

Between the Poet and the Clown: The Poetic Persona of Daniel Minchoni

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The contemporary Brazilian literary scene is being reconfigured through sarau events in peripheral neighborhoods, which is a testament to how marginal communities are re-centering their cultural capital and creating spaces in which poetry is a live and dynamic performative practice. Sarau events in São Paulo take place on weekly or sometimes monthly schedules and bring together important authors, artists, and activists from marginal neighborhoods across the city to recite poetry and, at times, to perform other sorts of cultural arts, such as acoustic music, dance, or even graffiti. Each sarau has its own characteristics based on the organizers' vision, the neighborhood where it takes place, and the composition of performers who frequent the event. Sarau performances are marked by a sense of informality that allows access and entry for a wide array of performers. The boundaries between the stage and the audience are blurred as each performance engages with the space. While the majority of sarau participants are not well known in elitist literary circles, many of these poets are prominent promoters of culture in their neighborhoods, having large social media followings, and many of the saraus themselves (Sarau do Binho, Sarau da Cooperifa, Sarau na Brasa, Sarau das Mina, Sarau Elo da Corrente) are important cultural references through their online platforms to communities beyond São Paulo.

The content of poems within a sarau space is vast; however, most express lived realities of marginal neighborhoods and have a social justice calling. As a result, sarau artists are also activists and influencers, capitalizing on their large online platforms to advocate for social change. These poets also self-publish print books that are sold within the sarau space and at other cultural events around the city. Interestingly, book sales among sarau artists do not reflect the trends within the mainstream Brazilian publishing industry,

which is undergoing a significant crisis in recent years. In 2017, the Confederação Nacional do Comércio de Bens, Serviços e Turismo published a report based on data from the Ministério do Trabalho that showed that the number of bookstores in Brazil had dropped by 29 percent in the last ten years, losing over 21,000 establishments as a result of the reduction of the editorial market by 20 percent over the last decade. The largest drop in the editorial market was reported in the city of São Paulo (Alvarenga). Sarau literature, on the other hand, is sold mainly through informal markets, such as sarau events, community gatherings, or through social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, rather than in bookstores or through major online purveyors and is, thus, not affected in the same way by the current crisis in the publishing industry. In fact, sarau artists self-reported in interviews that they have seen an increase in profits on their book sales over the past decade (Duarte, Minchoni). Their sarau poems create, influence, and capitalize on the need for social change in Brazil, making the sarau scene a powerful collective voice and source of sociopolitical energy. These poets have, thus, come to represent an important force in Brazil's cultural and literary scene today.

One such influential sarau poet is Daniel Minchoni. He employs techniques of humor in his performance of his poem "Literatura ostentação" to redefine the fragilities, defects, and impermanence of society's categorization of literature, to address marginalized experiences as significant, and to elevate the role of marginal voices in the literary scene in Brazil. Minchoni was born in São Paulo in 1980. At 17 he moved to the Northeast, living in Recife, Pernambuco, and Natal, Rio Grande do Norte. Minchoni first joined a poetry group in Natal called "Blasfemia" in 1998 while studying at the Universidade Potiguar. When he returned to São Paulo in 2006, his interest in the live poetry scene inspired him to become a founding member of sarau and slam poetry spaces across the city, including "O sarau do burro" (2008), "O menor slam do mundo" (2011), "Cabaré revoltaire" (2011), and "Rachão poético" (2015). His upbringing between São Paulo and the Northeast made him interested in the ways that saraus interact through live performance with a myriad of Brazilian cultural traditions, from urban styles such as rap and samba to repentista poetry from the Brazilian Northeast.

Minchoni's poetry employs a conscious awareness of the lived environment of those around him in the construction of his poetic persona. He sees himself, in his own words, as a "poeta-palhaço" (clown-poet), playing on the realization that both the poet and the clown construct their performances out of the material of their physical body as it interacts with the world, mixing elements of fiction and reality to re-signify one's place. He uses techniques of humor, as manifested through his bodily performance, as an extension of the poem to create personal agency as a poet and to build a powerful connection to

his audience's lived experience. In such poetic negotiations, the artistic fusion and creative process of the poet, like that of the clown figure to which Minchoni frequently refers, makes visible both the norms and defects grounding individuals and social life. Through absurdity and sarcasm, Minchoni meets his public by performing social norms of belonging through bodily gesture and by improvising from the laughter or provocation of the audience to celebrate fragilities and even failures to reposition societal norms. In "Literatura ostentação," Minchoni uses these comedic techniques to highlight the cultural capital that individuals who navigate marginal experiences and expressions possess and, at the same time, calls for consciousness building within these spaces to display the intellectual capacity of the margins.

