THE QUEER MASCULINITY OF THE GLOBAL PERIPHERIES: MARUZZELLA AND PORQUE HOMEM NÃO CHORA

Stefania Capogreco¹
Marcello Messina²

1. Introduction

The places that normally signify as peripheries in the context of the “web of imperial knowledge” (MIGNOLO, 2009) that regulates global politico-economic relations are also abundantly represented as negations of the ideal norms assigned to the centre. These representations do not operate only within global and international contexts, but also—and primarily—within national boundaries, determining the internal colonial subordination of some regions to a normative national centre. This is certainly the case in the subnational contexts from which the two case studies examined in this work originate, namely the South of Italy and the Northeast of Brazil.

Ontologies of Italian nationhood are structured by doubly-articulating colonialisms (PUGLIESE, 2007a). Italian Unification (1861), known as Risorgimento, saw Italy become a modern European nation-state through the colonial annexation of what is now known as its Southern region. Deemed by Northern colonial powers to have Arab and African cultural and racial admixtures, the South and “Southerners” continue to occupy a noi altri (“we others”) position (PUGLIESE, 2007a)—at once incorporated and signifying incorporable otherness—with respect to the Italian nation-state. In the schema of northern and caucacentric Italianness, Southern Italians (or terrone, “the dirt on the sole of one’s foot”) figure as incorporable otherness. Italy’s external North African (post)colonial subjects (or sottoterrone, “sub dirt on the role of one’s foot”), though, occupy a space of absolute otherness (PUGLIESE, 2007a).

¹ MRes candidate, Cultural Studies, Macquarie University, stefania.capogreco@students.mq.edu.au
² PhD in Music. Professor Colaborador, Universidade Federal do Acre, marcellomessina@mail.ru
As an arbitrary territorial partition nourishing specific nationalistic agendas (ALBUQUERQUE JR., 2004), the Brazilian Northeast occupies a similar liminal space of conditional incorporation—and continued otherness—with respect to Brazil.

The South of Italy, commonly narrated as the negation of ideal values of Italianness (GRIBAUDI, 1997), is conceived of as an internal racialised other (DICKIE, 1994; PUGLIESE, 2008). Similarly, the Northeast of Brazil popularly signifies as a “negation of modernity” (ALBUQUERQUE JR., 2011) in opposition to Brazilian national norms, discursively located in the South-Southeast of the country.

The tall white statue of northern Italian poet Dante Alighieri “father of the ‘pure’ Tuscan tongue”—now the standardised Italian language—stands in the centre of the Southern city of Naples (PUGLIESE 2008). This gives civic and spatial articulation to the “noi altri” / “we others” positionality that Southern Italians must negotiate (PUGLIESE, 2007a). Similarly, the white Church of Nosso Senhor do Bonfim towers over the North-eastern Brazilian city of Salvador de Bahia. A centennial ritual revolves around it: the lavagem (“washing”, “bathing”), that originated “in the times when the slaves were obliged to carry water to wash the steps of the church for white people’s religious festival” (BONFIM, 2012, p. 23). Historically reconfigured as a proud celebration of Salvador’s black population, the festival is nevertheless predated, in present times, by the allied interests of white exoticising tourists and of the local white elite (GUIMARÃES, 2003).

In cinematic representations, we contend, the pervasive trope of Naples as terra d’amore (land of love)—comprised of countless visages of a sunny coast—actively substitute transmediterranean racial and cultural mestizaje with stable, singular, North-centric images of whiteness. Similar images, such as the imenso litoral (“massive shoreline”) and the stunning beaches as loci of exclusive perusal of global tourism—and implicit white-washing of the local black histories and identities—are abundantly exploited to represent the Brazilian Northeast.

