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Bolsonaro, an unrecommended adventure

AN Original

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By Karen Shiratori, Daniel Cangussu



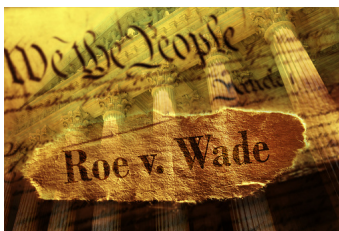
[pt](#) Reflexão Anti-Colonialismo Anti-Heteropatriarcado

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AN Original

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Por Lourdes Montero



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Understanding populism through the institutionalization of emotions: a mediatization perspective

AN Original - UNPOP Series

There is a school of thought that argues that to properly grasp populism, it must be studied in relation to media, the mediatization of society, and, by extension, the mediatization of politics. This is to say that,(...)

By Manuel João Cruz



en Reflection Anti-Capitalism Anti-Colonialism

The sound of “Black Fire”: placing Hip-Hop and Rap in the struggle for life in the Americas. An account for a genealogy

AN Original

The following text tries to trace a possible ?genealogy? of Hip-Hop and Rap within the history of ?black art(s)? across the Americas, as a weapon for black people in the United States for reclaiming the(...)

By Gaetano Marco Latronico



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en Reflection Original Anti-Capitalism Anti-Colonialism

Bolsonaro, an unrecommended adventure

AN Original

2022-06-16

By Karen Shiratori, Daniel Cangussu

President Jair Bolsonaro has suggested that the expedition in which Indigenous expert Bruno Pereira and journalist Dom Phillips disappeared on Sunday, May 5th, near the Javari Valley Indigenous Land (in the state of Amazonas, Brazil) was an 'adventure' in a 'completely wild' region, 'where anything can happen,' and, thus, 'unrecommended.' Yet, Bruno and Dom are far from being two reckless adventurers. Bruno is one of the most experienced Indigenous experts in the country, working for over 11 years in this region of the Amazon, respected by Indigenous peoples and admired by his colleagues at FUNAI (National Indian Foundation), the government's Indigenous affairs agency for which he worked. In turn, Dom Phillips carries over 30 years of experience in journalism, 15 of them in Brazil, a period during which he got to know and write about the Amazon, its Indigenous peoples, traditional communities, and the deterioration of environmental conflicts.

It was due to his exceptional work in the Javari Valley that Bruno was appointed by a council of Indigenous experts to take over the important role of General Coordination of Isolated and Recently Contacted Indians (CGIIRC) in Brasília, heading a FUNAI department in charge of articulating the protection of isolated Indigenous peoples in the Amazon. In this office, Bruno acted strongly against mining, drug trafficking, illegal fishing and hunting to ensure the protection of these Indigenous peoples' territory. It must be explained that isolated indigenous peoples are those that decided to cut contact with the outside world, especially with white people. They have survived massacres and other forms of violence. The lack of direct communication between isolated peoples and the country's environmental oversight and control agencies are seen as an opportunity for many (currently, even by the Brazilian State) to go into Indigenous territories.

Working with Indigenous groups is not an adventure, and neither is journalism. Yet, since Bolsonaro's election, these have become high-risk professions in Brazil under the incentive of the President, who legitimizes and even instigates the opportunistic and predatory behavior of miners, drug traffickers, land-grabbers, hunters, that is to say, all of those now pushing forward into the forest. The Amazon, already the setting of intense conflicts and disputes, has become a war zone under the banner of backward and genocidal politics.

What is currently underway is a rigging of Indian agency, unprecedented in recent history. From the first few months after the 2018 elections onwards, FUNAI has been acting under the direct command of special interest groups over Indigenous territories, including members of the ruralist and evangelical groups in parliament, a fact that has negatively impacted protective actions for isolated groups' territories.

In 2019, Bruno was removed from his position at the Coordination of Isolated and Recently Contacted Indians (CGIIRC) to be replaced by an evangelical pastor, whose only competency was religious proselytism. It is widely known that Bruno's removal was motivated by 'incompatibilities' with the administration and the guidelines adopted by the current president of FUNAI, the Federal Police Chief Marcelo Xavier, as well as with President Jair Bolsonaro himself. This change shows a clear strategy by the government to facilitate the entry of missionaries into the lands of isolated Indigenous peoples. One should highlight that the pastor in question worked precisely in the Javari Valley region, the place with the largest number of isolated peoples in the world. And that isn't just a detail; it's a depiction of one of the forces that threaten both the physical and cultural integrity of these peoples, as such organizations have aimed at locating and forcing contact with these populations, disrespecting their political self-determination and putting them in clear sanitary risk.

