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Kekeisso? - A Love Statement to Saiddy Bamba - Ethos, Performativities and Black Masculinities of a Salvador Pagode Band of the 2000s

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Abstract

Saiddy Bamba is a band that emerged in the early 2000s and played a major role in spreading Bahian pagode throughout Brazil. The band marked the lives of many young people at a time when street parties (held in the neighbourhoods themselves and free of charge) were very common, still with choreographies, stages and shows. In the light of Content Analysis and of Gender Performativity Studies, I try to trace here how the band emerged in the neighbourhood next to mine and how this forged my identity as an intellectual and, above all, as a woman from Salvador who walks through the city's periphery. In the article I present characters from the history of Saiddy Bamba: Alexx Maxx, the singer; Kekeo (Kleber Ycaro), one of the dancers; and, finally, Leo Kret, who was a dancer in the band and is now a city councillor. In this study I show the band as a reflection of the Salvador of the early 2000s.

Keywords: Bahian music; Saiddy Bamba; Sexualities

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Introduction

Feminist theory teaches us that our lived experiences are our starting points for the production of knowledge, and that "*being affected*" (a reference to Jeanne Favret-Saada in her well-known text) by particular experiences in the production of writing sharpens our gaze when we write about the reality that surrounds us. Love, enchantment and emotions must be fuel for writing, and this is how this article was built.

In 2023 I was invited to an interview at the local TV Globo affiliate for a special programme on Bahian pagode, as an intellectual, researcher and fan of Bahian pagode. I confess that this is one of the moments of my career I had always dreamed of (talking about what I research), but I also confess that, because of the impostor syndrome that Black people may carry, I still feel small before great references. And here I shift my gaze to say that my references are far from being other academics: they are the pagode bands that forged my being and made me a woman from Salvador who researches pagode.

That edition of the programme had the illustrious presence of Alexx Maxx (former singer of the band Saiddy Bamba) and Leo Kret (the first transsexual woman elected city councillor in Brazil and, before that, a dancer in Saiddy Bamba). And perhaps I need some time away from my precious work to say how much I love Saiddy Bamba and to declare my love for the band, at least for the classic line-up of my childhood in the 2000s.

I, Andreza, have a special relationship with Saiddy Bamba, a band formed in the Pau Miúdo neighbourhood (which borders Cidade Nova, the neighbourhood where I grew up), but above all with Leo Kret. Leo studied at the Marquês de Maricá school, a secondary school in Pau Miúdo, while I studied at the Crescimento school, where I walked up every day with Heide, my classmate, a few blocks earlier. Every day I saw Leo go by, saw some men harass her or make tasteless jokes at her, and I always saw her as very proud, imposing and strong. Still a child, I always admired that person, even though I could not yet identify what it meant to be a transsexual person.

She may have been the first person I saw every day for a long period and learned to admire. Once, when someone said something to her, she simply tossed her hair back and forth and walked away, and I found it amazing, watching from the door of my school. I did not yet understand that she was a queer person; I only noticed, and wondered, how entitled people felt to bother Leo. At the same time, deep down, it also troubled me that everyone felt they had the right to "make fun" when she went by. I had no idea of how wrong or right it was; I only thought, "how annoying, isn't it?".

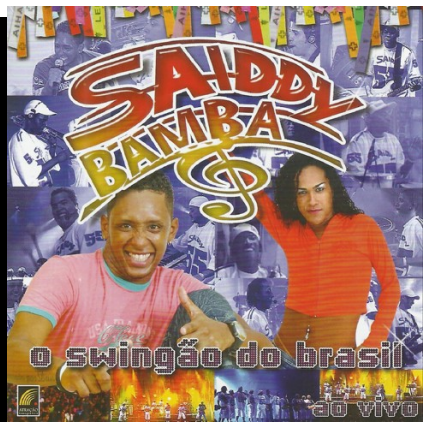
Today, in the light of Feminist Studies (such as Queer Theory), I try to analyse my great passion and, in a way, to thank this band that taught me so much. The article is divided as follows: first, a brief contextualization of the band; then the analysis of each transforming element, Kekeo (dancer), Alexx Maxx (singer) and Leo Kret, showing how each person is a case study of how we can perceive different gender perspectives and also understand a little more of the Salvador of the 2000s. The title of the text refers to the catchphrase of the band Saiddy Bamba, always said at its shows and performances, something close to "What is this?", combined with the nickname of the dancer Kleber Ykaro (Kekeo), whom I discuss later.

