

A MUSICAL ANALYSIS OF MUTANTES' BALADA DO LOUCO

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to propose a formal, harmonic and voice-leading analysis of the song *Balada do Louco*, written by the group *Os Mutantes*. The formal analysis was made according to concepts presented by William Caplin of inter and intrathematic functions and adapted for rock music by Walter Everett. Harmonic analysis was done according to the syntactic criteria, that is, it is the approach in which the chords design a certain function in line with its context within the form of the song (NOBILE, 2016, passim)[1]. Harmony studies and Schenkerian rock analysis initiated by Christopher Doll are also considered in this study.

1. INTRODUCTION

Musical analysis of the Rock genre is one of the fastest growing areas in US music research. In Brazil, Rock is studied mainly through sociocultural approaches, and it is rare that the genre is approached by musicology, music theory, analysis and harmony. In addition, popular harmony taught in conservatories and music colleges are focused on Jazz and Brazilian music that resemble harmonically and formally Jazz music, but it is not able to satisfactorily explain Rock. (TEMPERLEY, 2011)¹ [2] Thus, the aim of this study is to propose a formal, harmonic and voice-leading analysis of *Balada do Louco* by the group *Os Mutantes* following the concepts of William Caplin, Walter Everett, Drew Nobile and Christopher Doll. The band *Os Mutantes* was chosen as the representative band of rock made in Brazil due to its historical path: in the 1950s, rock in Brazil was based mostly on versions of English and American music and remains with this predominant characteristic until the "Jovem Guarda". The group was chosen considering their presence at the beginning of rock written by Brazilians (original compositions). In addition, the importance of its members and their contribution to tropicalism and rock in Brazil are factors that strongly contributed to the choice of the group for this study. To clarify the terms used in this article, "Rock" will be used to refer to the genre developed in England in the 50's and 60's derived from Blues, while "rock in Brazil" is referring to the genre that

became popular in the country during the 70's and 80's. Roman numerals represent chord degrees.

2. ANALYSIS

Even today there is no agreement between an appropriate methodology for analyzing songs from the rock repertoire. Therefore, I opted for analyzing the form of the song according to concepts of inter and intra-thematic functions according to William Caplin and adapted to Rock by Walter Everett.

The harmonic analysis will be done by degrees to elucidate along the song the voice leading movements. It will also be done according to syntactic criteria. In syntax harmony, Christopher Doll considers chords as function projectors, but the chord will be classified as tonic or pre-tonic according to the concepts of preparation and stability. Chords that are stable enough to not require a resolution project the tonic function, whereas pre-tonic chords are those that through voice-leading goes to stability. (NOBILE, 2014) [3]

The Schenkerian analysis was chosen because it reveals important harmonic and melodic relations in this song. Despite being useful in this song particularly, Rock is a genre that encompasses many composers and sub-genres, and therefore, not all songs analyzed can be "embedded" in this type of analysis. As we know, the number of composers Schenker has established for analysis is very small and it is not possible to establish a Urlinie (fundamental line) in Rock as Schenker proposed in his theory. (NOBILE, 2014)

Like Nobile (2014, passim), I also believe that these relations that the Schenker analysis shows are as fundamental to Rock as to the repertoire analyzed by Schenker and despite the lack of an unifying Urlinie of the genre, the relations evidenced are sufficient for a deeper analysis of harmony and melody than analysis by degrees alone. Finally, I believe that Schenker's analysis can bring an important harmonic overview of a piece and clearly shows the parts of tonic prolongation and emphasis on the dominant in the different sections of the music analyzed.

Finally, I will make some considerations relating form, harmony and instrumentation.

2.1 Formal Analysis

The 32-bar AABA ternary form in popular music originates from Tin Pan Alley, a form used in the 30s

and 40s, showing variations in the 50s and 60s with the beginning of rock. Thus, there is also the AABA

¹ The survey looked at the "500 best songs of all time" according to Rolling Stones magazine and it was notable that the IV-I movement is more common than V-I in rock. How is it possible to traditionally analyze a genre that doesn't follow the most used cadence in tonalism (V-I) as a general rule?