This loss of structure put not only the whole protective territorial policy, built and improved over the years, in check, but also the logic and viability of producing and managing information about isolated Indigenous peoples inside government structures, historically corrupted and anti-Indigenous. After taking the office, CGIIRC coordinators have full access to the precise location of all huts, encampments, communal houses, crops, and paths of almost 30 isolated indigenous peoples monitored by FUNAI, as well as to the databank of additional 100 records of isolated peoples in the Amazon, which require more investment in research and field expeditions for confirmation. Many of these are located inside cattle and soy farms in the states of Mato Grosso, Pará, Maranhão, and Rondônia, that is, in areas of great political interest to the ruralist parliamentary group. This also justifies the intense dispute over control of the CGIIRC by diverse segments of the Brazilian government.

Bruno, therefore, had to distance himself from FUNAI to move forward with work that the state refuses to do. He represents countless other workers that left FUNAI when they became aware that the agency was no longer there to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples, but, rather, to support the interests of those who want to take their rivers, soil, and forests. Days before his disappearance, Bruno talked about the hope of seeing FUNAI strengthened again. Of seeing it being run by Indigenous people and their supporters, and no longer by ruralists, fundamentalist missionaries, and the military, as it has lately been. He knew that rebuilding FUNAI's policies would be a slow and gradual process, but he was enthusiastic about this process: 'Keep calm! There are only six months left. We've already faced so much. It will soon pass,' he says in one of his messages to cheer up his colleagues. The news of his disappearance hits his family and friends hard; it also hits the Indigenous people, who saw him as a partner.

Fulfilling his campaign promise, the President has not demarcated any Indigenous Land. A large part of the most experienced people working on Indigenous affairs have been replaced by military reservists. For simply carrying out protection actions in Indigenous territories, many FUNAI workers are being investigated and suffering internal affairs processes.

There are indirect ways to order the killing of Indigenous affairs experts, environmentalists, and journalists nowadays in the Brazilian Amazon. Being dismissive of injustice, encouraging mining and deforestation are some of them. Promoting inaction, taking too long to call on the Military, and to guarantee the resources and adequate equipment in the search for Bruno and Dom suggest the same intention.

Bolsonaro is an unrecommended adventure, not only for the Amazon but for Brazil and the world. We consider the international dimension taken by this case as a recognition of the centrality of people like Bruno and Dom not only in the protection of Indigenous land and people but also to ensure the possibility of a common future. With that, we still ask: Where are Bruno and Dom?

...

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pt Reflexão Original Anti-Colonialismo Anti-Heteropatriarcado

Questões de género como aparelho ideológico do Estado: desafios do passado e do presente

AN Original

2022-06-15

Por Marcela Uchôa

O debate sobre género e sexualidade perpassa a história da luta da classe trabalhadora e das revoluções sociais, ainda que muitas vezes tenha sido silenciado. Desde a fundação da Primeira Internacional, em 1864 ainda por Marx e Engels, até a Terceira Internacional comunista o capitalismo se tornou mais cada vez mais maduro e os desafios para superá-lo foram se tornando maiores. Correntes reformistas por trás da retórica marxista têm buscado corromper os ideais socialistas desde a segunda internacional. Apesar da emancipação do sexismo e o patriarcado terem um papel importante na revolução social, os debates sobre género também têm sido instrumentalizados contra os revolucionários desde a Segunda Internacional – ainda que conquistas importantes também tenham sido fruto desse período, como o estabelecimento do dia internacional da mulher trabalhadora. Até hoje essa contradição mantém-se como um desafio a ser ultrapassado.

Após o abandono do ideal de internacionalismo e a ascensão do reformismo que marcaram a I Guerra Mundial, coube a Lenine, Rosa Luxemburgo e os bolcheviques fazer o resgate de uma missão histórica: a revolução socialista mundial. Foi com a Revolução Russa, e o surgimento da Terceira Internacional, nascida da primeira revolução proletária vitoriosa, que se deu um passo importante na implementação de políticas de emancipação de género.

Após a Revolução Russa, em 1922 a homossexualidade deixa de ser crime na URSS, o país se torna o primeiro do mundo a implementar o livre aborto, e um dos primeiros a garantir o direito de voto para mulheres. Garantiu ainda o reconhecimento de filhos ilegítimos, direito de divórcio, reconhecimento de apelidos maternos, criminalização da violação no casamento, além de direitos iguais entre homens e mulheres na constituição, etc...

