

Genre formation as enregisterment

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1 Introduction: Enregisterment and musical genre

In this paper, I argue that the formation of musical genres is a process of enregisterment. *Enregisterment* refers to the processes by which a semiotic repertoire—a set of potentially meaningful signs—becomes recognizable and acquires social meaning (Agha, 2003, 2005). The product of enregisterment is a *register*, a socially recognized linkage between a semiotic repertoire and particular social meanings. Often, the meaning of a register coalesces into a *persona* (or *characterological figure*), a “holistic, ideological social type[] that [is] recognizably linked with ways of being and speaking” (D’Onofrio, 2020). An example of a register is Yat English, which links a “Yat” persona—a White, working-class New Orleanian associated with tackiness and lack of education, but also with authentic local identity—to a repertoire that includes features such as th-stopping, r-lessness, and COIL-CURL reversal (Carmichael & Dajko, 2016).

A register is transmitted in a *speech chain*, a chronological series of speech events in which the receiver of one message is the sender of the next message (Agha, 2003). Participants in the speech chain link particular qualities, values, or personae to particular signs. Different speakers may establish different linkages, so a register’s repertoire and social meaning may evolve as it is transmitted in the speech chain (Agha, 2005).

Enregisterment is not a language-specific process. Agha (2003, 232) noted early on that the processes involved in enregisterment “apply to . . . any other cultural form,” and in general, “potentially meaningful acts of any kind” can be enregistered (Johnstone, 2016, 634). Thus, the application of enregisterment to the formation of musical genres is entirely natural.

This is an emic approach to genre, intended to model musical genres as they are understood by everyday social actors. Furthermore, approaching genre formation as enregisterment requires a combination of a presentist approach (which “retroactive[ly] group[s] . . . texts into a genre based on a presumed stylistic consistency and critical consensus”; Brackets, 2016, 5) and a historicist approach (which “stud[ies] . . . the conflictual meanings of categories via a reconstruction of a historical horizon of meaning”; *ibid.*). This is because both historical and contemporary viewpoints participate in the speech chain that transmits a genre. In this respect, the theory of genre formation as enregisterment contrasts with musicological approaches to genre, which tend to be presentist (Brackets, 2016).

If genre formation is enregisterment, then the creation of a genre depends on discourse in a speech chain. It is not enough for performers to create similar music; only through discourses about music will certain musical texts be grouped together and recognized as distinct from other groupings of musical texts. Lena (2012, 6)

draws the same conclusion: “a genre exists where there is some consensus that a distinctive style of music is being performed.” The dependence of genre on a speech chain is why “generic conventions . . . are constantly being modified by each new text that participates in the genre” (Brackett, 2016, 13): musical texts are themselves links in a speech chain, implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) linking certain signs (the stylistic characteristics of the text) with certain social meaning (the social categories inhabited by the performers, for example). However, they are not the only links in a speech chain; speech events involving fans, critics, musicians, marketers and other actors all contribute to the development of the genre, as Brackett himself notes.

Of course, if genres form through enregisterment, then they are registers. Crucially, a register is not a repertoire; it is the linkage between a repertoire and particular social meanings. Consequently, both the repertoire and meaning associated with a genre may change over time without being seen as a break in the genre. Conversely, the genre label can change without any corresponding change in repertoire or meaning (Agha, 2005). Music that was formerly considered rock can become pop, for example (Fornäs, 1995; Brackett, 2016).

Furthermore, different individuals may hold “competing models” of a register (Agha, 2005, 56). Different individuals may associate a genre with different musical characteristics—that is, with different repertoires—giving rise to genre debates (Rockwell, 2012). They could also associate a genre with the same repertoire, but disagree about which features are sufficient or necessary to invoke a genre (see Blommaert & Varis, 2011). And just as a genre’s repertoire can vary across individuals, so too can its meaning. As seen in the discussion of *carimbó chamegado* below, not all individuals associate the genre with *caboclo* ethnic identity.

