

Beyond the Mask of Technology: Educational Equity and the Pedagogy of Hope¹

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Technology is a word that in everyday contemporary parlance masks the back regions of a sociocultural terrain whose stratigraphy continues to be defined by certain invidious distinctions. Talk about technology and education divides along a fault line between those who attempt to project happy scenes of classrooms full of excited children huddled around computer screens with smiley faces, and those warning about the perils lurking behind the screen's satanic grin. With the enormous multi-national effort to load schools up with new wiring and computers (even if they are more often than not castoff machines), the issues of real availability and access to useful and useable tools are often disguised, caught in webs of significance that remain unspoken and unexamined. Anthropologists can play a crucial role both in offering a hard look at technology and also in playing a more activist role in helping to extend access to youth from excluded populations while working with educators to shape technology-based learning activities that give those youth greater power over their own learning about the world and their place in it.

It is customary for scholars to build their arguments on the most recent findings, dating back no more than a decade or so. While this practice has the effect of demonstrating how up to date we are as scholars, we prefer here to reach back a bit further into the anthropological repertoire and show how up to date the work of another scholar is. We look at two classic articles from the last century by anthropologist Gerald Berreman (1962, 1988) and suggest how their combined conceptual hardware equips us to understand clearly and account for ourselves unequivocally in order to act upon a complex contemporary phenomenon.

I.

“Nearly every school is now equipped with computers, and over two-thirds of our nation's children have access at home,” (Shields and Behram 2000:4) reports a recent article on the positive and negative effects of children's use of computer technology in the U.S. Widespread coverage in the mass media cite the Center for Educational Statistics' recent findings that approximately 96 percent of schools in the United States are connected to the internet. For those of us who have actually spent time in schools, particularly those in low-income communities, these assertions are at best puzzling examples of extraordinary wishful thinking and at worst exemplars of institutional impression management on the grandest of scales. The reported data

themselves are as verifiable and methodologically reliable as the results of a Florida election.

As part of a multi-regional study of technology availability, access, and use in what the California legislature calls “low-performing schools,” a number of University of California researchers have begun conducting intensive ethnographic observations of resource-poor schools serving diverse students from low-income communities throughout California. Preliminary results suggest that connectivity in these schools and communities—including the basic capacity to conduct electricity—is at best problematic and often nonexistent. In some cases, principals and teachers in these schools expressed the belief that their schools were wired for the internet because, in fact, wires had been installed along their corridors; in most cases, the hallway wires were not connected—they had no drop lines—into any classroom. In other cases, classroom or computer labs had computers in place but not enough plugs or insufficient wattage to make use of the computers practicable. Interestingly, even in schools where computer technology was adequately in place, access to their use was closely guarded by gatekeepers—teachers who had been given the role of technology specialists because they know how to use a computer and who came to view the computer lab as their personal domain to protect. As a result, certain teachers in these schools gain access and not others, and certain students—certain categories of student—tend to get access while others either do not or are allowed to engage only in limited tasks assumed to be at their level of ability.

Ironically, our work in after-school and out-of-school programs suggests that building meaningful learning activities around computer technologies works well for youth who are out of school or not doing well in school. This article focuses on aspects of such programs and is based on several years’ experience of work and observations in California and Brazil. We focus here on an out-of-school program working with “street children” in Brazil (we use the quoted term advisedly, as discussed below). These programs are, of course, what the Brazilian architect and urbanist Jorge Wilhelm has called islands of access in an ocean of exclusion (Wilhelm 2000). Whenever we discuss them, the questions of the “scalability” of these efforts to “serve” more youth and the “viability” of the “interventions” for children and youth living in these circumstances are frequently raised. Through a combined focus on status and social interaction as they relate to the co-construction of nonhierarchical pedagogical relationships, and through examining the role of technological innovation in the transformation of social interactions and relationships, we hope to suggest the power of these programmatic activities in creating, for disenfranchised youth, the sustained sense of the possible and the preferable we call hope—a value-laden word which, as we describe at more length below, we use to indicate not just a nice feeling but in actuality the pragmatic invention of necessity.

