COMUN. MÍDIA CONSUMO, SÃO PAULO, V. 15, N. 42, P. 51-71, JAN./APRIL 2018
DOI 10.18568/CMC.V15I42.1560

ARTICLE

Pop culture and performance: identity games a anime conventions[1]

Cultura Pop e performance: jogos identitários nos eventos de animê

Cíntia Sanmartin Fernandes[2]
Paula Rozenberg Travancas[3]

Abstract: *The great popularity of Japanese pop culture in Brazil, driven by the so-called anime boom in the 1990s, led to the creation of anime conventions. These conventions, initially aimed at fans of Japanese animations and TV shows, now gather neotribes, or urban tribes, that are grounded in the taste for various segments of global pop culture. Subscribing to the sociology of everyday life and of the imaginary, and supported by field research of ethnographic inspiration, this paper is rooted in the understanding of aesthetics as ethics to glimpse the desire that allows the communion between neotribes. To do so, five activities commonly performed at conventions that depend on the participation of visitors to come to life are analyzed: cosplay, animeke, k-pop covers and dance video games. These activities demonstrate modes of sociality that produce meanings through performance, in its dimensions of acting, play and game.*

Keywords: *anime conventions; pop culture; performance.*

Resumo: *A grande popularidade da cultura pop japonesa no Brasil, impulsionada pelo chamado boom dos animês nos anos 1990, levou à criação dos eventos de animê. Essas convenções, inicialmente voltadas para fãs de animações e seriados japoneses, hoje atraem neotribos (ou tribos urbanas) que se fundam*

1 The first version of this article was presented to the Work Group Studies of Sound and Music at the XXVI Annual Meeting of Compós – at University Cásper Líbero, São Paulo, June 6th to 9th 2017.

2 State University of Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil. E-mail: cintiasan90@gmail.com
3 State University of Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil. E-mail: ptravancas@gmail.com

no gosto por diversos segmentos da cultura pop mundial. Filiado à sociologia do cotidiano e do imaginário e apoiado em pesquisa de campo de inspiração etnográfica, este artigo parte da compreensão da estética como ética para vislumbrar o elã que permite a comunhão entre neotribos. Para tanto, são analisadas quatro atividades comuns aos eventos e que dependem da participação dos visitantes para ganharem vida: o cosplay, o animekê, os covers de k-pop e os videogames de dança. Tais atividades evidenciam modos de socialidade que produzem sentidos por meio da performance em suas dimensões de encenação, brincadeira e jogo.

Palavras-chave: *eventos de animê; cultura pop; performance.*

In the past, any mention to anime or manga in academic texts or in traditional media needed to be introduced by long explanations about what is Japanese animations and comics. Japan, or at least this aspect of their entertainment industry, is not only pop[4], it is mainstream. In this sense, we begin with the presupposition that pop culture is about products themselves and the meanings engraved and circulated through them, that begin to integrate, even if ephemerally, the repertoire of imaginaries of the people who consume that product. Even though pop culture products inevitably have marks of its time and place of origin, they also have a certain mood of cosmopolitan uprooting that, at the same time, bring people from different places to a common territory. Thus, pop culture "establishes forms of fruition and consumption that surround a certain sense of community and sharing of affections and things in common that locate individuals within a transnational globalizing sense" (SOARES, 2015, p. 22).

Watching animes and reading mangas get easier every day for dedicated fans and more casual audiences. A lot has changed since the 90's, decade when animes became a national boom. At the time, otakus, term to who is considered a fan of pop culture, had to unfold to watch more than the few Japanese productions offered in Brazilian television. Eager to watch more anime and tokusatsu[5], they needed to find VHS tapes, often without subtitles, obtained by a select number of specialized movie rental stores or copied from friends (MACHADO, 2009).

Due to the difficulty of access to anime, otakus from the 90's used to organize in clubs and promoted anime exhibitions, that also worked to know other fans of Japonese pop culture. Such exhibitions originated anime conventions, events that were, little by little, leaving the anime and tokusatsu sessions behind, but started to offer many other attractions.

4 Pop culture refers to what is called in Brazil mass culture or media culture, therefore, an array of cultural artifacts produced under the logic of entertainment industries that have the aim of mass consumption, either by the "great audience" or by some specific niche (SOARES, 2015).

