Crying Jellyfish.[1] Capicua[2] at the Crossroads of Artistic Labour and Critical Pedagogies during the Pandemic

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Abstract

Our goal is to bring the artistic and scientific perspective into dialogue, linking them to a form of critical pedagogy. Our spokesperson is the researcher and rapper Ana Matos Fernandes, also known as Capicua. Through her writings, we were able to explain and understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on artistic, cultural and creative work and how those moments could make way to a form of critical pedagogy. Moreover, we propose to overcome the conventional barriers between the social sciences, which tend to be perceived as being the fruit of an arbitrary nature and a product of scholastic reproduction. We also argue that one of the main errors of the social sciences today concerns the uncontrolled relationship maintained by the researcher with the object of study, ignoring everything that the vision of the object gives to the researcher within the social space and within the scientific field itself.

Keywords: rap, hip-hop, artistic and creative work, critical pedagogy, Capicua, COVID-19

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[2] Capicua is the artistic name of Ana Matos Fernandes. She affirmed her presence in the hip-hop world and within the Portuguese music industry with the release of tracks such as "Vayorken" and "Maria Capaz". Over the last decade, she has been involved in numerous collaborations, and has been a crucial element in reducing the prejudices and stereotypes built about the hip-hop movement and rap music.

1. Prelude: There is No Room for the Silence

In our understanding, the arts and the social sciences have always walked with intertwined fingers. In this article, the experiences, and representations of an artist (and sociologist) will be interwoven with comments from a teacher and researcher (also a sociologist). Topics such as rap music, the artists and the global COVID-19 pandemic are unveiled, mainly through the pandemic's consequences and constraints. If we consider authors such as Ragin (2004) and the questions he raises about what constitutes social research, we view this work as a preamble to such questioning since we consider ourselves before a means of perception of society and, inherently, of social life in its broadest plurality. It is these small details, experiences and reflections that become urgent for us, as sociologists, to analyse. Our aim is to promote a union of forces and a union between two fields of action: the academic world and the artistic field. So, the reader can understand and immerse themselves in this dynamic, each section was written by the artist and author of this article (Capicua) in the first person singular, as these are personal experiences and narratives. This first section and the last two are written by Paula Guerra and follow the 'commentary model'. Obviously, the predominant theme is the pandemic, but words have the power to take us to other fields and, as we shall see, focus on other themes and sub-themes. These texts to be commented on refer to 'lessons from the pandemic', experienced through music, with pedagogical potential, so we see everyday life as a means of informal curriculum knowledge.

Thus, another goal of the article is to present the main theoretical and methodological assumptions of the contexts of (cultural) resistance in Portugal. The planned analysis will contain three texts written during the pandemic. We want to find out what elements of the social world Capicua criticize; what alternative visions of the world she proposes, and how she do it. We will seek to enhance a form of critical pedagogy and resistance anchored in music. O'Neill (2014) speaks of a transformative music engagement, with empowering capacities so that the actors, understood as active and producers of knowledge, reflect on the realities that are not close to them. In a simple way, we will define cultural resistance as a conscious or unconscious practice, successful or not, carried out with the purpose of attacking the dominant structures at a political, economic and social level (Freire, 2017; Duncombe, 2002; Guerra & Zanko, 2019). For Guerra and Feixa (2021), these resistance practices can have various forms and meanings: they can be songs, interventional texts, demonstrations, etc. The big issue is that they all create a space of freedom for the development of alternative ideas and practices, in short, a grammar of resistance.

Like Judt (2010), we consider protest to be at the heart of a free and open society; that democratic societies were built not on consensus, but on the basis

of the conflict of political ideas (Rancière, 2010). Mouffe (2000) argues that it is only with an antagonistic paradigm that a form of radical democracy can be achieved, which has at its core dissatisfaction with social reality. Disagreement with injustices must be seen as a way of capturing individuals into democratic spaces, whether they are marginalised youngsters or just people who are sceptical about politics. These democratic spaces should be free of asymmetrical power relations, and where the Other is seen as an opponent and not an enemy.

