TECHNIQUE, IMAGINARY AND SAMBA – THE INFLUENCE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN BRAZILIAN CARNIVAL, 2025

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Introduction

If the internet emergence, following Ignacio Ramonet (2013), was equivalent to the fall of the meteorite that ended the kingdom of the dinosaurs, the spread of generative artificial intelligence seems to be equivalent to a new cataclysm of equal destructive power. The metaphor serves perfectly for the researcher's argument since the traditional media – from the news industry – could take the place of the Jurassic fauna in which those unable to adapt to the new reality were invariably driven to extinction. The same can be seen with the IA meteorite, which created a new seismic shock in the status quo of cultural industries, imposing transformations in the most diverse sectors.

In Brazil, still at the beginning of 2025, one of the markets in which this transformation has already begun to be noticed was precisely carnival - and, more specifically, samba schools. These are party groups that emerge in a context of class dispute, characterized by resistance to cultural expropriation and the reoccupation of spaces denied to formerly enslaved black people and their descendants at the beginning of the 20th century (Soihet, 2008). However, in a deeply folkmediatic process – when the mass media reconfigures popular culture, in a dialectical process of mutual interference (Luyten, 2006) – samba school parades began to occur in permanent tension.

This occurs between the mediatized televisual spectacle (made for the outside), but which is consolidated with direct interaction with the community and its interests (made for the inside). In these clashes, sometimes the influence of technopoly imposes on schools and their partygoers a series of decisions linked to the search for marketing and technological efficiency that, at times, can be contrary to the revolutionary structure of the party itself.

Methodology

This work seeks to investigate the ways in which artificial intelligence has affected Brazilian carnival, especially that of samba schools in Rio de Janeiro. The study begins with an initial data collection on the presence of artificial intelligence at Carnival, which manifests itself mainly to produce illustrations, applications and derivative products. Its main analysis, however, focuses on the parade of the samba school "Mocidade Independente de Padre Miguel", which brought the theme *Going back to the future – There are no limits to dreaming.* School that brought a critique of AI in its research book that is not replicated on the avenue.

This collection will serve as the basis for a cultural critique that will reflect on the ways in which this imaginary of technique, which imputes to us an almost Faustian urgency of efficiency, productivity, speed and future, affects a cultural manifestation marked by social criticism, revolution and appreciation of community and artisanal work.

The basis for this criticism is the archetypological imaginary theory, in which this epitome of Technique is understood as a demarcation of Western ways of feeling, thinking and acting since the 19th century (Durand, 2012). The reasoning is complemented by questions from Neil Postman, for whom the relentless advancement of technology harms the preservation of traditions, impacting mental processes and social relations in a community (1994, p. 12).

On Going Study

Over the last few months it has been possible to find reports of samba schools that use artificial intelligence to compose their "logo" – which is how the associations call the images promoting the chosen samba plots. In the process, community artists find their work underutilized due to the ease of generativity, which is only exposed when there are error movements or hallucinations. An example that became notorious was in the art of the plot "Logun-Edé, Santo Menino que Velho Respeita" by the Unidos da Tijuca samba school. In this art, made with a composition of images generated by A.I., the protagonist orixá had 6 fingers on one of his hands, making the use of technology evident. The art was then corrected.

In addition to Sapucaí, we have the proliferation of carnival chatbots. Whatsapp, for example, created Whatsfolia, a bot that uses generative artificial intelligence to provide information to partygoers during Carnival. The platform allows you to consult the schedule of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Salvador, access maps of points of interest, weather forecast, playlists and drink recipes.

As an example, demonstrating that the issue has taken over the country, the Carnival Center in Salvador created the AI "Alegria", also responsible for interactions with revelers. In Maranhão, the state government launched Ju na Folia, a chatbot aimed at the safety of revelers. In Belo Horizonte, a group of developers created IA Folia, a chatbot that offers information about blocks, schedules and routes in a practical and accessible way.

Publications derived from popular tradition have gained popularity in the media through their intersection with new technology. On February 26, 2025, the book Carnavais Artificiais, by Pedro Garcia de Moura, was released, which reimagines Brazilian revelry using AI inputs that incorporate other pop culture elements - from Darth Vader to Dia de Los Muertos partygoers. The publication follows on from another, Carnaval Arte - Faces, by Alessandra Pirotelli. Launched in 2024 during a box in Sapucaí, the work has 50 images generated by prompts based on the author's carnival memories.

Last but not least, 'Mocidade" presented an allegory representing the statue of *The Thinker,* by Rodin, as a man reflecting on AI. In the school research book, the established metaphor is as if Dante was at the gates of hell deciding whether or not to enter. And hell is generative artificial intelligence (Liesa, 2025). A Faustian metaphor for the man who sold its soul to achieve power, productivity, efficiency. In the avenue, however, the criticism becomes just another part of the entertainment, and the school was greatly praised by the beauty of its technological advances.

Far from seeking an apocalyptic alignment that rejects technological transformations, we understand that popular festivals are characterized by social dynamism. However, by questioning the way in which these adherences have been made in an unreflective way, we hope to collaborate with critical thinking and complex reflection on a phenomenon that will affect our own way of relating to tradition.

When the automation of art in an industrial process affects cultural activity, the tendency is to bring about an emptying of meaning where the references for a creation are no longer based on reality but on a projection of it. The capitalist market, influenced by a technological imaginary, constantly seeks to automate all types of production, generating a cold and monothematic culture that only facilitates the perpetuation of the system itself.

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