

AND IN THAT SCENE PABLO'S GRANDMA WAS ALREADY TRANSGRESSIVE: queer performances in Brazilian pop music

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Abstract

Based on the notion of musical scene, we propose – in this article – to approach some performances of the 1970s by theater and music artists in relation to certain queer performances of the contemporary Brazilian pop music scene. We observe these performances in productions that were and are dedicated to questioning the limits imposed by the social roles of gender; which denounce the heteronormative patrolling over bodies; and that invest in giving visibility to fluid and diverse identities. We are interested in this approach to perceive a common aspect that was supported by other ethics, arising from new aesthetic circulations; how the performance of those bodies contained and contains a power that transforms the consciousness; how pop becomes political.

Keywords

musical scene; pop music; performance; queer.

Introduction

In the final episode of the fifth season of the North American tv show RuPaul's Drag Race, in 2013, a short segment of the interviews with the queens deserves attention¹. In episode four of the season, the participants were challenged to create a musical called No RuPaulogies, based on RuPaul's history. Divided into two teams, the leaders determined the characters for each of them. As usual in all episodes, RuPaul goes talks with all competitors in the rehearsal room. After meeting all competitors in one of the teams, RuPaul asks: who will play Diana Ross in the 60s? Immediately, Lineysha Sparx answers that it would be her. When asked if she knew about Diana Ross and the Supremes, Lineysha replied that she did not know who they were. In the last episode, when all the participants return to the stage and are interviewed, Lineysha Sparx hears that she was a lovely participant. However, Sparx committed, according to RuPaul, an unforgivable sin. After the host says that, they show the segment of the episode in which Lineysha says she does not know Diana Ross. RuPaul asks if at that moment she already knew who the singer was. The queen's answer conveys that she confuses Diana Ross with Josephine Baker, in invoking the banana dance and describing the bodily movements when she sings. Then she says, "Oh... That wasn't her. But I was joking." Ru then asks her to say the name of a song of the singer. The drag can't answer. Mama Ru then comments that she is not alone, because many young people need to study about the gay miracles that preceded them. Then, the drag announces a pop quiz called RuPaul's Drag U – Drag Race herstory. The video, one-minute long, features iconic gay divas of cinema, television and music, starting at 1939, with actress Judy Garland, and advancing to contemporary times, with singers like Lady Gaga and other divas of the international pop.

The movie *The wizard of OZ* (1939) is considered to be a work full of references for the LGBTQ+ culture. The red magic shoes worn by the character Dorothy, played by Judy Garland, for example, have become an icon. The cover of Elton John's album *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*, released in 1973, features an illustration where the singer appears wearing a jacket with his name on the back (similar to a cheerleader's), wearing red platform heels (inspired by Dorothy's shoes), taking a step into a poster whose image is that of the yellow brick road – that which leads directly to the Emerald City. In using the year of 1939 as the initial landmark for his pop quiz and in invoking a set of references from music and audiovisual, RuPaul performs two movements: the first is a historic exercise for a young audience unaware of the influences – showing that many other queens have laid their brick on this long colored road that leads to the Valley of the Unicorns; the second is a description of the acts of a scene in which the cultural, musical, mediatic, affective, stylistic, and creative production meet to shape a group.

We use here the notion of scene as it appears on the horizon of studies that relate music and communication. The discussion - most of the time - is based on the concept coined by Will Straw. In an interview given to professor and researcher Jeder Janotti Junior (2012, p. 09), Straw points out the constant updating underwent by the notion of musical scene, since its first citation.

In my view, the notion of scene has developed in two directions ... In one, "scene" is an element in a lexical series that includes "subculture," "tribe," and other social/cultural units in which it is assumed that music exists ... In another direction, "scene" is used to try to theorize the relation between music and geography, space ... I would emphasize that the Brazilian work is strong in both directions – in the analysis of social categories and in the conception of the ways musical practices organize a sense of space. (Straw, 2012, p. 09)

Arising from the review proposed by the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, from the 1970s onwards, this notion of scene is forged to research

¹ The complete fifth season of RuPaul's Drag Race is available at: https://www.netflix.com/search?q=ru-paul%20&suggestionId=20007381_person&jbv=70187741&jbp=0&jbr=0 Accessed in: Jan 2019

[...] the formation of the networks of pleasure, taste, creativity and identity that found the relationship between juvenile cultures and mass pop music. An important component of the vocabulary of fans and critics, the spatial metaphor of musical scene was appropriated – in a more systematic and theoretically refined way – by sociologists, geographers and anthropologists interested in describing and analyzing localized spaces of cultural production and consumption (notably, musical), signaling the possibility of building alliances that escape traditional disputes for hegemony. (Freire Filho; Fernandes. 2005, p. 04)

Simone Pereira de Sá (2011, p. 157) underlined some characteristics of the music scene: a local or global environment; with a manifest exchange of ethical and aesthetic references; which assumes that the exchange and its development may or may not generate a new genre; which assumes the establishment of existential territories, manifest in urban and digital territorialities; recognized for its media dimension.