Com a morte de Lenine, acontece um processo de estalinização e retorno ao conservadorismo – o ideal de homem revolucionário masculino volta e vai ter reverberações do maoísmo chinês até o castrismo em Cuba. O ideal viril do homem másculo é retomado – e questões de género passam a ser interpretadas como um desvio pequeno burguês – não era incomum quem considerasse esse debate, inclusive, reacionário. Até a quarta internacional que é marcadamente trotskista, nos círculos de esquerda por muito tempo existiu uma mentalidade de que assuntos de género como a homossexualidade, a lgbtqidade eram tomados como assuntos menores. Era o sentimento de uma geração que dizia que “não

é comigo”, assim durante muito tempo o que sobrou foi uma luta política que sempre parecia nova e marginal.

Nas sociedades ocidentais, o enraizamento do reformismo político e a falta de interesse real sobre essas pautas só piorou a situação. Assim as questões de género cada vez mais foram abordadas a partir duma perspetiva de “tolerância”, identidade individual e incluídas dentro do capitalismo e do neoliberalismo. Esse sistema de tolerância vai transformando as nossas contradições em novos mercados de consumo.

Quando o sistema se apropria de mulheres e homens a partir de uma divisão sexual do trabalho, ele diz que as mulheres podem e devem ser inclusas no sistema, desde que se comportem como homens. Mas, se precisarem de creche pública, saúde pública, direitos trabalhistas são imediatamente marginalizadas. Contudo, se elas não quiserem sair da lógica da reprodução social e quiserem assumir um papel social poderão ser integradas ao sistema.

A mesma lógica persegue pessoas lgbt+, estas podem ser integradas ao sistema desde que assumam um comportamento heterossexual e reivindiquem os padrões hegemónicos do conceito de família. Como, por exemplo, na ideia de casamento como legitimação humana dentro dos padrões normativos do conceito de família. Ou seja, é possível aceitar a homossexualidade desde que siga determinado padrão normativo, como se casar e formar uma família que respeite os moldes do modelo hétero, cis, patriarcal.

Afinal, o que está em jogo quando é determinado quem pode ou não se casar, quem pode ou não ter família? E quem não quiser seguir esse padrão não é um sujeito de direitos? Indo mais longe é relevante questionar: só o Estado tem esse poder de nos configurar como seres de direitos? Não será que ainda continuamos acorrentados a uma noção super problemática que é a de sujeito de direito?

Em Ideologia e Aparelhos Ideológicos do Estado, Louis Althusser designa uma série de realidades que se apresentam ao observador na forma de instituições separadas e especializadas. Instituições como religião, escolas, família, aparato legal, sistema político, os média, cultura – funcionam como instrumentos ideológicos que nos formatam, assumindo que existe a unidade que constitui esta pluralidade no corpo e não é imediatamente visível. Os Aparelhos Ideológicos do Estado não devem ser confundidos com o aparato de estado (repressivo). Enquanto o aparato estatal unificado (repressivo) pertence ao domínio público, a maioria dos aparatos ideológicos do estado, apesar de parecerem dispersos, fazem parte do domínio privado.

Ou seja, não importa se as instituições que os realizam são públicas ou privadas - o que importa é o seu funcionamento. Na medida em que o aparato repressivo do Estado faz uso da violência, o aparelho ideológico de Estado opera através da ideologia. Assim, inconscientemente, mas também conscientemente seguimos um padrão normativo, e enquanto a nossa luta consistir em como fazemos para nos integrar nele, e não para destruí-lo continuaremos a ser sucumbidos.

Para Judith Butler a deslegitimação de outras identidades é feita ideologicamente pelo Estado na medida em que informa como os sujeitos devem se apresentar. Assim, a luta pela inclusão revela um movimento reformista, que no melhor dos seus horizontes demanda que uma pequena parcela de direitos para ser concedida – não passa na maioria das vezes de uma concessão do Estado capitalista. Dito isso, é importante perceber que a exclusão é sempre institucionalizada, na medida em que cria mecanismos para que esse corpo desviante seja excluído. Butler nos convoca a refletir se lutar por uma política onde pessoas do mesmo sexo possam se integrar a uma estrutura formal de família não é em última instância pensar uma política conservadora, reformista e limitada... A pergunta que se põe, então é: o que acontece com todos os corpos não binários, não monogâmicos que constituem famílias de outra forma? Lutar por uma subserviência a um modelo imposto pelo Estado só reforça o punitivismo estatal – que objetiva os corpos desviantes na medida em que exerce diversos tipos de coerção.

