

*NORDESTINA NEGOTIATIONS: ALTERNATIVE FEMININITIES, GENDERED AND
MUSICAL SELF-PRODUCTION IN RECIFE, PERNAMBUCO, BRAZIL*

BY

ELLEN MCKAY RICE

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Music in Music
with a concentration in Musicology
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2019

Urbana, Illinois

Advisers:

Assistant Professor Michael Silvers, Chair
Professor Donna Buchanan

ABSTRACT

This project follows the career trajectories of three women who were influential in the *manguebeat* movement of 1990s and early 2000s Recife, Pernambuco, in northeastern Brazil. Karina Buhr, Alessandra Leão, and Renata Rosa have each contributed significant innovations to Recife's music scene, both in their work with *mangue*-affiliated band Comadre Fulozinha, and also through more recent solo releases. Even so, I believe that some of the most significant contributions of these artists are not just musical, but simultaneously, social. While this thesis began as an exercise in canon correction aimed at re-centering the contributions of women in *mangue*, it grew to focus on the unique ways each of the artists mentioned here have worked to expand the possibilities for alternative femininities in Pernambuco, and in northeastern Brazil. Through careful manipulation of sound, images, and especially, through performance in multiple registers—including that of the voice—these artists continue to make space for new ways of being in the world.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| CHAPTER 2: THE NORTHEASTERN IMAGINARY: LOCATING THE FEMININE..... | 39 |
| CHAPTER 3: PRODUCING THE FEMININE, PRODUCING THE NATURAL: “SE-PRODUZIR” & THE <i>CANTAUTORA</i> AESTHETIC..... | 69 |
| CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION..... | 125 |
| GLOSSARY..... | 133 |
| REFERENCES..... | 136 |
| APPENDIX A: LYRICS FROM BUHR’S “SELVATICA”..... | 146 |

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

“Does your boyfriend really let you go to concerts by yourself?!” a friend’s partner asked incredulously. It was the week of Christmas, and I was about to leave with a group of friends to attend an all-night beach concert, one of the many social and musical events taking place near the town of Tamandaré, just outside of Recife, Pernambuco, in northeastern Brazil. This struck me as odd, in part because I hadn’t considered the idea of asking permission from my significant other to attend a concert, and in part because I did not consider attending a concert with five friends to be “by myself.” In many ways, I found that my return trip to Recife, a short visit in 2012, was much different from my experience living there as an exchange student in 2008-09. After three years of living on my own as an independent adult in the U.S., I found that my perspective had changed. My expectations regarding my own freedom of movement, personal agency, and ability to control my surroundings had become shockingly incompatible with the situations in which I now found myself, as a young woman and former exchange student visiting friends in northeastern Brazil.¹ As an exchange student, a teenager just out of high school, I had been content to observe and learn about a new place and culture different from my own. I was happy to go where other people wanted to take me, and to learn from every new experience as I re-learned how to be in the world. As an adult with greater self-knowledge and intent, I had my own agenda, and I was surprised by the conflicts this produced.

¹ At the time of this visit I identified and presented as a woman, and although I no longer do so, I have left this reference here because I believe it is important for framing the discussion that follows. I will discuss the ways in which my own identity has impacted this research (and vice-versa) later on in this work.

Women in many places around the world experience similar challenges in the areas of personal mobility and autonomy, and female performing artists occupy a unique position in that their professional activities often chafe with gender norms, providing both challenges and opportunities for different types of social navigation. There are also aspects of northeastern Brazilian culture that make life more challenging for women in a variety of professions, across lines of race and class. In many instances however, the binds of femininity cut differently on bodies of differently perceived classes and colors. My own experiences as a white foreigner embedded in an upper-middle-class Recife (a person from Recife) family, differ drastically, for instance, from the experiences of gender, social norms and expectations of my host family's live-in maid. In some senses we were playing the same game, but the rules are different.

With these differences in mind, it is important to examine the discourses that undergird various versions of femininity in the Brazilian northeast, and in Pernambuco specifically. A number of gendered archetypes will be explored in more depth later in this work. Through an examination of sound, visual and performance art, I will show how these archetypes are manifest and manipulated by women to achieve their own goals. While gendered archetypes in Pernambuco certainly extend beyond the artistic realm, I contend that female musicians and performance artists can provide unique insights into the processes of constructing femininity in that state. Because the roles of composer, instrumentalist, and band leader fall outside the realm of careers considered traditionally acceptable for women, those who choose to pursue them are forced to create their own paths.

This thesis will follow the trajectories of three contemporary female artists with ties to Recife, Pernambuco: Karina Buhr, Alessandra Leão, and Renata Rosa. I will show how Buhr,

Leão, and Rosa each construct different versions of a localized femininity in their work, and explore how they contribute to, resist, and attempt to reshape collective narratives about gender, tradition, and the northeast region. Musicians and artists can provide unique insights into the construction of gender, and Buhr, Leão, and Rosa respond in a variety of ways to the challenges and opportunities of working as a female performing artist. While masculinity in the Brazilian northeast has been written about by scholars including Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Jr. (1999), Felipe Trotta (2008; 2009) and others, there is less scholarship dealing with constructions of femininity in the region. Those scholars who have dealt with northeastern femininity have focused primarily on the challenges facing women in the rural interior or *sertão*² (Santos 2012; 2014) and rural areas of the *Zona da Mata*³ (Scheper-Hughes 1992). In general, there has been only limited investigation on the topic of urban femininities in the Brazilian northeast. One of my primary goals here is to integrate that urban perspective into the ongoing dialogue surrounding the construction of gender in the northeast. As I will explore in more depth later in this work, femininity in the northeast is both performed and (self-)produced. Because musicians are experts in these areas, their performances of femininity and production of self are often expertly crafted and intentional, allowing us to take a closer look at the discourses with which they are in constant dialogue.

² Interior desert region in the Brazilian northeast.

³ “Forest Zone” referring to the coastal Atlantic Forest biome.

“Se-Produzir”: Gendered Production of Self in Recife, Pernambuco

In this thesis, I examine the particularities of northeastern and specifically Pernambucan femininities, and the archetypes that are referenced by women in their self-presentational choices. I believe the concept of *se-produzir*, the act of producing oneself, can be a helpful analytical tool for deconstructing these models of femininity in order to better understand them. A number of scholars have discussed women’s self-production in a Brazilian context, and the current dialogue on this topic in the fields of anthropology and media studies has been a major inspiration for this project. Thaïs Machado-Borges, a Brazilian social anthropologist now based in Sweden, is one scholar doing important work in this area. Her dissertation, “Only For You!: Brazilians and Telenovela Flow” (Machado-Borges, 2003), helped me think more critically about my own experiences with femininity in Brazil, and the impact of media representations on social expectations and gendered ways of being particular to that context. Machado-Borges’ attention to the media imaginaries of gender and class in Brazil (viewed, in this instance, through the social world of Brazilian telenovelas), and the ways in which these are made real by female viewers who enact them, spoke to many of my own experiences engaging with middle and upper middle-class constructs of femininity in Pernambuco.

Living in Recife as an exchange student in 2008-09, I was often told by friends, friends of friends, and even complete strangers, that I could be really beautiful if I just tried harder. People frequently made negative or corrective comments about my clothes, weight, manner of walking, personal hygiene practices, and overall appearance. While this was sometimes hard to deal with, I knew that most of the people who made these comments genuinely cared about me and were trying to help. As an exchange student, I took this advice to heart and tried to be as Brazilian as I

could, which for me, often meant trying to “produce” or curate a more feminine version of myself. In turn, my families saw it as their responsibility not only to protect me from harm, but also to teach me how to become an adult woman. From their perspective, helping me learn how to prioritize my appearance was a key part of this. They invited and sometimes exhorted me to shower more often, use perfume, paint my nails, buy stylish clothing, and generally appear more feminine. “*Você precisa se-produzir!*” — “You need to produce yourself!” they told me. So, I tried to remake myself into an acceptable subject and daughter.

Ten years after the fact, I have only begun to process the impact that this experience had on me. I say this not to lay blame on any of my friends or host family members, nor to elicit sympathy, but because I believe it highlights the way in which these coercive practices are intensely naturalized. Gender constructs, like discourses about sexuality, tend to be pervasive and highly naturalized. The roles on offer are limited, and participation is not optional. At the time, I knew I was profoundly uncomfortable. But as many people living in a culture new to them can tell you, this is not an uncommon experience. I assumed everyone else was just as uncomfortable as I was. At the time, I understood these challenges as part of a growth experience that I did not fully understand, but hoped I would later appreciate, and in retrospect that has not been untrue.

Trying to become a specific type of woman was taxing, revelatory, and in relation to this project, it has also become ethnographically significant. As a young person living (albeit temporarily) as part of an upper middle-class family in northeastern Brazil, my lack of ability to produce myself was seen as an impediment to my own success, as a failure of *se-produzir*. While men of all ages in Recife also face strict codes of conduct and self-presentation, it is important to note that this is not considered the type of conscious self-production indicated by *se-produzir*. In

many senses masculinity is viewed as a state of being comprised of innate qualities, whereas femininity is viewed as an active process whereby women exert control over their bodies, producing them to achieve an ideal. Complicating things even further, this feminine ideal is one of produced “naturalness,” which will be explored in more depth later. It includes not only the types of productive performances and daily acts described by philosopher Judith Butler, but also the physical manipulation of the body itself through exercise routines, hormone therapy, and plastic surgery, the latter two of which are increasingly viewed as necessary interventions for many Brazilian women (Edmonds and Sanabria 2014).

On subsequent visits to Recife in 2012 and 2016, I was surprised to learn that many of my female friends and family members had undergone one or more plastic surgeries with the goal of enhancing their looks. Even those who had not yet undergone plastic surgery talked openly about their desire to do so in the future when they could afford it. This surprised me, because from my perspective these women were already beautiful. I had a hard time understanding why any of them would want plastic surgery. As authors including Machado-Borges, Alexander Edmonds, and Emilia Sanabria have noted, however, many different factors motivate Brazilian women to undergo hormone therapy, plastic surgery, and other medical interventions. In addition to physical beauty, these interventions are often prompted or influenced by class aspirations, the desire for improved psychological and sexual wellbeing, and the maintenance of relationships. It became clear to me that there were many more variables at play in the production and maintenance of femininity in Recife than I had originally imagined. I could tell that what it meant to be a woman in Recife, at least in the upper-middle class circles in which

I lived, was somehow different from femininities I had experienced in other contexts, but I could not initially put my finger on why.

My experiences of *se-produzir* in Recife were often frustrating or confusing, because they stood in contrast to my own conception and performance of a gendered self, but the work of scholars such as Thaïs Machado-Borges, Alexander Edmonds, Emilia Sanabria, Martha Santos and others has given me a better idea of how to interpret these experiences in their own context. I did not succeed at producing myself as a normative subject in Recife, in a way that made me consider and reconsider many aspects of my own self-fashioning and even my values. As a music researcher, this pivotal life experience has certainly influenced my interests, but although I make an appearance here, this thesis is not about me. In the music, performance, and visual art of Karina Buhr, Alessandra Leão, and Renata Rosa, I saw three innovative approaches to negotiating the rigidly defined gender roles I often struggled with. The work these artists are doing cannot be collapsed into a simple narrative of resistance to hegemony. Rather, it is part of an intricate tapestry of work-arounds, *jeitinhos*,⁴ ironic and self-conscious self representations, conscious use and manipulation of gendered archetypes, and outright political activism. At times, all three artists use tactics that often distance themselves from hegemonic gender roles, but can also reinforce them. Rosa, Leão, and Buhr each perform different versions of a localized femininity. The fact that they do so publicly, on national and international stages, through social media, visual art, music, theatre, and the performances of the everyday, helps make possible a

⁴ Literally a “little way,” *jeitinho* is a popular Brazilian expression that indicates bending the rules or going around social conventions to get done what needs to get done. It implies a creative use of the resources at hand, perhaps even an opportunistic one, with little regard for the law.

wider variety of femininities in Pernambuco, and in Brazil. Through performance and conscious manipulations of *se-produzir*, these identities become real.

Recife and its Music

Recife is the capital city of the northeastern Brazilian state of Pernambuco, and one of three major metropolitan areas in the region, ranking in size just behind Fortaleza and Salvador de Bahia. As a port city, it is a regional center for trade and commerce and has long been a popular destination for migrants impacted by cycles of drought in the state's interior and in other parts of the northeast. Alongside Salvador de Bahia, Fortaleza, and Natal, Recife is an important cultural and commercial hub in a region of Brazil marked just as much by stark inequalities and high levels of poverty, as by the unparalleled beauty of its natural and cultural resources (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística 2019). Discourses within Brazil and outside it have emphasized the role of the northeast as a source of authentically Brazilian cultural manifestations, but have also characterized it as a region separated from the modern Brazilian ideal, mired in an ahistorical swamp of extreme poverty, cultural backwardness and endemic corruption. As one of its capital cities, Recife has been included in this characterization. Exaggerations and regional stereotypes aside, these traits —both positive and negative— do have some basis in the reality of a city that has been described as the “Brazilian Venice,” for its many rivers and bridges, and that has given birth to some of Brazil's most innovative popular music in recent decades. With that in mind, it is important to note that improvised settlements along the banks of Recife's rivers and throughout the sprawling metropolitan area are also one of the city's defining features. Many of the city's residents who still do not have access to basic sanitation

services live alongside blocs of high-rise apartment buildings whose security guards and walls topped with barbed-wire protect the hard-earned achievements of the middle class. Recife is beautiful, and it is ugly.

At the convergence of two major rivers and the Atlantic ocean, Recife's character has been shaped by the commingling of people from diverse cultural groups and national origins. First among these were Africans brought to Brazil as slaves, indigenous Brazilians, and Portuguese colonizers. The Dutch, who established Recife as their colonial capital during the 17th century had a great impact on its development, as did Jewish immigrants who established the first synagogue in the Americas in Recife while under Dutch rule between 1630 and 1654 (Rohter 2000). Immigrants from Germany, the Iberian peninsula, Syria and Lebanon in particular, as well as subsequent waves of people from a variety of nations around the world, have also shaped the city's cultural makeup. This mix of cultures serves as part of Recife's narrative as a center of cultural and historical tourism, in which music plays an important role. A number of local musical genres are unique to the city, and in general, music plays a central part in the story Recifenses tell themselves, and the world, about their city. This is especially so in an era where intangible cultural heritage and cultural patrimony are becoming increasingly valued and recognized by state, national, and international organizations such as the Brazilian IPHAN (*Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional*; Institute for Artistic and Historical Heritage) and UNESCO.

One example of how this dynamic continues to play out in Recife can be found in the *Paço do Frevo*, or museum of *frevo*, a popular and unique local carnival⁵ music and dance genre. Recife's Paço do Frevo museum is a recent addition, founded in 2014 by the city government in collaboration with the Roberto Marinho Foundation, IPHAN, and the federal government.⁶ It is a recent example of state-sponsored musical culture in Recife, Pernambuco; one of many such cultural projects in the state.

Recife's sounds encompass much more than *frevo*'s ubiquitous brass bands, however, which even during the carnival season must compete with thunderous *maracatu nações* or nations,⁷ *trios eletricos*⁸ blasting *axé*⁹ imports from Salvador de Bahia, and other local popular musics blaring from trucks covered in walls of speakers. According to Falina Enriquez (and most Recifenses, for that matter) carnival is undoubtedly "the most important event of the year in Recife and throughout Pernambuco," (Enriquez 2012, 539). Recife's most famous carnival bloco *O Galo da Madrugada*,¹⁰ is locally known as the world's largest carnival parade, but is also one of many in a city known for its outdoor street-carnival-style festivities. Receiving significant

⁵ Carnival is a Christian, pre-Lenten holiday season celebrated in many parts of the world. It is especially popular in Brazil, where celebrations vary according to region but generally include street festivals, parades, live music, and diverse popular celebrations. Carnival celebrations in Brazil occur the four days prior to Ash Wednesday, the first day of the Lenten season for Catholics and some other Christians, but in general the party starts well before this official beginning, and work stops for at least one week during the holiday.

⁶ <http://www.pacodofrevo.org.br>

⁷ An Afro-Brazilian percussion and performance genre with sacred associations, *maracatu* is separated into two types, rural (*maracatu de baque solto*) and urban (*maracatu de baque virado*, or *maracatu de nação*); *maracatu* nations are an important part of Recife's carnival celebrations.

⁸ A Carnival float comprised of a semi-truck covered in speakers, topped with a stage for performances.

⁹ A style of popular music that originated in Salvador de Bahia, *axé* music draws on a variety of pan-African diasporic musical influences.

¹⁰ *O Galo da Madrugada* roughly translates to "the rooster of the early morning."

funding from the state, Recife's carnival is one of the most socially significant musical events of the year. After the frenzy of carnival is over, the city and region maintain vibrant scenes for music in a variety of genres, albeit on a slightly smaller scale. Like its carnival, several of Recife's other major musical events are also organized around yearly festivals which often focus on a particular genre or genres. The *Festas Juninas* or June Festivals celebrating several important saint's days that fall in mid-late June constitute another important yearly circuit for local musicians, in this case those who play forró and other regionally-coded dance musics. In April of each year, the city also hosts a popular rock festival called *Abril Pro Rock*. In addition to these festival scenes, Recife is also home to several cultural centers and a musical museum—the Paço do Frevo, all of which host live shows as well as educational events. While many of the musicians involved in these scenes have worked mostly at the local and regional levels, some have achieved national and even international popularity. Since the 1990s in particular, Recife has become more widely known for its musical products, spearheaded by the *mangue beat* (also known as *mangue bit*, *manguebeat*, or *mangue*) movement and accompanying “new music scene.”¹¹

A Brief History of Mangubeat: Locating the Feminine

Using the biodiverse mangrove swamps on which the city was built as a basis for genre and place signification, the *manguebeat* movement introduced the musical and biodiversity of 1990s Recife to audiences outside of the northeast region. While people in other parts of Brazil

¹¹ “New music scene” in this context does not denote contemporary classical composition or art music, but rather the wider resurgence of popular music in Recife during the 1990s and early 2000s. This began with the mangue movement but grew to include innovations in other genres, all of which can be considered together as Recife's “new music scene.”

had long been familiar with the geography and culture of the northeast, at least since Mario de Andrade's *Missão de Pesquisa Folclórica* (Folklore Research Mission) in the 1930s,¹² young Recifeans wanted to be seen as modern subjects capable of creating something valuable and new, not as relics of a prehistoric cultural past (Loveless 2010, 73-75; 278-82). Reacting against a report by "a Washington-based institute of population studies" which labeled Recife as "the fourth-worst city in the world to live in" (Crook 2001, 242), musicians repurposed local traditional musics, combining them with international popular genres to create a new sonic space with the goal of revitalizing, and resignifying both Recife and its sounds. In their *1st Manifesto of Mangue Bit*, published in 1991, three men: Chico Science, Fred 04, and Renato L, outlined the ideology of the movement, framing the city's economic and cultural paucity during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s in relation to its ecology. Recife had grown exponentially during this period, without regard for its ecosystem, for the health of its biodiverse mangrove swamps, estuaries, and rivers which have long been the city's most defining feature (Teles 2000, 255). Likewise, Recife's economic and cultural production had stagnated, leaving its people with little to indicate to the world (and to organizations that represent it, however rightly or wrongly, including the aforementioned institute of population studies), that their city, their region, their place in the world were worth valuing and had something to offer.

The mangue beat founders sought to combat this by reconnecting the city with its natural environment, reinvigorating Recife and its culture from the ground up. They envisioned the movement metaphorically as "a parabolic antenna stuck in the mud. Or a crab remixing Kraftwerk's ANTHENA on a computer" (Teles 2000, 256). The goal of mangue was to create

¹² For a much more thorough exploration of the impact of Mario de Andrade's work on narratives of musical nationalism in Brazil, and on contemporary music making in the northeast, see Loveless 2010.

“an ‘energy circuit’ capable of linking the good vibes of the *mangues* (mangrove swamps) with the global networks of the circulation of pop concepts” (Crook 2001, 243). This exchange was not fully two-sided, but manguê beat did become a hot commodity in certain global centers like New York City,¹³ arguably putting Recife on the world (and World Beat) map of the 1990s and early 2000s. It stimulated artistic growth in both traditional and popular music production, spawning Recife’s “new music scene” with artists producing a great variety of locally situated tunes that continue to construct senses of place and modernity specific to that city. Unfortunately, the national and international hubbub surrounding the manguêbeat movement either silenced or ignored the contributions of female artists.

While a number of female composers, singers, and instrumentalists were heavily involved in the manguêbeat movement and accompanying “new music scene” of 1990s Recife, the majority of these women were not given due credit for their contributions to a musical movement that became known as one of the most significant developments in Brazilian popular music history since the 1970s. Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon problem. Scores of works by feminist historians, sociologists, and academics in other related fields since the 1970s have attempted to recover and record the stories of women whose contributions to society have been ignored or minimized, and I hope this project will contribute something of value to their legacies (Purvis 2004). In Brazil, there has also been a significant movement particularly by female scholars to recover the history of their foremothers. Even so, this has been relatively limited in terms of its scope, as “historians of women [have tended] to work in the same time period as

¹³ Chico Science and Nação Zumbi’s famous NYC performance at SummerStage 1995 helped increase international interest in CSNZ and in the manguê movement, although it did not necessarily result in a global fame or fortune for the band (Loveless 2010, 284-5; Avelar 2011, 315).

historians of the family or of demography — that is, roughly 1750-1850,” with only a few scholars focusing on histories of Brazilian women in the 20th century (Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva 1991, 372). As even a cursory analysis of the representation of female artists in Recife’s media can show, many women’s accomplishments are still not considered worthy of official recognition or documentation. At this point, the cry for representation and inclusion has become a ragged, overused, and somewhat maligned one, but as this research will show, it is still necessary.

The three female artists who are the primary focus of this work: composer, singer, percussionist, and multimedia artist Karina Buhr; composer, singer, percussionist, and multi-instrumentalist Alessandra Leão; and composer, singer, actress, and *rabequeira*¹⁴ Renata Rosa; were among those written out of conventional narratives about mangubeat. Formerly associated with the mangu-aligned band Comadre Fulozinha, Buhr, Leão, and Rosa have pursued solo artistic careers characterized by radically different aesthetic and political choices. All three women are of a similar generation of artists who began performing in the early 1990s and are still active today. They represent a cohort of pioneering female artists with ties to Recife’s music scene, who have achieved popular (if not always economic) success as soloists, and who have something specific to say about what it means to be a woman and a musician in Recife. This work will explore how Buhr, Leão, and Rosa each engage differently with the city of Recife, the state of Pernambuco, and with the imaginary of Northeastern Brazil more broadly, showing how they work both within and against dominant discourses of femininity in northeastern Brazil.

Through live and recorded music, extra-musical performance elements, styles of dress, visual art,

¹⁴ *Rabequeira* indicates a female player of the rabeca, a type of northeastern Brazilian fiddle. *Rabequeiro* (indicating a man) is more common although both forms are used.

and social media, Buhr, Leão, and Rosa re-produce particular modes of northeastern femininity. Paying attention to the politics and aesthetics that undergird this very public form of self-production can help reveal how gender works in northeastern Brazil, and how contemporary female artists are reshaping these paradigms through their aesthetic choices.

Methodology

To better understand discourses of femininity, gender performance, and self-production in Pernambuco, I employ a variety of methods. Virtual fieldwork, alongside personal experience, has become a central axis of this project. Primary sources include social media posts, photos and YouTube videos of performances, published interviews with Buhr, Leão, and Rosa, liner notes, commercially and self-released recordings by these artists. Secondary sources include concert reviews, local and international press coverage, and scholarly works on the mangubeat movement, northeastern Brazilian music more broadly, and the construction of gender within and outside of Brazil. I put these sources in conversation with my own experiences of femininity (and its limits) in particularly gendered and classed spaces of Recife, Pernambuco. Through the experience of living as an exchange student in Recife, Pernambuco between 2008-2009, as well as through subsequent visits in 2012 and 2016, conversations with friends and other Recife natives in a variety of settings, I have gained insights into how femininity is constructed there that inform my interpretations of the sources listed above. While this thesis is not primarily an ethnographic work, it is ethnographically informed. Many of the methodologies employed here are primarily rooted in the disciplines of media and cultural studies.

Literature Review

The story of manguebeat is often framed in a way that deliberately silences women. After discovering and listening to the solo albums of Alessandra Leão and Karina Buhr for the first time in 2013 and 2015 respectively, I was surprised to learn that both artists had been active in the mangue movement. Even though I had already encountered a few books and articles about mangue, I had not seen the name of either artist mentioned in any of them. Women involved in the mangue movement, it appeared, had not experienced the same level of exposure or popular success afforded to male performers. As a result, artists like Buhr and Leão were also overlooked by scholars and music journalists writing about mangue. Renata Rosa, though peripherally involved with the movement and with the band Comadre Fulozinha, was not one of its founding members and is also left out of these narratives.

Even more glaring, however, is the omission of women of color from narratives about the mangue movement and Recife's new music scene. One of many examples of the impact of this double marginalization on artists in the movement is the career of fellow Comadre Fulozinha founder Isaar França. While Isaar, like Leão and Buhr, was a founding member of the band, a frequent collaborator with mangue frontrunners including DJ Dolores, and also a successful solo artist, I found it was virtually impossible to find information about her career online. When I did learn about her, through the social media platform Instagram, I was shocked and horrified to discover that my initial research had not even made me aware of her existence as a founding member of the group. Unfortunately, I was not able to find enough information about Isaar or her music to discuss these in detail here, but I believe that the implications of her omission from

official histories is significant, and hope that future research will be able to detail her individual contributions to the mangue movement.

When artists like those mentioned here do show up in books or articles about the mangue movement, it is often only to make a comparison to a male fronted band. José Teles, a music journalist who published the first book devoted to manguebeat in 2000, mentions the band Comadre Florzinha only once in his 350+ page book, *Do Frevo ao Manguebeat (From Frevo to Manguebeat)*. Teles' photo of the band performing in 1999 includes the band's name and this caption: "a variante feminina do Mestre Ambrósio" (The girl version of Mestre Ambrósio¹⁵) (Teles 2000, 311). I view this as emblematic of the fact that Buhr and her comrades still have not made it into the "official canon" of manguebeat history. While Galinsky and Murphy do Comadre Florzinha a little bit more justice by mentioning the band and briefly noting its importance in relation to other groups, including Mestre Ambrósio and Cascabulho, and Herom Vargas includes the band in his discography of important albums for the mangue movement but does not discuss their music in depth, most of the other authors cited here simply ignore them.¹⁶

Within a movement such as manguebeat, which has at its core a cosmopolitan identity, progressive values, and a heightened attention to local social issues, it is hard to believe that female artists could have been systematically silenced in this way. Certainly, many men within the movement were welcoming and supportive of female colleagues like Buhr and Leão, with

¹⁵ Mestre Ambrósio is another mangue-affiliated band that will be discussed in more depth later.

¹⁶ One notable exception to this trend is John Murphy's 2006 book, *Music in Brazil: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. Even though the book's primary audience is that of undergraduate survey courses, Murphy does mention Comadre Fulozinha in his description of Recife's new music scene. In it he includes helpful excerpts from an interview with Karina Buhr, but little information about the band's music or other members (Murphy 2006, 156-8).

whom they continue to collaborate, but the experience of female musicians in Recife cannot help but be indelibly marked by the limitations imposed on people of their gender.

It is important to note that all of the artists recognized as founders of the mangubeat movement were men. Undoubtedly, this informed the shape and direction of the movement and its stated goals, wherein “alternative” interpretations like that of Comadre Fulozinha were framed as being outside the norm for drawing on musical genres coded as feminine (for example vocal genres such as *enselenças*) in addition to male dominated genres such as *maracatu*. Thus far, scholars discussing the mangubeat movement have primarily focused on how mangu artists used their music to construct localized senses of place and modernity, and how they created sonic connections to both local and global networks. In her book *Música e Simbolização - Mangubeat: Contracultura em Versão Cabocla*, Rejane Sá Markman discusses the Mangubeat movement as part of broader countercultural social currents circulating in Brazil at the time. As Philip Galinsky suggests in his 2002 book, *Maracatu Atômico: Tradition, Modernity, and Postmodernity in the ‘Mangu’ Movement of Recife, Brazil*, one key aspect of the mangu movement is the way in which it articulates postmodern identity in Recife. Markman coins the term “renovated appropriation” to describe mangubeat as a force of cultural renewal for the city of Recife and its surrounding area, also framing the genre within a wider discourse of counterculture in Brazil. Interestingly, this cultural renewal and postmodern Recifense identity appear to have little to do with the feminist ideas promoted by mangu artists like Karina Buhr. Male leaders of the mangu movement focused on destabilizing the hegemony of elite social control, instead valorizing and revitalizing local traditional and popular musics in relation to one

another, and resisting cultural hegemony in general (with connections to international musics in this vein, such as punk) (Markman 2007, 170).