5 Movies or series of special effects with real actors, usually about superheroes, monsters and robots. Some of the popular tokusatsu in Brazil were National Kid, Jaspion, Changeman e Ultraman.

Following the formula that made them popular, anime conventions happened on weekends, during all the weekend or just the sunday, in rented spaces such as universities, clubs or convention centers. It usually has at least one stage, where the scheduled attractions take place, such as cosplay[6] contests, talks with voice actors or youtubers and music concerts. The rest of the space is divided into areas that have different activities that used to be available during all the event, such as videogame matches, RPG and trading card games, medieval battles[7] and anime karaoke.[8]

From conventions with few hundred people, these events grew and multiplied, beginning to happen regularly throughout the country. The history of Brazilian's relationship with Japanese pop culture and anime conventions that appeared and got modified contributed for the path of investigation that adopted, throughout the last two years, as a methodological strategy of ethnographic field research, consisting in participant observation in six events in Rio and one in São Paulo. The variety of urban neotribes[9], with their respective aesthetics evidenced by the research, lead to the analysis of participative activities frequently offered in conventions, in an attempt to see what is in common among these practices, approaching the desire that potentializes the communion of imaginaries and identifications of many groups present in these events.

It is important to reinforce that, according to Campos (2010, p. 4),

> […] the end of the Marxist-inspired thought of Birmingham school, and, simultaneously, the emergency of youth sociocultural contexts renovated take many investigators to adopt regenerated conceptual boards, organized around concepts such as "lifestyle", "scene" and "neotribe" (BENNETT and KAHN-HARRIS, 2004) comprising what, in a generic

6 Costume of na anime, manga, videogame or any type of entertainment character..
7 Fight simulation with fake swords.
8 Karaoke with anime songs.
9 Maffesoli, in his book O tempo das tribos, suggests to see social groups in current Society as a type of neotribe, as communities founded in emotion: "[...] emotional Community is unstable, open, which can turn it, under many aspects, anomic regarding the established morals" (MAFFESOLI, 1987, p. 22). These "new tribes" of today's society, "[...] unlike classic tribalism [...] would be characterized by the fluidity, punctual junctions and dispersion" (MAFFESOLI, 1987, p. 107).

> form, is understood as "post-cultural studies" (WEINZIERL and MUGGLETON, 2004)

Thus,

> [...] The concept of tribe, or neotribe, loaned by Michel Maffesoli (1987), comes from this movement of re-evaluation of paradigms, with an analytical framework more consentconsensualhe new empirical contexts where youth is located. While subcultures are perceived as an internally coherent whole, relatively rigid and uniform, with an ideological support that would refer to conflict of classes, tribes seem to exist more through the ephemeral, contradictory, for the apparently apolitical emotional connection, for the metamorphosis and gregarious fusion of hybrid outlines. The notion of youth tribe does not ignore the vigor of image and visual representation, in so far as it links individual to a lineage that do not result from structural determinants, but more aesthetical-stylistic options, emotional and gregarious, that are denounced to a great extent in the dominion of the performative and the appearance. The term "tribe" cannot stop evoking an imaginary filled with exotism, that recognized in the surface of bodies, parts of difference and distance (CAMPOS, 2010, p. 5).

Performances and identity games

Not all performance is socially marked by predetermined "social roles" (GOFFMAN, 1983). Any daily interaction requires the participants to act in the ongoing social game. In this theater of daily life - in which we act different "self" in interaction with others -, we live processes of identification and differentiation, constantly composing and recomposing what we understand as our own individuality.

This transformation that occurs in contact with the other is always difficult, ever-changing and transitory, since we don't talk about an identity but a persona, one of the many masks we put on in our social interactions. The mask does not represent something fake, but a role played according to the context and that impress a part of the true of what we are. As Maffesoli (1987, p. 15) summarizes, "the person (persona) only exists in relation to the other". Therefore, "being", otaku, gamer, cosplayer or any belonging to any other tribe is always a way of

being transcribed not only to changes in taste of individuals, but also in the moments and person with who is possible to be something and not another thing or more than one thing at once.

> The multiple imaginaries acted by the different activities of conventions is embodied in the many aesthetics we found there.

