

The ‘Black Angel’ in Lisbon: Josephine Baker challenges Salazar, live on television

Pedro Cravinho

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El «Ángel Negro» en Lisboa: Josephine Baker desafía a Salazar en televisión en directo
Le « Ange Noir » à Lisbonne: Josephine Baker défie Salazar en direct à la télévision
“L’Angelo Nero” a Lisbona: Josephine Baker sfida Salazar, in diretta televisiva

Abstract / Resumen / Résumé / Riassunto

This essay examines a televised performance by Josephine Baker that took place in Portugal on 29 November 1960, during the time of Portugal’s so-called “New State” (*Estado Novo*) regime. The performance included the song ‘*Terra Seca*’ by Ary Barroso, the lyrics of which explore slavery and racial discrimination, and Baker also made a deliberate point of speaking to racial and human rights issues. Baker’s pronouncements took place within a context of global instability surrounding the ongoing decolonization process. At this time, Portugal was one of the last of the European colonial empires, and was the target of huge international media pressure in support of decolonization. Josephine Baker’s televised performance can be understood as a stance in opposition to Portuguese colonial policies. As Jill Dolan has argued, “utopian performatives persuade us that beyond this ‘now’ of material oppression and unequal power relations lives a future that might be different, one whose potential we can feel as we’re seared by the promise of a present that gestures toward a better later” (Dolan, 2008: 7). Baker’s stance reflected a resilient opposition against colonialism and a demand for better conditions for those living under oppression globally. So, with no small degree of irony, the Portuguese Public Television Service – the dictator Salazar’s “ideological apparatus”, which was controlled by a rigorous Censorship Bureau to prevent the circulation of any potentially subversive content, especially related to African issues – was used against itself by a “Black Angel”.

Este ensayo examina la actuación televisada de Josephine Baker que tuvo lugar en Portugal durante el régimen del Estado Nuevo. El 29 de noviembre de 1960, durante su show, además de interpretar *Terra Seca*, una canción de Ary Barroso que comprende letras que exploran la esclavitud y la discriminación de los negros, abordó deliberadamente temas raciales y de derechos humanos. Las declaraciones de Baker tuvieron lugar durante un período de inestabilidad mundial con respecto al movimiento de descolonización en curso. En ese momento, Portugal era uno de los últimos imperios coloniales europeos y se enfrentaban a una enorme presión internacional respecto a la descolonización. La interpretación televisada de Josephine Baker puede entenderse como una oposición a las políticas

coloniales portuguesas. Como ha argumentado Jill Dolan, los «performativos utópicos nos persuaden de que más allá de este “ahora” de la opresión material y las relaciones de poder desiguales vive un futuro que podría ser diferente, uno cuyo potencial podemos sentir» (Dolan, 2008: 7). La declaración de Josephine Baker, en cierta medida, reflejó su oposición contra el colonialismo y demandó una mayor calidad de vida para los oprimidos a nivel mundial. Paradójicamente, la Televisión Pública Portuguesa, el ‘aparato ideológico’ del dictador Salazar, que estaba bajo el riguroso control del Departamento de Censura para evitar la circulación de cualquier contenido potencialmente subversivo, especialmente aquellos relacionados con temas Africanos, fue utilizada contra sí misma por un «Ángel Negro».

Cet essai examine le spectacle télévisé de Joséphine Baker qui a eu lieu au Portugal pendant le régime du l’État Nouveau. Le 29 novembre 1960, au cours de son émission, elle interpréta notamment « Terra Seca », une chanson d’Ary Barroso comprenant des paroles, paroles explorant l’esclavage et la discrimination des Noirs. Elle aborda délibérément des questions relatives à la race et aux droits de l’homme. Les déclarations de Baker se sont déroulées au cours d’une période d’instabilité mondiale concernant le mouvement de décolonisation en cours. À l’époque, le Portugal était l’un des derniers empires coloniaux européens à faire face à une énorme presse internationale en faveur de la décolonisation. La performance télévisée de Joséphine Baker peut être comprise comme une opposition à la politique coloniale portugaise. Comme Jill Dolan l’a expliqué, « les performatifs utopiques nous persuadent qu’au-delà de ce ‘maintenant’ d’oppression matérielle et de relations de pouvoir inégales, un avenir qui pourrait être différent, » (Dolan, 2008: 7). La déclaration de Joséphine Baker a, dans une certaine mesure, reflété son opposition résiliente contre le colonialisme et pour ceux qui vivent sous l’oppression dans le monde. Paradoxalement, la télévision publique portugaise – « l’appareil idéologique » du dictateur Salazar –, contrôlé par un bureau de censure rigoureux pour empêcher la diffusion de tout contenu potentiellement subversif, en particulier ceux liés aux questions africaines, était utilisée contre lui-même par un « Ange Noir ».

