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HISTORY AND SOUND CULTURES

Grandville, Jean Ignace Isidore Gérard
(1803-1847), "La Caricature", Paris, 1831-09-01

HISTORY AND
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- ARTICLE -

THE SOUND COLOR: CONSTRUCTION OF OTHERNESS AND RACIALITY IN BRAZILIAN PHONOGRAPHY IN 78 RPM, IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY¹

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Abstract

Starting from the central problem of the production of otherness as a key element in the constitution of the modern world and following the perspective started by Jennifer Stoeber and her concept of "sonic color line", the article focuses on the Brazilian phonographic industry in its early stages of development. We seek to problematize it as a place of fixation and reverberation of racial and ethnic sound representations, materialized in 78 rpm phonograms recorded in the first four decades of the twentieth century by black singers, musicians and composers. It is argued that the dynamics of incorporating these musicians into the entertainment system fueled by the phonographic industries necessarily involved the exploration of stereotypes in which elements such as ethnicity, comedy, sensuality, primitivism and exoticism played a central role – elements that had already been previously elaborated in literary and musical records.

Keywords

Brazilian phonography – Raciality – Otherness – 78 rpm shellac discs – Phonographic industries.

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Resumo

Partindo do problema central da produção de alteridades como elemento-chave na constituição do mundo moderno e seguindo a perspectiva aberta por Jennifer Stoeber e seu conceito de "linha de cor sonora", o artigo tem foco na indústria fonográfica brasileira em seus primeiros estágios de desenvolvimento. Busca-se problematizá-la como um lugar de fixação e reverberação de representações sonoras raciais e étnicas, materializadas em fonogramas de 78 rotações gravados nas primeiras quatro décadas do século XX por cantores, músicos e compositores negros. Argumenta-se que a dinâmica de incorporação desses músicos no sistema de entretenimento alimentado pelas indústrias fonográficas do período passava necessariamente pela exploração de estereótipos em que elementos como etnicidade, comicidade, sensualidade, primitivismo e exotismo exerciam papel central – elementos que já haviam sido elaborados precedentemente em registros literários e musicais.

Palavras-chave

fonografia brasileira – Racialidade – Alteridade – 78 rotações – Indústria fonográfica.

One of the characteristic traits of modernity, representative of its operating strategies in the symbolic field, is the permanent process of creating distinctions and otherness. In order to constitute and identify itself, modern Western civilization has depended, since its dawn, on the production of Others who have served and continue to serve as negative framing, as ethical counterpart or counterbalance. It appears, in fact, that the dichotomization between real and imaginary forms of life was a constant in its genesis and maintenance – whether in the dynamics of friction between the old and the new world and in colonial relations or within the Western world, when court societies and modern states were constituted – and remains active even today in the most contemporary geopolitical clashes. Thus, in the Western imagination of the last five centuries, the civilized and modern are opposed to and have been opposing a vast array of figures of otherness that, under the most varied masks, were connoted as rustic, exotic, wild, instinctual, primitive and irrational, as the other side of the civility and urbanity that would define the Western and hegemonic ethos⁴.

The characterization of otherness characters was carefully elaborated through visual, verbal, choreographic and sound devices, in strongly operative representations that circulated – depending on the time and context – through artistic modalities such as painting, sculpture, theater, dance, music, though printed literary media, informative and pamphleteering media, later amplified the mechanical and digital forms of informational diffusion of the industrial and post-industrial eras⁵.

⁴ This is not a purely ethical problem, of course, but the dichotomization between forms of life as a symbolic condition for the processes of primitive accumulation that allowed the modern West to constitute and remain as a hegemonic force. Witches, peasants, satyrs, cannibals, cynocephali and cyclops, inhabitants of the most different tropical longitudes and the most varied eastern latitudes, are just a few examples mobilized in the constitutive phases of the Early Modern period. And if in different periods and cultural and historical circumstances the savage/primitive came to be positively evoked as a moral critique of the civilized world (already in Montaigne and Léry; in pastoral literature at times, passing through Rousseau to the romantics), it is only a matter of a logical inversion that confirms the constitutive dichotomous dynamic of modern rationality. It is important to consider that we are not saying here that the device of ethical otherness is an invention of modernity. Narratives and figurations of otherness constituted since Antiquity are even reused and re-signified in the context of the encounter with the other in the Early Modern period. What we support here is the preponderant role of this device in the constitution of self-representation and in modern practices.

⁵ Just to evoke some examples, we point out: the iconography about witches (FEDERICI, 2019; CLARK, 2006; SOUZA, 1993); the iconography that accompanied the reports of the trips to America, representing Amerindians from the updating of icons of otherness from Antiquity (LESTRINGANT, 1994; BARTRA, 1994, 2011); the iconography that accompanied the reports about Antarctic France in Brazilian territory, as well as the representations of Protestants in Catholic pamphlets and of Catholics in Protestant pamphlets in the context of religious wars in the 16th century (BERBARA; MENEZES; HUE, 2020); visual and scenic, but also sound-musical representations of peasants and satyrs language in the literary and musical culture of the pastoral in the 16th and 17th centuries (LAVOCAT, 2005; PIERI, 2020; SCANNAPIE-

The study of otherness representation strategies is, therefore, an important vector for the critique of modernity and its mechanisms of domination.

Well, if visual representations of otherness have been and continue to be widely studied both in the field of art history and in the broader field of cultural studies, historically the study of sound and musical representations of otherness seems to have received less attention from critics. As Born and Hesmondhalgh (2000, p. 8) state, the apparent status of music as a “non-representational” medium and the continuing reluctance to consider the political and ideological dimensions of music in the core disciplines of conservative teaching models have led to studies on otherness in the field of musicology to remain minimal until the beginning of the 21st century.

The realms of ethnomusicology and popular music studies, however, seem to be an exception, mainly due to the contribution, in recent decades, of post and decolonial studies⁶. There is a growing interest in studies with an emphasis on the racial issues associated with the sound and musical aspects of social life. Recently, American authors such as Jennifer Lynn Stoeber and Nina Eidsheim and the Brazilian historian Martha Abreu have devoted works to the issue of the construction of sound “racialities”, fostered mainly by the radio and record industries in the first half of the 20th century.

In alignment with recent trends in anthropology that point to sound issues as a key element for understanding the power relations between different social classes, Stoeber (2016) proposes the concept of “sonic color line” to designate the set of sound strategies linked to the ideological demarcation between whites and blacks in the USA context. To the author, the concept is connected both to a proposal of racial hermeneutics and to sound indexes linked to markings that would allow listeners to construct and discern racial identities based on specific voices, sounds and soundscapes, enabling them to mobilize racially coded sound resources for discriminatory purposes.

CO, 2017; ARCANGELI, 2018; GERBINO, 2004); musical and choreographic representations of *turqueries* (such as the *Marche pour la cérémonie des Turcs*, from Jean-Baptiste Lully's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, or *Le Turc généreux*, in Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Les Indes galantes*); and Orientalism as a whole, as described by Edward Said (1978).

⁶ A review of these approaches so fruitful in recent decades would not fit in this article. Roughly speaking, it can be said that, starting with the development of postcolonial theories in the 1970s (SAID, 1978) and culminating with the so-called “decolonial turn” (MALDONADO-TORRES, 2008) at the beginning of the 21st century, this large body of studies, which encompasses different objectives and methods, includes the analysis of Western cultural influence and the power exercised by the colonizing countries, the analysis of oppression and violence applied to colonial contexts, the use of the arts in the processes of cultural domination applied to the Third World, among many others.

The sonic color line produces, codes, and polices racial difference through the ear, enabling us to hear race as well as see it. It is a socially constructed boundary that racially codes sonic phenomena such as vocal timbre, accents, and musical tones. (...) Through multiple simultaneous processes of dominant representation (...) particular sounds are identified, exaggerated, and “matched” to racialized bodies. (STOEVEY, 2016, p. 11)

Although created from the jump point of the United States context, the concept of “sonic color line” seems to be valid for the study of the phonographic industry in Brazil, established from 1902, with the beginning of commercial recordings by Casa Edison in Rio de Janeiro (VICENTE; MARCHI, 2014, p. 3-4). Founded by the Czech Frederico Figner in 1900, Casa Edison was the main Brazilian recording company in the first two decades of the 20th century, responsible for the first sound recordings of popular musicians from Rio, marketed throughout the country. As Franceschi (2002, p. 88-98) states, Figner was also responsible for the creation, in 1913, of a 78-rpm-record factory in Rio de Janeiro, the first in Latin America. Built in partnership with the Swedish group Lindström, the factory had, according to Franceschi (2002, p. 198) a production capacity of 125,000 discs per month, or 1,500,000 discs a year, which positioned it as one of the main producers in the Americas. From 1927, the arrival in Brazil of electric recording technology and other international groups, such as RCA Victor, Brunswick and Columbia, gave an even greater impetus to sales. They would also be leveraged by the development of radio, from the 1930s onwards, and by the emergence of a star system that would take male and female singers such as Francisco Alves, Carmen Miranda and Orlando Silva to the peak of popularity and record sales (VICENTE; MARCHI, 2014, p. 7-10). As the most significant portion of this sales was associated with Afro-Brazilian urban popular music records, it is quite surprising that academic studies proposing a racial focus associated with the Brazilian phonographic industry are historically recent.

