

Black hair aesthetics of Rio de Janeiro: for a political and discursive approach of peripheral visualities

*Estéticas capilares negras do Rio de Janeiro: por uma
abordagem política das estéticas corporais periféricas*

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ABSTRACT

This article sought to identify the political construction of *pivete blonde* and *lined up highlights* hair aesthetics as male style trends based on contemporary black visualities from the peripheries of Rio de Janeiro. To this end, basic research with a cultural constructivist approach was used to descriptively and qualitatively analyze these aesthetics through bibliographic and documentary surveys (journalistic articles from websites, virtual channels, and Instagram profiles). The results obtained point to the symbolic and socio-cultural relevance of these visualities in the contemporary historical process of empowerment of Rio's communities through fashion — whether through the tactics of relaxation of peripheral youths or the redefinition of the appropriation of black identity in places hegemonically legitimized by the ethos of whiteness.

Keywords: Bodies. Periphery. Masculine aesthetics. Black visualities. Fashion.

RESUMO

O presente artigo buscou identificar a construção política em torno das estéticas capilares do loiro pivete e do reflexo alinhado enquanto tendências de estilo masculina a partir das visualidades negras contemporâneas das periferias do Rio de Janeiro. Para tanto, lança mão de uma pesquisa básica, com abordagem cultural construtivista, para analisar descritiva e qualitativamente essas estéticas por meio de levantamentos bibliográfico e documental (matérias jornalísticas de sites, canais virtuais e perfis do Instagram). Os resultados obtidos apontam a relevância simbólica e sociocultural dessas visualidades no processo histórico contemporâneo de empoderamento das comunidades cariocas pelo viés da moda — seja pelas táticas da descontração de jovens periféricos, seja pelas táticas de redefinição da apropriação da identidade negra em lugares hegemonicamente legitimados pelo ethos da branquidade.

Palavras-chave: Corpos. Periferia. Estéticas masculinas. Visualidades negras. Moda.

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INTRODUCTION

Just like in urban centers, peripheral regions also contribute to creating aesthetics, customs, and reinterpretations of symbols that become characteristic of these areas. In the city of Rio de Janeiro, hairstyles such as "*pivete blonde*" ("*loiro pivete*" in Portuguese, which roughly translates as blonde rascal, consisted of men's hair dyed a shade very close to platinum white), along with *lined up highlights* (consisted of men's hair dyed as polka dots lined up as rows), define visual trends that originate from peripheral areas. These styles are particularly noted as a seasonal trend marking the beginning of summer and the festive *Carnaval* celebrations.

This article aimed to identify the political construction around the hair aesthetics of *pivete blonde* and *lined up highlights* as masculine style trends, based on contemporary Black visualities from the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. In this context, hair aesthetics are viewed as potential political manifestations that challenge the aesthetic-visual standards imposed by fashion trends. It is observed that there is a constant influence of a cultural elite that reinforces the aesthetic-cultural silencing of the bodies inhabiting the peripheries. This constitutes yet another way of perpetuating trends that do not align with the values and capital serving Rio's middle classes (Goldenberg, 2015).

As these trends are primarily reproduced by Black and peripheral bodies, marginal aspects are attributed to these hairstyles. Fashion has long corroborated the exclusion of bodies that did not meet the stereotypes desired by whiteness¹. The historical and sociocultural erasure of Black and peripheral aesthetics is then normalized, perpetuated by the mischaracterization and association of negative attributes to any manifestations of trends that revolve around this aesthetics.

The relevance of this research lies in its transcription of the fashion perspective, based on cultural studies that narrate the peripheral aesthetics of Rio de Janeiro, considering these spaces as potential incubators of fashion behaviors and trends. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of academic studies in the field of fashion that focus on aesthetics emerging from the outskirts of Rio. This addresses an urgent need to produce and acknowledge existing knowledge on this topic. Therefore, fashion can be understood as a political tool capable of valuing the expressions of bodies that relate to peripheral cultures.

