

# bossapósbossa, or, Postmodernism as Semiperipheral Symptom

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<i>bim</i>	
<i>bom</i>	<i>baum</i>
<i>bim bim bom</i>	<i>bim</i>
<i>bim</i>	
<i>bom</i>	<i>baum</i>
<i>bim bim bom</i>	<i>bim</i>
<i>bim bim</i>	
<i>é só isso meu baião</i>	<i>baum</i>
<i>e não tem mais nada não</i>	<i>bim</i>
<i>o meu coração pediu assim</i>	
<i>só</i>	<i>bim</i>

—João Gilberto, “Bim Bom,” 1958<sup>1</sup>

—Friedrich Achleitner, “baum-bim,” 1952<sup>2</sup>

WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO BE AGNOSTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE CURRENT configuration of the arts, about their relative importance as well as the constitution of the various art forms themselves. On one hand, the last thing we need in the current critical climate is another millenarian declaration of

the decisive end to this or that aesthetic possibility. On the other hand, it does not take a very strong historicism to note that art forms are born and die, that their constitution and social meaning change dramatically over the period of their existence, that an art form may continue to eke out a subsistence even while the social configuration that gave it force has passed into history. And it should not be a particularly radical stance to suggest that literature itself may already have entered this sort of afterlife. This is not to say that people have stopped reading or writing novels and poems, or that they will stop doing so any time soon. Rather, the point is one that those most invested in the value of the literary will be ready to admit: the forms of attention required by the literary object in particular (as opposed to those the novel shares with film or television, or that poetry shares with popular music) no longer come “naturally,” even to the class for whom literature is still supposed to be the hegemonic art form. Nor is this to say—far from it—that there is no longer any value in these forms of attention. But very few professional teachers of literature will have failed to note that while the vast majority of their students are able easily to generate insights about film and music—right ones, wrong ones, ideological ones, but nonetheless insights of the appropriate kind—they often fail to follow even the most overt formal cues in a Wordsworth poem, or a novel by Machado de Assis.

What can be said with some certainty is that literature as we know it is of fairly recent origin. In English, the modern sense of “literature” is perhaps a little more than two hundred years old: Dr. Johnson’s *Dictionary of the English Language* defines literature as simply “Learning, skill in letters.”<sup>3</sup> For Foucault, literature, “constituted and so designated on the threshold of the modern age,” emerges with the nineteenth century—though a retroactively constructed tradition obscures this moment of origin.<sup>4</sup> Alain Badiou, who maintains that the age of literature is constituted by the emergence in the poem of problems that philosophy was unable to solve, traces its emergence to Nietzsche.<sup>5</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, along the same lines, isolate a certain “eidaesthetic” or philosophical-artistic hybridity as the essence of the literary, tracing the origins of literature not to Nietzsche, but to the fragment form used by Friedrich Schlegel at the turn of the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Whatever the case, this “eidaesthetic” vocation

has not existed uniformly throughout the history of the literary; rather, it has seemed to be taken up most strongly in periods of political crisis and Utopian possibility. Without going into details, we might point to the relationship between Romanticism and the reorganization of feudal space in the wake of the French Revolution, between modernism and the political possibilities that opened up in the wake of the Russian Revolution, and between the heroic phase of postcolonial literature and the great anti-colonial revolutions, particularly in Africa.

To this series we might add a fourth movement, more diffuse and contrary in tendency to the first three. This would be the shutting down of the Utopian impulse shared by these earlier moments and by their literary complements: the end of the Cold War and the ideological establishment of the capitalist world market as the ultimate horizon of human history itself. Though this movement is genuinely global, its temporality has been far from uniform: in some places, this transition took place over decades; in others, like Brazil in 1964, it took the form of a crisis. We might expect that the foreclosure of Utopian possibility would have a profound effect on cultural production, especially if the constitution of the arts has been bound up, at least since Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, with a complex relationship to a Utopian political imaginary.<sup>7</sup> Whether or not, as Badiou suggests, "the age of poets is *over*,"<sup>8</sup> it is fair to speculate that a new hierarchy among the arts may be arising—in the culture at large, has perhaps arisen—in which music and film play a greater role than poetry and fiction.

But, to state the obvious, music and film are not the same thing, and with regard to the question of globalization—with regard, that is, to the present state and possible futures of the world system of Capital—they seem to represent opposing possibilities. To understand why this might be the case, we need to establish at least a minimal framework for discussing globalization, culture, and postmodernism. In a very obvious sense, "globalization means the import and export of culture."<sup>9</sup> But then, Goethe and Marx both identified the international exchange of culture, in specifically economic language, as a function of then-modern commerce; and presumably, when we talk about globalization, we are talking about more than a mere quantitative change.<sup>10</sup> The problem, then, is also one of the peculiar status of culture in

the current configuration of Capital, one that has witnessed the “becoming cultural of the economic, and the becoming economic of the cultural”<sup>11</sup>—in short, of postmodernity as a mode of production. On this Jamesonian view, “postmodernism” as the cultural or superstructural aspect of postmodernity (it being understood that one of the features of the latter is the difficulty of separating out the old categories of “base” and “superstructure”) is not to be identified with some number of stylistic traits that are then a matter of choice on the part of the artist. Rather, postmodernism names the limits placed on aesthetic practices by the reorganization of Capital in the wake of the disintegration of the old colonial system—particularly, by the elimination or final subsumption under Capital of hitherto semiautonomous areas: the aesthetic, for example, or non-capitalist societies. Nonetheless, it is impossible to speak of postmodernism without recourse to such notions as “pastiche,” which ceases then to be merely one technique among others and becomes instead a symptom of the existential possibilities afforded by this latest mutation in the organization of Capital. One of the questions we will be considering in this essay is whether such techniques as pastiche mean the same thing when deployed from different positions within the geopolitical order, and even whether the words we use to describe the formal attributes of postmodern culture in the First World can be properly applied to tendencies in the Third World (or more precisely, in the semiperiphery) from which they are formally indistinguishable.

Meanwhile, we need to account for the movement of these forms between the center and the periphery, and in this context it should be noted that postmodern culture is most often seen in terms of the image and its dissemination, which, with notable exceptions, tends to move outward from the dominant economies to the periphery. If postmodernity can be identified with an ideological formation in which, with the end of the Cold War, “capitalism and the market should be declared the final form of human history itself,”<sup>12</sup> then this end of history in the market also is said to represent

a colonization of reality generally by . . . visual forms which is at one and the same time a commodification of that same intensively colonized reality on a world-wide scale.<sup>13</sup>

Postmodernity is, from this perspective, more or less synonymous with a new and particularly virulent form of cultural imperialism.

The flow of musical culture across the surface of the globe, on the other hand, has a rather more complex and unpredictable relationship with the dominant flows of capital. The reasons for this are many: primary among them may be that the economic barriers to inventing, performing, producing, copying, and distributing music are extraordinarily low in comparison to film and even video (and also literature, if one includes the cost of an educational system); in addition, not only is the flow of musical information very difficult to control, but success in controlling it may actually restrict its impact. Meanwhile, we might take a cue from Jacques Attali, who has suggested that the emergence of new musical forms—which the past century has seen in abundance—tends to be proleptic, figuring in advance political configurations that have yet to be invented. If we take up Attali’s challenge to examine a world that is “not for reading, but hearing,”<sup>14</sup> we might be able to discern a rather different globalization taking place within the dominant one.

What follows will attempt to conceptualize this possibility by means of the years surrounding the moment of the Brazilian counterrevolutionary coup of 1964, a crisis point that crystallizes political, economic, and aesthetic problems that had been constitutive of Brazilian culture at least since Getúlio Vargas’s election in 1950. Less paradoxical than it may seem if one considers the enormous Utopian energies that preceded it, this depressing period in Brazilian political history marks one of the richest and most inventive periods anywhere in the recent history of the arts. Equally important for our current ambitions, the 1964 coup was, as Roberto Schwarz has made clear, “one of the crucial moments in the Cold War,”<sup>15</sup> and thus, to use the old-fashioned term, world-historical. We will begin, then, with the prehistory of this moment, the great era of a politico-economic formation known as “development populism”—of which Kubitschek’s promise to accelerate the country through “fifty years in five” is emblematic—and, in the realm of culture, of the invention of new modernisms.

Rather than any of the more obvious ways into this cultural milieu, we will begin with a song released in 1989, temporally quite distant from either

of the two periods under consideration here and linked to the emergent music of the pre-coup era only formally. The song “Etc.,” by the great Brazilian songwriter Caetano Veloso (whom we will have an opportunity to discuss in detail further on) introduces the vocal line with a half-measure of guitar that announces the song as a bossa nova, though it differs from and plays on formal convention in interesting ways:

*Etc.*

*Estou sozinho, estou triste etc.*

*Quem virá com a nova brisa que penetra*

*Pelas frestas do meu ninho*

*Quem insiste em anunciar-se no desejo*

*Quem tanto não vejo*

*Ainda*

*Quem pessoa secreta*

*Vem, te chamo*

*Vem etc.*<sup>16</sup>

[I’m alone, I’m sad, et cetera

Who will come on this new breeze that penetrates

Through the gaps in my nest

Who insists in being foretold in desire

Who I so fail to see

Yet

What secret person

Come, I’m calling you

Come, etc.]

The lyric immediately announces that part of its content is the depletion of form: the meaning of this first “*etcetera*” is that we already know everything the lyrical subject has to tell us about himself. We begin, then, with a very familiar melancholic lyrical voice, whose content we will turn to shortly; but for now, it is enough to note that it is marked very clearly as cliché. In the next line, however, this sense of depletion is turned around for a moment,

since the “*etcetera*” becomes the opportunity for a clever rhyme that briefly reanimates the cliché, and the third line does nothing to dispel this expectation. With the fourth line, however, we reach the heart of the song, or what ought to be the heart of the song, where the animating desire of the lyric emerges. But the line itself—“who insists in being foretold in desire”—is extraordinarily awkward, mainly consisting of one repeated note and, as though resorting to a slightly desperate improvisational trick, squeezing too many syllables into each measure. The hopes that ride on this “new breeze” seem to outweigh the manifest romantic content; after all, it is not that the desired lover brings an aura, but rather the breeze itself that is full of exciting possibility. The emphasis here is on the desire for the New itself, rather than on any particular new thing, and it may not be too much to see here an echo of sixties political lyric, where the singer’s “tomorrow” is not only a private tomorrow but also some unimaginable post-revolutionary future. At any rate, it is clear enough that the central theme of this lyric is not the desired person, who is after all a null quantity, but the desire itself.