(BA) form of 48 bars, as is the case of *Balada do Louco*, in which the sections, instead of 8 bars, have 12 (resulting in 3/2 of original Tin Pan Alley). An example of this form in Rock repertoire is the song *I Want to Hold Your Hand* by *The Beatles*. It is also present in several songs from the beginning of the band's career and, due to their great influence, defined the pre-psychedelic era (NOBILE, 2014). This song has great similarities to *Balada do Louco*: both begin with an introduction, and the A sections of both songs are made of 12 bars.

In *Balada do Louco*'s A section, it is possible to hear in the melody the formal type sentence being used in what Everett calls the Statement-Restatement Departure-Cadence (SRDC) model. "SRDC is the basis of a verse with refrain." (EVERETT, 2009, p. 140)[4] In fact, what we hear is a basic idea or Statement (c. 3-6), the repetition of this idea or Restatement (c. 7-10), the phrase that distances itself from the idea or Departure (c.10-11) and Cadence (c.11-12), which is repeated in the form of the refrain. Nobile also states that it is common in SRDCs to "reinterpret the cadential", just as it occurs at the end of the A section of *Balada do Louco*. See Fig. 1. (NOBILE, 2014, p.137)

Figure 1: Section A's formal analysis.

This section is divided into main theme (c.3-10) and expanded cadential (c.11-12). Thus, the first ten bars can be compared to a main theme. Caplin states that only the main theme is tight-knit in a song, because it follows the ensuing characteristics: tonal-harmonic stability, cadential confirmation, melodic-motivic unit, sentence symmetry and efficiency on functional expression. (CAPLIN, 1998, p.17) [5]

In fact, this theme of the A section may resemble a main theme, because in both the phrases of presentation and continuation, as well as in the cadential, the emphasis is reinforced, constructing a harmonic tonal stability. Harmony is confirmed at the end of the theme, which would only result in a more stabilized harmony if a perfect cadence was used instead of the plagal one. The melodic-motivic unit is observed when we note that all motives derive from the basic idea and we see the formal efficiency of this theme when we try to remove some of its parts and we realize that the meaning of the section is impaired.

The post cadential of the section may also resemble a codetta, although with a difference. A codetta may contain melodic-motivic material from the cadential and harmonically, the codetta prolongs

the root. These features are compatible to what occurs in the post cadential of the section, however, the codetta is usually preceded by a perfect cadence, and not a plagal one as we have heard in the song. (CAPLIN, 1998, p.16)

Section B is marked by its division between the theme and the interlude. This instrumental part that separates the A and B sections has a framing function, that is, separate the A section (quieter and tight-knit) from the B section (looser and chaotic). Just like the expanded cadential of the A section, the interlude also has a post-cadential function.

Harmonically, the B section focuses on dominant harmony, since its theme, rather than focusing on the root, ends in V, to start the interlude. This emphasis on the dominant is characteristic of contrasting middles from small ternaries. (CAPLIN, p.13, 1998)

This typical sound difference of the contrasting middle is usually associated with changes in textures, melodies and instrumentation (CAPLIN, 1998). An example of this is in the song *Every Breath You Take* by *The Police*.

In the A section of *The Police*'s song, we can hear guitar, bass, drums and voice. On entering the B section, we hear the addition of a keyboard and the guitar playing open chords instead of the fingering style. Despite the meaningful contrast, the biggest difference we feel between one section and another in this song is the loose form how section B poses in relation to section A, since B is characterized by groups of asymmetric phrases, some harmonic instability because the theme ends in V rather than completing the cadence and a certain inefficiency of functional expression, that is, the parts are not highly interrelated, different from the A section. (CAPLIN, 1998, p.17)

2.2 Harmonic analysis

Harmonic analysis will be divided in parts for better understanding: introduction, A section (divided into theme and expanded cadence) and B section (theme starting in anacrusis and interlude). In each section, each chord and its functions will be analyzed, as well as the cadences. Harmonic analysis will have two strands: separate analysis of each chord by degrees and analysis of sections based on tonic prolongation (section A), and emphasis on the dominant (section B).

