

# Monsters, Bottle Rockets, Bamboos, Balls and the Utmost Depth: enchantments in performances of a streetwise youth

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**ABSTRACT – Monsters, Bottle Rockets, Bamboos, Balls and The Utmost Depth: enchantments in performances of a streetwise youth** – This article is dedicated to scrutinizing some images and objects produced within a universe of marginalized youth cultures. Given the high flow of youngsters among these cultures, these practices are here understood as a network. Such network involves *pixação* (graffiti tagging), *torcidas organizadas* (soccer supporters' groups, i.e. hooligans, ultras, etc.), *bate-bolas* (bat-balls, masked carnival clowns) and *bailes funk* (*favela* funk parties). They were consequently analyzed with an approach that is interested in the studies of the imaginary, and in their relations with anthropology, philosophy and psychology; the monsters that give name to the sound crews of the *bailes funk*, the bamboos used by the *torcidas organizadas*, the balls/balloons swung by the *bate-bolas*, the weapon-allegory ambivalence of *rojões* (bottle rockets), and the image of the *fundão* (utmost depth).

Keywords: **Youth. Epistemology. Aesthetics. Subjectivity. Imaginary.**

**RÉSUMÉ – Monstres, Pétards, Bambous, Balles et le Fond: enchanterie dans les performances d'une jeunesse qui vive la rue** – Cet article analyse quelques images et objets issus de l'univers de jeunes cultures marginalisées qui fleurissent dans les quartiers pauvres de Rio de Janeiro. Il s'intéresse, ainsi, au réseau de pratiques qui comprennent aussi bien les graffiti que les démonstrations des supporters des différentes équipes de football, les exhibitions des *Bate-Bolas* (groupes de jeunes déguisés qui se produisent dans les rues pendant le Carnaval) et la participation aux bals Funk. Nous essayerons plus particulièrement d'examiner, depuis une approche forgée par les études de l'imaginaire et appuyés sur les contributions de l'anthropologie, de la philosophie et de la psychologie, les images autant que les objets liés à ces pratiques – tels les monstres éponymes des équipes de sonorisation des bals, les outils brandis par les supporters, les vessies manipulées para les clowns, les fusées, ces armes-allégories pleines d'ambivalence et l'image du *fond*.

Mots-clés: **Jeunesse. Epistémologie. Esthétique. Subjectivité. Imaginaire.**

**RESUMO – Monstros, Rojões, Bambus, Bolas e o Fundão: encantarias em performances de uma juventude rueira** – O artigo dedica-se a esmiuçar algumas imagens e objetos produzidos em um universo de culturas jovens marginalizadas. Dado o alto fluxo de jovens entre elas, essas práticas são aqui compreendidas como uma rede. Tal rede envolve a *pixação*, as *torcidas organizadas* de futebol, as turmas de *bate-bola* e os *bailes funk*. Analisa-se, então, com uma abordagem interessada nos estudos do imaginário, e nas suas relações com a antropologia, a filosofia e a psicologia, os monstros que dão nome às equipes de som dos bailes, os bambus usados pelas *torcidas*, a bola/bexiga dos *bate-bolas* e o *rojão* em sua ambivalência arma-alegoria, além da presença constante da imagem do *fundo*.

Palavras-chave: **Juventude. Epistemologia. Estética. Subjetividade. Imaginário.**

### From what Street do we Stem From?

This article<sup>1</sup> is dedicated to scrutinizing some images produced within the core of a universe of marginalized youth cultural practices, especially in Rio de Janeiro's suburbs and *favelas* (slums). Broadly speaking, given the high flow of youngsters among them, these practices are here understood not in isolation, but as elements that constitute one same network, and that oftentimes involve the same people, sharing values, ethics, aesthetics. To use a provocative vocabulary right away, they are the same universe, the same cosmology, in terms of how complex it has been treated here. Such network involves *piXação*<sup>2</sup> (graffiti tagging), *torcidas organizadas* (soccer supporters' groups, i.e. Brazilian hooligans, ultras), *bate-bolas*<sup>3</sup> (bat-balls, masked carnival clown gangs) and *bailes funk* (*favela* funk parties), an array of practices that, for those who are versed in the city's streetwise schemes, make up a composition of sibling entities capable of being understood, even if with some exaggeration, as variations of a general theme: the streetwise culture of Rio de Janeiro. It was over this "tangled" subject that I developed an extensive field work in recent years, having published other articles about it, with varying approaches, set of problems and styles. There are even short moments in this article when the original ethnography from that material comes to light, even though the priority focus of this piece is the conceptual development, as the readers will notice. I selected then, for this particular work, some pictures, objects and an idea-image that is constant and, more than that, founder of a streetwise dynamic subjectivity in my view. I am referring to the figures which give name and embody some sound crews for *bailes funk* – *Coisona* (Big Thing), *Kkreco* (Good-for-nothing), *Bagulhão* (Big Joint) and *Troço* (Junk) – as well as certain monsters that adorn the main symbols of the *torcidas organizadas*; objects that have in common a performing ambivalence, oscillating between the allegory and the weapon, namely the bamboo, the bottle rocket and the ball of the *bate-bola*; and, finally, the idea-image of the *fundão* (utmost depth) as an annoying imago that seems fertile to us for reaching an understanding of this existential desire by these youngsters. This inventory of small-scale movements from this universe, that can be almost called a bestiary of the streets of Rio de Janeiro, will be submitted to an analysis stemming from the studies of the imaginary