Questo saggio esamina la performance televisiva di Josephine Baker che si è svolta in Portogallo durante il regime dello Stato Nuovo. Il 29 novembre 1960, durante lo spettacolo, oltre a realizzare “Terra Seca”, una canzone di Ary Barroso comprendente testi che esplorano la schiavitù e la discriminazione dei neri, Baker ha deliberatamente affrontato questioni razziali e sui diritti umani. Le dichiarazioni di Baker hanno avuto luogo durante un periodo di instabilità globale riguardante il movimento di decolonizzazione in corso. A quel tempo, il Portogallo era uno degli ultimi imperi coloniali europei e obiettivo di una enorme pressione dei media internazionali a favore della decolonizzazione. La performance televisiva di Josephine Baker

può essere interpretata come opposizione alla politica coloniale portoghese. Come ha sostenuto Jill Dolan, “le affermazioni utopiche ci persuadono che oltre questo ‘ora’ dell’oppressione materiale e delle relazioni di potere ineguali vive un futuro che potrebbe essere diverso, il cui potenziale possiamo sentire mentre ci brucia la promessa di un presente che ci indica un futuro migliore” (Dolan, 2008: 7). La dichiarazione di Josephine Baker, in una certa misura, rifletteva la sua opposizione resiliente al colonialismo e la richiesta di una vita migliore per coloro che vivono sotto l’oppressione a livello globale. Paradossalmente, la televisione pubblica portoghese – l’‘apparato ideologico’ dal dittatore Salazar –, sotto il controllo di un rigoroso Ufficio di censura per impedire la circolazione di qualsiasi contenuto potenzialmente sovversivo, specialmente se relativo alle questioni africane, fu usata contro se stessa da un ‘Angelo Nero’.

Key words / Palabras clave / Mots-clé / Parole chiave

Portugal, New State, colonialism, television, Josephine Baker.
 Portugal, Estado Nuevo, colonialismo, televisión, Josephine Baker.
 Portugal, État Nouveau, colonialisme, télévision, Josephine Baker.
 Portogallo, Stato Nuovo, colonialismo, televisione, Josephine Baker.

Introduction

Fifty-nine years ago, in late November 1960, an African-American artist with adopted French nationality, given the name ‘Black Angel’ by the Portuguese press, visited Portugal for the last time. This was Josephine Baker (1906-1975), a dancer and singer who had first found fame in Paris in the 1920s.¹ In contrast to previous visits, when her shows would customarily receive plenty of exposure in the daily press,² her last appearance in Portugal was without fanfare:

A prominent showbusiness figure, Josephine [Baker] was met by only four people on her arrival at *Aeroporto da Portela*: a television executive, Melo Pereira (responsible for her visit), Julio Costa (the newest member of the *Trio Odemira*), a photographer and a journalist ... The ‘Black Angel’ was disappointed. There would have been more if a certain misinformed [Portu-

guese] newspaper was to be believed, in which she might have read of an “enthusiastic reception by her fans” and a “series of shows she was going to perform in Portugal”. The truth is simply this: only four people were waiting for [Josephine] Baker, and she performed only one televised show.³

As the magazine explains, Josephine Baker was visiting Portugal to perform on a television show at the invitation of a Melo Pereira, at the time Director of Light Music programmes at the Portuguese Public Television Service (RTP).⁴ However, no one could have predicted the polemics that were to ensue. During the televised performance, Baker chose to deliver statements about human rights and racism. This did not go unnoticed. In fact, it led to tensions between the RTP directorate and the New State regime itself.

In seeking to analyse this incident, this essay is divided into three parts. The first, “The context”, begins by briefly describing the Portuguese New State regime during World War II and, later, the Cold War era. It was during WWII — when Lisbon was a city with Allies and Axis spies moving freely but under the intense surveillance of the Portuguese Political Police agents — that Josephine Baker first visited the country.⁵ The second part, “The many faces of Baker”, begins by examining Baker’s visibility in the Portuguese daily press in the

³ All translations from non-English sources are the author’s unless otherwise indicated. In each case, the original text will be presented in a footnote, as here. The author hopes that opening up these sources to non-Portuguese readers adds to the value of this study. “Figura destacada no mundo dos microfones, Josephine teve a recepção-la, no Aeroporto da Portela, apenas quatro pessoas: o técnico da TV, Melo Pereira (a quem se deve a sua vinda), Júlio Costa (o mais novo componente do ‘Trio Odemira’), o fotógrafo e o jornalista... O ‘anjo negro’, ficou decepcionada. E mais ficaria se, ao ler certa *Imprensa* pouco e mal esclarecida, tivesse tomado nota de uma entusiástica recepção por parte dos seus admiradores’ e de ‘uma série de espetáculos que vinha realizar em Portugal’. A verdade e uma: apenas quatro pessoas esperavam Baker e a artista apenas interveio num ‘show’ televisonado.” *Plateia* 73 (1 January 1961), p. 7.