Persona Poética/Poeta Palhaço

Minchoni embodies a collective citizenship in his artistic persona of a "poeta-palhaço," advocating for new forms of cultural affiliation that erase divisions between marginal and elite interpretations of knowledge, text, and literature. In the sarau space, embodied forms of knowledge challenge perceptions of what counts as knowledge. The body-as-text holds its own codes and implicit semantic and ideological content that is read by viewing audiences. The act of reciting poetry in the sarau space, like the act of clowning, requires that the artist improvise from life experiences, constructing performance based on the emotional material generated through day-to-day interactions. Yet, the artist also wears a mask to the world, which becomes a reflection of the social realities that are distorted through the lens of the artistic persona. The mask of the poet, according to Minchoni, is the embodiment of a persona poética, a creative process of responding to the world with a sarcastic sense of humor to drive attention toward social problems. As Minchoni explains,

Gosto muito da relação entre o poeta e o palhaço que, para mim, são o mesmo personagem. Então, o palhaço é uma pesquisa que muito me interessa, e aí eu já estudei palhaço/clown que tem a ver com a coisa do improviso também. E o clown me interessa especialmente porque ele mostra as mazelas do mundo e aí tem essa coisa de que o palhaço tem a menor máscara do mundo, né? E o poeta também tem essa mesma característica de mostrar as mazelas do mundo, mas ele tem a máscara menor ainda do que o palhaço, porque a máscara dele é apenas o nome do poeta. 'Ah, você fala essas besteiras porque você é poeta' . . . Igual do jeito que

as pessoas falam, ‘Ah você faz essa bobagem porque você é palhaço’ . . . Então eu gosto muito da relação entre esses dois personagens. São dois personagens que enfrentam muito o mundo, cada um a sua maneira, e ridicularizam o mundo. (Minchoni, “Personal Interview”)

(I really like the relationship between the poet and the clown, who, for me, are the same character. The clown is a research subject that interests me a lot and, in fact, I have studied clowning that has to do with the improvisation thing, too. And the clown interests me especially because it shows the world’s ailments and there is also this thing that the clown wears the smallest mask in the world, right? And the poet also has this same characteristic of showing the world’s ailments, but he has an even smaller mask than the clown because his mask is just the poet’s name. ‘Ah, you say that bullshit because you’re a poet’ . . . Just like the way people say, ‘Ah you do this nonsense because you’re a clown’ . . . So, I really like the relationship between these two characters. They are two characters who challenge and ridicule the world a lot in their own way.)

The act of masking is transformative. Whether it is the physical mask of a clown or the figurative mask of a persona poética, masking is a reminder of the impermanence of the human condition and the individual’s ability to shift perception, even if it is not possible to overcome natural instincts or the constraints of one’s reality. The act of participating in *saraus*, whether as author or audience, becomes a liminal experience through which reality can be viewed from different perspectives (Turner 95). Representations that are exaggerated, playful, or off center from daily reality can be a technique for drawing attention to social issues for large segments of the population who find their own perspectives and interpretations of the humor and meaning of the piece. This act of both embodying reality while also often mixing elements of fiction into representation is key to Minchoni’s artistic persona because it reminds us that the act of creating and, thus, interpreting a literary text is a platform for social change and cultural creation in Brazil. Poetry is not simply about words but, instead, is about the sense of expression that authors embody through the act of performance.

