

**Female-Exu: Meaning and Eroticism in Maria Padilha by Bixarte /
*Exu-feminina: sentido e erotismo em Maria Padilha de Bixarte***

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ABSTRACT

In this research, adopting a qualitative and descriptive approach, the aim is to investigate the possible meaning's effect associated with the image of Female-Exu using the theoretical framework of Materialist Discourse Analysis. The mythologies surrounding this entity are linked to her power at crossroads and her potential to open paths, providing her followers new ways of understanding life. Additionally, the image of this entity updates meanings related to eroticism. Considering the hegemony of Christian ideologies, the representation of the Female-Exu leads to interpretations other than those which associate the erotic with sin. Therefore, unlike the Christian ideology, such as the image of the devil and/or satan, in addition to negative/pejorative erotic aspects associated with the entity by non-Candomblé and Umbanda practitioners, the research proposal is also to investigate possible erotic meanings in the lyrics "Maria Padilha" by Bixarte.

KEYWORDS: Female-Exu; Eroticism; Afro-Brazilian Religions

RESUMO

Nesta pesquisa, de abordagem qualitativa e descritiva, objetiva-se investigar os possíveis efeitos de sentidos vinculados à imagem de Exu-Feminina a partir do dispositivo teórico da Análise do Discurso Materialista. As mitologias em torno desta entidade estão vinculadas a seu poder sobre as encruzilhadas e seu potencial em abrir caminhos e formas de compreender a vida para seus fiéis. Ademais, a imagem da entidade atualiza significações do erotismo. Considerando a hegemonia das ideologias cristãs, a imagem de Exu-Feminina remete a interpretações divergentes daquelas que vinculam o erótico ao pecado. Por isso, ao contrário da ideologia cristã, como a imagem de diabo e/ou satanás, além de aspectos eróticos negativos/pejorativos vinculados à entidade por sujeitos não candomblecistas e umbandistas, a proposta da pesquisa é também investigar possíveis sentidos eróticos na música Maria Padilha de Bixarte.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Exu-Feminina; Erotismo; Religiões afro-brasileira

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1 Conditions of Production- Exu: The Afro-Brazilian Deity

Exu is a messenger deity, prominently recognized as the guardian of paths and *encruzilhadas* (crossroads). According to Rufino (2019), the crossroad emerges as a space for new directions, a field of possibilities, and an affirmation of life. The mythologies surrounding this ancestor are linked to his power over crossroads and his privilege to eat first, that is, to receive offerings before all other ancestors. *Exu* is an *orisha* [Afro deity] in *Candomblé* of *Nago* origin, belonging to the nations of *Ketu*, *Jejê*, and *Efon*. However, only in the Angola nation, he is referred to as *Pambu Njila*.

In the speeches of *Candomblé* and *Umbanda*, the ancestors are responsible for guiding good decisions in any given sphere, whether it be a job decision, love life, choices of friendships, and so on. Therefore, the destiny goes beyond a personal choice; it is a decision guided by the ancestor. Based on this, on proposing systematic research with theoretical considerations we may promote the dissemination of concepts about *Exu*. In accordance with this, this research is centered on the analysis of the Female-*Exus*, commonly known as *Pombagiras* and worshipped in *Umbanda*. The term *Npambu Njila*, can be translated from Kikongo to Portuguese language as ‘between paths’ or ‘crossroads.’ In the *Candomblé* religion of the Angola nation, *Pambu Njila* is an ancestor who takes care of the paths, which means that he safeguards his followers, preventing evil from getting in the way of their journey. The path, in this regard, can metaphorically mean the attitudes about decision-making that generate consequences in the destinies of *Candomblé* and *Umbanda* practitioners. The adaptation of terms to Brazilian Portuguese from the African continent is quite common within the religion; hence, the expression *Npambu Njila* is known as *Pomba Gira*, *Pombagira*, *Pombo Gira*, or *Pombo Gila*.

According to Silva (2019, p. 80), “the *Pombagiras* mainly represent women whose moral and sexual behavior is considered reprehensible. During the possession process, they manifest expansive and erotic gestures.”¹ Based on this statement, one can consider that there is an imaginary constructed both by chauvinistic and Christian ideologies, dictating the morally accepted conditions for sexuality and eroticism concerning the female body.

¹ In Portuguese: “as pombagiras representam principalmente mulheres de comportamento moral e sexual tido como reprovável. Quando incorporadas, manifestam gestos expansivos e eróticos.”

The portrayal of a morally condemned woman for certain religious or moral positions due to sensual effects is largely associated with black and poor women, supported by highlighting a body considered beautiful: small breasts, wide hips, and so on. Regarding the image of women, as Freyre (1984, s.p.) asserts, “when it comes to the hip sizes, Brazilians have supposedly developed an almost folkloric tendency to associate them with the so-called *cus de pimenta* [pepper asses] or *rabos ardorosos* [burning bottoms] already present in references in records of the investigations of the Holy Office.”