The self-disavowing caucacentric northern, machoist schema of whiteness described above, we argue, produces scientifically racist tropes of Southern Italian and
North-eastern Brazilian men as hyper-masculine, homophobic, and criminally aggressive. Two excerpts from recent texts—one a tourist guide and the other a report—exemplify such discourses. A US tourist guide on Sicily claims:

Even though Italy since 1861 has had rather liberal legislation regarding homosexuality, Sicily remains one of the major bastions of homophobia in Europe. Some of the islanders express antigay attitudes that might belong more appropriately to the Middle Ages. Open displays of affection between same-sex couples meet with obvious disapproval by intolerant islanders (PORTER & PRINCE, 2009)

Whilst a report on homophobia in Brazil states:

The Northeast is traditionally poorer, more machoist and less educated than the South of Brazil, and homophobia here is part of the socialisation of kids and youngsters, who affirm their masculinity by humiliating and harassing homosexuals (MOTT apud BARROS, 2014)

Both of the above passages, far from being exceptional, efficiently synthesise the racialised and otherised representations of these two places. In each case, firstly, homophobia is portrayed as an anomaly, or deviancy, that distinguishes the region from the (white) core of the country. Secondly, it is associated with stubborn backwardness, by means of signifiers like “bastions” and “Middle Ages” with reference to Sicily, and “traditionally”, with reference to the Brazilian Northeast. Thirdly, homophobia is represented as a unanimous characteristic of the locals, be them the “intolerant islanders” of Sicily or the Northeastern “kids and youngsters” in Brazil. In addition, Mott’s declaration on the Brazilian Northeast contains some other discursive elements that are worth noting: the uncritical association of poverty and lack of access to education with homophobia; and the implicit, and again, uncritical, contraposition between masculinity and homosexuality. Finally, mentioning the year 1861, Porter and Prince make reference the Risorgimento (Italian Unification) which was a specific moment of violent demarcation of the Italian “peninsula and its islands” along a racialised “black/white axis” (PUGLIESE, 2008, p. 3). Porter and Prince’s attempt to pinpoint a historically informed genealogy of the alleged homophobia of the racialised

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3 “O Nordeste é tradicionalmente mais pobre, machista e desescolarizado que o Sul do Brasil, e a homofobia aqui faz parte da socialização das crianças e jovens, que afirmam sua masculinidade humilhando e agredindo homossexuais.”
Southern Italian populations is extremely problematic, as it ignores the traditional local tendency to accommodate homosexuality identified by Dall’Orto under the notion of “Mediterranean homosexuality” (DALL’ORTO, 1990). Mediterranean homosexuality is, among other things, described by Dall’Orto as a paradigm diffused in Latin America and, in particular, Brazil (DALL’ORTO, 1990, p. 796).

In this paper, we seek to explore the hidden and silenced queer masculinities of the global peripheries, which pre-exist and outlive anthropologic and ethnographic incursions and the discursive assignation of an ancestral homophobia and a stubborn machoism to the populations that inhabit these places. We present two case studies from the domain of popular music, namely: the song Maruzzella, interpreted by Gennaro Cosmo Parlato in John Turturro’s film Passione: Un’Avventura Musicale; and Porque homem não chora, interpreted by Pablo.

2. Maruzzella: Gennaro Cosmo Parlato’s unstable (femminiello) whiteness

The song Maruzzella (BONAGURA & CAROSONE, 1955) was composed by Renato Carosone to lyrics by Enzo Bonagura. It was released in 1955 by Carosone with his quartet. The song quickly became a classic of Neapolitan music and was covered by various artists, including Claudio Villa (1956) and Lina Sastri (1990). It has also featured in various films, such as the eponymous film Maruzzella (1956), Nella città l’inferno (1958), and I vesuviani (1997).

