

[Review of the book *Brazilian Popular Music and Citizenship*, edited by I. Avelar and C. Dunn]

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Avelar, Idelber, and Christopher Dunn. *Brazilian Popular Music and Citizenship*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.

Scholarly studies on music have for the past thirty years paid particular attention to the ways in which music participates in the construction of national identity. In the case of Brazil, music has often been identified as a crucial expressive practice that creates concrete emblems that stand for and create the nation. By socializing people into experiencing a national sentiment, music actively contributes in generating feelings of identification with an imagined community. However, this is only the first part of the equation when thinking about the dashed identity group associated with the nation-state. Belonging to a nation is often conceived as a subjective position exemplified by feelings of pride, patriotism and even shame and guilt, while associations with the state is seen as an objective condition exemplified by identification documents, taxes, passports, etc. In a way, one is born into a state (thus conferred a citizenship), while socialized into a nation. The book *Brazilian Popular Music and Citizenship*, challenges the simplicity of this model and is a welcome addition that rethinks how expressive culture participates in how people are integrated—or not—into the state as participants with duties and rights, as member of broader social movements, or as subjects of repressive and coercive social forces. As it is claimed in the book's introduction, in Brazil "music has been both an instrument through which disenfranchised groups have asserted claims to citizenship, as well as a tool in the formulation of disciplinary or repressive state policies" (1). The book effectively exemplifies a turn from seeing citizenship as a contingent space of political representation to a site of meaning that problematizes "who gets to count as a citizen in Brazil and how" (6).

A significant strength of this compilation is its interdisciplinary breadth. The chapters are written by scholars specialized in musicology, cultural studies, education, anthropology and literary criticism, among others. Notably, there is an absence of specific musical analysis—a significant number of the discussions on musical examples focus on the lyrics—but on the other hand, this makes the book accessible to the non-music specialist. The editors, Idelber Avelar and Christopher Dunn, managed to capture in their introduction and the eighteen chapters of this book a significant multidisciplinary exchange between scholars in Brazil and in the U.S. More than half of the authors in the book teach in some of the most prestigious universities in Brazil and this allows non-Portuguese speakers to get acquainted with some of the contemporary issues in Brazilian academia.

The chapters are organized roughly in a chronological manner, and the introduction provides a good framework for scholars who are encountering Brazilian popular music for the first time. An issue that promptly appears is the contingent nature of what qualifies as a citizen, and how music gives meaning, mediates and redefines citizenship. More than offering a single solution, the essays in this book provide multiple examples of how these relationships occur on the ground, as an experience of everyday citizenship.

The first chapter by Adalberto Paranhos challenges the myth of generalized consent and adherence to state sponsored themes by samba composers during the *Estado Novo* (1937-1945) under the leadership of Getulio Vargas. Flávio Oliveira's chapter on orpheonic singing—a kind of collective singing in which voices are not trained and musical knowledge is not expected—explores how this practice was applied particularly in elementary schools, and played a key role in the formation of a modern Brazilian citizen. In an insightful manner, this particular look at education as a civilizing practice in Brazil relates musical practice to state building and racialized discourses of eugenics. Carlos Sandroni's "Farewell to MPB" examines the history and usage of

the term *musica popular brasileira*—including the shorthand often used of MPB—and challenges the usefulness of the term, particularly during recent years.

One of the editors, Christopher Dunn, presents one of the strongest articles in the collection, exploring a long and ongoing trajectory of reflection on issues of citizenship by the creative and sometimes eccentric musician Tom Zé. Angélica Madeira's article on the poetics of the rock group *Os Titãs* serves as a survey on the conditions of rock making in Brazil during the 1980s. Her literary perspective on some of the lyrics of *Os Titãs* during that period—which often attack so-called 'good taste' and 'decorum' and included obscenities and references to bodily fluids—exemplifies the work of several authors in the collection that look at song lyrics as poetry that emerges in analysis as complex societal critique.

Using different examples including MPB artists, hip-hop musicians, and the Living Culture program from the Ministry of Culture, Frederick Moehn's "We Live Daily in Two Countries: Audiotopias of Postdictatorship Brazil" discusses how discourses about music and musical practices negotiate some of the inequalities prevalent in contemporary Brazil and engage with issues that go beyond class or identity. His examples suggest that "it is not so much a question of whether class or identity (as we explored it through music) is more important in new social movements; rather, we see new ways in which class is tied to other aspects of the group experience of citizenship such as race, place, gender, violence, aesthetic preferences, and development" (127). This reference to new social movements is followed by Malcom K. McNee's analysis of the cultural phenomena associated to the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST). McNee's shows that, as one of the most important grassroots social movement emerging from Latin America in the last 30 years, the MST has made landlessness not only a condition but also an emergent political consciousness and subjectivity. While regional *música caipira* and *sertaneja* frequently engage with MST themes and emphasize associations between images of landlessness with Brazilian rurality, they also show tensions between diversity and singularity in the MST's identity politics. Shanna Lorenz's "Zhen Brasil's Japanese Brazilian Groove" is a look at the Japanese-Brazilian rock group *Zhen Brasil* as they negotiate racial stereotypes and attempt to include Japanese-Brazilians into the mainstream frame of what is considered to be Brazilian and dismantle preconceptions that marked Japanese Brazilians, even after many generations, to be considered 'others' within Brazil. Aaron Lorenz explores the music of the sambista Bezerra da Silva, known as the inventor of sambandido (gangster samba). Lorenz makes a parallel between Bezerra's work and testimonial literature that speaks about injustice, denounces social problems, violence and oppressive conditions.

