

# From singer to conductor: (auto)biographical travels and horizons of baritone Raimundo Pereira<sup>1</sup>

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## *De cantor a maestro: viagens e horizontes (auto)biográficos do barítono Raimundo Pereira*

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### ABSTRACT

This article aims to grasp the effect of migrations and travels in the musical and artistic education of Raimundo Pereira by reflecting on the 2004 (auto)biography “Muito prazer: sirva-se Raimundo Pereira Confidencial” [Pleased to meet you: Enjoy Raimundo Pereira Confidential], combined with interviews made with two professors, a poet, and a musician – people who the artist crossed paths with throughout his life. To that end, the study poses the following questions: How did Raimundo Pereira, as a black student, extend and consolidate his networks of sociability in migratory movements? How was his artistic education built up as he traveled? How do the (auto)biographical narratives of this gay singer manifest themselves as tactics of resistive existence and empowerment? Based on written and oral sources, it was possible to infer that although the baritone neither signs the book nor uses the resource of delegated writing, the act of narrating an

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(auto)biography, including his migrations and travels, emerges as a gesture of affirmation, resistance, and empowerment of the use of his voice beyond the act of singing.

*Keywords:* History of Education. (Auto)biography. Travels. Training. Raimundo Pereira.

## RESUMO

Este artigo objetiva compreender a relação entre migrações e viagens na formação musical e artística de Raimundo Pereira, por meio de reflexões sobre a (auto)biografia “Muito prazer: sirva-se Raimundo Pereira Confidencial”, publicada em 2004, articulada com entrevistas realizadas com dois docentes, um poeta e um músico – pessoas que perpassaram a vida desse sujeito. Nesta perspectiva, interroga-se: como o estudante negro ampliou e consolidou suas redes de sociabilidade em movimentos migratórios? Como se deu sua formação artística em viagens? Como as narrativas (auto)biográficas do cantor gay apresentam-se como táticas de res(ex)istência e empoderamento? A partir dos documentos escritos e orais, foi possível interpretar que, embora o barítono não assinasse o livro e nem use o recurso da escrita delegada, o próprio ato de narrar uma (auto)biografia, suas migrações e viagens, configura-se num gesto de afirmação, resistência e empoderamento do uso de sua voz para além do ato de cantar.

*Palavras-chave:* História da Educação. (Auto)biografia. Viagens. Formação. Raimundo Pereira.

## Introduction

This study belongs in the field of History of Education, and explores the (auto)biography titled “Muito prazer: sirva-se Raimundo Pereira Confidencial” [Pleased to meet you: Enjoy Raimundo Pereira Confidential], which weaves together the personal narratives of the Piauí State-born musician. The compilation dates back from 2004, and it is a first-person account resulting from the relationship established between Cristina Tojeiro (journalist in charge of collecting the testimonials) and the artist (the biography subject). The book pieces together the life history of the baritone, involving his migrations, formation, and gay activism in what is known today as the LGBTIQ+ movement, and also reveals passages about his experiences as a student, an artist, a Northeasterner, a black man, and a homosexual.

Throughout this study we sought to understand the reasons for his migrations and how his networks of sociability expanded as he moved from one place to another; know how his training took place as he traveled; identify signs of resistance and activism in his writings and narratives. Thus, the questions underpinning the study were: How did the black student broaden and cement his networks of sociability in his migratory movements? How did his artistic training take place as he traveled? How do the (auto)biographical narratives of the gay singer manifest themselves as tactics of resistive existence and empowerment?

In this regard, as we focused on the life path of the choir member and former student of the then-called Federal Technical School of Piauí (now Federal Institute for Education, Science, and Technology of Piauí), we sought to pool knowledge and contribute to broadening the discussion on the education of people deprived of means for studying. While we put into perspective factors such as travels and migrations, we dealt with aspects relating to the socialization of the student who lived in socially and economically vulnerable conditions; and whose experience also comprises stints as a teacher.

Notwithstanding the importance of the issues mentioned above and without sacrificing their correlations, we do not intend here to bring into view public policies, institutions or practices, or even directly discuss schooled education, for our focus is on the (auto)biography of a common person, scarcely present in academic discussions. Therefore, for us to write about Raimundo does not mean writing about a myth, a victim or a hero. It means telling a little of many Raimundos (BRUM, 2008), of those who do not belong, those with no belongings, the improbable, who are not exceptional or uncommon, but who are just rendered invisible throughout History.

