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corporal language, sexuality, and ties to Africa.[66] Tourism, the predominant economic activity on the coast, functions by allowing the visitor to consume the exotic. As in costeño boxing during its heyday, and perhaps in conjunction with the export of black boxers since the early 2000s, a mythified "black culture" has been transformed into a commercialized product, a "standardized, stereotyped identity."[67]

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KATYA WESOLOWSKI

FROM "MORAL DISEASE" TO "NATIONAL SPORT"
RACE, NATION, AND CAPOEIRA IN BRAZIL

In 1878, Rio de Janeiro's chief of police condemned capoeira as "one of the strangest moral diseases of this great and civilized city" and launched a war of repression against its male practitioners, most of whom were lower class and of African descent.[1] Seventy years later, the president of Brazil, Getúlio Vargas, proclaimed capoeira to be "the only truly national sport."[2] In August 2013, I attended the ninth Abadá-Capoeira Jogos Mundiais in Rio de Janeiro. These biennial "world games," held since 1995 by one of the world's largest capoeira associations, bring together teachers and their students from nations as diverse as Angola, Israel, Japan, and Sweden. That year's event brought the recognition, for the first time in this group, of two female *mestres* (masters)—a measure of changing gender politics in what has been a male-dominated physical and social arena.

These snapshots capture the radical shifts in the performance and perception of capoeira, an embodied Afro-Brazilian practice that combines dance, fight, acrobatics, percussive music, and call-and-response singing. From an exclusively lower-class, rough, male activity perceived as a social threat in the nineteenth century to a celebrated manifestation of national culture in the early twentieth century and a popular global practice among women and children as well as men in the twenty-first century,

capoeira embodies shifting discourses of race, gender, and belonging that have accompanied Brazil since its inception as a Portuguese colony. If, as French theorist of play Roger Caillois has asserted, a society discloses a great deal about itself by the game it plays and how, then the history of capoeira says a great deal about the changing configuration of Brazilian culture and national belonging.[3]

On the one hand, the historical transformations in capoeira appear to be a familiar story of state co-optation of an indigenous cultural practice during an intense period of nation building followed by the mainstreaming, disciplining, and commercialization of the practice to attract global participants. As sociologists Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning pointed out long ago, since the earliest processes of national consolidation, state monopoly on force and violence was coupled with a social "civilizing process" of leisure activities and sports that stressed self-control of the physical body, aggression, sexuality, emotions, and interpersonal relations. Games that were once brutal and dangerous became regulated and mimetic, the pleasure of play shifting from the goal of victory or domination over the other—beast or human—to the dramatization of emotions.[4] Capoeira, it would appear, was subject to just such a "taming" process, evolving from nineteenth-century violent street fights to an organized, controlled sport in the twenty-first century.

On the other hand, capoeira—as is often the case in the arena of leisure and expressive culture—measures the unfulfilled promises of nation building. Never truly the neutral spaces of fair play that they claim to be, modern games and sports are always shaped by larger social, political, and economic forces that determine their historical trajectories and populate their fields with players jockeying for position and power.[5] While some practitioners regard capoeira as a sport and others object to its "sportification" and the normalizing competitive model that brings, the story of capoeira nonetheless remains one of ongoing struggle of Brazil's marginalized groups for recognition on the larger playing field of national belonging. The civilizing process in Brazil—at least as measured by state control and social welfare—has been incomplete. The terrain of citizenship is uneven, and many Brazilian *capoeiristas* acutely feel this unevenness on bodies that have been historically criminalized and neglected by the state. This chapter—based on playing and studying capoeira in Rio de Janeiro since the early 1990s—brings the historical discourses surrounding capoeira to bear on the present meanings that practitioners use in their physical practice. The fields of expressive culture, racial politics, and reworked notions of nationhood and identity are deeply intertwined in the changing place of capoeira in a changing Brazil.

BRASILIDADE AND THE SOCIAL STIGMATIZATION OF CAPOEIRA

The question of whether capoeira should be conceived as a sport has been a matter of controversy ever since Getúlio Vargas pronounced it to be so, if not before. Since that 1953 pronouncement, the controversy has only increased, generating a fierce identity politics around the practice of capoeira. At the same time, it is the very ambiguity of capoeira—a game, a dance, a fight—that contributes to its increasing worldwide popularity: because capoeira does not sit neatly within a particular category, it affords individuals and groups the freedom and space to shape style, practice, pedagogy, and meaning that speak to their particular life conditions, needs, and desires. The slipperiness of capoeira reminds us that a definition is a starting rather than ending point; the real work to be done is to understand who is doing the defining, when, and for what purpose.

To understand why Vargas should have cared at all about capoeira, we must attend to the first part of his proclamation that it was the "only truly national" sport: more than simply co-opting an indigenous practice as national heritage, this claim in fact contributed to capoeira's very construction as an autochthonous practice. Unlike *futebol* (that other most Brazilian game that capoeiristas like to claim is the *only* physical activity more popular than capoeira in Brazil), which is recognized as an imported English game perfected by the Brazilians, capoeira would seem a more autochthonous invention. In fact, however, the exact place and time of capoeira's origin are unknown and subject to much speculation and contention. While some practitioners choose to believe capoeira was the invention of free men in Africa, which made the Middle Passage along with the captured and enslaved, others prefer a more Brazilian narrative.[6]

In the most popular version, capoeira was born on the *senzalas*, or slave barracks of the sugar plantations, created as a form of martial training disguised from the vigilant overseers' eyes with a dance aesthetic, music and singing, and an insulating circle of tight bodies. Another iteration places early capoeira on the *quilombos*, or runaway slave societies, which existed throughout colonialism. Africans and Amerindians lived together on the quilombos and shared knowledge, including language, giving rise to one possible etymology of the name "capoeira," as from the Tupi word for "second-growth forest."[7] While there is scant historical evidence before the nineteenth century to support these theories, the narratives continue to circulate among capoeiristas as stories of resistance that imbue their practice with personal and political significance.

Along with revealing the identity politics of those who practice capo-

eira today, the various claims to *brasilidade* (Brazilianness) provide a lens onto shifting racial ideologies at key moments in Brazilian history. Vargas's 1953 proclamation, which came during a period of political volatility that would eventually plunge Brazil into a twenty-year oppressive military dictatorship, was an attempt to link capoeira to a colorblind nationalism. In his earlier term as a populist dictator (1930–45), Vargas had won the hearts of Brazilians by elevating the culture of the *povo* (people) in an attempt to unite a nation fractured after the fall of the monarchy and birth of the first republic. A fecund period of national soul searching, the early twentieth century was defined by a longing for an imagined "authentic" brasilidade, which would distinguish Brazil from other nations. The revisionist history of sociologist Gilberto Freyre proclaimed Brazil a "racial democracy" in which Africans, indigenous people, and Europeans lived harmoniously, while the modernist artists celebrated anthropophagy—a cultural cannibalism of appropriation and hybridity. Proclaiming capoeira as the one true national sport went together with the new celebration of other invented Afro-Brazilian traditions—*feijoada*, the bean stew eaten by slaves, as the national dish, and samba, the music of Rio's *favelas* (shantytowns), as the national music. None of this destabilized the rigid racial hierarchy that had defined Brazil thus far, nor did it do anything to improve the lives of Afro-Brazilians.