The research is classified as basic, qualitative, and descriptive, incorporating bibliographic and documentary research as essential data collection methods. Theoretically, it contextualizes the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro through the lens of styles, fashion fads, and aesthetics originating from these areas; the performances of the *pivete blonde* and the *lined up highlights* on peripheral bodies are qualitatively analyzed based on journalistic articles from websites, virtual channels, and Instagram profiles. Finally, their visualities and representations are discussed in light of the constructivist, discursive, and political approaches proposed by Frantz Fanon

1 The term is adopted by Novelli (2014), alluding to the different dimensions of the privilege of individuals socioculturally positioned as "white," connected both to a "place of advantage" and to a historically hegemonic "point of view."

(2008) and Stuart Hall (2016). By engaging with decolonial studies, this article aimed to contribute to future research that critically reflects on style trends produced in peripheral contexts, historically marginalized by European fashion, and commonly accepted and naturalized by Brazilian society.

AESTHETIC POWERS OF THE PERIPHERAL REGIONS OF RIO DE JANEIRO: STYLES AND HAIR AESTHETICS TRENDS

Rio de Janeiro: favelas and peripheral regions

At the beginning of the 20th century, after the abolition of slavery, the city of Rio de Janeiro embarked on a process of urban remodeling to assert itself as a republican capital based on notions of civilization and modernity. The reurbanization design proposed by Pereira Passos was modeled after the reforms applied to Parisian cities in the previous century. Beyond establishing order, this project aimed to erase the traces of African populations and their descendants, who had been enslaved during the Colonial Period, from the central and port areas of Rio de Janeiro. This was done to meet the economic, political, and aesthetic demands of the republican elites.

Until the beginning of this process, it was possible to observe distinctions among the various social classes coexisting and playing their social and economic roles in the central areas of old Rio de Janeiro (Silva, 2018). The discomfort of the elite gentlemen and ladies moving around the region among the poorest people was decisive in promoting what Santos and Motta (2003) call “urban surgery”, radical changes made to the city’s urban fabric through public works.

The urban planning project by Pereira Passos had good objectives, except for the socio-segregating aspect implicit in its ideals, which entailed an ethnic and racial “cleansing” hidden behind reformatory ideals. This led to the eradication of tenements and the displacement of the poorer population, particularly Black individuals, to the hills and more remote, less noble areas. Consequently, real estate speculation contributed to ensuring that the economically lower class would not occupy areas now designated for those deemed “deserving” of enjoying the urban development process (Silva, 2018, p. 51).

Given the above, the poor black population that inhabited the center of Rio de Janeiro found themselves displaced and forced to reorganize around the hills that surrounded the city, thus forming the first traces of favelas and outskirts. In this logic, by displacing residents to peripheral areas or “pushing” them to the central hills, Passos determined these spaces as characteristic of excluded populations (Neder, 1997). In other words, favelas and peripheral regions became housing destinations for black and poor populations, absorbing the stigmatization that was previously associated with tenements.

Even in contemporary times, the traces of this merciless urbanization process, developed from conservative modernization, extend beyond the spheres of architecture. According to Andrade (2018), current social relations are victims of the city

project that had exclusionary characteristics for the Afro-descendant and poor population. The reform, in addition to creating social segregation, imposed on the favelas and peripheral regions of Rio the stigma of violence and marginality.

However, the behavior of depreciating these spaces is not solely associated with the practices carried out by parallel powers that inevitably established themselves due to the lack of public assistance. It is also rooted in the fact that, in the early 20th century, the cultural practices of formerly enslaved people were prohibited and criminalized by law under the government of Pereira Passos.

The knowledge, memories, and cultures originating from the enslaved population, and later from the freed population, were looked down upon by the dominant class of the city. Initially considered exotic and inappropriate, they eventually came to be seen as inconsistent with the republican city project that was being pursued (Andrade, 2018, p. 96).

The favelas and outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, by becoming official housing for these populations, provided a space for aesthetic-cultural freedom, exemplified by the pivotal role of samba schools in affirming peripheral black aesthetics. In this context, these areas resisted European aesthetic-cultural impositions and, as a result, began to be socially marked as inferior (Silva, 2018).