It is not surprising that the rapid emergence of new technologies has both followed and revealed the fault lines of social stratification. It is not surprising that

exclusion from technology availability and access follows socially defined notions of race, ethnicity, and caste, just as it is not surprising that children living in poverty in both Brazil and the United States happen to be subject to inclusion within certain birth-ascribed social categories and happen to perform poorly in formal educational settings. "Inclusion and exclusion have become important concepts for analyzing and responding to inequality because of changes affecting the class structure of the industrial countries," as Giddens (1998:103) has suggested. "Computer-aided design and customization, automated storage and distributions systems, and the integration of production with suppliers and customers have all replaced work previously done by hand" (Giddens 1998:103). Understanding the social processes of inclusion and exclusion has accordingly become a crucial theoretical and practical concern. Importantly, this focus is not of peripheral significance to anthropology. It is not about processes of social mobility or adaptation. "Exclusion is not about gradations of inequality, but about mechanisms that act to detach groups of people from the social mainstream" (Giddens 1998:104).

The question is: how do these mechanisms of exclusion work interactionally in the context of systems of birth-ascribed systems of social stratification? It is at this juncture that the analysis of stratified society and the interpretation of culture as symbolic interaction come together as a unified field (Berreman 1962, 1988). As Berreman once noted,

The consequences of birth-ascribed stratification," as someone once noted, "are self-fulfilling and self-perpetuating, for although low status groups do not adopt views of themselves or their statuses which are consistent with the views held by their superiors, they are continually acting them out and cannot avoid internalizing some of them and the self-doubts they engender. [1988:510]

In the case of low status youth in resource-poor schools, while Phillippe Bourgois (1996) cautions against glamorizing adolescents as protopolitical resisters, children do develop, as Robert Coles (1986) suggests, political consciousness at a very early age and are cognizant of their own and their families' status in their immediate social world. Resistance to schooling and other institutional contexts (Fordham and Ogbu 1986; MacLeod 1995; Willis 1981), as well as self-doubts about both their ability and the utility of doing schoolwork, represent key aspects of the interactive dynamic by which low status youth resist or play out their low status. Youth defined in terms of birth-ascribed status, even when in the best intentions described as "at-risk" or "underserved,"

are perceived by those outside their groups almost wholly in terms of their group identity rather than as individuals. They are regarded as sharing the characteristics which are conventionally attributed to the

group and they share the obligations, responsibilities, privileges, and disabilities of their group. [Berreman 1988:503]

Low status youth are seen as all the same, and they themselves recognize this fact. Their performance in school is a pragmatic reading of their audience, their teachers and fellow students. What educators' read as their unresponsiveness, or their inability or unwillingness to learn, more likely represents an attempt at managing an impression of themselves among uncertain—or all too certain—others. As an instance of social interaction, they are attempting “to keep the back region out of the range of the audience's perception; to control the performance, in so far as possible, preferably to an extent unrealized by the audience” (Berreman 1962:11).

II.

What is surprising to some is that children and youth who have never been to school or who have failed miserably in school are able, if given access to informal learning opportunities using computers outside of school, to master computer tools and techniques quickly and become knowledgeable in content areas beyond their supposed grade levels. Clearly, another interactive dynamic is in play. At *Projeto Clicar* in São Paulo, Brazil, children and youth from ages 6-18 come in off the street to engage in a variety of informal learning activities.

At home or in the streets, wherever they may spend most of their time, these youth live with violence and poverty. For these children (youth), like many others, the computer is an instrument (object) that exerts fascination and enchantment while at the same time providing enjoyment. The pleasure of discovery is independent of economic status or social class, the only difference is access. *Projeto Clicar* was developed to provide this access to youth, between 6 and 18 years of age, in this ‘street situation’.... The attendance is spontaneous and the activities [at *Projeto Clicar*] are directed to agree with the interests and objectives of each youth. Through play, learning opportunities are created and notions of respect, self-esteem and companionship are developed. [Revista *Clicar* 1999:3]²

The program is located within *Estação Ciência* (the “Science Station”), an old railway station converted into a science museum and sponsored by the *Universidade de São Paulo*. There, on any given day, one can see hundreds of school children in groups observing exhibits and taking part in activities demonstrating scientific principles and phenomena. Soon after the museum opened, museum workers noticed that in addition to the chaperoned school children, usually neatly dressed and sometimes in school uniforms, other children, wearing dirty, torn clothing, and wandering about the museum without supervision were looking at the exhibits and trying out the computers. It became immediately evident that these were children

living, working and begging in the streets of São Paulo and who are excluded from school and from systems of social assistance and medical care.

