

## CHAPTER 33

# “Porno para Ricardo: Rock, Analchy and Transition”

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*Abstract: This article does an analysis of punk-rock group Porno Para Ricardo, analyzing their musical proposal and doing a contextualization of their performance, in a transition process to a post-totalitarian regime. According to the main theorists of political regimes, in the post-totalitarianism exists, along with the official culture, a complex underground culture that could result in a resistance movement to the system. Porno Para Ricardo is conceptualized in what James Scott names the "infrapolítica of helpless" because they express their opposition to the Cuban regime through their proposal and musical performance. When we refer to speech infrapolítica of PPR, we are talking about those elements that the group used to express their anger: the reappropriation and mockery of national symbols and those associated to the ideology of the Cuban regime and the leaders of the Revolution.*

The contemporary Cuban society has taken on new codes and a post-revolutionary identity in which the ideological discourse is a thing of the past, as has been the need to take on new values associated with the free market to survive, in most of the cases, illegal in an economy that is sustained on the basis of supply and demand. Over the past decade, it was common for people to express their discontent through what James Scott called “disguised forms of resistance:” gossip, rumor, whisper, anonymity and gestures.<sup>1</sup> While such practices persisted strongly, recently observed a large number of social subjects that move and develop outside the State, assuming a more critical towards the Cuban regime.

In music there is a change in the discourse of the resistance that goes to the metaphor of open confrontation. In the nineties appeared in the Cuban music scene songs that, for all metaphorical resources containing,

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1. Scout, James, *El arte de la resistencia*, México, Era, 2000, chapter VI

and even novelty were marked an era. We all knew who was concerned when he sang Pedro Luis Ferrer “Mi grandfather (Paco) built this house with great sacrifice, to move a birdseed, you have to ask for permission” “Mi abuelo (Paco) hizo esta casa con enormes sacrificios, para mover un alpiste hay que pedirle permiso”. Similarly, when Carlos Varela sang “Guillermo Tell your son is grown up, he wants to throw the arrow. It’s his turn to show his courage...” Thousands of young people identified with the small Tell and were represented their disgruntled and experiences in songs like “Todos se roban” y “Memorias.”

In 1998 Gorki Aguila founded in Havana la banda punk-rock Porno For Ricardo, with Ciro Diaz on bass, David Luis Gonzalez on drums and Oscar Pita on guitar. The first songs were a reflection of what we were interested to express and share with the public: sex, irreverence and mockery. In the self-production “E’ pol tu culpa” (2001) one of the most popular songs was “Marlen y Tatiana,” which talks about the lesbian love relationship between the protagonists who, innocent and ignorant, taking pills become not pregnant. In the volumen *Rock para las masas carnicas* main topics are blow jobs and sexual pleasure of Ricardo (who actually in a plastic artists 36 years and is a very close friend of Gorky):

...Soy un hombre sencillo, amante de damas con bastante fondillo,  
Señoras gordas no se me acomplejen si paso por su lado y me les  
arrodillo... Y dejo de pajearme, salgo a la calle en busca de barrigas, eso  
es lo que sobra, mujeres gordas, pero falta la pornografía. Paco señor  
que estas en los cielos, mándame una gorda ahora mismo que me  
muero...<sup>2</sup>

Another of the recurring themes in the performance of Porno For Ricardo is the former Soviet Union, whether it’s based on appropriating the symbol of communism, or the “russian cubanism” of the song of the animated series for children, *Musicians of Bremen*, Mocks the group, while rejecting the imposition of Soviet culture that lived in Cuba, especially in the seventies. Hence, in the concerts it was common for Gorki Aguila broke Russian guitars, as a way to break with the past. The theme “International,” resumed the music of the Socialist International to march

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2. Porno Para Ricardo, “Ricardo para Porno”, *Rock para las masas... (cárnicas)*, La Habana, Producido por Abel González Rodríguez, 2002.