Another consequence of this proposal is that the features that form a genre’s repertoire need not be musical; the repertoire may contain meaningful signs of any type. For example, the country music repertoire appears to include rhoticity: whereas American singers avoid rhoticity in most genres of popular music (Trudgill, 1983), the American country singers investigated by Duncan (2017) all produce coda [r] at least 60% of the time. Likewise, the difference between heavy metal and white metal lies not in musical characteristic but in subject matter, indicating that the latter genre’s evangelical themes form part of its repertoire (Moore, 2001).

If genres are registers, then they are linked to sociocultural meaning, a point that was mentioned but not defended above. Some genres seem to be transparently linked to social personae; for genres such as outlaw country, punk rock, and gangsta rap, the very name of the genre points to a specific social type. More broadly, psychological research has demonstrated that listeners associate different genres of music with social and psychological traits (*e.g.*, Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007; Shevy, 2008).

Through a genre’s social meaning, we can understand the relationship between genre and identity. Brackett (2016, 25), following Born & Hesmondhalgh (2000), distinguishes between *homologous* genre-audience relations, which are “most deeply felt and experienced as ‘natural’”, and *imaginary* relations, which “parallel those aspects of ourselves that we are conscious of learning how to ‘perform’.” From the perspective of enregisterment, homologous relations are those where the audience sees themselves (or is seen) as “matching” the persona linked to

a genre: the audience is recognized to have the characteristics associated with the persona. Although homologous relations are felt to be natural, they are not (Brackett, 2016): the link between genre and identity is the ideological output of a speech chain, however inevitable that link appears in retrospect.

Imaginary relations involve a mismatch between audience and persona: some of the characteristics of the persona are at odds with those of the audience. Importantly, both homologous and imaginary relations are subjective: individuals may disagree as to whether a given audience matches the persona linked to a genre. Consequently, all genre-audience relations are imaginary to some extent, existing not in the real world but in the minds of individuals. What distinguishes so-called imaginary relations from homologous ones is whether they are *felt* to be real.

Of course, an individual may produce or consume various genres of music. In some cases, they will have a more homologous relation with the persona associated with the genre; in other cases, they will have a more imaginary relation. By engaging in a homologous relation, an individual can reinforce aspects of their own identity (or the identity projected onto them). By engaging in an imaginary relation, an individual can take on aspects of an identity seen as different, which may “prefigure, crystallize or potentialize emergent, real forms of sociocultural identity” (Born & Hesmondhalgh, 2000, 35; Brackett 2016 refers to this as an *emergent* relation). Conversely, an individual engaging in an imaginary relation may dissociate themselves from the genre persona, as in parody, in order to reinforce their own identity or avoid undesired characteristics of another identity. Such an imaginary relation serves to “inscribe and reinscribe existing boundaries of self and other” (Born & Hesmondhalgh, 2000, 35; Brackett 2016 refers to this as an *exoticist* relation).

Through acts of identity, the meaning of a genre can change. If a group of individuals repeatedly engages in an imaginary relation with a genre, then eventually the genre may come to be associated with (the characteristics of) that group, changing its meaning. In this way, what was once a performative relation may become natural over time—an imaginary relation may become homologous. Conversely, homologous identification may serve to preserve the genre in its current form. In either case, “fantasies of identity continue to sustain the genre” (Gunn, 1999, 39).

Even as the meaning of a genre changes, so too may its repertoire. If the meaning and repertoire change in tandem, this may be interpreted as the birth of a new genre, rather than a continuation of the old genre. Brackett discusses the case of blues rock, a genre associated with White people. Blues rock, of course, is based on blues, a genre associated with Blackness. What originated as an exoticist relationship between White audiences and blues developed into a homologous relationship between White audiences and blues rock. In short, rather than blues itself becoming associated with Whiteness, it gave way to new genre associated with Whiteness.