Founded on Straw's reflection in relation to the studies developed in Brazil, in the methodological framework proposed by Janotti Júnior (2012, 2014, 2015), Sá (2011, 2015) and Soares (2015), we propose – in this article – to approach some performances presented from the 1970s by theater and music artists in relation to certain queer performances of the contemporary Brazilian pop music scene. To describe and relate these performances, we seek the principles of an affective writing (Stewart, 2007). This writing invokes subjectivities, individual experiences, in the definition of perspectives about a given problem. A type of writing based on affection, on the ordinary and on forms of an ethnographic commitment anchored in affectionate and esteem bonds. We observe these performances in productions that are dedicated to question the limits imposed by the social roles of gender (Butler, 2012); that denounce the heteronormative patrolling on the bodies, trying to control their forms and their pleasures (Warner, 1991); and that invest in giving visibility to fluid and diverse identities. As for the theater scene, we highlight the performance theater of the Dzi Croquettes. As for music production, we have special interest in some artists who assimilated the influences from Glam Rock (Auslander, 2009; Leibetseder, 2016) and, in our conception, helped in opening spaces for queer performances such as those of Johnny Hooker, Pablio Vittar, Glória Groove, Linn da Quebrada, Liniker, and Quebrada Queer.

In addition to the impact on musical productions, we are interested in this approach to perceive vestiges of a journey that was followed in a non-linear way, told and sung by multiple voices. Therefore, although subsequently describing historical periods, our intention is not to present a totalizing timeline to which images of events are assigned. We are interested in perceiving a common aspect that was supported on other ethics, arising from new aesthetic circulations; how the performance of those bodies contained and contains a power that can transform the consciousness, how pop becomes political (Janotti Júnior, 2015). We recognize in these marks the signs of the web that intertwines affective, communicative and marketing networks (Freire Filho; Fernandes, 2005).

Thiago Soares (2015), in a text in which he reflects on the pathways for the study of pop music, defines it as the set of sound and imagistic expressions produced within certain standards of the music industry and which are associated with already hegemonic genres/matrices. Soares (2015) points out, however, that despite the undisputed presence of strong bonds linking the pop music to the cultural market and industry, it is equally fundamental and powerful, when studying it, to recognize important notions such as innovation, creativity and reappropriation that, also, structure it. According to Soares (2015), then, thinking about pop music would also mean considering the relevance of performances, bodies and sexualities in musical spaces/scenes and, in addition beyond a capitalist logic (also relevant), understanding the resulting political powers. Therefore, this is how pop music could be situated as "a possible focus to discuss the contemporary communication and culture in globalizing dynamics" (Soares, 2015, p. 30).

Simone Pereira de Sá, Rodrigo Carreiro and Rogério Ferraraz (2015), when discussing pop culture, suggest that it should be understood as a term that synthesizes a field of symbolic tensions and

disputes triggered by popular and media-related cultural manifestations from multiple spaces such as music, cinema, television, and social networks. Pop culture, in the perception of the researchers, features ambiguities that should be highlighted. At the same time it expresses a volatility of cultural products that are influenced by a market logic that is transitory, it translates, on the other hand, "the structure of feelings of modernity, having strong influence on the mode(s) how people experience the world around them" (Sá; Carreiro; Ferraraz, 2015, p. 09).

* * *

On March 31, 1972, color tv broadcast was first introduced in Brazil. In April of the same year, the Araguaia military campaign was initiated. Due to the violent acts of the Brazilian military dictatorship, in August of that year, Amnesty International² filed a complaint containing the name of 472 torturers and more than 1,000 tortured people. Faced with the aggressive policies of repression to opponents of the regime, also in 1972, the Rio de Janeiro-based group Dzi Croquettes premiered, at Casanova Cabaret, Lapa, Rio de Janeiro, *Gente Computada Igual a Você*³. The show, created by Wagner Ribeiro de Souza and directed by Lennie Dale, openly criticized the customs, politics, and moral and sexual values prevailing at that time.

The group, which worked between 1972 and 1976, consisted of 13 artists – aged 18 to 30 years. All the members resided in the same house, in the neighborhood of Santa Tereza, in the city of Rio de Janeiro, nicknamed "Embassy of Mars." Their shows merged elements from Broadway musicals, revue theater, cabaret shows, carnival, jazz, bossa nova. Their creations revisited the Anthropophagic Manifesto, by Oswald de Andrade.

Gente Computada Igual a Você initiated a movement of cultural and sexual questioning. Inspired by the "Blocos das Putas" [Blocks of Whores], which paraded the streets of Rio de Janeiro during the carnival, the group put on stage men dressed as women without concealing their furry breast, arms, and legs. Androgynous and strange beings blurred over their bodies the boundaries between male and female gender patterns. Fishnets, exaggerated makeup, lewd gestures of a body covered with bold costumes and much sensuality surprised the audience in show segments with lip syncing, dance, singing – all interspersed with declamations of ironic texts, full of double-entendres and criticism of the military regime. The dramaturgy invoked the subjective experiences of the artists involved.