Thus, as stated previously (Guerra & Zanko, 2019), there is no democratic society without cultural resistance and without pedagogies of resistance. These pedagogies, which may occur in the educational space or not, are non-hegemonic forms of learning and discourse, with a key role in developing forms of resistance against the status quo. Therefore, in this article we analyse an example of critical public pedagogy, originally postulated by Giroux (2004). Its major goal is to achieve a radical, participatory and inclusive democracy, in opposition to the corporate public pedagogy of today's neoliberalism, which is basically a null or uncritical civic participation. This can only be achieved through progressive social and political transformations, with an emphasis on the critical social agency of individuals, on their capacity for action to change social problems and to create new democratic relations, new institutions and identities.

Loic Waquant and Bourdieu (1992) invite us to overcome the conventional barriers between the social sciences, perceived as being the fruit of an arbitrary nature and a product of scholastic reproduction. Going further, the authors argue that one of the main errors of the social sciences concerns an uncontrolled relationship maintained by the researcher with their object of study, ignoring everything that the vision of the object owes to the position occupied by the researcher in the social space and within the scientific field itself, and with this harming its unveiling and its adequate treatment (Guerra, 2020a). Thinking about this topic, it becomes possible to highlight some aspects that, in our understanding, are in line with what we have tried to do with the elaboration of this article – that is, to fight against an artificial division between theory and empirical research, to the extent that this posture has led some researchers not to have a relation with a specific empirical object. This leads some to adopt an exacerbated theoretical attitude and others to develop empirical research without reference to theoretical issues. In our case, we tried to combine these two realities, thus making sociology and art epistemological partners of knowledge about contemporary reality (Guerra, 2021; Guerra & Sousa, 2021; Silva *et al.*, 2018).

2. Virtual Realities[3]

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated time and change. Telework is an example of this. Imagined as science fiction for decades, it became possible a few years ago thanks to technology that was already widespread and disseminated. Yet it was only put into practice out of necessity during the lockdowns that came with the pandemic. Thus, in a few months, it went from a project (dreamt of, but postponed) to a contemporary thing of real life, of the common person. Something else that is coming up is the routine application of virtual reality, replacing the various immersive experiences that have now become inadvisable. Concerts, trips, football matches, plays are lived in a private simulacrum, in the comfort of one's home, as if we were there at the event, but without viruses or discomforts, and with a thousand new possibilities.

We will be able to see a concert just as it would happen at a festival, as faithfully as possible, with all the sensorial stimuli emulated by the interface, or choose to innovate, opting for a different experience, replacing the artist with an 'improved' avatar, changing the scenery or choosing the repertoire. It will be possible to see Madonna with red hair and dressed as a schoolboy, or Pavarotti with the body of a muscular 30-year-old, a Marilyn Manson with ET anatomy, or travel back in time to attend the Jimmy Hendrix concert at Woodstock as if we were there, with the smell of grass included. Another aspect to mention is holidays. Instead of paying thousands of euros for a flight of several hours and taking vaccinations for tropical diseases, we can travel to an island paradise for a week of virtual beach without leaving the sofa in the living room. Or even go to 1920s Paris, drink wine in the artists' bars and have great conversations with Hemingway, just like in Woody Allen's film *Midnight in Paris*. In fact, we could go on holiday to a film – enjoy the landscapes of the *Blue Lagoon*, live the adrenaline of *Mad Max*, or get one-on-one with Amelie Poulain. In short, there would be experiences (individual or group) for all tastes, just like those vouchers you get for birthdays.

Now, if for some (like me) this idea seems sinister, for the new generations born in the age of the internet, this is as basic and natural as tap water – not only because the ecological footprint of these experiences will be much smaller than the ecological footprint of festivals and real travel, but because the notion of participating-being-alone is their daily bread. From online classes to online games, to the thousands of imagined communities to which they choose to belong (like K-pop fans in the West), living in and out of RPGs like someone

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[3] Text written by Capicua (2020b) and published in the Opinion Chronicles of *Visão Magazine* on 23 September 2020. Capicua has given her manuscript in Portuguese to be translated into English. For more details: https://visao.sapo.pt/realidade-virtual/.

who changes metro lines is already an integral part of everyday life. In fact, this distinction between real life and online life, identity and avatar, close relationships and long-distance relationships no longer makes sense to them because they can feel closer to those on the other side of the globe, but in permanent contact on WhatsApp; they can identify more with a nickname than with their baptismal name; and they can live the game more intensely than they can the daily school-home life. And, even if it seems perverse, all this has been accentuated in recent months, in this experience of being children and adolescents without school, relating to the world through the screen, when school was precisely the last redoubt of non-online sociability for many.