The document of records, also known as the Holy Office of the Inquisition, was a legal institution of the Roman Catholic Church aimed at combating deviant acts according to established moral conduct. Within this historical context, blackish phenotypes were often associated with sensual stimuli capable of provoking lascivious acts.

In contrast, aiming to extrapolate current meanings, this research is focused on analyzing the erotic meaning’s effect potentially present in the Female-*Exu* entity, and it is justified by the possible meanings surrounding these ancestral figures especially because the circulating meaning is based on the knowledge of non-*Candomblé* practitioners. Considering these understandings, this proposal is an analysis of the lyrics “*Maria Padilha*” by Bixarte, based on the Materialist Discourse Theory (DA). The artist is a Black, and transgender individual from the Northwest of Brazil, renowned for her powerful work in the artistic field, working as an actress at the *TV Globo* [Globo Tv] as well as a poet. The album *traviarcado* was her first one and it was sponsored by the *Projeto Natura Musical* [Natura Musical Project], comprising nine tracks available on digital platforms such as Deezer, YouTube, and Spotify.

The crossroads here means a *locus* of ancestral invocation, it emerges as a fundamental element in *Candomblé* practices. When invoking, that is, when performing the act of calling upon an entity to enter the practitioner’s body, the individual connects with the invoked entity in order to incorporate its wisdom. According to Rufino (2019), the concept of crossroads is a practical knowledge that launches itself as an openness to new horizons, claiming the sophistication of a plural world and expressing itself through the phenomenon of *cruzo* [crossing]. In this sense, it is also possible to evoke these entities, calling upon the spirit to be present but outside the practitioner, summoning the energy into the surrounding space. When it comes to *Exu*, whether invoked or evoked, this entity is the master of corners, streets, alleys, being present at any crossroads.

It is possible to establish a productive liaison between the concepts of invocation and interpellation, as they mobilize a dialogue between Discourse Analysis and Afro-Brazilian Matrix religions. Considering invocation as a vocative that indicates the calling of the entity into the subject's body, one can consider it as a movement of interpellation for both the individual and the entity. This is because the processes of subject constitution occur through ideological interpellations established by positions of enunciation (Zoppi-Fontana, 1999). Based on this functioning, the individual becomes subjective, and these enunciative positions are determined by specific ideological formations (Althusser, 2008). As religion is also an interpellative practice and rite, by invoking the entity, the discourse subject is constituted by embodying an *Exu*. Therefore, it can be said that the individual, through the act of incorporating the entity via invocation, becomes the subject of a given *Candomblé* discourse.

The verb *cruzar* (to cross) can be understood as interconnection, that is, a nexus between elements. It is also commonly associated with the sexual intercourse for animals. Establishing a possible relationship of polysemy, one cannot guarantee a semantic connection between the uses of the words, but rather associate this animalistic cross with the discourse of non-*Candomblé* practitioners. This discourse operates on a feminine entity, suggesting a sexual character, animalizing her, and positioning her as a sexual object. Therefore, it is a discourse constructed from the perspectives of certain religions that categorize sex as a sin

Maria Padilha is a deity worshipped in *Umbanda* and in some *Candomblé* houses. This entity has a challenging character, as she does not accept subordination. Her space does not align with domestic roles historically associated with women in the dominant ideology, such as being a spouse and a housewife. Padilha is the owner of the streets, the corners, of the crossroads of alleys and lanes. She embodies the stereotype of a woman who is in control of herself. Silva (2019, p. 78) states that:

her power stems from the control she exerts over her own body and desires, even if it costs her a socially stigmatized reputation. She takes advantage of the anatomical differences (penis and vagina), associated with biological sex (male and female), and gender roles (masculine and feminine), to question the social power that establishes dominance

based on these social markers of difference through social jestful and licentiousness.²

Although this mark of duality exists, there is no sense of opposition, but it seems to suggest a dynamic interplay between the entities of female and male *Exus*. This can be seen in the *Itan* (Oral Narratives) written by Maupoil (1988), which states that *Exu*, while performing sacrifices in the creation of woman, chose where to place her vagina: he tried placing it in the armpits, but there, the exposure was tremendous, so he placed it between her legs. Therefore, *Exu* received the right to walk with the exposed phallus, so one remembers that he helped to find the “accurate” place for the vaginas of the Female-*Exu* entities.

According to Matos (s.d.), the signifier phallus refers to the male genital organ and once the phallic symbol is a masculine noun in Portuguese, and, by homophony, akin to the conjugation of the verb *falar* (to speak) in the first person of the singular in the present indicative: *eu falo* (I speak). Therefore, these three possible meanings result from historical conditions that resemble each other: the male organ as a demonstration of virility and power, the classification of the word as masculine, and the inflection of the verb *falar*, due to homophony, as the one who holds the power of speech. These meanings about the phallus in the discourses of *Candomblé* and *Umbanda* are associated with the image of the male *Exu*.