The lyrics of Maruzzella see the male auteur blame a woman for the destabilising effects of his lust (or love?) for her:

Maruzzella, Maruzzella / you put the sea in your eyes / and left sorrow / in my heart. / You make this heart shake / stronger than the waves when the sky is dark. / First, you say “yes” / then, you gently let me die / Maruzzella, Maruzzella. / Hey! / Who’s going to help me? / If you don’t come and help me? / Hey! / I’ve just got / a burning desire to kiss you. / Come here, sweetie / and give me your dainty mouth / that, in order to poison me / becomes sugar (BONAGURA & CAROSONE, 1954)⁴

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⁴ “Maruzzella, Maruzzè’ / t’hê miso dint’a ll’uccochie ’o mare / e mm’ê miso ’mpiett’a me / nu dispiacere / Stu core mm’e faje sbattere / cchiù forte ’e l’onne / quanno ’o cielo è scuro / Primmìa me dice “sì”, / po’, doce doce, mm’e faje muri / Maruzzella, Maruzzè / Oël! / Chi mm’ajuta? / Si tu nun viene a mm’ajutà? /
The woman is represented as a frivolous and unstable femme fatale, who changes her mind very easily and literally undermines the steady and “burning” passion he feels for her. The blue eyes suggested by the image of the woman who “put the sea in her eyes” imply a commentary on white femininity both as archetypal, “zero-point” (AHMED, 2007) beauty and as object of lust. This paradigm returns vehemently in the film Maruzzella (1956), where the female protagonist, interpreted by the Piedmontese actress Marisa Allasio, is a blond, tall woman of Nordic appearance, with a “pure” Northern Italian accent that sounds extremely artificial next to the “amusing” Neapolitan characters that populate the film.

In his recent performance of this song in Passione (2010), however, Gennaro Cosmo Parlato counters the unreflective (white) masculinity of this received narrative by embodying the resurgent de-colonial figure of the Neapolitan queer:5 the femminiello.6 This unstable and disorienting queer performance gives rise to a critical sotto/terrone’d economy of allied souths which bring into focus the (disavowed caucacentric “cleansed” mirror) of terra d’amore vision/epistemology.

Parlato’s performance of Maruzzella takes place within a broader sotto/terrone’d sea-quence, i.e., a non-linear sequence within Passione in which unstable, queer Southern Italian figures re-turn to “the sea”. Whilst the brooding cityscape of Naples’ Arabic-Baroque quarters dominate throughout its linear sequences (BERNARDI, 2015), Passione’s sea re-turns destabilise the tropic economy of whiteness pervading terra d’amore representations.

First sea-quence: a female Neapolitan voice sings against a black screen. The camera focuses our gaze on the striking figure of a femminiello (a Neapolitan

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5 For the sake of completeness, it is important to mention that both Anna Magnani’s performance of Maruzzella in Nella città l’inferno (1958), and Lina Sastri’s cover of the song (1990), also subvert the machoistic assumptions contained in the original song. A rare TV performance of the song by Sicilian gay icon Giuni Russo also exists, which unfortunately we were not able to access.

6 However, the first transfiguration of Maruzzella as a femminiello appears in the package film I vesuviani (1997), where a transgender character is called Maruzzella and frequents an X-rated picture house in the area of Naples (TABANELLI, 2008).
identity encapsulating both a transgender woman and a gay male of markedly female gender expression). The femminiello stands on a circular bench in the middle of a Piazza, dressed in skimpy white clothes and white cowgirl boots. The camera pans out to reveal another Piazza containing a Dantesque statue. The scene draws our attention to the queerness of the Neapolitan voice as femminiello—an estranged, dirtifying vision of Risorgimento assumptions—and, as s/he continues to sing, the sea emerges. This scape is blemished by black clouds, uninviting rocks, and rough waves as we stand right up to the sea’s edge. A voice-over probes “imagine when the British are arriving, and they see a sunny bay,” suggesting terra d’amore incorporates an Anglo-centric modality of vision.

