



Tropicália: Sonic Resistance, Relationships, and Reframing

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Tropicália as Sound of the South

In 1964, the military dictatorship in Brazil seized political power and extended its domain to many facets of Brazilian society. In this context of repression, artists and musicians created the powerful yet short-lived cultural movement called Tropicália. This research examines the sounds of the Tropicália in response to the call to remap sound studies to include sounds of the “South” issued by Steingo and Sykes (2019). Concerning the terms “South” and “North,” Steingo and Sykes critically probe conceptualizations of the South not only in terms of geography but also as implicit bias in power relations. Significantly, they argue against the use of the “South” as an oversimplified binary that is contrasted with framings of the conceptual “North.” Instead, they argue that the terms are fluid and indicate both “empirical categories” and “ideological constructs” (2019: 3).

Taking issue with the hegemonic influences along multiple axes of power, Steingo and Sykes argue for the fundamental need to examine sounds from the South as constituting an important but often neglected genre in the large field of sound studies. To fill this need, Steingo and Sykes make three proposals for the remapping of a new cartography of sound theory. First, in terms of sounds’ relationship to technology, Steingo and Sykes urge for exploration of the constitution of culture through techniques made possible by technological innovation. Second, they argue for sonic studies to move in a relational direction to illuminate the relationship between listener and what is heard. Third, they encourage scholars to unpack the elements of sonic studies that reveal friction and antagonism, particularly in terms of social relations, a shift that moves the field beyond the perceptual qualities of sound toward the emotional and relational constructions of sounds as they are interpreted by listeners.

Tropicália and Sound Studies

Sound and music have been powerful forms of expression in Brazilian society and are central to Brazilians' sense of cultural identity. Brazil's contributions to musical and sound innovation are significant from the globally recognized samba, bossa nova, and sertanejo, to axé, MPB, forró, etc. (Perrone 1987). In terms of sound, many of these genres incorporate syncretic sound innovations produced by instruments including the pandeiro, berimbau, atabaque, and agogo. Of these, two will figure prominently in this research: the pandeiro and the berimbau (see images by Fred Pinheiro below). The pandeiro is a hand frame drum many consider to be the unofficial instrument of Brazil. The berimbau is a percussion instrument made of wood and a metal *arame* wire attached to a hollow gourd. These instruments produce sounds that are key to two seminal songs from the Tropicálista movement: "Tropicália" and "Domingo no Parque."

Imported from Africa, sounds and music are integral to a longer tradition of resistance in Brazil.¹ Capoeira, the Afro-Brasileiro martial art, relies on music and sounds created by instruments including the berimbau and pandeiro. The berimbau was added as a sonic overlay to capoeira, disguising it as a dance form in order to conceal its true purpose and force as a martial art. The berimbau also was used to generate different rhythms or *toques* that generated coded messages. For example, the rhythm "Cavalry" or "Cavalaría" was used as sonic warning of the arrival of the mounted police (Gorlinski, 2018).² The unique sounds

¹ This paper emphasizes the centrality of syncretic sound in Brazil within sound studies. It is beyond the scope of the present research to engage with other important debates including Andrade's work, cultural appropriation in Brazil, contestations of Freyre's treatment of the myth of racial democracy, the damaging effects of colonialization, and related cultural histories of subjection of the other. For an additional discussion of music, race, inequality, culture, and other important topics, see Dunn, Assuncao, and Gazi and others.

² Gorlinski explains: "Some berimbau rhythms are characteristic of a particular capoeira school or master, while others may be typical of a certain region. Many of the toques are named after Roman Catholic saints or African spiritual societies (such as Nagô). One well-known rhythm called "Cavalaría," however, is a reference to the mounted police; historically, it was used to advise capoeiristas (practitioners of capoeira) of the approach of the authorities" (2018).

produced by the berimbau and pandeiro indicate the degree to which Brazilian music comprises many rich syncretic tapestries, many rooted in the African Diaspora. Brazil's diverse population has produced a truly unique sonic heritage that inextricably links the power of sound to music, and to resistance.

For this reason, exploring resistance through Tropicália also offers a window into power relations. Many of the sounds and music that are celebrated today in Brazil have their origin in Africa. Although these sounds and music were initially marginalized by those in power in Brazil, through a process of resistance and reframing, today these sounds are iconic components of Brazilian identity. It is often impossible to dissociate sound, dance, and music in Brazilian culture. For example, samba refers to all three. While today samba is revered as one of Brazil's national treasures, it was prohibited and excluded from public space until the release of *Pelo Telefone* ("On the Phone") in the early 1900s.