Thus, bringing such discussions to the forefront of the field of History of Education, especially to the History of Musical Education – as we studied the life of a poor student turned classical singer – stems from our option for viewing students as a meaningful component of the relationships in the field of education, and from our interest in the processes of subjectivation of students in vulnerable conditions. For this reason, this study can be said to be justifiable as it brings visibility to a black person, mediated and subjectified in (and by) his networks of sociability, and also by institutions, practices and policies, by his teachers, by his migratory processes and other travels.

Theoretically, this work is in line with the concept of memories (AMADO, 1995), and it takes into account the discussion on the scope of biographical studies (AVELAR; SCHMIDT, 2018). It views autobiographical writings as one's self-archive as a practice of resistance (ARTIÈRES, 1998). However, it strives not to lose sight of the reflections concerning the illusions created in biographies (BOURDIEU, 2006). Following the same reasoning, we understand

“regardless of the type of memory or its support, nothing can prove the remains of human subjectivity are an accurate portrayal of the original fact, of the experience itself” (MONTI, 2018, p. 73).

This study reflects on concepts related to gay (in)visibility (PEDRO; VERAS, 2014), expounds tensions relating to social field and social distinction (BOURDIEU, 2007) between outsiders and established ones (ELIAS; SCOTSON, 2000), perceives prohibitions and rejections (FOUCAULT, 2010), acknowledges there are selections and gaps in bibliographical approaches (MONTI, 2014), and views music as a possibility for intellectual and affectionate development (MONTI, 2014). All phases of the work were permeated by the intersection between travels, sociability networks, training, and writings on resistive existence.

Within that approach, we sought to organize the study temporally by covering a time frame from 1978 – when Raimundo Pereira first migrated – to 2004, the year when his (auto)biography came out as a book: the work “Muito prazer: sirva-se Raimundo Pereira Confidencial” [Pleased to meet you: Enjoy Raimundo Pereira Confidencial], published by Litteris Publishing Company, narrated by the musician himself and assembled by journalist Cristina Tojeiro. The auto(biography) was our written archival source, and interwoven with interviews, which made up the corpus of oral documents analyzed through oral history methodology. As put by Grazziotin and Almeida (2012), we understand how relevant it is to keep mindful of the following: which place the subject occupies; why and when he speaks; whom he narrates.

As regards the rationale for choosing interviewees, picking them was based on Ludke and André’s idea (1986). Thus, we opted for purposive sampling, with subjects not randomly selected, but chosen according to the specific characteristics the researcher wishes to investigate. In this case, those interviewed were two former teachers of the choir member (Frederico Marroquim and Paulo Libório)<sup>2</sup>, a musician<sup>3</sup> (Geraldo Brito), a poet<sup>4</sup> (Salgado Maranhão) contemporary to Raimundo. The interviewees were chosen because they shared the singer’s network of sociability, as well as the same stages and educational institutions.

Besides defining the time frame, the article includes an initial explanation of the objective, scope, rationale, and relevance. The following section focuses on migration, and then the study deals with education. A third

2 Retired professors from the former Federal Technical School of Piauí (now IFPI).

3 Professor from the Possidônio Queiroz Music School.

4 Poet Salgado Maranhão.

segment addresses the possibilities of writing as tactics for resistive existence and empowerment and LGBTIQ+ activism, and the last part contains some outcomes and final considerations.

## **Migration and networks of sociability**

This topic, developed around the building up of Raimundo's networks of sociability, is centered on the two migrations he undertook. According to (auto)biographical narratives, he was born in 1960 in a village called "Boca da Mata" in the municipality of José de Freitas, located 54 kilometers from Piauí State capital city. Nearing 18 years of age, the then-student moved in 1978 from the countryside to Teresina, the capital of Piauí State, to pursue his dream of studying (TOJEIRO, 2004). He landed up a seat in the accounting program at the former Federal Technical School of Piauí after passing through the entrance exam process. He tells in his (auto)biographical narrative he left home much to his mother's chagrin, who feared he might suffer for not being able to afford living there.

When he arrived in Teresina and went to the Federal Technical School of Piauí – in the strikingly oppressive environment of the civilian-military dictatorship – the school board was recruiting students to set up a choir group. That time, exposing oneself could be restrained even by self-censorship needed for one's survival Raimundo Pereira<sup>5</sup> despite describing himself as a "quiet boy who always nodded yes, and did not know how to protest" (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 7), decided to take the admission test.