Second sea-quence: Sounds of seagulls, a dog crying, and then a piano take us to an abandoned building, behind which is a prison-style fence, and behind that, the sea. What ensues is a mixed quasi-operatic and grainy Neapolitan vocal style rendition of Maruzzella. Now inside the derelict house, in the dirty reflection of a mirror appears another femminiello—the singer Gennaro Cosmo Parlato—dressed in men’s clothes with smudged make-up. Parlato’s palpable discomfort and disorientation throughout the song reaches climax as he leaves the house and ends up—rather dramatically—on the tourist beach.

Final sea-quence: a campy version of Fabrizio De André’s Don Raffaè (PAGANI, BUBOLA & DE ANDRÉ, 1990), a song about a mafia boss, is performed in an Island prison setting. A performance that follows problematises terra d’amore sea-scapes as a site of racial cleansing for would-be “deviant” southerners.

Maruzzella’s unstable bodily return to the sea—a site traditionally functioning as a whitening/bathing of Southernness—we argue, de-links from Europe’s white interiority. The “South, and the Mediterranean as Southernness” articulate Europe’s fertile history of “geo-cultural encounters” and a colonial ambition to expunge the “non-similar through cultural and racial cleansings” (ZACCARIA, 2015, p. 9). This Mediterraneity reveals “shadow archives”—subjugated, corporeal knowledges (SEKULA, 1986)—genealogically inscribed by “geo-corpography” (PUGLIESE,
Specific “pre-colonial collateral and coeval archives” haunt Italian whiteness—predicated on Renaissance and Risorgimento (unification) styles—revealing ‘African and Turkish blood and cultures moisten [its] bios and cultus’ (ZACCARIA, 2015, p. 10). Terra d’amore, then, cinematically epitomises Italy’s ‘systematic burials’ of its doubly-articulated colonial heritage (PUGLIESE, 2007b, 197). If Italy’s racialised North/South axis sees the North as caucacentrically European and the South as African and Arab (PUGLIESE, 2007a), terra d’amore graphically embodies these dominant histories of a caucacentric white Italianness in its picturesque sea-scape wiped clean of its non-European genealogies. In contrast, as one of Passione’s sotto/terrone sea returns, Maruzzella stages a divergence from this self-same image in terms of noi altri “we others” who embody an erased otherness that Europe’s white interiority is ‘always already predicated upon’ (PUGLIESE, 2007a). Noi altri’s ‘deep roots that radiate along multiple Souths of the South’ (PUGLIESE, 2007a, 200) tactically stage “African and Middle Eastern re-turns” whereby which “complex historico-cultural lines between the South and its Mediterranean neighbours are reinvented” (2007a, 198). As we will elucidate, the re-turn of the femminiello that is not bathed by the sea represents an embodied shadow archive of non-northern bio and cultus (Zaccaria, 2015) resurging to utterly refuse to inhabit Europe’s white interiority.