Capoeira--the martial art that also unites sound, dance, and music--was outlawed in the 1880s by the newly established republic before rising back several decades later and becoming a point of Brazilian pride. Motivated by power relations rooted in race and class, this pattern is evident in other genres such as funk (aka "Carioca funk" or "Baile funk")³ that was prohibited and subsequently idealized. This cycle is evident across different sounds, genres, and cultural icons in Brazilian music including the genre Tropicália, which was also first reviled and later embraced.

Within this larger tradition, this research examines Tropicália as an expression of resistance to the military regime in Brazil that seized power in 1964. Given the increasing scholarly interest in sound as a potential vector of resistance, this research begins to fill this gap by examining pivotal works by legends Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. The article unpacks

³ This form of Brazilian funk has been referred to as simply "funk," "Carioca funk" meaning "Rio funk (D'Angelo, 2015) or "baile funk" meaning "funk dance party" (Sneed, 2008). According to Sneed: "Like some other cultural expressions of African diaspora communities, these bailes conjure up and sustain a morally and politically charged musical space that joins the young people together, emotionally elevating them above the harsh conditions of their lives into a spiritual state that makes available to them the feeling of living in a better world" (2008:57).

key songs “Tropicália” and “Domingo no Parque” (Sunday in the Park). Each harnessed sonic innovations as a means of socio-political protest. The research offers compelling evidence of how artists expressed resistance via the electric guitar, pandeiro, and berimbau. As these elements may not be familiar to all readers, the article provides musical and historical context, as well as discussing Tropicália’s theoretical underpinning of antropofagia based on Oswald de Andrade’s 1928 *Anthropophagous Manifesto*.

Implicitly promulgating antropofagia, Tropicálistas resisted visions of Brazil promulgated by the military regime and dismantled cultural representations of Brazil in order to reconstruct them. The research concludes by exploring how different audiences heard and interpreted these innovative sounds, in particular at the third Festival Internacional de Canção (FIC, the International Festival of Song) in Brazil. At the FIC, the movement’s use of the electric guitar was met with extreme and violent reaction due to the audience’s interpretation of the instrument as a signifier of Anglophone cultural imperialism. By contrast, today the mélange of these sounds is heard as a uniquely Brazilian contribution to both world music and protest (Dunn, 2016; Veloso, 2013; Behague, 1993).

Historical Context of Tropicália as a Genre

Before proceeding with the examination of sonic relations and resistance related to Tropicália, the article begins with a short history of the Brazilian political context into which Tropicália was born. In response to perceived “leftist” tendencies of the democratically elected Goulart government, in 1964 the administration was toppled. Initiating the two-decade period of the dictatorship, the coup was led by the military and joined by civilian leaders. As the latter half of the 1960s progressed, the dictatorship increased its stranglehold on Brazilians, their freedom of expression, and their safety. Fueled by Institutional Act #1, thousands of Brazilians lost their civil liberties, were imprisoned, tortured, murdered, and forced into exile. By 1967, Institutional Act #2 suspended political parties and strengthened the president’s executive powers and hold on power for the regime.

In response, Brazilians took to the streets through coordinated strikes, public manifestations, and public demonstrations such as the March of the 100,000 in Rio that capped a period of unrest with dozens of protests in different Brazilian cities (Skidmore, 2010). In response, the right-wing junta pushed back even harder. By the close of 1968, the military regime accelerated its brutal authoritarianism with Institutional Act #5. This act

gave the government enormous powers, including suspending the constitution, dissolving the congress and state legislatures, as well as enforcing rigorous censorship. At the same time, leftist groups engaged in armed struggle – *luta armada* –using guerrilla techniques including the kidnapping of U.S. Ambassador Charles Burke Elbrick in 1969 (some argue with an eye to establishing a new left-of-center government). It was not until two decades later that Brazil incrementally returned to democratic rule beginning with indirect election (1985) and a new constitution (1988).

In the midst of this struggle, music became politicized by artists and audiences. Of all politically engaged artists, the Tropicálistas offered a dynamic new type of resistance combining sounds, music, dress, and performance style (Dunn, 1996).⁴ Two artists spearheaded the movement: Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, both well-known musicians who hosted a television program. Although the movement is often strongly associated with Veloso and Gil, it also included artists such as Gal Costa, Geraldo Vandré, Chico Buarque, José Carlos Capinam, Torquato Neto, Tom Zé, Nara Leão, Rogério Duprat, and the band Os Mutantes.