Practically speaking, not all identity relations are equally available to the individual. Certain relations may be censured (*e.g.*, those subject to accusations of cultural appropriation), and institutions may aim to solidify one potential identification at the expense of another. Since both individual acts of identification and institutional constraints form part of the speech chain, we must attend to the role of both top-down and bottom-up forces in the development of a genre.

I have proposed that musical genres form through enregisterment, and are therefore registers themselves. This proposal accounts for (i) the ability of genres (or

their labels) to change; (ii) the fact that different individuals may disagree about the properties of a genre; (iii) the role of non-musical features in a genre; and (iv) the sociocultural associations of genres. Moreover, the analysis of genres as registers provides an account of the relation between genre and identity.

2 Case study: carimbó chamegado

To illustrate the proposal that genre formation is enregisterment, I present a case study of *carimbó chamegado*, also called *chamego*, an emergent genre spearheaded by Dona Onete.¹ Ionete da Silveira Gama, known by her stage name Dona Onete, is a singer-songwriter from Pará, a state in the North Region of Brazil largely covered by the Amazon rainforest. According to Lamen (2013), Pará “has historically been viewed as isolated and provincial” (133) and occupies a “liminal position on the periphery of the Brazilian nation” (150).

Dona Onete identifies as *cabocla* (G.Lab, 2021). The term *caboclo* (feminine: *cabocla*) historically referred to indigenous peoples, and then to those of partial indigenous heritage (Lisansky, 2008). However, *caboclo* is now a pejorative term associated with rurality and low socioeconomic status, akin to the English word *hick* (*ibid.*). Despite the history of the term, the categories *caboclo* and *indigenous* are today seen as mutually exclusive and even opposed, with indigenous peoples “understood as standing outside the [Brazilian] political economy, the [caboclo] standing precariously on its margins (Lamen, 2013, 147).

The caboclos’ marginalization goes beyond the socioeconomic. According to Adams *et al.* (2009, 4), “nationally, the caboclo represents an unfinished project of the creation of a Brazilian culture that broke with its European, African and Indigenous antecedents”. Given that the “founding myth of Brazilian nationality” presents the Brazilian nation as “the product of ‘racial admixture’ brought into being through the meeting of Europeans, Africans, and Amerindians” (Santos *et al.*, 2009, 798), Adams *et al.*’s claim effectively identifies *caboclos* as unfinished, imperfect Brazilian citizens. Thus, the caboclos are symbolically marginal as a representation of an imperfect past incarnation of the Brazilian nation.

As noted above, Dona Onete calls her music *carimbó chamegado*, identifying it as a subgenre of *carimbó*, a genre of music practiced in Pará. Along with *siriá*, *carimbó* is one of genres in Pará “most explicitly associated with blackness” (Lamen, 2013, 148). *Carimbó* has also been identified as a tradition “available for assembly as caboclo culture” (Nugent, 1997, 45). As we will see below, Dona Onete’s *carimbó chamegado* embraces the ethnic associations of *carimbó* while rejecting the marginalization of the caboclo.

¹The word *chamego* has a number of meanings: ‘very intimate friendship’, but also ‘excitement for a lustful act’ and ‘violent passion or irresistible physical attraction’ (these definitions are from the *Michaelis* dictionary). *Chamegado* is the perfect participle of *chamegar*, a verb derived from *chamego*.

2.1 Carimbó chamegado according to Dona Onete

Dona Onete has released three albums: *Feitiço Caboclo* in 2012, *Banzeiro* in 2017, and *Rebujo* in 2019.² She has also released two standalone singles, “Boto Namorador” (‘flirtatious dolphin’) and “Homenagem de Dona Onete para Rainha Soberana da Amazônia” (‘Dona Onete’s homage for [the] sovereign queen of Amazonia’). As discussed above, musical texts are links in a speech chain, since they implicitly musical characteristics with social meaning. However, many of Dona Onete’s lyrics explicitly describe her own music—that is, they *explicitly* link musical characteristics to social meaning. Consequently, these songs are expected to play a key role in the construction of carimbó chamegado, and will be a central focus of the analysis.