Starting from the central problem of the construction of otherness and following the perspective opened by Stoevey, this article focuses on the Brazilian phonographic industry in its early stages. We will seek to problematize it as a place of fixation and reverberation of racial and ethnic sound representations, focusing on phonograms in 78 rotations recorded in the first four decades of the 20th century by black singers, musicians and composers. We argue that the dynamics of incorporating these musicians into the entertainment system, fueled by the phonographic industries of the period, necessarily involved the exploitation of stereotypes in which elements such as ethnicity, comedy, sensuality, primitivism and exoticism played a central role – elements that had previously been elaborated in literary and musical registers, such as the *lundu*.

From *xarapins* and *nhanhás*: the *lundu* and the sonic color line

Musicological criticism has long focused on the historically and symbolically constituted bonds of meaning between the *lundu* and the descendants of enslaved Africans in Brazil. Following in the footsteps of José Ramos Tinhorão and Mário de Andrade, Carlos Sandroni pointed to the “meaning attributed since the end of the 18th century to the *lundu*-dance and transmitted in the 19th century to the *lundu*-song” as a “direct or veiled representation of the Afro-Brazilian universe” (SANDRONI, 2001, p. 33). In fact, the 17th-century pen of poet and amateur musician Domingos Caldas Barbosa (1740-1800)⁷, for example, already seems to delineate a distinctive lexical and sound marking between the characters that populate his poems. Throughout the succession of poems by Barbosa published posthumously in the second volume of the collection *Viola de Lereno*⁸, different vocabulary repertoires are alternated dichotomously, which allows one composition to differentiate from the others that receive the designation of the *lundu* genre. No only the speech of the enslaved black – the lyrical element of these poems made to be sung – is strongly denoted by terms such as *xarapim*, *harenga*, *moenga*, *angu*, *dengue*, *quingombó*, *quindim*, *moleque*, which refer to African languages of the Bantu group⁹, but it also has a vocality attributed to enslaved people, as is the case of corruptions of the terms *senhora* (lady) and *senhor* (lord), in the forms *nhanhá*, *iaia* and *nhonhô*¹⁰.

⁷ Poet, priest and Afro-Brazilian musician who, in the last third of the 18th century, emerged not only as an important figure in shaping Brazilian popular music, but also as a musical transit between Brazil and Portugal.

⁸ The first volume of the collection was published in 1798. The second was published posthumously, in 1826 (TINHORÃO, 1986, p. 47).

⁹ On the presence of Bantu languages in Brazilian Portuguese, see Lopes (2003), Queiroz (2018) and Lucchesi, Baxter and Ribeiro (2009). On the Bantu presence in Brazilian music, see, among others, Mukuna (2000) and Lara and Pacheco (2007).

¹⁰ For example, the “Lundum de Cantigas Vagas” (BARBOSA, 1826, p. 15-17): “*Xarapim eu bem estava / Alegre nesta aleluia, Mas para fazer-me triste / Veio Amor dar-me na cuia. // Não sabe meu Xarapim / O que Amor me faz passar, / Anda por dentro de mim, / De noite, e dia a ralar. // Meu Xarapim já não posso / Aturar mais tanta arenga / O meu gênio deu à casca / Metido nesta moenga. // Amor comigo é tirano / Mostra-me um modo bem cru, / Tem-me mexido as entranhas / Qu’estou todo feito angu. // Se visse o meu coração / Por força havia ter dó, / Porque o Amor o tem posto / Mais mole que quingombó. // Tem nahanhá certo nhonhô, / Não temo que me desbanque, / Porque eu sou calda de açúcar / E ele apenas mel de tanque. // Nahanhá cheia de chulices / Que tantos quindins afeta, / Queima tanto a quem a adora / Como queima a malagueta. // Xarapim tome o exemplo / Dos casos que vê em mim, / Que se amar há de lembrar-se / Do que diz seu Xarapim. // [Estribilho:] Tenha compaixão / Tenha dó de mim, / Porqu’eu lho mereço / Sou seu Xarapim*”.

The profiling of the characters involved in the poetic scene of the songs is drawn from the sonority and vocality associated with this lexicon¹¹ and from the way in which the amorous and erotic bonds – real or desired – between the enslaved black boy and his white girl are described. The description is marked by the ideas of slavery, purchase, possession, designating at the same time the actual enslavement of the black body and the loving subjection, or even by the evocation of corporal punishment, metaphorically converted into an erotic game.¹²

The playful, mocking and licentious tone of the scenes starring kids, *xarapins* and their *nhanhás* contrasts with the prudish lyricism predominant in the rest of the collection, populated by commonplaces of the bucolic literary tradition, and in which the beloved ones are referred to under the mask of nymphs or shepherdesses named Anarda, Marília, Lília, Nerina, Tirce, Ulina and Márcia, frequent in the poetics of Portuguese and Brazilian Arcadianism¹³. In these poems/songs, the poet Lereno Selinuntino – pastoral pseudonym of Caldas Barbosa in Nova Arcadia, Lisbon, and in Arcadia, Rome (SAWAYA, 2011) – narrates the sweetness and hardship of his love experiences, singing the delicacy and beauty of the beloved's traits and manners, mirrored in an equally docile nature¹⁴.

The publication of the second volume of *Viola de Lereno*, which contains the pieces designated as *lundus*, is, as has been said, posthumous, and this term was probably not used by Caldas Barbosa himself, but only from the 19th century onwards (SANDRONI, 2001). In any case, as can be seen, the distinction between an

¹¹ See page 9 *infra* and footnotes 16, 17 and 18, on the use of this device in other cultural and geographical environments.

¹² E.g., “[...] Vir a gente reboando / Ao chamado imperioso / Ouvir-lhe apre inda não chega! / He bem bom he bem gostoso. // [chorus] // Chegar aos pés de nanhá / Ouvir chamar preguiçoso, / Levam um bofetãozinho / He bem bom he bem gostoso” (BARBOSA, 1826, p. 7-10). Although this poem is not specifically designated a *lundu* in the collection, it is similar in theme and lexical usage. Conversely, as Sandroni (2001) rightly pointed out, the poem “*Gentes de bem pegou nele*” is designated as *lundu* in the collection, although it does not present the characteristics pointed out here.

¹³ E.g., in Antonio Diniz da Cruz e Silva (1731-1799), Manuel Maria Barbosa du Bocage (1765-1805), Filinto Elísio (1734-1819), Leonor de Almeida Portugal, Marquesa de Alorna (1750-1839), Manuel Inácio da Silva Alvarenga (1749-1814), Luís António Verney (1713-1792), Tomás António Gonzaga (1744-1810), among others.

¹⁴ E.g., in “Retrato de Anarda”: “Pastores acompanhai-me / Cada hum sua flauta tome, / E de Anarda o doce nome / Vinde todos festejar. // Anarda gentil Anarda / Vem nossos hymnos honrar. // Aquellas formosas tranças / De finíssimos cabellos, / A luz viva de olhos bellos / São dignas de se louvar. // Anarda &c. // O rosto que a Natureza / Engraçadamente cõra, / As faces da cõr d’aurora / Tem muito que celebrar. // Anarda &c. // Engraçada boca, e linda, / Que só voz discreta solta, / N’um divino aroma envolta / Que perfuma a todo o ar. // Anarda &c. // A lindissima garganta / O corpo gentil, e airoso, / O engraçado pé mimoso / Tudo he raro, he singular. // Anarda &c. // Mas desta pastora illustre / Não se louve só belleza, / Tens mais dons da Natureza / Digno assumpto de cantar. // Anarda &c. // Ostentou o Ceu mostrar-se / Sempre liberal com ella, / Deo-lhe em bello corpo, a bella / Alma illustre, e singular. // Anarda &c.” (BARBOSA, 1826, p. 16-18).

erotic and playful poetics – conforming to a behavioral and sound stereotype applied to the black and enslaved man – and a lyrical and idyllic poetics remissive to the ethos of the white European was already a reality before the 19th century. As Sandroni (2001) shows from Béhague, at the end of the 18th century, the differentiating element between the so-called Brazilian and Portuguese *modinhas* seems to have been precisely this poetic distinction, accompanied by the difference between a more or less syncopated musical writing (from which derives, evidently, a choreographic distinction in danced music). What separated Brazilian and Portuguese *modinhas*, therefore, was a line of sonic color (vocal, vocabulary, rhythmic, musical in short) and body (gestural, choreographic), making up a stereotype of racial and cultural otherness¹⁵ that prefigured the way in which many black musicians would come to insert and assert themselves in the Brazilian phonographic industry in its early stages of development, in the first decades of the 20th century.

Before that, however, among the literary and musical examples of the 18th century phonographic records, the racialized sound distinction found a vehicle of continuity in the *bourgeois salon lundu* and in the staged and sung *lundu* of theatrical interludes, widely cultivated in the 19th century (that is, from the burgeoning Brazilian cultural industry). As Mário de Andrade (1999), Tinhorão (1972) and Sandroni (2001) point out, the marks of otherness elaborated in the poetic-musical terrain of *lundu* already constituted, in the 19th century, a sufficiently stabilized and fixed mask, which from now on could indistinctly cover black or white faces (and bodies).