What can be said about capoeira with some certainty is that in the nineteenth century, when the first historical documentation appears, it was an exclusively male, rough, lower-class activity vilified and persecuted by the authorities. Yet for its participants it created a strong sense of local belonging in the socially stratified geography of nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro. Organized around neighborhoods, the *maltas* (capoeira gangs), which ranged in size from a half dozen to hundreds of members, functioned like street gangs. Often taking the name of a local church, the maltas laid claim to the surrounding urban territory. Joining the maltas were slaves, former slaves, or recently immigrated poor Europeans who were menial street laborers, such as porters, vendors, or shoeshine boys. Members of a gang that controlled a neighborhood had exclusive rights to the resources (e.g., a public fountain in a city that lacked indoor plumbing) and clientele.[8] While these material gains were not insignificant, the nonmaterial gains were just as, if not more, important: the internal cohesion, adept fighting skills, and a system of codes made the maltas impenetrable, rendering them, according to historian Thomas Holloway, "the most persistent and perhaps the most successful effort to establish a social 'space' on the part of urban Afro-Brazilians—an area of activity which they controlled, used for their advantage and largely on their own terms, and from which they could exclude outsiders."[9]

That the city authorities viewed the maltas as a social threat is clearly evidenced in the police reports and visual documentation of the time. Among the several nineteenth-century artistic renditions of capoeira by European travelers to Brazil is the striking 1840 lithograph by Frederico Guillerme Briggs titled "Slaves Going to Be Flogged" (Negros vão levar açoutes). The strongest visual evidence of the persecution of capoeira, the print depicts soldiers standing with two slaves in shackles who carry above their heads a sign that reads, "Capoeira." Most likely being led to the *pelourinho* (the public whipping post ubiquitous in colonial Brazil towns), the offenders are being paraded through the streets, announcing their crime as a deterrent to others.[10] Compelling as they are, Briggs's and others' artistic renditions of capoeira raise more questions than answers: We are still left to wonder what this capoeira looked like and why it was treated as a crime punishable by law. Police records, the written counterpart to Briggs's lithograph, likewise offer only partial answers. Records reveal that in 1858 capoeira was the most common reason for detainment in the slave prison, Calabouço.[11] It is difficult to ascertain how many of those detained were actual members of maltas or capoeira adepts, as it appears that "capoeira" had become a catchall label for street hoodlums, and *capoeiragem* a general category for any act of social vagrancy—disorderly conduct, drunkenness, public fighting, or curfew violation.[12] Similarly, those arrested for these other acts of social misconduct could very well have also been involved in capoeira.[13]

What the Brazilian authorities apparently feared was not so much the criminality of the capoeiras, but what the maltas *represented*. What attracted participants to the gangs frightened the authorities—a parallel sociopolitical structure in their city and the possibility of black insurrection. Fear that these secret organizations would spread is evident in the language of infection employed to describe the capoeira phenomenon. One police chief called it a "moral disease," while a journalist likened it to an epidemic plaguing Rio at the time: "Like yellow fever, which for unknown reasons attacks so many people and which everyone wants to see vanquished, capoeiragem, a national fight that is degenerating into murders, deserves persecution without rest, war without limits."[14] Such language was deployed in hopes of instilling fear in the general public. In fact, the general public held a rather ambiguous relationship to capoeiragem and the capoeiras. While fearing the violence of the maltas, people who occupied similar or slightly higher niches as the capoeiras on the *carioca*

social hierarchy also occasionally enjoyed the spectacle of capoeiras' gang rivalry and even called upon their services: clashes, or rumbles, between maltas were held on Sundays, publicly advertised so as to draw spectators, and capoeiras were hired as bouncers in taverns and crowd controllers during Carnaval. Even taken up as a theme at one year's Carnaval parade, capoeiragem evidently became a crowd-pleasing performative element of popular culture.[15]

Thanks to the general public's fascination with the maltas and capoeiras, we have some historical documentation that provides better ethnographic evidence of nineteenth-century carioca capoeira than the police records and paintings. Displaying a typical ambivalence, the same folklorist and journalist who likened capoeira to a yellow fever invading the city wrote an essay, titled "Capoeiragem and Famous Capoeiras in Rio de Janeiro." In the essay Mello Moraes Filho detailed the clothing (baggy pants, open shirts, and "gang colors" displayed on silk scarves and hat bands), the rituals (provoking another gang by stomping on its colors), secrecy (using nicknames, slang, and warning whistle calls), and initiation rites (climbing church bells or becoming an accomplice to theft or even murder) of the maltas.[16] Journalist Placido de Abreu, who allegedly dabbled in capoeira himself, wrote the 1886 novel *Os capoeiras*, which begins with a description of the training sessions of the largest of Rio's maltas:

> Not long ago, the Guayamú gang still trained novices on Livramento Hill, a place named Mangueira. The trainings were held on Sunday mornings and consisted of exercises with the head and feet and strikes with a razor and knife. The more famous capoeiras were instructors to those just beginning. At first, strikes were practiced empty handed; when the disciple had learned the lessons, he began to train with wooden weapons and finally with knives and razors, so that many times the training ground became bloody. The Nagôas had similar trainings.[17]

While drawing attention to the potential violence of these trainings, this passage also illuminates the organization of these gangs as pedagogical social institutions in which fighting techniques were transmitted from the more experienced to the novices.

Some of Rio's citizens, not only from the popular classes, embraced capoeira as a uniquely elegant and effective fighting art. Foreshadowing the widening social base of its practitioners that would take off in the twentieth century, by the end of nineteenth century, capoeira had begun to attract attention in elite circles, where it "became highly prized by some upper-class whites, not only for self-defense but also as an expression of physical elegance."[18] Even those who actively persecuted capoeira were not immune to its attraction: João Baptista Sampaio Ferraz, the police chief credited with finally purging the city of capoeiras, was allegedly an adept himself. It was not the efforts of one man alone, however, that brought about the demise of carioca capoeiragem; he was greatly aided by the country's particular political moment, on the verge of a major transition, and by the internal characteristics of the maltas themselves.