in its recurring inspiration in Jungian psychology and of the anthropology of performance.

I intend to begin, then, from the principle that every human gesture, as well as the images that we generate, the techniques that we develop and, in our case, the objects that we handle, do not possess as foundation to their *becoming* only motivations that are exclusively objective, rational, consciously expressed or expressible. Therefore, the lush appearance, the outlines of the expressed, have in their hypnotic discursive enunciation the veil that covers what serves them as epistemological basis – a dense reservoir of psychic forces which constitutes a collective and elementary framework that we call imagination and that, in an ever complex relationship with the subjective biography, serves as platform to the emergence of our actions, projects, speech, gestures, images, techniques, objects, from the more ordinary to the more complex.

I find support for such in the working hypothesis of two authors, one placed closer to the field of anthropology of the imaginary, Gilbert Durand, and, the other, an exponent of psychoanalysis, who has favored the study of archetypes, of the collective unconscious, C. G. Jung, whose affinities become evident in the amount of times that the former references the latter. Regarding this approximation, two excerpts are eloquent and serve as premises for how the highlighted focal elements will be handled in this article. First, Durand (2002, p. 51) in “[...] let us have as a working hypothesis that there is a tight concomitance between the gestures of the body, the nerve centers and the symbolic representations “. And also, in a similar fashion, Jung (2011, p. 60) when he says:

It may seem superfluous to analyze all those details more closely. But let us remember the acknowledgement [...] that, when people stop talking about their unconscious, the latter always tells the most intimate things. In this respect, the smallest details often become significant ones.

### ***Coisona, Kkreco, Bagulhão, Troço***

Let us analyze then the monstrous characters that represent and give name to the sound crews that used to make up ZZ, one of the main producers of *bailes funk* in Rio de Janeiro. Each of the four crews is represented by a monstrous character, their names respectively being *A Coisona* (The

Big Thing - Image 1), *O Kkreco* (Good-for-nothing - Image 2), *O Troço* (The Junk - Image 4) e *O Bagulhão* (The Big Joint - Image 3), which are also the names, as mentioned, of the sound crews themselves.

In fact, one day during a soccer game at *Maracanã* (one of the world's most famous soccer stadiums), I was discussing those names with *Dudu*, one of the research informants and a member of the *torcida organizada Young Flu* (supporters' group for *Fluminense*, one of the four major teams in the city of Rio de Janeiro), when he asked:

- But you know the reason for these names, right?
- I don't.
- So, as *Furacão 2000* (Hurricane 2000, the most famous producer of *bailes funk* in Brazil) was the all-powerful, people made fun of *ZZ*, calling it junk, stuff, because it was something really humbler, rougher, but everyone liked it, so they took this up and gave these names for the sound crews (Coelho, 2015, p. 86).

Here is a story that, no matter its likelihood or not, just points out what was already a noticeable characteristic of the four names, even without this anecdotal support, due to the fact that these names are indeed adherent to the idea of garbage, waste, disposal, hence, to those who dig their strength exactly from their condition of inferiority within a hierarchical structure. A usual strategy in multiple scenarios of subalternity is, when individuals are aware of their *low* status, they take up their ambivalence, being more subdued, but, at the same time, more familiar with the refuge that offers support to everyone, a factor that paradoxically gives a much rarer force the more one goes up hierarchically - the strength of the inversion, evident in the virtuous role that the *weakest* (Turner, 1974) take on in various carnival parties of inversion of hierarchies (Coelho, 2015).

Image 1 – *A coisona*. Source: Online access<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore, these nouns act as signifiers that seem to have in common with each other the fact of representing a paradox – they do not consist of any meaning assigned; in fact, they make use of their abstract, open meanings, to specifically reject any total adherence to a meaning that defines *a coisona* (the big thing), but, on the other hand, assume, each of them, the vocation of the movement, the mutability, being all signifiers escaping from, let us say, meaning. They are nothing but can be everything. Therefore, they are good names, among the many baptisms possible of what will be called here enigma (Coelho, 2015).