"We're not men. We're not women either. We are computed people just like you," said the opening phrase of the performance. The Croquettes proclaimed to be flesh and bone artists who approached ordinary life and spoke about ordinary people in their creations. The confrontation with the macho and homophobic values of the military regime was not conducted through the defense of a homosexual agenda, women's rights, or denunciation of the privileged condition of men. The performance of the bodies was, by definition, an affront to the regime. Victor Turner (2008) highlighted the importance of performance events on the management of cultural systems. According to the anthropologist, these systems do not exist without the action of humans motivated by a specific type of will and conscience. Such actions have as consequence the establishment of relations of new type that affect the modes of interaction between subjects. These voices that rise from the liminal spaces. In other words, while the military dictatorship defined the status quo, an anti-structure opposed it. From this perspective, the presentations of the Croquettes would operate like a rite within the rituals of passage: from the structure

² Available at: <https://anistia.org.br/noticias/50-anos-golpe-relatorio-da-anistia-foi-o-primeiro-listar-os-acusados-de-tortura-durante-o-regime-militar-brasileiro/> Accessed on: Jan 2019

³ Available at: <http://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/evento401552/gente-computada-igual-a-voce>. Accessed on: Jan 2019

to the antistructure, from the center to the edge, from obedience to resistance.

As success increased and the legion of fans grew, many people began to watch the performances wearing outfits inspired by their costumes. The presentations gathered a vast and heterogeneous audience. The awareness raised in the performance event *Dzi Croquettes* not only described the place of those people in the social organization, they created a new group with borders demarcated by the intertwining of the common experiences of the artists and the audience. The aesthetic gesture of the scenic performances inspired an ethical gesture among the fans, provided a definition to a scene – in the ways through which Straw highlighted (Janotti Júnior. 2012). Having as distinctive trait the resistance to privations, to the dominant standards and to censorship, the *Dzi Croquettes* philosophy had as motto: "With the strength of the male and the grace of the female⁴."

“A vida é um cabaré”

Lennie Dale's phrase, an American choreographer based in Brazil from the 1960s, prophesied what Peter Fry called – in the release text for the work *A palavra mágica* – "a humorous satire of the conventional roles of gender" amidst military dictatorship. Although short-lived (1972–1976), the *Dzi Croquettes* group was the spearhead for artistic movements that question a status quo maintained by dominant and repressing agents. The group's performances integrated cultural and sociability practices that promoted a certain kind of musical scene that favored the opening of paths for queer performances in the Brazilian music scene. Jeder Janotti Junior (2014, p. 62), based on the thought of Will Straw, tells us: "It is possible to think that one of the marks of the music scenes is their capacity to dramatize, to put on stage (in the sense of *mise-en-scène*) affections, objects, sensitivities, and cultural values." Guided by this point of view, we think the performance of the *Dzi Croquettes* as the introducer of a body way, distinct from that which was heteronormatively conformed, a gesture that acts on the ways by which some artists produce, record and release their songs. Following the path indicated by Janotti Junior, we understand that the performance theater of the *Dzi Croquettes* feeds, since the 1970s, a musical production that went through the traditional media formats and in the second decade of the 2000s reached the virtual space of digital networks – both in their performances and in their language.

In the documentary "*Dzi Croquettes*" (2009), directed by Tatiana Issa and Raphael Alvarez, testimonials such as those of songwriter and musical producer Nelson Mota and musician, songwriter, and singer Gilberto Gil recall the transformative character of the group: whether in performing arts or in Brazilian music. On this topic, Ney Matogrosso emphasized that the *Croquettes* influenced both the performances of the *Secos e Molhados* (S&M) group and his solo career.

The S&M, a trio composed of João Ricardo, Gerson Conrad, and Ney Matogrosso, achieved – according to Heron Vargas (2010) – a meteoric success between 1973 and 1974. Vargas considers the success of *Secos e Molhados* an exemplary case to observe the way through which the structures surrounding the massive song were shaped to the novelties presented by the artists and musicians. The group's radicality found a place in the phonographic market and in the media. A poll held by newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*⁵, in 2001, surveyed 149 personalities of the national cultural scene about which would be the best album cover of Brazilian music. With 23 votes, the cover for the album *Secos e molhados* (1)⁶, released in 1973, was the winner. The second best was Tom Zé's album *Todos os olhos*⁷, and the third was

⁴ For further information on the history of the *Dzi Croquettes* group, see Rosemary Lobert (2010).

⁵ Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/ilustrada/ult90u12211.shtml> Accessed on: Jan 2019

⁶ The 1973 and 1974 albums are available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7HMjcvOVjo> Accessed on: Jan 2019

⁷ The complete album is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOLiYu-slfM> Accessed on: Jan 2019

Gal Costa's *Índia*⁸.

The three covers date back to 1973 and, due to bringing images that involved the exposure of the body or fragments of it, caused surprise at the time. The winning cover showed a photograph of the heads of the S&M trio members and of drummer Marcelo Frias – who participated in the recordings of the album, but did not follow with the group –, served on a dining table. The members wore heavy and stylized makeup. Tom Zé's album cover involves a controversy that stirs discussion to date. In the photo, a mouth or anus holds a marble. The objects in the image mimic an eye. In 2018, the image's creators participated in the tv show "Conversa com Bial," on TV Globo network, with the aim of clarifying the issue⁹. Photographer Reinaldo Moraes and publicist Chico Andrade told different stories; therefore, doubts still remain about the graphic pun. The cover of Gal Costa's album *Índia* was censored because of the excessive exposure of the singer's body. The cover image showed a close-up of Gal's abdomen, who was wearing a red thong and beaded cords. Her hands, in addition, held a fringed skirt made of organic material. Inside the album, there were two images of the singer dressed as an indigenous person, with bare breasts. The censorship committee prohibited the exposure of the images. The solution found by the record company was to pack the discs with blue plastic, a fact that increased the curiosity and the selling of the record.

