


PERRÉ, A SHARED DIALOGIC PATTERN <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2025.008-008>**Fernando Antônio Ferreira de Souza¹.****ABSTRACT**

From a dialogical approach to Pernambuco's popular culture developed between 2003 and 2023, I observed the recurrence of the rhythm of the 'toque de perré' of the caboclinhos of Pernambuco, as a common expressive resource present in local sound making and in other musical practices in the Northeast region of Brazil. In this arena of musical productions, the processes of expressive language acquisition take as reference the countermetric formula 3+3+2 and its culturally established variants (Kolinsky apud Sandroni, 2001, p.21), which structure performative consciousness as a central and shared pattern of interpretation. Based on a dialogic perspective of analysis, this approach followed a collaborative line of data collection (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015) based on participant observation. The problematic that inductively emerged on the ground revealed decolonial processes (Quijano, 2005) of disinformation, even though in customs there are still links between local expressive practices and the perré pattern of performance.

Keywords: Rhythmic of perré. Percussive language. Decoloniality. Oral tradition.

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THINKING ABOUT AN EMIC MATRIX FOR PERFORMANCE

The musicalities that mark the popular expressiveness of the Brazilian Northeast suggest identity bonds that allow its actors to dialogue fluidly with each other in their performances through the use of common elements of language that mark the popular songbook, forró and mediatized regional music. In his practice, these elements of language transcend the universe of a specific cultural practice, being recurrent in others of local and global daily life, in order to potentially allow the same interpreter to dialogue expressively in several other musical practices of the festive calendar of the region, even when the specific literature of folklorist and encyclopedic basis points to watertight and closed performances in the popular tradition - a problem present in decolonial studies (Quijano, 2005) of multiple doings and inheritances of popular practices arising from oral learning processes.

José Gomes Filho, the Jackson of the Tambourine (1919 – 1982), referring to his skills and performance skills in various types of music, considered the coconut as the standard of his skills, giving rise to a reflective plane that there is an intangible matrix of reference for performance:

"I have a kind of boring balance sheet that works for every season. The gang connects because, except for samba-canção, I get caught from everywhere, from frevo to terreiro music. Music that has balance, in Brazil, I do all of them. And the coconut is the father of the business". (Testimony of José Gomes Filho registered in the UOL Almanac Database – Folha da Manhã – Music – Online²)

His testimony points to a problem that is still in force in folklorist literature and in the various mediatized documentary sources that deal with the musical and expressive identity of the northeastern culture of Brazil as a concrete and rigidly delimited product. This problem portrays processes of search for an invariable formula or method for the interpretation and certain performance of the Northeastern musical language. This objective permeates common conceptions among practical and theoretical musicians in the effort to define the intangible peculiarity of the skills of local music, which, due to the subjectivity and interpretative fluidity of the musical competence of the performers, comes to be spoken as: 'musical accent' or 'musicality'. Imprecise concepts that foster metaphors and diverse ideologies that are strategically necessary in times of globalization. Invariably, every conceptual action that promotes determinant applications of the identity or expressive personality of a people attempts to establish a kind of rule, regulation and control of processes in favor of a supposed systematization or universal basic foundation of the ways

² almanaque.folha.uol.com.br/jacksondopandeiro.htm

of doing. Such formats and massifying trends imply the possibility of articulating transversal forms of awareness of vectors and nuances that define the ways of making local music. These actions predominantly do not listen to the voice of the real participants of the categorized object. Given that it presents dangers or risks resulting from objectification of people's cognitive and metacognitive processes without a minimum prior consultation of their respective perspectives. A problem that lays bare in Brazil the occurrence of a reflexive lack of knowledge of the very determinant matrices of the expressive language inherited by tradition, due to a lack of attention to the voice of the real bearers of this knowledge, since intellectual productions tend to result in possible invented truths, arbitrated in the laboratory.