Who Is Saiddy Bamba?

Saiddy Bamba is a pagode band formed from the break-up of the group "Coisa de Bamba", originally created in the 1990s. The band was formed by young people from neighbourhoods on the periphery of Salvador: Pau Miúdo, Liberdade and IAPI (Nascimento, 2012). I was born on the border between Cidade Nova and Pau Miúdo, which explains how the band was part of my childhood. The classic line-up, which coincides with my childhood, included Leo Kret do Brasil as a dancer, the dancer Kekeo (Kleber Ykaro) and

Alexx Maxx as the singer. Dance was always one of the highlights of the band's performances; the band reached its peak between 2000 and 2010, precisely with this classic line-up.





Figures 1 and 2: Saiddy Bamba albums. “A Porrada é Dura” (Source: YouTube) and “O Swingão do Brasil” (Source: Apple Music).

Between the 1990s and the 2010s there was an explosion of Bahian pagode, driven by bands with great national projection such as É o Tchan, as Ari Lima (2016) states:

> Soon after the former GeraSamba, countless pagode groups or bands emerged in Salvador, in peripheral and Black neighbourhoods, reproducing the same formula of success: an attractive lead singer, with a muscular body, who commands the audience and knows how to sway his hips well. A trio of dancers, usually a young Black man, a natural or dyed blonde woman and a Black woman, and a band that included keyboards, guitar, bass, cavaquinho, drums and percussion [...] Today few bands still have a dance trio. They usually perform the same repertoire, whose lyrics are easily assimilated, lascivious, non-romantic, sexist, homophobic and racist (Lima, 2016, p. 65).

We can observe how there was an aesthetic and a way of being that permeates a series of bands from Bahia, initiated by É o Tchan. This is not only a nationally recognized movement but also part of our everyday life in Salvador, in which aesthetics, music and corporeality resonated in similar ways, shaping perceptions of the Bahian “self”.

Obviously, as I have already argued (Cerqueira, 2021), we need specific lenses to understand what are today regarded as controversial (sexist or racist) lyrics, since the very construction of sexualities and belonging in the periphery takes on other dimensions. But this article makes me think about how, beyond a specific historical moment of the Salvador pagode scene, Saiddy Bamba marked the lives of many children and young people at a time when street parties were very common, still with choreographies, stages and shows. These elements were part of what was thought of as being a pagode band in Salvador that sought national projection.

Bahian pagode has always been a rhythm dominated by men, yet with great female participation. Whether or not it complies with the gender binary, Saiddy Bamba moves through this rhythm, which is often regarded as sexist and as a perpetuator of stereotypes. I believe that the possible claim that Bahian pagode is a rhythm that maintains sexism may in itself be a prejudice, since this rhythm, like many others of Black cultures such as hip hop, funk and samba, is a model of expression of corporeality and of peripheral reality. In short, sex and violence are integral parts of the language of Black and peripheral rhythms because these rhythms lay bare the reality of Black communities around the world. I do not intend to classify Bahian pagode (and, in this case, the

band Saiddy Bamba) as emancipatory or defeatist, but only to show that its importance is undeniable and integrated into everyday life in Salvador, regardless of the academic and theoretical label I might attach to it.

I confess how difficult it was to write this essay, given my positionality. Oppression crosses me in some ways, as a Black woman from the periphery, but heteronormativity still permeates mistakes I may eventually make in this text. A great difficulty, for example, was identifying gender designations for some figures, but I took error as a perspective of fluidity. The aim is to make these people visible beyond articles and gender inflections, especially since we will see that changes in naming over time reflect these people's trajectories much more than my reading of these transitions.

