

On *Non-Folklorizing* the Popular: reinterpreting the so-called popular cultures through Torquato Neto

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ABSTRACT – On *Non-Folklorizing* the Popular: reinterpreting the so-called popular cultures through Torquato Neto – The article analyzes the only audio record (1968) of Torquato Neto, which points out, in dialogue with the experimental context of *Tropicália* (Süssekind, 2007), another point of view to rethink the creations and studies related to the so-called popular cultures, since such manifestations are almost always circumscribed exclusively to the field of Folklore. Starting from the relation between *local* and *global* (Anjos, 2005) and the concept of *anthropophagy* as a mechanism for proposing a Brazilian art that would incorporate both foreign and national myths, it is discussed the poetic project of *non-folklorizing* the popular, as Torquato says.

Keywords: **Popular Culture. Tropicália. Anthropophagy. Torquato Neto. Folklore.**

RÉSUMÉ – Sur *pas Folkloriser* le Populaire: reinterpreter les cultures populaires par Torquato Neto – L'article analyse l'unique audio (1968) de Torquato Neto, qui souligne, en dialogue avec le contexte expérimental de *Tropicália* (Süssekind, 2007), un autre point de vue pour repenser les créations et les études connecté aux dites cultures populaires car ces manifestations sont souvent confinées exclusivement au domaine du Folklore. A partir de la relation entre le *local* et le *global* (Anjos, 2005) et du concept de *anthropophagie* comme un mécanisme de proposition d'un art brésilien qui incorporerait les mythes étrangers comme les mythes nationaux, est discuté le projet poétique de, comme le dit Torquato, *non folklorisation* du populaire.

Mots-clés: **Culture Populaire. Tropicália. Anthropophagie. Torquato Neto. Folklore.**

RESUMO – Sobre *Não Folclorizar* o Popular: reinterpretando as culturas ditas populares via Torquato Neto – O artigo faz uma análise do único registro em áudio (1968) do piauiense Torquato Neto, o qual aponta, em diálogo com o contexto experimental da *Tropicália* (Süssekind, 2007), um outro ponto de vista para repensar as criações e estudos ligados às culturas ditas populares, uma vez que tais manifestações são quase sempre circunscritas exclusivamente ao campo do Folklore. Partindo da relação entre *local* e *global* (Anjos, 2005) e do conceito de *antropofagia* como mecanismo de proposição de uma arte brasileira que incorporaria tanto os mitos estrangeiros quanto os nacionais, discute-se o projeto poético de, como diz Torquato, *não folclorização* do popular.

Palavras-chave: **Cultura Popular. Tropicália. Antropofagia. Torquato Neto. Folklore.**

explorar

SOLTO DAS AMARRAS

da terra-terrinha [...] (Oiticica, 1973).

The present article proposes a debate about the cultures considered as popular from the interview with Torquato Neto, recently published, so that, in counterpoint to the subject of Folklore, other ways of conceiving and researching the popular can be perceived and implemented.

Numerous facts marked the tumultuous Brazilian History during the 1960s: the election of Jânio Quadros for the presidency in 1961 and his resignation in August of the same year; the presidential inauguration of João Goulart, the vice president, in a transitory parliamentary regime; the growing number, throughout the national territory, of Popular Culture Centers (*Centros Populares de Cultura*, CPCs), the National Union of the Students (*União Nacional dos Estudantes*, UNE), concentrating numerous and important artists around a national-popular project¹; a *coup d'État* that would lead Brazil into a military dictatorship which would last until the mid-1980s, with more than two decades of censorship to artists, persecution to LGBTT² people, and the killing of left-winged political militants; the convergence and the intense communication, initiated in 1967, among Brazilian artists from various areas (Music, Literature, Visual Arts, Theater), even before Nelson Motta's pursuit to define this fruitful context of artistic production as "Tropicalism"³, in the article *The Tropicalist Crusade* (in the *carioca* newspaper *Última Hora*), in 1968 (Süssekind, 2007).