In its short lifespan, this tremendous period of productivity gave birth to innovative resistance in response to the military regime’s prohibition of public assembly, abridgement of freedom of speech, and state-sponsored kidnapping and torture of citizens bold enough to criticize their nation’s loss of democratic freedoms. The military regime responded to any and all protests with force by marshaling the powers of the state. Shortly after Institutional Act #5 was enacted, Tropicálistas Gil, Veloso, and others were denounced, imprisoned, held without charge, put under house arrest, and ultimately forced into exile. As such, the Tropicália had a brief but vibrant duration in 1967-1968 that was abruptly cut short once many Tropicálistas were jailed, exiled, or forced into what the junta termed “psychiatric care.” Although Tropicália’s influence would continue to inspire resistance to the military regime, the movement as a public force came to a sudden end due to the government’s new powers to brutally silence any opposition.

⁴ Veloso sheds light on the genre’s history in his book *Tropical Truth: A Story of Music and Revolution in Brazil*. For scholarly examination of the arts in Brazil (including Tropicália) during the military dictatorship see Dunn’s books *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* (2001) and *Contracultura Alternative Arts and Social Transformation in Authoritarian Brazil* (2016).

Antropofagia: Cultural Cannibalization

Tropicália was part of the larger umbrella of Tropicálismo that encompassed a broad social artistic movement informed by theories of cultural cannibalism or “antropofagia.” Taken from Oswald de Andrade’s 1928 *Anthropophagous Manifesto*, The process of “cannibalization” was key to the movement. Across a range of media, these artists “cannibalized” materials, ideas, and cultural artefacts as acts of creation. They drew on varied influences including the surrealists of the 1920s, musique concrete, and concrete poetry (Perrone, 1985). Playing on the mélange of different media, Tropicália amalgamated artistic innovations across multiple modalities sparking different sensory perceptions. For example, the song “Bat Macumba” plays on phonemes as well as disassembling and reassembling syllables from two words “bat” and “macumba” rather than linguistically based lyrics. In written form, the contours of the lyrics formed the shape of bat wings. This visual effect has been interpreted as a critical reference to the American superhero Batman symbolizing North America (de Amorim Neto and de Castro Rocha, 2020 [retrieved]). The term *macumba* is taken from Afro-Brasileiro religious practice with positive connotations; by contrast, non-adherents have also colonized the term negatively in ways that indicate bias. Cannibalizing all of these meanings together, “Bat Macumba” provides an excellent example of Tropicália’s spirit of melding and redefinition. Tropicália was not in isolation but part of the larger artistic movement that used new aesthetics across media and modalities to protest the military regime.

The movement’s name came from the art installation by Hélio Oiticica in 1967 entitled “Tropicália” (Canejo, 2004). The neologism Tropicália was then borrowed to name the genre of music, its iconic album, and ultimately the musical movement. The very way in which Tropicália derived its name via cannibalization underscored the movement’s ties to Andrade’s work. His manifesto advocated cannibalization as an act of creation that subsumes the other rather than simply rejecting it. In this way, cannibalization as a form of resistance across multiple fronts became the vehicle through which dominance was confronted and potentially transformed. For example, Andrade’s *Manifesto* adopted the phrase “Tupi or not Tupi.” Employing this expression implicitly spoke to dominance and power differentials by playing on a concoction of Shakespeare and the name of the now-extinct lingua franca spoken by some of Brazil’s first peoples. This juxtaposition did several things. First, it pointed to Brazilian culture as the unique mélange of many factors in which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Second, this process elevated the continual (re)production and (re)birth of Brazilian culture and, at the same time, rejected a vision of

Brazil as subaltern to European colonization or subordinate to Anglophone hegemony. Third, it indicated how resistance is communicated by implication and nuance that audiences needed to be willing to hear.

Cannibalization as Critique and Creation

Following the tenets of antropofagia, it was vital for the Tropicálistas to subsume the other as part of the creative act of reinvention. According to Behague (1973: 216), through antropofagia, Tropicálistas consumed all facets of Brazilian society and global influences as raw materials that were weaponized to critique the military dictatorship. Whether it was the middle class' assumptions, taken-for-granted religious frameworks implicit in Brazilian society of the time, or the military regime, everything was food for cannibalism. At the same time that the movement digested foreign music, it devoured "anything and everything." As Veloso explained:

You take in anything and everything, coming from anywhere and everywhere, and then you do whatever you like with it, you digest it as you wish: you eat everything there is and then produce something new. We thought we could have a critical attitude from a cultural perspective, an aggressive attitude, not a passive and defensive nationalism. (Veloso in Dunn, 1996: 123)

The antropofágico movement took the form of cosmopolitan symbolic cannibalism with a political agenda. The internalizing and reissuing of cannibalized sound and musical creation was central to the movement's multifaceted critique of the military regime, reactive nationalism, and received aesthetics. The movement took in everything as raw material to be fashioned into something new and consumed without distinction as to what was good or bad, national or international, or other received binaries.