Therefore, it can be understood that the urban arrangements of Rio de Janeiro were created with the support of a policy that purposefully excludes and removes those who do not meet European aesthetic standards from the city center. Trends in art, fashion, and design styles and aesthetics built in these spaces are invalidated or even criminalized until they are endorsed by those who contribute to making up the dominant layers. It is important to highlight that symbols originating from Afro-Brazilian and peripheral cultural aesthetics in Rio de Janeiro take on different meanings when appropriated by the whiteness present in central areas.

Cultural representations and discursive potentialities

The social imaginary created about peripheral territories is surrounded by signs that negatively label their inhabitants and can be understood as the result of a slave society that commonly develops its relationships based on social hierarchies designed to make these spaces invisible as creative powers. From the perspective of Villaça (2010), the peripheries and their spaces, with their creative bias, challenge conservative views and reconstruct them, prompting actors to consider new ways of functioning of spatial representations outside the established norms of centralities in opposition to the margins and peripheries.

The author reiterates that these spaces can be perceived as “a potential for experimentation both for the actors who build them and for the inhabitants who live in them” (Villaça, 2010, p. 69), thus being regions responsible for producing innovative, creative solutions, self-sufficient, and sustainable. This occurs despite enduring the prolonged silencing of their cultural representations by a media system that does not recognize them as producers of cultural discourses (Faustini, 2009).

Representations, including their practices, are a key concept of the “cultural circuit” (Hall, 2016) and can be interpreted as part of a politics that “constitutes not only identity, but the existential quality itself [...] being represented in its values, interests, positions, priorities, with its members (and non-members), its rules and institutions” (Hall, 2016, p. 13). In this way, it is understood that “to represent” means “to exist” in society, whether through appearance or culture. In this process, language operates as a representational system (Hall, 2016), which becomes a fundamental resource for the production of meanings within a given culture.

To belong to a culture is, *broadly speaking*, to belong to the same conceptual and linguistic universe, to know how concepts and ideas translate into different languages, and how language can be interpreted to refer to the world or to serve as a reference for it. Sharing these aspects means seeing the world through the same conceptual map and deriving meaning from it through the same language systems (Hall, 2016, p. 43).

The dominant classes, by symbolically holding power, subjugate and exclude the peripheries because these areas produce cultural languages that do not align with their interests. The hegemonic advertising machine perpetuates this exclusion by erasing the languages and meanings of the Afro-Brazilian and peripheral population. This effort maintains an aesthetic and discursive representational system where “white people are closed in their whiteness” (Fanon, 2008).

According to Hall (2016, p. 83), “it is the discourse — not the things themselves — that produces knowledge.” Discourse forms when language and practice are associated, opposing the notion that actions are distinct from a subject’s languages (Hall, 2016); discourse “produces the objects of our knowledge, governs the way in which the subject can be meaningfully talked about and debated, and also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others” (Hall, 2016, p. 80). Although colonialism, as a political process, ended in the 19th century, its practices continued to exercise power over black and peripheral bodies, resulting in a hegemonic discourse that excludes and stereotypes individuals who do not conform to recognized and validated languages. Fanon (2008) posits that the process of inferiorizing black bodies results from a negative charge from a colonial system that symbolically violates them and generates trauma, placing them primarily in a position of villainy.

In the context of this study, it is understood that peripheral territories begin to employ tactics to ensure their cultural identities are acknowledged beyond the dominant discourses of centralization. According to Certeau (2002), tactics can be seen as actions that operate between the conservative frameworks of strategies. They are responsible for shaping behavioral norms and defining what aligns with their own rules. Certeau suggests that “tactics are shaped by the absence of power, just as strategy is structured by the assertion of power” (Certeau, 2002, p. 101).

Therefore, when considering the prominent style trends within peripheral aesthetics, as well as the aesthetics emerging from peripheral regions of Rio de Janeiro, it becomes evident that there is an effort to establish modes of representation that (re)exist in opposition to a fashion system that perpetuates inequalities.