So, from *coisona*'s resistance in allowing itself to be something well defined, without ceasing from BEING, we come to Deleuze (2011), for whom language always offers such resistance, saving the means to prevent that the *becoming* isolates itself, by the forces of designation, in an inaccessible depth, offering us, for that reason, the figure of the paradox as possibility of a kind of knot in cognitive rationality. Not by accident, the paradox, as a possible language, serves as a frequent figure on poetic craftsmanship, as well as a factor for the tragic thinking that needs means to assert the double contradictory simultaneously, affirming the denial, yes and no, whole and unit, thing and being. Therefore, “[...] the paradox appears as a dismissal of the depth, a display of events on the surface, the unfolding of language

throughout this limit” (Deleuze, 2011, p. 9), launching, on the surface, the necessary indeterminate determination for the enigmatic appearance of the “[...] crazy-becoming, [the] unlimited-becoming [that] is no longer a depth that mumbles, but ascends to the surface of things and becomes impassive” (Deleuze, 2011, p. 8). Deleuze, finally, urges for the image of the ring, the continuity of the edge between its right side and its reverse to express this elevation of the becoming to the level of language:

The continuity of the reverse and the right substitute all levels of depth; and the effects and surface, in one and only Event that counts for all the events, make all of becoming and its paradoxes rise to the level of language (Deleuze, 2011, p. 12).

We can thus indicate the assignment of meaning as a language maneuver that operates by the containment of this *unlimited-becoming* (Deleuze, 2011), this plethora aimed at the infinity of signifiers, being a presence, while the meaning would be the good itself owns and that, therefore, establishes it in a structure. This approach is still reproduced in Deleuze when, quoting the work of Levi-Strauss, sees a *fluctuating meaning* that is given to words of such nature, although it cannot be exactly identified:

There is, on the other hand, a kind of fluctuating meaning, given by the signifier ‘without being, therefore, known’, without being, therefore, established or accomplished. Levi-Strauss proposes that words like that should be interpreted as *thing*, ‘stuff’, something, *aliquid*, but also as the famous *mana* (or also, *this*). A value ‘in itself void of meaning and, therefore, susceptible to receiving any meaning, whose only function is to fill a gap between the signifier and the meaning’, ‘a symbolic zero value, that is, a sign marking the need for an additional symbolic content to that bearer of meaning, but possibly being any value, provided that it is still part of the available supply...’ (Deleuze, 2011, p. 52-53).



Image 2 – *O kkreco*. Source: Online access<sup>5</sup>.



Image 3 – *O bagulhão*. Source: Online access<sup>6</sup>.



Image 4 – *O troço*. Source: Online access<sup>7</sup>.

It seems to me that not only the names given to the sound crews, but also the shapes given to the characters which carry the same names, may also be subject to similar reflection, since they maintain, precisely in their amorphism, as we can see in the images, this elusiveness, this paramount uncertainty that gives them reservations on the defense of any attempt of capture. However, it seems that the one that best summarizes all these features is *Coisona*, the most amorphous among them, next of kin to, in my view, the blots which symbolize both *Torcida Mancha Verde do Palmeiras* (Palm Tree's Green Blot Supporters' Group - Palmeiras is a soccer team from the city of São Paulo, in the southeast of Brazil - Image 5), and *Torcida Mancha Azul do CSA* from Alagoas (CSA's Blue Blot supporters' group - CSA is a soccer team from the city of Alagoas, in the Northeast of Brazil - Image 6), that may similarly share the same analysis.



Image 5 – Mancha Verde. Source: Online access<sup>8</sup>.



Image 6 – Mancha Azul. Source: Online access<sup>9</sup>.