But this desire, despite initial appearances, is being conjured, not felt. The emphasis of the next line, “who I *so* fail to see,” hints at this, but the word “yet,” which falls on an unresolved note, raises expectations for what will come after the caesura. What follows is the entreaty to appear; but if the “secret person” does not appear in the space of the lyric, the real impact of the song comes from the fact that neither did the desire. The final “come” is held out on a high note over two bars, while chords of increasing tension progress underneath. But this is merely bravado: the final line is a tremendous anticlimax. The song ends with another “*etcetera*,” unrhymed, on a dying note. The meaning of “*etcetera*” has shifted; it no longer refers to the dispensability of further elaboration, but to the pointlessness of continuing to feign desire. It is worth pointing out further that the song, in contrast to most bossa nova compositions—even the very simplest ones, like the one whose words head this essay—has only one section. The second section paradigmatically serves as a standpoint from which to comment on the first, and here what we get instead in this same lyric, sung again and with identical intonation, is a kind of absolute, un-ironizable perspective.

This negative evocation of bossa nova as something that is missing or

impossible in our own present points to something essential to bossa nova: an atmosphere in which the making of a new music could be viewed as part and parcel of something absolutely New. (The name *bossa nova* itself means something like “the new thing,” and the fact that this name stuck indicates it has meaning beyond a marketing commonplace.) But if we begin to ascribe a content to this “new”—in other words a politics—we come up against an objection in the form of a stereotype (one shared to some degree in contemporary Brazil) that views bossa nova as quintessentially apolitical, sunlit, and guiltless: charming music, with its transcendent moments, but easily assimilated to less serious forms of jazz, and ultimately to “easy listening,” devoted thematically to pretty girls, beaches, and the scenic backdrop of a postcard Rio de Janeiro. It is not as though there is nothing to this stereotype, or even that bossa nova’s own self-image—together with the commonplace of the Brazilian 1950s as an “age of optimism”—has not contributed to it. Attention to some formal aspects of bossa nova, however, gives specificity to this “optimism.”

Ordinarily, we tend to think of accessibility and technical elaboration as tending in different directions—and not only in the arts. This has everything to do with the progressive segmentation of the labor process and the concomitant specialization of consciousness; the distance between the specialist in a particular field and everyone else tends to widen to the point of incomprehensibility, and this is as true in the arts as it is in engineering, law, or physics. This is not some accidental cultural tendency, but rather a process that follows directly from the expansion of the commodity form, and that tends to render any attempt at popularization immediately dilutive.<sup>17</sup> Bossa nova, however, manages at every level—within its own limited sphere—to overcome this antinomy. With all of the commentary about the virtuosity of João Gilberto, who originated the distinctive bossa nova guitar and vocal techniques, what is often forgotten is that these techniques are not only distilled from a popular idiom (samba), but are also, taken separately, extraordinarily simple and, in their basic form, within the reach of anyone who wants to learn them. (The bass line and percussive accompaniment, when they are used, are similarly built up out of simple building blocks.) On the other hand, in the technical execution, the interplay

between these techniques is dazzlingly elaborated. This is as true for the guitar accompaniment (a relatively simple syncopation that derives its complexity from its interplay with the vocal line) as it is for the vocal quality itself, which eschews decorative embellishment, almost remaining within the compass of ordinary speech, even as this very lack of embellishment requires an extraordinary development of the sense of pitch. The compositional technique of its most accomplished composer, Tom Jobim, exhibits the same dual tendency. On one hand, there is an emphasis on melody that makes bossa nova immediately accessible; on the other, the building blocks of these melodies sometimes approach duodecapronic density, and the harmonic base on which they rest provides an apparently inexhaustible supply of ingenious and surprising manipulations of the harmonic system.

Putting this fusion in terms that were surely not on the minds of Jobim or Gilberto, bossa nova fully mobilizes the existing technical apparatus in the service of a radically accessible art form. While not exactly a politics, this is an aesthetic ideology that does not look out of place next to the more explicitly Utopian experiments of Brazilian Modernist architecture. If this technological way of describing bossa nova's innovations sounds strange, however, we should note that it is nothing new in Brazilian cultural criticism; as early as the mid-1960s the concrete poet Augusto de Campos, to take just one example, celebrated bossa nova as a movement that "developed new technologies . . . autonomous, exportable and exported"<sup>18</sup>—the import of technology being, as we shall see, one of the real limiting factors in the autonomization of the Brazilian economy.

Of course, the overcoming of this fundamental antinomy between specialization and accessibility is not emphatic; the world outside bossa nova is still segmented and segmenting, and this persistence inscribes the old antinomy into bossa nova in a new way. Segmentation takes its revenge in the specialized ear of the listener, which must have undergone a certain kind of training to receive the stylistic development of bossa nova in the proper way. The untrained ear prefers the overblown arrangements, often unevenly performed, that bossa nova supplants, while for the trained ear the chasm between this music and João Gilberto grows ever wider.

This ambivalence between the popular imperative and the re-inscription of class specialization makes itself explicit in bossa nova lyrics. The beauty and grace supposedly celebrated in bossa nova are paradigmatically inaccessible for the lyrical subject. To take Tom Jobim's most canonical example, one of the mainsprings of the stereotype, "The Girl from Ipanema" herself—the symbolic embodiment of the elegance and beauty of the wealthy beach neighborhood of Ipanema—is decisively out of the subject's reach, as is captured perfectly well in the standard translation of Vinicius de Moraes's lyric:

*And each day as she walks to the sea  
She looks straight ahead not at me.*<sup>19</sup>

Unconsummated desire is, of course, a lyrical commonplace that goes back at least to medieval tropes, but here the unattainable desire for a woman is a synecdoche for the desire for her upper-class milieu. In Newton Mendonça's "Desafinado" ["Out of Tune"], a kind of manifesto-song that introduces the term *bossa nova*, this structure becomes explicit:

*Se você disser que eu desafino, amor  
Saiba que isso em mim provoca imensa dor  
Só privilegiados têm ouvido igual ao seu  
Eu possuo apenas o que deus me deu*<sup>20</sup>

[If you say I'm out of tune, love  
You should know this hurts me immensely  
Only the privileged have an ear like yours  
I possess only what God gave me.]

Although the meaning of "*privilegiados*" is as flexible in Portuguese as in English, the class reading is made unavoidable by the final line of the stanza, which contrasts the (minimal) God-given talents of the lyrical subject with his lover's class privilege. This reading is confirmed in the following stanza, from which bossa nova takes its name. What is out of tune here is not just the subject's singing but his whole social being, which he excuses by attribut-

ing it (falsely, like the “new small talk” in *Pygmalion*), to some new hip way (“bossa nova”) of doing things, more “natural” and democratic:

*Se você insiste em classificar  
 Meu comportamento de antimusical  
 Eu mesmo mentindo devo argumentar  
 Que isto é bossa nova  
 Que isto é muito natural*

[If you insist in classifying  
 My behavior as antimusical  
 I, though lying, might make the claim  
 That this is the new thing  
 That it's quite natural]

Nobody who listens to the song can fail to notice that the music (also composed by Tom Jobim) both dramatizes the words and introduces a radical disjunction, as the ambiguity we noted in the form ironizes the lyrical content. The first two lines of each stanza end with deliberately awkward intervals that are meant to perform the awkwardness and antimusicality of the subject—an effect that is lost if the intervals are, in fact, sung out of tune. It only strengthens the paradox that, as we saw above, João Gilberto delivers these lines without glissando or vibrato—an apparently “simplifying” effect, resulting in a more “natural,” less-ornamented style, but one that requires an extraordinary sense of pitch, since glissando and vibrato allow for miniscule corrections to the pitch after the note is attacked.

What we see, then, is a tendency within bossa nova to identify the lyric voice with a relatively humble perspective; indeed, in “Desafinado” bossa nova *is* this identification, the equation of this genuinely “new thing” with a simple, unspecialized musical consciousness. Of course it should go without saying that in this relationship, bossa nova’s composers, lyricists, and performers actually occupy the position of the “privileged ear.” The popular subjective identification is not complete; it tends to dominate at the level of lyric, but to be almost imperceptibly ironized at the formal level. It is against

this background that we can best understand the lyric that serves as one of the epigraphs to this essay, João Gilberto's own "Bim Bom," which in English would look something like this:

*bing*  
*bong*  
*bing bing bong*  
*bing*  
*bong*  
*bing bing bong*  
*bing bing*  
*my baião is just this*  
*nothing more than this*  
*my heart wanted it this way*  
*just*

Nothing could seem sillier and more inconsequential than this little song, the main section of which consists of two notes (one for "bim" and one for "bom") a perfect fifth apart, and that, including repeats, takes up all of one minute and twelve seconds on the 1958 recording. But if we take the time to look at it closely, we note right away that it follows, in miniature, the basic structure outlined above. In fact, the subject of the lyric is specified with remarkable efficiency: not only is he simple and poor, but he's from the Northeast; the rhyme, sense, and meter could have been preserved by any number of words (e.g., *canção*, song) besides "*baião*," which refers to a syncopated dance form from the Northeast. But the second section takes place in a different tonality, expands the harmonic palette, and contains chromatic elements that are plainly beyond the fictional composer of the song within a song. Once again we encounter a split within the lyrical voice—on one hand, an identification with popular simplicity, and on the other, the slightest tingeing of irony (introduced by the form), which undercuts this identification and introduces a note of pathos that may not be quite legitimate.<sup>21</sup>

The juxtaposition of "Bim Bom" with Achleitner's concrete poem "baum-bim" at the beginning of this essay is not entirely capricious. One

thing we might immediately take note of is that though a similar structure seems to unite these two poems, their content could not be more different, with “bim-baum” being a minimal linguistic experiment based on the disjunction between “*baum*” as the German word for tree and as half of an onomatopoeic expression for the sound of a bell. To be sure, this owes something to their immediate context—“Bim Bom” is not, after all, a concrete poem—but it also points to something more general, which is that forms that appear similar, even those that develop in communication with each other, tend to have different significations as they cross geopolitical fault lines. Even the most apparently “pure” formal experimentation will immediately tend to take on social content in a peripheral situation that it tends to resist successfully in a First-World cultural context—a phenomenon that is certainly operative between Brazilian and European concrete poetry. We will have an opportunity to see this phenomenon in detail when we turn to the Tropicália movement, particularly Caetano Veloso’s manifesto-song “Tropicália” itself.