Maria Padilha can be signified as (dis)order of the image of what a woman is and should be. In terms of paraphrases, semantically one could not compare Padilha with Maria de Nazaré, the mother of Jesus. “Padilha” and “virgin” are nouns that do not complement each other. The orthodox people view Maria as a symbol of holiness and virginity, while practitioners of African-derived religions speak of Maria as the owner of the cabaret and the streets. The Marias of *Umbanda*, with the most well-known being *Mulambo* and *Padilha*, can signify images of power and seduction. Maria Padilha, as a revolutionary woman, aligns more closely with the characteristics of Mary Magdalene, as in the medieval period she was considered by many as a prostitute. In Chapter 8, verse

² In Portuguese: “seu poder decorre do domínio que manifesta sobre seu corpo e sua vontade, ainda que isso lhe custe uma reputação social estigmatizada. Ela se utiliza da diferença anatômica (pênis e vagina), associada ao sexo biológico (macho e fêmea) e aos papéis de gênero (masculino e feminino), para questionar por meio da jocosidade e da licenciosidade e poder social que instaura relações de dominação a partir destes marcadores sociais da diferença.”

2 of the Gospel of Luke, it is said that “Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out.”³ Magdalene and Padilha are both labeled by the Christian discourse as promiscuous women.

1 Possible Erotic Undertones in the *Pombagiras* in the Lyrics “Maria Padilha”

Maria Padilha

Maria Padilha
Padilha
Essa menina é bonita
Quando a sua saia gira
Ninguém vai se controlar
Eh ah

Padilha
Essa menina é bonita
Quando a sua saia gira
Ninguém vai se controlar
Eh ah

E desce cachaça, desce Pitú
Desce ardendo, 51
Cachaça fuerte
Quero jambu
Tremendo meu corpo e teu corpo nu

E desce cachaça, desce pitu
Desce ardendo, 51
Cachaça forte
Quero jambu
Tremendo meu corpo e teu corpo nu

Estoy muy loca por ti
Tu estas muy loco por mi
Estoy muy loca por ti
Tu estas muy loco por mi

Beso tu boca, saco tu ropa
Quero te enlouquecer
Com minha voz rouca e minha mão boba posso te
encher de prazer

Maria Padilha

Maria Padilha
Padilha
such a beautiful girl
When her skirt swirls
No one will be able to control themselves
Eh ah

Padilha
such a beautiful girl
When her skirt swirls
No one will be able to control themselves
Eh ah

And the *cachaça* [sugar cane drink] goes down,
the *Pitú* Goes burning,
51 Strong *cachaça*
I’m craving for *jambu* [a typical Northeastern fruit]
our bodies trembling while we’re nude

And the *cachaça* goes down, the *Pitú*
Goes burning, *51*
strong *cachaça*
I’m craving *jambu*
our bodies trembling while we’re nude

Estoy muy loca por ti
Tu estas muy loco por mi
Estoy muy loca por ti
Tu estas muy loco por mi

Beso tu boca, saco tu ropa
I wanna drive you crazy
With my raspy voice and my wandering hands, I can
fill you with pleasure

³ Reference: Luke 8:2 – New International Version. Available at <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%208%3A2&version=NIV>. Access on January, 17, 2024.

<i>Y Beso tu boca, saco tu ropa</i>	<i>Beso tu boca, saco tu ropa</i>
Quero te enlouquecer	I wanna drive you crazy
Com minha voz rouca e minha mão boba posso te encher de prazer	With my raspy voice and my wandering hands, I can fill you with pleasure
Padilha	Padilha
Essa menina é bonita	Such a beautiful girl
Quando a sua saia gira	When her skirt swirls
Ninguém vai se controlar, êh ah	No one will be able to control themselves eh ah
Padilha	Padilha
Essa menina é bonita	Such a beautiful girl
Quando a sua saia gira	When her skirt swirls
Eu sei que você me conhece	I know you know me
Você sabe onde pode me encontrar	You know where you can find me
Em qualquer esquina, em qualquer bar	On any corner, any bar
Basta meu nome você chamar	Just call out my name
Hahahahaha	Hahahahaha
Maria Padilha	Maria Padilha
Padilha	Padilha
Essa menina é bonita	Such a beautiful girl
Quando a sua saia gira	When her skirt swirls
Ninguém vai se controlar	No one will be able to control themselves
Eh ah	Eh ah
Eh ah	Eh ah
Eh ah (Bixarte, 2023)	Eh ah

The investigation of possible erotic aspects in the lyrics “Maria Padilha” by Bixarte will be considered according to a given concept of eroticism. According to Bataille (1962), “I said that I regarded eroticism as the disequilibrium in which the being consciously calls his own existence in question. In one sense, the being loses himself deliberately, but then the subject is identified with the object losing his identity.” (Bataille, 1962, p. 31).⁴ In this context, the aim here is to investigate how the discourse functions in its erotic meaning’s effect and/or effects that provoke psychic or physical effects of a self-imbalance.