*O Coisona*, in its entirety, seems to be composed of a kind of gelatinous substance, certainly thick, viscous. Big and fat, it clearly fails to move with agility, being a monster that keeps very low spatial agitation. In addition, it has a facial expression in no way terrifying, and seems to be kind of one-eyed, numb, or numbed, since it has downcast, crooked eyes, and an inert, softened tongue, that hangs out of its mouth, a mouth that seems to have no teeth; with its arms on top of the belly, fingers interlocked, and a headphone gently lying on its head, in a 'cool' way, 'just chilling'. Furthermore, the inflatable doll that the sound crew displays in some parties generally remains motionless in a corner next to the speakers. Therefore, it reflects the antithesis of the uneasy, dynamic monster that escapes, but we will see that, even so, holds a paradoxical familiarity to it. So, *O Coisona* is motionless, but at the same time is pure movement, since its whole body is made up of this gelatinous substance. Thus, although standing still, it is never stationary, a patent impossibility to its anatomy. Moreover, even if it were extremely easy to get close to it, as it apparently would not escape, offer resistance nor any danger, the simple act of laying hands on it, in other words, *holding* it, *restricting* it and trying to make it aware of its limits, means running the risk of, in this same movement, be subsumed not necessarily *by it*, but unwittingly *in it*, losing yourself amidst this viscous *Coisona*, losing the perception about your own limits, a danger whose last stage is the complete integration and dissolution of yourself inside *O Coisona*. However, it will not keep any remnant of you nor, as its chemistry indicates, will it show any change after your integration. Therefore, the more abrupt is your contact with it, the greater the chance of your disintegration into it, noting that it is, in fact, the Funk Party, more precisely the *Party* strength that obviously provides just one of the many metaphors for the exaggerated overflow of any edge, in the decibels of its speakers. Impersonal chaos (Coelho, 2015). It is something very similar to this development of Bauman, from the idea of viscosity in Sartre:

[...] let us imagine a bath in a barrel filled with resin, tar, honey or molasses... Unlike water, the substance shall stick, adhere to my skin, it wouldn't let go of me. More than exuberantly invading a foreign and new element, I feel invaded and conquered by an element from which there is no escape. I'm not in control, I'm not my own master. I have lost my freedom (Bauman, 1998, p. 39).

A clumsy entity, *O Coisona* doesn't constitute, therefore, a personality, it is a wandering substance, a character without personal biography, one that can only be out of its mind, hence its inertia. A figuration that gives liquid, viscous contours, to the impersonal primal chaos which precedes any creation, as much as resists letting itself be defined in some work of strict contours, that in order to ensure this reserve, threatens all that is created, from its own dissolution. Therefore, it is a founding substance of the night, the darkness, the abyss, the Party, of everything that nurtures the common stemming from the excess, as we shall see in Durand later on. *O Coisona* could be the Dionysius of our slums.

### **Balls, Bottle Rockets, Bamboos and the Swing of the Weapon**

Let us tackle other figurations of the enigma in the repertoire of these young marginalized cultures, keeping ourselves at all times concerned with finding indicatives of the epistemological shocks operating in the contemporaneity in this popular daily life. To do so, I will turn the focus now to some objects used in these universes, types of allegories which, as we shall see, give material outlines, not only in their shapes as well as in their gestural relation with the bodies of the practitioners, with their forms of aesthetic expressive handling, and allow the spatial experience of some ongoing epistemic mechanisms in the imagination. Objects full of dynamism, as if in physical, aesthetic interaction, stir up expansive movements, resistances through swinging and twisting, for a grammar that was taken by the addiction of definition, as the epistemological matrix that serves as its basis.

So, it is about the balls of the *bate-bolas* and the bat that holds them, the bamboos which serve as the *torcidas organizadas*' flag-poles and the bottle rockets that are used in all of these practices, as well as in several folk festivals, be it during the *bate-bolas*' outings, or the arrival at the *baile funk*, or the walks of the *torcidas organizadas*, or at *festas juninas* (traditional Brazilian folk celebrations that happen in June, hence, *Junina*), although, they can all quickly stop being simple fireworks when thrown at a different angle, to become a weapon. And it is exactly about this disguised ambivalence in these popular allegories which, it seems to me, we can perceive one more of these remnants of the emergence, sometimes sneakier, other times quite

obscene, of what we call here enigma, this kind of tragic popular resistance that swings in front of the attempts of defining its functions.

Let us notice then the hidden ways with which these objects exacerbate the euphemism of their combative power through the vibrant colors of the balls, through the shiny papers that wrap the bat that holds them, through the mesmerizing waving of the flags with their bamboo poles, a truly different swing, because of the flexibility of bamboo, in comparison to the plastic flag-poles seen in other parts of the world and, obviously, through the explosion of the bottle rocket that, whenever discharged, radiates agitation. Thus, such objects privilege and offer the front of the stage to their layers of allegory, leaving their lesser known backside in the hands of their handlers who know how to dissimulate them very well through swinging. In fact, the *bate-bola's* ball serves not only for visual, gesture and sound enlargement of the performance, carrying in itself, especially in the bat that moves it, a verse, an always immanent metamorphosis, but also always disguised – its condition of allegory-weapon. Consequently, if during their carnival *crazy-becomings*, some containment operation intends to interrupt their flux, the hard-plastic ball shifts from its allegory protagonism to a staff weapon, in an evasive move that seems analogous to *capoeira* in the disguise of the power of its strikes, through the dancing breadth of its movements. So, the deception acts as a subjective maneuver of decolonizing survival, which guarantees to the ordinary body the fervor of its parties, hence, the affirmative exhibition of the self through the exuberance of allegories. At the same time, a weapons supply of resistance, which are, naturally, also drawn for the clashes in the established rivalry games of these cultures.