To understand the process and purpose of cannibalization in Tropicália, it is helpful to examine the appropriation of Carmen Miranda⁵ in the song that is synonymous with the

⁵ Many outside of Brazil are unaware of Carmen Miranda's iconic status in Brazilian culture and how her life parallels the cycle of rejection and reconciliation discussed in this paper. Born in Portugal and moving to Brazil as a child, Miranda was acclaimed in Brazil for her work in films celebrating samba and carnival before moving to the U.S. The Hollywood machine propelled her to international celebrity by branding her as a stereotype of Latin

movement and shares its name: "Tropicália." Veloso invoked Carmen Miranda in the final stanza of the lyrics. In closing the song "Tropicália" with Miranda, Veloso implicitly referenced the cycle of power, disempowerment, and renewal that marked both Brazil under the dictatorship and the Brazilian star's own trajectory: the cycle of rejection and redemption marking Miranda's rise in Brazil, restrictive casting by Hollywood, demonization when returning to Brazil, and her later redemption as a cultural icon.

Carmen Miranda epitomized the redemptive power of "Tropicália" as a form of antropofagia in the cycle of rejection and reunification central to so many of Brazil's potent cultural forces. Here we see how Andrade's concept of cannibalizing culture or antropofagia animated "Tropicália's" innovative blending of electronic sounds, music, and critical lyrics. Veloso's reference to Carmen Miranda at the end of the song "Tropicália" in the lyrics "Carmen Miranda-da-da-da-da" essentially devoured her and redefined her. Veloso explained his vision of this process:

[This was] a trend we were exploring in Tropicálismo: that is to take an object – a vulgar, even a culturally repulsive object – and remove it from its context, displace it [...]. Then you start to realize why you chose that particular object, you begin to understand it, and you realize the beauty in the object, and the tragedy involved in its relationship with humanity – humanity's tragedy for creating that object and that

America and touting her signature performance style that was an appropriation of Baiana dress and accoutrements. When Miranda returned to Brazil, some elite Brazilians vilified her as a sellout to American commercialism; other members of high society charged her with debasing Brazilian culture by facilitating stereotypes based on a reductionist version of Afro-Brasileiro identity. Performing at a charity event in 1940, when Miranda attempted to perform one of her signature pieces, the audience stopped her performance through aggressive booing. Miranda did not return to Brazil for over a decade. While the critiques of Brazilian elites of the day smacked of racism and class-ism, Miranda was also criticized as a woman of European origin who appropriated elements of Afro-Brasileiro culture. Yet it was also Brazilians who redeemed Miranda during her later trips to Brazil and after her death in her mid-forties. In Brazil, Miranda's demise gave rise to a collective outpouring of public grief and national mourning and ultimately a museum to memorialize her, the Carmen Miranda Museum.

kind of relationship – and finally you start to love it. And if there really is something loveable about it, you begin to respect it. (Veloso in Dunn, 1996: 132)

Veloso took the stereotype of Hollywoodized Brazil embodied in Carmen Miranda, consumed it, recognized its tragedy, and ultimately transformed it into something worthy of love (Veloso, 2013). According to Dunn, Veloso's treatment of Miranda in "Tropicália" was "a way to recover something from the past, to recover it, assimilate it, try to understand it, not with scorn, but with something that is part of the culture" (1996: 131). In this way, Veloso transformed Miranda from an object of derision to an object of love symbolizing a cycle of resistance and redemption.

"Tropicália"

Veloso's treatment of Miranda was only one example of how the movement emphasized the combining of opposites and the unexpected, from kitsch to androgyny (Sovik, 1998: 1). High and low cultural practices, aesthetically refined and vulgar cultural artefacts, national and international music genres, Tropicália re-constructed them all in order to critique the military regime and the complacency of members of the middle class supporting it. Most pertinent to this study, all sounds, including those of the electric guitar, pandeiro, and berimbau were grist for the cannibalizing mill.

