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**The mask and the crack: A discursive investigation in the song “As
Caravanas” of Chico Buarque**

Disciplina: Estudos Discursivos

Second Paper

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Discourse is a mode of action, one of the ways that people use to act in the world and on others. Also, discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure, in other words, Discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but the signifying the world (reproducing social identities, social relationships, systems of knowledge and belief)¹. Discourse is manifested in language, linguistic forms and all kinds of texts constituting society, culture, and history. If the Discourse is characterized by the social dimension (and manifests this dimension), social problems are also rooted in discursive practice, for example, racism. This paper aims to unveil and try to understand the forms of discourse on racism and social segregation implied in the music "As Caravanas" of Chico Buarque².

First of all, the material that will be unleashed here has as its theme something that is placed in the empirical reality: Discrimination and imprisonment of young blacks who live in communities far from the beaches of southern Rio de Janeiro and that cross the city to enjoy these places. To understand the construction of this material, we need to understand what social context they were produced and what is in their background, as an example, on August 28, 2015, the Extra Journal published the following article³:

PM aborda ônibus e recolhe adolescentes a caminho das praias da Zona Sul do Rio.

Eram por volta das 14h30m de ontem quando 15 jovens, a maioria da periferia do Rio, se revezavam em um banco para quatro lugares no corredor externo do Centro Integrado de Atendimento à Criança e ao Adolescente (Ciaca), em Laranjeiras, após terem sido recolhidos pela Polícia Militar. O motivo? Estavam indo para as praias da Zona Sul do Rio.

— Tiraram “nós” do ônibus pra sentar no chão sujo e entrar na Kombi. Acham que “nós” é ladrão só porque “nós” é preto — disse X., de 17 anos, morador do Jacaré, na Zona Norte.

Do grupo que havia sido retirado de um ônibus que chegava a Copacabana, só um rapaz era branco. Os outros 14 tinham o mesmo perfil: negros e pobres. Todos os jovens ouvidos pelo EXTRA estavam em linhas que saem da Zona Norte em direção à orla. Nenhum deles portava drogas ou armas.

— Nós “estava” dentro do ônibus, não estava com nada. Nós “é” humilhado na favela e na “pista” — disparou Y., de 14 anos, que havia saído do Morro São João, no Engenho Novo, com quatro colegas.

Sem comer desde que haviam sido recolhidos pela PM, no fim da manhã, a todo momento os jovens pediam por comida. Os lanches só foram entregues cerca de quatro horas depois de a ida para a praia ser interrompida.

¹ For more informations, read “A social theory of Discourse” - Fairclough (1992). In the first pages, the author draws the implications and the proposals of what is the term “Discourse” (p. 62 - 65).

² The music of Chico Buarque is attached at the end of the work.

³<https://extra.globo.com/noticias/rio/pm-aborda-onibus-recolhe-adolescentes-caminho-das-praias-da-zona-sul-do-rio-17279753.html>

Pedindo anonimato, quatro funcionários da Secretaria municipal de Desenvolvimento Social que estavam no local disseram não concordar com o recolhimento dos menores. Uma conselheira tutelar, que também preferiu não se identificar, não conteve a revolta com a situação que, segundo ela, tornou-se corriqueira:

— No início, o critério era estar sem documento e dinheiro para a passagem. Agora, está sem critério nenhum. É pobre? Vem para cá. Só pegam quem está indo para as praias da Zona Sul. Tem menores que, mesmo com os documentos, são recolhidos. Isso é segregação. Só hoje (domingo) foram cerca de 70. Ontem (sábado), foram 90.

Faced with this problem and other issues, Chico Buarque released his thirty-eighth studio album entitled "Caravanas", in August 2017. Composed of nine songs, the Brazilian music critic defined Chico's new work as "the portrait of Rio de Janeiro, which Chico sees when he can while walking along the beaches of southern Rio"⁴. "As Caravanas" is the last song of the album and can be defined as a "Carioca" chronicle inspired by the conflicts between police officers and slum boys who are frequently accused of robberies and assaults on the southern beaches⁵. Also, it is a collaboration with the beat box of the rapper Rafael Mike and the music has the influence of the jazz music of Duke Ellington (Caravan), giving a sensation of strangeness to the listener when still at the beginning of the song the beat of funk (musical style from the "favelas" of the state of Rio de Janeiro) invades the music. A first question that is already raised: the popular joins the consecrated, which is demoted and excluded invades what is considered high culture. The musical style already reveals the discourse of exclusion and segregation between whites and blacks, poor and rich, racism and the confrontation of social classes. The song was composed only by Chico Buarque and begins with the following two stanzas:

É um dia de real grandeza, tudo azul
Um mar turquesa *à la* Istambul enchendo os olhos
E um sol de torrar os miolos
Quando pinta em Copacabana
A caravana do Arará - do Caxangá, da Chatuba