Marcela Uchôa é investigadora integrada ao Instituto de Estudos Filosóficos da Universidade de Coimbra (IEF); doutora em filosofia política pela Universidade de Coimbra; é colaboradora do jornal português O Público, e no Brasil da Carta Maior.



es Reflexión Original Anti-Heteropatriarcado

Resistir el retroceso

AN Original

2022-06-12

Por Lourdes Montero

El pasado 2 de mayo, la revista *Político* publicó un borrador filtrado del texto del juez Samuel Alito en el que se define como “error flagrante” una histórica decisión emitida por la Corte Suprema en 1973, que lleva por nombre *Roe vs Wade* y que protege el aborto como un derecho constitucional. Esto implica que el Tribunal Supremo de Estados Unidos está a punto de acabar con el derecho constitucional al aborto a nivel nacional.

Días después, el máximo tribunal confirmó que el documento filtrado es auténtico, pero aclaró que no representa una decisión formal de la Corte. Sin embargo, todo indica que esta definición y su intensidad es solo cuestión de días. Debido a la exitosa toma de posesión del sistema judicial por parte de los republicanos, la criminalización del aborto por parte del Tribunal Supremo está cerca, se espera su publicación en julio.

Esta noticia es solo la cara visible de todo un proceso silencioso de retroceso en torno a los derechos sexuales y reproductivos. Una vez más, los cuerpos de las mujeres son el campo de batalla de una guerra geopolítica y civilizatoria. Estados Unidos no es una excepción. En Europa, el discurso público se centra cada vez más en el declive demográfico. Nuevamente, hermosas madres blancas con hermosos bebés blancos inundan costosas vallas publicitarias en Hungría, Polonia, Alemania, Dinamarca, Rusia y Serbia para promover la maternidad occidental y condenar el aborto.

Desde hace 10 años que se viene gestando este retroceso en relación a los derechos reproductivos, interconectado con otros niveles cruciales de retrocesos discursivos que podrían bloquear los avances en la igualdad de género. Uno de ellos es la captura institucional, como ocurrió con el Tribunal Supremo de Estados Unidos, y está también la creación de instituciones alternativas. En ese sentido, los últimos años se ha creado una red transnacional de organizaciones no gubernamentales que impulsan el Congreso Mundial de Familias, que ya ha organizado cuatro “cumbres demográficas” donde se reúnen políticos con líderes religiosos para compartir estrategias destinadas a aumentar las tasas de natalidad. En octubre de 2020, se firmó la Declaración de Consenso de Ginebra sobre la Promoción de la Salud de la Mujer y el Fortalecimiento de la Familia, que pretende ser una alternativa conservadora a documentos como la Convención sobre todas las formas de Discriminación contra la Mujer (CEDAW).

El racismo también se encuentra con discursos demográficos en oposición al derecho al aborto. La popular teoría de la conspiración derechista conocida como el “Gran Reemplazo” advierte que las personas nacidas en Estados Unidos están siendo reemplazadas por inmigrantes no blancos. Prohibir el aborto es una forma de mantener altas las tasas de natalidad en Estados Unidos.

Por último, una estrategia cada vez más potente es la sustitución de los discursos sobre los derechos humanos por un nuevo lenguaje sobre la reproducción: el maternalismo y la familia. Muchas personas

anhelan el regreso a una estructura social conservadora en la que todos se casan jóvenes y forman una familia nuclear encabezada por un varón.

Cuando Latinoamérica no ha terminado de celebrar su marea verde, parece que ya tendremos que salir nuevamente a las calles para resistir este nuevo retroceso conservador. Son muchas las cosas que están en juego. Como amenaza latente, solo basta ver a las mujeres en Afganistán que, tras el retorno de los talibanes al poder, temen perder todo lo que lograron en su vida.

Lourdes Montero es cientista social boliviana.



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en Reflection Original Anti-Capitalism Anti-Colonialism Anti-Heteropatriarchy

Understanding populism through the institutionalization of emotions: a mediatization perspective

AN Original - UNPOP Series

2022-05-30

By Manuel João Cruz

There is a school of thought that argues that to properly grasp populism, it must be studied in relation to media, the mediatization of society, and, by extension, the mediatization of politics. This is to say that, to understand the intricacies of populism, the role that media (specifically news media understood as an institution) plays in society and politics is fundamental. After all, “no political actor or institution can afford not to take the media into consideration”.

Considering news media as institutions that play a key role in the democratic state, and that there is a deep and even (co)dependent relationship between (populist) politicians and the media, my main argument is that populist actors and populist parties use the media to institutionalize emotions through and in the public discourse.

On this note, the populist branch of institutionalized emotions aims to target populist in-groups like “the people” through, for example, pride and love, and the out-groups like the “corrupt elites”, immigrants, and other minorities, through fear and hate. In-groups and out-groups are social groups to which a person psychologically identifies (members of an in-group are generally assumed to be virtuous, friendly, cooperative, trustworthy, and safe. On the other hand, out-group members are assumed to be unfriendly, uncooperative, unworthy of trust and dangerous).