Saiddy Bamba had a great influence on those who grew up in the 2000s in the city of Salvador, filling shows at the city's festivals, influencing the lexicon (through the terms used in its songs) and promoting figures who are forever remembered in culture at the national level (such as Leo, who became a state deputy years later). It may sound a little emotional, but the band's influence is an important marker in terms of gender, race, class and territory, since it was born in a historical context in which Bahian bands were propelled to the national level, because it had a performance that challenged gender boundaries and because it brought together emblematic figures who are still known today in the Bahian imagination.

From here on, I analyse each member of the band and their possible influence on the debates I want to highlight.

Kekeo, a Black Man Who Sways His Hips: Discussing Masculinities in Bahian Pagode

Mobilizing the imagination of the sensuality of teenage girls like me, the first person we came to see as an attractive man, who became a sex symbol in our community, was called “Kekeo” (Kleber Ycaro), one of the dancers of Saiddy Bamba.

In Bahia, in rhythms associated with samba and pagode, it is always common to see men sway their hips, and I personally think this is one of the revolutionary differences of Black rhythms: a freedom to “move the hips” across all genders. Some authors even say that this is a legacy of the very performance of the orixás of the religions of African matrix, as Ari Lima states:

> [...] elements of composition of European-inspired authorial dance, such as the upright body, elongated arms, legs and feet, arabesques and pirouettes, as well as several candomblé movements, especially those of Ogum, Oxum and Iansã, such as bent knees, feet on the ground almost all the time, sinuous hip movements, accelerated advance and retreat while moving the hips, hands around the body, and diagonal arms that alternately rose or fell, were drawn on by the performers to mark distinctions and take a position in relation to the other (Lima, 2016, p. 37).



Figure 3: Alex Maxx and his dancers. Kleber Ycaro (Kekeo) is the one in the pink shirt. Source: Saiddy Bamba's Facebook page.

Kekeo, in his performance, made many swaying, squatting and thrusting movements, raising questions of masculinity and desire among girls in Salvador. Pagode gives visibility (to this day) to muscular, well-built men, making this type of corporeality the standard desired by many young boys in Salvador and in other parts of Bahia.

It is worth noting that there was another dancer in Saiddy Bamba, but the collective fascination with Kekeo was perhaps due to his more sexualized performance, as well as his greater ease with the media: he appeared on other TV programmes and danced in other bands (a profession he still pursues). Kekeo is also phenotypically lighter-skinned than the other Saiddy Bamba dancer of that time.

Ledson Chagas explains a little about this structure of dancers in pagode bands:

> If, during the period of great national media success of Bahian pagode, between 1996 and 2001, trios of dancers formed by two women and one man predominated (there were also duos of women only, duos with one woman and one man, or trios of women only), in which women had the leading role; and if, in the phase in which Harmonia do Samba was the paradigmatic band, the singer himself was usually also the dancing attraction of the group, sometimes helped by the musicians themselves (a tambourine player, for example), still with samba dancing as the basis of the steps during the songs, a basis usually interrupted or reduced for some choreography during the chorus; the more recent bands (the aforementioned New Hit, the bands Play Way, Guettho é Guettho, La Fúria, Pagodão, Black Style and Bailão do Robyssão, as well as some older ones, such as Saiddy Bamba and Pagod'art) have used duos or trios of male dancers, with more spectacular dances, in some cases with jumps, performing steps considered feminine, such as the "quadradinhos de quatro e de oito" popularized by the Rio funk group Bonde das Maravilhas (steps that the heterosexual male audience generally does not perform) (Chagas, 2016, p. 136-137).

Obviously, Kekeo would not do this work alone, since calling up themes of sex and sexualities was part of the band's enunciation (through its lyrics). His dance was part of a meticulously rehearsed choreography that dictated what should be done. As many have said, pagode is music that teaches you how to dance to it:

> However, some songs invariably refer to a specific choreography, through the very intentionality and appeal of the lyrics, linking parts of the body to the movements. These are expressions such as *"Desce com o dedo na boca", "mão na cabeça e rala[1]", "se é pra manter o corpo sempre no compasso, levante os braços, balance as mãos… venha, venha, venha se jogando[2] [...]" "e agora a swingueira no pedaço rola e todo mundo vai, vai, vai rebola… dá uma giradinha agora[3]"* (Nascimento, 2012, p. 95).