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to the square by individuals who are rarely acknowledged their existence in socialist societies: drug addicts, homosexuals, mentally ill, hungry, with their faces indecent are greeted by the prime minister and the human slate, while a woman with breast outside, carrying the flag...<sup>3</sup>

The sexually explicit messages, the vulgarity in the lyrics, the provocative name of the group, as well as its logo (a vaginal penetration, made on the basis of the symbol of the hammer and sickle), it caused serious problems to Gorki Aguila, who refused to follow the lines morally and politically correct or even suggested, at the insistence of the authorities, which could rename the group and call Porno Para Rodrigo or Porno Para Roberto, so as not prove as provocative, although the authorities did not understand the irony of Gorki.<sup>4</sup>

In April 2003 during the Festival Pinar Rock, Gorky was arrested and taken to Destacamento Cinco, Provincial Prison in Pinar del Rio, where he was convicted of drug trafficking (and shared cell with real drug dealers retail), a trial in which the prosecution failed to provide evidence against the musician and, according to a press release issued in September 2003, the police only was based on the complaint of an assistant to the concert, whom he accused of having sold Gorki a pill. Gorky's lawyer had only ten minutes to deliver his statement and to date, the only evidence against Gorki are two tablets of methamphetamine and three Cuban pesos. According Gorki, who shared the cell with drug dealers to retail, he put them to police the situation on a silver platter, because at that time had not become aware of their situation and the repercussions that the group could suffer to make a speech morally and politically wrong.<sup>5</sup>

To date, se cree que was a cause for armed lift Gorki of the music scene, make you lose credibility and weaken it as a person and as a musician. Nevertheless, in 2004 Gorki was nominated for the award annual "Index of Censorship" in London, England, in the musical category, the prize was eventually awarded to pianist Daniel Barenboim.

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3. Porno Para Ricardo, "La Internacional", *Rock para las masas... (cárnicas)*, La Habana, Producido por Abel González Rodríguez y La Paja Records, 2002

4. Gorki Aguila interviewed by this autor, La Havana, September, 2007

5. Gorki Aguila, interviewed by this autor, La Havana, september, 2007

On March 16, 2005 Gorki was released on a conditional, in appalling health conditions. Meanwhile, Ciro Diaz, guitarist and creator of the concept of the group along with Gorky, was unable to enroll in the Graduate in Mathematics at the University of Havana, not only for his musical activity in Porno Para Ricardo, but by critics who exercised against the university authorities in his division trova music.

Since the release of Gorki, the group recomposes Gonzalez with Hebert Gonzalez on bass and Renay Kairus on drums and Ciro Diaz, formerly bassist, takes up the guitar. In the summer of 2006 brought to light the diptych *A mí no me gusta la política, pero yo le gusto a ella compañeros* y *Soy Porno, soy Popular*<sup>6</sup> most of the 43 tracks are a reflection of circumstances that Porno Para Ricardo has had to face, once it has assumed an irreverent speech, that certainly was not in the group's founding objectives, as expressed in the song “La Política:”

cuando hice el piquete de Porno Para Ricardo siempre me dije no ser  
contestatorio, con el tema del sexo es bastante, no hace falta ser un mili-  
tante. Pero a los putos policías les picaba el fundillo por ponerme otro  
apellido. Me dijeron eres un farsante, ya lo tuyo es bastante...<sup>7</sup>

The change in the lyrics is because, as pointing Gorki Aguila, “it is time to call a spade a spade,” as already tired of the insinuations with poetic lyrics: “What interests us more say in our letters is that we live in hell has a name and surname: Fidel Castro Ruz. I do not need any resources poetic to say.”<sup>8</sup>

The first songs of Porno Para Ricardo, faithful to the essence of punk-rock, looking across the irreverence, lead to good conscience, morality and good taste; their obscene lyrics, and the continued eschatological referent, use of drugs, and rejection can cause discomfort for those who are not familiar with the punk philosophy, as this, while expression of transgression, looking for “free itself from the aesthetic corsets and oppres-

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6. Both produced un Havana, by La Paja Records, 2006

7. Porno Para Ricardo, “La Política”, *A mí no me gusta la política, pero yo le gusto a ella compañeros*, La Habana, La Paja Records, 2006

8. Porno Para Ricardo, interview with Petr Placak, Encuentro en la Red, [www.cubaencuentro.com](http://www.cubaencuentro.com), August 29, 2006

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sion; the authority and disagree with the conventional society, as well as the social stigma.”<sup>9</sup>

The punk movement, to be critical of their society and those who govern, the majority of cases assumes political and ideological positions, which can range from anarchism to socialism. In the case of Porno Para Ricardo, to make a critical social and the political system more explicit, in which the revolution and its leaders are the focus of mockery, his speech assumes political position, which rejects the dogma, as well as the ideology imposed by power. This exercise of criticism and rejection is expressed through the mockery to the institutions and their leaders at all levels; undoubtedly the most popular song is “El Coma-andante” for his irreverent and as a regular target Fidel Castro, to express the fatigue which has its presence;