Institutionalization of emotions

If institutionalization is the infusion of valor and behavior routinization, as well as the link between the private and individual to the collective and political, the institutionalization of emotions is the understanding of emotions as the driving force behind shaping beliefs, norms, values, behaviors, social roles, structure, culture, and politics within society as a whole.

Emotions only become fully institutionalized at the macro level if and when media plays a key role in propagating those beliefs, norms, values and behaviors. In the mediatized society we live in, emotions find their way into our collective imaginary through the median that, in turn, help shape and structure the social world. In other words, I argue that it is under the heavy influence of media that emotions are socially constructed, collectively shared and finally institutionalized.

Mediatization and mediatization of politics

Mediatization refers to the process in which media have become increasingly influential in and deeply integrated into different spheres of society. Mediatization accounts for the exerted influence of the whole media structure apparatus, the culture it breeds and its implied, implicit and ever-presence in society. When applied to politics, in what can be considered a twist on the Hawthorne Effect, media plays a more ominous role, as Jesper Strömbäck and Frank Esser say:

“Oftentimes, it may be the ‘presumed’ influence of the media that induces political actors to act in a forward-looking manner.”

The mediatization of politics represents a world where political actors and political institutions are increasingly (co)dependent and intertwined on and with media logic. This is not without the other side of the coin, however, as political actors, while adapting to the media logic, also push back with their own interests and influence the media logic as they refuse to be reduced to a passive element in this relationship.

Over time, and, to a degree, also caused by the existential crisis within traditional media that sees its business model as unsustainable and increasingly dependent on advertising revenue to survive, politicians have been successful in creating their own political language, which is separate but still related, to and from news media.

If we look at the specific case of populism, it appeals to an audience that holds populist views. This means there’s a very real demand of populist actors and institutions that the media will try and meet by offering populist content, in which stories are framed by a division between the “innocent people” and the “culprits”.

Political issue ownership is claimed through mediatic channels as well and is of the highest importance to the populist. “Ownership” of a political issue is the simple notion that a specific party is the most qualified to deal with and affect policy regarding a particular issue. Populists try, with their own political language, to take ownership of topics such as corruption and immigration and they use the media to do so and convey their message.

Any politician or political party with serious political ambitions is obligated to secure funding to employ a team of highly capable and fully dedicated communication and public relations professionals dedicated to sharing their own political message, thus creating a relationship that resembles a dance between traditional media and political actors, where each party takes and gives what the other needs, in what some authors call the colonization of media by public relations or the “PR-isation of news media”.

The logical conclusion of the mediatization of politics is the inevitable generalization of the spectacularization of politics driven by media, especially the likes of television, still a general public favorite to get their news and political information, which is also driven by market imperatives that favors entertainment over more substantiated content.

The *political spectacle* is of great importance to populism since its spillover effects result in an ever-increasing personalization and dramatization of political actors and parties, in which the populist actor tends to predominate through the use and instrumentalization of emotions. They do so by mobilizing emotion narratives “that focus on the frame through which political subjects stimulate a defined set of emotions that create both a feeling of allegiance to a political movement and of belonging to a privileged imagined community”.

Institutionalized emotions

The institutionalization of emotions opens a rather interesting array of possibilities for the understanding of the political and populism, especially if one takes into account the collective action

problem, which has eluded political theorists for centuries, might be best explained through a framing of instrumentalized emotionality, through and by media, to change and guide public opinion and, in turn, collective action.

Although a fair share of caution is required before linking private emotions with public action and politics, which has undoubtedly dystopian and Orwellian qualities, it certainly does not take too much of an abstraction to imagine a world where ‘Ministry of Love’, ‘Ministry of Happiness’, ‘Ministry of Hate’, ‘Ministry of Fear’, ‘Ministry of Empathy’, in a 1984 style, exist albeit under different names. There are real world applications already of this with the “Hate Cabinet” by Brazil’s Bolsonaro, a disinformation machine with the goal of spreading disinformation and fake news targeting opposing voices to the regime. In Italy, there’s also “The Beast” in use by Salvini, an algorithm that dictates the degree to which emotions should be used in social media posts to bring negative feelings out and amplify them.

Other examples, and to illustrate this point further, a well-functioning national healthcare system can be interpreted as institutionalized empathy. War, military doctrines and conflicts tend to institutionalize fear and/or security. The welfare state and calls for wider, more inclusive, social benefits tend to institutionalize compassion or solidarity. A just and adequate taxation system tends to institutionalize justice. Symbols like the national flag and a national anthem are an attempt at institutionalizing pride.