*Poesia concreta* is most often associated with a later moment in the history of Brazilian popular music, when the concrete poets championed Tropicália in the mid-sixties. Nonetheless, in a 1968 interview with the concretist Augusto de Campos, in the midst of the furor over Tropicália, Veloso championed “Bim Bom” as one song that, after the banalization of bossa nova, remained unassimilated and vital<sup>22</sup>; and the avant-garde composer Júlio Medaglia singled out this “simple, concrete *baião*” (one assumes that the word “concrete” here is no accident) as embodying the essence of bossa nova.<sup>23</sup> This relationship between bossa nova and concrete poetry is not accidental; to understand it, we should note that the ambivalent democratization of form we have observed in bossa nova, together with its similarly paradoxical semi-identification with a “popular” perspective, can be traced back at least to Brazilian Modernism, particularly the work of Oswald de Andrade. His untranslatable “*pronominais*” (“pronominal forms”), for example, depends for its force on two different placements of the pronoun “*me*,” (“*Dê-me um cigarro*” as against “*Me dá um cigarro*”), the first of which belongs to good students, teachers, and grammar books (and pretentious mulattos, which is another issue), while the second represents not only the

“good black and good white / Of the Brazilian nation” but the poet himself, who speaks their language:

*Come off it brother*  
*And gimme a cigarette*<sup>24</sup>

Concretism marks one possible endpoint of this process. The raw material of concrete poetry is readily accessible to all readers of the language, even the semiliterate: against “expressive poetry, subjective and hedonistic,” private and privatizing, the “pilot-plan for concrete poetry” proposes a “poem-product: useful object.”<sup>25</sup> The “proper” context for the poem “cidade-cité-city,” one enormous portmanteau word, is an electronic signboard in downtown São Paulo, and one can imagine the power de Campos’s stunning 1961 “Greve” (“Strike”) might have if put to use, in some suitably monumental context, as propaganda for a general strike.<sup>26</sup> The linguistic element is generally reduced to a few words or even syllables, while emphasis is placed on visual impact and spatial relationships, on “the graphic space as structural agent” rather than syntactical procedures.<sup>27</sup> The relationship to advertising technique is striking, and it comes as no surprise to find direct borrowings from commercial design. Augusto de Campos’s handsome red-and-white design from 1972, “VIVA VAIA,”<sup>28</sup> for example, though it looks like a template for one of Lygia Clark’s constructivist *bichos*, borrowed its conception from an advertisement for “deluxe ready-to-wear.” Quite aside from parodic possibilities, operative for example in Décio Pignatari’s famous 1957 “beba coca cola” (which transforms “drink Coca-Cola” into a word for the anus),<sup>29</sup> concrete poetry at its most interesting confronts us with the power of the advertising image divorced from the necessity of selling shoes: ultimately, with the democratizing edge of capitalism—its unleashing of productive power to the point that this power is, in potential if not actually, “for everyone”—without its repressive edge, which is entailed fairly immediately by the drive for profit. The similarity to the aesthetic ideology we discovered in bossa nova might be triangulated through Brasília: the “pilot-plan for concrete poetry” quoted above is a direct reference to the “pilot-plan” for the new capital city itself. But here the use of advertising technique—much

closer to industry and the actual functioning of capital than musical technique—brings us closer to a moment when an aesthetic ideology might turn out to be ideology proper. Here, the “popularizing” tendency is directly linked to capital, to the fund of available images and stereotypes exploited by advertising, hardly “popular” in a sense worth celebrating. And after all, the difference between “VIVA VAIA” and its commercial model is one of degree, not kind; the democratization of *haute couture* promised by the claim “deluxe ready-to-wear” is itself not without its Utopian aspect, though of course in the falsity of the promise it is immediately belied.

Before we return to the moment that renders this aesthetic ideology unviable, a theoretico-historical digression is in order. The technical imperative in both concretism and bossa nova, consciously or unconsciously, operates within an Adornian framework where the mobilization of productive forces in the work allegorizes the productive forces outside the work:

Although it appears to be merely subjective, the *totum* of forces invested in the work is the potential presence of the collective according to the level of the available productive forces.<sup>30</sup>

The Adornian position assumes a First-World cultural situation, one in which the latest developments in industry—not only production techniques but also the specialization of consciousness—are more or less immediately present subjectively. In a semiperipheral situation—one in which the circulation of capital is neither self-sustaining as it is in the First World, nor yet in a relation of structural redundancy vis-à-vis First-World capital, as it is for example in many sub-Saharan African economies—the situation is a little different. In the semiperiphery, the national economy cannot be mistaken for the theoretical horizon of the market as such. From the Adornian perspective, cultural production in the classical semiperipheral situation faces an unbearable choice. On the one hand, it can ignore its subaltern position and continue to produce “authentic” works in regional traditions. But since cosmopolitan alternatives will always be available to those who can afford them, “authentic” cultural production turns over into its opposite and becomes nothing more than, in a memorable phrase of Oswald de Andrade’s

often cited by the concretists, “*macumba* for tourists.” On the other, it can imitate these same metropolitan forms; but since these forms grew out of particular social formations without equivalent on the periphery, their derivative status will be palpable.

If we refuse to be bound by Adornian absolutism, we can allow that beautiful and significant work has been produced under each of these conditions—not because the dilemma is false, but because these conditions are rarely met in pure form. Leaving aside the possibility of abandoning the pretension to art altogether, there seem to be two ways out of this dilemma, neither of them easy. The first option is to “join the game,” to participate directly in the production of new vanguards, to compete with cosmopolitan culture: that is, to escape, in the restricted realm of art, the restrictions imposed by the peripheral situation. The second option would be to begin from the fact that impoverishment at the periphery and wealth at the center are aspects of a single process; thus, the way the “level of the available productive forces” renders its subjective effects in the periphery is precisely by way of the “uneven development” that impinges on everyday life in unexpected ways. This would not in itself imply claiming the semiperipheral condition as an “identity” or a value—which, besides entailing a kind of masochism, would lead us right back to the paradox of authenticity—but rather using the symptoms of the geopolitical order, in however mediated a fashion, as raw material.

It should be clear that these two positions are, in theory, incompatible: the aim of the first is to escape symbolically the limitations imposed by the semiperipheral condition, while that of the second is to occupy this position fully. One, undeniably progressive and anti-imperialist, nonetheless remains within the horizon of Capital; the point is not to alter the core-periphery relationship, but to represent the possibility of altering one’s position within it. The other, provided it does not sink into masochistic identification, cannot help but project a social horizon no longer organized around this relationship. This theoretical cleavage, however, does not prevent both tendencies being present in the same artist, even the same work—indeed, this may be the case more often than not.<sup>31</sup> Reaching back to the modernist instance, a comparison of Oswald de Andrade’s famous pair of manifestos,

“Manifesto da Poesia Pau-Brasil” (“Manifesto of Brazilwood Poetry,” 1924) and “Manifesto Antropófago” (“Cannibal Manifesto,” 1928), elucidates this tension. The liberating importance for the Brazilian avant-gardes of the heroic figure of the cannibal-poet is well-known: peripheral anxiety over metropolitan influence is transformed into its opposite in a single stroke, as all culture—American films, psychoanalysis, communism, Tupi myths, Portuguese sentimentality, whatever—is flattened to the status of mere nourishment. But there is something else in Oswald’s statement of “cannibal” ethos: “I’m only interested in what’s not mine.”<sup>32</sup> Cannibal inauthenticity is espoused in the name of an elucidation of the subject, in other words a kind of authenticity: what is most “mine” is the fact of only being interested in what is not mine. The cannibal ethos is then not to be read in contradiction to the earlier demand “to be regional and pure in one’s time,”<sup>33</sup> but rather as its expression. The only way to be “regional and pure” is to register the impurity of the semiperipheral situation, which is a function of Capital. In this context, the familiar modernist imperative “to see with free eyes” (9) is a rather stronger gesture for Oswald than it is for, say, Pound, since this “seeing” necessarily contains a geopolitical element.