Image 7 – *Bate-bolas* from *Turma Legalize de Rocha Miranda* (Rocha Miranda's Legalizing Crew - Rocha Miranda is a marginalized neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) with their balloons attached to exploding bottle rockets. Source: Author's archive (2017).

It is also interesting to dig the inventory of these objects that extrapolate their occurrences beyond these practices, rescuing the evidences of their role in other popular cultures that are even more foundational, whose inheritances refer to functions, including mythological ones, where, in my view, it is still possible to find symbolisms that keep on functioning on the object, by reminiscence, as is the case of the bottle rocket. Present at the arrival of the crowds to the *bailes funk*, as much as in the walks and fights of the *torcidas organizadas*, the bottle rocket has a crucial role in the representation of the strength of the thunder that is *Xangô* in *Candomblé* (an Afro-American religious tradition, practiced mainly in Brazil), and has also the task of waking up *São João* (Saint John), the Christian figure that is analogous to *Xangô*, considering syncretism. The bottle rocket possesses the ability of disguising itself, as does *Xangô*'s thunder, whose fire has killed several monstrosities, and is employed for the purpose of justice. It is, at the same time, weapon and enchantment, fascinating and frightening, roles that also adopts, as we see (Image 7), in the cultures here searched.

Finally, it is worth talking about the bamboo, which is only used in Brazil as flag-poles by the *torcidas organizadas*, a fact that made me curious because of its uniqueness. In the face of this, which seemed to be a popular Brazilianness regarding the use of bamboo, I decided to mention it to some

known researchers of Afro-Brazilian religions, in order to assess my suspicion that this forest material could have a special place in these mythologies that underlie our popular cultures and that, therefore, trigger irradiations for contests which may apparently be religiously disassociated. One of these acquaintances, then, told me that the bamboo plantation comprised the *Orisha Dankó*, but he was not able to give me more details, since this *Orisha* is an entity little spoken of. In any case, I had a lead. I contacted another acquaintance, who is a musician, a percussionist and drum master of a *terreiro* (yard, one kind of temple of *Candomblé*), in *Mesquita*, a marginal city from the *Baixada Fluminense* (lowland of the state of Rio de Janeiro). He had also heard about it but did not know what to tell me very well. However, he promised to talk to other people at the *terreiro* – to try to learn more. The following week I met him, and he was surprised:

– I’ve had talks over there, and there is very little information about him, one has to know very well to be able to talk about him. He’s not a well-known *Orisha*. But from what I was told, that’s it, he lives in the bamboo plantation, in the woods (Coelho, 2015, p. 41).

I started, then, thinking a lot about the collective condition of the bamboo, since a single bamboo tree does not grow isolated in nature, only in bamboo fields, always sprouting in the plural. I also started linking the bamboo’s restfulness with its flexibility, whose elasticity and adaptability grants resiliency against weather or nature, in other words, its strength lies more in its malleability than in its stiffness, which gave me good visuals for the analogy with the enigma. In any case, I kept on searching, and I found the description below on the website of the Center of Afro-Brazilian Culture *ILÊ OPO OMIDEWÁ ASÈ*:

An *Orisha* of great power and highly needed for our coexistence in this system, since he is the responsible for turning Earth’s impurities into positive energy. The yellow or white bamboo represents him, and it is through this shrub that *Dankó* performs his task, absorbing through its roots and emanating through its long stems. It is through this shrub that *Eegun*, the male ancestors, are able to get in and out of their habitation. It is said that the house of the dead, underground and unreachable, is just below the roots of *Dankó*, because we assign the same name to the bamboo plantation. This *Orisha* is linked to *Oya* and *Osumare* (Dankó, 2012, online).

It seems to me that there is, in the mythical-imaginary-cultural history of the bamboo, a number of elements which justify my suspicion that there, in the *torcida organizada*, in its function as a flag-pole, it is disguised, concealed, with its symbolic ancestry, which, however, seems absolutely compatible to the *ethicsaesthetics* of these youngsters, considering what we have developed so far. I would risk saying, then, that even though it is not a matter of conscious choice, the compatibility between the humours governing the condition of community of these youngsters and the cosmogonical aspect of the bamboo's symbolism, made it, while being a material of more difficult access, an exclusive option to act as a flag-pole. And, come to think of it, if we imagine plastic flag-poles, in their asepsis, contaminated by the more industrial than mythical soil, where its use germinates, we can already feel its incongruity in relation to our grandstands, a disagreement of some order that definitely cannot be of objectivity, after all, they shall also serve as flag-poles. Now I realize, I believe so, where the weirdness derives from when, watching soccer games in Europe, where all flag-poles are made of plastic, we feel an uncomfortable artificiality in the fluttering of the flags. Finally, still discussing the bamboo, it is evident that we do not need much effort to understand that, circumstantially, it can also be turned into a weapon of large scale and fine forcefulness.