In an interview, in 2001, with newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*¹⁰, photographer Antônio Carlos Rodrigues, photographic reporter for newspaper *Última Hora*, said that on a trip to Rio de Janeiro he had seen some girls, in the beach, wearing makeup with glitter hearts. When he came back to São Paulo, he conducted, with makeup artist and hairdresser Silvinho, a photoshoot based on this idea. Subsequently, having his wife as model, he resorted to this inspiration in a photoshoot for the *Fotoptica* magazine. When journalist João Apolinário – father of João Ricardo and newsroom colleague – asked him to help his son's group, Rodrigues showed him the magazine and proposed the use of the same creative concept. When he learned the group's name, the photographer offered the following scenario as an option: on a table prepared for dinner, the heads of the group members are served in a tray, alongside products found in warehouses – dry and wet [secos e molhados in Portuguese]. They would wear makeup and play characters for the photo. According to the photographer, until that moment no one used to wear makeup. This image produced supported the concept of a bold, androgynous group with heavy makeup and extravagant costumes at the service of a new musicality for Brazilian standards, a music with a poetics of its own. Critics and experts at the time commented that the album's cover had an anthropophagic visuality. Acclaimed by the public, with style close to glam rock, the album sold more than 700,000 copies.

Philip Auslander (2009) highlights that glam rock was a radical change in rock performance. According to the researcher, the significance of the style includes the opening for new identity explorations. Androgynous bodies in performance created a tension between gender and sexuality. The presentations were characterized by excess, extravagant costumes, theatricalization. Created in England in the late 1960s years, also known as Glitter Rock, the style was popularized between 1971 and 1973. In 1967, the vocalist of T-Rex, Marc Bolan, adopted a visual style consisting of strong colors, feathers, and voluminous hair. In his performances, he always wore makeup, glitter, and fancy costumes. Marc adopted the mod, a London's subculture of the 1960s. Abbreviation for modernist¹¹, the mod movement was initially composed of middle-class British youths and children of fabric merchants. Their interests involved modern jazz, rhythm and blues, well-designed Italian suits, and amphetamines. The success of

⁸ The complete album is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjdjZ-fi3k0&list=PLfpWy6OINhU5mBX0uKwmksJ3_WCFYEnNS Accessed on: Jan 2019

⁹ Available at: <https://g1.globo.com/pop-arte/musica/noticia/polemica-sobre-capa-de-album-todos-os-olhos-de-tom-ze-vira-debate-no-conversa-com-bial.ghtml> Accessed on: Jan 2019

¹⁰ Available at <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/ilustrad/fq0604200112.htm> Accessed on: Jan 2019

¹¹ For further information, see Anderson (2014).

Glam Rock inspired and influenced many fans, people who copied the style of the bands and took to the streets their androgynous bodies, the genderless.

Also arising from the mod and friend of Marc Bolan, the frontman of the band The Hype became the embodiment of Glam Rock: David Bowie (AUSLANDER, 2009). The singer's third studio album, **the Man Who Sold the World**¹², brings on the cover Bowie with long hair and wearing a dress. In 1974, Bowie released the album that would become the great reference of Glam Rock: *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*¹³. The album narrates the story of Ziggy Stardust, a Rockstar alien who with his band (The Spiders From Mars) offers through music peace and hope to mankind. From that moment, Bowie incorporated the character Ziggy: his songs covered political subjects, drug use, and sexual orientation. His costumes became even more androgynous and extravagant. The artist publicly assumed to be bisexual.

On a Sunday afternoon in 1973, in the defunct TV Tupi network, Ney Matogrosso sang the song *Sangue Latino*¹⁴, wearing loose pants covered with fringes, with naked torso, and wearing white and black makeup. The audience before the image recognizes a male body. But the gestures of the performance do not point to a hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2003). João Ricardo and Gerson Conrad occupied the background of the image wearing a costume that was between the theater and the circus, with the faces covered with white and black makeup. Ney Matogrosso offers himself to the camera, poses and moves as if slipping through the image. Vargas (2010, p. 07-08) points out that the visual aspects of the S&M's performance were crucial to the group's success. "The case of the S&M is an example of how the creative and innovative intent was possible using the instruments and possibilities opened by the electronic image and the massive dissemination of television."

In solo career, Ney Matogrosso launched, in 1978, the album *Feitiço*. The internal image of the album was a nude photo of the singer. In full military regime, Ney offers to his audience another queer image (De Lauretis, 1991) of himself, that is, detached from the heterosexual conformations or gender binarisms. In the photograph, the singer is naked, lying sideways, with one of the legs flexed. At the same time that the flexed leg hides the genitals, it favors the visibility of the buttocks. The slender body is covered with hairs: legs, chest, armpits. The masculine traits do not harden the image, which gains even more languidness in the movement of the arms directing the gaze of the audience to the head surrounded by roses. All this languid set is tensioned by the serious facial expression and the oblique look.

It is clearly an image of a man, but the exposed body, in the frozen gestures, suggests that this man is simultaneously one thing and the other. Less than the image of a "homosexual," the photograph exposes a male body that offers itself to erotic enjoyment, at the same time offering itself as an object of desire and as desiring being (Leal; Mendonça, 2015, p. 148) (our translation).

