinhô, and the popular musician Pixinguinha, as well as civil servants and other professional people, like Mauro de Almeida, who is thought to have written the lyrics of the first samba '*Pelo telefone*' ('On the Telephone'), allegedly the outcome of these get-togethers. This song, registered in Rio's National Library in 1916, was credited to Ernesto dos Santos, usually referred to by his nickname of Donga, although there was considerable controversy over the true authorship of the composition, and

heated opinions on this matter were aired in the *carioca* press by the parties concerned. Informal gatherings like those that gave rise to the writing of this song, where both samba and *choros* were performed, were held in various districts of the city, such as Saúde at the end of the nineteenth century, and later in Lapa, Cidade Nova, and Riachuelo. It was on the *morro*, literally 'the hill' but long since synonymous with Brazil's hillside shantytowns, that samba developed, among blacks who were forced to flee to the outlying districts, in the face of police repression. Thus the *morro* became inextricably linked to samba and its creators.

This early samba acted as an identity marker for the poor, largely black community, whose physical territory was frequently taken away. In 1904, under the direction of the then *prefeito* (mayor) of Rio, Pereira Passos, and President Rodrigues Alves, Rio's city centre was the object of a massive renovation campaign, part of the savage urbanization of the city known as the '*bota-abaixo*' (literally 'knocking down'), which drove out the poor to the hillside shantytowns. Between 1904 and 1906 641 buildings and 21 streets were demolished in order to create space for the Avenida Central. Under the slogan '*O Rio civiliza-se*' ('Rio is becoming civilized') the poor were forcibly moved from central areas of the city, that were becoming valuable, to the *favelas* or shantytowns and the suburbs of the humble *Zona Norte* (North Zone). Hence the *bairro* (neighbourhood or district) became a central part of the identity of the lower classes, as distinct from the *cidade* (city) as a whole.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, unemployment and underemployment among blacks were exacerbated by the influx of European immigrants to Brazil in the first decades of the twentieth century, spurred on by government incentives. The Brazilian élite's belief in the racial superiority of whites and the *branqueamento* or 'whitening' ideology, gave rise to the myth of the *operário ideal* (ideal factory worker), of white, European origin. Brazil's blacks and mulattos, who had proved highly skilful in a whole host of trades and crafts prior to the abolition of slavery in 1888, were subsequently stigmatized, the implication being that they were unsuitable for modern life and progress. Forced into a marginal existence, they accounted for the vast majority of Rio's poor, *morro* inhabitants.

Throughout the 1920s, samba was written and performed by ex-slaves and their descendants, and it gradually divided into two strands. On the one hand, there was the samba of the *sambistas* of the central area of the city, where '*Pelo telefone*' was created, which was tolerated by the authorities and given the respectable label of '*cultura afro-brasileira*' ('Afro-Brazilian culture'). On the other was the samba of the musicians of the *morros*, who were persecuted by the police and considered to be part of a marginal underworld. Two such individuals were Ismael Silva and

## 6 THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE BRAZILIAN SAMBA

Nilton Bastos, from the Estácio de Sá district, who founded the first *bloco carnavalesco* or samba school in 1928, called 'Deixa Falar' ('Let Them Talk').

At the end of the 1940s, 95 per cent of the population of Rio's *favelas* were black or mulatto, as opposed to 27 per cent in the overall population of the city. The shantytowns provided the perfect breeding ground for black cultural manifestations, including samba.<sup>5</sup> On the *morro* blacks could isolate themselves totally from the pervasive ideals of the white élite, and it became a spiritual refuge, as well as a physical hideout for petty criminals and persecuted *sambistas*. Internal harmony on the *morro* was paramount, and there existed a moral code of practice. Each member of the community had a particular role to play in maintaining the status quo, such as the peace-keeper or *valente*. The community as a whole took precedence over the individual, and the street rather than the makeshift shack became the centre of life.<sup>6</sup> *Lá fora* (out there) was considered an entirely different world by the inhabitants of the *morro*, and any contact with the alien *cidade* was treated with some apprehension. It was a closed society, and access to outsiders, other than in the form of police raids, was mostly denied.<sup>7</sup> The *morro* allowed Afro-Brazilian traditions to be preserved and to flourish, and it had its own social structure and means for economic survival.