This idea of resistance embedded in mangue aesthetics is more complex than an ideology “lifted” from punk. It stems from a variety of sources including elements of resistance that are both race and class-based. Chico Science, who is widely recognized as a key figure in the mangue movement if not its originator, grew up in a lower middle class home on the periphery of Olinda,¹⁷ where he immersed himself in American “black music”¹⁸ of the 1970s and 80s (James Brown, Curtis Mayfield, Sugar Hill Gang, Kurtis Blow, and Grand Master Flash, etc.) as well as local popular traditions such as *maracatu*, *côco*,¹⁹ and *ciranda*²⁰ (Galinsky 2002, 31). These influences led to his creation of a sound rooted in both local traditional culture and international pop genres. At the same time, Chico’s connections to the local Afro-mestiço community through a *bloco afro* (Afro-Brazilian percussion group that performs during carnival and often promotes an aesthetic of Black consciousness) linked him musically and socially with the poorest communities of Recife’s periphery, and by extension, with *samba-reggae*’s emergent culture of community uplift and consciousness-raising, based on a Brazilian Black Power aesthetic (Galinsky 2002, 33). With his band Chico Science & Nação Zumbi (CSNZ),²¹ Chico synthesized these ethical and aesthetic influences to create a musical style unique to Recife.

¹⁷ Olinda is a small city adjacent to Recife that predates it, but has now been essentially annexed by the larger metropolitan area.

¹⁸ In Brazil, “black music” is a recognized genre category that includes diverse American musics from funk to hip hop and beyond.

¹⁹ *Côco* is an Afro-Brazilian circle dance from northeastern Brazil.

²⁰ *Ciranda* is another type of circle dance from northeastern Brazil.

²¹ Alongside Mundo Livre S/A, CSNZ is one of two most famous bands of the mangue movement and included Chico Science, as well as Jorge du Peixe, Lúcio Maia, Alexandre Dengue, Gimar Bola Oito, Toca Ogan, and Pupilo (Espírito Santo, 2014).

Alongside Chico Science, Fred Zero 4 (leader of the band Mundo Livre S.A., or *Free World Ltd.*), is recognized as a key individual in the formation of the mangue movement. In an interview with Rejane Markman in 2000, Fred Zero 4 discusses how his experience with the punk scene influenced the posture of resistance he brought to the movement (Markman 2007, 171). Like Chico, Fred Zero 4 emphasizes the importance of this culture of resistance to the creation of a Recifense modernity, part of which involves his goal of dispelling those stereotypes of northeastern Brazil that emphasize rurality and exoticism symbolized by regional folklore and “traditional” music. By combining traditional genres with rap, punk, hip-hop, and reggae, as well as by engaging with social issues in their lyrics, mangue musicians explode these stereotypes and replace them with the more realistic (if ambiguous) reality of Recife as a modern city with access to global popular culture and the internet, but where 50% of residents still live in *favelas*²² without access to basic sanitation (Markman 2007, 172).

Tragically, Chico Science was killed in a car accident during Recife’s carnival celebrations of 1997 (Galinsky 2002, 47). While his band Nação Zumbi eventually continued composing and performing music without him, their short-term hiatus following his death allowed other groups to emerge and fill the void. Mestre Ambrósio²³ was one of the ensembles that became popular during this time (Galinsky 2002, 74). Like Chico, the members of Mestre Ambrósio grew up performing and listening to a wide variety of musics from around the world,

²² Hillside slums.

²³ Formed in 1992, Mestre Ambrósio was a mangue band that combined rock and thrash metal with regional folk styles including forró and cavalo-marinho. The band’s core members included Éder “O” Rocha, Sérgio Veloso (Siba), and Hélder Vasconcelos.

including rock, disco, blues, thrash metal, western art music, samba, and local genres like *xote* and *forró* ²⁴ (Galinsky 2002, 74-75).

While their music has not been studied in as much depth as that of Chico Science and Nação Zumbi or Mundo Livre S.A., Mestre Ambrósio presents another side to mangue's engagement with constructions of place and modernity in 1990s Recife that is important to examine here. Because of the aesthetic similarities between the two bands, a discussion of Mestre Ambrósio's creative processes and ideological positioning will help frame Karina Buhr, Alessandra Leão, and Renata Rosa's early work with Comadre Fulozinha, discussed in greater detail below.

Unlike Comadre Fulozinha, about whom relatively little has been written, Mestre Ambrósio's approach to music-making has been examined by American ethnomusicologists Philip Galinsky and John Murphy, the latter of whom worked closely with one of the band's leaders, Siba (Sérgio Veloso), while he was studying at the Federal University of Pernambuco in Recife during the early 1990s (Galinsky 2002, 74). Mestre Ambrósio forged strong ties to local traditional music ensembles, and its band members (Siba in particular) theorized their approach to music-making around the idea of self-discovery, rooted in the pursuit of "authentically" local music. As Murphy explains in his essay "Self-Discovery in Brazilian Popular Music: Mestre Ambrósio":

While the members of Mestre Ambrósio are often grouped with the *movimento mangue* or *mangue beat* by the media, they see their process differently. They make a distinction between those groups which, like them, build on a basis in regional traditional styles and add global musical references, which they refer to as "from the inside out" ("de dentro para fora"), and groups which add regional flavor to a predominantly global style, such

²⁴ *Xote* and *forró* are genres of dance music associated with northeastern Brazil.

as heavy metal or rap, “from the outside in” (“de fora para dentro”) (Murphy 2001, 252-53).

For Mestre Ambrósio, their approach, which builds “from the inside out,” is based firmly in traditional genres such as *cavalo-marinho*.²⁵ This type of approach could only take place after “a prolonged and self-conscious process of *limpeza*, or ear cleaning,” conducted in an attempt to remove the aesthetic constraints of “foreign” musics like rock, jazz or western art music (Murphy 2001, 251). According to Siba, the cleaning process was not intended as a value judgement of these musics, but rather as a way for the musicians of Mestre Ambrósio to recalibrate their ears and focus on creating sounds that could carry specific local meanings (Murphy 2001, 252).

The late 1980s and early 1990s have been characterized as a time of national and cultural resignification in Brazil. After the country’s gradual transition to democracy beginning in 1985, its citizens had to reinvent what it meant to be Brazilian, Pernambucan, or Recifeense (Galinsky 2002, 76-77). As Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson put it in the opening chapter of their book *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, “today, the rapidly expanding and quickening mobility of people combines with the refusal of cultural products and practices to ‘stay put’ to give a profound sense of a loss of territorial roots, of an erosion of the cultural distinctiveness of places” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997, 37). It was precisely this loss of place-based identity and “erosion of...cultural distinctiveness” that motivated musicians like Siba of Mestre Ambrósio to devise new ways of territorializing identity that would privilege local narratives. The process of *limpeza* was part of a journey of self discovery for the band and its

²⁵ *Cavalo-marinho* is “a musical play that portrays life on a sugar plantation in song, poetry, dance, and dramatic action” (Murphy 2001, 247). The name of the band Mestre Ambrósio comes from that of a character in the play.

audiences, all of whom had to “rediscover” how to be Recifense, Pernambucan, or perhaps even Brazilian.

In many ways, Comadre Fulozinha was engaged in a similar project. Both Galinsky and Murphy mention Comadre Fulozinha as part of a cadre of bands including Mestre Ambrósio, as well as a third band Cascabulho, all of whom were committed to reinterpreting local musical traditions. Murphy presents this trio of ensembles in contrast to bands like CSNZ, whose music mixes maracatu and other local styles with international genres like hip-hop and funk, in roughly equal amounts (Murphy 2001, 247). Like that of Mestre Ambrósio, Comadre Fulozinha’s music is filled with indices of local and regional identity. While some international elements are included, the band’s focus is more on reinterpreting and updating local traditional music from a variety of genres, including *forró*, *ciranda*, *embolada*, *côco*, and *maracatu*.

As an ensemble made up primarily of women, interpreting and composing original music in the spirit of these genres, Comadre Fulozinha was active in constructing a new version of Recifense modernity that included women. Many of the songs on the band’s two albums place percussion at the forefront, a significant detail given the restrictions on female percussionists in many traditional genres. The vocal and instrumental textures index local traditions mentioned above, and even the name of the band references a northeastern Brazilian mythical figure, the mischievous forest spirit Comadre Florzinha. By deploying these indices, Comadre Fulozinha constructs an image of a new Recife in line with mangue aesthetics, a city connected to its rich musical traditions and rural roots, as well as to its environment, in this case, symbolized by the “mata atlântica” or “atlantic forest,” a biome just inland from the costal mangrove swamps. Even

so, this city is at the same time part of the modern world and open to the participation of all its people, regardless of gender.

Comandre Fulozinha's Recife is a city *performed* by all of its people, including women. In her introduction to the volume *Performing Brazil*, Kathryn Bishop-Sanchez explains how *Brasilidade* or *Brazilianness* is performed, enacting Benedict Anderson's idea of an imagined community, and helping form the "deep attachments" to this community which serve as essential elements in the creation of "nationness," Anderson's preferred term over "nationality" (Bishop-Sanchez 2015, 17-20). I believe that the aesthetic and political work done by mangue artists like Comadre Fulozinha, Mestre Ambrósio, and CSNZ represents a localized version of this performance of nation or "nationness." One of the main aims of mangue beat is the performance of city and region, but the musical aesthetics of many mangue bands build a sonic city that is performed exclusively by and for men.

The goals stated by Chico Science and Fred Zero 4 in the formation of the mangue movement are both inherently aesthetic and political. They seek to draw attention to social issues and uplift the marginalized (both in the lyrics, and by drawing attention to the musical contributions of those whose voices are not often heard). They also seek to create a fusion of sounds which encompass the local and the global, not just for ideological reasons, but to create a hip sound that can represent their city and its youth. Unfortunately, local gender norms have long marginalized women in roles of instrumental music-making and public performance in general, making it more difficult for them to succeed as performing artists, even within the relatively progressive context of the mangue movement.

Many of the local music genres in which mangue artists like Siba and Chico Science became deeply involved (*cavalo-marinho*, *maracatu*, and *samba-reggae*, for instance) had not been historically considered the domain of women, or had only allowed their participation beginning in the early 1990s (Crook 2001, 239). At the same time, Galinsky notes that interaction with elder musicians was considered essential for younger interpreters of the mangue generation:

Notably, young musicians of *both* the lower and middle class, given the factors that distance both of them from older performers, must fortify connections with this folk heritage through participation and study. Indeed, a self-conscious study of and interaction with one's local heritage is one of the pervasive activities on the scene that cuts across class, race, and gender. It is as relevant for musicians who participate in the folk forms (such as *maracatu* and *côco*) as well as for musicians who play in bands that adapt and fuse these styles (Galinsky 2002, 79).

Engagement with local tradition bearers may cut across barriers of class, race, and gender in some senses, but that does not necessarily mean that all younger musicians have equal access to this type of engagement. Isaar, Alessandra Leão, and Karina Buhr all worked extensively with *maracatu* groups in Recife, prior to and concurrent with their formation of the band Comadre Fulozinha, but as women, their involvement in these groups was necessarily limited in certain ways that would not have been the case for Siba or Chico Science. As Murphy describes in his 2006 monograph: "In the Recife rock scene, women participated mostly as singers and dancers, and in the Maracatu Estrela Brilhante, [Buhr] had to persist in her demands to play percussion in public performances along with two other female percussionists" (Murphy 2006, 158). The situation was similar for other regional genres such as *cavalo-marinho* and *maracatu rural*, where Buhr played the *baiana* role in Mestre Salustiano's group Maracatu Piaba de Ouro, but was not allowed to perform as a percussionist even though she had learned the parts (*ibid*). In an

interview with John Murphy, Buhr explains how her attempts to participate actively in traditional genres like *cavalo-marinho* were discouraged and sometimes even thwarted outright:

The first time I went to play the *mineiro* [in a *cavalo-marinho* performance in the country], the guy who was playing the *mineiro* took a break. Siba was playing *rabeca*, and he called me to play the *mineiro* because he knew I knew how to play, but the other people there didn't know it. I started to play, and everything stopped. Everything stopped, and a Galante came over and took the *mineiro* from my hand and started playing—incorrectly. He took it out of my hand without asking and started playing incorrectly until the other player came back. That's what it was like (Murphy 2006, 157).

This type of reception was one of Buhr's inspirations for starting the band Comadre Fulozinha, which would serve as a space by and for women, a space without restrictions. The efforts of Buhr and other band members to learn this music from tradition bearers were clearly met with resistance, but they were ultimately able to learn these musical styles—sometimes with the help of men who were part of the same movement (for example, Siba, mentioned above).

In a patriarchal society where attitudes of machismo govern what constitutes acceptable or transgressive social behaviors, women who demand to be heard are often grouped in the latter category. For female performers in the Brazilian northeast more broadly, and particularly for those active in genres considered part of the traditional music scene, this can produce a variety of challenges. In Pernambuco, many Afro-Brazilian musical traditions are linked in some way to Orixá-based religious practices²⁶ such as Candomblé and Xangó. This creates a rich network of cultural and religious associations that many artists, including Chico Science, have used to their creative advantage. For women, however, they can present additional hurdles. In Candomblé ceremonial drumming, for instance, as in many other Afro-Brazilian sacred percussion genres, religious taboo prevents women from playing drums. This taboo also exists in other Orixá-based

²⁶ Afro-Brazilian syncretic religions in which ceremonial drumming and possession trance are key elements

Afro-diasporic religions such as Santería, and is deeply embedded in the practice of these religious traditions. Women participate actively in many other aspects of Candomblé religious practice, including as community leaders or *mães de santo*, but they do not play drums in ceremonial contexts. While it contains sacred and secular elements, *maracatu* drumming is also associated with Afro-Brazilian religious practice. Until the early 1990s, women did not perform with *maracatu* groups, most likely because of their association with Candomblé terreiros and sacred music (this has changed somewhat as there are now secularized versions of *maracatu*) (Galinsky 2002, 71; Crook 2001, 239). By vying for inclusion in *maracatu* ensembles, learning to play the *alfaia*²⁷ and other percussion instruments, and performing with maracatus Piaba de Ouro and Estrela Brilhante beginning in 1992, Karina Buhr became one of the first in a generation of women to perform maracatu in Recife, an act that would have been seen as transgressive by many older performers (Buhr 2016).²⁸ Alessandra Leão was also part of this first generation of female *maracatu* performers, and has gone on to perform and record other Afro-Brazilian sacred percussion genres, even including *toques de santo*²⁹ on several of her albums.

Regardless of the reasons for their exclusion, the fact of the matter is that women involved in the mangue movement often did not experience the same level of exposure or popular success afforded to male performers. These women were also overlooked by scholars and music journalists writing about mangue. José Teles' characterization of the band Comadre

²⁷ The *Alfaia* is a type of bass drum used in *maracatu*. It generally combines a wooden body with a skin head and rope tension system, and is played with two wooden mallets. *Maracatu de nação* groups feature *alfaias* in various sizes.

²⁸ karinabuhr.com.br

²⁹ *Toques de santo* are songs specifically associated with *Orixás* (Afro-Brazilian deities) and typically performed in a ritual context.

Fulozinha as “the girl version of Mestre Ambrósio,” in his book *Do Frevo ao Manguebeat*, is one of the most egregious examples of journalistic negligence in this area, but there are many others. This situation was compounded by general racism and shadeism³⁰ in Recife. The only female artists who did get any attention or recognition for their work in relation to the mangue movement were also white. It is unfortunate, although not altogether surprising, that music scholars working in Recife in the 1990s and early 2000s were not able to mitigate this atmosphere of exclusion.

Pernambuco’s *Cultura* Scene - Opportunities and Challenges:

While myriad challenges still exist, the reception of female performing artists in Recife appears to have improved in recent years. It is much more common to see women instrumentalists performing in a variety of local genres, including *maracatu*, today, for instance, than it was in the 1990s. One factor that has impacted the success of female musicians (and of musicians in general) in Recife is the growing influence of Pernambuco’s state-sponsored culture industry, which has created not only performance opportunities and financial incentives for qualifying artists, but also its own music scene and local following.³¹ In her 2012 article, “The Ins and Outs of *Cultura*: How Bands Voice Their Relationships to the State-Sponsored Music Scene in Recife, Brazil,” Falina Enriquez proposes a model for *cultura* in Recife, which she defines as “an official category managed by the state of Pernambuco that privileges artistic

³⁰ In Brazil, racial discrimination often takes the form of “shadeism,” a type of discrimination based more on skin tone than on perceived race. Even though many Brazilians identify as mixed-race or acknowledge their own diverse ethnic ancestry, people with darker skin tones often still face discrimination.

³¹ While I do not mean “state-sponsored culture industry” in a strictly socialist sense here, the regulations that determine which artists qualify as *cultura* are still highly deterministic. See Enriquez 2012 for a more thorough exploration of these dynamics.

expressions of regional identity” (Enriquez 2012, 533). As Enriquez explores in this article, a number of discourses are operating within the boundaries of Pernambucan³² *cultura*, the basic framework of which draws upon national discourses that frame artistic and creative practices as part of Brazilian citizenship, enshrined in the constitution of 1988 (ibid, 534).

While based on a national concept, Pernambucan *cultura* also has a significant local historical legacy in the work of folklorist Mario de Andrade. A modernist scholar active in the 1920s and 30s, Andrade traveled throughout Brazil recording the music of rural people, which he believed to be “a direct reflection of its producers” (ibid, 537). His work in the Brazilian northeast is well known, both in Pernambuco and throughout the nation, and as a result, Andrade’s conflation of people and their music has become a defining paradigm in regional conceptions of *cultura*.

Since the 1930s, various factions have attempted to create cultural policy that could shape tastes on a national level, promoting a unified vision of *Brasilidade* or Brazilianness with a central focus on music and the performing arts (Loveless 2010; Bishop-Sanchez 2015; McCann 2004). Getúlio Vargas’ regime was a major force in this area, but a variety of actors were involved at the national, state, and local levels. Mario de Andrade’s research and recording missions were conceived as part of this process of national taste-making and of a national search for “authentic” source materials—the wellspring of Brazilian cultural vitality. Andrade (and many other folklorists of the period) believed that the rural folk, or *povo*, were the true source of such authentic materials, and that these folk could be found primarily in the northeast region. While these ideas were widely circulating at the time, reinforced by intellectual trends among the

³² Native to the state of Pernambuco

elite in Europe and elsewhere in the Americas, they were likewise highly influential in Brazil. Andrade's work, alongside the discourses of cultural preservation in the interest of the Brazilian nation that produced it, helped frame the northeast as "Brazil's cultural archive" (Enriquez, 537). These types of official narratives were also reiterated outside of the academy, and disseminated via trends in popular cultural.

Throughout much of the 20th century, the region continued to be viewed as a source of authentic traditional cultural material. From within Pernambuco, members of the cultural elite sought to forge a modern identity for their state and region by exploring this source material, producing a variety of efforts modeled on São Paulo's *Semana de Arte Moderna* of 1922³³ (Slater, 160-161). These efforts coalesced into an official movement, the *Movimento Armorial*, that garnered government sponsorship for the first time beginning in 1970.³⁴ Including writers, visual artists and musicians based in and around Recife, members of the *Movimento Armorial* hoped to reinvigorate the "magic spirit" of northeastern Brazilian artistic and musical traditions. Rejecting nationalist cosmopolitanism (at least officially), and championing the value of popular traditions and folk culture, the *Armorialists* were an interesting combination of untutored artists and middle-class intellectuals, led by playwright and novelist Ariano Suassuna. As Brazilian studies scholar Candace Slater notes in her 1979 article on the *Movimento Armorial*, Suassuna was an important resource for the movement, providing it with funding and official sponsorship

³³ São Paulo's *Semana de Arte Moderna* was not solely about rediscovering local popular culture, but also to a large extent about forging a Brazilian version of European modernism. This thesis will deal primarily with its impact on the dissemination of folk culture, but this was not its only goal.

³⁴ The *Armorial Movement* was an artistic and cultural movement that united Pernambucan artists, artisans, musicians, and authors from various backgrounds to produce creative projects that united sensibilities of western art music, medieval Portuguese literary forms, and regional traditional arts traditions (Slater 1979).

under the auspices of the Federal University of Pernambuco, where he led the Cultural Extension Division (DEC) from 1969-75. He continued to promote its goals even after leaving the DEC to serve as Secretary of Education and Culture for the City of Recife from 1975-78, where he was able to oversee new Armorial projects and bolster existing ones (Slater 1979, 161).

While Ariano Suassuna and “his” Armorial Movement have been viewed alternately with enthusiasm and vehement critique by other local artists and intellectuals, it stands out as an early example of how cultural policy initiatives in Pernambuco have impacted local artists, authors, and musicians in very real ways. Many of the values espoused by the armorial artists Slater interviews also point towards underlying ideological currents common to the Armorialists, mangubeat artists of the 1990s and 2000s, and state entities dealing with Pernambucan *cultura* today.

With Brazil’s return to democracy in the late 1980s, identity politics became increasingly important. Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian movements, among others, used discourses of *cultura* to highlight their contributions to the nation, and ideas about cultural citizenship that had already been circulating for some time were enshrined in Brazil’s new constitution (Moehn 2011). Alongside Brazilians from other regions, Recifenses took part in these movements. Negotiating the seismic cultural shifts of the 1980s and 90s required new strategies, and the new strategies of this particular historical moment were instrumental in the creation of mangubeat. Although mangu was initially ignored by the state, as the movement gained visibility it became more attractive to local authorities, who began to expand the original definition of Pernambucan *cultura* “to include regional remixes structured by a more commercial cosmopolitan sensibility” (Enriquez 2012, 538). The tension between these remixes and supposedly pure or

authentic traditional musics, both of which fall under the umbrella of *cultura*, continue to animate the music scene in Pernambuco today.

Similar tensions can be observed in the work of many Armorial artists, including Antônio José Madureira of the Armorial Quintet (Quinteto Armorial), who discusses the importance of eliminating foreign musical elements as part of his process of interpreting traditional ballads or *romances* (similar to mangue artist Siba's process of *limpeza* or ear cleaning). In the same breath, Madureira cites composers of western art music such as Stravinsky and Bartok as important influences (Slater 1979, 171). Like the Pernambucan *cultura* scene that developed from it, the Movimento Armorial was able to encompass both a deep commitment to "authentic" popular traditions, and an openness to the social value of "remixes," whether those remixes are inspired by Stravinsky or James Brown.

As Enriquez's work shows, Recife's carnival provides a prime example of how the tensions between conservative and innovative discourses of *cultura* play out on the ground. State-sponsored carnival events are some of the city's largest, and ideas about *cultura* are central to decisions about which groups perform. The city's carnival is billed as "multicultural," the local meaning of which relates more to particular local identities and the musics associated with them (read: Afro-Brazilians and *maracatu*), than to immigrant or international populations. Essentially, it promotes musical variety indexing a multiplicity of local identities and the rhythms associated with them. For the purposes of carnival organizers, these could be local "traditional" genres like *maracatu*, or bands with repertoire that includes these rhythms through resignification [resignificação] (Enriquez 2012, 539).

State sponsorship, whether through a carnival performance, a record deal, or other form of endorsement, serves as both an important source of income for performers, and a source of social capital. With performances throughout the year at state-funded SESC venues,³⁵ as well as on yearly carnival stages, performers can gain access to middle-class consumers of the *cultura* scene. Because these opportunities can be lucrative, as well as socially valuable for purposes of both marketing and prestige, they form a competitive marketplace for performers of “regional” music, broadly interpreted. This situation produces performances that are framed in particular ways, valorizing local traditions, but often in a way that conflates them with particular social identities. This collapsing of rhythm or genre with social identity can often be limiting for artists who choose to populate the world of state-sponsored *cultura*, as Dan Sharp’s recent work has made clear.

In his book *Between Nostalgia and Apocalypse: Popular Music and the Staging of Brazil* (2014), Sharp explores these issues in relation to the mangue-affiliated band Cordel do Fogo Encantado, as well as more “traditional” *samba de coco*³⁶ ensembles, both from Arcoverde, in the interior of Pernambuco. Sharp shows how musicians on both the innovative and the conservative sides of the *cultura* debate attempt to exploit it, succeed in benefitting from it, and are also limited by it:

³⁵ “SESC, which stands for *Serviço Social do Comércio* (Social Service of Commerce), is a private federal structure with an autonomous representation in each Brazilian state. ...[it] was first created in 1946 in Rio de Janeiro. Since then, it has spread out, with now 572 institutions scattered over more than 2000 Brazilian municipalities. The main benefit of the SESC comes from its ability to develop a rich cultural program targeted towards a socially-diverse audience,” (Kauffer 2015). This programming includes musical and other types of performances, as well as facilities for sport and other leisure activities, all of which employ taxes to serve federal and state workers.

³⁶ *Samba de coco*, a musical and dance style originating in the interior of Pernambuco, “is one of the many Afro-Brazilian round dances commonly understood to have preceded samba, such as *samba de roda* in the state of Bahia” (Sharp 2014, ix).

Contemporary musicians living on the route of the 1938 Mission of Folkloric Research found that performing within genres steeped in nostalgia limited how they were received by audiences, even as it provided them with professional opportunities. Whether presenting themselves as culture bearers performing folklore or as pop innovators experimenting with a rooted cosmopolitan sound, they faced similar challenges. On both sides of a dynamic folk-pop boundary, musicians in Arcoverde reworked tradition to combat being discursively distanced from the Brazilian “here and now” (Sharp 2014, xvii).

In spite of their differences in background and musical style, all of the musicians with whom Sharp worked had to maintain this delicate balance between creatively distancing themselves from the discourses of Pernambucan *cultura*, and embracing them from afar. For women in Pernambuco’s traditional music scene this adds one more hurdle to an already complex game of representation.

For both male and female artists, the “traditional” and the “natural” are constructed artificially to satisfy state and audience demands. In the context of Recife’s *cultura* scene, localized discourses of multiculturalism are employed that require artists to include regional rhythms associated with certain identities. While these musical signifiers are associated with particular groups, they are also viewed as the collective property of all Pernambucans. The diversity of Pernambucan *cultura* is a post-racial one (Enriquez, 550). While it includes Afro-Brazilian rhythms, it does not leave room for *conscientização Negra* (Black consciousness), or for class-based critiques of any kind, both of which are central to the mission of many community-based Afro blocos that perform *maracatu* or *samba-reggae*, particularly during the carnival season. Middle-class consumers of *cultura* performances in Recife expect to see “authentic” expressions of local culture, but these expressions are expected to make themselves presentable —i.e., non-threatening, not mobilized by identity politics related to race or class, and carefully

crafted for the stage complete with costumes and choreography. To satisfy these demands, thereby gaining access to the *cultura* scene's resources and publicity, artists must produce themselves to fit the bill.

This type of artistic self-production is certainly not new, and not limited to female performers, but it does constitute an area in which women could have a competitive edge. After all, women in Pernambuco are already producing themselves in a variety of highly sophisticated ways—female performing artists even more so. *Se-produzir* is at the heart of what it means to be a woman, and what it means to be a performer in Pernambuco. Through an examination of the differing strategies employed by Karina Buhr, Alessandra Leão, and Renata Rosa in this arena, this thesis will begin to unravel the tightly woven threads of artistic and personal, gendered self-production in Recife, Pernambuco.

Chapter Overview

To understand how dominant gendered archetypes of the northeast region are expressed and exist sonically, I will explore how they are constructed. Chapter two focuses on locating these archetypes within the northeastern Brazilian imaginary. This chapter also explores women's experiences of social power, mobility, and autonomy in Recife, more broadly, based on my own personal experiences and those of my interlocutors. In dialogue with the works of Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Junior, Martha Santos, and Nancy Scheper-Hughes, I will show how discourses about the northeast and locally coded gender constructs are linked to the harsh realities of the *sertão* (interior desert region), and to ideas about what is needed to survive under such circumstances. Gendered perceptions of toughness are also key to this particular

northeastern imaginary, one that envisions the region as rural backlands populated by lawless bandits, peasants, and landowners. This is the northeast of Maria Bonita—famous *cangaceira* (bandit) and wife of Lampião—she has become a symbol for a particular kind of *sertaneja* or northeastern backlands woman.