⁴ RTP-DAG Proc. No. 1/60, microfilmed.

⁵ On 29 August 1933, under Decree Law No. 22 992, the *Policia de Vigilancia e de Defesa do Estado* (PVDE) (“Police of State Surveillance and Defence”) was created, which coincided with the establishment of special military courts. On 22 October 1945, the *Policia Internacional de Defesa do Estado* (PIDE) (“International State Defence Police”) replaced the PVDE under Decree Law No. 35046. Later, on 24 November 1969, under the Caetano government, the *Direcção-Geral de Segurança* (DGS) (“Directorate-General for Security”) replaced the PIDE under Decree Law No. 49,401.

¹ For further discussion on this topic, see Papich (1976), Haney (1981), Rose (1989), Stovall (1996), Dalton and Gates (1998), Blake (1999), Bonini (2000), Ezra (2000), Baker and Chase (2001), Shack (2001), Berliner (2002), Henderson (2003), Jackson (2003) and Jordan (2010).

² From March 1941 to July 1958, Baker participated in several shows in Portugal, which were prominently promoted in the daily press.

late 1920s and the 1930s, and her first visits to neutral Lisbon during WWII as a tourist, artist and French secret agent.⁶ Baker's performances in March 1941 and July 1958 are briefly considered, as well as her passage through Lisbon in April 1959. The third and final part, "The broadcast", presents a detailed analysis of the 1960 performance. Based on archival and bibliographical research, this section brings to the discussion original RTP microfilmed documentation associated with the broadcast. Although some accounts of Baker's earlier presence in Portugal can be found, especially those relating to her activity as a French secret agent, no detailed analysis of her television broadcasts has yet been published.⁷

The context: The Portuguese New State regime

To understand the importance of Baker's actions, it is essential first to comprehend the contemporary Portuguese socio-political context. During WWII, Lisbon was one of the few European cities in which both the Allies and the Axis powers could operate openly. In a bid to win foreign support for his New State regime, the Portuguese dictator, Dr Oliveira Salazar, authorized the creation of a novel form of tourism in metropolitan Lisbon. This offering was branded *Costa do Sol* ("Sunny Coast") and mainly comprised the areas covering São Pedro do Estoril, São João do Estoril and Santo António do Estoril. In those areas:

The accesses there had been improved tremendously so the poorest and most degraded areas located a little further from the coast would not be identified by those touring either on-board the comfortable Sud-Express train that travelled from Paris to Santo António do Estoril, or along a recently constructed coastal road which linked Lisbon to this Costa do

Sol. The accommodation catering for these foreigners differed from the facilities dedicated to national tourists. In fact, palace hotels and similar chic lodging houses hosted not only these travellers, but also refugees and spies.

(Cadavez, 2013: 210)

These elite travellers fleeing the war in Costa do Sol would be greeted by an environment in which they could resume those social routines they had been forced to abandon, such as parties, movies and music concerts.⁸ As Pereira has noted, "under the Estoril sun, on the beaches, yachts and the golf club, in the terraces and bars of the cosmopolitan hotels, and in the casino at night under the watchful eyes of the croupiers, the high society serenely enjoyed its privileges" (Pereira, 2017: 20).⁹ Lisbon became a temporary home for both exiled European royalty and for refugees seeking passage to the North American continent, and it also played host to spies from many countries. It was within this context that Josephine Baker circulated freely in the Portuguese capital as a French secret agent during her first visits to the country.¹⁰

From the end of WWII throughout the Cold War era, Portuguese society underwent profound changes (Barreto, 2000). There were changes in behaviour and mentality, described by Rosas as "invisible changes", which took place in a context of domestic political and social repression, and isolation from the rest of the world (Rosas, 2001: 1051). An accelerated process of decolonization was evident in this period, especially with regard to the African continent. Portugal was one of the last European colonial empires, still ruling several colonies in Africa, Asia and Oceania.¹¹ The Portu-

⁸ For further discussion of the Estoril elites' lifestyle, see d'Orléans (2011) and Lochery (2013).