El Comandante quiere que yo trabaje, pagándome un salario miserable.  
El Comandante quiere que yo lo aplauda, después de hablar su mierda delirante. No Comandante, no coma usted esa pinga Comandante. El Comandante, hace unas elecciones, que las inventó el pa’ perpetuarse.  
El Comandante quiere que vaya y vote para seguir jodiéndome bastante... Si quiere que yo vote, ponga un barco pa’ pirarme. No Comandante, no coma tanta pinga Comandante.<sup>10</sup>

At the same time they make fun of his condition ostracism ("the Asociación Hermanos Saiz has asked us that we affiliation;" "We have not given concerts on the island because we are in an international tour," "Today has not concert, tomorrow it"), focused its mockery in the former president of Asociación Hermanos Saiz, Alpidio Alonso, who put in ridiculous in the song “Comunista Chivatón” where they questioned the intellectual capacity and skills poet Alonso, as well as minimizing their role as official culture “(Alpidio Alonso) escribe unos versos que nadie quiere oírlos porque son muy malos, le va mejor el rol de chivatón ...El singa’o comunista chivatón, si algún día fue poeta yo ese día fui escultor...”<sup>11</sup>

On another topic, Porno Para Ricardo wondered how not laughing at Asociación Hermanos Saiz, for membership because it is not necessary

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9. Punk philosophy, [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

10. “El Coma-andante,” *A mí no me gusta la política, pero yo le gusto a ella compañeros.*

intelligence, but simply repeat the speech *Del papa cucaracha* and benefited así leave:

Pero mi vida, pero mi cielo, pero yo quiero viajar al extranjero. ¿Cómo no me voy a reír de la Asociación Hermanos Saíz? Hay una cosa muy fea que pasa en las cloacas de todo el sistema. Hay ratas rojas y verdes, serpientes con barba que se dan la lengua. Unas llegan a presidente, las otras las pobres, se van a la cazuela... ¿Cómo no me voy a reír de la Asociación Hermanos Saíz?<sup>12</sup>

The seizure of power by Raúl Castro and speculation about the alleged reforms to be undertaken, are matters of the latest issue of the band, since the September 2007, and spoke of the succession process would occur in February this year:

Al fin el general se hizo comandante, al fin el general ya está en primer lugar... A su hermano se le cae la barba y los dientes, dicen que tiene cáncer, dicen que ya ni siente.. Raúl, Raúl tira los tanques, para que el pueblo se levante. Raúl, Raúl, es un farsante, a ti no hay quien te aguante. El es un mentiroso, él es un buscapleitos, él no sabe dar discursos, a él le dieron ese puesto. La gente se pregunta que es lo que va a pasar, pero con Raúl al frente la mierda sigue igual.<sup>13</sup>

Porno doesn't like politics but...once they made public the cd's *A mí no me gusta la política*, *pero yo le gusto a ella compañeros* y *Soy Porno*, *soy Popular* the discourse of “Porno Para Ricardo” suffers from two substantial changes: public discourse is made of rejection and opposition to the political system, which was kept in the privacy of home and family or within the circle of friends; discourse is radicalized as the main theme the songs are not only sex, drugs and libido, but the political authorities and agencies. The speech was made public by hiding the condition of not having nothing to lose and, above all, for having lost their fear, as expressed

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11. “Comunista chivatón,” *A mí no me gusta la política...* Alpidio Alonso Grau, engineer aged 45, was national president of the Asociación Hermanos Saíz, from 2001 to 2006; he has published four books of poetry. Is currently vice president of the Instituto Cubano del Libro.

