

Comparing Brazilian And North American Songs About Money

Ruben George Oliven

Abstract

This article compares Brazilian and North American popular music. It focuses on the lyrics of songs composed mainly in the first half of the twentieth century when an intense process of national building was taking place in Brazil and the United States. Several of those compositions became classics. Those songs were and still are very popular because they echoed and continue to echo the social imaginary of both countries. It is for this reason that popular music is so crucial for the understanding of both societies.

Keywords: Brazilian Popular Music, North American Popular Music, Samba, Blues, Money

Resumo

Este artigo compara a música popular brasileira e a norte-americana. Ele enfoca as letras de canções compostas principalmente na primeira metade do século XX, quando um intenso processo de construção de identidades nacionais estava ocorrendo no Brasil e nos Estados Unidos. Várias destas composições se tornaram clássicas. Estas canções eram e ainda são muito populares porque elas ecoaram e continuam a ecoar o imaginário de ambos os países. É por esta razão que a música popular é tão crucial para a compreensão de ambas sociedades.

Palavras-chave: Música Popular Brasileira, Música Popular Norte-Americana, Samba, Blues, Dinheiro

Comparing Brazilian And North American Songs About Money¹

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I

Until recently most Brazilian anthropologists concentrated their work within the country's national borders. This was due not only to the lack of funding to carry out research abroad but also to the fact that Brazilian society was (and still is) in the making with many urgent phenomena to be studied (Peirano 1992 & 2005, Velho 2008). More recently, Brazilian anthropologists have moved further afield, first to neighboring countries where Brazilians have migrated and later to counties such as the United States, Japan and countries of the European Union where other Brazilians are going in growing numbers. There are currently over three million Brazilians living abroad. Brazil is the sixth largest economy of the world and is becoming a major global player. It is therefore natural that it should export not only commodities but also intellectuals. There is a growing number of Brazilian anthropologists doing research abroad. They often study Brazilians who live in other countries and try to understand how they adapt to different cultures. Others aim to understand different societies and to compare them with their own society (Fry 2004).

In the same line of argument developed by Nader when she suggested that anthropologists should “study up”, that is, carry out research on the middle and upper levels of the social power structure, as well as the lower (Nader 1972), I would like to suggest that is important that Brazilian anthropologists study other societies. I would argue that it is even more important that they study ‘First World’ societies. These societies are at the origin of the anthropological enterprise. I am thinking basically about England, France

1 This is an expanded version of my paper presented at the panel *Challenges in Brazilian Anthropology: a Global View* during the 110th Meetings of the American Anthropological Association. Montreal, Canada, November 20, 2011. The panel was organized by Professor Bela Feldman-Bianco, President of the Brazilian Anthropological Association

and the United States, the three main centers of irradiation of anthropological thought. They created contemporary anthropological science and are its totemic reference. Their central object of study was originally 'the native', a term usually applied to the members of the colonies or to the first inhabitants of the United States. Very rarely have anthropologists of these countries turned to studying their own society and culture, a task attributed largely to sociologists, historians and political scientists. Anthropologists should study 'overseas', that is beyond the frontiers of their own "culture". Since the members of central countries did not consider themselves natives in this sense, why should they be studied? The picture has been slowly changing, but anthropologists usually do research 'beyond their pale'.

II

Between August 1993 and January 1995 I was a visiting professor at the Department of Anthropology of the University of California, Berkeley. When I decided to go to the United States, North American scholars who knew my previous work suggested I should study some minority group in the San Francisco Bay Area such as the Brazilians who live there in growing numbers. Since I had just published a book on cultural diversity in Brazil (Oliven, 1996) this would be the 'natural' continuation of what I had been doing at home. Somehow the idea did not appeal to me. I came to the conclusion that this was what one would expect from a Brazilian anthropologist in the United States, i.e., that he or she should study the periphery in the center. As I had already worked on money in the lyrics of Brazilian popular music (Oliven 1999) it occurred to me that this would be a more fascinating subject. When I told North American anthropologists about my plan, they were usually enthusiastic about it but tended to say it was a very broad subject and asked how would I be able to study it in so short a period of time. I was of course also concerned about the feasibility of my project and worried about the time frame. I had no idea about how to start and where to focus my attention.

But from the moment I arrived in the United States (this was the first time I spent a reasonable period of time in that country) I noticed that money was around me all the time and that I was literally so submerged in my research topic that I would have no difficulty finding material. I noticed people were constantly speaking about money and that most things were expressed

in a monetary idiom.

Money has many implications and is expressed in different dimensions of social life. Abstractly, it is a measuring rod for comparing things, a means by which they are exchanged and stored for holding value (Hart 2000) but what is the value that money “stores”? Part of money’s value lies in its pervasive and persuasive capacity as a vehicle of communication to express a variety of values, especially through metaphor and synecdoche. Money is effective not only as a means of exchange but mainly as a means of communication. It helps to mold and organize thought and action. Its effectiveness can be gauged through its persuasiveness. Money is persuasive in use, in talk, in understanding others and in thinking about the self and probably in just thinking alone. If Gudeman (2009) looks at the power of market rhetoric and the way it cascades in theory and on the ground in other economic modes, I consider how money cascades into everyday life in the United States and becomes a vehicle for communicating local values.

Money is an integral part of North American culture and as such it is constitutive of social reality in the United States. It expresses its history, the life cycle, market participation, food, cleanliness, different regions of the country, the future, individualism, religious differences, race relations and fundamental values of citizenship.

Carrying out research on money in the United States I soon realized that it could be looked at as a *total social fact*, to use Mauss’ (1970) concept. Believing that money is a key to understanding North American society, I decided to look at any instance which could bring me clues: scholarly and non-scholarly articles, financial magazines, books on personal finance, proverbs, expressions, banks, investment companies, health insurance, service clubs, compulsive spenders, restaurants, shops. I studied money in relation to love, death, blood, semen, food, God, Catholicism and Protestantism.

Looking at the multifarious aspect of money in the United States I ended up making Americans my “tribe.” I tried to compare attitudes towards money in the United States with those existing in Brazil. Through ethnographic research, I concluded that money is a language and a grammar that is widely used in the United States (Oliven 1998 & 2009). I also suggested that in North American society money tends to be considered less polluting than in Brazil where it is represented as something potentially dirty perhaps because of the huge social and economic inequalities existing in that country.