On the other hand, the figure of “Brazilwood poetry”—which, like brazilwood itself, would be “for export” (7)—offers a quite different metaphor, one that has also had a lasting impact on Brazilian art. The general thrust of the manifesto is towards the development of the technical conditions necessary for the emergence of a vanguard poetry. First among these is “poetry for poets,” another familiar modernist refrain that means something slightly different in the peripheral context: not so much the autonomy of cultural producers from the interference of other class fractions as the development of the local division of labor to the point that a specialized artistic class can emerge:

The return to specialization. Philosophers doing philosophy, critics criticizing. . . . Poetry for poets. (6)

It is clear that the “technical accomplishment” (8) demanded is not a mere metaphor, but refers also to the actual development of the national means

of production, which requires “engineers, not legal advisors” (6). We have to distinguish, however, between two export economies (which exist simultaneously): the first is the export of raw materials, the hallmark of a colonial economy, and the second is the export of finished products—the hallmark of a core economy (though this of course has changed in the past three decades). In this context, the intended meaning of the notion of “poetry for export”—poetry being, of course, a “finished product”—is undermined by the choice of brazilwood as an emblem. Rather than entailing a certain “technical accomplishment” (the ideological content of the technical imperative in bossa nova and concretism as well), the brazilwood economy merely exploits a raw material. The metaphor has a certain aptness, since brazilwood is the commodity that gave the nation its name. Perhaps it is all too apt, for in a sense the real referent of the manifesto, the real basis upon which Brazilian Modernism was possible, is part of the old export economy: coffee, which did, for a time, “nourish the initial stage of industrialization,” even as it constituted a limit on that process as well.<sup>34</sup>

So on one hand, we have the properly Utopian perspective of an abstract peripheral subject whose horizon must be that abolition of the center-periphery relationship, and ultimately all relations of status and domination. (It is not a mere coincidence that the Brazilian Modernist movement and the Brazilian Communist Party—of which Oswald later became a member—were formalized in the same year). On the other, there is the limited perspective of coffee money—as in Oswald’s “aperitivo,”<sup>35</sup> where the euphoric atmosphere derives from coffee prices soaring like São Paulo skyscrapers. A certain affective interference takes place between these two positions. Euphoria (“happiness is the acid test”)<sup>36</sup> belongs in the first perspective to the future, while in the second it belongs—for a few—to the present. Brazilian Modernism’s euphoria slides easily from one to the other.

In a kind of paroxysm of vulgar materialism, we might note that the four competing “models” postulated by the Brazilian sociologist Octavio Ianni for the dominant configuration of the Brazilian economy at the time of the coup correspond fairly well to the four aesthetic horizons we have mentioned.<sup>37</sup> The classic model of “export”—that is, of raw materials—corresponds more or less to the option of producing “authentic” regional art, while the imita-

tive option—the simple import of the “finished product” of cultural commodities—conforms to the model of full integration with Northern capital ultimately imposed by the military dictatorship. Meanwhile, there are two active possibilities in the economic realm, which correspond to the two interpenetrating aesthetic solutions in the manifestos examined above. One is nationalist import-substitution, a strategy central to Brazilian developmentalism whereby weaknesses in First-World production were selectively exploited to develop a regional industry that, with a little luck, could eventually compete with the First-World product on the global market.<sup>38</sup> This strategy corresponds to peripheral vanguardism, while the second option, socialism proper, corresponds to the Third-Worldist solution. In practice, however, just as cultural production tends to blur the distinction between the latter two aesthetic possibilities, the political configuration of pre-coup Brazil tended to oscillate between or conflate the two economic options. It should be emphasized here that the structural correlation between the economic and cultural levels does not mean that one directly entails the other in any personal or public ideology; the point is, rather, that the overall formation of aesthetic choices is governed by the field of possibilities generated by tactical compromises between the incompatible positions associated with either import-substitution or socialism.

The logic behind this hasty schematization is authorized to some extent by the fact that a homology, once it becomes conscious and self-reproducing, is no longer a mere homology but an allegory, and all of the artists discussed in the present essay are explicitly materialist, at least at the level of “cultural imperialism.”<sup>39</sup> Since the dynamic of cultural imperialism is determined by the logic of the circulation of capital, however, the discourse on cultural imperialism restricts itself arbitrarily if it remains at the level of culture.<sup>40</sup> If we take the logic of this discourse to its limit, we arrive directly at the cultural version of import substitution we have seen in the Brazilian vanguards. But while such a practice may have some positive effects (both symbolic and economic), it mainly operates to authorize local owners of capital (not, it should be emphasized, to producers of culture in its “raw” form). Thus the struggle over who is entitled to appropriate local culture for his or her own “finished product” is not a class conflict, but a conflict within a single class: between the

cosmopolitan symbolic class and their semiperipheral counterparts.

Thus, there is a spontaneous interest on the part of cultural producers to maintain a certain confusion between Utopian anti-capitalism—which mobilizes the desire of the many—and nationalist anti-imperialism—which operates mainly to the benefit of a few. This interpenetration not only has its equivalent in cultural politics, as we have seen, but also (to jump rather abruptly into a third, political register) conforms rather precisely to the asystematic development of Brazilian populism described in Octavio Ianni's *O Colapso do Populismo no Brasil*.<sup>41</sup> The dominant political configuration in postwar Brazil before the 1964 coup was an alliance between the Left and the “progressive”—i.e., urban and industrial—nationalist bourgeoisie. Even the Communist Party endorsed the strategy of import substitution, and identified only two contradictions at the heart of Brazilian society, neither of which is the classic contradiction between Labor and Capital: the conflict between Brazilian national development and U.S. imperialism, and that between industrial progress and the problem of land monopoly.<sup>42</sup> (In fact, the second conflict is a corollary of the first.) As Ianni makes clear, not only did this configuration not have a systematic expression, “structuring itself through chance occurrences, through victories and obstacles,”<sup>43</sup> but it *could not have had one*, since the fundamental interests it balanced in uniting the proletariat, the middle classes, and the industrial bourgeoisie were fundamentally incompatible. The ideological configuration here rests on (in Roberto Schwarz's words) “an apologetic and sentimentalizable notion of the ‘people,’ which embraced without distinction the working masses, the lumpenproletariat, the intelligentsia, national industrial magnates, and the army.”<sup>44</sup> It is probably unnecessary to emphasize the relationship between this “sentimentalizable notion of the ‘people’” and the note of pathos we saw in bossa nova lyrics. It is probably worth pointing out once more that the developmental side of so-called “development populism,” which ostensibly mobilized the expansion of the national means of production in the interests of the many (while in fact real material gains were illusory for most),<sup>45</sup> corresponds to its technical imperative.

The foregoing sketch attempts to give an account of the relationship between political and economic options and aesthetic ideologies in the

Brazilian 1950s. The 1960s tended towards a polarization and coming-to-consciousness of these positions. While the populist configuration more or less absorbed the energies of the Left, the former was, of course, itself not impervious to pressure from what it had absorbed. The early 1960s saw a tremendous polarization in Brazilian politics, and the Goulart administration seemed to be gravitating towards the socialist alternative.<sup>46</sup> The reasons for this polarization are too complex to enter into here, but it corresponded to the alternatives presented by an emerging economic crisis. As Immanuel Wallerstein has demonstrated, the strategy of import substitution has inherent limitations, having to do with its ultimate reliance on imported technology.<sup>47</sup> Despite the symbolic victory of producing new technologies for export in the form of concrete poetry and bossa nova, Brazil had apparently exhausted the cycle of expansion and faced an untenable debt situation (an economic crisis that led to high inflation and political crisis). Brazil faced a radical alternative: further integration with foreign capital along lines that are familiar today, or a dramatic reorganization of property relations.<sup>48</sup> The Left, having been enormously successful at influencing the existing political configuration, by and large did not take into account the opposition a radical program would face from the “progressive” industrialists and the national bourgeoisie, whose interests naturally did not favor the radical restructuring of property. As can be seen from the Brazilian Communist Party platform cited above, the Left mistook the means—alliance with these progressive elements—for ends in themselves. Partly because they believed, with apparently good reason, that socialism could be imposed from within the existing political configuration, the Left was unable to formulate and carry through a genuinely revolutionary program at the decisive moment. The failure resulting from this historical error was complete: the coup met virtually no resistance, and indeed appeared to have the support of many sectors of Brazilian society among which the Left had failed to make distinctions.

Before we become immersed in the particularity of this situation, however, we should emphasize once again that what happened in the coup of 1964 was not unique to Brazil; rather, the Brazilian case is a particularly dramatic instance of a global phenomenon of the final end of a political modernism grounded in great Utopian projects: from the disappointment that

followed the apparent seizing of historical initiative by the African independence movements to the dissipation of the sixties' countercultures into the "commodified dissent" of alternative lifestyles.<sup>49</sup> The ultimate horizon of the moment we are discussing, in other words, is the turning of the Cold War towards the consolidation of a U.S.-led market hegemony—globalization as it is currently understood. What followed the coup was the complete collapse of development populism, along with economic nationalism and the aesthetic ideology that went along with it. For while the technical imperative persisted, the coup reinstated, with a vengeance, the antinomy that this ideology had symbolically overcome, and which Brazilian populism itself claimed to be overcoming. For while the military regime was interested in "modernizing" the national means of production, it was plainly unconcerned with the imperative that this expansion be "for everyone."

Roberto Schwarz's insights into this cultural and political nexus are so fundamental that it may not be too much to insist that little of consequence can be said about this historical moment outside of the framework he constructs.<sup>50</sup> Schwarz's sweeping critique of Brazilian culture during the first years of the dictatorship reveals how profoundly the coup affected the arts. The situation of architecture is emblematic: Brazilian architects, whose formation had been centered around a collectivist, Utopian modernism, suddenly had nothing better to do than build single-family houses. The ends being completely out of proportion to the means, the result was architecture ill-suited for living in: formerly "rational" design principles were turned into either a mere sign of good taste, or a moralistic symbol of abstract revolution. Schwarz has similarly important things to say about Tropicália, which we will return to in a moment, but he reserves his most detailed analysis for the theater.<sup>51</sup> Simplifying Schwarz's discussion a great deal, we might say that there are essentially two possibilities. The first is represented by Augusto Boal's Teatro de Arena, whose dominant influence was the Brechtian *Lehrstücke*. As with the architectural instance, the *Lehrstücke* techniques, developed in the context of imminent revolution, undergo a certain deformation in the context of the aftermath of a failed one. Indeed, to put it in overly brutal terms, the Brazilian cultural elite, though sincere in its leftist politics and opposition to the coup, was "objectively" on the side of

the coup, since it failed to take into account the way in which its own class interests coincided with the populist elision of class conflict: “The defeated Left triumphed, without critique, in front of a full house, as though its defeat had not been a defect.”<sup>52</sup> Revolutionary technique becomes, at best, a reproduction of the problems inherent in leftist populism, and at worst, a consumable sign of the audience’s innocence. It hardly needs to be said that the pleasure of this experience gives the lie to the innocence.