Very early, a decision was made not to exclude these youth. “We called a meeting of these street children,” one museum worker told us, “and asked them what they liked. ‘We like the computers!’ they said.” A portion of the museum was set aside specifically and solely for their use. The museum, working with the University and various funders, acquired a few computers, educational software, books, board games, and art supplies. Several educators highly experienced working with *meninos em situação de rua* (rough translation: children living in a street situation) began to work with the children and soon, Projeto Clicar was in full swing, six afternoons a week from one to five. The children arrive in a steady stream precisely when the program opens every day. They enter with set hardened faces, the mask of the street, but soon begin joking with each other and the Projeto Clicar staff, who present adult faces to the children that break their usual expectations of older people as threatening exploitation, abuse, or violence, or on the other hand, fear. Their faces relax as they interact with each other and the staff in a place that is safe for them, where they do not need to keep up their guard.

Our own work with the staff and children of Projeto Clicar began as a result of similar work we were part of in after-school sites in California. After learning about Clicar, we began communicating by e-mail with the educators in Brazil and soon they invited us to visit. This initial invitation led to collaborative research on the problems and strategies appropriate to this difficult work with children and adolescents who live in a constant state of social and personal danger. The youth themselves are in fact collaborators not only by participating in small-group activities, but also by helping to frame the activities and carry out research to improve the activities for the participants. In many cases, they become experts in using the technology available at Projeto Clicar and working out with the staff and each other how to use the technology to discover and learn what they want or need to know about the world and their place in it.

Among the first children to come to Projeto Clicar was Luis Eduardo.³ In his words, “the majority of the people that come and interview me want to know how it was when I lived on the street and that is something that I want to forget.” About Clicar, he comments,

Here a kid can be distracted and forget that drugs and violence exist, not only with the computer but also with pencil and paper.... Clicar is very good for children that don’t have much vision about the future because here they learn many things that they don’t get to at home or in the streets. [RC 1999: 3-4]

Luis Eduardo rapidly became a master at using the computers and at teaching their use to others. Although at times he would disappear for days or weeks at a time, he always returned to work and play on the computers. His mastery keeps the scientists who work at Estação Ciência in awe. He speaks knowledgeably in many areas, but a year ago, when he returned to school, he found it extremely difficult to succeed. The problematic character of his returns to school suggest that while he is able to continue to develop mastery in learning activities in the informal setting that Projeto Clicar provides, the discipline of the institutional structure of formal schooling still presents a formidable challenge. After several years of coming to the program, he took on the role of educator at Projeto Clicar at age 17. Now at the age of 18, he says, "I still feel a part of this project. I am there with the kids and I intend to stay even more connected, to have more responsibility. This is one of the things that I noticed and resolved to do."

Luis Eduardo's comments carry implications both about the children who come to the site and the pedagogical strategies used there. Many of the children have either never gone to school or stopped going after two or three years. Some arrive not knowing how to read or write. Importantly, although identified as "street children," some do have homes where they can go at night. Some live with a single parent or extended family member, or with older youth. As some researchers have pointed out (e.g., Craidy 1998; Hecht 1998; Lalor 1999; Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman 1998; UNICEF 1984), the conventional concept of "street children" encompasses a wide range of individual circumstances and experiences. Nonetheless, it is a concept by which many children are identified, cast into roles they cannot always escape.

Tiago, now 15, has lived on his own since he was about five, for a long time sleeping in the cemetery because, he said, "it's the safest place." Tiago discovered dinosaurs at Projeto Clicar. First in a computer game and later on a web site, he first caught a glimpse of a Tyrannosaurus and became fascinated. The staff at Clicar bought some dinosaur books, and soon, Tiago, asked for clay. He wanted to make one with his own hands. It quickly became evident that Tiago is an artist.

The way in which he worked illustrates the informal character of learning at Projeto Clicar. Looking at the side view of a Triceratops on the computer screen, at a frontal view in a book, Tiago worked quickly with his hands and fashioned an accurate reproduction of the dinosaur in a matter of minutes. He also drew pictures and murals—sometimes large enough to cover the wall of a large room—of dinosaurs with pencil and charcoal. In one drawing he showed us, a Tyrannosaurus was stalking the streets of a city. We asked him if it was Godzilla. "No," he said, "It's a Tyrannosaurus." Then he laughed, "It's me, taking over São Paulo." When we last left São Paulo, Tiago had a job helping to construct dioramas for the science museum. But his story is not a success story. At age 15, his face has the mask of a hardened adult; it rarely cracks into a smile nor does it have many reasons too. Yet what he has received, or rather achieved, at Projeto Clicar combined knowledge, skill, a network

of people who will listen to him, and a flicker of hope in the face of overwhelming obstacles.