This last type of analysis is a syntactical one. In syntax harmony, Christopher Doll considers chords as function projectors, but the chord will be classified as tonic or pre-tonic according to the concepts of preparation and stability. Chords that are stable enough to not require a resolution project the tonic function, whereas pre-tonic chords are those that through leading voices conduct to stability. (NOBILE, 2016, p. 32) Doll also asserts that predictive functions can have different levels of proximity to tonic, especially considering temporal position and stepwise resolutions that each degree escale anticipate (DOLL, 2007, p.17) [6]. For example, in a song in the key of C major, a movement from a D minor chord or a triad B diminished do predict a “stronger” pre-tonic than a F major. But the terms dominant and subdominant might not be appropriate because eventually a IV might represent a pre-tonic function stronger than a V considering its position and importance within the song, as we will see in this song.

2.2.1 Introduction and A section



Figure 2: Harmonic analysis of the A section.

According to Caplin (1998), a thematic introduction contains the following characteristics: short (between two and four bars), weak or nonexistent melodic-motivic component, and usually emphasizes the harmony of the tonic. In this case, the introduction of the beginning of the song resembles a thematic introduction as described by Caplin. The two bars played on the piano begin with a diminished chord (VII) followed by the I, without building any motif or melody. Thus it is possible to note its role in the song: to start the music without starting genuine ideas, so that the basic idea starts in the A section. This introduction, however, cannot be considered a thematic introduction, because it does not repeat itself when the A section is repeated throughout the song.

Section A begins with the A major chord with ninth (IV), sounding like a cluster, because in the piano it’s played the notes A, B and C# in the same octave. This chord is then followed by VII in the same measure. The IV chord acts as a pre-dominant that evidences the voice leading of the B note as a contrapontistic suspension that resolves on the diminished chord with dominant function. Already in the third and seventh beat of the theme, the diminished chord starts to have the pre-dominant (or

pre-pre-tonic) function to the V that follows it. Considering the syntactic criteria, both the diminished chords are in a pre-tonic position, as well as the V, since both go to stability.

The first section is formed by one theme only, similar to the classic sentence defined by Caplin (1998, p.10). Its presentation phrase extends from c. 3 to the beginning of c. 10, having a basic idea of four bars that repeats itself. The first motif of the theme (c 3-4) begins with the note F # and ends at the second measure of the section on a V chord. The second part of the theme retains the rhythmic pattern of the first, but instead of leading to the fifth of the tonic (B), it leads to the third (G#), creating a sense of question and answer between the two sentences.

From the fifth measure of the A section, the basic idea is repeated, but the last note does not extend to the end of the measure, because instead of using I, the progression was extended through III, I6/4, # IVo until reaching IV and finishing on the plagal cadence. The cadence is then repeated in the last two measures of the section, as well as the lyrics. These last two bars are considered as an expanded cadential as defined by Caplin (1998, p. 19-20). The cadence is repeated because the first time the melody ends, it ends on the third of the chord, and when it is repeated, the melody reaches the tonic. In our analysis, we consider c. 13-14 as an expanded cadential. The lyrics "and (He/She) is not happy, is not happy" of the last four measures of the section is always repeated, creating what is defined by Walter Everett (2004) [7] of refrain or hook. The only time we have a change of these lyrics is on the last repetition of the A section, at the end of the song: "and (He/She) is not happy, I am happy."

