

The rock *ethos*, erasures and political conflicts on Roger Waters' tour in Brazil

Ethos roqueiro, rasuras e conflitos políticos na turnê de Roger Waters no Brasil

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ABSTRACT

By choosing as object of analysis the *Us + Them* tour by musician Roger Waters, who toured Brazil in 2018 accumulating controversies around his political commentaries, this article addresses the tension between the rock *ethos* and the specificities of contemporary mega shows. Based on our analysis, we propose that the rupture caused by Roger Waters' performances during the 22 days he was in Brazil made visible several disputes, negotiations and reconfigurations related to the affects of his fans. By analyzing the erasures materialized in social media in response to Roger Waters' live presentations in Brazil, we uncovered a *crisis* concerning the idea of the rock *ethos* and the expectations about mega live music presentations.

Keywords: Rock, Roger Waters, erasures.

RESUMO

Elegendo como corpus a turnê *Us + Them* do músico Roger Waters, que passou pelo Brasil, em 2018, acumulando polêmicas em torno de seu posicionamento político, este artigo analisa os tensionamentos entre o *ethos roqueiro* e as especificidades dos grandes espetáculos na contemporaneidade. A partir destas discussões, propomos que a ruptura causada pelas performances de Roger Waters nos 22 dias em que esteve no Brasil visibilizou diversas disputas, negociações e reconfigurações nos afetos entre seus fãs. Analisando as rasuras performatizadas em ambientes digitais geradas pelos shows de Roger Waters no Brasil, localizamos uma *crise* em relação à ideia de *ethos roqueiro* e às expectativas em relação aos grandes shows de música.

Palavras-chave: Rock, Roger Waters, rasuras

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INTRODUCTION

SINCE ITS WIDESPREAD success in the West, at the end of the 1960s, especially due to the echoes of 1968 and to its close relations with the so-called counterculture, rock music has been used, in its various styles, to address the relationships between music and politics. This includes discussions about the *youthful rebellion* that marked the genre since its beginnings in the 1950s, its denunciation as *alienated music*, its role as a psychedelic reference in opposition to the hegemony of Eurocentric rationalism and its being a source of aesthetic challenge to the mainstream hit parade. On the other hand, rock was also categorized as conservative music, an affirmation of white heteronormative values, particularly regarding what came to be called classic rock (Frith, 1996; Grossberg, 1992; Hesmondhalgh, 2013; Silveira, 2016).

Based on this initial assumption, this article aims to examine one of the most remarkable cultural quarrels in Brazil, which was also discussed worldwide (Phillips, 2018; Reeves, 2018): the 2018 *Us + Them* tour, starring Roger Waters, a former member of the British progressive rock band Pink Floyd, who brought to seven Brazilian state capitals¹, in addition to his music, a series of brouhahas involving the narratives presented in his live presentations. As the tour took place during the 2018's electoral period, the debates focused on the artist's political positioning – expressed in his speeches during the shows and in the images projected on the stage screen used in the tour. The inaugural episode took place already at the first live venue in Brazil, held in São Paulo on October 9 at the Allianz Parque stadium. The public (estimated at 45,000 people) reacted in a polarized way to the exhibition on the screen of the hashtag #elenão (#nothem), which marked political manifestations on social networks that opposed or called for street demonstrations against the candidacy of the then presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro. In addition, also at that presentation, the name of the candidate was displayed among a series of images of world leaders classified by Waters as neofascists – a list updated with names of local politicians at each new country the tour visited. During the second live presentation in São Paulo, some fans exhibited a banner reading “FUCK YOU ROGER, PLAY THE SONGS,” indicating their expectation for entertainment and repudiation of political manifestations – a gesture that, to some extent, summarizes part of the many manifestations surrounding the episode.

Besides the public's on-site reaction, amid boos and applause, the presentation became a subject of discussion of the country's leading media outlets and social networks, allowing for a series of analyzes and comments

¹ The Brazilian leg of the tour had eight concerts held in football stadiums, in October 2018: on the 9th and 10th at Allianz Parque, in São Paulo; 13th in Brasília, at Mané Garrincha; 17th at Arena Fonte Nova, in Salvador; 21st at Mineirão, in Belo Horizonte; 24th in Maracanã, in Rio de Janeiro; 27th at Couto Pereira, in Curitiba; and on the 30th at José Pinheiro Borda, in Porto Alegre.

on topics such as the musician's history and the consistency of his political manifestations, the discourse of rock music and the ways of being a rock musician in the contemporary context, in addition to further controversies raised by the following concerts that did not seem to be part of the initial tour script. These *political episodes* occurred in the context of the *Us + Them* tour thus materialized as events related to the tour itself, unfolding in a series of online discussions (tweets, Facebook posts, news stories, comments by other musicians, interviews with Waters himself) that shed light on some of the issues that inspired this article.

Focusing on a series of dynamics that we deem more and more recurrent, involving political conflicts and demands from audiences to artists², we point out that Waters' own career is built on speeches and attitudes related to expectations about rock's political *mode of being*. It is in this sense that the acts of performative opposition to the musician emerge in contexts that challenge a certain anti-establishment reputation of rock music. Our aims are thus 1) to highlight the clash of expectations and the tensions that the presentation aroused, both with regard to the established idea of rock as a transgressive musical genre – and therefore used to anti-normative and anti-systemic discourses challenging the kind of authoritarianism Waters perceived in the Brazilian politician – and to the relationship built between artists and their public on major tours in contemporary times; 2) to present a panorama of the so-called mega shows as affected by the spread of globalized and networked means of dissemination (world tours, globalized distribution and dissemination, widespread sharing of signs originating in various places through the presentation of videos and setlists); and 3) to systematize the many manifestations of affects by those interested in the tour, showing the breach of expectations, or the evidences of *erasures* – the breach of expectations in the fan-artist relationship that generates conflicts – that signal disapproval of Waters' behavior in the virtual Facebook events organized by the tour producers, which brought together fans in ephemeral digital communities.