⁹ "Sob o sol do Estoril, nas praias, nos iates, no clube de golfe, nas esplanadas e nos bares dos botéis cosmopolitas, e à noite no casino, sob o olhar atento dos croupiers a alta sociedade gozava serenamente os seus privilégios?" (Pereira, 2017: 20).

¹⁰ For further discussion on this topic, see Abtey (1948), Rose (1989) and Onana (2006).

¹¹ With Portugal being one of the colonial empires in Africa, Asia and Oceania, and thereby attracting widespread condemnation, in 1958 Salazar responded to this by creating a kind of "democratic mirage", pulling back on repressive practices and promoting free elections in order to manufacture the illusion of a free country. The candidacy of the Oposição De-

⁶ For further discussion of the reception of African-American artists, as well as jazz-related music (and modern dance) in Portugal during the 1920s and '30s, see Cravinho (2016).

⁷ For further discussion on this topic in Portuguese language, see Santos (2011).

guese dictator was not willing to relinquish the overseas territories. To distract attention, the New State regime aimed to create the impression on the world stage of an opening-up of Portuguese political, social and cultural activities and temporarily suspended the repressive activities of the Censorship Services and Political Police. Salazar's intransigence on the colonial issue led to a long-lasting war of independence in the former Portuguese African colonies, beginning in March 1961. It was only a few months before the beginning of armed conflict in the then Portuguese colony of Angola that Josephine Baker paid her final visit to the country to make her notorious television appearance.

The many faces of Baker: Dancer, singer, spy and activist¹²

Josephine Baker is usually remembered primarily as a spirited and glamorous entertainer from the 1920s, but there was a great deal more to her than that. Born Freda Josephine McDonald on 3 June 1906 in St Louis, Missouri, she found work as a waitress in a club at the age of 13; shortly thereafter she learned to dance and soon found success on Broadway.¹³ By mid-1920s, she moved to France and soon became one of Europe's most

mocrática (Democratic Opposition Party), led by General Humberto Delgado, was one of the strongest signs of change. On 10 May 1958, at the Café Chave d' Ouro in Lisbon, Humberto Delgado promised to depose Salazar, in response to a question from Lisbon's Agence France press correspondent Lindorff Pinto Bastos. With these words, General Delgado earned the nickname "General sem Medo" ("general without fear"), and subsequently managed to unite different sectors of Portuguese society around a political project that sought a democratic and non-colonial Portugal. because of this, the ensuing presidential elections offered a moment of hope for the Portuguese people, both at home and in the overseas colonies. Unfortunately, because of extensive electoral fraud, Delgado lost the election (Sardica, 2008). Nevertheless, the political framework established in Portugal during that year of presidential election campaigning forged a determination for change within Portuguese society.

¹² I borrowed the title of this section from the title of Caravantes's (2015) book.

¹³ For further discussion on this topic, see Caravantes (2015).

famous artists. In 1937, she chose a French husband and fully embraced her new homeland by becoming a French citizen. The energy that had thus far been expended on developing her career was in 1939 redirected following France's declaration of war on Germany. She joined *la Résistance Française* (the French Resistance) and, working as a secret agent, used her European tours as a cover to convey information on Axis troop movements to the Allies.¹⁴ Later, when the war was over, Josephine Baker returned to her native USA, with a less acquiescent attitude towards the prevalent racism: she insisted on both a non-discrimination clause in her contracts and on playing to integrated audiences. Regarding her 1950s US tours, Dudziak has observed that:

[Baker] expressed quite frankly her disapproval of Negroes who come to Europe as "goodwill" ambassadors of the U.S. Government and attempt to sell the European people on the idea that all is well for Negro citizens in America. "Europeans are not ignorant", she said. "They read, and they visit America. They are quite familiar with the race situation in this country".

(Dudziak, 1994: 559)¹⁵

In recognition of Baker's involvement in the civil rights movement, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) declared 20 May 1951 "Josephine Baker Day".

Thus, it was during the latter part of her career that Baker accepted the invitation to perform on Portuguese television, although it was not her first visit to the country. Baker had been there several times before November 1960, either on extended visits — performing a number of concerts in Lisbon and Porto — or else passing through as a French secret agent.¹⁶ During WWII:

Portugal welcomed Josephine with invitations to diplomatic parties at the British, Belgian, and French embassies. As she moved from one ambassador to another, she listened for information to help the Resistance. Then she went back to her

¹⁴ For further discussion on this topic, see Abtey (1948), Rose (1989) and Onana (2006).