* * *

"I am transgression itself, dear, whether you like it or not. I'm everybody's grandma. A transgressive grandma." This statement from artist Edy Star comes from an interview with reporter Tiago Dias, for *Uol Entretenimento Música*¹⁵. Star's grandkids are the male and female artists with queer performances in the

¹² The complete album is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HyM6O_Nris Accessed on: Jan 2019

¹³ The complete album is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWm03wYBTbM&list=PLuR-3CWq59OyrTdWAeVkkqH3F6UziQICYeN> Accessed on: Jan 2019

¹⁴ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-zLicyzaH5A> Accessed in: Jan 2019

¹⁵ Available at: <https://musica.uol.com.br/noticias/redacao/2017/11/14/pioneiro-gay-no-brasil-edy-star-lanca-o-2-disco-depois-de-44-anos.htm> Accessed in: Jan 2019

contemporary Brazilian music scene. In the 1970s, the singer, dancer, plastic artist and actor from Bahia had the themes of gender and sexuality as central to his production.

Born Edivaldo Souza, his first appearance on stage was at the age of 13, in the radio network Sociedade da Bahia, in the Hora da Criança program. About 20 years old, Edy sang on the radio networks Sociedade da Bahia and Cultura da Bahia. At that period he met Raul Seixas – at the time, a member of the Panteras group. Also at the age of 20, Edivaldo Souza was approved in a Petrobras admission test. A year later, Edy quit the job to follow a circus. At that time, he met Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil.

In 1970, Raul Seixas was hired as a music producer by the label Columbia (CBS Discos) and moved to the city of Rio de Janeiro. In the move to Rio's capital was Edy. In the label, Seixas' job was to find new talents. Raul produced Edy's first record, with two songs: Aqui é quente, bicho / Matilda. The first song was written by Raul for Edy.

In 1971, during the absence of the record company's director Evandro Ribeiro, Raul got together with three friends, Sergio Sampaio, Edy, and Mirian Batucada, to record the album A Sociedade da Grã-ordem Kavernista Apresenta Sessão das Dez¹⁶. Without promotion and with censored letters, the album did not call the attention of critics and the public. The album was taken off stores 15 days after its distribution.

Between 1972 and 1973, Edy started singing at the nightclubs of Mauá Square. In that period he became Edy Star. "These were completely transgressive shows, which the dictatorship did not allow. It presented segments with lesbian porn, a midget running naked, striptease, all happening at the brothel theater, restricted to the people who attended the Mauá square."¹⁷ The repercussion of the shows of Edy Star caught the attention of the newspaper O Pasquim. "The Pasquim team went to the Cowboy venue and found it great. That was it, it became "cool." There were limousines, the Marcondes Ferraz, the Braga, rich people starting to attend." Shortly afterwards, Edy Star was singing at nightclubs in the wealthy neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro. In 1974, he was hired by the Som Livre record company and recorded the album Sweet Edy¹⁸. For the album, Edy received songs from Erasmo Carlos and Roberto Carlos, Caetano Veloso, Jorge Mautner, Gilberto Gil, Luiz Galvão, and Moraes Moreira. Pedro Alexandre Sanches wrote, in 2012, in the magazine Revista Fórum¹⁹:

Despite Brazil's repressive environment under the government of General Emilio Garrastazu Médici, the artist from Bahia was, alongside the Secos & Molhados, the "spearhead" of the Brazilian version of the glam rock of David Bowie, Marc Bolan, Elton John, and Freddie Mercury. In a tropicalized pastiche between the androgynous persona Ziggy Stardust, of Bowie, and the hard-rockstar Alice Cooper, Gil composed for him "Edyth Cooper." Sergio Natureza and Renato Piau, authors recorded by Paulinho da Viola and Luiz Melodia, created "Sweet Edy" and "Bem Entendido." The title of the latter borrowed the then current slang used to designate homosexual men – "entendido" [knowledgeable] – and was erased from the list of tracks on the original back cover (but not from the disc itself). (Sanchez, 2012, Revista Fórum)

In 1975, Edy Star was the first artist of great success in Brazilian music to publicly assume being homosexual. When asked about the male and female artists of the current scene, Edy Star comments: "Today, thanks to us, the queer people is out there doing whatever they will, and the closet is there with a lot of queers inside."²⁰

¹⁶ The complete album is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCknLVtkNaA> Accessed in: Jan 2019

¹⁷ Available at: <https://www.revistaforum.com.br/de-edivaldo-a-edy-star/> Accessed in: Jan 2019

¹⁸ The complete album is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqFxNgaGeQ0> Accessed in: Jan 2019

¹⁹ Ibidem 19.

²⁰ Ibidem 19

The pop is (also) queer

Researcher Adalberto Paranhos (2014) considered the importance of recognizing advances, albeit under strong repression from the military dictatorship, in the expression of affectivity and sexuality from the 1970s onward. In the growth of this scene, he points out the significant role of male and female singers who addressed the subjects of gender and sexuality in their musical productions: "To that end, the production in the area of popular music – including the songs, album covers, and live performances – provides elements that will lead to the reflection on the connections established between the areas of culture and politics." (Paranhos, 2014, p. 03) In his work, the researcher seeks a broadening of the notion of politics, considering the feminist positions that affirm the personal as political and the presences of the bodies as legitimating the existence of subjects not always valued politically.