The song "Tropicália" was a pioneering mixing of percussion, rattle, and high-pitched electronic sounds. It opened with a montage of bird calls and twittering that call to mind the sounds of the virgin forests of Brazil (Veloso, 2003). According to Perrone (1993), the novel instrumentation of bird sounds was the key foil to the subsequent voiceover reading from *The Letter of Pero Vaz Caminha*, a historic document describing the natural riches of Brazil just before colonization. This juxtaposition of bird twittering and human voice reading the document that presages the fall of the tropical paradise conveyed how colonization will devour natural resources and decimate first peoples. Bird calls and masculine voiceover signaled the demise of Brazil's natural resources, acting as an allegory for the fate of Brazil under the military dictatorship. The mixture of instrumental reproduction of natural bird sounds and references to colonization and subjugation signaled the corruption of Brazil's natural patrimony that began with the arrival of Europeans in 1500. Significantly, Caminha's letter was referenced in Andrade's manifesto, indicating the degree to which antropofagia provided the theoretical underpinning of the movement.

The song "Tropicália" summoned the audience to recognize a threat posed to Brazil by the military dictatorship by calling to mind the threat posed by colonization signaled by the voiceover of *The Letter of Pero Vaz Caminha*. In addition, musically generated bird sounds signaled Brazil in its natural state in contrast to the dissonant sounds being created by the regime. To reinforce the contrast, in "Tropicália," Veloso sings "Hail the forest" ("Viva a mata") paying homage to beauty of natural Brazil indicated by the sounds of birds. Yet the birds and forest are quickly silenced as Veloso's other lyrics take the audience along "an ancient road" to "the monument in the central plateau of the country" ("o monumento no planalto central do país") that is a symbol of the military dictatorship's seat of power: the new city of Brasília carved out of the jungle that serves as a metaphoric aviary of oppression. Although construction of Brasília was not begun under the dictatorship, it was completed after the 1964 military coup. The new regime dismantled some of the original plans envisioned by architects Niemeyer and Costa to "purify" them of Marxist influence. In contrast to the bird sounds pointing to the natural abundance of the jungle, the jungle was being destroyed by the dictatorship when it took over the construction of Brasília.

Also according to Perrone (1993), meanings encapsulated in *Tropicália* relied on the complex mixture of noises, harmonies, nonsense words, and nondiscursive language. Keeping this combinatory innovation in mind allows us to understand the importance of hearing the bird sounds, disjointed lyrics, and use of onomatopoeia. In "Tropicália," as the bird sounds of natural Brazil faded, Veloso sang lyrics that cast Brasília as a "monument with no doors" inhabited by "a child smiling, ugly, and dead" reaching out his hand – "uma criança sorridente, feia e morta estende a mão." The juxtaposition between bird sounds and dissonant noises was purposefully used as a foil to the soft cadence of Veloso's voice when describing the horrors of the regime in song. By interrupting smooth vocals with jarring noises and screeching sounds, Veloso confronted the audience with the perversion of natural Brazil into a corpse marked by death and corruption, smiling a ghoulish smile and beckoning its fetid hand from the lap of the dictatorship. In addition to the sounds of birds in the aviary of the dictatorship, Veloso employed onomatopoeia with the sound "bang-bang." Bang-bang communicated the violence of the regime and brought to mind gunshots against protestors, the armed struggle against the dictatorship, and even the faltering heartbeat of a languishing Brazil. These aural combinations pointed to a natural Brazil that was weak, dying, and bleeding out: "the bang-bang running through the veins very little blood."

Most important, the next line in the song's lyrics took up the motif of the heart and linked it to uniquely Brazilian sounds: "But the heart beats a tambourine samba" that "emits dissonant chords." Invoking the tambourine conjured associations of overturned power relations and linked them to two cultural institutions at the heart of Brazilian identity: samba and carnival. To this day, carnival is famous for its samba celebrations, notably Rio's elaborate samba parade competition at the Sambadrome. Significantly, both samba and carnival are still traditions in which power relations are overturned and the powerless gain the ascendancy. This is particularly true of carnival (Moreno, 1982) when samba schools briefly become the center of national attention and cultural deification. Veloso's reference to carnival thus signified the inversion of power between the Brazilian people and the junta, as well as the hope for Brazil's future once the dictatorship ends. These meanings were signaled through the tambourine that is perverted from its natural state through the dictatorship's dissonance.