Another northeastern archetype (although not specifically Pernambucan) is the *mulata*, an idealized Brazilian woman of mixed-race heritage. Chapter two explores the relevance of this archetype to Pernambucan and northeastern constructs of femininity, tracing the scholarly discourse on *mulatice*³⁷ and performance. To do so I draw on older scholarship by sociologist Gilberto Freyre, whose work set the tone for discussions of miscegenation in the Brazilian northeast for most of the 20th century, as well as more recent articles dealing with race, performance, and embodiment (Souza 2013; Pravaz 2009). I will also explore scholarship dealing with the visibility and resistance of women in the northeast region (Santos 2014; Taddei and Gamboggi 2009; Thayer 2010).

Chapter two concludes by discussing how these and other archetypes of and ideas about northeastern femininity are expressed sonically. Felipe Trotta's study of northeastern genders and sound will provide a comparison from the point of view of sounded masculinities. Three case studies will show how Renata Rosa, Alessandra Leão, and Karina Buhr contribute to and complicate these northeastern Brazilian versions of femininity through sonic, visual, and performative interventions.

Chapter three delves more deeply into the idea of *se-produzir* as a theoretical tool. Grounded in Judith Butler's writings on gender construction and performance, I will show how

³⁷ Being *mulata* or "mulata-ness"

the Brazilian ideas about self-fashioning, self-care, and self-production encapsulated in *se-produzir* go one step further to include not only performative acts but also physical manipulation of the body—and by extension, the voice. To do so, I draw on Thaïs Machado-Borges’ research with middle-class women in Minas Gerais, which deals with the impact of media representations and the *telenovela* flow on beauty standards and values. The work of Alexander Edmonds (2010; 2014) and Emilia Sanabria (2014) also informs my analysis. Edmonds and Sanabria shed light on the routinization of plastic surgery and hormone therapy in Brazil, and regimes of self-care that normalize these interventions as a routine part of women’s healthcare. Alternative modes of self-production and resistance will also be explored in this chapter, with an emphasis on how aesthetic choices can allow female artists to reclaim ownership of their bodies. I provide case studies detailing the varied responses of Karina Buhr, Alessandra Leão, and Renata Rosa to these discourses, showing how artist responses are not always liberating, and often combine resistance to and reinforcement of hegemonic norms.

In addition, I show how these discourses are applied to the realm of vocal production. Drawing on scholarship that deals with the ways in which voices are gendered, and with the materiality of the voice, I explore how the voice is often understood as an extension of the body, and is likewise under the purview of *se-produzir* (Barthes 1977; Weidman 2012 and 2014; Eidsheim 2012 and 2017; Cusick 1999). This section also explores the ways in which northeastern Brazilian ideas about self-production map onto aesthetic choices in recordings and live performance. How do artists create “natural” or mediated sounds on stage or in the studio? Why are these choices significant and how are they in dialogue or in conflict with the feminine

archetypes discussed earlier in this work? Examples of work by Buhr, Leão, and Rosa showcase these different facets of self-production and the ways they are employed by artists.

In the concluding section of chapter three, I provide a short discussion of Laila Rosa and Isabel Nogueira's theoretical concept of the *cantautora* (a conjunction of the Portuguese words for female singer and author, that highlights the creative power and contribution of female artists), showing how this emic category might provide a better understanding of the political and artistic contributions of Rosa, Leão, and Buhr (Rosa and Nogueira 2015). Ultimately, I show how this political and aesthetic work helps create new possibilities for alternative femininities in the Brazilian northeast. Through careful manipulation of *se-produzir*, *cantautoras* like Rosa, Buhr, and Leão make space for different ways of being to emerge, ways of being that are locally meaningful, powerful, and diverse.

CHAPTER 2:

THE NORTHEASTERN IMAGINARY: LOCATING THE FEMININE

The tourism management class from the Pernambuco Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology (IFPE) visited a number of historical sites throughout Pernambuco during the 2008-2009 school year, but for me, the class trip to an historic *engenho*, or sugarcane plantation, in the state's interior was one of the most memorable. As a member of the class of 20 or so Brazilian students, I was the only American, and one of two foreign exchange students at the school. Once I could understand the lectures, I was fascinated to learn about Brazilian history and geography, among other subjects. Professors at the school tried to make these subjects come alive for students by arranging trips to local historic and touristic sites which included everything from colonial churches and monasteries, to beaches, performance venues, and other natural scenic areas. And then there was the *engenho*. Unlike the other sites, this piece of Pernambuco's history was at once repulsive, horrifying, and fascinating. I found I couldn't look away, in part because I recognized its shadow in many aspects of contemporary life I had experienced in Recife.

Sugarcane has been emblematic of the Brazilian northeast since the colonial period, when the crop was brought there by the Portuguese to be cultivated by slaves and form the backbone of the region's agricultural economy. The original center of the Portuguese colonial mission, Brazil's rural northeast was divided into captaincies or large pieces of land controlled by *coroneis* (colonels) who presided over plantation lands and enacted martial law. Under this militant, patriarchal system, land ownership was the greatest marker of wealth and political

influence. While relatively few studies have focused on the experiences of northeastern women during this period, Martha Santos's work (2014) on property rights and gender inequality in Ceará's interior sheds some light on the topic. In her article "Recreating Patriarchy in Northeast Brazil: Widows, Property Rights, and Gender Inequality in the Backlands of Ceará, 1845-1889," Santos shows how legal codes in Ceará disadvantaged women from the propertied poor class who were widowed, making it almost impossible for them to continue as autonomous heads of household. These women, not wealthy to begin with, were effectively written out of economic and social life because of legal codes that continued to reproduce patriarchal structures (Santos 2014, 152). In addition to challenges inherent in the rule of law, other scholars have shown that women in the northeast have long been marginalized by discourses that link politics and public life in the region to masculinity, effectively rendering women's social impact invisible (Taddei and Gamboggi 2009, 149-51). While political and economic dynamics in Pernambuco have changed significantly since the colonial period, its many sugarcane plantations are still cultivated (today, usually by poor tenant farmers), and the historical legacy of backlands patriarchy lives on in the lives and experiences of women today, in popular culture, the regional imaginary, and in historic sites like the *engenho* we visited.

The IFPE class tour began with the *casa grande* (big house or master's house), where the tour guide explained the significance of each room, the roles and daily activities of family members. The plantation house was dusty, and more than a little unsettling, but the main thing I remember about it was its organization. All the bedrooms in the house were on the top floor, and they were laid out in such a way that the girls' bedroom could only be accessed through the master suite, while the boy's bedroom had its own access to the rest of the house through a

common stairway. The guide explained how this setup allowed the parents to effectively police their daughters' comings and goings and prevent them from "getting into trouble." That this concern did not apply to male children says a lot about gender roles in this class stratum, and during this time period.

While women in Recife today do not usually face these types of overt restrictions on their mobility and autonomy, there still exists an imbalance of social power between the genders that has its roots in the colonial system. In a socially conservative climate like that of northeastern Brazil, women's sexuality is highly policed. Most young adults (regardless of gender) live with their parents, and often with extended families, until they are married. My friends in Recife often talked about how lonely it must be for me to live away from family members as a single person, and overall, families in Brazil are very tight knit and tend to live as close together as they can. While a variety of birth control methods are available, abortion is illegal in Brazil, and it is viewed by many Recifenses as morally wrong. In the upper and upper middle classes especially, there is a high value placed on women's virginity. While this is partially linked to religious teachings, it is also intertwined (as in many patriarchal societies) with regulatory histories of inheritance and land ownership that favored men and their officially sanctioned heirs (Santos 2014, 154). Although many women today have the autonomy to make their own choices, the discourse of virginity dominates the public sphere.

Women in Pernambuco also find their autonomy and social power limited in particular situations, some of them trivial, others profoundly impactful and even potentially dangerous. Each time I return to Recife after a year or two away, I have to retrain myself not to order my own food in restaurants when dining with a group (the man orders for everyone), to assume that

all male acquaintances are potential suitors who will at some point need to be fended off, and to know that they will usually not respect my ‘no’ the first, second, third, or tenth time. These experiences are the norm, not the exception. This is not to say that the experience of being a woman in Pernambuco is 100% negative or that it is always challenging — although certainly this is even more the case for women of color and those without social or monetary resources to draw on. It is, however, an experience that makes one more conscious of the social limitations that lie just under the surface of perception. Men rarely decide not to attend concerts, dance with someone, or engage in conversation with a stranger because they are afraid of sexual harassment. For women, all of these are realities of daily life.

To contend with these daily challenges, women in Pernambuco must either stay out of the way of trouble or become very creative. It is the second strategy with which this thesis is primarily concerned, because as public figures and performers, female artists are already in the spotlight. As this chapter will show, performers like Renata Rosa, Alessandra Leão, and Karina Buhr employ a variety of different strategies to contend with the challenges of working as women artists. All three draw on established feminine archetypes with regional significance, carefully crafting a strategy for negotiating life as a female artist. These choices can include anything from unselfconscious identification, to ironic or humorous gender play, employed strategically according to the situation. To better understand what these artists are doing and why it is significant, I will begin by exploring localized versions of femininity.

Gendered Archetypes and the Brazilian Northeast

In northeastern Brazil, and in Pernambuco in particular, discussions of gender and gendered archetypes have frequently focused on men and the particularities of masculinity in the region. Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Júnior and Martha Santos among others have codified popular ideas about northeastern masculinity already in circulation that link it with violence, courage, and the maintenance of honor (Albuquerque Júnior 1999; Santos 2012). The majority of scholars who have opened the discussion on femininity in the northeast have also looked primarily at gender in the context of rural areas. Key examples of this include Santos' work in the *sertão* or arid interior region, and Nancy Scheper-Hughes' research in rural areas of the Atlantic Forest biome (Santos 2014; Scheper-Hughes 1992). While many northeastern states, including Pernambuco, are comprised of at least three different biomes (Atlantic Forest; *Agreste* - semi-arid agricultural region; and *Sertão* - desert), the *sertão* is understood as prototypical of the rural northeast, and is frequently the focus of mythologies about the region onto which outside ideas are mapped.

In her book *Cleansing Honor with Blood: Masculinity, Violence, and Power in the Backlands of Northeast Brazil, 1845-1889*, Santos shows how a particular discourse about *sertanejos*, or men from the desert hinterlands, came to be central to the discussion of gender in the northeast region. Santos explains how Brazilian authors in the 19th and early 20th centuries such as Euclides da Cunha in his history of the backlands — *Os Sertões*— put forth the idea that *sertanejos* had long “been the possessors of a well-developed sense of honor, and [had] been conditioned to aggression by deep-seated cultural traditions that appear fixed in time and

landscape” (Santos 2012, 1). This depiction of *sertanejos* as violent and honor-bound, conditioned by rigid traditions and life in a harsh and unforgiving environment, has been enshrined in both scholarship and popular culture since at least the turn of the last century. While its discourse has been problematized by recent developments in historical scholarship (Albuquerque Júnior and Santos’ contributions included), it lives on in popular manifestations such as *cordel* chapbooks,³⁸ popular poetry books sold in markets throughout the northeast, as well as in music, art, and public discourse. Albuquerque Júnior even believes these popular manifestations are responsible for perpetuating violence as a defining element of northeastern gender relations (Albuquerque Júnior 1999, 182). Santos, meanwhile, is more concerned with the historical impetus for gendered violence, and her book focuses on societal trends that may have influenced its increase during the last third of the 19th century.

While both of these perspectives are primarily focused on masculinity in the northeast, they can inform our understanding of femininity as well. In Albuquerque Júnior’s analysis of gender roles in *literatura de cordel*, for instance, women are the ever present foil, the shadow figure. As opposed to men, who are positioned as the protectors of the family unit, women in *cordel* stories are portrayed as “fragile beings, dependent on men, who must be protected and oriented by male authority figures in their family” (Albuquerque Júnior 1999, 183). When they disobey the orders of male family members or otherwise fail to conform to this mold, *cordel* discourse constructs women as bearers of chaos, disorder, and the potential rupture of social norms. It is this feminine chaos that masculine violence must be employed to quash, as honor is upheld and order is restored to the social system (Albuquerque Júnior 1999, 184-85). It is

³⁸ *Literatura do Cordel*, also known as *folhetos* or *cordel* chapbooks, are a printed booklets containing popular literature/folk poetry, available in markets throughout the northeast region (Slater 1982).

significant also, Albuquerque Júnior notes, that women rarely play starring roles in *cordel* stories, “In *cordel*, a woman does not make history, she suffers it. She is almost always the pretext for an unfolding drama that pits men against each other. The woman is the pretext, not the text of history” (Albuquerque Júnior 1999, 185). In the few *cordel* stories where women do serve as protagonists, the understood absurdity of the female characters is reinforced by the fact that they are always presented as masculine women, *mulheres-machos*. In these cases, female *cordel* protagonists are celebrated and mocked in the same breath.

Two different profiles of *sertaneja*³⁹ women are thus visible in *cordel* stories and other popular discourses: the *mulher/menina de família*, and the *mulher-macho*. The *mulher* or *menina de família* (family woman or family girl) is the refined feminine type that masculinist discourses such as that of *cordel* would like to enforce. She is docile, dependent, and in need of male protection. It is her honor that is being fought-over by the men who populate both Albuquerque Júnior and Santos’ narratives. The *mulher-macho* is her opposite. She is a woman who “isolate[s] herself socially, who occupies positions formerly occupied by men,” “a descendent of Maria Bonita and Dadá” (Albuquerque Júnior 1999, 185), two of the most famous female bandits or *cangaceiras* associated with the bandit “captain” turned legend, Lampião.

Life in the *sertão* of Pernambuco and other northeastern states is different from that of the semi-arid interior or coastal regions. While this is less based on facts of contemporary life than it has been historically, depictions of the region in literature, popular culture, and the media still present an environment where survival is a constant challenge. In particular, the *sertão* is known for its recurring cycles of drought that have made life periodically even more difficult for

³⁹ A woman from the *sertão* or desert hinterlands.

residents. Martha Santos has documented how these environmental challenges caused fissures in the patriarchal system and subsequent violence in the northeastern state of Ceará, following a major drought in 1877-79 (Santos 2012, 6). In this instance, prolonged drought produced a re-ordering of society in rural Ceará in which women became much more autonomous in order to keep themselves and their families alive while their husbands left the region in search of work.

Historians from da Cunha to the present day have long postulated a connection between the environmental challenges of the *sertão*, and male roles that emphasize enduring regional tradition, maintenance of honor, and the ability to use violence as a tool of social power, in a word, the role of the macho. More recent scholarship has begun to envision where women fit in this matrix of environment, strength, violence, and power. Like men, women in the rural northeast interior must deal with harsh climate conditions and other major challenges in order to survive. These realities have shaped ideas about femininity in the region, in regards to the *mulher-macho* role introduced above, but also in the lives of everyday women who fall outside the realm of the mythic outsider represented by that archetype.

Published in 1992, Nancy Scheper-Hughes' ethnographic tome *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* has become a staple (albeit a contentious one) in the study of northeastern Brazilian femininity. Unlike Santos, Scheper-Hughes' work is primarily ethnographic rather than historical. It focuses on the challenges of women's lives in the 20th century Brazilian interior. The book's setting is a shantytown in Pernambuco's *zona da mata*, closer to the coast than to the *sertão*. As a small rural town in a poverty-stricken area prone to drought, Bom Jesus da Mata⁴⁰ has more in common culturally with the rest of the state's rural

⁴⁰ The name of the town is a pseudonym used by Scheper-Hughes.

interior than it does with the capital, Recife (Scheper-Hughes 1992, 19). To survive in such an environment, as in Pernambuco's *sertão*, women must be strong and able to deal with myriad challenges from substandard or nonexistent medical care to hunger, thirst, and the frequent and seemingly unpreventable deaths of their children. Above all else, the women of Brazil's rural northeastern interior are survivors.

The second relevant archetype discussed here has just as much to do with race as it does with region. The *mulata* is often portrayed as the ideal mixed-race Brazilian woman, and has been adopted as a national symbol that is constantly reinforced by media representations from the local to the international level, but her origin is in the northeast. In the early 1930s, Pernambucan sociologist Gilberto Freyre was responsible for creating a theory that pinpointed racial mixing as the source of Brazil's uniqueness, cultural contributions, and strength as a nation. This viewpoint was formulated in response to ideas circulating at the time that framed racial mixing as degenerative and as the source of Brazil's backwardness. While the concept of racial democracy⁴¹ put forth by Freyre has been hotly contested in recent years and largely proved false, popular conceptions of Brazil as a place where racial tensions are less pronounced than in the United States, for example, and where interracial coupling is equated with colorblindness, remain fresh in the national imaginary. Although it initially focused on Brazil's northeast, Freyre's theory of racial democracy was upheld as a national motto by the Vargas regime and subsequent governments because of its usefulness in the nation-building project. This was how a regional type became a quintessential symbol of the Brazilian nation.

⁴¹ Although he did not give the concept its name, the idea of 'racial democracy' grew out of Freyre's theories about miscegenation as Brazil's greatest strength. Freyre believed that racial mixing in Brazil would create a society without racism.

Her national importance, however, did not prevent the *mulata* from remaining regionally relevant. As many scholars in the fields of Latin American studies, critical race and gender studies have noted, the *mulata* is both a significant and multivalent symbol when it comes to Brazilian gender archetypes. Within the framework of racial democracy, the *mulata* herself is framed as desirable, sensuous, and evocative of the Brazilian nation, but also as a dangerous other, a being whose connection to the natural world is so strong that her wild nature must be controlled (Machado-Borges 2003, 143, 176, 186). She is also often, although not exclusively, associated with professional samba performers. In this role, the *mulata's* dance can be viewed as a cultural performance that reproduces Freyrean racial democracy, reinforcing a fetishized image of mixed-race womanhood while at the same time allowing for some amount of personal agency and empowerment (Souza 2013, 91). As Corey Souza explains in his article “*Mulatice: Fetish or Feminine Power?*,” this performance fetishizes the *mulata* in that it reproduces dominant ideologies about race and the sexual availability of female samba dancers, but also frames her as a character with agency:

The *mulata*, for example, parallels the *malandro*⁴² in her independence and subversion of hegemonic normalized standards of feminine propriety....The power of the *mulata* also lies in the independence achieved through assertion of sexual power (Souza 2013, 93).

One source of the *mulata's* power is economic. In Rio's samba schools, the *mulata* has become synonymous with a female *passista*, or carnival samba soloist. An important part of carnival performances in this context since the 1950s and 60s, the role of the *passista* has provided economic opportunities for soloists (Souza 2013, 96). Since the 1970s, the business of

⁴² According to Souza, the *Malandro* is a “ruffian or thug. *Malandro* does not indicate a color (as does *mulato*), but the assumed social status of the *malandro* presupposes a non-white identity. *Mulatas* and *malandros* form the quintessential Brazilian couple of Rio de Janeiro as seen in popular discourse” (Souza 2013, 102).

the *mulata-show*, a “Las Vegas-style showgirls’ performance,” created additional work opportunities for *passistas* outside of the carnival season (Souza 2013, 97). As Souza’s article shows, these opportunities for economic and professional advancement are viewed by many dancers as a better alternative to housecleaning, janitorial work, and other available options, even though they carry with them frequent experiences of racism and sexual harassment (Souza 2013, 101).

While Souza’s work centers around conceptions of *mulatice* in Rio, these insights are also relevant to the ways in which the *mulata* functions as a feminine archetype in the northeast. Assumptions about sexuality and sexual availability, personal agency, and even performance abilities that are associated with *mulatas* in Rio bleed over into general conceptions of mixed-race women, particularly those employed in the entertainment industry, in other regions. In the northeast, as in Rio, the *mulata* is imagined as agile, sexually available, and most importantly, as the epitome of Brazilian female beauty. Interestingly, while the category of *mulata* implies racial mixture, *mulatice* can be inscribed on bodies of various shades and even of differently perceived races (Souza 2013, 91; Pravaz 2009, 79).

As Latin Americanist Natasha Pravaz explores in her article “The Tan from Ipanema: Freyre, *Morenidade*, and the Cult of the Body in Rio de Janeiro,” *mulata* as a social category does not always denote race, but rather a female type that can also be achieved by *morenas*, (a woman with brown skin or hair, but not necessarily of African descent). “A polysemic category, ‘mulata’ in the Brazilian context can refer to ‘a woman of mixed racial descent,’ but it also connotes the voluptuousness and sensuality characteristic of women who dance the samba onstage” (Pravaz 2009, 80). In a context where shadeism colors race relations, this is significant,

because it means white women too can become *mulatas* with enough hard work and studied self-production. Like all the feminine types discussed here, the category of *mulata* is flexible even as it appears fixed.

Similar to the *mulata*, the remaining archetypes discussed here are differentiated from the *sertaneja* in terms of their urban context. The most widespread feminine archetypes in Brazilian middle and upper class circles are the *patricinha* or *burguesinha*, and the *alternativa*. I group these archetypes together here, because they act as responses to each other. As opposites, one makes little sense without the other. *Patricinha* or *burguesinha* are slang terms that approximate petite bourgeois or socialite, but are more specific and localized in a Brazilian context. While sometimes used as a pejorative, the qualities associated with this chic, young (or aspiring to be young), conventionally beautiful female type reflect the desires of many Brazilian women. When my friends and family members in Recife told me I needed to produce myself, this is most likely the type of woman they felt I should aspire to be. The *patricinha* is imagined as the end-all be-all of feminine types by mainstream, urban Brazilian society, both within the northeast and outside of it. She is stylish and well groomed, thin but not too thin, tan but unambiguously white, sensual, and well-heeled. She is often the object of desire, but infrequently wields it herself. She is the telenovela star, or even the Playboy model. She could even be the housewife, mother, or daughter of a middle-class family. But in all things, she is an ideal. In particular, the *patricinha* or *burguesinha* is an ideal that promises to be available to anyone with enough effort, money, time, and ambition.

The telenovela star is perhaps the most important representative of the *patricinha* or *burguesinha*, not because she is a typical representative, but because she is an ideal

representation of a type that worships ideal versions of itself. As Thaïs Machado-Borges' work has illustrated, one of the keys to the allure of Brazilian telenovelas and the telenovelas flow⁴³ is that these are presented and understood as being available to all Brazilians. By participating in the telenovela flow, viewers (many of whom are women) can be exposed to the latest trends in fashion, self-care, and other areas, and can (with enough available resources) participate in these trends themselves (Machado-Borges 2003, 137). By employing a variety of tools from makeup and designer clothes, to personal training, plastic surgery, and hormone therapy, women can produce themselves in the image of an ideal type such as the *patricinha* or *burguesinha*.

What's more, new research shows that these types of personal modifications are becoming more common and more accepted as a routine part of women's healthcare in Brazil (Edmonds and Sanabria 2014, 203-204). The desire to remake one's body in order to look younger, remain sexually active, cover up scarring after a common surgery like a c-section, or simply to achieve the desired ideal body type, is becoming the norm rather than the exception and is seen as justifiable. The fact that plastic surgeons operate popular clinics in public hospitals points to the overall social acceptability and desire for such procedures (Edmonds 2012, 89; 92). While this phenomenon will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 3, I discuss its importance here because of the role this process has played in the creation of a particular feminine archetype, one that is understood to be produced and is celebrated as such.

⁴³ The "telenovela flow" is a concept developed by Machado-Borges to indicate the social dimensions of telenovela viewing in Brazilian communities — this includes discussion, advertising, and the constant presence of telenovelas in the daily lives of many Brazilians, all of which are maintained in a dialectical relationship. This is quite different from the way "flow" is understood in the fields of performance studies and psychology.

As pervasive as the *burguesinha* or *patricinha* archetype has become in urban upper and upper-middle class Brazilian society, there is always room for alternatives. The *alternativa*, literally alternative, feminine archetype is another urban type primarily defined by what it is not—the *burguesinha* or *patricinha*. The *alternativa* as feminine archetype often takes on a decidedly subcultural if not oppositional tone. She is the public university graduate, the artist or musician, or perhaps the student activist, a proponent of oppositional politics or member of the Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores* or PT). The *alternativa's* education and interests have often been advanced by a middle-class upbringing, but her values are more aligned with the urban popular classes. In the absence of these advantages, she could also be one of the few lower or lower-middle class students at the federal university, someone whose academic talents have taken her beyond the margins of society but not quite into the cultural center of the elite. Unlike the *patricinha*, the *alternativa's* type does not necessarily imply whiteness, although it often corresponds with a particular class position. The *alternativa* represents a different kind of cosmopolitanism, one positioned outside of mainstream Brazilian consumer culture and with ties to the rural roots of the northeast, or to international subcultures like punk.

The *alternativa* type is particularly relevant to this study because as a demographic it contains many artists, including some of those whose work will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis. Many of the participants in musical roots-revival movements from the *movimento armorial* to *manguebeat* have also been a part of this social group. While *alternativa* constitutes a recognizable subject position for many Brazilian women, as a category it is also defined more by what it is not, than by what it is. In this way, it serves both as the result of marginalization, and as the catalyst for possible new identities.

The final two subject positions to be explored here are related in that they fail to fit into conventional narratives of femininity, the *garota de programa* and the *travesti*. The *garota de programa* (call girl or prostitute), while marginalized, is also a feminine type in possession of a particular kind of social power. Like the *mulata*, with whom she could and often does overlap, the *garota de programa* is often viewed as a racialized other, but one who uses her innate sensuality to gain financial freedom in an environment with few economic alternatives. According to Maria Dulce Gaspar's sociological study *Garotas de Programa: Prostituição em Copacabana e Identidade Social*, *garotas de programa* in 1980s Rio de Janeiro were unique among others in their profession. They "regard themselves as the elite of the profession...are young, attractive and well-dressed, looking much like the middle-class students and salespeople who live and work in [Copacabana]" (Gaspar 1985). These factors contributed, Gaspar found, to emphasis on the temporary nature of their work and the possibilities for upward mobility it could provide. In this sense, the *garota de programa* is an aspiring *burguesinha* or *patricinha* with fewer resources to draw on. While rife with risk, working as a top-tier prostitute could open doors to other social worlds, particularly as compared to other poorer paying professions.

Another often overlooked archetype that is particularly significant for this inquiry is the *travesti*. Social anthropologist Don Kulick's book *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture Among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes* provides some insights into this rarely studied group whose self-identifications complicate western understandings of gender. Not just a gloss for cross-dresser, *travesti* refers to a particular group of gay male prostitutes in Brazil who "adopt female names, clothing styles, hairstyles, cosmetic practices, and linguistic pronouns" (Kulick 1998, 5). While *travestis* frequently employ hormone treatments and injections of industrial silicone to

produce a more alluring, feminine form, they do not self-identity as women (Kulick, 1998, 6). Even more so than other sex workers, *garotas de programa*—for instance—whose self production is more hetero-normatively styled, *travestis* as a population are particularly stigmatized. As with other marginalized groups, the existence of a few famous *travestis* who star in telenovelas and other popular programs does not negate the violence, poverty, and police brutality that characterize the lived reality of the majority (Kulick 1998, 7).

Even though they do not identify as women, *travestis* present a subject position that is important to consider in the context of this study of northeastern femininity and feminine types. Just as Judith Halberstam has noted in relation to female masculinity, which she argues makes visible the very nature of masculinity, so too do the femininities produced and performed by *travestis* make visible the nature of Brazilian femininity:

Far from being an imitation of maleness, female masculinity actually affords us a glimpse of how masculinity is constructed as masculinity. In other words, female masculinities are framed as the rejected scraps of dominant masculinity in order that male masculinity may appear to be the real thing. But what we understand as heroic masculinity has been produced by and across both male and female bodies (Halberstam 1998, 1-2).

Using Halberstam's framework, the versions of femininity produced by *travestis* should be of prime importance to any study of northeastern femininities, regardless of the gender identity of the subjects. It is interesting to note the similarities between dominant (cis-het) practices of feminine self-production (that of the *patricinha* for example) and those of the *travesti*, whose use of *se-produzir* differs mainly in terms of access to resources and safer treatments. As Edmonds notes, the liquid silicone injections popular among *travestis*, while considered an experimental and dangerous (read marginal) treatment today, are still used by those segments of the population

without access to safer procedures, and as such they offer insight into the logics of body modification in Brazil (Edmonds 2010, 97-98). While these modes of self-production will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this work, they form an important link between the mainstream and alternative femininities expressed in the archetypes treated above.

The *travesti*, the *garota de programa*, the *patricinha* or *burguesinha*, the *alternativa*, the *mulata*, the *sertaneja - mulher de família*, or *mulher-macho*; these are the feminine types that populate the northeastern imagination of today. Whether feared, mocked, or admired, these archetypes of femininity claim to represent the experiences of real people. In so doing, they form the basis of locally-coded gender constructs that shape, but do not predetermine, how real women move in the world in significant ways. As women artists, Alessandra Leão, Renata Rosa, and Karina Buhr are no exception to this influence. Like all people, they are creative agents who adapt the tools provided them to shape their experience of society and the world around them in ways that make those experiences more palatable, even though they may not always do so consciously.