On the other hand, we have José Celso Martinez Corrêa’s *Teatro Oficina*, which is more directly relevant to the new music of the period: the military police, at least, gave their association with the *Oficina* group as a (probably bogus) reason for the imprisonment of Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso, who also had ties with the *Arena*.<sup>53</sup> The *Oficina*, particularly its staging of Chico Buarque’s *Roda Viva*, represents an entirely different kind of theater experiment based on assault. Grounded in a more critical understanding of the role of the middle classes in the coup, Celso argued that “any understanding between the stage and the house is an ideological and aesthetic mistake.”<sup>54</sup> The audience, therefore, is to be insulted by the stage: its habits and choices ridiculed; its very person grabbed by the collar, yelled at, spattered with blood, jostled by actresses fighting in the aisles over a raw ox liver (representing the heart of a TV celebrity), jeered out of the theater if it shows any resistance. The surprising thing—also the problem—is that the audience enjoys the image of its own humiliation: the show is a tremendous commercial success. But we are not dealing here with simple masochism. In fact, something rather more sinister appears to be taking place:

[the audience] identifies with the aggressor, at the expense of the victim. If someone, after being grabbed, leaves the theater, the satisfaction of those who stay is enormous. The disintegration of solidarity in the face of the massacre and the disloyalty created in the midst of the audience are absolute, and repeat the movement initiated on the stage.<sup>55</sup>

Does it need to be said that that movement initiated on the stage, in turn, repeats the movement of society at large?

Two ways of evaluating these thoroughly ambiguous experiments pres-

ent themselves. The criterion of the first would be overcoming the contemplative attitude inherent in the “aesthetic principle” in favor of the political value of class consciousness.<sup>56</sup> From this perspective, the minimal political cohesion maintained by the Arena productions is preferable to the thoroughgoing “disintegration of solidarity” in the Oficina. The criterion of the second is truth: Adorno’s famous “windowless monad,” which embodies societal structures without necessarily representing them.<sup>57</sup> In this view, the Arena approach becomes simply a *lie*, the continuation of populist ideology after the point when the illusion that sustained it has ceased to be grounded in appearances—in other words, bad faith—while the Oficina productions, in all their brutality, in fact forecast the actual brutality of the dictatorship (the worst of which was yet to come) and general complacency in the face of it. Neither the stage nor the house can claim any innocence; each is absolutely complicit in the theater’s dynamic. The point here is not to choose between the two. Such a choice, at any rate, could not be absolute, but would have to depend on the political situation in which one finds oneself, and how one interprets that situation. At the time, when the part to be played by the student Left, which had begun to take an active role, was still open to the future, one might easily favor the first. In the current situation, in which the possibilities for a classically critical art seem increasingly restricted and where, in the U.S. context at least, an unprecedented complacency and ersatz innocence dominate in the face of one global horror after another, there are reasons to be attracted to the second.

At any rate, it is in this context that we should understand the most interesting new music of the period, dubbed “*Tropicália*” after an installation by Hélio Oiticica.<sup>58</sup> To ears hearing “Panis et Circenses”—one of the title songs of the collaborative 1968 manifesto album *Tropicália ou Panis et Circensis*—some three decades after its release, the arrangement will sound derivative (though no more so than many well-respected British and American albums released during the height of the Beatles’ popularity). It might be better, in this case, to think of this as an example of Brechtian *Umfunktionierung* or “re-functioning,” which implies a kind of retrofitting of found techniques to meet new circumstances. For example, “Panis et Circenses” begins with a pompous military fanfare that is clearly inspired by

George Martin. But while the meaning of this sort of pastiche is left rather vague in the Beatles' context, deflating older official culture that suddenly seems dated and laughable, in the context of military dictatorship "official culture" takes on a more pointed significance. The title of the song itself refers to "bread and circuses," Juvenal's assessment of what it took to maintain the complacency of the Roman citizenry. The arrangement, imitating circus music, is as rhythmically square as it is possible to be. The misspelling of the Latin reference on the album cover, whether intentional or not, gives a certain parochial air to this particular circus:

*Panis et Circenses*

*Eu quis cantar*

*Minha canção iluminada de sol*

*Soltei os panos sobre os mastros no ar*

*Soltei as tigres e leões nos quintais*

*Mas as pessoas na sala de jantar*

*São ocupadas em nascer e morrer.*

*Mandei fazer*

*De puro aço luminoso punhal*

*Para matar o meu amor e matei*

*As cinco horas na Avenida Central*

*Mas as pessoas na sala de jantar*

*São ocupadas em nascer e morrer.*

*Mandei plantar*

*Folhas de sonho no jardim do solar*

*As folhas sabem procurar pelo sol*

*E as raízes procurar procurar*

*Mas as pessoas na sala de jantar*

*São ocupadas em nascer e morrer.<sup>59</sup>*

[I tried to sing

My sun-illuminated song

I unfurled the sails on the masts in the air  
 I unleashed the tigers and the lions in the backyards  
 But the people in the dining room  
 Are busy being born and dying.

I had them make  
 A dagger of pure luminous steel  
 To kill my love with and I did  
 At five o'clock on Central Avenue  
 But the people in the dining room  
 Are busy being born and dying.

I had them plant  
 Dream leaves in the manor garden  
 The leaves know how to search for the sun  
 And the roots to search to search  
 But the people in the dining room  
 Are busy being born and dying.]

The atmosphere of the arrangement (the entire weight of contemporary recording techniques, the participation of hip avant-garde composers, the use of tape montage, and so on, brought to bear on a rather insipid little melody, ending on an anticlimactic authentic cadence, performed in a deliberately stilted fashion) can be read as a very specific allegory of a dictatorship that was technically and economically “modernizing,” but which mobilized the most “backward” and provincial elements of the petty bourgeoisie in its support—sundering, in effect, what the aesthetic ideology of the fifties had attempted to align. In this context, the contempt for bourgeois family life in the first verse is deliberately facile; we are led to expect a routine denunciation of bourgeois philistinism that would be equally incisive (that is, not incisive at all) today or a hundred years ago. Indeed, the whole song can be heard in that vein; but the second stanza suggests something much more wily and sinister, as more than a hint of malice creeps into the singers’ voices, and the meaning of the refrain switches polarity. The “I”

of the lyric is no longer an artist lamenting the ignorance of the bourgeoisie, but a murderer taking advantage of it. Suddenly, the people in their dining rooms are no longer philistines in the abstract, but are of a particular moment when Brazilian petty bourgeoisie, mobilized by the dictatorship, closed its eyes and began to join “Family Marches with God for Liberty.” The second “I,” however, is not marked as distinct from the first one, so this second, murderous “I”—for whom anything is permitted as long as the peace of dining rooms is not disturbed—reflects back on the first “I,” the artist. It cannot have escaped the namers of the album that their own spectacles were (like the *Oficina* performances) increasingly circus-like, and of course the album itself is called “Bread and Circuses”—it too is part of what is required to keep people in their dining rooms. (Caetano Veloso has referred to pop music generally as “our bread and our circus.”)<sup>60</sup> Nobody here is innocent. Apropos of this Tropicalist effect, which exposes dated, tacky, conservative content to “the white light of the ultra-modern,” Schwarz remarks that it is “like a family secret dragged into the street.”<sup>61</sup>

The fusion of archaic, “retrograde” elements with modern ones as an allegory of the dictatorship is a subset of a more general technique in which emblems of the residual, the actual, and the emergent are thrown together, apparently willy-nilly. Formally, this is indistinguishable from the “grab bag or lumber room of disjointed subsystems and random raw materials” that characterize the work of art in Jamesonian postmodernism.<sup>62</sup> However, here the raw materials are never quite random, just as the Brazilian concretists never quite succeed in producing pure linguistic experiments (not that this makes Brazilian concrete poetry inferior to its European counterpart—quite the opposite). In semiperipheral cultural production, this kind of juxtaposition is more or less immediately given geopolitical content, since the very texture of everyday life on the semiperiphery consists in the absolute contemporaneity of the residual and the emergent. (The integration of Brazil into the world economy via the coffee industry, for example, both maintained quasi-feudal social relationships in the countryside and required a certain level of industrial development in the cities.)<sup>63</sup> As with the example of the introductory fanfare cited earlier, so with the McCartneyan juxtaposition of provincial music-hall entertainment with avant-garde studio tech-

nique: a relatively contentless pastiche in certain Beatles arrangements is unavoidably transformed into an allegory of the dictatorship.

A similar phenomenon happens with the incorporation of aleatory elements in music, which in Jameson's compelling analysis are symptoms of a cultural schizophrenia, which follows on the withdrawal of the signified (i.e., History) from the paradigmatic First-World subject. The other manifesto-song from the *Tropicália* album, "Tropicália," begins with a legendary found recording in which one of the drummers, unaware of being recorded, throws off a few lines of Pero Vaz Caminha's letter to the Portuguese king describing the discovery of Brazil, terminating with the statement "And the Gauss of the time recorded it." Given the thematics of the song, which we will turn to in a moment, it seems impossible that this recording could have been accidental; but another example lends the legend credibility. A John Cage composition that cues an unprepared radio is performed in Salvador. When the apparatus is switched on, it immediately announces, in a voice familiar to everyone in the audience, "Radio Bahia, City of Salvador."<sup>64</sup> The Tropicalist effect is produced by accident, but it is produced nonetheless, as it could not have been in a performance in the United States. The point here is that the very techniques that, in a First-World context, are symptoms of the withdrawal of History (the evaporation of signification as such in the postmodern artwork) turn out, in semiperipheral cultural productions, to be (even in spite of themselves) symptoms of History itself.