We would like to point out that politics, as discussed in this article, should not be viewed as restricted to its institutional aspects, traditionally associated with political parties, political offices and elections, but rather, according to Rancière's definition (2005), "Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time" (p. 16; translated by Gabriel Rockhill in *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Bloomsbury, 2004). Thus, we seek to examine in this study how the brouhahas that occurred during Roger Waters' recent Brazilian tour relate to disputes

²For instance, the fans in 2018 asking Anitta to take a position towards the murder of Rio de Janeiro's councilwoman Marielle Franco and Jair Bolsonaro's candidacy. In 2019, a few days before the Super Bowl, there was a campaign, in which Roger Waters participated, for Maroon 5 to somehow show solidarity in their halftime presentation with the athlete Colin Kaepernick, who was excluded from the national league after starting to protest against racism in 2016.



³We understand as *rock ethos* the affects and sensitivities usually associated with the counterculture hallmarks of the 1960s, the punk movement and the associations with the idea of youth culture as a counterpoint to the dominant culture. Thus, it is set of notions based on the history of rock throughout the 20th century that presupposes contradictions, conflicts and partial appropriations of those notions.

⁴A reference to the song of the same title included in Pink Floyd's album *Wish You Were Here* (1975).

involving the distribution of the sensible, as experienced in what is recognized, or not, as a kind of *rock ethos*³ usually associated, in an affective manner, with transgression and the opposition to hegemonic cultural institutions.

WELCOME TO THE MACHINE⁴: TRANSGRESSION AS ROCK'S MODE OF BEING

Our first axis of analysis focuses on discussing precisely a possible dimension of this *rock ethos*, a mode of being linked to rock music that associates this musical genre with politics through the notion of authenticity as a potential source of resistance to institutionalized politics (Frith, 1996; Grossberg, 1997). This is one of the rock's discourse features that supposedly identify it historically and socially with spaces of dissent, as opposed to pop music, which would be more prone to docility and escapism without major digressions arising from a critical awareness. Of course, these are stereotyped cultural expectations that can be deconstructed by observing that entertainment, regardless of musical genres, creates political opportunities for demanding other ways of living in the world. Another important observation is that, despite also being linked to the strategies and logic of the market, rock is still viewed as an opponent of this same system, particularly regarding its creative and critical legacy, of which Roger Waters and his former band Pink Floyd would be among the main references.

If, throughout his musical career, Waters actualized this dilemma (reaching a peak with the conceptual/audiovisual album *The wall*), we can think that, to some extent and in due proportion, the *Us + Them* tour renews and updates some of the tensions typical of the history of this musical genre, in which the wall that critically *divorced* creators from the public now seems to be designed with new bricks, due to the changing profile of part of the contemporary rock audience (such as the aging of former young rockers and alliances with political conservatives).

In this sense, we may assume that, in its multiple aspects, rock is not characterized only by musical and stylistic heterogeneity, but also by the very diversity of ideas of its varied audience. Similarly, Grossberg (1997) sees fans getting involved with rock for different purposes and in different ways, objecting to his attempt to define *one single experience* or *one single use* of the genre (denying the idea of full unity). Grossberg argues that, for some people, at a given moment, the meaning of particular lyrics is the most significant; other times, and more commonly, the experience is a purely affective one of listening to a song without much concern for the meaning of the lyrics. Despite what

Grossberg's says, it still seems to us today that much of the discussions about rock as a category and a musical genre (either as a native concept shared by fans, musicians and producers, or as an academic debate) start from the idea that these labels would be constraints and not means for dealing with cultural differences and the musical diversity of the massive contemporary musical production. In addressing the wide universe encompassed by rock as a category, it is important to highlight that, in the case of Roger Waters, the genre's political aspects seem to gain prominence due to its materialization in the musician's life story and career. Our approach to this discussion is thus based on the idea that

Before being homogenizing musical categorizations, musical genres allow musicians and audiences to establish parameters for disputes over taste, while allowing the establishment of specific signatures, the artist's distinguishing mark. This process occurs on the basis of a wide network of connections involving sound, audiovisual, recommendation processes, grouping of productions, affirmations of taste, lyrics, biographies, cultural criticisms, interviews, etc. (Pereira de Sá & Janotti Junior, 2018, p. 6).

In this context, even though we believe in the pertinence of understanding the idea of rock from a musical genre perspective, we cannot fail to perceive the difficulties of approaching this categorization while considering the historical and aesthetic multiplicity encompassed by the term, often used as a taxonomic umbrella. Thus, although we recognize ourselves as researchers who share to some extent this *rock ethos*, we see the articulation of musical genres as a device that helps us situate the discussion based on the relevance of the contradictions in musical categorizations and aesthetic discussions to the contemporary communication environment.

Therefore, we think that to define the *rock category* we should start by presupposing the existence of multiple approaches and a wide range of possibilities, often contradictory, varied and opposite to each other. In this sense, determining both the genealogy and the origins of the political approaches to rock is an arduous task, which should be continually reviewed. Our aim here is to emphasize that the association of rock with political debates and manifestations, actualized in different ways, is one of its most distinctive features. In this sense, perhaps we can turn to social tensions as a starting point for the constitution of this *rock ethos*, something already evident since its beginnings with the fusion of musical genres marginalized both by geographical origin (the southern United States) and by the social origin of its practitioners⁵.