Many musicians and representatives of popular standards of expression mechanically reproduce a politically mediatized official discourse, which has historically sedimented a model of disinformation as a way of erasing original references. In this path of understanding, in premise, I conceive that many vectors of local Amerindian origin (which in their essence present a multiplicity of realities and truths, distinct from each other from community to community), and of other identity minorities made invisible since colonization (gypsies and Islamized groups, for example), were amalgamated by a fluid and imposing discourse in Pernambuco; established by value judgments; veiled about its sources; which disguises and disperses points of visibility of cultural links between local practices. Given that it denotes impacts and consequences of a decolonial order on the identity production of music and other forms of northeastern expressiveness.

From the effort to promote an understanding of the cultural dynamics in which memory and awareness of what one does determine *public* [official] and *private* [unofficial] plans for the conception of identity and self-identification of popular tradition, I observed that in many of the actions of research and systematic institutionalization of truths in the light of science, two perspectives predominate: that of the autonomy of scientific reason over the things and facts of life and the nature of human behavior; and that of scientific neutrality about the origin and occurrences of things and facts of life and the nature of human behavior.³

Such perspectives refer to and bring to this study the concern of considering the facts of popular making as 'a natural and sovereign cultural phenomenon of a people', without incurring in possible 'truths arbitrated and suggested by the imposition of a

³ It is pertinent to note that, for the perspective of an autonomy of scientific reason, Habermas (1983) defends Marcuse's central thesis that science and technology fulfill the function of legitimizing domination by a tendency to systematize the ways of doing and thinking, since scientific methodologies lead to a control of nature, constituting instruments for an increasingly efficient domination of the system over man.

globalized system'. Furthermore, considering the decolonial complexity of this process, the arbitrariness of truths without reflection can generate different developments. A problem that concerns the process and consequences of modes of organization, structuring and construction of human knowledge. A problem that is projected in the ways of common sense appreciating and judging popular practices of collective identity and its own heritage, whether as a structuring and regulating foundation of actions, or as a political-economic resource linked to processes of inclusion and establishment of political identity and forms of consumption of markers of this identity (Lundberg, 2010). Problems that manifest themselves when the verification of ignorance or misinformation of a social phenomenon generates limitations in the very awareness of their culture, or in the ways of better identifying values, interacting and proceeding technically with vectors of their cultural identity; or about the fact that so little is known about the reality of one's own inherited culture in the face of so many evidences observable in the daily life of manifestations common to everyday life. Many emic individuals, jokers or musicians of a mass culture do not feel secure in their own memories, accepting the media discourse as truth to the detriment of facts present in their own inherited habits. Based on this observation, I perceive a great conceptual fragility about the things that are around us. Such as the assertions that: *"Little is known, much is thought to be known, and before fleeting time, everything is experienced without awareness of the whys"* (by the author of the article himself); or *"Those who have many certainties are usually because they think little"* (Pondé apud Provocações Filosóficas, 2021). ⁴

This state of affairs is linked to the problems referred to by Plato ('Plato's Problem') and Orwell ('Orwell's Problem') when these authors deal with the relationship between knowledge and evidence – as a domain of thought and understanding of reality. And the complexity of this perception lies in the fact that the emic players of an oral tradition themselves do not know how to explain why they are able to traffic performatively in other expressive practices different from that of their cultural space, mainly because folklorist literature, in the use of encyclopedic resources, transforms expressive practices of oral tradition into islands of performance, isolated from each other; by promoting the conception of these practices to be monoliths almost incommunicable with each other. In these terms, a coconut singer would not have mastery of the maracatus. However, I cite as an opposite example to this perception that a musician/player of maracatu de baque solto, such as

⁴ Luiz Felipe Pondé - PodCast (Jota Jota PodCast) – Philosophical Provocations – 12/12/2021
provocacoesfilosoficas.com/quem-tem-muitas-certezas-normalmente-e-porque-pensa-pouco-por-luiz-felipe-ponde/

Nascimento Gaiola⁵, manages to perform fluently in other local practices, such as ciranda, coco, samba de matuto and cantoria. Or Mestre Salustiano⁶, to be able to perform without difficulty in the seahorse, coconut, ciranda, pastoral, and other expressive practices.