Veloso's "Tropicália" consists of two alternating sections. The first section, of extraordinary density and allusiveness, is sung in quasi recitatif over a stately arrangement by Júlio Medaglia. The song has been analyzed by generations of U.S. and Brazilian critics, so we will not examine it too closely here. (But it is worth noting that a central element in the allegory, returning us unexpectedly to the question of architecture, is the great modernist city of Brasília itself, which after 1964 can only seem like an historical abortion: one finally reaches the heart of the "monument on the Central High Plains" only to find a "smiling child, ugly and dead.") It is the second section that will have more interest for us for the moment. Here, the allegorical elements suddenly become much freer, organized in pairs but detached from any explicit context and allowed to mingle with each other

in interesting ways, while the music suddenly breaks into an up-tempo, distinctively Brazilian march whose chord structure contains an echo of the two-note *berimbau*. The juxtapositions, extricated somewhat artificially from their context, are as follows:

*Viva a bossa sa sa*  
*Viva a palhoça ça ça ça ça*

*Viva a mata ta ta*  
*Viva a mulata ta ta ta ta*

*Viva a Maria ia ia ia*  
*Viva a Bahia ia ia ia ia ia*

*Viva Iracema ma ma*  
*Viva Ipanema ma ma ma ma*

*Viva a banda da da*  
*Carmen Miranda da da da da*<sup>65</sup>

[Long live bossa  
 Long live straw huts

Long live the bush  
 Long live the mulatta

Long live Maria  
 Long live Bahia

Long live Iracema  
 Long live Ipanema

Long live (Chico Buarque's) "A Banda"  
 Long live Carmen Miranda]

The peculiar power of these juxtapositions comes, however, not only from the synthetic procedure, which is, after all, a rather simple “linguistic trick”<sup>66</sup>; rather, they share a certain distortion of affect from what this juxtaposition would seem to call forth. On one hand, a “family secret dragged into the street”; on the other, a certain tolerance and even affection for this situation (“Long live straw huts”) that is, in its brute form outside the poem or lyric, a symptom of mutilation. Once again, one is reminded of Jameson’s analysis of postmodernism:

The exhilaration of these new surfaces is all the more paradoxical in that their essential content . . . has deteriorated or disintegrated to a degree surely still inconceivable in the earlier years of the twentieth century. . . . How [can] urban squalor be a delight to the eyes when expressed in commodification . . . [?]<sup>67</sup>

But yet again, the Jamesonian answer does not apply here. In the First-World context, this affective quirk gives us a clue to a form of subjectivity for which a horizon other than that given in immediate experience is utterly unthinkable. In “Tropicália,” however, it marks something quite different: the transposition of a euphoric, Utopian possibility (and we have yet to discover to what in Tropicália this euphoria belongs) onto the dystopic present.

The problem is not so different from what we encountered in Oswald de Andrade. As in Oswald’s poetry, this transposition is ideological. Far from being randomly jostled together, the juxtapositions are carefully controlled, kept from becoming outright oppositions or antinomies by forcing the terms to slide between certain registers and not enter others. The anonymous Maria does not get to come up against Carmen Miranda, which would bring in another set of questions; bossa nova doesn’t get to come up against “A Banda,” which would make the song say something definite about Chico Buarque. (In the existing conjunction of Buarque with Miranda, which is the modern, which the obsolete?)<sup>68</sup> Most significant is the distance that separates “Ipanema” and “*palhoça*.” “Ipanema” is of course a neighborhood in Rio, “Iracema” the Indian heroine (whose name is an anagram for America) of the eponymous nineteenth-century novel by José de Alencar. Other than

the Indian name, which is of course significant for more than the rhyme, nothing seems to unite these two, which reside on different levels of discourse: a neighborhood, a fictional character. On the other hand, if “Ipanema” also reminds us of the famous girl from Ipanema, then we are dealing with two images of Brazilian femininity; if it refers to the title of Jobim’s song (and Iracema to the title of Alencar’s work), then with two distinctively Brazilian forms of artistic expression. Ipanema can stand for the trace of the indigenous presence, for sophistication, modernity, Brazilian women, or bossa nova; what it can’t refer to is “where wealthy Cariocas live,” which would bring it in direct opposition to the straw huts where poor Northeasterners live. In a sense, this marks the ideological limit (the same limit, more or less, that Schwarz finds in the poetry of Oswald de Andrade) of “Tropicália” as a poem. In a moment we will consider whether there is some other content to “Tropicália” which is in fact domesticated by these images, even as it lends them its excitement. Meanwhile, when we consider that this image of Brazil is also a commodity on the world market, we find that a very fine line separates the Tropicalist stance, which must empty out much of the baleful significance of the contradictions it maps, from its opposite: tour-guide rhetoric that presents a contentless “land of contrasts” for one’s contemplation.

The ultimate example of the Tropicalist strategy is Veloso’s recent—and very beautiful—“Manhatã,” which begins from the conceit, discovered in a poem by Sousândrade, of pronouncing “Manhattan” (originally, of course, the name of a Native American group) phonetically in Portuguese, so that it sounds like “Manhatã,” which looks like an Indian name.<sup>69</sup> The marvelous first verse reads equally coherently on two radically disparate registers. Each word refers at once to both the island of Manhattan nosing into New York Bay with the Statue of Liberty before it, and an Indian “goddess” in the prow of a canoe on the Amazon. Here the juxtaposition is, as it were, absolute: the archaic and the modern do not simply occupy the same space, but are somehow identical. What makes this speculative identity between seemingly incommensurate particularities possible is given with remarkable clarity, given the lyric context:

*Um remoinho de dinheiro*

*Varre o mundo inteiro, um leve leviatã*

[A whirlwind of money

Rakes the entire world, light leviathan]

The operative word here, “*varrer*,” means literally “to sweep,” but also “to erase”: the identity of Manhattan and Manhatã is contained in the movement of Capital itself (in its current phase, centered in a Manhattan in whose direction “all the men in the world turned their eyes”), whose intrinsic disequilibrium has always necessitated perpetual expansion and the incorporation or obliteration of non-capitalist modes of production and ways of life—both Brazilian Indians and the original Mannhattans, who sold the island for the equivalent of about a pound of silver. But, as with “Tropicália” and Oswald’s poetry, the tone of the chorus (simply “Manhatã,” which means both New York and the “sweet name of the girl,” repeated over and over again) is paradisiacal—appropriate for a certain experience of Manhattan, but not of course for the contemporary Amazon; and indeed, the image we get of Manhatã is plainly cognate with Iracema, not with actual Indians.

All this is not to criticize Veloso’s poetry; a more strident tone wouldn’t make for better politics, but rather worse poetry. (Indeed, Veloso’s explicitly political music tends not to be his best). This syncretism or pastiche (neither of these words, it should be clear, is really adequate to the Tropicalist approach, though both terms are often used to describe it) is an authentic symptom of the semiperipheral condition; it is just that not everyone is in a position to enjoy this symptom. What was referred to a moment ago as the ideological limit of the Tropicalist image is, in fact, the ideological limit of aesthetic representation as such. If the misery of the Amazon is to be aesthetically represented—and of course, refusing to represent it would be ideological as well—then it is, at some level, to be enjoyed. A photograph of present-day Yanomami by Sebastião Salgado, explicitly framed by the real issues of the day and projecting a far more correct representational politics, is nonetheless subject to the same critique.<sup>70</sup>

Further, if anyone is going to hear or read this representation, it has to be

disseminated through existing channels of distribution, which means that it must be exploited economically, bought and sold so that somebody can turn a profit. In the contemporary situation, there is no lag between the potentially “critical” moment of a work of art and its appropriation by the market. The old Romantic prejudice against “selling out,” treating art as a commodity on the market, is correct as far as it goes: entering the market necessarily involves compromise and conformism. But the alternative is irrelevance. One can hardly be annoyed at Veloso’s constant invocations in *Verdade Tropical* of the market as the horizon of musical practice; he is speaking remarkably honestly about the conditions under which contemporary artists actually work. (It may be that the peripheral condition itself is what allowed the Tropicalists to recognize this before anyone else. Mass culture in its contemporary configuration emerged with extraordinary rapidity in Brazil. A glance at the development of the media apparatus shows that it grew exponentially in the period preceding the Tropicalist moment, quickly outpacing conventional infrastructural development. By 1970, only 12.8 percent of households in Bahia had running water, 22.8 percent had electricity, but 36.6 percent had radios, which can be shared; the numbers for São Paulo are 58.5 percent, 80.4 percent, and 80.4 percent, respectively.)<sup>71</sup> Thus, when Júlio Medaglia (who would possibly have been working on his arrangement for Veloso’s “Tropicália” at the time) proclaimed in 1967 that there simply was no space outside the market and that heretofore the “artist” was equivalent to the “dilettante,” leaving significant cultural production henceforth to the professionals, he was saying something that First-World theorists would only come to recognize relatively recently.<sup>72</sup> The ambiguities of this position are deep: on one hand, an abandonment of the notion of the solitary genius in favor of collective production, and the obligation to be within the reach of everybody; on the other, the culture industry as we know it, an acquiescence to the status quo, and the abandonment of the vocation of critique. Veloso himself puts it extraordinarily clearly in the interview cited earlier:

On one hand, Music, violated by a new communicational process, is forced into both innovation and slavery; on the other hand, Music protected and impotent.<sup>73</sup>

The problem inherent in concretism now becomes an unavoidable impasse. We all know by now one result of market absolutism (which by now has to be treated as a fact rather than a mere position—which does not mean that it will always be a fact): any genuinely critical art is immediately commodified and turned into its opposite. The space of transcendence with regard to the market, no matter how slim—and for Adorno, who understood this, it was already very slim indeed—is essential for the moment of critique. And this space, as Medaglia et al. recognized long ago, and as Veloso clearly always understood, has disappeared—to the point that the culture industry now has to produce its own “critical” art simply to meet demand.