1Bambaz, Oz. Mão na Cabeça e Rala. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9du2Znx96zs. Accessed: 26 Jun. 2025.
2Bambaz, Oz. Venha se Jogando. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9T8LThF8Rs. Accessed: 26 Jun. 2025.
3 Ghetto, Guig. Pandeiro de Couro. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtIzjeL19JI. Accessed: 26 Jun. 2025.

To understand a little about the enunciation of pagode songs, we need to know Alexx Maxx, its singer and therefore its enunciator.

Alexx Maxx: Enunciative Performativities of Black Men in Pagode

Alexx Maxx was the singer of Saiddy Bamba (he left the band in the early 2020s). His voice was always striking, and we could easily run into him here, near where I live. In his words, the creation of the band was a very organic movement (which was quite common in peripheral neighbourhoods of Salvador):

> "I formed a band and then I started playing percussion, I didn't even start by singing, imagine that. So I started on percussion, I started playing in the little pagode bands, we played pagode, but we didn't play serious pagode, we played pagode for fun. The thing took on a very big professional dimension and I became Alex Maxx, always thanking God", he added.[4]



Figure 4: Alexx Maxx. Source: iBahia.

I have pointed out many times in my work how "making pagode" is inherent to the lives of Black people in the periphery (Cerqueira, 2019; 2021; 2022). The rhythm plays an undeniable part in everyday life, as a sound present at family parties, in stacked sound systems and even in candomblé terreiros, given the origin of this sound in the sambas de caboclo, for example.

This statement by Alex Maxx is interesting because, besides reaffirming the unpretentiousness with which Bahian singers make music (and the musicality present in the city), it also shows how this enjoyment of music became his source of income, a place already noted by Angela Figueiredo (2012).

Figueiredo (2012) comments on how football and music have always been terrains of social mobility for Black people, stating that "the perception that some areas of the labour market have become easier routes for the social ascent of Black people, such as sport and music, is a consensus, although these activities offer few places for those who aspire to mobility" (Figueiredo, 2012, p. 99). In this way, Black people achieve better living conditions and change their realities through these areas, but do not necessarily attain high social status.

Another key to understanding is to note how every singer has an interface as enunciator, a concept of great importance to Discourse Analysis. Dominique Maingueneau, discussing Discourse Analysis, explains how the place of the "enunciator" applies in a participation of communion, since one speaks of a collective speaker that does not privilege the boundary of communion with the outside, but rather the fusion among the members of the group (Maingueneau, 2008). In this way, the figure of the enunciator emerges from an important place, being not only a representative but also a member.

> A mediating instance intervenes that is endowed with competences superior to those of the addressee with regard to the relationship with the thesaurus. The addressee tends to become an audience. [...] This

4Ibahia. Alex Maxx relembra início da carreira na música: 'A gente sempre começa na rua': programa "atitude", da bahia fm, também recebeu a criadora do "cuscuz odara". Programa "Atitude", da Bahia FM, também recebeu a criadora do "Cuscuz Odara". 2023. Available at: https://www.ibahia.com/mundobahiafm/atitude/alex-maxx-relembra-inicio-da-carreira-na-musica-a-gente-sempre-comeca-na-rua. Accessed: 15 Nov. 2024.

> does not mean leaving the orbit of participation, since the performer appears as a representative of the community, for whom he actualizes the fragments of a shared treasure (Maingueneau, 2008, p. 107).

In other words, Alexx Maxx, being a Black man from the periphery, ended up touching on points that connected these interfaces: gender, race and territoriality. The figure of the enunciator, according to Discourse Analysis studies, generates identification with the audience, in a way signing a contract of trust and shared values (Semprini, 2010). He sang what he himself experienced.