The continuity of the work at Projeto Clicar is important to the youth who go there, even sporadically. In the words of one of the educators who works at Projeto Clicar:

The other day a boy came and was surprised that we were still here after three years.... He was hesitant to enter and was certain that I wouldn't remember him. His reaction was one of surprise when I didn't only remember him, but also called him by his name.... He was surprised to see that the place he [once] frequented was still there and with everything he had left to be kept and saved, that this place had a memory.... The young boy said: "I don't know when I'm going to come back because my life is uncertain." But on the next day, he was there. [Revista Clicar 1999:6]

III.

The work at Clicar is not about the technology itself. The computers are, without a doubt, a magnet for the children who come to Clicar. However, the educators' descriptions of their work with the children indicates the inevitable and necessary mingling of pedagogy and impression management.

It was the first time that Eduardo, 9, came to Estação Ciência and Projeto Clicar. He came with a friend, Juliano. The educator, Cecilia Toloza, asked if it was the first time and he responded: "Yes it is. I always wanted to come but they never brought me." She asked why his friends never brought him. "Because they say that I am small and I am work for them." All of the friends are of the same age, between 8 and 10-years-old. She asked his name, his age, where he lived and how he arrived at Estação Ciência. He said that he came by bus and he did not know the name of the place where he lived, he called Juliano over in order to help explain where his house was. She asked about school, and he said that he never went to school and never studied because they did not have space for him, and his mother didn't have time to go everyday to the school to see if they had an opening for him to be able to study. We went to make his Projeto Clicar name tag, and he said, "Auntie, I don't know how to make (write) my name." Cecilia told him that it was fine and that he was going to learn to write his name. She wrote his name a piece of paper and asked him to copy the letters on his name tag.

She noticed that he identified vowels but that he didn't know the consonants. While he copied the letter, he moved the pencil from hand to hand, now writing with the right hand, now writing with the left. With both hands, the control of the pencil and the manner of writing was the same, there was no difference whatsoever. He

began to draw a picture on the name tag (the educators at Projeto Clicar ask all of the kids to mark their name tags with a design or something similar, as if it were their identifying mark or signature at Clicar). While Eduardo drew and painted, always alternating the pencil from one hand to the other, he was talking and telling everything that he had done at the museum since he arrived. He said that he and his friends had arrived early and had begun to make a big mess, running around throughout the museum. Then the guard “fought with us and said that it was time for us to go and take a walk and come back later.” Finishing the picture, Eduardo showed Cecilia the name tag, put it on his shirt and with a big smile on his face, he looked at her and said: “I want to come here all the time!”

The name tags are an example of a key transitional marker in the daily impression management practices that take place at Projeto Clicar. Every day, when the children arrive at Estação Ciência, they are expected to wash their hands before entering the space set aside for them at Projeto Clicar. For the educators at Clicar, the washing of the hands is both a functional and a symbolic gesture: it is an important way to maintain the quality of the equipment (not only the computers, but also the software, the books, and art supplies) available at Projeto Clicar, and at the same time, is a dramatic indicator, symbolizing to the youth that they are entering a space that is distinct from the public spaces they frequent on the streets.

After washing their hands, the children enter the space at Clicar. At the entrance is a table with boxes containing all the identity tags of youth who have ever attended Clicar. Before moving on to any activity, the children talk with an educator who oversees the boxes. Together with the educator, they search for their name tags, which are in alphabetical order in the boxes. Interestingly, some children have created more than one name tag for themselves, including tags with different names and different signature images on them. In this way, the children negotiate their own self-identification—in a sense, their own mask for the day.