Can live music, sports in the stadium and tourism as we know it compete with virtual reality? Only for a short time. Not just for all the possibilities it can add to these 'old' experiences, but because not even sex seems to be able to compete with porn anymore, or even Netflix, in the generation that studies indicate has less interest in making love. For my part, I ask that, when they program me as an avatar, they add a tuned voice so I can sing some virtual *fados* and that they pay me more royalties than I receive from streaming.

3. Lockdown (and the Soothing Trance of Everyday Life)[4]

I've never been a marathon runner, but they say that in an endurance race, once you get past the stage where giving up seems inevitable and the despair of those who swear they won't last another minute hits you, there comes the part where the body moves mechanically, without effort, in a kind of trance. That's precisely the phase of confinement I'm in. If in January, faced with the prospect of two months of house arrest, I was stricken with the anguish of not knowing how to endure another season of isolation, at this moment it already feels like normality. The memory of another routine seems more and more distant, and the days go by without expectations of change, in a kind of comfortable torpor. It is the kind of sleepiness felt by someone who has slept too much.

Not that I'm depressed or discouraged. I would say that I am resigned. I feel that the permanent expectation and anticipation of freedom worsen claustrophobia because they bring the false hope of a release that, given the context, will never be total. It is conditional freedom, with an uncertain date, and its prospect is disquieting because of its insufficiency. I think my

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[4] Text written by Capicua (2021a) and published in the Opinion Chronicles of *Visão Magazine* on 10 March 2021. Capicua has provided her manuscript in Portuguese to be translated into English. For more details, see https://visao.sapo.pt/confinamento-e-o-apaziguador-transe-do-quotidiano/.

subconscious has chosen the habit. The wonder of routine is that it normalizes and tames almost everything. I would say that it is the great key to our infinite power of adaptation. And, at this moment, it is more comfortable to know that I can count on it, anchoring me in the small daily rituals, than to gasp for the horizon in a historical moment marked by a total lack of linearity.

In this family of three, we are already going into our fourth birthday in confinement. In two years of life, my baby has spent half of it in the pandemic, living in a very restricted circle of social contacts – lucky to have his parents very present, but without the opportunity to go from lap to lap at a party, or to play with our friends' children, or even to go to the playground in the square (because it has been closed for months). What reassures me is that, apart from the playground part, which is too hard to explain and remains a great object of desire, the rest is his normality and the backyard and grandparents do the rounds of the world and the crowds.

I am seriously worried about friends and colleagues who work in the cultural sector. Having no work, no prospects, is very hard, and for those who are alone or have no children at home, it's even harder to stay afloat. Children, apart from giving you a lot to do, leaving you little time to think about reality, give you a lot to smile about and feel sorry for, which helps you keep your focus on the small joys and less on the big misfortunes. Support is scarce and the money announced is, once again, for new projects, as if alms always came in exchange for the trick. When the pandemic took away our opportunity to work and our projects were interrupted, we were left full of albums to launch and present, theatre plays and shows to premiere, exhibitions to open, books to sell. Financing new cultural projects is not compensation or help in crunch time. They can't demand anything new without compensating us for the year (not) gone by, the present suspended and the future not realized.

This week, on my way to the supermarket, I passed the door of a vaccination centre and in that second, as the car crossed the building, I caught a glimpse of an old lady entering, bent over, leaning on a woman's arm. I seemed to see the future in those white hairs. It comforted me to live in a society that protects the elderly first and I felt I was facing the light at the end of the tunnel. But then, reading the news and seeing the way the big pharmaceutical companies are dribbling around the EU, drooling over the delivery of the vaccines that we co-financed and that are already paid for, I felt that it was prudent to curb expectations and that the best thing is to keep the focus on the small routine tasks and feed the soothing trance of everyday life. (You may even think that this is conformism – and maybe it is – but for me, these days, it is a survival strategy).