A caravana do Irajá, o comboio da Penha
Não há barreira que retenha esses estranhos
Suburbanos tipo muçulmanos do Jacarezinho
A caminho do Jardim de Alá - é o bicho, é o buchicho, é a charanga

The song begins with defining the verbal time that the story of the music is passed: the present indicative, situated by the conjugation "é". Next, we have the indefinite article "um"

⁴<https://cultura.estadao.com.br/blogs/pedroantunes/analise-chico-buarque-em-caravanas-e-um-retratista-para-os-anos-de-extremos-de-amores-e-odios/>

⁵ <https://istoe.com.br/caravanas-faixa-a-faixa/>

which is repeated three times, locating the listener of the place "um mar turquesa", the climate "um sol de torrar os miolos", and the period of time "um dia". The use of the indefinite article, can also be interpreted as if a fact of the "carioca" quotidian was being sung. There are also qualifications of that day and the sea, which is "real grandeza", "tudo azul", "mar turquesa à la Istambul", which refers to calm, quiet, order, and limpidity of a beautiful landscape, which even invokes Istanbul (the capital of Turkey, from which even the word turquoise derives).

This place of order, clarity, and order is the Copacabana beach (located in the district of the same name in the southern zone of Rio de Janeiro, being the noblest region of the city), and it is there where the caravans arrive, caravans coming from the poor neighborhoods, suburbs and in areas that are called "favela", where a large part of the poor and black population is concentrated (Arará, Caxangá, Chatuba, etc). This opposition between poor and rich, white and black, is more evident in the following verses where the voice that sings says that there is no barrier that can prevent these "strange" people to arrive at the beach of Copacabana, the verse evidences the social segregation that occurs on the part of the upper-class people who still classify them as "strangers", that is, outside of that social space, outside that reality.

To give more emphasis to the separation of social classes, the voice compares these strangers to Muslims, a comparison that is made by the word "tipo" used as a distinctive characteristic of a certain group: "Mulçumanos do Jacarézinho". The voice plays with irony and polysemy, putting the muslims who leave their land on account of wars and religious intolerance to immigrate to the regions of Europe, being received with the doors closed, and often treated with indifference and violence. At the same time, strangers who come from regions far from the elite zone of Rio de Janeiro are compared to foreigners, strangers, different from that land itself, on the contrary, they come from Jacarézinho, a suburb located in the northern part of the Rio de Janeiro, one of the largest "favelas" in the city, with high levels of violence, mainly related to drug consumption and trafficking⁶. This polysemy and irony of the voice that sings is also present in the expression "Jardim de Alá" (park located on the border between Ipanema and Leblon - economically rich regions), which can refer either to the park or to a sacred garden for the Islamic, or the way that the upper class, a resident of the region, deal with the Carioca bathers who go to the beaches of the South Zone from the

⁶<http://g1.globo.com/jornal-hoje/noticia/2011/03/operacao-do-bope-na-favela-do-jacarezinho-rj-deixa-cinco-mortos.html>

outskirts and would be treated in the same way as foreigners, notably the Arab immigrants, are received in developed countries.

As already explained above, in the second stanza, from the third verse, the popular genre - funk carioca - invades the instrumental influenced by jazz music. The rhythm also passes through the arrival of the "Jacarézinho" Muslims, the "strangers" from the poor neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro, as if the musical style also simulated racial and social segregation. Not only the instrumental, but the language also simulates this "invasion", there is a rupture that is assumed more informal and with slang (tipo, buchicho, charanga), when the caravans of people from the suburbs arise, on this, Fairclough shows that the process of wording or lexicalization imply process of wording the world which happens differently in different places and different groups of people⁷. These people are those who with agitation disturb the order⁸ (buchicho) and that makes a lot of noise⁹ (the word charanga is slang that means a musical set noisy, without rhythm, with many noises).

The following two stanzas continue and further evidence of social segregation, the discourse of this musical voice gives more attention to issues such as racism:

Diz que malocam seus facões e adagas
Em sungas estufadas e calções disformes
Diz que eles têm picas enormes
E seus sacos são granadas
Lá das quebradas da Maré

Com negros torsos nus deixam em polvorosa
A gente ordeira e virtuosa que apela
Pra polícia despachar de volta
O populacho pra favela
Ou pra Benguela, ou pra Guiné

The first point that we highlight is the "diz que" formation that can be understood as "rumor, thought and lack of proof of empirical reality", this marking that we do shows a certain knowledge of common sense and reproduces stereotypes¹⁰, according to Wodak and Reisigl (2001), "discourses may serve to construct collective subjects" which produces and