Dominant Narratives, Visibility, & Translation

One of the main challenges produced by dominant narratives about gender in the Brazilian northeast is the social invisibility of women—an overall lack of understanding on the part of other actors of what women contribute to society and what they have to say about it. As anthropologists Renzo Taddei and Ana Laura Gamboggi have noted, many prominent social positions, including those associated with political leadership, are coded as masculine and imbued with masculine symbols as representative of effective leadership styles. “In the rural

world of the Brazilian Northeast, there seems to have been little space for women in traditional narratives on political leadership, unless these women replicate behaviors locally seen as masculine” (Taddei and Gamboggi 2009, 150). There is, in essence, no room for femininity in northeastern Brazilian public life.

In spite of these exclusionary narratives, Taddei and Gamboggi’s ethnographic analysis found that women do actually play active roles in local economic and social networks; their styles of leadership are just not coded in ways that allow them to be read as such by men. While local narratives peg women as either macho (i.e., not feminine) or as passive and subordinate, recent research has show that “there are deep contradictions between the ways in which the female universe is depicted in dominant narrative genres and the vital importance of women’s activities in the local socioeconomic realm....Many of the features of the female ways of being in the region are invisible in dominant narratives” (Taddei and Gamboggi 2009, 152).

This reality has negative consequences not only in its implications for social policy in the region, but also for the everyday lives of women whose significant contributions to the public sphere go unacknowledged. In her article “Translations and Refusals: Resignifying Meaning as Feminist Political Practice,” Millie Thayer shows how Brazilian feminist organizations that seek to overcome these challenges by “translating” their message into a dominant register encounter yet more problems when the message then is read as unintelligible or even subversive to the women they seek to represent. By translating their lives and experiences, making them readable to donors in Brazil and the “global North,” women’s organizations in the *sertão* “gained material and political solidarity, but they also risked the kind of commodification that led them to conflicts with [urban sponsors]. ‘Rural women’ could become a confining, as well as an

empowering category, a means of exoticizing and dividing constituencies, thereby limiting their possibilities and subjecting them to the designs of others” (Thayer 2010, 226).

Artists often act as political agents even when they do not set out to do so. As public figures, arbiters of taste, and potential spokespeople for groups they represent, women artists occupy a unique position. Like politicians and feminist NGOs, they must choose whether to translate their narratives into a register that would make them intelligible to a larger public, whether to craft ways of acting and being in the public sphere that will make them visible to that public, and at what cost. As in other arenas of social life, the stakes are high. I believe it is significant that all three of the artists discussed here, although they take different stylistic and political approaches, have chosen to record and publish their work independently. In a music industry that privileges displays of youth, sexual availability, and a party atmosphere, while punishing “the idea of aesthetic autonomy” (Trotta 2008, 10). All three of these artists have chosen aesthetic and personal freedom at significant cost. What then, does their work have to say about the locally coded gender constructs discussed in this chapter? How might it complicate or reinforce aspects of the northeastern sonic and visual imaginary? In the final section of this chapter, I present three case studies that explore these issues in relation to the creative work of Renata Rosa, Alessandra Leão, and Karina Buhr. To begin, I take a closer look at Rosa’s performance in the 2007 TV Globo Miniseries, *A Pedra do Reino*.

Renata Rosa — *A Pedra do Reino*

Renata Rosa has worked not only as a musician, composer, and band-leader, but also as an actress. One of her most well known roles thus far has been as Maria Safira in the TV Globo

miniseries *A Pedra do Reino*, an historical fiction drama set in northeastern Brazil and based on a work by Recife playwright and leader of the *movimento armorial*, Ariano Suassuna (“A Pedra do Reino: Trama Principal,” 2013).

In a clip from *A Pedra do Reino* posted on her YouTube channel, Renata Rosa’s character, Maria Safira, is shown seducing the protagonist of the miniseries, D. Pedro Dinis Ferreira Quaderna. While Safira is known to be possessed, she succeeds in curing Quaderna with her passion, restoring his virility which had been compromised by a magic potion that was intended to improve his intelligence (ibid.). In the video clip starting at 02:00, Safira is portrayed as an exotic wild woman, outfitted in something that resembles an American bellydance costume with the addition of elements drawing on Bollywood aesthetics, including a veil, ankle bells, and small coins that jingle when she moves. Her theme music is interesting in that it does not fit the setting of the miniseries (19th century Pernambucan *sertão*), but rather is intended to evoke a pan-orientalist exotic Other, combining non-Brazilian instruments like the tanpura and tabla, with the sound of jingling coins and an overdub of rabeca for a touch of northeastern Brazilian flavor. Visually, Safira is first seen twirling in circles while holding the rabeca, circling her potential lover who lies immobilized on the floor. Later in the scene she appears outdoors, frightening people in the street by jumping out from behind a building while playing an ominous chord on her instrument. Interestingly, Safira does not speak at all in the video clip. She is viewed from the perspective of her lover Quaderna, but her own madness and possession are key aspects of how the character is portrayed. No matter where she is or what is going on around her, whether she is seducing Quaderna or frightening strangers in the street, Safira’s body seems to writhe.

The fact that it is Safira, a married woman, and not the hero Quaderna doing the seducing, constitutes a transgression of social norms—particularly for the miniseries’ setting in rural, 19th century Pernambuco. Even so, just because Safira’s behavior is transgressive does not necessarily mean that its portrayal is working against conventional gender norms. The character of Safira with her exoticized theme music seems to fetishize her as an Other, more than making space for alternative ways of being in regards to gender or sexuality. While the combination of madness or possession and transgressive female sexuality is not a new one, and is not unique to northeastern Brazil, it takes on a particular significance here in light of the restrictions placed on women in such a context (both in the miniseries, and to a lesser extent but still significantly, in Pernambuco today).

It is hard to know what aspects of Rosa’s performance in *A Pedra do Reino* were part of her own creative process, vs. what may have been added or suggested by the directors of the miniseries. Even so, it is clear that both Rosa the performer and Safira the character are exerting some agency in the scene depicted above. Rosa’s performance draws on both regional and international stereotypes in its conjuring of an alluring feminine Other, but to do so it combines feminine archetypes in interesting and unexpected ways. Based on the setting of the romance novel and its TV adaptation, Safira is clearly a *sertaneja*—a woman living in the Pernambucan *sertão*. But she is neither *mulher-macho* nor *mulher de família*, that is, masculine heroine or respectable housewife. In fact, the character draws more on imagery associated with the *mulata* or with the *travesti* than with either *sertaneja* figure. Like the *mulata*, Safira is portrayed as innately sensual and captivating, and also as a dangerously animalistic presence. Her dancing and musicality (playing the rabeça) also echo with shades of *mulatice*, albeit in a different

register than that of the samba school *passista*. Like the *travesti*, she is an object of intense desire, but also of intense fear and distrust (that of the villagers). By combining these archetypes in unique ways, Renata Rosa shows that her performance is not just one of hegemonic femininity. Likewise, it is also not totally liberating. As I will discuss in more detail later in this work, the rest of Rosa's musical and artistic opus showcases a variety of other approaches to negotiating both northeastern regional tropes and feminine archetypes.

Alessandra Leão — *Língua*

Alessandra Leão's approach to navigating feminine archetypes is quite different from that of Renata Rosa. In her newest series of albums, *Língua* (Tongue), Leão presents a new side of her artistic self by including multiple tracks inspired by Afro-Brazilian sacred percussion genres, namely *toques de santo* from the Xangó (Recife) tradition, and Tambor de Mina (Casa Fanti-Ashanti). While she does not deal as overtly with feminine archetypes as do Rosa or Buhr, Leão does work to shape perceptions of listeners vis-a-vis the role of women in Afro-Brazilian percussion genres. The main way she accomplishes this is by publicly performing and celebrating her own uniquely overlapping identities: woman, percussionist, and practitioner of Candomblé/Xangô. Her 2014 album *Pedra de Sal* (Salt Rock), the first in the series, opens with the track "Doutrina e Toque de Iemanjá," a reinterpretation of a traditional Recifense Xangó chant (Slater 2014). Likewise, 2015's album *Língua* closes the series with the track "Doutrina de Oxum," these two tracks serving as bookends for the three album series: *Pedra de Sal* (Salt Rock), *Aço* (Steel), and *Língua* (Tongue). Interestingly, "Doutrina de Oxum" is inspired by a different Afro-Brazilian tradition: Tambor de Mina.

Leão has been known primarily for her unique voice and sultry “mangue-folk” style, but a major part of what makes her music different is undoubtedly her use of Afro-Brazilian percussion styles. In 2016 she began teaching workshops in Afro-Brazilian sacred percussion to groups of primarily but not exclusively female students in São Paulo (Leão, July 6, 2016 Instagram post).⁴⁴ The classes, aimed at beginners, have been specifically focused on the Ilú drum (used in *terreiros*, Candomblé religious centers, in Pernambuco) (Leão, March 2017, Instagram post).⁴⁵ This development is significant, not only because Leão is white, but especially because she is a woman. While membership varies and some *terreiros* are known for having a more concentrated group of Afro-decedent practitioners, as *orixá*-based religions have become more accepted in mainstream Brazilian society, membership has increased to include more racially and economically diverse segments of the population (Sarduy 2015, 11). Being female and a percussionist in that tradition, however, is an even more complicated set of identities to reconcile.

In most *orixá*-based religious traditions (Candomblé and Santería for instance), women are prohibited from playing drums in ceremonial contexts and discouraged from learning the rhythms associated with the *orixás* in general, although they participate actively in other aspects of religious practice. In Candomblé and Tambor de Mina, two of the sacred percussion traditions on which Leão’s music draws, there are explicit prohibitions against female percussionists (Sandler 2002, 154). Although women are not explicitly prohibited from playing drums in the related tradition of Xangô de Recife, Xangô and its main *terreiro* in particular (the *Sítio de Pai*

⁴⁴ Accessed July 10, 2016. https://www.instagram.com/p/BHh0_e1D_eU/?taken-by=alessandra_leao

⁴⁵ https://www.instagram.com/p/BR_Kmvnjyc_/?taken-by=alessandra_leao

Adão in Olinda), are known for their traditional views and customs that draw heavily on the Nagô ritual tradition of Bahian Candomblé (Sarduy 2015, 11-12). With that in mind, it seems unlikely that women's participation as instrumentalists in a ritual context would be encouraged there, as this custom is common among almost all other Candomblé nations and related groups.

Even so, it is important to note that in general, *orixá*-based religions are not subject to a centralized authority and some variance is recognized and accepted. Anthropologists who have written about Xangô de Recife have noted that like many other Candomblé nations, it contains a plurality of voices and discourses that allow for a greater level of accepted variance in genders and sexualities, on average, than the dominant culture in Brazil. While these voices are sometimes in conflict with one another, tolerance is the guiding rule and “characteristic of Candomblé...it is rare to encounter a sole, hegemonic religious discourse” (Sarduy 2015, 14). Women rarely, if ever, perform Candomblé *toques* in a ritual setting, but it is possible that these dynamics of doctrinal flexibility could make it easier to accommodate certain exceptions to this practice (performing adaptations of *toques* in a secular setting, for instance.)

As a female practitioner of an *orixá*-based religious tradition who is also employed as a professional percussionist, composer, and singer, Leão occupies a unique position. Media outlets have described her compositions as drawing on “themes of coco, cantoria (sung poetry), and candomblé” (*Correio Brasiliense*, July 21, 2017).⁴⁶ In her own notes, on social media, and in interviews, Leão has labeled certain tracks as being associated with Tambor de Mina or Xangô, and has described herself as “*da macumba*”⁴⁷ and as a practitioner of Candomblé (Martinelli

⁴⁶ https://www.instagram.com/p/BW2RehA5HM/?taken-by=alessandra_leao

⁴⁷ A colloquial expression indicating that she participates in some sort of Afro-Brazilian religious practice, although it does not specify from which tradition (Leão, July 8, 2017, Instagram post: https://www.instagram.com/p/BWSjjGYga-2/?taken-by=alessandra_leao).

2016, “Alessandra Leão no Cultura Livre”).⁴⁸ It is significant, however, that the sacred-adjacent⁴⁹ songs she performs are generally adapted from the original ceremonial versions, to differing degrees. The politics of using ceremonial music from these traditions outside of a ritual context are complicated, but ethnomusicologist Juan Diego Diaz Meneses has provided one model for how these musics can be interpreted by Candomblé practitioners, what practitioners might value in them, and in what contexts they are considered appropriate. He found, for instance, that the Candomblé practitioners he interviewed enjoyed feelings of deep connection to recontextualized *toques*, but only when they had been altered sufficiently as not to provoke trace in unwanted contexts (Meneses 2016, 99). It would make sense then, that as a practitioner of Candomblé/Xangô, Leão would understand these dynamics and would change certain elements of the songs she performs to be sure they maintain a safe distance from their sacred inspiration. Even so, it is significant that as a woman, Leão was able to learn this exclusively male repertoire of sacred music in the first place.

In northeastern Brazil, the field of professional percussionists is clearly male-dominated, but this is even more the case when it comes to Afro-Brazilian percussion traditions. Because artists like Buhr and Leão were among the first female performers to become part of *maracatu* groups (among other Afro-Brazilian percussion genres), the road was often difficult. Buhr has discussed openly the challenges she faced in trying to integrate into *cavalo-marinho*, *maracatu*, and *Afoxé* groups in particular. (Paola 2010, 72). Because *Afoxés* are percussion ensembles linked with *Candomblé terreiros* in Pernambuco, they allowed women to participate in secular

⁴⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dbnm4ltZh3g>

⁴⁹ In this case, I refer to songs with sacred origins, but which have been decontextualized and altered in ways that make them more acceptable to perform in a secular context.

public performances but not in sacred contexts inside the *terreiro*, a major frustration for Buhr. While Leão's path has been different than that of Buhr, they shared many similar formative musical experiences. Because of these challenges, I believe it is particularly significant that Leão has been able to access and teach Afro-Brazilian sacred music from several different traditions. By performing and teaching *toques de santo*, Leão creates a new space for an alternative kind of femininity—one that is transgressive, but also, interestingly, racially (un)marked.

Karina Buhr — “I couldn't stand to be an invisible woman anymore”

By using northeastern musical genres or styles like the *ciranda*, local instruments like the *alfaia*, and other sonic indices of the northeast region, combining these with punk aesthetics and activist political messages, Karina Buhr constructs a different type of northeastern femininity in her most recent album *Selvática (Savage)*, released in 2015. Compared to her two previous solo albums, *Selvática* is much more of a concept album, and its goal, or overarching theme if you will, is to make women visible. In an interview with Fernanda Paola for *Revista Gol*, Buhr commented on her choice to begin a solo career with the release of her first album. “I no longer wanted to hide. I couldn't stand to be an invisible woman anymore”⁵⁰ (Paola 2010, 68). While Buhr's first two albums began to work in this direction, in *Selvática*, her goal of visibility has really come to fruition.

The eleven songs on the album deal with a variety of social issues and themes related to the experiences of women in Brazil. While the title track *Selvática* and the memorable second track “Eu Sou um Monstro” (I am a monster) serve as blatant calls to arms, other songs deal with

⁵⁰ “Não estava mais a fim de me esconder. Não aguentava mais ser mulher invisível”

issues of domestic violence (“Esôfago”), bourgeois hypocrisy and misogyny (“Pic Nic”), and social inequality (“Alcunha de Ladrão”), gentrification and real estate speculation (“Cerca de Prédio”), as well as the intricacies of romantic relationships (“Conta Gotas” and “Desperdiço-Te-Me”). In these songs, Buhr draws on many of the feminine archetypes discussed in this chapter, in particular the *mulata*, the *alternativa*, *mulher-macho* or *guerreira*,⁵¹ and ironically, the *burguesinha*. In fact, irony and parody are key elements in much of her work, creating a variety of possible readings that subtly (and sometimes not so subtly) expose the fissures and absurdities inherent in mainstream culture. As Stan Hawkins has noted in reference to the band, The Pet Shop Boys:

By disrupting stereotypical codes of gender and sexuality through a parody of artifice and masquerade that challenges patriarchy, these artists remind us that music can function as a key vehicle in deconstructing fixed notions of gendered identity in everyday life (Hawkins 1997, 118).

This is exactly what Buhr does in *Selvática*, as well as in much of her other work, as she seeks to challenge dominant discourses of femininity.

While the song “Não me ame tanto” (Don’t love me so much) comes from Buhr’s 2011 album *Longe de Onde*, not from *Selvática*, it provides a perfect example of how she uses irony and humor to disrupt gender norms, this time in the context of a romantic relationship narrative. Compared to many of her other songs, “Não me ame tanto” has a more lyrical and relaxed feel. Buhr is at ease, singing in a higher register without the force or emotional intensity often found in her more punk-rock inspired tracks. Without listening to the lyrics, a casual observer might think this was a dreamy love song by any popular Brazilian *cantora* or female singer. A closer

⁵¹ female warrior

look reveals a song gushing with irony, where Buhr chides her lover not to love her so much, because she “can’t deal with a love that’s more than what [she] feels inside” (Buhr 2011).

I have a problem with too much love,
I throw it in the trash...

I take it all
My love and your love
make a love cake and throw it out
or eat it and orgasm
Inside

Buhr actively constructs an alternative to hegemonic depictions of northeastern femininity in songs like “Não me ame tanto.” The female protagonist in this song is not overly emotional. In fact, she isn’t emotional at all. She happily tells her lover to dial down the intensity before she dumps him, assuring him that his presence isn’t necessary for her orgasm. In this and other songs, Buhr creates a counter-representation of Brazilian femininity that defies narratives that frame women as the passive recipients of male desire rather than as people with desires in their own right. In many of her songs, as well as in her visual and performance art, women and their desires are made visible.

In the song “Eu Sou um Monstro,” from *Selvática*, Buhr takes on tropes of woman as monster and savage, repositioning them as part of her presentation of the feminine as agentive, powerful, and loud. To do so, she plays with discourses of cultural cannibalism⁵² as well as those that frame women as the source of both pleasure and danger (as in the case of the *mulata* or the

⁵² A concept developed by Oswald de Andrade and published in his “Manifesto antropófago” or “Cannibalist Manifesto” of 1928, cultural cannibalism was originally linked to the Brazilian modernist movement but has become broadly associated with many Brazilian cultural forms, including music. One of the most famous examples of the recycling of this concept is its use in the Tropicália movement of the 1960s and 70s, in which international influences were consumed, digested, and turned into something uniquely Brazilian.

travesti). Declaring herself “a monster,” Buhr rejects the “apathy” of women to their disadvantaged position in society, as well as the discourses of hegemonic femininity represented by beauty and princesses. Her “monster” and “savage” imagery are linked to longstanding ideas about women’s connection to nature, an untamed nature that must be controlled to bring it into accord with the social norms established by men. If women did not already have power and agency, however, they would not need to be controlled to maintain the social order. Buhr’s goal here is to make that power visible, unstoppable. As she sings at the end of the verse, “Whatever you do will dictate what happens to you” (Buhr 2015). This is the version of femininity that Buhr’s compositions enact, and it is in direct opposition to those portrayed in *cordel* stories and other northeastern popular media that portray female characters as subjects *to whom* the action happens.

“Eu Sou um Monstro” - *Selvática*

Mulher, tua apatia te mata
Não queria de graça
O que nem você dá pra você, mulher

Hoje eu não quero falar de beleza
Ouvir você me chamar de princesa
Eu sou um monstro

Eu sou um monstro
Eu sou um monstro
Eu sou um monstro

Mulher, tua apatia te mata
Não queira de graça
O que nem você dá pra você, mulher
Tua apatia te mata
O que você vai fazer
Vai dizer
O que vai acontecer com você

Hoje eu não quero falar de beleza
Ouvir você me chamar de princesa
Eu sou um monstro
Eu sou um monstro
Eu sou um monstro
Eu sou um monstro

O que você vai fazer
Vai dizer
O que vai acontecer com você

Eu sou um monstro
Eu sou um monstro

“I am a Monster” - *Savage*

Woman, your apathy kills you
You don't want for free
What you wouldn't even give yourself,
woman

Today I don't want to talk about beauty
Hear you call me a princess
I am a monster

I am a monster
I am a monster
I am a monster

Woman, your apathy kills you
You don't want for free
What you wouldn't even give yourself,
woman
Your apathy kills you
Whatever you do
Will dictate
What happens to you

Today I don't want to talk about beauty
Hear you call me a princess
I am a monster
I am a monster
I am a monster
I am a monster

Whatever you do
Will dictate
What happens to you

I am a monster
I am a monster

CHAPTER 3:

PRODUCING THE FEMININE, PRODUCING THE NATURAL: “SE-PRODUZIR” & THE *CANTAUTORA* AESTHETIC

Before beginning work on this project, I made a return visit to Recife in May 2016. I was finally on vacation, having just completed my first year of graduate school, and I spent much of that month in Recife waiting for old friends to return my messages, attending a wedding, waiting for people to get off work on weekdays so I could see them, waiting for it to stop raining, trying to figure out where to buy a *rabeca*, waiting for the power at the *rabeca* workshop to come back on, attending parties that I did not really want to attend, waiting for the bus to arrive, waiting for someone to invite me to run errands with them, waiting.... So whenever one of my host family members left the apartment for a place that wasn't work, I went with them. I'm sure it was quite annoying. But because of their unending patience and hospitality, I had the opportunity to visit many of the places where two of my host sisters, both unemployed recent college graduates from two different middle-class families in Recife, spent their time. Besides the gym, the social club where one sister studied for professional exams, the grocery store, and various repair shops, one of the most frequented places was the *Espaço Vida Saudável Herbalife* (Herbalife Healthy Life Space; spaces colloquially referred to as “shakes”⁵³), in Recife's Casa Amarela neighborhood. What started out as a routine errand ended up becoming a significant turning point in my understanding of how femininity works in Recife, and an inspiration for this project.

⁵³ As the reader might have guessed, this name comes from the English name of the drink consumed there.

As of this writing, a quick Google search reveals at least twenty Herbalife-affiliated vendors, stores, and nutrition clubs in the greater Recife area, many of them labeled “Espaço Saudável,” or “healthy space.” To put things in perspective, a similar Google search in greater Los Angeles, CA, the birthplace of Herbalife, turns up eighteen related establishments or independent vendors. In 2014, Katherine Coutinho of the news outlet Globo Nordeste estimated that there were more than 150 independent vendors operating Espaços de Vida Saudável (EVS) in Recife alone (Coutinho 2014).⁵⁴ By either measure, Herbalife is big business. It represents an extremely popular weight loss and fitness program, social space, and home business/franchise trend for Brazil’s classes A and B⁵⁵ (Alberto 2013).⁵⁶ While its teas, smoothies, and weight loss/protein shakes are marketed to (and consumed by) both men and women, in Recife, Herbalife’s Espaços Saudáveis often serve as social spaces for women in search of a community of “people who enjoy a healthy lifestyle” (Lis Melo Germano, Facebook review for one of Recife’s many EVS, August 3, 2015).⁵⁷ Many people in Brazil and elsewhere who patronize EVS like the one I visited mention the community support and conviviality of the space as one of its primary attractions (Alberto 2013; Coutinho 2014).

Like many upscale businesses in Recife, the *shake* Herbalife was housed in an unassuming small building with a sparse interior of glass, white plastic and shiny marble tiles,

⁵⁴ <http://g1.globo.com/pernambuco/noticia/2014/02/no-recife-espacos-reunem-clientes-para-consumir-shakes-e-chas.html>

⁵⁵ In Brazil, a scale of social class separates groups based on income from A to E. Class A includes the elite, class B comprises the middle / upper-middle classes; class E includes those who make minimum wage. This system has been codified by the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) and is used to discuss income-based social class in both official and popular forums.

⁵⁶ <http://www.joaualberto.com/2013/04/10/os-shakes-que-viraram-mania-no-recife/>

⁵⁷ “Amo na hora do almoço tomar meu shake e essa reunião com as pessoas que curtem a dieta saudável é muito bom.”

and an ambience halfway between a restaurant and a doctors' office waiting room. The interior was decorated in Herbalife's signature bright green and white, and filled with two large tables surrounded by the usual plastic chairs, which at lunchtime would be populated by handful of women who spend their lunch break there together most weekdays. My first visit to the *shake* was on just such a day, and around six or seven women were already gathered there, enjoying each other's company, leafing through magazines, and discussing the latest in-group gossip, all while sipping on the customary teas and meal-replacement shakes. After I had been introduced to the group, the conversation soon turned to fitness and nutrition, popular topics among patrons of a business that bills itself as a "nutrition club." As my sister and her fellow "*meninas do shake*," (or "*shake girls*" as they call each other) were catching up, I took in my surroundings. When I turned my attention back to the table, the topic had shifted to cosmetic surgery. While I knew several people in Recife who had undergone plastic surgery (all of them women), I had never heard them talk about it except in passing. I was surprised at how the women talked openly about various *plásticas* (plastic surgery procedures) they had undergone, comparing them to one another, discussing their successes and which surgeries they planned to do next. I was even more surprised when they started stripping off layers of clothing to compare results. "Look, they did such a great job! This one barely even left a scar!" While the display didn't bother me, I had little to contribute to the conversation, and after a few minutes it became clear that I was the only person at the table who had not had any *plásticas*. In jest, but also in earnest, my sister chided her friends for exposing themselves in public (we have a guest, you know!), and the show-and-tell session ended. I returned home that afternoon, feeling a bit bewildered, but intrigued.

What motivated these women to pursue numerous cosmetic operations? What motivated them to share those experiences and the scars they left behind, with friends in a semi-public space? It seemed to me that the *shake* Herbalife (at least at the time of day I visited) was understood and treated as a private social space, one reserved for women, rather than as a restaurant or public nutrition club, but why? Did the same discourses about beauty and self-making in northeastern Brazil apply to both plastic surgery and to less invasive interventions like weight loss shake routines? While I saw these as two very different modes of bodily control or discipline, my interactions at the *shake* suggested that women there saw them as part of the same suite of practices. Both seemed to be viewed as a relatively routine part of *se-produzir*, or self-production. Something about the experiences I had at the *Espaço de Vida Saudável* flipped a switch in terms of my thinking about femininity in Recife. They made me sharply aware of a reality I had experienced, but had not fully understood on previous visits, but which like many ethnographic insights, now seems obvious. What it means to be a woman in Recife is actually very different than what it means to occupy that subject position in the United States. This project seeks to shed light on the ways in which femininity is imagined and constructed in northeastern Brazil, and above all, to explore how female artists and musicians interact with these narratives. Can artists shape the possibilities for gender expression and roles through creative intervention? How does gender, and the constellation of ideas surrounding it, become real in the first place? Understanding how the Brazilian concept of *se-produzir* works is key to answering both of these questions.

The previous anecdote exemplifies several different modes of *se-produzir* that are integral to understanding how femininity is produced in Pernambuco. Because *se-produzir* is

essentially a kind of gendered self-making or self-production, it can be used coercively, to enforce hegemonic norms, but it can also be used to realize viable alternatives to those norms. As the examples presented in this chapter illustrate, I believe that artists can effect real change through their creative work, and that the personal (but also highly visible) choices they make surrounding norms of self-production are a significant part of this process. Chapter two of this thesis dealt with a variety of feminine archetypes specific to Pernambuco and to Brazil's northeast, and talked a little about how artists manipulate, undermine, and reinforce those archetypes in recordings, performances, and social media. In this chapter, I go further into the practices and processes that make these social identities real. While the previous chapter explored how femininities are categorized in Pernambuco, this chapter will examine how they are produced and naturalized. This conversation extends not only to personal self-production and issues of identity, but also to recording and performance aesthetics, and to women's bodies and voices themselves. As the opening anecdote illustrates, the most obvious application of *se-produzir* is its application to physical bodies. However, I argue that the voice is also a significant site for self-production. Because the voice is within and part of the body, the physicality of the body itself is audible in it. Just as bodies are produced in interaction with the constraints of gender roles, norms, and expectations, so then is the voice. The voice is where *se-produzir* becomes audible.