Parlato’s femminiello-Maruzzella dis-orients and challenges both the disavowed masculine frame of Italian whiteness, and subsequent projections of problematic masculinity only onto southerners. The first femminiello, who resembles the western category of a “transgender woman”, stands firmly in place. As a Dantesque figure, her voice relays the Neapolitan song not as straightforwardly and unproblematically a soundtrack do terra d’amore visages, but as always already dirtified and queered by its very rooted, embodied performance manifestations. Voice-over narration makes us rethink terra d’amore whiteness as an always already (mis)placed, (dis)embodied masculine whiteness haunted by the impure, queer femminiello body. As a Dantesque figure, the unique ‘grain’ or ‘rasp’ of the Neapolitan voice (PLASTINO, 2007) arguably does not conform to Dante’s tongue, but reclaims
the authorial pen (KLARER, 2014). In contrast Gennaro Cosmo Parlato who resembles the western category of a “gay man”, singing quite literally by the sea, does not stand so still. His vocal emission zigzags between ‘quasi-operatic’ and ‘grainy Neapolitan’ vocal ambits (PLASTINO, 2007). What initially looks like a window adorned with thin privacy drapes separating inside and outside, emerges more clearly as a derelict, abandoned mirror. The frame as window and then mirror, is also constantly moving. Suddenly, Parlato finds himself outside bathed by light, he leans against buildings and walkways, encountering snickering men. This is inter-spliced with pseudo-pornographic clips of a heterosexual couple fucking on a balcony overlooking the sea. On a similar balcony, he holds his head back over the railing as if yearning to be “cleansed” under a shower, or perhaps by the terra d’amore vista behind him. Now washed clean of his running make-up, Gennaro watches the heterosexual couple fucking from below. Finally, he finds himself on the sunny tourist beach. Here, on the very site of terra d’amore whiteness, he repeatedly twirls and falls as if writhing in pain. The interpenetration of sonic ambits gain in intensity until he literally interrupts the song with “Maestro, il momento è delicato,” (“conductor (or director), this is a delicate moment”). The last “Maruzzella Maruzzè” iteration takes full grainy Neapolitan (PLASTINO, 2007) and operatic sonic ambience. Literally interrupting, and then stretching the note beyond routine renditions of Maruzzella, he also becomes the author. Within the white, fencing-in cartography of the sea this femminiello-Maruzzella occupies a strangely doubled-space: at once “here” in the white interiority, and comprising an estranged, queer shadow archive of proliferating, excluded souths. The femminiello figure, here, functions to interrogate the white template body—at once caucasian and male and heterosexual (PUGLIESE, 2007b, p. 12)—and its capacity to disorient and disfigure those bodies it reduces to the self-same. White bodies occupy a “zero-point of orientation, from which the world unfolds” (AHMED, 2007, 151). In the caucacentric schema of whiteness, the non-male body occupies “those blanks in discourse” which render women “off-stage, off side” (IRIGARAY, 1990, 22). We could say that doubly-articulating colonial Italian North/South axes surface on Passione’s
femminiello figures and shape how they surface (AHMED, 2007). As an embodied shadow archive figure of impure transculturation (ZACCARIA, 2015), the re-turned femminiello evokes Gloria Anzaldúa’s Shadow-Beast: a strange doubling that is the queer refuse of colonialising whiteesses (ANZALDÚA, 1987).

3. *Porque Homem não chora*: Pablo’s fragile masculinity as a disowned homoerotic performance

The song *Porque homem não chora*, (“Because a man doesn’t cry”), also known as *Homem não chora* (“A man doesn’t cry”), is an example of *arrocha* music, a North-Eastern Brazilian musical genre comprised by romantic lyrics and regional rhythms. The song was written by Bahian (Northeastern Brazilian) keyboardist Roni dos Teclados and released in 2012 by his band Paixão Aguda. Its cover in 2014 by Bahian singer Pablo (stage name of Agenor Apolinário dos Santos Neto), saw widespread national success. Following the success of Pablo’s version, the song was covered by various artists, including Léo Magalhães (2014) and Guilherme & Santiago (2015), respectively from South-eastern (Minas Gerais) and Central-Western (Goiania) Brazil. Guilherme & Santiago, in particular, are known for having transposed the song to the *sertanejo* (BOUFLEUER, 2015) which is a genre based on a countryside aesthetics and diffused across the whole of Brazil, *sertanejo* is associated in various ways with the rural areas of the Centre-South and Northeast of the country (ALONSO, 2011).

The geographical location is important as the song undergoes a progressive decontextualisation in its path from the original release by Paixão Aguda through to the various covers. This finally results in a dramatically different musical arrangement, seeing the guitar accompaniment supplanted by the accordion in the *sertanejo* version by Guilherme & Santiago. However, here we focalise Pablo’s cover of *Homem não chora* as producing the greatest amount of tension with the original.