One aspect that reiterates this song as part of the rock repertoire is its harmony, especially the plagal cadence (IV-I) at the end of the section. The repetition of the cadence serves to reinforce its intention of ending the section, since the melody in the first time ended on the third of the tonic and thus creates an impression of a question that demands a response made by the expanded cadential. Although it seems a weak movement, it is curious to notice that the IV-I movement is much more common than the V-I in rock. A research analyzed the "500 best songs of all the times" according to Rolling Stones magazine and have arrived at the following result, see Table 1: (TEMPERLEY, 2011):

Cons	I	bII	II	bIII	III	IV	#IV/ bV	V	bVI	VI	bVII	VII
I	0	23	132	94	44	1052	2	710	104	302	470	16
bII	31	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
II	120	1	0	2	20	58	0	97	0	24	10	0
bIII	50	6	6	0	0	64	2	2	67	0	41	0
III	16	0	39	0	0	46	0	6	0	60	3	4
IV	1162	14	30	98	45	0	4	514	57	72	90	4
#IV/bV	7	0	0	6	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
V	788	0	36	6	17	392	4	0	6	191	48	0
bVI	208	0	1	20	0	22	6	22	0	10	78	0
VI	144	0	87	0	32	260	0	124	21	0	3	0
bVII	386	0	0	11	2	188	2	26	114	6	0	0
VII	18	0	0	0	12	0	4	0	0	3	0	0

Table 1: Chord transitions occurrences in the “500 best songs of all times” (TEMPERLEY, 2011)

Alike *Balada do Louco*, the Eagles' 1975 song *Lyin' Eyes* presents a plagal cadence in the continuation phrase of the first theme (NOBILE, 2016). Thus, we can understand the aspects of syntactical analysis: the IV in these two cases act as dominants even though, theoretically, they normally assume the function of subdominant.

The function of the diminished chords is also a prominent subject in this song, since they are always followed by I or III, suggesting a dominant or pre-dominant function when they appear before V. Another point that can be raised is the few occurrences of VII chords (usually diminished ones) found in rock songs in the same research. These chords represent less than 1% of the chords used in the songs of the analyzed list. They are also the least recurrent (along with III and #IV) to be followed by the tonic, as occurs in *Balada do Louco* countless times.

Root	Number of occurrences		Number of occurrences in pre-tonic position (proportion of total, excluding tonic)
	Proportion of total	Proportion of total, excluding tonic	
I	0.328	—	—
bII	0.005	0.007	0.010
II	0.036	0.053	0.041
bIII	0.026	0.038	0.017
III	0.019	0.028	0.005
IV	0.226	0.336	0.396
#IV/bV	0.003	0.004	0.002
V	0.163	0.241	0.269
bVI	0.040	0.059	0.071
VI	0.072	0.107	0.050
bVII	0.081	0.119	0.132
VII	0.004	0.006	0.005

Table 2: Chromatic distribution of tonics in the “500 best songs of all time” (TEMPERLEY, 2011)

In summary, the analyzed music contains in its first section a harmony based on tonic prolongation, similar to that of a presentation phrase, as defined by Caplin (1998). That is, a harmony that may contain passing chords or neighbouring ones, but that its base and final direction is the tonic. (CAPLIN, 1998, p.10)

2.2.2 B section and Interlude

The B section is also composed of 12 bars. However, it is divided as follows: the theme and the interlude. According to Everett (2009, pp. 147-8), B sections, in relation to As, are less varied and has the function of creating a contrast (be it harmonic, melodic, textural, lyrical, etc.). One of the most common ways to achieve this effect is through harmony with an emphasis on the dominant.



Figure 2: Harmonic analysis of the B section.

In the first measure occurs the transformation of I into the secondary dominant (V7 / IV) to start the theme. Then it goes to IV and alternates between I and IV. Finally, we get to the F# major chord (V / V) followed by B major (V). Instead of ending on I, the theme ends on V, suggesting an emphasis on the dominant, main characteristic of contrasting middles of small ternaries, according to Caplin (1998, p.13). This emphasis on the dominant is also a feature of rock, and this particular type of harmonic progression (IV-I-IV-I-V/V-V) is a mixture of the "classical" types of bridges defined by Trevor de Clerq (2012, p.77) [8].