III

When looking at the significance of money in the United States one is of course reminded of Benjamin Franklin and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Franklin (1706-1790) is quoted at length by Weber in his *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and is frequently hailed as “the first civilized American” and “the apostle of modern times.” Among other things, he was a successful inventor and businessman who became also famous for his “proverbs”. He published an almanac from 1733 to 1758 that sold about 10,000 copies each year and which “next to the Bible ...might well have been the most frequent reading material in the colonies” (Mieder 1989: 129). Although most of the proverbs of his *Poor Richard’s Almanack* were not invented by him, as he himself made clear, they were associated with his person. “The Way to Wealth,” a short article Franklin published in 1758 is an example of the Puritan ethic rendered through 105 proverbs and has become a classic. In it Franklin quotes proverbs such as “God helps them that help themselves,” “It is foolish to lay out money in a purchase of repentance,” “It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright,” “At the working man’s house hunger looks in, but dares not enter.” In *Advice to a Young Tradesman*, written in 1748, he says: “Remember, that *time* is money. ... Remember, that *credit* is money. ... Remember, that money is of the prolific, generating nature. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on. ... Remember this saying, *The good paymaster is lord of another man’s purse*” (Franklin apud Weber 1958: 48-49). Franklin represents the idea of the self-made man, the colonist who does not wait for others to do things for him.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, who lived a century later (1803-1882) is frequently considered “the last puritan” (Santayana 1936, Porte 1979). He can be seen as a champion of the virtues of capitalism stressing the idea of thriftiness, of free enterprise, etc. In his essay “Wealth” published in *The Conduct of Life* he makes this apology of money: “The world is his, who has money to go over it” (Emerson, 1983: 994). It is interesting that he relates wealth to nature. He argues that “Wealth is in applications of mind to nature; and the art of getting rich consists not in industry, much less in saving, but in a better order, in timeliness, in being at the right spot” (Emerson, 1983: 989). He also stressed that “Men of sense esteem wealth to be the assimilation of nature to themselves, the converting of the sap and juices of the planet to their incarnation and nutriment of their design” (Emerson, 1983: 993). Emerson goes on in his analogy and argues that “It is a doctrine of philosophy, that man is a being

of degrees; that there is nothing in the world, which is not repeated in his body; his body being a sort of miniature or summary of the world: then that there is nothing in his body, which is not repeated as in a celestial sphere in his mind: then, there is nothing in his brain, which not repeated in a higher sphere, in his moral system. Now these things are so in Nature. All things ascend, and the royal rule of economy is, that it should ascend also, or, whatever we do must always have a higher aim. Thus it is a maxim, that **money is another kind of blood.** *Pecunia alter sanguis*: or, the estate of man is only a larger kind of body, and admits of regimen analogous to his bodily circulations” (Emerson, 1983: 1010, emphasis added). In a way, Emerson realized both that money is only good when it circulates and that it is the blood that runs through the veins and arteries of capitalism.

Franklin and Emerson were both born in Boston. Their attitudes towards money represent a more capitalist and north-eastern view of a society which was based on free labor, the idea of the self made man, and providing equal opportunities to all. Analyzing southern ante-bellum folkways regarding money, Ogburn (1964) in an article originally published in 1943, shows that things were different in the Old South where there was not a highly developed money economy largely because farmers were mostly self-sufficient. According to him, although the South changed after the Civil War and money became much more widely used, “some ideas, characteristic of the days of self-sufficing plantation economy, have persisted into the industrial civilization of the twentieth century” (Ogburn 1964: 199). Examples of the survival of attitudes of a moneyless economy are the resistance to the use of money in settling personal differences, the fact that it would be rude to come quickly to business conclusions without any preliminaries, the fact that tipping is less wide-spread a custom than it is in northern cities, the use of expressions such as “this is something money cannot buy,” etc. Ogburn argues that these attitudes have a lot to do with an aristocratic society where wealth was based on land not on money, where merchants and businessmen were looked down upon. He draws a comparison with seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe which was not yet a fully monetary economy: “The attitudes of the aristocrats were like the attitudes of a moneyless economy. They high-hatted tradesmen and people who worked for money” (Ogburn 1964: 203).

Sure “money is making an inroad into such personal transactions, but slowly and with resentment” (Ogburn 1964: 203). Ogburn sees these attitudes

as survivals which sooner or later will disappear: “several of the manners and customs of the South become clearly understood when they are seen as survivals of attitudes of a moneyless society. Money appears first in a limited sphere of transactions in a society. But gradually it penetrates into wider and wider circles of exchanges and relationships. But in doing so, it is opposed. Many of these attitudes of the South after the Civil War are best understood as oppositions to this wider use of money. In the course of time, these survivals will disappear, and the adoption of money will be as complete in the South as elsewhere” (Ogburn 1964: 206).

Some of the attitudes about money mentioned by Ogburn as applying to the Old South can also be noticed in Brazil. Being one of the last countries to abolish slavery (in 1888), Brazil has no tradition of valuing work, especially manual labor. To toil in Portuguese is called “*mourejar*,” something which according to the Portuguese should be left to the moors. A racist expression referring to hard work is “*trabalho para negro*” (black man’s work), a direct reference to slavery. But even after the abolition of slavery and introduction of wage labor in factories, work was never valued because the social order continued to be highly exclusive and hierarchical. Until the nineteen thirties Brazil was an essentially rural society. When industrialization and urbanization started to become more important in the thirties there was a strong reaction against working and the growing monetization of life. At that time one could find the same “resentment against expressing values in money” about which Ogburn (1964: 205) speaks in relation to the Old South. The *horror ao batente* (hatred of manual work) developed into *malandragem* (idleness)² which can be seen simultaneously as a survival strategy and a conception of the world through which some segments of the lower classes refused to accept the discipline and monotony associated with the wage-earning world.

IV

Brazil and United States are of course very different and it is therefore interesting to compare them. They have in common the fact that they are “New World” societies located in the Americas. Both countries were inhabited by

² A *malandro* is generally an important male character in sambas, and the word is used in Brazilian society to identify a clever, easy-living trickster (Matta 1991).

native peoples when the European colonists arrived. They were also slave societies until the second half of the nineteenth century. Whereas in the United States slavery was more concentrated in the South, in Brazil it was spread throughout the whole territory and for three centuries the economy was fully dependent on this mode of production. The first half of the 20th century was a period of great transformations in both countries. They had abolished slavery, received great numbers of immigrants and were going through the processes of urbanization, industrialization, and nation building. The economic crisis of the 1930s affected both countries dramatically. Social life became increasingly monetized and different reactions to this process occurred. World War II was a major event for Brazil and the United States, both of which countries fighting on the same side.

All of this is reflected in popular music, which, I argue provides an opportunity for comparing the two societies. Popular music is a key instance for looking at societies. It reflects day-to-day life, social and political events, changes in morals, cultural values and economic representations. In Brazil and the United States the majority of composers are men and they tend to use music as one of the few public spheres in which they allow themselves to speak more freely about their private feelings. They will sing about their weaknesses, their fear of losses, and their sentiments towards women. Money tends to be a central theme in popular music. It is usually related to other themes like work, social inequalities, gender relations, love (Oliven 2011).

Different scholars (Frith 1996 & 2007, Middleton 1990 & 2000, Tagg 2000, Tatit 2002) have pointed to the relation between melody and lyrics in popular music. However, in Brazil and the United States in the first half of the 20th century it was common for one musician to compose the melody and another to write the lyrics. Without denying the relation between melody and lyrics, for the purpose of this article, which is concerned with the messages conveyed through popular music, I will concentrate on the lyrics.

Most of the songs I studied were composed during the first half of the twentieth century, when an intense process of nation building was taking place in both countries. Several of them became classics. I chose to analyze those songs that were and frequently still are very popular because they echoed and continue to echo the social imaginary of both countries.