The artists mentioned so far in this article are in the gallery that registers the expressive emergence, in the 1970s, of songs, singers and musicians who assimilated in their works the issues of gender and sexuality. The performances of these artists created spaces for the circulation and expression of bodies and behaviors that were inconsistent with the prevailing standards. By relating what was seen in the look directed at the past with what can be recognized from a glance at the present, we are interested in perceiving – in the context of contemporary Brazilian pop – queer performances that, through this situation, provide destabilizations/ruptures by giving visibility to places and experiences that challenge heteronormative standards (Warner, 1991). To that end, we highlight, albeit briefly, some elements that help us to think about the queer²¹.

With regard to the context of its development, we can say that the origins of the queer theory would be associated with the second feminist wave, the southern United States black movement, more specifically, with the posture of the population in general before homosexuals, who – in a context of AIDS epidemic and fear of contamination – were perceived as an abject group against which repulsion was recommended and stimulated (queer nation). In addition, from a theoretical and methodological point of view, this theory would result from the encounter between the North American cultural studies and the French Post-Structuralism, having as an important aspect the deconstruction of the classical notions of subject and identity (Miskolci, 2012).

According to Guacira Lopes Louro (2008), the queer would be the rare and the weird, the strange body that disturbs and fascinates, the subject whose gender performance breaks with what would be established as conventional and whose sexuality gives visibility to other existing and continually camouflaged possibilities. "It is the eccentric that wants neither to be integrated nor to be tolerated. Queer is a way of thinking and being that does not aspire the center and does not want it as benchmark" (Louro, 2008, p. 07).

Under the belief that everyone has the right to be who they are, to express themselves free from the parameters of judgment forged under the logic of normality, many and many artists have provided mass pop music with a visuality for other bodies and subjects. If visuality is a quality of being visible, this is not done unawares. Whether singing the banal life, the powers of the social roles of gender or social hierarchizations, the performances of these bodies are, by definition, political acts, which inform about a type of experience, of existence.

"I think I define myself as a queer really. For straight men, Honorable Miss Queer, please." That's

²¹ Queer, a term used as a slur, a cuss word, commonly directed to those who break with standards of gender/sexuality (as in something strange, weird), is then reclaimed and resignified by those who received it in the form of slur (Eribon, 2018). As pointed out by García (2005), the word queer brings embedded in its enunciation the burden of violence and discrimination directed by the heterosexist society against the "deviant" subjects.

how Johnny Hooker introduced himself in testimony to the #ProntoSaí campaign, for MTV²². Hooker, a composer, singer and actor from Pernambuco, albeit already known nationally since his participation in the talent show *Geleia do Rock*, aired by tv network Canal Multishow, became widely known after the launch of *Eu Vou Fazer uma Macumba Pra Te Amarrar, Maldito!*, his first solo album, released in 2015. As João Alcântara (2017) points out, the performances of Hooker (artistic surname, inspired by the English word meaning prostitute), are characterized by the approximation to the borders. Assimilating several musical genres (such as pop, popular romantic music, and samba), Hooker strays from a heteronormative center, apart from a hegemonic masculinity (CONNELL, 2003). *Alma sebosa*²³, for example, a music video released on Youtube in 2014 that already has more than 3 million views, is characterized by the presence of non-binary bodies and a gay/queer performance (Alcântara, 2017).

In an interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine²⁴, published in January 2018, the composer, singer and drag queen from Maranhão Pablló Vittar comments on the themes that, in general, are addressed in her songs. "I think it's great that people bring me lyrics with questioning and issues. But I, as an artist, want to talk about common things, of my everyday life. The fight I had with my friend, you know?" According to Pablló, in that sense, the political power of her performances lies in the fact that she, a drag queen, is on stage in the country that most kills LGBTs in the world.

Pablló Vittar gained national visibility in 2015, when the music video for the song *Open Bar*, released on YouTube, reached 1 million views in less than four months. Currently, this music video alone has more than 65 million views²⁵. When addressing specifically this music video, Jorge Cardoso Filho, Rafael Azevedo, Thiago Santos, and Edinaldo Mota Junior (2018) perceive that the body that emerges in this performance evokes a series of elements (such as the wig, makeup, and sensuality) that characterize the "dress-up." According to the researchers, on the one hand, the performance comes close to a hegemonic standard of femininity, referring to the place of the cisgender diva/woman of international pop music. On the other hand, they claim, Pablló's performance mobilizes tensions and suggests destabilization in that which refers to "stable" places intended for male and female bodies.

If Vittar seeks benchmarks in a pop universe and adopts a mainstream logic, fitting more easily (albeit being a drag queen) in the regulating codes of the devices of capitalism (Cardoso Filho et al, 2018), Glória Groove, the Brazilian composer, singer, voice actor, actress and drag queen, on the other hand, also brings the power of rap and hip hop and, in her performances, evokes an even more fluid/non-binary/androgynous logic to discuss/deconstruct icons of masculinity and femininity. Groove started her career on television, not as a drag queen. The success as drag queen occurred, as in the case of Pablló, through the great visibility of a music video, released in 2016. *Dona* reached 1 million views in less than three months and has now been watched more than 5 million times²⁶. In *Dona*, the artist appears both dressed up and not dressed up, and at a given time of the lyrics, marks a point of view (and representativeness) by saying: *Ai meu Jesus/ Que negócio é esse daí?/ É mulher?/ Que bicho que é?/ Prazer, eu sou arte, meu querido/ Então pode me aplaudir de pé* [Oh, my Gosh / What the hell is that? / Is that a woman? / What kinda creature is that? / Pleased to meet you, I'm art, my dear / Then give me a standing ovation] (our translation).