First, let us consider how Dona Onete defines the repertoire of carimbó chamegado. On the song “Carimbó Chamegado” from *Feitiço Caboclo*, Onete describes the genre as being performed on makeshift instruments built from materials available in the rural Amazon. These include a banjo made from a cooking pot, a wooden flute and viola, and percussion instruments made from animal skins and plants found in Amazonia. Onete also describes carimbó chamegado as a mixture of musical and cultural traditions of Pará, including lundu, bangué, carimbó, sirirá, tambor de nagô, and boi bumba.

On “Carimbó Arrepiado” (‘carimbó with goosebumps’, from *Rebujo*), Onete identifies the saxophone as another instrument of her carimbó while reaffirming the role of the banjo and of various percussion instruments mentioned on “Carimbó Chamegado.” Moreover, she specifies how carimbó chamegado is played: the drum has a strong thump, the banjo does an exciting dance, and the saxophone runs wild and improvises notes.

On “Vem Chamegar” (‘come *chamegar*’, from *Rebujo*), Onete defines carimbó in opposition to other genres, identifying *suingue* (‘swing’, understood in the context to refer to *chamego*, given the title of the song and the fact that *suingue* “swing” replaces *chamego* in the second verse) as something distinct from the Latin American genres of merengue, cumbia, zouk (a genre originating in the French Antilles), and chá-chá-chá. Thus, Onete excludes foreign influences from the repertoire of carimbó chamegado.

By and large, there is no explicit metacommentary on Dona Onete’s lyrics within those lyrics. However, the recurrence of certain themes across Dona Onete’s lyrics implicitly link those themes to the repertoire of carimbó chamegado. These implicit links are supplemented by Onete’s explicit commentary on her lyrics and in interviews and other fora.

One major theme of carimbó chamegado is love and sexuality, a theme present in the very name of the genre (see footnote 1). Indeed, songs about desire recur throughout her oeuvre, from *Feitiço Caboclo*’s “Poder da Sedução” (‘power of seduction’) to *Banzeiro*’s “No Sabor do Beijo” (‘in the taste of the kiss’) and *Rebujo*’s “Galante Sedutor” (‘gallant seducer’). Indeed, Onete asserts that the difference between carimbó chamegado and other types of carimbó is that the former “talks

²*Feitiço caboclo* means ‘caboclo spell’. *Banzeiro* and *rebujo* are both regional terms: a *banzeiro* is a wave caused by passing ships (Ferreira, 2016), and *rebujo* refers to debris from the bottom of a river that has been brought to the surface by the movement of fish (Natura, 2019).

about love, in a slower and very sensual rhythm” (Brasil Música e Artes, 2019).

A second major topic of Dona Onete’s lyrics is life in Pará, with songs about cuisine (e.g., “Jamburana”, about an herb used in the region’s cuisine), music popular in Pará (e.g., “Faceira”, an homage to other siriá and carimbó musicians), and various Paraense locales (e.g., “Lua Jaci”, where Onete recounts a night spent singing carimbó along the banks of the Guamá river). In her own words, she “talks about the waters, the river, the trees, the fruit, the magic . . . [she] takes a lot of inspiration from the people who live on the rivers” (G.Lab, 2021).

As for the meaning of carimbó chamegado, Onete links it to caboclo identity. On “Vem Chamegar,” she calls her *suíngue* a “nice caboclo rhythm,” and on “Carimbó Chamegado,” she sings, “[The] caboclo is a dancer / The caboclo is a musician . . . [The] caboclo is a composer,” identifying chamego as a music produced by caboclos. Furthermore, the caboclo is the object of chamego’s sexual themes: on “Fogo na Aldeia” (‘fire in the village’), Onete sings of “kissing a caboclo mouth.” Likewise, the song “Mistura Pai D’Égua” (‘cool mix’) closes with the lines “What caboclo beauty / He’s handsome, that caboclo.”