The negative side of labor is reflected in Brazilian popular music. During the twenties, thirties and forties of the twentieth century *samba* composers

used to eulogize *malandragem*. It developed into a way of life. Government was so worried that Brazilian might be developing a *malandro* ethic that during the 1937-45 dictatorship the State decided to intervene through its censorship department prohibiting songs which praised *malandragem* and at the same time giving prizes to those which praised work (Oliven 1984).

The same composers who praised *malandragem* also depicted money as something ignoble, generally demanded by women who didn't understand that the men they were asking for it had something much more precious to offer them: their love. Of course one can see here a "sour grapes complex": knowing they would never make much money no matter how hard they tried, those men looked down at the *vil metal* (filthy lucre). On the other hand, in several of the lyrics of these songs one can notice that money is a reality from which one cannot escape in a monetized society. But all of this is seen in a melancholic fashion. And money after all can be very destructive: it sometimes ends love and friendship, and it invites falsehood and treason. As Noel Rosa, one of the great composers of the thirties, put it in *Fita Amarela* (Yellow Ribbon) a 1933 song co-authored with Vadico (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utUzUVEs9os>): "I have no heir/ and I don't have a penny/ I lived my life in debt to everyone/ But I didn't pay them off" ("*Não tenho herdeiros/ Nem possuo um só vintém/ Eu vivi devendo a todos/ Mas não paguei a ninguém*").

The first composition to be registered with the name of samba was in 1917. Before that there was practically no music industry and no notion of musical copyright in Brazil. In the United States, the music industry and musical copyright started earlier. In both countries, songs dealing with money also addressed themes like work, love and gender relations.

Samba flourished through the 1920s, matured during the 1930s and by the 1950s it became hegemonic. Together with *chorinho* and *marcha carnavalesca*, it formed what became known as MPB (Música Popular Brasileira, or Brazilian Popular Music) (Sandroni 2001, Vianna 1999, McCann 2004).

V

When analyzing North American popular music of the first half of last century one has to deal with different genres, styles and influences. There is minstrelsy, Tin Pan Alley (the place around 28th street and Broadway in New York where sheet music developed) and of course blues. They all deal with

money but in different ways. Whereas as in minstrelsy, African-Americans are frequently depicted as not being able to understand the meaning of “time is money” as a central tenet of modern North American life, in Tin Pan Alley songs (Hamm 1979) money is often sung about in a rather frivolous way as a means of attaining luxury (as in “Diamonds are a girl’s best friend”, a song performed by Marilyn Monroe in Howard Hawks’ 1953 film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZRs_rmYMc). In contrast, in blues, money is central to surviving but difficult to obtain through work (Jones 1963, Levine 1977).

Several songs produced at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth in the United States deal with money. *If Time were Money I’d be a Millionaire* (words by Felix F. Feist, music by Ted S. Barron, copyright 1902) is a good example:

*A lazy coon a hangin’
‘round heard Parson Jenkins say
“Dat time was money”
And it almost took his breath away
He never done a stroke of work
He was too big and strong
He’d stretch out in the boilin’ sun
And sleep de whole day long*

*Of course he never had a dollar
In his tattered clothes
And didn’t own a pair of shoes
To cover up his toes
De only thing he had
Was lots of time to pass away*

*And when he heard
Dat time was money
Dis is what he did say
If time was money
I’d be a millionaire
I’ve got time honey
An’ chunks of it to spare*

*Oh dere aint no other coon
Could get wealth half so soon*

*If time was money
I'd be a millionaire*

*Dis nigger was too lazy
Fo' to raid a chicken roost
Because he'd have
To lift his arm to give
His hand a boost*

*He nearly starved
To death one day
Fo' certainly because
He didn't have the energy
To move his lazy jaws*

*Dis coon was never sociable
It tired him to talk
If twenty mules would kick him
All at once he wouldn't walk
'An so a baskin in the sun
Dis nigger laid all day*

*A grinnin', chucklin' to himself
An' dis am what he'd say
If time was money
I'd be a millionaire*

The song was composed by two white musicians at a time when part of the North American population had already been converted to the virtues of productivity and the proper management of time. On the other hand, slavery had been but recently abolished and there were people who were seen as unable to understand this logic. In the song, these are the ex-slaves not yet integrated into new forms of the productive process. The subject of *If Time was Money I'd be a Millionaire* is seen as a *coon*, that is, as a person who would today be called African-American, at the same time offensively and disparagingly associated with and synonymous of “a rustic or undignified person” (Webster 1994: 321). Apart from being lazy, he is seen as so naive that he is unable to realize the meaning of the proverb “time is money,” a central tenet of capitalist America. Since he does not work and seems to be happy with this situation he has all the time he needs and is led to believe that he is a

millionaire. The way he is described is full of the prejudices that abounded in the United States at the time the song was composed.

There is an important difference between Brazilian and North American songs as regards race. Brazilian composers of the beginning of the twentieth century were frequently descendants of slaves and had an almost political stance by the fact that they quite consciously rejected work and the ethic associated to it (Oliven 1999). Whereas the subject of *If Time was Money I'd be a Millionaire* is depicted as being stupid and incapable of understanding what a capitalist ethic means, more or less at the same time Brazilian Black composers were eulogizing idleness and disparaging work. They assumed themselves to be lazy and as having more noble things to do than to think about money. Laziness was taken as a dignified attitude. Actually *Macunaíma*, the main character of one of the formative novels of Brazilian literature, published in 1928, who is the result of a racial mixture (White, Black and Indian), is born lazy and is defined as “a hero without any character.” His first words on being born were “boy, do I feel lazy” (“ai que preguiça”) (Andrade 1993).

Sloth as an inherited and inevitable trait of personality appears clearly in the samba *Caixa Econômica* [Savings Bank], recorded in 1933 by Orestes Barbosa and Antônio Nássara (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uD_MEzFxoPg&feature=related):

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>You want to secure your peace and quiet</i> | <i>Você quer comprar o seu sossego</i> |
| <i>Watching me kill myself at work</i> | <i>Me vendo morrer num emprego</i> |
| <i>Just so you can enjoy yourself</i> | <i>Pra depois então gozar</i> |
| <i>Life is quite comical</i> | <i>Esta vida é muito cômica</i> |
| <i>I am not the Savings Bank</i> | <i>Eu não sou Caixa Econômica</i> |
| <i>Which has interest to collect</i> | <i>Que tem juros a ganhar</i> |
| <i>And what is it you want to buy, huh?</i> | <i>O você quer comprar o que, hem?</i> |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>You say that I am a bum</i> | <i>Você diz que eu sou moleque</i> |
| <i>Because I dont go to work</i> | <i>porque não vou trabalhar</i> |
| <i>I am not a checkbook</i> | <i>eu não sou livro de cheque</i> |
| <i>For you to get your cash</i> | <i>Pra você ir descontar</i> |
| <i>If you live without worries</i> | <i>Se você vive tranqüila</i> |
| <i>Always playing chic</i> | <i>Sempre fazendo chiquê</i> |
| <i>Always in the front row</i> | <i>Sempre na primeir fila</i> |
| <i>Pretending I am a teller</i> | <i>Me fazendo de guichê</i> |
| <i>And you want to buy what, huh?</i> | <i>E você quer comprar o quê, hem?</i> |

*My grandpa died in the struggle
And my father, poor soul
Was exhausted by toil
That's why I was born tired
And, to be fair
I declare to those who work
That my laziness is the way I am
Inherited from my ancestors*

*Meu avô morreu na luta
E meu pai, pobre coitado
Fatigou-se na labuta
Por isso eu nasci cansado
E pra falar com justiça
Eu declaro aos empregados
Ter em mim essa preguiça
Herança de antepassado*

We have here an example in which sloth has become an inherited trait and is transformed into an ethic. The male character, possibly a grandson of a slave and son of a laborer, argues that work is useless for the lower classes. Laziness is seen as a trait, for which he is not responsible, and which he manifests at the time of his birth.