Plato's problem lies in discovering explanatory principles, sometimes hidden and abstract, that can give meaning to phenomena that, on the surface, seem chaotic, discordant and that lack any standard of meaning or regularity – that is, this approach arises when it is found that the criteria and values that modulate and shape reason are disconnected from reality in function of a social end. As for Orwell's problem, what is at stake is the gathering of evidence and examples to *illustrate what would be obvious to a rational observer*⁷ in order to provide, even in an introductory analysis, the "conclusion that power and privilege work just as any rational mind should expect them to work and to reveal the mechanisms that operate to produce the results we observe" (Chomsky, 1986, pp.17-18). For the patterns that underlie the most significant and easily perceptible phenomena of political, economic, and social life of genres of popular tradition are not very difficult to distinguish, but they are nevertheless relegated to the background of appreciation. This preliminary observation is based on the historical fact that in practice, little is known about the reality of popular demonstrations even in the face of so many plausible facts in the daily behavioral life of society.

Aware of these problems, this ethnographic study sought to promote a dialogical approach that considered the perspective of its maker and his emic ways of thinking about practice as a standard system of relations between interpretive styles, expressive genres and generations of its makers, considering the synchronic moment of the research, delimited and open to interdisciplinary analysis, at the same time that deeply integrated into everyday life, to behavior and cultural thinking in its metacognitive dimension, as a methodological tool to understand human thought in its relational dimensions (musical and extramusical).

Under this appreciation, the use of the term *balance*⁸ in Jackson do Pandeiro's speech, for what he referred to as his mark of expressive competence, is, from a

⁵ Nascimento Gaiola, born in 1918 as Manoel Lourenço da Silva, grew up and lived in the place of Ipojuca, Mata Sul, on the coast of the State of Pernambuco. It represents being one of the main activators of popular toys in the place, such as coconut, maracatu de baque solto and samba de matuto, and practices of singing metrical in mottos typical of the oral literature of the Northeast.

⁶ Mestre Salustiano, born in 1945 as Manoel Salustiano Soares, in the city of Aliança, Zona da Mata Norte of Pernambuco. He was a multiple artist and producer of traditional shows and festivities organized and maintained in the family. In life, he represented revelries and games such as maracatu, ciranda, coco, forró, mamulengo and improvisation of viola.

⁷ As Chomsky (1986, p.18) observes

⁸ "I have a kind of boring balance sheet that works for every season. The gang connects because, except for samba-canção, I get caught from everywhere, from frevo to terreiro music. Music that has balance, in Brazil, I

metacognition perspective, a strategic resource that works and connects to various expressive forms of Brazilian music from a local interface element of the Northeast. In its essence, this interface element reveals itself as a tensional area or common border that allows solidary forms of interaction, integration or communication, constituting something that serves as a reference for musical thought and performance.

Based on this ethnographic approach, I sought to verify which cultural factor of the Pernambuco tradition acts as an integrator of diverse experiences, and democratically enables and summons the local population to creatively build a sound panorama as a vector of their collective identities. This approach pointed to rhythm and rhythm as important factors in how musicians and the local population can produce successful performances even in contexts not previously programmed.

Considering this finding as a premise, this study sought to verify, as an initial question: which cultural factor of the Pernambuco tradition acts as an integrator of diverse experiences, and democratically enables and summons all participants present to creatively build together a sound panorama ememically recognized as representative of the local collective identity?

This approach pointed to rhythm and rhythm as important factors in how local musicians are able to produce successful performances even in contexts not previously programmed. Based on a dialogic perspective of analysis, this approach followed a collaborative line of data collection (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015) based on participant observation. Under this approach, I sought to give voice to practitioners who hold standards of tradition⁹ and their inductive ways of doing, identifying the perré pattern of thought in the local language as a mechanism for the construction of performance. The rhythm of perré, perceived in its functionality as an identity marker (Lundberg, 2010), proved to be the supplier of diverse lines of performances that are effectively applicable in the expressive language of local music.