In the opening verses of the lyrics, the composer characterizes Maria Padilha with the term *bonita* [beautiful]. This adjective seems to complement the atmosphere of seduction and attraction. It leaves no room for opposing adjectives, thereby reinforcing

⁴ BATAILLE, Georges. *Death and Sensuality. A Study of Eroticism and the Taboo*. New York: Walker and Company, 1962.

the imagery associated with black women who are exposed to the gaze of desire that dictates what constitutes a beautiful body. The excerpt “when her skirt swirls” suggests a circular movement, allowing a glimpse of what lies beneath. This can be interpreted as a dance-like motion that imaginatively provokes the eyes of those who desire it. While the fabrics conceal the body, the swaying of the skirt simultaneously exposes it.

It is crucial to understand the discourse of these lyrics: the discourse of Afro-Brazilian religions, in contact, in antagonism with the dominant religious discourse, that is, the Christian one, based on the conditions of production of Brazilian society. This idea finds support in Bataille (1962, p. 71), who speaks about the “Religious cannibalism is the elementary example of the taboo as creating desire: the taboo does not create the flavour and taste of the flesh but stands as the reason why the pious cannibal consumes it.”⁵ In this perspective, little is known about the pleasures that Padilha, the *bonita* may offer, but the desire arises from this place of fantasy.

The sentence “No one will be able to control themselves” opens up a range of perspectives; Padilha is plural, there are not just one audience desiring her; her beauty surpasses standards. In harmony with this, associating the verb *olhar* (to look), it elicits effects of meaning that may evoke a sense of desire in the observer, according to Mota (2012). Therefore, being pretty and arousing uncontrollable desire are complementary predicates in this regard. With eroticism possibly implying a loss of stability, the absence of control is assumed as an inherent function of this erotic storytelling that the individual creates.

Reflecting on the noun Mary: in a certain part of the lyrics, it appears implicitly, and in another, explicitly. The proper noun in discourses influenced by Christian ideologies refers to the entity with meanings that are not considered applicable to Padilha, especially when compared to Mary of Nazareth once Jesus’ mother is characterized as a virgin and saint, and these adjectives do not apply to Maria Padilha.

So, overtly, in the music, the proper noun may have functioned as a semantic play, aiming to identify this specific subject. As a form of qualification: one does not desire any Mary, but rather Maria Padilha. However, in a comparison with Magdalene, there are possible adjectives that apply to both. In Christian discourses, Maria Padilha and Magdalene are associated with non-monogamous promiscuous women supposedly

⁵ For reference, see footnote 4.

lacking moral values. Perhaps, in modern times, they would be at a table in a bar, without children in their laps, holding a glass of *cachaça* [sugar cane drink] and swirling their skirts.

Thus, the image of Padilha is also influenced by the opposition to other Maries who are not entities from African traditional religions. The image of Mary, the mother of Jesus, is shaped by the Christian religious ideology, which aims to control acts related to sexuality, portraying this woman as an untouched virgin. These adjectives are emphasized and persist in biblical interpretations, while Mary of Nazareth, at the same time, has other children from “other sexual relationships,” who are mentioned as brothers and sisters of Jesus in the Bible.

The filter that dictates the sanctification of these entities is related to the presence or absence of sexual intercourse, functioning as a monitoring of these meanings assigned to certain signifiers in Christian traditions. The profane woman is the one who engages in sex, while the virgin is seen as sacred. Even Magdalene, intimate with Jesus, was considered a profane woman. Therefore, this religious ideology condemns other possibilities of female sanctification, labeling them as *diaba* [evil women], which means that Padilha, a non-virgin woman, is considered profane from this perspective especially because non-monogamy is a sin in the Christian religion, and Padilha identifies herself as a woman who does not exclusively engage with one partner.

The verbal phrase *vai se controlar* [will be able to control themselves] is in the reflexive form, and there is also the presence of a verbal periphrasis. The particle *se* [reflexive pronoun in Portuguese] combines with the indefinite pronoun *ninguém* [nobody] conveying the idea of a lack of self-control. Therefore, *ninguém* does not function as a pronoun referring to no one in particular, but rather to anyone who looks/desires Padilha. In paraphrase, one could say *todo mundo vai se descontrolar* [everyone will be out of control] or *alguém não vai se controlar* [somebody won't control themselves] meaning “when her skirt swirls, everyone will lose control.” Thus, this is an antagonistic effect present in the expression.

The verse “when her skirts swirl, no one will be able to control themselves” suggests a probable imagistic effect of a body that is physically distant but close to the gaze. Mota (2012) states that the gaze provokes nuanced effects that evoke in the observer a probable space of desire. In this perspective, in the swirling of the skirt, a swaying

reveals the fabrics that would be covering the body, also causing a synesthetic effect, where the subject touches another with their glance, placing them in an intimate space. When speaking of Maria Padilha and the potential erotic effects, given both imagistic and verbal compositions, they may elicit an invitation, a form of participation, an intimate involvement, even if imaginary, with the entity. This is in the composition of what is said about the *pombagira* or what she says.

In the first verse of the lyrics, there are statements related to the practice of incorporation, such as the consumption of alcoholic beverages by the *pombagiras*. *Pitú*, for instance, is a popular brand of *cachaça* manufactured in the state of Pernambuco, which was founded in the year of 1938. This alcoholic beverage has an average alcohol content of forty percent, and it is a mix of sugar, lemon, and sugarcane spirit, giving it a sweeter taste. Another Brazilian *cachaça* brand is the 51, produced in the state of São Paulo since 1951. The composition of this distilled beverage includes sugarcane juice and water, with an alcohol content also averaging forty percent.