¹⁵ From the *New York Amsterdam News*, 14 July 1951, p. 22.

¹⁶ For further discussion on this topic, see Abtey (1947), Rose (1991) and Onana (2006).

hotel room and made careful notes on slips of paper that she pinned to her underwear. She felt confident that no one would strip-search her.

(Caravantes, 2015: 89)

However, it was during the 'Jazz Age' that the Portuguese press first made its readers aware of Josephine Baker. On 16 March 1927, *Ilustração*, a leading Portuguese magazine, published an article entitled "Josephine Baker: The Black Star" (see Figure 1).

Probably the most extensive piece during this period was also run by *Ilustração*, on 16 October 1930, and consisted of four pages with several photographs (see Figures 2 and 3).¹⁷

Her first sight of Portugal had been on 17 March 1939.¹⁸ She arrived in Lisbon at dawn aboard the ship *Massília*, from Bordeaux bound to Buenos Aires, accompanied by her secretary and two famous dancers, Betty Ben and Henchis Estes.¹⁹ Together with her secretary, Madeleine Charlot, Baker had a quick tour of Lisbon's city centre where she lunched at the Jerónimo restaurant before returning in the afternoon to Alcantara Pier, shortly before the ship departed. Portuguese audiences first saw Josephine Baker the artist on stage two years later in March 1941. On her arrival on 19 March, Baker was fêted as a famous star, garnering much positive coverage in the daily press up until her departure on 21 April. Under various soubriquets such as "Queen of Paris", "Black Venus" or "Princess of the World", Baker performed at the Teatro da Trindade in Lisbon and the Teatro Sá da Bandeira in Porto. However, as we now know, behind these shows lay a mission as a French agent. Baker handed over secret messages written in invisible ink on the margins of performance scores bound for London (Sauvage, 2006).

Baker was to visit Portugal seventeen years later, this time during the Cold War era, to perform at the Casino Estoril,²⁰ with the daily newspaper *Diário de Lisboa* announcing her "sensational debut" at that venue in its 17



Figure 1. "Josephine Baker: The Black Star", *Ilustração* (16 March 1927).

July 1958 edition.²¹ During this visit, she made an unsuccessful attempt to adopt a Portuguese child – part of an ongoing project since 1953 to assemble a "Rainbow Tribe" by adopting children of diverse races and ethnicities (the number would eventually reach twelve).²² Baker landed in the country again the following year on the 24 April 1959, on her way to Paris, according to the daily newspaper *O Século* ("The Century"). In the following day, the newspaper reported that Baker was returning from Venezuela, accompanied by her husband, sister and two of her children, one of whom was called Mara and had been adopted only days before in Caracas.²³ A few months after this brief sojourn, Baker would find herself in Portugal once again.

¹⁷ *Ilustração*, 116 (16 October 1930), pp. 24-25.

¹⁸ See *Diário de Lisboa*, 5860: 4 (17 March 1939).

¹⁹ See *Diário de Lisboa*, 5860: 5 (17 March 1939).

²⁰ See *Diário de Lisboa*, 12789: 2 (16 July 1958).

²¹ "Estrela sensacional". See *Diário de Lisboa*, 12790: 2 (17 July 1958).

²² For further discussion on this topic, see Guterl (2014).

²³ See *O Século*, 25 April 1959.

The broadcast: Baker's confronts Salazar live on television

From the outset of the Cold War era, Josephine Baker was involved in activities around racial equality, decolonization and support of the civil rights movement. She took advantage of her celebrity status to call attention to the discriminatory racial practices in her native US during her international travels, and, as a result, the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) viewed her as a national security threat and kept a file on her (Dudziak 1994). According to Dudziak, the "State Department collected data on her activities, using the information to dissuade other countries from allowing her to perform" (Dudziak 1994: 543). Clearly, no such dissuasion took effect in Portugal.

On 6 November 1960, Josephine Baker wrote from the Palace Hotel in Madrid to Melo Pereira, RTP's Director of Light Music, to inform him that family circumstances meant she would have to postpone her planned visit to the television studios in Lisbon. The letter in full read:

Cher Monsieur,

Pour des raisons d'ordre familial, et indépendantes de ma volonté, je me trouve dans l'obligation de m'excuser auprès de vous, en ce qui concerne la date du neuf courant, date à laquelle vous auriez voulu que je fasse une émission de Télévision, et que j'aurais été enchanté de faire.

J'espère que ce contretemps ne vous cause pas trop de déséquilibre dans votre programmation et ne vous occasionnera pas d'ennuis auprès de votre direction, ennuis dont vous n'êtes absolument pas responsables.