Sarau artists, like clowns, use information provided through observing everyday realities and the varying audiences that they address. In both performative contexts, the artist plays with an understanding of the conscious and unconscious factors of identity that influence how audiences respond. Clowns

are a part of the cultural landscape of most countries in the world; they are part of historical and contemporary local traditions, as well as new global mass media trends. While the clown figure itself is universal, jokes and gags of clowning are highly context sensitive because they exploit the gestures, norms, and cultural values of their immediate social environments, as well as address larger societal conditions (Bouissac 1). Clowns in Latin America are frequent performers in public squares, in the streets, at traffic lights, and, even, at protests (Sorensen 26). They are popular cultural figures who sometimes come to exercise social or political influence through the power of their performances. They thrive by adapting their craft to changing social and economic conditions. Vulnerable and marginalized elements of society have been able to reinvent themselves through the act of clowning, but, at the same, the exploitation of clowning attributes has also been used to maintain certain individuals or institutions in positions of power. In societies marked by hierarchical social order, ruling elite may employ clowns to make connections to their public because clowns are more in touch with the common people's linguistic code and view of society due to their lower position on the social ladder. Thus, clowns can present a populist view, often an absurd one, that would have otherwise been inaccessible to the figure of power (Hereniko 1). Clowning in sarau spaces connects the performance to the lives of everyday people through humor and sarcasm, simultaneously reflecting imbalanced social relationships and making those realities appear less harsh and the injustices seem less oppressive by centering the voices of the marginalized in new ways.

Clowning techniques allow narratives of authority, domination, and resistance to play out through performance. The technique is not just frivolous entertainment but can offer profound critical reflections on the world that the performer inhabits (King 3). Saraus on the periphery jest with and reinvent the saraus of the nineteenth-century Portuguese court, which were elaborate literary soirees heavily influenced by both European tradition and the Brazilian elite (Allencastro 47). Today, sarau artists reformulate the sarau to fit within the context of the lived realities of peripheral neighborhoods and communities. Instead of being held in the elaborate courtyards of the upper class, they are often held in a bar or some other mundane social establishment, and they utilize social media as a platform to reach a wider social audience beyond the immediate confines of the neighborhood. This act of playful re-appropriation of the historical elite sarau sets different codes of social conduct in which the daily habits and attitudes of common people are celebrated. All are invited to come as they are.

The performance of the clown and the sarau artist fits within the definition of cultural performances outlined by David Gus as "sites of social action where identities and relations are continually being reconfigured" (12).

The power of cultural performance to do this work has also been explored by George Yúdice. Performing is not only celebrating a cultural heritage but also symbolically creating a culture in itself, especially among those who have been left marginalized (Yúdice 33). Yúdice's work on performativity is useful for helping us understand both the performance of the sarau artist as a reflexive act of representation and the designation of marginal spaces as culturally significant. Performance culture takes into consideration fields as diverse as media, consumer markets, the state and civil society, the police, schools and universities, as well as individual people and communities.

There is often a dark humor in these sarau performances on the periphery. The audience both laughs and is entertained by the spectacle, while, at the same time, underlying truths are revealed that question the current realities of the viewing audience and, thus, of society. Encoded messages about the dichotomies in social class emerge when the literary stage is located in bars or other unexpected places and occupied by unassuming actors. Likewise, the performance continues beyond the immediate social setting, especially through the use of digital media as a tool to reach wider audiences, but also through performed interventions of marginal saraus in mainstream or public places.

Saraus embody the human condition of being always in process, unfinished, incomplete, and unresolved. This condition is a key lived reality of audiences on the periphery. Performers and audiences use their imaginations to dream, envision, and create a different view of society. The pride and ownership of such a human state is key to why saraus have become an important act of social empowerment in marginalized neighborhoods. Individuals operating outside of both the care and control of the regulated system take control of their own advancement through creativity and invention. Like the clown, the poet uses the stage to portray the lived reality of his immediate social environment and reveals certain truths through performance that often remain unspoken or hidden by the routine of the everyday.

Writer, activist, and sarau artist, Allan da Rosa terms such flexibility and malleability of encoding messages through performance and bodily knowledge as a type of *pedagoginga*. He defines the concept poetically as “a forma, a didática, a maneira de gerar e de transmitir saber que permita à abstração se enamorar da sensibilidade e do sensorial, do corpo, do que somos, que é água, ponte e barco para qualquer concepção e desfrute do conhecimento” (124) (the form, the didactics, the way of generating and transmitting knowledge that allows abstraction to fall in love with sensibility and the sensorial experience of the body and of what we are, which is water, a bridge and a boat to hold and enjoy whatever conception of knowledge we have). In practice, *pedagoginga* is the insertion of peripheral forms of knowledge and communication into consciousness building. It is an educational process for those who

are marginalized, and it reveals how clowning performances and sarau can be explained as eloquent forms of the cultural repositioning of power.