This chapter is separated into four main sections. The first section explains in greater detail the Brazilian concept of *se-produzir* and how this particular discourse of self production articulates with theories of gender performativity put forth by Judith Butler, Karen Barad and others. The second section explores strategies of resistance to hegemonic modes of *se-produzir*,

showing how artists are responding to the status quo by creating alternative styles of self-production. The third section of the chapter applies these concepts to the realm of vocal production, drawing on related scholarship that deals with how voices are gendered, and with the materiality of the voice. In it, I examine the ways voices are constructed and naturalized. The final section provides three case studies, one for each of the artists discussed in this thesis. It articulates the distinct ways Renata Rosa, Alessandra Leão, and Karina Buhr each engage with discourses of *se-produzir* in their work, and to what ends. The chapter concludes with a short discussion of the impact of these various strategies for employing *se-produzir*, and whether or not they are specific to female composer-performers, or *cantautoras*.⁵⁸ I discuss the work of Brazilian scholar-artists Isabel Nogueira and Laila Rosa, and how their concept of Brazilian feminist epistemologies, embodied in the character of the *cantautora*, can serve as a model for better understanding the contributions of Renata Rosa, Alessandra Leão, and Karina Buhr.

“Se-Produzir” and Gender Performativity:

As actors with agency, but who are nonetheless caught up in a compulsory performance of their gender, women in Recife produce themselves in ways that make their subject position coherent to both themselves and to others in the larger society. These performances can reinforce dominant archetypes and ideals, or can subvert them. Often, as Judith Butler explains in her essay “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” they do both (Butler 1991, 24). The resulting tension is frequently unintended, sometimes subversive, and it is a perennial characteristic of the

⁵⁸ *Cantautora* combines two Portuguese words: *cantora* (female singer) and *autora* (female author), connoting an artist involved with various aspects of the creative process.

cycle of imitation that produces gendered identities. Butler applies this argument to sexuality here, but it is also applicable to gender:

If repetition is the way in which power works to construct the illusion of a seamless heterosexual identity, if heterosexuality is compelled to *repeat itself* in order to establish the illusion of its own uniformity and identity, then this is an identity permanently at risk, for what if it fails to repeat, or if the very exercise of repetition is redeployed for a very different performative purpose?... That there is a need for a repetition at all is a sign that identity is not self-identical. It requires to be instituted again and again, which is to say that it runs the risk of becoming *de-instituted* at every interval (Butler 1991, 24).

It is through similar acts of repetition that gender becomes real as an identity. As she explains it, “coherent gender, achieved through an apparent repetition of the same, produces as its *effect* the illusion of a prior and volitional subject” (Butler 1991, 24). Gender is performative in the sense that it is not expressed or confirmed by a person’s acts and ways of being, but rather is a *product* of those acts.

In some senses, the Brazilian concept of *se-produzir* is compatible with Butler’s conception of gender as performative. *Se-produzir* implies that people have the ability to re-make or produce themselves in particular ways, and that this self-production is desirable and ultimately necessary. Like gender, *se-produzir* is compulsory. That is, there are consequences for doing it “wrong.” In fact, *se-produzir* could be viewed as part of the set of performative acts that make up a particular gendered identity (woman) in a particular place (Brazil). But I also believe that the concept of *se-produzir* goes beyond what Butler describes as “performative gender attributes and acts” (Butler 1988, 528). One way it differs is in how *se-produzir* is inscribed on the physical body, the way in which it *makes* the body. *Se-produzir* is not only performative of an identity, it is performative of the physical body itself.

While Butler does address aspects of this type of negotiation between materiality and conceptual categories in her 1993 monograph *Bodies that Matter*, she frames this discussion primarily in terms of biological sex, explaining how physical bodies are made intelligible (or not), based on their alignment with previously existing categories. This constitutes a significant contribution to literature on the subjects of sex, gender, and sexuality, but Butler's theorization of these concepts in *Bodies that Matter* still does not completely address the material aspects of gender construction as it plays out in Brazilian discourses of *se-produzir*.

Since the publication of Butler's most influential works in the 1990s, a number of other scholars have joined the dialogue on performativity and have begun to broaden the possibilities of the concept. Scholars associated with the New Materialist turn in particular have critiqued Butler's concept of performativity in ways that can further illuminate this discussion of *se-produzir*. Drawing on the work of feminist science studies scholar Donna Haraway, whose "notion of the material-semiotic...thinks the material, bodily fleshiness and the discursive-linguistic together" (Geerts 2016),⁵⁹ physicist-philosopher Karen Barad critiques Foucault's (and by extension Butler's) framing of discourse (read: performativity), as purely linguistic phenomena that are insufficiently grounded in the materiality of physical bodies.

In her article, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," Barad draws on the work of physicist Niels Bohr, whose concept of "apparatuses" overlaps with how Foucault conceptualizes discourse in his work, while providing greater attention to materiality:

For Bohr, apparatuses are particular physical arrangements that give meaning to certain concepts to the exclusion of others; they are the local physical conditions that enable and

⁵⁹ <https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/p/performativity.html>

constrain knowledge practices such as conceptualizing and measuring; they are productive of (and part of) the phenomena produced; they enact a local cut that produces “objects” of particular knowledge practices within the particular phenomena produced. (Barad 2003, 819)

As Barad shows, this goes beyond the idea of a discourse that is “‘supported’ or ‘sustained’ by material practices, as Foucault seems to suggest,” but rather implies a much deeper entanglement between concepts and materiality (820).

In theorizing “Posthumanist Performativity,” Karen Barad not only expands the concept of performativity to include both human and non-human actors, she shows that discourse and materiality are mutually constitutive: “Materiality is discursive...just as discursive practices are always already material” (822). Materiality is *made* in performance. This insight has significant implications for understanding self-making practices such as the Brazilian concept of *se-produzir*, in which the “material dimensions of regulatory practices” come to the forefront (Barad 2003, 822). *Se-produzir* provides an excellent example of how Barad’s dialectic between materiality (in this case, the physical body) and discourse (discourses of femininity in a particular context) plays out in the flesh. While this conceptual, and very real, linkage of bodies and ideas is broadly applicable, it is also particularly suited to an exploration of how gender is constructed in the Brazilian northeast.

Based on my research and on personal experience, I believe that the idea of body-making as part of self-production is central to how femininity works in Brazil, particularly for certain populations in Recife, Pernambuco, the focus of this study. As Alexander Edmonds’ work on beauty aesthetics and plastic surgery in Brazil has shown, this field of Brazilian medicine has a particular philosophy that distinguishes it from plastic surgery elsewhere. In fact, doctors, patients, and the general public in Brazil tend to view reconstructive and cosmetic surgeries as

points on a continuum, rather than as two altogether separate (differently motivated and valued), types of medicine (Edmonds 2010, 49). These beliefs have motivated the transformation of plastic surgery in Brazil from a dichotomous field in which reconstructive surgeries were viewed as necessary (and therefore as medicine) and cosmetic surgeries were viewed as elective or even frivolous (and therefore, not medicine), to its current state, where both types of procedures are seen as “psychotherapeutic intervention[s] worthy of being offered in a public health system to needy patients” (ibid.). In other words, both types of procedures are now viewed as routine medical interventions aimed at improving or solving a “health problem.”

When prevailing discourses (not just about beauty, but even more significantly, about *health*) turn experimental forms of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and cosmetic surgery into routine and medically acceptable practices, the result is a “redefinition of normal femininity” (Edmonds and Sanabria 2014, 211-13). As such, these practices have become part of what it means “to be properly and ideally desirable and desiring...to balance reproductive and sexual desires...to be a ‘good’ mother and a ‘modern’ woman,” in particular for Brazilian women in classes A and B (213).

Failure to buy into these ideals and to achieve them by employing the necessary “self-care”⁶⁰ tools of HRT or *plástica* is in effect, a failure of *se-produzir*, a failure to produce oneself as a modern woman and as an acceptable subject.⁶¹ As Butler notes, “performing one’s gender

⁶⁰ Edmonds and Sanabria employ the concept of “cuidar-se” or self-care to encompass varied practices from hormone therapy and *plástica* to work-outs, weight management, manicures, tanning and body waxing (Edmonds and Sanabria 2014, 203). While this category overlaps with “se-produzir,” as I see it, the later is more productive for creating a dialogue between Brazilian understandings of self-making and scholarship on gender constructivism.

⁶¹ While many readers in the US might associate use of HRT or plastic surgery with trans women, in this case, these practices are applied specifically to cis women who have reached menopause. Discourses of *se-produzir* certainly do impact trans women, however, but not in quite the same ways.

wrong initiates a set of punishments both obvious and indirect, and performing it well provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity after all” (Butler 1988, 528). Likewise, proper self-production in Brazil confirms widely held beliefs that *plástica* and hormone therapy are *normal* and *essential* to achieving a basic, acceptable level of femininity, to the maintenance of romantic relationships, and to maintaining high self-esteem. Normative discourses of self-production reassure women that they can have it all, and that the only real impediment to achieving these ideals could be a lack of financial resources—still a significant challenge for many Brazilian women. As in Butler’s model, alternative or deviant self-production incurs punishments. Women interviewed by Sanabria and Edwards reported many of these, from being chastised by gynecologists for refusing HRT, to the breakdown (or fear of a breakdown) of domestic, professional, or class relationships (212).⁶² The cost of these practices is extremely high, both in the sense of monetary cost, but also in a personal sense. Women must actively work to counter these narratives with alternative modes of self-production, in order to create space for new identities to exist.

Alternative Self-production and Resistance:

In spite of the predominance of certain types of self-care or self-production, Brazilian women still can and do create powerful alternative narratives. Ethnomusicologist Sydney Hutchinson has documented similar processes among female musicians in the Dominican

⁶² This situation is further complicated by the fact that HRT is also prescribed by doctors for a variety of other health concerns related to menopause, not all of which are related to *se-produzir*. The issue is certainly not black and white. However, these other medical uses do not negate the increasing demand for HRT by cis women in Brazil, much of which is driven by the factors listed above.

Republic. In her book *Tigers of a Different Stripe: Performing Gender in Dominican Music*, Hutchinson shows how musicians are often at the forefront of this type of alternative self-production. This is precisely because music is one arena in which gender is built (Hutchinson 2016, 11):

Musical performance actually brings cultural norms and notions of gender—really gender itself—into being. [These] performances...the movements, gestures and musical sounds Dominican artists produce at particular moments and in particular places—are creative not just in the sense that they are artistic but also in the sense that they bring particular identities into being. They therefore have the potential to change those identities that are currently dominant.
(Hutchinson 2016, 11-12)

Artists have the power to make alternative ways of being real and visible. As Hutchinson shows, the *Tígueras* of Dominican *merengue típico*, female *típico* artists whose performance of gender draws heavily on the *Tiguere* (an overtly sexualized, powerful trickster archetype generally associated with a particular version of masculinity in the Dominican Republic), are one subset of creative professionals who use musical performance to bring new identities into being in the Dominican Republic. Like these Dominican *Tígueras*, the Brazilian musicians who are the focus of this thesis, Alessandra Leão, Karina Buhr, and Renata Rosa, all perform versions of femininity that lie outside the norm. By referencing regional symbols and archetypes in their music, visuals, and self-presentation, and by playing with gendered expectations about bodies and voices, Leão, Rosa, and Buhr help make space for new identities that still feel regionally coherent and relevant.

Since the physical body is a battleground for discourses of *se-produzir*, it makes sense that it would also be a major site of resistance. Both Buhr and Leão have tried to reclaim the way their own bodies are represented in the visual media associated with the recent albums/album

collections of both artists: *Selvática* (savage) and *Língua* (tongue) respectively. Each artist posed nude for the cover art associated with her album(s),⁶³ both as part of an artistic statement made by the work as a whole, but also as an act of resistance to northeastern Brazilian gender norms. This is particularly significant because as both artists' albums are self-published, the aesthetic choices therein—musical and visual—are entirely their own. I will begin with Buhr and her album *Selvática* (savage), since it was previously introduced in chapter two.

Since the album's release in 2015, *Selvática* (savage) has garnered controversy in online forums, and on social media platforms, including Facebook. On the cover of the album, the artist poses topless, adorned with African-inspired jewelry, and clutching a dagger in her hands. According to Jesse Brent in his review of the album for Afropop Worldwide, this pose is “inspired by the female warriors of Brazil and Dahomey (modern-day Benin).” In other interviews, Buhr has also noted the relation between this cover image and the album's title *Selvática* (savage), which connects not only to this imagined (and historical) female warrior, but also to apocalyptic, biblical imagery, and to local myths (Bridges 2015).

⁶³ *Selvática* (by Buhr) is a single album whereas *Língua* (by Leão) is a trilogy of albums that shares common musical and visual material.



Figure 1: Karina Buhr, Album Cover for *Selvática* (2015)

The racial dynamics of this aesthetic choice are clearly problematic from a North American perspective, in particular because Buhr is white,⁶⁴ but I do not believe that this image reads in quite the same way in the context of northeastern Brazil. Because of the ways in which discourses of miscegenation have been incorporated into those of Brazilian national identity, many Brazilians feel a sense of shared ownership towards minority cultural heritages, whether or

⁶⁴ Racial categories in Brazil do not work in quite the same way as they do in North America, but colorism is still a major issue in Brazil, where it is often disguised in terms of economic difference. The fact remains that people with darker skin almost always have fewer social advantages than people with lighter skin, including Buhr, whose heritage is primarily German.

not these make up a significant part of their own family histories. Particularly in the Brazilian northeast, a racially diverse region with many Afro-Brazilian and indigenous Brazilian descendants, among other groups, it is increasingly not uncommon for Brazilians of all heritages to participate in performance genres that have specific minority ethnic group associations. These qualms aside, I also believe that part of Buhr's project in *Selvática*, is a reclamation and repurposing of the term "savage." Buhr understands how this type of language has been used to enforce women's marginalization, and she wants to turn it on its head to present women not just as wild, but also as strong, agentive, and powerful in their wildness.

To accomplish this, the political and aesthetic statement of Buhr's album cover works on a number of levels. By posing as a Dahomey warrior, she draws on Brazilian discourses of femininity, race, and sexuality that idealize the sensuality of black and brown bodies, while at the same time viewing them as dangerous because of their perceived close connection to the natural world (as with the *mulata*). These discourses situate the female Dahomey warrior as part of the mythical and natural environment of northeastern Brazil, but they also convey resistance. In addition to evoking the struggles of Afro-Brazilians, Buhr's exhibition of her naked body also resists social codes that demand modesty and deference from women. Shortly after it was released in 2015 and posted on Buhr's page, Facebook removed the album cover due to its violation of the company's rules prohibiting nudity. While Facebook is not a Brazilian company and its policies cannot stand in for an understanding of local norms, Buhr has received criticism for the ways she chooses to display her body from others both within and outside her native country.

In tandem with the sonic contents of *Selvática* (savage), the album's cover helps produce an alternative vision of Brazilian femininity. As such, it can be considered a radical proclamation of ownership by Buhr over her body, of personal agency and sexual empowerment. This is significant, because even though the display of women's bodies in particular circumstances is more socially accepted in Brazil than in the United States, the presentation of those bodies is often one that privileges the male gaze and in which women themselves have little agency. In *Selvática*, Buhr seeks to deconstruct this relationship by *demanding* that the viewer engage with her body on *her* terms.

This representation is consistent with the way(s) in which Buhr presents herself throughout her creative opus, in a variety of media, and onstage. A quick survey of photos from recent performances posted on Buhr's website shows her dressed in head-to-toe fishnet or other sheer fabrics, leotards without pants, and her characteristic heavy makeup. Often she is photographed singing while jumping, thrashing, or lying on the floor (Buhr 2016).⁶⁵ While they may adapt aspects of feminine presentation from dominant ideologies, Buhr's self-eroticizing portrayals are also often ironic, and can be read on a variety of levels. She simultaneously makes space for alternative Brazilian femininities, while affirming the power of the erotic and claiming it as her own.

For Alessandra Leão, posing nude on the cover and liner notes of her album trilogy *Língua* (tongue) produces a different type of Brazilian feminist narrative, but one that is equally powerful and significant. The three albums that comprise the trilogy, *Pedra de Sal* (salt rock) (2014), *Aço* (steel) (2015) and *Língua* (2015), each include songs that relate to the body,

⁶⁵ <https://www.karinabuhr.com.br/media>

femininity, and spirituality. While each album is distinct, the album artwork, sonic landscape, and thematic universe of *Língua* is clearly common to all of them. Significantly less has been written about Leão and her work than about either Buhr or Rosa, but her website, social media presence, and the works themselves can provide insight into Leão's process and goals.

Like Buhr's album *Selvática*, the artwork associated with the *Língua* (tongue) series⁶⁶ includes photos of the artist's naked body, but it differs in presentational style and artistic aim. On the album cover of *Língua*, the final album in the series of the same name, Leão appears slightly out-of-focus against a background of solid red, as a splash of bright yellow paint obscures the photo, as if she had splashed it directly at the camera. The bright colors and paint-splashing add to the playful atmosphere of the album artwork, which contrasts with that of the other two albums in the series. *Pedra de Sal* (salt rock), for instance, takes a darker tone. The cover of this album is mostly black, with Leão's face partially covered again by paint, but this time in a way that obscures her features. She appears with her eyes closed, with heavy black eye-makeup that leaves the viewer unsure of whether this is a face or a mask. Because this is the first album in the series, and because the artwork is so different from that of Leão's previous albums, it alerts the viewer that new sounds lie ahead. In the second album in the series, *Aço* (steel), a dark blue background shimmers like water, a recurring theme throughout the series. Floating on top, or perhaps about to dive in, Leão's body is covered not in clothing, but instead in fine red and blue lines. A closer look reveals these patterns to be muscle, bone, and tissue, an interior

⁶⁶ The *Língua* trilogy (Alessandra Leão), contains three separate albums: *Pedra de Sal* (Salt Rock), *Aço* (Steel), and *Língua* (Tongue). The name of the last album is the same as that of the series as a whole, but these are separate entities. I will specify in each case to which one I am referring.

body that is visible from the surface. As in *Pedra de Sal*, this album's artwork is evocative of its sonic contents, that is visceral, transparent, and raw.



Figure 2: Album Artwork - *Lingua* Trilogy, Artwork by Vania Medeiros (above)



Figure 3: Album cover detail:
Lingua

Figure 4: Album cover,

Língua

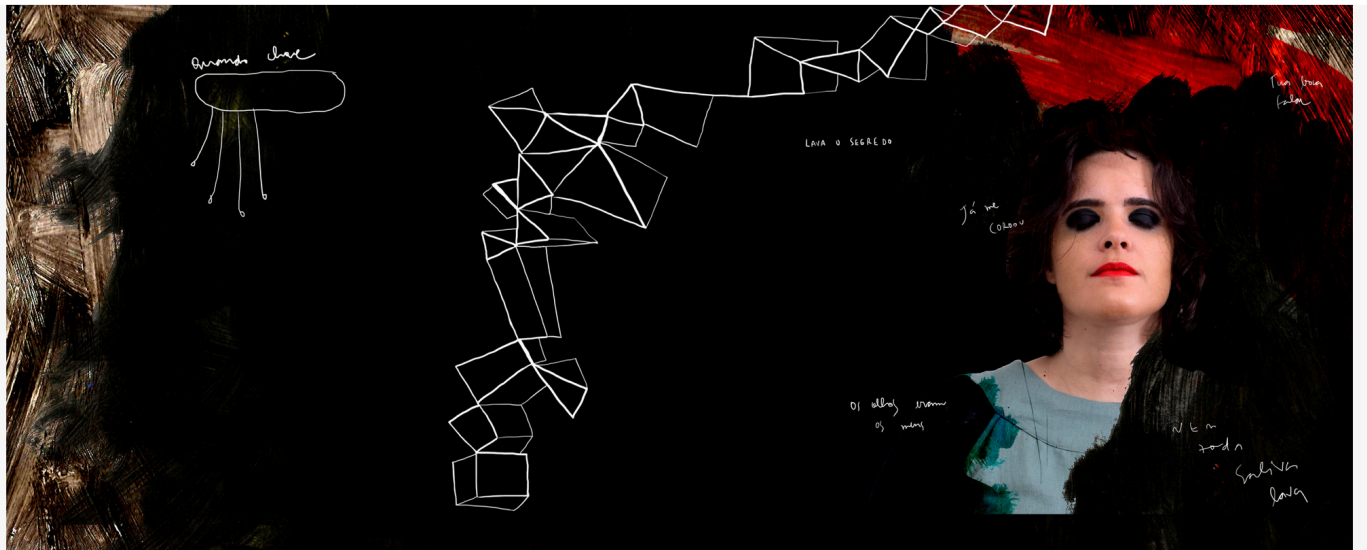


Figure 5: Album cover, *Pedra de Sal*



Figure 6: Album art detail, *Aço*



Figure 7: Album art detail, *Aço*

Thematically rich, the series progresses visually from darkness into light.

While Leão is clearly naked in the photos for *Língua* (tongue) and *Aço* (steel), this is more implied than explicit. Leão's full body is rarely shown. Unlike Buhr's photo for the *Selvática* cover, the framing and artistic treatment of the photos for *Língua*, *Aço*, and *Pedra de Sal* (salt rock) set more of a playful, rather than confrontational tone for the series. Overall, Leão's artistic statement seems to be more about reclaiming her body and its beauty for herself, while letting the viewer catch a glimpse of this magical, sometimes savage, interior world. Compared to Buhr's overt confrontation, Leão's visual media is more subtle, but no less critical of hegemonic gender norms. Leão's body, like her voice, is beautiful and radiant, and she knows it.

But her body is also unruly, in that (at least in some ways) it does not fit within the ideals to which *se-produzir* requires urban, middle-class women to aspire. In June, 2017, Leão shaved her head. While this act of self-making may not seem that radical in a North American context, in Brazil, and in the socially more conservative Northeast in particular, it is clearly a political and defiant act. In the Northeast and throughout the country, Afro-Brazilian religions such as Candomblé and Umbanda are becoming more socially accepted in general, and more popular among racially and economically diverse groups of Brazilians. In spite of this progress, they still face persecution from some segments of society and are generally viewed as being outside the mainstream. Because Leão is a Candomblé practitioner, her choice to shave her head could be motivated by religious as well as aesthetic concerns. Interestingly though, Leão's Instagram feed shows that her choice to shave her head was also a conscious act of *se-produzir*. In a post from June 4, 2017, Leão posted a photo of herself in profile, sporting her new style for the first time,

with the caption “Today’s the day to take new photos for the new website”⁶⁷ (Leão 2017).⁶⁸ She chose this look, in particular, to represent her artistic and creative work as part of her professional portfolio.

Even more than Leão’s hairstyle, however, I believe that her inclusion of nude (or partially nude) photos as part of the album artwork for *Aço* (steel) and *Língua* (tongue), as well as on her website, is a significant act of resistance. Leão’s visual presence can be read in this way in part because her body type does not conform to the thin “ideal” promoted by the Brazilian media, and by regimes of self-care and self-production in Brazil. These discourses dictate above all that women should have control over their bodies, and therefore should employ methods of *se-produzir*, from weight-loss shakes to hormone treatments and plastic surgery, to achieve an ideal. This type of *se-produzir* is embedded in a complex matrix along with categories of race, class, and religion, among others, and is therefore not applied by every woman in the same manner. Even so, women who fail to conform to ideals of hegemonic self production are seen by many as “‘brave’, ‘alternative’ or irresponsible, and lacking in basic self-care,” (Edmonds and Sanabria 2014, 211). By these standards, Leão’s choice to exhibit her body in a public forum could be considered a radical act of self love. By declining to participate in normative discourses of *se-produzir* such as those that govern the *Espaço de Vida Saudavel* case study presented at the beginning of this chapter, Leão shows that women have agency in determining what beauty is. Not only that, this act of self love is also a political statement and a proclamation of identity. Like Buhr, Leão’s self-styling is alternative and *alternativa*, one of the identity categories

⁶⁷ “Dia de fazer fotos novas pro site novo que virá”

⁶⁸ https://www.instagram.com/p/BU7naVkjumZ/?taken-by=alessandra_leao

discussed in the previous chapter. As such, it makes space for different ways of being a woman, for new ways of being a female artist within the existing framework of possibilities. Leão and Buhr's performances serve as a foils for another feminine archetype discussed in chapter two: the *patricinha*. As such, these performances are understood as being directly political. Through this alternative performance of self, Alessandra Leão not only projects a particular subject position and political stance, she shows that she is an artist with agency, and that her power extends into the realm of the erotic, as well as the spiritual, the mysterious.

Feminist Aesthetics: The *Cantautora* as Category

These conscious acts of self production not only map onto the body and are activated by it, as we have seen above, they also make it. Likewise, the human voice is produced and naturalized in a similar manner. Here I explore how the voice is produced and manipulated through performative acts, and how production aesthetics are also intimately linked to discourses of gender in Pernambuco. I also show one way that female artists in the Brazilian Northeast are thinking about these processes and renegotiating them, through the political-aesthetic category of the *cantautora*.

Gendered associations, taboos, and prescriptions associated with instrumental music-making are well documented in a wide variety of cultures, including in Bahia⁶⁹ and across the Brazilian northeast. While certain instruments, genres, or styles of playing are certainly gendered (as the challenges faced by female percussionists in this study illustrate), vocal production is gendered in ways that are even more thoroughly naturalized, and therefore more complicated to

⁶⁹ Northeastern Brazilian state located to the south of Pernambuco

untangle. As Suzanne Cusick has noted, voices often “stand for the bodily imperatives of biological sex” (Cusick 1999, 29).

Unlike the behaviors we might agree are performances of gender (clothes, gestures, ways of walking), voices originate inside the body’s borders and not on the body’s surfaces. We assume that...they cannot be “performances,” in that they seem not to be choices. In our common sense, we believe the voice *is* the body.
(Cusick 1999, 29)

Cusick challenges this common sense as she reveals the culturally constructed nature of voices, that are in fact “always performances of a relationship negotiated between the individual vocalizer and the vocalizer’s culture” (ibid.). Because of the way it is often naturalized, Cusick believes song could be particularly suited as a site for cultural resistance (38). Indeed, Buhr, Leão, and Rosa are all masters of this type of reframing of bodily relationships to culture. By selectively employing, manipulating, and shifting discourses of *se-produzir*, Buhr, Leão, and Rosa create new ways of being female that are locally meaningful. Vocal production is an essential component of this material-cultural reframing.

Smooth, precise, and harmonious singing, creative wordplay and poetry are among the most prized elements in Brazilian Popular Music or MPB, and for female artists in particular, there is a marked emphasis on song. While Leão, Buhr, and Rosa would all more likely be considered ‘alternative’ or ‘regional’ in terms of genre, the aesthetics associated with larger national categories such as MPB are important to consider here, because they impact the way in which gendered norms of vocal production are understood by artists and audiences alike. While not unique to Brazil or to Brazilian popular music, discourses that link women with song (and exclude them from instrumental music-making and composition), are so pervasive there, that they structure national categories for popular music. Many female composer/performers,

including Karina Buhr (Sanchez, 2014), have reacted against the label of *cantora* (female singer), a category frequently applied to Brazilian female artists across a wide range of genres. While some artists use the term *cantora* to identify themselves, many women find being identified in this way problematic because it downplays their agency as artists active in *all* parts of the creative process. A *cantora* is a woman who sings, and in most cases, she is understood to be an interpreter of music written by others (coded male); rarely is she (understood as) a composer, poet, bandleader, producer, or other authority figure.

To provide viable alternatives for naming their own musical-authorial pursuits, and to make space for other Brazilian women to do the same, scholars Laila Rosa and Isabel Nogueira (both active in [ethno]musicology, as well as women's and gender studies) propose the term *cantautora* as an alternative for existing labels such as the limiting *cantora*, or the more specific *compositora* (female composer). The word *cantautora* combines two separate words: *cantora* (female singer) and *autora* (female author), to denote a female artist who is involved with various aspects of the creative process. In their 2015 article, "What Moves Us, What Unfolds Us, What Instigates Us: Notes About Feminist Epistemologies, Creative Process, Education and Transgressive Possibilities in Music,"⁷⁰ Rosa and Nogueira borrow their category of *cantautora* from Latin American Spanish, "reformulating the concept...[to] refute the role of masculine authority as universal creator"⁷¹ (Rosa and Nogueira 2015, 33). *Cantautora* "designates a

⁷⁰ "O Que Nos Move, O Que Nos Dobra, O Que Nos Instiga: Notas Sobre Epistemologia Feministas, Processos Criativos, Educação e Possibilidades Transgressoras em Música," (Rosa and Nogueira, 2015. in *Revista Vórtex*, Curitiba, v.3, n.2, 2015, p.25-56.) (titled translated by Rosa and Nogueira, all other quotations translated by the author)

⁷¹ "Reformulamos o conceito de *cantautora*, refutando o lugar de autoridade masculina de criador universal" (Rosa and Nogueira 2015, 33).

composer who interprets her own works,” but in Rosa and Nogueira’s reformulation it is also a political and activist identity (Rosa and Nogueira 2015, 33).