The educators are keenly aware of this practice. For them, this is a time to note exactly who among the many children who frequent Projeto Clicar has come for the day, and to get a reading of what “mask” or “self” the children have chosen to project on that particular day. This is also a time when children decide whether or not they want to remain and interact with the educators and with specific other children who happen to show up. It is significant that the educators do not attempt to limit the children to one name tag. They also do not try to limit who can enter and who cannot (with the exception that ordinary school children, not *em situação de rua*, are not allowed in the Projeto Clicar space), unless their behavior becomes belligerent or destructive, abandoning respect for the open informal learning environment that exists for everyone equally. In short, the children’s choice of name tags mark their passage into a bracketed time and place, where, in the paraphernalia of identity as well as in the activities themselves, they have power, and are acknowledged to have power in

their place and interactions in a social world—a moral order that they themselves help to define.

The activities at Projeto Clicar are designed to help the youth comprehend the larger world around them and to give them a measure of knowledge and power over certain aspects of their own lives. Approximately twenty computers are available to the youth at any one time. They are arranged in an “s” curve, the computer screens facing outward, so that the children at the computers (at times only one per computer but often two or three engaged at the same time at a single terminal) are facing toward each other, thus intensifying interaction among them. The children either use educational software, picking up math, reading, or other skills as they engage in playful activities, or they explore the internet. Several of the youth have learned to navigate the web, searching for music, popular cinema and music artists, both Brazilian and North American. More recently they have been engaging in e-mail communications, exchanging questions and answers with university professors, students, journalists, and other youth in Brazil and the United States. Since many of the youth at Projeto Clicar either have never been to school or have left school at early ages, they have learned to count, read, and write through these various activities. Importantly, they have learned not through controlled exercises imposed on them by the educators. In many cases, they have learned from each other, working in small groups or puzzling individually over the sounds and lyrics of popular music on the screen.

Because of increasing demand, there is now often a wait for the children to get access to the computers. For this reason, Projeto Clicar offers a wide range of other kinds of activities for youth attending on any particular day. Some children, for instance, are not initially drawn to the computers or to learning activities with other youth. Alan spends most of his time on his own, sitting on a bench in the corner and reading comic books and children’s books and stories. He reads and rereads them again and again, usually without interacting with anyone. At times the educators ask him if he wants to use the computer or to draw or color, but he usually refuses and is content to look at pictures and read. The educators allow him to remain on his own, although they occasionally sit down with him and read out loud to him for a while.

One day Alan, to everyone’s surprise, emptied out the crate of comic and children’s books onto the floor and began rearranging them in order. In this way, his silent actions channeled his care and fascination for the materials into a sense of ownership of them and responsibility for them. In short, in the context of Projeto Clicar he had, while closely guarding the back regions of his life outside the project, experienced and conveyed a sense of control over immediately present objects and interests, in marked contrast to the everyday challenges he encounters, begging on the streets.

The educators at Clicar use various activities as a way to engage the children in examining their own lives and their place in the world. In this sense, their work is a direct descendant from the work of Freinet, Vygotsky, and Freire. One of the main activities used is art—including clay modeling, kite making, drawing and coloring, using crayons, markers, colored pencils, charcoal, and paints. How these materials are used reveals a kind of mutual impression management on the part of both educators and children. Educators use the children's artistic expression to bring out back stage information, and the children themselves use it strategically to negotiate what back stage information they want to bring to the foreground, without compromising their own sense of identity. One of Clicar's educators, Dirce Pranzetti, described an example of how this politics of identity takes place.

One afternoon at Projeto Clicar, she was sitting at one of the tables, where five children, ages ten to thirteen years, were drawing. Outside, the day was dark and rainy, after a long night of hard rain. Even though it was still raining, many children came to Clicar that day. All five of the children at the same table were drawing landscapes with lots of mountains and a few houses, each drawing with a beautiful yellow sun shining between the mountains. Dirce was distributing the colored pencils. She began to talk with the children about their drawings. She commented on how everyone was drawing the sun and asked if any of them had been caught in the rain that morning. All of them responded that they "had taken a lot of rain" and continued, immersed in their drawings. Only one of them, Elvis, stopped drawing and picked up a blank piece of paper from the middle of the table. He asked, "Do you want to see what happened to me this morning?" He began to draw a map, with streets and different blocks, and explained, "Here's the bus stop" (which he noted with a "x"). He continued, "My mother walked with me with an umbrella to there" (indicating the bus stop). "After that, I got soaked."

Dirce asked, "Why didn't you take the bus to school?"

Elvis answered, "I went, but something happened. After I got off the bus [he pointed to a place rather far from the school site], I had to walk two more blocks."