The similarities between the evolution of the Brazilian samba and the Argentinian tango from the 1920s to the 1940s are striking. Up until 1917 tango had been the marginalized song and dance form of the suburbs of Buenos Aires, where the rural population settled, its lyrics centred on the denunciation of social conditions. However, when it migrated to the city, these social themes were replaced with a more personal, emotional content. The macho, violent *compadrito* character, the peasant newly arrived in the city, ceased to exist, as did the references to prostitutes and violence. As in Brazil, the new media, chiefly radio and cinema in Argentina, brought this form of popular music into mass culture. Like samba, tango became popular in the three main senses of the word, that is, quantitatively by reaching a mass audience, qualitatively by still retaining some of its oppositional elements *vis-à-vis* the dominant élite culture, and yet also becoming a populist form, part of the process of popular mobilization. Perón, like Vargas, although some years later, sought to coopt support for a capitalist path of development among the poor, and under his rule the cultural production of the lower classes, such as tango, was given increased exposure on a national stage.<sup>8</sup>

## The thematics of samba lyrics

### *Malandragem: a lifestyle of idleness and roguery*

In broad terms samba dealt with two main themes in the 1920s, '30s and early '40s - women and love affairs, and the figure of the *malandro*, a black spiv or hustler with a horror of work and a love of women, gambling and carousing.<sup>9</sup> By the early 1900s, the real-life *malandro* had made his presence known in Rio de Janeiro, and in the 1920s he entered samba lyrics and became the protagonist of a poetic text that was just beginning to be heard outside its original community.<sup>10</sup> The *malandro's* negative attitude to manual labour directly flouted the work ethic of the Vargas government. He parodied bourgeois values and lifestyle in his dapper, white, linen suit, which formed an ironic contrast to his dark skin, his jauntily tilted straw hat, two-tone shoes, silk shirt and scarf, and spurned the manual labour (*trabalho no pesado* or *o batente*) that was so closely associated with exploitation and the institution of slavery, which was only finally abolished in Brazil in the late nineteenth century. The figure of the *malandro* is epitomized in the following extract from a samba by Noel Rosa. Here he is from Salgueiro, a Rio shantytown and stronghold of samba, he lives from gambling and is obsessed with his smart appearance, as is suggested in the reference to the *tintureiro* or dry cleaner's in the third line. However, *tintureiro* was also the 1930s' Rio slang term for the police van used to arrest vagrants, and this reference is a reflection of the police harassment suffered by these marginal characters and by *sambistas* themselves:

'*Mulato bamba*', 1931, Noel Rosa

Este mulato forte  
É do Salgueiro  
Passear no tintureiro  
Era seu esporte  
Já nasceu com sorte  
E desde pirralho  
Vive à custa do baralho  
Nunca viu trabalho

'Cool Mulatto', 1931, Noel Rosa

This strong mulatto  
Is from Salgueiro  
Hanging around in the dry cleaner's  
Was his favourite sport  
He was born lucky  
And since he was a kid  
He's lived from a pack of cards  
He's never seen a day's work

## 8 THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE BRAZILIAN SAMBA

The ethos of *malandragem* constitutes one of the poles of Brazilian national identity, and the figure of the *malandro* has been explored in depth by the great Brazilian literary critic Antonio Candido de Mello e Souza. He traces the evolution of this character back to Manuel Antônio de Almeida's novel *Memórias de um sargento de milícias* (*Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant*), published in 1853-54, and beyond, and more specifically to one of the characters of this novel, Leonardo, whom Candido calls: '... o primeiro grande malandro que entra na novelística brasileira ...' ('... the first great *malandro* that appears in the Brazilian novel ...'). According to Candido, elements of the ethos of *malandragem* are also to be found in the works of the seventeenth-century poet Gregório de Matos, and the figure of the *malandro* reemerged in the twentieth century in Mário de Andrade's novel *Macunaíma*. Nevertheless, the *malandro* is not peculiar to Brazilian society, but is one example of the generic type of the picaresque adventurer.<sup>11</sup> There is an obvious similarity between the Brazilian *malandro* and the figure of the *curro* in Cuba, who appears in the nineteenth-century novel *Cecilia Valdés* by Cirilo Villaverde.<sup>12</sup> Parallels can also be drawn between the *malandro* and the characters of Nicolás Guillén's poetry from the 1930s, who also wear *sapato de do tono* (two-tone shoes). It is no coincidence that the slave-based societies of both Brazil and Cuba should produce a mythical black figure who rejects demeaning manual work and challenges his inferior social position. Antonio Candido also states that the *malandro* character bears traces of other popular heroes found in Brazilian folklore, such as Pedro Malasartes, a similarity which Roberto Da Matta embroiders on in his book *Carnavais, malandros e heróis: para uma sociologia do dilema brasileiro* (*Carnivals, 'Malandros' and Heroes: Towards a Sociology of the Brazilian Dilemma*). Here he shows Pedro, a figure from popular literature, to be a rural *malandro*, who lives by cheating the system (his bosses) and compensates for his lack of power with his cunning, thus turning his fortune around.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, it was in the lyrics of *carioca* samba that the mythical Brazilian *malandro* found his true identity. The *sambista* found his greatest source of inspiration in the ethos of *malandragem*, and in the 1920s and early 1930s the so-called *samba malandro*, with its anti-establishment discourse, predominated. Although seemingly self-obsessed and concerned, above all, for his own well-being, the *malandro* is, nevertheless, vehemently opposed to the exploitation of his social class. He challenges any form of manipulation by the state, and thus is worshipped by the rest of his community. He does not want to become a middle-class city dweller, preferring to indulge in small acts of *malandragem*, rather than make any serious attempt to climb the social