⁵ Among those often viewed as rock pioneers are musicians like Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Fats Domino, Ike Turner and vocal doo-wop groups like The Coasters. The genre gained its particular musical texture (rhythm, harmony and instrumentation) with names like Chuck Berry and Little Richards. Most of these artists have in common blackness, rebelliousness and social marginalization, issues that shaped an initial affectivity template related to the forbidden, the profane, the ambiguous and the sexuality.



These elements were rearranged with the appropriation of the genre by white musicians like Elvis Presley and Bill Halley, since the second half of the 1950s, definitively reframing it as a media product (which spread beyond the music industry to the cinema, clothing, advertising), with all the market weight that this condition meant, being an expressive form of the new entertainment segment that emerged in the post-war period, a compound often called pop culture. But, as Merheb (2012) points out, if the rock pioneers never toned up their attitudes, their music and their speeches (at least explicitly) with political and behavioral discussions, it was the 1960's generation that laid the foundations of an image of rock linked to explicitly political manifestations.

With the association of rock with intellectual ambitions, either due to its success among college students or to the incorporation of more sophisticated agendas, we can speak of a kind of artistic emancipation of rock – which also creates an internal valuation scale, involving criteria as political and behavioral potential, critical recognition and commercial success; in addition to being able to arouse potentially subversive affects, whether in explicitly political and partisan disputes, or “as a visceral expression of sexuality and total rejection of middle class values (...) reinventing commercial music and benefiting from specific cultural conditions in order to explore new aesthetic possibilities in unvisited territories” (Merheb, 2012, p. 9).

Rock then started to be recognized as a musical expression of the ongoing revolution in mores, allowing for its association with social upheavals, with the artists of the time being understood as militants of an insurrection that went beyond music. This perception is not unwarranted, since experimentation with new technologies (Jimi Hendrix), sounds (Beatles) and anti-establishment lyrics (Bob Dylan, Rolling Stones, MC5) guaranteed rock's place in history as an “auxiliary line of social movements that confronted the establishment” (Merheb, 2012, p. 14). In this sense, some rock albums and artists – such as Velvet Underground, The Doors and David Bowie – as well as series of remarkable events (Monterrey Pop Festival, in 1967, and Woodstock, in 1969) and manifestations involving specific communities (such as San Francisco's hippies or the swinging London youth) consolidated rock as an artistic expression associated with the countercultural desire to oppose the *Zeitgeist* of that period. Rock became part of the 1960s' counterculture that emerged from drug experiences, the sexual revolution, civil rights campaigns, black and feminist militancy, anti-war protests (especially against the Vietnam War) and global political clashes (against dictatorships and conservative governments). Before the genealogical aspects that would remain relevant to

the idea of rock, including to its political transfigurations, as occurred with the punk movement, these historical facts are interesting because they allow us to understand how this representation of rock, even if contradictory, left marks in the representation of what we are calling *rock ethos*.

SHINE ON YOU CRAZY DIAMOND⁶: PINK FLOYD'S HISTORY AND THE LINKS TO AN ETHOS OF ROCK IN THE FIGURE OF ROGER WATERS

Like so many other rock bands of the period, Pink Floyd was the result of a variety of influences emerging from the origins and matrixes of rock experimentalism. Pink Floyd was a typical expression of this rock ethos, both in its associations with the spirit of the time of its emergence and in the specificities that marked its performances. At different phases of its history, the band exhibited characteristics that constituted distinctive marks of the rock genre, such as a style that articulated sound structures typical of the period (psychedelia, experimentalism, seriousness and artistic ambitions) with a lyrical discourse that articulated countercultural elements⁷.

In what can be considered the band's first phase, when vocalist and guitarist Syd Barrett was still the band leader, Pink Floyd performed as one of the leading exponents of British psychedelia (or art rock), both for the sound kaleidoscopic that characterized its first works and for establishing links with the consumption of psychedelic drugs, which marked many of the young fans of rock 'n' roll. With the departure of Barrett (linked precisely to the excessive consumption of drugs), the band, under the leadership of Roger Waters, established itself as one of the references of progressive rock, or prog rock, as it came to be called by music critics and fans (Brackett, 2005). The progressive rock subgenre solidified as a rock style practiced by a generation that stood out for its formal musical techniques, conceptual albums and the various middle class musicians with college education (such as Waters himself, who studied architecture), and who was responsible for producing shows with large investments in stage technologies that emulated psychedelic experiences, the hallmarks of progressive rock⁸. In this sense, it seems to us that Waters' career exemplifies the whole idea of rock as an artistic musical manifestation imbued with politics, dealing with serious themes and sound textures often inspired by classical music and some of its listening conventions, especially in live performances:

In the U.K., however, Pink Floyd was a revered mainstay of a subculture – born in the 1960s and fixed as a key musical subculture by the start of the next decade

⁶ A reference to the song of the same title included in Pink Floyd's album *Wish You Were Here* (1975).

⁷ The son of a soldier who died in World War II when he was only five months old, the dark side of the war and its political overtones were extensively addressed by Waters in his work, establishing him as the owner of a singular poetic verve within the lyrical scope of rock 'n' roll. Among his various songs addressing this theme, we highlight "Welcome to the machine," "Us and them," "Money," "The Fletcher Memorial Home" and, in particular, Pink Floyd's *Animals* (1977) album, inspired by the anti-totalitarian literary classic *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell (1945). Although we recognize the importance of Waters' poetic biography, for reasons of space, we will not address this topic in detail; our investigation is not focused on a specifically musical analysis of the songs, but on the political contextualization of what they represent to the idea of a rock ethos.