The work of a *cantautora* differs from that of a *cantora* (singer/interpreter) or from that of a folkloric singer because it brings with it the question of authorship, the interpretation of one’s own [artistic] production, generally linked to political themes, but fundamentally [distinguished] by the act of bringing her thoughts and ideas into the center of musical discourse.⁷²
(Rosa and Nogueira 2015, 33)

If *cantautora* is a category with political and activist implications, it makes sense that such a category could be useful for female artists in Brazil. While not all women’s song is political, the nature of gendered musical divisions creates a dynamic in which certain aspects of women’s music-making are coded as transgressive and therefore provide significant political and activist possibilities. These include roles and activities such as public instrumental performance, especially percussion; working as a composer; and working as the leader of an ensemble.

The reason these roles are viewed as socially transgressive has to do with the ways in which vocal production and instrumental music-making are gendered, and subsequently, valued. While women are far from the only people in northeastern Brazil who sing, women’s music-making is valued primarily *as* song in dominant constructions of gender and musicality. As such, Brazilian women’s singing in a popular music context is often viewed as a product of innate talent, rather than as creative innovation or as a cultivated practice demonstrating hard work. Women’s singing is naturalized in a way that negates authorial or creative contributions. This dynamic is part of why Brazilian music scholars such as Rosa and Nogueira feel the need to

⁷² “O trabalho da *cantautora* difere-se da cantora/intérprete ou da cantadora/folclorista porque traz consigo a questão da autoria, do interpretar a própria produção, vinculada geralmente a temáticas políticas, mas fundamentalmente por trazer seu pensamento e suas concepções para o centro do discurso musical,” (Rosa and Nogueira 2015, 33).

advocate for a new identity category rooted in feminist epistemologies, one that could better describe their own experiences as singers, but also as scholars, composers, and performers.

The creation and performance of new identities, such as that of the *cantautora*, helps make space for other types of music-making, as well as other ways of being female in northeastern Brazil. Significantly, it is not a category imposed from above, but rather, one emerging from within. In addition to its theorization by Rosa and Nogueira, both singer/composer/performers themselves, other female artists have begun to adopt the *cantautora* terminology, including musician and visual artist Tulipa Ruiz in her testimonial for Alessandra Leão's *Língua* trilogy accessible via Leão's website (Ruiz 2017). It makes sense that Ruiz would describe Leão as "A cantautora percussionista pernambucopaulistanizada" or rather "The São Paulo-ized Pernambucan, woman-singer-composer percussionist," because, like many contemporary women artists with one foot in regional music and another in transnational sonic exchange, Leão's music and career are impossible to describe using any one of the existing categories available in Brazilian popular music discourse (Ruiz 2017).

For artists like Leão and Buhr, the label of *cantautora* can be empowering because it helps make visible the breadth of their creative work, as opposed to focusing exclusively on one piece of it. However, as significant as authorship is for each of these artists, I argue that much of what makes their work political, activist, or otherwise transgressive, *alternativa*, is contained sonically, in the voice itself. Their political work is not solely constituted via particular categories. Likewise, it is not contained only in the lyrics, nor in visual or social media presence, but in the voices of the artists.

The Voice

The concept of voice has a long history in ethnomusicology, anthropology, and other related disciplines. To understand how *cantautoras* like Karina Buhr, Renata Rosa, and Alessandra Leão mobilize their voices to bring alternative femininities into being, I provide a short survey of applicable scholarship on voice. Anthropologist and music scholar Amanda Weidman provides a good starting point for this discussion with her characterization of voice as “both sonic/material phenomenon and culturally elaborated metaphor” (Weidman 2014, 38). This attention to the multiple registers of voice is helpful, because *cantautoras* are concerned with both the voice in its material sense, and also in the sense of agency and social advocacy, of ‘giving voice to.’

Roland Barthes was one of the first to theorize the materiality of the voice, introducing his now famous concept the “grain of the voice,” which relates to the embodied, “dual production of language and music” (Barthes 1977, 181). In the same chapter, Barthes calls attention to the material and tactile qualities inherent in the body and the voice, the ways in which the body can be *heard* in the voice. As he explains, “the ‘grain’ is the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs” (Barthes 1977, 188). Other scholars have since expanded on Barthes’ ideas about the embodied nature of voices, in ways that highlight how voices come to embody the sonic identities many listeners take for granted. Weidman, as well as musicologist Nina Eidsheim, among others, have been at the forefront of this discussion.

In her work, Eidsheim has investigated assumptions about the voice, and about vocal timbre, that frame these elements as innate and unchanging. She challenges the ways in which particular vocal timbres are racialized: understood as being naturally linked to particular bodies.

In addition, she highlights the co-constructing relationship between vocal embodiment and audience reception, resulting in “voices [that are] are physically and metaphorically bent into certain corporeal and sonic molds so that they may fit certain preconceived sonic identities” (Eidsheim 2012, 18).

In examining the ways in which the voice and body are both culturally constructed and thoroughly material, Eidsheim draws attention to many of the same factors at play in the Brazilian discourse of *se-produzir*. Like bodies sculpted to fit an ideal type through plastic surgery and other self-making practices, voices can also be (and almost always are) intentionally sculpted: “Acting material bodies may be formed and physically altered by mechanical devices, deliberate impediments, and even repetitive imitations of sonic ideas. Repeated action literally forms the body” (Eidsheim 2012, 17). Eidsheim notes that “the material that is the singing voice, i.e., the body in its material dimension, never exists in a pre-cultural state,” (13). This is true of other aspects of the physical body as well, which, as *se-produzir* implies, must be made culturally meaningful according to local standards of beauty and utility.

Other aspects of voice that are relevant to this discussion are the role of technological mediation in vocal practice, consideration of the voice as instrument, and the iconic status accorded to certain voices. Both Eidsheim and Weidman have pioneered studies that seriously consider the voice as an instrument (organology of the voice), and that simultaneously consider its relationship to technology in terms of vocal production. The voice is produced not only by “what is being done with the body, but also with space and technology” (Weidman 2014, 41). *Cantautoras* like Buhr, Leão, and Rosa are particularly attuned to this type of technological self-production. As the case studies included below will demonstrate, these artists each engage with

technological mediation in different ways, shaping the ways in which their voices are understood to signify in association with particular politics of identity.

In addition, Buhr, Rosa, and Leão all negotiate the role of “singer as icon.” Because of the heightened nature of public performance, and the particularities of inhabiting this realm as a northeastern Brazilian woman, the stresses of *se-produzir* are even more intense for performing artists than they are for women who are not engaged in this type of work. As Eidsheim has noted, “iconic singers are heightened carriers of culture. As representatives, these singers become idealized versions of the various roles on offer” (Eidsheim 2017, 253). This dynamic creates both the potential for both change and for personal harm. While iconic status can provoke intense public scrutiny of an artist’s personal life and choices, it can also provide the possibility for alternative or deviant performances of self to be shared with a broader audience, adding to the “roles on offer.”

Popular music in the Brazilian northeast provides a heightened arena for the performance and negotiation of norms around gender, sexuality, and female agency. If, as Cusick states, song is “a set of cultural disciplines of the mind and body that is not necessary for survival... a discourse one can accept, reject, or play with,” and which therefore provides “a more flexible field for the performance of gender, sex, and sexuality” than other performative acts such as speech, it makes sense that song would serve as a conduit for performative intervention (Cusick 1999, 38). By engaging with the discourse of the *cantora*, but adapting this limiting archetype to serve their own purposes, contemporary female artists are able to create space for alternative modes of *se-produzir*. In their public performances, recordings, visual art, social media activity, activism, and other creative work, Leão, Buhr, and Rosa present three different perspectives on

how Brazilian *cantautoras* can negotiate these dynamics to achieve their personal goals and simultaneously present new possibilities for femininities in the Brazilian northeast.

Renata Rosa: A Dive into the Natural

Renata Rosa is one of only a handful of professional *rabequeiras* (female instrumentalists who play the rabeça, a Brazilian fiddle) active in Pernambuco today, and has been increasingly recognized for her songwriting and arrangements. Even so, singing is also a central part of what she does as an artist. Rosa has self-identified as a *cantora* in interviews, and continually highlights this aspect of her work. In both the vocal and instrumental elements of her performance, Rosa emphasizes similar aesthetics and goals: first, the cultivation of a “natural” sound, drawing on “traditional” and indigenous styles and genres; second, the creation of a sonic space removed from the modern and from the urban; third, the inextricable fusion of movement and sound, in particular, as this relates to the embodiment of the voice.

Like her former bandmates/collaborators Leão and Buhr, Rosa’s early career involved ties to traditional music genres such as *cavalo marinho*, *maracatu rural* (*maracatu de baque solto*),⁷³ and *cantoria de viola*,⁷⁴ in which she became involved as a teenager. Studying rabeça with Seu Luiz Paixão, following her move to Pernambuco from São Paulo, Rosa became one of a number of younger musicians of that era to become interested in “rediscovering” the traditions of

⁷³ Mentioned briefly in Chapter one, the reader may recall that *maracatu de baque solto* is a style of *maracatu* practiced more frequently in rural areas of Pernambuco, that includes indigenous spiritual elements, folk poetry, music, and a variety of dramatic dances (Murphy 2006, 89).

⁷⁴ *Cantoria de viola* is a musical genre found in both northeastern and central-southern Brazil, that features songs with poetic texts and guitar accompaniment. The genre includes both epic songs and “song duels” where two performers improvise intricate rhymes. It is part of a suite of practices that also includes *Literatura de Cordel* (Cordel chapbook poetry) (Murphy 2006, 113).

the northeast region (Rao 2012). As with other artists mentioned here previously (in particular Leão, Buhr and their band Comadre Fulozinha, Siba and his band Mestre Ambrósio, and the band Cascabulho), Renata Rosa's early work was clearly regionally focused, and concerned with updating traditional music rather than with incorporating it into international sounds. In interviews, Rosa has characterized her first two albums as part of "a deep dive into the traditions [in which she] took part, in the countryside of the states of Pernambuco and Alagoas" (Rao 2012). This aesthetic differentiated Rosa and her compatriots from other mangue-affiliated artists such as Chico Science & Nação Zumbi (CSNZ), and others in the more mainstream mangue camp who were interested in combining maracatu with hip-hop and funk, in equal proportions.

Since the early 2000s, Renata Rosa has continued to focus on Brazilian musics with strong ties to the rural northeast, combined with a particular spiritual and political orientation connecting her to the "world music" scene, especially in Europe, where she has toured extensively. One important part of this aesthetic is the idea of naturalness. In each of Rosa's three solo albums, *Zunido da Mata* (2003)—(Whistling of the Forest), *Manto dos Sonhos* (2008)—(Cloak of Dreams), and *Encantações* (2015)—(Incantations), she employs almost exclusively acoustic timbres, with little electronic mediation beyond amplification. This is not to say, however, that the albums have a low production value. While Rosa chooses not to play with electronic timbres in her solo work, this seems like an intentional choice. As part of her "deep dive" into genres including *cavalo marinho*, *maracatu rural*, *coco*, and kariri-xocó⁷⁵ polyphonic singing, Rosa seeks to absorb the stylistic and aesthetic lessons of these genres, sometimes reproducing them, sometimes using them as the inspiration for new works. All of these styles of

⁷⁵ an indigenous tribe in northeastern Brazil

music include primarily acoustic instruments or unmediated voices, and they also index local discourses about rural spaces. Renata Rosa's pursuit of naturalness is part of a larger mission to vividly capture a particular (rural) place, a particular magic, a place out of time.

Imagining her music-making as a metaphorical "deep dive" implies that there is a deep source, or cultural wellspring available, into which to dive. This is a metaphor used in multiple instances by Rosa, but also by Leão in regards to her own journey, as the subsequent case study will explore. While Leão and Rosa have different interpretations of what this "deep dive" might mean, the idea of exploring the roots or source of a culture through in-depth study (i.e. participant observation) is central to both artists' visions. For Rosa in particular, as sociologist Dominique Dreyfus conveys in a quote printed on the CD jacket for *Manto dos Sonhos*, "[she] dives into this mixture of origins and influences, clarifying...the bonds between Brazil, the Iberian Peninsula, Western Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, helping us navigate the curves of this history of roots, ramifications, water, earth, grains, thorns, and smells" (Dreyfus 2008, *Manto dos Sonhos*). As such, Rosa's "deep dive" is one in search of northeastern roots, but it looks for them in a wide variety of places, and in a manner that is well within the purview of Brazilian discourses of multiculturalism, as well as those of the Pernambucan *cultura* industry.⁷⁶ In many senses, Rosa's dive is one in search of a more natural, more authentic sound, and like Siba and Mestre Ambrósio's concept of "ear cleaning," a more authentic self.

⁷⁶ After Falina Enriquez' use of the term *cultura* in her 2012 article, introduced in Chapter one of this thesis, I use it here to denote "the official category managed by the state of Pernambuco that privileges artistic expressions of regional identity," (Enriquez 2012, 533), along with the associations this category carries, both in terms of preservationist discourse and folklore research practices historically carried out in Pernambuco.

Like other mangue artists who specifically reference the natural wealth and biodiversity of Recife's mangrove swamps (for example, CSNZ), Rosa's music evokes and valorizes a particular ecology—that of the Atlantic Forest.⁷⁷ As noted in the discussion of mangue aesthetics in chapter one, in 1990s Recife, the idea of conserving and valuing nature was aligned with a particular politics of resistance, and linked to the struggle of marginalized groups including the poor, those living in improvised settlements, Afro-Brazilians, and indigenous peoples. While Rosa's music is less overtly political than that of Leão or, especially, Buhr, her commitment to engaging with local indigenous groups and their music, and her focus on the natural beauty and importance of local biomes, create an aesthetic that can be read as inherently political in its orientation. This orientation is evident particularly in Rosa's collaborations with Karirí-xocó and Pankararú musicians, but is also audible in the many sonic references to the natural world Rosa includes on her albums: recorded cricket and cicada calls; mimicry of natural sounds using percussion instruments, the *berrante* (hunting horn), and the *rabeca*; and the blending of these natural and instrumental sounds into a seamless soundscape through the use of studio production tools.

While a focus on natural sounds and acoustic timbres may not seem remarkable for an artist whose work is couched in discourses of traditional music, specifically in the Brazilian northeast where these ideas are strongly associated, it is important to draw attention to the ways in which Rosa's aesthetic is produced by specific choices. These traditional sounds are circumscribed by discourses of the natural, as are the bodies of musicians making them. Similar to Leão's use of sacred percussion and Candomblé *toques*, Rosa's aesthetic choices, in particular

⁷⁷ A forest extending along much of the Atlantic coast of Brazil and into parts of Paraguay and Argentina.

her emphasis on naturalness, indexes a particular worldview and political orientation. The vision of a mystical, rural northeast that Rosa conjures in her solo albums is supported by various aspects of *se-produzir*, including Rosa's style of dress, album cover art, poetry, vocal and instrumental production, and the inclusion of sounds that index the natural world. This aesthetic also draws on previously codified representations of a separate "mythical northeast" (the northeast of the *sertão*, of Lampião and Maria Bonita) discussed in greater detail in chapter two of this thesis.

Rosa invokes these northeastern imaginaries intentionally. In addition to choices of instrumentation, genre, vocal and instrumental timbre, the imaginary northeast to which her body of works contributes is referenced in the texts and themes of her songs. One example of this is the song "Marcha do Donzel" (March of the Squire), an original composition by Rosa, set to the text of a poem by Pernambucan playwright and leader of the Movimento Armorial, Ariano Suassuna. The lyrics of the song are drawn from the text of Suassuna's "Poema do Coro do Povo" from the larger work, *A Romance a Pedra do Reino*, with which Rosa would likely have become familiar due to her role in the miniseries mentioned in the previous chapter. In fact, the song is also included in the soundtrack for TV Globo's version, completing the circle of influence (Teles 2015). Rosa's song draws on the context of Suassuna and the Movimento Armorial its its evocation of a particular northeastern imaginary. Likewise, her portrayal in the Globo miniseries draws on aspects of her unrelated musical performances and real life self-presentation. Together, these performances contribute to a mythical northeastern imaginary that is conveniently packaged for broad public consumption in the form of a TV series.

While it is likely that this choice to work with material by Suassuna was inspired by Rosa's experience with the Globo miniseries version of *A Pedra do Reino*, or perhaps even specifically commissioned by TV Globo, the fact that the politics and aesthetics of Suassuna's work are highly aligned with Rosa's own points to greater intentionality. In particular, Suassuna was known for projects (many associated with the Movimento Armorial) that valorized particular types of local folk or traditional culture in Pernambuco, and that emphasized the significance of folk arts, including *cordel* chapbooks, *repente* musical /poetic "duels," *cavalo marinho*, and visual arts such as wood block printing.⁷⁸ As Falina Enriquez (2012) has shown, state sponsorship of "artistic expressions of regional identity" fall under the official category of *cultura* in Pernambuco, a designation which is imbued with ideas about the preservation of authentic local culture, and with discourses that frame the northeast region as a cultural wellspring for the nation. Because these discourses are officially sanctioned by the state, they impact funding and performance opportunities for musicians who fall within the purview of the *cultura* model, a model that has gained credibility based on its association with the work of regionally significant public intellectuals including Suassuna, Mario de Andrade, Gilberto Freyre and others.

Rosa, like Buhr and Leão, has the creative freedom to play with discourses of regional identity, place, and femininity through her aesthetic choices. Because all of her solo albums are self-published, Rosa is able to have more control over her sound, but as is the case with other

⁷⁸ Suassuna's own creative projects and governmental initiatives attempted to raise the status of these popular arts by combining them with codified western arts traditions (i.e. erudite music using folk instruments such as the *rabeca* and *viola caipira*; folk poetry styles reworked into plays or novels fit for presentation to elite audiences, etc.). These initiatives were varyingly received, but were significant in that they represented the beginnings of the first major revival of traditional arts in Pernambuco. Suassuna's legacy is still very much alive in the institutional discourses that frame presentations of traditional arts in Pernambuco, and as a result, in the state's *cultura* industry.

artists whose music is understood as traditional or regional, she must also negotiate the dynamics of Pernambuco's *cultura* industry with its different (but still rigid) demands. As Falina Enriquez (2012), Daniel Sharp (2014), and other scholars have shown, discourses of *cultura* (and by extension traditional music) in Pernambuco frequently emphasize the natural and the pre-modern, while also adhering to an apolitical multiculturalism that implies the shared ownership of Afro-Brazilian, indigenous, and other minority groups' cultural traditions.

Renata Rosa has asserted her independence as a composer, performer, and band leader in ways that are significant for a field that is often inhospitable to women, and her creative work has enlivened traditional idioms and built upon them. Even so, Rosa's performances generally work within the established bounds of the *cultura* industry. This means that she creates work that is viewed as traditional by the state of Pernambuco, either because its source material is associated with a specific ethnic group or identity (such as the Kariri-xoco tribe with whom Rosa works), or because it is an original composition that draws explicitly on local models of traditional culture, employing values (instrumentation, vocal timbre, dress or self-presentation) that are specifically coded as regional. While these influences cannot be ignored, Rosa's body of works is also much more than a simple copying of ideologies from the Movimento Armorial or from Ariano Suassuna. Her song "Marcha do Donzel" (March of the Squire), for example, employs a variety of sonic icons that conjure the mythical, rural northeast of which Rosa is both a part, and a creator. Beyond the lyrics, which draw from Suassuna's northeastern imaginary, Rosa's music itself contains symbols that connect back to ideas about regional identity, spirituality, and the natural environment of the Atlantic Forest, often intertwining these themes.

Her vocal stylings (in this song and others) are part of a well thought out practice that theorizes song as embodied and intimately connected to dance and movement more broadly.

Rosa has recorded at least two different versions of the song “Marcha do Donzel”, first on her album *Manto dos Sonhos* (Cloak of Dreams) (2008), and most recently, on *Encantações* (Incantations) (2015), which also includes several other re-recordings of songs from Rosa’s previous albums. While the two versions of “Marcha do Donzel” (March of the Squire) are relatively similar, there are a few notable differences. More so than Rosa’s first two albums, *Encantações* draws on sonic influences from beyond Brazil. Rosa notes the importance of her exposure to artists from the Middle East, North Africa, and Eastern Europe to the creative process behind this album (Rao 2012). These links to musical traditions outside of Brazil stem partly from Rosa’s extensive experience touring in Europe, where she is frequently billed as a “World Music” artist, part of a scene that features other artists performing music associated with various ethnic groups or national styles.

Many of Rosa’s choices in terms of visual self-presentation, musical instrumentation and other sonic elements also emphasize this combination of influences in ways that appeal to European and North American “World Music” audiences. But her attention to Middle Eastern and North African musics in particular, and her incorporation of these influences into her program of Northeastern Brazilian “traditional” music is also significant because of the ways discourses about music from the northeast region employ narratives of multicultural influence, heritage, and tradition. Instruments such as the *rabeca* (and the music played on it) may or may not be historically related to Moorish presence in medieval Iberia, but this ambiguity does not make the connection between the two any less discursively significant. Rosa also clearly alludes

to these Middle Eastern, North African, and Iberian roots in her music, negotiating the relationship between these traditions and those of northeastern Brazil in the majority of her work. Because of the ways in which regional and national discourses of identity operate, this combination of influences is likely to be viewed by many Brazilians as a search for roots, rather than as a multicultural expansion. In either case, Rosa's global inspirations are clearly audible in *Encantações*. Many tracks on the album, for instance, showcase lush orchestrations that incorporate a horn section, bowed and plucked string parts, multiple percussion tracks, solo voice and choral arrangements. The new version of "Marcha do Donzel" is no exception, but even with these stylistic differences, it is significant that almost all of the sonic symbols of the northeast that were prominent in the original version (on *Manto dos Sonhos*) remain present in the more commercially and internationally "presentable" version of the song that appears on *Encantações*.

In both versions, the song begins with only the sounds of the forest: the soft chirping of crickets and the ever present hum of cicadas. This chorus is joined by a variety of percussion instruments, including shakers that mimic natural sounds such as rustling leaves, and the rich, low sound of Ilú drums (Afro-Brazilian drums with connections to candomblé religious practice).⁷⁹ Added to this mix is the guttural sound of a *berrante* or blowing horn.⁸⁰ The sound of the *berrante* is at once oddly hard to identify but also clearly natural, and it mixes almost uniformly with the similarly guttural drone of the *rabeca* in its lower register, as the latter makes its first entrance. Even before the entrance of Rosa's voice, and the introduction of the lyrics by Suassuna, "Marcha do Donzel" clearly evokes a particular place, a particular timeless vision of

⁷⁹ In the more expanded *Encantações* version, this is also where the 7-string guitar joins in.

⁸⁰ The *berrante* is a type of hunting horn usually made from the horn of a bull; used in both hunting and cattle ranching.

the rural northeast. Rosa accomplishes this by including indices such as the recorded sounds of cicadas and crickets, common to the Atlantic Forest biome, as well as the call of the *berrante*, which although not specific to the northeast region,⁸¹ indexes a timeless rural setting that places the listener somewhere in the Brazilian *campo* (countryside). Even the *rabeca* itself has a distinctly recognizable timbre that has become associated with the northeast region of Brazil, and especially with traditional genres (often understood as rural, popular genres) such as *cavalomarinho*.⁸²

In his review of *Encantações*, journalist José Teles characterizes the song “Marcha do Donzel” as an “*aboio/toada*” (Teles 2015), an agglomeration referencing two different song-types, the *aboio* (a type of herding call song normally performed by men) and the *toada* (a more general category for a song with simple harmonies, a short text, usually with stanzas and a refrain). While Teles could have chosen this description for a number of reasons (the sound of the *berrante* or blowing horn, for instance), I believe it also references Rosa’s vocal timbre throughout the song, and the way she uses her voice to manipulate and engage with the stylistic parameters of these two genres of song.

As in *aboio* herding calls, Rosa’s vocals on “Marcha do Donzel” are often highly nasal and strident in timbre, with large leaps and emphasis on the scooping motion between notes. These vocal techniques are not unique to this song, but are common among a variety of northeastern Brazilian vocal musics of different genres. Although she frequently uses these types

⁸¹ Partially because it is associated with Brazilian *vaqueiros* (cowboys) and ranchers, characters also associated with both northern and southern Brazilian rural culture.

⁸² The *rabeca* is actually found in many regions of Brazil, but became associated with the northeast in part because of Mario de Andrade’s (mentioned earlier) understanding of that region as the original and unspoiled source of authentic “folk” culture for the emerging nation.

of vocal stylings in her work, a quick look at Rosa's broader catalog shows that she is clearly in command of a variety of vocal techniques, timbres and affects that showcase her intentional, technical manipulation of the voice and by extension, the body.

One of the arenas in which Rosa's emphasis on vocal embodiment is most explicit is in her career as a teacher. Like Alessandra Leão, Rosa not only performs but also spends much of her time teaching. She leads song workshops throughout Brazil, Europe, and the US, often focusing on the connections between vocal production and movement. In the Facebook advertisement for her May 2018 workshop "Canto - o impulso na voz e no corpo," ("Song - the impulse in the voice and in the body") held at *A Casa Preta* in São Paulo, Rosa describes her singing and teaching processes as relating to an embodied understanding of the relationship between movement and sound, developed through her participatory research with indigenous singers in Kariri-xocó village in Alagoas state and Pankararú village in Pernambuco ("Oficina de Canto com Renata Rosa" Facebook event).⁸³

Watching Rosa perform, it is clear that she takes this voice-body continuity very seriously, and that it is in fact a central basis for her work. Not only does she move theatrically on stage (after all, she is also an actress), these movements are part of the sound production process. Just as the physical body is produced through processes of *se-produzir*, so is the voice. Embedded as it is in that same physicality, the voice also illustrates, viscerally and publicly, the ways in which the body is always being produced and manipulated.

⁸³ <https://m.facebook.com/events/2595074890716882>

Alessandra Leão: A ‘Dive’ into the self

A founding member of the mangue band Comadre Fulozinha (Comrade Little Flower), Alessandra Leão released her first solo album in 2006, and since then has continued to produce acclaimed solo projects and musical collaborations with a variety of artists, including her husband and producer Rodrigo Caçapa. Leão is a percussionist, multi-instrumentalist, and composer, who writes most of her own solo material and maintains an active performing and teaching schedule. While Leão’s songwriting and instrumental technique are highly skilled, her voice is arguably the most striking and immediately recognizable trademark of her work.

In Leão’s most recent trilogy, *Língua* (Tongue), the overall message, aesthetics, and sonic palette are radically different from that of her earlier creations. For her first two solo albums, *Brinquedo de Tambor* (Toy Drum) (2006), and *Dois Cordões* (Two Big Strings) (2009), Leão’s overall aesthetic could be described as acoustic mangue-folk,⁸⁴ with its intricate layers of Afro-Brazilian percussion, strings, and voice. While she has not altogether abandoned this aesthetic, all of Leão’s albums contained in the *Língua* trilogy have a noticeably harder edge. Poetic lyrics have always been at the forefront of her compositions, and in her public persona Leão has never shied away from discussing contemporary social issues, including domestic violence and women’s liberation, but she had not addressed these themes directly in her music until recently. In addition to this change in lyrical content, the distinct tone of the *Língua* series is created

⁸⁴ The term ‘mangue-folk’ has been used to describe Leão’s music in particular by English-speaking reviewers (Slater 2014, “Review: Alessandra Leão-Pedra de Sal.”) but is not used as a genre category in Brazil, where Leão’s music would more often be categorized as ‘alternative.’ I use ‘mangue-folk’ here because I believe it effectively evokes Leão’s unique style for English-speakers, more so than the broader ‘alternative,’ although both are applicable.

through a combination of acoustic, electric, and electronically synthesized/mediated sounds, and, significantly, through subtle changes in vocal delivery and production.

In a July 2016 interview with journalist Roberta Martinelli of the show *Cultura Livre*, Leão discusses *Língua* and gives some insight into her creative process. Since 2011, Leão had been a part of a research / creative collective in which she traded ideas with three other artists: her husband and collaborator Caçapa, as well as actress Luciana Lyra, and visual artist Vânia Medeiros (Martinelli 2016, “Alessandra Leão no Cultura Livre” 7:05),⁸⁵ a collaboration which led her to the concept for *Língua*. Answering questions from the audience during the interview, she explained how the trilogy relates not only to events in her personal life, but also to various aspects of Candomblé belief and practice. Answering a question regarding the “reigning orixá” (Afro-Brazilian deity associated with Candomblé, Xangô and other related religions) associated with each album or “chapter” in the trilogy, Leão offered the following insights:

The trilogy talks about a dive (*mergulho*), right? —An intimate and personal dive— and each chapter is a step in this dive. *Pedra de Sal* (Salt Rock)—the process of immersion, of understanding what path you will take, pausing for breath, so *Pedra de Sal* has various breaths between the songs. If you’re going to dive, I think you need to ask permission of Iemanjá (orixá of the sea) to do this.