If the secret and insular nature of the maltas fortified them against the authorities, then it was a breech in that secrecy and insularity that eventually led to their downfall. This period of capoeira history is particularly difficult to reconcile with the image of capoeira as a form of resistance against slavery and the oppressive classes and, in this sense, suggests the tensions and contradictions always built into opposition to the dominant order. The rivalry between the maltas, which created more internally than externally directed violence, eventually led to their self-destruction. By the 1880s Brazil, which had peacefully transitioned from colony to independent empire in the 1820s, was the closest it has ever come to civil war.[19] The country, Rio in particular, was divided between the Conservatives, who were loyal to the monarchy, and the Liberals, who were agitating for political reform and abolition of slavery. While for ideological purposes it would be convenient if the maltas had aligned themselves with the abolitionists, this in fact did not happen. Self-serving to the end, the majority of the capoeiras, who by this point had consolidated into two large factions, aligned themselves with the Conservatives, the current party of power. Working as bodyguards, campaigners, rabble-rousers at the rallies of the opposing political party, and even thugs to intimidate and injure oppositional candidates, the capoeiras hoped to reap political benefits after the Conservatives restored civil order to the city. Their hopes were not realized: even with their last-ditch attempt at appeasement with the signing of the golden law of abolition of slavery in 1888, the Conservatives were overpowered by the Liberals, and by 1889 Brazil's first republic was declared. The new governing party was quick to put order in their house, which included killing or exiling all capoeiras from the city.

Capoeira's early history is a matter of intense interest, and often debate, today among practitioners. Many capoeiristas are aware of the dubious accuracy of some of the myths they tell, and the idea of capoeira as an unquestionable form of resistance against slavery and the oppressors of Afro-Brazilian culture. Yet these narratives continue to circulate—a set of chartering myths that form part of the fabric of capoeira as much as the embodied practices that define it.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CAPOEIRA

Even more alive in the imaginations of contemporary capoeiristas than the history of the nineteenth-century carioca maltas is the transformation in capoeira that occurred in Bahia in the 1930s and 1940s. It was in the northeast city of Salvador that capoeira's two iconic masters—Mestre Bimba and Mestre Pastinha—took advantage of the new political environment of a colorblind nationalism and search for authentic Brazilian culture and definitively transformed the way in which capoeira was practiced and transmitted. The two mestres and, more significantly, their disciples created a bifurcation in style that sparked debates that endure today about the proper definition and practice of capoeira.

Born Manoel dos Reis Machado in Salvador on November 23, 1899, Mestre Bimba has been called the last of the *valentões* (tough guys). While Rio had the fierce capoeiras of malta fame, Salvador's capoeira fighters of the time were known as valentões. Unlike the carioca capoeiras who organized into gangs, the valentões tended to operate on their own, winning mythic reputations, often with supernatural powers. The absence of capoeira gangs may have been one reason that capoeira was not as severely persecuted in Salvador as it had been in Rio, so the practice continued to flourish even while it was temporarily dormant in Rio. Of formidable height and brawn, Mestre Bimba was also known as Três Pancadas (Three Blows) for his alleged fame of knocking out any opponent with, at most, three punches. Numerous newspaper articles from the 1920s and 1930s document his many tussles with the police, and he supposedly boasted of having been arrested for public fighting twenty-four times by his twentieth birthday.

Though proud of his outlaw exploits, by the 1930s Mestre Bimba had proclaimed it his mission to remove all association of capoeira with violent and marginal characters and to elevate the practice to a respectable activity among reputable citizens. He reacted strongly against the newly popular presentations of capoeira to tourists on the streets or in folkloric shows of "authentic" Bahian culture. These displays, he thought, stripped capoeira of its power and meaning as a fighting art. To dissociate his capoeira from irrational violence or banal performance, Mestre Bimba developed a new style that emphasized discipline and efficiency and expanded the repertoire of movement, incorporating techniques from other martial arts. Probably his most important innovation, however, was moving capoeira from the streets to the academy. In 1937 he opened the first capoeira school, Centro de Cultural Física Regional (Center of Regional Physical Culture).[20] Along with moving the training of capoeira from outdoor plazas and streets to inside school walls, Mestre Bimba introduced structured pedagogy, uniforms, and "baptisms," or graduation ceremonies that marked students' induction into the group and subsequent achievements.

Opponents of Mestre Bimba's innovations argued that they "modernized" and "deauthenticated" capoeira. From another perspective, these elements of capoeira—pedagogy, hierarchical organization, specialized clothes, and rituals that fostered group identity and personal pride—were not new to capoeira, having been an integral part of at least the nineteenth-century maltas. Mestre Bimba's school moved locations several times over its life span, resulting in a wide variety of students: from the largely lower-class Afro-Brazilian neighborhood where Mestre Bimba lived to the old city center near the School of Medicine (still its present location), where it attracted white middle-class students. This widening of the social base of practitioners, as well as Mestre Bimba's rule that anyone who wanted to train in his school present a student or worker's identification card, fueled criticism by his detractors that along with "modernizing" capoeira, Mestre Bimba was "whitening" it.

Mestre Bimba's rival—capoeira's other titan—was Mestre Pastinha. Born Vicente Ferreira Pastiña in Salvador on April 5, 1889, Mestre Pastinha was in many ways Mestre Bimba's counterpoint: light-skinned, small, and delicate-looking, he was a philosopher, artist, and avid writer. Some consider *capoeira angola*, the style developed by Mestre Pastinha, the antithesis of Mestre Bimba's *capoeira regional*.[21] Though the styles today could not be more distinct, probably the two mestres' manner of play were more similar than different, as they learned capoeira at the same time and in the same location and allegedly both from African teachers. Furthermore, though stated differently, their vision and projects for capoeira were much more similar than contemporary followers of the two styles might like to admit. Although Mestre Pastinha published a book during his life (*Capoeira Angola*) and left several unpublished manuscripts, little is known about his life. His mother was a black Bahiana and his father, who worked as a peddler, was from Spain. Mestre Pastinha claimed to have learned capoeira as a child to protect himself from the neighborhood bully; when he was twenty-one, he began teaching capoeira in the back of a bicycle shop where he worked. This predates Mestre Bimba's debut as a capoeira teacher, but little is known about this early phase of Pastinha's teaching. In 1912 he completely withdrew from the capoeira scene for three decades. Mestre Pastinha's reentry into capoeira in 1941 was instigated by Mestre Bimba's success and some of the "old guard" Bahian valentões' growing concern with the loss of "tradition." To distinguish their capoeira from Bimba's capoeira regional and to emphasize its African roots, they called

it capoeira angola, and in 1949, Pastinha established the Centro Esportivo de Capoeira Angola in a soap factory where he worked as a watchman.[22]

The name suggests that like Mestre Bimba, Mestre Pastinha wished to bestow legitimacy on his school. By calling it a "sports center," he was distancing capoeira from associations with criminal, violent, or vagrant activity. In the introduction to his book, Pastinha explicitly states his vision and goals for capoeira. Like Bimba, he wished to divorce capoeira from its violent past and from those "individuals of bad character who used capoeira to discharge their aggressive instinct." He goes on: "Fortunately those disorderly capoeiristas were small in number and deserved violent police repression. Unfortunately the consequence of these episodes from distant times and verified in our state brought doubt and antipathy to capoeira for many years. It is with great pleasure that I can verify that that doubt has been erased, and today, capoeira angola is practiced by all social classes and receives protection and prestige from the authorities for being one of the most authentic manifestations of national folklore."[23] Though proclaiming capoeira to be an important element of Brazilian folklore, like Mestre Bimba, Mestre Pastinha did not want the efficacy and power of capoeira as a fighting art to be lost. He reminded his readers: "Capoeira angola is, before all else, a fight and a violent fight."[24] Like Mestre Bimba, to reach his goals, Mestre Pastinha codified capoeira and his teaching of it. Rather than expand, he limited the repertoire to seven basic moves and their variations and discouraged the introduction of any "foreign" fighting techniques. He taught structured classes, emphasized music, and demanded that his students wear uniforms.

