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STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

PAULO TRINDADE ALBERTON
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................................................................................ ii

**Section 1. Introduction to the Project** ......................................................... 1

1.1 Inception: Meeting Mestre Roxinho – 2006 ........................................ 2
1.2 Overview: Who We Really Are ........................................................... 5
1.3 Participants .......................................................................................... 8
1.4 Defining Refugee ................................................................................. 18
1.5 Sites and Organisations ...................................................................... 20
1.6 Presentation to Community .................................................................. 23
1.7 Minimisation of Risk or Harm ............................................................. 24
1.8 Limitations of Research ....................................................................... 24

**Section 2. Film Component** .................................................................. 26

2.1 Nichol’s Modes of Representation ....................................................... 26
2.2 Who We Really Are’s – Mode Overview ............................................. 30
2.3 Observational – Objective Representation ........................................ 32
2.4 Film Workshops and Grounded Theory .............................................. 33
2.5 Performance in the Mix of Observation and Participation ................ 36
2.6 Film as Text ......................................................................................... 37

**Section 3. Framing Narratives of African Diaspora and Australian Multiculturalism** ................................................................. 39

3.1 Narrative and Identity .......................................................................... 39
3.2 Narrative and Power ............................................................................ 41
3.3 Framing the African Diaspora Narratives ........................................... 42
   3.3.1 Homeland orientation and boundary-maintenance
   3.3.2 The African diaspora of the southern hemisphere
3.4 Framing Australian Multicultural Narratives .................................... 40
   3.4.1 Before multiculturalism - the ethnic nationalism
   3.4.2 Emergence of multiculturalism
   3.4.3 Multiculturalism and SBS
   3.4.4 SBS and the mediation of multiculturalism
   3.4.5 SBS – ethnic and cosmopolitan multiculturalism coexisting
   3.4.6 Popular multiculturalism

**Section 4. Historical Background** ............................................................ 62

4.1 Capoeira Angola ................................................................................ 63
4.2 Hip Hop .............................................................................................. 71
4.3 The Intersection of Capoeira Angola and Hip Hop ............................ 75

**Section 5. Conclusion** .......................................................................... 77

Appendix: Documentary Script
ABSTRACT

Who We Really Are is practice-lead research that consists of two parts: a collaborative documentary and a written exegesis. Both are arguments and narratives that complement each other.

The documentary follows the settlement process of a Capoeira Angola Master and a group of young African refugees who attend Cabramatta High School, in the outskirts of Sydney, Australia. It uses a mixture of the objective representation of the observational documentary tradition with the subjective approaches of the participatory, performative and reflexive modes (Nichols, 2001), which presents the filmmaker as one of the characters of the film and exposes some of the production processes.

The film, both in its production process and its screen content, is situated at the intersection of a complex set of narratives of diaspora and multiculturalism that, in their construction and development, have been subject to competing perspectives and values.

This exegesis proposes that the diasporic and multicultural narratives mediated by the film are similarly constructed in terms of Brubaker’s notions of ‘boundary-maintenance’ and ‘homeland orientation’ (Brubaker, 2005). While these theories highlight the similarity of the narratives they also inform an understanding of their competing narrative projections.

Drawing from Ang et al. (2008) and Danforth’s (2001) insights this exegesis presents some of the paradoxes of the Australian multicultural narrative and its link with a history of government acts and policies (e.g., Immigration Restriction Act, the White Australian policy, and multicultural policy). Ideas and concepts about diaspora and multiculturalism are framed in a narrative style combining personal and national narratives that stand-alone but also which shape each other (Appiah, 1996; Danforth, 2001; Freiwald, 2002).
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

Over a few years, the documentary film *Who We Really Are* followed the relationship between Capoeira Angola Mestre Roxinho and a group of young African Refugees who attend Multicultural Cabramatta High School, in the Western suburbs of Sydney. The film in the form of a DVD is included at the back of this manuscript as an important part of my research. This exegesis was written in relation to the film component and it incorporates a mixture of narrative and academic style of writing. This written component is divided into five sections.

The first section is written in a narrative style. It introduces the researcher and filmmaker as a migrant of non-English speaking background and as one of the participants of the project who are settling in multicultural Australia. The section tells the story of how the film emerged as a Doctorate of Creative Arts project and introduces the key participants of the film. I have chosen to use a narrative style writing in my exegesis as it represents the broader reflexive and participatory methodology of my film.

Section Two describes the film component in methodological and theoretical terms and attempts to seed the links between practice and theory. It introduces participatory film as exploratory research, observational film as a tool in the participatory method and speaks of the film editing process as a creative process that assigns meaning to the field data. This section situates the documentary component of this DCA within Bill Nichols well known ‘modes of representation’ (1991, 2001) as a mixture of the objective representation of the observational mode with the subjective approaches of the participatory, performative and reflexive modes, which presents the filmmaker as one of the characters of the film and exposes some of the production processes. It proposes that the chosen modes of representation offer together an alternative narrative construction to the popular multicultural story that frequently airs on prime time on SBS.

Section Three academically reflects on the concepts of diaspora and multiculturalism that emerged in the film component. Drawing from Gilroy (1993), Brubaker (2005), Ang et al. (2008) and Danforth (2001) it explores
these concepts as narratives that have beginning middle and end, and proposes that they can be understood as having similar constructions in terms of Brubaker's notions of ‘boundary-maintenance’ and ‘homeland orientation’ (2005). This section suggests, however, that these narratives have competing perspectives.

Section Four provides an overview on the historical backgrounds of Capoeira Angola and Hip Hop supporting Section Three’s suggestions that the narratives of African diaspora embedded in these art forms have been historically constructed from below, while the Australian narratives of multiculturalism, from above.

Section Five attempts to bring the personal, national and diasporic narratives presented in this exegesis to a closure.

The documentary script is included as an appendix to this exegesis.

1.1 Inception: Meeting Mestre Roxinho - 2006

New to Sydney, I was invited by a couple of new friends to a game of Capoeira Angola at the Bondi Pavilion, in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. I had seen Capoeira being played in parks in Brazil and I knew it was an African-Brazilian game, an art form created by African slaves in Brazil that was a mix of dancing and fighting. I had, however, never had a close friend who practiced it. I grew up in white middle-class São Paulo, Brazil, far away from the Afro-Brazilian cultural centre of the northeast, where Capoeira originated. Although I was aware of Capoeira I was oblivious of the social gap between Afro-Brazilians and my own socio-economic class. Previously a pilot I was knowledgeable of the geography of the northeast and had occasionally stayed overnight in Salvador at a 5-star hotel. Moved by a nostalgic urge to reconnect with a culture I had romantic ideas about but to which I had never belonged, I decided to accept my friends’ invitation.
I am the youngest of three sons of an airline pilot and a housewife. In early 1960s my family migrated from Porto Alegre, in southern Brazil, to São Paulo in southeast Brazil, one of the largest cities in the world and the city where I was born. I grew up at a distance from my extended family in the south, but within a small and loving family unit. I lived a politically disengaged middle-class lifestyle in São Paulo; I was completely unaware that I lived the first 19 years of my life under military dictatorship. I didn’t know that artists (such as Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil and Augusto Boal) were seeking exile abroad due to a fear of being tortured for using art to resist the authoritarian regime. I listened to North American music and was unaware that my early years were the richest moments in the Brazilian music history. I had no concept of slavery, the history and struggle of people of African descent, or the devastation colonisation had wreaked on the Indigenous people of Brazil and their cultures.

While my father was away flying in his employment as an airline pilot, my mother was supported by a full time nanny/housekeeper who lived with us on and off for about 40 years, an occasional part time cleaner, a gardener and other occasional domestic aides. My family belonged to a privileged, though not rich, class of Southern Brazilians of European decent. For the sake of comparison, this is perhaps likened to the privilege experienced by Australians of British descent living in Australia. Since my older brother had a slight disability he attended an expensive special school. This meant that my middle brother and I were sent to a small public school where the quality of teaching was low and where strikes by underpaid teachers were common. Despite my low-level public school education I grew up in a family of aeronautically orientated people who taught me about a pilot’s career. Not surprisingly I became a pilot and my early career took me to various places across the world. This enhanced my curiosity of different cultures. Driven by this curiosity in 1998 I left aviation to study film and to work in New York, Johannesburg, Perth and Sydney.

Eight years after leaving Brazil I was a migrant living in multicultural Australia. Curiously, I was sitting next to other migrants from different cultural backgrounds, being introduced to the African-Brazilian art form of Capoeira Angola. It was now clear to me that I occupied a less privileged social position in
Australia than when I was an airline pilot in Brazil. I thus observed the Capoeira Angola practice from a different perspective. I paid a lot more attention to it. The way they were playing the Capoeira game did not equate with my memory of the practice. It appeared that participants were making the effort to ‘pull themselves together’ as a group. Alongside their attempts I too started to try and pull together the different components of my identity after being absent from Brazil for eight years.

All of a sudden the disjointed nature of the Capoeira group changed. The music stopped, I heard whisperings, people relocated on the floor to form a circle. Musicians took their positions and an unknown Afro-Brazilian ‘figure’ entered the space and in Portuguese said:

If you see a Master, you must invite him to the circle and not just look at him ... Capoeira Angola is a tradition ... Who taught you to behave like this? You move here, you move there, don't cross your arms, close the circle so the energy doesn't escape, you need to respect the Master.

His name was Mestre Roxinho and he had recently arrived from Brazil and taken over the leadership of the group, after this position was left empty by a previous teacher. His presence created an immediate sense of obedience and respect amongst all the people in the circle. With a strong voice he started singing a ‘Ladainha’, (a kind of song that starts a Capoeira game), and the conduct of the participants suggested they all knew the rules of the game. Everyone knew their place and their role in that micro community. They knelt in front of Mestre Roxinho before entering the circle to play. They negated the kicks at the rhythm of the music. They sung the chorus in Portuguese. It was a very satisfying and, to a degree, spiritual experience and gave me a sense of belonging to a culture I had never belonged to. This experience revealed to me that I was not sure of my place in Australian culture. I asked myself why the majority of people in the circle were foreigners. What did that say about Australian culture, about Capoeira Angola, and about us, migrants and refugees who participate in this project?

Ironically, my first encounter with the African-Brazilian art form of Capoeira Angola happened in Australia and not in Brazil. The cultural distance between
Mestre Roxinho and I in Australia seemed smaller than had we met in Brazil. Here we were both migrants, belonged to the same social class and lived in the privileged eastern suburbs of Sydney. I didn’t realise but this encounter was about to take me on a complex journey of identification as a migrant in Multicultural Australia. I joined the Capoeira group when Roxinho decided to stay in Australia and when the community was being re-formed after the previous teacher had departed the country.

I asked Mestre Roxinho if I could start filming him as he established his Capoeira Angola culture in Australia, I explained that I wished to make a documentary tentatively called My Father, My Mestre. I did not know what would become of the documentary but I knew I had to start immediately. Roxinho agreed to be filmed.

1.2 Overview: Who We Really Are

The idea for Who We Really Are emerged while I was filming the documentary My Father, My Master, in 2007. As Roxinho was establishing himself in Sydney he started teaching Capoeira Angola to groups of recently arrived young refugees on the outskirts of the city. The fact that one of these groups was composed of refugees who had come from African countries caught my attention. What was Capoeira’s connection to African cultures and Africans today, centuries after the emergence of Capoeira in Brazil? Were there common stories to be shared between contemporary Africans in Australia and the stories of oppression sung in Capoeira? These questions drew my attention to the African continent and to the history of Capoeira Angola and slavery in Brazil.

Capoeira Angola was an art form created in Brazil by African slaves and their descendants as a means of resisting the colonial oppression of Portuguese rulers. It is an expression of physical and spiritual survival that weaves African tradition, history and spirituality into a unique physical and musical ‘game’

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1 This film did not attract finance and has not been finalised yet. It is in a rough-cut stage.
played in a circle. It is believed that the social skills learned in the Capoeira circle are transferable to and helpful in real life.

When I met Roxinho’s young African refugee students, the fact that we all came from Language Backgrounds Other Than English (LBOTE) helped us to empathise with each other. Despite our different cultural backgrounds, in Australia, we were ‘placed’ in the same multicultural category. My encounter with Roxinho and his students raised questions about who we really were in multicultural Australia, and about how the public policy of multiculturalism influenced the way we constructed our identities as migrants and refugees settling in Australia.

Having observed popular documentary formats and series that aired on the dedicated Australian multicultural Television channel – the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS), such as Long Way Down (Alexanian & Malkin, 2007). Go Back to Where You Came From (O’Mahoney, 2011) and others, I realised that ethnic stories were not often subjective. They were generally presented through the eyes of the dominant culture.

These questions led to an idea for a new documentary. As an immigrant filmmaker in Australia I began to think that I could take steps to fill this gap in representation. In 2008 I a dialogue with Mestre Roxinho, the New South Wales Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), Cabramatta High School and the young African refugees who practice Capoeira Angola with Mestre Roxinho, about producing a collaborative documentary about who we really were as we settled in Australia.

In order to produce the film I sought the interest of SBS, Screen Australia and Screen New South Wales. I was confidant that the project would meet SBS’ multicultural charter requirements and that I had enough skills to produce this documentary with some support and collaboration. In my interaction with different government funded agencies I became aware that each funding source body, through its funding guidelines and management, influenced the way ideas took shape and narratives were constructed.
Curiously, I found the support to produce this documentary in academia and not in the above mentioned Australian film industry bodies. I was accepted into a Doctorate of Creative Arts (DCA) degree at the University of Western Sydney. As part of this DCA research I was required to produce the film and an academic component, this exegesis, which functions to communicate in a scholarly context the ideas and processes associated with my research. My initial urge to reconnect with ‘my’ culture, therefore, transformed into a larger learning project about being a migrant with a Language Background Other Than English (hereafter, LBOTE) in Multicultural Australia.

According to DCA guidelines from the University of Western Sydney:

The DCA aims to provide professional artists with recognition of both their practice and the contribution they make to professional and scholarly knowledge. It is a program of advanced research embedded in professional practice. It also must be able to contribute to the advancement of policy and practice in the creative arts (UWS, 2004, p. 1).

Filmmaking is my professional craft and was my starting point for this academic and creative journey that aimed to make sense of how diaspora and multicultural narratives are both similar and different. The documentary *Who We Really Are* has been framed and constructed after a complex set of creative and inter-subjective processes with participants and government and non-government organisations. The filmmaking practices occurred at the intersection of the activities of a diversity of actors and their narratives; this diversity is explored throughout this exegesis.

This research project did not seek to use filmmaking to gather raw data that could be objectively analysed in the exegesis. Instead knowledge was gained through the process of the construction of the film’s narratives, through creative collaboration with participants, through the editing of material, and through interaction with government and non-government organisations. Knowledge was also obtained through the use of the traditional research tools of reading and writing. The documentary and exegesis are both arguments and narratives that complement each other.

Together and separately I, along with participants, engaged with a number of organisations including: The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation
of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS), Fairfield Council, Cabramatta High School, and the University of Western Sydney. All these organisations are engaged, in one way or another, with the ideology of multiculturalism as it operates in Australia. Actually this ideology, according to Hage (2006), emerged through a government policy that was created to manage the kind of cultural diversity that emerged when LBOTE migrants migrated to Australia.

As a filmmaker and a migrant of a ‘Language Background Other Than English’ I became interested in understanding the following:

- Who are we becoming as we settle in multicultural Australia as migrants and refugees labelled as coming from ‘Language Backgrounds Other Than English’?
- How are we constructing our personal narratives and identities? And how is Australia constructing its national narrative and identity in relation to migrants and refugees?
- How have these questions emerged in the production of this documentary?

1.3 Participants

Mestre Roxinho  
Capoeira Angola Mestre (Teacher)  
Country of birth: Brazil  
Arrived in Australia in 2006

African-Brazilian Mestre Roxinho’s birth name is Edielson da Silva Miranda. He was born in a large and broken family with an alcoholic father who couldn’t provide for the family. At the age of six he was selling peanuts on the streets of Salvador, in the northeast of Brazil, surrounded by people engaged in criminal activities. It was during this time that Welder Virgílio Maximiano Ferreira, who is also a respected Capoeira Angola Mestre, offered him a job as an assistant welder. Edielson not only accepted the offer he also brought his personal
belongings and literally moved into Virgílio’s home. Virgílio did not send the boy back to his mother. Instead he raised the young boy in his home until he became a grown man. Because of this Roxinho refers to Virgílio as his father, his Capoeira Angola Master, and his friend.

Within the circle of Capoeira Angola, Mestre Virgílio prepared Edielson, at first only a young boy for the challenges of growing up black and poor in northeast Brazil. Mestre Virgílio’s father was an important Mestre of Capoeira Angola. When Edielson was approximately 18, he received the Capoeira name of Roxinho, meaning ‘little purple’. When Roxinho started teaching Capoeira Angola, he replicated the style of Mestre Virgílio and taught Capoeira Angola to at-risk youth in northeast Brazil. Roxinho understood what it meant to be a kid at-risk. Over time Roxinho shaped this teaching style into a project which he named ‘Project Bantú’. Bantu, according to Roxinho, is the name of his ancestors in Africa. Most Angolans were Bantu people. Roxinho’s knowledge of his ancestry, and his connection to the Bantu people, is not based on documentary evidence but on his spiritual understanding of his ancestry. He gained this understanding through his involvement with the African-Brazilian religion of Candomblé.

After twenty-two years of Capoeira Angola practice Mestre Virgílio gave Roxinho the title of ‘Mestre’ (Master of the art form). Mestre Roxinho then started a pilgrimage-style journey practising Capoeira Angola. As a response to a calling he travelled around Brazil teaching Capoeira Angola to at-risk youth; he then travelled in various countries overseas until he arrived in Australia in 2006.

In Australia Mestre Roxinho opened a Capoeira Angola Cultural Centre and school in the heart of Sydney. With the assistance of The New South Wales Service for the Treatment of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) and Social Worker Chiara Ridolfi, Roxinho took ‘Project Bantú’ to at-risk youth in the western suburbs of Sydney. In the Australian multicultural context the kind of at-risk youth Roxinho was introduced to included migrants and refugees of Language Backgrounds Other Than English, as well as young Indigenous people.
I started following Roxinho's engagement with STARTTS in 2007. Both Roxinho and STARTTS became aware of my intentions to develop documentary project that later became a part of a research degree at the University of Western Sydney. They supported the idea and throughout 2008 and 2009 a number of meetings were held to negotiate terms and conditions of our collaboration. In 2009, STARTTS employed Roxinho and his assistant, Chiara Ridolfi, because they believed that Capoeira Angola could help young refugees recover from trauma and assist them in settling and integrating into Australian society.

**Chiara Ridolfi**  
**Social Worker, Project Bantú Officer, Capoeira Angola Teacher Assistant**  
**Country of Birth – Italy**  
**Arrived in Australia in 2005**

Chiara has a Masters degree in Social Change and Development from the University of Wollongong, NSW. She has worked in community-based projects with young people in Italy, Brazil, Thailand and Bangladesh. She was one of the first Capoeira Angola students of Mestre Roxinho when he arrived in Australia in 2006. Very dedicated to learning Capoeira, Chiara is also a qualified social worker and is fluent in both Portuguese and English.

After meeting Mestre Roxinho Chiara quickly became a key player in the implementation of ‘Project Bantú’ in Australia from 2007. One of her roles has been to help Roxinho to translate into English his traditional culture which manifests orally, physically and musically. During the implementation of ‘Project Bantú’ Chiara counted on the support of STARTTS, an organisation that helps refugees recover from their previous trauma experiences and to build a new life in Australia. Chiara and Roxinho helped STARTTS in the production of funding applications to make ‘Project Bantú’ possible. Eventually, as these applications attracted funding, STARTTS employed both Chiara and Roxinho to run ‘Project Bantú’.

At STARTTS Chiara’s role included the co-facilitation of Capoeira Angola groups, project documentation and evaluation, liaison with schools, social support and referrals for young people. Chiara’s skills have developed to the point that she is
able to independently teach classes to young participants of ‘Project Bantú’. In 2012 she started working as a Child and Adolescent Counsellor at STARTTS, adding individual counseling and therapy to her duties (Ridolfi, 2013).

**Elisabeth Pickering**
**Cabramatta High School Counsellor, Intensive English Centre (IEC)**
**Qualifications in Bachelor of Teaching and a Masters degree in Educational Psychology**
**Country of birth: Australia**

Elisabeth has had a long career in education and in working with migrants and refugees newly arrived in Australia from a number of different countries. She has worked for seventeen years as a teacher with a focus on teaching English as a Second Language and for twenty-four years as the School Counsellor at Cabramatta High School Intensive English Centre (IEC). IECs operate under the rubric of the NSW government high school system. The aim of these centres is to prepare newly arrived migrants, refugees and secondary aged students for study in an Australian high school by providing them with intensive English tuition (YAPA, 2009).

Elisabeth has a special interest in the impact of war trauma, the challenges of resettlement and students’ management of loss and grief. She has a keen interest in alternative approaches to address the needs of the different cultural and ethnic groups that arrive in Australia. Elisabeth maintains that to obtain effective outcomes for young people who have suffered from the traumas of conflict and displacement, interventions need to be long-term and tailor-made.

Elisabeth is passionate about issues of equity and justice for all people. She was introduced to ‘Project Bantú’ and to my DCA project via STARTTS, and supported both projects from her first exposure to them. Elisabeth is very resourceful. During my project she frequently went out of her way to help me. Her ‘extra help’ included, but was not limited to, negotiating food for students who stayed for filmmaking workshop, organising camps and events, and helping to fundraise for the filmmaking workshops.
Brendan O'Byrne  
**Cabramatta High School Deputy Principal**  
**Country of Birth: Australia**

Brendan has had a long career in teaching. He began teaching as a science teacher and later became Head of Faculty. He was appointed Deputy Principal of Cabramatta High School in 2006. He has a strong background in administration and a passion for technology in education. During his time at Cabramatta High School he instigated a number of environmental programs and building projects. When we were filming the project in 2010 Brendan was skeptical about the efficacy of the Capoeira program. He threatened to ‘sink’ the project unless the behavior of young participants improved. When interviewed in 2012 he admitted he no longer had problems with young students from African backgrounds. In 2013 Brendan moved to another NSW state school.

Beth Godwin  
**Cabramatta High School Principal**  
**Country of Birth: Australia**

Beth Godwin has been the Principal of Cabramatta High School since 2004. At the school she has created a culture of community advocacy and community involvement and in doing so has acted as a role model for her culturally diverse students and their families. Beth has embraced various causes and in the school supports a wide range of extra-curricular projects, such as Project Bantú and this film project, with and for her students, with whom she maintains a close, supportive and personal relationship (UWS, 2014).

In order for the school to host such programs Beth relies on the support of organisations such as The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS).
I am a Brazilian-born independent documentary filmmaker who used to work as an international airline pilot. I then became a professional videomaker, and only undertook formal study a few years after I started filming, in 1996. I constructed my filmmaking knowledge bottom-up, from practice to theory. The focus of my interest evolved to be in the ethical, political and artistic dimensions of the documentary form.

I have lived and worked as a filmmaker in São Paulo, New York, Johannesburg, Perth and Sydney and explored my filmmaking voice in different styles including video poetry, road-documentary, Auteur animated documentary, character-driven documentary and format documentary for television. I have taught film at university, certificate and community levels and produced educational drama and documentary for NGOs.

The documentaries that have influenced my filmmaking style include the subjective and performative *Tongues Untied* (Riggs, 1989), the animated political allegory *Isle of Flowers* (Furtado, 1989), the interactive and online documentary *Long Journey, Young Lives* (Goldie & Dahdal, 2004) and the hybrid documentary *Jabe Babe* (Merewether, 2005); the latter produced as a part of a Doctorate of Creative Arts degree. These films were not funded with an aim to reach mainstream audiences but funded under schemes that aimed to support community arts, that sought to push the boundaries of the documentary form or to challenge mainstream politics.

Three years after arriving in Australia, in 2003, I identified an orientation towards developing documentaries that would air on the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS). I related more to SBS’s “Special” proposition than to the commercial broadcaster’s mainstream themes. SBS’s campaign “Six billion stories and counting”, which aired during program breaks, included impressive looking ethnic faces saying: “My story is about…” These subjective accounts really caught my attention.
Going To The Dogs (Alberton, 2004) is the first authorial film I produced after arriving in Australia. It marked the beginning of my identification as an ethnic filmmaker and member of a minority population in Australia. This short film is a political allegory that uses dogs as metaphors in order to examine multiculturalism and immigration policies in Australia. Going to the Dogs is also my first film to air on SBS. Other SBS credits include Swapping Lives (Goldie, 2004), Give Me A Break (Tait, 2005), Living On (Cornish, 2005) and Podlove (Australian Film Commission & Special Broadcasting Services, 2006).