Style and aesthetic trends in the periphery

Fashion, along with style and trends, is often discussed solely in terms of clothing and attire. However, it is crucial to clarify that fashion “operates within the realm of the imaginary, of signifiers; it is an integral aspect of culture” (Sant’Anna, 2007, p. 74). Unlike clothing, which serves as practical tools for expressing these three components.

In the realm of communication, fashion can be seen as a non-verbal element that conveys information through an individual’s image and appearance. Sant’Anna (2007) asserts that various social groups are formed around notions of appearance, and societal beauty standards can be viewed as instruments of power for those who conform to them.

Body appearance is a social knowledge that enables the enactment of practices aimed at constituting social strategies based on self-seduction and the seduction of others. Identifying bodily excellence, which varies across different social groups within a society under study, involves understanding how specific and societal strategies articulate to form social hierarchies (Sant’Anna, 2007, p. 78).

As a manifestation of power, whiteness conceals a privileged social position through its historical alignment with the stylistic and beauty ideals of the colonial era. The social hierarchies within this group contrast starkly with those of black and peripheral bodies. According to Novelli (2014), colonialism can be viewed as a “desiring machine,” extending beyond political structures to implement aesthetic mechanisms that marginalize the style and beauty trends of Others (non-white) because they diverge from colonial desires.

Due to its colonial foundations, the fashion system possesses the ability to sustain the dominance of symbolic representations associated with white bodies. The social and cultural behaviors of this demographic have become sources of inspiration for fashion products on both physical and visual levels. According to Rech and Gomes (2018), social expressions rooted in values and desires, visibly manifested through behaviors, are classified as trends. Campos and Wolf (2018, p. 15), however, argue that these phenomena primarily involve matters of taste and style.

Style, in turn,

It will encompass aesthetic and subjective elements that follow a kind of conciseness or singular form of encounter between various natures of variables, characterizing a movement, a grouping, a way of writing, playing, expressing oneself, among other manifestations (Mesquita, 2009, p. 9).

Thus, when examining historically and broadly the image representations in Western and Europeanized fashion, it becomes evident that media portrayals of style trends have long centered around archetypes of whiteness. The naturalization of the [white] body in fashion (dominant and oriented toward fulfilling colonizer desires) places upon the hegemonic and socio-culturally/economically privileged

system of whiteness the responsibility for symbolic violence — since this ethos is utilized to legitimize the symbolic authority of the white group (Novelli, 2014).

From this viewpoint, it is evident that the style trends that became prominent within Brazil's fashion sectors often excluded connections with peripheral and black bodies. Consequently, the aesthetic ideals in fashion, formulated in a country predominantly composed of black individuals and residents of peripheral areas, adhere to white and elitist standards. In essence, the dominant landscapes of the fashion industry dismiss styles that diverge from its norms, where the concept of “ugliness” continues to be linked to racial characteristics, as noted by Mesquita (2002).

The rejection of style trends originating from black and peripheral bodies, along with the historical prejudices stemming from early 20th-century hygienic practices imposed on descendants of enslaved populations, can be seen as a form of symbolic violence perpetuated by the aesthetic system for over a century. In addition to conventional norms, style trends emerging from peripheral contexts serve as pathways for individuals in these spaces to redefine aesthetic standards. The appreciation of these aesthetics is being reshaped by these actors through discourse in cyberspaces, which aims to dissociate them from marginalizing stereotypes, such as the *pivete blonde* and the *lined up highlights*.

Pivete blonde emerged in the early 1990s within communities on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, where young people began bleaching their hair as a stylistic expression for the summer and *Carnaval* festivities (Soupin, 2020). It is important to note that the origins of this trend are largely anecdotal. While data accuracy is limited, available evidence suggests its early manifestations were predominantly within the *funk* and *pagode* cultures of the 1990s. Influenced by figures in these music scenes, young men from peripheral areas of Rio de Janeiro started using hydrogen peroxide to bleach their hair (Coutinho, 2022). For those who embrace this style, bleached hair (Figure 1) symbolizes a moment of self-expression that celebrates a cultural trend, challenging negative associations imposed on these bodies by outsiders who may misunderstand or marginalize them.