The *lundus* that came to us from the Empire and from the early years of the Republic, on the other hand, are perfectly bourgeois music, that is, composed by professionals (whose technical training was carried out along European lines, and whose role differs from that of lyricists), supported financially through the sale of scores, performed in the homes of families who owned a piano and in variety theaters with paid admission. These composers employed syncopations in the manner of white actors who painted themselves black: the musical dialect of the bourgeois *lundu* is “marked” with a country accent. Arvellos, Sá Noronha, Coelho Machado, etc., all used in their compositions for orchestra or choirs, in their *polkas* or *modinhas*, the internationally dominant “classic-romantic” style, in which the syncopations, if they appear, do so with complete discretion. When it came to composing the *lundu*, on the contrary, they appeared blatantly, as an ingredient of the characterization, as an imitation of what would be, for white ears at the

¹⁵ It should be noted that this form of fixation of otherness based on vocal, sound, rhythmic and musical elements occurred within the very interior of the pastoral culture in the First Modern Period, which confirms, in a way, a *modus operandi* of Western culture, with perceptible geopolitical implications, also in this case. We refer to the established ethical distinction, in poetry, music and pastoral theater, between the elevated ethos of shepherds and nymphs and the characterization of peasants and satyrs as the opposite of the natural civility of the inhabitants of mythical Arcadia (LEMONS; VIEGAS, 2021).

time, musical “blackness” (it is not by chance that the figure sixteenth-eighth-sixteenth-note is called by Mário de Andrade and others “characteristic syncopation”). (SANDRONI, 2001, p. 47)

Faces and bodies, sometimes black, sometimes white, through the “new variant of white-black acculturation in the realm of batucada dances” (TINHORÃO, 1971, p. 54), performed a repertoire musically connoted with “blackness”, which could even do without the black theme¹⁶.

Mário de Andrade (1999, p. 225) describes the way in which the *lundu* “overcomes the feigned disinterest of the ruling classes and invades the white party”, sometimes in an instrumental version in which it was “cleaned¹⁷ first”, “scented with a harpsichord¹⁸ key” and “peeled from its color”, sometimes in the form of a song whose comic register allowed other forms of life to be smuggled into the environment of the ruling classes.

The comic, the teasing, the smile, was the psychosocial disguise that allowed it to spread among the dominant classes. They made fun of, or at least smiled condescendingly at, the loves of the land. The *mulata* woman began, and the black woman and the black man, being literary consented in the upper and lower bourgeoisie classes, as an object of sexual outlet. But, unlike a combat poet like Castro Alves, the *lundu* removed any pain and any drama from them. The very white little man was the one who suffered because of them, the *mulatinhas do caroço*, a laughable suffering. And they also repudiated it with “love”, with the dignity of its accompanying feelings, and as a constitutive social force of the family. Pure sexual evasion.

It is a phenomenon identical to the italic appearance of the *opera buffa*, in which the character of the people was allowed within the aristocracy of the opera, with its mythical and historical heroes from Greece and Rome, but allowed for its comicity. It is also the creation of a medieval farce, within the religious aristocracy of passions and mysteries. And just as with the farces

¹⁶ As is the case of the *lundu* by Cândido Inácio da Silva on lyrics by Manoel de Araújo Porto Alegre, “Lá no Largo da Sé”, which Mário de Andrade referred to as significant in the constitution of a Brazilian music, ethnically and socially miscegenated: “It’s not about class anymore. It’s not about race anymore. It’s not about white, but it’s also not about black. It is national” (ANDRADE, 1999, p. 228): “Lá no largo da Sé Velha / Está vivo um grande tutu / Numa gaiola de ferro / Chamado surucucu // Cobra feroz / Que tudo ataca / Té da algibeira / Tira pataca // Bravo à especulação / São progressos da nação // Elefantes berrões / Cavalos em rodopios / Num curro perto da Ajuda / Com macacos e bugios // Tudo se vê / Misericórdia / Só por dinheiro / A tal mixórdia // Bravo à especulação / São progressos da nação // Os estrangeiros dão bailes / Pra regalar o Brasil / Mas a Rua do Ouvidor / É de dinheiro um funil // Lindas modinhas / Vindas de França / Nossos vinténs / Levam na dança // Bravo à especulação / São progressos da nação // Água em pedra vem do norte / Pra sorvetes fabricar / Que nos servem os cobrinhos / Sem a gente refrescar // A pitanguinha / Caju, cajá / Na goela fazem / Taratata Bravo à especulação / São progressos da nação”.

¹⁷ Translator’s note: The original word is a neologism, based on the word “clean”, invented by the author to denote a popular way of speech.

¹⁸ Translator’s note: In Portuguese, this is a play on words, since the Portuguese word for “harpsichord” is the same for “carnation”.

and *opera buffa*, if the *pretas*, *pretaranas* and *moleques* were invited to frequent the *lundus*' text, their language and music also came with them. With the *lundu*, conscious grammatical errors entered the "*meu bem está mal com eu*", the "*mecê já não me gosta*." (ANDRADE, 1999, p. 226-227).

In fact, the comic register was the gap that allowed subaltern forms of life to enter the scene, at the price, however, of an emptying of subjectivity, as Andrade observes, and of the obliteration of the physical and symbolic violence to which they were subjected, "showing not the hard daily life of slave labor, but the black man who dances and who, above all, makes his white masters laugh" (SANDRONI, 2001, p. 45).

It is important to pay attention, in the excerpts by Andrade and Sandroni aforementioned, to the analogy, respectively, of the popular character (in the context of opera and farcical comedy) and to the hillbilly accent. Effectively, the poetic-musical elaboration of a form of otherness centered on the enslaved black in the Brazilian colonial context seems to have reaffirmed and updated forms of constitution of otherness already present in literature and music in the First Modern Period. We allude particularly to the characterization of peasants and rustics, whose comic nature also coated social and geopolitical tensions more or less repressed depending on the case. As in the case of people of African descent in Brazil, popular, peasant and/or dialectal speech had been caricaturized and stylized, for example, in Italian poetry and music since at least the 16th century¹⁹, either through a phonetic and lexical distinction or the establishment of poetic metrics (that is, through sound, rhythmic and musical elements) that ended up being assumed as stylized indexes of a rustic and rough popular speech²⁰.

In the Brazilian case, with regard to these practices of sound characterization, we draw attention to the explicit use of the expression "black language", referred to, for example, by Manuel Antônio de Almeida (1854) in his book *Memórias de um*

¹⁹ Sandroni (2001, p. 46) perceptively summarizes Mário de Andrade's reading of the comic nature of the *lundu*, suggesting that "Andrade sees in the comic nature of the *lundu* what psychoanalysis would call a 'symptom', a manifestation that distortedly expresses a repressed conflict, in this case the latent social conflict between masters and slaves". The notion of a comic that reveals a conflict situation that is more or less repressed would justly apply to the case of the rustic comedy that was established in Padua and Siena in the Italian Renaissance. The actor Angelo Beolco (1496-1542) and his famous character Ruzante, in Padua, or the rustic and anti-academic scene of the Congrega dei Rozzi in Siena, symptomatically asserted themselves at a time when the two cities "lose political and cultural autonomy and feel their linguistic identity threatened by the regional metropolises of Venice and Florence" (FOLENA, 1991, p. 132-133).

²⁰ Musicological studies have identified, for example, the use of the proparoxytone verse called *sdruciollo* in Italian as a mark of ethical characterization (GERBINO, 2004). The constitution of a modality of otherness centered on popular and dialectal speech took place on a terrain of tensions and political disputes in the Italian Peninsula, in which literature and art were of great importance as an instance of symbolic elaboration and transmission (DIONISOTTI, 1999, p. 158-159).

Sargento de Milícias. Employed in Portugal since the 16th century, the expression referred not only to the way enslaved Africans spoke Portuguese, but also to the literary stylization of this way of speaking, in Portuguese comic and farcical dramaturgy. As Mário de Andrade (1999, p. 224) inferred, the mention of it in the prose of Manuel Antônio de Almeida is an indication that “singing in a black language still was [in the mid-nineteenth century] an exotic and money-making thing”.

He enjoyed a reputation as a very amusing man, and there was no party of any kind to which he was not invited. (...) The reputation he had as an amusing man, and which provided him with such beautiful ways of passing the time, was owed to certain skills, and above all to one in which he had no rival. *He played the viola and sang modinhas very well, he danced the fado with great perfection, he spoke the language of a black man and sang admirably in it, he pretended to be crippled in any part of his body very naturally, he mimicked perfectly the speech of country boys, he knew thousands of divinations, and finally – this is his rarest talent – he knew with rare perfection how to make an infinite variety of faces that no one was capable of imitating.* (ALMEIDA, 1854, our emphasis).

The otherness of the black and the peasant also converge into the list of histrionic qualities of Teotônio, the character in *Memórias de um Sargento de Milícias*, capable of mimicking not only the “black language”, but also that of “farm boys” and “cripples”: other outcasts in the theater of civilized normativity, whose exoticization and spectacularization, whether in the comic or monstrous register, began to commonly combine with subalternization and exclusion²¹.