⁸ This period, in the 1970s, is clearly articulated in *The Dark Side of the Moon* (1973), *Wish You Were Here* (1975) and *Animals* (1977) albums and tours, works that became part of the genre's canon and that decades later would be relegated to the *classical rock* shelf.



– in which shows were often accorded the quiet respect that greets classical recitals. The contrast with their early experiences on the British ballroom circuit could not have been more pronounced: now, any idea of the rock gig as a hedonistic, noisy mass experience took second place to the importance of quietly *listening* (a process often assisted, it has to be said, by the sharing of the odd fragrant hand-rolled cigarette) (Harris, 2006, p. 102).

Thus, when viewed from the perspective of *expressive coherence* (Goffman, 2009; Pereira de Sá & Polivanov, 2012), it is no surprise that in a 1980’s interview for the American edition of Rolling Stone magazine Waters revealed how he thought the rock audience’s role should be: “Passive,” he replied. “Like they’re in a theater. You bloody well sit there. I hate audience participation” (Gilmore, 2010, p. 376). This answer came, at that time, as a confirmation of the musician’s growing dislike of live music dynamics, encouraging Waters “to live out [Pink Floyd’s] recent concerns about alienation by implanting an emotional distance between the audience, the music and themselves” (Gilmore, 2010, p. 376).

This dissatisfaction was the cornerstone for the band to design their next project, the album *The Wall*⁹. Both the album and the tour functioned as a kind of self-accusation, in which Pink Floyd assumed the role of rock (and, therefore, of the band itself) as the bearer of this negative and alienating condition. The diagnosis was that the genre presented itself as another vector of social oppression, with bands and audiences forming a system tensioned by the clash of expectations of a public willing to be entertained and musicians who, after a great artistic investment, received from the audience misunderstanding and a sense of indifference. This exposed a disjointed relationship between desires and expectations of musicians and fans, as shown by Waters’ perception of the audience’s demands as a kind of artistic gag.

Ironically, *The Wall* was a huge success and a bestseller¹⁰, further amplifying the band’s popularity, but increasing that split. Thus, based on what Waters expressed through his compositions in *The Wall*, the experience of shows in large arenas – a commercial successful for rock bands since the 1970s – dehumanized the performances and took rock dangerously close to what it has historically intended to maintain distance: the excessive commodification of its contents; the crystallization of the hierarchy between musicians and audiences; the repetition and rigidity of performances that inspired comparisons with authoritarianism and, ultimately, with fascism¹¹.

Roger Waters was pointing not only to the duality in Pink Floyd’s shows (art versus entertainment), but also to a broader confrontation, a rivalry

⁹The wall erected by Waters and Pink Floyd was not just metaphorical, as scenic bricks were actually laid out around the musicians on the stage, gradually hiding them as the show went on. A wall almost fifty meters wide and ten meters high, destroyed at the climax of the performances, was how the band materialized the lyrical purpose of the album – denouncing the forces of alienation employed by various ideologies: education, the family, the military (Gilmore, 2010).

¹⁰By 2018, *The Wall* sold nearly 29 million copies, establishing itself as the Pink Floyd’s most commercially successful album and one of the best-selling rock records of all time, along with Led Zeppelin’s *IV* (1973), according to estimates based on figures from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), the trade organization that represents the American music industry (<https://www.riaa.com>).

¹¹It is no coincidence that in Alan Parker’s movie version of *The Wall* (1982), the protagonist Pink, played by Bob Geldof, is a mentally collapsed rockstar who, during a performance, hallucinates that he is, in fact, a dictator leading a political rally.

between two poles (musicians and audience) that, a priori, should be in agreement and participating in the same act of communion. Waters began to question the role he played as an authoritarian leader before his audience, with his sphere of power put in dispute with the commercial reframing of his art by a consumer audience that yearned for certain protocols and formats. At the heart of this relational trajectory was an increasingly clientelistic tendency (illustrated by a variety of demands) of its fans (Gilmore, 2010).

This represents a significant change: if, on the one hand, it is possible to outline several issues that permeate the narratives of Pink Floyd as one of the bands that most expressively materialized the *rock ethos*, on the other, its huge success and the wide circulation of his songs put him in the pantheon of the so-called Adult-Oriented Rock or Album Oriented Radio (AOR)¹². The same songs that served to set boundaries between progressive rock (with its demands for quiet listening linked to the idea of seriousness) and the supposedly frivolous, hedonistic aspects of pop and disco music, could also be viewed as part of a broader, more accessible (and therefore docile) repository of rock music. In this sense, Waters would represent rock history as a discontinuous flow, whose path from the margin towards the center had been accelerated, since the 1970s, with the boom of records sales and mega shows planned as war operations. Thus, the careers of Roger Waters and Pink Floyd expose a tension within this rock ethos, arising from the breach of expectations, narrative clashes and brouhahas that are still visible today and that wrote, in the recent Waters' Brazilian tour, another instigating chapter of political contradictions that permeates not only rock, but also popular mass music in a broad sense.