Source: Afotografia (2022a).

Figure 1. *Pivete blonde*, a cultural trend in Rio de Janeiro's periphery communities.

In the journalistic piece published by UOL, featured in the *TAB* section, which explores the realities of Brazilian street life, the “*pivete blonde*” phenomenon is examined not only from the perspective of peripheral communities in Rio de Janeiro but also from affluent areas of the city (Figure 2). The article notes: “Criminalized from its very name, the platinum-blond aesthetic resonates with youth and has taken root in the South Zone of Rio.” It highlights disparities in how individuals with bleached hair are treated between residents of peripheral communities and those from wealthy neighborhoods within the same region.



Source: Soupín (2020).

Figure 2. Special report on *pivete blonde*.

In essence, while bleaching hair may be seen as a fashionable and “cool look” for individuals in privileged areas, those in peripheral regions who adopt this aesthetic are often stigmatized as criminals or delinquents, “*pivete*.” The report also raises concerns about how military and police groups interpret the appearance of young black people sporting the *pivete blonde* style trend. Furthermore, bodily control is enforced by militias — who use force to restrict, threaten, and even prohibit young black individuals from maintaining bleached hair outside of festive occasions like the end of the year and *Carnaval* in the peripheral areas under their control.

As an act of resistance against prejudice and violence, artist Maxwell Alexandre organized an event titled “Global Pre-Carnaval Discoloration” at the Rio Art Museum (*Museu de Arte do Rio – MAR*) (Figure 3). The initiative aimed to reclaim space within the museum for a practice integral to black and peripheral cultures in Rio de Janeiro: the bold expression of young black and peripheral individuals through hair bleaching.

The artist, from the Rocinha favela, states in an interview with the TAB UOL portal:

A Black blonde person to me is synonymous with power, as there is a stigma regarding bleached hair in black-skinned people. Choosing to be blonde when you are black is confronting these stereotypes. In other words, it’s an assertion of freedom against judgment of the black body. We have to be who we want to be. Affirming this aesthetically is an exercise in freedom and power (*apud* Soupín, 2020).



Source: Museu de Arte do Rio's photobook (2020).

Figure 3. Photos from the Global Pre-Carnaval Bleaching Action, 2020.

In this context, the artist, through similar actions in peripheral territories of Rio de Janeiro like Rocinha and Morro do Santo Amaro, emphasizes the aforementioned style trend and helps dissociate it from any marginalized connotations. Within the art scene, this effort disrupts traditional hierarchies, demonstrating a dedication to democratizing the concept of “art” within peripheral contexts. It also expands cultural dialogue, fostering reflection on issues of identity, power, and representation in contemporary society.

The appreciation of the *pivete blonde* style is reaffirmed in various territories. The photobook *Loiro pivete: da margem ao centro* explores this style trend within the peripheral communities of Ilhéus, Bahia (Figure 4), revealing similarities with the hair bleaching trend in Rio de Janeiro. This work invites reflection on hair bleaching not just as an aesthetic choice but as a powerful instrument of cultural and personal affirmation within the black Bahia community, challenging marginal stereotypes. In essence, the photographic project is seen as a “movement of redefinitions in the appropriation of identity and the construction of self-esteem among young peripheral black people” (Sales, 2020, p. 67).

The authentic reports and impactful images humanize and give voice to the protagonists, reinforcing positive perspectives around the hair trend by showcasing how bleaching is integrated into the daily life and culture of peripheral communities in Ilhéus. Overall, the practice of hair bleaching is celebrated as an expression of joy and resistance within aesthetic productions from peripheral territories. Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge

in the potential of art, culture, and human beauty lies the construction of a more just, plural, and diverse society, where individuals are respected for their identity and style, admired for their audacity and intelligence, a society where being a *pivete* symbolizes joy, irreverence, and creativity (Sales, 2020, p. 60).