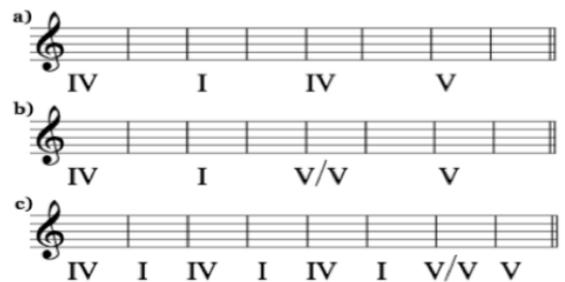


Figure 3: “Classical” bridge models by Trevor de Clerq (2012, p. 77)

In comparison to the theme of the A section (tight-knit), the theme of section B is relatively looser. The five-bar interlude keeps the bass pedal on E and toggles between the IV and V / IV chords until it returns to section A again. The function of this interlude is to separate the two sections and to create different atmospheres, reaching an apex of euphoria and madness, as the name of the music itself suggests, to return to the verse.

2.3 Schenkerian Analysis

From the piano transcription and voice melody, a Schenker analysis was adapted to rock following the model proposed by Nobile. At each level of analysis, it is possible to see important details of voice leading movements that reaffirm the issues of tonic prolongation and emphasis on the dominant. It is important to remember that in popular music the rules for voice-leading are not always followed. As in the harmonic analysis, the sections were also divided for better visualization. The images contain the analysis and some comments will be made on each level of observation.

2.3.1 Introduction and A section



Figure 4: A level analysis of the introduction and A section.

A Level: At this level, it is possible to notice the passing chords being used to prolongate tonic, as they return to I, as we see in the bass leading voice keeping the tonic (E) and contralto the fifth (B). The first chord of the A section is a melodic emphasis chord, just holding the B note from the previous chord and solving it in the chord of VII that follows it. In relation to the melodic contour, it is possible to perceive that the ideas always return to the triad of E major. The pre-tonic chord V is found only at the end of the basic idea leading to I. Ascending fourth leaps in the bass are prominent in this section, as well as the chromatic descending bass at the end of the section before the expanded cadential.

Levels B and C: At the intermediate level it is possible to observe the tonic prolongation in most of the section and at the end to go to IV there is a descending leading voice movement. At the structural level, in the end of the A section, the piano makes a passage from the tonic (E) to the fifth (B) with prominence in the song and that is almost repeated when going to section B, but, instead of the fifth, it is directed to the seventh. At this level it is also possible to clearly notice the I-IV-I cadence as the section structure. See fig. 5 and 6:



Figure 5: B level of the introduction and A section.



Figure 6: C level of the introduction and A section.

2.3.2 B section and Interlude

A Level: In section B, it is clear the melody is at a higher register. The use of secondary dominants draws much attention in this section, suggesting an emphasis on the dominant, however, returning to the prolongation of tonic in the interlude. Also in the interlude it is possible to observe an interesting voice leading between the V/IV and the inversion of the IV. See fig. 7:



Figure 7: A level analysis of the B section and the interlude.

B and C Levels: Voice leading movements by joint degrees on the contralto and the bass leaping in fourths. The emphasis on the dominant in this section is observed both by the melody always returning to the note B, and in the presence of the secondary dominants. The interlude, due to the presence of the low pedal, makes us think of a prolongation of tonic, despite the use of the chord of first degree with seventh minor. This quality of chord may suggest a blues influence in this passage, a genre in which it is common to have a major chord with a minor seventh as tonic. See fig. 8 and 9:

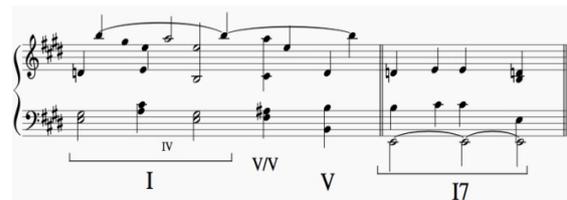


Figure 8: B level of the B section and the interlude.



Figure 9: C level of the B section and interlude, as well as the song's structural chart.

Considering the form of the song (AABABA), we can observe that the structure of this song can be drawn in a graph I-V-I as proposed by Schenker, since section A and interlude are tonic prolongations and between the first A section and the last one, we have section B of emphasis on the dominant, very similar to the structural chart of section B and interlude (Fig. 9).