THE PERRÉ EMERGES AS A SHARED DIALOGICAL PATTERN

The rhythm of the perré, perceived in its functionality as an identity marker, proved to be the supplier of diverse lines of performances that are effectively applicable in the expressive language of local music, including significant bases of the coconut itself, referred

do all of them. And the coconut is the father of the business". (Testimony of Jackson do Pandeiro - UOL Almanac Database - Folha da Manhã - Music - Online⁸)

⁹ Among forty popular artists of the oral tradition interviewed, I cite: Zé Neguinho, Nascimento Gaiola, Ana Lucia do Coco, Manuel Pereira, Pombo Roxo, Mestre Salustiano, Tia Fafa, Anjinha do Coco, Roberto Pescocinho, Reizinho, Beth de Oxum, Gilmar do Estrela Brilhante.

to by Jackson do Pandeiro. From the crossing of rhythmic formulas sung and played by the interviewees, I identified as pertinent to adopt the perré as a reference standard for comparison and analysis of the practical molds of metacognitive thinking and performance in the local musical language. The use of the common term from the perspective of the local expressive culture proved to be substantially appropriate to replace the formal term *tresillo*.

My suggestion of using the term perré evidenced among the interviewees emotional planes of empathy based on the familiarity of these actors and representatives of local traditional practices such as the Caboclinhos, Xote, Coco, Mazuca, Xaxado, Embolada, Maracatu Baque Solto, Cavalo Marinho, and other practices of the sound panorama of Pernambuco and the Northeast.

As an example, I cite a comparative table with sound examples made available from the contrametric formula 3+3+2:

Image 1. Comparative table of interpretative formulas and sound examples ¹⁰.

Algumas variantes (toques) do Padrão Perré

Padrão Perré de 3 batidas = 3+2+3	X	.	.	X	.	X	.	.
Padrão Perré de 3 batidas = 3+3+2	X	.	.	X	.	.	X	.
Padrão Perré de 4 batidas = 3+2+3	X	.	.	X	.	X	.	X
Padrão Perré de 4 batidas = 3+3+2	X	.	.	X	.	.	X	X
Padrão Perré de 5 batidas = 2+3+3 (a)	X	.	X	X	.	X	X	.
Padrão Perré de 5 batidas = 2+3+3 (b)	X	.	X	X	.	.	X	X

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Based on the structure of distribution of accents of the perré in the contrametric system 3 + 3 + 2 (and its variants 3 + 2 + 2 and 2 + 3 + 3) I found that it is possible to travel through various performative practices of the Pernambuco sound panorama, according to personal planes that the performer considers most appropriate.

From this perspective, this interface element emerged as a dialogical and shared pattern of the local expressive language, as it revealed itself as a shared dialogical pattern. Dialogical because it evidences mutual relationships of a sense of belonging; emerge as a narrative of common experiences; and to promote a sense of familiarity between diverse

¹⁰ Sound examples presented at IASPM-AL Recife 2024. <https://on.soundcloud.com/pbmKT2GM7nFrsCrc8>

local and glocal sound languages. It is shared by having an integrative and participatory part of the rhythmic structures of various expressive practices; to be accessible, perceived and applied among active players of local music.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In these terms, the perré, an integral touch of the performative structure of the caboclinhos, based on percussive vectors of the bases of native peoples, emerged in this communication as a common rhythmic pattern perceptible in other musical practices. Its recurrence in the forms of rhythmic articulation of northeastern music structures the executing thought of performers, musicians and dancers, favoring new ways of learning the local musical culture.

The study pointed out that the local performance competencies and skills have, in addition to the metacognitive resources of the common and shared pattern of the perré, a dynamic and permissible mode of interactive participation of those present in the musical event, opening precedence for people from the audience to integrate the performance of the sound set in the expressive events without prior rehearsal, by sudden invitation (a punctual fact of percussive language that also applies to dance contexts). This form of performative interaction, established by a democratic and barrier-free access, highlights the existence and occurrence of a matrix vector, of common access, capable of allowing frank participation without risk of errors or performative difficulties.



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