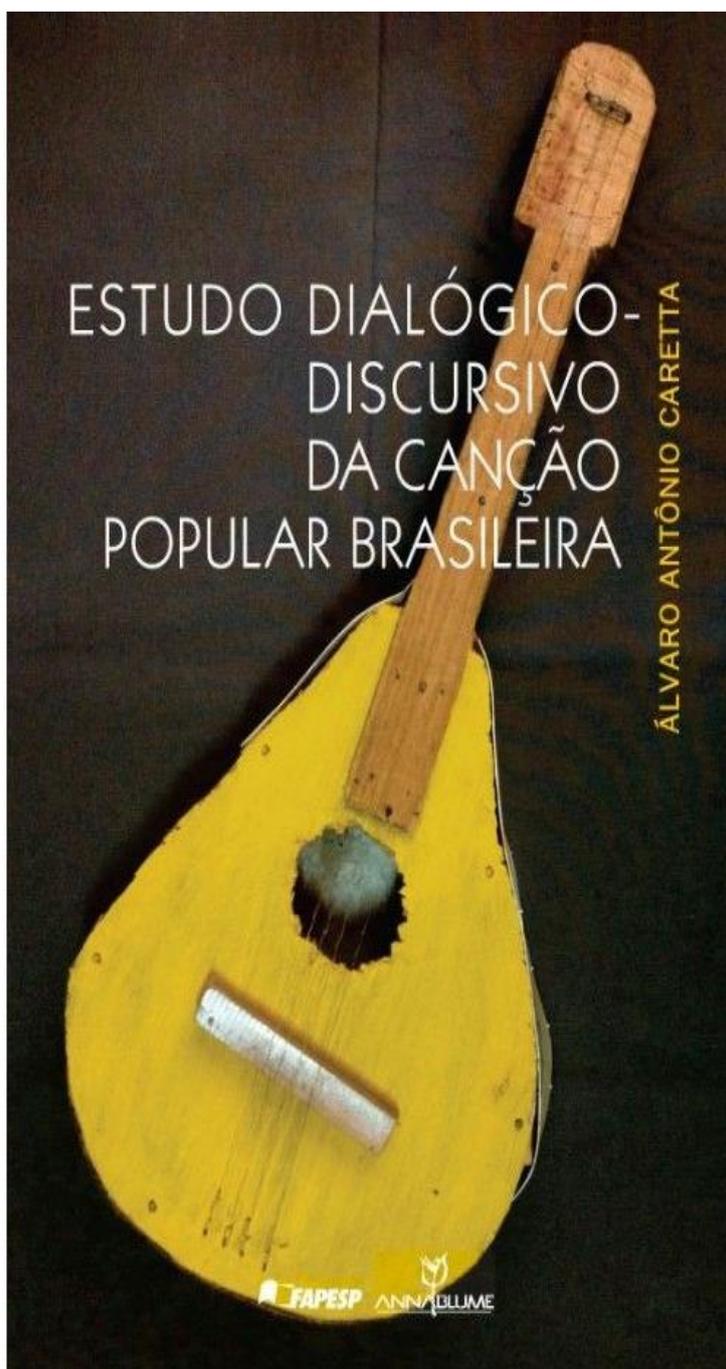


CARETTA, Álvaro Antônio. *Estudo dialógico-discursivo da canção popular brasileira* [Dialogic-Discursive Study of Brazilian Popular Song]. São Paulo: Annablume, Fapesp, 2013. 217 p.

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Álvaro Antônio Caretta's book results from his PhD studies and it presents undeniable contribution to, at least, two domains: theoretical/methodological and historical/cultural. Those domains are interrelated in his discussion. Therefore, despite the emphasis given here, they should not be read as two incommunicable axes, but as interdependent ones, so that one can understand the originality of the study.

The title of the book – *Dialogic-Discursive Study of Brazilian Popular Song* – discards any subheadings and metonymically indicates what is addressed and developed throughout five chapters, besides the *Introduction* and the *Conclusion*. There is also a bibliographical trajectory listed at the end of the book, as well as a precious list of the 55 songs mentioned in the study; both signal, on the one hand, the academic responsibility of the investigation and, on the other, the historical and cultural value of what is taken as the object of study: Brazilian popular song.