I suggest, then, with this article, that the objects of highlighted use and importance in our popular daily lives also carry accumulated symbolic legacies in the relationship that they establish with our bodies, in their swings and vibrations, swinging all the while swinging us, being burst while reverberating us. These legacies, if scrutinized, as I tried to do here, also catch the epistemological shocks that common life imposes on the paradigms of modern rationality. The constitution of the self through the crossings of all things, death as rebirth, impurities as a diffuser of positivities, the concealment which ensures the dynamism against the colonizing fixation, the letting yourself bend as a strength factor against the hardness that breaks more easily, in any case, a series of images that the bamboo, the bottle rocket and the *bate-bolas*' ball, from the reflection that I proposed, seem to radiate and allow the bodily experience of these dimensions through their handling. It is through the swing that the slamming of the ball complaints to the body, when it is projected against the floor, it is through the robustness and flexi-

bility of a large bamboo, together with the weight of the fabric of the flag, that requires an also robust and flexible corporeality from the supporter, as well as the ricochet of the discharge of the bottle rocket, that will keep on reverberating through the body of the shooter, that these dimensions of counter-hegemonic sensory knowledge, in opposition to a body sequestered from the sensitive, are *learntfelt*, linking to Castoriadis idea (1987, p. 340-341):

It is a fact that nothing can exist, it seems, having-been-detached from sensible magnitudes and out of them, the intelligibles exist in sensitive forms, both those who are told by abstraction such as those which are willingness and affections of sensitive beings. That is why it would not be possible to learn nor comprehend anything if you did not feel anything.

### Utmost Depth, Caves e Wombs...

Lastly, then, in this inventory of images from the fringes of our city, I want to elaborate on the various forms in which the image of the *fundão* (utmost depth) appears here and there in the lives of these youngsters. There seems to be a larger sense of continent than of content in this image, that is, it matters less what is in the background than entering and inhabiting this place. In fact, there is a sort of chest, of cave, of deep imaginary, and being in it is the same as getting in touch with what we are calling enigma, a shared substance that is paradoxically synonymous with everything, *all* and *nothing* at the same time, since *nothingness* can be clearly isolated and described, since its physical state is gaseous. In other words, it is airborne, everywhere, but at the same time, not one of these youngsters that tamper with it can say that this *nothingness* is *nothing*. And such enigma only acts as such when there is no one interested in solving it, since investing in that would be the same as wishing its death and the death of its culture, precisely for only having function as a paradox, as a mystery.

If it emerges in various gestures, from the more exaggerated to the more nuanced, and is everywhere, there are also some privileged places that, for their more marginalized and hidden condition, become places of this agglutination par excellence, serving then as areas of concentration, areas of immanence, of reserve, of latency of this Evil and that generally make use of this image of the *fundão*, to characterize this vocation. Creating an analogy

between the *back* of the classroom, the *back* of the bus and the function of the *root*, of the *basis*, of the *unconscious*, from where things, life and *consciousness* are germinated, and to where one must return, from time to time, in order to reach certain reinvigoration. Because of this, it is possible to understand its aspect, at the same time attractive and repulsive. Attractive because it bears the source of some rebirth, and repulsive, because it represents, in the same fashion, the devouring and deadly power of that same force. A dual basic system in psychoanalysis, which was exhaustively treated by Jung through a series of archetypal images, as in the excerpt below, where we notice the recurrence of the image of the *bottom* of the sea and of the womb as this ambivalent place of death/diving and rebirth/emersion.

Everything that is alive emerges from the water, just like the Sun, and at the end of the day submerges back into it. [...] The black waters of death are the waters of life, the death with its cold embrace is the motherly womb, just as the sea in fact brings the Sun, but makes it revive in the motherly womb. Life knows no death (Jung, 2011, p. 260).