"Domingo no Parque"

From the samba tambourine in the song "Tropicália" we now turn to berimbau in the song "Domingo No Parque" ("Sunday in the Park"). In this song, Gilberto Gil employed key elements with strong ties to the African diaspora--the rhythms of capoeira punctuated by both the berimbau and call-and-response sequences—to signal resistance. In "Sunday in the Park," the orchestration begins with an accelerated tempo with music and performers from the Os Mutantes ("The Mutants") band on fast-forward. The feverish sounds of the dictatorship were broken by Gil's introduction of the sound of the berimbau. Strumming an acoustic guitar in time with the tempo of the berimbau, Gil and Os Mutantes began a call-and-response rhythm inviting the audience to respond to the regime with sounds that had clear meaning for Brazilian ears.

While the song incorporated percussion, electric guitar, and an orchestra, the song's power of call-and-response was set to rhythms of the berimbau. Meaning was generated through repetition set to the sound of the berimbau and the rhythm of capoeira emphasized by the call-and-response echoes of the chorus—all calling to mind larger traditions of resistance through sound. Breaking into the frantic sounds of the dictatorship (symbolized by the frenzied sounds of the orchestra) with the sounds of the berimbau and call-and-response was an unmistakable signal of opposition to the junta. Gil's use of the berimbau called to mind the centuries of oppression of Afro-Brasileiros who brought the instrument with them from Africa. As such, Gil's choice of the berimbau symbolized an unmistakable critique of

regimes of oppression of the past (slavery) and present (the dictatorship). Further, the sounds of the berimbau were a covert call to resist the dictatorship with clear parallels with capoeira as a vehicle of resistance. To combat the barbarism of state-sponsored slavery the power of capoeira as a martial art was disguised as a dance. The majesty of capoeira as a deadly force was hidden by presenting its potentially lethal kicks and whirls as rhythmic dancing set to the berimbau. Just as capoeira was disguised as a dance under the brutal regime of slavery in Brazil, "Domingo no Parque" cannibalized the sounds of the berimbau and the rhythms of Brazilian martial arts into a critique of the dictatorship. The sonic mirroring sent an unmistakable message: a call for resistance.

In addition to the berimbau, Gil invoked the call-and-response pattern that is also at the heart of capoeira. In capoeira, set to the cadence of the berimbau, the vocal calls and clapping of capoeiristas take the form of a call-and-response pattern. Gil reconstituted this pattern in "Sunday in the Park" through the repetition of call-and-response as he narrated the death of José and Juliana using lyrics that call to mind the spinning moves of the capoeiristas. For example, this is clear in the alternation between José and João, as well as between Gil and Os Mutantes to signal their demise:

O rei da brincadeira, **ê José** (The king of play, oh Joseph)

O rei da confusão, **ê João** (The king of confusion, oh John)

Não tem mais construção, **ê João** (There is no more construction, oh John)

Não tem mais brincadeira, **ê José** (There is no more play, oh Joseph)

Não tem mais confusão, **ê João** (There is no more confusion, oh John)

The call-and-response pattern was also underscored by the use of phoneme repetition set in a whirling cycle that called to mind the flying hands and feet of capoeiristas engaged in potentially mortal combat. Just as the beauty of capoeira as a dance concealed from view its destructive power, Gil voiced phonemes in a call-and-response pattern that obscured their references to the dictatorship's lethal effects, for example, the repeated words with the phoneme "ão": João, mão (hand), ilusão (illusion), coração (heart), construção (construction), and confusão (confusion). Tellingly, confusão (confusion) began and ended the song in a call-and-response rhythm. In like manner, while brigar (fight), jogar (play), namorar (flirt) shared the same sound as verbs concluding in "ar," their disparate meanings created dissonance through multi-layered meanings that paralleled the resistance through capoeira.

Sonic Innovation: Cannibalizing the Electric Guitar

In these songs the electric guitar made its most controversial entrance into the Brazilian scene.⁶ Although Tropicália musicians revered and built on bossa nova (Moreno 1982: 139), many felt that bossa nova's smoother sounds were an inadequate medium with which to respond to the dictatorship. Instead, the electric guitar presented a powerful tool with which to respond to the horrors of the regime.