For the baritone, joining the choir group marks the start of his career. Despite the achievements one could make, it was impossible to escape prejudice at the Technical School; and choir members, according to him, were dubbed "the choir queens" (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 10). In this regard, it is worth remembering professor Frederico Marroquim (DOCUMENTÁRIO...2020), when he said back then prejudices abound among professors concerning choir singing, as they said "men should not take part in."

Also supporting the account by the lyrical singer about stigmas attached to choir boys, professor and conductor Fred Marroquim says that stance shifted in

<sup>5</sup> Raimundo Pereira was known professionally and in the artistic environment as Baritone Raimundo Pereira; and he was called Pereira among friends.

1981, upon a visit by General Rubem Carlos Ludwig, Minister for Education of the military dictatorship, “with the revolution at full throttle”<sup>6</sup>. After seeing the choir perform, he said in his speech he had been a choir member. To Marroquim, those prejudiced teachers had a change of hearts after the discourse; and the situation changed for better (DOCUMENTÁRIO..., 2020).

Thus, the networks of sociability were shaped as the newcomer to the capital city took part in musical activities. It was in that movement promoted by his teachers that his new relationships, bonds and friendships were formed. At the technical school Raimundo Pereira met Ramsés Ramos<sup>7</sup>, pursued professional activities, trips around the country and music-related courses. That was when he made contacts with journalists, politician and musicians, expanding his presence into the most diverse settings. According to him, at that time he became “an important figure in the choir movement of Piauí” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 10).

In that context, the artist was yet to become the *Baritone Raimundo Pereira* but, as it reads in the (auto)biographical narratives transcribed in the book examined in this study, he took numerous trips sponsored by the Federal Technical School for musical performances. Together with the school choir, he traveled to Belém do Pará, Goiânia, Belo Horizonte, São Luis, among other capital cities. His (auto)biography includes the accounts that he was funded by the Culture Department of Piauí State to travel to the state countryside to set up choir groups; and, in 1982, he first took his first plane trip with tickets and accommodation funded by conductor Reginaldo Carvalho<sup>8</sup>, when he went to Rio de Janeiro, a city that fascinated him.

Also supported by information drawn from his autobiographical work, we note Raimundo spent nearly a decade in Teresina in his first period of studies. From 1978 to 1986, he lived wherever he could find shelter: at his sister Maria Neuza’s, at the Piauí Student House, at housing cooperatives, and expense-free out of the generosity of professor and conductor Frederico Marroquim. It was

6 The term “revolution” was used by Professor Frederico Marroquim to refer to the civilian-military dictatorship resulting from a coup. More information is available in the Elio Gaspari Collection, made up of five books: “A Ditadura Envergonhada” [The Embarrassed Dictatorship], “A Ditadura Escancarada” [The Dictatorship Out in the Open], “A Ditadura Derrotada” [The Vanquished Dictatorship], “A Ditadura Encurralada” [The Cornered Dictatorship], and “A Ditadura Acabada” [The Finished Dictatorship].

7 Poet from Piauí, born in Teresina. He died young at 36 in Russia. He worked at for the United Nations as the Chief of Protocol and Foreign Affairs. Raimundo considered him as his own brother.

8 Reginaldo Vilar de Carvalho was the conductor of the Amparo Choir Group when he met Raimundo. The conductor studied under Heitor Villa-Lobos at the National Conservatory for Orpheonic Singing, where he rose to the post as a director (SILVA, 2009).

also in that period he got his first officially registered job at a sporting goods store owned by the parents of Ângela Pessoa, an educational advisor at the Technical School, who referred him to that job post.

During that eight-year-period from 1978 to 1986, Pereira rose to some prominence, and in 1984 he performed for the first time at the 4 de Setembro [Fourth of September] Theater. He was also a member of the Nossa Senhora do Amparo [Our Lady of Protection] Choir Group, conducted by Reginaldo Carvalho. However, he was still materially deprived, so he moved back to the town of José de Freitas in 1986, where he stayed for a few months.

After his first trip to Rio in 1982, he went back there in 1986 as the conductor of the Teresina Polyphonic Madrigal Group. In 1988, after the start of the re-democratization process and with the Law for Cultural Incentive during the José Sarney term of office, he took other trips around the country with Ramsés Ramos, mostly funded by the State government or other public or governmental entities. In 1988, for instance, he embarked on a tour funded by the Piauí State government in some capital cities of the country, in which they performed folklore-themed compositions by Ramsés Ramos. Then, the state government sponsored meals and accommodation, and VARIG airline company provided plane tickets.