But suddenly we find ourselves on the other side of the coin, since this demand exists. In spite of all the ambiguities entailed in the Tropicalist strategy—and after all, it is not so different from the modernist one, except that it is now directly consumable, rendering it even more problematic—there is something beyond this in Veloso’s music (and a great deal of other music as well) that is much more fundamental than what happens at the level of lyric. One might hazard a reading of the title of *Tropicália ou Panis et Circensis* here in which the word “or,” rather than separating two synonyms, offers a real alternative: on one hand, the dystopian lyrical genius of the Tropicalist image, of which “Panis et Circenses” is emblematic; on the other, a formal dynamic that represents a real Utopian possibility within Tropicália. It is significant in this regard that the paradisiacal moments in “Tropicália” emerge not only with a change in poetic tone, but when the orchestral arrangement recedes in favor of the drum section, when the recitatif bursts into a celebratory march. This march, incidentally, is very similar to the rhythm Paul Simon uses on some tracks of his *Rhythm of the Saints*.<sup>74</sup> While Simon uses the Afro-Bahian percussion group Olodum as raw material without any content of its own—the postmodern gesture par excellence—in “Tropicália” this rhythm is used precisely for its own content. The opposition to focus on at the moment, however, is that between the bodily impulse of this march, which is potentially “for everyone,” and a poetic gesture that binds this pleasure to the specificity of a class position.

Even if culture is now immediately a commodity, it is not a commodity in the abstract, but has specific qualities. If the export of Hollywood films is

also the export of U.S. comportment, gestures, and consumption habits, then we have to ask a different set of questions about the circulation of musical culture. In Don Ihde's phenomenology of sound, *Listening and Voice*, music names an appeal, a "call" that demands a response of a particular sort:

If, on the one hand, music is sound calling attention to itself, the temptation then is to conceive of music as "pure body." . . . But what occurs in this engagement is clearly anti-Cartesian. It is my subject-body, my experiencing body, that is engaged, and no longer is it a case of a deistic distance of "mind" to "body." *The call to dance is such that involvement and participation become the mode of being-in the musical situation* [my emphasis]. The "darkness" of music is in the *loss of distance* which occurs in dramatically sounded musical presence.<sup>75</sup>

What Ihde's formulation implies is that music is essentially that activity by which bodies are synchronized into a social body: "*involvement and participation become the mode of being-in the musical situation.*" In other words, music enacts fundamentally not just a relationship to the body, but a relationship between the individual body and the social world. One might, as is customary, point for evidence of this to ritual music, martial music, or to the work song, and go from there to the dance; this certainly would seem to locate the origin of music (particularly, perhaps, music with roots in the African diaspora) in bodily movement. But this would imply that everything since has been either a freeing from or a falling-away from this original bodily music, which would make its return either atavistic or a restoration of essence. Instead, we ought not to take this synchronization of bodies into the social body as a simple substance, as something straightforward or given, and present perhaps to a greater or lesser degree, but address it in each instance as an object of study. In other words, we should consider the possibility, opened up by Jacques Attali, that music not only represents social order, but actually runs ahead of the social order that produces it, reaching for a social form that is immanent in the actual.

Rather than saying that music allegorizes the future, which is a rather strange thesis if an attractive one, we might say that it embodies the desire

for an organization of the social body that does not yet exist. Surely, the content of this desire is a value Veloso invokes often: “convivência,” conviviality in a very strong sense, universal intimacy.<sup>76</sup> The very opposite of the liberal “tolerance” supposedly fostered by the market itself—which entails precisely a reinforcement of the borders between people—such universal intimacy is to be found virtually nowhere in contemporary culture except immanently in musical form and, concretely, in certain kinds of musical performance. The content of the mass music that emerged in the last century—even the worst of it—is precisely this intimacy. The role of the “conscious artist” in this scheme is, in quasi-Brechtian fashion, to refine this content and give it back to us. In order that this “giving back” be as nearly possible “for everyone,” the existing channels of distribution must be exploited as fully as possible—which of course involves compromise, both with the media themselves, and with Capital in the form of marketing niches and so on. And it must not be forgotten that on the economic side, this process is none other than our old cultural imperialism, profit derived from the privatization of communal knowledge. Nonetheless, we are concerned at the moment with the desire upon which this process is parasitical. Veloso’s omnivorous appropriation of musical forms has been seen in terms of pastiche in the precise Jamesonian sense, with the waning of a parodic impulse that still had the force of conviction.<sup>77</sup> Although this claim is based on an interesting observation, it is, on the perspective being developed here, precisely wrong. It is true that, despite camp expectations, there is no irony in Veloso’s appropriations of, for example, Carmen Miranda, Vicente Celestino, or late-period Michael Jackson, any more than there is in his composition of bossa novas or *trio elétrico* music, or Gilberto Gil’s distillations of regional forms like the *xote* or *baião*.<sup>78</sup> But this is not because they have become mere raw material; on the contrary, what Veloso preserves and distills is the collective joy that is their most essential content.

Let there be no mistake: the kind of immanent desire described here is not political; at best, it is proto-political. For this immanent desire to become political it must, at some crisis point, condense into a position of transcendence. The Angolan novel *A Geração da Utopia*<sup>79</sup> [*The Utopian Generation*] contains a fascinating musical parable—and we should not forget that

Brazilian music has its origins in Angola—in which a simulacrum of collective joy is manufactured, in bad faith, by a group hoping to profit from collective misery. A former guerrilla and a former Fanonian intellectual, who have become respectively an *entreguista* businessman and a self-styled “Bishop of the Church of Hope and Joy of Dominus” (330), inaugurate the new church. The final scene of the novel is the bogus spectacle of this evangelical Church, with the Bishop simulating elements of older religions and ideologies, working up the crowd into a fervor of religious joy that is mainly channeled towards filling the coffers of the church with “the money and the few jewels and even the shirts” (375) of the celebrants.

But for all that, this final scene is deeply ambiguous. The energies of this multitude, once released, cannot be so easily recontained, overflowing the boundaries set for them by the bogus church. Carnival returns:

Everybody dancing and kissing each other and touching each other, dancing belly to belly even in the aisles and hallways and later in the square in front of the Luminar and in the streets nearby . . . towards the markets and the streets, the beaches and the slums, in self-multiplying processions like in Carnival, leaving the Luminar to reach the World and Hope (375)

This is quite a different sort of Utopia than the older imagined Nation, and certainly we must see the “Hope and Joy” of this mercenary church as deeply ironic. But here, the slogan is significantly changed to “the World and Hope,” and the explosive proliferation of the dance must be seen in a different light. Indeed, this scene marks the reemergence of the very same collective joy that had been last seen at the moment of independence, fifteen years earlier, when “the multitudes were singing the slogans of independence with equal fervor” (375). But if Carnival, which had not been seen since that moment, here returns, this is not the disordered space within order that allows order to exist, but rather a space of collective creativity that constantly threatens the bounds that are set for it in advance, “multiplying themselves” without outside impetus or check. (The book, which ends with the passage above, ends without a period.) The power of this allegory, in fact, derives from its ambiguity, precisely from the fact that the creative joy of the multitude is ini-

tially organized for profit. In factory production as well, or in colonial domination, or in the culture industry, the desire of the multitude is initially organized only to exploit it; but the powers thus magnified then struggle against this arrangement and must, ever after, be either placated or repressed. It is this power, both constrained and potentially magnified by the media apparatus, that we witness in the best of Veloso's work.



#### N O T E S

1. João Gilberto, *The Legendary João Gilberto: The Original Bossa Nova Recordings* (1958–1961), World Pacific 93891, 1990.
2. Emmet Williams, ed., *An Anthology of Concrete Poetry* (New York: Something Else Press, 1967) n.p. (1).
3. Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: AMS Press, 1967).
4. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970), 43.
5. See Alain Badiou, *Manifeste pour la philosophie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1989), especially chapter 7, “L'âge des poètes,” 49–58. Unless an English edition is cited, all translations from French and Portuguese will be my own. I have erred on the side of literalness over elegance, partly because of my own limitations as a translator and partly because poetic movement is better served by providing the original, with the translation as a key, rather than trying to reproduce such movement in English. Where English translations exist (as noted) they have often been helpful.
6. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *L'Absolu littéraire: Théorie de la littérature du romantisme allemand* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1978). For an English translation, see *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988).
7. Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man: In a Series of Letters*, trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), especially books 1–9.
8. Alain Badiou, *Manifeste pour la philosophie*, 51.
9. Fredric Jameson, “Globalization as a Philosophical Issue,” in *The Cultures of Globalization*, ed. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), 58.
10. See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe's Literary Essays: A Selection in English*, ed. J.

- E. Spingarn (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1964), 99; and Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, trans. Samuel Moore, ed. Frederic L. Bender (New York: Norton, 1988).
11. Jameson, "Globalization as a Philosophical Issue," 60.
  12. Fredric Jameson, "'End of Art' or 'End of History?'" in *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983–1998* (London: Verso, 1998), 88.
  13. Jameson, "'End of Art' or 'End of History?'" 87.
  14. Jaques Attali, *Bruits: Essais sur l'économie politique de la musique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1977), 7. For an English translation, see *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).
  15. Roberto Schwarz, "Cultura e Política, 1964–1969," in *O pai da família e outros estudos* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1978), 73. This piece, along with several of the other essays by Schwarz cited here, are excellently translated in Roberto Schwarz, *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture*, ed. and trans. John Gledson (London: Verso, 1992).
  16. Caetano Veloso, *Estrangeiro*. Elektra 60898, 1989.
  17. The logic of this connection, which cannot be elaborated here for reasons of space, is developed in its classical form in Georg Lukács, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," in *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971).
  18. Augusto de Campos, "Boa palavra sobre a música popular," in *Balanço da bossa e outras bossas*, ed. Augusto de Campos (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1974), 60. The same metaphor was used in negative evaluations of bossa nova as well, which insisted that bossa nova was merely a new kind of jazz. These read less credibly today.
  19. Stan Getz and João Gilberto, *Getz/Gilberto* (1964). Verve 314521414–2, 1997.
  20. Gilberto, *The Legendary João Gilberto*.
  21. We might make a speculative reading of the difference in affective content between the unhappy lover in bossa nova (pathos, helplessness) and in the urban samba of the period (revenge, wrathfulness). If we read the class allegory of bossa nova back into samba itself, the domestication of samba no longer seems so innocent.
  22. See "Conversa com Caetano Veloso," in *Balanço da bossa e outras bossas*, 202.
  23. Júlio Medaglia, "Balanço da bossa nova," in *Balanço da bossa e outras bossas*, 78.
  24.
 