The innovations produced by the electric guitar and cannibalized by Tropicália showed how new sounds were enlisted to demonstrate resistance. It is therefore fruitful to examine Tropicália's use of aural combinations and the technological advances including the electric guitar as vehicles of meaning. Significantly, Veloso explained that the movement's incorporation of the electric guitar was far from being an attempt to model Tropicália after American or British musicians. Rather, it was part of Tropicália's use of antropofagia to consume the other. Veloso elucidated: "Tropicálismo was a very ambitious project; we took in the hippie movement, pop music, the British invasion, student movements in the U.S. and France – we had all this material to discuss and reflect upon" (Veloso in Dunn, 1996: 122). Therefore, the Anglophone roots of the electric guitar were decoupled from their northern origins through the process of cannibalization. For Tropicálistas, the electric guitar produced sounds to be consumed, digested, and re-excreted or re-birthered as an act of creation rather than passive replication.

Yet not all audiences were ready to hear the electric guitar as a sound of resistance due to latent conceptions of what resistance should sound like. In 1968, audiences at the FIC III (the third International Festival of Song or Festival International de Canção) misheard Tropicália. This festival replaced older radio festivals by partnering with the Globo television

⁶ First mass produced in the 1950s in the United States, the electric guitar picked up speed globally in the 1960s. Popularized in the U.S. and the U.K., the electric guitar was introduced to Brazil through media such as the *Jovem Guarda* (Young Guard or Vanguard) musical television show in the mid-1960s. Co-hosted by established musician Roberto Carlos Braga, the variety show showcased artists influenced by American rock and the British invasion incorporating sound innovations including the electric guitar, electric bass, electric organ, and electric piano. With the entrance of the *Jovem Guarda* television show in 1965, bossa nova began to cede its centrality (Behague, 1973: 214).

network. In addition to changing the medium of dissemination, there was also a significant shift in the demographic characteristics of the spectators. Whereas the radio festivals' audience had been largely economically disadvantaged and Afro-Brasileiro, the new festival attracted a predominantly white, middle class audience that was politically engaged (Treece, 1997: 4). Sound was the prime mover shaping social relations at the FIC that were marked by friction and antagonism.

Tropicália created shockwaves at the FIC III where Tropicálista musicians, including Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, performed the ground-breaking sounds and concepts. In the context of acoustic and vocal norms of the FIC, the audience reacted viscerally and violently as they erroneously heard the incorporation of the electric guitar as an extension of audible imperialism. What the audience failed to grasp was a deep critique of the military regime through the contrast of melodic vocals that were purposefully set in contrast to new sounds. While Tropicálistas believed they were creating a uniquely Brazilian sound, the audience interpreted the incorporation of the electric guitar as a rejection of national Brazilian "unplugged" styles, and, even worse, as unreflective acceptance of American and British cultural imperialism on the part of the artists.

At the festival, in response to Veloso' first performance of "E proibido proibir" ("It is Forbidden to Forbid"), spectators reacted with deafening booing. Several nights later, during his second performance of this same politically loaded song, the audience turned their backs on the performers and even pelted them with food and objects. Spectator reaction was so hostile that it would make the festival known as the *Festival of Booing* (Stroud, 2000: 89). In his 1996 interview with Veloso, Dunn asked him about this critical event:

Dunn: I want to talk about a very important moment for Tropicálismo: the eliminatory rounds of the 1968 Festival Internacionale da Canção, when you sang "E proibido proibir," and the uproar it caused. Why did the public react against this song?

Veloso: It was not so much the song itself [...]. The students who went to these festivals favored nationalism and a kind of socialist populism. This festival was started after the military coup in 1964, but in the beginning that government didn't prevent left-wing cultural manifestations. The students reacted against what we were

doing – it wasn't how a leftist songwriter was supposed to behave (Dunn, 1996: 122).

Despite the irony that the song's title was taken from the anti-establishment leftist French student protests, ultimately Veloso withdrew the song from competition, having been silenced by elite Brazilians just as other Brazilian artists had been in the past before later being embraced. In this way, the FIC III was a key moment for the Tropicália movement, being both the medium of one kind of protest and the object of another kind of resistance. Just as elite Brazilians scorned Carmen Miranda for her representation of Brazilian musical culture of the 1940s, the audience scorned the Tropicálistas for their representation of Brazilian musical culture of the 1960s. In both cases, the elites silenced the artists through a weaponized cacophony of booing.

In this way, although Tropicália was a harsh condemnation of the military dictatorship, it was also a critique of traditional leftist protest due to the audience's misinterpretation and hostile reaction. Faced with the challenge of responding to the military regime, the movement sought to break new ground in ways that more orthodox means of resistance could not:

The challenge faced by the protest song movement was not merely the need to offer an ideological alternative to the state's developmentalist mythology of popular and national identity [...]. Paradoxically, the orthodox left's reaction to the modernization and internationalization of Brazilian culture was symptomatic of an idealistic isolation from the realities of the 1960s, which prevented it engaging critically and creatively with the new mass culture (Treece, 1997: 4).