The friendship he made with the three Ramos siblings – Ramsés, Carla, and Garibaldi – all of them pianists and born into a well-to-do family of the capital, was also a milestone in Raimundo's personal and professional life. As he visited the Ramos family, he met poets, artists, musicians, journalists, and other intellectuals, because that was where they gathered to play the piano and talk about music in the 1980s, as told by musician Geraldo Brito and poet Salgado Maranhão.

One of the outcomes of those get-togethers was the friendship to Kenard Krueel, a journalist and writer who held offices of public trust in several governments. He was the president of the Union of Journalists of Piauí, editor of the *Jornal da Manhã* and *Correio do Piauí* newspapers. Kenard Krueel held the position as an executive secretary in the second phase of the Petrônio Portella Project during the second term of office of Alberto Silva (1987-1991). Under the management of his journalist friend, Raimundo was given a scholarship to study the history of music from Piauí (MOURA, 2015).

From reading the book, we can notice Raimundo meandered through different networks and met people from a diversity of spheres, mingling among intellectuals, artists, and politicians, across governments and institutions. During the term of office of Moreira Franco in Rio de Janeiro State (1987-1991), upon the request of Arimatéa Tito Filho, an immortal from the Piauí Academy of Letters, Raimundo migrated for the second time – from Teresina to Rio de Janeiro – on

the promise of a scholarship. The scholarship was worth a minimum wage, and meant to finance his singing studies. At that time, he was an intern at the Municipal Theater of Rio de Janeiro (TOJEIRO, 2004), and also went to the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro State (UNIRIO).

Despite that scholarship and a ticket sponsored by the Piauí Cultural Foundation, headed by Susana Silva, daughter of Governor Alberto Silva, the singer went to Rio as he had first moved to Teresina: “he plunged headlong into it” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 98). Reminiscing about that time, Raimundo tells the following: “at that time at UNIRIO, when I studied music teaching, I was really in a tight spot, times were not good. I ditched the course because I couldn’t stick it out, as they say” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 08). As we have gone over the networks of sociability and difficulties Pereira went through as he tried to keep studying in Rio de Janeiro, away from his native state, we sought to push further into understanding how the education of the baritone took place in his travels.

## **Getting educated while traveling**

Despite the financial difficulties, the artist-student managed to further his education. In this regard, now we bring up aspects concerning Raimundo’s formation taking place during his travels, as we understand, along with Monti (2014), music provides alternatives for affectionate and intellectual development, thus making it possible for one to achieve education. We also deem the student’s first migration significant, when he moved from José de Freitas to Teresina the city where his subsequent experiences occasioned by an array of factors that converged together to make him well-known and to connect with people of his area. As said before, Pereira took up the technical accounting course at the Federal Technical School of Piauí, where he found fertile ground to forge paths he previously might not even have been aware. What the migrant had always had in himself even before joining the choir group was his interest in music. In 1972, Raimundo Pereira da Silva won first place in a school contest in José de Freitas for his rendition of “Colher de Chá”, a song recorded by the Young Guard movement star Ronnie Von. He says in his (auto)biography that music instilled itself in his life at that winning moment.

Six years later after that “first winning moment,” he left for Teresina, and the chance came up to be part of the choir group. As his involvement with choir singing grew steadily more intense, Raimundo ended up quitting the technical course in his senior year, as he put it, to “hurl myself body and soul into choir singing” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 36). He graduated from high school years later.



In the meantime, as narrated in his autobiographical book, the singer took several trips across Piauí (Ipiranga, Picos, Parnaíba, Jaicós), setting up choir groups. He also traveled to Northeastern and Northern capital cities (Fortaleza, Recife, São Luiz, Maceió, Salvador, Manaus), for performances with the Choir of the Federal Technical School of Piauí, and also to cities in the Southeast and Central West (Vitória, Belo Horizonte, Brasília) for development in music, open courses.

On a personal level, the young black gay man, away from his hometown, struggled with intimate issues for not coming out as a homosexual, and going through the process of coming to terms with himself and self-affirming as the subject of himself, as supported by his words recorded by Tojeiro (2004, p. 32): “I was very lonely. I had nobody to talk to. I already saw myself as a homosexual. I wanted to accept myself, I tried to understand myself.” At the same time, Raimundo Pereira studied painstakingly for his singing performances, as he repeatedly said in the abovementioned book.