Source: Sales (2020).

Figure 4. *Loiro pivete: da margem ao centro* photobook.

When analyzing the frames² (Figure 5) from the video produced by KondZilla, available on their YouTube channel, it becomes evident that the *pivete blonde*, while portrayed in a São Paulo context, carries the same significance as in the outskirts of Rio: bolstering the self-esteem of young black individuals from peripheral areas within an aesthetic-political framework. Therefore, the intention of the audiovisual protagonists is to initiate a discourse on body image centered on the appreciation of an aesthetic that challenges conventional norms of beauty and behavior.



Source: Kondizilla (2020).

Figure 5. Ngks dyeing his hair *pivete blonde*

² The term is used to refer to the frames of images in audiovisual productions.

On the YouTube video platform, a wide range of content produced by young people from peripheral contexts in Brazil showcases tutorials on achieving the ideal bleached hair color for men, whether it is *pivete blonde* or *lined up highlights*. This phenomenon highlights that peripheral communities, with their unique characteristics geographically dispersed across various regions of the country, share similarities (Ávila, 2006). In essence, this hair aesthetics originating in the peripheral communities of Rio de Janeiro gain visibility and popularity in other peripheral regions throughout Brazil.

Lined up highlights, empirically known as a stylistic offshoot of *pivete blonde*, gained popularity after being popularized by funk artist MC Poze do Rodo. This technique involves bleaching strands of men's hair using a highlighting cap, forming polka dot rows (Figure 6).



Source: Afotografacia (2022a; 2022b).

Figure 6. *Lined up highlights* technique and result.

In the peripheral neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro, the style trend serves as a means to preserve oneself aesthetically and socioculturally amidst style appropriations by dominant classes. It also challenges conventional social and cultural norms, sometimes provocatively, through aesthetic subversion that redefines beauty and self-expression for black and peripheral bodies. This stands in contrast to an elite that often excludes or marginalizes those with non-conforming physical characteristics. Thus, this trend significantly contributes to constructing and reinforcing an aesthetic identity rooted in black and peripheral cultural references, which confront Eurocentric norms.

It is also noted that at times, *pivete blonde* is referred to on social media with another name: *nevou* (snow) (Figure 7). For instance, barber Bruno Garcia's post caption in Figure 7 reads: "TRUE SNOW OF THE COMMUNITIES, 0 makeup, 0 effects." These adopted expressions seem to be efforts by marginalized individuals to replace negative stereotypes and counteract the racialized associations typically linked to their bodies through terms like "*pivete*." Instead, they aim to redefine terminology based on their own cultural references for this style trend — constantly challenged by Brazil's racist structures.



Source: Garcia (2022) e Rodrigo (2022).

Figure 7. The “snow” style as presented in the discourses of different barbers

It is crucial to emphasize that peripheral cultural aesthetics gain strength when these style trends prominently feature in mainstream media on black and peripheral bodies. This is particularly significant because cultures from peripheral communities often face racist discourses, despite being strategically endorsed in high-profile fashion campaigns by influential figures. For instance, the Calvin Klein campaign featuring football player Richarlison sporting this hairstyle serves as evidence that black and peripheral bodies are not inherently associated with criminality or destined for failure due to adopting these style trends. On the contrary, this is illustrated in a post by TV Baiana reporter Raoni Oliveira, who wore the blonde hair while presenting a show (Figure 8).

Part of the caption from Raoni’s post in Figure 8 reads: “My hair simply tells about myself and the culture I belong to, which is black and peripheral. In recent days, I have received several messages from kids from the neighborhood who felt represented when they saw me on TV.” The context surrounding his statement underscores how positive messages convey the symbolic significance of his appearance in a prominent media setting, using a trend often stigmatized by elitist and racist narratives outside of the peripheries. Thus, within the realm of beauty and aesthetics, the term “*pivete*” is reinterpreted by black and peripheral individuals who historically have faced oppression for embracing this hairstyle as a form of self-expression.



Source: Oliveira (2022).