Still about the 1960s, it is important to highlight that:

1967 is the year of the New Brazilian Objectivity Exhibition, which took place at MAM-RJ, in which Hélio Oiticica would present the installation *Tropicália*; of the exhibition, in May, in the same city, of *Terra em Transe*, a film by Glauber Rocha; of the proposition, by Lygia Clark, of her *Sensorial masks*; of the song, written by Caetano Veloso that would borrow the title from Oiticica's work; of the staging, by the *Oficina* group, of the play *O Rei da Vela*, by Oswald de Andrade; of the presentation, by Caetano and Gil, in October, at The Music Festival on TV Record in São Paulo, of the songs *Alegria, alegria* and *Domingo no parque*. And it is also the publishing year of the novel *Panamérica*, by José Agripino de Paula. [...] They are examples, in this way [of satirical appropriation of the political-cultural and behavioral archaisms, of the myths and 'roots' which give identity of nationality], songs

like *Tropicália*, by Caetano Veloso, and *Geléia Geral*, by Gil and Torquato Neto (Süssekind, 2007, p. 2).

Süssekind (2007) points out above some of the various artistic works that were compiled under the seal of Tropicalism. Artists from such diverse origins, like Hélio Oiticica, Glauber Rocha, Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Zé Celso, Torquato Neto⁴, among others, have concentrated their efforts in the sense of producing artistic works, or, better saying, artistic experiments of vanguard, which, inspired by the *Manifesto Antropófago* by Oswald de Andrade, written in 1928, would make a deep review on the thoughts about the Brazilian culture. The rediscovery of the Oswaldian anthropophagy⁵ (Süssekind, 2007) has generated the *global* cultures devouring, but in a way that would not ignore archetypes, taken as *local*, from the Brazilian repertoire, more specifically from elements considered popular. “The human old human flesh that should have already been devoured stinks and steps the game out, to its world of the dead. The political efficacy is to devour all the mythology of this country” (Corrêa apud Süssekind, 2007, p. 4).

The *Tropicália*⁶ contributions to think the Brazilian culture in no way have been exhausted following the distancing among those who formed the Tropicalism. Be it due to the disagreements between Torquato, Caetano and Gil⁷, or the distance⁸ caused by the Institutional Act No.5 (AI-5), known as the *second coup*, which would assign extreme powers to the President of the Republic, established the early censorship to the media and the arts, opened the possibility of terminating political rights of any citizen for ten years, and prohibited the population from politically manifesting in public, among many other authoritarian acts.

“Not singing would fade Torquato’s visibility, in the stage that the singer-image was being strongly established”, Tom Zé commented (Zé apud Süssekind, 2007, p. 6). However, mainly in the two last decades, the production of Torquato Neto⁹, who was born in Piauí state, has been used in order to think of themes that extrapolate the universe of the Tropicalism in Rio de Janeiro. Torquato’s contributions in Piauí, in the passage from the 1960s to the 1970s, have been explored by researchers such as the professor and researcher Edwar de Alencar Castelo Branco (Post-graduation program in History of Universidade Federal do Piauí), who develops,

articulated with the discussions about Tropicalism, vanguard and post-modernity, an important work about the direct reverberations and interferences of Torquato on the following themes: marginal culture in Piauí, marginal cinema from Piauí and alternative newspapers¹⁰. “The traces left by the crooked angel of *Tropicália* keep on defoliating the flag and influencing new creators in the Brazil general jam” (Miguel apud Castelo Branco; Cardoso, 2016, p. 207).

In the current paper, what is intended to be done is to make Torquato not a subject of study and analysis, but to exploit his iconoclast and transgressor gesture reverberated in his musical poetry and in his journalistic exercise¹¹ to think and rethink interchanges, exchanges and disputes in the field of cultures considered as popular. Moacir dos Anjos, in *Local/global: arte em trânsito* (2005), highlights the importance of the discourses about artistic works from regions taken as *peripheric* that come from the very people of these regions, “[...] such discourses have their origins gradually displaced to other territories, making it fit, in that system, formulations made from an effectively decentered perspective” (Anjos, 2005, p. 34). Anjos exposes the question of the need that the discourses must be from the *peripheric* continents themselves: Latin America, Africa and Asia. It is obvious that the game of power between different ways of representation can be thought in a *global* context, but if the category *Latin American art* is insufficient and ends up standardizing differences, the category *Brazilian Art*¹² is not less vague.

The critical range of these formulations is not restricted, evidently, only to the narratives about the group of Latin American, African, or Asian arts. In each of the countries and subnational spaces that integrate these continents, or that are located in subordinate position in the process of globalization, it can be found, with different degrees of complexity, identity constructions that, even though having sought for a long time to be affirmed as totalizing and natural, have been established to reinvent themselves in the contemporaneity. There certainly has been an idea of Brazil that, formulated from what is defined as the Southeastern region – whose elite retained the power (political, economic, and symbolical) of nationalizing a local discourse –, for many decades has informed the recognition, of those who live in the country or outside it, of what would be specifically national (Anjos, 2005, p. 51-52).