2.4 Considerations on form and instrumentation

The instrumentation on this song is highly related to its form, since the first separates the sections as instruments are added. Thus, we have in the introduction only the piano. The first section contains piano and voice. In their repetition, the drums and the bass begin their participation. As we have seen previously, the B section can be considered a contrasting middle according to Caplin (1998), since it is common that this section contains changes in textures, instrumentation and accompaniment patterns. In the case of this song, the chorus and the synthesizer join the layers already built throughout the music, causing great impact, since they are "above" pre-existing layers. The interlude mixes sounds of the synthesizer with piano, drums, bass and some parts of not spoken voice (screams, onomatopoeias, etc.). Upon returning to the verse, the chorus and synthesizer give way to the piano, drum, bass and voice lull, just like the second verse. The verse is not repeated as in the first part of the song and we return to section B with the same characteristics as before: shocking, sudden changes of layers and interlude with the function of separating these two atmospheres.

Finally, the song ends with the verse in a different way: the sitar is added. The use of sitar suggests an interesting topic present in psychedelic rock and possibly lysergia. This instrument is used in emblematic *The Beatles'* songs like *Norwegian Wood, Love You To and Within You, Without You*. The band *Os Mutantes* is known for its influence of *Beatles*, its irreverence, originality and, since the album *Mutantes E Seus Cometas no País do Baurets* began the period of influences of progressive rock in their compositions. It is curious to notice that the lyrics, in two of the four repetitions of section A, the verses begin with the structure: If they are X, I am Y. However, in the last A section, the singer starts the verse admitting "Yes, I am very crazy". At the end of each A there is also the refrain that is repeated "and (He/She) is not happy, (He/She) is not happy". In the last repetition of A, however, the lull of the piano and voice is accompanied by the sitar and the phrase becomes "and (He/She) is not happy, I am happy", creating a sense of completion and transcendence of the singer, accepting his madness and reaching a state of happiness.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study done by Drew Nobile and using his method (analysis of harmony through the syntactic criterion, application of notions on form by William Caplin and Schenkerian analysis of songs), it was possible to establish similarities between *Balada do Louco* and songs from the English, American and Canadian rock repertoire studied by Nobile.

Concerning harmony, it was possible to identify the plagal cadence in section A, the most common cadence seen in rock according to Temperley's study (2011). The issue of tonic prolongation observed in section A and the dominant emphasis in section B are also recurrent in the genre. In addition to these similarities, the use of cadential chords common to classic tonal music such as I6/4 and the expanded cadential are notable.

The form of this song is similar to several rock songs of the 60s, with its origin in the Tin Pan Alley. In addition, the melody analysis showed the use of the sentence form defined by Caplin and renamed for rock as SRDC by Walter Everett. This form is widely used in the genre and is usually associated with a refrain (hook) that repeats at the end of each section A, just as it occurs in this song. Section B, with typical aspects of contrasting middles also suggests the approach of rock songs to music of the classical period analyzed by Caplin.

The instrumentation is another important subject to be mentioned. Although it has several aspects similar to a rock song and even sound as a song of the genre, it is not possible to hear guitars in it. This fact suggests that rock is considered an autonomous genre, but not only by its standard instrumentation composed of guitars, bass and drums, there are other elements that unify the genre such as its form and its harmony and that are not mentioned as part of its identity and uniformity.

Finally, it is possible to notice that the layers used by *Os Mutantes* are typical of a rock band when passing through the sections, however, some harmonic and formal aspects of the music that could not be explained by rock studies suggest a certain connection to genres of Brazilian music. The use of diminished chords are extremely rare in rock, but very common in Brazilian music. In addition, the AABA form chosen by the band to structure the song was used a lot in the beginning of rock, but in the 70s the genre already used other forms, like the ones that today we know by verse-chorus and verse-pre-chorus-chorus. Thus, it can be said that *Os Mutantes*, despite its explicit influence of British rock, opts for some uses of chords and typical forms of bossa nova, style that preceded the group in Brazilian music history.



Figure 10: Instrumentation x Form in the song *Balada do Louco*.

Acknowledgments

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