When it comes to populism and populist actors, when they talk about immigration and welfare dependency, two topics closely related to right-wing populism, they are trying to institutionalize fear and resentment. Or when they promise to fight corruption and/of the elites, in the name of the people, they are trying to institutionalize anger or disgust. The populist also tries to institutionalize emotions like hope, in the sense that only they can save the “people” from the “others”. In this sense, hope is institutionalized in the ballots, the number of votes and public mobilization achieved, which grants democratic expression to the populist.

Populist actors are also successful in institutionalizing emotions when strict immigration quotas are implemented or immigration is severely restricted or demonized (e.g. Trump’s “wall” and *Brexit* referendum), or when borders become heavily guarded to protect against illegal migration.

The institutionalization of emotions by the political isn’t exclusive to the populist actor, however. Just to name an example, recent western’s sanctions against Russia are a case of perceived institutionalized anger/hate towards Russia’s geopolitical ambitions, alongside a sense of justice and punishment. On the other hand, economic, moral and military aid towards Ukraine can be understood as institutionalized empathy or love.

In conclusion, how, if not through media and the mediatization that influences everything we do, see or say, do we come to understand, and finally accept institutionalized emotions? I argue that it is through mediatization that we can explain, understand, believe, request, accept or reject institutionalized emotions. The reasoning, then, keeping in line that political actors or institutions can’t afford not to take media into consideration, maybe it’s time that we start to see the political, especially the populist, as an actor trying to instrumentalize and institutionalize emotions and affect democratic processes and institutions through media and the mediatization process. In this sense, regarding populism as the institutionalization of emotions might prove to be a small, but equally important, step forward in the quest to unpacking populism.



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The sound of “Black Fire”: placing Hip-Hop and Rap in the struggle for life in the Americas. An account for a genealogy

AN Original

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By Gaetano Marco Latronico

The following text tries to trace a possible “genealogy” of Hip-Hop and Rap within the history of “black art(s)” across the Americas, as a weapon for black people in the United States for reclaiming the fundamental right to “Life”. This latter term is here intended as the capacity for “free creation”, in contrast to the logic of slavery, aimed to reduce life to forced “production”, under the constant threat of her destruction.

*“Hip is to know, it’s a form of intelligence. To be hip is to be update and relevant.
Hop is a form of movement, you can’t just observe a hop, you gotta hop up and do it.
Hip and hop is more than music . Hip is the Knowledge,
hop is the Movement. Hip and Hop is Intelligent movement.”*

Krs-One – Hip Hop Lives, with Marley Marl

Every art, as a vehicle for expression and a cultural manifestation, has its own history, with its genealogies and even mythologies. Art embeds the multiple characters of social life stemming from the evolution of singular communities, which in turn possesses all the necessary contradictions inherent to localized life experiences. However, even if originating from positioned singularities, arts possess the claim for a universal echo, an aim for a plural acknowledgment of going beyond time and space. Music is no exception: it has the capacity to affect, by representing life.

Representin’ was the slogan appropriated by a wide-range cultural movement, where music played an integral part since the beginning. Hip-hop was born in 1973 in South Bronx, New York, baptized by the hands of Dj Kool Herc, a Jamaican who in 1967 emigrated to the United States as a child. Herc had inherited the “pulsing of life” reproduced by Dj’s in Kingston’s dance-halls and sound-systems, along with the Jamaican subcultural dimension of the under-classed and racialized ghetto masses. Sound-systems were about these “wretched”, who were seeking to contrast the dull “thundering of death” thrummed by gangs, police and State violence through guns, with its reversal, the *beating* of life through Dub productions, Reggae chants and Raggamuffin’ “toasting”.

Music as “movement” has always had a strong political meaning for those who would not succumb to oppression. Across the Atlantic, through the so-called Modernity, from the tingling of enslaving chains

and war-cry percussion-beating from Africa, to the Voodoo in the Caribbean, the Samba in Brazil and the Sound-Systems in Jamaica, music has designed what could be regarded as a “Black Internationalism”: a radical tradition of struggle, shaping the life-form experience of Afro-descendants across the Americas.

Hip-hop pertains to this legacy of struggle, carried out by Life itself, the “power to blossom”, which refuses to succumb to Death, the “power to annihilate”.

The conflict between the two “powers” has been constructed as structurally asymmetrical through history: marginalization and control of the bodies assures the domination of a group of people over another; with the basic scope of seizing the creative “power to blossom” of life for the extraction of (plus)value. The epiphenomenon is slavery, as forced labor shaped Modernity in the form of the ascendant global Capitalism. Life constrained to work. The “power to annihilate” was meant to “police” Life, by “overseeing” her as enslaved capacity to “produce”.