Before interrogating this tension, we will briefly focus on some passages from the lyrics. The song narrates the story of a man who decides to leave his partner,
and proceeds to blame her for having caused the end of their relationship. Right from the incipit, the lyrics seem to prescribe a very strict model of masculinity:

I’m leaving, my suitcase is already out there, / I’m leaving you, I’m leaving you, / Please don’t implore, as a man doesn’t cry, / And doesn’t apologise, and doesn’t apologise. [Alternative translation: And (please) don’t apologise, and (please) don’t apologise].7 (RONI DOS TECLADOS, 2012).

The prescribed impassibility of the non-crying (and perhaps non-apologising) man implies that crying (and perhaps apologising) are activities only acceptable for women, due to their alleged “weakness”. Following a notorious patriarchal formula, this weakness implies guilt, as per biblical tradition and the original sin (GELEDÉS, 2015):

You are the guilty one if our love is ending / You, who destroyed my life / You, who crumbled my heart and made me cry / And left me in a dead end (RONI DOS TECLADOS, 2012)8

Importantly, here the adjective culpada (“guilty”) is, in line with standard Portuguese grammar, in its feminine singular form. This leaves no doubt as to the association between womanhood and guilt. While in this section of the lyrics the representation of feminine guilt is exaggerated to a grotesque point (“You, who destroyed my life”), the impassibility of the non-crying man is undermined by the singer’s admission that his partner actually made him cry (“You, who crumbled my heart and made me cry”). In Paixão Aguda’s subsequent production, this apparent masculine impassibility is further translated into fragility in the song Homem chora sim (“A man does cry”), which says “who says that a man doesn’t cry? Here is the (counter)proof because I’m crying now” (PAIXÃO AGUDA, 2015).9

Rather than as an accepted model, then, the idea of the non-crying man appears to be understood as a social protocol that the singer nominates as a known obstacle to his urge to cry. While the man’s apparent impassibility is thus partially

7 “Estou indo embora, a mala já está lá fora / vou te deixar, vou te deixar / por favor não implora, porque homem não chora! / e não pede perdão, e não pede perdão”. Here the ambiguity of the last reported line lies in the form of the verb pedir (“ask”): pede is both the 3rd person singular of the present indicative (“he/she/it asks”), and the 2nd person singular of the imperative.
8 “Você foi a culpada desse amor se acabar / você que destruiu a minha vida”.
9 “Quem disse que homem não chora? Aqui está a prova porque estou chorando agora!”
refuted, it is important to note that the model of the guilty woman seems to be accepted unproblematically. Therefore, here the masculine protagonist seems to be represented as a double victim: firstly, he is a victim of the woman, and secondly, he is oppressed by the social norms that prevent him from crying freely.

This double victim-ism narrates a fragile masculinity troubled by the dominant misogynistic norms of hegemonic masculinity (CONNELL, 1995), undoubtedly persisting throughout all the covers of the song. We attempt to unveil how Pablo’s 2014 cover of the song and the related 2015 video produce further tension with the model of apparently impassible masculinity discussed above.

Pablo’s understanding of the song seems more or less coextensive with that of Paixão Aguda, in that he recognises that the model of the non-crying man is not evoked seriously in the lyrics:

[The song] tells the story of a man who doesn’t want to admit that he’s suffering, that he’s crying, right? That he suffers… Generally, men don’t want to admit that they suffer for love, so this is the song, “a man doesn’t cry”, but obviously men do cry, undoubtedly (PABLO & SOARES, 2015).

However, Pablo actively employs a variety of additional performatic elements in order to resist to this masculine model. The first of these elements is his extraordinarily high-pitched voice, which arguably even exceeds the range of a typical countertenor. An unfamiliar, or lay, listener here could easily mistake Pablo’s version of Porque homem não chora to be sung by a woman.

In the video (PORQUE HOMEM NÃO CHORA, 2015), Pablo appears with a rather flamboyant and camp “George Michael-esque” beard, a larger-than-life pompadour haircut, and a noticeable amount of eye-makeup. The images consist of a montage of shots of Pablo recording the song in the studio, with the camera lingering abundantly on the singer’s clothes and facial features and frequently focusing-in on his

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10 [A música] conta a história de um homem que não quer admitir que está sofrendo, que está chorando, né? Que sofre... geralmente o homem, ele não quer admitir que sofre por amor, então a música é isso, “homem não chora”, mas claro que o homem chora, sem dúvida.