Je serais contente de me mettre d'accord avec vous pour une autre date, et je vous prie de voir Monsieur CORTES pour cela si vous êtes intéressé.

Bien sincèrement à vous, et encore tous mes excuses.

Joséphine Baker²⁴

²⁴ "Dear Sir, For family reasons, and beyond my control, I find myself obliged to apologize to you, regarding the date of the ninth inst., when you would wish me to do a Television show, and which I would have

After an exchange of correspondence between the artist, Rafael Cortez (her agent in Spain) and Melo Pereira, it was agreed that the broadcast would take place on 29 November under the supervision of RTP Director Fernando Fradique.²⁵ With regard to the musicians involved, it was originally envisaged that the studio orchestra would be led by Fernando de Carvalho, as noted on the production sheet dated 23 November 1960.²⁶ An internal service note dated 28 November, the very day before the transmission, sent from the Music Programmes Office, informed RTP's Programme Directorate about Fernando Carvalho's replacement by conductor Tavares Belo.²⁷ Also, the pianist Antonio Melo was added to the roster of musicians.²⁸ Under Belo, the studio orchestra comprised fifteen musicians: four violins, one viola, one cello, one double bass, three saxophones, two trumpets, one trombone, drums and piano.²⁹

been delighted to do. I hope that this setback does not cause you too much imbalance in your programming and will not cause you trouble with your management, trouble for which you are absolutely not responsible. I would be happy to agree another date with you, and I would ask you to see Mr CORTES on that matter if you are interested. Sincerely yours, and my apologies once again, [signed and printed] Joséphine Baker." RTP-DAG Proc. No. 1/60, microfilmed.

²⁵ RTP-DAG Proc. No. 1/60, microfilmed: "Ficha de Produção (November 23, 1960)" (Production Sheet).

²⁶ RTP-DAG Proc. No. 1/60, microfilmed: "Folha de Cachets (November 23, 1960) – ANULADA" (Cachet Sheet – CANCELLED).

²⁷ RTP-DAG Proc. No. 1/60, microfilmed: "Radiotelevisão Portuguesa – Serviço Interno (November 28, 1960)" (Portuguese Public Television – Internal Service).

²⁸ RTP-DAG Proc. No. 1/60, microfilmed: "Folha de Cachets (November 29, 1960)" (Cachet Sheet).

²⁹ On the programme's cachet sheet, approved by RTP's Director of Production Services, we find the musicians named as follows. Violins: Humberto de Aguiar, Fernando Correia Martins, Mário Garibaldi Duarte, Domingos Ferreira Vilaça; viola: Francisco Canto e Castro; cello: Joaquim Bernardo Moreira; double bass: José Martins Esteves Graça; saxophones: Guilherme Martins d'Oliveira, Manuel Hermenegildo Tabora Pereira, Flamiano Ferreira Evaristo; trombone: Mário de Jesus, Joaquim de Almeida Lourenço; trombone: Edgar Fernando Oliveira; drums: Artur Brandenburg Machado de Oliveira; piano: António Melo. RTP-DAG Proc. No. 1/60 microfilmed: "Folha de Cachets (November 29, 1960)". It is of much interest to note that some of these musicians were connected to the Lisbon jazz scene at the time. For further discussion on this topic, see Cravinho (2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b).

The programme was aired on a Tuesday at 10:30 pm, with a duration of 45 minutes, and was announced in the daily press as “Music Hall: Josephine Baker in an exclusive presentation in Portugal”.³⁰ As far as production costs were concerned, Baker’s fee was at the time one of the highest ever awarded by RTP to a foreign artist: 25,000 Portuguese escudos, with no deductions for fees or tax.³¹

Baker took full advantage of her opportunity. She used the broadcast to challenge Salazar’s colonial policies via what Jill Dolan calls a “utopian performative”. According to Dolan, “utopian performances” can be understood as “small but profound moments in which performance calls the attention of the audience in a way that lifts everyone slightly above the present, into a hopeful feeling of what the world might be like” (Dolan, 2001: 5). This definition is apposite to the performance in question. At certain points, she conveyed anti-racism messages and sentiments about universal brotherhood. In introducing ‘Terra Seca’, a song by Ary Barroso, the lyrics of which explore slavery and racial discrimination, Baker claimed that it had been the ‘good God’ who had made her black (see Figure 4).³²

Baker’s pronouncements were not well received by the RTP Censorship Bureau and RTP Directorate,³³ while censorship meant the Portuguese press was silent on the issue. It is important to keep in mind that this controversy had taken place on Portugal’s only television channel, under the control of the corporatist far-right Estado Novo regime with its dominant colonial ideology, at a time when that regime was facing increasing international pressure from the UN to withdraw from its African and Indian colonies.