Louise Peacock defines the unique features of all clowning (ceremonial clowning, the traditional circus clown, clowns in theatre, and the recent invention of clowns in hospitals) as the remarkable fusion of play, otherness, and failure:

The clown is distinguished from the actor by his or her ability to play with the audience and to create a sense of complicity with them by using play to connect with them. There is always something of the “other” about clowns. This may be expressed in the way that they look different from ordinary everyday people (through make-up, costume, the use of a red nose), but the most striking feature of the clowns’ “otherness” is their attitude to life as expressed through their performance. Whilst the clown often fails to achieve what they set out to achieve, their failure is framed by their optimism and by the simplicity of their approach to life. (Peacock 14)

The poetic persona of the sarau artist who implements pedagoging into artistic practice addresses inequalities through performative social inquiry in order to appropriate and reposition power in a form of urban resistance.

“Literatura ostentação” Performed at Elo da Corrente

In Minchoni’s poem “Literatura ostentação,” these constructs of play, otherness, and failure are techniques for connecting with his audience and creating dialogues across cultural scenes by using the sarau as a space to bridge conversations around identity, literature, knowledge, and power. The sense of play and otherness is reflected through humoristic malandragem. Malandragem is the inventive, often playful, tactics of survival that are used when authoritative systems are stacked against a person. The malandro image became part of Brazilian urban culture in the 1920s to describe those people who refused to buy into the unjust working relationships of capitalism and, thus, made their own rules. The malandro was a kind of urban outlaw hero (Calvani 122). According to Da Matta, the common man became a malandro because it was the only way to perform popular resistance to the arbitrary systems of oppression of the ruling elite (204). Antonio Candido has placed the humorous irreverence of the

malandro as central to the archetype's national status as mediator in the social dialectic between the classes ("Dialectic of Malandroism" 100).

This ideology of dissent is present in Minchoni's clowning technique in "Literatura ostentação." Minchoni's persona-poética is playful, with his own imperfect performance of funk culture as a conduit of his poem. He uses humor to exaggerate the same tropes of the malandro in his persona to re-appropriate meanings. He puts on the exaggerated swagger of a funk artist, yet with the purpose of reimagining the barriers between artist and audience in delightfully and explicitly blurred ways. In his performance, his playfulness and otherness open channels of communication between elite and marginal cultures while also challenging these same normalized societal divisions in the production of knowledge. Thus, he employs Peacock's clowning technique of failure by performing with a malandro swagger that is slightly off in purposefully eccentric ways. It is a performance that all can approach and understand in its humor and exaggeration, allowing a sense of communal optimism in its simplistic approach to radically imagining a new way of life.

On the evening of July 19, 2018, Minchoni performed "Literatura ostentação" in Pirituba in northwestern São Paulo in the sarau gathering Elo da Corrente, a regular literary event that had been founded in the local bar, Boteco do Santista, in 2007. This was one of many live performances Minchoni has presented of "Literatura ostentação." It is common for sarau artists to recite their poetry at many different sarau spaces and exchange with a community of authors and audiences. Each time, those present become a new extension of the poetic experience. Elo da Corrente, like most saraus in the periphery of São Paulo, draws a diverse mix of participants. Present were neighborhood locals like Michel Yakini, co-founder of Elo da Corrente. During his book launch that night for *Amanhã quero ser vento*, Yakini proclaimed, "poesia me salvou a vida" (poetry saved my life), as if poetry were a living being, capable of the will power to think on its own and with its own forceful agency. Indeed, the performative action of poetry in the sarau space does give the practice a life of its own through the embodiment of the performer. There were also poets visiting from a remote community near Alter do Chão, Pará, who had arrived at the event as part of their cross-country tour to advocate for the rights of indigenous communities in their local area. Their trip was made possible through the poetic connections in the sarau digital sphere. The women stayed with fellow poets, whom they only knew through online profiles, as they travelled across country. And, they funded their trip by selling self-published books as well as other local handicrafts from their region. When they took the stage, they spoke to the rhythm of caboclo music about the fragility of the natural environment at the hands of loggers and investors in Pará.