I have moved to Brazil late 2012 and I have been working as an editor of a long running documentary series on Brazilian music called Passagem de Som\(^2\) (Alvim, 2013) which airs at SESC TV, Brazil.

My awards include Best Photography for Water and I (Alberton, 1996), Film Australia special commendation, ATOM Best-multimedia award for Mijn Man (Alberton, 2005), and Best Documentary and Best Editing at Western Australian Screen Awards (WASA) in 2004 for Going To The Dogs (Alberton, 2004)

I completed a Certificate in Film at New York University (NYU), Queer Film Studies at WITS University in Johannesburg and a Master of Arts at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) specialising in documentary directing.

Refugee Participants Under 18 years old
Country of Birth: various
Participants arrived in Australia between 2005 and 2010

The young participants in my project were 30 Cabramatta High School students (17 male and 13 female) who were enrolled in the Capoeira Angola classes in early 2010. They were aged between 11 and 17 years old. Four of them were still studying at Cabramatta High School’s Intensive English Centre (IEC) in order to prepare them for a transition to mainstream high school. Twenty-five of them had already transitioned to regular Cabramatta High School. All were of refugee background, 27 of them were of African origin (11 from Burundi, 11 from Sudan, four from Congo, and one from Somalia), two students were from

\(^2\)www.passagemdesom.org
Iraq, and one from Thailand. Some participants’ English language skills were low and they required the presence of a community translator or liaison person, who was always present during Capoeira classes. When 2010 ‘Project Bantú’ commenced the young participants’ length of stay in Australia varied from six months to four years. Details of the students involved in the project are summarised in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>IEC / HS</th>
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Table 1: Capoeira Angola attendance sheet of April 2010

The information in Table 1 was provided by participants at the school. It was not verified by official documents. This brings up a question about precision of information. For example, Evelyn Agripa, one of the students in the project, said in an interview that she was Sudanese. As we got to know each other better and
I conducted further interviews, she mentioned she was born in a small village called Agojo, which is in Uganda. She used Uganda and Sudan alternatively to refer to her country of origin. Further I learnt of another student who claimed she had a different age to that provided on her documentation. The reasons for these discrepancies could be various and are not explored in this exegesis. What is important, though, is that the statistical information provided in my film, screenplay and exegesis could be imprecise, particularly in relation to the age and place of birth of some of the students - this potential imprecision points to the importance of the narrative voices of these participants and the stories of their identities.

In terms of the classes not all of the students who participated in the Capoeira classes chose to participate in the filmmaking workshops. Despite this they agreed to being filmed while they practiced Capoeira. Most students who participated in the filmmaking workshops also participated in the Capoeira Angola classes. Capoeira classes pre-existed the film workshops. I had expected to work with up to 15 students in the filmmaking workshop component, dividing them into three groups of up to five students each. This was most ideal in terms of the three sets of AV equipment and the three tutors I had available to this project. This number, however, was highly variable throughout the year.

Below is a brief introduction to the key young participants who feature in the documentary, based on the information provided by participants in conversation and interviews. Following the name of each participant is the age of the student as it was at the beginning of the school year in 2010.

**Rama Kayungu (15)** was born in Congo and in the first years of his life moved to the town of Kigoma in Tanzania where he learned how to Rap. His idols included Professor Jay and Juma Nature. When we started this project Rama had been in Australia for approximately four years. Rama proved to be a natural leader and a troublemaker in the eyes of some.

**Dieme Muhimbirwa (17)** was born in the small Congolese village of Bunyakiri. In 2010 he had not seen his parents for six years. He told me that most of his
family members were still in Congo and that he speaks with them over the phone every now and again. Dieme lives in Sydney with his grandparents. During the project I noticed that he was a very mature and responsible young man.

**Miriam Omari (15) and Gemimah Omari (13)** are part of a Christian family of four girls and a boy. The children of this family were born as the family moved across different national borders on the African subcontinent, a movement that occurred due to war or for religious reasons. All the girls of the family sing in a church choir. Of the girls Gemimah composes the most. Part of the song *Who We Really Are* (theme song of the documentary) was composed by Gemimah. Miriam is a natural leader.

**Evelyn Agripa (15)** said in an interview to camera that her family and herself escaped by foot from a small Ugandan village called Agojo because of her mean step-father who had three or four wives and who no longer liked Evelyn and her family. According to Evelyn, after escaping Agojo, they stayed in a refugee camp in Kampala, Uganda, until they found a place to live in Sudan. She does not remember the name of the town they lived in Sudan. Evelyn was one of Roxinho’s most dedicated Capoeira students, along with Makor and Hunkun. Evelyn is the cousin of Hunkun.

**Hunkun Bosco (16)** is Sudanese. He turned out to be one of the most devoted Capoeira Angola students of Mestre Roxinho. Although Hunkun was initially not keen to participate on the film workshops, by the end of 2010, he started participating in some workshops and expressing his opinions to the camera.

**Deborah and Migaret Jones (Twins - 15).** The twins were born in a refugee camp called Kakuma, in north-west Kenya. At Cabramatta High School they were very popular and always articulated clearly. During the project they showed they had an interest in both Capoeira and Rap.

**Makor Makor (16)** is a highly intelligent and articulate young Sudanese man who during the project was deeply committed to both Capoeira and Rap. Makor chose not to participate in the filmmaking workshops and the film, therefore,
does not portray his Rap. He did, however, come to be vocal about Capoeira on the film. In 2013 he was diagnosed with cancer and had to cancel his Capoeira travel to Brazil in order to undergo chemotherapy.

1.4 Defining Refugee

The 1951 United Nations Convention, also signed by the Australian government, defines a refugee as:

A person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion; someone who is outside his/her country of origin; and is unable or unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution (UNHCR, 2007).

The Organization of African Unity’s [OAU] Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa was a regional treaty adopted in 1969 and in that it is added that a refugee is, ‘any person compelled to leave his/her country owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality’ (Chaloka Beyani, 1995).

Refugees in Australia

In the 2008 to 2009 financial year 13,507 refugees and humanitarian visa applicants entered Australia. In this time period the primary countries of origin for offshore refugees and those with humanitarian visas were Iraq (2874), Burma (2412) Afghanistan (847), Sudan (631), Bhutan (616), Ethiopia (478), Democratic Republic of Congo (463), Somalia (456), Liberia (387), and Sierra Leone (363) (Government, 2010). Approximately 7,000 of these refugees were children.

Many of the newly-arrived refugees who enrolled in Intensive English Centres (IEC) in NSW were born in detention and refugee centres around the world and have never attended school. Many have experienced war, hunger, life threatening situations, or have witnessed the killing or raping of close relatives.
As refugees of high-school age settle into Australian life they often have to manage one set of values at home and a different set at school. This means that often their resettlement needs take priority over their need to engage in some kind of trauma healing process. As part of their settlement they must learn English, the rules of Australian society, the way finances are managed, the culture, even their way around their local environment. Sometimes students also have to be responsible for their parents who are not as fluent in English as they are.

Although in Australia these children are offered specialised settlement services and psychological support at places such as IECs, they are generally expected to integrate into the mainstream school curriculum after three school terms. After this period they lose access to most of the special support programs. This transition from IEC into mainstream school is one that needs to be examined more closely and better understood (Chegwidden & Thompson, 2008).

Government and community reports point to the largely unassisted transition from IEC into mainstream schooling as a period when a number of pressures may result in violent or disrespectful behaviour at school and at home. This is particularly significant in African communities because between 2002 and 2006 African refugees constituted the largest refugee intake in Australia (Chegwidden & Thompson, 2008; NSW, 2006). African refugees have therefore been experiencing growing learning and settlement difficulties in NSW and many schools are having trouble managing the situation; many schools are not fully aware of the cultural backgrounds of such African refugees, nor the needs of these communities. Government agencies still need to better comprehend the realities of these families in order to better address the issues of healing and settlement (Chegwidden & Thompson, 2008).
1. 5 Sites and Organisations

**Cabramatta High School**

8 Aladore Ave., Cabramatta, NSW 2166

Cabramatta High School is a large public high school 30 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD. In 1974 Film Australia produced a participatory documentary titled *Stirring* (Oehr, 1974), which was filmed within the grounds of Cabramatta High School. This controversial feature documentary showed a school attended by Anglo-Saxon male students and the topic of the film was a questioning of the practice of corporal punishment. After the arrival of Vietnamese refugees in 1975 other documentaries (Do, 2003; Lim, 2012) have depicted a dramatic shift in the demographics of the Cabramatta region. Often such films featured narratives of Asian drug gangs and the history of racist Australian public policies that favoured immigration from Britain.

By 2010 *Who We Really Are* showed a very different school. At this time Cabramatta High School was a coeducational school where the majority of students were from Language Backgrounds Other Than English (Cabramatta High School, 2014).

Although Cabramatta High School had a history of accommodating migrants and refugees, and had an IEC attached to the school, it began to experience difficulties in managing refugees from African backgrounds who started to arrive in larger numbers from 2005. Perhaps it is because of these problems that the school became a strong supporter of my DCA project. Their support included, but was not limited to, allowing me to film on school grounds, and offering rooms and some equipment to conduct filmmaking workshops. I met with participants twice a week at school throughout 2010 – every Wednesday for filmmaking workshops, and every Friday for filming of the Capoeira Angola Classes.
Capoeira Angola Mato Rasteiro (ECAMAR) &
Capoeira Angola Cultural Centre Australia
41 Belmore Street – Surry Hills – NSW

ECAMAR stands for Escola de Capoeira Angola Mato Rasteiro. (‘Mato Rasteito’ Capoeira Angola School) - ‘Mato Rasteiro’ makes reference to the origin of the word ‘Capoeira’ which according to Roxinho comes from the indigenous Brazilian language of ‘Tupi-Guarani’. It means ‘low grass’, the kind of grass that grew after a harvest, the place where slaves in north eastern Brazil gathered to practice African rituals or to have fun in the XIX Century. The Sydney branch of the school opened in 2007 in the suburb of Surry Hills, in 2011 it moved to the suburb of Chippendale but then closed in 2012 when the building was returned to its landlord. At this time Roxinho started to teach out of the Redfern Community Centre in Redfern, NSW.

The sibling organisation of ECAMAR is the not-for-profit Capoeira Angola Cultural Centre Australia, also launched in Sydney in 2007 by Mestre Roxinho. The organisation aims to introduce, preserve and develop Capoeira Angola and Afro-Brazilian culture in Australia. The Cultural Centre hosts ‘Project Bantú’.

I filmed at ECAMAR and Capoeira Angola Cultural Centre Australia on special occasions. For example I filmed at Capoeira Angola Youth Encounter, an event that happens in November and unites students from the various high schools where Roxinho teaches. Both the Capoeira Angola Cultural Centre and ECAMAR School supported my DCA project from the beginning.

The New South Wales Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)
152 – 168, The Horsley Drive, Carramar, NSW 2163

Like the two organisations listed immediately above STARTTS was another organisation that supported my DCA project. STARTTS is a not-for-profit organisation that helps refugees recover from trauma and helps them build a new life in Australia. STARTTS also works with other individuals and

3 Roxinho’s version of the origin of the word Capoeira is confirmed as one of versions presented by Brazilian historian Rego (1968). See more on the historical background of Capoeira in Section Four.
organisations in order to guide them to work more effectively with refugees. STARTTS provided me with information about the needs, strengths and challenges of torture and trauma survivors. They provided psychosocial support to participants of my DCA and addressed any issues when they arose in regards to the research, filming and workshops. The organisation also taught me how to deal with participants who have experienced trauma and how to implement self-care strategies in terms of boundary setting. Ethical guidance was another service STARTTS offered as well as assistance with my liaising with refugee communities who participate in ‘Project Bantú’. STARTTS also helped me to identify and access government funding programs for the implementation of the workshop element of this research project.

I filmed and conducted film and music workshops at STARTTS on special occasions. For example, when I and the film workshop students felt ready to produce film clips.

**Secondary research sites**

- **The Cabramatta Plaza, Cabramatta, NSW.**
  We conducted the filming of the Refugee Week Capoeira Angola presentation.

- **The Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Casula, NSW.**
  We conducted the filming of the ‘Who We Really Are’ music clip with young participants.

- **The streets around the suburb of Cabramatta, NSW.**
  We conducted the filming of the ‘Who We Really Are’ music clip with young participants.

- **Mestre Roxinho’s home / Bondi Beach, NSW.**
  We conducted the filming of the weekend gathering between Roxinho and young refugees.

- **Young participants’ homes in the western suburbs of Sydney, NSW.**
  We conducted the filming of the ‘Mama’ song and the filming of participants collecting their personal belongings in their homes when they were on their way to Roxinho’s home.
1.6 Presentation to Community

A formal outline of this DCA project was presented to potential participants and their families in February 2010 at Cabramatta High School. In preparation for this presentation the organisation STARTTS and Cabramatta High School Counselor, Elizabeth Pickering, helped me liaise with the communities involved. This involved making phone calls, sending emails or handing a written introduction of the DCA project to various refugee community leaders. This occurred in December 2009. At this stage nobody was sure who was going to participate in the Capoeira Angola program at Cabramatta High School in 2010.

When a list of Capoeira Angola participants was confirmed in February 2010 we invited all participants and their parents/carers for an information session at Cabramatta High School. During this session I outlined the idea of the film workshops, the documentary film and the exegetical components of the DCA. I then screened extracts from previous years’ videos I had produced with STARTTS which portray Capoeira Angola classes being conducted at Cabramatta High School.

I explained how the *Who We Really Are* project would use film to tell the stories by and about young refugees. I explained how the footage in the film would identify participants and organisations who were involved. I made it clear that any sensitive material or legally uncleared footage would have participants’ identities protected or classified as confidential.

At this session community translators clarified any questions participants and their families had about the project. I then left the families with information sheets and release forms for potential participants and their families to consider and hopefully complete. Mrs. Pickering helped to collect the signed documents from participants and their families or carers before the commencement of the film workshops.
1.7 Minimisation of Risk or Harm

My DCA project received the approval of the UWS Human Research Ethics Committee and the New South Wales Department of Education and Training ethics (SERAP). Both the Capoeira Angola and the filmmaking workshops were supported by Cabramatta High School and by STARTTS. Their support included administrative assistance and the supply of facilities (such as rounding up students for class, liaising with parents, the organisation of school camps, and the provision of a teaching space), specialised trauma and general psychological support, and information and training for researchers and tutors.

Working with Children and Criminal Record Checks were conducted by the NSW Department of Health on behalf of STARTTS. I undertook the elective and mandatory workshops offered at STARTTS for adults working with children and adolescents of traumatic backgrounds. If any distress arose as a consequence of a storytelling exercise (for example reliving past experiences), participants had access to the school counselor and, if needed, the STARTTS trauma expert counselor offsite. Contact numbers for the UWS Ethics Officer were also supplied on the information sheets.

1.8 Limitations of Research

*Who We Really Are* is a qualitative enquiry that draws from ethnographic and participatory filmmaking methods. The findings, therefore, are technically not generalisable beyond this particular context of participants. Despite this, though, the experiences recorded provide insight into the experiences of young African refugees settling in Australia and the power of Capoeira Angola and filmmaking to help these refugees articulate the challenges they face while adapting to Australia.
Although most of this research was set in a public high school, and although it raised questions about literacy and the way refugee trauma is dealt with within an Australian school context, these issues did not become the central focus of my analysis. This choice was made because I believe these issues are extremely complex and thus deserve more attention than a short Doctorate of Creative Arts exegesis can offer.
SECTION 2: FILM COMPONENT

Who We Really Are marks a large development step in my career as documentary filmmaker. It is my first long form film, shot over a long period of time and the first film I produce that includes a theoretical component. The level of complexity, logistically and ethically speaking, was much higher than I expected. Seeking consent, going through the formal processes of the ethics application, seeking financial and institutional support, dealing with the technical and ethical aspects of filming, thinking the narrative, teaching film and learning Capoeira, managing a flow of volunteers throughout the project are only a few examples of the high flow of sensitive information I had to deal with on a day to day basis. I was transiting through diverse social, political, economical, cultural and religious circles.

Making this film was not only a journey into vulnerable refugee experiences, but also a chance to learn more about my own place in Australian society. A question that emerged during the making of this film was: How can multiculturalism encompass and approximate such distinct human stories, such as the ones contained in the documentary “Who We Really Are”? In the following section I describe the methodology used in my documentary, based on the work of Bill Nichols, which tries to give voice to some of these stories.

2.1 Nichols’ Modes of Representation

North American film theoretician Bill Nichols states that documentary film emerged in response to Hollywood fictional narratives, which lacked “reality” (Nichols, 2001, p. 138). When describing the documentary project he identifies six modes of representation, as sub-genres of the documentary film genre, which set up conventions and provide expectations viewers anticipate having fulfilled. (Nichols, 2001, p. 99).

He presents these modes roughly in the chronological order. A mode of representation that emerges and dominates in a particular moment in history, and then in the next moment this mode ceases to dominate (but not to exist) giving way to a new mode that represents “a new set of issues and desires to
preoccupy an audience” (2001, pg. 102). This suggests a kind of narrative to our understanding of the documentary genre. Nichols highlights, however, that these modes of representation do not evolve toward a final form of truth, but according to “power and authority within the historical arena” (1991, p. 33). Although Nichols’ modes are somewhat outdated, they compose an important and comprehensive model to examine representation in the documentary genre pre-digital, pre-online and pre-format documentary.

Later in this section I will touch upon a contemporary mode of representation, which is currently dominant in most western countries: the format documentary. This mode is specifically dominant at the Australian multicultural channel, SBS, which I will explore in more detail in section Three.

Bill Nichols’ modes of representation are the poetic mode (1920s), the expository mode (1920s and 1930s), the observational mode (1960s), the participatory mode (1960s), the reflexive mode (1980s) and the performative mode (1980s).

Nichols separates each mode of representation in distinct theoretical terms, however, in practical terms, a single documentary generally combines more than one mode to tell a story.

The poetic documentary arose within the modernist movement valuing the experimentation with visuals and sound to create mood and affect and to convey the director’s abstract treatment of the world. Here, emotion is more important than information (Nichols, 2001, p. 102-3). Examples of poetic films include Berlin – Symphony of a Great City (Ruttmann, 2009), Rain (Ivens & Franken, 1929), and N.Y., N.Y. (Thompson, 1957).

The expository mode, on the other hand, “assembles fragments of the historical world into a more rhetorical or argumentative frame than an aesthetic or poetic one” (Nichols, 2001, p. 105). This mode utilises ‘voice-of-God’ narration and titles to deliver a clear and objective, top-down style narrative. Examples of

\[\text{\footnotesize 4 In a similar “narrative-like” style, I will later explore how our understanding of the term ‘diaspora’ and of the concept of multiculturalism evolved according to power and authority through time.}\]
expository films include: *The City* (Dyke & Steiner, 1939), *Blood of the Beasts* (Franju, 1949), *Ways of Seeing* (Berger, 1972), and *Bowling for Columbine* (Moore, 2002).

The observational documentary (or direct cinema, as it is known in the US) and the French cinéma vérité emerged in the 1960s. These documentary forms emerged as a reaction to the way other modes of documentary represented the world. The observational and vérité modes tended to be distinct from both the abstractions of the poetic mode as well as the didactic moral tone of the expository mode. The introduction of compact filming equipment in the 1960s also had a huge impact on the way stories could be told. In both observational and vérité modes of representation there is minimal crew and equipment, narration is avoided, and there is no soundtrack or re-enactment. Despite these general similarities, filmmakers of these modes engage with their film subjects differently. In vérité films such as Jean Rouch’s and Edgar Morin’s *Chronicle of a Summer* (1961), the filmmaker and his or her camera are part of the setting being filmed. In observational films such as *The Monastery: Mr. Vig and the Nun* (Grønkjær, 2006) or *High School* (Wiseman, 1968), the presence of the filmmaker (and the responsibility for his or her perspective) is more camouflaged. Observational directors can be more detached from their film subjects, while vérité filmmakers are more involved, offering a more complex and reflexive style of representation. Both styles, however, are not exempt from producing an exotic image of the other or interfering in the performance and reality of the people being filmed.

In the participatory mode, we expect to be told a story by a participant observer kind of filmmaker, someone who “actively engages with, rather than unobtrusively observes, poetically reconfigures, or argumentatively assembles that world.” (Nichols, 2001, p. 115). We see and hear the filmmaker as a social actor among others onscreen, but we are aware that he or she maintains, in a varying degree, a level of detachment from other actors being represented and an amount of power as social actors are unlikely to engage in the filmmaking process. Rouch and Edgar Morin’s *Chronicle of a Summer* (1960) is also an
example of a participatory documentary mode of representation. Others include *Hard Metals Disease* (Alpert, 1987) and *Sherman’s March* (McElwee, 1985).

The reflexive mode of representation makes the conventions and techniques more visible, and hence to subvert the notions of reality unproblematically portrayed through other modes (Nichols, 1991, p. 33). More specifically, the reflexive mode reminds us of Grierson’s definition of documentary as a “creative treatment of actuality” by addressing the presence of the filmmaker, presenting a negotiation between filmmaker and viewer, and by reflecting on some of the issues of representation. As Nichols writes, “[w]e are now attending to how we represent the historical world as well as to what gets represented” (2001, p. 125). These questions are ignored in the observational mode. Rouch and Edgar Morin’s *Chronicle of a Summer* (1960) is an example of a film that incorporates various modes of representation. Other reflexive documentaries examples are *Reassemblage* (Trinh, 1983), and *Letter to Jane* (Godard & Gorin, 1972).

The performative documentary “stresses subjective aspects of a classically objective discourse” (2001, p. 138) [or] “sets out to demonstrate how embodied knowledge provides an entry intro an understanding of more general processes at work in society”. (2001, p. 131). This mode generally favours first person accounts from the underrepresented, the margins or minorities (women, homosexuals, migrants, etc). It highlights the subjective, affective, emotionally complex aspects of first-person accounts. *Tongues Untied* (Riggs, 1989), *Bontoc Eulogy* (Fuentes, 1995) and *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask* (Julien, 1995) are a few examples of performative documentaries.

Since Nichols released *Representing Reality* (1991) and *Introduction to Documentary* (2001) we have experienced complex transformations in the way we communicate and represent ourselves in the digital, online and interactive worlds. It is beyond the scope of this exegesis to analyse these transformations and to map out the contemporary modes of representations. However, as this exegesis uses the Australian Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) as a means for discussing multiculturalism and suggests that *Who We Really Are* offers an alternative mode of representation to that favoured by SBS, I will briefly explore
a contemporary mode of representation that has gradually become dominant at SBS - the format documentary. This idea will be further explored in Section Three.

If the documentary genre emerged in response to the lack of reality in Hollywood fiction film, the format documentary approximates the historical world to entertainment, episodic fiction or reality television. It highlights a fatigue with all of Nichols modes and signals a perceived lack of popularity and commercially viability in the documentary project.

Some times these programs are referred to as TV Mini-Series, TV Shows, Factual Programs or Documentaries. With formats such as Go Back to Where You Came From (O’Mahoney, 2011), Who Do You Think You Are (Marciniak et al., 2007) and Long Way Down (Alexanian & Malkin, 2007), the documentary project becomes more attractive to a wider audience and more commercially viable, since it is produced in series, uses mainstream dramatic tools and higher production levels to grab viewers’ attention.

The format mode of representation is conceptually a Producer’s project. It is the Producer, not the Director, who best understands the market and is best able to create, brand and sell a narrative model that can be produced as a series and adapted into a new market or culture. These narratives generally articulate the perspectives of the dominant culture, even when portraying a minority culture. In Go Back to Where You Came From (O’Mahoney, 2011) we experience the refugee journey through the eyes of ordinary Australians, in Long Way Down (Alexanian & Malkin, 2007), we see African culture through the eyes of Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman. We do not understand the world because we identify with the minority group directly, but because we are seeing their journey through the dominant culture’s glasses and discourses.

When SBS Managing Director, Michael Ebeid, states that the format documentary Go Back to Where You Came From (O’Mahoney, 2011) ‘needs to be the new benchmark for SBS content’ (Ebeid, 2011), this signals that the format
mode of production is currently dominant and that the other modes have virtually no place in the Broadcaster.

2.2 Who We Really Are – Mode Overview

Who We Really Are uses a combination of four of Nichols modes of representation: the observational, the participatory, the reflexive and the performative. Different modes of representation allowed for different perspectives to be seen.

The observational mode, with its unobtrusive style of filming was chosen to preserve Roxinho’s authority and relationship with young participants in the classroom and offer a more objective, fly on the wall, perspective of the events. This mode of representation captured revealing moments of crisis and of the unfolding of participants’ relationships. The objectivity of this mode favoured Roxinho’s views. His views are challenged, however, when the reflexive mode kicks in and breaks down the objectivity by exposing some of the filmmaking tools and thoughts.