Furthermore, Dona Onete identifies both carimbó chamegado and caboclos themselves as the products of racial mixture. On “Carimbó Chamegado,” when singing the supposed origin story of her music, she says that “the Black man, White man, and Indian [*índio*] left everything mixed.” On the same song, however, she identifies the caboclo as the creator of carimbó chamegado, as discussed above. If chamego was created by caboclos, but is also a mixture created by “the Black man, White man, and Indian,” this implies that caboclos themselves are a mixture of Black, White, and indigenous influences.

Similarly, on “Mistura Pai D’Égua,” Onete describes her chamego as the outcome of a “cool mix / [that] happened in Pará / a mix of races / a mix of colors,” and specifically identifies it as *negro* (roughly ‘Black’), *loiro* (‘blond’), *moreno* (‘dark-haired’ or ‘dark-skinned’), *crioulo* (‘creole’ or ‘Black’), *mulato* (‘mulatto’), *mestiço* (‘mestizo’), and caboclo, in that order. By listing *caboclo* last in this list of racial descriptors, Dona Onete implicitly presents caboclos as a category encompassing the preceding racial terms. This is also implied by the dual categorization of carimbó chamegado: carimbó chamegado is caboclo, but it is also the product of racial mixture, insinuating that being caboclo means being the product of racial mixture. Furthermore, Pará is presented as the site of that mixture. Given that racial mixture is the founding myth of the Brazilian nation (Santos *et al.*, 2009), by presenting caboclos and Pará as the product and the site of racial mixture, Dona Onete identifies them as quintessentially Brazilian. In doing so, she creates a counternarrative that challenges the peripheral position of caboclos within Pará and of Pará within Brazil: Pará epitomizes Brazil, and the caboclo epitomizes Pará.

This section has presented carimbó chamegado as constructed by Dona Onete—that is, as presented in those links in the speech chain for which Dona Onete is responsible. The repertoire of carimbó chamegado includes instruments such as the banjo, the flute, the viola, the saxophone, and various percussion instruments. It also includes elements of other genres of Pará while eschewing foreign influences. The repertoire is also characterized by lyrics about love and sexuality on the one hand, and about life in Pará on the other. The genre is linked to a caboclo persona.

The persona is associated with sexual desire—specifically, it is presented as the object of that desire—and is identified as racially mixed. This implicitly links the caboclo persona to Brazilianness, alongside a more transparent connection to Pará.

2.2 The transmission of carimbó chamegado

Let us now turn to the transmission of carimbó chamegado beyond the words and music of Dona Onete. I make no attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of discourse about carimbó chamegado. The goal of the present section is to demonstrate how to analyze genre through the lens of enregisterment, specifically by examining how a genre is constructed and transmitted in a speech chain. Given these goals, it is sufficient to consider only a small section of that speech chain.

Many aspects of carimbó chamegado as presented in Dona Onete's music are recirculated in the descriptions of her albums provided on Bandcamp, though sometimes with modifications. These album descriptions are written in English, a language that Dona Onete does not speak, and refer to Dona Onete in the third person, so it is unlikely that Onete is directly responsible for their content. Rather, they were likely written by someone working at Dona Onete's record label, Mais Um, which is based in the United Kingdom.

The album descriptions identify sexual lyrics as part of the genre's repertoire. The page for *Feitiço Caboclo*, for example, describes how her "songs talk about the delights of seducing men" (Mais Um Discos, 2020), while the page for *Banzeiro* says, "Whether she's... singing about the delights of indecent proposals or praising a former lover for his 'crazy ways of making love', Banzeiro is defined by Onete's honest reflections on life, love and sex" (Mais Um Discos, 2017).