In addition, there is a vast body of readings on Masculinities around the bodies of Black men from the periphery, and also of Black pagode singers. The idea of men who sing songs about sex and violence, but who also use their bodies very freely, since they sway their hips, perform choreographies and usually wear extravagant costumes, may tie the heads of the unwary in knots, as Osmundo Pinho (2015) has already observed:

> Men dancing like women at carnival and in “pagode”, or rather like “putas” or “negrinhas”, in Bahian popular language, have been a cultural constant in this context for several generations, with a humorous content, recently joined by an erotic dimension linked to the spectacularized performance of the bands' dancers. A hybrid development of the very evolutionary line of Bahian pagode, led by É o Tchan and, earlier, by Gerasamba, articulated with the performance of the dancers of Rio funk, which has led to the eroticization of the male body in popular culture (Pinho, 2015, p. 226).

Thinking about the masculinities raised by the band makes me think about Queer Theory. Queer Studies began in the 1990s and propose a zone of potentialities related to desires, sexuality and gender. Contesting the unstable models of sexuality established by heteronormativity is one of the perspectives of queer studies, as Ana Cristina Santos (2006) observes. For the author, the concept of queer has led to a category often used as a conceptual shortcut to designate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQIAPN+) people and themes.

The author points out ideas related to queer studies such as the multiplicity of identities, the fight against the silencing imposed by fixed identities and the possible acceptance of the contestation of identities, among others. Queer would be a general theorization of the sexualization of bodies, desires, actions, identities and social relations.

Queer Studies bring together several areas of knowledge and theoretical frameworks to develop new proposals both in writing (a confessional tone, for example) and in thematic diversity. One of the best-known names in Queer Theory is Judith Butler, who in several texts discusses the need to acknowledge gender performativities beyond the straight/gay and man/woman yardstick. Butler (1993) draws on performative acts to develop her theory and states that:

> Performative acts are forms of authoritative speech: most performatives, for instance, are statements that, in the uttering, also perform a certain action and exercise a binding power. Implicated in a network of authorization and punishment, performatives tend to include legal sentences, baptisms, inaugurations, declarations of ownership, statements which not only perform an action, but confer a binding power on the action performed. The power of discourse to produce that which it names is linked with the question of performativity, and the performative is thus one domain in which power acts as discourse (Butler, 1993, p. 26, our translation).

As noted in the quotation above, speech acts produce discursive effects that embody actions and exercise power. Every discourse already has a prior history that limits the possibilities of action. Thus, gender is a performative act because it is the effect of a regime that regulates and enacts gender differences, operating through repetition. For this reason, the unexpected masculinities of the dancers and of Alex Maxx challenge imposed logics, since the group's dance, lyrics and public performance all relocate what is expected of gender and desire, building new performances, exercising power and constructing discourses.

Since we are highlighting here the importance of Alexx Maxx as an enunciator who challenges dynamics of gender, race and territoriality, we cannot forget how Saiddy Bamba also ended up testing readings of gender identity through the figure of Leo Kret.

And Finally Her: Leo Kret do Brasil! Possibilities for Discussing Gender Identities and Sexualities

Leo Kret became widely known for her participation in the band "Saiddy Bamba" for much of the 2000s, and for her political and municipal parliamentary work, as the first transsexual woman elected city councillor in Brazil[5].

Leo Kret do Brasil is a personality of the city of Salvador who came from the favela and won over Brazil, representing the LGBTQIAPN+ community. Always controversial, it is hard even to list all of Leo Kret's fields of activity: besides having been elected city councillor, she is a leader in her neighbourhood, is still a dancer (she took part in Anitta's music video "Me Gusta") and is also a digital influencer.