Figure 4. A screenshot of the Josephine Baker RTP broadcast.

Frazier, in a study in which he characterizes diplomacy as “black cultural traffic”, claims that, with few exceptions, “Cold War historiography, in general, has under-theorized the discourses and performances features of black internationalism when in transit” (Frazier, 2013: 36).³⁴ He points out that the historians Charles R. Lilley and Michael H. Hunt have drawn attention to this, and quotes their assertions that many works “ignore and downplay the patterns of social interaction produced between different peoples’ and, therefore, treat ‘culture and power as though they were largely divorced from, rather than wedded to, one another in important ways” (Frazier, 2013: 36).³⁵ Moreover, as Bauman has observed:

The consideration of the power inherent in performance to transform social structures opens the way to a range of additional considerations concerning the role of the performer in society. Perhaps there is a key here to the persistently documented tendency for performers to be both admired and feared-admired for their artistic skill and power and for the enhancement of experience they provide, feared because of

³⁰ See *Diário de Lisboa*, 13638: 19 (29 November 1960).

³¹ Conductor Tavares Belo’s fee was 1.500\$00 (1,500 Portuguese escudos), and each musician was paid 400\$00 (400 escudos). RTP-DAG Proc. No. 1/60, microfilmed: “Folha de Cachets (November 29, 1960)” (Cachet Sheet).

³² “*C’est le bon dieu qui nous fait de c’est couleur.*” RTP “Music-Hall” Josephine Baker (29 November 1960).

³³ It should be noted that the programme was broadcast live and Josephine Baker’s remarks were in French with no subtitles.

³⁴ For further discussion on this topic, see Cohn and Platzer (1978), Griffin and Fish (1998), Gilroy (1993), Von Eschen (1996, 2004), Edwards (2003) and Frazier (2013).

³⁵ For further discussion on this topic, see Lilley and Hunt (1987).

the potential they represent for subverting and transforming the status quo.

(Bauman, 1975: 305)

I argue that Baker's televised performance could be seen as an example of this dual agency of inspiring both admiration and fear. On the one hand, Baker was internationally admired: both as an artist and on account of her service to France during WWII as a secret agent and her support of the French Resistance, for which she was awarded the Medal of the Resistance with Rosette and named a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour by the French government. On the other hand, in a post-WWII world, she became feared by the US authorities on account of her deep involvement in the US civil rights movement (Dudziak, 1994).

As described above, Baker sent shockwaves through the corridors of RTP, with her pronouncements becoming the subject of an exchange of correspondence between the RTP Censorship Bureau and Deputy Director-General. Questions were asked within RTP's power structures about how this could have happened, given the prevailing system of prior censorship of all RTP content before transmission.³⁶ According to a letter from the Head of the Censorship Service to the Deputy Director-General of RTP, it was not just Baker's words that were controversial: the dress she wore for the broadcast left her shoulders and arms exposed during parts of the performance, which affronted the prevailing Portuguese conservative moral sensibilities of the day (see Figure 5).

This might seem an excessive reaction in Western Europe at the dawn of the '60s but it needs to be considered in context: since 1933, Salazar's authoritarian, conservative, traditionalist regime, with its "Catholic-rooted vision of politics and society", had been ruling Portugal under the slogan *Deus, Pátria e Família* ("God, Homeland and Family") (Sardica 2008: 47).³⁷



Figure 5. A screenshot of Josephine Baker's RTP broadcast.

Alongside a widespread moral conservatism in society at large, the Catholic Church in particular voiced strong opposition to new forms of entertainment and modern fashion.³⁸

The excuse given by the RTP's Head of Censorship Services was that he had not had the opportunity before the broadcast to analyse the song lyrics nor to see the dress Baker was to wear.³⁹ Yet he reaffirmed that it would "always be desirable to ascertain in advance all the elements that concern the programmes' moral ap-

period, also known as Salazarism (1933–68), nationalist cultural symbols were widely circulated and the colonial mentality was amplified in ways that legitimized authoritarian power both in domestic and foreign policy, sustained by the guiding slogan *Tudo pela Nação, nada contra a Nação* ("All for the Nation, nothing against the Nation"). These nationalist discourses, alongside the dominant colonial ideology, to some extent represented a threat to new forms of entertainment from abroad that were intrinsically of "African origin". For further discussion on this topic, see Cravinho (2017, 2018a).

³⁸ For further discussion on this topic, see Cravinho (2016).