Torquato, being from Piauí¹³, enables an interesting and audacious look over what is understood as popular. It is important to stress that it is not about an essentialist proposition, let alone to affirm that only Torquato or other Northeastern intellectuals could talk at length about the *Bumba-meu-boi* or about the *Reisado*¹⁴. On the contrary: what matters here is a person from Piauí living in Rio de Janeiro, appropriating of *Bumba-meu-boi* and in parallel also speaking of Godard, Ezra Pound, Marginal Cinema, “[...] concretism, anthropophagy, folklore, *iê-iê-iê*, TV, newspaper, foreign words, clichés, etc. Game and truth. [...] A tropical mess, general jam like Oswald de Andrade style” (Salomão apud Castelo Branco; Cardoso, 2016, p. 192).

Torquato was interviewed in November 1968 by the broadcaster from Rio Grande do Sul Vanderlei Malta da Cunha during the IV Festival of the Brazilian Music, promoted by TV Record, in São Paulo. It was the year of the release of the collective record *Tropicália ou Panis et Circenses*, which contained *Geléia Geral*, composed by Torquato Neto, a song that is considered as a *statement of the tropicalist movement* (Pires apud Neto; Pires, 2004a). What happens is that this interview was lost in Vanderlei’s locker for 46 years, being finally found in 2015, after the journalist read an article in the newspaper *O Globo* in which the director of the documentary *Anjo Torto* regretted not having found any audio register of Torquato, even though he had taken part in festivals and radio programs. Such register represents the only voice record of Torquato so far, being easily retrieved from websites. Next, we present a transcript of a long excerpt in which Torquato discusses themes concerning the *folklorizing* issue and the need of *(de)folklorizing* of what is understood as popular, as well as of *Brazilian* and *Northeastern* culture:

I think that the [tropicalist] *baiano* group no longer folklorizes the folklore, which makes no sense. [...] We do not keep on folklorizing the samba, the folklore from Bahia, the *samba de roda*, nor anything, neither all the influences that the people have of popular music in Brazil during their formation, the thousand ways to make popular music. I think that our current work, and I say that with no fear of being called immodest, I consider our work as something really important because of the following: it is what opens perspectives. [...] See our record *Tropicália*, this LP, released some months ago, that LP, each track is a totally different musical proposal from each other and all the others. Each track in that record is a different

proposal, that I would not label as new, but different, it is an open thing. So, in this sense, you can see that there is a song which is really mine, *Geléia Geral*, which is totally Northeastern. You can see what I have said before *Mamãe coragem* which is really linked to Northern things, now with another vision. You can see songs like *Miserere* from Gil and Capinan, for God's sake, that cannot be more Brazilian. By the way, like everything that is there. For us to do that work, we really did not have the condition to do it, of doing a work like that, if we had not previously worked with folklore, worked with everything. I don't know, anyway. We are not folklorizing the folklore anymore, that's all (Torquato Neto, 1968, interview).

First and foremost, it is absolutely necessary to highlight that it is not our intention to draft a hierarchy of importance and more or less precision related to the conception of popular culture and of Torquato's *Brazilianess* highlighted above and other, distinct but not necessarily antagonistic views, but linked to the field of folklore. However, the excerpt above offers a priceless material to think and have more discussion from additional points of view the appropriations, creations and even academic studies linked to the so-called popular cultures¹⁵.

Some of the axes from Torquato's quotation above deserve to be highlighted in order to be better developed and understood: (1) not folklorizing the folklore anymore and understand the popular from more open perspectives, (2) perceiving the multiple forms of emergence and appropriation of the popular in artistic works, (3) not denying or ignoring the folklore, but adding up other layers and artistic possibilities (*working with everything*) to what is understood as folklore, and (4) seeing that it is not about a denial or an affirmation of the inexistence of a *Brazilianess* or a *Northeasterness*.