Figure 8. *Pivete blonde* style and the importance of its prominence in black and peripheral bodies in traditional media contexts.

In summary, *pivete blonde* and *lined up highlights* hairstyles have become integral to the universe of Brazilian outskirts. For black and peripheral individuals, these trends, despite being discriminated against, serve as empowering tools that enhance their appearances. Given this, the tactical role of peripheries involves strategically influencing discourses that often misinterpret aesthetics originating from these communities.

DISCUSSIONS ON PIVETE BLOND AND LINED UP HIGHLIGHTS

Fashion, as a pioneer in aesthetic and behavioral trends, incorporates studies to appropriate new aesthetics into fashion products and consumer styles. However, these behavioral mappings predominantly originate from central contexts, occasionally considering customs emerging from peripheral regions.

As style trends, *pivete blonde* and *lined up highlights* are predominantly represented by black and peripheral bodies. However, this hair aesthetics is seldom central in cultural representations of fashion, often distorted by a whiteness that alters their original meanings from black and peripheral communities. Despite symbolic recognition of the aesthetic and cultural contributions of these communities, there is an effort to assimilate them into mainstream media dynamics (Vilaça, 2012). Conversely, peripheral individuals employ this aesthetics and develop tactics to assert their existence within a fashion system that typically upholds conservative, hegemonic, and elitist norms.

In this study, the aesthetics stemming from these style trends, *pivete blonde* and *lined up highlights*, are linked to the (re)affirmation and defiance of the “appearance of power” imposed by hegemonic fashion (Sant’Anna, 2007). Consequently, the dynamics of this colonial fashion directly impact cultural and racial norms in the lives of black and peripheral individuals, influencing their identity and self-image issues.

Thus, according to Fanon (2008), drawing from his analysis of the experiences of black individuals in colonized societies dominated by whiteness, many black people develop a “white mask” — meaning they adopt behaviors, language, and appearances associated with dominant white culture in an attempt to assimilate and gain societal acceptance. From this viewpoint, black and peripheral bodies embrace unconventional aesthetic trends like *pivete blonde* and *lined up highlights* as a means of challenging this “white mask,” actively rejecting the notion that they must conform to Eurocentric beauty standards to be valued or accepted. These aesthetic choices can be seen as affirmations of identity and refusals to conform to cultural norms that uphold whiteness as the ideal of beauty, instead seeking genuine self-expression. Consequently, black and peripheral actors wield influence through their appearances, distancing themselves from the influence of whiteness and reinforcing style trends that celebrate their cultural identities.

The initiative led by artist Maxwell Alexandre to bring the practice of bleaching hair into museum spaces extends beyond mere visibility. It serves as a platform to present this aesthetic and its socio-political implications to the cultural elites frequenting these art institutions, emphasizing it as a cultural aesthetic originating from the peripheries. Moreover, it underscores the necessity for museum spaces to embrace and represent peripheral cultural expressions. These representations embody complex meanings and political languages that are actively evolving (Hall, 2016). Through these actions, Maxwell Alexandre not only challenges conventional aesthetic norms but also questions the fundamental structure and role of museums as centers of power and cultural representation. This underscores the significance of acknowledging and integrating peripheral voices and expressions within and beyond these institutional spaces.

The contrast in perceptions of blonde hair across different social and geographic strata of Rio de Janeiro illustrates a profound dichotomy in Brazilian society: between stigmatization and style appropriation. As highlighted in the report from the TAB UOL portal (Soupin, 2020), style trends can be interpreted drastically differently depending on the social context. In affluent neighborhoods, blonde hair may be viewed as a fashion statement or individual expression, often associated with white bodies. However, in peripheral communities, it is frequently stigmatized and linked to crime and marginalization — this disparity in perception not only reflects social inequalities within Rio de Janeiro but also underscores the symbolic impact of stereotypes and prejudices in shaping opinions and value judgments.