Cosplays, the clothing, the accessories and the forms of communication belong to tribes that can be identified in conventions. The clothing and the presentation of self are very relevant in the materialization of conventions, which become spaces where people can wear clothes and accessories or adopt behaviors that could be frowned upon outside these occasions. The implicit agreement is that everyone has the freedom of being who they are (or who they want to be) without being judged for the way they look.

Clothes and accessories work both as belonging markers and difference markers, which allows the meaning of each piece of clothing or print to be read as the other participants of the convention, once most of the people there dominate these codes. One of the main roles of clothes in conventions, thus, is to be an invitation to interaction, since one of the main attraction of events is to be in the presence of other people who love pop culture. Therefore, clothing potentializes the communicational aesthetics of the group.

For many of the convention goers, cosplays or clothing and accessory items represent the reality of who they are more than the clothes they normally wear, in a way that

> [...] As if, when they are disguised as animation characters, these young people would find their true personality. As if the monotonous everyday clothes were, in fact, the real disguise (BARRAL, 2000, p. 140).

Many of the convention goers wear black shirts with bands, anime or games printed in it, but even when they are not dressed as a character or following a specific style, they wear props and accessories that mark their sense of belonging of the tribe. They wear metallic necklaces with

pendants (for girls and boys), trench coats, gloves, hair accessories, keychains or pins on their backpack or bag, which can or cannot refer to specific characters or series. There are also hats, ears and tails of cute animals, that can be used by boys or girls.

All of these elements make it difficult to identify where a simple composition of accessories end and where cosplay begins. These forms of wearing the passions bring up the importance of the body in the society, where it fits as an affectionate billboard inviting the contact with other members of the tribe. It is common, in anime conventions, a person to start a conversation with another just because they've seen the person wearing a shirt or a pin of some anime or series they like.

Among otakus, gamers, cosplayers, nerds, geeks and many other groups, these conventions can be characterized as "intertribal events" (MACHADO, 2009, p. 117). The feeling of belonging to one or more neotribes is fluid, dynamic and ambivalent, not having clear borders or exclusivity among the different groups (MAFFESOLI, 1987). Thus, the spaces of anime conventions are markedly heterotopic, since they "have the power of juxtaposing in one place a variety of spaces, different positions that are, in itself, incompatible" (FOUCAULT, 1984, p. 411).

The different attractions and activities that coexist in the same event are in constant negotiation of physical and symbolic space. This tension of heterogeneities, far from shaking the coexistence of neotribes, promotes diversity that solidifies the group (MAFFESOLI, 1987). The different urban neotribes present in these conventions are manifested in different aesthetics, known as "correspondence, as something that links one individual to another, which conduces to sharing experiences and common feelings with others" (OLIVEIRA, FERNANDES e SOUZA, 2008, p. 4).

This aesthetics are agglutinating and vectors of communion, constituting the meanings of being together and getting a glimpse of these tribalizing images in the bodies of who frequent these spaces. In this sense, the body is image and communicates, through its surface, voice, gesture and sensitive presence, constituting as a vector of sociality

and exchanges with the other (FERNANDES, 2008). Therefore, it is through the observation of participants in anime conventions, their affective interactions and common experiences we can be aware of the desire that unites them. There is, thus, beyond the differences between neotribes, some kind of being shared that makes this meeting with the different not only possible, but desirable, since "the cement (ethos) of all life in common is elaborated through the passion game" (MAFFESOLI, 2014, p. 44).

Unlike shows and lectures that happen in events, that are independent from the number of people in the audience, many of the activities among the schedule depend of the participation and performance of people in the convention to come to life. The most popular events are cosplay, anime videoke, k-pop covers and dance videogames.

All behavior and interaction can be understood as social performance, but what is, in fact, performance, depends entirely on the context in which the acts are played. Such activities re-territorialize space and modify temporarily the rules of the social game, which mark them as different from the "common life" (SCHECHNER, 2006). These activities are limited in time and space and their context of visibility makes that there is an audience.

> *"Performances mark identities, bend time, reshape and adorn the body, and tell stories. Performances – of art, rituals, or ordinary life – are 'restored behaviors', 'twice-behaved behaviors', performed actions that people train for and rehearse"*. (SCHECHNER, 2006, p. 28)

The practices analyzed throughout our research carry a certain degree of self-reflexivity (GIDDENS, 2002) of the participants, since they implicitly admit that as restored behavior. Evoke and embody someone else, a "non-self" to which the performance makes reference to, an activity that is assumed as other in time or space.