COMFORTABLY NUMB¹³: THE RISE OF MEGASHOWS AND THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF DISPUTES ON THE ROGER WATERS' TOUR

Given this context of changes in the enjoyment and consumption of rock, it seems that, today, a Roger Waters show, as framed by the logic of mega presentations, is attended by diverse audiences with different expectations, ranging from the dedicated progressive rock fan to the cross-cultural *cosmopolitans* who are there to participate in the show in order to witness an event that, apart from musical particularities, is part of the cultural agenda of large cities. Thus, we reiterate here that it is not a question of viewing in these concerts two different, polarized audiences, since part of their commercial and aesthetic success is precisely the ability to bring together diverse audiences in a kind of mega-audience¹⁴. The same show,

¹² A radio format developed in the USA in the early 1970s and which initially focused on rock songs, mostly by white musicians, which began to become a reference for an audience that was becoming adult, entering the job market, forming their families and that listened this music while driving (Brackett, 2005).

¹³ A reference to the song of the same title included in Pink Floyd's album *The Wall* (1975).

¹⁴ In this sense, we see mega-events here as cultural or sport events of international or even planetary scope, collective and ephemeral actions that have symbolic status in a very significant spatial and temporal scale, allowing for the construction of socially distinctive symbols (Seixas, 2010).



depending on the expectations of the public, can be experienced, at the same time, as belonging to the global universe of pop culture and as a coupling device for supposed political features of the rock universe.

In political terms, a tour like *Us + Them* is thus capable of producing effects of presence in a rearrangement of the expectations staged in Waters' performances that, while seeking to reterritorialize the idea of political engagement as intrinsic to the rock genre, also can deterritorialize this positioning due to local contexts. In the specific case of the Brazilian leg of the Roger Waters' tour, we see a tense association between the demands for confrontation with politicians considered conservative, stimulated by Waters – engaging the traditional image of rock anti-hegemonic – and the Brazilian electoral context, with part the audience expressing support for a presidential candidate who, in social and moral terms, positioned himself against the liberal and progressive ideals associated with progressive rock and espoused by the Waters.

But before reviewing the romantic idea that Waters' songs would represent a distribution of the sensible with rock as emulation of authenticity, perhaps we can refer to Rancière (2011), according to whom this categorization is also “about a possible distribution, which is also a distribution of the capacity that all have to participate in this same possible distribution” (p. 19).

Amid all this, and already mapping an important breach of expectations' hotspot, we call attention to some of the implications of the so-called mega shows. As is common in large entertainment productions like this, everything follows a previously prepared, detailed script. This is usual practice in events of this size and, therefore, we may say that the tours of the biggest names in rock (which, for example, are able to fill a stadium) provide an experience that, in addition to having been previously tested by the producers, is not prone to delivering improvisations or novelties to the audience – which often pay high prices for the tickets¹⁵.

What Roger Waters brought to Brazil – in addition to being part of his large repertoire of albums, tours and interviews – was made available on digital platforms even before the first chord was played or the first image projected on the stage screen. There is probably no *surprise factor* and little margin for breaking the audience's expectations, since the contents of events like these can often be found on official DVDs or websites such as YouTube or Setlist.fm (<http://www.setlist.fm>)¹⁶, allowing fans to form expectations about the order of the songs to be performed, possible variations (usually not very flexible), the duration of the live presentations, etc. Thus, the audience, interested in the *live* experience of the show, has a series of opportunities

¹⁵Ticket prices for the Roger Waters' Brazilian tour ranged from R\$ 90.00 (half price for the upper chair sector in Salvador) to R\$ 810.00 (full price for the premium sector in São Paulo).

¹⁶Setlist.fm is a collaborative site whose contents are generated by users who share the setlists of the shows they attended. In this sense, it is a UGC (user-generated content) site. Despite this collaborative approach, it should be noted that the site is today part of the Live Nation Entertainment group, a large company specializing in the promotion, sale and production of events, mainly musical.

to previously *assess* how big is this interest before paying for tickets and effectively going to the shows.

These considerations point to the fact that, despite the centrality of experiencing a *live performance* at large rock concerts, *live* events involve much more elements than the effects of presence of the artists' stage performance. There is a whole pre-event preparation that involves watching previous shows on YouTube, arguments about setlists and their repetition or small variations, expectations about political comments made in previous shows, etc. In other words, it is not just a matter of noticing the multiple mediations that make up a live music presentation, but also of realizing how the mediations themselves become part of the live performance. Perhaps, before approaching the performance as an event, the live show should be viewed as a communicational setting experienced in times of digital culture.

Considering this, many of the Brazilians who attended the *Wo of the Us + Them* tour probably had some knowledge of what they would pay to see and listen. But, on the one hand, if it is possible to see a rigidity in the lack of surprises of large shows, on the other hand, the brouhahas that emerged around the expectations of Waters' political comments during his shows in Brazil allow us to observe relationships that seem to situate globalized performances within local contexts, that is, through their cross-cultural aspects. Thus, despite all the expectations created around the script that is usually followed to the letter on global rock tours, we can also think that the controversies that arose at Roger Waters' shows in Brazil "only exist in an irrepressible brouhaha of compositions, decompositions and recompositions that lead us to think of boundaries, peripheries and multiple centralities, in a boundary situation conceived at the same time as concatenation and rupture" (Garcia Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 16).