Furthermore, it underscores the critical role of positive representation in reshaping these perceptions. Public figures like football player Richarlison or reporter Raoni Oliveira, who incorporate *pivete blonde* as a part of their identity and cultural expression, play a crucial role in challenging stereotypes and empowering black and peripheral individuals. Their presence in prominent media spaces with this aesthetic not only reaffirms their identity and culture but also provides alternative representations that challenge hegemonic, elitist, and racist narratives.

When *pivete blonde* is depicted prominently in museums or other media contexts, it signifies a popular phenomenon rooted in fashion references originating from peripheral communities. In this context, the cultural languages developed hold significant meaning in bolstering the self-esteem of young black individuals from the peripheries. The *Pivete Blonde* photobook and the visibility of this style trend championed by black figures in mainstream media outlets foster identification, empowerment, and reaffirm the potency of appearance through the lens of peripheral cultural aesthetics. *Pivete blonde* and *lined up highlights* as style trends can symbolize a quest for authenticity and liberation for black — especially peripheral — bodies to assert their true selves without compromising their racial identity, amidst the tensions outlined between authentic identity and societal expectations imposed by white norms (Fanon, 2008).

Although there is an effort from dominant groups to exert social control over these style trends, there is a noticeable silent resistance from these young individuals who frequently reproduce and adapt this aesthetics. This silent resistance can be seen as a response to the oppression faced by them, revealing a clear understanding of the power dynamics at play. This movement aligns with Certeau's (2012) concept of "tactics," as:

They operate blow by blow, move by move. They seize "opportunities" and depends on them, without a basis to stockpile benefits, increase property, or foresee exits. What they gain is not preserved. This non-place undoubtedly allows their mobility, but in a docility to the misfortunes of time, to capture in flight the possibilities offered by the moment. They must use, vigilantly, the gaps that particular conjunctures are opening in the vigilance of proprietary power. There they go hunting. They create surprises there. They manage to be where no one expects. It's cunning. In short, tactics are the art of the weak (Certeau, 2012, p. 100).

It is evident that peripheral style trends, once overlooked by the global aesthetic mainstream, are now gaining prominence and interest beyond the confines of peripheral communities (Villaça, 2010). This shift highlights tactics emerging when alternative terms are introduced for *pivete blonde*, aiming to symbolically and visually dissociate it from marginalizing discourses. Additionally, the creation of new style trends like the aligned reflection serves to navigate historical and cultural appropriations and counter the social context dominated by whiteness.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research focuses on *pivete blonde* and *lined up highlights*, two hairstyle trends originating from the aesthetic and sociocultural milieu of peripheral communities in Rio de Janeiro. Symbolically, these trends also influence behaviors and political identities. These territorialities, shaped by a historical white and sanitizing political agenda that marginalized black cultures and their descendants, now serve as potent arenas for the struggle for discursive recognition of specific forms of knowledge and ideas enacted tactically — including contemporary visualities

found in cyberspace, where more spontaneous and democratic virtual social interactions thrive.

The analyses conducted on media sources referenced in this article confirms that the adoption of blonde hair (both *pivete blonde* and its derivative, *lined up highlights*) by black individuals represents a deliberate confrontation of stereotypes through aesthetic-political (re)existence. This adoption is observed in various contexts, whether as a form of self-expression (among young people in peripheral communities on social media profiles, websites, virtual channels, and photobooks) or as a means to redefine the appropriation of black identity in spaces historically legitimized by whiteness (museums and mainstream television news).

It can be argued that this hair aesthetics, emerging as style trends from the peripheral communities of Rio de Janeiro, extend into other territories, pioneering a perspective on fashion and style trends from a peripheral standpoint. They thereby foster new aesthetic ideals rooted in visual elements associated with black and peripheral cultures. This reflection underscores how languages and cultural representations shaped by whiteness, representing the powerful “group that dictates appearance norms,” perpetuate entrenched discourses that discriminate against and oppress alternative representations — based on conservative, elitist, and prejudiced theories, stemming from judgments rooted in central representations. Ultimately, this study aimed to contribute to fashion discourse by recognizing and promoting the aesthetic potential of peripheral communities, advocating for further research in this area.

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