4. Some Reflections about Being a Musician in Pandemic Times (a small testimony)[5]

And at forty-something days of quarantine, I broke. It was not even because of the cloistered days weighing me down. Nor the fact that the quarantine turned into a *cinquentine*. Not even because of the lack of social life. It was due to the perspective that the return to normality was not going to be easy. Because normality now is unviable and will only be until there is a vaccine. And, of course, without a vaccine to give us back the crowds, we musicians won't get any jobs. The prospect of cancelling the agenda came at a thankless time for everyone and especially for me. It happened in full restart of the annual activity of the musicians (because January and February are always months of few concerts) and just at the beginning of the new album's touring, which I managed to finish at the cost of a lot of blood, sweat and tears (during pregnancy and postpartum).

Despite the bucket of cold water, everyone realized the importance of avoiding crowds and, even before the official recommendations, all concerts were promptly cancelled. I think we hoped that the timely quarantine that would rob us the early spring, would instead guarantee us the summer (the peak time for work, where we gathered the sustenance for winter, like ants). Now, in full quarantine, and already with the spring compromised, we realized that we would not have work in summer and that, only at a great cost, some events would come up in the rest of the year, but always without certainty. It is just that the prospect of a new outbreak in winter compromises the glimpse over autumn and I am afraid that it is only next year that things may come back to be good for those who, like me, make their living up on the stage. The phrase that has been repeated somewhere is true: the culture workers were the first to be out of work because of the pandemic and will be among the last to return to be fully active again. They are also among the most precarious. A whole industry of self-employed and almost always seasonal workers, who are very committed and skilled but forgotten behind the scenes.

To give you an idea, for me to take to the stage, there is a 14-people team in action (between musicians and technicians). This is in addition to the people who work at the agency that markets the concerts, those who work in the company that sets the stage and installs the sound system, and the production programming and promotion staff… an army of workers who do everything possible to make a spectacle at the appointed time, with all the necessary

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[5] Text written by Capicua (2020a) and published in *Pandemic Notebooks from the University of Porto Sociology Institute* – specifically in the fifth volume, titled *In Suspense. Reflections on Artistic, Cultural, and Creative Work in the COVID-19 Era* – in November 2020. Capicua provided her Portuguese manuscript to be translated into English. For more details, see https://catalogo.up.pt/exlibris/apache_media.pdf.

conditions for the magic to happen and for the public to be satisfied. All these people have been out of work and all these people have families, pay mortgages, need to go to the supermarket, receive electricity bills, exist as good citizens, who pay (a lot of) taxes and social security every month (in exaggeration), mostly as 'green-receipt' workers, a condition that does not give you any right to any kind of protection in times of scarcity.

I know that the state has provided some symbolic aid through social security, but in addition of being very little, it does not cover the immense number of workers in the industry. Institutions such as Gulbenkian and the Lisbon City Council promised support, but only for some. That GDA (Artists Rights Management) and SPA (Portuguese Society of Authors) tried to support artists and authors, but many teams were left out. And the small impacts of this poor support, for so much time without work, resulted in dramatic situations for many families. It is necessary to think how much of this critical mass will remain in the end, how many of these skilled workers and with years of experience we will lose to other professions during these long months, and how many artists will simply give up. One might wonder what price the country will pay for the incalculable loss of talent, knowledge and professionalism in the cultural sector and how many years it will take to recover.

This is apart from the financial and political incapacity of the Minister of Culture, which shamefully put us through advances and setbacks, late afternoon drinks and quasi-TV programs in a pyramid scheme, which meant that the financial aid that was initially provided was, in the first instance, used for calling for tenders and for proposals for new creations. It was almost as if, before a beggar begging in the street, a trick or a small performance was initially demanded in return. It was almost as if, even in our hour of despair, we were only worthy of support providing inventiveness and creative ability … And the industry worked well. Soon came the attempts to maintain relevance online, through some shows on social networks. That, at first, was stimulated by the good intention of encouraging people to stay home and provide company for those who were confined, but quickly this became commonplace, contributing even more to trivialize artists' own artistic work – especially in music.