Maybe we can try to understand here the role that the dead take on the everyday life of these youngsters, as it is noticeable by the amount of tributes that *piXadores* (graffiti taggers) pay to those who have passed away, as well as the frequency that songs about the death of friends are sung at the *bailes funk*. It is easy to find flags, clothes and other tributes among the *torcidas organizadas*, with the names and silhouettes of dead friends. In these daily lives, it seems to me that death takes on the role of this mysterious place, the *depth*, in the sense of the group's foundation. No wonder, therefore, the one who dies paves the way for the possibility of becoming a symbol, which would be much more difficult while alive. As if it were agglutinated, in its silhouette, a sort of seed of the group as a whole, hence its symbolic force, always honest, which becomes shared by all supporters on flags, caps and shirts. Thus, the dead will never be dead while there is a group, and every group, to avoid its own dissolution, its final death, needs, every now and then to have, emerged from this *depth*, symbols of this seed, emblems of its original strength, that will feedback its cohesion and, the dead have always been very fertile for this purpose. Here we have some photos of these epitaph-emblems (Image 8; Image 9; Image 10; Image 11; Image 12):





Image 8 – Cap with silhouette of *Jorge*, a supporter from *Young Flu* who was killed.  
Source: Author's archive (2012).



Image 9 – Silhouette of *Anderson*, a supporter from *Fúria Independente do Guarani* (*Guarani* is a team from the country part of the state of São Paulo, Brazil) who was killed. Source: Author's archive (2012).



Image 10 – *Emanuel*, a supporter from *Vélez* (a team from Argentina) who was killed.  
Source: Author's archive (2014).



Image 11 – Balloon in honor of *Charles*, a supporter from *Young Flu* who was killed.  
Source: *Torcida Young Flu's* archive.



Image 12 – Flag in honor of *Jorge*, a supporter from *Young Flu* who was killed.  
Source: Photo shared by *Dudu* from *Young Flu*.

Let us move ahead with two more excerpts in which Jung helps us to think about this idea of *depth*:

[...] the Evil that exists within a man wants to get back into the mother, into the forbidden incestuous tendency with the mother, here is the trick invented by Typhon. It is interesting to notice that it is the Evil that wants to attract Osiris to the Ark, because in light of the theology of this topic the fact of being enclosed inside the Ark means the latency before the renovating birth. The Evil, as if recognizing its imperfection, yearns for improvement through the rebirth (Jung, 2011, p. 280).

We find the theme of slaughtering in many solar myths, in contrast to the ‘composition’ of the child in the motherly womb. In fact, the mother Isis searches for parts of the corpse with the help of Anubis, who possesses the head

of a jackal. Here, the corpses' nocturnal devourers, the dogs and the jackals, become helpers of the composition, the recreation (Jung, 2011, p. 283).

The Jungian assumption is that we lay our psychic material in a reservoir of images and symbols accumulated throughout the entire history of human life, and that it serves as a psychic inheritance to us, which makes up our imagination, that will act in a continuous and underground manner in our daily lives, as well as in our dreams. Based on this, it does not seem absurd to relate the *back* of the classroom and the *backs* of the buses to the *bottom* of the sea and to the motherly *womb*, as well as it is no wonder that in many cases, the baptism is initiated with a dive in water, followed by an emersion. A symbology that can be similarly extended to the ideas of the night, the darkness and the cave, as they were treated by Durand at multiple times:

[...] the obscurity is the amplifier of the noise, it is resonance. The darkness of the cave retains in it the grunt of the bear and the breathing of monsters. Moreover, the darkness is the proper space of all paroxysmal impetus, of all agitation. The blackness is the proper 'activity', and an entire plethora of movements is triggered by the lack of boundaries of the darkness, in which the spirit seeks blindly for the '*nigrum, nigrius nigro*' (Durand, 2002, p. 92).

Certainly, the conscience must, first of all, make an effort to exorcise and invert the darkness, the noise and the harmful effects that seem to be primary attributes of the cave. And the whole depiction of the cave carries a certain ambivalence. In every 'wonderful grotto' there is a bit of a 'hideous cave'. [...] the trauma of birth would drive the primitive to flee the world of fearful and hostile risk spontaneously to take refuge in the cavernous surrogate of the motherly womb (Durand, 2002, p. 241).