The next two chapters in the book focus on the vibrant hip-hop scene in São Paulo. The first, by Wivian Weller and Marco Aurélio Paz Tella, provides an excellent survey of the different key moments and social concerns in the hip-hop scene of São Paulo. Their main interest is showing how the practice of hip-hop was an important part in developing 'strategies that oppose exclusion and discrimination and promote new forms of collectivity' (190). Derek Pardue's "Conquistando Espaço: Hip-Hop Occupations of São Paulo" on the other hand, focuses on the public nature of the hip-hop movement in the city, and the important engagement with cultural and educational organizations that the music movement has. Pardue's main interest is showing how citizenship has a spatial dimension, and it is exemplified by the negotiated occupations of the periphery of São Paulo by hip-hop organizations like *Força Ativa*.

Contrasting the engagement with political and racial discourse of São Paulo's hip-hop scene is the relatively apolitical funk scene of Rio de Janeiro. However, as João Freire Filho and Micael Herschmann show in their chapter "Funk Music Made in Brazil: Media and Moral

Panic,” the anxieties of the middle and upper classes of the city are reflected in the simultaneous process of media glamorization and demonization of funk in Rio de Janeiro. This chapter is followed by Hermano Vianna’s “Technobrega, Forró, Lambadao: The Parallel Music of Brazil,” where he makes the argument that the most popular musics of contemporary Brazil “are not the ones that play most often on radio, appear on TV shows, or are released by the big recording companies” (247). On the contrary, Vianna argues that genres like *forró*, *lambadao*, *technobrega*, as well as funk, *arrocha*, hard samba, and *sertaneja* are central to the informal markets of music found all around the country and have a much wider impact among Brazilians today.

The final chapters move geographically to the northeast of the country. Osmundo Pinho’s chapter on the different black musics that developed in Salvador, Bahia, looks at the way in which Afro-descendant identity has constituted itself through Carnival, converting a racial identification into a political subjectivity with significant agency. Pinho offers a brief survey of the history of carnival in Bahia during the 20th century. Ari Lima’s article “Modernity, Agency, and Sexuality in the Pagode Baiano” on the other hand, exemplifies how narratives about samba as national music seem to emphasize ‘survivals’ of African descent and thus deny the agency for social change of black Brazilians that were actively participating in the construction of the mixed identity associated with ‘modern’ Brazil. In a somewhat disjunct manner, this chapter also argues that pagode events in Bahia, a particular form of samba from this state, embraced “a subaltern gender (feminine) and sexuality (homosexual) and undermines the hegemony of the macho” (277). Continuing with music and musicians in the state of Bahia, Goli Guerreiro’s chapter titled “Candeal and Carlinhos Brown: Social and Musical Contexts of an Afro-Brazilian Community” focuses on the social impact on the community of Candeal by the projects undertaken by Pracatum and its leader Carlinhos Brown. Guerreiro shows the effective change in the community that surged from Carlinhos Brown and Pracatum’s social work, as well as some of the difficulties it encountered.

Daniel Sharp’s “Of Mud Huts and Modernity: The Performance of Civic Progress at Arcoverde’s São João Festival” gives a rich ethnographic account of the celebration of São João’s festival in the town of Acoverde. Despite the deep exchange and dialogue happening between the multiple musical performances taking place that include *samba de coco*, *reisado*, *forró estilizado*, eclectic uses of several genres (such as the group Cordel) and rock, Sharp shows how these events are being reinterpreted under different agendas that create specific spaces for the ‘traditional’ against the ‘modern’ and the ‘past’ against the ‘present,’ thus articulating particular ways of embracing citizenship for its participants. The last chapter is by one of the editors, Idelber Avelar. In “Mangue Beat Music and the Coding of Citizenship in Sound” he focuses on the *mangue beat* (or *mangue bit*) movement that exploded during the 1990s in Recife, focusing on the music of Chico Science and Nação Zumbi and the band Mundo Livre S/A. Avelar compares the cannibalizing aesthetics and appropriating attitude of Chico Science with the Tropicalismo movement. Like Tropicalismo before it, Avelar argues that a key element in the success of the mangue beat movement was the way it put in dialogue multiple worldviews and aesthetics that might have been seen as contradictory earlier: hip-hop and embolada, samba-soul and distorted heavy metal, and in general, set in conversation regional genres with national and international styles. By doing so, Avelar concludes, mangue beat “restored the possibility of making collective political and aesthetic statements in popular music, atrophied since the 1960s” (320).

Overall, the collection presented in *Brazilian Popular Music and Citizenship* is successful in adding an important theoretical consideration—the relationship between music making and citizenship—to the growing field of studies of expressive culture in Latin America. The variety of disciplinary approaches—also marked by differences in academic focuses between scholars in the U.S. and Brazil—certainly will help to a broad appeal of this text. As the editors mention in their introduction, the collection of essays in this book complement and dialogue with *Brazilian Popular Music and Globalization* (edited by Charles Perrone and Christopher Dunn, 2001). While that earlier collection examined how transnational flows of expressive culture had shaped and were shaped by Brazilian popular music, this volume is “resolutely grounded in local and national contexts,” convinced that “the construction of citizenship in all of its dimensions takes place primarily within national boundaries even as it is informed by international and postnational discourses and practices” (7).

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