Where Bimba had the support of medical students and politicians, Pastinha had the support of artists and intellectuals. Famed Bahian author Jorge Amado immortalized Pastinha in several of his novels. Folklorist Edison Carneiro, who erected an "exhibition of capoeira de angola" at the second Afro-Brazilian Congress in Salvador in 1937, scorned Bimba's regional style, claiming the angola style to be the only true capoeira. In 1955, with the help of these supporters, Pastinha was able to move his academy to the more centrally located neighborhood of Pelourinho, drawing more students and publicity. Despite the recognition Bimba and Pastinha gained during their lifetimes, both died destitute and disillusioned. Their dire conditions at the end of their lives symbolized, in its way, the disjuncture between new populist state celebrations of Afro-Brazilian cultural manifestations and the continuing marginalization of Afro-Brazilians, a situation that endures today, as one can see in Brazil's many upscale, essentially all-white city neighborhoods with black nannies and watchmen.

Nonetheless, the changes that capoeira underwent during this period of radical transformation in Brazilian racial ideology led the way for a proliferation of groups and practitioners, paving the road for the global embrace of capoeira. Seen today as a creative art form, a fun and exciting way to stay fit, and a social network for connecting with people across continents, capoeira and its practitioners have moved far from a marginalized status. However, the enduring difficulty of life in Brazil, where inequality and violence still abound, means that capoeira continues to be a terrain, albeit in updated ways, in which many practitioners fight for full inclusion in the nation.

MALANDRAGEM, JOGO DURO, AND THE FEEL OF THE GAME

But what can be said about the bodily expressive culture and language of capoeira itself? Sociological histories of play and sports too often fail to recognize the embodied nature of these practices, an embodiment that both reflects and sometimes exceeds the forces of history and society that games mirror and refract. Capoeiristas, in the language of sport, do not "fight" or "dance" but "play" (*jogar* in Portuguese), and a match between two "capoeiristas" or "players" (*jogadores*) is called a *jogo* or "game." Capoeira shares much with Brazil's uniquely creative brand of soccer. Terms such as *manha* (swing), *jogo de cintura* (flexibility), *ginga* (sway), *rasteira* (sweep), and *malandragem* (cunning) circulate in both capoeira and soccer to describe the sophisticated footwork, improvisation, and intelligent strategy of adept players. These terms also belong to the Brazilian dance of samba, suggesting that soccer and capoeira are as much games of aesthetics as they are games of physical and mental prowess. The popular epithets—*futebol-arte* and *arte-capoeira* as well as *jogo bonito* or "beautiful game" used to describe both—claim capoeira and soccer as art forms, perhaps urging us to reconsider the ways in which we categorize and separate certain domains of physical activity.

Whether capoeira is presented as sport, art, fight, performance (or culture, education, and resistance, to name just a few of the myriad definitions I heard in the field) depends on the particular participants as well as the time and place of engagement. But to return to the most immediate language capoeiristas use to speak of their practice, it is a form of play. The physical play of capoeira is accompanied by the musical play (designated by a different verb—*tocar*—in Portuguese) of percussive instruments, hand-clapping, and call-and-response singing. *Brincar*, which refers to the play of children, is also used at times to describe a game between two capoeiristas that is particularly playful, spontaneous, and joyful.

While the main objective of a capoeira game is to outmaneuver and destabilize one's partner/adversary in the space of the *roda* (ring) in which it

occurs, there is equal emphasis on maintaining the flowing movement in time with the music and singing. The use of "escapes" rather than blocks (as in other martial arts) and the seamlessness of games—players replace one another without formal acknowledgment of a winner or loser, with the result that a roda (which refers to the "play event" as well as the "play space") can go on for hours—creates a "to-and-fro movement which is not tied to any goal which would bring it to an end . . . [but] rather renews itself in constant repetition."[25] Scholar Hans-Georg Gadamer's definition of play as well as that of historian Johan Huizinga—"a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious,' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly"—beautifully capture capoeira's physical qualities and the way in which it is engaged by and engaging to its players.[26] Demanding strength, flexibility, quick decision making, aesthetic and musical sensibility, capoeira shares as much with a soccer match as with a breakdance "battle" or chess game.[27]

The defining ethos of capoeira, what makes it truly Brazilian, is malandragem. Glossed as "cunning" or "deception," malandragem incorporates a whole range of characteristics, among them intelligence, foresight, improvisation, opportunism, and self-preservation. Well known in the wider Brazilian context, malandragem is best understood as a form of cultural agency.[28] Often not explicitly spoken about, and impossible to teach, malandragem is nonetheless, many capoeiristas insist, an essential part of capoeira.[29] Echoing the words of many others, one mestre in Rio told me: "Malandragem is the center of capoeira. Capoeira without malandragem is not capoeira but just movement. The spice of capoeira is *malícia* and malandragem. Malandragem is the provenance of the *malandro*, the con artist. Malandragem is survival, it is surviving the fight that is everyday life." Capoeira without malandragem is just a show of physical agility. Embodying improvisational spontaneity, strategic cunning, and even theatrical humor, malandragem, capoeristas say, adds the *tempero* (spice) to the game; it is capoeira's *dendê*—that hot palm oil that distinguishes Bahian food. But there is a dark underbelly to malandragem. As a tactic for surviving "the fight that is everyday life," malandragem expresses the difficulty of a life constrained by the conditions of a corrupt, inegalitarian, and unjust society. Malandragem is the art of bricolage in confronting societal constraints that range from grueling underpaid jobs to extreme poverty and violence. More often than not, it involves bending the rules and taking advantage of others in the interest of self-preservation.