While she was a dancer in Saiddy, Leo Kret always generated much controversy because of her stage performance (already doing the famous "bate-cabelo" in the early 2000s); at one show she even rode a motorbike onto the stage, always singing and dancing to lyrics that ended up telling her trajectory as an LGBTQIAPN+ person but that, in a way, echoed the thinking of the time (that she was a gay man). An example of this is the song "Bicha":

Descaradinho, não adianta se encubar

Todo mundo aqui já sabe

Que você não é chegado a fruta

E que seu sonho é virar um travesti

Por isso eu vou

Eu vou mostrar pra você

Olha a bicha

Bicha, bicha

Vá sambando bicha.[6]

It is worth noting that, up to that point, it was common to refer to Leo as a gay man or, as in this song, as "bicha". Years later, she identified herself as a transsexual woman. Leo was of great importance to Saiddy Bamba, as Clebemilton Nascimento (2012) stated:

> The presence of Leo Kret in the band is justified as a "product" that worked. Her performance as a dancer, her attitudes and behaviours come close to a *camp* aesthetic characterized by "fechação" and outrageousness, by artifice and exaggeration. Leo Kret's connection with the group Saiddy Bamba motivated the group's songwriters to write songs with themes aimed at homosexuals. The song "Bicha", written, in fact, in partnership with Leo Kret, caused great controversy because of its content. The group was sued by the Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB) on grounds of homophobia and incitement to violence (Nascimento, 2012, p. 83-84).

5 Many news reports that did not respect her gender identity were published at the time, still referring to her with masculine pronouns. For this reason, I avoided using journalistic sources.

6 Musica, Letras de. Bicha: saiddy bamba. Saiddy Bamba. 2006. Available at: https://www.letras.mus.br/saiddy-bamba/210886/. Accessed: 22 Dec. 2024.

In a way, Leo's performance (on stage), beyond her own gender identity at that time, built new corporealities beyond what was expected of male or female dancers: a queer, non-normative and deviant performativity. Her dance performance, combined with the lyrics she sang at the shows, reshaped expectations of what society knew about gender.

The greatest proof that Leo was always a distinctive person is that her political persona was always part of her performance. Leo has been a city councillor and a state deputy, and still leads a series of Arts and Culture projects for the LGBTQIAP+ population, with dance as her parallel work. Leo is one of the greatest examples of an artivist in the context of Bahian pagode.







Images 5, 6 and 7: Leo Kret in her many facets: as a dancer in Saiddy Bamba, as a candidate for federal deputy and alongside Anitta during the Salvador carnival. Sources: Letras de Música, Twitter @verleokret and PNotícias.

The concept of Artivism, by which I define Leo Kret, is cited by Leandro Colling (2018), who takes it from Raposo (2015), who defines it as “social and political interventions, produced by people or collectives that question themes and situations, aiming at change or resistance” (Raposo, 2015, p. 4, as cited in Colling, 2018, p. 156). Artivism also concerns the multiplicity and mixture of languages:

> To begin with, it is striking how the artistic features are quite consistent with the conceptual and political proposals that made their emergence possible and that are used in these productions. The valorization of hybrid identities, of gender and sexuality, is connected to an artistic production that uses multiple languages. Performance, theatre, dance and singing may be mixed in the same show, which also connects these productions with the trends of contemporary art (Colling, 2018, p. 164).

Describing queer artivisms, Colling (2018) observes how dissident collectives take a new approach in relation to the organized LGBTQIAPN+ movement. The use of political strategies in the field of culture is one of the distinguishing features, followed by the overcoming of gender binarisms, with the understanding that identities are fluid. In other words, the blend of culture and politics was one of Leo Kret's victories that made her who she is.

Queer artivisms find in social media their major sources of dissemination, organization and maintenance, and are therefore independent of the large media outlets and agendas. Francisco (2016) shows how artivism is neither art nor politics, but something in between, an intersection that combines political experience and aesthetic experience. The queer artivist experience admits (like theory) new productions of knowledge coming from places and people who do not necessarily have artistic training or academic writing, bringing shared feelings and experiences into their productions:

> Queer writing and the archive of feelings can be considered concepts that cover a broader framework. Thus, while the first implies the historical singularity of a work, which ties the author/creator to the society in which he or she lives, and the second the formation of a memory shared by people who have experienced common traumas, it is possible to take these concepts as tools for locating the work in seeking to understand the emergence of the phenomenon, in its genealogical sense (Francisco, 2018, p. 75).