³⁹ "Apesar das recomendações de V. Exa, não me foi ontem possível obter as letras das canções do programa em epígrafe, nem ver o vestido utilizado pela artista na emissão. Tive, porém, o cuidado de lhe falar com ela sobre as duas coisas." ("In spite of the recommendations of Your Excellency, it was not possible yesterday to obtain the letters of the songs of the programme in the epigraph, nor to see the dress used by the artist in the broadcast. But I was careful to talk to her about both.") "Comentário do Adjunto do Diretor-geral da RTP a carta do Chefe do Gabinete Literário [Serviço de Censura da RTP] (December 3, 1960)" (Commentary by the Deputy Director-General of RTP to a letter from the Chief of the Literary Cabinet [RTP Censorship Bureau]).

³⁶ RTP-DAG Proc. No. 1/60, microfilmed: "Carta do Chefe do Gabinete Literário [Serviço de Censura da RTP] (November 30, 1960)" (Letter from the Chief of the Literary Cabinet [RTP Censorship Bureau]).

³⁷ The new Portuguese constitution was approved on 19 March 1933, and initiated after its official publication on 11 April 1933. During this

preciation.”⁴⁰ On 3 December 1960, the Television Programmes Directorate received the following statement from RTP’s Deputy Director-General: “the utmost care should be taken so that a situation like this cannot be repeated. We want to be informed if any measures have already been taken that can put our minds at rest on this matter”⁴¹ Soon the Television Programmes Directorate received another message about the programme but this time it was a telegram from Josephine Baker sent on New Year’s Day, thanking them for their invitation to perform: “*Vous remercie tout cœur amitié et affection témoignages, par radio journalistes artistes et employés TV, amicalement Joséphine Baker*”.⁴²

Baker’s remarkable televised performance in Portugal can be understood to have come about as a result of one individual’s actions given RTP’s connections with the international music industry. In its simplest terms, it was a public event in which music was used as a form of protest against a repressive colonialist regime, not least because of that regime’s continuous resistance to international pressure to decolonize. However, as we have seen, the picture is in fact more complex, and a range of other forces are in play in this interface between music, television and the Portuguese state, including RTP’s internal production dynamics, the New State regime’s colonial policies, the actions of the Censorship Bureau, and an artist visiting from abroad with a hidden political

agenda. As Williams asserts in his study of television, there are profound historical, social, political and philosophical implications in representing the world through such media (Williams, 1974). This is clearly true of Baker’s televised performance. Despite the Censorship Bureau’s policy of vetting all television content before broadcast, the realities at play within such an institution operating within the New State regime allowed for significant tactical manoeuvres with the state itself, creating spaces in which the authoritarian control fails. One of these spaces was occupied by a “Black Angel”.

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⁴⁰ “conveniente conseguir sempre com antecedência todos os elementos que interessam a apreciação moral dos programas.” “Comentário do Adjunto do Diretor-geral da RTP a carta do Chefe do Gabinete Literário [Serviço de Censura da RTP] (December 3, 1960)” (Commentary by the Deputy Director-General of RTP to a letter from the Chief of the Literary Cabinet [RTP Censorship Bureau]).

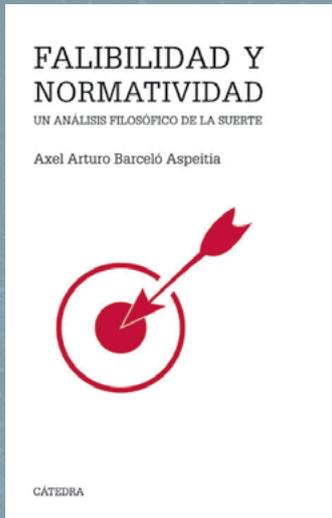
⁴¹ “Recomenda-se o maior cuidado para que não possa voltar a repetir-se uma situação destas. Gostaríamos de ser informados se já foram tomadas providências que nos possam deixar tranquilos nesta matéria” RTP-DAG Proc. No. 1/60, microfilmed: “Comentário do Adjunto do Diretor-geral da RTP a carta do Chefe do Gabinete Literário [Serviço de Censura da RTP] (December 3, 1960)” (Commentary by the Deputy Director-General of RTP to a letter from the Chief of the Literary Cabinet [RTP Censorship Bureau]).

⁴² “Thank you with all my heart for the friendship and demonstrations of affection from radio journalists, artists and TV employees. Yours sincerely, Josephine Baker.” RTP-DAG Proc. No. 1/60, microfilmed: “Cópia do telegrama de Joséphine Baker recebido em 31.12.1960”.

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