Thus, what we restrict here as performance is the "act of presence in the world and in itself" (ZUMTHOR, 2007, p. 67). From Zumthor (2007) - retrieving concepts from Merleau-Ponty -, we understand that

we can find in the body speeches as potent as the ones we acquire in texts and in orality. In bodily inscriptions, we can unveil meanings of cultural texts. Thus, the author argues:

> My body is the materialization of what is my own, a reality experienced which determines my relationship with the world. Gifted with incomparable meaning, it exists as an image of my being: it is where I live, have and am, for best and for worst (ZUMTHOR, 2007, p. 23).

The experiences of cosplays, anime videokes and k-pop covers is much more than simply putting on a costume, involving also the interpretation (or performance), materialized in the posture, the game of identifications, the understanding of that is to be different characters. In the practice of these performances, the individuals modify the knowledge, update virtualities and make their imaginary real.

Cosplay

Cosplay, the most prestigious activity in conventions (MACHADO, 2009), is also the one who had the most academic attention. It is the act of dressing up as the character of media narratives, either anime, books, movies, games, series or even "real" celebrities.

Cosplay is the fusion of the words costume and play (DAWSEY, 2007). The practice of creating and wearing costumes of media characters in conventions started in the United States in 1939, with sci-fi characters. The first register of this type of activity in Japan is in 1978. The term cosplay was invented in 1983 in that same country, where the practice was deeply popularized (SOARES, 2013). The arrival of cosplay in Brazil goes back to 1996, when the convention Mangácon took place.

Practically all the anime conventions nowadays have a cosplay contest. It is very common to see people strolling around with costumes in conventions, some of them prefer not to present themselves on stage. Going in cosplay practically gives the instant status of semi-celebrity,

even if it is only until the end of the convention or until the person takes the costume off.

There is an implicit agreement that, when one puts on a costume, the cosplayer is willing to pose for pictures that other people will ask them to take. In these moments, it is common to see the cosplayer making a characteristic pose of the character they are impersonating. When a cosplayer is walking in a convention, they are a "not me" and a "not not me" (SCHECHNER, 2011), being inquired, at any moment, to perform the character. While they are dressed up in costume, it is as if they are the character, living in the ambiguity of a double identity.

Image 1 - *Cosplayers* that weren't originally together, but since they all were dressed as DC characters, gathered spontaneously to pose for a picture.

The cosplay contest usually happens in the main stage. It is usually subdivided into the following categories: a) presentation, where only the costume and their resemblance to the character are judged b) traditional, in which one or more cosplayers perform a scene of the anime (or other media) the character was originated; c) free, in which cosplayers perform a skit with these characters, usually in humorous situations (SOARES, 2013).

Therefore, cosplay doesn't mean only to dress up a costume, but also performing a character. It is also not only an imitation, since they create new scenes, either on stage or off of it, since cosplayers pose for pictures in situations that never happened in the original material. Cosplayers allow enemies to kiss and characters from other franchises pose for pictures as if they were fighting each other. The cosplay itself can be an adaptation or recreation of a character regardless of the gender of physical characteristics of the cosplayers and the cosplay. There are female versions of male characters and vice-versa, situations in which not only the cosplayer is dressed in a character whose gender is different from theirs, but the clothes are completely adapted, as if the character was originally of another gender.

Image 2 and 3 - Man dressed as Mileena from *Mortal Kombat*, and a female version of the Joker beside the traditional version of the character at Anime Friends 2015.

The choice of the character by cosplayer usually is given by physical or psychologic affinities, for the challenge of creating a good costume or even to participate in a group performance with friends.

According to Nunes (2015, p. 45), "cosplay, understood as a metonymy of hegemonic narratives, manga, animes, among other things, reinvents the original narrative in the body of young people through the materialities consumed. Thus, through the affective choice and the transforming character of performance (SCHECHNER, 2011), that the cosplayer, at the same time, incorporates the character and performs processes of identity negotiation, acting for himself something typical of that character or that performance.