Professor Renato Ortiz (1986, p. 39), in *Cultura popular: românticos e folcloristas*, presents a distinction between folklore as an object of study and folklore as science: "A first obstacle that is imposed to the new subject is related to the name, which confuses the object to be studied for the science itself; the scholars use the term folklore as a synonym of popular traditions and as an equivalent to a scientific area". Perceiving this distinction is necessary in order to try to grasp the meaning employed by Torquato above, which seems to be more related to folklore as a synonym to the cultures considered as popular and the folklorists as accountable for "[..]

classifying into genres and species the popular life collected. That is why their books are extensive descriptive catalogues that seek to include the highest possible number of facts” (Ortiz, 1986, p. 36). The notion of folklore and the characterization of something (an artist or a play, for instance) as *folkloric* was established as a negative connotation in the sense of something summarily understood as crystalized, romanticized, or simplified. Torquato proposes and develops a process of *non-folklorizing* of the popular cultures as an alternative to what Ortiz refers as the extensive listing in genres and species made by the folklorists. This gesture of Torquato towards a non-folklorizing, a non-crystallization, non-listing is made possible due to a more *open* perspective in relation to the popular cultures, in the opposite way of what would be an act of collecting cultures and identities (Clifford, 1997). Collecting a *Brazilian culture*, a *culture from Piauí*, or, differently a culture in Melanesia:

All these collections include hierarchy, exclusions, and territories ruled by the rules of the I. But the sense that this compilation involves the accumulation of possessions, the idea that the identity is a kind of wealth (of objects, knowledge, memories, experience) is not, for sure, universal. The individualistic accumulation by the ‘great men’ from Melanesia is not possessive in the sense of MacPherson, because in Melanesia things are accumulated not to be kept as private goods, but to be given, to be redistributed. In the Eastern world, however, collecting has been for a long time a strategy for the redistribution of an I, a possessive culture and authenticity (Clifford, 1997, p. 71).

Torquato contrasts the pursuit of a steady authenticity and the understanding of culture as the accumulation of symbolical assets by a people¹⁶ with an understanding of the popular as something flexible and dynamic. “Fight and resistance – but also, naturally, appropriation and expropriation” (Hall, 2003, p. 274). This way, Torquato establishes a dialogue, not in a direct way, with Cultural Studies¹⁷ and with the ideas of intellectuals such as Stuart Hall (Jamaican living in the UK), Néstor García Canclini (Argentinian living in Mexico), and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Indian living in the USA). We believe that it is this way that Torquato, from Piauí and member of the *baiano* group who lived in Rio de Janeiro, expresses a radical gesture as the explicit in the beautiful image of the critic Walter Benjamin about the *epic theater*, but that we transpose here to the

current discussion: “He establishes a relation with his history like the ballet instructor with his student. His utmost concerns are to loosen her joints up to the most possible limits” (Benjamin, 2012, p. 90). Torquato articulates, tears apart, and rearticulates in an anthropophagical way the popular with elements considered as modern and erudite by means of the matter that was available to him: the language.

The spoken language of the Brazilian Portuguese – and not the *Brazilianish*, be it from Piauí, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, or São Paulo. He did not use to folklorize the language. [...] Torquato did not mix up Oswald de Andrade with Zé Celso. Others could have their heads in the sand. Being afraid of seeming *high brown*. Not Torquato (Pignatari apud Castelo Branco; Cardoso, 2016, p. 195).

Torquato also ratifies what he had already shown through his poems and songs: the various possibilities of the popular being incorporated and articulated in artistic works. As Clifford writes (1997, p. 89): “The objects both from the act of collecting art and the act of collecting culture are susceptible to other appropriations”. The *Brazilianess* is extensively discussed as if the various views about the theme were homogeneous, with their ideas pacifically converging. Even when we talk about the Modernism of the Week of 1922, the protagonists of that context of accomplishment and claims of new aesthetic proposals are almost always equated and their distances are erased. It is not different with the label of *tropicalists*. “Thus, it was formed a ‘consensus’ on themes and events that should be seen mainly through the viewpoint of the creative conflict, an essential aspect for the collaboration of any cultural movement” (Coelho apud Castelo Branco; Cardoso, 2016, p. 38). Matching the diverse and usually conflicting meanings of *Brazilianess*, as well as the different ways of articulation of the popular in artistic works, by names such as Oswald de Andrade, Mário de Andrade, Caetano Veloso, Hélio Oiticica and Torquato Neto, would be simplifying and not very accurate, like it happens often. It is not possible to match the thoughts of Oswald de Andrade (1970) reflected in the *necessity of the anthropophagic vaccine* to the Brazilian culture, the perspective of *Bumba-meu-boi* by Mário de Andrade (apud Wisnik, 1982) as the “most exemplary, original and weird of our dances”¹⁸, as well as the proposal of “defoliating of the national flag” defended by Torquato Neto in the song *Gelêia Geral*. These different forms of understanding art, culture, and