12. “Preste a rata,” *A mí no me gusta la política...*

13. “El General,” *Porno Para Ricardo*, home video made by this autor, La Havana, September, 2007

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Gorki Aguila, “Yo ya perdì el miedo, yo ya caì preso y de eso solo me quedan unos cuantos huesos.”<sup>14</sup> As reads the same philosophy of punk: “The punk is the constant struggle against fear of social repercussions.”<sup>15</sup>

The radicalization of Porno Para Ricardo has resulted who has been prohibited from playing in public, which are not invited to play in the various rock festivals that there are throughout the country, which are not included in the radio and music programming that regularly receive subpoenas, where Gorky, principally, has been subjected to lengthy and tedious interrogations aimed at chasing him and exhausted. This prohibition and seeking the annulment by authoritarian decree, Porno For Ricardo refuses to follow the trend of the group Change, one of which enjoy greater promotion by the authorities, thus giving an image of greater tolerance towards rock, a genre Since the seventies has been a source of persecution in Cuba, associated to “diversionismo ideològico” and American ideological penetration, so that, even when in Havana since a few years ago there is a statue of John Lennon, thirty years ago was forbidden to listen to the Beatles

When Porno Para Ricardo made public his speech intolerance and repression, the Asociación Hermanos Saiz, at that time headed by Alpidio Alonso, decided to close all the spaces to the group, for precisely that speech can not be heard, shared, and probably imitated . Therefore, one of the major impacts suffered Porno For Ricardo is in relation to space, public space and space radio, as it is in the public space where the discourse has the option to multiply and create bonds of solidarity.

In Havana there is a gap in options for youth have expressed places. Park G, or Avenue of the Presidents, located in the Vedado, has been in the last ten years or so, a reunion centre at weekends, for hundreds of young people who spend the night drinking and, at best cases, with guitars and singing. G a public space was first conquered by the frikis, but now, as a reflection of the very few options available to young people for fun, has been taken over by young people regardless of their musical identity.

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14. “Comunistas de las gran escena,” *A mi no me gusta la política...*”

15. Philosophy of punk, [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

One of the most emblematic for the Cuban rock was the “Patio de Marià.” Maria Gattorno, graduated in art history from fifty-eight years, is a pioneer of the movement rocker on the island, as well as the first debates and exhibitions of tattoos. “El Patio de Maria” (officially known as Community House) was located in the streets of 37 and Paseo, in Vedado, hosted cultural events as precursors “TatuArte” and “Rock vs. Side,” both held in 1996. From 1987 until 2003, the courtyard was the preferred forum for the rock concerts and a meeting place for young frikies as well as an option alternates to the State, (even though it came from, the dynamics of the place was creation of Mary Gattorno, so that gradually the Patio acquired its own identity) where they could present live rock bands and also the post was charged in local currency. However, was closed by the authorities, who claimed that the place was conducive to corrupt youth drug use by some of those who attended. Mary Gattorno was removed from the leadership of Patio and advises allocated in the Provincial Directorate of Culture. The closure of “Patio de Marià” contextualizes within the “Plan Coraza.” in which it appears that rockers were part of the objectives of the authorities to carry it out, not only because Gorki was taken to prison, but also were expelled youth Park G, raids by police at the scene.

For a rock band can access places to rehearse and concerts should be belong to the Asociaciòn Hermanos Saíz (AHS), the agency responsible for promoting, both inside and outside Cuba, cultural expressions of youth under 35 years. In music, AHS promotes more impetus rap, trova and rock, but this Association, which describes itself as non-governmental, economically dependent of the Union of Jovenes Comunistas, (UJC), and therefore it is the one that dictates the political guidelines - ideological, and even moral, to be followed so that artists can be supported, and with it access to some material resources, in the Cuban case, only the state can provide, as is the sound equipment belonging to the AHS, which has a capacity of 15000 watts.

For this reason, many groups have decided to make a speech complacent with the authorities or do covers of hits by groups in North America and also sing in English, as in the case of Hypnosis. It is not our intention to do a critique on the music group trend, but we must point out that the leader of the gang, Kiko, is the provincial chairman of the AHS in the

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province of Pinar del Rio, where they are responsible for the realization Pinar Rock Festival (started in 1996) and King Metal (2001).

Faced with the rise of rock in Cuba, the AHS formed the Agencia Cubana de Rock (ACR) in July 2007 (directed by Maxyuri Avila, former manager of Hypnosis), which is responsible for promoting, disseminating and marketing to groups are in their catalog, as Trend, Hypnosis, Zeus, Agonizer, Chlover, Mágnum and Escape. To become part of the catalog of the Agency Cuban Rock groups have to do an audition, only we do not know the members that are part of the commission, and we do not know if they are rock musicians or party cadre.