People are not used to paying to listen to records since the advent of online piracy. Musicians have had their performances and incomes reduced to live shows and copyright. And suddenly, in two months of quarantine, concerts were offered in the comfort of one's own home, free of charge. Of course, a minority of famous artists did this in partnership with sponsoring brands, and a minority of diligent musicians did it through a crowd-funding scheme, with the public contributing donations or even buying electronic tickets, but most of them contributed only to the trivialization and exhaustion of the format and consumption of live music.

There were also those who sought other alternatives once the discomfort began and shows with limited capacity and complying with the safety standards imposed by the DGS (General Directorate of Heath) began to be authorized. There were drive-in concerts, in which the immersive experience of the usual concerts was replaced by the confinement of the car and listening to the music through the radio. Or even concerts in trucks, in itinerant stage mode, in transit through the street of the localities to avoid gatherings, but obviously also preventing the normal accompaniment of a show. We must not forget, too, a derisory minority of performances in rooms without an audience, but with all the technical conditions, broadcast by the internet or the television.

The more conservative ones confined themselves to the possibility of shows with limited capacity, but despite the need to return to work, very few musicians returned to the stage for two essential reasons. First, the limited capacity makes many productions unfeasible and very few musicians and promoters can afford to risk losing money in a difficult year like this one. And second, the municipalities have shown a great deal of retraction, fearing that they will be pioneers in the return to normality, in a context in which public opinion itself seems to welcome the climate of security restriction in cultural programming. This is especially true after the outbreak that attacked Greater Lisbon after the discomfort, exposing poverty, the lack of working conditions, territorial segregation, housing concentration and the saturation of public transport in the outskirts of the capital. The outbreak told us more about the (sub)development of the country than about the pandemic, but (ironically) it reinforced a latent discourse that we need muscle measures to contain this problem. Instead of discussing the living conditions of these fringes of the population, the fingers were quickly pointed at the supposedly unconscious young people, with their need for leisure.

It seems to be acceptable to risk your own life to go to work at the assembly line, at the construction site or even on the bus, but there is a call for a curfew that prevents the use of free time (there it is) while free. Bans and postponements of shows are becoming more and more popular, even with limited capacity, assured social detachment and often outdoor locations, as if it were a sin to want to absorb culture at a time like this. Or even as if the virus just attacks the idlers. Without realizing it, the more we prohibit leisure in controlled spaces and comply with the DGS guidelines, the more we encourage informal parties and gatherings, in domestic settings or places with few security conditions. Without realizing that, at such a delicate moment in our economy, boycotting culture – which is already quite moribund – or demonizing it, or reinforcing the idea that is superfluous and avoidable, is killing a sector that creates jobs, attracts tourists and maintains our mental health. The mob of social networks, the tone of television journalists, the mouths in cafés support

prohibition, call for tight control, protest events organized under all conditions, and support the authoritarian and populist attitudes of mayors' tyrannical tics.

In short, we have a pandemic crisis with no end date. We have a Ministry of Culture that is incapable (politically and technically) and has no budget to deal with the damage caused to this sector. And we have a great deal of work to do, at the door of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, to demand that the status of the cultural worker – precarious, seasonal and intermittent – should be, as it is in France, more dignified and suited to the needs of a kind of class protection. I know that there are still those who think culture is a smaller sector, and that art is not quite essential. There are many who accuse artists of pity and parasitism, those who think it is a hobby and not a profession. Bashfulness and technocracy, normally aligned with undemocratic ideologies, are not friends with world-sight or critical spirit – neither inspiration nor *corações ao alto* [hearts really high]. And it would be very interesting to see how many would survive two-month quarantine without music, movies or series, books and other art forms.

Still, I feel that this financial reliance on music is, in fact, very stupid at a time when income prospects are scarce. I often think that our greatest challenge, as a collective, beyond the realization of an intermittent worker status, would be to diversify our sources of income for the sake of justice (because there is much to gain from our music, while we offer it) and for the sake of survival. I love her too much to depend on her, as Carlos Paredes said, but I feel that she demands all the time and all the dedication – loving her too much not to live for her, as Sam the Kid said. What we are experiencing is, in fact, a watershed. In a short time, we have invented the label and the protocol. We rethought urban mobility and work organization; we transformed education, routines and consumption priorities. We have transformed the habits of socialization and leisure. We have replaced a lot of things we found irreplaceable, and in the process we have revalued a lot of things previously taken for granted: the touch, the hug, the dinner as a national institution, the ecstasy of a live concert, the joy of the popular parties that we will not have, the trips to work gazing out the bus window, the coffee with colleagues, even the beach, as well as its unlimited access.