Aço (steel) is the deepest/most profound moment. And it was a question for me, because I always thought I had to go even deeper, until I understood that this is the depth where I am today, where I was when I made [the album]...but understanding this was very important for me—knowing my own depth, and accepting that. So, Ogum. Ogum is the orixá of strength, right? Of struggle, of war, of metal, including steel. And nothing better than him to help conquer this faze, a tougher, more difficult faze.

And *Língua* (Tongue) is the immersion, it’s this return path. This breath of fresh air—it’s realizing what changed through this journey. And Oxum is the goddess of love, of beauty, of sex, of fertility, of exuberance. Oxum is all this, right? She is gold, she is abundance, and it was all this that I wanted for the end of the dive.

⁸⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dbnm4ltZh3g>

(Leão 2016, interview with Roberta Martinelli ~20:50-22:50)

Clearly, many of the themes present in the albums of the *Língua* trilogy are personally meaningful to Leão, having to do with her faith, her journey and development as an artist, and with a recent move from Recife to a new city and a new city and region—São Paulo. Sonically, the *Língua* trilogy is also very different from Leão’s previous work. In accord with how Leão discusses the trilogy in the above interview, the first album, *Pedra de Sal* (Salt Rock) opens with the song “Doutrina e Toque de Iemanjá,” a sonic homage adapted from a sacred song in honor of Iemanjá, from Recife Xangô, a local version of Candomblé. Likewise, the last album, *Língua*, closes with the song “Doutrina de Oxum,” also an adapted version of a sacred song, this time from the related Afro-Brazilian religion of Tambor de Mina. These two quasi-sacred songs bookend the trilogy and serve as sonic referents for the orixás they honor: Iemanjá and Oxum.

The second (middle) album, *Aço* (steel), is the most sonically distinct, both from the rest of the series, as well as from the rest of Alessandra Leão’s oeuvre more broadly. While Ogum’s *toque* (sacred song associated with an orixá) doesn’t appear as part of the album as is the case for Iemanjá and Oxum, the title of the album clearly acts as an homage to the orixá, as the orixá of metal, including steel. It makes sense, then, that this album would have a sonically sharper edge. Here I analyze how Leão creates this distinct sonic environment through electronic mediation, instrumentation, and especially through vocal timbre, showing how these stylistic choices are understood by listeners not only in terms of genre, but in terms of the politics and representation of alternative femininities.

One of the major differences between *Aço* (Steel) and Leão's other albums is the amount of dissonance present in the album overall. In the track "Acesa" (Alight), for example, Leão maintains many of the trademarks of her sound: smooth, melodic vocals and intricate instrumental tracks showcasing syncopated and interlocking rhythms, but the overall tone of the track is insistent and slightly unsettling. Part of the reason for this is the increasing dissonance throughout the song, mostly in the instrumental parts, which consist primarily of overlaid electronic guitar tracks. While the level of electronic mediation in this track is subtle compared to some of the others on the album, its presence is felt, both in the timbre of the guitar(s), as well as through subtle but invasive "white noise" sounds that become more and more frequent as the song progresses. Likewise, the vocal parts are melodic, but contain much shorter phrases than in many of Leão's other songs. These phrases repeat over and over again throughout "Acesa" without changes in register or melodic contour, giving the impression of increasing urgency and insistence, even restlessness. As the song progresses, the voice and guitar parts also seem to drift further and further apart tonally, such that dissonance builds as the players embark on seemingly independent journeys, even while they maintain perfect rhythmic coordination.

While the most noticeable differences between this album and Leão's other work are in the areas of lyrical content, instrumental texture and style—particularly in the realm of electronic mediation—subtler innovations in vocal technique are equally important to the message and impact of *Aço* (steel), and to that of the trilogy more broadly. On the title track, "Aço," Leão plays with vocal timbre and style in ways that are particularly significant. Rather than singing in her usual more relaxed style, Leão often sounds as if her voice is at its breaking point in this track. Her enunciation of consonants is harsher, sonically embodying the content of the lyrics

—“cortei a carne, até sangrar, cortei a carne, até sangrar—e o que sai de dentro dela, é aço, é aço,”⁸⁶ (Leão 2015, *Aço*). On certain words of enhanced significance or emphasis, including “aço,” Leão also slides between pitches, accentuating the already simmering dissonance. Overall, Leão’s vocal performance (on this song and on the album as a whole) conveys a penetrating sense of urgency not present in her earlier work. The instrumental parts present in “Aço” add to the already present tension. The guitar, and especially the bass tracks are clearly electronic and employ significant distortion. At the end of the song, the guitar ends on a minor seventh. Together, the lyrics, instrumental tracks, driving rhythms, and vocal delivery create a sonic landscape for *Aço* that is very different from that of *Dois Cordões* (2009) or *Brinquedo de Tambor* (2006), and even from the other two albums in its trilogy, *Pedra de Sal* and *Língua*.

This aesthetic culminates in the track “Mergulho” (Dive), the penultimate song on the album *Aço* (Steel), which combines many of the techniques described above, alongside electronic mediation of the voice itself. The track begins with a barely audible synthesized electronic sound pattern (the interval of a perfect fourth played over and over again) mimicking an emergency siren. This pattern appears at various points throughout the song, even continuing into the final track on the album, “Foi no porão” (It was in the basement). In “Mergulho,” it is accompanied by distorted electric guitar and bass, drum set, and finally by Leão’s voice. In the “A” section of the song, which makes up the greatest percentage of the material, Leão’s voice is not obviously electronically mediated; instead, it is reminiscent of the more naturalistic timbre she has frequently employed in other projects. In “Mergulho’s” “B” section, however, her voice is clearly electronically mediated, with the applied distortion and its syncopated instrumental

⁸⁶ “I cut the flesh, until it bleeds, I cut the flesh, until it bleeds—and what comes from within it, is steel, is steel”

accompaniment creating a sort of alternate reality / underwater dreamscape that correlates with the “dive” described in the song’s title. By applying a filter to her voice in this section of the song, which lifts with the final line, “I start breathing again,”⁸⁷ Leão creates an evocative underwater soundscape that is both symbolic and literal, referencing the sea, the seasons of life, her personal artistic journey, and the role of the orixás in all of this.

Through adjustments in vocal timbre and style, electronic mediation and production choices, Alessandra Leão has created a unique and symbolically rich aesthetic that references regional and religious symbolism, particular political ideologies, and her specific experiences as a *cantaurora*. By adapting her vocal style to include more dissonances and sharper articulation, and in some instances electronic mediation, Leão makes a political statement about the place of women in the public sphere and the varied possibilities for alternative femininities in the Brazilian northeast.

Karina Buhr: A Different Kind of Natural

A fellow *cantautora*, Karina Buhr’s music is in dialogue with that of Renata Rosa and especially with Alessandra Leão, but in many ways she inhabits a separate conceptual universe. Previous chapters have discussed the political orientation of Buhr’s music, her use of social media, visual art, and other extra-sonic elements to craft a particular persona and vision, but this case study will show how Buhr creates and embodies this vision sonically. Even more so than either Rosa or Leão, Buhr’s musical palette is incredibly eclectic, and her original music incorporates styles as diverse as punk, indie rock, *ciranda*, and *maracatu*. While she fuses these into a unique and recognizable personal style, one of the defining characteristics of that style is

⁸⁷ “Volto a respirar” (Leão, 2015 “Mergulho”)

its variety. Buhr emphasizes this by creating a set of contrasting musical pastiches on her two most recent albums, *Longe de Onde* (far from where) (2011), and *Selvática* (savage) (2015), in which a driving punk tune might follow an ephemeral indie love song, following on the heels of a piece featuring spoken words. In each of these cases, while the instrumental parts are important for establishing the tone and feel, Buhr's vocals are at the core of the songs. These are carefully crafted to highlight the unique style of each song, and even perhaps, a unique persona behind it.

Even on its own, the album *Longe de Onde* (Far from Where) provides a good sample of a number of these stylistic frames and personae. The opening song on the album, "Carapalavra," bursts open the door with fast and repetitive drum beats, accented guitar riffs, and intentionally abrasive vocals with an emphasis on sharp, rhythmic enunciation. This punk explosion of a song is followed by something completely different. This is unsurprising, because while a couple of songs could be grouped together stylistically, for the most part, each song on the album is its own unique capsule of character, voice, and style. These include "Sem fazer ideia" (Without imagining), an introspective, poetic piece featuring spoken word against a jazz-tinged, ambient bed of sound; "Pra ser romântica" (To be romantic), a laid-back love song with a reggae feel; "Copo de veneno" (Cup of poison), an eerie song that includes understated yet powerful vocals with an almost sing-song quality, nested within a thick chorus of electronic and brass instruments, and unrelenting synthesized percussion; and finally, the song "Amor brando" (Gentle love), a sparsely orchestrated romantic ballad that provides a rather shocking change of pace via short and sweet lyrics, thematic content, and vocal style. In fact, these songs (and others on the album) are so different from each other that they almost seem like characters in a play, rather than the personal commentary of a single artist. This is not to say that Buhr's

songs are disingenuous. Rather, by creating a collage of distinct voices, Buhr creates a level of separation between herself and her work. Some of Buhr's songs might well contain autobiographical elements, but the extent to which they do so is irrelevant to their meaning, to the political work they accomplish, and ultimately to the "truth" of their content.

One of the interesting things about Buhr's work is the way she uses these vocal personae to keep the listener guessing. Which voice is the *real* Karina? Are any of the voices real, and if so, in what way? By creating and juxtaposing these different versions of her performing self, Buhr works against ideologies that link the *cantora* to an authentic expression of emotion, of self. She resists the sort of commodified autobiographical connection that is often understood by audiences as part of the product one buys when purchasing concert tickets or albums. As Gabriel Solis details in his article on Tom Waits, by presenting the gendered self as a set of performances or masks, an artist can explore something as personal as gender identity "in a way that is sincere and "believable" without relying on the implication, so common in rock and popular music more generally, that musical expression is autobiography" (Solis 2007, 27). Solis is mainly interested in how Waits' performances draw attention to the constructed nature of masculinity, a project that is particularly significant because of the ways in which masculinity is naturalized. While the context, and therefore the effect, are different, I believe Buhr's vocal personae are doing something similar for femininity in Brazil. By exaggerating or satirizing aspects of her experience as a woman in the Brazilian northeast, (or aspects of that experience that are understood to be *real* in a broader sense, even if they aren't biographical), Buhr critiques local tropes of femininity and highlights their constructed nature. She also provides alternatives to these tropes, and to hegemonic narratives about gender more broadly, in part through her own

ability to perform such a broad swath of femininities, helping make these real and accessible to audiences.

Buhr's songs are both genuine and ironic. They are both true and obviously consciously constructed. They are hilarious and angry and sad, all at the same time, or intentionally devoid of emotion. But above all, Buhr's songs and the voices that represent them put to rest the idea that there is any one sort of natural woman. In this sense, her oeuvre is the antithesis of the type of project adopted by many other artists, even by some other female composers like Renata Rosa. Karina Buhr does not just put to rest the specter of naturalized femininity, she stomps on it and lights it on fire. As her work shows, Buhr's vision of the *cantautora* is one in which women's authorial and interpretive contributions are made visible, in large part by exploding the myth of naturalized femininity.

What novel possibilities might this new role of *cantautora* offer? Buhr gives a clue as to her answer in her most recent album, *Selvática* (Savage) (2015). In *Selvática*, Buhr employs many of the same vocal techniques heard in her previous albums, but with a greater emphasis on some of her edgier voices. Some songs on the album still showcase the sweet, smooth vocal stylings Buhr often employs for her love songs and other slower ballads, but these are in the minority. The more prevalent voices in *Selvática* are the roaring, croaking, screaming ones, the voices that lie in between speech and song. This is in keeping with the theme of the album, titled *Selvática*, or *Savage*. As the lyrics at the end of the title track proclaim, Buhr's vision of female "savages" is one in which women refuse to be dominated, instead defending themselves while seizing the weapons that have long been used against them:

The savage (women), they don't need your praise
She violates your orientation
The biblical beginning is remade—you will not injure even one body for being
Feminine—with a knife, or a punch, or kindling
I promise you
She will sedate evil, will intercept the skewer in the middle of her path
Super heroes for two trapped victims
Now the sword is theirs and not the executioner's
Savage, she devours the jungle without
She comes from the jungle within!
Savage, she gives birth in her own time
She is worth her own thoughts!
And in the ideal end you will not dominate even one woman!
And in the ideal end you will not dominate even one woman!
(Buhr 2015, "*Selvática*")⁸⁸

As previous chapters have discussed, and as this song illustrates, Buhr's vision for women's liberation is an active one. She actively seeks to remake women's roles in Brazilian society, and the image of the savage woman, or *selvática*, is key to this project. The character of the *selvática* represents the simultaneous refusal of the conflation of nature with the feminine, and redefinition of this trope. If women must be tied to nature, Buhr screams, then let them be tied to the savage nature of beasts that devour.

Buhr's 'voices' may seek to put an end to a particular sort of naturalized femininity, but they are not a rejection of the natural as such. Rather, Buhr's screams, roars, and growls produce a different kind of naturalness. Supported by several guest vocalists on the album *Selvática*, including Elke Maravilha and Denise Assunção, Buhr goes even further afield with her vocal stylings, including animalistic screams and vocal fry on some tracks. These techniques are underscored by the use of flashy, electronic, and mediated sounds. The song "Conta Gotas" (Dropper), for instance, while it presents a more subdued overall profile, opens with a

⁸⁸ See Appendix I. for original lyrics in Portuguese

collage of recorded and synthesized sounds that range from amplified static to a quiet yet distinct roar, like that of a big cat. In other tracks, including “Cerca de Prédio” (Around buildings), Pic Nic” (Picnic), “Eu sou um Monstro” (I am a monster), and “Selvática” (Savage), higher-volume screams frequently punctuate the mix. This judicious use of vocal effects not generally associated with female artists, alongside clearly electronic and synthesized sounds, is part of what makes Buhr’s style unique. Even apart from Buhr’s lyrics (which are often overtly political), I believe that these sonic-aesthetic choices are heard and understood by Brazilian audiences as political and alternative. But it is also this political-aesthetic act itself that helps create space for women artists and audience members in the Brazilian northeast to explore new ‘versions’ of a localized femininity. In her album *Selvática*, and in other works that explore a variety of alternative and potentially overlapping feminine roles, Karina Buhr helps create new spaces for alternative femininities in Brazil.

Conclusion

Karina Buhr’s *Selvática* presents a version of Brazilian femininity that allows space for women to be powerful, loud, angry, and politically engaged. It includes both beauty and savagery, but above all it is self-sufficient and in control. Buhr’s savagery is also squarely situated in the public sphere. She’s not going anywhere, in spite of obstacles or objections. Alessandra Leão’s music and poetry, especially in her most recent trilogy, *Língua* (tongue), accomplish something similar in terms of bringing women’s creativity, desires, and diverse ways of being into the public eye. While Renata Rosa’s goals are clearly different, and the themes her music discusses are less overtly centered on political or feminist causes, her presence as a

successful composer-performer and instrumentalist working in Pernambuco's traditional music/*cultura* industry is significant in and of itself.

Likewise, Buhr, Leão, and Rosa each engage with discourses of *se-produzir* in different ways. Whether hegemonic modes of self-production are being reinforced or subverted, there is rarely an instance where the rules of *se-produzir* are ignored completely. Even when artists actively work against dominant narratives, this is still a type of engagement—albeit one that has the possibility of producing alternatives. Leão, Buhr, and Rosa each craft versions of femininity that are locally meaningful and coherent because of the ways in which they engage (or subvert) discourses of *se-produzir*. This includes bodily self-production, self-styling, and vocal production. As the case studies presented in this chapter show, Buhr, Rosa, and Leão each present different strategies for engaging with compulsory narratives of *se-produzir*, as well as for dealing with the challenges that accompany a career in performance and composition more broadly. Considered together, their ongoing efforts show that even the significant hurdles of gender bias can also create opportunities for people of any gender to create something new, something artistically and culturally significant.

Because these projects are so diverse, I do not find it particularly helpful to separate them into a cohesive stylistic or aesthetic category, i.e., a category or genre shared among female composer-performers in Pernambuco, the Brazilian Northeast, or the country at large. Even so, I do see the value in considering the works of these artists as a group. I believe it is significant that Buhr, Leão, and Rosa (and many other artists whose work is outside the scope of this project) have responded differently to similar challenges and social pressures, resulting in a diverse creative output. In spite of their differences, each of them has something to say about how they

view the possibilities of feminine roles in their region, in Brazil, and in the world, how those possibilities are expanding, and how artists can impact that process. It is important to listen to what each has to say, precisely because they do not speak with one unified voice, but represent a variety of perspectives.

Brazilian artist-scholars such as Laila Rosa and Isabel Nogueira are thinking and writing about these issues, and have developed a framework for looking at them that can be valuable here. In their 2015 article, Rosa and Nogueira provide a model for a Brazilian feminist epistemology that is situated in musical practice and primarily concerned with issues of authorship (Rosa and Nogueira 2015, 51). Inherent in the idea of a *cantaurora* as subject is the framework of “*artevismo*” (a combination of the Portuguese words for art and activism), which draws on aspects of feminist narratives from the U.S., Latin America, and elsewhere, carving out a new and specifically Brazilian space for “*alternativa*” subjectivity. If much of what Rosa, and especially Leão and Buhr are doing fits into this framework, it is because this model is an emic one, produced by fellow *cantautoras* to describe their own experiences.

Perhaps there is a Brazilian-female-composer-performer (or *cantautora*) aesthetic, but if so, it is one based on intention and ideology, rather than on a shared sense of musical style. While Rosa and Nogueira’s model is not a one-size-fits-all solution, it does resonate with many aspects of Buhr, Leão, and Rosa’s creative and political work. In Rosa’s case, for example, the overtly political criteria of *artevismo* are less applicable, but other aspects of the *cantautora* framework are quite helpful. From published interviews, workshop descriptions, and from looking at her own commitment to ethnographic research with the Kariri-xocó and Pankararú indigenous groups, it is clear that Renata Rosa’s work is very process-oriented. Laila Rosa and

Isabel Nogueira assert that one of the key aspects of *cantatoura* subjectivity is the intent to mobilize feminist epistemologies as part of one's artistic practice (Rosa and Nogueira 2015, 51), of which process-orientation is one piece. In fact, all three artists' choices to independently record and release their albums are acts that de-emphasize the idea of album-as-product. Especially for Karina Buhr and Alessandra Leão, who have both made their catalogs available to audiences for free online, self-publishing has been a radical assertion that their music will not be commodified. Both Buhr and Leão have also emphasized process over product in their work.

In addition to this emphasis on musical process, Rosa and Nogueira note that "Feminist epistemology defends cultural relativism, the historicity of concepts, and the coexistence of multiple timelines,"⁸⁹ (Rosa and Nogueira 2015, 47). While they do so in different ways, Rosa, Buhr, and Leão are all interested in these issues and highlight them in their music. Rosa and Leão's "deep dives" provide multiple examples of how both artists have framed their work in a culturally relativistic and inquisitive manner. By collaborating with indigenous and Afro-Brazilian artists respectively, and by learning in-depth about their traditions, Rosa and Leão have participated in significant projects of musical and cultural exchange. While Buhr's work has focused more on political activism and the incorporation of topical themes into her songs, she has also collaborated with a diverse array of artists on many projects, *Selvática* (Savage) included.

As Rosa and Nogueira have theorized, and as the creative output of fellow *cantautoras* including Buhr, Leão and Rosa show, working as a female composer and performer in Brazil is often about finding creative solutions to the challenges women face when they refuse to conform

⁸⁹ "Assim, a epistemologia feminista defende o relativismo cultural, a historicidade dos conceitos e coexistência de temporalidades múltiplas," (Rosa and Nogueira 2015, 47).

to established norms. Feminist ways of knowing, and of making music, offer “another way of listening and looking, one that questions a particular production of knowledge that prioritizes rationality, detachment as harnessed to the world of men, [a world that is also] heteronormative, white, and western,”⁹⁰ (Rosa and Nogueira 2015, 51). By challenging this world and its strictly codified rules of gender performance, artists like Alessandra Leão, Karina Buhr, and Renata Rosa create works that make space for alternative ways of being female in northeastern Brazil.

⁹⁰ “uma outra forma de escuta e olhar, questionando a produção de conhecimento que prioriza a racionalidade, o distanciamento, e atrelado à ele o mundo masculino, heteronormativo, branco, ocidental,” (Rosa and Nogueira 2015, 51).

CHAPTER 4:

CONCLUSION

What does a book speak of? Every book speaks about the world. Not only this world, the one we inhabit. Every book speaks about a world we could invent, or one which is invisible, or even that one which we see, but do not understand.

- Mischeliny Verunschik, testimonial for Alessandra Leão's album, *Língua* (2017)⁹¹

Each of the *cantautoras* whose work is discussed in this thesis inspires her listeners to imagine a world—one that is different from the world of the everyday, but that gains its power from the possibility that it could in fact displace that everyday world. To be a *cantautora* in the first place means to aspire to this sense of feminine possibilities and alternatives, both politically and personally. While this project began as an exercise in canon correction aimed at re-centering the contributions of women artists involved with Recife's manguebeat movement, it has become much more expansive. Buhr, Leão, and Rosa have each contributed significant musical innovations to Recife's new music scene, both in their work with mangue-affiliated band Comadre Fulozinha, but also through more recent solo releases. Even so, I believe that some of the most significant contributions of these artists are not just musical, but simultaneously, social. In their own unique ways, Buhr, Rosa, and Leão have each worked to expand the possibilities for alternative femininities in Pernambuco, and in northeastern Brazil. Through careful manipulation of sound, images, and especially, through performance in multiple registers including that of the

⁹¹ “Do que fala um livro? Todo livro fala do mundo. Não esse mundo apenas, esse ao qual nos habitamos. Todo livro fala do mundo que podemos inventar, ou daquele que é invisível, ou ainda daquele que vemos, mas não compreendemos” (Verunschik 2017) <https://www.alessandrleao.com.br/sobre-lingua>

voice, these artists have made space for new ways of being in the world. The remainder of this document will review of the main points from each chapter of this thesis, showing how they do so.

Chapter one of this thesis set up the premise for the project: to follow the career trajectories of three contemporary women artists with ties to Recife, Pernambuco (Buhr, Leão, and Rosa), and to explore the unique ways each of them continues to contribute to constructions of femininity in Brazil's northeast region. Each artist provided a different sort of exploration of the "roles on offer," the diverse versions of femininity and ways of being that are shaped in sound and in the flesh. How do these different versions of femininity come to be? How do they come to be locally meaningful? What role do musicians and artists play in the process of creating new identities, new possibilities? These questions have motivated and guided this research.

I began by contextualizing the work and ongoing legacies of these artists, their relationship to the mangue movement, and to cultural production and innovation in Recife, Pernambuco, also discussing my own relationship with that city, where I lived as an exchange student in 2008-09. I drew from my experiences with Recife and its music, and especially with local gender norms and constructs, to reflexively explore my own interest in this project and the reasons why I feel it is significant. The Brazilian concept of *se-produzir*, or gendered self-production, is also introduced in this chapter, although it is explored in greater depth in chapter three.

In addition to this discussion of local gender norms, chapter one provided an overview of relevant scholarship on the mangue beat movement, one of Recife's most well known popular music innovations of the last 50 years, showing how both Brazilian and American scholarship on

mangue beat has largely ignored the contributions of women. While it is far from comprehensive, I hope that this thesis can serve to spark conversation and scholarly interest regarding the significant work of *cantautoras* in Brazil's Northeast, and their ongoing contributions to musics as diverse as mangue, punk, and *musica regional*. I also sought to expand this discussion to explore other aspects of contemporary music making in Recife, including the role of the state-sponsored music or *cultura* scene and its impact on women artists, as well as the roots of discourses about authenticity, multiculturalism, and regional music in the northeast.

In chapter two, "The Northeastern Imaginary: Locating the Feminine," the focus turned to gendered archetypes. I presented a number of them, discussing the history of these archetypes and the discourses about femininity that continue to shape them. Feminine archetypes explored here include the *sertaneja* (the *mulher/menina de familia* and the *mulher-macho*), the *mulata*, the *patricinha* or *burguesinha*, the *alternativa*, the *garota de programa*, and the *travesti*. While each of these archetypes is just that—a rigid category that does not necessarily represent the realities of individual people—these categories do work to shape the possibilities for ways of being in the world that are available to women in northeastern Brazil. I discussed the racialized and classed dynamics of these archetypes, as well as the ways in which they are defined against one another.

In addition to this focus on archetypes and regional possibilities for femininity, I also brought in scholarship that deals with women's general invisibility in the public sphere (Taddei and Gamboggi, 2009), discussing the impact this dynamic has on female artists. With examples from the work of Karina Buhr, Renata Rosa, and Alessandra Leão, I showed how artists negotiate this lack of visibility, and how they mobilize many of the archetypes mentioned above, manipulating them to serve their own purposes.

In chapter three, “Producing the Feminine, Producing the Natural: “Se-Produzir” & the *Cantautora* Aesthetic,” I returned to the concept of *se-produzir*, exploring it in more depth and showing how it is a central force behind the gendered production of bodies and voices in the Brazilian Northeast. I showed how this particular discourse of self production articulates with theories of gender performativity put forth by Judith Butler, Karen Barad and others. *Se-produzir* works on both the level of the physical body and the voice, to produce a specific version of femininity that emphasizes naturalness. In part one of chapter three, examples from my own personal experience, and from scholarship on self-production and plastic surgery in Brazil illustrated how these dynamics play out in the realm of ideas and in the flesh. The second section of chapter three explored strategies of resistance to hegemonic modes of *se-produzir*, showing how artists including Buhr, Leão, and Rosa are responding to the status quo by creating alternative styles of self-production. The third section of the chapter applied these concepts to the realm of vocal production, drawing on related scholarship that deals with how voices are gendered, and with the materiality of the voice.

In the final section of chapter three, I tied together these multiple facets of self-production and applied them to three case studies. In “Renata Rosa—A Dive into the Natural,” I show how Rosa employs *se-produzir* in ways that alternately reproduce and challenge dominant discourses of femininity in the Brazilian Northeast. Her emphasis on producing an aesthetic of naturalness in her music is particularly interesting because of the way it draws on narratives about regional *cultura*, and on naturalized modes of femininity. In “Alessandra Leão: A Dive into the self” I examined a different type of dive—one that delves into the religious symbolism and political ideologies associated with the Afro-Brazilian religious tradition, Candomblé. Leão not

only explores this rich world of symbolism in her work, however, she also makes adjustments in her vocal timbre, style, and use of studio production techniques including greater electronic mediation, all of which make space for alternative femininities of a particular regional character. In the final case study of this chapter, “Karina Buhr—A Different Kind of Natural,” I showed how Buhr employs *se-produzir* in the realm of vocal production to similar effect. By creating various contrasting vocal personae, she uses satire to critique tropes of femininity and highlight their constructed nature, thereby making space for new narratives and identities to emerge.

Chapter three concluded with a short discussion of Laila Rosa and Isabel Nogueira’s theoretical model, the *cantautora* (a conjunction of the Portuguese words for female singer and author that highlights the creative power and contribution of female artists), and showed how this emic category can shed light on the varied projects of artists including those who are the focus of this work. While differing in approach, Rosa, Buhr, and Leão each identify with aspects of the *cantautora* as category, and the political and aesthetic work they continue to accomplish is significant for defining the future possibilities for alternative femininities in Recife, in Pernambuco, and in Brazil as a whole.

Future Directions

This thesis represents the beginning of a conversation about the international contributions of women in popular music from Pernambuco, and from northeastern Brazil more broadly. It is not exhaustive, nor is it meant to be. Because of the limited scope of this project, there are many truly significant artists whose work I did not have the opportunity to discuss here. In particular, it would be interesting to follow the career trajectories of other artists who, like

Buhr, Leão, and Rosa, were members of the original band Comadre Fulozinha. One of these “comadres” whose solo music I discovered only part of the way through working on this project, is Isaar França. França was one of the founding members of Comadre Fulozinha, alongside Buhr and Leão, and like them she has pursued a solo career in both music and regional theatre. She has performed and recorded with a number of other highly successful mangue artists including DJ Dolores, Siba e A Fuloresta, Mundo Livre S/A, Eddie, and Cidadão Instigado, among others, has toured in Europe, and has produced a solo album (Valquer, 2016). Isaar continues to perform with Buhr and Leão on occasion, and has also worked with such respected figures as Pernambucan playwright Ariano Suassuna, but even with all of these accolades, she still has not “made it” into the *manguebeat* canon.