Anime Videoke

From clothes, we go to voice, an important element of the performance in its materiality (ZUMTHOR, 2007). The issue of speech is also manifested in the cosplayer, who speaks with their own voice or can be "dubbed" through lip sync, but the videoke brings the performer to the register of singing. *Animekê*, fusion of anime with karaoke, is the same as the latter: the person sings with an instrumental background taped from the music itself. What set animeke apart is the music selection, that can be anime songs[10], videogame soundtracks, tokusatsu or j-music[11] (MACHADO, 2009).

Karaoke is the fusion between kara (void) and oke (an abbreviation of okesutora, Japanese phonetization of orchestra) meaning something as "no orchestra". The activity was invented in Japan in the 70's and was popularized in the 80's and spread around the world, being a widely practiced form of fun until this day.

In their original country, karaoke is a social activity, guided by modesty and the search of harmony in the group, notorious characteristics of the Japanese social life. The importance to gather with friends or work colleagues to sing is to make an effort, to bring their A game. To sing out

10 Songs of anime soundtracks.
11 Japanese contemporary music, normally pop or rock.

of tune in these circumstances is not a reason to shame, but a relaxing activity that promotes unity through fun and "vulnerability" of all people present.

Coming to the West, karaokes were appropriated as a competitive activity of individual reaffirmation, even if this competitiveness is part of the play in this social ritual. An evidence of that are the homemade karaokes that give a score to the singer's performance (SATO, 2007). Anime conventions gathers this two aspects of karaoke: at the same time it is a safe environment where people can feel free to be themselves and sing their favorite songs in any way they like, there is also the competitive level.

Animeke can take place in a separate stage or room or in the main stage. There is the free animeke, where the person sings without a commitment, and contests which the participants are judged for their performance and contestants can win prizes.

Some people choose anime songs in Portuguese versions, but it is very common to see contestants picking songs in Japanese, with no difficulty in singing, even though they don't speak the language. This fact can impress many non-otakus, but it is dealt with naturality in conventions. That is because, even though many of them did not take Japanese lessons, anime fans are used to the sound of the language.

As the offer of dubbed animes in Brazil is relatively small nowadays, otakus recur to the internet, where they easily find animes with subtitles (LOURENÇO, 2009). These subtitles are usually fanmade, translated from Japanese or from other subtitles of other languages, activity called *fansub*. Just by listening the Japanese language in animes, movies, telenovelas and songs that Otakus end up learning the pronunciation, rhythm or even accent of the Japanese voice.

Both singing and learning another language, even if just for vocalization, not knowing its meaning, are body techniques that make use of the human vocal apparatus. They are learned, like any other activity, by imitation and training, acts that require the assimilation of moments (MAUSS, 1974); in this case, movements that produce voice and melody.

Another common attraction in conventions are rock bands, normally covering anime and videogame songs. This attraction, however, due to it being previously hired by organizers, do not get in the scope of activities that any person can join and compete. The name of the bands, that normally have some degree of fame in the mainstream media or on YouTube, are shown as a formal part of the schedule.

K-pop covers

It may seem odd that South Korean pop music had taken a huge space in Japanese pop culture conventions in the last years. This expansion, however, is clear once we examine the Hallyu phenomenon. This term, that literally means "Korean flow", but is more popularly known as "Korean wave" marks the quick rise of South Korea as a country exporting cultural products throughout the world. Initially propelled by the dissemination of Korean soap operas (known as k-dramas) in south east Asia, *Hallyu* became global in the beginning of the 2000's through k-pop.

Abbreviation of *Korean pop*, k-pop goes beyond a musical genre with a strong beat and influences of North American musical genres such as electronic, R&B and hip-hop. The phenomenon also comprises the aesthetics of their colorful videoclips, in which band members wear fashionable clothes and dance highly synchronized choreographies. These boy and girl bands (rarely mixed) are the result of real factories of talent, recruiting kids and teenagers to have the opportunity of one day become idols. These young people are exhaustive training for years to become stars that appeal to the global market (KARAM and MEDEIROS, 2015)

Internet was essential to spread the taste of k-pop over the world. Social media websites allow the communication among Korean idols, that learn other languages in their training for their international fanbase, strengthening their image and giving the feeling of being accessible people. YouTube, in turn, allowed clips and concerts of these bands were easily shared by fans, that started to record their own covers of k-pop choreography and share them in the video platform (JUNG, 2011).