5. When Art meets Critical Pedagogy

In her reflections, Capicua enunciates a series of topics that are key elements for us to understand the crisis caused by coronavirus, especially regarding the social and artistic field. As Atalan (2020) points out, only one-third of the social impacts are understood, not least because the virus has given visibility to a

series of social, economic, political and cultural imbalances that, prior to the pandemic, went unnoticed in the bustle of everyday experiences.

Cook et al. (2021) argue that the pandemic is not only a global health crisis, but a crisis in the labour market, especially in such a precarious one as the artistic and cultural one. Inequalities and uncertainties in relation to the future have become even more acute. In this sense, Howard et al. (2021) affirm that young people are one of the social groups most affected by the restrictions derived from the pandemic – that is, their forms of leisure were more affected. If before the pandemic, social networks were already a preference for establishing relationships and communicating, with each successive confinement this became even more evident. Authors such as Kennedy (2020) mention social networks, giving special prominence to TikTok, which, having become a symbol of juvenile culture, gave rise to a room culture because rooms became the main space of production and dissemination of content (Guerra et al., 2021).

Capicua is one of the most renowned hip-hop artists in Portugal; her songs have become anthems for the younger generations. Like so many other Portuguese artists, Capicua saw her career suspended with no prospect of shows or live performances. This is reinforced by the three texts that presented here. In the first, about virtual realities, Capicua says that the application of virtual reality will arise to replace several immersive experiences that have become inadvisable, among them the concerts. Thus, the virtualization of performances and live music has been pointed out as a possible path in the future, but we too have adopted a critical stance towards such an assertion, especially since the digital world has created a diversity of problems and obstacles, including the deepening of social inequalities. Not all musicians have the right spaces in their homes to record or livestream, and many of them also do not have the economic conditions to invest in state-of-the-art digital recording equipment (Pugh, 2021). Moreover, where would sound and light technicians be? Indeed, from the point of view of music-making and performances, the use of digital technologies had already been identified as problematic even before the pandemic exploded (Howard et al., 2021; Mulder, 2015).

Established and well-known bands have put up live streams, performing some of their most iconic tracks (Lehman, 2020). Yet while they had almost unlimited resources, independent or amateur artists were confined to their rooms or their small and improvised recording studies (Sobande, 2020). If in other countries such as the United States, these livestreams (in most cases) were paid, in Portugal the reality was quite different since most musicians did them for free (Miles, 2021) or, when they promoted fundraisers, the values obtained were derisory. It is true that the digital universe has developed rapidly to meet the needs of the populations, and of the musicians themselves (Strong &

Cannizzo, 2020), but almost everything that happens too fast brings with it problems – in this case, the most obvious of these relate to changes in social structures. When Capicua writes that the digital world allows us to enjoy a holiday on aphrodisiac beaches without leaving the comfort of our home, it makes us think that we are experiencing a dystopian reality, in the same way that Beck (1992) referred to something typical of Western societies.

At the same time, Capicua's texts – especially the second one – state that while new technologies and social networks were seen as a means of combating physical disconnection and isolation, in the concrete case of musicians, these networks and platforms came to be seen as a means of resistance, largely because the income decreased significantly. As Guerra et al. (2021) point out, although the Portuguese state has publicly supported workers in the cultural sector, few received any actual assistance. At the same time, there is even talk of a 'secondarization and devaluation of music and alternative artists (…) because they are understood and framed as entertainment' (Guerra et al., 2021: 189). This misalignment of state support and measures is highlighted by Capicua in her reflections, providing first-person testimony from an artist.