Minchoni was one of several regular participants at sarau Elo da Corrente, having made a two-hour trek to get to the periphery neighborhood of Pirituba that night. As Minchoni took the designated stage space in the back corner of Boteco do Santista, his poem “Literatura ostentação” took form by playing off the rhythms of previous poets and incorporating the audience. This was not his first performance of this piece at a sarau, yet each time the poem becomes slightly different as he engages with his audience. That night, he directed the audience to participate with his poem by instructing all those present into a collective samba beat, using the body and voice as percussion. The rhythm of the audience transitioned smoothly as a collective unit, building from the energy of the previous presenter, who had taken the stage to perform his poem with the berimbau. These techniques of mixing the rhythmic quality of the voice and body with the poetry itself are common in sarau spaces. As Minchoni’s performance became one with the audience, the beat sped up, transitioned, and became heavier on the bass, guided by Minchoni, but there was also a level of spontaneity that emerged from the audience itself, until the sarau space was transformed by a funk beat. There was no need for a microphone in the small bar, and those present were also integrated into the poem rhythmically and energetically as they sat and stood, packed together, shoulder to shoulder.

With the audience’s beat in the background, Minchoni began his recitation of his poem. Minchoni explains that “Literatura ostentação,” like many sarau poems, developed and evolved over time in the sarau space, metamorphosing as different audiences left their creative mark on its structure. In each performance, his persona poética is free form as he responds to the audience and the performance space. The audience participates by singing along, adding rhythm, joining the chorus, creating new verses, or providing hype to the poet himself. In “Literatura ostentação,” the periphery is protagonist, creation occurs in real time, and the literary event born of this metamorphosis becomes itself the flashy subject of Minchoni’s poem.

In describing the process of the poem’s creation, Minchoni says that it “começou nos saraus, sem base nem ritmo certo e foi virando uma colcha de retalhos cheia de citações” (Balbino) (began in the saraus without a base or a clear rhythm and became a patchwork full of cultural references). The stanzas became funk beats, parodying songs of the genre, such as those of MC Dudu. The line, “Eu tô que tô, eu tô na pista, eu tô ostentando mais do que o Eike Batista” (I’m, I’m, I’m on the floor, I’m showing off more than Eike Batista), was taken directly from MC Dudu’s hit “Funk da mega ultra ostentação” and references Eike Batista, the billionaire Brazilian businessman infamously linked to the culture of ostentation. But Minchoni then transforms this reality into that of literary ostentation: “Eu tô que tô, se olhando no espelho, se ostentando mais do que o Paulo Coelho” (I’m, I’m, looking at myself

in the mirror, showing off more than Paulo Coelho). This line plays on Paulo Coelho's wealth, as one of the most widely read authors, popular across social classes in Brazil. It both insinuates his literary prowess as worthy of display and also alludes to his widespread fame in popular culture circles, bridging social and economic classes. The poem appropriates and resignifies, making no distinction between Brazilian classic literary texts, rap, social media influencers, playboy bunnies, and poets like Ni Brisant, who, according to Minchoni, was the first person he heard use the term *literatura ostentação* in sarau spaces (Minchoni).

Through this performance, Minchoni references and persuades audiences to engage in a parody of the musical genre, funk paulista, also known as funk ostentação, which was created in São Paulo in 2008. According to Minchoni, the poem's rhythm took shape over time as audiences began to co-create the poem with him, as they did that night at Elo da Corrente. The central theme in funk ostentação is showy, exaggerated, and flashy material consumption. Indeed, many funk ostentação artists sing about cars, motorcycles, alcohol, women, and their ambitions to leave the favela and achieve their life goals of personal wealth and status. Minchoni uses the funk aesthetic to explore, through humor, how young people come to represent themselves and their subcultural affiliation and to reveal the ways that peripheral cultural expressions have been represented in the mainstream. Clowning, perhaps counter-intuitively, becomes the tool to make serious social critique about reconsidering gaudy material consumption and instead glorifying the consumption of knowledge. Yet, it does so without judgement and, in fact, celebrates funk ostentação by considering the possibilities of funk as important cultural capital. In an interview with Globo, Minchoni comments,