Both *cachaças* are commonly given to *Exus* (either female or male) as an offering. These alcoholic beverages are offered to the entities as a form of gratitude or compensation. When manifested in the body of the individuals, these entities consume these types of beverages, as Silva (2019, p. 80) asserts, the *pombagiras* “when incorporated... use profanity or playful and double entendre expressions, consume alcoholic beverages, and smoke.”⁶ The consumption of *cachaças* is a part of the rituals surrounding these entities.

These Brazilian alcoholic beverages, in their simplest form of production, are consumed by the informal and precarious working classes, making them widely popular. In the social imagination, *cachaça* is labeled as a disqualifier for those who consume it as in the adjective *cachaceiro* [*Cachaça* drinker], in which the associated meanings portray someone who consumes the drink as a vice or a person lacking social prestige. Establishing these semantic connections, these *cachaças* become attributes of offerings because they are, in some way, an ingredient that enhances a certain intimacy with the entity. If the entity drinks it during incorporation, the faithful followers also partake to accompany them.

⁶ In Portuguese: “quando incorporadas... utilizam “palavrões” ou expressões jocosas e de duplo sentido, consomem bebida alcoólica e fumam.”

The consumption of alcohol, the act of ingesting the alcohol, can be expressed by the verb *descer* [go down], which can also suggest a flow in quantity, as in the expression *desce/traz mais* [Down one more/ bring some more]. The expression *desce mais uma* [bring down one more] is commonly used when it comes to drinking alcohol. Consequently, the verb *descer* can also evoke connotations associated with pouring *cachaça* over a naked body, like a presumed scene with erotic performances. In other words, it is plausible that these performative devices contribute to the imagery created by the lyrics as appreciated by the listener, in an erotic and sexual manner. It's like crafting a scene in the imagination of the viewer.

These physical sensations of going down burning, are similar to a sensation of burning the body from the inside as once the liquid is ingested, it makes the body tremble, causing a synesthetic effect. The sensations from drinking *cachaça* provoke the power of intimacy, heightening the lack of control, the fantasy. The verse *quero Jambu* [I'm craving for *jambu*] brings to the scene something that would enhance this synesthetic sensation, since this fruit causes numbness in the mouth, as the beginning of the entire pleasure zone of the body is the mouth. This anesthetized part of the body amplifies the burning sensation, the burning of the body. If during the consumption of the alcohol that burns, the oral anesthesia softens the heat, the burning, then, the individual seems to want for this pleasure to last longer as well as the erotic fantasy itself. It begins with the mouth and unfolds through the entire body that is out of control by the imagination.

The verb *tremendo* [trembling], in turn, can suggest the sensation caused by alcohol, that is: the loss of control over the body. However, when accompanied by the word *nu* [nude], it represents a loss of control upon seeing that naked, exposed body. According to Mota (2012), there is a common tendency to label any symbolic object that exposes the body while suggesting eroticism as pornographic. Based on this, the naked body, by provoking this loss of control in the other, implies a certain moment of fantasy, eroticism, like a scene, an imagination.

The phrase *tremendo meu corpo e teu corpo nu* [our bodies trembling while we're nude] suggests that the naked body is the cause of this trembling, as if the body craving for another naked person couldn't control its restlessness and sexual desires. Bataille (1962, p. 17) asserts that "stripping naked is the decisive action. Nakedness offers a contrast to self-possession, to discontinuous existence, In other words. It is a state of

communication revealing a quest for a possible continuance of being beyond the confines of the self.”⁷ Nudity, in this perspective, functions as the ruin of decency whereas clothing is a way of hiding obscenity. Therefore, by embracing this uninterrupted connection, the subject implies that in the lyrics there is a relationship of intimacy and eroticism that constitutes the connection between these individuals. As noted by Bataille (1962, p. 31),

I said that I regarded eroticism as the disequilibrium in which the being consciously calls his own existence in question. In one sense, the being loses himself deliberately, but then the subject is identified with the object losing his identity. If necessary I can say in eroticism: I am losing myself.⁸

The word *nu* [nude] evokes a connection with the verse *Ninguém vai se* [No one will be able to control themselves], because nudity can provoke a sense of intimacy in the spectator. The act of undressing, in this sense, in a latent manner, would create a bond of reception, making Padilha’s relationship with the listener quite distinctive. This is because “the naked woman is near the moment of fusion, her nakedness heralds it” (Bataille, 1962, p. 131).⁹

Since seeing this naked body is indicative of self-exposure, corresponding to Maupoil’s *Itan* (1988), where *Exu* gained the right to walk with the exposed phallus, this also establishes a homophonic relation with the verb *falo* (Matos, n.d.; emphasis added), which can be understood as someone who possesses the word, at that given moment, in the present tense. Matos (n.d., p. 63) states that “by possessing the ‘phallus,’ the man holds authority and symbolic power.”¹⁰ Therefore, *Exu*, who is not a mortal man but a deity, can be understood as this Great Subject, a Universal Subject, as affirmed in Pêcheux’s quote (2014, p. 8):

The ideological subject unfolds into a singular subject, captured in the empirical evidence of their identity (“this is me!”) and their place (“it’s true, I am here, worker, boss, soldier!”) and into a Universal Subject, the Great Subject that, in the form of God, Justice, Morality,

⁷ For reference, see footnote 4.