Life had to resist Death within this dimension of structural violence, as a fixated asymmetry of power, , since an “outside” was not at her disposal. Thus, she counter-acted Death, engaged the conflict to reverse the asymmetry, trying to convert this violence in her counter-power. Throughout the Centuries, rebellious enslaved people across Africa and the Americas violently revolted against the exploitation regime of forced labour, under the menace of annihilation. Their revolts were ritualized through music. From the XVII to the XIX Century, music accompanied black insurgencies, and the dimension of violence in which they took place, in North America like elsewhere, across the so-called “New World”. (In)famous mass uprisings, like the “Great Black Conspiracy” of New York (1741) accounted for the alliance of black people with other underclass racialized people (e.g. Irish) and for the prominent role of women for a massive upsurge. The worst nightmare of the white bourgeois male, exposing the intersectional nature of both oppression and resistance, produced the riotous Hydra which was fighting against the capitalist, colonial and hetero-patriarcal “Cerberus”. And that was delineating a very different kind of Enlightenment, maybe stemming from the Manden Charten of Mali (1236), “intersecting” with European radical political traditions, as the example of Haiti shows.



Haiti Revolution

In the XX Century North America, no matter the participation of Black People in both the American Revolution and the U.S. Civil War, The Jim Crow Laws had continued to pend on black lives, across two World Wars.

*“As real as it seems, the American Dream
ain't nothing but another calculated scheme
to get us locked up, shot up or back in chains
to deny us of the future, to rob our names
kept my history a mystery, but now I see
the American Dream wasn't meant for me..”*

2Pac– Panther Power (in the Strictly Dope)

During the Cold War, following also the global wave of Pan-Africanism, gigantic figures like Rosa Parks, Claudia Jones, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael and Muhammad Ali, led the impetuous movement for black liberation. Gospel, Jazz, Blues, Soul, Rhythm&Blues and Funk shaped the “black” form of the USA, along with the proliferation of gang-life in the metropolises.