This was materialized in the events resulting from the musician's visit to Brazil. We thus compiled a series of episodes that reflect the erasures that appeared in the fabric of expectations, which later manifested in social networks (our third analytical axis) as a tension related to the changes in expectations about these events. We understand by erasures the result of a rupture in the relationship between artists and their fans. The term was proposed by Pilz (2019) as a metaphor, based on the idea that breaking expectations produces deep marks – like a stain or blur on a sheet of paper – in the fan's relationship with the artist while *maintaining*, *maintaining in part* or *erasing* any affective narrative (which was, if not harmonious, at least little tensioned) that existed before. We list as follows nine episodes (Table 1) that, in a certain way, triggered ruptures and represent some breaches in the tour's political engagements:



Table 1

Main episodes of tension on Roger Waters tour in Brazil in 2018

10/9	At the first show of the tour, in São Paulo, Roger Waters criticizes Bolsonaro, classifies him as a fascist and shares the hashtag #elenão (#not-him). The audience at the stadium is divided and the dispute of narratives move to social networks.
10/10	Faced with the repercussions, at the second show in São Paulo, Waters, in silence and supported by the stage screen, presents as a performance the censorship to which he feels submitted.
10/17	In Salvador, Waters pays homage to the master of <i>capoeira</i> Moa do Katendê, murdered a few days earlier after saying in a bar that he voted for Fernando Haddad (Worker's Party – PT) in the first electoral round. During the tribute, the audience responded with applause and the musician cried.
10/21	The then Minister of Culture, Sérgio Sá Leitão, posts on his Twitter account that Waters was campaigning for PT during the shows and had received R\$ 90 million for this.
10/22	Roger Waters is interviewed by Brazilian musician Caetano Veloso for <i>Mídia Ninja</i> (independent local press) and mainly talks about the conservative and fascist wave of recent years.
10/24	At a presentation in Rio de Janeiro, Waters calls Marielle Franco's family to the stage.
10/26	Waters requests, through his lawyers, to visit former President Lula, which is denied. The Electoral Court warns the musician that he would risk imprisonment if he expressed political preferences after 10:00 pm of the day before the second electoral round, according to the electoral law.
10/27	At the show in Curitiba, held on the eve of the election, starting at 9:30 pm, Waters displays a countdown on the stage screen a few seconds before 10:00 pm. Soon after, the phrase "Resist Neofascism" was projected on the screen.
10/30	At his last show in Brazil, two days after Jair Bolsonaro's victory, Roger Waters takes children on stage with T-shirts containing the word <i>Resista</i> (resist).

Source: The Authors.

We argue that the *controversial* aspects of Waters' concerts, including verbal and visual manifestations of political content, make up a musical performance, that is, an *effect of presence*, through the expectations created by the contents consumed before the concerts (with due proportions and particularities), whether they are repeated or not in the Brazilian leg of the tour. But this *effect of presence*, despite being actualized in the live performance as an event, is part of a network of relationships that we call a live show.

In this context, the breaking of a supposed stability in expectations about the tour generated new expectations about the artist's political comments and the audience reaction, which also influenced the media coverage of the tour: *How will Roger Waters position himself today and what will the audience's reaction be?* The catalytic agent for the brouhaha is incorporated to the modus operandi, also becoming a source of novelty – given that

Roger Waters changed his manifestations at each presentation and the fans prepared performances to demonstrate their annoyance: in short, for a part of the audience, a Roger Waters taking a political position on the Brazilian elections was of little use, becoming a source of irritation and contempt. These controversies allowed us to approach rock as a locus for disputes about the distribution of the sensible, and it is in this sense that we observe an audience that progressively adapts itself to this singular dynamic and starts to attend the shows with this in mind, manifesting what we call signs of *erasures* in relation to the bases of what we call *rock ethos*.

US VS. THEM¹⁷: AFFECTS AND ERASURES OF THE ROGER WATERS TOUR AT FACEBOOK VIRTUAL EVENTS

During Roger Waters' tour in Brazil, the textual or audiovisual expressions of discontent that were widely spread on social media – such as reports and videos of boos, filing of police reports (*Rolê Aleatório*, 2018), posts on *Reclame Aqui* (2018), a website for posting consumer complaints, and videos showing the breaking and disposal of Pink Floyd LPs – point to strong affective reactions to the musician's political comments. In this sense, in order to determine the specific ambiance of such manifestations, we sought to examine the dialogues (posts, comments and responses) on the *Discussion* tab of the eight Facebook events¹⁸ created by T4F, the tour's production company. Our investigation, although we have examined all manifestations from October 9, 2018, in a reverse chronological order (from the most recent posts to the oldest ones), was restricted to posts expressing, even if indirectly¹⁹, feelings of annoyance with Waters' political commentaries – since, for the most part, conversations on these pages concern the purchase and sale of tickets. Here, we adopt the method of Analysis of Construction of Meaning in Digital Networks²⁰, especially with regard to the systematization of discourses through proximity categories of messages.

We thus point out highlight that, among the arguments used and the meanings expressed in the conversations, there are associations between the thematic cores we established to assess erasure proximity. We also emphasize that we do not treat the expression of affects as affective blocks through a show-by-show examination or any specific chronology (although we understand that they may offer clues to these erasures, given the dynamism of Roger Waters' manifestations). However, the observation of conversations unfolding, before systematization into categories using the adopted methodology, allowed us to observe that, as the tour proceeds and Waters continues to comment

¹⁷ A reference to the song *Us and Them* included in Pink Floyd's album *The Dark Side of The Moon* (1975).

¹⁸ The Facebook events were selected based on their relevance and potential for analysis with respect to the ambiance of fans, producers, the official virtual event and those interested in the shows.

¹⁹ In this sense, we highlight above all the resource of irony in some conversations, as considering a mere dichotomy between *positive* or *negative* is too simplistic in face of the complexity of social media conversations and interwoven affects.

²⁰ See Pilz et al. (2018).

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The rock *ethos*, erasures and political conflicts

on political issues, the manifestations of annoyance begin to resort more to humor and irony, moving away from expressions of anger. We therefore propose five categories to group these manifestations:

- *Boycott and other practical initiatives*: this category includes attempts to materialize the falling out with the musician, through either individual or collective actions, such as the filing of a police report, the intention of asking ticket refunds and the destruction of Water’s albums (Figure 1).