⁸ For reference, see footnote 4.

⁹ For reference, see footnote 4.

¹⁰ In Portuguese: “possuindo o “falo” o homem detém autoridade e poder simbólico.”

Knowledge, etc. It conveys the evidence that “it is this way,” always and everywhere, and that it must be this way.¹¹

Based on this, a God who walks naked is only unfamiliar to subjects of religious and moral ideologies that deem the naked body as sinful. Embracing nudity is not succumbing to the gaze of the other spectator, who knows nothing about the power of embracing an entity that exposes their phalluses as a possibility of intimacy and belonging. Those are the circumstances of a universal Subject, that is, of this God who exposes himself, and as Rufino (2019, p. 31) states about *Exu*: “this spirit is the lord of possibilities, it descends into any body, speaks in any language, and says the unsaid.”¹²

Additionally, in the lyrics, there is a verse in Spanish. The blending of Portuguese and Hispanic languages in the lyrics may arise from the imagery of a *caliente* language, where the accents carry a sensual tone. Perhaps the imaginary formations of hot languages stem from the sexual objectification of these peoples, as if the image of any and every Latin American woman were primarily linked to meanings of sensuality and profanity. This linguistic imagery, with its sound and timbre, creates such a sensation. Therefore, when hearing words in Spanish, based on memories associated with the image of Hispanic languages, the listener may be inundated by meanings of pleasure.

As Freyre (1984) states regarding Iberian women of the 16th century, they would be noted for their notably prominent bottoms or prominently large bottoms, just like Afro-Brazilian women. This correlates with the sexualized image constructed around this Latin body. Thus, the language will function as a metonymy for this Latin body, as it replaces and rhymes with these words because there is a possible relationship of meaning in them. It is possible to say that when it comes to these exaggerations employed in the lyrics, the expression *muy loca* [very crazy] functions as a hyperbole. The adverb *muy* is a qualifier that intensifies the meaning of madness, and it is not about a psychological anomaly but rather a maximum state of excitement of the subject.

The singer blends phrases from these two languages to evoke a feeling of expressiveness in the lyrics, using the device of alliteration. Additionally, there is the

¹¹ In Portuguese: “O sujeito ideológico se desdobra em um sujeito singular, tomado na evidência empírica de sua identidade (“este sou eu!”) e de seu lugar (“é verdade, eu estou aqui, trabalhador, patrão, soldado!”) e num Sujeito universal, Grande Sujeito que, sob a forma de Deus, ou da Justiça, ou da Moral, ou do Saber etc., veicula a evidência de que “é assim”, sempre e em toda parte, e que é mesmo assim.”

¹² In Portuguese: “esse espírito é o senhor das possibilidades, ele baixa em qualquer corpo, fala em qualquer língua e diz o não dito.”

presence of rhymes with *loca* [crazy], *boca* [mouth], *ropa* [clothes], causing assonance. This production creates a harmonic effect, providing a sound that brings similarity between the languages. A possible meaning for the blending of these two languages, conceived from the signifier ‘crossroads,’ in the sense of intersection, meeting between these languages, stems from the principle of *Exu*, as an entity capable of embodying any form and speaking any language (Rufino, 2019). This is the crossing between the possibilities of connection with any and every single body, that Padilha, this plural woman with sexual freedom, can achieve.

According to Vainfas (2020, p. 269), “there is no sin on the underside of the equator”¹³ - this saying that circulated in Europe in the 17th century and became a verse by Chico Buarque is almost a commonplace when talking about sexual freedom in colonial times. Based on this assertion, it is possible to discuss about sexual freedom: for it to exist, would it be necessary to suppress the moral and religious rules that restrain the so-called sexual practices? It is likely so since a Christian being, given one’s ideological obligations, should suspend one’s moral convictions, for example, to engage in carnal relations outside of marriage, without feeling guilty about it.

Sexual freedom or lasciviousness is a constitution of subjects who deviate from the Christian creed doctrine when they subject themselves to the discourse of Afro-Brazilian religions and affirm themselves as erotic people, as seen in the entity Maria Padilha. And this stance of the subject as erotic is given in and by language when one desires and fantasizes about an entity as we can perceive in the lyrics.

The subjectification to languages to emphasize a certain affect, in the religious order, is like a (re)approach to God. Uttering a given phrase in Latin is as if the sin were extinguished in the sinful act, considering the functioning of this language as sacred. Therefore, even though Latin is considered a dead language, it still carries a memory of sacredness. In view of this, it is crucial to comprehend that these processes are ideological. Consequently, the subject does not appropriate language in an individual movement (Orlandi, 2007). The subjection occurs in the social order and it establishes a cohesion to the ideological constitution of this subject.