We can thus affirm that Leo Kret is neither only an artist nor only a political figure, but an artivist, since in this in-between space she managed to expand the networks of her career in queer activism and also did not abandon her influence in pagode, the rhythm from which she emerged and which she continues to spread.

Discursivities from Content Analysis

Understanding Content Analysis

One of the methods of analysis adopted in Communication is Content Analysis, which “rests on the assumptions of a critical and dynamic conception of language” (Franco, 2021, p. 13). In this sense:

> Content analysis can be considered a set of techniques for the analysis of communications that use systematic and objective procedures for describing the content of messages... The aim of content analysis is the inference of knowledge relating to the conditions of production and reception of messages, an inference that draws on indicators (quantitative or not) (Bardin, 1977, p. 38, as cited in Franco, 2021, p. 26).

In other words, from the recurrence of certain indicators we can measure the creation of a “content”, and thus the aims of the message sent and its effects. In general, there are four ways of analysing, the so-called recording units: words, theme, character and items. Here I chose to analyse two of these aspects (theme and character) in songs by Saiddy Bamba in order to identify and characterize what it was like to be young in Salvador in the early 2000s.

Recording Units: Theme and Character

The theme can be understood as an “assertion about a given subject. It can be a simple sentence (subject and predicate), a set of sentences or a paragraph” (Franco, 2021) that incorporates readings and meanings about a concept. Creating a theme means creating a universe of meaning around specific grouped ideas.

Let us look at the lyrics below:

Se seu time perdeu
sua nega passou pro Ricardo
e o sangue ferveu tá estressado mané, seu otário
Sua lata tremeu
Você fica calado no canto
Darei gargalhada toda essa noite da sua cara
Vai Chorar é ?
Chore na Minha[7]

A minha prima trabalhava numa firma chamada "Você tá"
Não era carteira assinada, o bagulho era tudo na treta
Mandaram ela embora, sem nenhum centavo
Não deram a moral
Só dei um conselho pra ela!
Prima! Bota “Você ta” no pau![8]

The lyrics above contain two recurring pieces of information. First, the use of some everyday situation (one's team losing a match, the stress of life, being fired), things common to anyone and very present in everyday life in the periphery. Second, the use of puns and wordplay referring to something sexual, such as “chore na minha” (which for some time was an allegory for oral sex) and the combination “você tá”, which, said together, sounds like “boceta”, another word for vagina in Salvador, and which in the phrase “coloque a voceta no pau” alludes directly to the sexual act (the vagina on the penis). Thus, the everyday themes present in pagode lyrics do not escape the double meaning that is characteristic of the rhythm.

This alliance between the use of an everyday situation and the disguise of a sexual connotation brought by double meaning is very common in pagode songs from Salvador, placing Saiddy Bamba in the broader

7 Música, Letras de. Chore na Minha Saiddy Bamba. 2010. Available at: https://www.letras.mus.br/saiddy-bamba/1786317/. Accessed: 15 Nov. 2024.
8 Música, Letras de. Você Tá No Pau Saiddy Bamba. 2014. Available at: https://www.letras.mus.br/saiddy-bamba/1855531/. Accessed: 15 Nov. 2024.

context of the city. Obviously, the choreography followed the description in the lyrics (both are gestures pointing to the genitals: where one should cry and where one should put the “company”).

Another possible recording unit is the dialogue with the character. The character is a recurrence of meanings that can express “particular people who can be classified according to different indicators” (Franco, 2021). To this end, we can analyse markers such as gender, race, class and territoriality, that is, how far this recurring information can draw content profiles of a given society or context. Let us look at the lyrics below:

Espalhafatosa e sensual
É Leokret do Brasil que chegou para vocês
Com seu jeito irreverente contagia
Uma pele tão macia e não para de dançar [...]
Não tenho medo de dizer
Eu sou bicha e sou do ghetto
O povo que me adora
Tem amor, não preconceito
Eu provei que o mundo é gay
E Bahia é cor-de-rosa
Os homens me desejam
É porque eu sou gostosa[9]

Andando na av. sete
Encontrei com a minha "peguete"
Me pedindo para namorar
Mas foi em então
Liguei a máquina de furar
Botei na um
Na dois de vez
Embalei para três
Toma danada.[10]

Sempre na moda,descolada
Por onde passa ela é tentação

9 Música, Letras de. Espalhafatosa (Melô da Leokret) Saiddy Bamba. 2012. Available at: https://www.letras.mus.br/saiddy-bamba/1317521/. Accessed: 15 Nov. 2024.
10 Música, Letras de. A Máquina de Furar Saiddy Bamba. 2012. Available at: https://www.letras.mus.br/saiddy-bamba/1929917/. Accessed: 15 Nov. 2024.