Figure 1

Boycott and other practical initiatives

Obs.: Sample selected by the authors.

- *Repudiation of Roger Waters*: this thematic core includes posts expressing the understanding that Roger Waters should not speak about Brazilian politics because a) he is not Brazilian; b) he lacks knowledge of local politics; c) he is financially successful; d) he comes from a country that is still a monarchy; e) he takes advantage of supposed benefits of local cultural legislation; and f) he was led to comment or deceived by others about Brazilian issues (Figure 2).

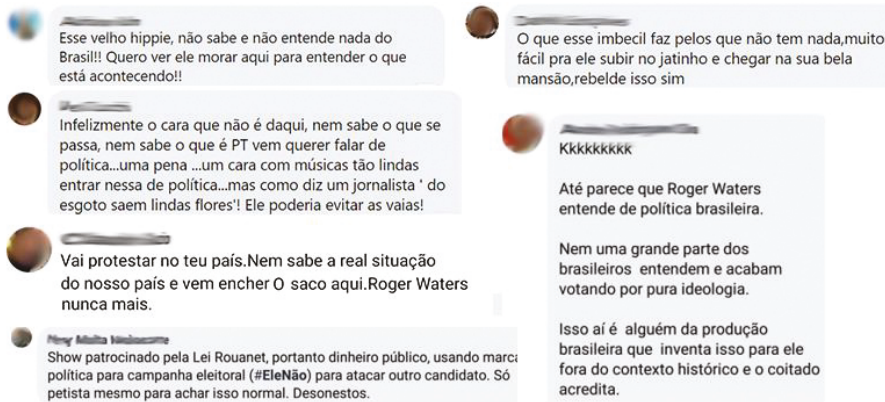


Figure 2

Repudiation of Roger Waters

Obs.: Sample selected by the authors.

- *My ticket, my rules*: this category includes comments arguing that Roger Waters’ performance should have been restricted to his music and to fulfilling the audience’s expectation of enjoying an entertainment experience, as the public would not had bought tickets to other types of discursive performance (Figure 3).

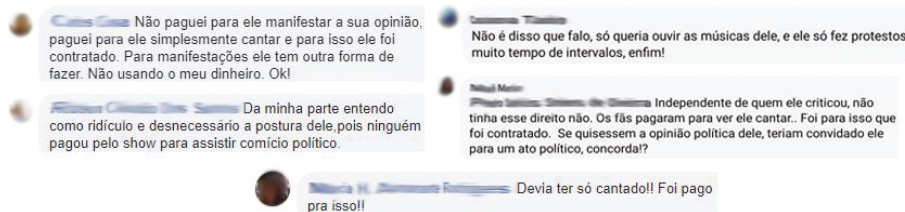


Figure 3

My tickets, my rules

Obs.: Sample selected by the authors.

- *Roger Waters adding fuel to the fire*: here, the annoyance is with Roger Waters’ lack of care in manifesting himself in such a way at such a time (taking into account not only the electoral period, but social instability), in front of thousands of people in the same place, thus a) fomenting discord among the audience and b) leading to insecurity (Figure 4).

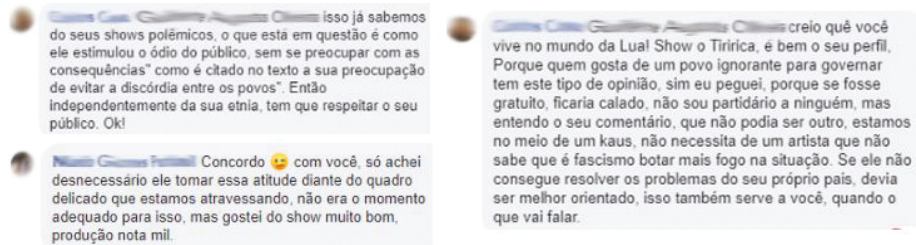


Figure 4

Roger Waters adding fuel to the fire

Obs.: Sample selected by the authors.

- *Lack of expressive coherence*: here Roger Waters' history and origins are used to point out a lack of expressive coherence, that is, his discourse would not be consistent with his identity and career. (Figure 5).



Figure 5

Lack of expressive coherence

Obs.: Sample selected by the authors.

Of course, even with the systematization of comments, there are associations between categories; these are more evident particularly between the *Repudiation of Roger Waters* and *Lack of expressive coherence* categories. However, this latter category, even if also representing a repudiation of Waters' political commentaries, demarcates a certain specificity in the comments of fans, who argue based on their knowledge and interpretation skills. In general, we found that the tour's virtual events emulate and centralize the disputes between polarized population segments observed in the national runoff election. In this sense, Roger Waters' manifestations are not only received as opposition to one of the candidates, but also as a support to the other candidate.

In the *Boycott and other practical initiatives* category, we point to attempts to respond to Waters' commentaries by giving up going to the show, organizing demonstrations at the show or taking actions aimed at causing some kind of loss to Waters, as part of a repudiation not only of his political positions and

the setting where they were expressed, but also of an *unexpected* commercial relationship. Some of the comments point to the *My ticket, my rules* category, which groups posts express the breaking of expectations and questions the idea of an entertainment mega show congregating a heterogeneous audience, even with the creation of new expectations after the repercussion of the arguments that what Roger Waters, who was *paid*, was offering is not what the *paying* Brazilian audience would be interested in. In the *Roger Waters adding fuel to the fire* category, we grouped posts expressing concern for the possible consequences of Waters commentaries and for the presentation of a less homogeneous spectacle, which would further foment the polarized affects that emerged at that period in the country.