Likewise, the album descriptions recapitulate Onete's depiction of carimbó chamegado as a mixture of various musical genres, for example referring to it as a "hybrid genre" (Mais Um Discos, 2020). That said, the Bandcamp descriptions differ in what they present carimbó chamegado as a hybrid of. The descriptions for both *Banzeiro* and *Rebujo* read, "the music [Dona Onete] sings is a unique mix of rhythms from native Brazilians, African slaves and the Caribbean" (Mais Um Discos, 2017, 2019). This contrasts with the description of the genre on "Vem Chamegar," which opposed chamego to cha-cha-chá and merengue, genres of Caribbean origin. Thus, the Bandcamp descriptions assign a place to Caribbean influences, whereas Dona Onete excluded them.

The preceding quotation also demonstrates the theme of racial mixing: carimbó chamegado is a "mix of rhythms from native Brazilians, [and] African slaves." Although European influence is absent from this description, it is invoked on the description for *Feitiço Caboclo*: "Onete sings carimbó, an indigenous rhythm and dance from Pará... influenced by both African and European traditions" (Mais Um Discos, 2020). Thus, the album descriptions present Dona Onete's music as a fusion of indigenous, African and European influences, although they tend to focus on the indigenous and African aspects of the music.

The Bandcamp descriptions also reproduce the importance of Amazonian culture. However, unlike in Dona Onete's music, the emphasis is on the Amazon as a whole rather than on Pará specifically. The only reference to Pará itself is in the above quotation, where carimbó is referred to as "an indigenous rhythm and dance

from Pará.” Elsewhere, Dona Onete is described as the “Queen of the Amazon” (Mais Um Discos, 2019) and “an ambassador of Amazonian culture” (Mais Um Discos, 2017, 2019), and is said to sing about “her delight in the everyday pleasures of life in the Amazon” (Mais Um Discos, 2017). This contrasts with Onete’s music, which—with one exception—never mentions the Amazon river or Amazonia and does not, to my knowledge, reference any place in the Amazon outside of Pará.³

Most egregiously, the Bandcamp descriptions make no mention of caboclos, with the word only occurring in the name of the album *Feitiço Caboclo* and its title track. Whereas Dona Onete’s music combatted the marginalization of caboclos, the album descriptions reproduce that marginalization, erasing caboclos from the presentation of Dona Onete’s music.

The genre is reconfigured yet again on the album reviews left by Bandcamp users. The themes of sexuality and racial mixing are absent from the reviews, and although one review preserves the theme of musical hybridity, it describes Dona Onete’s music as a “mix of quite raw sounding Brazilian Carimbo [*sic*] with some full production samba,” which is not a characterization that I have seen Dona Onete use for her music.

Additionally, as on the Bandcamp album descriptions, the reviews make no specific reference to Pará. Instead, they reference the Amazon, for example calling Onete the “Musa da Amazônia” (‘Muse of Amazonia’), or Brazil as a whole, as in a review of *Banzeiro* calling it “one of the most energetic and fun albums Brazil has given us in the past 10 years.” Likewise, there are no references to Caboclos in the album reviews.

Brazilian journalism describes carimbó chamegado fairly similarly. Multiple articles discuss the hybridity of carimbó chamegado, with one describing Dona Onete as making “carimbó, guitarrada [another genre practiced in Pará], samba” (Araujo, 2012), another describing her as making “carimbó, lundu, siriá and other roots genres from the Brazilian North” (Wanderley, 2016). Some articles also reaffirm the role of lyrics about sexuality, with one describing her as singing “subjects that go from love to religion, passing through the rural world” (Araujo, 2012).