As the author outlines from the *Introduction*, in various spheres through the 20th century, Brazilian popular song was differently valued, being, sometimes, considered a substandard aesthetic manifestation, and being, some other times, recognized as a genre of excellence in the musical sphere. Anyway, despite the value attributed to it and beyond its prosaic character evident for its circulation in Brazilian everyday life, musicians, poets and even scholars have driven their attention to what has undoubtedly been consolidated as an aesthetic phenomenon relevant to the construction of Brazilian identities. Yes, identities, and not identity, since, as the author properly argues throughout the book, the discursive movements which give life to the songs take place in variegated processes and, because of that, reflect the diversity of what swarms the Brazilian cultural universe and refract values of different ideological orientation.

In the first chapter, *The Genre Brazilian Popular Song*, the author considers the construction of the song as a discursive genre. With the consolidation of towns, musical manifestations began to change until one could distinguish urban popular songs from folk songs. This way, the second half of the 15th century marks the beginning of a mellow singing which would be spread among popular songwriters. In the Brazilian scenario, especially during the first three centuries of Portuguese colonization, Indians' and African slaves' musical manifestation blended with European songs of the colonizers, establishing a context of frontiers and of aesthetic interaction which led to

the genesis of what is nowadays recognized as *Brazilian popular song*. The arrival of the gramophone was decisive to this aesthetic finish. As the author points out, the “relation between popular musicians and new technology is *sine qua non* for the establishment of the popular song at the beginning of the century”¹ (p.43).

In the second chapter, *Dialogism in Brazilian Popular Song*, the author develops a very important and original theoretical discussion of interdisciplinary character, articulating Bakhtinian studies, which in Brazil has consolidated a trend in discourse analysis entitled Dialogic Discourse Analysis, utterance-based discourse analysis, especially the trend developed by the linguist Dominique Maingueneau, and Greimas Semiotics, in particular the Brazilian studies focused on syncretic texts, as those developed by the Professor and researcher Luiz Augusto de Moraes Tatit. And why should he mobilize those different fields of knowledge? The author answers that: “[those fields] part from the same object, the utterance, particularly the linguistic utterance, being it oral, written or, which is the case under study, sung”² (p.15). By means of this interdisciplinary articulation, the author does not coin the concepts, but he builds two very fruitful descriptive-analytic categories which are valuable contribution to both Bakhtinian studies in general and the studies of songs in particular: inter and intradialogism. In the book, the latter is defined by the dialogic relations within the same discursive sphere – in the case under study, relations among songs inside the musical sphere – and the former is defined by the relations which are established among songs and genres of other spheres. Despite having been mobilized specifically for the analysis of discursive and interdiscursive nets of songs, the concepts seem to be productive for the description and analysis of the discursive functioning in general, being a relevant theoretical and methodological contribution of the study.

In the third chapter, *Lyrics and Melody in the Amplification of Brazilian Popular Song*, the author shows how inter- and intradialogism are actualized in the material conditions of the song, which necessarily exceed the verbal dimension. As the author

¹ Text in original: “relação entre os músicos populares e a nova tecnologia é condição *sine qua non* para o estabelecimento da canção popular no início do século (p.43)”.

² Text in original: “[esses campos do conhecimento] partem do mesmo objeto, o enunciado, particularmente o linguístico, seja ele o oral, o escrito ou aquele que é objeto de nosso estudo, o cantado (p.15)”.

highlights, “in the song, words and their stylistic possibilities are melody-driven”³ (p.122) and “the dialogism between lyrics and music, inherent to the syncretic character of the song, characterizes this discursive genre”⁴ (p.122). Thenceforth the author considers how the song also constitutes a place for the manifestation of heteroglossia, i. e., a place of relations among different social voices, articulating not only linguistic elements, but also musical aspects, for example, and the meanings mobilized by them.