²¹ The process of stereotyping and burlesque spectacularization of black otherness in literature and music is not exclusive to the Portuguese/Brazilian case. Analogously to the case of the “black language”, already stylized in the 16th century Portuguese-speaking comic dramaturgy as a characterizing element of the enslaved African, *a habla de los pretos*, also called *bozal español*, or simply *bozal*, frequently appeared in the comic literature of the Spanish Golden Age and, equally, in the poetic-musical repertoire of *villancicos de negros*, also called *villancicos guineos* or *negrillas*, strongly popular in the Hispanic environment, notably in the colonial territory of New Spain. See, in this regard, Subirá (1992), Lipski (1995), Swiadon (2002), Santamaría (2006), Ludlow (2008), Abril (2013), Porras (2013), Lopes (2017), Krutitskaya (2018), Singer (2019), Uribe (2020), among others. It should be noted that the *villancico de negros* is just one modality among many others that, within the vast subgenre of *villancicos* called by critics as *villancicos de remedo* (Abril, 2013), satirically represents “*algún grupo sociocultural distinto al hegemónico*” (ABRIL, 2013, p. 19) (Abril mentions different designations used by other authors: *villancicos jocosos*, *villancicos plurilingües*, *villancicos diglósicos* or *heteroglósicos*). The vast cast of othernesses (characterized in these *villancicos de remedo* mainly by their supposed form of verbal/dialectal expression) includes peasants, shepherds, indigenous people, foreign communities of Portuguese, French, Tuscan, Guinean, Galician, Asturian and Basque, among others (ABRIL, 2013). This confirms the coherence (already pointed out here) between the multiple examples of representation of otherness that historically contributed to the conformation of the modern West in mentalities, and that largely share both the operative characteristics and the social and geopolitical effects and implications.

“With the *lundu*”, says Andrade (1999, p. 227), “conscious grammar mistakes came in, *my sweetheart is bad with I, my mam don’t like me no more*” which, aiming to create a comic effect, explored, as suggested by Tinhorão (1986, p. 55), “the light-heartedness of the special social position of slaves in a patriarchal society”²². But reports such as the one expressed anonymously in the *Sketches of Portuguese Life, manners, costume, and character*, published in London in 1826, show how the otherness represented in or by the *lundu* could be fixed not only to a comic register, but also to the grotesque or monstrous keys. The author establishes a radical distinction between the *lundu* performed by white Portuguese women from high social circles and the *lundu* practiced by the blacks and the poor. The first is a pleasant and applause-worthy staged dance, made up of graceful cadences, elegance and expressive attitudes of the limbs and body, as it has been purified of its original lascivious and frenetic character by means of “decent modifications”. The second, however, is nothing but disgust and astonishment.

(...) When this is well danced, it never fails to elicit the most thunderous applause. What I just tried to describe is the *landum* of the best classes. But when danced by the scoundrel it is far from graceful or decent. Ordinary people in Portugal are so fond of the *landum* that even in old age they experience a strong sense of pleasure when hearing its rhythm played on the guitar. I shall never forget once seeing an eighty years old woman as a mummy rise from the floor she was scrubbing on hearing a barber play the tune, and begin to accompany the air with contortions to which age imparted no other impression than that of sheer disgust. (...) I was assured that both the blacks and the Portuguese are known to dance to a state of frenzy and even to convulsions. (...) We are no longer astonished that the children of Africa are so fond of this exercise, when we are assured by a credible traveler that, from the moment the sun sets, the entirety of that vast continent is a single dance scene. (A. P. D. G., 1826, p. 288-290).

Frenzy, lasciviousness, convulsive contortions and ugliness make up the representation associated by the anonymous author with the popular and black *lundu*. And the imagery operates metonymically and by degrees, which is crucial, linking the qualities of the *lundu* to its first practitioners and, subsequently, to the entire “vast continent” from where they come, which, based on the punctual example of the *lundu*-dance, is connoted with primitivism, debauchery and irrationality.

²² This register is equally similar to that of certain characterizations of otherness already present in the First Modern Period: characters from *commedia dell'arte* and opera who ended up perpetuating themselves as maids, wet nurses or pages, whose comic nature constituted a gap even for the social criticism (COSTA, 2008). Their special position – of belonging to a subaltern social class but enjoying access to the most intimate life of characters from the higher classes – allowed for the dramaturgical exploration of the erotic dimension and social tension, in addition to making these characters key elements for tying together the intrigue.

César Nunes, Geraldo Magalhães: the sonic color line and the phonographic industry

A prime example of musical Brazilianness according to Mário de Andrade (1999), the *lundu* seems to have both designed and challenged the sonic color line that it helped to establish, crossing social, ethnic and ethical barriers. It was also one of the first musical genres recorded in Brazil, in 1902, in the voice of the singer Manuel Pedro dos Santos, the *Bahiano*²³: *Isto é bom*, by the actor, composer and singer Xisto Bahia (Disco Zon-o-phone 10001)²⁴. The phonography, in fact, knew how to take advantage of the attractiveness exerted by Afro-Brazilian popular music, exploiting commercially and on an industrial scale the key to comedy and exoticism, which had already been proven to be incorporated in the public's taste in theaters and the music press.

As the historian Martha Abreu (2017) has shown, the construction of this color line is observable both in periodicals and on sheet music covers published throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. In her book *Da senzala ao palco: canções escravas e racismo nas Américas, 1870-1930* (ABREU, 2017), the author highlights the stereotypical way in which black musicians were represented in caricatures that highlighted “primitive” or “comic” aspects, associating these qualities with the African American universe. One example among many is a cartoon published in the magazine *O Malho* in 1908, featuring “A *choro* in the far away suburbs”. A musical practice born at the end of the 19th century, the *choro* – as well as other musical genres such as *maxixe* and *samba* itself – was frequently referred to in the press at the beginning of the 20th century in association with the Afro-Brazilian environment and neighborhoods located beyond the “civilized” borders of Rio de Janeiro city, such as Cidade Nova and its suburbs. Used to designate at the same time the party, the dance and the musical encounter around popular instruments such as the *cavaquinho* and the guitar, the term “*choro*” was strongly connoted, constituting a mark of otherness. As can be seen in the cartoon, the members of *choro* are portrayed from the caricature of their phenotypic traits: accentuated thick lips, curly hair, in a disorderly aggregation of people whose choreography (central figure of the cartoon) has an air of primitivism. The scene is presented under a caption that emphasizes the physical

²³ Translator's note: “Bahiano” was the singer's nickname. The Portuguese word refers to a person born in Bahia, a state in Brazil's Northeast region.

²⁴ All phonograms mentioned in this paper, unless otherwise specified, are available for listening on the website Discografia Brasileira, from Instituto Moreira Salles. Listening 1: *Isto é bom*, by the actor, composer and singer Xisto Bahia, Zon-o-phone 10001, available at: <https://discografiabrasileira.com.br/fonograma/571/isto-e-bom> (accessed on: May 26, 2023).

border with the civilized city and accompanied by the transcription of a dialogue with grammatical errors (“Ah quem deras que eu sessel!”, “Nunca faz de o for...”), attributing ignorance and lack of culture to those who go to these balls.

Image 1

Cartoon depicting “A choro in the far away suburbs”.

UM CHORO NOS CAFUNDORIOS DOS SUBURBIOS



Source: Um choro... (1908, p. 24).

A critical listening of some of the first Brazilian phonographic recordings makes it possible to identify, transposed onto the grooves of the records, these same racialized caricatures so frequent in newspapers at the time and which, as we have seen, had already been taking shape since colonial times. A significant example is *Imitação d'um batuque africano*²⁵, a phonogram released in 1907 (disc Victor R 98702) with interpretation by the white singer César Nunes. An actor, singer, and imitator of great prestige in Brazil in the first decades of the 20th century, Nunes often presented himself as “the phonograph man” due to his ability to imitate the sound of this technological innovation of the time. He also performed “imitations of pop-

²⁵ Listening 2. *Imitação d'um batuque africano*, performed by César Nunes, Victor R 98702, 1907, available at: <https://discografiabrasileira.com.br/fonograma/12506/imitacao-d-um-batuque-africano> (accessed on: May 26, 2023).

ular Portuguese types” and comic sketches in *teatros de revista*²⁶ and vaudevilles throughout Brazil.

Image 2
Announcement of the presentation of
César Nunes on stages in Rio de Janeiro



Source: Theatro S. José (1907, p. 12).

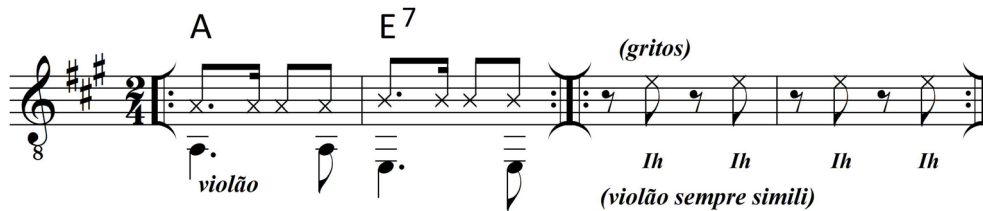
Like the aforementioned literary example of *Memórias de um Sargento de Milícias*, *Imitação d'um batuque africano* is a notable example of the fixation of a sonic color line in the Brazilian context, and it gives continuity to marks already established in previous centuries in a strongly caricatured way: interjections that intend to refer to what was understood by the agents of the time as a primitive and rural universe, mimicry of idioms and vocalities of enslaved Africans, all in a comic register. Despite the precarious audibility of this phonogram, which dates from the beginning of the 20th century, an analysis of its musical content allows us to identify sound resources used in the construction of the sonic color line, as proposed by Stoevers (2016).