The king of malandragem, an iconic figure popularized in the golden age of samba in early twentieth-century Rio, is the *malandro*. An artful dodger, a hustler, a womanizer and a trickster, the malandro presents himself as a man of leisure, a lower-class flâneur, yet one who depends on malandragem to survive; he deploys street smarts, charm, and opportunism to take advantage and get ahead of others. As a kind of folk hero historically tied to a particular socioeconomic and racial identity, the malandro has come to occupy a central place in the Brazilian social imagination that crosses class and ethnic lines: a label that today can apply equally to a politician or a drug lord, the malandro is the person who has learned to game the corrupt Brazilian system. Malandragem is a response to a highly hierarchical, inegalitarian, and paternalistic society in which getting things accomplished requires working one's social connections in creative and not always honest ways. As such, malandragem is somewhat ambiguously valued: on the one hand, it represents innovative resourcefulness; on the other hand, dishonesty and exploitation. The malandro fights an undemocractic and corrupt system with corruption, and while perhaps momentarily victorious, ultimately he does not transform the oppressive social system or his place within that system. Inside the roda, malandragem manifests as theatrical ploys and deception—a pretense of being drunkenly off balance or an attempt to distract with facial expresssions—to outmaneuver one's opponent. Outside of the roda, malandragem is, as one mestre put it, "not being taken by surprise by life itself." This translates into various tactics, including the cowboy move of sitting in a bar with one's back to the wall and one's face to the door, guarding against *ciúme* (jealousy) by avoiding gossip, and not being *transparente*, or showing emotions and reactions on one's face.

Beyond the perceived survival tactics of malandragem, capoeira provides a social network that for many proves to be the most powerful lifeline. Capoeiristas who had grown up or continued to live in some of Rio's poorest neighborhoods repeatedly would begin an interview with me by thanking God and capoeira for keeping them alive. As one twenty-five-year-old capoeirista began: "First I need to thank God, second capoeira and my mestre for being alive. Being born and raised in a favela, the majority of my friends died in the favela from a life of crime. So, if it were not for capoeira, I wouldn't have had any other option than a life of crime." Much like the capoeiras of the nineteenth-century carioca maltas, young capoeiriastas today find that capoeira can provide a "family" (mestres are often referred to as father figures) and a means for earning respect on the streets. Reflecting back on his early years, one thirty-year-old carioca capoeirista who today lives and teaches in Barcelona told me:

I started to train capoeira to occupy the time I had as an adolescent, because until then I didn't do anything. I lived on the streets and didn't identify much with anything. By chance I met a person who lived in our neighborhood who did capoeira. I went to watch a roda and the thing that made the biggest impression on me was I saw these kids, practically my size and my age, playing and doing all those things and I thought, "Damn, I've got to do this, people are going to respect me!" When a person comes along and he is not playing capoeira, you don't know who he is. And then suddenly the guy enters the roda and starts to play and then you see the guy in a different way, and he leaves respected. So that is what I wanted. To have respect in the place where I lived, which is a place with a lot of poor people and crime and marginality, and adolescents have a tendency to go in that direction. And so maybe capoeira gave me another path.

As a route out of a life of crime and drugs, capoeira provides street cred that is dependent not only on malandragem and physical prowess but also on a masculine code of aggression and toughness. I discovered during the course of my fieldwork that along with admiring and striving for a *jogo bonito* (beautiful game), or a game full of malandragem, many capoeiristas also admire and enjoy *jogo duro*—a concept I gloss as "hard play."[30] If malandragem is the art of indirect confrontation, jogo duro is its opposite: referring to more aggressive and "objective" (*objetivo*) or purposeful games, hard play allows players to intentionally, and consensually, strike and potentially injure one another. Jogo duro is a form of metacommunication that both indexes and ruptures the "play frame."[31] This rupture reflects a certain sociality that mixes pleasure with danger. Jogo duro expresses a deep dissatisfaction with the everyday violence of poverty, racism, and sexism with which many capoeiristas in Rio continue to live, despite the growing popularity of their practice. As one female capoeirista explained to me: "My family never had anything. We were often hungry. Hard play for me was a relief from that weight that I had arrived [at training] with."

Relief, often referred to as *desabafo* ("release"), is described as a pleasurable if potentially frightening experience. Often using a masculine and sexualized language, capoeiristas talk about jogo duro as an exciting flirtation with danger and potential loss of control.[32] Within the confines of the roda and under the watchful eye of other participants, however, jogo duro is a kind of scripted loss of control.[33] Within the safe boundaries of play, jogo duro is a "controlled uncontrolling of emotions" that is often a constituting characteristic of the powerful attraction of certain types of sports or leisure activities.[34] Another way of conceptualizing the circumscribed release of jogo duro is as a "controlled violence" that can be especially attractive for those for whom the everyday violence of life can seem out of their control. In his ethnography of inner-city African-American boxers, sociologist Loïc Wacquant elaborates this idea of "controlled violence" by arguing that the highly ordered and ritualized violence of the boxing ring stands in direct opposition to the arbitrary and chaotic violence of the ghetto. The boxing gym with its ritualized behaviors (everything from three-minute fighting rounds to curt conversations between fighters and trainers is prescribed) is a sanctuary from the problems of the outside world and a space for boxers to feel, if only momentarily, in control of their lives.[35]

Like boxers, capoeiristas experience the roda as a retreat from the stresses of everyday life. However, rather than the closed, windowless boxing gym in which "all problems are left at the door," the capoeira studio, often an open-air community space in Rio's poor neighborhoods, stands in a relationship of osmosis with the external world. Training sessions can be a forum for discussing personal or social problems, and it is not uncommon for students to take out frustrations from the day or with each other in the roda. Aggressive games can be a result of blowing off steam, but they can also be a direct response to an interpersonal conflict. And unlike boxers, who enjoy the highly ritualized and regulated violence of boxing and who pride themselves on disciplined and controlled bodies, many capoeiristas seek the pleasure of unpredictable situations and potentially volatile bodies.

At the same time that capoeiristas revel in unpredictable volatility, they view jogo duro as a test of their efficacy as fighters. Together, jogo duro and malandragem make a complete capoeirista, one whose cunning strategy is backed up by a confidence and willingness to engage with physical aggression if provoked. Both these aspects of capoeira are steeped in a masculine ethos, making it often difficult for women to achieve them and, if they do, to be respected for it. In popular culture the malandra is more often vilified than her male counterpart, represented as an unfaithful, conniving vixen.[36] Even more problematic for a female capoeirista than having malandragem is to prove herself in the roda through jogo duro: she will be considered unduly aggressive, out of control, ugly, unfeminine, or overstepping her place as a woman. These attitudes become especially problematic for female capoeiristas who strive to rise through the ranks and become instructors. One thirty-seven-year-old female instructor from a favela in Rio explained to me that the boys who trained with her would not accept her demonstrating the upper hand, even during training:

> One time I was showing a student a *galopante* (open-hand strike) and I placed it on the side of his face. And he said, "Are you crazy! What is this! I am a man!" He wanted to show me that I was a woman and he was a man and I had no right do that. I told him, "Look, I am explaining the strike. This has nothing to do with being a woman or a man. This is a school and I am your teacher and I am explaining something to you. It is better that you learn now than get it in the street." And he said, "But women don't hit me!" And I said, "No one is hitting you. I am explaining something. If you were training with a man and he hit you, you would think it was great." He stopped training with me after that.