He says in 1980 he took a course on conducting at the Federal University of Piauí on an invitation by conductor Reginaldo Carvalho, an occasion when he was also given support by Frederico Marroquim. In the following years, still in the 1980s, he took summer courses in Curitiba and Brasília and he says he took vocal technique lessons from sopranos Gislene Macedo (Teresina/Brasília) and D’Alva Stella Freire (Fortaleza), from conductors Afrânio Lacerda (Belo Horizonte), Jäder de Alemão Cysneiros (Pernambuco), and bass Paulo de Tarso Libório (Teresina). Raimundo also tells of a music course attended in Ouro Preto, under the responsibility of Toninho Horta. Besides those, he says he studied under other teachers in short courses lasting less than two years each, like those given by baritones Carmo Barbosa and Fernando Teixeira.

Throughout the (auto)biography, there are scattered references to the training of the baritone, and they are unmethodical and with large time gaps. The author says that he considers himself “almost an autodidact [...] I studied hard” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 32), owing everything he knew to his persistence, to Fred Marroquim, and Reginaldo Carvalho. What we can infer from those accounts is his endeavor to build himself (BOURDIEU, 2006) as someone worthy, presenting himself as an industrious, dignified, and respectable person.

Although the book lacks details on formal training, there are moments in which he tells of professional difficulties for not holding a diploma, as when he wrote for the *Jornal da Manhã* newspaper. Introduced into journalism by Kenard Kruel, editor of that publication, Pereira narrates his difficulties with the Union of Journalists for not having academic background. However, not possessing institutionalized cultural capital, materialized in the form of a diploma – or, according to Bourdieu’s idea (BOURDIEU, 1998), in the legitimization of

cultural competence – did not preclude him from working as a press officer for the Department of Culture of Piauí State.

In another part, he speaks his heart out: “Let’s face it, the Academy is not very democratic. It’s a privilege of a few” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 57). We see that, despite all the effort the classical music singer put into learning through his travel experiences and sociocultural relationships, there were cleavages between his academic and cultural capital (BOURDIEU, 2007) and that of the ones he related to – an aspect which placed him out of the order of discourse (FOUCAULT, 2010) which would legitimize him as a rightful part of the milieu he frequented.

Based on what baritone Raimundo Pereira wrote and narrated about himself, in “Muito prazer: sirva-se Raimundo Pereira Confidencial” [Pleased to meet you: Enjoy Raimundo Pereira Confidential], in a movement of resistive existence and empowerment to be understood from the analysis of his (auto) biography, we agree with Bourdieu (2006) as he infers a trajectory can be understood from the sum of relationships between the agents making up a certain field against the same space of possibilities. Based on that assertion and linking it with the research conducted, we can understand the distinctions between the spaces occupied by the musician as a result of a broad network of (un)happenings taking place beyond what his sheer will could get.

Thus, in the early 1990s, apparently, after all his expectations in the city of Teresina had been fulfilled, Raimundo Pereira took his third trip to Rio. His two previous visits to the Rio de Janeiro state capital had been in 1982 and 1986, respectively. This time, instead of a round trip with a set return time, the baritone took a plunge and moved there, where he started the Music Teaching Course at UNIRIO which, as said before, he never completed.

The musician had no place to live in the city, and considered staying at a boarding house; so he placed an ad in a gay magazine about his need for accommodation. His ad was answered, and thus his contact with the Atobá Group<sup>9</sup> – Movement for Homosexual Emancipation – was started. Paulo Cezar Fernandes, founder of the group, picked him up at the airport and took him to the headquarters of the organization, where he was lodged. In the so-called Marvelous City, unemployed and penniless, Pereira was welcomed by the activists of that community.

<sup>9</sup> The Atobá Group – Movement for Homosexual Emancipation – began in Rio de Janeiro in 1985 in the wake of the killing of homosexual Sidney Quintanilha dos Santos. Officially founded on June 28, 1986, Gay Dignity Day, it aims to recognize, develop and promote the dignity of homosexual men and women. More information is available at: <https://naconmissal.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/gestc3a3o-depolc3adticas-pc3bablicas-em-gc3aanero-e-rac3a7a.pdf>. Accessed on June 19, 2020.