César Nunes is accompanied by a Portuguese guitar that articulates basically two chords in a V-I function in the traditional harmony, in a rhythmic-harmonic accompaniment based on the 3-1-2-2 scheme (dotted eighth note, sixteenth note, eighth note, eighth note), one of the rhythmic patterns pointed out by Sandroni (2001) to characterize the *habanera*, close to the typical figuration of the *maxixe* (3-3-2). This harmonic rhythmic pattern is maintained throughout the duration of the phonogram. Over it, the singer vocalizes interjections in the off-beat (“ih ih ih”), evoking what would be a “typical” “ritual” and/or “primitive” environment (Image 3).

²⁶ Translator's note: “*Teatros de revista*” are a specific type of popular comic drama, very common in Brazil at the time.

Image 3

Excerpt from *Imitação d'um ataque africano*,
 recorded by César Nunes (disc Victor R 98702)



Transcribed by Marcilio Lopes.

A musical phrase in sixteenth notes follows in an onomatopoeic text, simulating an alleged African dialect followed by vocalizations (“ah ah”).

Image 4

Excerpt from *Imitação d'um batuque africano*,
 recorded by César Nunes (disc Victor R 98702)



Transcribed by Marcilio Lopes.

The search for sound effects reminiscent of a primitive, rustic and strange environment is reinforced in the following passage, in which César Nunes uses a percussive object, in a recording effect that highlights the timbre strangeness with which he wants to describe the sound environment of the “drumming”.

Image 5

Excerpt from *Imitação d'um batuque africano*,
 recorded by César Nunes (disc Victor R 98702)



Transcribed by Marcilio Lopes.

In the following passage, Nunes describes a “cabinda” at the river gate – the term refers to a location in Angola and was used to identify the enslaved population from this region. The text (“*O cabinda na porta do rio / O cabinda na porta do rio / Ficou pasmado ao ver o navio*”²⁷) is followed by vocalizations, interjections, spoken comments and laughter, stereotypically imitating the speech and figure of the “*preto velho*”²⁸, common in caricatures of the period.

Image 6

Excerpt from *Imitação d'um batuque africano*,
 recorded by César Nunes (disc Victor R 98702)



Transcribed by Marcilio Lopes.

In addition to drawing a vocal caricature, the recording includes one of the key elements of characterization of the sonic color line as proposed by Stoeber (2016): the essentially sensual and libidinous behavior attributed to blacks. This is the case of the passage that refers to the sexual act in a rustic environment (“*O preto com mais a*

²⁷ “The Cabinda at the gate of the river / The Cabinda at the gate of the river / Was stunned to see the ship”.

²⁸ Translator’s note: “preto velho” is a specific black Brazilian stereotype.

preta/Foi abaixo de u'bananeira/O preto que diz para a preta/Vamos fazer brincadeira?")²⁹, and also of the speech of “*preto velho*” interspersed with the song, which refers to the sensuality of the black female body (“*Anda aí filha, rebolando sempre menina*”³⁰).

Image 7

Excerpt from *Imitação d'um batuque africano*,
 recorded by César Nunes (disc Victor R 98702)



Transcribed by Marcilio Lopes.

As Lisa Gitelman (1999) argues, early recording technologies ushered in a new generation of blackface minstrels in the North American context, where “sounding black” became more important to white performers than “looking black”, dyeing their face with burnt cork. In Brazil, recordings such as that of César Nunes are examples of how phonography participated in the construction of racial otherness through specific sound devices, constituting an audible analogue of caricatures that accentuated phenotypic traits and images of primitivism associated with the Afro-Brazilian population’s ways of life. These devices, which, as we have seen, included vocalities, accents, imitation of dialects, slang, vocalizations and extra-verbal expressions, contributed to establishing a distinction between the “Afro-Brazilian” sonic world and the white-Western sonic world.

On the one hand, if historically a chain of mediators, mostly made up of white agents linked to the entertainment industry (such as César Nunes), actively collab-

²⁹ “The black man with the black woman / Went underneath a banana tree / The black man says to the black woman / Let’s play?”.

³⁰ “Go on, my dear / Twerking aways little girl”.

orated in the elaboration of racist stereotypes, on the other hand, several black musicians were active in building new bridges, spaces and meanings for Afro-Brazilian musical practices at the beginning of phonography in Brazil. This is the case of singer Geraldo Magalhães, the first black Brazilian singer to enjoy an international career. Born in 1878 in the city of São Gabriel, in Rio Grande do Sul state, Magalhães began his career as a singer and songwriter in Rio de Janeiro in the last years of the 19th century. In 1900, he performed at Alcazar Parque, in the Lapa neighborhood, in a duo with the Spanish Margarita Quintano, as evidenced by an advertisement published in *Revista da Semana*, on October 6 of that year. According to Vasconcelos (1977), in that period Magalhães was starting to become known as a singer of *chopps* and *café-dançantes* in the city, attracting the attention of the Carioca *intelligentsia* at the time. João do Rio, one of the most recognized chroniclers of the city, portrayed Magalhães in the following terms:

With the influence of the *café-dançantes*, Geraldo left the serenades to wear black-tie and use a monocle on a “chopp” on Rua da Assembleia. His repertoire is almost entirely written by renowned poets who went there to spend the Verlaine hour. There are *tangos repincados* talking about *caruru*, written by symbolists who, when they sign poems, only talk about blond crops and chrysanthemums...” (VASCONCELOS, 1977, p. 302).

João do Rio’s narrative indicates a historical continuity of the color line established in previous centuries, highlighting an issue that refers to the phenomenon pointed out by Andrade (1999), Tinhorão (1972; 1986) and Sandroni (2001) and already mentioned here: the intentional, more or less exaggerated and stereotyped use of lexical and musical marks attributed to the *lundu* by the white bourgeois composers of salon pieces and theatrical interludes in the 19th century. At the beginning of the 20th century, as before, the “*tangos repincados* talking about *caruru*” that João do Rio tells us about, that is, syncopated and written with a lexicon culturally connoted as black, are distinguished from the poetry composed by the same authors – “symbolist poets” – on more civilized, Verlainian, Western themes and terms: the docile and domesticated nature of “blond *mams*” and “chrysanthemums”.

But his narrative also indicates, however, the challenge or subversion to the color line by black musicians who, like Geraldo Magalhães, “left the *seresta* to wear ‘black-tie’ and a monocle”. In parallel with his career on stage, Geraldo Magalhães developed an intense career as a singer on records as of 1902, which places him as one of the pioneers of Brazilian discography, alongside other singers such as Cadete and Bahiano. According to an announcement published on August 24, 1902, in the *Correio da Manhã*, Geraldo Magalhães released in that same year the song *Pela Janela*, from an album apparently lost today, and which does not appear in the Brazilian Discography in 78 rpm by Instituto Moreira Salles. In 1906, he recorded the song A

Mulata, by Gonçalves Crespo and Nicolino Milano, thus inaugurating a theme that would become recurrent in his discography, already heavily explored in music theater: the reference to Brazilian racial types (with emphasis on female figures, such as “the *mulata*” and “the little black girl”³¹).

In 1904, he created the duo Os Geraldos in partnership with the *gaucha*³² singer Nina Teixeira, with whom he toured several times internationally in the following years, and released their first album through Casa Edison, with the famous *maxixe Corta Jaca*, by Chiquinha Gonzaga. In 1908, the duo left for Europe, where they apparently performed with great success in Paris and Lisbon, as indicated by the press and references of the time. One of which is a letter by the writer Xavier de Carvalho published in the Rio de Janeiro press in 1908, quoted by Vasconcelos (1977, p. 302), where he states that the duo Os Geraldos had “conquered Montmartre and were, in those days, the festive *clou* of the nocturnal festivals of the Abbaye de Thélème cabaret”. Likewise, the *Revista Brasil-Portugal* of August 1, 1908, published a photo of the duo, stating that the Coliseu dos Recreios theater “was packed to see Os Geraldos in their inimitable Brazilian duet”. As stated by Aragão (2016), the success in Europe echoed in Brazil in a dubious way: while part of the press celebrated the “consecration of the patrician artist”, the columnist Jota Depê, in the Brazilian periodical *O Degas*, classified the duo as a “fat-lipped duet”, which proclaimed in foreign countries “the low financial and aesthetic level of our art” (*Revista O Degas*, May 9, 1908).

³¹ Translator’s note: the original term used here is “*negrinha*”, which roughly translates to little black girl, but could be used for older black woman in an endearing way.

³² Translator’s note: “*gaúcha*” refers to a person born in Rio Grande do Sul, a state in the far South of Brazil.

Image 8

Duo Os Geraldos, with Geraldo Magalhães and Nina Teixeira



Source: Arquivo Nirez.