It is worth noticing that while in a song like *When You Ain't Got no Money Well You Needn't Come Round* (words by Clarence S. Brewster and music by A.B. Sloane, copyright 1898, presented as "A novel ditty of a love-sick coon") the demanding woman who pronounces the sentence that gives title to the song has the upper hand, in *Caixa Econômica*, although the female character is the element that drives the plot of the samba, accusing the male narrator of being a bum, he ends up having the upper hand by defending himself forcefully. He does this at two levels. Besides arguing that laboring is useless for the lower classes, his second level of defense is a counter-attack, expressed in the accusation that the woman is an insatiable consumer and that she has a predator-like character since she wants to obtain stability by entering the world of order, represented by a salaried job. The man also rejects any association between himself and anything that reminds him of money.

VI

In these songs love is usually seen as morally superior to money. An example of the sublime nature of love can be found in the North American song *Something that money can't buy* (words by Charles Horwitz, music by Frederick V. Bowers, copyright 1900):

*Gold has its power
Sages will say*

*Riches in life
Hold a wonderful sway*

*But there's a power
Hails from above
Greater and better
Power of love*

*There strolls a noble
Money and land
Lives in a mansion
Costly and grand*

*Still he's unhappy
No one knows why
Love is the power
Money can't buy*

*Love of a mother
For her darling child
Love for a son
Tho' he's wayward and wild*

*Love that brings joy
And a tear to the eye
This love is something
That money can't buy*

*There sits a maiden weary at heart
Sighing for one who had
Vow'd ne'er to part
Two lives were happy*

*Till one sad day
There came a message
He'd pass'd away*

*Still she is constant
Never will wed
True to the one who lies buried
'tis said
Rich men to win her*

*One and all try
Her love is something money can't buy*

*Love of a soldier
His flag to defend
Loving Old Glory
He fights to the end
True to these colors and for it he'd die
This love is something that money can't buy*

The song is an unswerving assertion of the superiority of love in relation to money.

Sinhô, a black Brazilian composer of the beginning of the twentieth century known as the “King of Samba” found out that “samba could bring in money, prestige, and even good polemics—three things that pleased him greatly... His favorite themes were the chronicling of daily and love stories with special emphasis on matters of *money* and *women*, his greatest preoccupations in real life” (Severiano 1988). In 1918, he wrote *Quem são Eles* [*Who are they*], his first Carnival success. One of the verses states:

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|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>No need to ask</i> | <i>Não precisa pedir</i> |
| <i>I'll give it to you</i> | <i>Que eu vou dar</i> |
| <i>I don't have any money</i> | <i>Dinheiro não tenho</i> |
| <i>But I can steal some</i> | <i>Mas vou roubar</i> |

The theme of money appears incidentally in this song, in the middle of other themes, as if it were something of lesser importance. The fellow has no money and to get it, he will not avail himself of work, considered unworthy, but of theft. As he presents himself as uninterested in material preoccupations, it becomes implicit that it is a woman who is asking him for money and that she is not indifferent to financial matters.

O Pé do Anjo [*The Angel's Foot*], in the carnival march idiom, recorded in 1920 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fboqkLrr18U>), was one of Sinhô's greatest hits. In it the “King of Samba” sings of women and money in one of the verses:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>The woman and the hen</i> | <i>A mulher e a galinha</i> |
| <i>Are two selfish animals</i> | <i>São dois bichos interesseiros</i> |
| <i>The chicken for corn</i> | <i>A galinha pelo milho</i> |
| <i>And the woman for money</i> | <i>E a mulher pelo dinheiro</i> |

The woman is compared to the chicken which is always pecking, and she is regarded as a selfish, money-consuming creature. The idea is that while men stand above material interests, women are constantly bringing up such an ignoble topic as money. Xisto Bahia, one of the precursors of Brazilian Popular Music, concluded, *Isto é bom* [*This is good*], a march written in 1880 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUqorvESjQI>) for a music hall performance by saying, “Whoever wants goods things/ Should not love money.”

In the march *Amor sem dinheiro* [*Love without money*], one of the hits of the 1926 Carnival, Sinhô discusses the relationship between money and love, showing the impossibility of fully loving without adequate financial conditions:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Love, love</i> | <i>Amor, amor</i> |
| <i>Love without money, honey</i> | <i>Amor, sem dinheiro, amor</i> |
| <i>Has no value</i> | <i>Não tem valor</i> |
| | |
| <i>Love without money</i> | <i>Amor sem dinheiro</i> |
| <i>Is a flash in the pan</i> | <i>É fogo de palha</i> |
| <i>It is a house without an owner</i> | <i>É casa sem dono</i> |
| <i>Where the scum lives</i> | <i>Em que mora a canalha</i> |
| | |
| <i>Love, love, etc.</i> | <i>Amor, amor, etc.</i> |
| | |
| <i>Love without money</i> | <i>Amor sem dinheiro</i> |
| <i>Is a withered flower</i> | <i>É flor que murchou</i> |
| <i>Verses that don't rhyme</i> | <i>São quadras sem rima</i> |
| <i>Take me and I'll go</i> | <i>Me leva que eu vou</i> |
| | |
| <i>Love, love, etc.</i> | <i>Amor, amor, etc.</i> |
| | |
| <i>Love without money</i> | <i>Amor sem dinheiro</i> |
| <i>Is sugarcane without juice</i> | <i>É cana sem caldo</i> |
| <i>A frog in the pond</i> | <i>É sapo no brejo</i> |
| <i>Singing wearily</i> | <i>Que canta cansado</i> |

The song's argument is clear: love needs a financial base without which it is merely a “flash in the pan.” It is interesting, however, that the same Sinhô released in 1928 another samba, *Que vale a Nota sem o Carinho da Mulher* [*What is money good for without the caresses of a woman*], which goes in the opposite direction. In the first verse, he proclaims the supremacy of love over money:

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Love! Love!</i> | <i>Amor! Amor!</i> |
| <i>It is not for those who want it</i> | <i>Não é pra quem quer</i> |
| <i>What is dough worth, my honey</i> | <i>De que vale a nota, meu bem</i> |
| <i>Without the pure tender touch of a woman?</i> | <i>Sem o puro carinho de uma mulher</i> |
| <i>(when she wants it)</i> | <i>(quando ela quer)</i> |

The title condenses the meaning of the song. It affirms the value of love over money, which is of no value without the caresses of a woman. There is a pervading tension in songs of this period that deal with money. On the one hand, everyone knows that in an increasingly monetized society such as Brazil's in that period, money is needed to fulfill one's wishes. But since it is difficult for poor men to earn much through manual labor, they express their sour grapes by claiming that affection is much more important than wealth. These compositions from the early twentieth century are marked by the co-presence of awareness that money is increasingly important, and the belief that affective and magical solutions can minimize scarcity. This contradiction appears, at times, in the songs of a single composer, such as Sinhô.