It was through his contacts in Rio de Janeiro that his subjectivities emerged, and they shaped his identities away from his hometown: as a homosexual and an activist. In Teresina, his sexual orientation was known to most people; and he once had even been a contestant in a Miss Gay pageant. Speaking about that, the artist says it was great coming in fourth place with a stunning costume made by his brother, designer Luís Pereira. Then, what was new was not being a homosexual, but coming out and fully acknowledging it to himself. In his own words, he saw himself as “gay as a bird” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 8).

Pereira speaks of the importance of the Atobá in his life and education, saying there he met “people with the same experiences, discriminated against within their own families. I learned to keep my feet on the ground, free from the myths about homosexuals created by the straight world” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 66). Here nuances of his activist writing stand out, as “deciding which categories to historicize is inevitably political” (SCOTT, 1998, p. 299).

Throughout the analysis, we sought to listen to other sources, to cross-reference information, as we understand “our memories are made up of episodes and sensations we experience and which others have experienced” (AMADO, 1995, p. 132). In this regard, we spoke with Professor Paulo de Tarso Libório and musician and songwriter Geraldo Brito about Raimundo’s moving from Teresina to Rio. They said he went through changes. To Paulo Libório, in Rio he got lost. Geraldo Brito, accredited with being a significant figure in music from Teresina (MEDEIROS; NASCIMENTO, 2013), says in Rio Pereira relinquished being a singer and identified himself as an activist. In our next topic, we are going to deal with that discovery of activism and writing as a form of resistive existence.

## **Possibilities of resistive existence through activist writing**

Interpreting what was recorded on the personal narrative of a Northeastern gay Black poor migrant man challenged and drove the discussion, along with Reis (2018), is anchored on the assumption that the individual has writing as an ally. Through such process, one seeks to be acknowledged in the circles where they belong and in the interrelated groups before their human condition, woven into the sum of subjects and spaces of sociability.

The baritone seemed to have carefully chosen what he wanted to be recorded. He makes a point in telling about his trips to take singing lessons; lists the stages he performed on, such as the 4 de Setembro Theater, the

Albertão Sporting Arena, and São Pedro Theater.<sup>10</sup> He also tells of the notables he performed to, such as artist and landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, ambassador Aloísio Napoleão, and Pope John Paul II. We interpret that quest for positive visibility for himself and his peers as related to the movement started in the 1970s and 1980s, through which homosexuals countered their portrayal as linked to pathologies, and also questioned their social and historical invisibility (PEDRO; VERAS, 2014).

We identified fragments in the (auto)biography in which Raimundo seems to defy, affirm, thank, and claim a place of recognition. In a supposed attempt to stave off being erased, against social situations which seem to promote a strategic forgetfulness (RICOUER, 2007), we see that claim when, for example, the baritone stated, “Lyrical singers in Brazil are heroes. They survive with no incentive or support from anyone”. He adds, in the same vein, “Does anyone know the name of a famous contemporary Brazilian lyrical singer?” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 112).

His involvement with activism took some time to consolidate, his liking of writing had come to him at a much earlier point, in his teens, when he listened on his father’s radio to “broadcasts from the Netherlands, Germany, Voice of America” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 27). Back then, he pen-palled intensely with people from different parts of Brazil; he wrote letters and conducted researches at José de Freitas city library – all of that without ever talking about his homosexuality to anyone.

In Teresina, he wrote for the *Jornal da Manhã*<sup>11</sup> newspaper. In Rio, still unemployed, he said one of his activities was his freelance writings for the

10 Here is some information about the theaters in the order as they were mentioned. 4 de Setembro Theater is the largest of Piauí state capital. Designed by Alfredo Modrak, it seats 600 people. It was started on September 4, 1889 and opened on April 21, 1894. Albertão Arena (officially named Alberto Tavares Silva Sporting Arena), also located in Teresina; was built in 1973. It ranks among the three largest arenas in Brazil, and seats 52,000 people. São Pedro Theater, one of the grandest stages of Porto Alegre/RS since colonial times, was opened in 1858. It is the oldest theater of the capital city of Rio Grande do Sul state (SOPHER; CHWARTZMANN, 2008).

11 At the Public Archives, when we searched for the issues of *Jornal da Manhã* newspaper of 1985, year pointed out in the (auto)biography as the period when he wrote for the publication, we found no columns signed by the baritone, which leads us to suppose he didn’t sign his writings because of the alleged problem with the Journalist Union, as he lacked academic background in that area. We have been trying to contact Kenard Kruel since July 13, 2019, but we have had no success in scheduling an interview to obtain more information.