In 1910, Geraldo Magalhães began his phonographic career in Lisbon, recording under the Zonophone label the songs *Uma lição de machina de mão* (Gramophone Company 262109), *A partida do Geraldo* (Zonophone 52005), *A abelha e a flor* (Zonophone Z-052010), in addition to the *maxixes* *O Vatapá* (Gramophone Company 1156) and *Maxixe Aristocrático* (Victor 98447) in partnership with the Portuguese singer Medina de Sousa. In 1913, Nina Teixeira was replaced in the duo by the Portuguese singer Alda Soares, whom the Brazilian singer would marry in 1915, as reported in the Brazilian newspaper *O Imparcial* on June 29 of that year. In partnership with Alda Soares, Geraldo Magalhães crossed the Atlantic several times, touring not only in Brazil and Portugal, but in countries such as Mexico, Nicaragua, Spain and Sweden.

Although little cited by the historiography of Brazilian popular music (with rare exceptions such as *Efegê*, 1974), Geraldo Magalhães can be considered one of the main pioneers in the process of internationalization of Afro-Brazilian musical genres – long before the group Os Oito Batutas, traditionally identified by the historiography as the first group of black musicians to gain recognition in Europe.

His action was not limited to the stages of some of the main European theaters and cabarets: he also played an active role in recording albums in a European context, mainly in Portugal. An analysis of his discography reveals the existence of 82 albums in which Magalhães acted as a soloist: 21 of these were recorded in Portugal – now archived in the José Moças collection at the University of Aveiro – and 61 were recorded in Brazil and are now part of the Brazilian Discography in 78 rpm at Instituto Moreira Salles.

It seems fundamental to us to analyze the role played by black singers and composers as active agents in the process of inserting and legitimizing *maxixes*, *sambas*, *cateretês* and *lundus* in the context of phonography. This process involved a two-way street: on the one hand, it required conforming to a strategy used by white agents in the characterization of Afro-Brazilian music; on the other hand, conforming to these same strategies represented a way for these performers and musicians to enter the professional world of entertainment, helping to legitimize Afro-Brazilian musical practices not only nationally but also in the international network of the entertainment industry.

The industry made use of certain devices to characterize Afro-Brazilian music, which was appropriated and incorporated by black performers. One of them is the repeated reference to Brazilian racial types, with emphasis on female figures such as “the *mulata*” or the “little black girl”, often mentioned in the songs recorded by Magalhães. One example is the *Maxixe Aristocrático* (Gramophone 64332), recorded by Geraldo Magalhães and the Portuguese singer Medina de Sousa, where interjective phrases such as “*Quebra mulata, bate nas cadeiras*” and “*Aí minha negra, quebra com gosto!*”³³ appear repeatedly. They refer us to the concept of “sonic color line” as proposed by Stoeber, where “particular sounds are identified, exaggerated and ‘combined’ with racialized bodies”. The constant mentioning of the black woman’s or the *mulata*’s bodies and sensuality undoubtedly proves to be a fundamental part of this process of construction of otherness. A second device is the use of texts with double meanings, which ambiguously mix items or culinary gestures and sexual references – a resource that was actually used in several popular cultures long before the advent of record and which had great expression in *teatro de revista*, in the Portuguese-Brazilian context. This resource, pointed out by Sandroni (2001, p. 44), who lists some examples of the use of food as a sexual metaphor in *lundus* and *sambas* from the late 19th century to recordings from the 1940s, is quite frequent in Magalhães’ songs and can be considered as another strategy for characterizing Af-

³³ “Twirk, *mulata*, shake your bottom”, “Oh, my black woman, twirk with gusto!”

ro-Brazilian music, which were somehow appropriated by black singers in the early days of phonography. This is the case of the *maxixe O Vatapá*³⁴ recorded in Lisbon in 1910 by Geraldo Magalhães and Medina de Sousa (Gramophone Co. 64336) – a song originally composed for the magazine *Fado e Maxixe*, by the Brazilian João Phoca and the Portuguese André Brun. Following a tradition of the Brazilian *lundu* of the 19th century, and which would later be consolidated with composers such as Dorival Caymmi and Ary Barroso, the text mixes the culinary recipe recited by the character Bahia (Medina de Sousa) with the always ambiguous roguery of the character Maxixe (Magalhães), of a sexual nature.

Bahia – *O vatapá, comida rara, é assim yoyô. Você limpa a panela bem limpa; quando o peixe lá dentro já está, bota o leite de coco, gengibre, a pimenta da Costa e o fubá; o camarão torradinho se ajunta ao depois da cabeça tirada.*

Maxixe – *Mas então a cabeça não entra?*

Bahia – *Qual cabeça seu moço, que nada.*

Both – *Mexe direito pra não queimar; mexe com jeito o vatapá.*

It is undeniable that the constituent devices of sonic color lines, already active in theater before, were incorporated by many of the black male and female singers from the beginning of phonography in Brazil, as it is the role that these male and female singers played in the legitimization and diffusion of both Afro-Brazilian musical genres and their own careers, recognized in newspapers and artistic circles both in Brazil and in Europe. Recording musical genres associated with the Afro-Brazilian universe such as *maxixes*, *lundus* and *sambas*, Geraldo Magalhães was an active spokesperson in the international dissemination of musical practices that were then the target of persecution, silencing and prejudice by the Brazilian musical historiography, nascent in that period. In one of the first historiographical-musical narratives in the country, *A Música no Brasil*, published in 1908, the year in which the duo Os Geraldos made its debut in Europe, the author Guilherme de Mello (1947 [1908], p. 15) described the music of African and indigenous ethnic groups as “impregnated with barbaric and savage feelings and Kabbalistic superstition”, pondering that this should not cause surprise, since “even today one finds traces of a heinous cannibalism and superstitious beliefs among the black populace that has not yet purified itself and in whose veins the uncultivated blood of the African still flows”.

³⁴ Listening 3. *O Vatapá*, by Paulino Sacramento, performed by Medina de Sousa and Geraldo Magalhães, Victor R 98453, 1910, available at: <https://discografiabrasileira.com.br/fonograma/20733/o-vatapa> (accessed on: May 26, 2023).

In contrast to this type of discourse, the progressive appearance of black performers such as Geraldo Magalhães and Nina Teixeira in newspapers and magazines of the period, as well as their performance both on European stages and in the music industry in Portugal, represents an enormous advance for the incorporation of musical practices that seemed confined to peripheral or marginalized neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro, such as Cidade Nova and the suburbs. This insertion process will be driven forward in the following decades by the performance of a series of other black artists in the music industry.

***O Negô de pé espiado, J. B. de Carvalho:* carnivalization and subversion of sound raciality**

The commercial exploitation of raciality by the phonographic industry in its 78-rotations phase also has a significant example in J. B de Carvalho and his group Conjunto Tupy, which highlights the complexity that has permeated, since its inception, the stereotyped constitution of black otherness. Conjunto Tupy was a musical group active in the phonographic market, in radio broadcasts and in the musical spectacle environments of Rio de Janeiro between the years 1931 and 1943. It became famous for the interpretation of compositions referred to at the time with general designations such as “*batuques*” and “*macumbas*”, related to religions of African origin. It was led by the composer and singer João Paulo Batista de Carvalho (1901-1979), or J. B. de Carvalho, as he preferred to be called, who had been taken to the phonographic environment by Getúlio Marinho, creator and member of the group Conjunto Africano. In addition to J. B. de Carvalho himself, Conjunto Tupy was formed, at some point, by the flutist from Editora Victor and composer Attílio Grany (or Attilio Verlani Gieri), singer and composer Francisco Sena (or Francisco Silva, who would become Herivelto Martins’ partner at the duo Preto e Branco), Pedro Gomes, Daniel Ferreira, Euclides José Jesus (or Euclides José Moreira), Lucio, Herivelto Martins (the singer named under the pseudonym Índia do Brasil) (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 67-69), the singer Olívio Carvalho, the guitarists Henrique Caetano and José Corrêa da Silva, the instrumentalist Euclides José Moreira (banjo), the percussionist Pedro Nascimento (“*cabaça*” or *xequê*), the singer and *omelê* player Alberto Rodrigues and the saxophonist and composer Abelardo Neves (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 61-75). The group premiered in the phonographic market in 1931, with the recording of two “*macumba drums*” titled *E vem o sol* and *Na minha Terrera* (Victor 33420). But it is with *Cadê Viramundo* (Victor 33459), recorded in the same year, that Conjunto

Tupy became famous³⁵. The song was a hit at the 1932 carnival, boosting the group's career, which began to perform with great frequency in scenic-musical shows in movie theaters, ballrooms, clubs and casinos in the then capital of Brazil. *Cadê Viramundo* refers to the Caboclo festivities – religious ceremonies held in “terreiros” of *Umbanda* and *Candomblé*, in which indigenous spiritual entities or *mestizos* of indigenous peoples with whites and blacks are invoked, incorporated and honored. The ensemble's scenic-musical performances visually and choreographically mimicked “*terreiro*” ceremonies, especially in the *caboclo* tradition, with costumes that evoked indigenous and *caboclo* clothing. They did so, however, in an admittedly irreverent way, where the ritual elements and their related practices were represented in a comic tone, whether they were chants, invocations, trances, gestures, dances or offerings. Advertising pieces of the time allow us to perceive that it was precisely by accepting and putting to their advantage a strongly stereotyped and racialized imagery that J. B. de Carvalho and Conjunto Tupy were able to promote their successful career in the music market. Months after the group broke out in the 1932 carnival, the newspaper *Correio da Manhã* announced in its pages “an authentic *macumba* on the stage of Eldorado”, advertising its scenic-musical performance:

Everyone hears about “*macumba*”, but very few have seen this ceremony, a pagan rite, in which spirits from beyond the grave are evoked. So that everyone knows what a “*macumba*” consists of, Conjunto Tupy, which now works on the Eldorado's stage, presents an authentic scene, with all its characteristics, songs, barbaric music and typical staging. It is a very original number, which Conjunto Tupy completes with other highly successful creations. In the same program, Alda Garrido and Augusto Annibal create a magnificent duet; “The two Genaro” perform stupendous eccentric acrobatics; and Maria Lisbôa and Dagoberto sing and dance happy things, in typical costumes. For Monday, Eldorado announces, on stage, “Trio Richard” amazing trapeze artists, “Lennette Ger” French singer, Ada from Bogoslowa, an authentic Russian princess, in wonderful classical dances (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 40).