VII

Gender is part of the picture of Brazilian and North American songs about money composed at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Although most of the composers were male, they frequently constructed a feminine narrator. Women can either be sublime in the love they provide or very mean because they ask for money. In the compositions of that time, money is more and more associated with the figure of the woman (Oliven 1988). We enter here in the realm of expectations and complaints between men and women—themes that are abundant in the compositions at that time. The songs show both the masculine point of view as well as the feminine one (shown through the male imagination). As love relationships are made up of expectations, we always confront a tension between what is expected or demanded of the opposite sex and what is obtained from it. Also, always present is what was done to attend to the other's expectations and the gratitude or ingratitude generated by the action. Popular music at that time reflects this world of expectations and complaints in a register that is at times humorous and at other times resentful.

In North American songs, women also appear as making

constant demands of money. In *Money Blues* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVvFaB389cs>), composed by D. Leader and H. Ellers and recorded by Bessie Smith, 1926 we have a direct reference to money:

*Daddy, I need money,
Give it to your honey
Daddy, I need money now
All day long I hear that song
Daddy, it's your fault
If I go wrong
I need a small piece of money now
I can use a small piece now*

Several other songs sung by Bessie Smith speak directly about money or the lack of it: *Hard Times Blues*, *Homeless Blues*, *Poor Man Blues*, *Washwoman blues*, *Nobody knows you when you are down and out*.

Why Don't You Do Right (Get Me Some Money, Too!) (www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_lNE_L_E8M), copyright 1941, by Joe McCoy, an African American Delta blues musician and songwriter born in Mississippi also depicts a woman demanding money from her man. She complains about her partner's financial insolvency:

*You had plenty money
Nineteen twenty two
You let other people
Make a fool of you*

*Why don't you do right
Like some other men do?
Get out of here and
Get me some money too*

*Yo' sittin' down
Wond'ring
What it's
All about*

*If you ain't
Got no money
They will
Put you out*

Why don't you do right ...

*If you had prepared twenty years ago
You wouldn't be
Wandering now
From do' to do'*

Why don't you do right ...

The song deals with themes that were common in blues following the Great Depression. The woman complains that her partner is broke because he spent his money on other women who no longer have any interest in him now that he is poor. Her refrain is that he should 'do right' like other men do, insisting that he must earn a living in order to support her.

But when the man is the provider power relations between sexes based on money crop up as can be seen in *Paying the Cost to be the Boss* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MuBIOmGFHM), a song of 1968 with words and music by B.B. King, an African-American blues guitarist and singer-songwriter, born in Mississippi:

*You act like you
Don't wanna listen
When I'm talking to you
You think you ought to do, baby
Anything you want to do*

*You must be crazy, baby
You just got to be out of your mind*

*As long as I'm paying the bills, woman
I'm paying the cost
To be the boss*

*I'll drink if I want to
And play a little poker, too
Don't you say nothing to me
As long as I'm taking care of you*

*As long as I'm working, baby
And paying all the bills*

*I don't want no mouth from you
About the way I'm supposed to live*

*You must be crazy, woman
You just gotta be out of your mind*

*Now that you've got me
You act like
You're ashamed*

*You don't act like any woman
You're just using my name
I tell you I'm gonna handle all the money
And I don't want no back talk*

*'Cause if you don't like
The way I'm doing
Just pick up your things and walk*

*You gotta be crazy, baby
You must be out of your mind
As long as I'm footing the bills
I'm paying to the cost
To be the boss*

If we look at Brazilian songs we notice that women are also not satisfied with their men. In *É o que ele quer* [*That's what he wants*], a composition by Oswaldo Santiago and Paulo Barbosa in 1938, we find the image supposedly held by the woman of a male dream:

*Good house and good clothes
And home cooked meals
That's what he wants
That's what he wants*

*Boa casa e boa roupa
E comida de mulher
É o que ele quer
É o que ele quer*

*A life of fun
With the woman's money
That's what he wants
That's what he wants*

*Uma vida de orgia
Com o dinheiro da mulher
É o que ele quer
É o que ele quer*

This is too much

Isso é demais

*It cannot be
He who does not work
Should not live
This young man even wants
Me to chew
So he can eat*

*Não pode ser
Quem nao trabalha
Não deve viver
Esse rapaz chega querer
Que eu mastigue
Pra ele comer*

In Brazilian popular music of the first half of last century women were more and more insistent on reminding men that they should work and earn money, as in the 1942 samba *Vai Trabalhar* [Go to work] (<http://www.carmenqueiroz.com.br/b/b.php/a/r/ip/59>) by Cyro de Souza:

*I don't like this
It doesn't look good
I am doing my thing
at the wash basin
To earn money*

*Isso nao me convém
E nao fica bem
Eu no lescó-lesco
na beira do tanque
Pra ganhar dinheiro*

*And you in the samba
All day long, oh
All day long, oh
All day long, oh*

*E você no samba
O dia inteiro, ai
O dia inteiro, ai
O dia inteiro, ai*

*You understand
And pretend that you don't
That everything depends on good will
For our lives to straighten up*

*Você compreende
E faz que nao entende
Que tudo depende de boa vontade
Pra nossa vida endireitar*

*You must cooperate
You are strong and you can help
Look for a job
Leave the samba
And go to work*

*Voce deve cooperar
É forte e pode ajudar
Procure emprego
Deixe o samba
E vai trabalhar*

Although composed by a man, the narrator is a woman (who takes in laundry to make money) who is complaining about her man who instead of working dances the samba and is kept by her work. But live by working is difficult, as shown in *Vida Apertada* [A tight life], a samba from 1940 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-yruButp-A>) by the same composer:

*My God, what a hard life
I work but I have nothing
I live in total martyrdom
Life has no enchantment
For one who suffers so much
This way, I'll end up in a mess*

*Meu Deus, que vida apertada
Trabalho, não tenho nada
Vivo num martírio sem igual
A vida não tem encanto
Para quem padece tanto
Desse jeito eu acabo mal*

*Being poor is not a defect
But unhappiness
I don't even have the right
To enjoy my youth*

*Ser pobre não é defeito
Mas é infelicidade
Nem sequer tenho direito
De gozar a mocidade*

*I leave work late
And get home half-dead
Because I have to endure work on the docks
Every day at the harbor*