Having been, then, engulfed by the depth-cave and, therefore, having taken the inherent risk of this experience, the possibility of another entity being resurrected from this womb is granted, compelling then to share with the others of this enigma, of this belonging that, when ready, will function as a bond to be reforged daily. From this, I can try to also understand an aspect of the importance that, in general, young people give to the area where they were born and/or live. I was asked several times: *where are you from?*, and felt a mysterious need to tell them that I had lived in Olaria, a suburban neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, until I was 25 years old, as if that could allow me some kind of empathy, of approximation. It felt like I had to embed the answer with

what I carry from my suburban past and that, in fact, it was indeed essential for my interest in this universe. Well then, broadening the classroom, the bus, the cave and the womb, to the limits of the entire city, living in the suburbs or in the marshland is analogous to sitting in the *back of the classroom*. It is also known among them that, in Rio de Janeiro, the centers which are best known for being *de pista* (streetwise), inclined to fighting, seen as the more dangerous, at least for *Torcida Organizada Young Flu*, are the ones from *Zona Oeste* (the West Side of Rio, the impoverished part of town), from *Baixada Fluminense* (the state of Rio de Janeiro's lowland) and for *Bonde dos 40* (The 40 Crew) from *Leopoldina/Vila Cruzeiro* area (a marginalized area in Rio, full of slums), as well as recognizing that, the centers with the least amount of members among all *torcidas organizadas*, are the ones from *Zona Sul* (the South Side of Rio, the wealthy part of town) and *Centro* (Downtown). Likewise, whenever I scheduled interviews with some of them, the act of commuting to and from their areas, such as *Cascadura* (Hard Shell), *Campo Grande* (Big Field) or *Nilópolis* (City of Nile), was not simply to meet them, but it was a skill that, I could feel moreover, was rather valued among them and decisive for the quality of our conversations – the knowledge of moving around town. Having lived, currently living or, at least, knowing how to get there alone, lets you access this enigma, a dose of this mysterious *fundão*, we can say.

Thus, a kind of intimate fear of the *depth* is assumed, that drives you away at first, for being the synthetic form of Evil, and this ritualistic process of *descending* into the depth is about unlearning fear. It is one of the reasons why the imagination of the descent will require more precautions than that of the ascent. It will require shields, diving suits, or the monitoring of a mentor, an entire arsenal of machines and more complex machinations than the wing, this appanage of the takeoff. “Because the descent runs the risk, at all times, of confusing itself and turning into a fall. It needs to continuously strengthen itself, as if for reassurance, with the symbols of intimacy” (Durand, 2002, p. 200-201).

At last, we trust that the popular daily life and its eloquent strength in producing images, aesthetic coatings, in tensioning to the epistemological demands by the disenchantment that attempts to govern part of our world, is a fertile ground in the scrutinizing of our, not always and not only, conscient ways to invent technologies that guarantee the impossibility of the ready and

ideal deployment of this modern epistemological paradigm of the disenchantment. They forge, then, an area of expression, not always hostage of *what is said*, but also set in the dimension of the form, of the craftsmanship of objects, of the gesture, of the body, in resistance or resilience to the dogmas of the individualizing monotonous rationality.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The article was written based on the author's dissertation (Coelho, 2015).
- <sup>2</sup> The word *piXação* and its derivatives will be always written, along the text, with a capital *X* in appreciation of the same use by Canevacci in *Culturas eX-tremas* (2005). There is also an analogy between the enigma as an important concept in this work and the letter-symbol *X* that represents, in various contexts, the presence of the unknown.
- <sup>3</sup> Groups that independently develop masked clown costumes with themes that are, at the same time, terrifying and infantile, and then flock the streets during carnival time, causing disturbances and establishing rivalries between them.
- <sup>4</sup> Available at: <[http://spa.fotolog.com/photo/42/25/51/funkeiros/1096463179\\_f.jpg](http://spa.fotolog.com/photo/42/25/51/funkeiros/1096463179_f.jpg)>. Accessed on: Jan. 15 2018.
- <sup>5</sup> Available at: <[https://scontent-sea1-1.cdninstagram.com/t51.2885-15/e35/16230163\\_158418234658011\\_597796711015907328\\_n.jpg](https://scontent-sea1-1.cdninstagram.com/t51.2885-15/e35/16230163_158418234658011_597796711015907328_n.jpg)>. Accessed on: Jan. 15 2018.
- <sup>6</sup> Available at: <<https://i.ytimg.com/vi/u6orN90XKbA/hqdefault.jpg>>. Accessed on: Jan. 15 2018.
- <sup>7</sup> Available at: <<https://i.ytimg.com/vi/vEH7akmlrUU/hqdefault.jpg>>. Accessed on: Jan. 15 2018.
- <sup>8</sup> Available at: <<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/pt/1/1f/Mancha-AlviVerde.jpg>>. Accessed on: Jan. 15 2018.
- <sup>9</sup> Available at: <[https://images.suamusica.com.br/usCSs30EKDrW2jUZFYncjd7F44Q=/500x500/96716/186584/cd\\_cover.jpg](https://images.suamusica.com.br/usCSs30EKDrW2jUZFYncjd7F44Q=/500x500/96716/186584/cd_cover.jpg)>. Accessed on: Jan. 15 2018.

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