As capoeira has become more and more popular, no longer confined to the poor neighborhoods but now taught in health clubs, nursery schools, and universities across Rio, Brazil, and beyond, these dynamics are changing. As one forty-five-year-old Brazilian female instructor who now teaches in the United States explains: "The whole thing about being a woman, being a man doesn't count as much. Before it was like, 'Oh, who is toughest, who can beat up others more.' That is why men got more support than women. Today if a woman has a better CV, she might get the job over the guy who kicks ass. That is the big change in Brazil in terms of capoeira." For some, this big change, the professionalization of capoeira, is a positive development; while jogo duro and malandragem provide only a temporary sense of victory but in no way transform a capoerista's life conditions, professionalizing in capoeira can be potentially life changing. This development is fraught with its own set of contradictions and controversies.

PROFESSIONALIZING CAPOEIRA AND CITIZENSHIP STRUGGLES

Debates over the professionalization of capoeira came to a head during the Third National Capoeira Congress held over an August weekend in São Paulo in 2003. Supported by then President Lula's minister of sports, the Communist Party of Brazil and other national political parties, and local capoeira groups, the confrence brought together politicians, academics, and close to five hundred mestres and instructors from across the country. With presentations, panels, and delegate voting, the congress was a forum for discussing if and how the teaching of capoeira should be regulated. The most charged moment of the gathering came on the third day of intense debate and heightened emotion when Mestre Pinatti, a distinguished mestre in his seventies, climbed to the stage uninvited. Reaching the microphone, he raised a clenched fist and cried: "Capoeira is culture, not sport!" Encouraged by cheers of support from the crowd, Mestre Pinatti went on

to criticize the political sponsors of the congress, admonishing his fellow capoeiristas to recognize politicians as those responsible for the "big mess the country is in." To even louder roars of support and some shed tears, Mestre Pinatti closed his impassioned speech with, "At times I am prouder of being a capoeirista than a Brazilian!"

On the one hand, in invoking the old dispute over an exact definition of capoeira, Mestre Pinatti and others at the congress were making an ideological argument. Harking back to the early twentieth-century dispute between Mestre Pastinha, Mestre Bimba, and their students, the argument claims that the sportification of capoeira strips away its essence as an art form steeped in Afro-Brazilian history and culture. A capoeira that emphasizes technique, efficiency, competition, and other characteristics of sport is no longer a capoeira of beauty, cunning, and resistance. Similar to Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano lamenting professional soccer's trajectory from "beauty to duty," a professional capoeira, for some, is devoid of the playful, spontaneous aesthetic at its heart.[37] On the other hand, and perhaps more important, Mestre Pinatti was making a political argument that was in fact shared by many at the congress regardless of their particular definition and style of capoeira. While ironically invoking a term—cultures—itself heavily steeped in politics in Brazil, Mestre Pinatti and other were protesting that the sportification of capoeira was opening an avenue for the regulation and thus further co-optation of their practice by politicians and others in the ruling class. In particular, they were protesting federal Law 9696, enacted in 1998, which required any capoeira instructor to be certified by the state or federal council of physical education and in possession of an identification number and card. Anyone with a degree in physical education would be automatically certified; anyone else had a five-year grace period to receive certification through a yearlong course that carried a monthly tuition that at the time was more than many Brazilians earned in a month. In 2003 the five-year grace period was up and the congress was convened to discuss whether the law should be supported, protested, or altered. What Mestre Pinatti and others feared was that the law would effectively bar uneducated, lower-class capoeira mestres who for generations have been the keepers and transmitters of capoeira knowledge.

Most, if not all, the capoeiristas at the congress vehemently agreed that the last thing they wanted to see was the transmission of capoeira taken out of the hands of mestres who had been teaching it all their life. However, for many the move to professionalize the teaching of capoeira, even if this came with more regulation, was a new form of mobilization against social inequality and discrimination that have been at the heart of this practice

since its inception. For some practitioners the search for authenticity and authority in capoeira's mythic past and its inclusion in an imagined and rather elusive brasilidade has been superseded by a forward-looking gaze that emphasizes professionalism and "recovering citizenship" (*resgatando cidadania*). The mission statement of one of the largest capoeira associations in Rio de Janeiro and around the world includes "diffusing Brazilian culture, promoting social integration, recovering citizenship, and professionalizing capoeira." When speaking about one of his top students who grew up on the streets, the mestre of this group claimed that "before capoeira, he could not read, write, or speak properly. He had no teeth, no documents, no citizenship."

This new capoeira rhetoric of professionalism and citizenship is part of a larger discourse in Brazil over the unevenness of citizenship. Although a political democracy since the end of the military dictatorship in 1985, Brazil has failed to adopt the cultural values and practices that ensure democratic rights for all citizens.[38] This is most evident in general attitudes toward the rich and the poor. While the darker-skinned poor very often find themselves criminalized and viewed with suspicion, the wealthy often receive preferential treatment in a justice system that has tended to favor the light-skinned, the moneyed, and the powerful.[39] Mistrust of the law and legal system runs deep in Brazil's favelas and other poor areas. These feelings have only been reinforced by such incidents as the 1993 Candelaria Massacre in which a group of off-duty police officers fired on and killed a number of street children sleeping on the steps of a Candelaria Cathedral in downtown Rio. Many cariocas supported the killing, believing the street children to be dangerous and dirty petty criminals who deserved extermination.[40] Along with these more egregious and visible acts of violence, many Brazilians live with the more hidden everyday violence of poverty and deprivation. Working with children from the streets and favelas in Rio, many capoeira groups recognize the precariousness of citizenship for this population and promote capoeira as a means of avoiding the fate of the children of the Candelaria Massacre.

The possibility of escape from marginalizaton and criminalization has been enhanced with the growing recognition of capoeira as a legitimate and now even potentially lucrative occupation. In an environment where the poor are immediately associated with criminal behavior, visible signs of honest and productive citizenship—a maid's uniform, the calloused hands of a construction worker, or the Bible of an evangelical—are coveted commodities.[41] In a complete reversal from the nineteenth century, when the distinctive clothes of a capoeira were a clear sign of his marginality, the capoeira uniform today—white pants, T-shirt, and colored

cord around the waist—can be a legitimizing and protective second skin. In certain neighborhoods this uniform, like a worker's lunchbox, protects against accusations of vagrancy and police harassment. One young capoeirista who grew up in a Rio favela plagued with drug trafficking and police surveillance told me that he would always leave his uniform on after training to ensure quick passage through the police checkpoint on his way home.

By far the symbol of respectability the poor most desire is the hard-to-come-by *carteira assinada* (work document) provided by an employer. Along with ensuring some minimal job security and benefits, this document verifies that a worker has transitioned from the informal to the formal economy and thus is visible proof of "productive" citizenship. As jobs for teaching capoeira become more available in the economy's formal sector—in health clubs and schools, for example—the work document becomes within reach for capoeiristas, sometimes for the first time in their lives. To secure and keep such a job entail a new set of social skills and a work ethic that are potentially at odds with malandragem: a capoeira instructor teaching in a school or health club must be reliable, honest, hardworking, and a direct communicator. Thus many capoeiristas view their practice as a vehicle for transforming individuals; by learning to embrace this new code of ethics (and having the documents to "prove" it), individuals who were once perceived by society as *marginal* (a Portuguese term denoting a delinquent or criminal) can move into the category of "citizen."