*Saio tarde do trabalho
Chego em casa semi-morto
Pois enfrento uma estiva
Todo o dia lá no cais do porto*

The subject of the composition is killing himself as a stevedore and he realizes that besides not earning very much, he doesn't even have the right to enjoy his youth. A similar theme is in *Será possível?* [*Is this possible?*], by Rubens Campos and Henricão from 1941:

*Ai, ai, ai, I am already tired
of trying to control myself
My money was never enough
for anything
It's for eating badly and dressing
to pay for the shack and not making it
I am already disillusioned
because this way
I know that I will be finished*

*Ai, ai, ai... ja estou cansado
de querer me controlar
O meu dinheiro nunca deu
pra outra coisa
É pra comer mal e vestir
pagar o barraco e olhe lá
Eu ja ando desanimado
que desse jeito
eu sei que vou me acabar*

*I worked all year
to see if I could straighten out
I saved so much
I even cooked without any grease at home
To travel by trolley I waited for the second
class street car*

*Trabalhei o ano inteiro
pra ver se endireitava
Eu fiz tanta economia
Até em casa cozinhava sem gordura
Pra viajar de bonde esperava o
caradura*

A recurring theme during that time focuses on the woman's interest in money and the pressure that she exerts on her man for him to obtain it. The invariable answer by the man is that he is going to get some, but this is

secondary when compared to the affection that he has to offer her. This is perfectly clear in *Dinheiro não Há* [There is no money], by Benedito Lacerda and H. Alvarenga in 1932 recorded in 1932 (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBo_tvcAxeo):

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <i>There she comes crying</i> | <i>Lá vem ela chorando</i> |
| <i>What does she want?</i> | <i>O que ela quer?</i> |
| <i>Not a beating</i> | <i>Pancada não é</i> |
| | |
| <i>I know</i> | <i>Já sei</i> |
| <i>Fun-loving woman</i> | <i>Mulher da orgia</i> |
| <i>When she begins to cry</i> | <i>Quando começa a chorar</i> |
| <i>She wants money</i> | <i>Quer dinheiro</i> |
| <i>There is no money</i> | <i>Dinheiro não há</i> |
| <i>There is none</i> | <i>Não há</i> |
| | |
| <i>Love I have too much</i> | <i>Carinho eu tenho demais</i> |
| <i>To sell and to give</i> | <i>Para vender e dar</i> |
| <i>Beatings will also not be lacking</i> | <i>Pancada não há de faltar</i> |
| <i>Money, not that</i> | <i>Dinheiro, isto não</i> |
| <i>I don't give that to women</i> | <i>Eu não dou à mulher</i> |
| | |
| <i>But I promise on earth,</i> | <i>Mas prometo na terra</i> |
| <i>The sky and the stars</i> | <i>O céu e as estrelas</i> |
| <i>If she wants them</i> | <i>Se ela quiser</i> |
| <i>But there is not money</i> | <i>Mas dinheiro não há</i> |

The woman (fun-loving in this case) is seen as always wanting money. The song affirms the scarcity of cash and the abundance of love that can even take the form of physical aggression as in several other contemporary songs.

In these songs women are complaining to their men that they are not performing what is considered their basic role in society: to be providers. The best the men can say is that they are unable to provide money but that they have plenty of love to offer.

One of the few “solutions” at hand for those men was to dream that they had suddenly become rich like in *If I had a Million Dollars* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yJ4MD_1W_E) (words by Johnny Mercer, music by Matt Mallneck, copyright 1934):

Castles with their thrones

*Ships up on the sea
Gold and precious stones
All belong to me
Foolish though it seems
Ev'ry word is true
Though they're only
Mine in dreams
My dreams belong to you*

*If I had a million dollars
I know just what I would do
I'd tie a string around the world
And bring all of it to you*

*Those little things you pray for
Whatever they may be
I'd have enough to pay for them all.
If I spent the million dollars
I know I would never care
Because as long as you were mine
I'd still be a millionaire
That's why I'm always dreaming
Dreaming of what I'd do
If I had a million dollars and you.*

In *Acertei no Milhar* [I hit the jackpot], a samba written by Wilson Batista and Geraldo Pereira, recorded in 1940 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eOpqjyjX6I>), hitting the jackpot represents the ideal of salvation:

*Etelvina, my darling!
What is the matter, Jorginho?
I hit the jackpot
I won 500 bucks
I am no longer going to work
Give all my old clothes to the poor
We can destroy all the furniture
This instant
Hand them over to me*

*Etelvina
We'll have another honeymoon
You'll be a fine lady*

*Etelvina, minha filha!
Que há, Jorginho?
Acertei no milhar
Ganhei 500 contos
Não vou mais trabalhar
E me de toda roupa velha aos pobres
E a mobília podemos quebrar
Isso é pra já
Passe pra ca*

*Etelvina
Vai ter outra lua de mel
Você vai ser madame*

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>You'll live in a big hotel</i> | <i>Vai morar num grande hotel</i> |
| <i>And I will buy a name somewhere or another</i> | <i>Eu vou comprar um nome não sei onde</i> |
| <i>Of a Marquis, Lord Jorge Veiga,</i> | <i>De marquês, Dom Jorge de Veiga,</i> |
| <i>of a Viscount</i> | <i>de Visconde</i> |
| <i>A French teacher, mon amour</i> | <i>Um professor de francês, mon amour</i> |
| <i>I'm gonna change your name</i> | <i>Eu vou trocar seu nome</i> |
| <i>To Madame Pompadour</i> | <i>Para Madame Pompadour</i> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>At last now I am happy</i> | <i>Até que enfim agora eu sou feliz</i> |
| <i>I will travel all over Europe to Paris</i> | <i>Vou percorrer Europa toda até Paris</i> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>-And our children, huh?</i> | <i>- E os nossos filhos, hein?</i> |
| <i>-Oh, what the Hell!</i> | <i>- Oh, que inferno!</i> |
| <i>-I will put them in a boarding school</i> | <i>- Eu vou pô-los num colégio interno</i> |
| <i>Call Mané from the grocery shop</i> | <i>Me telefone pro Mané do armazém</i> |
| <i>Because I don't want</i> | <i>Porque não quero ficar</i> |
| <i>To be in debt to anybody any longer</i> | <i>Devendo nada a ninguém</i> |
| <i>I'll buy a blue airplane</i> | <i>Eu vou comprar um avião azul</i> |
| <i>To travel around South America</i> | <i>Pra percorrer a América do Sul</i> |

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <i>But then, suddenly, all of a sudden</i> | <i>Aí de repente, mas de repente</i> |
| <i>Etelvina called me</i> | <i>Etelvina me chamou</i> |
| <i>It's time to work</i> | <i>Esta na hora do batente</i> |
| <i>Etelvina woke me up</i> | <i>Etelvina me acordou</i> |
| <i>It was all a dream, folks</i> | <i>Foi um sonho, minha gente</i> |

The background of the song is *prontidão* (*pennilessness*) and the difficulties that stem from it such as having to work, debts to pay, and so forth. The way out is in the world of dreams. The narrator dreams that he has won a large amount of money from gambling and he quickly declares that he is no longer going to work. A world of fantasies follows such as a new honeymoon, international trips, living in a hotel, children in a boarding school, brand new furniture, paying off debts, and so forth. From being a mere worker, the narrator climbs up the social ladder to become not a member of the bourgeoisie, but a nobleman. All this will be brought about by money. But a lot of money is only possible by hitting the jackpot, and, as he discloses in the end, it was all but a dream. The woman is the object of this fantasy: it is to her that the dream will be told, it is she who will become a “lady”, it is also she who will call him back to reality – that is, to work. The “aversion to drudging work”, which characterizes the *malandro*, runs through the entire composition.