Through innovation, Tropicália replaced instrumentalist formulation of protest in favor of sounds as a vehicle of resistance. In this way, the movement became a salient alternative to traditional protest and allowed Tropicálistas to condemn the military government's repression as well as societal inequalities. Although it introduced a new aesthetic and challenged society to reexamine its assumptions, it also carried on the larger tradition of music as a tool of protest, resistance, and challenge in Brazil. According to Behague, "...it should be emphasized that early Bossa Nova was basically a reaction against the limits and prejudices of the more traditional samba, and Tropicálismo against unproductive nationalist bourgeois cultural values" and "Veloso and Gil's credo was justifiably directed to the

awakening of the middle class to the Brazilian tragedy of poverty, exploitation and cultural terrorism" (1973: 217-219). For these reasons, while the left at first reacted against the aesthetics promulgated by Tropicália, it eventually embraced the movement.

Ironically the audience's revulsion did not protect the Tropicálistas from political persecution by the military dictatorship. Veloso explained:

What we were doing was new. Tropicálismo lasted for a year only, and the military didn't know what to make of it – they didn't know whether it was a political movement or not – but they saw it as anarchic, and they feared it. There were some intellectuals in the military, who had some understanding of what we were doing – they were the ones who recommended that we be imprisoned. They thought we represented dissension and danger. People had to take a stand and we were raising questions, giving interviews [...] these things were coming to fruition in our minds – a vision of Brazil in which there was freedom, strength. Obviously, we were enemies of the military regime, we hated it, and we thought that this regime was a source of shame for us (Veloso in Dunn, 1996: 131).

As the Tropicálistas continued their revolt against the dictatorship, some were imprisoned and tortured. Gil and Veloso were exiled and moved to London, the center of gravity rejected by the festival audience. Ultimately, the Tropicálistas prevailed musically and politically. For although the military regime lasted twenty years, Tropicália's influences live on today as a revered form of sonic innovation in the pantheon of Brazilian musical culture.

Synthesis of Sound as Resistance in Tropicália

In conclusion, this examination of Tropicália as a multi-layered form of protest speaks to the call for sonic cartography of the South raised by Steingo and Sykes, particularly the meanings ascribed to sounds in the Brazilian cultural context. Examining the aural significance of the pandeiro samba tambourine and berimbau in two pivotal songs, "Tropicália" and "Sunday in the Park," revealed how deep cultural knowledge is necessary to understand the sonic resistance generated by Tropicálistas Veloso and Gil that was heard by their sonically literate audiences in ways that would not be audible to the uninitiated.

In addition, this research also uncovered the social and political legacies of the musico-political movement at the third Festival International de Canção. This festival was a key

moment for the Tropicália movement in which it became both a medium of protest and the object of another kind of resistance due to the use of new sonic importation that the audience was not ready to hear. The friction unleashed by Tropicália at the FIC III illuminated latent understandings of what resistance “should” sound like to the ears of different audiences.

Despite its short duration, the Tropicália movement made incredible aesthetic and political contributions. Rooted in Andrade’s concept of *antropofagia*, the Tropicália artists imported new aural elements, primarily through the use of the electric guitar, and combined them with sounds from the berimbau and pandeiro. Tropicálistas cannibalized all of them, as well as their latent cultural associations signaling resistance through sounds. Resistance was heard by those listening and hearing the cannibalization of sounds, particularly the electric guitar, pandeiro, and berimbau. The movement’s devastating critiques and ultimately redemptive content was a sonically-driven condemnation of the military dictatorship via a new Brazilian aesthetic expression of resistance.

Yet Tropicália was much more than a critique of a right-wing regime. In addition to protesting the military government, the movement posed a much more radical form of protest that questioned aesthetics, political expression, and the segments of society implicitly supporting the status quo and the military coup. The movement also questioned traditional ideas of reform by reevaluating the role of audible aesthetics by incorporating the sound of the electric guitar, berimbau, and tambourine samba together in new ways. For Tropicálistas, redefining Andrade’s *antropofagia* was a potent process of creative defiance powered by sound. In making these connections, the research contributes to the literature on sounds from Brazil and thereby begins to fill the lacunae demarcated by the omission of sounds from the South from the larger field of sound studies. Studying Tropicália makes clear the role of sound in larger social processes that reveal patterns of power, contestation, and resolution.

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