The documentary Who We Really Are is natively reflexive, as it was produced as part of a thesis that includes an exegesis that reflects on the film’s themes, conventions and techniques. However, independent of this exegesis theoretical commentary, the documentary is itself reflexive. The first scene shows the filmmaker holding the camera in front of the key character while narrating in first person about their relationship and revealing the key storyteller. Throughout the documentary, other reflexive moments reveal young participants filming, suggesting that there are partial storytellers, or the filmmaker handing over young participants a microphone and negotiating whether or not the film should go public. Offscreen, the filmmaker reflects upon how much he is was contributing to the chaos they were experiencing at that moment.

It is worth noting that the participatory filmmaking workshops conducted throughout 2010 are associated to a different method to that of Nichols’
participatory mode. The former is an intervention that encourages first person narratives from participants; while the latter is a method of engagement with participants, while favouring third person account of participants’ lives and cultures by the filmmaker. Who We Really Are is more associated with the former kind of participatory method, although it has elements of Nichols’ participatory observation mode. According to Nichols:

> Participatory documentary gives us a sense of what it is like for the filmmaker to be in a given situation and how that situation alters as a result. The types and degrees of alteration help define variations within the participatory mode of documentary. (2001, p. 116)

The participatory component of this project worked as a tool that was exposed and reflected upon in the reflexive mode. However, the workshops were also the key tool that allowed for the performative mode to emerge. It was during the filmmaking workshop component that rap and gospel appeared as participants’ preferred form of expression. Their subjective perspectives came through powerfully though their performances. We are accustomed to hear objective news story about refugees, but it is rare to have access to the refugees’s first person accounts about who they think they really are, in a musical way.

Combined, these modes of representation were utilised to bring the different perspectives into a dialogue, and to create a complex treatment to the experiences of this group of migrants and refugees in western Sydney. It is not intended that the outcome generalises the multicultural experience in Australia but to offer an alternative narrative to the highly dominant format style programs that air on primetime SBS. I will expand on this later.

### 2.3 Observational documentary - Objective Representation

Ethnographic films have been profoundly influenced in recent years by the ideas and techniques of observational cinema that arose out of cinema verite in the early 1960s and the British Free Cinema movement of the preceding decade. Lightweight synchronous sound cameras and film stocks of increased sensitivity made it possible to film almost anywhere with a minimum of disturbance to those being filmed (MacDougall, 1978, p. 414).
Through observational filmmaking I framed the evolving relationship between Roxinho and his young students as they interacted in Capoeira Angola classes every Friday throughout the 2010 school year. As an orally transmitted practice and tradition, Capoeira Angola is learned through a long-term relationship with a Mestre. Observing this relationship over a long period of time was necessary in order to allow narratives to form from everyday interactions. I had agreed with Mestre Roxinho not to take an Assistant Camera-person into the classroom and also to work as unobtrusively as possible. The aim of this was to preserve Mestre Roxinho’s authority as the teacher of Capoeira Angola. This was only possible because of the quality and portability of the video equipment I used, and because I had years of experience in operating cameras ‘solo’. Having said that, sometimes the technical quality of the footage was compromised. In particular moments of crisis I was not able to move or to stop the action to insert a wireless microphone on a person who entered the room to discuss something important. I just had to accept what I could see and hear from the position I was in without interfering with the unfolding relationships.

I filmed, using an observational style, nearly every Capoeira Angola class held weekly throughout the school year of 2010 at Cabramatta High School. Over time participants got used to my presence and my camera and I was able to capture rich moments of their relationship development.

I also obtained footage of the students’ improvements in regards to both their physical abilities and also their social skills. These images helped to illustrate the students’ journeys as characters and highlight the focus of the theoretical discussion.

In recent years film has entered anthropology both as a method and as a theory. As a method, the focus has been on the use of film as part of the ethnographic process, as a means of recording data, of “documenting” events. The theoretical emphasis has been on the analysis of the finished film: on film as a medium for presenting interpretations and representations of “other cultures”. Thus theoretical and methodological concerns have tended to be distinct from one another (Morphy, 1994, p. 118).

While the observational method facilitated the collection of ‘raw’ data and an observation of events with minimal impact on the setting, the creative intervention was designed to have an impact of the setting and welcome
subjective perspectives and inter-subjective narratives. It thus cannot be ignored in this analysis.

2.4 Film Workshops and Grounded Theory

I conducted weekly participatory filmmaking workshops at Cabramatta High School. These workshops ran for approximately two hours and were conducted on most Wednesdays throughout the 2010 school year. The film group varied in size throughout the year from approximately 7 to 25 students per session. Sometimes the group size even varied within one session because the workshops were not compulsory and participants sometimes came and went throughout the duration of the workshop as they accommodated other activities such as studying for exams or attending soccer practice.

Participants in the filmmaking workshops were not expected to become filmmakers. Workshops were a kind of creative tool for us to get to know each other personally and creatively outside the Capoeira Angola environment. We took this time to watch films, build rapport, brainstorm ideas and develop, in an informal way, small biography projects using stills images and text. In this process, music emerged as their number one art form. They composed some songs and I made sure I gave them the tools and help they needed to produce their songs. Although producing the feature documentary included a creative collaboration with participants, I constructed the film narrative over many months, without their participation. Having said that, I shared the editing decisions of the music clips with participants and screened the roughcut of the feature documentary with them, and listened to their feedback.

The workshop process operated in a cumulative fashion where one session built on another. So I would design one workshop session, then implement it, watch the video materials produced from it and then reflect on the participatory process. I would then start a new cycle of design, implementation and reflection. In distinction to the non-interactive style I used to film the Capoeira Angola classes, the filmmaking workshops brought a level of complexity, collaboration
and proximity to students that deepened my relationship with them. As an interventionist, I became an integral part in the development of the young participants’ stories and music clips. Sometimes in the workshops we discussed the students’ relationships with Roxinho.

STARTTS and school counsellor Elisabeth Pickering played an important support role during the implementation of these workshops. Not only did they offer psychological support if needed, they also helped to make the workshops possible by liaising with communities, organising a space to conduct the workshops, organising food and applying for grants to pay for tutors and assistants. As stories arose during our weekly workshops at Cabramatta High School Library more intensive workshops were planned to produce participants’ creative projects; these were largely run during the school holidays. Music emerged as participants’ preferred mode of expression as opposed to more traditional film narratives, as I had imagined. This meant that I had to seek expert support to incorporate the music element into the workshops. I sought the advice of composer and music producer Basil Hogios and he actually ended up helping participants and I to realise the participants’ music ideas and compositions. UWS provided the stills, video cameras and computers, and I became reliant on the assistance of a number of volunteers to conduct these workshops throughout the year.

The participatory filmmaking workshop component was not only a creative tool used for the construction of the film but a form of social exploratory research as issues of the groups’ relationships emerged, were discussed and then illustrated through creative projects. According to Schutt, social exploratory research, or grounded theory,

seeks to find out how people get along in the setting under question, what meanings they give to their actions, and what issues concern them. The goal is to learn “what is going on here?” and to investigate social phenomena without explicit expectations (Schutt, 2006, p. 14).

The different politics deployed by Roxinho’s Capoeira Angola and young participants’ Hip Hop practices became noticeable after the participatory workshops started. It was then that I decided to examine how the different
African diasporic art forms informed participant’s diverging politics. Further, it was only during the workshops that young participants’ musical performances emerged. Without the participatory workshops particular stories would have remained untold. For example, the story of how Burundian Jones felt about his journey to Australia and his faith in God would not have been revealed. Also it was through the hip hop performed in the participatory workshops that I learnt that young participants call themselves ‘niggas from Africa’ and that Rama is a natural leader and loves his mother.

2.5 Performance in the Mix of Observation and Participation

The performance component that emerged in the participatory workshop was incorporated into the documentary in a way that challenged the reality portrayed in the observational component. According to Bill Nichols:

performative documentary presents a distinct disturbance to ethnographic film. Such films have been classically bound by a triadic conception of “the field”, the academic institution that supports it, the geographic sites that host it, and the disciplinary forces that police it (Nichols, 1994, p. 96).

The performance element boosted participants’ self esteem as they recorded their songs and saw themselves on a big screen singing “we are the niggas from Africa.” This feeling of ecstasy flooded into the Capoeira room and triggered a conflict between young participants and Mestre Roxinho, who now felt threatened by the impact the filmmaking workshops were having on participants.

When the situation evolved into a group crisis, I screened observational footage to young participants and they had the chance to watch themselves living their lives and interacting with other participants on screen. They were then encouraged to have a conversation about what they saw. This helped them to have a better understanding about who they were at that moment of crisis. In watching the film I too had a chance to better understand the complexity of the relationships and to determine how much I was contributing to the crisis. In this case observational footage was used as a tool to understanding.

5 I will explore more of this on Section Four.
According to Eraso, ethnographic film, historically, was a product of colonialism that created audiovisual narratives of exotic ‘others’. Since the 1970s, though, this practice began to evolve ‘with a wave of self-criticism and theoretical reflection about the role and impact of ethnographic filmmaking. The result, today, is a great deal of reflexivity and inter-subjectivity’ (Eraso, 2006, n.p.).

According to Eraso ethnographic filmmaking also experienced a ‘crises of representation’ in regards to the fields of ethnography and anthropology. It was criticised for displaying the naive assumption that the ethnographer was invisible.

Today, the ethnographer ‘must accept that the filmmaker(s) will lose authority in the film and that authority will tend to get decentralised and shared among subjects’ (Eraso, 2006, n.p.). In other words, there is a greater emphasis on negotiation between authorities as well as on a shared ownership of the process of filming and telling of stories. The negotiation of authority between my subjects and I can be seen in the documentary. For example, when I discuss with the participants whether they want the films to go public.

Eraso also believes that ‘written and spoken forms of qualitative research still overshadow the visual realm’ (2006, n.p.). Certainly in my project, though, the film component of this Doctorate of Creative Arts project was used to unearth data, stories, perspectives, and was pivotal in informing the direction of the research.

The different languages and creative processes of both Ethnographic and participatory filmmaking helped to construct the dialogue between Roxinho and his students. While the ethnographic component emphasised objectivity and realism, the performative component challenged or devalued these objective conceptions of reality with subjective performances. Ethnographic films and performative films offer different perspectives and allow for different interpretations of reality. As Nichols says, ‘One is poetic and evocative, the other is evidential and referential in emphasis’ (Nichols, 1994, p. 97).
2.6 Film as text

The process of analysing and assigning meaning to observational and participatory footage was two-fold. First, the construction of the long form documentary’s narrative, at a creative level, tried to give meaning to the data through using the editing process to link different pieces of audio and video content. Second, the direction of the academic scholarship evolved alongside the editing of the film; this was possible once the focus of the story and the topics depicted in the film were defined. The finished film foregrounds the complex creative and ethical decisions that were made in the construction of the ‘finished data’. As MacDougall points out,

> The film-as-text stimulates thought through a juxtaposition of elements, each of which bears a relationship to the intellectual framework of the inquiry. These elements may reveal information on how materials were gathered, provide alternative perspectives by the film’s subjects, or present the evidence out of which the film proceeds (MacDougall, 1978, p. 423).

In other words editing of the film component was as critical in assigning meaning to field data as the writing of the exegesis itself. The next section is an example of an academic reflection of the themes that emerged from the production of the creative component of this DCA.
SECTION 3: FRAMING NARRATIVES OF AFRICAN DIASPORA AND AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM

The documentary component of this DCA, both in its production process and screen content, is situated in the intersection of a complex set of narratives of diaspora and multiculturalism that compete in terms of the perspectives and values in which they are constructed and developed. Narrative is a key focus that works itself through the 'storying' of both the production processes of the film (including the filming) and the stories of the participants. This section proposes that despite the fact that these narratives have competing projections, they are similarly constructed on what Brubaker calls 'boundary-maintenance' and 'homeland orientation'. These are two of the three core elements that constitute his concept of diaspora (2005, pp. 5-8).

In this section the concepts of diaspora and multiculturalism are developed in a narrative form, as concepts that evolve through time. For example, the narrative of African diaspora starts in reference to the experience of the Jewish diaspora of forced migration and evolved to incorporate ‘the voluntary emigration of free, skilled Africans in search of political asylum or economic opportunity’ (Akyeampong, 2000, p. 183). Similarly, this section proposes that the concept of multiculturalism can be understood in a narrative form. I mainly draw from Ang et al. (2008) and Danforth (2001) to suggest a continuity of narrative from one cultural construct to another (e.g., Ethnic Nationalism to Multiculturalism etc.) and to relate these constructs to a history of government acts and policies (e.g., Immigration Restriction Act, the White Australian policy, and The Multicultural Policy). This section is not intended to be a complete study of diaspora and multicultural narratives. Instead it only presents contextual debates around these notions in order to theoretically frame the field experiences.

3.1 Narrative and Identity

Narrative, for Barbara Herrnstein Smith, can be conceived ‘most minimally and most generally as verbal acts consisting of someone telling someone else that something happened [...] [and this is not far from] saying that something is (or
was) the case’ (Smith, 1980, p. 232). For Hayden White, ‘a narrative is a story with a beginning, middle, and end. [...] A form of representation that gives significance, coherence, and continuity to a series of events. It is through narratives, in other words, that human beings endow reality with meaning’ (White cited on Danforth, 2001, p. 364). For Gilroy music, performance and ritual are essential narrative tools for people of the African diaspora because they help them to share their stories and construct their diasporic identities (1993, p. 200).

In my documentary, *Who We Really Are*, participants performed their different narratives through Capoeira Angola and Hip Hop in alignment with Gilroy’s notion of narrative mentioned above. The Capoeira Angola narratives presented in the film originated within the communities of disenfranchised slaves and slave descendants in Brazil from the early sixteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century (Lovejoy, 1989, pp. 368-386). The early Hip Hop narratives originated in 1970s America, and particularly in the poor Black and Latino communities of southern suburbs of the Bronx (Chang, 2005, pp. 7-19). For Gilroy, the locations where African diasporic performances take place are sites of democratic interaction that build community and identity. They are also, he claims, an inter-subjective resource that he calls ‘the ethics of antiphony’ (1993, p. 200). The Capoeira circle and the rap rehearsal sessions depicted in the film are examples of such spaces of democratic interaction, where each performance is constructed in a call-response style both physically (e.g., a kick that calls for a response movement in the Capoeira game) and musically (e.g., the chorus that responds to the lyrics of the key singer). In the film participants are seen to be performing diverse interpretations of what happened to them in the past, and although sometimes confronting we witness the construction of their identities as Africans and African descendants who are settling in Australia. Their narratives are as much about diaspora as they are about multicultural Australia, and in regards to the latter a dialogue and tension is evident between the students’ own perspectives as migrants and the perspectives of both ethnic and mainstream Australia.
Art-forms are often key sites for the construction of artists’ narratives and identities. On the other hand literature, film and laws of society can be considered as narrating a nation. In this exegesis I illuminate concepts of diaspora and multiculturalism in a narrative style. I show how they are evolving concepts that not only connect personal and national narratives but also interact in a way to shape each other (Appiah, 1996; Danforth, 2001; Freiwald, 2002). According to Stephen Appiah:

It is a familiar idea that modernity allows the ordinary citizen to make a national identity central to an individual identity [...] It is a slightly less familiar thought that the identity of this nation is tied up with the stories of individuals [...] whose stories, in helping to fashion a national narrative, serve also, indirectly, to shape the individual narratives of other patriotic-nationally identified-citizens (Appiah in Freiwald, 2002, p. 1).

It is in the context of complex interconnectedness between personal and national narratives that questions of power relations emerge.

3.2 Narrative and Power

For Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie, the ability to tell stories is related to power. She argues:

How [stories] are told, who tells them, when they’re told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power [...] Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person [...] show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become (Adichie, 2009).

For example, a story narrated from the subjective perspective of 15 year-old Jones, a Burundian refugee who, while participating in this project, raps his journey of escaping war and his feelings of being in Australia with his friends is one story of African diaspora and multiculturalism. Another story is the so-called objective television depiction of the arrival of a boat full of illegal refugees in Australian waters. This latter story is one that is entangled with the legal concerns of an immigration department. The former constructs, in a bottom-up style, through performance and helps to develop a subjecthood based on that individual’s own terms. The latter feeds the mediated construction of an Australian national narrative, it is from the perspective of a government and its policies. I argue that the perspectives from which diaspora and national
narratives are constructed are different because they draw on cultural values from different ‘homelands’ outside of Australia.

Despite my concern with narrative and power, my adherence to my academic ethics committee requirements and my desire to construct a bottom up narrative, my position is one of more power than the position of the young participants in this project. I was the recipient of a higher degree scholarship, I am the senior filmmaker, I am writing this exegesis and I am editing the long film and shaping the film’s narrative. This project depends, somehow on this power imbalance and on a top-down component embedded in the way both academia and film industry constructs their narratives. On the one hand, I am in a position of less power in relation to TV commissioning editors who are able to select and commission specific kinds of narrative. On the other hand, I am in a position of more power in relation to the participants of the film, whose stories I am shaping, even though they participate creatively in the process. Being aware of the power issues embedded in this project, including historically in the narratives of diaspora and multiculturalism, encouraged me to operate reflexively throughout the film production and the writing of this exegesis.

In order to develop this argument, in the next section of this chapter I provide an overview of how the narratives of African diaspora and Australian multiculturalism emerged and developed in both general and theoretical terms. Then further on in this section I examine multiculturalism by focusing on the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS) as the most explicit communications institution in Australia that continues to claim this territory.

3.3 Framing the African Diaspora Narratives

The term ‘diaspora’ refers to a conceptual homeland and has its origins in the dispersion of Jews outside Israel. When George Shepperson introduced the concept of the African diaspora in 1966 he did so with the Jewish experience of forced migration in mind (Brubaker, 2005, p. 2). But as Akyeampong highlights:
the nature and composition of the African diaspora have undergone significant changes over time: from the forced migration of African captives of the Old and New Worlds to the voluntary emigration of free, skilled Africans in search of political asylum or economic opportunity (2000, p. 183).

Stuart Hall’s broader interpretation of the composition of diaspora extends on this argument. Hall argues that diaspora is about displacement and identifies his own life experience as diasporic. He states, ‘being displaced, or out of place, is a characteristic experience of mine. It’s been all throughout my life’ (Hall & Back, 2009, p. 21). Hall does not use the term ‘displacement’ only to refer to forced migration but applies it to anyone’s feelings of being ‘out of place’. Hall says the following about his experience of presenting a paper on identity at the London Institute of Contemporary Arts, in 1988:

> I looked out into the hall and I saw a lot of white faces and one after another everybody stood up and said, “Well, actually I’m not really English because my parents come from Australia” or “from the North” or “from Scotland” or “from Wales” or “from the working class”; and I suddenly got this feeling that everybody was becoming diasporic (Hall & Back, 2009, p. 23).

In a similar vein Brubaker argues that since the late 1980s the term ‘diaspora’ has come to be interpreted differently as it has proliferated across different fields and disciplines and accommodated different agendas. He suggests that this dispersion of the meaning of the term could be called a “‘diaspora” diaspora’ (2005, p. 1).

### 3.3.1 Homeland Orientation and Boundary-Maintenance

Despite this spreading of the meaning and constitution of the term diaspora, Brubaker identifies three core elements that remain widely understood as constitutive of diaspora. The first is forced or traumatic dispersion in space. The second is the orientation to a real or imagined ‘homeland’ as an authoritative source of value, identity and loyalty – a place one would, or should return to. And the third element is the preservation of a distinctive identity, a ‘boundary-maintenance’ which can signify resistance to assimilation into the host nation (Brubaker, 2005, pp. 5-8). In this exegesis I focus my attention on the second and third elements – ‘homeland-orientation’ and ‘boundary-maintenance’. I do this because I believe they are the key constitutive elements of Australian multicultural narratives.
Not all scholars agree with these concepts. For example, James Clifford challenges the model of 'homeland-orientation' arguing that:

\[d\]ecentered, lateral connections may be as important as those formed around a teleology of origin/return. And a shared, ongoing history of displacement, suffering, adaptation, or resistance may be as important as the projection of a specific origin (Clifford, 1994, p.306).

In terms of the subject matter of my film, Mestre Roxinho’s journey to Australia is an example of the importance of both 'homeland-orientation' as well as decentred lateral connections. Despite his strong ancestral identification with the African continent and with African-Brazilian culture, both his sources of value, he chose to teach his Capoeira Angola culture in Australia, not in Africa. The group of refugees from various African countries who participate in this project and depicted in the film is only one of many ethnic groups he teaches. He deploys the experience of oppression and resistance inherent in Capoeira history\(^6\) to connect with refugees from around the world as well as with Indigenous groups living in Australia and neighbouring countries such as New Zealand. Roxinho maintains a lateral connection to his ancestral homeland through his teaching of Capoeira Angola and his engagement with diverse cultures and organisations that help to fund his project. He does so, though, with a traditional approach that attempts to maintain the cultural essence and purity of his art form and its African and Brazilian roots.

Ghanaian historian Emmanuel Akyeampong is another scholar who focuses on the African diaspora and he claims it is evolving ‘from a diaspora with little contact with the point of origin to one that maintains active contact with the mother continent’ (2000, p. 183). Indeed the African influences of Hip Hop have travelled back, via radio broadcasts and the transportation of vinyl records, to African countries such as Tanzania, to influence cultural practices\(^7\). In Tanzania the local version of Hip Hop is called Bongo Flava and it is accompanied by a new style of politics. In Section Four I explore in more detail how Hip Hop has been transformed in Tanzania.

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\(^6\) I will further explore the historical background of Capoeira Angola in Section Four.

\(^7\) In the context of my film, Tanzania was where Congolese refugee Rama was introduced to Hip Hop. Rama and Roxinho go on to meet at a highly ‘multicultural’ high school in Australia where they negotiate the African origins of their art forms and of their identities.
On a theoretical level the concept of ‘boundary-maintenance’ is deeply connected to discussions of homeland orientation because it can refer to diasporic peoples’ process of identification towards their ‘homeland’ and in distinction to their hostland (Brubaker, 2005, p. 5). Although Brubaker proposes this model he also acknowledges that scholars, such as Hall, adopt transnational ‘boundary-erosion’ terminology such as ‘hybridity’, ‘fluidity’, ‘creolisation’ and ‘syncretism’, terms which fiercely resist ‘boundary-maintenance’ approaches to diaspora (Cooper, 2000, p. 183).

Concepts of hybrid and fluid identification (boundary erosion) and the maintenance of distinct identities (boundary-maintenance), paradoxically, can both be applied to the way diasporic people identify with their homelands as well as with their host nations. Clifford and Gilroy offer different approaches to this paradox.

On the one hand, Clifford advocates for a hybrid approach to diaspora discourse, an approach that builds lateral connections as it spreads (Brubaker, 2005, p. 6). He uses the example of the Jewish diaspora which he says: ‘can be taken as [a] non-normative starting point [...] for a discourse that is travelling or hybridizing in new global conditions’ (Clifford, 1994, pp. 305-306). By this he means that diaspora can begin with fixed ideas about specific cultural forms but then give way to new ideas about the character of different cultural forms as they are developed in the new ‘setting’.

An example of this kind of hybridisation was evident when a more contemporary style of Capoeira emerged in Brazil in the 1930s called Capoeira Regional. This type of Capoeira was influenced by Martial Arts imported from Asia and this diversification gave this style of Capoeira more of a global appeal. It involved a hybridisation with non-African and non-African diasporic cultures, and moved this type of Capoeira away from its original links to African ritual, more towards combat and sport. The popularity of Capoeira Regional, however, had a negative impact on the ‘traditional’ Capoeira Angola style which nearly went extinct in the 1950s (more is written about Capoeira in Section Four).
On the other hand, Gilroy focuses on the hybrid identification processes that exist between African diaspora and African cultures. For example the blend between Reggae music and Rastafarian culture in Zimbabwe, or the impact on ‘authentic’ African culture, of music played by slaves who returned from Brazil to Nigeria in the 1840s (Gilroy, 1993, p. 199). Through these lenses Gilroy proposes that diaspora could be spoken of as

the apparently magical process of connectedness that arise[s] as much from the transformation of Africa by diaspora cultures as from the affiliation of diaspora cultures to Africa and the traces of Africa that those diaspora cultures enclose (Gilroy, 1993, p. 199).

![Figure 1: Gilroy’s ‘The Black Atlantic’, www.blackatlantic.com](www.blackatlantic.com)

This concept of associating, blending and strengthening the roots of African cultural identity is represented by the pictorial representation of Gilroy’s concept of the Black Atlantic (1993) (see figure 1 above) which highlights the fluidity of the Atlantic Ocean as a container for the stories of the African diaspora.

In such a model the ocean is a space defined by flows and stories rather than by territorial nations. The ocean unites and validates the diasporic stories in a kind of ‘negative continent’ of dark stories, and this ‘fundamentally disrupts contemporary forms of cultural nationalism’ (Erickson, 1997, p. 506).