⁷ Fairclough, 1992, p. 76 - 77

⁸ For more informations: <https://www.dicio.com.br/buchicho/>

⁹ For more informations: <https://gcn.net.br/nossasletras/noticia/123268/PALAVRAS-EM-DESUSO-123268/>

¹⁰ Here we apply the notion of stereotype according to Uta Quasthoff, present in the study of Wodak and Reisigl (2001): "Verbal expression of a certain conviction or belief directed toward a social group or an individual as a member of that social group. Element of common knowledge, shared to a high degree in particular culture. It takes the logical form of a judgment that attributes or denies, in an oversimplified and generalizing manner and with an emotionally slanted tendency, particular qualities or behavioral patterns to a certain class of persons" (p. 378)

perpetuates and distorts those who are attacked by the speech of a "majority", as said at the beginning, discourse is a mode of action in which people act upon the world and upon each other.

This stereotyped discourse reveals an elite's view of the suburban and especially of the black people as potential perpetrators of violence, marked by "facões e adagas" and as they already show that they can exert this violence because they store these white arms in "sungas estufadas e calções disformes". The common sense discourse does not stop at these verses, the song makes the horror of a certain group more visible by showing the sexualization and fetishization of blacks and how they may be potential rapists, comparing their inferiors as "grenades" (*É, diz que eles têm picas enormes / E seus sacos são granadas*), again, a ironical comparison, with another polysemic stereotype that music explored - the terrorism that Muslims perpetuate -, there is again the placement of another locality of Rio de Janeiro, Maré, which is a set / complex of favelas located in the northern part of the capital.

In addition to the stereotypes, there is the presence of another point that is rooted in the discourse of the song: the dehumanization of the black person, present in the verse (Com negros torsos nus...). In the Bakhtinian¹¹ theory, Western traditions regard the upper body (head region, neck up) as the lower body (trunk, hip, etc.), as it is considered the region of thoughts / consciousness. In other words, valuing this region is to reaffirm the superiority of humans compared to other species, while the lower body is linked to sex and is what equates us to other animals, thus, inferiority. In the words highlighted, the voice of music focuses on the genital parts and uncovered torsos¹² of blacks, lowering them and placing that ethnicity at the level of marginalization compared to "gente ordeira e virtuosa" (adjectives used with irony by the singer, which shows the question of how elites feel superior about certain ethnic and social groups, and even to disqualify them on account of their acts before a different class) who are shocked at the nakedness of those who are "many different".

Faced with this shock caused by the aversion felt by what is unknown and different and which in their minds is taken as a threat, the elite decides to "despachar" back the "populacho" (words used that emphasizes the lack of value and opportunity that perpetuates this social layer - poor and black -and the contempt and arrogance that the upper classes have

¹¹ For more informations, read: Bakhtin, M. - "A cultura popular na Idade Média e no Renascimento: o contexto de François Rabelais". São Paulo, Hucitec, 1987.

¹² The problem of inferiorization is already part of the choice of the word "torso" which means: "the human body considered without head, arms, or legs". (In: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/pt/dicionario/ingles/torso>)

for these layers) to the favela, Benguela or Guiné (places that were strong sources emitting blacks to become slaves in Brazil¹³¹⁴, showing that racial and social segregation is a historical problem in Brazilian society) and that the police must withdraw violently the "strangers" of the beach in the south of Rio. The social elite that is in conjunction with the police. Two dimensions of society that build alliances and help build a class hegemony¹⁵ that through a discourse of violence and hatred manifest their power that places them apart and segregates social strata and delimits their space of culture and leisure, based on racism, common sense, and fear of the different, the "foreigner". All these social problems that have been raised so far are rooted in the discourse of Chico Buarque's song, which mimics discrimination and racial exclusion that are promulgated through the discourse of an economic, social and cultural elite

¹⁶.

In the last two stanzas that repeat until the song comes to an end, the problem of racial violence in the discourse continues to appear:

Sol, a culpa deve ser do sol
Que bate na moleira, o sol
Que estoura as veias, o suor
Que embaça os olhos e a razão
E essa zoeira dentro da prisão
Crioulos empilhados no porão
De caravelas no alto mar

Tem que bater, tem que matar, engrossa a gritaria
Filha do medo, a raiva é mãe da covardia
Ou doido sou eu que escuto vozes
Não há gente tão insana
Nem caravana do Arará

In the first stanza in question, there is a need to have a culprit for all this segregation and racism: the sun. The sun that warms, agitates and distorts the vision. What actually constitutes an irony of the speech, because what is guilty is something small and extraneous, at that moment, Chico inserts the images of crowded prisons (one of the problems that Brazil faces is overpopulation inside the prisons) and the cellars of caravels crowded with blacks to be slaves in Brazil. Here is a comparison with the caravans crowded toward the south of Rio de Janeiro, caravels and caravans, past and present, both with the same fate: suffer, feel and