However, like the Bandcamp descriptions and user reviews, Brazilian press coverage sometimes diverges from Dona Onete’s own characterization of her music. One writer describes her as a singer of boleros (Mans, 2019). Although Dona Onete says that her music includes boleros, that is certainly not the only style of music she produces (Wanderley, 2016). Another writer highlights Caribbean influences on Dona Onete’s music, contrasting the characterization established by Dona Onete herself (Muniz, 2021). And many writers link Dona Onete’s music to the Amazon more broadly, rather than Pará specifically (Wanderley, 2016; Gabriel, 2018; Mans, 2019). This contrasts with Dona Onete’s own attitude: she only says that she is from the Amazon (rather than Pará specifically) as a necessary concession to foreigners, who “mix up everything” (Wanderley, 2016). Additionally, most articles do not mention caboclos whatsoever.

Thus, as carimbó chamegado circulates, both its repertoire and its meaning are changing. For some individuals, the repertoire has expanded to include Caribbean

³The exception is “Homenagem de Dona Onete para Rainha Soberana da Amazônia.” The “sovereign queen” of song’s title is the Virgin Mary.

influences. Additionally, the lyrical theme of life in Pará has been replaced with a one of life in the Amazon more broadly. And for most individuals, the genre has lost its link to a caboclo persona, instead being associated with Amazonian-ness, or even with Brazilian-ness.

3 Discussion

I have argued that genre formation is enregisterment; this in turn entails that genres are registers. In other words, genres are sociocultural linkages between a semiotic repertoire and certain social meanings, and are constructed and transmitted in a “speech” chain (which may include non-linguistic texts such as songs).

I have illustrated this proposal through a brief presentation of a genre known as *carimbó chamegado*. As presented by Dona Onete, its main practitioner, the genre’s repertoire is characterized by instruments such as the saxophone and banjo; the fusion of different genres of Pará; and lyrics about sexuality and life in Pará. This repertoire is linked to a caboclo persona, associated with sexual desire, racial mixture, and Brazilian identity.

The genre has changed as it has circulated. For some, its repertoire has expanded to include Caribbean influences. Furthermore, for most individuals, the genre is no longer connected to a caboclo persona, and is not associated with Pará in particular. Instead, it has come to be associated with the Amazon more broadly, or even with Brazil as a whole.

The extension of enregisterment to musical genre has consequences for our understanding of enregisterment itself. As implied by the name, *carimbó chamegado* is a subgenre of *carimbó* (Gabriel, 2018). But if a genre is a register, what is a subgenre? The relationship between genre and subgenre does not reduce to subset-hood: both the repertoire and social meaning of the subgenre may differ from that of the “parent” genre. For example, *carimbó chamegado* differs from other *carimbó* in its lyrical focus on sexuality. Instead, the relation between a genre and its subgenre appears to be ideological. During the enregisterment of the subgenre, it is identified as an instantiation—another “level” (Brackett, 2016)—of the parent genre, despite differences in form and meaning. We can refer to this process as *nested enregisterment*, since it nests one register within another, and refer to its outcomes as the sub-register (a subgenre, in the context of music) and the super-register.

Nested enregisterment is not limited to musical genre. For example, consider the following discussion of accent identification (Wells, 1982; in Agha, 2003, 233)

... a Liverpool working-class accent will strike a Chicagoan primarily as being British, a Glaswegian as being English, an English southerner as being northern, an English northerner as being Liverpudlian, and a Liverpudlian as being working-class.

As Agha notes, none of the descriptions of the accent are wrong, but rather reflect different levels of geographical specificity. Under the present perspective, the same speech can belong to multiple registers, because one register can exist “within” another: working-class Liverpudlian English is a subregister of Liverpudlian English, which is a subregister of northern English, which is a subregister of the English of England, which is a subregister of British English.

The present example also motivates an extension of the notion of a speech chain. As discussed above, a speech chain is a “historical series of speech events” such that “the receiver of the message in the (n)th speech event is the sender of the message in the (n+1)th speech event” (Agha, 2003, 247). As Agha discusses, this notion is complicated by the fact that *receiver* and *sender* are not individuals, but roles. A speech event may be produced by multiple individuals, and may be heard by multiple individuals—in other words, multiple individuals may occupy the sender role or receiver role of a single speech event.