In colonial Brazil, the prevailing belief was that uttering the words of consecration of the host in the mouths of husbands, wives, or lovers, preferably during sexual relations,

¹³ In Portuguese: “não existe pecado do lado de baixo do equador.”

held special powers. There was a precious detail: the words had to be spoken in Latin, nothing less than the sacred words of the Eucharist, amidst whispers and moans. The language of seduction thus followed the fate of religion, oscillating between the phallic Christ and the feminine Virgin (Vainfas, 2020).

Built upon that, the use of the Hispanic language works as an approach to the erotic effect of the lyrics. Padilha is represented by the girl who provides pleasure. This entity is not limited to a speaker and a given lexicon: it is charged with the language of seduction. Therefore, even when using a language not considered sacred by religious ideology to express its desires, there is this operation of erotic fantasy. Even though, all this eloquence turns her into a *diaba* [female devil] for those not faithful to her.

This is clear because, as Silva (2019, p.78) understands regarding the *pombagiras*: “Although she can also be seen as a mother, she is perceived as a ‘woman of the street’ and not as a housewife.”¹⁴ As a consequence, *pombagira* takes on the stereotype of a prostitute. In this sense, her power arises from the control she asserts over her body and her desire, even though it costs her a stigmatized social reputation.

Considering that Padilha occupies this position of the “woman of the street,” Orlandi (2019, p. 13) states that “to occupy,” in the sense of social construction, involves thinking about this “multiple, plural subject and the possibilities that the construction of spaces opens up for the relationship between subjects and the subject with themselves.”¹⁵ Therefore, the street as this habitual place, a public space, is occupied by this entity because a meaning is produced there, that is, a subject position that legitimizes this place. Padilha takes on the street, or the crossroads, as a place of power.

In the verses *Com minha voz rouca e minha mão boba posso te encher de prazer* [With my raspy voice and my wandering hands, I can fill you with pleasure]. The raspy voice can be attributed to the desire to utter whispers and moans, and it can also be read as if this discursive functioning would evoke eroticism. It also aims to enliven this poetic sensation with sound effects, as during the production of speech occurs the emission of breaths of air. Hence, this refers to synesthesia, where the subject, through sensory stimulation, can associate different senses.

¹⁴ In Portuguese: “Embora ela possa ser também vista como mãe, é como “mulher da rua” e não “da casa.”

¹⁵ In Portuguese: “sujeito múltiplo, plural e nas possibilidades que a construção de espaços abre para a relação dos sujeitos entre si e do sujeito com ele mesmo.”

So, the huskiness of the voice is like yearning the other person once this raspy voice is perceived as sensual. Besides, the huskiness can also be associated with the absence of voice in a moment of ecstasy, because it is correlated to the act of speaking close to the ear, like a whisper and/or a moan. Simultaneously, the same happens with the voice to the ear and the sliding of the wandering hands over the body. Whispers are carried out through the breath of air and provoke a tactile and intimate sensation, potentially erotic in complicity. When one physically feels this warm air on the body, in collusion with the slippery wandering hands, this may cause this synesthetic effect, mixing and (con)fusing senses. In an instant of stimuli, this might result in the loss of control of both senses and body, with aphonia being one of the consequences of this erotic frenzy. In other words: the body exalts itself while the voice falters.

The expression *mão boba* [wandering hands] is popularly known as a falsely involuntary gesture, where one person touches another with libidinous intentions. The adjective *boba* (silly (metaphorically wandering) in Portuguese) qualifies it as naive. The term *bobo* refers to the court jesters, who in the Middle Ages amused the kings. Thus, the expression in the music functions by evoking the dissimulation or successful tacit consent of this temptation towards the other. As if, in moments of intimacy, the hand slides over the nearby body without direction, in a lascivious way in order to disguise the craving, the avidity that suggests running one's hand over that body. The naked body and its erogenous zones are traversed by these hands ready to indulge and provide pleasure. Returning to the phallus, as the imaginary of *Exu's* avidity, the *mão boba* would be the one that furtively holds the phallus, manipulating it, caressing it until the eruption of climax. The climax being that point of culmination of sexual pleasure, to make one come.

The excerpt of the lyrics *eu sei que você me conhece* [I know you know me] indicates that there is a consolidated relationship. The verb *conhecer* [to know] suggests a connection, a certain sense of belonging. This knowledge is quite vague, not specifying which or what types of connections, whether they are romantic and/or religious, but it reveals an identification as in the verses: *Você sabe onde pode me encontrar* [You know where you can find me] this discursive play of possibilities, capture effectively the essence of Padilha once this occasional entity that dominates both body and desires can be multiple and adapts herself to any and every space.