Juxtaposed with other varied and spectacular “numbers”, the performance of Conjunto Tupy was offered, as can be seen, as an exciting, exotic and original extravaganza. Strongly connoted as expressions of primitivism, the personifications that the members of the group made of “*macumbeiros*”, “sorcerers”, “*pais-de-santo*”, entities such as “*caboclos*”, “*pretos-velhos*” and “*orixás*” represented once again, in the commercial entertainment environment, the opposite of modern civility and, as such, amenable to laughter, curiosity and fascination at the same time. As in their scenic

³⁵ Listening 4. *Cadê vira mundo*, by J. B. de Carvalho, performed by Conjunto Tupi, Victor 33459, 1931, available at: <https://discografiabrasileira.com.br/fonograma/40889/cade-vira-mundo> (accessed on: May 26, 2023).

appearances, in which ritual performances were staged in order to suit the commercial needs of entertainment, one can see a marked stylization in the recordings of “*macumbas*” by Conjunto Tupy. Textual, melodic, rhythmic and vocal elements identifiable to the music performed in *Umbanda* and *Candomblé* circles and parties were accommodated to exogenous instrumentation (which included both melodic instruments, such as saxophone or flute, and well as guitars, *cavaquinho*, *bandolin* and *banjo*) with quadratures and harmonizations proper to Western music. In this sense, the musical approach of J. B. de Carvalho and his Conjunto Tupy differed significantly from the search for a stricter mimicry of the sound reality of the rituals, which characterized recordings of “*macumbas*” made in the early 1930s by other groups such as the Conjunto Africano, by Getúlio Marinho and Mano Elói³⁶, but especially Filhos de Nagô, by Filipe Néry Conceição³⁷, or Grupo do Pai Alufá, by Zé Espinguela.

The group’s career was relatively brief, but J. B. de Carvalho’s lasted for several decades after the disappearance of Tupy from the music market, always marked by the link to the “*macumba*” imagery, whether in his recordings, in the reception by press or in his performance as a singer and broadcaster. He commanded and presented radio broadcasts that explored the theme, such as the daily program *A voz de outro mundo*, with the participation of Conjunto Tupy, launched in 1938 on Rádio Cruzeiro do Sul (later migrated to other stations) or, already in the 1930s, 1970, the program *A Carioca nos Terreiros* on Rádio Carioca, in which the “*capitão da mata*” J. B. de Carvalho, “a profound expert on *umbanda* and spiritism in general”, offered listeners the resolution of personal and mediumistic problems.

The complex public persona of this eminent character in the history of Brazilian phonography is representative of the tactics that, making use of the nascent cultural industry in post-abolition Brazil and mechanisms that exacerbate and subvert stereotypes at the same time, knew how to open gaps for cultural mani-

³⁶ For example, the album *Macumba*, performed by Eloy Antero Dias, Getúlio Marinho Amor and Conjunto Africano, 1930 (Odeon 10690).

Listening 5. *Canto de Exu* (Lado A), performed by Eloy Antero Dias, Getúlio Marinho Amor and Conjunto Africano, available at: <https://discografiabrasileira.com.br/fonograma/30489/macumba-canto-de-exu>. (accessed on: May 26, 2023).

Listening 6. *Canto de Ogum* (Lado B), performed by Eloy Antero Dias, Getúlio Marinho Amor and Conjunto Africano, available at: <https://discografiabrasileira.com.br/fonograma/30492/macumba-canto-de-ogum>. (accessed on: May 26, 2023).

³⁷ For example, the album *Candomblé*, by Felipe Néry Conceição, performed by Filhos de Nagô (Parlophon 13254). Listening 7. *Candomblé* (Lado A): a) *Oduré*; b) *Eriúá*, available at: <https://discografiabrasileira.com.br/fonograma/46114/candomble-a-odure-b-eriua>. (accessed on: May 26, 2023).

Listening 8. *Candomblé* (Lado B): c) *Canto de Exú*; d) *Canto de Ogum*, available at: <https://discografiabrasileira.com.br/fonograma/46119/candomble-c-canto-de-exu-d-canto-de-ogum> (accessed on: May 26, 2023).

festations and subjectivities strongly oppressed by the exclusionary colonial and modern logic. As Anderson Araújo (2015) shows, J. B. de Carvalho personified in his artistic performance the “*macumbeiro*”, the “*batuqueiro*”, the “*sorcerer*”, undoubtedly meeting the expectations of the market of exoticism and primitivism, but affirming, even if under caricatured and comic mask, his identity as a black man, *samba* dancer and practitioner of “*terreiro*” religions. For example, in the dialogue song released in 1931, in which he himself plays *Nêgo do pé espaiado*³⁸:

– Êba, dá licença de eu dizer um pisilone?
– Ó crioulo, não força!
– Esse nêgo do pé espaiado
Esse nêgo já quer ser delegado.
– Esse nêgo é bom?
Não senhor!
Não sabe ler e já quer ser doutor!
– Esse nêgo da cara larga
Bota colarinho e não quer fazer mais nada.
– Esse nêgo é bom na batucada
Quando ela é mesmo enfezada!
– Esse nêgo só anda amufiado
E os olhos dele logo pega a lumiar.
– Esse nêgo é bom no candomblé
Com santo no corpo ele faz o que quer.
– Esse nêgo só gosta de comê
Da galinha preta que parece urubu.
– Esse nêgo é bom mas anda jururu
Com meia de cachaça só recebe Exu!

Stereotypes related to magic and nocturnal spirits are also listed in a burlesque way and assumed in a frank and uncomplicated manner as characteristic elements of the religious practices of the “*terreiro*”, carnivalizing the link between blackness and witchcraft, as in the *jongo* *Quando o sol sair*³⁹ (Victor 33784), released in 1934:

³⁸ Listening 9. *Nêgo de pé espaiado*, by J. B. de Carvalho, performed by Conjunto Tupi, Victor 33482, 1931, available at: <https://discografiabrasileira.com.br/fonograma/40949/nego-de-pe-espaiado> (accessed on: May 26, 2023).

³⁹ Listening 10. *Quando o sol sair*, by J. B. de Carvalho, performed by Conjunto Tupi, Victor 33784, 1934, available at: <https://discografiabrasileira.com.br/fonograma/42237/quando-o-sol-sair> (accessed on: May 26, 2023).

É de mariê quando o sol sair!
Um galo preto à meia noite em ponto
É emissário que o diabo mandou;
Galinha preta na encruzilhada
A gunissaia se manifestou.
Coruja cantou, mortalha acordou
É mau quebranto que ela deixou.
(...) *O negro preto que parece o cão*
É assombração de só dá amolação.
A gente chama Saci Pererê
Ele se espanta e começa a correr.
Nêgo danado da venta larga
Cala essa boca, não diz mais nada.
É de mariê quando o sol sair! (...) ⁴⁰

But, in a significant ambiguity, once made famous as a successful artist, J. B. de Carvalho made himself visible on the newspaper pages in a radically different way from his artistic persona: dressed in an elegant suit, tie and hat, girded with all the signs of modernity and urban civility⁴¹.

Image 9
Photograph of J. B. de Carvalho



Source: José Ramos Tinhorão Collection, Instituto Moreira Salles.

⁴⁰ From the transcription made by Araújo (2015, p. 117-118).

⁴¹ This ambivalence was very well observed by Araújo (2015, p. 178-179).