While Clifford emphasises that diaspora in the new global condition is defined by ‘boundary-erosion’, he acknowledges Gilroy’s preoccupation with
maintaining a diasporic identity boundary in the host country. For Clifford, Gilroy’s kind of

diaspora discourse articulates, or bends together, both roots and routes to construct what Gilroy describes as alternate public spheres (1987), forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identifications outside the national time/space in order to live inside, with a difference (Clifford, 1994. p. 308).

Living inside the host nation while maintaining one's identification with a national space outside of it could signify a resistance to assimilating into the host nation’s dominant culture. In regards to diaspora discourse, therefore, Gilroy simultaneously highlights the erosion of identity boundaries in relation to a migrant's homelands at the same time suggesting that a migrant may maintain a distinct diasporic identity in relation to the host nation's identity. Gilroy thus borrows Du Bois’ concept of ‘Double Consciousness’ to refer to this double identification experienced by Black Atlantic people who struggle to be both European and Black at the same time. Du Bois’ popular depiction of ‘Double Consciousness’ is that it is:

a peculiar sensation [...] this sense of always looking at one-self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity (Bois, 1994).

3.3.2 The African Diaspora of the Southern Hemisphere

Gilroy’s understanding of the African diaspora in Black Atlantic (1993) is limited by his study of the North Atlantic slave trade routes, and North American and European literature. His conceptualisations, therefore, leaves the southern hemisphere largely unexplored.
**Figure 2: the African diasporic routes of *Who We Really Are***

*Who We Really Are* adds to Gilroy's study of African diaspora by tracing different routes (see figure 2) and stories that are of great significance. The study of these diasporic routes informs the human encounters framed by the documentary component of this DCA. One set of routes originates from West Africa to the Portuguese colony in Brazil, the largest importer of slaves and the place where the art form of Capoeira Angola originated. The next leg in this route takes Mestre Roxinho and the Capoeira Angola culture to Australia. The other set of routes, the 'new routes' of the African diaspora, leaves the African continent from the east side, crosses the Southern and Indian Oceans and brings together the diverse range of African refugees that participate in this project. These routes can be seen as closing a symbolic circle that highlights the important stories of the African diasporas of the southern hemisphere. Two other symbolic circles are also played out in this project; one in the Capoeira Angola practice led by Mestre Roxinho (see figure 3), and the other in the film workshop circle led by myself (see figures 4). It is within these symbolic circles that participants' diasporic stories are reflected upon and where participants work out what it means to be black in Australia.

![Figure 3: Capoeira Angola circle](image1)

![Figure 4: Film workshop circle](image2)

The tensions between the maintenance and erosion of identity boundaries are articulated in my project through performance and the clear evidence of conflicting relationships. For Mestre Roxinho while Brazil is his birth country the African continent is his ancestral 'homeland'. The latter is, a land he has never lived in but it functions as an authoritative source of value, identity and
loyalty. Roxinho's art form clearly displays African influences and these influences shape his black identity in both Brazil and Australia. He is explicit in stating that he does not wish to adopt a mainstream Australian identity, but he wishes to share the Australian land, as an agent of African-Brazilian culture, with many other cultural agents. In the film Roxinho said to camera: ‘It’s not bad to be Australian, I just want to be who I am, and they need to respect who I am [...] and I think the kids have to be the same, they have to be Africans, but they can live here and share the country’.

Roxinho’s young students who have recently arrived in Australia as refugees from various African countries are more open to eroding their identity boundaries in their settlement process. During their identity-forming years many have lived in refugee camps across national borders and their concept of homeland can be unclear, dispersed across a number of different locations. In Australia the young participants are seen to be engaging in a number of different African diasporic art-forms of North and South Americas, such as Hip Hop and Capoeira Angola, as well as with traditional practices from their ‘home’ continent, such as choir singing, dancing and drumming. They are not as concerned as Roxinho in maintaining an ‘African authenticity’ because they also identify with global fashion and contemporary religious practices, which are not ‘authentically African’.

Despite Roxinho’s resistance to incorporating mainstream Australian identity into the documentary Who We Really Are, he highlights the African connection and solidarity between the African influences of his art form and the origin of his young African refugee participants. Roxinho attempts to associate and strengthen what he sees as their common and ‘authentic’ cultural roots, although he is challenged when he encounters the North American gangster Hip Hop influence of his students, which he considers ‘not’ to be authentically African.

Together Roxinho and his students perform old and new narratives of African diaspora and negotiate what it means to be black in multicultural Australia. As a story of diaspora, however, all the participants exhibit traces of both their
routes (their journeys) and their roots (their origins) and they negotiate these through the cultural forms and contexts provided to them.

3.4 Framing Australian Multicultural Narratives

Loring Danforth (2001) frames the ambivalences of national narration beyond the literary readings of transnational narratives, and into the history of Australian soccer. He divides Australian national narratives into three main kinds: the narrative of ethnic nationalism, the narratives of multiculturalism, and the more recent narrative of cultural hybridity (2001, p. 367).

I draw on Danforth’s concepts of national narration to examine the multicultural narratives depicted on the ‘public’ service broadcaster, SBS, and the relationships of these narratives to government policy. I am particularly inspired by Ang et al.’s The SBS Story which argues that ‘three versions of multiculturalism have circulated within SBS over time: ethno-multiculturalism, cosmopolitan multiculturalism and popular multiculturalism’ (Ang et al., 2008, p. 19).

Both Ang et al. and Danforth suggest a continuity of narrative from one cultural construct to another (e.g., Ethnic Nationalism to Multiculturalism etc.). Drawing from their insights I seek to present some of the paradoxes of the multicultural narratives and their links with a history of government acts and policies (e.g., Immigration Restriction Act, the White Australian policy, and The Multicultural Policy).

Like Ang et al. and Danforth I also present these cultural constructs in a chronological order (e.g., ethnic nationalism, multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism) because each dominated in a different period. As Danforth (2001), Hage (1998, 2006) and Ang et al. (2008) argue, however, all three of these cultural constructs co-exist and compete today.
3.4.1 Before multiculturalism – the ethnic nationalism

The core of the ethnonationalist idea is that nations are defined by a shared heritage, which usually includes a common language, a common faith and a common ethnic ancestry (Muller, 2008; Passos, 2008, p. 10).

In the Australian ethnic nationalist narrative ‘Australians were, and still are, a white, English-speaking people whose ancestors immigrated to Australia from the British Isles’ (Danforth, 2001, p. 367; Muller, 2008, p. 10). People of English descent are constructed as ethnically unmarked (not seen as ethnic) and are referred to as Anglo-Celtic, mainstream Australians or ‘Aussies’. They are perceived as the key components of the national community. Young participant Gemimah, from Malawi, refers to Australians and ‘Aussies’, who according to her, ‘have blue eyes and blond hair [...] [and] like to have a barbeque’. Their identity is constructed in opposition to the ethnically marked, immigrant other, or Australians of non-English-speaking background who arrived in Australia in different periods throughout Australian history (Danforth, 2001, p. 367). For example, Chinese migrants who arrived in large numbers during the gold rushes in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the extensive European migration, from countries such as Italy and Greece, shortly after the conclusion of World War II. Although these migrants had considered Australia a promised land (Gunew, 1990, p. 103-04), once in Australia they found themselves outside of the mainstream national story and identity, or they found themselves on temporary visa arrangements, which required them to return to their country of origin after a few years.

This notion that Australians were members of the ‘British race’ was institutionalised in the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, ‘which formed the basis of the White Australia Policy, which guided Australia’s immigration program’ (Danforth, 2001, p. 367-368). Danforth argues that:

from the end of World War II until the early 1970s, the principles of assimilation and integration guided Australian immigration. According to these principles, some people of different cultural backgrounds - Europeans, but not Asians were held to be capable of adopting the Australian way of life and becoming members of the Australian national community (2001, p. 367).

This period was marked by a transformation in the demographics of Australia, with a growing number of ethnic communities, and the development of global
alliances of capitalism. These changes threatened the Australian ethnic nationalist identity and provoked debate about what it meant to be Australian (Danforth, 2001, p. 367). Mark Lopez identifies this period as a transition from ethnic nationalism to what he calls ‘proto-multiculturalism’ (2000, p. 2).

3.4.2 Emergence of multiculturalism

Different ideologies of multiculturalism started to emerge between 1966 and 1968, when criticisms were directed at ethnic nationalism and its assimilation policies (Lopez, 2000, pp. 2-7). During this period, according to Ghassan Hage, there were three key conditions in Australian society that bolstered multiculturalism. The first was what he calls a ‘relaxed form of nationalism’, the second a secure sense of Australian identity, and the third the presence of ethnic others who were only mildly different from the mainstream Anglo-Celtic society (Hage, 2006).

As a caveat to Hage’s claims, it is important to note that in the ‘formation of multiculturalism, ethnic minorities had a minor role; despite the fact that some individuals of ethnic background and some ethnic organizations were on occasion involved’ (Martin in Lopez, 2000, p. 9). This historical precedent of leaders being concerned about cultural diversity but seeking little or no input from ethnic groups in decision-making reflects the paradoxical environment in which the policy of multiculturalism emerged.

By 1975 the policy had passed through its early formative phase and reached various government departments. In the following years, as the multicultural policy evolved, it ‘shifted from providing one of several bases for public policy in ethnic affairs to providing the sole basis for public policy in that area’ (Lopez, 2000, p. 2).

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8 Lopez is referring to a ‘neutral’ kind of ideology that is a less comprehensive system of thought or belief, which he outlines and discusses, rather than a ‘critical’ kind of ideology that is conceptualised in terms of processes of maintaining a system of domination.

9 For a more detailed account of the four multicultural ideologies that informed the official multicultural policy of 1975 see Lopez 2000.
The diversity of Indigenous cultures that existed for thousands of years prior to European colonisation was not and is still not the central focus of multicultural policy. Multicultural policy is predominantly concerned with the cultural diversity that arrived (and arrives) in Australia from overseas, through migration and the diasporic movement of people. According to Hage (2006), multiculturalism emerged through government policy to manage this kind of cultural diversity, which assimilation had failed to do.

### 3.4.3 Multiculturalism and SBS

The ideology of multiculturalism features on SBS’s charter and proves the station’s link to government policy. SBS is one of three national broadcasters which are financially supported by the government and which form the national television mediascape (Appadurai, 1990). They are the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), representing mainstream public service broadcasting (Ang et al., 2008, p. 3), the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS), the multicultural public service broadcaster, and National Indigenous Television (NITV), being the aboriginal community broadcaster.

The names of these broadcasters, the different budget sizes and dates of each station’s emergence are symbolic of their importance in the national context. The ‘Australian’ ABC emerged in 1929 and in the 2010—2011 financial year had a budget of $1.18 billion. The ‘Special’ SBS television started in 1979, and in the 2010-11 financial year had a budget of $216.504 million (Special Broadcasting Services, 2010, p. 46). The ‘Indigenous’ NITV was only launched in 2007 with an annual budget of $15.2 million. In 2012, SBS and NITV were in the process of amalgamating, with SBS being assigned a new free-to-air indigenous channel. This process of amalgamation is still happening in 201410.

SBS is a public service broadcaster that attempts to feature multicultural stories as part of its core business. SBS relies both on culturally diverse personal stories and on the guiding principles of its multicultural charter in this process of

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10 See [http://www.tvtonight.com.au/2012/05/new-indigenous-tv-channel-for-sbs.html](http://www.tvtonight.com.au/2012/05/new-indigenous-tv-channel-for-sbs.html) - as part of the deal to manage NITV, SBS received a budget boost of 158 million, 15 million of which is dedicated to NITV.
mediation. The SBS charter is intimately related to a history of policies, acts and reports. The way SBS has incorporated these principles suggests a multicultural narrative that evolved from a need to incorporate the cultural diversity of migrants into mainstream culture to a presumption that they have already been incorporated (Ang et al., 2008). This narrative is ethically questionable because it was constructed without sufficient input from ethnic communities as narrators despite being constructed to handle ethnic communities.

Furthermore, the integration of cultural diversity into mainstream culture in light of the arrival of new migrants suggests that the presumption of an unproblematised multiculturalism is a premature conclusion to SBS's multicultural narrative. Australia is more culturally diverse now than it was in when the concept of multiculturalism first emerged, and according to Ang et al., '[SBS’s] relevance as a public broadcaster with a mandate to "reflect Australia's multicultural society", as its charter specifies, is even more significant today than when it was established more than 30 years ago’ (Ang et al., 2008, p. 1).

In the following section I will examine SBS's problematic mediation of multiculturalism when based on a multicultural charter that can be interpreted in a number of different ways.

### 3.4.4 SBS and the mediation of multiculturalism

SBS is the greatest and most expensive ‘agent’ of multicultural policy. According to SBS's multicultural charter:

> The principal function of SBS is to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society (Government, 2012).

Despite its charter, SBS's reflection of Australia's multicultural society is heavily influenced by British broadcasting models. For example, British formats such *Who Do You Think You Are* (Marciniak et al., 2007), and reality shows such as *Go Back to Where You Came From* (O'Mahoney, 2011). Such programs, paradoxically, base the commissioning of multicultural stories on the values and perspectives of the dominant culture. Newly appointed SBS Managing Director,
Michael Ebeid, stated at the 2011 SPAA Conference, ‘Go Back needs to be the new benchmark for SBS content’ (Ebeid, 2011). He enunciated a policy that tried to project a vision of what multicultural content will be in future SBS programs. Ebeid’s view suggests that the way multiculturalism is constructed at SBS is complex. Ebeid is the first SBS Managing Director from a Non-English-Speaking-Background but paradoxically he defends the British model of multiculturalism as the best way of mediating multicultural stories.

SBS emerged not long after the multicultural policy and Henderson’s Poverty in Australia report (1975). Henderson’s report identified migrant communities as one of the most disadvantaged communities in Australia, and recommended that ‘[e]xtra efforts, through television, radio, newspapers and informal networks, must be made to try to get information through to migrant groups’ (Henderson, 1975, p. 7). SBS commenced its operations as an experimental ethnic radio narrowcasting foreign language programs under two stations, 2EA in Sydney and 3EA in Melbourne. Getting information to migrants was an important aim in the early stages of SBS. For Ang et al. this kind of multiculturalism, the ethno-multiculturalism, ‘focuses on catering to the special needs and interests of migrants and ethnic communities, who have historically been key constituencies of multicultural policy’ (Ang et al., 2008, p. 19). As May highlights, though, the 1978 Galbally report ‘depicted multiculturalism as a program of education and services, aimed at promoting a “multicultural society (which) will benefit all Australians”’ (2003, p. 33). These conflicting aims of addressing the special needs of ethnic communities while simultaneously benefitting all Australians have been part of the fabric of both multicultural policy and the SBS Act from their conception.

3.4.5 SBS - ethnic and cosmopolitan multiculturalism coexisting

Ang et al. suggest that since the establishment of SBS Television in the 1980s, a new form of multiculturalism, cosmopolitan multiculturalism, has prevailed. They define cosmopolitan multiculturalism as having ‘a more universal emphasis, encouraging all Australians, whatever their background, to embrace global cultural diversity’ (Ang et al., 2008, p. 19). Throughout the 1980s and
early 1990s attempts were made to engage with the special needs and interests of migrants and ethnic communities. For instance, in the 1980s SBS television’s first Chief Executive, Anglo-Australian Bruce Gyngell, performed a pivotal and long lasting role in ‘turning the idea of “multicultural television” into reality’ (Ang et al., 2008, p. 35). He insisted on contracting people of non-English Speaking backgrounds to present programs and news, and this had a long lasting impact on the station’s branding as a promoter of multiculturalism.

Other examples of SBS’s engagement with ethnic needs included the production of news and current affairs programs such as SCOOP, Vox Populi, Forum and WorldWatch. Some of these programs emerged in response to the third report of the Ethnic Television Review Panel\(^\text{11}\), which advocated for free and open debates about controversial issues associated with cultural diversity. The controversy surrounding these programs, however, was extensive and difficult for SBS to manage. Migrants used these programs as a space to complain about their employers, inadequate settlement conditions, or to protest against the approaches taken by SBS programs on various ethnic issues. These programs did not have a long life (Ang et al., 2008, pp. 53-54).

In Pluralising Identity, Mainstreaming Identities: SBS as a Technology of Citizenship, Nolan and Radywyl argue that:

> as the most visible and most expensive commitment to the public policy of multiculturalism, SBS originated as part of a broader social policy framework rather than from a media portfolio. Because of this, SBS’s history is indexed, though not identical, to state policies of multiculturalism (Nolan & Radywyl, 2004, p. 41).

The relationship between government multicultural policy and SBS as an evolving broadcaster that aspires to reflect Australian multicultural society is not free of ethical contradictions (See Ang et al., 2008; Nolan & Radywyl, 2004; Lopez, 2000; May, 2003). Views of SBS range from it being an institution that counters top-down government agency to seeing it as an extension of government management, particularly because most of its managers have been from Anglo backgrounds (Nolan & Radywyl, 2004, p. 46). According to Ang et

\(^{11}\) This organisation was established to carry out public consultation in the lead-up to SBS Television’s launch in 1980.
al., SBS Television has always been run by media professionals with no direct connection to the ethnic community they represent. They say:

multicultural activists questioned SBS Television's commitment to multiculturalism because it was dominated, as academic and former SBS board member Andrew Jakubowicz observed, by "middle-class Anglo-Saxon males from the traditional broadcasting industries" (2008, p. 35).

In the 1990s a clear transition occurred from a focus on the special needs and interests of migrants in ethno-multiculturalism to an embrace of the global cultural diversity of cosmopolitan multiculturalism. The enactment of this transition was supported by a number of agreements and acts. In 1991 SBS became an incorporated entity and started airing five minutes of commercial advertisements between programs. Also in 1991 the ‘Special Broadcasting Service Act’ (which included the SBS Charter) was passed. And in 1994 SBS Independent was created which meant extra funding for independent local film production for television.

Vertovec & Cohen believe that multiculturalism (together with globalisation, nationalism and feminism) has led to a revival of the term 'cosmopolitanism' (Vertovec & Cohen, 2002). For Kendall, Woodward and Skrbis cosmopolitanism is ‘a cultural location that affords (privileged) individuals the capacity to see, and to “consume” otherness, in ways which reproduce patterns of cultural power’ (Kendall, Woodward, & Skrbis, 2009).

At a 2006 SBS Forum on multiculturalism, Hage said in relation to this cosmopolitanism that the key conditions in Australian society that led to the emergence of a strong sense of multiculturalism are slowly eroding. He argues that the ‘relaxed form of nationalism’ is giving way to an ‘anxious’ form of nationalism. The secure sense of Australian identity is becoming less secure and the mildly different ethnic others are becoming increasingly more different to Anglo-Celtic Australians: potentially very religious, and increasingly dissatisfied with their share of control of the nation. Multiculturalism, like ‘assimilation’, is failing in its attempt to unify the nation and control cultural diversity. The term ‘multiculturalism’ is taking on a cosmopolitan flavour and is being associated with gay bars and fusion cuisines instead of integrating cultural diversity.
Multicultural Policy is positioning otherness in further opposition to the Anglo-Australians (Hage, 2006).

This polarisation between Anglo-Australians and ethnic otherness to a degree reflects an element of ‘boundary-maintenance’ in terms of the construction of Australian identity, and an anxiety about determining a ‘homeland’ as an authoritative source of value. The quote below from Ang et al.’s *The SBS Story* is illustrative of how Anglo-Australian Managing Director Shaun Brown witnessed this split when he arrived at SBS in 2003. As Ang et al describe, Brown discovered

an organisation held captive by the “Anglo arthouse” camp who, in [Brown’s] observation, hold a much more exclusionary view of SBS than the “ethnic” camp: There were some who cautioned me, "Don't let the ethnic voice become too dominant otherwise we won't be able to continue doing the things that we like doing - Nazi documentaries, foreign movies, things like this". I've got no problems with any of those programs, but they're not exactly defining of our charter. And there was also, I'd say, a degree of arrogance to that: "Oh well, if they don't like it, they don't watch it. It's our quality judgment, and if the audience doesn't engage, well so be it!" (Brown in Ang et al., 2008, p. 51).

This account represents a failure in terms of the multicultural policy and the SBS charter in integrating non-Anglo Australians in decision-making. It shows Anglo Australians as national agents and the English culture as the source of value guiding the commissioning of multicultural content. It illustrates Kendall et al.’s concept that cosmopolitanism encourages the reproduction of patterns of cultural power.

### 3.4.6 Popular multiculturalism

Although Brown stated that the 'Anglo arthouse' camp held a more exclusionary view of SBS than the 'ethnic' camp, he pushed programming according to ratings and not according to a need to reconcile with the 'ethnic' camp. In a speech in 2006 Brown attempted to explain the difficult challenge of addressing cultural diversity while engaging with all Australians:

we deliver the primary objective of the Charter: “to inform, educate and entertain all Australians, and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society”. You may have noticed I emphasised two words from that primary Charter obligation – “all” and “reflect”. I did that deliberately because those words directly challenge some of the media and public misconceptions of our role. It requires us to be defined by our content
and services and that content is required to reflect Australia’s multicultural society (in Ang et al., 2008, p. 126).

Some of the most watched factual TV programs that emerged during Brown’s management illustrate the dominance of a popular approach to multiculturalism. The prime time air space was allocated to imported and locally produced programs such as Top Gear (UK and Australian version), MythBusters (North American and Australian versions), the North American South Park, and the English Premier League Football, which are hard to describe as being in line with the SBS charter. Although Australian versions of British programs such as Who Do You Think You Are can be argued as being multicultural, they portray a reference to England as the source of value and authority. This is a trend that permeates the commissioning process. This popular approach has moved SBS closer to commercial broadcasters while simultaneously moving it away from early ethno-multicultural concerns of providing migrants with better access to information and education. Ang et al. argue that in the popular kind of multiculturalism:

> the emphasis is no longer on actively promoting multicultural diversity, but on treating it as an increasingly ordinary, taken-for-granted feature of everyday life. It is multiculturalism as part and parcel of mainstream culture (Ang et al., 2008, p. 20).

The original SBS charter’s aim of addressing ethnic needs whilst benefitting all Australians no longer applies in this popular approach, which suggests that immigrants have integrated into mainstream culture. The contradiction is that the narrative of multiculturalism is reaching mainstream culture at the same time that the national population is becoming even more culturally diverse than it was during the emergence of multiculturalism over thirty years ago. The pendulum may have swung too far towards the needs of the ‘national audience’.

Should SBS, as a multicultural ‘public’ service broadcaster, consider itself to be appealing only to multicultural communities and audiences? Or should it be opening itself up to larger national audiences as well? Whose perspectives should it represent? These are important questions but certainly the popular TV programming under Brown’s management has challenged the concept of SBS being a ‘public’ broadcaster. Ang et al. argue that:
ingrained in the philosophy of SBS is the fact that the public is characterised by plurality, not unity. In this, SBS embodies a notion of the public developed by political philosopher Iris Marion Young in her book *Inclusion and Democracy*: “The public consists of multiple histories and perspectives relatively unfamiliar to one another, connected yet distant and irreducible to one another”. The point for SBS is to *broadcast* the plurality of histories and perspectives, not to sweep them into some singular, common denominator (Ang et al., 2008, p. 3).

On the one hand an understanding of migrants’ social position has evolved from Henderson’s suggestion that ‘migrant communities [...] [are] one of the most disadvantaged communities in Australia’ (1975, p. 7) to the contemporary interpretation of multiculturalism that migrants have integrated into mainstream Australia. As a narrative ‘with a beginning, middle, and end’ (Hayden in Danforth, 2001, p. 364), the narrative of multiculturalism may have reached its conclusion with the concept of integration.

Paradoxically, on the other hand, as said earlier, cultural diversity has grown much greater and more complex than it was during the emergence of multiculturalism in the mid-1970s. People arriving in Australia now include African and Middle Eastern refugees who arrived in the last decade with a history of trauma, no education, limited English language skills, contrasting religious views, but also with workforce opportunities. According to SBS’s popular construction of multiculturalism, multicultural diversity is increasingly treated as ordinary and part of mainstream Australia. But is this a romanticised view? Have migrants really integrated? Ang et al. argue that this is:

a rationale that neglects the many groups that are still either marginalised or simply not part of the mainstream, in particular emerging migrant communities such as refugees from the Horn of Africa. [...] The 2005 Cronulla riots reminded us that “living in harmony”, a key objective of multicultural government policy, is by no means a universal reality. Racism, prejudice and Anglo-centric hegemony are not things of the past. [...] If anything, the task of reflecting the complex reality of multicultural Australia [...] is more urgent in this era (Ang et al., 2008, p. 163).