Building a bridge with the artistic and musical works of Capicua, where the awareness of the importance of these resistance processes was already seen, as well as the use of music or the word as a form of denunciation (Guerra, 2020b). Concepts such as resistance and resilience seem to have assumed touchstone status when talking about the pandemic. In fact, these concepts are often related to direct responses to the crises experienced by the artist and cultural sectors (Guerra, 2021) – that is, they are understood and described as the ability of artists to remain productive, as well as pertaining to the constant personal reinventions that are made to keep their careers active. Similarly, authors such as Comunian and England (2020) have asserted that the concept of resistance can be described as a buzzword that represents discredit towards the creative and artistic sector. Other authors (Guerra, 2021) argue that the concept of resistance has been replaced – or accompanied – by the concept of existence, in the sense that opposition to the institutionalized creative sector and the adoption of careers of do-it-yourself (DIY) become the only alternative for these artists.

This combination of careers, resistance processes and the digital are even more important when we think of self-employed workers or artists who, in turn, are more prone to the risks and uncertainty of the artistic sector. What is certain is that these configurations originate from telescopic identities (Comunian & England, 2020) that must be analysed in the light of multiple social, political, cultural and geographical contexts (Bennett & Guerra, 2018), in which they develop. It is in this scope that the artists anticipate their work, in fact, it is in this design that the artists also substantiate their careers (McRobbie, 2016),

hence DIY becomes an important form of resistance (Bennett, 2018; Bennett & Guerra, 2018; Guerra, 2020b, 2021). The truth is that Capicua's release of an EP during confinement was a form of resistance. In addition to this EP, she also released five songs during the third wave of the pandemic. As she says, 'To continue making music is an act of resistance and, at a time when the stages are closed, I thought that releasing a live EP would be the best way to celebrate them.'

Capicua's album *Madrepérola* was dedicated to the portrait of motherhood and the processes of artistic creation. The album features 13 songs, and tracks such that perfectly portray music as a form of resistance. Let us focus briefly on 'Gaudí'. After listening to the song, it is immediately the establishment of a relationship between it and rap as pedagogy (Guerra, 2020) because it addresses issues such as sexism and the role of women in society. These topics are paradigmatic, not least because women were one of the groups most affected by the pandemic, both in terms of income and in increase in unpaid working hours for tasks such as domestic work and home-schooling, for example (Guerra et al., 2021). In the song's lyrics and music video, its resistance processes are visible through the image of a militant rapper, emotionally and politically involved, as it emphasizes issues such as the female body. In fact, the representations take the form of resistance to all the norms that are imposed on women; in their essence, they also end up conditioning their entry into the world of hip-hop. We are facing the resistance of a rapper, a woman, who – contrary to all expectations – decided to release an album during a pandemic.

In a complementary way to this act of resistance, and personal and artistic affirmation, in digital media Capicua found a vehicle to give life to her album, in the sense that it outlined the traditional means of production and dissemination of artistic content. Paradoxically, Capicua sought to find stability in something those new technologies had failed to reproduce: a 'corporeal' community experience of live music and a process of artistic co-creation (Harrison, 2019).

Finally, we need to stress one last aspect in relation to mental health. In the third text, Capicua highlights that she broke due to the uncertainty of the future. The prospect of not knowing when it would be possible to return to normality affected her mental health and wellbeing. This is another of the central issues in Capicua's reflections and, of course, in our understanding of the impacts of confinement on artists. In a study we conducted between Portugal, Australia and the United Kingdom (Howard et al., 2021), we sought to understand what the impacts of the pandemic on artists had been in terms of wellbeing and mental health. But what do we mean by wellbeing? According to Newton and Ponting (2013) and White (2015), (relative) wellbeing captures and represents

a sense of having what we need to live and refers to the living circumstances of everyone – what they feel and the ways they function.

It is true that a substantial part of the interviews conducted in all three countries demonstrated that, for many, isolation had positive effects on music-making processes, fostering greater artistic productivity and enabling immersion in the processes of recording new songs. In addition, participants stated that the technologies helped in co-creation, and that time alone allowed them to invest in instrument learning processes and learning about the business side of music. However, we cannot fail to mention that they came from an imposition. In a way, so much free time forced these artists to look for alternatives to spend their days and, of course, to look for new possibilities to reinvent themselves. In fact, the Portuguese music industry requires artists to be multipurpose in the sense that is almost impossible to have a stable income as an artist, thus we can hardly find an artist who dedicates their time solely to the production and creation of music or art. Often, they are also designers, managers, roadies, producers and technicians (Guerra, 2021).