Dirce asked, "In the rain?"

He responded, "No, it had already stopped. It was just a little drizzle, but when I reached the curve on the corner of the street where the school is, there was a lake with a lot of water. Really a lot of water. Then my friend and I decided to go around the building and enter through the other door."

"Friend?" Dirce asked. "Was he on the bus with you?"

“Yes. So then we went around the whole school and guess what—the Director (Principal of the school), that idiot, had not opened the door on the other side. So went back the whole way.” As he spoke, he drew the way they went on the map. “And we went into the water.”

“How high was the water?” asked Dirce.

“Up to here [indicating the height of his knees] but you won’t believe what happened.”

“There’s more?”

“There’s more. They didn’t have school. Because of the rain, the Director had sent everybody home. Isn’t she a complete idiot?” and he wadded up the paper and threw it on the table.

During this time, most of the other children sitting at the table had continued drawing, as if uninterested in the conversation. They seemed to be more focused on who got to use the yellow pencil, the color which appears most used by the children and therefore always in short supply. This example, in any case, suggests how educators use the activity to explore the daily challenges that the children face. The children in turn use the opportunity to portray themselves and to fill out or narrow down the dimensions of their masks.

IV.

When the children leave Clicar at closing time, it is interesting and heart-breaking to watch them as they re-mask themselves for the street. But while they are inside Projeto Clicar, it is equally interesting to observe and participate in the face work that continually goes on. This is not on our part or that of the educators just a matter of assuming a role in order to establish rapport. It is the basis on which the activities take place. The children enter the setting with hard-earned suppositions about what to expect from adults in any institutional setting. They also arrive with enormous uncertainties, even about the immediate future.

The interactive play with computer and internet technologies, enabling them to engage with each other, the Clicar staff, and us ethnographers, provides them with instances of role reversals where in many cases they become the knowledgeable and the skilled and we become the learners; where they become certain about how things work and what they know and we become the uncertain ones. It is not a game, although it often looks like one. It is not a put-on either. They really do know much about which we are ignorant. They really do survive in situations where we would collapse in confusion and exhaustion. In brief, it is a situation where the stratigraphy of domination is suspended, and where all of us involved can judge each other’s

motives and define ourselves and the situation without regard to the usual invidious distinctions that determine exclusion and inclusion. In a very real sense, we are all together learning from each other how learning takes place.

Some critics have argued that such programs are simply recreational. We would suggest that they do, in fact, involve recreation. The activities at Projeto Clicar represent, for the children who come there, the recreation of hope. In this regard, the work of the educators at Clicar is akin, and in fact largely based, on the work of Paulo Freire, who has argued that education for children and adults from oppressed and excluded populations must build on their world and reveal their world and their place in it (Freire 1970; 1994). It is, as he wrote late in his life, a pedagogy of hope.

As Freire (1994:8) has commented, hope is not simply a nice feeling to have. It is an ontological need, a pragmatic stance toward the world, one's position in the world, and one's agency to accomplish changes in that world. As such, he writes, any productive pedagogy is transformative, posing a problem, encouraging participation and agency in the world at large. In this sense, "the educational practice of a progressive option will never be anything but an adventure in unveiling. It will always be an experiment in bringing out the truth." (Freire 1994:7). Berreman's work on social stratification and impression management are examples of this adventure in unveiling, opening up the rugged terrain of society and setting a path for passage through that terrain. As Berreman suggests, "A thread of hope lies in the possibility that people can learn from comparison of the realities of inherited inequality across space, time, and culture" (1988:516). Anthropologists have a role to play in this pedagogy of hope—both in unmasking the processes that lead to exclusion and inclusion and in helping to recreate reasons for hope, a dual task for which Gerald Berreman has given us the conceptual technology.

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¹ A draft of this paper was presented at the Behind Many Masks Conference in Honor of Gerald Berreman sponsored by the Kroeber Anthropological Society and Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, April 2001.

² All quotes from Portuguese texts, notes, and interviews were translated by the authors.

³ Names of the youth described ethnographically have not been changed. After discussing relevant ethical and methodological issues with each other and with some of the youth involved in the program, the authors felt that an attempt at any form of preserving anonymity through changing participants' names would diminish the contributions they have made to the collaborative nature of the program and undermine their sense of ownership of their own experiences. Importantly, several of the youth have themselves read and commented on parts of this article.