The ambiguities does not end there, however, because the dapper image of J. B. de Carvalho, dressed in careful elegance and urbanity, does not fail to refer to the characterization of both the figure of the “*malandro*”⁴² from Rio and the entity related to him and worshiped in *Umbanda* – Zé Pelintra (or Pilintra). Possibly originating from Catimbó (or Jurema) in the Northeast (LOPES, 2011 [2004], p. 1499-1500), once acclimatized in Rio de Janeiro, the figure of Zé Pilintra incorporated the ethical and aesthetic qualities of the local “*malandro*”. In the terms of anthropologist Luiz Assunção (2010, p. 176), Zé Pelintra represents “cunning, free transit through the gap and the forbidden, the use of means not sanctioned by moral norms”. In the Southeast, he is often related to as Exu (ASSUNÇÃO, 2010, p. 176), having in common with him the predicates of a rule-breaker, a trickster, an intriguer, a prankster, a mocker, a producer of change (GABANI; SERBENA, 2015, p. 62). His typical clothing is a “white suit, Panama hat drooping over his forehead, red tie and scarf, two-tone shoes” (LOPES, 2011 [2004], p. 1500). He survives and overcomes difficulties, poverty and social discrimination with his cleverness and wit, dressed as a “doctor”, as “fine people”. Monique Augras draws attention to the meanings of the term “*Pelintra*”, which give clues about the characteristic duplicities of the entity:

The nickname “Pelintra” also deserves investigating. The consulted dictionaries propose definitions that once again point to duplicity. According to *O Pequeno Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa*, *pelintra* means “poor or poorly dressed person, but with pretensions to represent; person without money; poor but pretentious; (Bras.) well dressed; naughty; *adamado*”. Right from the start, therefore, Seu Zé is described as poorly and well dressed. He’s poor, dressed up as elegant. (...) The *Enciclopédia Brasileira Mérito* summarizes the ridiculous audacity of the *pelintra*, typical of “those who have nothing and intend to show that they own something”. Zé Pelintra, therefore, takes on the clear features of a poor man who does not know his place. He dresses with care, but his elegance is too striking. He flees the *bon ton*. It is the clothes of a poor man who is trying to be rich, of a marginal person who promotes himself, of the dominated who dreams of becoming equal to the dominator and, due to the fuss, ends up proclaiming, instead of social ascension, the irremediable fate of the *ralé*. (AUGRAS, 1997, p. 48)

The “*nego do pé espaiado*” in the song by J. B de Carvalho seems to exactly fit with the characterization of Zé Pelintra, seeking to speak in a “difficult” way (“*dá licença de eu dizer um pisilone?*”⁴³), aspiring to social ascension (“*esse nêgo já quer ser delegado*”; “*não sabe ler e já quer ser doutor!*”⁴⁴), tricking under elegant clothes (“*bota*

⁴² Translator’s note: a “*malandro*” is a traditional character in *carioca* culture, a very charming conman.

⁴³ “May I say a *pisilone*?”

⁴⁴ “This nigro already wants to be a sheriff!”; “he doesn’t even know how to read and he already wants to be a doctor!”

colarinho e não quer fazer mais nada”) and similar to Exu (“*com meia de cachaça só recebe Exu!*”⁴⁵). Zé Pelintra’s song transcribed by José Ribeiro (1974), as well as the variant cited by Assunção (2010), seems to be yet another indication that Carvalho’s song referred to Zé Pelintra, due to the equivalence between the designations “*nego do pé espaiado*” and “*nego do pé derramado*”⁴⁶.

Sou caboclo Zé Pilintra
Negro do pé derramado
Quem mexer com Zé Pilintra
Está doido ou está danado
Seu doutor, seu doutor,
Bravo senhor
Zé Pilintra chegou (...) (RIBEIRO, 1974, p. 47 *apud* AUGRAS, 1997, p. 45, our emphasis).

The “*nego do pé espaiado*” in the song and, why not, J. B de Carvalho himself could well be taken as a figuration of Zé Pelintra, the one who, in the words of *babalorixá* Pai Rodney de Oxóssi⁴⁷,

[translates], in its own way, the challenges of the underprivileged of all sorts, mainly the black men who, with neither money or opportunity, had to find a way to survive, to get along using all their smarts and mojo.

The black Zé Pilintra, master of jurema and trickster of the hill, has the status of a doctor. He graduated in the school of life, in the science of the laws of survival, the law of silence, the law of the dog-eat-dog, in the arts of the rejected (EUGENIO, 2018).

Or, still, the one who is “adaptable, like a good *malandro* has to be”, who “plays with the contradictory”, who “is sometimes sacred, sometimes profane”, who “confuses the less aware and surprises the accommodated” (PEREIRA, 2016).

J. B de Carvalho, in his career, embodies to a large extent the archetype of this trickster⁴⁸. His irreverence and his profane caricaturization of *terreiro* rites confuse us, the ambiguities, duplicities and ambivalences that permeate his forms of public

⁴⁵ “With half a *cachaça* dose he’ll incorporate Exu”.

⁴⁶ Other variants may be found, for example: “*Sou eu José Pilintra / Nego do pé arranhado, / Na direita eu sou bonzinho / Na esquerda eu sou danado. / Seu doutor, seu doutor / Zé Pilintra chegou*” (our emphasis), available at: <https://gritelaroye.tumblr.com/post/54465947561/sou-eu-jos%C3%A9-pilintra-nego-do-p%C3%A9-arranhado-na> (accessed on: May 26, 2023).

⁴⁷ Rodney William Eugenio is an anthropologist, writer and *babalorixá*. PhD in Social Sciences from PUC-SP, he conducts a research on racial relations, racism and religions of African origin. He is a priest of the Cultural and Religious Association Ilê Obá Ketu Axé Omi Nlá, in São Paulo.

⁴⁸ On Exu and Zé Pelintra as expressions of the trickster archetype, see Gabani and Serbena (2015).

appearance shuffle the cards, throw us off track. On the one hand, if the process of stylization, adaptation and carnivalization of songs linked to religiosity of African origin confined the Conjunto Tupy's repertoire to the exotic, primitive and comic, objectifying cultural elements and reinforcing racial stereotypes, on the other hand, it enabled its wide and free circulation, giving visibility and notoriety to its musicians. In a deceiving zigzag of signifiers, J. B. de Carvalho blatantly flaunted his persona as a *macumbeiro* and a sorcerer on stages and on the radio and showed himself in the press as a modern dandy, at the same time hiding and revealing a clandestine referent: the *malandro*/Zé Pelintra/Exu, representative amalgam of who precisely tactically manages duplicity, ambiguity and ambivalence. The few existing studies on his biography seem to show that Carvalho skillfully slipped between separate worlds, circulating naturally both in the peripheral and marginalized environment of *samba* and *Umbanda* and in the hegemonic circles of sociability. His visible dexterity in moving between discriminatory barriers made him a mediating figure: converted into a product of the cultural industry, the stylized *terreiro* chants of Conjunto Tupy penetrated environments of the most diverse layers and sectors of society and were present in the press, records, radios, musical and theater stages, carnival balls and private clubs. At a time when *terreiro* religions were criminalized and the target of violent and repeated police persecution, J. B. de Carvalho and Conjunto Tupy circulated their sounds, their performances, propagating openly and sonorously: “Sou da Macumba, / no feitiço não tenho rival. (...) Não tenha medo / e vem mesmo com fé, / Que o nosso grupo / pertence ao candomblé. / E a nossa vida / é mesmo um pagode / Não é para quem quer / e sim para quem pode”⁴⁹ (*samba Fica no mocó*, Victor 33516).

The *malandragem* of J. B. de Carvalho/Zé Pelintra/Exu – an ambiguous mix of submission and transgression – does not seem to have been efficient in subverting his condition: despite his success in the cultural industry, his visibility in the press and his transit among the fancy, elegant and powerful people, he remained poor, in need of continuing to work as a chauffeur in order to survive (ARAÚJO, 2015). Nor did it succeed in converting the symbolic oppression which the musical and religious expressions the Conjunto Tupy conveyed into definitive emancipation. But, as Monique Augras (1997) acutely observed, writing about Zé Pelintra, peripheral cults know how to insidiously penetrate the interstices of the social fabric. “After

⁴⁹ “I’m from *Macumba*, / in spells I have no rival. (...) Don’t be afraid / and come with faith, / That our group / belongs to *candomblé*. / And our life / is really a *pagode* / It’s not for those who want to / but for those who can”. Listening 11. *Fica no mocó*, by J. B. de Carvalho, performed by Conjunto Tupi, Victor 33516, 1932, available at: <https://discografiabrasileira.com.br/fonograma/34833/fica-no-moco> (accessed on: May 26, 2023).

all, among the police officers who go up the *morro*⁵⁰, how many are devotees of Zé Pelintra?”, she asks. “The imagination of the dispossessed does not frankly attack the hegemonic system”, expressed Augras in a fundamental way. “It goes about it stealthily” (AUGRAS, 1997, p. 49).

Conclusion

The examples we sought to highlight mark different stages of the fixation of sound and linguistic stereotypes of black otherness. Located in different historical moments that correspond to equally different modes of circulation and consumption of music, they seem, however, to converge in fundamental aspects regarding the problem of the constitution of otherness. The caricatural and/or comic representation, common to the examples presented, operates in two divergent and paradoxical senses. Firstly, by overexposing the features of the Other, it renders the hegemonic ethos invisible or endows it with a universalizing transparency – a strategy by which it occupies the place of a ground zero, around which all the Others that define it negatively are inscribed. But, conversely, the comic overexposure of otherness allows the smuggling of subaltern cultural and life forms as a result of the dynamics of dichotomizations. Thus, if on one hand the phonographic industries in Brazil reinforced the dynamics of domination constitutive of Western modernity, establishing a sonic color line that had already been formed before and reverberating their stereotypes on an industrial scale, on the other hand, artists such as Geraldo Magalhães and J. B. de Carvalho, preceded by poets and musicians from the 18th and 19th centuries, played a fundamental role in the processes of subversion of these racial sound representations, creating spaces for the transmission and legitimation of Afro-Brazilian musical practices.

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⁵⁰ Translator's note: “morro” literally means “hill”, but in this context it refers to the slum/*favela*. *Favelas* in Rio are predominantly located up the hills.

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