The verb *saber* [to know] is present in both sentences of the lyrics, and this functions, in some way, as a demonstration of knowledge and a relationship between the pairs. I know – you know, so there is a manifestation of mastery/ownership. In paraphrases, Padilha knows that I know, just as I know that she knows, or I know that Padilha knows about me, just as I know about her. It is an implied knowledge between these subjects, an allusion to knowledge that is not spoken but shared. The complicity between the subjects has to do with eroticism: Padilha, as a religious entity, demonstrates knowing her followers, just as her worshipers recognize knowing her.

Resuming the term *npambu nzila* translated as “between paths, crossroads,” and its relationship with the word *pombagira*, the streets are considered as the dwelling place of *Exus* (both female and male), and the word *nzila* is translated as road/street. Rufino (2019, p. 108) states that “the place that opens up and where the powers that reinvent life intersect is called an *encruzilhada* [crossroad], is commonly known as *encruza*: the crossroads is where certainties are destroyed; it is, *par excellence*, the place of breaches and possibilities.”¹⁶ Therefore, in the lyrics, there is a fragment that complements the idea of the verb *saber*, where Padilha says that you can find her on any street corner, in any bar. The street corner, then, alludes to this space on the street, being anywhere, and the bar to this space for the consumption of alcoholic beverages, reintroducing the consumption of *cachaça* mentioned earlier.

The invocation of entities from *Candomblé* and *Umbanda* occurs through chants, prayers, dances, rituals, offerings, etc. It is in this festive setting that the term *terreiros* [religious Afro-Brazilian grounds] is commonly used: calling upon the saint/*orixá*/energy. This expression is associated with invocation, calling upon the entity, occurring in the spiritual dimension. In the lyrics, there is a prayer that captures this spiritual process when the lyrics say, *Basta meu nome você chamar* [just call out my name], meaning invoking the name Maria Padilha could be a possible invocation of this entity. In this way, the individual seeks to connect with the invoked entity, aiming to incorporate its wisdom. Therefore, by calling upon Padilha, she reveals herself in the

¹⁶ In Portuguese: “o lugar que se abre e onde se cruzam os poderes que reinventam a vida enquanto possibilidade chama-se encruzilhada, vulgo encruza... a encruzilhada é onde se destroem as certezas, é, por excelência, o lugar das frestas e das possibilidades.”

bodies through incorporation. This results in an interaction between the entity and the faithful, as well as between the faithful and the entity.

As previously mentioned, in the process of incorporation, the *pombagiras* use playful expressions to signal their arrival. These expressions are loud laughs, meant to demonstrate their power, reverence, and the way they establish relationships through amusement. Saraceni (2020) explains that *Exus* are a type of “energy that, when radiated towards someone, vitalizes them, making them feel strong, vigorous, and even happy.”¹⁷ That’s why *Exu* laughs. In the lyrics, to emphasize this laughter of *Exu*, the expression *hahahahaha* is used, which is commonly employed in digital writing to symbolize laughter.

Finally, laughter can function as the erasure of the threshold between the sacred and the profane, so that mockery and jesting, undo the untouchable deification, making the divinity more complicit with its faithful. Just as the *mãos bobas* slide over bodies indolently, laughter would carry or discharge more spontaneous, more joyful meanings. Thus, the satisfaction of laughter can be linked to enjoyment, to the act of experiencing pleasure and reaching the pinnacle of a religious and profane delight.

Final Considerations

In summary, *Exu* (both feminine and masculine) can be understood as an entity with erotic undertones, as his/her connections with the genitalia are not solely linked to sexual acts. The modes of functioning of eroticism, as analyzed in the lyrics, represent Maria Padilha as a concrete, tangible entity, close to entity, endowed with mechanisms of pleasure and eroticism. Padilha shows intimacy, complicity, because she stimulates erotic imagination in subjects: the imagination woven through desire. Moreover, once the street, the crossroads are her place of identification, the entity assumes her proximity to subjects. As a plural, multiple Goddess, invoked in anybody, embracing any language to speak about herself and others.

In the lyrics, based on the investigations, it is possible to say that Padilha does not hide as an entity of a sensual nature. Although the discourse about an energy/entity of

¹⁷ In Portuguese: “energia que quando irradia para alguém, vitaliza-o, fazendo com que se sintam forte e vigoroso, feliz mesmo.”

promiscuity circulates in dominant religious ideologies, Padilha blurs this discursive functioning to assert her conditions as a free woman and producer of pleasure. Therefore, if her image is that of a devil, Maria Padilha embraces that role and its erotic relationship. Hence, in the lyrics, there is a fantasy about Padilha as a Goddess announcing herself as strictly connected to the concrete and tangible conditions of individuals, as what is uniquely human, unlike other animals, is their ability and need to imagine, create, fantasize in sexual relations. Padilha asserts herself as a sign of reproduction and eroticization.

The eroticism evoked in the lyrics functions by provoking or signifying a loss of control, an imbalance in the terms of Bataille (1962). Unlike the Christian religion, which imposes self-control and self-sacrifice, the image of the entity Female-*Exu* seems to lead to a loss of self through sensual and erotic provocations, inciting a surrender that momentarily dissolves the boundaries of bodies, individuals, and the threshold between the profane and the religious sacred.

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The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

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