By mentioning some positive and other negative aspects, we consider that we are dealing with forms of understanding about relational wellbeing. Moreover, if we focus on the texts of Capicua, we can identify some axes referring to this type of relational wellbeing: (1) identity and a purpose – continue to create and produce music to, in the future, ensure a place in the return of physical concerts; (2) social connection – maintaining a connection with other musicians, but also with audiences; (3) artistic creation during isolation – providing, to a certain extent, a focus and a routine; (4) allowing working with affective fields – in the case of Capicua, motherhood, the perception of the city and territories, and feminism, present in the album *Madrepérola*; and (5) continuing to produce and record during the pandemic and isolation – which became a means of communication and expression.

We can safely say that the COVID-19 pandemic has deeply affected artists, as well as influencing young artists to reflect on their futures and on the value that creativity, artistic creation and performance have in their lives and careers. As Capicua says, COVID-19 has demonstrated that there are other ways of living and experiencing social life and has also highlighted new modes of involvement and consumption of music.

6. An Appendix

In most of his works, Bourdieu (1993) states that theoretical research is blind and that research without empirics is empty. This assertion fully justifies our effort with the elaboration of this article, since we sought to establish a link

between the texts of Capicua (empiricism) and our research and considerations (theory). Our objective was not based on the construction of a general discourse about the impacts of the pandemic in the artistic sector, but rather aimed to deepen knowledge about the pandemic and about the artistic and musical sector through the link between theory and empirical experience. Starting from the texts written by Capicua, we sought to build a general panorama of perceptions and actions from the delimitation of a set of empirical cases. Moreover, by presenting this article within a logic of commentary, we are also counteracting the typologies of research, and presentation and discussion of traditional data. By enabling the artist to speak in the first person, we are opening the scope of the interpretation field. We are therefore promoting and instigating new forms of discussion and debate about a phenomenon that affects us, as a society, in a systematic and profound way: COVID-19. It is also important to highlight the existence of a logic of reciprocity between researcher and object of study – something that, in our perspective, should be emphasized in the future of research in the social sciences.

Shortly, one of our goals when we gave voice to Capicua was to get out of the academic field and have, at first hand, an approach that tells us about the problems that affect part of the country. We recognise that Capicua has cultural and subcultural capitals that other actors do not have, but nevertheless, we think that it is a pertinent voice to understand the problems that affected Portuguese artists during the pandemic. This is one of the purposes of the critical pedagogy we carried out: to give voice to people who allow us to see what for us is not always visible. Instead of creating abstract theoretical approaches talking about the trajectories of artists during the pandemic, with the classic references to certain authors and the defence of an interdisciplinary vision, these raw voices allow us to trigger a critical reflexivity in our works, reinvigorating them. It is time to integrate these perspectives without filters in our research. The work is more complex, yes, we must relinquish control, which can be daunting, but it is discovery by serendipity, as Merton advocated. It is a very hard approach, but a rich one. It puts us in touch with the social reality in the flesh, which we are sometimes so far away from, and in the end makes us say, like Wittengstein (2010: 135): "How hard I find it to see what is right in front of my eyes!". Similarly, it is a way of also advancing the empowerment of actors who find themselves on the margins of society. Musical genres such as punk or hip-hop, applied through a critical pedagogy, constitute spaces of freedom devoid of hierarchical forms of power and serve to empower actors, whether they are more or less young or more or less underprivileged (Santos & Guerra, 2017; Parmar et al., 2014; Cordova, 2016).

A critical pedagogy based on music, therefore, allows one to apply multiple forms of resistance that contribute to the strengthening of a counter-hegemonic

voice. These voices, whether punk or hip-hop, with their positions of non-conformism, the ethos and networks of support that they possess, build a window that allows us to look at what is coming, but which we do not always manage to see clearly and which makes us almost always arrive late. In the same way, betting on this politically intervening music, the actors can look at punk or hip-hop as spaces of freedom, safe havens, that maintain an ethos and ideas of freedom and equality in a world in deep change (Santos & Guerra, 2017).

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