It is important, however, to highlight Hage’s perception that communal cultural diversity did not emerge from the multicultural policy. Ethnic communities were the problematic reality that emerged during assimilation and then multiculturalism emerged to try to deal with. He states, ‘you do not have multiculturalism without multicultural policy, but you do have cultural diversity without multiculturalism’ (Hage, 2006).
Even though the Australian government constructed the ideology of multiculturalism without the participation of ethnic people, and even though SBS seems to be ending the multicultural narrative by promoting the integration of ethnic migrants into mainstream culture, cultures in Australia are more diverse now than they were when multiculturalism was being formed. The construction of diaspora and multicultural narratives, as I have presented in this section, and as they appear in my documentary reveal both an orientation to different cultural values that originated outside Australia as well as different approaches to the process of cultural identification. The homelands of African diasporas that inform the construction of participants’ stories found in the documentary come from different locations (Angola, USA, Tanzania, Brazil). Despite the different origins the multicultural narratives can be constructed in similar terms – the ‘boundary-maintenance’ approach (by keeping ethnic identity distinct to mainstream identity) or the ‘boundary-erosion’ approach (by merging mainstream and ethnic identities). Different homeland orientations and different processes of constructing identity inform the competing views of the narratives presented.

If the stories of the ethnic others have largely been constructed and mediated by ‘non-ethnic’ managers at SBS, that is top-down, the stories about being black or Latino constructed throughout the history of Capoeira Angola and Hiphop, through songs and oral teachings, were constructed in a bottom up style by the ‘ethnic communities’ themselves.

The next section is an exploration of the diasporic narratives contained in the history of Capoeira and Hip Hop and a study of how these narratives also involve both the maintenance and erosion of identity boundaries. Like the Australian multicultural narrative they are also entangled with a history of power inequality.
An examination of the history of Capoeira and Hip Hop helps to shed light into how the narratives of African diaspora, portrayed in the documentary *Who We Really Are*, were constructed. A focus on this history also helps to explain the nature of the conflict between African-Brazilian Mestre Roxinho and his young refugee students of diverse African cultures, particularly Congolese rapper Rama. These relationships highlight issues of performance, social position, cultural identity, race and power as they are situated in an Australian context and are key elements of the documentary film’s narrative.

It is not my intention to provide an in-depth historical account of Brazilian history or to replicate and analyse the various discourses on the origins of Capoeira. As Assunção argues, there are many different and competing ‘myths, fakes and facts’ about the origins of this art form (2005, p. 5). The history of Capoeira has been constructed through three channels: through written documents such as explorers’ journals, newspaper articles and police reports, orally through various lineages of Mestre-student relationships and songs and, only recently, through books and films. Assunção (2005), Rego (1968) and others have produced extensive historical accounts. In this section only a brief contextual overview is given of how this art form evolved and was shaped over the years by the Brazilian social context of slavery, colonisation and post colonisation. Further, the role of a Mestre as a moral authority and the holder of knowledge – a fact recognised in the Capoeira world but not necessarily in the wider social and academic worlds - is introduced.

This section distinguishes between the two main Capoeira styles: the Western-friendly Capoeira Regional style and the Capoeira Angola style, the latter being the style practised by Mestre Roxinho. In Capoeira Angola there is an emphasis on traditional learning methods and a connection to ritual, lineage, and racial and spiritual consciousness. These connections are made through its links to slavery, African ancestrality and African-Brazilian religion.
Following the examination of Capoeira is a brief review of how Hip Hop culture, like Capoeira, emerged as a grass-roots black resistance movement, but how, unlike Capoeira, it was diffused worldwide through mass media without the need of the presence of a Mestre. Depicting the complex history of Hip Hop, with all its artistic variations and elements - such as graffiti, rapping, and b-boy ing, amongst others - is not my intention here and is beyond the scope of this thesis. Filmmakers and writers, such as Ahearn (1982, 2002), Rose (1994), Murray Forman (2004), Chang (2005) and others, have produced valuable historical accounts of Hip Hop in books, articles, blogs and films. My intention in this section is to identify the Hip Hop style that influenced Rama when he lived in the town of Kigoma, in Tanzania. My other aim is to explain the different approaches Rama and Roxinho take in terms of explaining African identity and politics, as featured in the documentary component of this thesis.

4.1 Capoeira Angola

In times of captivity, when my owner beat me up, I used to pray to the Virgin Mary. Oh my God! How it hurt! I worked in the cotton, the sugar cane and the straw. I was whipped on the old tree trunk. When I arrived in Bahia, Capoeira freed me up. Till now I remember the orders of my owner: “work black man, or you will be beaten!” (Capoeira Angola song by Mário Macumba).

From the early sixteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century approximately 12 million Africans – mainly from west and central-west Africa – were sold by other Africans to European slave traders (Lovejoy, 1989, pp. 368-386). The Atlantic slave trade to the Portuguese colony in Brazil accounted for 38.5% of all Atlantic slave trades (Behrendt, 1999), making Brazil the largest importer.

In Brazil over time slaves, drawing from diverse African cultural and spiritual influences, created Capoeira as a ‘game’ that helped them build physical and spiritual strength to resist the oppression imposed by slavery. ‘Game’ in the West African Yoruba culture involved ‘engaging in a competition of wits verbally and/or physically, and playing it out tactically to disorient and be disoriented, to surprise and be surprised’ (Chvaicer, 2002, p. 537). Chvaicer notes that:
According to Zairian scholar Fu-Kiau, games in Congo were an important part of one’s life. It contained all the ingredients a person needed to acquire mental and physical fitness [...]. For the African slaves in the early 1800s, Capoeira was [...] a social expression that inherently incorporated all the basic elements of an African game: the circle, dance, music, audience, as well as the rituals and symbols that served capoeiras [participants] in the course of this activity; it contained all the supplementary Congolese ingredients of a game to train and prepare the individual for his daily life. As a process that mirrored life itself, it provided the player with the required experience to strengthen the body and the soul (2002, p. 537 my italics).

Brazilian ethnologist, Camara Cascudo, draws a parallel between Capoeira and African dances such as the N’Golo dance, which were used as rites of passage to adulthood (1967, p. 183). As stated previously the word “Capoeira” means “low grass” in the Indigenous language of Tupi-Guarani. ‘Capoeira’ was this grassy place where slave community gathered to have fun and to practice African rituals (Rego, 1968, pp. 19-35). According to Roxinho, a Capoeira Angola Mestre and a slave descendent, the name ‘Angola’ comes from the believed place of origin of the slaves (Roxinho, 2009).

Mestre Roxinho also explained that throughout centuries of Brazilian colonisation slaves and slave descendants heard the term ‘Mestre’ being used to refer to the captains of the ships that brought slaves to Brazil, the heads of building sites, respected musicians and teachers. With respect to Capoeira, Roxinho says that the word ‘Mestre’ emerged in popular culture when it was used to refer to a person who is respected for holding and passing on knowledge of the art form. Although students must submit to their Mestre’s authority and knowledge in order to learn the art form - in a similar way to disciples of martial arts respecting their ‘masters’ - Roxinho does not view the role of the Mestre as an oppressing one.

In Western ideology the word ‘master’ in the master/slave binary suggests a complex set of relations, and this has resulted in many important discussions and theories in disciplines such as philosophy. For instance, for Kohn:

[Hagel’s] use of the terminology of mastery and slavery (or lordship and bondage) draws attention to the issues of slavery, struggle, and liberation, issues that were not simply of historical interest in Hegel’s day. [...] Each self-consciousness tries to force the

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12 I use ‘capoeira’ or ‘capoeirista’ with lower case ‘c’ and italics throughout this exegesis to refer to the practitioner of the art form of Capoeira, which is written with capital ‘C’.
13 In Portuguese ‘low grass’ is ‘mato rasteiro’, which is the name Mestre Roxinho gave to his Capoeira Angola school – ECAMAR – Escola de Capoeira Angola Mato Rasteiro.
other to recognise his point of view while withholding reciprocal recognition from the other. This violent struggle ends when one participant chooses submission and life over death, thereby establishing the relationship between master and slave (2005, p. 497).

Capoeira practices and methodologies seem to mirror relationships in life through performance. The metaphors contained in these performances, however, are rooted in the culture of slavery where the power imbalance was extreme and strongly influenced by racially discriminatory ideas which were ‘supported by theories about the inferiority of blacks, which were supposedly stuck in the very early stages of human development’ (Chvaicer, 2002, p. 528). Although I have adopted the Brazilian Portuguese word 'Mestre' to refer to the highly respected role of Capoeira Angola teachers and mentors, I am aware of the entangled historical issues of authority acted out in this role (see Wesolowski, 2007).

It was during the process of Brazil seeking independence from Portugal, and in the search for a national identity, that a connection with African identity was not considered desirable for the national psyche. According to Assunção, the legal system that was established to oppress slaves and the practice of Capoeira ‘originated within the structures of an absolutist monarchy’ (2005, p. 9). Those in power ruled that the practice of Capoeira was a dangerous offence against public order, and ‘any slave or freedman caught in flagrante, even though without doing any harm to property or persons, was to suffer immediate “correction” in the form of brutal whipping’ (Assunção 2005, p. 9).

By the middle of the nineteenth century the ruling authorities increasingly felt threatened by the informal slave gatherings and ‘games’ performed. People of military and religious parades organised by White rulers, and performers of Capoeira started to clash in public spaces. Occasionally, the capoeiras (participants of the Capoeira ‘game’) were accused of committing crimes and murdering peaceful citizens. Chvaicer quotes an 1853 letter from a Police Commissioner to the Minister of Justice:

One of the most frequent crimes in this city [Rio de Janeiro] is homicide. It is singular that neither revenge nor the desire to commit theft is the cause of these offenses. It is the pleasure of seeing blood flow [...] that brings them to commit these serious attacks. The perpetrators are known by the common name of ‘capoeiras’ (2002, p. 528).
The commissioner's letter does not explain the causes of these conflicts. As in many other cases the viewpoint of the slaves was not expressed in such written documents. Slaves belonged to highly codified Black sub-cultures that used performance as a form of resistance while protecting themselves by using rituals and art forms such as Capoeira and travelling in public spaces in gangs. Assunção's research highlights how territorial Capoeira gangs in Rio de Janeiro formed during this period and how they were clandestine in nature. He notes:

[the Capoeira gangs] constituted a kind of secret society of predominantly young, black or coloured lower-class males in a hostile environment dominated by white and mestizo slave owners. The clandestine character of the malties [gangs] implies that many aspects of their organization will probably never be known and it is therefore extremely difficult to assess on what principles of solidarities they were built upon (Abreu in Assunção 2005, p. 84).

Interestingly the codified black subculture of Hip Hop, involving music, dance, and gang fights, emerged approximately a century later in the United States, with descendants from the same Atlantic slave trade. Hip Hop and Capoeira are only two of the many art forms of resistance that were influenced by different African cultures brought to the Americas via the slave trade.

Brazil was the last country to abolish the Atlantic slave trade in 1850 and the practice of slavery in the country was only legally abolished in 1888. The racial miscegenation and the liberation of slaves that followed the end of the trade brought ‘dynamic changes in the demography of the capoeiras [and this] had a tremendous impact on their actions’ (Chvaicer 2002, p. 533). Many capoeiras started to serve as bodyguards for politicians during elections and had an impact on local politics (Chvaicer 2002, p. 535). Mestre Nestor Capoeira confirms that:

Capoeira has been in perpetual interaction with “the System” and different power structures, and this has caused it to mature. Capoeira gangs in Rio de Janeiro associated themselves with deputies, senators, and ministers of state, and played a major role at the end of the 1800s when Brazil became a republic (Nestor Capoeira, 2002, p. xxii).14

When the Brazilian government needed to extend its armed forces in the face of the Paraguayan War (1865-1870), the fighting skills of the capoeiras caught the attention of the government and slaves were conscripted to fight on the war

14 For more on the alliances between different Capoeira gangs and different factions of the government during the transition to a republican government see Assunção (2005, pp. 89-91).
front, ‘with the promise that they would receive their freedom as well as other privileges upon their return from the war’ (Chvaicer 2002, p. 534). According to Assunção the war had important social consequences. Not only did it disrupt the Capoeira gang culture due to the drafting of young men, but on the battlefield Brazilians of very different backgrounds closely interacted in a setting where whites and blacks played the same role. When Capoeira players who had fought in the war returned home they were more recognised and admired by the white population (Assunção 2005, pp. 83-89).

According to Trochim, however, ‘the abolition of slavery in Brazil has aptly been called a white revolution’ (1988, p. 286) because the proposed reforms introduced to benefit the liberated Africans and African descendants were not successfully managed by organisations such as the Black Guard. For Trochim, the idea of racial miscegenation compromised racial solidarity and created a ‘destructive distinction between negro and mulatto’ (1988, p. 286) and this, he believes, weakened the agency of black political organisations after the abolition of slavery in 1888. When Brazil became a Republic in 1889, ‘radical measures against the capoeiras were adopted’ (Assunção, 2005, p. 90). The first few decades of emancipation and Republican government proved hard for the Capoeira community.

**The modernisation of Capoeira**

According to Assunção, in Brazil ‘the Modernist movement, launched in 1922, put the search for the popular roots of “Brazil-ness” back on the agenda and contributed to a positive reassessment of the African heritage’ (2005, p. 125). The 1930s also marked an important transformation of Capoeira in Brazil. Assunção argues that the process of the modernisation of Capoeira happened alongside an increase in international interest in African-American music and African sculptures and in the context of the emergence of modern sports and the systematisation of combat arts (2005, pp. 125-126). Two important individuals in the Capoeira world played a key role in this period of intense transformation and modernisation of Capoeira. They were Mestre Bimba, who created the more Western-friendly version of Capoeira called Capoeira Regional, and Mestre
Pastinha who revived and re-organised the traditional style of Capoeira, which became known as Capoeira Angola.

*Mestre* Bimba re-invented the tradition of Capoeira by adapting it to a sports and combat arts environment, and by making it friendlier to mainstream culture. He set up challenges against fighters from imported martial art forms such as Ju-Jitsu, Greco-Roman wrestling, Judo, and French ‘Savage’. He kept in mind the influences of these different forms in the re-shaping of Capoeira. In 1932 Mestre Bimba opened the first Capoeira Regional School and named it *Escola de Luta Regional Bahiana (School of Bahian Regional Fight).* Not only did Bimba leave the word ‘Capoeira’ out of his school’s name, but his modern style moved away from Capoeira’s traditional connection to ritual and spirituality. By adapting the art form into a sport, Bimba made it more attractive to white middle-class students. Some of these students were influential and contributed to Bimba’s relationships with the Bahian elite and to the institutionalisation of Capoeira in Brazil. On the 9th of July, 1937 Bimba was awarded a Physical Education Teaching certificate and he went on to teach his style of Capoeira to the Training Centre for Army Officers in the Reserve (Centro de Preparação de Oficiais de Reserva—CPOR) (Assunção 2005, pp. 125-138). According to Mestre Roxinho, the popularisation of Bimba’s style of Capoeira as sport meant that the traditional art of Capoeira Angola became marginalised because of its links to both ritual and to the African-Brazilian religion of Candomblé, considered by most whites as being a practice of the devil.

As organised by Mestre Pastinha the Capoeira Angola game is played inside a circle framed by an orchestra of eight instruments and a group of engaged spectators who sit on the floor. This ritualistic circle of practice is called ‘roda’, or circle in Portuguese. Inside this circle a range of improvised physical games are played by two players at a time. The Capoeira Angola ‘roda’ is generally an unpaid event and is treated as a ritual, even to date. It generally lasts for a couple of hours, but it can last less or more time.

The links between Capoeira Angola and the African-Brazilian religion of Candomblé are taught by Mestre Roxinho, who is also a devotee of Candomblé.
In the rituals of Candomblé, before dancing, the dancers pay respect to the drummer who, according to Roxinho, is generally an Ogan, which in the African language of Iorubá means a chief or superior person.

Similarly in Capoeira Angola two capoeiristas bend on their knees to pay respect to the berimbau instrument and player as they enter the circle to play their ‘game’. Some capoeiristas use this moment to ask for protection, to concentrate or to strategise. This spiritual and ritual approach to practice gives the Capoeira Angola circle a sacred quality.

Capoeira Angola participants, or players, can act in multiple roles during the course of a ‘roda’. A participant can play a musical instrument in the orchestra, then sit on the floor and sing the chorus, and later play the improvised physical ‘game’ in the centre of the circle. The arrangement of a circle feeds the physical ‘game’ played in the centre with musical energy and messages contained in the lyrics. The lyrics contain moral narratives as well as metaphors of oppression that refer to times of slavery and the struggles of important Mestres and long deceased slave leaders. Different kinds of songs are played at different moments and for different purposes.

The physical ‘game’ starts when two capoeiristas, who are sitting on the floor, move toward the orchestra and bend on their knees in front of the key berimbau player. Once cleared by the key berimbau player the two capoeiristas then move toward the centre of the circle as they play an improvised physical dialogue, or ‘game’, that responds to the musical messages sent by the orchestra and responds to the bodily messages of each other. The ‘game’ may include attack, defence and dance-like movements. A Mestre can sing a song to set the kind of ‘game’ he or she wants to see being played, or a song that carries a message to the two ‘players’ inside the circle for them to change their ‘game’ style. The lyrics of these messages are sung in Portuguese and use metaphors specific to African-Brazilian culture. A player unconnected with these musical messages, not aware of the rules of the ‘game’, or who is not

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15 Berimbau is the key musical instrument in Capoeira.
16 If a Mestre is present, he or she is likely to lead the roda as he or she plays the berimbau. It is a convenient position to choose songs and send messages to the capoeiristas playing the game.
engaged with the other player, may be surprised by a kick or can be pulled to the ground by the other player.

Capoeiristas sitting in the circle participate in the ‘game’ as an active audience that respond, as a chorus, to the ‘leading-lyrics’ generally being sung by one of the berimbau players. The sitting players also have the chance of observing the ‘game’ being played in the centre and imagine possible tricks and ways of dealing with these situations when it is their turn to perform in the centre of the circle. After a period of time the Mestre directs the two performing players to sit and welcomes two new participants from the sitting chorus to play the physical ‘game’ in the centre. The new players, who had observed the previous ‘game’, now have the chance to perform as ‘protagonists’. The active role of the sitting player in Capoeira Angola is likened to the role of the theatre audience of Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed (2000) as both use the opportunity of observing to rehearse for future action on ‘stage’.

After Capoeira started travelling the world in the mid-1980s great cultural differences had to be explained so that international participants and hosting organisations understood the art form, and thus did not simply place it in pre-existing categories such as sport, martial arts or exotic dance. The terminology of resistance and oppression used and performed by capoeiristas had to be reconsidered in new contexts and in more complex terms. Many Capoeira Angola Mestres have had to find ways of explaining their orally and bodily learned art form in written terms, and in foreign languages, so hosting authorities could understand the history and methodology of Capoeira and, more importantly, appreciate its benefits and thus contribute to the funding of Capoeira projects.
4.2 Hip Hop

Although Capoeira Angola and Hip Hop have emerged over a hundred years apart and in different hemispheres, there are similarities in the way these African diasporic art forms emerged from grass roots black resistance movements outside the African continent, in social contexts of power inequalities, and in what was considered illegal public gatherings that involved police arrests and the suppression of gang culture. The original participants of these art forms were by and large African slaves or slave descendants from the Atlantic trade. Racial and class discrimination embedded in, or inherited from, colonisation have greatly shaped the music and dance components of these art forms, and the way they relate to power structures. As Jeff Chang says, ‘[i]f blues culture had developed under the conditions of oppressive, forced labour, hip-hop culture would arise from the conditions of no work’ (Chang, 2005, p. 13). Chang explains that the roots of the social tension that gave birth to Hip Hop culture in the Bronx region of New York in the 1970s was the 1929 Manhattan urban development plan (designed by the New York Regional Plan Association) to construct the Cross-Bronx expressway (2005, pp. 7-19). This master plan aimed to transform Manhattan ‘into a centre of wealth’ and allow people to drive from New Jersey to the Bronx in fifteen minutes (p. 11).

A few years before construction started white middle-class inhabitants were offered white picket fence homes in ‘white-only Levittown suburbs, while working class [residents] [mainly composed of Black Americans and Hispanics] got nine or more monotonous slabs of housing, areas soon-to-be crime-hidden “parks”’ (Chang 2005, p. 12). When development of the expressway reached the Bronx apartment buildings were passed into the hands of slumlords who saw in the crisis an opportunity for profit. Chang states that ‘[b]etween 1973 and 1977, 30,000 fires were set in the South Bronx alone’ (p. 15). The construction of the expressway changed the local demographics and social context of the region immensely as the unemployment rate hit 60% (p. 13) and a violent street gang culture emerged in the 1960s and 1970s (pp. 10-15).
It was in this context of social chaos and lawlessness that Jamaican-born DJ, Clive Campbell, moved to the Bronx in 1967. He gained the respect of the local gangs through hosting regular parties with a DJ crew or a break-dance crew. His rhythmic party announcement style, which introduced songs, dance moves or ‘cooling off’ messages directed at gang members who attended his parties, were the beginning of what we now know as ‘rapping’ (Chang 2005, p. 67-79).

Campbell is also known as ‘Kool Herc’ and is credited as being one of the fathers of Hip Hop as well as the creator of the musical form of ‘break’17, and the terms ‘b-boys’ and ‘b-girls’ - those who would dance to his breaks. Kool Herc’s style was heavily influenced by the Jamaican tradition called ‘toasting’ , the act of announcing songs and improvising lyrics over a sound track, which was used in the Jamaican popular music genre of Dancehall and Reggae (Bradley, 2001, pp. 300-40). Herc’s DJ’ing quickly influenced New York-born Afrika Bambaataa (of Jamaican and Barbadian descent) who later formed the influential Hip Hop awareness organisation called ‘Universal Zulu Nation’. This organisation helped to spread Hip Hop culture throughout the world. Bambaatta describes Hip Hop culture as consisting of four basic elements: the music of the deejay, the announcing or ‘rapping’ of the ‘emcees’, break dancing performed by the ‘b-boys’ and ‘b-girls’, and graffiti art (Chang, 2005, p. 90). Herc suggests that a list of Hip Hop elements should also include ‘the way you walk, the way you talk, the way you look, the way you communicate’ (Herc, 2005, p. xi).

Hip Hop culture went through a prolific, diverse and innovative period in the mid-1980s and early 1990s and this was commonly referred to as Hip Hop’s golden age. According to Dyson, this was an Afro-centric moment when ‘art was never far from life […] It was always found at the intersection of reflection and reaction or of critical consciousness and social intervention. Art was a servant of the masses’18 (Dyson, 2007, p. 63).

Since Hip Hop culture has been diffused and globalised its diverse sub-genres have undergone a creolisation process, or a process of cross-fertilisation

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17 The sampling of drum beats, which are played as the rhythmic basis of Hip Hop.

18 Although a similar Afro-centric and interventionist style of politics is used by Capoeira Mestres in the dissemination of the art form, Capoeira has never been considered as addressing the masses, as it relies on a Mestre-student relationship.
between different cultures. The spread of Hip Hop culture does not rely on a long-term Mestre-student relationship. Its access through radio, vinyl records, CDs and music videos facilitates a ‘do-it-yourself’ (DIY) style of learning and gives the audience more power to relate to and experiment with different influences in order to produce something new. For instance, since Hip Hop reached Tanzania in the late 1980s it has incorporated influences from other diasporic musical movements such as reggae and R&B, as well as local traditions such as taarab and dansi (Graebner, 2007, pp. 192-94). This localised version of Hip Hop, which is known as Bongo Flava, (or boiling brains), was initially practised by middle-class Tanzanians who were able to access Hip Hop music from the USA and understand its lyrics. They were, therefore, less marginalised than the early American hip hoppers.