*pronominais*  
*Diz a gramática*  
*Do professor e do aluno*  
*E do mulato sabido*  
*Mas o bom negro e o bom branco*  
*Da Nação Brasileira*  
*Dizem todos os dias*  
*Deita alisso camarada*  
*Me dá um cigarro*

—Oswald de Andrade, *Poesias Reunidas*  
 (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1971), 63.

25. Augusto de Campos et al., “plano-piloto para poesia concreta,” in *Teoria da Poesia Concreta: Textos Críticos e Manifestos, 1950–1960* (São Paulo: Livraria Duas Cidades, 1975), 156.
26. See Augusto de Campos, *VIVA VAIA: Poesia, 1949–1979* (São Paulo: Ateliê Editorial, 2000), 111–13.
27. de Campos et al., “plano-piloto para poesia concreta,” 156.
28. de Campos, *VIVA VAIA: Poesia, 1949–1979*, 204–5. The literal meaning of “Viva vaia” is, rather inelegantly in English, “Long live the Bronx cheer.” The immediate content is the relationship between the artist and the “public,” though of course the nature of this public is unspecified. The historical referent may be the audience response at televised music festivals.
29. Williams, ed., *An Anthology of Concrete Poetry*, n.p.
30. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedleman, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota press, 1997), 43.
31. See, for example, Caetano Veloso’s fascinating autobiographical account of the Brazilian sixties, *Verdade Tropical* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997), where an explicitly Utopian program jostles against the rather more modest project of diversifying the Brazilian music industry. In Veloso’s music, Brazil itself often allegorizes this double horizon, exploiting the “tensions between Brazil-Parallel-Universe and a country peripheral to the American Empire” (16). For an English translation, see *Tropical Truth*, trans. Isabel da Sena (New York: Knopf, 2002).
32. Oswald de Andrade, “Manifesto da Poesia Pau-Brasil,” in *Do Pau-Brasil à antropofagia e às utopias: Manifestos, teses de concursos e ensaios* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1972), 13.
33. *Ibid.*, 9.
34. Octavio Ianni, *O Colapso do Populismo no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira: 1971), 26. For a somewhat frustrating English translation, see *Crisis in Brazil*, trans. Phyllis B. Eveleth (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).
35. de Andrade, *Poesias Reunidas*, 64.
36. Oswald de Andrade, “Manifesto Antropófago,” in *Do Pau-Brasil à antropofagia e às utopias: Manifestos, teses de concursos e ensaios* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1972), 18.
37. Ianni, *O Colapso do Populismo no Brasil*, 53–55.
38. For the limitations of this strategy, see Immanuel Wallerstein, “Dependence in an Interdependent World: The Limited Possibilities of Transformation within the Capitalist World Economy,” *African Studies Review* 17, no.1 (April 1974): esp. 10–13.
39. Even a cursory look at the Tropicalist-concretist conversation in *Balanço da Bossa* establishes cultural imperialism as the central problematic.
40. For a brief but rigorous explication of the dynamic of cultural imperialism, see Paulin J. Hountondji, “Recapturing,” in *The Surreptitious Speech: Présence Africaine and the*

- Politics of Otherness, 1947–1987*, ed. V. Y. Mudimbe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 238–56; for a strong Marxist critique of the uses to which the discourse of cultural imperialism may be put, see Chidi Amuta, *The Theory of African Literature* (London: Zed, 1989).
41. Ianni, *O Colapso do Populismo no Brasil*, 122.
  42. *Resolução Política da Convenção Nacional dos Comunistas* (Rio de Janeiro: 1961), 15–16, cited in *O Colapso do Populismo no Brasil*, 105–6.
  43. Ianni, *O Colapso do Populismo no Brasil*, 122.
  44. Schwarz, “Cultura e Política,” 65.
  45. Ianni, *O Colapso do Populismo no Brasil*, 61.
  46. For a “moderate” account of this period, see Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930–1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), especially chapters 7 and 8.
  47. See Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Limited Possibilities of Transformation within the Capitalist World Economy,” *African Studies Review* 17, no.1 (April 1974): esp. 10–13.
  48. See Ianni, *O Colapso do Populismo no Brasil*, 123–24.
  49. See Thomas Frank, “Alternative to What?” in *Commodify Your Dissent: Salvos from the Baffler*, ed. Thomas Frank and Matt Weiland (New York: Norton, 1997), 145–61. Many of the other essays in the volume are also relevant to this point.
  50. In an article on the Brazilian musical vanguard, Schwarz includes a remarkable footnote: “Generally speaking, incidentally, the arguments I present here are in Adorno’s work” (“Nota sobre vanguarda e conformismo,” in *O Pai da Família*, 43–48). Generally speaking, the arguments I present take place within a framework constructed by Schwarz.
  51. See also “Altos e baixos da atualidade de Brecht,” in *Seqüências Brasileiras: Ensaio* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1999), 113–48.
  52. Schwarz, “Cultura e Política,” 83.
  53. See Caetano Veloso, *Verdade Tropical*, 382–86. Caetano’s insistence that he saw nothing explicitly political about *Roda Viva* is surely disingenuous.
  54. Schwarz, “Cultura e Política,” 85.
  55. *Ibid.*, 88.
  56. Lukács, “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat,” 138–40.
  57. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 43.
  58. See Guy Brett et al., *Hélio Oiticica* (Rotterdam: Witte de With, 1993), 121–26.
  59. Veloso, *Tropicália ou Panis et Circensis* (1968), Phillips 512089, 1993.
  60. *Verdade Tropical*, 272. The third verse reproduces the red herring structure of the first two. The initial planting of “dream leaves in the manor garden” is a fairly routine, deliberately “shocking” counterculture drug reference. But the emphasis is on the roots, not on the leaves, and we are left with an image of subterranean desires—it is unclear whether they are malign or revolutionary—that perpetually seek outlet. Meanwhile,

confirming the ambiguity of the lyric, the people in their dining room get the last word: the refrain accelerates for the coda, culminating in a kind of frenzied repetition of “those people in the dining room” that, rather than resolving, breaks off abruptly into a recorded representation of the dining room itself, where people pass each other dishes to the strains of the “Blue Danube.”

61. Schwarz, “Cultura e Política,” 74.
62. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1991), 31.
63. This technique in its linguistic form is nothing new in Brazilian poetry; Schwarz’s reading of Oswald de Andrade’s group of poems “Postes da Light” (“Electric Poles”—the title itself, containing the English word “light” in reference to a Canadian company that operated in Brazil, already contains the seeds of the technique) draws out a similar structure. See “O carro, o bonde, e o poeta modernista” in Roberto Schwarz, *Que Horas São?* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1987). It could be that his engagement with Tropicália gave Schwarz the clue to Brazilian Modernism: the article on modernism was written significantly later.

The remarkable thing here is that Tropicália seemed to arrive at this method independently, attesting to the fact that this apparently “postmodern” technique is, as it were, native to the semiperiphery. Caetano Veloso, hardly coy about his influences, insists that he “knew . . . nothing of Oswald” de Andrade (*Verdade Tropical*, 155) until after the similarity was pointed out to him by the concretists. See also *Balanço da bossa*, 204.

64. Veloso, *Verdade Tropical*, 60.
65. Veloso, *Tropicália ou Panis et Circensis*.
66. Schwarz, “Cultura e Política,” 76.
67. Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 33.
68. See Caetano Veloso’s defense of Carmen Miranda, “Carmen Mirandadada,” trans. Robert Myers and Charles A. Perrone, in *Brazilian Popular Music and Globalization*, ed. Charles A. Perrone and Christopher Dunn (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 39–45.
69. Veloso, *Verdade Tropical*, 505. The song “Manhatã” appears on Caetano Veloso, *Livro*, PolyGram 536584–2, 1999.
70. In fact, Salgado’s images of the Yanomami manage to project *both* the older Romantic ideal of the (female) Indian and the contemporary human-rights ideal, which brings its own problems, different but no less profound. What one sees reflected in many of the most horrible photographs in Salgado’s *Migrations* series—and some of them are very horrible indeed—is one’s own innocence in the face of the massacre: *that horror* is something I could never be responsible for. In the first instance, what one enjoys in these photographs is their great and paradoxical beauty—already far from a simple phenomenon, since they represent the most acute human misery our planet currently has on offer. In the second instance, what one enjoys is one’s own innocence, and of

course this very enjoyment marks the innocence as spurious. Once again, this is not to say that the massacre should not be represented; there simply may be no “right” way of doing it, and Salgado’s unflinching images of, for example, Rwandan Tutsi corpses spilling over the waterfall at Rusumo give us the massacre with an immediacy that is absolutely necessary in the face of the forgetting demanded by the news media. Nonetheless, one may prefer the comportment of the camera in his *Workers* series (New York: Aperture, 1993). For the Yanomami images, see Sebastião Salgado, *Migrations: Humanity in Transition* (New York: Aperture, 2000), 251–63.

71. Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 45.
72. See Roberto Schwarz, “Nota sobre vanguarda e conformismo,” in *O Pai da Família*, 43–48. Schwarz’s footnote gives 1957 as the date of Medaglia’s interview with four vanguard composers, but this appears to be a typo, since Schwarz’s response was written in 1967, surely not ten years after the fact.
73. “Conversa com Caetano Veloso,” in *Balanço da Bossa*, 200.
74. Paul Simon, *Rhythm of The Saints*, Warner Brothers 26098–2, 1990.
75. Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound* (Athens, Ohio, 1976), 159.
76. Veloso, *Verdade Tropical*, 281.
77. See Dunn, *Brutality Garden*, 90–92.
78. A “samba-provocation” by Gilberto Gil gives a sympathetic reading of Michael Jackson that hints at the kind of non-ironic appropriation described here:  
*Michael Jackson ainda resiste*  
*Porque além de branco ficou triste*  
 [Michael Jackson still resists  
 Because when he turned white he became sad]  
 (“De Bob Dylan a Bob Marley: Um Samba-Provocação,” *O eterno deus mu dança*, Wea 703698, 1989.)
79. Pepetela [Artur Pestana], *A Geração da Utopia* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2000).