Despite their differences, Pablló Vittar and Glória Groove are iconic figures when it comes to the increased visibility of a drag queen scene in the country. The *Billboard*, in an article²⁷ reflecting on the rapid

²² Available at: <https://twitter.com/mtvbrasil/status/1050468579424911360> Accessed in: Jan 2019

²³ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rSUKG1o8ys> Accessed in: Jan 2019

²⁴ Available at: <https://rollingstone.uol.com.br/edicao/edicao-137/pablló-vittar-capá-no-vício-da-batida/> Accessed in: Jan 2019

²⁵ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyuepseCRGY> Accessed in: Jan 2019

²⁶ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPfO6Wkr8fs> Accessed in: Jan 2019

²⁷ Available at: <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/pride/8221687/brazil-drag-revolution-pablló-vit->

rise of the artists, situates them as central in a movement that it called the Brazilian drag revolution through which, according to the publication, the new queens could contribute to the fight against LGBTQphobia.

Cardoso Filho, Azevedo, Santos and Mota Junior (2018, p. 102) claim that both Gloria and Vittar, in their distinct drag performances, show the "possibilities of cultural transit through distinct performance practices, which are permeated by flows of niche images and experiences that are amplified globally." Although in different ways, the researchers argue, we are informed, when listening to Pablllo and Gloria, from a first moment, about a queer universe. Beyond the lyrics (which may or may not make the discussion explicit), the "ways in which those bodies make the voice a space to make gestures and to act in the world in a certain way" (Cardoso Filho et al., 2018, p. 95) are remarkable places through which, in a pop scene, there is a movement of deconstruction of rigid/established heteronormative standards.

"What I do know is that I am queer, black, poor and I am out there, battling for a people²⁸," Liniker told Globo G1 in 2015. In another interview, with El País²⁹, the singer kept the tone and defined herself, again, as black, poor, gay and as someone who, also, could be powerful. With androgynous look (beard, turban, clothes and accessories culturally considered feminine), Liniker, who conceives her body as political, stated, in an interview with Rolling Stone³⁰, that she prefers female pronouns, since, to her, the "he" would leave her very much in the box of the male: "Every day I wake up and work on that, that I'm biologically a male man and I'm going to wear my lipstick, yeah, because that's how I feel beautiful. I think that's what we have to do, feel wonderful, apply lipstick three times to fix it well." Liniker, leader and lead singer of the band Liniker e os Caramelows, became nationally known after the release of Zero³¹. OnYoutube, in less than a week, the music video reached more than 1 million views (currently more than 22 million views). Felipe Santos (2016), in research about the performer, talks about a Latin queer body in explosion, which would cross the gender barriers with fluidity and would create tension in a cisgenderified, white, and heteronormative logic.

"MC Linn da Quebrada is a gender terrorist," described Trip magazine, in 2016³². Transgender woman, songwriter and singer, Linn mobilizing in her performances – as highlighted by Dilton Couto Junior and João Paulo Silva (2018) – a musicality that assimilates funk, rap and that questions the value assigned to hegemonic standards of masculinity and femininity. *Enviadescer*³³, music video released in 2016 that made her widely known in Brazil, "presents the transgressive power of the countless experiences of sexual and gender dissidence [...] showing how different social markers of differences [...] intersect in the constitution of the daily experiences of the peripheral subjects" (Couto Junior; Silva, 2018, p. 326). Linn, according to the researchers, would seek "unusual, powerful and daring ways to, through the *lacrção* [accomplishment] funk music, explore more and more her deviating and peripheral form of being and of being in the world" (Couto Junior; Silva, 2018, p. 319). Having as one of the central themes of her performances the coping with CIS/heteronormative impositions, Linn contributes (in dialogue with the queer theoreticians, recurrently cited by her) to the appreciation of lives that differ from the norms of gender and sexuality and, therefore, so that such subjects can, in fact, matter. "The act of becoming

tar-aretuza-lovi-homophobic-culture Accessed in: Jan 2019

²⁸ Available at: <http://g1.globo.com/sp/sao-carlos-regiao/noticia/2015/12/de-batom-e-brincos-cantor-liniker-tem-1-milhao-de-acessos-com-clipes.html> Accessed in: Jan 2019

²⁹ Available at: https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2015/11/12/cultura/1447331706_038108.html Accessed in: Jan 2019

³⁰ Available at: <https://rollingstone.uol.com.br/noticia/expoente-da-nova-musica-brasileira-liniker-quebra-paradigmas- apenas-por-se-aceitar-como-e/> Accessed in: Jan 2019

³¹ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4s3yTJCmI> Accessed in: Jan 2019

³² Available at: <https://revistatrip.uol.com.br/trip-tv/mc-linn-da-quebrada-em-entrevista-ao-trip-tv-genero-sexo-religiao-e-funk> Accessed in: Jan 2019

³³ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saZywh0FuEY> Accessed in: Jan 2019

increasingly gay [...] is a powerful strategy that goes against the discourses that support the founding pillars of the heteronormative vision" (Couto Junior; Silva, 2018, p. 333).