Brazilianess reflect also distinct forms of unfolding of popular elements in his creations. Torquato Neto, in the referred song, writes: “A poet defoliates the flag”. *To defoliate* (2014) can mean taking off the leaves or fading little by little. An analogy that is related to a proposal of artistic creation that is contrasted to a nationalizing bias based on questions like the *originality* put by Mário de Andrade and reflected in later contexts of thinking and artistic creations which were based upon this idea, like, for instance, the *Armorial movement*, by Ariano Suassuna, based on a proposition of a *cult* art, that would be created from a *filtering* of popular elements. About this arguable process of the use of the popular as *invigorating*, the musician, songwriter, and essayist José Miguel Wisnik (1982, p. 133) writes the following critique:

The opposition is clear between the Art that contains history, elevated and disciplined, invigorated by the good use of the rural folklore (that is, the nationalist music), and the manifestations that are undisciplined, unclassifiable, rebellious to the order and the history, that the urban songs happen to be. Symptomatically and systematically, the nationalist discourse of the musical Modernism has pressed this key: re/negate the *emerging* popular culture, the one from the black people of the cities, for instance, and a whole bunch of gestures that used to project the social contradictions of the urban space, *in the name of the stylization* of the sources of the rural popular culture, idealized as the real keeper of the hidden face of the nation. [...] The problem is that the modernist musical nationalism takes the authenticity of these manifestations as the foundation of its representation to the *detriment of the manifestations of the urban popular life that cannot bear the incorporation of the latter*, that messes the centralized, homogeneous, and paternalistic view of the national culture (Wisnik, 1982, p. 133).

Differently, Torquato does not perform an *invigoration* of his songs and poems through the usage of themes considered as popular. The cultures considered as popular are not, for Torquato, a soothing source, bearer of an educative *ethos*, that would provide to the *erudite* art themes from our *people* (rural, rustic, savage), that would lead to an artistic creation linked to our *original roots* (Wisnik, 1982). The artist from Piauí withdraws from the paternalist, homogenizing, and authoritarian character often present in the national-popular paradigm. He juxtaposes in his poems various and conflicting elements, both from popular cultures (and one can risk to say that they are connected to his roots from Piauí state) and aspects that are

present in a *global* art that was *en vogue* at that moment, thus allowing a distinct and more coherent aesthetic-political view to what would represent a *Brazilian people*, which, if named like this, is at least perceived for its differences, distances, and multiple identities.

This creative gesture by Torquato cannot be simplified as a denial of the folklore, of the popular traditions, and that some cultural-artistic manifestations are more connected – what does not mean exclusively – to the ordinary life and the sociabilities of what is understood as popular classes. “The study of the popular traditions [by the folklore] is, in this sense, a counterpoint to a more globalizing tendency; faithful to their romantic origin, that underlined the local element to the detriment of an Illuminist universality [...]” (Ortiz, 1986, p. 37). Torquato gets in touch with elements from the popular culture, but without the aversion to elements considered as global and foreign, considered as the great villains from the national-popular bias of a traditional left-wing¹⁹.

In a division not free from Manichaeism and ingenuity, Torquato opposes a national musical identity to the foreign influence [...]. It is the moment when both the more reactionary traditionalism and the conservative left-wing, based upon a national-popular ideology, will have to face a good enigma: the possible bond between Lamartine and the electric guitar, between the rock and the samba, luxury and litter. It is the wait for the tropical morning accurately documented by Torquato Neto (Pires apud Neto; Pires, 2004a, p. 13-16).

Torquato is able to perceive the limitations of a notion of *people* that ignores the contradictions among different classes, as well as the way he captures and talks with the various cultural movements that were taking place in Europe and in the USA, like the hippies, Godard, the Beatles and the songs by Bob Dylan (Hollanda, 2004). Torquato, influenced by such cultural agitation, but also by Brazilian movements, like the *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928), by Oswald de Andrade, and the *paideuma concretista* (Hollanda, 2004), the poets Augusto de Campos, Haroldo de Campos, and Décio Pignatari, was able to conceive his artistic practice in a way to articulate manifestations considered as coming from the *center* along with the cultures considered popular in Brazil. The relation between *center/periphery*, *local/global*²⁰ cannot be understood as something pacific and free from power relations, on the contrary, it:

[...] evokes the violent nature of the relations among the various people put in touch at that moment. It gets away from the description of this process, therefore, any intention of celebration or soothing, emphasizing, on the contrary, the power relations that constituted them (Anjos, 2005, p. 25).