Even with this complication in mind, the idea of the speech chain must be extended to account for the present data. As argued above, musical texts form links in a speech chain. Most albums of music consist of multiple musical texts (*i.e.*, multiple songs). Consequently, texts about an album—for example, the descriptions of Dona Onete’s albums on Bandcamp, or reviews of her albums in the media—simultaneously respond to multiple speech events. In the case of an album, these multiple speech events are effectively simultaneous (although some musical texts may have a prior life as singles), but this need not be the case. For example, one may argue that user reviews on Dona Onete’s Bandcamp page respond both to Dona Onete’s music, and to the descriptions of her music on the Bandcamp page—which themselves respond to Dona Onete’s music. And although multiple individuals may share the receiver role of a speech event, they might not share the sender role of a subsequent event. That is, a single speech event may spawn multiple responses, each with different individuals occupying the role of sender. The proliferation of senders and receivers is likely part of the reason that different individuals come to have different models of a register.

Given these considerations, a speech chain cannot be a linear sequence of senders and receivers, even with the caveat that multiple individuals may occupy the role of sender or receiver. Instead, a speech chain is better represented as a directed acyclic graph, as in Figure 1. The nodes in the graph are speech events, and the edges (the lines connecting the nodes) represent the change of role from receiver to sender. Thus, the arrow from S_1 to R_1 indicates that a receiver of speech event S_1 is the sender of speech event R_1 . Given the nature of the response relationship—if speech event A is a response to speech event B (or a response to a response to B, *etc.*), then speech event B cannot be a response to A—the speech chain is acyclic.

Additionally, I argued in section 1 that genre repertoires need not consist only of musical signs. Lyrics, linguistic features, fashion choices, even orthographic choices can figure in a genre’s repertoire. This was a prediction of the definition of a register. A register links social meaning to a *semiotic* repertoire; the repertoire need not be purely musical. Nor, of course, need it be purely linguistic. Consequently, the linguist must consider the possibility that non-linguistic features figure in a register’s repertoire. Without this awareness, they may fall into the trap of categorizing a speaker’s language based not on its own characteristics, but on the characteristics of the speaker.

Finally, although the present paper has focused on the enregisterment of musical genre, the framework can be extended to other cultural forms, as discussed in section 1. For example, it is likely that styles of dance can also be enregistered (Ainoa Martínez Cuervo, p.c.). Recognizing this commonality among various cultural forms—they are all registers, formed through enregisterment—facilitates the

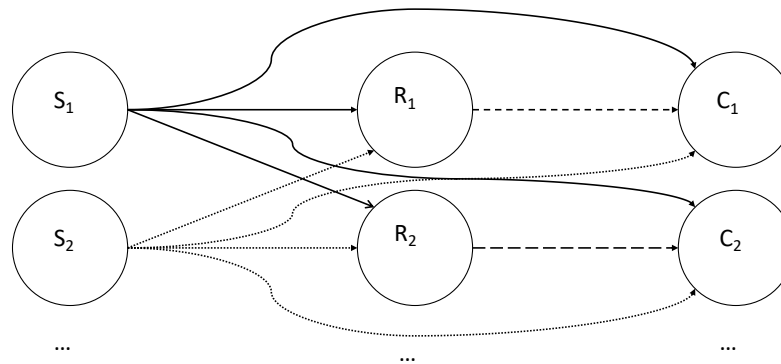


Figure 1: A representation of a hypothetical speech chain. To make the figure clearer, different line styles (solid, dotted, dashed) are used for edges from different nodes. The choice of line style has no other significance.

transmission of knowledge across academic domains: what is true of one type of register (say, a linguistic register) may be true of another type (say, a musical genre). Thus, the extension of enregisterment started here may help development a holistic, interdisciplinary view of culture, society, and individual identity.

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