We may thus infer from these repudiations of Roger Waters' political positions several linkages that range from the affirmation of an audience expecting to be entertained (mega show), and which should not pay attention to any political manifestation on the part of the musician, to attempts to review an anti-establishment *rock ethos*, seeking to mischaracterize Roger Waters' position by putting into question the coherence of his counterculture ideals with his current political positions. This seems to show that, instead of an alignment of these political commentaries with a specific type of audience, they seem to reach different audiences with different arguments in what has to do with the brouhahas observed during the Waters' tour in Brazil in 2018.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this article we aimed to examine the brouhahas that occurred during the Brazilian leg of Roger Waters' tour in 2018 from three analytical axes. Initially, we addressed the possibility of defining what we called a *rock ethos*, crystallized in a variety of actors (musicians, audience, specialized media vehicles, researchers) based on the political expressions found in this musical genre and on the principle that, in its origin, rock music expressed political views opposed to hegemonic behavioral patterns and social rules. This context helped to cement the notion of authenticity and transgression as characteristics of the rock's approach to politics. Next, based on elements provided by the British musician Roger Waters' career, we examined his work with the band Pink Floyd as an example of the social-affective tones of the progressive rock musical genre and how, by his own initiative, he came to be in the middle of tensions involving the rock genre and the context of mega shows. As leader of his former band, Waters had to face the consequences of the premise that the success of a mega shows requires making concessions to the detriment of this *rock ethos*, as it presupposes the articulation



of diverse expectations and idiosyncrasies around his *reference* songs – whose dissonances are potential disruptions in certain settings and temporalities, but which, with historical distance, appeared as resulting from the very process of the passage of time that involves both the songs and the artist's own audience.

In the light of all this disagreements, we examined the recent Brazilian leg of the Waters' tour and the events related to the tour's political tone, which allowed us to observe a kind of *crisis*, both in terms of what we defined as the *rock ethos* and in terms of a possible meeting of the expectations intrinsic to the logic of the contemporary mega shows. The confrontation with the heterogeneity of the audiences, crystallized in a kind of polarization in the face of Waters' political commentaries, also presupposes an instability in affects, materialized in the clashes involving parts of the audience that are there to sing along to the songs, listen to the music and enjoy the event as a way of participating in the hedonistic aspects of pop culture, which do not necessarily have a unequivocal connection to the musician's work. This corroborates Keightley's argument (2001) that:

'Rock' is a term that is instantly evocative and frustratingly vague. Rock may mean rebellion in musical form, distorted guitars, aggressive drumming, and bad attitude. But rock has also stood for much more than a single style of musical performance (...) If this eclectic set of performers and sounds can be grouped under the heading 'rock', it is not because of some shared, timeless, musical essence, rather; specific historical contexts, audiences, critical discourses, and industrial practices have worked to shape particular perceptions of this or that music or musician as belonging to 'rock.' (p. 109)

We thus highlight the emergence of visible tensions due to a certain *romanticization of rock*, visible in our selection of manifestations on social media, coalescing into the possibility of an *expressive coherence* (Goffman, 2009; Pereira de Sá & Polivanov, 2012) arising from the artist's biographical narrative (*Waters was always political*) and from some expectations from part of his audience about what they would like (and paid) to watch and listen (*I just want to listen to the songs*), which suggest that a diversity in listening rituals puts into question a supposed *stable communion* between musician and audience. In this sense, we observe an audience progressively adapting to this singular dynamic and starting to manifest what we call *erasures* – arrangements that articulate, through affective marks, a variety of processes in the relationship with the artist. These *erasures* ultimately show that, before approaching these phenomena through a binomial perspective that attempts to address cultural relations in terms of global/local or center/periphery dichotomies, it is necessary to take into account their cross-cultural aspects. These

emerge in the brouhahas we analyzed here, demonstrating that the place where these events occur continues to be of great importance for the engagement of affects and notions that articulate aesthetics, politics and pop culture.

These controversies also allowed us to see rock as the locus of disputes about the distribution of the sensible, in which “the arts only ever lend to projects of domination or emancipation what they are able to lend to them, that is to say, quite simply, what they have in common with them: bodily positions and movements, functions of speech, the parcelling out of the visible and the invisible” (Rancière 2005, p. 26; translated by Gabriel Rockhill in *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Bloomsbury, 2004). Thus, ironically, such episodes lend other meanings to what Waters suggests with the tour’s name, *Us + Them*, in view of the varied readings it received in Brazil: if *Us and Them* has evoked more a duality than a communion, it is possible that Waters has left Brazil more uncertain of who is who in this conjunction. Moreover, we can think of an event like the *Us + Them* mega show as part of a *clash of values* involving synchronic and diachronic positions, which also encompass non-musical aspects of everyday life (such as the Brazilian elections), marking symbolic disputes that shed light on what the *Us + Them* tour reveals of a more complex and confusing context, where different expectations are transformed into a clash of narratives.

It is within this context that the emergence of *inconsistencies* between what is implied by the performance of the songs and social media comments results in audiences approaching musical presentations through a kind of connected listening, that is: personal stories, political positions, likes/dislikes become values attached to the very idea of what a live music show is. These rearrangements quickly become the drives of engagements and expectations, putting a stress on the standard model of major world tours, even with Waters performances of *Us + Them* changing in a dynamic-progressive way, by continuously adding names of politicians to the list projected on the stage screen. In addition to his political comments in interviews, the continuation and re-elaboration of his criticisms, which to some extent confront his audiences, also reinforce Waters own coherence with the *rock ethos* he materialized in *The Wall*. ■

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