Internet is also essential for communication and formation of networks between fans, that can share their taste with people of their country and the world, learn with each other and organize off-line encounters.

K-covers were invented from that, a practice in which k-pop fans learn and perform, in group, the choreographies of their favorite videoclips. As anime conventions comprise an increasingly large amount of interests and Hallyu itself gained a lot of strength through the Japanese market, it didn't take long until k-pop covers became a part of the schedule. As Sasaki (2013) speculates, Japanese descendants may not be comfortable with the inclusion of South Korean pop culture in the schedule of anime conventions due to complicated history between the two countries. This apparent fall out, however, is not a concern for most Brazilians, which does not mean that there aren't any conflict between otakus, the former main target audience of these events, and k-pop fans.

In these contests, it is not rare to have levels of bigger contests (as well as the other activities reported here) that there are categories where only original dance covers are allowed - free in which participants can do mashups[12] of songs and create their own choreographies. At times, there is the division between solo presentation, duo and group presentation. In smaller contests, it is common to have one only modality, which end up receiving few solo participants, since the synchronization of movements between dancers is very important to make the performance impactful. Teams seek to be coordinated in gestures and also in the fashionable looks, using the same clothes or matching clothes together, almost always with pretty colorful items.

There are more simple choreographies, that can be practiced by beginners, and more complex ones, that require a high degree of training and skill. Some groups pick more "cute" presentations, element that unites k-pop and j-pop (Japanese pop music), others are more sexy in the clothes and movements, bringing up the North American influence in South Korean music. Some k-poppers (k-pop fans, dancers or not) seek to get closer from the Asian look, which often becomes difficult due to

12 Faixa que combina trechos de duas ou mais músicas.

the differences of physical constitution between Brazilian bodies and their Korean idols.

The bodily techniques necessary for the execution of k-pop choreographies are learned through products for massive consumption accessed on the internet. K-poppers imitate and reproduce the choreographies they watch, but also create new meanings to it and negotiate with them, since these techniques are juxtaposed to bodies that already have a previous gesture and symbolic repertoire assimilated in years through the Brazilian culture and habits.

Dance videogames

Still in the field of choreography, another form of popular fun in events are dance videogames. This genre of game was invented in Japan as the evolution of rhythm games, in which the player used the directions of the joystick to follow the commands in form of arrows, hitting the beat of the song. Released in 1998, *Dance Dance Revolution* (DDR) gave the player the command of arrows through buttons under their feet, making them step in the right place according to the orders that appeared on screen.

In the first years of the 21st century, DDR became a hit in anime events, newly established in Brazil. Dance games evolved and changed, which was reflected into their presence in events. Following the DDR trend, *Pump It Up* came along, very similar to their previous creation, now adding arrows in the diagonal, not only up, down, left and right. Then, there was the moment for the game *Para Paradise*, which used sensors on the ground to detect the player's arms, bringing the focus to the superior members.

The arrival of Nintendo Wii marked a new era for the dance games, adding movement sensors to the gyroscope embedded in the joystick. For Wii, *Just Dance* came out, 2009 game by the French multinational company Ubisoft. With colorful graphics, intuitive gameplay and a selection of hits, the game reached a huge popularity even among people that did not have the habit of playing videogames. Another big difference

of this new type of dance game is that, unlike DDR and others, in which the song was interrupted after too many mistakes of the player, causing frustration, the Just *Dance* generation allowed the gamer to keep playing until the end of the song, making the process of learning the choreographies easier.

Kinect, sensor of movements of Xbox consoles, elevated the gameplay of dance games. Using this system do play *Just Dance 2016*, the most current version of the series, the player uses their whole body to interact with the console (SILVA, 2013). It is no longer necessary to hold any joystick, since it has a camera that captures the player's movements. More than ever, to move your feet or hands is not enough to "trick" the game, you must participate with your whole body.

In anime conventions, *Just Dance* and, at times, his competition *Dance Central* are played in a limited space in the "floor" of the event. Only in bigger conventions or phases of bigger championships there is a specific stage for these games. Dance games are usually played in events with a maximum possible number of participants, two at *Dance Central* and four at *Just Dance*.