Upon hearing Isaar’s music for the first time and learning more about her biography, I was surprised that I had not previously encountered her work. Isaar is a consummate artist, and in terms of her resume and musical experience, she has much in common with her bandmates Alessandra Leão and Karina Buhr. But Isaar’s music is almost impossible to access. The majority of her catalog is not commercially available via iTunes, Spotify, or other electronic channels that I could find, and I also could not find it even when I visited regionally focused record stores in Recife, where I purchased many mangue albums by other artists: including Leão, Buhr, and Rosa. The few news articles I was able to access that discussed Isaar or her work were almost all outlets focusing exclusively on Afro-Brazilian content, and I do not believe it is an accident that her work is so inaccessible via traditional media outlets. Isaar is an Afro-Brazilian woman, and her work seems to have been relegated to minority-focused channels and set apart from the mainstream, even more so than that of her bandmates.

The primarily virtual nature of my fieldwork for this project has not allowed me to incorporate the voices and perspectives of artists like Isaar who are doubly marginalized, in part because of their lack of media representation. In many senses this is ironic, due to the nature and goals of the project, but I hope that future scholars can correct this imbalance by continuing this research on the ground. Many other voices need to be considered to attain anything close to a complete picture of the role of *se-produzir* and other types of self-making in the popular music practices of Recife, Pernambuco. Because the majority of the artists discussed in this thesis are middle-class, primarily white, cis women, the perspective on gendered self-making presented here is a very specific one, but I still believe that it is important to discuss. Because of the way women in northeastern Brazil are frequently marginalized in the public sphere, I believe that even this small contribution can help contribute to a correction of the record regarding the political and aesthetic work that female artists in this region accomplish. Were I to continue this research in the future, I would want to learn much more about how people from a variety of racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds view discourses of *se-produzir*. I would also want to center the voices of queer and trans artists, who I have only discussed in passing here, but whose perspectives would also contribute to a more complete understanding of the ways in which *se-produzir* impacts marginalized communities and bodies. In particular, I would love to interview Recife artists Johnny Hooker and Maria Beraldo, two gay popular musicians based in Recife whose music plays with discourses of identity and sexuality, consciously employing *se-produzir* in ways that are not easily categorized.

In many ways, Brazil is in a different place politically and socially than it was when I began this project in 2016. Because of the increasingly conservative and volatile political

climate, the punishments for non-normative self-production are becoming more severe. As a nonbinary, gender non-conforming person, I don't know if I will be able to return to Brazil to continue this research. Even in these uncertain times, however, it has been heartening to see the response by many of the artists I follow on social media, some of whom are among those discussed in this thesis. I believe their artistic and political work really can make space for people of diverse identities to exist, and I hope that the political situation will continue to allow them to carry out this work in spite of challenges.

GLOSSARY

Agreste: The *agreste* is a semi-arid agricultural region located in the northeastern Brazilian interior, separating the Atlantic Forest biome from the *sertão*.

Alfaia: A type of bass drum used in *maracatu*; generally combines a wooden body with a skin head and rope tension system, and is played with two wooden mallets. *Maracatu de nação* groups feature *alfaias* in various sizes.

Atlantic Forest: A forest extending along much of the Atlantic coast of Brazil and into parts of Paraguay and Argentina.

Axé (musical genre): A style of popular music that originated in Salvador de Bahia, *axé* music draws on a variety of pan-African diasporic musical influences.

Berrante: The *berrante* is a type of hunting horn usually made from the horn of a bull; used in both hunting and cattle ranching.

“Black Music”: In Brazil, “black music” is a recognized genre category that includes diverse American musics from funk to hip hop and beyond.

Bloco Afro: Afro-Brazilian percussion group that performs during Carnival and often promotes an aesthetic of Black consciousness

Cantautora: *Cantautora* combines two Portuguese words: *cantora* (female singer) and *autora* (female author), connoting an artist involved with various aspects of the creative process.

Cantoria de viola: *Cantoria de viola* is a musical genre found in both northeastern and central-southern Brazil, that features songs with poetic texts and guitar accompaniment. The genres includes both epic songs and “song duels” where two performers improvise intricate rhymes. It is part of a suite of practices that also includes *Literatura de Cordel* (Cordel chapbook poetry) (Murphy 2006, 113).

Carnival: Carnival is a Christian, pre-Lenten holiday season celebrated in many parts of the world. It is especially popular in Brazil, where celebrations vary according to region but generally include street festivals, parades, live music, and diverse popular celebrations. Carnival celebrations in Brazil occur the four days prior to Ash Wednesday, the first day of the Lenten season for Catholics and some other Christians, but in general the party starts well before this official beginning, and work stops for at least one week during the holiday.

Cavalo-marinho: *Cavalo-marinho* is “a musical play that portrays life on a sugar plantation in song, poetry, dance, and dramatic action” (Murphy 2001, 247). The name of the band Mestre Ambrósio comes from that of a character in the play.

Ciranda: *Ciranda* is another type of circle dance from northeastern Brazil.

Côco: *Côco* is an Afro-Brazilian circle dance from northeastern Brazil.

Favelas: Hillside slums

Forró, Xote, Baião: genres of dance music associated with northeastern Brazil

Jeitinho(s): Literally a “little way,” *jeitinho* is a popular Brazilian expression that indicates bending the rules or going around social conventions to get done what needs to get done. It implies a creative use of the resources at hand, perhaps even an opportunistic one, with little regard for the law.

Mangue(s): Mangrove swamps

Marcatu: An Afro-Brazilian percussion and performance genre with sacred associations, *maracatu* is separated into two types, rural (*maracatu de baque solto*) and urban (*maracatu de baque virado*, or *maracatu de nação*); *maracatu* nations are an important part of Recife’s carnival celebrations

Maracatu Rural: A sub-genre of *maracatu*, also known as *maracatu de baque solto*, that includes elements of costumed dance-drama, as well as practices associated with Amerindian religious beliefs (Murphy 2006, 89).

O Galo da Madrugada: *O Galo da Madrugada* roughly translates to “the rooster of the early morning.”

Olinda: Olinda is a small city adjacent to Recife that predates it, but has now been essentially annexed by the larger metropolitan area.

Orixás: Afro-Brazilian deities central to Candomblé and Xango

Orixá-based religious practice: I use this phrase to denote a number of related religious traditions that are syncretic but share roots in Africa, including Afro-Brazilian Candomblé and Xango, as well as Santería and Vodun in the Caribbean. These faiths share a number of deities (*orixás*), and all feature spirit possession/possession trance as a central practice.

Pernambucan: Native to the state of Pernambuco

Rabeca: A type of folk fiddle found throughout Brazil but associated with the northeast region in particular

Rabequeira: *Rabequeira* indicates a female player of the rabeca, a type of northeastern Brazilian fiddle. *Rabequeiro* (indicating a man) is more common although both forms are used.

Recifense: A person from Recife

Samba de Coco: *Samba de coco*, a musical and dance style originating in the interior of Pernambuco, “is one of the many Afro-Brazilian round dances commonly understood to have preceded samba, such as *samba de roda* in the state of Bahia” (Sharp 2014, ix).

Se-Produzir: The act or process of producing oneself

Sertanejo/Sertaneja: Prototypical inhabitant of the sertão (arid interior); *sertanejo* indicates a man, while *sertaneja* indicates a woman.

Sertão: Interior desert region in the Brazilian northeast

Shadeism: In Brazil, racial discrimination often takes the form of “shadeism,” a type of discrimination based more on skin tone than on perceived race. Even though many Brazilians identify as mixed-race or acknowledge their own diverse ethnic ancestry, people with darker skin tones often still face discrimination.

Terreiro: A religious center or house of worship for Candomblé and other related Afro-Brazilian religious traditions

Toques de Santo: *Toques de santo* are songs specifically associated with *Orixás* (Afro-Brazilian deities) and typically performed in a ritual context.

Trios Eletricos: A Carnival float comprised of a semi-truck covered in speakers, topped with a stage for performances.

Zona da Mata: “Forest Zone” referring to the costal Atlantic Forest biome

REFERENCES

Published & Print Sources

- Avelar, Idelber. 2011. "Mangue Beat Music and the Coding of Citizenship in Sound." In *Brazilian Popular Music and Citizenship*, edited by Idelber Avelar and Christopher Dunn, 313-30. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Barthes, Roland. 1977. *Image Music Text*. Translated by Stephen Heath. London: Fontana Press.
- Bishop-Sanchez, Kathryn. 2015. "On the (Im)possibility of Performing Brazil." In *Performing Brazil: Essays on Culture, Identity, and the Performing Arts*, edited by Severino J. Albuquerque and Kathryn Bishop-Sanchez, 15-38. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Butler, Judith. 1988. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40 (4): 519-31.
- . 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York and London: Routledge.
- . 1991. "Imitation and Gender Insubordination." In *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, edited by Diana Fuss, 13-31. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 1993. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York and London: Routledge.
- Conboy, Katie, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury, eds. 1997. *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Crook, Larry. 1991. "Zabumba Music from Caruaru, Pernambuco: Musical Style, Gender, and the Interpenetration of Rural and Urban Worlds." PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin.
- . 2002. "Turned-Around Beat: Maracatu de Baque Virado and Chico Science." In *Brazilian Popular Music and Globalization*, edited by Charles Perrone and Christopher Dunn, 233-244. New York: Routledge.
- Cusick, Suzanne G. 1999. "On Musical Performances of Gender and Sex." In *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, and Music*. Zürich: Carciofoli Verlagshaus.

- de Albuquerque Júnior, Durval Muniz. 1999. "Quem é Froxo Não se Mete" Violência e Masculinidade como Elementos Constitutivos da Imagem do Nordeste." *Projeto História: Revista do Programa de Estudos Pós-Graduados de História* 19: 173-188.
- Diaz Meneses, Juan Diego. 2016. "Listening with the Body: An Aesthetics of Spirit Possession Outside the *Terreiro*." *Ethnomusicology* 60 (1): 89-124.
- Edmonds, Alexander. 2010. *Pretty Modern: Beauty, Sex, and Plastic Surgery in Brazil*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Edmonds, Alexander and Emilia Sanabria. 2014. "Medical Borderlands: Engineering the Body with Plastic Surgery and Hormonal Therapies in Brazil." *Anthropology & Medicine* 21 (2): 202-16.
- Eidsheim, Nina Sun. 2012. "Voice as Action: Toward a Model for Analyzing the Dynamic Construction of Racialized Voice." *Current Musicology* 93: 9-33.
- . 2017. "Maria Callas's Waistline and the Organology of Voice." *The Opera Quarterly* 33 (3-4): 249-68.
- Enriquez, Falina. 2012. "The Ins and Outs of *Cultura*: How Bands Voice Their Relationships to the State-Sponsored Music Scene in Recife, Brazil." *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 24 (4): 532-53.
- Ernst, Kristen Marie. 2007. "'Rios, Pontes e Overdrives': Northeastern Regionalism in a Globalized Brazil." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley.
- Frank, Sarah Noble. 2017. "Feminist Historiography As If: Performativity and Representation in Feminist Histories of Rhetoric." *Rhetoric Review* 36 (3): 187-99.
- Galinsky, Philip. 2002. "*Maracatu Atômico*" *Tradition, Modernity, and Postmodernity in the Mangue Movement of Recife, Brazil*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Gaspar, Maria Dulce. 1985. *Garotas de Programa: Prostituição em Copacabana e Identidade Social*. Rio de Janeiro : J. Zahar.
- Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson, eds. 1997. *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Halberstam, Judith. 1998. *Female Masculinity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- . 2007. "Queer Voices and Musical Genders." In *Oh Boy! Masculinities and Popular Music*, 183-196. New York: Routledge.

- Hawkins, Stan. 1997. "The Pet Shop Boys: Musicology, Masculinity and Banality." In *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender*, edited by Sheila Whiteley, 118-33. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hutchinson, Sydney. 2008. "Becoming the Tiguera: The Female Accordionist in Dominican Meringue Tipico." *World of Music* 50, no. 3: 37-56.
- . 2016. *Tigers of a Different Stripe: Performing Gender in Dominican Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kulick, Don. 1997. "The Gender of Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes." *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 99 (3): 574-85.
- . 1998. *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Legg, Benjamin. 2015. "The Bicultural Sex Symbol: Sônia Braga in Brazilian and North American Popular Culture." In *Performing Brazil: Essays on Culture, Identity, and the Performing Arts*, edited by Severino J. Albuquerque and Kathryn Bishop-Sanchez, 202-23. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Loveless, Megwen May. 2010. "The Invented Tradition of Forró: A 'Routes' Ethnography of Brazilian Musical 'Roots.'" PhD diss., Harvard University.
- Machado-Borges, Thais. 2003. "Only For You! Brazilians and Telenovela Flow." PhD diss., Stockholm University.
- Markman, Rejane Sá. 2007. *Música e Symbolização; Mangubeat: Contracultura em Versão Cobocla*. São Paulo: Annablume Editora.
- McCann, Bryan. 2004. *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Moehn, Frederick. 2011. "We Live Daily in Two Countries": Audiotopias of Postdictatorship Brazil." *Brazilian Popular Music and Citizenship*, edited by Idelber Avelar and Christopher Dunn, 109-30. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- . 2012. *Contemporary Carioca: Technologies of Mixing in a Brazilian Music Scene*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Murphy, John. 1994. "Performing a Moral Vision: An Ethnography of *Cavalo-Marinho*, a Brazilian Musical Drama." PhD diss., Columbia University.

- . 1997. “The ‘Rabeca’ and Its Music, Old and New, in Pernambuco, Brazil.” *Latin American Music Review* 18 (2): 147-72.
- . 2002. “Self-Discovery in Brazilian Popular Music: Mestre Ambrósio.” In *Brazilian Popular Music and Globalization*, edited by Charles Perrone and Christopher Dunn, 245-269. New York: Routledge.
- . 2006. *Music in Brazil: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Oliven, Ruben George. 1988. “‘The Woman Makes (and Breaks) the Man’: The Masculine Imagery in Brazilian Popular Music.” *Latin American Music Review* 9(1): 90-108.
- Peraino, Judith A. 1992. “‘Rip Her to Shreds’: Women’s Music According to a Butch-Femme Aesthetic.” *Repercussions* 1 (1): 19-47.
- Pereira Campos, Zuleica Dantas. 2013. “De Xangô a Candomblé: Transformações no Mundo Afro-Pernambucano.” *Horizonte* 11 (29): 13-28.
- Pravaz, Natasha. 2009. “The Tan from Ipanema: Freyre, *Morenidade*, and the Cult of the Body in Rio de Janeiro.” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 34 (67): 79-104.
- . 2012. “Performing Mulata-ness: The Politics of Cultural Authenticity and Sexuality among Carioca Samba Dancers.” *Latin American Perspectives* 39 (2): 113-133.
- Rosa, Laila and Isabel Nogueira. 2015. “O Que Nos Move, O Que Nos Dobra, O Que Nos Instiga: Notas Sobre Epistemologias Feministas, Processos Criativos, Educação e Possibilidades Transgressoras em Música.” *Revista Vórtex* 3(2): 25-56.
- Sandler, Patricia J. 2002. “Singing with the Spirits: Musical Life in São Luis, Northeast Brazil.” PhD diss., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
- Santos, Martha. 2012. *Cleansing Honor with Blood: Masculinity, Violence, and Power in the Backlands of Northeast Brazil, 1845–1889*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- . 2014. “Recreating Patriarchy in Northeast Brazil: Widows, Property Rights, and Gender Inequality in the Backlands of Ceará, 1845-1889.” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 51(2): 150-69.

- Sarduy, Aída Esther Bueno. 2015. "Dressed to Charm the Gods: Sensuality, Beauty, and Eroticism in Cuban Santería and the *Xangô de Recife*." Translated by David González López. *Afro-Hispanic Review* 34 (1): 9-24.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1992. *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sharp, Daniel B. 2014. *Between Nostalgia and Apocalypse: Popular Music and the Staging of Brazil*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Slater, Candace. 1979. "Folk Tradition and the Artist: The Northeast Brazilian 'Movimento Armorial'." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 16 (2): 160-90.
- . 1982. *Stories on a String: The Brazilian Literatura de Cordel*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: The University of California Press.
- Solis, Gabriel. 2007. "'Workin' Hard, Hardly Workin'/'Hey Man, You Know Me': Tom Waits, Sound, and the Theatrics of Masculinity." *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 19 (1): 26-58.
- Souza, Corey. 2013. "Mulatice: Fetish or Feminine Power?" *The Latin Americanist* 57 (1): 91-106.
- Stokes, Martin. 1994. "Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity and Music." In *Ethnicity, Identity, and Music: The Musical Construction Of Place*, edited by Martin Stokes, 1-27. Oxford, U.K.: Berg.
- Taddei, Renzo and Ana Laura Gamboggi. 2009. "Gender and the Semiotics of Political Visibility in the Brazilian northeast." *Social Semiotics* 19 (2): 149-64.
- Teles, José. 2000. *Do Frevo ao Manguebeat*. São Paulo: Editora 34 Ltda.
- Thayer, Millie. 2010. "Translations and Refusals: Resignifying Meanings as Feminist Political Practice." *Feminist Studies* 36 (1): 200-30.
- Thomas, Susan. 2006. "Did Nobody Pass the Girls the Guitar? Queer Appropriations in Contemporary Cuban Popular Song." *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 18 (2): 124-43.
- Trotta, Felipe and Márcio Monteiro. 2008. "O Novo Mainstream da Musica regional: Axe, Brega, Reggae e Forró Eletrônico no Nordeste." *E-Compós: Revista da Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação* 11 (2): 1-15.

Trotta, Felipe. 2009. "O Forró Eletrônico No Nordeste: Um Estudo de Caso." *Intexto* 1 (20): 102-16.

Turino, Thomas. 2008. "Introduction: Why Music Matters." In *Music As Social Life: The Politics Of Participation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Vargas, Herom. 2007. *Hibridismos Musicais de Chico Science e Nação Zumbi*. São Paulo: Ateliê Editorial.

———. 2015. "Chico Science & Nação Zumbi: Hybridity and Experimentation in the *Manguebeat* Movement," In *Made in Brazil: Studies in Popular Music*, edited by Martha Tupinambá de Ulhôa, Cláudia Azevedo, and Felipe Trotta, 121-32. New York: Routledge.

Weidman, Amanda. 2012. "Voices of Meenakumari: Sound, Meaning, and Self-fashioning in Performances of an Item Number." *South Asian Popular Culture* 10 (3): 307-18.

———. 2014. "Anthropology and Voice." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43: 37–51.

Online Resources

Anjos, Anna Beatriz and Isadora Otoni. 2014. "Está Tudo Pegando Fogo e Eu Estou Gostando." *Revista Forum Semanal*, February 7. Accessed April 22, 2019. <http://revistaforum.com.br/digital/133/karina-buhr/>

Brasil Cantadô. 2016. "Comadre Florzinha." *Brasil Cantadô* (blog). Accessed March 11, 2016. <https://brasilcantado.wordpress.com/2012/04/24/comadre-fulozinha/>

Buhr, Karina. 2016. "Karina Buhr: Perfil." Accessed April 24, 2016. <http://www.karinabuhr.com.br/perfil>

Dicionário Cravo Albin da Musica Popular Brasileira. 2016. "Comadre Florzinha." Accessed April 20, 2019. <http://dicionariompb.com.br/comadre-florzinha>

Espirito Santo, José Julio do. 2014. "Nação Zumbi: Bio." Accessed April 2016. <http://www.nacaozumbi.com.br>

Ferreira, Mauro. 2015. "Karina Buhr revela o título e as 11 músicas de seu terceiro álbum, 'Selvática.'" *Notas Musicais* (blog), Friday, August 7. Accessed April 22, 2019. <http://www.blognotasmusicais.com.br/2015/08/karina-buhr-revela-o-titulo-e-as-11.html>

- Geerts, Evelien. 2016. "Performativity." *New Materialism: How Matter Comes to Matter*, Almanac, August 14. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/p/performativity.html>
- Globo Comunicações. 2013. "A Pedra do Reino: Trama Principal." *Memória Globo*. Accessed January 30, 2019. <http://memoriaglobo.globo.com/programas/entretenimento/minisseries/a-pedra-do-reino/trama-principal.htm>
- Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. 2019. "Produto Interno Bruto dos Municípios 2010 - 2014." IBGE: Tabelas Completas. Accessed January 20, 2019. https://ww2.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/economia/pibmunicipios/2014/default_xls.shtm
- Isola, Juliana. 2016. "Língua encerra trilogia de compactos de Alessandra Leão." *O Povo: Jornal de Hoje*, February 10. Accessed April 22, 2019. https://www20.opovo.com.br/app/opovo/vidaarte/2016/02/10/noticiasjornalvidaarte_3572972/lingua-encerra-trilogia-de-compactos-de-alessandra-leao.shtml
- Kariri Xocó, Apony. 2016. "Tribo Kariri Xocó: Notícia." Accessed December 15, 2016. <http://www.karirixoco.com.br/2006/index.php?pag=noticia¬i=7>
- Kauffer, Antoine. 2015. "The Brazilian SESC, an Exportable Cultural Model?" *Forum D'Avignon*, July 28. Accessed April 22, 2019. <http://www.forum-avignon.org/en/contribution-brazilian-sesc-exportable-cultural-model-antoine-kauffer>
- Martinelli, Roberta. 2016. "Alessandra Leão no Cultura Livre." *Cultura Livre*, YouTube channel. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://youtu.be/Dbnm4ltZh3g>
- Menezes, Cynara. 2015. "A selvática Karina Buhr contra o Faceburca." *Socialista Morena: Journalism Anticapitalista*, September 22. Accessed April 22, 2019. <http://www.socialistamorena.com.br/a-selvatica-karina-buhr-contra-o-faceburca/>
- O Estado. 2015. "Morre aos 78 anos Pai Euclides, fundador da Casa Fanti Ashanti." *O Estado: O Portal do Maranhão*. Accessed April 21, 2019. <https://imirante.com/oestadoma/noticias/2015/08/17/morre-aos-78-anos-o-babalarixa-pai-euclides-fundador-da-casa-fanti-ashanti/>
- Rabeca, Cláudio. 2013. "Caravana Rabequeiros de Pernambuco - Teatro Paiol, Curitiba 2013." Accessed December 14, 2016. <https://youtu.be/bm6WbTTRROY>

- Radio Cultura Brasil. 2010. "Saudades do Agudo Mais Agudo de Biu Roque." Accessed July 12, 2018. <http://culturabrasil.cmais.com.br/programas/veredas/arquivo/saudades-do-agudo-mais-agudo-de-biu-roque>
- Rao, Madanmohan. 2012. "Interview with Renata Rosa, Vocalist Extraordinaire and Rabeca Expert from Brazil." World Music Central.org., July 3. Accessed April 22, 2019. <http://worldmusiccentral.org/2012/07/03/interview-with-renata-rosa-vocalist-extraordinaire-and-rabeca-expert-from-brazil/>
- Rohter, Larry. 2000. "Recife Journal; A Brazilian City Resurrects Its Buried Jewish Past," *The New York Times*, May 19. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/05/19/world/recife-journal-a-brazilian-city-resurrects-its-buried-jewish-past.html>
- Rosa, Renata. 2015. "Renata Rosa." Globo Comunicações. *A Pedra do Reino*. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://youtu.be/Kk1Ojn4ytrQ>
- Rosa, Renata. 2016. "Metrópolis: Renata Rosa." *Metrópolis: TV Cultura*. Accessed October 5, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdreXAxNncY&sns=fb>
- Sanchez, Marco. 2014. "Karina Buhr Mostra 'turbilhão' de Influências nos Palcos Europeus." *DW Notícias: Música*. Accessed July 26, 2018. <https://p.dw.com/p/1CUq4>
- Slater, Russ. 2014. "Review: Alessandra Leão — Pedra de Sal." *Sounds and Colours*. November 10. Accessed April 22, 2019. <http://soundsandcolours.com/articles/brazil/alessandra-leao-pedra-de-sal-26007/>
- Sons de Pernambuco. 2016. "Artistas: Renata Rosa." *Sons de Pernambuco* (blog). Accessed October 5, 2016. <http://sonsdepernambuco.com.br/artistas/renata-rosa/>
- Sons de Pernambuco. 2018. "Sons de Pernambuco: Isaar." *Sons de Pernambuco* (blog). Accessed August 10, 2018. <http://sonsdepernambuco.com.br/artistas/isaar/>
- Valquer, Leandro. 2016. "Conheça a história da cantora e compositora pernambucana Isaar França." *Revista Raça*, October 30. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://revistaraca.com.br/a-carreira-da-cantora-pernambucana-isaar-franca/>

Discography

- Buhr, Karina. 2015. *Selvática*. Self-published. Streaming audio. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://soundcloud.com/karinabuhr/sets/selv-tica>

- . 2011. *Longe de Onde*. Natura Musical. Streaming audio. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://soundcloud.com/karinabuhr/sets/longe-de-onda>
- . 2010. *Eu Menti Pra Você*. Self-published. Streaming audio. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://soundcloud.com/karinabuhr/sets/eu-menti-para-voce>
- Chico Science & Nação Zumbi. 1994. “Rios, Pontes e Overdrives,” *Da Lama ao Caos*. Sony. Streaming audio. https://youtu.be/hG-q_Z64XU4
- Comadre Florzinha. 1999. *Comadre Florzinha*. CPC UMES. Streaming audio. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://youtu.be/p06MQbwEwV0?list=RDp06MQbwEwV0>
- Comadre Fulozinha. 2003. *Tocar Na Banda*. YB Music. Streaming audio. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://youtu.be/zZ8X7RHCZx8?list=PL55113665CDD026DB>
- Leão, Alessandra. 2015. *Língua*. Garganta Records. AA001300. CD.
- . 2015. *Aço*. Garganta Records.
- . 2014. *Pedra de Sal*. Garganta Records. CD.
- . 2009. *Dois Cordões*. Garganta Records. CD.
- . 2006. *Brinquedo de Tambor*. Garganta Records. CD.
- Rosa, Renata. 2015. *Encantações*. Self-published. CD.
- . 2008. *Manto dos Sonhos*. Self-published. CD.
- . 2003. *Zunido da Mata*. Self-published. CD.

Social Media

- Buhr, Karina. 2016. Facebook page. Accessed October 5, 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/KarinaBuhrOficial/?fref=ts>
- . 2016. Twitter page. Accessed March 11, 2016. <https://twitter.com/karinabuhr>
- . 2017. Instagram page. Accessed July 20, 2017. <https://www.instagram.com/karinabuhr/>

França, Isaar. 2018. Instagram page. Accessed November 30, 2018.
<https://www.instagram.com/p/BquTR2plxUL/>

Leão, Alessandra. 2016. Facebook page. Accessed October 5, 2016.
<https://www.facebook.com/alessandraleaooficial/?fref=ts>

———. 2016. Twitter page. Accessed October 5, 2016.
https://twitter.com/alessandra_leao

———. 2017. Instagram page. Accessed July 8, 2017.
https://www.instagram.com/p/BWSjjGYga-2/?taken-by=alessandra_leao

Rosa, Renata. 2016. Facebook page. Accessed October 5, 2016.
<https://www.facebook.com/RenataRosaOfficial/>

Interviews, Personal Communications

Freitas, Di. 2016. Personal communication. Champaign-Urbana, IL. October 3.

Owner, Passa Disco record store. 2016. Personal communication. Recife, PE. May 24.

APPENDIX A:

LYRICS FROM BUHR'S "SELVATICA"

Selváticas, elas não necessitam seu elogio
Ela transgride sua orientação
Refeito o começo bíblico não ferirás nenhum corpo por ser
Feminino com faca, ou murro, ou graveto
Eu te prometo
Sedarás o mal, interceptarás no meio do caminho o espeto
Super heróis de duas vítimas estancadas
Agora és delas a espada e não o algoz.
Selvática, ela come a selva de fora
Ela vem da selva de dentro!
Selvática, ela pare a própria hora
Ela vale em pensamento!
E no final ideal não terás domínio sobre mulher alguma!
No final ideal não terás domínio sobre mulher alguma!
(Buhr, 2015, "Selvática.")