Babados column, in the *O Grito*<sup>12</sup> gay paper. Regardless of when or where he was, writing kept him company when he repeatedly said, “[...] and I was alone” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 19) – and maybe it was already one form of resistance against his loneliness.

Raimundo wrote and gradually felt higher about himself: in the beginning, before migrating, the friendships, traveling, he describes himself as a boy full of fears, shy, lonely, who didn’t know how to protest. As he made friends, traveled, and earned professional recognition, he empowered himself, asserting himself as black, gay, and a Northeasterner. As he makes discoveries about himself, he speaks of his underprivileged situation, “I’ve always been a fighter. I’ve always liked to break down barriers, overcome obstacles” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 67). He admitted what he might not have said throughout his career: “People forget singing is a job for me. I need to eat, buy clothes, shoes, pay my bills, and other stuff” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 106).

He also changes his way of writing: he tells of his achievements, mentions the stages he performed on, the songs he sang, the people he sang to, apparently intending to leave it recorded in writing, archived, that he existed, pointing out where he had been and who he had been with. At a certain moment, his tone changes: he takes on the mantle of activism. Initially, he attended the meetings and already spoke in the name of the Atobá group, but said he was not prepared yet. Then, after the ECO-92 Summit, as he said, “I have decided to stick my neck out” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 8).

Reading the narratives of his (auto)biographical book reinforced the idea based on Artières (1998) as he considers the practice of archiving oneself is intersected by the process of subjectivation,, involving an autobiographical intention, of making oneself through deliberate choices and refusals: “[...] archiving one’s own life is putting oneself in the mirror, it is contrasting the social image to one’s image; and in this way self-archiving is a practice of building oneself up and of resistance” (ARTIÈRES, 1998, p. 11).

We see those ideas of Artières (1998) knitted into Raimundo Pereira’s narrative as regards the intentions and choices in the process of building himself up as a subject and a narrator of himself. Something noteworthy about the shaping of that image as crafted in the (auto)biography is the baritone spoke directly of his being black only once, albeit assuredly, “I always make a point of saying I’m black and a Northeasterner” (TOJEIRO, 2004, p. 120).

<sup>12</sup> We didn’t manage to have access to the publication at the National Newspaper Library and at the National Museum Library.

Thus, we have read the book also with the perception “everything man has said or written, produced or even just touched, can and must provide information about him” (BLOCH, 2001). As regards Raimundo, cross-referencing oral documents, searching for newspapers, and the contact with photographs – or even the challenging setback of not finding as many writings as we would like – also allowed that absence to give rise to questions and interpretations. If there is no neutrality in archiving oneself, and if in archiving lies the only hope to show how one sees himself or wants to be seen – and if it is ultimately a practice of resistance (ARTIÈRES, 1998) – the extant remains of Raimundo’s history and its missing fragments also say something about him.

If there is in the order of discourse a tendency to applaud and extol the deeds of certain groups ensconced in specific power spaces, while on the other hand there are those who are not in certain places in the discourse order and might be subjected to belittlement, contempt and the erasing of their deeds through prohibitions and rejections (FOUCAULT, 2010), including by their peers, fellows, and contemporaries, we wondered about which place Raimundo occupied in his networks, and which intentions were behind the appropriation of his discourse and presence. As regards that exclusion from the discourse order and the artist’s supposedly being regarded as illegitimate, it is worth stressing we found no columns penned by the baritone when we conducted our research on the issues of *Jornal da Manhã* newspaper of 1985 at the Public Archives. The absence of his signature leads us to suppose he did not sign his articles because of the alleged problem with the Union of Journalists, for not having academic background in the field. Another possible interpretation for that omission is that there might be asymmetrical relationships and hierarchized values ascribed to people in the social and academic field, depending on the power positions occupied at that moment.