Fiz uso de uma forte ferramenta, o funk, para conversar com o público que me interessa, jovens da periferia ou não, falando de possibilidades. Para os intelectuais, a possibilidade dos quadris e pros funkeiros a possibilidade da literatura. A ideia é tornar o baile um sarau e o sarau um baile. (Balbino)

(I used a powerful tool, funk, to talk to the public that interests me, young people whether they be from the periphery or not, talking about possibilities. For intellectuals, the possibility of hips and for funkeiros the possibility of literature. The idea is to make the dance a sarau and the sarau a dance.)

Minchoni makes reference to the funk aesthetic throughout the poem and re-signifies it. For example, “Também acho bonito relógio e corrente, mas importante é o que está na sua mente. Também acho bonito relógio e corrente, mas importante é plantar a semente” (I also think watches and chains are nice, but more important is what is in your mind. I also think watches and chains are nice, but more important is to plant a seed [of knowledge]). Then, “Planta no chão, planta no chão, chão chão. Pega a sua mente e planta no chão” (Plant in the ground, plant in the ground, ground, ground, ground. Take your mind and plant it in the ground). He calls attention to the fact that the ostentation of material culture that is celebrated in the funk videos (clothing, watches, cars, motorcycles) can co-exist with obtaining knowledge through literature. The image of planting knowledge as a seed strongly emphasizes the potential for personal growth, change, and redefinition of self. Furthermore, the lyrics suggest that, instead of planting your hands and feet on the ground in an act that creates the body as an object while dancing funk and gyrating toward the ground, the mind becomes the object of the dance. In a baile funk, it is mostly young girls who dance by planting their hands and feet on the ground, shaking their hips, and occasionally going down to the floor, while flexing their knees and hips upright. When he calls, over and over again, “chão, chão, chão” (ground, ground, ground), such a call to descend to the ground, rather than the sexual positioning common in a baile funk, is resignified in the mind as the focal point of attention to plant knowledge as seeds.

The dark humor that underlies “Literatura ostentação” alludes to wider questions of societal ostentation not only present in funk videos but also in all realms of Brazilian society, from shopping malls to the work of politicians to the World Cup stadiums. Ostentation is often more about the symbolism of power than the material object on display. For example, wearing the latest designer sneakers is important symbolically rather than practically. Thus, “Literatura ostentação” involves the act of deconstruction through the act of revealing and undermining some of the very basic rules of contemporary Brazilian society. It uses humor to remind the viewer to consider the material things on which society has bestowed status. The poem plays with audience vulnerabilities in relationship to these realities. Through its reference to “literatura ostentação,” the poem is a social critique of the realities underlying blatant ostentation, as well as about the agency of the individual or a society to re-signify elements of power. The humor in the piece gives the poem a transcendental element to make visible these sensibilities that translate to wide audience appeal; everyone gets the humor, and it allows the audience to be both funkeiros and intellectuals simultaneously.

Minchoni also uses humor to make bold resignifications. For example, the line, “Eu vou dizer algo bem pesada. Eu também li Os Lusíadas no banheiro

da balada” (I am going to say something very heavy. I also read *The Lusíads* in the club bathroom), both re-signifies who is imagined consuming canonical literature as well as what scandalous activities may happen within the club bathrooms on the periphery. It offers a discordance between the colloquial “algo bem pesada” (something very heavy) and the canonical reference to *The Lusíads*. The line can also be interpreted as breaking from the norm of activities, such as sex acts or drug consumption, often reported on in media representations of *pancadões* and *baile funk*. The line toys with the idea of high culture in marginalized cultural spaces. Instead of vulgar writing on the walls commonly seen in club bathrooms, Minchoni’s poem violates our expectations by putting the classic epic *The Lusíads* as the writing on the wall. In his *malandro* clown persona, he insinuates that reading such a text can be outrageously provocative and a subject worthy of gossip amongst those in positions of power in that cultural space.