Congolese Rama, the key rapper and young refugee participant in this project, was introduced to Hip Hop while living in the town of Kigoma, in Tanzania. Young rappers in Tanzania respected the fathers of Hip Hop from the Bronx, such as Herc and Bambaataa, but considered them ‘old school’ and outdated in terms of politics (Stroeken, 2005, p. 489). Stroeken argues that the way Tanzanian Hip Hop developed sheds light on what he calls a ‘sophisticated post-colonial strategy of survival’ – that is, the evolution of specific politics used by the founders of Hip Hop. For Herc, Hip Hop is about ‘keeping it (morally) right’ (2005, p. xiii), and for young Tanzanian rappers, it is about ‘keeping it (pessimistically) real’ (Stroeken, 2005, p. 502). There has thus been a ‘shift from discursive content to experiential effect’ (2005, p. 488), from being hopeful, naïve and moralist to employing pessimistic and witty tactics. For example, artists describing harsh realities such as the survival of male and female prostitutes and the conditions of street children, realities in stark contrast to the experiences of the wealthy (p. 488). Stroeken notes that:

> [t]he shift to predatory pragmatics has a streetwise quality hard to outwit, as it responds to social inequality with personal enrichment. Of particular relevance to political scientists is how the logic of popular culture (of what is “in” and what is “out”) has compelled Tanzanian hip-hop to consider the merit of both gangsta rapper and postcolonial elite in overcoming the naïve ideals of predecessors. Any critique that does not at least have this merit will prove futile, that is, fail to be taken seriously by the population at large (2005, p. 489).
The political differences between young Tanzanians who engage in Bongo Flava and the fathers of Hip Hop are, in essence, similar to the political differences between Rama and Roxinho. Bongo Flava’s new politics does not focus on blaming one singular other for the poverty and corruption in society, such as the European coloniser, the rich, the corrupt or the white. Instead it foregrounds the social complexity and hard-core reality of Tanzanians by describing a social conflict using irony and pessimism. In that way they do not claim moral superiority and instead leave the choice of whom to blame for this situation to the listener. Stroeken claims that Tanzanian rappers ‘immunize themselves against the suspicion of moralism’ (2005, p. 490). They criticise post-colonial indifference and ‘get away with it by including themselves in the critique, thus making their critique resistant by analogy with the biological process of becoming immune after contagion’ (p. 505). An extract from Professor Jay’s music exemplifies this:

We are killing each other like eating tomorrow
If only the Beijing meeting had taken place in the village
Perhaps with my grandmother in the group
Help does not arrive, gets stuck up the trees
The rich get more, how about the poor?
Tanzanian politics have begun to smell like blood
Tanzanian brothers killing each other in turns
Who will collect the blood spilled?
(Jay, 2002)\(^\text{19}\)

Bongo Flava’s immunising strategy presents a different kind of politics to the moralist ‘politics of the oppressed’ used in Capoeira Angola. For Stroeken, the strategy used in Tanzanian Hip Hop is more effective in influencing a larger and more diverse section of society. This is because the young rapper’s ‘streetwise approach tries to outwit the ruling logic of self-seeking predation, which to [his] knowledge no Western philosophy has been able to defeat’ (Stroeken, 2005, p. 492).

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\(^{19}\) An extract from the introduction of his highly acclaimed album *Tears, sweat and blood (Machozi, jasho na damu).*
4.3 The Intersection of Capoeira Angola and Hip Hop

Racial and class discrimination embedded in, or inherited from, colonisation have greatly shaped the music and dance components of Capoeira Angola and Hip Hop and the way they relate to power structures. A search for belonging played an important part in the formation of these movements, and still does, because the activities of these art forms are social processes of gathering and forming like-minded people. Despite the diasporic connections to Africa these art forms maintain, the Capoeira Angola style practised by Mestre Roxinho and the personal Hip Hop style developed by Rama demonstrate differences in regards to the way Black identity is constructed.

African-Brazilian Mestre Roxinho, in his forties, brings to Australia traditional views on resistance and black identity which he learned from his Mestre and adoptive father over a period of more than thirty years. For him, black identity is constructed over a long-term relationship with a Mestre and it follows a ‘boundary-maintenance’ style. The politics embedded in Capoeira Angola includes codified moral messages and metaphors that are rooted in the history of slavery. Although Roxinho’s daily practices are part of a culture in Australia he affirms that he does not practise Capoeira Angola as a means of belonging to ‘Australian culture’.

Congolese refugee Rama, who is only fifteen, brings to Sydney a mixture of personal influences. These include influences from his journey as a refugee as well as artistic influences from Hip Hop artists such as Tanzanian artists, Professor Jay and Juma Nature, and a North American artist called 50Cent. Influenced by Bongo Flava’s immunising strategy, he builds identity in a more ‘boundary erosion’, hybrid style. He does not rely on a presentational relationship with a master or on a close relationship to African tradition and morals to build his identity. Rama and his Cabramatta High School friends compose songs about being black and being a refugee student amongst many other African refugees at School. Being an independent thinker, Rama struggles with the role of authority that Mestre Roxinho adopts and with Roxinho’s views on Hip Hop and black identity.
The performative elements contained in these African diasporic art forms gave participants in this project instruments to better understand who they really were becoming as they settle in multicultural Australia. For readers of this exegesis and viewers of my documentary I believe this section provides the historical background to better understand the conflicts experienced by participants in the documentary narrative and to understand how these conflicts are a part of the students’ growing understanding of themselves in relations to their new country and each other.
SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

This section attempts to bring the personal, national and diasporic narratives presented throughout this exegesis to a closure.

The thesis suggested interconnectedness between personal and national narratives. On the one hand, participants constructed their personal and diasporic stories in interaction with organisations that were entangled with the ideology of multiculturalism, such as Cabramatta High School, STARTTS and SBS. On the other hand, personal stories of people from culturally diverse background are mediated by national organisations such as SBS to ‘help fashion a national narrative’ (Appiah in Freiwald, 2002, p. 1).

I have presented some of the contradictions surrounding the construction and development of narratives of diaspora and multiculturalism and explored how the documentary component of this DCA mediates these. In particular, I have suggested that diaspora and multicultural narratives have similarly been constructed on grounds equated with Brubaker’s notions of ‘boundary-maintenance’ and ‘homeland orientation’, and this similar foundation also informs their competing views. The perspectives displayed in these documentary stories were drawn from the cultural values of different ‘homelands’ outside of Australia.

The historical backgrounds of Capoeira and Hip Hop demonstrate how the narratives of participants are informed by a number of different homelands including Angola, USA, Tanzania and Brazil. In comparison the historical trend for SBS to have Managing Directors and Commissioning Editors of an Anglo-Celtic heritage, and their preference for British broadcasting models, suggests that this network’s multicultural narrative is orientated towards England as the predominant homeland and cultural reference.

I have explored how the meaning and constitution of the term diaspora has been transformed and I have done this using a range of theoretical resources
and tools (Brubaker 2005, Akyeampong, 2000). Theorists such as Clifford and Hall emphasise the transformation of diaspora culture and identity in global conditions, and a merging of the values of ‘hostland’ and ‘homeland’. In contrast, scholars such as Gilroy focus on establishing a distinction between ‘homeland’ and ‘hostland’ values by merging the different homeland identities into a united diasporic identity. This latter view is the one expressed by Mestre Roxinho in the documentary component of this DCA.

I have considered how the narrative of multiculturalism emerged without much input from ethnic communities, as a public policy that aimed to integrate migrants into mainstream Australia. Following on from this, I have framed SBS’s contemporary assumption that migrants have integrated into mainstream Australia suggesting that the multicultural narrative is now symbolically reaching its end (Hayden in Danforth, 2001).

This DCA project expressed a critical view of the top-down multicultural narrative construction (and ending) deployed by SBS and, as a response, attempted to offer an alternative narrative that included a bottom-up, collaborative production component. Key participants in the film are migrants and refugees of Language Background Other Than English. The subjective and inter-subjective perspectives arranged by this documentary are supported by a title, which uses the first person pronoun ‘we’. The title *Who We Really Are* emerged in the collaborative process with participants who were as keen to tell the world who they really were as I was. The film consciously avoids the simple, objective only, or single mode of representation of the ethnic other.

Retrospectively reflecting upon the production process and the efforts to distribute the film I realised that although the film provided great insight into the experiences of a group of migrants and refugees settling in Australia, the intended alternative narrative introduced some limitations to the film. The legitimacy of *Who We Really Are* as a television documentary was penalised by the adoption a mixture of modes of representation. This made the project more complex (both to watch and to pitch), and less attractive to the Australian film industry funding bodies, broadcasters and festivals that favor a simpler mode of
representation that is able reach a wider audience. There is a feeling the documentary has become “too niche” for wider Australian audience.

It was only after various unsuccessful attempts to engage with SBS from development to post-production stages of the film; after being rejected by 19 mainstream and niche film festivals around the world; and after the film was selected for screening by the Recife Ethnographic Film Festival (Brazil) that I realized that the documentary is better defined as a research process rather than a product. In fact, the film’s ability to generate debate both about its content and production processes was witnessed strongly during the crowd funding campaign I ran for post-production support. In particular, the film attracted the attention of art educators, capoeira players and some academics.

Reflecting upon the process I also realised that while the long-term collaborative experience created an incredible rapport with participants, and offered great access to and insight into the migrant and refugee experience, it also questioned my perspective as a filmmaker. The complex, task and socially intensive aspects of the process made it particularly difficult for me to maintain a narrative focus. Throughout the seven years it took me to produce the film I had to wear different hats - the researcher, the documentary producer, the director, the film tutor, the cameraperson, the editor, the Capoeira Angola student, not to mention being one of the participants. Within the complexity of intense relationships it was sometimes hard to picture the narrative arc. By the end of 2010, which was the year I filmed most of the documentary with participants, we had reached a crises point, a conflict with unclear resolution. If I stopped filming at the end of 2010, I would run the risk of not doing justice to participants’ stories and leave a few important narrative questions unresolved. How would Rama resolve his conflict with Roxinho? How would students’ relationship to Capoeira Angola evolve after such an intense year? Would the Deputy Principal succeed in 'sinking' the Capoeira Angola project?

Although I had reserved the year of 2011 to produce the academic component of this DCA, sometimes I did manage to meet participants and film some scenes that revealed how the 2010 conflicts evolved. Many times, however, I was not
able to. I was entangled in the more than 150 hours of footage that had been shot, and which contained a complex set of personal, collective, creative and national narrative possibilities. Finding closure for the documentary narrative and its links to the academic component proved challenging. I wonder how would the process and the final film have been different had I managed to attract the support of SBS and the collaboration of other film industry professionals.

Interestingly, while I was concerned with finding an end to the film’s narrative I had insights about my own story. I realised it had been 14 years since I lived in Brazil and that my parents were getting old. I suddenly felt an urge to reconcile with my own roots and accept my homeland orientation before it was too late – I was already 46. I decided to move back to Brazil to give meaning to my own story.

What made me want to learn about the other in Australia, and in consequence, learn about myself, was the fact that my social position changed after my move to Australia. Over the years in Australia I started to feel more and more ‘out of place’ in the same way that Hall speaks about feeling displaced in the diaspora (Hall & Back, 2009, p. 21). As a consequence I was forced to consider my environment more critically. Deciding to return to Brazil came out of this consideration. It also came out of learning about Roxinho and the importance of his roots to his integrity. Similarly, my decision came out of learning about the resilience of the young refugees in the film, who, despite all the hardship, were able to reconstruct their lives over and over again in different contexts.

Filmmaking was an essential tool in this knowledge gaining process. It enabled relevant topics to emerge, our relationships to evolve and our stories to be mediated and told.


Macumba, M. (3 May 2014). [Cativeiro].


WHO WE REALLY ARE
A seventy-five-minutes participatory documentary by Paulo Alberton

Produced as part of a Doctorate of Creative Arts degree at the University of Western Sydney

Script Writer: Paulo Alberton
Script Editor: Marie Ange Bordas

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1. INTRODUCTION TO PARTICIPANT’S ROOTS AND ROUTES

MESTRE ROXINHO with beach in the background.

NARRATION
I started filming this documentary when I met ROXINHO in 2006. He had come to Australia to teach Capoeira Angola. The fact that we met in Australia is very revealing. In Brazil, we belonged to very different social and cultural worlds. ROXINHO is a descendant of African slaves, and I am of European settlers. But in Australia, we were both migrants. This condition brought us closer and I had the chance to learn a little about his Afro-brazilian identity.

Although ROXINHO is proud of his African roots, he had never been to Africa, well, at least until he goes to Cabramatta High School, in the western suburbs of Sydney, to teach Capoeira Angola to a group of young African refugees.

We see MESTRE ROXINHO teaching Capoeira Angola at Cabramatta High School.
Date: 2007

MESTRE ROXINHO (to STUDENTS)
When you start to look at what your partner is doing you start to understand more what you are doing through his movements. Do you understand?

MESTRE ROXINHO’s students observe as he teaches.

NARRATION
ROXINHO’s students had never been to Brazil and they knew nothing about Capoeira Angola. At school, they had learning and behaviour difficulties. After escaping war-torn countries, many were raised in refugee camps throughout Africa, and some have lost close family members at war.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to CAMERA)
I am very sorry about what they’ve been through in their life, but in the same way I believe they are very capable and competent to be amazing person. We have something in common. The heritage makes me feel something with them.
NARRATION
Despite our extremely different life journeys, in the Australian context, all of us belonged to the same category: we were migrants of non-English speaking background. And we did not feel represented in the media of this so called multicultural Australia.

As a filmmaker I thought I could help fill in this TV representation gap and proposed to the group that we make a collaborative film about who we really were, as we settled.

FILM TITLE: WHO WE REALLY ARE

We see MESTRE ROXINHO about to start teaching his first Capoeira Angola Class of 2010 at Cabramatta High School. There are about 30 young African refugees in his class. Some are new students, others had started the year before.

NARRATION
They agreed, and two years after they had officially started the Capoeira program, I started filming their classes on Fridays.

2. INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN PAULO AND YOUNG PARTICIPANTS

We see a montage of clips from film workshops with MESTRE ROXINHO’s Capoeira Angola students; workshops facilitated by PAULO.

NARRATION
Then, every Wednesday we gathered for filmmaking workshops.

Initially, I thought we would be producing short films about their stories, but their connections with hip hop and gospel took us on a different path.

MIRIAM OMARI, 15, refugee from Democratic Republic of Congo (to CAMERA)
When we started doing the video, first, we were separating girls by themselves and boys on their own. The girls were telling their stories and writing them down. I was in the room and I could hear the boys rapping, singing.
BOYS singing
We are the niggers from the Africa

RAMA KAYUNGU, 15, refugee from Democratic Republic of Congo (to other BOYS)
You guys sing too loud.

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
Oh my God! They are having so much fun!

NARRATION
I had asked my friend BASIL, who is a Music Producer, to give us a hand in putting their musical ideas together.

We see Music Producer BASIL HOGIOS and STUDENTS listening to their recorded music and enjoying themselves.

BASIL (to STUDENTS)
What we will do now is to record Jones.

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
I realised we were surrounded by so many talented people, rapping, singing, doing all this stuff.

Girls listen to JONES’ song being played back.

MIRIAM (to GIRLS)
God, he is so good!

BASIL (to GIRLS)
This is your section. We got to figure out some singing or something.

We see BASIL conducting girls, and they sing.

GIRLS singing
We got to show the world who we really are
We got to show them that you are the shining star.

RAMA (to CAMERA)
We actually take some lines from this song we wrote down, and Jones take this from where he wrote down, and Miriam and Gemina take from the choir because they are choir people. And we combine all together as one and it actually sounds ok.

JONES NTUNGWANAYO, 15, refugee from Burundi (to other BOYS)
You rap, then they do the chorus, then I rap, then they do the chorus, then we end.
NARRATION
BASIL gave us a guide track and we went off to the streets to record our first music clip.

PAULO and young students walk towards the location, where they are about to start shooting the music video.

PAULO (to RAMA)
You direct. You are good at it!

RAMA (to TALENTS IN FRONT OF CAMERA)
Don’t look at us, don’t feel shy...

Music clip for “Who We Really Are” shown

You wanna show the world who you really are
You wanna show the world that you are a shiny star
Now it’s your turn - scream out loud
And tell the world that God is in you
And now you are free, and now you are free

We are the niggers from Africa, Africa
We are the niggers from Africa, Africa.

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
I think that was just us saying who we really are, you know? Kids from Africa.

Music clip for “Who We Really Are” continues

We are the niggers from Africa, Africa
We are the niggers from Africa, Africa

NARRATION
Their hip-hop brought to our encounter a contemporary Africa that was in dialogue with North American cultures.

Throughout this project the camera unveiled this latent conflict between modern African cultures brought by the students and the traditional views of Africa MESTRE ROXINHO had constructed through Capoeira.

3. INTRODUCTION TO MESTRE ROXINHO´S RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUNG AFRICA REFUGEES THROUGH CAPOEIRA ANGOLA

We see MESTRE ROXINHO and students at Cabramatta High School.
MESTRE ROXINHO (to CAMERA)
They need to open their eyes and understand the opportunity they have.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
If you keep funny, you go and seat there.
Do you understand? Do you understand or not? I’m talking to you.

RAMA gets his backpack and leaves class. MESTRE ROXINHO continues teaching.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to STUDENTS)
This is an introduction for you to see how the game looks like. You always move around. You never stay stuck in one place.

ELISABETH approaches ROXINHO while he teaches the Capoeira class.

ELISABETH (to ROXINHO)
You know RAMA? that’s alright for him to do it again?

MESTRE ROXINHO (to ELISABETH)
Yes, he has to come and talk to me first.

ELISABETH (to ROXINHO)
Ok.

ELISABETH goes to get RAMA.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to a STUDENT)
You put your hands together and balance like this.

Do you understand? So let’s do it.

School Psychologist ELISABETH PICKERING brings RAMA back to MESTRE ROXINHO in Capoeira Angola class.

MESTRE ROXINHO (comments to CAMERA)
Everyone was ashamed of them, was sorry about them, very sorry because they came from war, and they give and give and give. Well, they don’t do well in school. Well, they don’t listen, they don’t respect. I step in and I say: it’s over, from now on it’s going to be difficult for you.

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
Sorry if I did go out without your permission.
MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
I’m here to teach you, and you don’t listen to me, you don’t have patience to listen to me. I’m not here to fight with you. Ok?

4. CABRAMATTA HIGH SCHOOL AND MULTICULTURALISM IN AUSTRALIA

NARRATION
97% of Cabramatta High School students were migrants or refugees from non-English speaking countries. The school offered Intensive English language courses and social support during their settlement process. Although the school was well known for receiving refugees from around the world, it was only in 2005 that African refugees started to arrive in larger numbers.

We see participants interviewing each other about where they come from and lived before coming to Australia. This is part of a collaborative film workshop exercise.

KID who operates camera commands action
Three, two, one, action!

KIDS being interviewed answer
- I was born in Sudan
- Kenya
- Sudan
- Congo
- I come from Burundi
- Then I moved to Kenya
- And I moved to Egypt
- And then, I moved to Malawi
- I’ve being in Australia for two years.
- Eight months
- I’m twelve years old
- Thirteen years old
- Fifteen years old

NARRATION
According to school psychologist, ELISABETH PICKERING, the school still didn’t know how to deal with the needs of African students. She supported the Capoeira program from the beginning, because she saw in the African heritage of Capoeira and of ROXINHO, a chance to better engage with these students.
ELISABETH is in a meeting at Cabramatta High School with MESTRE ROXINHO, CHIARA and PAULO.

ELISABETH (to MESTRE ROXINHO, CHIARA and PAULO) It’s a very gradual process. As you get to know them, they will build trust with you.

5. CAPOEIRA ANGOLA AND YOUNG PARTICIPANTS’ BACKGROUNDS

ROXINHO teaching Capoeira music class

A kid makes a mistake while singing

MIRIAM (to CAMERA) I don’t know what capoeira means, but I wish it means people coming together.

NARRATION
MIRIAM was right, Capoeira, since its beginning has been a space for gathering and celebration, but it has also been a place for fighting and resistance. Capoeira Angola was created by African slaves in Brazil over more than three centuries of colonization. In order to strengthen themselves physically and spiritually to deal with their oppressive reality, slaves gathered around port areas and sugarcane fields to play, dance, sing, and practice African rituals that were considered illegal by government authorities.

MIGARIT, 16, refugee from Kenya (to CAMERA) Whenever we come together, I just see them as my brothers and sisters, so it’s a really good time because I like to feel like all my brothers and sisters haven’t abandoned me, because I can always know that there’s other people that I can look up to, and I can be close to. And it still reminds me about back home.

RAMA (to CAMERA) When I came to this school, Cabramatta School – Yeah – I start knowing something about Capoeira. Our master told us, it is a background from Africa, and they call it Capoeira Angola. It’s kind of fighting, but it’s not really fighting.
EVELYN AGRIPA, 15, refugee from Uganda\textsuperscript{20} (to CAMERA)
In my culture, if you have to do dancing, you have to go in the middle too. Like, everybody stay around you.

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
Because before, sometimes, you might think, just because we are Africans, we are all the same. But we realised we are all different. And we didn’t let the differences get in between us. I’m really glad Capoeira came to our school.

6. CAPOEIRA ANGOLA AND CABRAMATTA HIGH SCHOOL

NARRATION
Capoeira was a new thing at school, and because of this, it encountered resistance. It was hard for ELISABETH to secure the same room and the same time for Capoeira classes.

SCHOOL STAFF (to ELISABETH)
Let’s go down the back to see if there’s an empty room?

ELISABETH (to SCHOOL STAFF)
Yes! Yes! Maybe, at least we can …

They continue walking in search of a room that can be used for Capoeira Angola class.

ELISABETH (to CAMERA)
When we began, on Friday afternoon probably wasn’t the best time of the week to hold it, especially after lunch.

CHIARA RIDOLFI, Social Worker (to CAMERA)
At one point there were also the teachers, they were questioning how much was good for the young people not to be in class learning English, but learning something Brazilian that do not relate to anything in the school.

BRENDAN O’BYRNE, Deputy Principal (to CAMERA)
Basically because I am a Deputy people are coming to me and saying: listen there’s these kids running around the school causing us a little bit of trouble. Then I became very aware of the capoeira project. (smiles)

\textsuperscript{20}Although during her interview on page 13 Evelyn says she is from Sudan, she was actually born in Uganda. The exact location of her birth did not seem to be so important at that moment.
CHIARA (to CAMERA)
They were sent to our program because they were not able to sit in class, and learn how to read and write. So there was an issue there.

BRENDAN (to CAMERA)
My personal view is, my sense of history isn’t too bad, is that for the last two thousands years that we’ve known of them, like I said, through our eyes and it is only a view, they come from a chaotic type of society. So, I suspect we are seeing what they are.

BRENDAN answers the phone.

7. WHAT THEY REALLY ARE – YOUNG PARTICIPANTS’ ROUTES, ORIGINS AND STORIES

We see a music clip sung by JONES, about his life journey from Burundi to Australia. JONES acts out. He is walking in the bush (pretending to be Africa) and, like magic, he crosses behind a tree and transitions to the streets of Cabramatta, in the Western suburbs of Sydney, Australia, where he is singing and dancing with his African refugee mates.

Credit: “Life Story” by JONES

JONES sings

I was born in Burundi
Raised in Tanzania
2005 came to Australia
I was on the streets
Rapping on a hard-core beat
Next thing I know
My home is in amazing grace
Never lose your faith
With God you are safe
That’s why I wanna thank God for looking after me
I got 50cent here singing ‘Shady Aftermath’
I wanna see heaven, got to be good
Cinema soulful […]
Never turn back, just live my life
I ain’t […] cause I am a Burundian boy
I […] Playing a baseball game
Damm, it’s like a hall of fame
You can achieve if you believe, cause God is in you
Never lose your faith, cause God is in you
With God you’re safe, cause God is in you.
JONES (to CAMERA)
I started rapping maybe ... I think it was two years ago. Rap is like the way I express myself. I sing from the heart. It's like, things that make me happy.

TRANSITION SHOT
Time-lapse of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

RAMA (to CAMERA)
My name is Rama. I was born in Congo. The war was dangerous, so our mom wanting to protect us, so yeah, she had to take us to Tanzania, where it was safe to us. Yeah. I spent eleven years there.

DIEME MUHIMBIRWA, 16, Refugee from Democratic Republic of Congo (to CAMERA)
I'm Dieme, I'm from Congo, I moved to Uganda when I was kind of like nine, ten. And I stayed there for three years and half. The camp was very very difficult, I said: Oh! This is like killer. The life over there ... finding water, finding food ... You must walk like 2km to get water from where you are. And they find that hard. I haven't seen my parents and siblings for six years.

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
I was born in Congo, then we moved to Malawi, then she (her sister GEMIMAH, sitting next to her) was born. I knew there was a war, cause when my brother was born... and then...

GEMIMAH OMARI, 12, refugee from Malawi (to MIRIAM)
Oli was born in Congo?

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
No, he was born in Burundi. That is when we had to go to Congo and I was born - After the war, I think. We lived in the camp in Dzaleka. There was tents. We lived in a tent, the whole family. We had seven people in the family. She wasn't born yet. Then we moved into a unit. It's like, interluded into sections. Like this is one's house, this is someone else's house.

GEMIMAH (to CAMERA)
It didn't have any door.

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
We didn't have any door. The only way to make a door was like ... I don’t know. There was wild animals
around the place in the night time. We could hear the foxes howling.

GEMIMAH (to CAMERA)
Someone got eaten by a …

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
A fox.

GEMIMAH (to camera)
Yeah, a fox.
The school was inside the camp. Me and my older sister went to school in the morning.

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
At seven in the morning.

GEMIMAH (to CAMERA)
At seven o’clock, and if you are late …

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
You have to put your hand out like this and the principal hits you a lot of times. It is punishment, if you are late.

GEMIMAH (to CAMERA)
But in Australia I feel much safer, and I feel I am getting a better education.

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
We arrived in Australian September 22nd.

GEMIMAH (to CAMERA)
21st.

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
Ok, that’s ok.

GEMIMAH (to CAMERA)
We never knew there was going to be Africans in Australia. We thought it would only be Aussies and white people. Aussie is the Australian person.