In that search for cross-referencing information to delve deeper and consolidate the study we carried out, along with the (auto)biography, we collated and strung together diverse sources, such as oral documents, newspaper and iconographic sources, bearing in mind there are outside views imposed on the writing itself, conceding that “the other’s mirror is part of the movement of building the subjects’ own identity” (SILVA, 2014, p. 35). It was by weaving sources together, along with the analysis of the (auto)biography, that we found out signs of growing empowerment in Raimundo’s discourse. After writing self-deprecatingly about his young years, the artist gradually rises and takes a stand: as a musician wishing to be recognized as such by referring to his renowned professors, as an out gay man engaged in advocacy for humanitarian causes;

and as a hyped artist with good connections who gets interviewed and is highly sought-after. Going back to his origins, he is also the son crying for not having money to attend his father's funeral. Raimundo Pereira regains his voice and says he has learned to "get a foothold".

## Final considerations

For us to understand the storyline we undertook to develop in this article, it was important to know a little about the political environment during the civilian-military dictatorship in some of the periods described in the analyzed biography, about selecting which themes to cover, about the context of the relationships established, and about the time and setting in which this book was made. Then, from reflecting on the (auto)biography "*Muito Prazer: sirva-se Raimundo Pereira confidencial*" [Pleased to meet you: Enjoy Raimundo Pereira Confidential], drawn together with oral documents, photographs, and newspaper searches, we noticed that Raimundo navigated his way through different spaces, received affection, but he was not included into them. The baritone was mediated and subjectified as he immersed into his networks of sociability, and we identified his social and economic background, his place of birth, and his sexual orientation as factors conditioning his passage through those environments.

We understand his migrations took place in a movement for overcoming material poverty, and also because of the need and eagerness displayed by him to know, challenge, risk, and experiment throughout his professional training. Both in the first and second time the singer moved, he didn't have enough financial backing to live decently and safely and without needing favors from others.

His national and international trips resulted from the spaces he paved as a lyrical singer, and they made it possible to infer, in this regard, that those experiences did contribute to his intellectual development, to his betterment as an artist and as an activist. We can also construe that trajectory would not have been possible without the support received in many instances. It was Raimundo Pereira's moving from one place to another along with courses and his exposing himself that indicate his gaining more assurance on stage and in life.

The friendships made and being in the right place at the right time were important, but not enough for the singer to advance to the point he could lead an independent life. Being at the Federal Technical School in a moment when

the civilian-military dictatorship was still in force – but when the winds of re-democratization, albeit gentle, were already blowing – and mingling with professors who campaigned for art for whatever purpose, allowed Raimundo to enjoy a fruitful moment for his development. What is clear is that it is impossible to dissociate the relationship between his networks, travels, and training, as such experiences were significantly interrelated.

Meeting Ramsés Ramos and his family, frequenting their house, interacting with those friends, listening to and engaging in discussions with that group about music and politics, and roaming through the same sociability networks were paramount factors in making Raimundo's travel experiences and training possible, as it was through those relationships he got acquainted and connected with politicians, and people in spheres of official authority beyond school. Those contexts led him to be sponsored in many trips and earned him invitations to both attend and teach courses. Those invitations came from the most diverse groups from different political affiliations, and Raimundo enjoyed free access to many of them.

As regards the spaces in which he had the opportunity to sing, there were moments, especially in Teresina, in which the baritone seemed to be perceived as a fancy designer item. To some extent, having him sing brought status to private events, such as weddings of high society ladies. The problem, though, was that he did not charge for it, or was not paid for it, so his voice reverberated strongly in his favor in his activism.

We analyzed many passages which are out of our focus at the moment, and which do not make up our proposal. But as regards the representations and intentions perceived through reading, what we grasped was a movement of someone lifting up his voice, resisting representations of him as fragile or as someone who takes everything at face value, who never challenges, so the sheer act of narrating an (auto)biography, including his migrations and travels, emerges as a stance of affirmation, resistance, and empowerment of the use of his voice without someone speaking for him – also breaking down a historical prejudice according to which people coming from lower strata leave no written record (ALBERTI, 2015), not even through delegated writing.

Although Raimundo was not an author, he did not sign his (auto)biography. He delegated the recording of his memories to journalist Cristina Tojeiro, who wrote under his command and control. He was a conductor in the process of shared writing of his biography, a performer of others' songs, taking up the helm of the narrative of his life. Therefore, that allows us to understand Raimundo Pereira spoke for himself, imposing himself through the (auto)biographical narrative somewhat uncaring for social or chronological rules. From that perspective, he recalled different pleasures and pains, among which his companionship with



music and musicians, his social and political connections. The baritone sang until his last day, on October 7, 2006, two years after his narratives were recorded. Thus, the memories conveyed in the form of a book seem like a farewell letter.

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