Ironically, at the time of the Third National Capoeira Congress and thereafter it was not at all clear whether Law 9696 would actually be enforced. In any case the debates at the congress highlight the changing environment in which Brazilian capoeiristas operate. On the one hand, the growing popularity of their practice is creating job opportunities that can potentially transform them into full citizens. On the other hand, the increasing incorporation of capoeira into the formal economy has created an anxiety among the middle and upper classes to see that the practice is regulated. And this regulation has the potential for perpetuating processes of exclusion on which Brazilian democracy operates.

The overwhelming response—deafening cheers and grown capoeiristas weeping with emotion—to Mestre Pinatti's closing statement about sometimes being prouder to be a capoeirista than to be a Brazilian, is evidence of the continuing strength of the capoeira identity and the sense of belonging it provides. Even in the thick of debate, the capoeiristas in the room shared an embodied experience that at moments seems to trump even Brazilians' strong national pride. Pinatti's claim was in fact a critique of the nationalist discourse that framed the congress: emblazoned on huge

banners as well as on hats, T-shirts, and pens distributed to the delegates was a map of Brazil superimposed with the image of a virile, mulatto capoeirista and the words "Capoeira é Brasil!" (Capoeira is Brazil!). Perhaps, in the end, the congress motto was more appropriate than the politicians who had dreamed it up imagined: capoeira turns out to be very Brazilian indeed, though not so much in the way that the nationalist myth makers would suggest as for what it indexes about the old contradictions and ongoing hierarchies in Brazilian society.

STAGING/SPORTING THE NATION

Around the same time as debates over professionalization were raging at the Third National Capoeira Congress and beyond, I participated in a roda at the foot of the Cristo Redentor, the iconic statue of Jesus who embraces Rio de Janeiro with outstretched arms from his high hillside perch. The capoeira presentation was the official welcome to a selection team touring various cities bidding to host the 2007 Pan American Games.[42] Rio de Janeiro did win and went on to win the bid to host the 2014 World Cup and summer 2016 Olympics Games. This landslide success in the global sporting arena symbolizes Brazil's growing presence on the world stage as an economic powerhouse; yet it has also highlighted and intensified the incompleteness of its nation building as the country continues to struggle with social inequality and violence.

This contradiction is quite literally played out on the bodies of capoeiristas. Simultaneous to performing for the nation in an attempt to woo the world and win the bid for the Pan American Games, these same capoeiristas were to experience extreme tactics of governmentality that winning the bid would bring. Beginning in 2007 in anticipation of the Pan American Games, and continuing with preparations for the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics, Rio officials increased efforts to "clean up the city." Targeting drug gangs in favelas, many of which are home to the capoeiristas with whom I performed at the foot of the Cristo that day, the civil and military police instigated an aggressive "pacification" process. On June 27, 2007, just before the opening ceremonies for the Pan American Games, the military police invaded the Complexo Alemão, a notoriously dangerous conglomeration of favelas ruled by drug lords north of the city. The police occupation of the area lasted the duration of the Pan American Games and left over one hundred people wounded or dead.[43]

Alongside these egregious violations of civil rights, the pacification process has brought some benefits for the favela residents. While I was in Rio in the summers of 2013 and 2014, for example, several capoeiristas who live in favelas that have been "pacified" admitted to me that although they do not like the police presence and the long shadow of repression it casts on their daily lives, they are thankful for the absence of drug trafficking, arms, and violence. What remains unclear, however, is if there will be enduring effects of the pacification after 2016. As one resident told me, pointing to the bullet holes on his house from the last police invasion that drove the drug traffickers from his favela: "The drug lords didn't get rid of their arms. They just buried them. When everything calms down, they will be back."

Besides the militarization of their cities, Brazilians are outraged at the obscene amounts of money the government has poured into these international sporting events. Beginning in the summer of 2013 and continuing through the World Cup, Brazilians staged some of the largest street demonstrations in Brazilian history to protest, among other things, the construction of multimillion-dollar stadiums that will get little use after the events. "Build us FIFA-quality schools and hospitals instead!" the protestors chanted.

In the end a stunned Brazil watched as its team suffered a historically devastating loss to Germany in the World Cup semifinals. The defeat was perhaps the most appropriate closure to a year of unrest. After the initial outpouring of grief and outrage at the humiliating loss, many Brazilians turned to self-reflection. The capoeira mestre I trained with the night after the game spoke passionately to his students: the loss was a reflection, among other things, of Brazil's love affair with "appearance over character" and of "valuing the individual over the team." He went on to suggest that capoeira is a better vehicle for improving lives: "How many hundreds of capoeiristas born in Rio's favelas now earn a living teaching capoeira in Brazil and abroad?" he asked. "Can you say the same about futebol?"

Despite the World Cup disappointment, there is still a buzz in Brazil around the Olympics. Capoeiristas speculate about if and how capoeira will be on display during the opening ceremonies, and if one day capoeira will become an Olympic sport. Most would agree that this will not happen: capoeira's mixed genre—should it be treated as a gymnastics floor routine or a boxing match?—would make it nearly impossible to score. Some groups have in fact created competitions—the largest and most well known being the biennial Abadá-Capoeira World Games. The scoring system is complex, based as much on cooperation between player-opponents as on individual prowess, and as much on creativity, aesthetics, and musical sensibility as on take-downs and other more martial elements. Still, judging is difficult, highly subjective, and vulnerable to group politics as the judges are top-ranking instructors whose own students are competing.

While some complain that these competitions represent the worst of

the sportification of capoeira, replacing the ethos of cooperation and indirect malandragem with a more direct competition, others enjoy them as simply another way to train and play capoeira. But more important, the Jogos Mundiais are also a time for Brazilian capoeiristas to fraternize and make connections with other capoeiristas from around the world. Champions gain national and international recognition and are often invited abroad to teach workshops and perform in shows. This newest development in capoeira—international competitions—has created a fresh forum for Brazilian capoeiristas to understand and negotiate their place on the world stage. Just as Brazilians wonder how the 2016 Olympics will affect them as a nation and a people, Brazilian capoeiristas struggle to understand the impact on their lives of the international popularity of capoeira. While some choose to emmigrate permanently abroad to make a more financially lucrative living teaching capoeira, others choose to stay and teach in Brazil. As it continues to grow and adapt to a changing world, capoeira will continue to be terrain for political and personal meaning making.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. The Rio Olympics will take place almost fifty years after the 1968 summer games in Mexico City.

2. Latin American countries have hosted the world soccer championship seven out of twenty times since its initiation. Uruguay hosted the first one in 1930, and Mexico has held the event twice (in 1970 and again in 1986). In comparison, European countries have hosted the World Cup ten times.