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
They have blue eyes with freckles.

GEMIMAH (to CAMERA)
They have blue eyes and blond hair.

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
They have freckles.
GEMIMAH (to CAMERA)
They like to have a barbecue.

TRANSITION SCENE
We see MIRIAM and GEMIMAH OMARI’S home. Music producer BASIL HOGIOS in a recording session with the OMARI’s FAMILY singing their own compositions in their living room.

DEBORAH JONES, 15, Refugee from Kenya (to CAMERA)
My name is Deborah Jones, I was born in a little village refuge’s camp called Kakuma. My twin sister, Migarit, I’m an inch taller than her. She looks like me, people say that we are identical, but we quite opposite, like, she likes opposite things.

MIGARIT JONES, 15, Refugee from Kenya (to CAMERA)
My father’s name is John. He is a minister; he used to travel around Africa in the areas, going to preach the words of God.

DEBORAH (to CAMERA)
It was during the civil war. So there was guns on the streets. Everyone shooting each other. And the Turkana people were looking for a victim, they were looking for a certain person they wanted to kill. On the same night, when dad came home from preaching, they saw dad and they shot him.

OMARI’s girls finish humming the song “Emannuel”.

EVELYN (to CAMERA)
My name is Evelyn and I am 15 years-old. I come from Sudan. I have 3 brothers and 3 sisters in my family, and one mum. I don’t really know who my father is. But I know my step dad. He was the meanker one. When I was in Sudan, he threw us out of the house. He has 3,4 women, like wives. He doesn’t want us anymore. Then we had to run back to Uganda.

TRANSITION SHOT
Pointo of view of car driving. Choir song in background. We go back to Cabramatta High School, inside the Deputy Principal’s office.

8. CAPOEIRA ANGOLA AND CABRAMATTA HIGH SCHOOL

Refering to the note on page 8. Evelyn was born in a small village in Uganda called Agojo. Although she has mentioned Sudan, as her country of origin for a number of times in the first years I met her.
BRENDAN (to CAMERA)
The whole concept of order and the way things should be done was a bit alien to these kids.

The group of young African refugees are gathered with MESTRE ROXINHO on school grounds, outdoors. School Principal walks toward them with a scooter in her hand, and two boys follow her.

BETH GODWIN, School Principal (to GROUP)
Riding the scooter around the school. Come here (to two boys who follow her). They told me they were supposed to be here.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to BETH)
Yeah.

BRENDAN (to CAMERA)
If they felt they needed to go out to the toilet, or they felt they needed to wander around the school for a little bit during Capoeira ... That is what they did!

BETH (to GROUP)
Ok, they were all around the school. Tall boy riding the scooter. Now they want to argue with me about when they get it back. So, when you are in Capoeira, where are you meant to be?

TALL BOY (to BETH)
In Capoeira.

BETH (to TALL BOY)
Are you meant to be arguing with me?
Are you meant to be riding the scooter?

TALL BOY
No. No.

BETH (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
Well. It’s up to you what happens to them.

SOMEONE FROM GROUP OF KIDS whispers
She is not happy!

BETH (to TALL BOY)
You let people down when you do that, you know?

Some kids smile at the scene.
MESTRE ROXINHO (to GROUP)
No, no! It’s not for laughing. It’s not funny.

School Principal walks away.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to GROUP)
I remember him (pointing to TALL BOY) a year ago. He couldn’t talk. Now he can argue with the principal. That is horrible. It’s really, really important for you not to get lost in this country. It’s the first thing when I teach you Capoeira Angola, I’d like you to watch and pay attention how Capoeira Angola can be with you and connect to your culture for you to be able to grow up in this country. To be able to learn English, speak English, but you respect the principal. That is what Capoeira Angola is for me. That makes me understand who I am. That makes me understand where I come from. That makes me be safe in so many ways inside this new world, this new country, this new way of life.

TRANSITION SHOT
The shot reveals MIRIAM, GEMIMAH, their SISTERS and MOTHER about to start singing a gospel song acapella in their living room.

OMARI GIRLS CHOIR
For I know the plans I have for you.

The song continues offscreen.

9. MESTRE ROXINHO’S BACKGROUND

We see MESTRE ROXINHO and his adoptive father, MESTRE VIRGÍLIO, playing Capoeira Angola in the bush – Northeast Brazil.

NARRATION
ROXINHO’s teaching style has a lot to do with the way he was raised by his adoptive father, in the circles of Capoeira Angola. Also by his experiences on the streets of a poor suburb in the Northeast Brazil, which taught him more than the school itself.

We see street life in the suburb of north east Brazil where MESTRE VIRGÍLIO lives.

MESTRE ROXINHO (off screen)
When I was four to five years-old I used to sell peanuts cause I had to work. It was a difficult
moment. I used to walk pass MESTRE VIRGÍLIO’s door everyday on my way to the bus stop.

We see Mestre VIRGÍLIO in front of his house and then working as a welder at his workshop.

MESTRE ROXINHO (off screen)
One day Mestre Virgilio asked if wanted to work at his workshop.

MESTRE VIRGÍLIO (to CAMERA)
As he came to the workshop, he brought all his belongings, and I raised him. As you can see he tells everyone that I am his father. But in fact, I was his mestre, both in the welding profession and in Capoeira.

10. THE UNFOLDING OF SEVERAL CONFLICTS: BETWEEN GENERATIONS, TRADITION AND MODERNITY, CAPOEIRA ANGOLA AND GANGSTER HIP HOP, BETWEEN LITERACY AND CULTURE, CAPOEIRA AND FILM

Back in Australia, we see MESTRE ROXINHO walking next to RAMA in Cabramatta High School grounds. MESTRE ROXINHO pulls RAMA’s pants up. RAMA is wearing a backpack with a picture of Michael Jackson.

NARRATION
At Cabramatta High School ROXINHO met the resistance of RAMA, who was inspired by hip-hop idols from Tanzania and North America. These remote teachers inspired the way RAMA composed, sang and dressed. In contrast, RAMA was having difficulties with such a strict and present mestre around him.

RAMA (to CAMERA)
Mestre Roxinho is our master for Capoeira. He’s been with us now for five months. He’s trying to teach me to be a man.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
It’s better. I can see your nice face.

RAMA (to CAMERA)
I started doing rap in Tanzania. I was very young, like 7 years old. I was with my four friends. We are listening to this Juma Nature / Professor Jay Music
We see the music-clip of RAMA’s song “MAMA”. We see RAMA standing in front of his house. In the background we see his mother sitting on the steps at the front of his house.

RAMA raps
What’s up people around me!
For my mum … yeah, for my mum

RAMA (to CAMERA)
But when I moved up to Australia, I hear some beautiful song: 50Cent, Tupak. Like the way Tupak sings: “Dear mama, queen mama” I really love that a lot. I said “I want to be like these guys too”.

Music-clip of RAMA’s song “MAMA” continues.

RAMA sings
Mama, I love you mama
Mama, I need you so much
I still got the wier when I was little boy
I was very sick
Mama couldn’t stay in peace. You worry a lot
You thought I am gonna die
You start thinking what I am gonna eat
Where is the food?
Life was hard
I mean very tough
Only upper class can do what ever they want.

RAMA (to CAMERA)
When I am rapping, I feel good
I feel like I am chasing the right dream.

MAMA clip continues.

RAMA sings
No women can take my mama place
When I am sick you always make me happy
When I am angry you always control my anger
When I am weak you always make me stronger
When I am with you I feel am a fool
Of course, I am a cool
I promise on my life, I will never leave you alone
You’re the best mother I never seen in my life
The way you treat me
The way you love me
The way you care
I believe you are the true mother
You are always fair
No matter how bad I am
You never give up
And you always take the blame
When I am with you, I never feel ashamed
When I with you, I never feel ashamed

(GIRLS CHORUS)
Mama, I love you mama
Mama, I need you so much

TRANSITION SHOT
We hear the beat of the berimbau over time-lapse of clouds.

We are in front of Cabramatta High School. ELISABETH is gathering all African STUDENTS for a Capoeira presentation at Cabramatta town centre.

ELISABETH (to STUDENTS)
Everybody, my hand is up and I expect you to be listening!

NARRATION
It was Refugee Week. ROXINHO and his African students were invited to perform at Cabramatta Plaza.

MESTRE ROXINHO, CHIARA and ELISABETH guide about 30 young African students through the streets. They talk to each other as they walk toward town centre.

CHIARA (to RITA, 14, refugee from Sudan)
I moved to Sydney and I did not know anyone. So I decided to go and see how this thing was. I started with him, and I really enjoyed it. Then I ended up working with him.

CHIARA (to CAMERA)
Sometimes I think if I am in Australia and I did not leave, it’s because I have this job and these relationships. They are the same relationships in my life.

ELISABETH is guiding and talking to kids as they walk

ELISABETH
Keep over on the crossing please. Hi Grace. I like foods from lots of different countries. I like food from Africa. I like food from Iraq. I like food from Afghanistan.
At Cabramatta Plaza, we see part of the African community performing traditional drums. Girls from Capoeira are watching and having fun. RAMA is dressed in Capoeira uniform but with headphones and headband on. He spots the microphone and asks the person who is presenting the event if it is working.

RAMA (to CAMERA)
When I grab the microphone so I can rap,
He came up and started telling me ... no, this isn’t African culture.

At refugee week event MESTRE ROXINHO argues with his African refugee students about Rap and its origins.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
Rap ... This is too much!

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
In Africa ... Our culture ... We Rap! Burundi, Tanzania, they rap!

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
From America.

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
No! Swahili, our language. They rap. I saw it.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
No, rap is made in America.

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
America, they copy Africa.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
Read the history. You have to read the history. It could be now in Africa, Rap. But coming from U.S.

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
No Master, they copy us. We start!

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
Read the history!

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
Rap come from America?

MAKOR, 15, refugee from Sudan (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
Didn’t it come from Africa?

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
My rap is right, man.

RAMA now raps (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
If you are black American, you are African
If you don’t agree, remember the history
Long long time ago.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
The history, what they try to do?
They try to make you forget.

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
If I was gonna rap. It would be good if I rap in my language. But I was gonna rap in English. And that wasn’t good, because that wasn’t part of Africa. He did good job to stop me there.

We see people dancing at the Refugee Week event. We see MESTRE ROXINHO and MAKOR sitting and chatting.

MAKOR (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
I don’t want to do Capoeira anymore.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to MAKOR)
What did you say?

MAKOR (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
I don’t want to do Capoeira anymore.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to MAKOR)
Can you say it in Portuguese, please?

MAKOR (to PAULO behind the camera)
Paulo, can you tell him I don’t want to do Capoeira?

MAKOR (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
It’s getting boring.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to MAKOR)
It doesn’t get boring, you know that!

MAKOR (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
You do nothing!

MESTRE ROXINHO (to MAKOR)
We’ll get there!

MAKOR (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
We never! I’m gonna leave next month and I’m not going to do it again! And I will see ... I will come
back next year. I’m serious … I am not going to do it this year. I don’t want to do again next year.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to MAKOR)
Why?

MAKOR (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
I told you already, hey.

TRANSITION
Two Chinese women sing a traditional acapella song. We see Capoeira crew getting ready.

WOMAN ON MICROPHONE introduces the Capoeira group
This is one of our local high schools. They are going to be performing for us.

MESTRE ROXINHO (in Portuguese)
Chiara, take your position.

WOMAN ON MICROPHONE continues
This is Refugee Week in Cabramatta! Welcome everyone.

NARRATION
It was time to play Capoeira, but the kids had gone walkabout.

We see ELISABETH rushing through the crowd looking for RAMA.

ELISABETH
Rama, Rama?

MESTRE ROXINHO (to STUDENTS)
I need everybody here. If you don’t wanna do it, you should not come before (in the first place). Now you get here, you have to do it.

WOMAN ON MICROPHONE PRESENTING REFUGEE WEEK
Alright everyone … What is going on here?

MESTRE ROXINHO (to STUDENTS)
No, I need you now … here. Rama, can you sit down please?

MESTRE ROXINHO and his crew start playing Capoeira Angola. It is not their best moment as a group. ROXINHO sings “Paranaê”. After the presentation MESTRE ROXINHO gathers them.
MESTRE ROXINHO (to STUDENTS)
Can you see how bad it is what you guys did?

CHARITY BOSCO, 14, refugee from Kenya (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
Yes, it was very bad.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to STUDENTS)
What do you think about respect?

MESTRE ROXINHO (to camera, in Portuguese)
This happens because they are given too much. And they are not asked anything in return. When things are given for free, you lose respect and everything is at loss. This lack of discipline is not because my project is not good. It’s because other people who work with them don’t require anything in return and treat them as ill people, who will never recover. Then, they will live their lives as ill people. For me, this is a lie. They can recover. They can respect. They can participate. They can take on responsibility. They can do all of that. But you need to be tough … you need to ask back.

ELISABETH (to MIRIAM B)
Miriam, would you like a drink? Have you ever had one at Gloria Jeans?

MIRIAM B, refugee from Burundi (to ELISABETH)
No.

JOHA KANYAMNEZA, 14, refugee from Burundi (to ELISABETH)
Do they sell water?

ELISABETH (to MIRIAM B AND JOHA)
If you want water, you can have water. But you can have whatever you like. Because there is only two of you. I don’t have to buy lots.

MIRIAM B (to ELISABETH)
It’s coffee miss.

ELISABETH (to MIRIAM B AND JOHA)
It’s coffee, but they have lots of other things. Ice chocolate … ooo, I don’t know what a Tim-Tam drink is; chocolate chillers.

MIRIAM B (to ELISABETH)
Just a juice.
ELISABETH (to MIRIAM B AND JOHA)
Would you like a mango, or strawberry or mixed berry? What’s your favourite?

MIRIAM B AND JOHA
Mango.

TRANSITION SHOT
Time-lapse of clouds and roof-tops.
Credit: September 2010.

We see the Point of View of PAULO setting up the camera on school grounds, outside the School’s gymnasium. Hand-held camera frames IZAHAKI, 13 year-old refugee boy from Burundi, who is observing PAULO.

NARRATION
The following week I was setting up the camera when Capoeira student, ISAAC, asked if he could film. I was teaching him how to use the camera, when the Deputy Principal, arrived to express his concerns with the Capoeira project.

We see kids, MESTRE ROXINHO and ELISABETH waiting outside the gymnasium for the Capoeira Class to start. BRENDAN walks toward ELISABETH.

BRENDAN (to ELISABETH)
How long is this Capoeira going on for?

NARRATION
We filmed the scene together both of us holding the camera.

BRENDAN (to ELISABETH)
Do not think doing welfare or treating these kids differently will do them any favour. It’s not. Getting them an education and getting marks, it’s going to do them favours. I am not convinced that this is. Frankly and really, next year I am going to sink it.

ELISABETH (to BRENDAN)
Are you?

BRENDAN (to ELISABETH)
I am going to try my best.

ELISABETH (to BRENDAN)
Don’t you dare!
BRENDAN (to ELISABETH)
Yes I will. Unless these kids start behaving themselves better, it’s not gonna happen!

ELISABETH (to BRENDAN)
Well, I think you might find that they would be behaving even worse.

BRENDAN (to ELISABETH)
Then I’d just expel them. It is very simple.

ELISABETH (to BRENDAN)
You haven’t had to live through war. You haven’t had to live through seeing your family killed, your house destroyed … the dislocation.

BRENDAN (to ELISABETH)
No, I quite agree.

ELISABETH (to BRENDAN)
So you can’t say that it doesn’t affect them.

BRENDAN (to ELISABETH)
I agree with all of that. So why can’t Capoeira happen after school?

ELISABETH (to BRENDAN)
Because we negotiated with Beth that doing it during school time was going to be a much more effective way of doing it. Brendan, Friday afternoon is not a prime learning time, is it? You go around to the other classes.

BRENDAN (to ELISABETH)
But sooner or later you got to draw the line. So what happens that they are misbehaving in periods three and four instead, because their weekend is about to start as of one o’clock?

BRENDAN moves away from ELISABETH and enters the Gymnasium.

ELISABETH (to CAMERA)
Sometimes literacy and numeracy are huge challenges, and while they are necessary, I think they should not be at the expense of trying to develop the artistic side.

CHIARA (to CAMERA)
There is one side of the school that stresses a lot the literacy side, and then there is us – that we do a work using music, movement and culture. They can be seen as two separate ways of looking at it, but I just don’t think they are separate. I do believe, and I think Mestre believes as well, that they gonna need to be able to read and write, to be successful. And I wish to all of them, not to end up being a sheer at Hungry Jacks. So I obviously want them to be able to read and write. I just think that if you had no prior education, or very fragmented one, if you are not able to control yourself and to learn how to deal with the anger or the sadness that you feel inside, then, obviously you’re not going to be able to sit and think about reading and writing.

11. CONFLICT BETWEEN MESTRE ROXINHO AND YOUNG AFRICAN REFUGEES INTENSIFY TO A CRITICAL POINT

MESTRE ROXINHO attempts to start his Capoeira class, but students seem dispersed.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to AZAM AL MOUSAWI, 14, refugee from Iraq)
So you are doing this class (Capoeira) or are you going back to school class?

AZAM (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
This class.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to AZAM)
Then get your place in the line.

Chaos seems to be installed in the group. And MESTRE ROXINHO stops the music to speak with kids.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to CHIARA in Portuguese)
I can’t handle this Chiara.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to STUDENTS)
Sit in the circle everybody, even you guys. We spent one hour doing nothing. Before, Elisabeth had a big argument with the guy (Deputy Principal) because he said you don’t deserve this. Because you behave really bad in the school.

Maybe he is right because you come here ... and you need to come with your pants to do the class and you come with a skirt. So you don’t even put in your mind that today is your Capoeira class.
We have to understand how things ...

MESTRE ROXINHO notices RAMA, who is falling asleep and stops what he was saying for a moment.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
Can you sit down properly and stop sleeping because I am talking to you?

RAMA only moves a little

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
Do you know how to sit?

RAMA sits.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to ALL)
Back home there is quite a few young people like you looking for this opportunity to be here, and have this school to learn whatever they have to teach here.

You can get everything because you are a human being ... and you deserve everything good and everything what the other people, white, black, yellow, blue, rich, poor.

Everything that they have you deserve to have too. But everything you can have, you should give a value.

We see Deputy Principal BRENDAN O’BYRNE sitting by his desk. He looks concerned at the camera with a pen in his hands. After a moment of silence, he sits back on his chair.

BRENDAN (to CAMERA)
I’d like to see the evaluation of it. I’d like to see if it has actually produced what it wanted to in the first place. I am not convinced. They are kids basically doing the Capoeira when they feel like it, and other kids hanging around, when they feel like it, which suits them fine. I don’t know if this is really helping them or not.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to CAMERA)
You can see it is good, but somebody from the top want to take away this opportunity from you ... They know they are power ... This is oppression because
they know they are power, so they cannot let you do it.

TRANSITION SHOT
We see MIRIAM and GEMIMAH’s family in their living room singing acapella.

GIRLS singing
You are going through many problems
You don’t know how to solve them
Just remember Jesus is by your side
He will help you and you will make it
You can make it. You can make it
When the lord by your side you can make it
Oh, Brother you can make it

NARRATION
But ROXINHO can’t make it without the support of his students.

We see MESTRE ROXINHO in the classroom with all his students sitting on the floor, listening to him.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to STUDENTS)
So what time you were supposed to be here?

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
1:35pm

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
So why you are here at 2:10pm?

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
We were lost.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
Lost where? I heard you were doing your hair. This is your class. If you have to be here at 1:35, you have to be here 1:35. I can give you trouble at school. We are part of the calendar. This is your class on Friday. Ok, Stand up. Make a line here.

SEVERINO GAPAWA, 16, refugee from Burundi (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
My leg hurts.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to STUDENTS)
You always hurt something. I hurt this, I hurt that. But everything is a lie. When one gets hurt, everybody gets hurt. Hey! This is not “Hippy Hoppy”. Make the line and stay in the line.
CHARITY (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
Not "Hippy Hoppy?"

MESTRE ROXINHO (to CHARITY)
No. Not Hippy Hoppy.

CHARITY laughs

RAMA attempts to leave the room.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
You come here!
No, I can’t do it for you. You don’t do it for me.
You come late to my class. No. No. Take a seat.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to STUDENTS)
Let’s go! Stop talking.

MESTRE ROXINHO is having a hard time controlling the chaotic environment.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to CHIARA)
Stop the music Chiara.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to CHIARA)
Hey, hey … Can you stop talking? In this project, I’ve never sent a student to office, cause I don’t like it. Because I know it does not work for you. But you should be ashamed of yourself and show some respect! And understand this is your class! Anyone talking now, is gonna do 100 negativas (a very physical Capoera movement) on the side of the room.

STUDENTS continue talking.

MESTRE ROXINHO points to ABDHARI RASHID, 15, refugee from Burundi, who is at the back of the class.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to ABDHARI)
Come here! You. You come and do negativa and count for me. I changed my mind. Everyone is going to do it. We are a group.

STUDENTS complain, but do what he asked.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to GROUP)
We are group … if you keep talking … it’s double!
Negativa … One … Two … Stay there … Count.

STUDENTS
Five.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to GROUP)
Three, three ... if you are laughing it is 10 negativas more ... this way ... count.

STUDENTS
Seven.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to GROUP)
Five!
Don’t put your knees on the ground.

CHARITY (to STUDENTS who are talking in class)
Stop talking or we got to do more!

MESTRE ROXINHO (to GROUP)
No knees on the ground, no laying down.

RAMA (to GROUP)
Rita is in the wrong class, can someone collect her?

MESTRE ROXINHO
We going to do 200. I am not funny here. I am taking it serious and you don’t get it.

STUDENTS
One, Two, Three.

MESTRE ROXINHO
Ok, Stop and start again, because Abdhari was doing nothing.

RAMA approaches the exit door.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
Take a seat.

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
I need to go to class.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
Sit down!

STUDENTS continue
35, 36, 37 ...

MESTRE ROXINHO
No, no, we are going to start again because some people stop.
STUDENTS continue 58, 59, 60.

STUDENTS crash on the floor tired. RAMA approaches the exit door again.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
Rama!

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
Please Master, don’t make me angry.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
You gonna get angry? You go back and sit there! You don’t have the right to get angry.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to GROUP)
I am doing this to all of you because I can see how difficult it is to communicate with you. And my concern is, how it is going to be in a couple of years ahead. Almost always you listen to 50cents from USA, because you think he is black and from African diaspora. It is bullshit!

STUDENTS react to MESTRE ROXINHO’s swear word.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to KIDS)
You know why? Because you change. You change the way you dress, the way you understand your people. You forget about your music. You forget about your country.

RAMA approaches the exit door again.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
Rama, stay here.

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
I am going Master, this is no good.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to CHIARA)
Tell him to return or I will suspend him.

CHIARA (to RAMA)
Why do you let things go this far? What is the point? You don’t like his class?

MESTRE ROXINHO goes outside to rescue the situation. He puts his arms around RAMA and takes him back into the classroom.
MESTRE ROXINHO (to RAMA)
Come in, Come in.

RAMA (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
No, Master.

TRANSITION SCENE
We see the BOYS’ rap group, the KING KONG BROTHERS, singing in the music clip “Who We Really Are”.

KING KONG BROTHERS sing
We are the niggers from Africa, Africa
I’m the nigger from the Africa, Africa.

12. CREATIVE FILM WORKSHOP ATTEMPT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN MESTRE ROXINHO AND YOUNG PARTICIPANTS

At the school library, PAULO has gathered all students. We see them all listening to PAULO.

NARRATION
The tensions between ROXINHO and his students intensified. Chaos was let loose both in the Capoeira classes and in the film workshops. I started questioning how much I was contributing to this. I decided to show the film we were making to the group, so they could see themselves represented and could help us work out what was happening.

PAULO (to GROUP)
I recognise that at the end of the year you guys are full of things happening at the same time. There is camp, there is drumming, there is church, soccer, exams … sometimes to take on board Capoeira and film on top of that can be too much.

So instead of pushing you some sort of interview exercise, I thought I would screen to us what we’ve done throughout the year, so you guys can understand what I am doing and what you are doing, and how the two things are looking like. And then I’d like to get your opinion. This is a little microphone. I will put here in the middle, and you guys throw it around and speak what you think about what you see.

Short segment of film screens. STUDENTS react. Film ends. PAULO gives mic to STUDENTS
PAULO (to GROUP)
Microphone here. Pass it around to who wants to speak.

DEBORAH (to PAULO)
It was good because we learned how to cooperate and self respect.

PAULO (to GROUP)
Do you all agree that you have learned how to behave?

DIEME (to PAULO)
People who say they agree that their behaviour changed ... no. I am one of those people who have not agreed to anything yet.

MIRIAM (to PAULO)
He always tells us that we are changing our identity. He never says something good about us. He is always saying bad stuff, criticising us. It is not good. If he wants us to change, he better change too.