ladder. The samba '*O que será de mim?*' ('What Will Become of Me?'), written by Ismael Silva in 1931, clearly illustrates the spiv's aversion to honest toil:

*'O que será de mim?'*, 1931, Ismael Silva

Se eu precisar algum dia  
De ir ao batente  
Não sei o que será  
Pois vivo na boemia  
E vida melhor não há

Não há vida melhor  
E vida melhor não há  
Deixa falar quem quiser  
Deixa quem quiser falar

O trabalho não é bom  
Ninguém deve duvidar  
Trabalhar, só obrigado  
Por gosto ninguém vai lá

*'What Will Become of Me?'*, 1931, Ismael Silva

If one day I have to  
Go out to work  
I don't know what will happen  
'Cos I live a bohemian life  
And there's no better way to live

There's no better life  
No better way to live  
Let people say what they want  
Let them say what they like

Work isn't good  
No one should doubt that  
I'll only work if forced to  
Nobody works for the fun of it

The myth of the *malandro* had much more power than the real-life black spiv, and helped preserve the socio-cultural identity of his community. He came to symbolize the marginal world of the poor *bairros* and *morros* of the city of Rio. It was in these areas that many impoverished blacks did, in fact, spurn poorly paid, manual labour, in favour of a lifestyle that often transgressed the law, revolving around gambling, petty crime and organized prostitution. As Sam C. Adamo explains: 'The popular association of the Afro-Brazilian with crime is embodied in the image of the *malandro* or vagabond who never works and survives by using his cunning and wits'.<sup>14</sup> This criminal stereotype of blacks and mulattos was reinforced by the ideas of Social Darwinism, but the *malandro* was, in

## 10 THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE BRAZILIAN SAMBA

reality, the product of an economic structure incapable of absorbing all the male workforce available in urban Rio.<sup>15</sup>

The *malandro* and the *sambista* became synonymous, with the performance of samba being outlawed by the authorities in the first decades of its existence. During this clandestine period in samba's history, when its performance was closely associated with the Afro-Brazilian cult practice of *candomblé* in the minds of the authorities, the state feared the potentially subversive group solidarity engendered by informal musical or religious gatherings. Police repression was used to try to stamp out both activities until the 1930s, and as Adamo says:

What were considered the 'uncivilized' and 'barbarous' practices of non-whites provided a means for a powerless group of social and economic outcasts to organize and become a threat to the established socio-economic order. Unification of non-whites in urban areas would have been a threat to traditional society.<sup>16</sup>

Until 1930, public order offences like drunkenness, vagrancy and begging were used to control those outside mainstream society. Fights, sometimes involving knives and guns, would occasionally break out between rival samba groups, but it was an unlawful minority of participants that stigmatized all *sambistas* and contributed to the *malandro's* violent image. Such disturbances prompted a police response in the form of arrests and the confiscation of musical instruments. Maria Júlia Goldwasser states that she heard of many cases of samba schools competing in carnival that left a trail of wounded and even dead behind them, and of *baianas* (black women wearing the typical dress of those from the city of Salvador in the northeastern state of Bahia), sometimes men in disguise, who would hide an arsenal of weapons under their clothes.<sup>17</sup>

Around 1920 there had been a perceptible shift in the cultural establishment's attitude to Brazil's African heritage. Most intellectuals no longer rejected it as a dangerous menace to society, and instead began to view it as an integral part of Brazilian culture. As Dain Borges says:

... this new attitude toward the Afro-Brazilian heritage coincided with the mobilization and commercialization of festive aspects of Afro-Brazilian urban popular culture between 1910 and 1940. This mobilization undermined the formal and informal discriminatory policies of the First Republic. By making Afro-Brazilian practices more visible, less clandestine, it abated some of their connotations of polluting menace. Slyly or sincerely renamed as 'schools', *samba* societies and *capoeira* martial arts circles sought and won police permission to meet and perform on the streets. Record companies commercialized *samba* marches, legitimating Carnival music as a product. ... Eventually, in a variety of ways, Brazilian intellectuals unbarred access to Creole popular traditions, to symbols and ideas that had previously been stigmatized and cast out.<sup>18</sup>