Image 4 - *Just Dance* at Rio Geek Zone 2015.

It is interesting to notice that a group of people gather around the players already knowing the choreography and executing it as if they are playing, phenomenon also perceived in the audience that watches k-cover presentations.

However, dancers/players of *Just Dance* and *Dance Central* need to worry less with their own image than those from k-pop. Therefore, they don't need to dress a certain way to dance nor be worried in keeping in shape within beauty standards, since who decides the winner is the videogame, that doesn't consider subjective aspects of the performance.

In contrast with other practices we analyzed, dance games are the only ones made with the objective of being imitated. The game is only completed when the players are corporified in the movements of the characters appearing on screen, characters that are re-creations of performances of artists in which the choreography is based on. Unlike other musical games, such as *Guitar Hero* and DJ Hero, dance games make the player truly dance, not only simulate the act of playing an instrument.

Dance can be part of an experience of musical fruition, but dance games go out of the wider sphere of the play and representation to be formalized into clear rules. Thus, between activities available in events, the dance game is what seems to blur the frontiers between performance and game, with "objective" notes and, at the same time, a sensitive presence that becomes a presentation before someone else's eyes.

Thus, the dance game is hardly separated from its game dimension, even if it is not played in a competitive way. The instructions on the screen, however, are not only followed, but translated, interpreted and negotiated between players and the game, dancers and the audience. The competitive character of dance games is closer to other performances in the event in audience engagement, whose reactions are also a part of the "performatic text" (SCHECHNER, 2011), which can engage their body and voice rooting for some of the competitors.

Final Considerations

All the activities open to participation of event goers materialize, in the body of these subjects, the desire to make contact with other people and aesthetics that, at times, refer to modes of being that are distant from those people, both in space and time. The anime event goers update and re-signify media content and cultural imaginaries. Such images carry, for these pop culture fans, a great "communicative-aesthetic potency" [13], interesting them to their own ambiguity of being "others" themselves and having characteristics in common that allow the creation of affective bonds with these images. They become vectors of communion and signs of individual/tribal differentiation in relation to the social whole.

Either by media characters of cosplays, the voices of anime songs, the South Korean videoclips of k-pop covers, the characters of dance games, the event goers embody and materialize imaginaries and media texts. They embody something of these images due to the transformative experience of performance and party, that work as a locus of negotiation of identities and community.

Through the movement of embodied and semantized bodies, pop culture fans produce meanings and create, in the ephemeral spatialities of anime events, relational micro-territories that place the spaces and anesthetize the daily life through its sensitive presence, its appearance, their imaginaries and modes of being. In its relationship of integrality with others and with spaces, they live interactions and produce performances, behaviors restored, but unique in their context and execution, gathering aspects of theater, play and game.

13 Power is not only rationalizable, but sensitive, affectionate, emotional, enabled by the mundane aesthetic. Such aesthetic brings us closer and communicates to diferente communities within the globe, in which communication is the guarantee to the most primary form of being together, regardless of social contracts and deliberative actions. It is a type of union that is in the base of the Society, composing the communitary humus (FERNANDES, 2009).

References

AMARAL, R. As mediações culturais da festa. *Revista Mediações*, v. 3, n. 1, p. 13-22, jan.-jun. 1998.

BARRAL, É. *Otaku*: os filhos do virtual. São Paulo: Senac, 2000.

CAMPOS, R. Juventude e visualidade no mundo contemporâneo: uma reflexão em torno da imagem nas culturas juvenis. *Sociologia, problemas e práticas*, n. 63, p. 113-137, 2010.

DAWSEY, J. Sismologia da performance: ritual, drama e play na teoria antropológica. *Revista de Antropologia*, v. 50, n. 2, p. 527-570, 2007.

FERNANDES, C. S. Co(rpo)municabilidade e sociabilidade: a imagem e a estética como vetores de comunicação-comunhão. In: ENCONTRO DE ESTUDOS MULTIDISCIPLINARES EM CULTURA (ENECULT), 4., 2008, Salvador. *Anais*... Salvador: UFBA, 2008.

FERNANDES, C. S. *Sociabilidade, comunicação e política*: a rede MIAC como provocadora de potencialidades estético-comunicativas na cidade de Salvador. Rio de Janeiro: E-papers, 2009.