A similar theme appears in *Saquinho de Papel* [Little paper bag] (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MK9GRnpSqq5>) by Cyro Monteiro and Lilian Bastos:

*If life were like we want it
Oh how good it would be
How good it would be
We would only sing
Night and day*

*Se a vida fosse como a gente queria
Ah que bom seria
Que bom seria
A gente só cantava
De noite e de dia*

*Nobody would work
They would just spend
In a big house we would live
We would eat, sleep and dream
And happiness would remain with us*

*Ninguém trabalhava
Só gastava
Numa casa grande a gente morava
A gente comia, dormia e sonhava
E a felicidade com a gente ficava*

*And every night in the yard
There would be samba with drums
Whoever has a guitar would sing
Who was good at singing, would sing
And happiness would remain with us*

*E todas a noites no terreiro
Tinha samba firme de pandeiro
Quem tinha viola cantava
Quem era de cantar, cantava
E a felicidade com a gente ficava*

*And every end of the month
A little bag of money in the yard
So that we could pay what we spent
Pay for food, pay for drink
Pay for the clothes that we wore
And the rent*

*E todo o fim de mês
Um saquinho de dinheiro no terreiro
Pra gente pagar o que gastou
Pagar comida, pagar bebida
Pagar a roupa que vestiu
E o aluguel*

This money would all come from heaven

Esse dinheirinho viria todinho lá do céu

*Oh, what a nice dream
How great it is to dream like this
Oh, if I could only never wake up
from this dream*

*Ah, que sonho bom
Como é bom sonhar
Ah, se eu pudesse jamais
desse sonho acordar*

Big Rock Candy Mountain (Harry Kirby McClintock) (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouKk_kPmAk4) was composed in 1928, the same year of *Sinhô's Que vale a Nota sem o Carinho da Mulher* [What is dough worth without a Woman's Tenderness] and sings about a "land that's fair and bright,/ The handouts grow on bushes/ And you sleep all night." Not only do handouts grow on bushes, but it is a land "Where you sleep all day,/ Where they hung the jerk/ That

invented work.” It is interesting that at no moment is the word *money* pronounced in the song.

Shortly after the song was composed the crash of Wall Street occurred. The Great Depression made itself felt in music. Money, or rather the lack of it, appears in several songs of the period. The classic *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4F4yToKAMy0>) (words by E.Y. Harburg, music by Jay Gorney, copyright 1932) is an example. The expression “Brother can you spare a dime?” is not only a direct reference to money but also an admittance that money is difficult to get by in a land that made the promise that you could get rich if you worked. *The Gold Diggers’ Song (We’re in Money)* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJOjTNUuEVw>) (words by Al Dubin, music by Harry Warren, copyright 1933 renewed) expresses the hope the bleak times of the Depression are over and also makes direct reference to money already in its subtitle:

*Gone are my blues
And gone are my tears
I’ve got good news
To shout in your ears*

*The silver dollar
Has returned to the fold
With silver you
Can turn your dreams to gold*

*We’re in the money
We’ve got lot of
What it takes
To get along!*

*We’re in the money
The skies are sunny
Old man depression
You are through
You done us wrong!*

*We never see a headline
‘bout a breadline today
And when we see the landlord*

*We can look that
Guy right in the eye*

*We're in the money
Come on, my honey
Let's spend it
Lend it
Send it rolling along!*

The song ends with the message that money has to circulate in order to breed more, hence it has to be spent or lent.

With Plenty of Money and You (*Gold Diggers' Lullaby*) (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xiz8OgDQ9oE>) written for the musical *Gold Diggers of 1937* also deals with the question of love and money:

Verse:

*I have never envied folks with money,
Millionaires don't get along so well;
I have you, but haven't any money,
Still the combination would be swell;*

Chorus:

*Oh, baby, what I couldn't do-oo-oo,
With plenty of money and you-oo-oo;
In spite of the worry that money brings,
Just a little "filthy lucre" buys a lot of things;
And I could take you to places you'd like to go,
But outside of that, I've no use for dough;
It's the root of all evil,
Of strife and upheaval;
But I'm certain, honey,
That life could be sunny,
With plenty of money and you.*

The song makes direct reference to the *New Testament* idea of money as "filthy lucre." But it does it in a clever way. It does not deny that money is the "root of all evil" (1 Timothy, 6:10) but all the narrator wants is to have plenty of it in order to enjoy the affection of the woman he loves. Other than that, he thinks, money has no use. Which means that love can cancel out the negative aspects associated with money.

The dilemma of love versus money is a constant during this period. Like the decade of the twenties, many songs during the decade of the thirties emphasize that love is much more important than money and that the latter does not bring happiness. It is better to be poor and happy rather than rich and miserable. This is what one finds in the 1940 samba by Benedito Lacerda and Herivelto Martins, *E o vento levou* [*Gone with the wind*] (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgQH0BJlmM4>), the same title of the famous North American film:

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Where is the money?</i> | <i>Onde está o dinheiro?</i> |
| <i>Gone with the wind...</i> | <i>O vento levou...</i> |
| <i>Your jewelry, your home?</i> | <i>Suas jóias, sua casa?</i> |
| <i>Gone with the wind...</i> | <i>O vento levou...</i> |
| <i>And the woman that you had?</i> | <i>E a mulher que você tinha?</i> |
| <i>She flew the coop...</i> | <i>Bateu asas e voou...</i> |
| <i>Everything that I possessed</i> | <i>Tudo que eu possuía</i> |
| <i>Gone with the wind...</i> | <i>O vento levou...</i> |
| | |
| <i>I have been rich, I have been noble</i> | <i>Já fui rico, já fui nobre</i> |
| <i>I have been elegant and a big spender</i> | <i>Fui grã-fino e gastador</i> |
| <i>Everyone greeted me this way:</i> | <i>Todos me cumprimentavam assim:</i> |
| <i>Hello, Doctor</i> | <i>Olá, seu doutor</i> |
| <i>Even this nickname is gone with the wind...</i> | <i>Até esse apelido o ventou levou...</i> |
| | |
| <i>Where is...</i> | <i>Onde está (...)</i> |
| | |
| <i>He who has been a millionaire</i> | <i>Quem já foi um milionário</i> |
| <i>He who has had and does not have today</i> | <i>Quem já teve, hoje não tem</i> |
| <i>Wherever I go</i> | <i>Onde eu passo</i> |
| <i>Everyone shouts this way:</i> | <i>Todos gritam assim:</i> |
| <i>Hello, Mr. Nobody</i> | <i>Olá, João-ninguém</i> |
| <i>Some day the wind storm</i> | <i>Qualquer dia a ventania</i> |
| <i>Will take me also</i> | <i>Me leva também</i> |
| | |
| <i>Where is...</i> | <i>Onde está (...)</i> |

The song shows how much a rich man is pampered, and how he ends up being abandoned when he loses his fortune. To be rich always involves the risk of loss and suffering.