With the establishment of Vargas's provisional government in 1930, a totally new tactic was employed by the authorities. Repression was replaced, to a large extent, by tolerance and cooption. Samba and Afro-Brazilian cult practices were permitted, provided that their participants abided by certain rules laid down by the regime. Non-white institutions such as these were 'Brazilianized', and their potential for subversion was defused. In 1932, for example, Rio's largely Afro-Brazilian carnival was brought under government sponsorship and became a national festival. The same process of appropriation by the state took place a few decades earlier with *capoeira*, the warfare dance game of Angolan origin, developed by Angolan slaves on the plantations of the state of Bahia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, possibly as physical training for slave insurrection. After emancipation, *capoeira* gangs continued to exist in urban areas, often armed with knives, and naturally posed a threat to law and order. In the late nineteenth century, politicians dealt with this problem by forming alliances with these gangs. In return for favours and patronage, the latter were encouraged to channel their energies and violence into intimidation, with the aim of ensuring electoral success for their patrons. Thus, the threat that gangs of blacks posed was attenuated, and an impression of leniency on the part of the ruling élite was maintained. As Gerhard Kubik states: 'It was a result of the same process of "emancipation" which turned *capoeira* from a prosecuted activity into a harmless manifestation within a presentable white category: *Folclore* (Folklore).'

As carnival grew in importance, samba became increasingly acceptable in the eyes of the white élite. Its force as a vehicle for ethno-cultural expression was reduced by encouraging its adoption by other sectors of society. Originally a symbol of black identity, samba gradually became a symbol of the Brazilian nation as a whole.<sup>20</sup> The appropriation of samba by Vargas's authoritarian regime clearly fits the pattern identified by Eduardo Diatahy B. de Menezes, which divides the process of cultural domination into three stages, as follows:

1. The rejection of 'offensive/disorderly' elements by the repressive apparatus of the state. (In the case of samba this took the form of the eradication of overt references to the ethos of *malandragem* via censorship, and greater incentives for *sambistas* to deal with un-controversial, eulogistic, pro-establishment topics.)
2. Domestication by separating these dangerous elements from the 'exotic/decorative', which can be used in a process of symbolic domination. (The innocuous, patriotic features of samba were foregrounded to create a symbol of national as opposed to ethnic or class identity.)

## 12 THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE BRAZILIAN SAMBA

3. Recuperation. The culture industry and the ideological apparatus of the state transform these desirable elements into cultural expressions of the dominant class, for the purposes of ideological education, national marketing for the tourist industry, and suchlike.<sup>21</sup> Samba, like other Afro-Brazilian cultural forms, such as *feijoada* (Brazil's national dish)<sup>22</sup> and *candomblé*, was to become a national symbol, produced and consumed by a cross-section of Brazilian society and projected abroad as a reflection of Brazil's mythical racial democracy.<sup>23</sup>

As a result of the restrictions placed on *sambistas* by the censors, the *malandro* was replaced in song lyrics by his respectable counterpart, the *malandro regenerado* (reformed spiv). Cláudia Matos believes, however, that the ethos did not disappear entirely, but rather became increasingly ambiguous. She says that songwriters managed to evade censorship and seemingly to toe the official line, yet still put across elements of the counter-culture of *malandragem*. The *malandro's* vision of life became more realistic and a critical view of society was covertly expressed.<sup>24</sup> Matos quotes Noel Rosa's samba '*Rapaz folgado*' ('Laid-back Guy') of 1933, which triggered off a famous polemic between Noel and Wilson Baptista, as an example of this transformation. In this song, Noel is giving Wilson advice, telling him to be more subtle in his advocacy of a life of *malandragem* if he wants to survive as a *sambista*.<sup>25</sup>

'*Rapaz folgado*', 1933, Noel Rosa

Deixa de arrastar o teu tamanco  
Pois tamanco nunca foi sandália  
Tira do pescoço o lenço branco  
Compra sapato e gravata  
Joga fora esta navalha  
Que te atrapalha

Com o chapéu de lado deste rata  
Da polícia quero que te escapes  
Fazendo um samba-canção  
Já te dei papel e lápis  
Arranja um amor e um violão

Malandro é palavra derrotista  
Que só serve pra tirar  
Todo o valor do sambista  
Proponho ao povo civilizado  
Não te chamarem de malandro  
Mas sim de rapaz folgado

'Laid-back Guy', 1933, Noel Rosa

Stop dragging your clogs<sup>26</sup>  
'Cos clogs have never been sandals