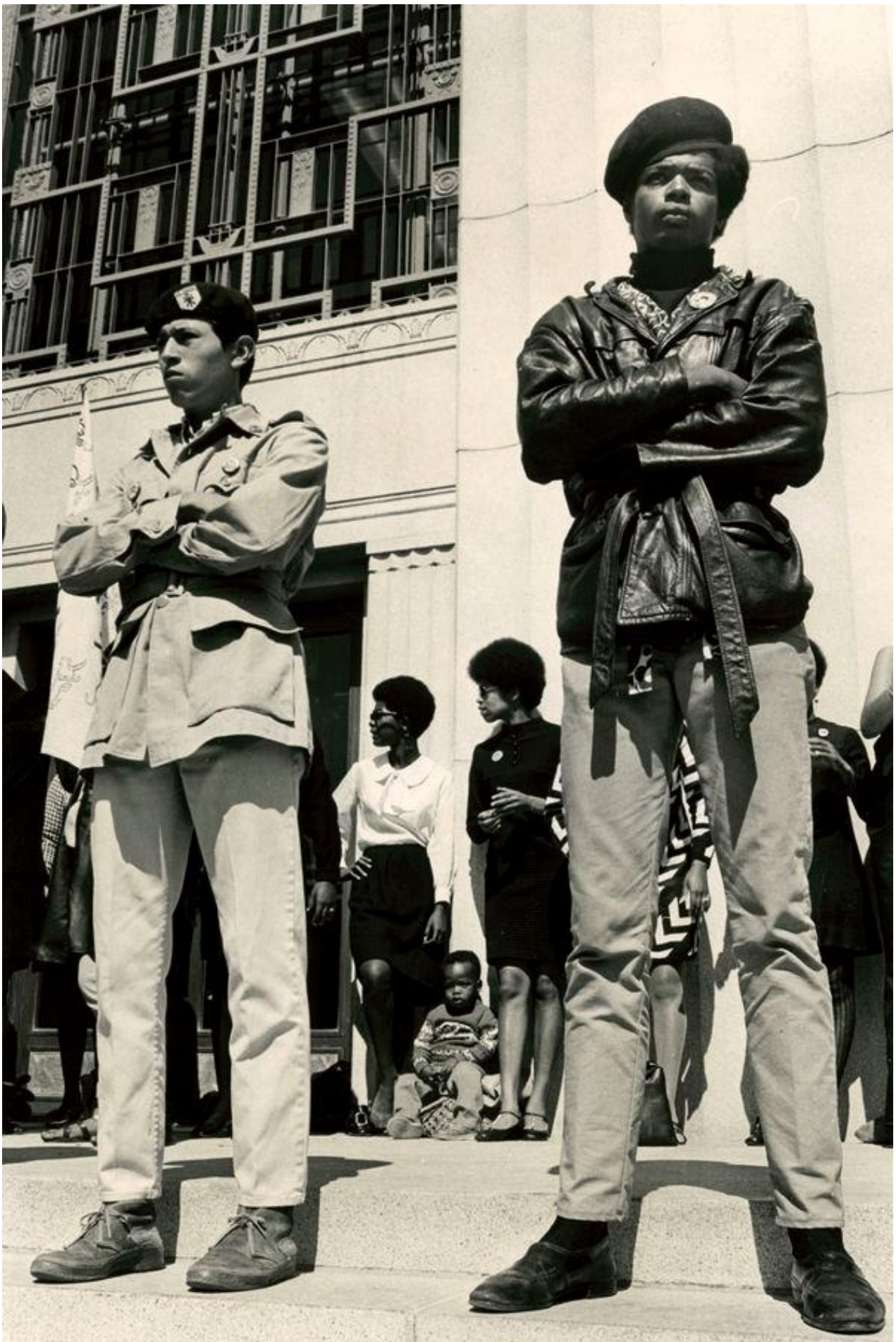
Claudia Jones

With the "Long '68", civil and political rights were only formally conquered. Meanwhile waves of black "rolling stones" and "hustlers" invaded the ghetto streets and contended the territory formerly hegemonically ruled by other marginalized immigrants, mostly Irish and Southern Italian through "organized crime".

Young underclass black males (and latinos) seek self-determination through "money, power, respect"; while black women (and latinas) were taken in between their leading role in the emancipation struggle, and the sexist violence perpetrated by their fellow men continuously trying to "pimp" them, to reduce them to commodities.

*“Freedom! You askin' me about freedom..
..Asking me about freedom?
I'll be honest with you.
I know a whole more about what freedom isn't,
than about what it is, cause I've never been free..”*

Assata Shakur interviewed, from Common Sense – A Song for Assata



Social movements needed to deal with this “scum” from the streets. More radical black political movements, with a strong feminist component, like the communist Black Panther Party (Oakland, 1966) advocated for armed self-defense and self-government, while denouncing openly the U.S. “internal colonialism”. In California the political struggle involved the black youth engaged in ascendant gangs

like the Bloods and the Crips in Los Angeles, and tried to convert *violence* into *power*: a task that Hannah Arendt had defined an impossibility.

During the years of their warfare-like repression by the U.S. Intelligence, Hip-Hop saw the light, while Black neighborhoods were about to be deadly colored of white by crack.

From New York, Hip-hop expanded fast across the States. Rap started as *emceeing*, from the acronym MC, *Master of Ceremony*. The Mc's were word-players improvising on *beatboxing*, *beat-braking* and *scratches* made by Dj's during rap battles called *cyphers*, where communal antagonism was performed as art. They borrowed the rhetoric from the black urban *Spoken Word* tradition, and set the stage for the "Golden Era" of Hip-hop of the 1980s, that crowned the "Big Rotten Apple" as the *Mekka*, the *City-Temple*.

In the 1990s it took the form of *Gangsta Rap* *Gangsta Nation* of California. Differently from the East Coast style, more focused on punch-lines word-play and inspirational urban storytelling, the West Coast style recounted to the listeners true stories of everyday violence. It posed the trend for the later developing style of the South in the 2000s, called *Trap*, by which the drug-dealing everyday violence is narrated starting from the "trap houses", hotspots where drugs are fabricated and sold: a sort of new plantation, where black youth is actually trapped. In the Middle West, and notably in *Chiraq*-Chicago, Gangsta Rap evolved in the *Drill* style, according to which street violence is reflected and even mimed by bullet-like flows of utterly violent rhymes, performed to drill the mind, just like gunshots do to bodies.

Since the origins Rap music in Hip-hop culture has served the scope of representing life in the struggle against death, just like her musical ancestors had done across the Americas. A form of *knowledge born in the struggle*, to convert *violence* into *power*. A task still more than urgent, since black youngsters in the United States, like elsewhere, are still *drilling* each other, are still *trapped*, and are still *scratching* the streets, producing black noise to be heard. Black Lives (still) Matter. The "Black Fire" of Life is still alive. On the perennial *Road to Zion*, her centuries-old *patience* in fighting Death will never be over.

"*Sabali, sabali, sabali yonkote*
Sabali, sabali, sabali kiye
Ni kêra môgô.
Sabali, sabali, sabali yonkote
Sabali, sabali, sabali kiye
Ni kêra môgô."



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