3. Notable scholars from Latin America include Eduardo Archetti (*Masculinities: Football, Polo, and the Tango in Argentina* [Oxford: Berg, 1999]); Eduardo Galeano (*Fútbol al sol y sombra* [Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1995]); Roberto Da Matta, L. F. Baeta Neves, Simoni Lahud Guedes, and Arno Vogel (*Universo do Futebol: Esporte e Sociedade Brasileira* [Rio de Janeiro: Edições Pinakotheke, 1982]); and Juan José Sebreli (*La era del fútbol* [Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1998]). From the United States, one can point to the pioneering work of historian Joseph Arbena and cultural anthropologist Alan Klein. Whereas Klein authored important monographs on baseball (see his "Sports and Colonialism in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 10 [1991]: 257–72; and *Sugarball: The American Game, the Dominican Dream* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991]), Arbena published his own work alongside several collaborative projects with other scholars that broadened the scope of Latin American sports studies. Arbena edited a special volume of

67. Cunin and Rinaudo, "Consuming the City," 282; and Gustavo Bell Lemus, "¿Costa Atlántica? No, costa Caribe," in *El Caribe en la nación colombiana*, ed. A. Abello Vives, 123–43 (Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, Observatorio del Caribe Colombiano, 2006).

8. FROM "MORAL DISEASE" TO "NATIONAL SPORT": RACE, NATION, AND CAPOEIRA IN BRAZIL

This chapter is based on dissertation fieldwork supported by a Wenner-Gren Individual Research Grant conducted from 2001 through 2004 in Rio de Janeiro.

1. Thomas Holloway, "'A Healthy Terror': Police Repression of *Capoeiras* in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 69, no. 4 (1989): 637–76.

2. Quoted in Matthias Röhrig Assunção, *Capoeira: The History of an Afro-Brazilian Martial Art* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 141.

3. Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, trans. Meyer Barash (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

4. Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 25, 43.

5. Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 17.

6. For a discussion of more Afrocentric views among capoeiristas, see Greg Downey's *Learning Capoeira: Lessons in Cunning from an Afro-Brazilian Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

7. See Assunção, *Capoeira*, chapter 1, for a complete discussion of competing narratives of origin.

8. For the most comprehensive history of nineteenth-century capoeira, see Carlos Eugênio Líbano Soares's *A negregada instituição: Os capoeiras na corte imperial, 1850–1890* (Campinas: Editora de Unicamp, 2001).

9. Holloway, "'Healthy Terror,'" 646.

10. Public whippings and announcing one's crime in the streets were a form of social control similar to the spectacle of public beheadings in eighteenth-century Europe described by Michel Foucault; see his *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995).

11. Holloway, "'Healthy Terror,'" 659.

12. Although today's practitioners of capoeira are called capoeiristas, in the nineteenth century they were simply called capoeiras.

13. Holloway, "'Healthy Terror,'" 674–75.

14. Mello Moraes Filho, *Festas e tradições populares do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Itatiaia, 1999), 257. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Portuguese are mine.

15. Soares, *A negregada instituição*, 240.

16. Filho, *Festas e tradições*, 257–63.

17. Placido de Abreu, *Os capoeiras* (Rio de Janeiro: Type. Da Escola Serafim José Alves, 1886), 2.

18. Gilberto Freyre, *Order and Progress: Brazil from Monarchy to Republic*, trans. and ed. Rod W. Horton (New York: Knopf, 1970), 11.

19. When King João returned to Portugal after Napoleon's defeat, he left his son Prince Regent Pedro I, who on September 7, 1822, declared Brazil an independent empire and himself emperor. When Pedro I returned to Portugal, he left his fifteen-year-old son, Pedro II, to rule.

20. The name that Mestre Bimba gave his academy is a source of debate among practitioners: while some claim that the name is an indication that Mestre Bimba wished to introduce a sport only tangentially related to capoeira, others claim that he was forced to use this pseudonym to disguise the fact that he was teaching a marginal activity. In keeping with his project, Mestre Bimba chose this name, I argue, to distinguish his style from other capoeira; by using the language of the day—"regional culture" and "physical education"—he gave his school a ring of legitimacy.

21. Alejandro Frigerio, "Capoeira: De arte negra a esporte branca," *Revista brasileira de ciências sociais* 4, no. 10 (1989): 85–98.

22. There is some controversy over when the term *capoeira angola* began being used. It seems that in the nineteenth century, capoeira may already have been called *jogo de Angola* (game from Angola). See Assunção, *Capoeira*, 158–60, for a discussion of the adoption of the name in the 1940s, which he compares to the practice of claiming a "nation" among houses of *candomblé* in Bahia.

23. Vicente Ferreira Pastinha, *Capoeira Angola* (Salvador: Escola Gráfica N.S. de Lorêto, 1964), 26.

24. Ibid., 30.

25. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury, 1975), 93.

26. Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 13.

27. As one mestre (master) was fond of telling me, "Capoeira is a game of chess played with the whole body."

28. See Roberto DaMatta, *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes: An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), for a discussion of malandragem in general.

29. Also known as *mandinga* and *malícia*, and in its more sinister variation *maldade*, "malandragem" is often spoken about mystically by expert practitioners, eagerly pursued by novices and analyzed by academics. For example, see Margaret Wilson, "Designs of Deception: Concepts of Consciousness, Spirituality, and Survival in Capoeira Angola in Salvador, Bahia," *Anthropology of Consciousness* 12, no. 1 (2001): 97–113.

30. Katya Wesolowski, "Hard Play: Capoeira and the Politics of Inequality in Rio de Janeiro," PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2007.

31. Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 177–93.

32. For instance, a series of expressions for engaging in more aggressive play use the word *pau*, which means "wood" or "stick" but is also slang for "penis." Expressions to describe a roda that is becoming rough, such as *está pegando fogo* ("it's

catching fire") or *chapa esquento* ("the grill heated up"), are used to describe sexually charged or potentially dangerous situations.

33. In his ethnography of violent interactions during Carnival, anthropologist Daniel Linger describes very similar attitudes and terminology among Carnival "players" in the northeastern part of Brazil; see his *Dangerous Encounters: Meanings of Violence in a Brazilian City* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1992).

34. Elias and Dunning, *Quest for Excitement*, 44.

35. Loic Wacquant, *Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

36. See Maria Cecilia de Mello e Souza, "Constructing Moral Boundaries: The ethics of Everyday Life in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil," PhD dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California at Berkeley, 1993.

37. Eduardo Galeano, *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*, trans. Mark Fried (New York: Verso, 1998), 2.

38. James Holston and Teresa Caldeira, "Democracy, Law, and Violence: Disjunctions of Brazilian Citizenship," in *Fault Lines of Democracy in Post-Transition Latin America*, ed. Felipe Agüero and Jeffrey Stark, 263–96 (Miami: University of Miami North-South Center Press, 1998).

39. Theresa Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

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42. The Pan American Games are held for American nations the year before the summer Olympic Games.

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