Tem gente ligada
Desconfiada que a sua grife é
Calcinha de três por 5,00
O colan (sic.) é 10,99
O sapato é do balaião
E o shortinho dela é da promoção
O relógio dela é paloso
Mas se molhar para de funcionar
Tira onda de patricinha
Mas compra roupa na Barroquinha[11]

The three songs chosen end up reflecting three specific and common characters of everyday life in the peripheries of Salvador. Once again through excerpts of everyday life, we meet three common profiles in the city of Salvador and its periphery: a queer person, a man with high self-esteem and a poor woman who gets "brand-name" clothes through replicas.

In the first case, we have a song sung partly by Alexx Maxx and partly by Leo Kret, in which he describes her as flamboyant and sensual. In her part, Leo states that she is from the periphery (the ghetto) and that, in her own way, she manages to change realities and prejudices in Brazil and in Bahia.

In the second case, we have the story, told by Alexx (giving the impression that it could be about himself), of a man who was walking along Avenida Sete (in downtown Salvador) and meets his romantic interest for sex. He calls himself a "máquina de furar" (drilling machine) and describes the sexual act in three speeds, all of which he can reach.

Finally, we have the song entitled "Barroquinha", another Salvador neighbourhood known for its popular commerce, which tells the story of a woman who shows off as a "patricinha" (posh girl) but buys her clothes in this neighbourhood, and whose designer clothes actually come from the so-called "balaio", baskets in which you can buy cheaper clothes in the Barroquinha neighbourhood. He also says that her watch is "paloso", something like "big", "showy", but because of its quality it stops working as soon as it gets wet.

All three songs, besides modelling profiles that are common in any periphery and present in the making of Brazil, also carry a form of Salvador cultural identity, since being from the ghetto (the way people from Salvador refer to favelas), walking along Avenida Sete and buying clothes in Barroquinha is something that is and was part of the everyday life of many Black and peripheral people in the city.

In this way, this connection with elements so much a part of ordinary life ends up building an identity that Saiddy's audience can relate to and, beyond that, constructs an imagined social place of what it is and was to be from Salvador in the past decade, a place I identify with and also belong to, which is why I consider the band part of the construction of my personal and intellectual identity. The connection between these three enunciators and the three stories told in the songs marks a distinct historical moment of that band, how it worked at that time and what kind of audience it was aimed at.

11 Música, Letras de. Barroquinha Saiddy Bamba. 2012. Available at: https://www.letras.mus.br/saiddy-bamba/1922791/. Accessed: 15 Nov. 2024.

Final Considerations

This article is, above all, a declaration of love and recognition. In intellectual production, we are very much bound to citing and remembering our academic references, but it is important to remember that we are built from a series of references, and songs, places and people are also part of this.

Through Queer Studies, some Bahian theorists and Content Analysis, understanding Saiddy Bamba ceases to be merely understanding a historical context and a specific period of Bahian music, and becomes relocating a whole construction of Bahianness and of being peripheral, present in the trajectories of people from Salvador and repeated to exhaustion in pagode, one of the most widespread rhythms in the peripheries of Salvador. I want to leave here my heartfelt thanks to Saiddy Bamba.

Analysing Saiddy Bamba as a performative event for Queer Theory, for promoting a new way of thinking about masculinities and gender identities, and also as a great multiplier of Salvador's culture and everyday life, through songs that evoke everyday situations and routes that only a resident of Salvador knows, helps us think about our existences as peripheral people, conferring identity and belonging on the rhythm and on the band's fans.

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