In the fourth chapter, *The Utterance in Brazilian Popular Song*, the social places instituted by the intersubjective relations established in the songs and by means of the songs are the protagonists. From them, always keeping in mind that the utterance of the song takes place in the articulation of linguistic and musical elements, different ways of presenting the *ethos* are designed, i. e., the images of the utterer are consolidated, such as the image of a scoundrel, which characterizes samba writers in the 1930s.

Having built the object of study and having designed a descriptive-analytic route, in the fifth chapter, *An Exemplary Case*, Ary Barroso’s song *Dá nela* [free translation: *Hit Her*] is dialogically and discursively scrutinized. Evidently that is not the only song analysed in the book. The whole discussion is permeated by analyses and examples that outline and give concreteness to the theoretical reflexion undertaken. However, in this last chapter, the selected song is thoroughly analysed, with special attention given to the intradialogic relations it establishes intertextually and interdiscursively with the samba *Dá nele* [free translation: *Hit Him*], from the samba writer Sinhô. The exemplary case functions, thus, as a metonymic study of the project undertaken.

The way the author mobilizes the Bakhtinian notion of discursive genre and articulates it with other consolidated studies in Semiotics, especially semiotic studies on Brazilian popular song, as well as with utterance-based Discourse Analysis, makes evident the originality of the theoretical reflection and of the methodological treatment given to Brazilian popular song. Nevertheless, as it has already been pointed out here, this is not the only contribution of the study. The songs mentioned and the analyses developed also convene a cultural memory relevant to the construction of the Brazilian

³ Text in original: “na canção, as palavras e suas possibilidades estilísticas se voltam para a melodia (p.122)”.

⁴ Text in original: “o dialogismo entre letra e música, inerente ao caráter sincrético da canção, caracteriza esse gênero discursivo (p.122)”.

identity. It is not about the subjective memory of particular individuals or famous characters, but it is about the memory which functions as a Brazilian *thesaurus* and which promotes the set of vectors of Brazility discourses.

References to Tia Ciata, Donga, Chiquinha Gonzaga, Noel Rosa, Vicente Paiva e Jararaca, among many others, permeate the book and highlight memorable characters of the history of Brazilian popular song. Also, the songs themselves inhabit the study, bringing to it a documentary character of fragments of the Brazilian cultural-musical history. This way, the lines of Assis Valente's samba *Camisa listrada* [free translation: *Striped Shirt*], and of Benedito Lacerda and Orlando Porto's *Jardineira* [free translation: *Female Gardener*], for example, let one take glances not only at some past time but also at a Brazilian memory which is constituted in the articulation of poetry and musical art. The controversy that chains *Feitiço da Vila* [free translation: *Vila Charm*], *Conversa fiada* [free translation: *Idle Talk*], *Palpite infeliz* [free translation: *Unfortunate Hunch*], *Frankenstein da Vila* [free translation: *Vila Frankenstein*] and *Terra de cego* [free translation: *Land of the Blind*] makes it evident, to the reader, an eventful dialog – in Bakhtin's terms, which recover both the prosaic dimension of the discursive functioning and the refined theoretical and conceptual plane – in such a way that the reader is turned into a kind of witness of the interdiscursive and intertextual relations which are vectors of meaning. In this context, the melodic-linguistic analysis of the song *Mamãe eu quero* [free translation: *Mommy, I want it*] should not surprise the reader for its rhetoric presentation, but for the theory-methodology-history articulation, which eliminates tediousness, for it becomes a pleasant lesson on the languages that, on the one hand, we mobilize and, on the other, build us in the musical sphere.

In short, it is possible to state that *Dialogic-Discursive Study of Brazilian Popular Song* figures as a relevant investigation of the language relations which are constitutive of a phenomenon or, from a more precise point of view, of a discursive genre remarkable for the construction of the idea of Brazility. Without compromising the academic language or the conceptual and methodological rigour of a responsible and ethical study, the book seems to establish a conversation by means of which striking characters and priceless songs flow. This way, the reader will be able to learn about this important ingredient of Brazilian historicization – that is, the popular song – and return

to childhood, recall old times, revive the past, and reframe experiences and times – all that at once, through the lens of this *Study*.

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