In the audiovisual production of the poem, Minchoni also implements very literal visual references to *funk ostentação*. New technologies allow for a traversal of the textures of identities through body and text. Like *funk ostentação*, the use of new technologies and audiovisual production become key to the creation, production, and quick dissemination of content to a wide audience. In 2014, for example, Minchoni produced a video version of “*Literatura ostentação*,” along with performance and *sarau* artists Luiza Romão and Renan Inquérito. The video is testament to the scenic and online possibilities of *sarau* spaces, and it gained online recognition by an audience outside of the *sarau* scene. Minchoni has two different video clip versions of the poem, each with over 7,000 views. He also has numerous live *sarau* recordings of the poem, which have been uploaded by different users on social media platforms. In our digital world, *sarau* performances play on and with the sense of voyeurism allowed when performances extend into the digital realm and our online and in-person identities intersect.

As is typical in clowning performance, the visual images motivate the language of the poem and vice versa. In digital performances of “*Literatura ostentação*,” the world of ostentation is constructed through everyday objects, like a regular industrial chain painted with gold spray paint and worn around his neck. Such chains could be imagined as restricting or binding, but Minchoni re-signifies it through humor to show that society arbitrarily instills objects with fetishized power and meaning. *Funk ostentação* songs often sing about objects of material status, which become props or costumes in the video versions (Pereira 7). Through clownish costumes that hint at *funk* representations, Minchoni’s video of “*Literatura ostentação*” constructs a parody of *funk ostentação* videos. Minchoni and his backup dancers, fellow *sarau* artists, are in *funk* costumes with clowning attributes.

Minchoni is in a short-sleeved button up shirt and shorts that have been spray painted gold, and, behind him, the three back-up dancers are in poorly fitting gold bodysuits, reconceptualizing the typical attire and dance moves of funk ostentação. Their bodies, including that of Minchoni, have all been spray painted completely gold. Rather than the female body being the focal point of the dancers' movement, many of the movements have the head as the focal point. The dancers sway their heads wildly and make the mind the central object and metaphor for Minchoni's "Literatura ostentação."

Through the construction of a persona poética based in traditions of clowning and humor, Minchoni recenters and re-signifies peripheral and politically marginalized forms of knowledge and understanding as noteworthy of attention. This performance process is simultaneously cultural insertion and cultural affirmation. In live performances and online platforms, the poem has a life of its own, a life that brings the margins and the marginal into Brazilian literary and cultural production, not only in the sense of including themes traditionally not studied universally (funk ostentação, for example), but also by incorporating a malleability, a sensorial understanding housed in the body, as a crucial part of the literary experience. "Literatura ostentação," developed in sarau spaces over time, takes on its local contexts and traverses social worlds and audiences, gaining flow and form by responding to and co-creating within these physical and online spaces.

Antonio Candido has proclaimed that literature is an educational opportunity for understanding citizenship:

A literatura tem sido um instrumento poderoso de instrução e educação . . . A ficção e a poesia configuram-se como veículo muito importante para demonstrar o que a sociedade preconiza, ou que considera prejudicial, no qual o leitor ou escritor consegue se encontrar ou expressar, para o público, aquilo que pensa e sente, baseando-se na sua cultura e no mundo em que vive. ("O direito à literature"177)

(Literature is a powerful educational instrument . . . Fiction and poetry are configured as important vehicles for demonstrating what a society advocates, considers harmful, and through which the reader or the writer are able to find or express themselves and what they think and believe to a wider audience based on their culture and the world in which they live).

Sarau literature explores these new interpretations of the human condition, societal systems, and social problems by creating discussion, reconfiguring values and interests, and broadening the political experience of those on the margins.

Minchoni-as-author is an amalgam of the social influences that surround him. “Literatura ostentação” is indirect in its ridiculing, which is both a part of its widespread popularity and its key to challenging the hegemonic discourses that separate elite knowledge and book-instructed intelligence from funk or peripheral cultures and identities. Social change requires multiple strategies. Although techniques of clowning during a sarau may not bring about change on their own, these techniques are powerful tools to express dissent and perform resistance to dominant discourses. Sarau literature such as “Literatura ostentação” has the power to generate global media attention, and it is both a platform for the development of personal and community activism and itself a profound and influential culture of resistance.

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