"Sigo cantando e armado / Trampando pesado, medindo um dia ser lendário / Não passo pano pra otário / E mesmo ameaçado, eu serei cada vez mais viado / Quebrando armários, extermínio à normatividade / Revolução! [I go on singing and armed / working heavily, so one day I'll be legendary / I make no excuses for suckers / And even threatened, I'll be increasingly gay / Breaking closets, end of normativeness / Revolution!]. Bicha preta se amando de verdade/ Botando fogo nas regras dessa sociedade/ Vai falar mal, mas vai assistir a nossa liberdade/ Vamo assistir você ouvindo a nossa realidade/ Tirando nossas capas de invisibilidade/ As mona unidas pro combate e olha no que deu/ Se quer verso com massagem, pare de socar os meus" [Black queer loving herself for real / Burning the rules of this society / You're gonna dis, but will see our liberty / We'll see you listening to our reality / Taking off our cloaks of invisibility / The queer united to fight, now take a look and see / If you want soft poetry, don't attack my friends and me] (our translation). The excerpt presented is part of Quebrada Queer, released in June 2018. The music video, which currently has about 2.5 million views on YouTube³⁴, was responsible for the rapid success. Initially, Quebrada Queer consisted of Tchelo, Murillo Zyess, Guigo, Harlley, Lucas Boombat and, subsequently, also included Apuke, the only woman in the group. With lyrics that deal with intolerance, homophobia, racism, and life in the periphery, through a performance characterized by an androgynous look, Quebrada Queer is considered the country's first group of LGBT rap.

Final Considerations

Considering the movement made in this text, a look at two times (present and past) to observe some queer performances in the Brazilian pop music scene, we understand that the pop, too, is a powerful place to think about identities and differences, about the multiple possibilities that constitute the bodies and, also, about the amplitude of that which may come to be the masculine and the feminine.

Janotti Junior (2015, p. 45) recalls that, at times, the term pop can be employed in order to disqualify an artistic/media production/performance, considering its ephemerality and close association with a logic of cultural industry; at other times, the notion is employed when addressing "claims of cosmopolitan sensitivities, ways of inhabiting the world that relativize the weight of local traditions and project globally shared sensitivities." And here we are interested in that second understanding. As the researcher recalls, the pop is characterized by resignifications, tensions and disputes that express modes of inhabiting/uninhabiting the world.

"While Ney, Alcina, and me stuck our necks out, there were people who did the same thing much more veiledly. The gayest album in Brazil, to date, is Galeria do amor (1975), by Agnaldo Timóteo, who still says: "I'm not gay, I'm Agnaldo Timóteo." The police used to arrest us, I was arrested like this, next to a huge billboard with my name, and the policeman saying: Don't worry. I've already arrested Agnaldo Timóteo, why wouldn't I arrest you? Get in there." (Junior, 2015, p. 45)

Edy Star's statement³⁵ highlights something interesting to be noted: the dissonant body as a means of escaping the normalized standard. It is on the body that visibility is made, it is on the body that the (inclusive/excludent, liberating/imprisoning, resistant/conformed) experience occurs. Edy Star remembered in the interview the prejudice suffered by Maria Alcina. Because of her low-pitched voice, different behavior in relation to that culturally and conventionally considered feminine, the singer was

³⁴ Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=FwktAmgku68 Accessed in: Jan 2019

³⁵ Available at: <https://www.revistaforum.com.br/de-edivaldo-a-edy-star/> Accessed in: Jan 2019

identified as a cross-dresser. At that time, the trio was treated as strange bodies. Dissonant bodies who offered themselves as an opening to the yellow brick road that leads to the queer.

Queer, a term employed, at first, to attack bodies that strayed from the heteronormative and hegemonic standards, was, theoretically and politically, reclaimed and endowed with new (and powerful) significances. From slur (Eribon, 2008), it is situated in a place that is of resistance and of the constitution of a knowledge that is subjectively implied/committed (Preciado, 2009). It is no coincidence that the very term queer is continually evoked by the artists we mentioned here. Hooker's queer performance, the drags that occupy stages that are not only those of the ghettos, in a country with very high rates of hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ population, the trans women (such as Linn da Quebrada) who, in an intersectional manner, discuss gender, sexuality, race, and social class and the gays who open space in the musical universe of rap express an appropriation of voice. The brief choir evoked in this article is joined by voices such as As Bahias e a Cozinha Mineira, which invest in the female protagonism in their music; the rap of Rico Dalasam; the funk of drag Lia Clark, of MC Trans and MC Xuxú; the fluid-gender performances of Lineker; the disruptive aesthetics of Jaloo from Pará; the rock from Ceará of the band Verônica decide morrer; the glamour of Aretuza Lovi; the carnival of Sara and Nina; the parodies of the band Uó; among Others. Although the political aspect is not central in all songs, the political perspective is already installed there. As strange bodies that disturb or as diverse bodies that fascinate, gays, lesbians, transgenders, agenders, and drag queens occupy a legitimate and fundamental space in the pop milieu, expressing diversity and pluralistic ways of being/of being in the world.

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