EVELYN (to PAULO)
It is not his fault, because we never do anything right.

DIEME (to PAULO)
We spend half hour or 45 mins doing nothing.

MAKOR (to PAULO)
It is not “we”. It is some of them. You can’t say “we”, because I am not in it. I listen. I can say who, do you want me to say?

GROUP (to MAKOR)
No!

MAKOR (to GROUP)
Ok.

JONES (to PAULO)
Sometimes he says it is our culture to do Capoeira ... But we are not used to it as he is.

MAKOR (to JONES)
You don’t like it, don’t come!

HUNKUN BOSCO, 15, refugee from Sudan (to PAULO)
He should be more tougher and kick people out. People don’t listen, he gives too many chances.

PAULO (to GROUP)
So, Hunkun was saying that maybe if he is even tougher ... will put people out and the people who like it will stay, then the class will improve.

HUNKUN (to PAULO)
All those people who keep on complaining, they shouldn’t come. They keep on coming and they don’t wanna do it, and they stop other people who wanna do it from improving.

MIGARET (to PAULO)
He needs to take it easy on us. If we are into hip hop, we are a new generation. We have to experience new stuff, you know what I mean? If he is into Capoeira and he has been doing it for so long. If he wants to teach us so that we can teach to our generations, he needs to take it slow on us.

RAMA (to PAULO)
Africa is big. It’s a continent actually, and there is a lot of country in it. So maybe he went to the wrong place.

STUDENTS laugh.

PAULO (to GROUP)
It’s not a joke!

RAMA (to PAULO)
He went to the wrong place and he didn’t see those people doing hip hop.

NARRATION
It was interesting that instead of speaking about the film and our creative process, we ended up debating their relationship with ROXINHO. I then realised how entangled both the Capoeira and film projects were at this moment.

TRANSITION SCENE
We see JONES singing at the “Who We Really Are” music clip with the KING KONG BROTHERS

JONES sings
I’m here at Cabra High
Lewis from behind
Abdhari on my right
Lawless on my left
I got my niggers around me
Supporting me OMG
What is it gonna be?
Blood on my knee
Fighting for my homies
KKB, that is the King Kong Brothers.

JONES (to PAULO)
You know, hip hop is like enjoying ourselves. It’s good!

DIEME (to GROUP)
When it comes to Capoeira time, we must take it as Capoeira time.

NARRATION
We had already passed our time. Everybody was hungry, but I still wanted to talk about our film workshops.

PAULO (to GROUP)
We only have two more weeks to go and I’d like to know who wants. I want six people who want to participate with me, and work out what we are going to do from now on. And I don’t want to impose; I want to talk about it. Do you want to do it?

STUDENTS (to PAULO)
Can I do it Paulo? Paulo, Paulo.

PAULO (to GROUP)
We need to listen to each other. We are on the right time to leave. There are few issues going around here. One of them is very important. It’s about disclosure – making the film public or not making the film public.

STUDENTS (to PAULO)
Public … No, private, private … Just for us to see.

PAULO (to GROUP)
Which movie you don’t want in public?

We hear many different opinions. There is a moment of chaos. In the background we see ELISABETH carrying a box with lunch. She listens to the classroom conversation.

RAMA (to PAULO)
We did understand what you said. You said like this. First of all, when we do the video, you are going to put on facebook. We check if it’s good or bad. We see which places we going to change. Later on we come to tell you. This place change, change… Then after, when everybody says it’s good, then we can put it in public.

RITA (to GROUP)
That is what he said!

DEBORAH (to GROUP)
We all want private yeah?

Various STUDENTS respond
Yeah!

DEBORAH (to GROUP)
So we can see it ourselves!

STUDENTS
Yes!

DEBORAH (to GROUP)
But we know each other! What is the point?

HUNKUN (to GROUP)
You guys knew it was going to be public, anyway. He told us in the beginning!

MIRIAM (to GROUP)
I am just saying … Look … The film that you took of “Mama”, you didn’t edit that much, and we were wearing our school uniform.I liked it, but it’s just that you said it was going to be only on “Framing The Circle”. Because I don’t like to put films of myself for everyone else to see.

CHARITY (to PAULO)
You know when we’re dancing “Mama” and we were wearing our school uniform? Just put black and white in it!

GEMIMA (to PAULO)
So people don’t know that we were wearing our school uniform. But it’s too late now.

ELISABETH (to CHARITY and to the GROUP)
Charity, would you please shut up! Every one of you! We want to just make some simple decisions. There is some food for you. You need to go home soon! But no
one seems to have any self-discipline! We need to take turns! We wanna solve this in a mature way!
But you are acting like my three-year-old grandson! We’ve got a wonderful film. We need to just have one person talking at a time. And people listening to each other. A little bit of respect! You guys are so lucky to have Paulo to be helping you!

STUDENTS clap hands.

ELISABETH continues
At the moment ... Do you know what you are treating him like? S. H. I. T.!

STUDENTS react
Wow! What is that?

ELISABETH continues
You should know it! That is how you are treating him! Now, would you S. H. U. T. U. P. and sit and listen for a while! People bend over backwards to do good things for you. And you are just like throwing back all the shit. So shut up and listen for a while!

TRANSITION VIGNETTE
Time-lapse of clouds moving in the sky, Sydney downtown. Kids arrive at Capoeira class. All fast motion and to the sound of kids’ beat-box.

13. MESTRE ROXINHO ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE TENSIONS BY INVITING BOYS FOR A WEEKEND WITH HIM

NARRATION
The following Friday, ROXINHO had planned to take the boys for a surprise weekend with him. This was the way he had found to re-connect with them. But no one knew that this was about to happen.

We see MESTRE ROXINHO telling the boys about their coming weekend.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to the BOYS)
Today I pick you up, you go to my house, we stay today, tomorrow, till Sunday after lunch. If you have soccer, I drive you to the soccer. We stay in the soccer then drive back then afternoon we go home. It’s just for us to enjoy time together.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to ELISABETH)
Can you write for me a permission form?

ELISABETH (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
Permission form?

MESTRE ROXINHO (to ELISABETH)
To say they are coming today, staying with me in my place. We go watch movie and stuff, until Sunday. Just to the parents to sign.

ELISABETH (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
Right, ok!

MESTRE ROXINHO (to ELISABETH)
It’s easy. Just to the parents: “I’d like to invite your child to stay with me”.

ELISABETH (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
Maybe … At what date this is.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to ELISABETH)
Today, tomorrow and Sunday.

ELISABETH (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
Of this weekend?

MESTRE ROXINHO (to ELISABETH)
This weekend.

We see MESTRE ROXINHO driving a car. It is the car he will use to collect the kids. While he drives he reflects on the situation.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to PAULO)
I keep asking myself what is going on. Maybe I am stupid because I am very connected to my culture. Yes, that makes me feel like going back home. I have a lot of people around, but I am still alone. Because we are not fighting for the same thing.

PAULO (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
You said you are happy and sad. You spoke about being sad … Can you say something about the happy?

MESTRE ROXINHO (to PAULO)
I am happy because I am still healthy, I am still strong, I still believe what I believe, I still know who I am, I still know where I come from, I still know where I can go back to, because I know where I come from … That is why I am happy. And I am safe because they can’t change my mind.
NARRATION
After collecting a car that was big enough to fit everyone, ROXINHO returned to school to get the permission forms from ELISABETH. Next, he went to pick them up from their homes.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to PAULO, as he drives)
I don’t feel comfortable to see the way they are changing. I cannot see their identity, so I want to try to help.

We see the van parked in front of school. LEWIS HANTENGIMANA, 15, refugee from Burundi is standing outside the van asking MESTRE ROXINHO details of the weekend.

LEWIS (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
Where we are going to go?

MESTRE ROXINHO (to LEWIS)
I live in Bronte. It’s near the beach, near Bondi. We going to the beach, we go to the city, we watch movie home.

From inside the van we see that we are parked in front of JONES’ home, where his father is asking MESTRE ROXINHO about the details of the weekend.

JONES (translating for his father)
You know, Sunday … because I go to church …

MESTRE ROXINHO (to JONES)
I take you there.

LEWIS’ home.

MESTRE ROXINHO to LEWIS’ father
I came here to teach Capoeira Angola.

RAMA’s home.

MESTRE ROXINHO to RAMA
Take the permission form. Your name here, your parents sign here.

RAMA
I sleep here. Sometimes I sleep here.

JONES is on the car, writing his rap on a school laptop. He reads the lyrics.
JONES
King Kong Brothers
Niggers from Africa Africa
Always forever, it’s now or never
God you are so clever. NT is my name
Always on the streets, playing a baseball game
Damn, it’s like a hall of fame.
Don’t give me the blame, I took the shame.

RAMA is on the car, writing his rap on a school laptop.

RAMA (to PAULO)
How do you spell lawyer?

MESTRE ROXINHO (to HUNKUN)
Stay in the car.

JOHA’s home. FAMILY MEMBER speaks as he watches boys’ DVD.

FAMILY MEMBER
These boys are cool. I didn’t expect anything from them (that) they can sing like this.

They are driving towards the city as it is getting dark.
We see the Harbour Bridge at sunset.

NARRATION
After a long week at school, their surprise weekend with ROXINHO started with a traditional game of Capoeira Angola in the centre of Sydney.

We see a Capoeira group about to start a Capoeira Angola game at MESTRE ROXINHO’s Capoeira Angola school in the heart of Sydney. MESTRE ROXINHO organises the circle of practice telling the position of participants.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to CAPOEIRA PLAYERS in the circle)
Hunkun, move this way, Frederik, move here.

MESTRE ROXINHO starts playing the key instrument in the Capoeira orchestra, the berimbau. He calls for the physical game to start. We see kids interacting with adults in the game. They are really engaged. We see details of MESTRE ROXINHO’s school, like the altar for African-Brazilian religion of Candomblé. We see kids observing these details.

NARRATION
The weekend to strengthen their relationship followed with a soccer game at Bondi beach, next morning.

We see kids playing soccer. As they finish the soccer game and walk exit the beach, we see that SEVERINO is wearing a big hip-hop style belt.

NARRATION
This weekend, there was no space for hip-hop fashion …

MESTRE ROXINHO (to SEVERINO)
You give me this belt, and I give you a new belt. I have it at home … We are changing at home.

We see MESTRE ROXINHO arriving at his home with the boys. Everybody leaves their shoes outside.

NARRATION
… nor for the video clips we produced together.

RAMA
Master, give us the video … Not all of us are going to cook!

MESTRE ROXINHO (to BOYS)
I want everybody to cook.

We see all the boys in the kitchen helping out with the cooking.

NARRATION
This weekend, ROXINHO was in control of the content.

TRANSITION VIGNETTE
We see time-lapse shot of Sydney centre at night.

14. SCHOOL AND YOUNG PARTICIPANTS ATTEMPTING TO RESOLVE THEIR TENSIONS

NARRATION
Meanwhile, EVELYN and the other girls organised a surprise birthday party for ROXINHO and CHIARA.
At Cabramatta High School we see YOUNG PARTICIPANTS hugging MESTRE ROXINHO and CHIARA and wishing them happy birthday. They eat cake together.

NARRATION
It was November, the year was ending and it was time to reconcile and talk about the future of the group. From behind my camera I was thinking that my time with them was ending, and that next year I was no longer going to run film workshops or film their Capoeira classes. I had the feeling this was a delicate moment to end this story, with still a lot to be lived and resolved.

ELISABETH (to GROUP)
I really have some serious things to say today, so I really want you listening hard. What happened on Wednesday was just a build up of a lot of anger and frustration I was feeling. I’ve written up on the board: “We feel good, when life feels fair”. It makes us feel good when there is a give and a take. Sometimes I felt that all we’ve got from you has been rudeness: “No … I’m not going to do anything… I’m going now! Good-bye!”. And that makes us all feel like we’re not getting much out of the relationship! And when that balance isn’t there, you sort of feel … Why bother!

I’ve said enough mestre. Is there anything you’d like to say, or Chiara, or Paulo?

STUDENTS clap at the end of ELISABETH’s speech.

CHIARA (to GROUP)
Take this time that you have now in this school where you are really supported, and believe me, we are going to a lot of different schools and you are very lucky here. Take your time today that there is Elisabeth, there is me, there is Mestre; that we are supporting you. That every time someone comes and says you are not worth it, we say “no, they are”. Take this time to discover for yourself why you are worth it. Who you are … and prepare this answer for when in five years, they are gonna ask you, or they are not gonna give you a job, or they want to fire you from the job. And I think you are loosing an opportunity, a big opportunity to get to know yourself, and to have a good answer for this. That is it.
STUDENTS clap hands.

15. BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS – RE-UNITING BLACKNESS AND GIVING THE GROUP EXPERIENCE A MEANING

We see MESTRE ROXINHO in Ecamar – his school of Capoeira Angola, in Sydney.

NARRATION
November is “Black Consciousness Month” in Brazil. It acknowledges the lives of important black leaders, such as Zumbi Dos Palmares, who fought for the freedom of slaves in the seventeenth century, and Pastinha, the Master who organised Capoeira Angola practice in the 1930s.

That’s why ROXINHO held his annual Capoeira Angola Encounters in November. In 2010, the second Youth Encounter gathered students from the various schools ROXINHO and CHIARA taught. The special guest for this event was respected Mestre AUGUSTO JANUÁRIO. ROXINHO and CHIARA had worked really hard to make this event happen.

At Cabramatta High School outdoor space, during a class interval, ELISABETH passes by.

ELISABETH (to GROUP)
Let’s hop inside, to have a quick meeting (inside).

The GROUP is now inside the school theatre. Listening to ELISABETH.

ELISABETH (to GROUP)
I was so proud of you last week when you showed me how beautifully you can behave. You know how to do the right things. So, let’s see if this wonderful weekend that is coming up. With people that have come from other countries, who practice Capoeira, can share with you and you can share with them. And just show them what fine people you are.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to GROUP)
We’ve been working the whole year to make this happen for you. I want you all to be there tomorrow. Mestre Augusto is already here. And a lot of people arrive tonight from overseas, just for this special event. It’s for you. Church you have the whole year,
So, one Sunday, God understands, doesn’t matter. It’s ok, God understands.

ABDHARI (to MESTRE ROXINHO)
The food is Halal?

MESTRE ROXINHO (to ABDHARI)
Yes, the food in Halal.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to ALL)
If you have your pants become small. Bring it because I can give it to another student and give you a new one. I see you all tomorrow. It’s gonna be a very good weekend. We gonna do lots of good things.

Screen credit: 13 November
A large bus arrives at Capoeira School in the city where youth encounter is about to start. Participants come out of the bus and walk towards the Capoeira school, where city students are at the door, greeting them. As LEWIS walks up the stairs he takes his earphones off.

NARRATION
In this event, the diverse African stories met far from Cabramatta High School, far from the SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, the PSYCHOLOGIST, the DEPUTY. The different location and the presence of different authorities, like MESTRE AUGUSTO, helped giving a new meaning to a difficult year.

We see kids observing the instruments and pictures hanging on the walls, inside MESTRE ROXINHO’s school. There are pictures of Capoeira players from around the world. Some are of old black masters from Brazil, such as Mestre Pastinha.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to PARTICIPANTS)
Today is the anniversary of death of Mestre Pastinha. Mestre Pastinha is the Master on the top (pointing to the wall, where his picture is hung). He gave big contribution for us to have Capoeira Angola today. Mestre Pastinha for sure is going to be here with us, and is going to make everything really strong, and everybody is gonna be happy, and we are gonna learn more Capoeira Angola. And for the second (time) participating in the Youth Encounter we have Mestre Augusto here.

Everyone claps.
MESTRE AUGUSTO (to PARTICIPANTS - in Portuguese)

The basic movement in Capoeira is called "ginga". Everyone has their own "ginga". It's like a fingerprint. The ginga is the dance of Capoeira. The dance is accompanied by the music. The music is played by an orchestra. Curiously, all instruments are of African origin. Also, the roots of Capoeira are in Africa. Pastinha is the first Master to organise Capoeira Angola. He used to say that Capoeira is the slave-fight for freedom. Its beginnings had no method and its end is inconceivable by the wisest of all masters. This means that we will die training Capoeira without knowing it in its entirety.

Master Pastinha used to say:
"Capoeira is all that the mouth can eat".
"It is all that God gives".
"It is affirmative. It carries truth".
"It is negative. It negates men their own death".
So, you need to take Capoeira from within yourself and put it out to the world. Let's share our energy, our spirit!

MESTRE ROXINHO sings a song in honor of Mestre Pastinha

Mr. Pastinha asked us to say ...
Capoeira Angola cannot end.

CHIARA (to CAMERA)
In 2010, when we did the Youth Encounter, and I saw how the young people got involved with the Mestre that came. For me that was a good ending! Because 2011 started with a very different note.

Various sequences of games of Capoeira Angola showing the kids’ engagement at the Youth Encounter.

Encounter ends. Everybody claps.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to PARTICIPANTS)
You are very lucky because Mestre Augusto is like a diamond inside Capoeira Angola.

Participants clap hands.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to PARTICIPANTS)
The elders, they have the knowledge.
The older​s have the information to educate us for the future. Like the Grandma here (pointing to an old lady in the audience).

People clap hands. Old woman smiles.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to PARTICIPANTS)
They have the real, precious knowledge.

16. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON THE EXPERIENCE, ON WHO WE REALLY ARE, ON AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM, ON THE DOCUMENTARY INDUSTRY - PARTICIPANTS’ FUTURES AND EXPECTATIONS

NARRATION

This event marked the end of an intense year for all of us. From here on, I took a break from filming and focused on going through the footage we had shot. It was time to reflect on “Who We Really Were” in multicultural Australia. Have we helped fill in the TV representation gap I had proposed in the beginning of this film?

Do stories of individuals like us help to fashion the Australian multicultural narrative? Or is it totally reliant on the White Australian men who have historically managed the Australian multicultural channel?

The answers to these questions may come over time, when we discover how this film makes its way to its audience. And if the dominant British narrative models will give way to more diverse ways of telling stories.

In 2012, I returned to school to see how they were going.

We see Cabramatta High School.

ELISABETH (to CAMERA)
I can’t say strongly enough that I think it’s been the long-term connection that has been one of the most beneficial things.

CHIARA (to CAMERA)
The first year they were just coming because they enjoyed it. The second year they started to question it. The third year they started to think about what
is it that I can do with this? We’ve been together with them now close to five years.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to CAMERA)
The year before I said it would be tough. The year after I said, we gonna have better communication. You started to grow up.

ELISABETH (to CAMERA)
Yeah, the kids have changed.

MIRIAM and EVELYN (sing together to CAMERA)
No, no. It ain’t the way it used to be Yes, yes, it is getting harder to believe When I think about my blessings I am telling you god’s been good to me.

HUNKUN (to CAMERA)
Last year, between me, MAKOR and EVELYN, we went on a trip to New Zealand. We went down with Mestre’s other students. Other people came from around the world. They had been doing Capoeira for a while … more than us. The way they grew so much, I just wanted to pull myself into it more and more, working a bit harder to come back in the next encounter to show what I have learned.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to CAMERA)
I believe the next generation to teach Project Bantu can be the young people from Project Bantu.

HUNKUN (to CAMERA)
Mestre wanted us to get some work experience before we finished high school. We started going to other classes, following him around.

EVELYN (to CAMERA)
Mestre saw how I go all the time, how I try so hard. Even if he do hard moves, I don’t give up. I just keep doing it. So Mestre told me: “do you like to come to Alice Springs with me and teach the Aborigines? I love Aborigines”.

Screen credit: Alice Springs – March 2012.

We see pictures of EVELYN and MAKOR in Alice Springs teaching Capoeira to young Aboriginal people.

NARRATION
Without the financial support to follow them on their journeys, they kept me up to date with the videos they recorded on their cell phones. The images revealed an Australia under construction, and stories that were not mediated by white Australian men.

We see MAKOR and EVELYN teaching young aborigines.

MAKOR (to YOUNG ABORIGINES)
Hi everybody. I’m Makor, this is Evelyn. That is Mestre and Chiara. We are from Project Bantu.

MAKOR (to camera)
I am surprised that the kids listen to us now. It’s pretty cool.

MAKOR (to YOUNG ABORIGINES)
First I am going to show you guys the music. We are going to tell you instrument names and everything.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to YOUNG ABORIGINES, as he plays the musical instrument called berimbau)
Can you say Berimbau?

YOUNG ABORIGINES
Berimbau!

MAKOR (to YOUNG ABORIGINES)
This is the Pandeiro

(YOUNG ABORIGINES don’t respond)

Pandeiro

(YOUNG ABORIGINES don’t respond)

Pandeiro?
Pan ... dei ... ro

YOUNG ABORIGINES
Pandeiro

EVELYN teaching
This is the Atabaque
Say Atabaque.

YOUNG ABORIGINES
Atabaque

EVELYN (to CAMERA)
I know Mestre trusts me. So one day, I will be like him. If I know the kid and I saw them doing bad. I will ask them. I would love to be like Mestre.

CHIARA (interviews EVELYN)
Do you enjoy teaching?

EVELYN (to CHIARA)
I love teaching!

CHIARA (being interviewed by EVELYN)
I had tears in my eyes when I had two African kids that were my kids, that I had been living with for the past four, five years, teach indigenous kids in Australia ... To me that is a sign that I’ve been here for five years and it made sense. Sometimes I wake up in the morning and I ask myself, “why am I here and why I am not in my country with my family?” And when I experience these kinds of things ... then I see ... Ok ... I got a reason to be here.

Screen credit: Cabramatta High School – August 2012.

ELISABETH (to CAPOEIRA STUDENTS)
Our special people, Evelyn, Hunkun and Makor, are going to be running the class.

EVELYN is nervous about teaching
I don’t know what I am going to do!

EVELYN teaches the Capoeira class with MAKOR and HUNKUN.

ELISABETH (to CAMERA)
Originally I would not have picked them as people who would stand as leaders. But they certainly have been amazing in that transformation from being such trying kids to being just really beautiful gorgeous people.

RAMA rapping (to CAMERA)
This is my life, this is my legacy
What I’ve been through, just let me see
The blue up on my homies won’t let me be
Just fighting for this crap and for the money
This is my life, my philosophy
It’s full of desires, full of controversy
Pain in my heart, make me weak at knees
Nothing in life will ever be free
I’m trying to live in peace, why can’t you see
This is my life and always will be
ELISABETH (to CAMERA)
He was uncooperative. He was often disrespectful and cheeky.

RAMA (to CAMERA)
I feel like all the community was challenging me. They were pressuring me. You are doing this, you are going the wrong direction, the wrong way.

ELISABETH (to CAMERA)
When we made a visit to his home with Mestre and Chiara ... and talked through things with his parents and with Rama.

MESTRE ROXINHO (to CAMERA)
We explained to the mother and father how their children were doing in school. And if they follow up or not.

RAMA (to CAMERA)
So me and Mestre Roxinho ... our relationship broke out.

ELISABETH (to CAMERA)
I think it was a real turning point in his understanding of where he was headed. He has had an amazing transformation too.

MIRIAM AND EVELYN singing
You may think I got it easy
But it’s not the way it’s always been
But that is not really my story
I tell you how it all happen
I had to work real hard to get here
But I didn’t do it all alone
Someone was watching over me
That is why I sing this song.

MIRIAM (to CAMERA)
I really want to get into music. But I am afraid cause I didn’t do music in high school. So, I am just trying to find a way of how to get into it.

RAMA (to CAMERA)
I don’t really know about my future yet. So I can say I have plan B, but I don’t have plan A. My plan B - I am trying to do business ... but if that doesn’t work. I don’t know what God has planned for me yet.

EVELYN (to CAMERA)
I want to go back to Uganda so I can find my real dad.

We see time-lapse aerial of a neighbourhood in São Paulo, Brazil.

Credit: São Paulo, Brazil

Then we see PAULO with his partner, then PAULO with his family in their home, in Brazil.

NARRATION
By learning about everyone’s journeys and stories, I reflected on my own. I realised it had been 14 years since I lived in Brazil, I was already 46, my parents were getting old and I had this urge to reconcile with all of this, before it was too late. I decided to move back to Brazil to give a meaning to my own story.

Time-lapse of PAULO and his family in Brazil.

NARRATION
Before going, I screened the roughcut of this documentary to the group. There were tears, reconciliations, and a perception that we were really connected.

We see KIDS sing Happy Birthday to PAULO.

MESTRE ROXINHO
If I did something wrong with my own children to be away from them, they can see this video and see I am not playing. I am doing something serious and good.
END CREDITS

PRODUCED AND EDITED BY Paulo Alberton

Produced as part of a Doctorate of Creative Arts at the UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY

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SONGS
"Regional Break"
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"Who We Really Are"
King Kong Brothers
& Harmony Girls

"Life Story"
Jones Ntungwanayo

"Mama"
Rama Kayungu

"Songs played in the classrooms"
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