¹³<https://acervo.publico.pt/mundo/noticia/-guinebissau-alimentava-o-comercio-de-escravos-de-cabo-verde-1729883>

¹⁴ <https://acervo.publico.pt/mundo/noticia/-angola-o-grande-produtor-de-escravos-1729882>

¹⁵ To understand more the concept of hegemony in discourse: Fairclough, 1992, p. 92

¹⁶ "Racism opinions and beliefs are produced and reproduced by means of discourse; discriminatory exclusionary practices are prepared, promulgated, and legitimated through discourse". (Wodak and Reisigl, 2001, p. 372)

be mistreated by those who hold power, money, and culture: the Brazilian elite. The discourse reveals this historical past in which Brazil is undoubtedly still present, in the shadows that stir, showing that racism and segregation have always been part of Brazilian history, this is the true sin / guilt originating from the situation of the what the musical discourse is about.

Before we investigate the last stanza of the song, we must raise some considerations about the voice of the song, that is, who is singing. According to Brandão (1995), “those who speak, speak from a locus, and from a recognized institutional right. This discourse - considered the truth, spreads knowledge, and produces power”, also, the analysis of discourse (which we are investigating in this work), works with the language in the world, with ways of meaning, with individual speaking, considering the production of meanings as part of their lives, whether as subjects or as members of a given society¹⁷. Therefore, the individual (in the case we are trying to apprehend, the voice of the song), does not speak through an abstract place, but of a social and material place. The conclusion we raise is that the lyrical voice uses a mask, a mask with cracks made by the language figures in the music - like irony - and it is through these fissures that the voice manages to critique the mask he is using.

The mask is the discourse, the question is what is this discourse? The ideological discourse of the current Brazilian elites (social, economic and cultural). Ideology understood as proposed by Fairclough (1992):

I shall understand ideologies to be significations / constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities), which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination (...) The ideology embedded in discursive practices are most effective when they become naturalized, and achieve the status of “common sense”. (p. 87)

That is why the word choices that define the suburban are "estranhos", "muçulmanos do Jacarézinho", “populacho” or the stereotypes that music inserts like those discussed here. The voice of the song is steeped in the discourse of elites, prejudice, racism, and segregation, and are used as a mask by that individual. He wears this disguise and only then is it possible to denounce and bring into focus the social problems prevailing not only in Rio de Janeiro, but in Brazil. Problems that are shadows of a historical past that has not been solved and that today is of no importance to most Brazilians (if we look at who was elected to be the new president of Brazil, we can see, how our past history of violence and racial segregation is

¹⁷ Orlandi, 2001, p. 16

being thrown into the trash again). However, it is through the fissures, openings, crevices that the individual manages to criticize the racist and segregationist discourse of the upper and middle classes. The problem we are facing here is not the poor and black people going to the beaches in the south of Rio de Janeiro, but the discourse and the ineducable character of the elites through these people who have always been marginalized throughout Brazilian history. It is through these ironic fissures that the individual manages to critique and show the horror that is entangled in the discourse of those who have always held power, culture, and leisure. Discourse is mask and fissure, it is problem and complaint, as Wodak and Reisigl (2001) shows

On the one hand, racist opinions and beliefs are produced and reproduced by means of discourse. discriminatory exclusionary practices are prepared, promulgated, and legitimated through discourse. On the other hand, discourse serves to criticize, delegitimize, and argue against racist opinions and practices, that is, to pursue antiracist strategies (p. 372)

The violent discourse of "gente ordeira e virtuosa" becomes even more explicit and music reaches its climax in the question of instrumentality, a moment of explosion of the voice that sings the screams of elites who ask, as if it were obligation, "tem que bater, tem que matar" the black and poor, the strangers who "invaded" Copacabana. In this greater moment of the song, there is the first presence of an "I", an individual who turns out to be critical and ironic through the gaps of the mask. An "I" who denounces superior people, who are now "gente tão insana", so barbarous as to ask for the death of the one who is always strange to the larger society. An "I" that says that the caravans have already been expelled and returned to the place where they have always been assigned: to the periphery, to marginalization, to be hidden in the area that is one of the biggest tourist spots in Brazil. "Não há nem caravana do Arará". A racist and segregationist discourse that gains strength and manifests itself every day, every hour, no longer in the shadows of Brazilian history, but now with open hearts, scandalized, hate and legitimated racism, a society that increasingly asks for death and has hands dirty with blood from caravels and caravans from Africa to Rio de Janeiro, from foreigners to locally marginalized. Afrodescendants do not serve to procreate, said the new president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro¹⁸.

¹⁸<https://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/mpf-entra-com-acao-contra-bolsonaro-por-declaracoes-ofensivas-negros-quilombolas-21188576>

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AS CARAVANAS - CHICO BUARQUE

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