Belonging to the AHS and the Agencia Cubana de Rock is a great advantage because it organizes the last Thursday of Rock in the Rose Garden of the Tropical Beach in the neighborhood and on weekends organizes concerts at Club Atelier, in the Vedado. They organized the concert that took place on December 28, 2007 in the same park G, which touched Zeus, Hypnosis and Trend. Therefore, if one group does not belong to the AHS or ACR, it has to find their own spaces, which will be underground or alternative locations. Tribuna Antimperialista Jose Marti (located in Malecon and Linea, in Vedado, a side of the Interests of the United States Office) has also served as a stage for presentations rock groups, and in fact the ACR was officially inaugurated with a concert in the Tribune, where touched Hypnosis, Chlover and Zeus.

Porno Para Ricardo prefer not to have concerts to be free from political and ideological standards of organizations dealing, as they say in his song:

Porno pa' Ricardo no toca en la Tribuna cuando la mentira de la dictadura. Porno pa' Ricardo no saluda a la bandera de los comunistas de la gran escena. No sigo la tendencia del grupo Tendencia, me hace vomitar tanta reverencia. No tengo nada que ganar, nada que perder, siempre lucho así, contra el poder.<sup>16</sup>

In the case of Porno Para Ricardo, organizing their own concert "Fiesta Antibloqueo," December 8, 2007, in a semi-abandoned cinema

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16. Porno Para Ricardo, "Comunistas de la gran escena", *A mí no me gusta la política, pero yo le gusto a ella compañeros*, La Habana, Producciones La Paja Records, 2006.

## “Porno para Ricardo: Rock, Analchy and Transition”

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Beach neighborhood. This was his first live concert since he took Gorki prisoner. The concert was performed with the group's own resources, and was promoted a few hours before under strict security measures. One night earlier, Gorki distributed some leaflets in the Park G, which announced the concert under the listing “Coming without masturbating.” Despite the inability to perform in public spaces, Porno Para Ricardo was able to show, at no cost, for two hours in front of an audience of about 50 people. The group’s objective was to demonstrate that you can do things outside the State, without authorities through. They prepared the old movie, with a few tables that did dais, with his own sound equipment and posters, made by the same Gorky, which read: “The only cuban rock movement I Know is when I am fucking and I listen to rock and roll” y también “Porno Para Ricardo, first non gobermental rock band”<sup>17</sup>

This group of punk-rock has no goals to speak freely and to concerts where their convenience, although his cause can be identified with the aspirations of millions of Cubans, Porno For Ricardo is not intended anything else ...

...ratificar nuestro juramento inquebrantable de lucha por la causa que nos de la gana. Juramos no serle fiel a ningún partido, a no ser el propio, el individual. No somos de izquierda, ni de derecha, ni de en medio. No queremos marchar, mas bien reposar, sentir placer; que la política del presente sea el placer... Por eso no queremos ser eternos, ni asociarnos a ninguna asociación, no valga la redundancia...Lema: Un mundo mejor es imposible, con tanta tiranía, tanta hambre y sin pornografía.<sup>18</sup>

Tag Porno Para Ricardo as dissidents or opponents in somewhat risky because they did not directly propose ways politicians, do not identify with an organization for social or political, nor his artistic work can be associated with a cause of what is euphemistically in Cuba is called civil society. Thus, we propose that, in an attempt to conceptualize Porno Para

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17. Porno Para Ricardo interviewed by this autor, La Havana, december, 2007. Check also, “Concierto y desafío”, Encuentro en la Red, [www.cubaencuentro.com](http://www.cubaencuentro.com), january 15, 2008.

18. Porno Para Ricardo, “Comunicado Manifiesto”, *A mí no me gusta la política, pero yo le gusto a ella compañeros*, La Habana, Producciones La Paja Records, 2006. El lema de Porno Para Ricardo es una versión burlesca del lema de la Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas: “Un mundo mejor es posible”.

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Ricardo as a cultural project, it is wiser to talk in terms of social resistance, which gradually so the actors involved are stripping of the costumes that accompany any political culture, to make public a hidden speech, the discourse of resistance. Porno Para Ricardo is part of what James Scott calls the “infrapolítica” of the helpless,<sup>19</sup> to refer to the struggle that deaf subordinated groups waging a daily basis beyond the visible spectrum, from social movements and large demonstrations. The performance of Porno Para Ricardo is precisely “infrapolítica” which uses music, costumes and bombings against symbols of the dominant players, to develop a form of resistance declared public.

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19.Scout, James, *op. cit.*

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