FOUCAULT, M. *O corpo utópico, as heterotopias*. São Paulo: N-1 Edições, 2013.

_____. Outros espaços. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 1984.

GIDDENS, A. Modernidade e identidade. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2002.

GOFFMAN, E. A *representação do eu na vida cotidiana*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1983.

JUNG, S. K-pop, Indonesian Fandom, and Social Media. *Transformative Works and Cultures*, n. 8, 2011. Disponível em: http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/289/219. Acesso em: 20 out. 2017.

KARAM, K.; MEDEIROS, M. C. Subcultura, estratégia e produção de gosto: uma análise do k-pop no Brasil. In: CONGRESSO INTERNACIONAL DE COMUNICAÇÃO E CONSUMO (COMUNICON), 2015, São Paulo. *Anais*... São Paulo: ESPM, 2015.

LOURENÇO, A. L. C. *Otakus*: construção e representação de si entre aficionados por cultura pop nipônica. 2009. 365f. Tese (doutorado em Antropologia Social) – Museu Nacional, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2009.

MACHADO, C. A. *Processos socioeducativos dos animencontros*: a relação de grupos juvenis com elementos da cultura midiática japonesa. 2009. 192f. Tese (doutorado em Educação) – Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2009.

MAFFESOLI, M. *Homo Eroticus*: comunhões emocionais. Rio de Janeiro: Forense, 2014.

_____. *O tempo das tribos*: o declínio do individualismo nas sociedades de massa. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 1987.

MAUSS, M. *Sociologia e antropologia*. v. II. São Paulo: Edusp, 1974.

NUNES, M. R. F. Cena cosplay: breves narrativas de consumo e memória pelas capitais do Sudeste brasileiro. In: _____. *Cena cosplay*: comunicação, consumo, memória nas culturas juvenis. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2015. p. 23-76.

OLIVEIRA, A. C. M. A.; FERNANDES, C. S.; SOUZA, J. S. Corpo, comunicação e cidade: a estética como élan comunicacional. In: COLÓQUIO MULTITEMÁTICO EM COMUNICAÇÃO (MULTICOM), 3., 2008, Natal. *Anais*... Natal, 2008.
SASAKI, E. Qual a relação entre a imigração e a cultura pop japonesa no Brasil? In: CONGRESSO INTERNACIONAL "ASIA Y AFRICA. Conexiones, intercambio y nuevos abordajes acadêmicos desde América Latina", XIV, 2013, La Plata. *Anais*... La Plata: Aladaa, 2013.
SATO, C. *Japop*: o poder da cultura pop japonesa. São Paulo: NSP Hakkosha, 2007.
SCHECHNER, R. Pontos de contato entre o pensamento antropológico e o teatral. *Cadernos de Campo*, n. 20, p. 213-236, 2011.
_____. *Performance studies*: an introduction. Oxon: Routledge, 3. ed., 2006.
SILVA, C. G. *Cultura juvenil em dance games como forma de lazer em espaços públicos de Brasília*. 2013. 67f. Trabalho de conclusão de curso (graduação) – Faculdade de Educação Física, Universidade Federal de Goiás, Formosa, 2013.
SOARES, G. T. *Cosplay*: imagem, corpo, jogo. 2013. 86f. Dissertação (mestrado em Comunicação e Semiótica) – Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2013.
SOARES, T. Percursos para estudos sobre música pop. In: FERRAZ, R.; CARREIRO, R.; SÁ, S. (Orgs.). *Cultura pop*. Salvador: UFBA; Brasília: Compós, 2015.
ZUMTHOR, P. *Performance, recepção, leitura*. São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2007.

About the authors

Cíntia Sanmartin Fernandes – Post-doctor at the Communication School at UFRJ and the Communication and Semiotics Program at PUC-SP (2007-2010). PhD and master in Political Sociology at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, graduated in Social Sciences at the State University of Campinas. Professor at the Social Communication course at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (FCS-Uerj) and the Post-Graduate Program in Communication (PPGCOM/Uerj).

Paula Rozenberg Travancas – PhD student and master at the Post-Graduate Program in Communication at the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro.

Date of submission: 27/10/2017
Date of acceptance: 20/03/2018