But the composers become more aware of the importance of money to

build a positive emotional relation. *Romance Without Finance* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_BnFRd11sMk) (Charlie Parker, 1944) speaks precisely about this question:

*Romance without finance is nuisance
Baby, you know I need me some gold
Romance without finance just don't make sense
Mama, mama, please give up that gold
You so great and you so fine
You ain't got no money you can't be mine
It ain't no joke to be stone broke
Baby, you know I'd lie when I say
Romance without finance is a nuisance
Please please baby give me some gold*

*Romance without finance is nuisance
Oh baby, I must have me some gold
Romance without finance just don't make sense
Oh baby, mama, mama, give up that gold
You so great and you so fine
You ain't got no money you can't be mine
It ain't no joke to be stone broke
Baby, you know I'd lie when I say
Romance without finance is a nuisance*

Here we have a clear message that it is impossible to develop a satisfactory love relation if an adequate financial basis is not present. In *If You've got the Money, I've got the Time* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2xofMsZj58>) (Lefty Frizzell and Jim Beck, 1950) this idea is developed in an even more direct way: "If you got the money, I've got the time/ But if you run short of money I'll run short of time/ Cause you with no more money honey I've no more time."

Busted (Ray Charles) (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLWoiC-3b6o>), a song composed in 1963 deals with material reality:

*My bills are all due and the baby needs shoes and I'm busted
Cotton is down to a quarter a pound, but I'm busted
I got a cow that won't dry and a hen that won't lay
A big stack of bills that gets bigger each day
The county's gonna haul my belongings away cause I'm busted.*

*I went to my brother to ask for a loan cause I was busted
I hate to beg like a dog with his bone, but I'm busted
My brother said there ain't a thing I can do,
My wife and my kids are all down with the flu,
And I was just thinking about calling on you 'cause I'm busted.*

*Well, I am no thief, but a man can go wrong when he's busted
The food that we canned last summer is gone and I'm busted
The fields are all bare and the cotton won't grow,
Me and my family got to pack up and go,
But I'll make a living, just where I don't know cause I'm busted
I'm broke, no bread, I mean like nothing*

Although the song makes no bones about the ordeal the narrator is going through, it does not mention the word *money*. A very similar situation can be found in *Pode guardar as Panelas* [You can put away the pans] (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zoZqHMzfs18>), a 1979 samba by Paulinho da Viola:

*You know that the tide
Is a piece of cake
And those who sleep without a cap
Know what it is all about
I know that my heart aches
When I talk the way I did
To say that the worst has happened
You can put away the pans
Because today the money fell short
(you know that the tide)*

*Você sabe que a maré
Não está moleza não
E quem não fica dormindo de touca
Já sabe da situação
Eu sei que dói no coração
Falar do jeito que falei
Dizer que o pior aconteceu
Pode guardar as panelas
Que hoje o dinheiro não deu
(você sabe que a maré)*

*I struggled a lot
Asking for loans but nobody lent me
I went over to Mr. Malaquias
To buy on credit but he didn't let me
My salary, tight, poor thing, it's funny
I has disappeared
I resorted to the horses, I bet on the favorite
But it didn't work out
(you know that the tide)
You know that the tide ... etc.*

*Dei pinote adoidado
Pedindo empréstimo e ninguém emprestou
Fui no seu Malaquias
Querendo fiado mas ele negou
Meu ordenado, apertado, coitado, engraçado
Desapareceu
Fui apelar pro cavalo, joguei na cabeça
Mas ele não deu
(você sabe que a maré)
Você sabe que a maré... etc.*

*To fill our pans, woman
I don't know how*

*Para encher nossa panela, comadre
Eu não sei como vai ser*

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>I have run around everywhere</i> | <i>Ja corri pra todo lado</i> |
| <i>I did what I could do</i> | <i>Fiz aquilo que deu pra fazer</i> |
| <i>Hoping for a miracle</i> | <i>Esperar por um milagre</i> |
| <i>That would work things out</i> | <i>Pra ver se resolve a situação</i> |
| <i>My faith is wavering</i> | <i>Minha fé já balançou</i> |
| <i>And I don't want to be disappointed again</i> | <i>Eu não quero sofrer outra decepção</i> |
| <i>(you know about the tide)</i> | <i>(você sabe que a maré)</i> |

The song, which represents a complete change about the question of money, expresses the loss of past illusions. The chorus repeats all the time, like a background painting, the economic situation of the popular classes and their related difficulties. In spite of recognizing that this may hurt one's feelings, the narrator prefers to be honest and direct. The impact is strong, for money is associated directly with food. Contrary to sambas from other times, in which the word money was frequently avoided, here it is cited explicitly. The narrator is a salaried worker whose earnings do not cover the month's expenditure. Therefore, he is obliged to try some alternative forms of getting money. But the methods that he utilized in other times (borrowing, buying on credit, gambling) no longer help and he no longer believes in miracles, hence his profound disillusionment. The title of the samba itself, *You can put away the pans*, suggests a retreat, the absence of any solution on the horizon.

VIII

This article has argued that popular music is a key instance for comparing societies. It expresses the changes that take place in different societies and allows us to understand how they are interpreted and represented by its members. It is interesting to compare the social imaginaries of popular music of Brazil and the United States because, although they are very different countries, they have a lot in common. The lyrics of popular songs represent an important social space for understanding the transformations through which those two societies went through during the twentieth century, in particular nation building, urbanization and industrialization. During that period, cities were the stage for a rearrangement of work relations, the dissemination of wage labor, a redefinition of gender roles, and new forms of family organization. Relations became gradually more monetized and hence money or the lack thereof became

a crucial reality of daily life. These changing realities are richly expressed through the lyrics of popular music.

There is a parallelism in the Brazilian and the North American songs analyzed in this article. The songs of the nineteen twenties represent a period in which people could still dream of surviving without working and of a society in which idleness and love could be imagined possible and preferable to salaried work and the need for money. The songs of the second half of last century, on the other hand, are much more 'realistic.' The narrators are poor, mainly of African descent in both cases, and they speak about the difficulty of earning money through wage work. Contrary to the lyrics of the 1920s, in which the word money was frequently avoided, here it is cited explicitly. The songs witness the end of an era. The period begins with the composers affirming the unimportance of money through wage labor and the dream of obtaining it magically, and ends with the recognition of its importance and the enormous difficulty of obtaining it. Money becomes more and more part of everyday reality. As the title of one of the songs of the 1966 Broadway musical *Cabaret* asserts: "Money makes the world go round" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkRIbUT6u7Q>).

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