11 In this work, we differentiate the adjective “performatic”, referring specifically to the sphere of artistic performance (HUNTER, 2008), to the adjective “performative”, which has a broader meaning and describes the faculty of a symbolic trace to perform an action while uttering it.
languid looks at the camera. The close-ups on Pablo alternate with shots of the other musicians, especially the lead guitarist, ecstatically transported by the sound of their own instrument, to the point of recurrently closing their eyes. The quasi-carnal bond of each of the instrumentalists with their own respective instrument resembles Pablo’s relationship with the microphone, interposed between the camera and the singer’s face. Pablo gently and repeatedly touches on the microphone, as if caressing it. Drawing on John Champagne’s (2015) interpretation of the main gun scene in the Italian film Gomorrah (2008) as a “homoerotic spectacle” (CHAMPAGNE, 2015, p. 12), we propose to resignify the homosocial musical practice displayed in the video of Porque homem não chora (PABLO, 2015) as a mutual and loving display of virility to one another, a liminal homosocial/homoerotic ritual comparable to the “circle jerk” or the “pissing context” (CHAMPAGNE, 2015, p. 12), whereby the musicians’ instruments and Pablo’s microphone assume the role of surrogates of the phallus.

This queer reading of Pablo’s version of Porque homem não chora does not negate nor alleviate the misogynist tension that characterise the song. On the contrary, the absence of the constantly blamed woman—unambiguously qualified as such via the aforementioned feminine ending of the adjective culpada (“guilty”)—is a distinctive feature the song, which the exclusive male population of the music video also partakes. However, this attempt to suppress the woman/Shadow-Beast (ANZALDÚA, 1987) fails dramatically by transcending in the homosocial/homoerotic “masturbative” ritual described above.

4. Conclusive Remarks

As a result of quite literally giving birth to messy entities of “flesh and blood”—babies—the woman is the West’s stranger, its Shadow-Beast (ANZALDÚA, 1987, p. 18). If, in Parlato’s Maruzzella, the Shadow-Beast emerges as a femminiello, in Pablo’s Porque homem não chora the attempt to suppress the Shadow-Beast transcends into a highly homoerotic performance. In both cases we are in presence of a queer subaltern that literally occupies “two in one body, both male and female”
(ANZALDÚA, 1987, p. 19), as attested to by the vocal extravagances and the physical presences of the two interpreters.

Both Pablo and Parlato perform, more or less consciously, an instance of “epistemic delinking” (MIGNOLO, 2009) in that they proudly disavow received notions of their territories and identities, both in terms of picturesque postcards of (white) beach paradises, and in terms of machoistic, homophobic masculinities. The two performances also resist traditional treatments of Neapolitan and Bahian musical traditions, be it in terms of national appropriation or in terms of peripheralisation, demonisation and criminalisation.

In a recent TV interview, Pablo controversially declared that he did not remember the name of the author of Porque homem não chora (PABLO & SOARES, 2015). In his performance, as seen above, Parlato sardonically summons the figure of the Maestro/composer only to symbolically claim full authorship on Maruzzella. We see these two coextensive manifestations as de-colonial arrogations of control over the queer ontologies encoded in these two performances. Violently labelled as machoistic, homophobic and criminally aggressive, the Italian South and the Brazilian Northeast emerge, through these two performers, as reservoirs of dissident queer figures, subverting the apparently solid zero-point of white masculinity.

5. References


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PASSIONE. Director: John Turturro. With: Massimo Ranieri; Lina Sastrí; Gennaro Cosmo Parlato e Pietra Montecorvino. Squeezed Heart Production. 2010.

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