By concealing the conflicting nature of the cultural clashes, the dilution of the difference to the exotic reaffirms the hierarchy of the world among cultures which claim themselves to be universal (global) and others that would be, from the point of view of the first ones, unequivocally particular (local) (Anjos, 2005, p. 17).

Torquato's artistic gesture of clashing these disparate elements meant something fundamental for his generation, in music and for the whole cultural production of his time, and has consequences, ramifications, and influences even nowadays (Hollanda, 2004), because it brings to the view a possibility of artistic creation, of study and critique different from the one made by the already commented national-popular paradigm deeply employed in the Brazilian artistic exercise. According to Ortiz (1986), who relates what he calls folklorists and traditional intellectuals, there has always been a historical process in which one cultural manifestation was replaced by another: (1) for the intellectuals of the new social order, the popular classes did not have any culture, (2) while the folklorists would idealize these classes and would consider that they were about to be extinguished. Thus, according to Ortiz (for the intellectuals), the cultures considered as popular would be cultures from the past and should be eliminated in the clash with the *civilizing* process or, on the other extreme (for the folklorists), they should be preserved as objects for a museum. "But between these two extremes there is a gap, and at no moment it is asked what type of culture, better saying, cultures, that replaces the previous one along with the subordinate classes" (Ortiz, 1986, p. 50). Intellectual try to erase the cultures that are taken as popular. The folklorists perceive the popular as something to be protected and shielded. It is in this context that Torquato's concerns could introduce a third way for the reading and approximation to the popular cultures.

All the arguments presented so far can end up giving place to interpretations that would lead to the understanding that, after all, the existence of a *Brazilian culture*, a *Northeastern culture* and a *culture from Piauí* was being denied. It is exactly the opposite: Torquato claims the

Northeasterness of the song *Geléia Geral*, the link to the *Northern things* of the song *Mamãe coragem*, only with a *distinct vision*, as said by himself, the *Brazilianess* of songs like *Miserere* by Gilberto Gil and Capinan, and of the whole LP *Tropicália ou Panis et circencis* (1968). The elements that form the “mythology of this country” (Velooso apud Süssekind, 2007, p. 4) have only been devoured and reinterpreted in the tropicalist vanguard whose bananas and tropical fruits are still harvested, offering artists and intellectuals the hope of a new possibility of thinking the popular as something hybrid, mutant, and loose.

Notes

- ¹ For a Brazilian national-popular critique on the artistic production in the 1960s, the *revolutionary left-wing* and committed art, see Hollanda (2004).
- ² Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transgender – LGBTTT.
- ³ “‘Tropicalism has never existed’, José Celso Martinez said in 1977, ‘what existed’ according to him, ‘were ruptures in various fronts’. [...] This negativity would even involve, the very designation of a collective movement. And if the suggestion, at the beginning of 1968, of a “tropicalist crusade”, by the press of Rio de Janeiro, was seen by its members, at first, with as funny (Torquato Neto: ‘deep inside, it’s a big joke’) and distrust (Hélio Oiticica: ‘The one who speaks of tropicalism gets the image to the consume, ultra-superficial, but the existential experience flees’, and, next, appropriated as means of media interference (Caetano: ‘If this is the word that remained, let’s walk with it’), often it would be tried to “bury”, publicly, the designation (Süssekind, 2007, p 2-6). For a better understanding of the tropicalist experience, not as an *ism*, but as a dissonant moment, of non-homogeneous voices and interests, and, of course, fundamental of the national experimental production, see Süssekind (2007).
- ⁴ Torquato Neto (1944-1972) was a poet, journalist, actor and director. He was born in Teresina, capital of Piauí state, on November 9th. An only child, “suffocated by the environment of Teresina, a synonym of oppression for him, he leaves the city” (Pires apud Neto; Pires, 2004a, p. 385-387). The mentioned challenges are effective and Torquato goes to Salvador in 1960. In the capital of Bahia, he is introduced to Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso, and Glauber Rocha, to whom he was an assistant in *Barravento* (Mendes; Ribeiro apud Castelo Branco; Cardoso, 2016). In 1963, he studies journalism at the National School of

Philosophy (FNFi), Universidade do Brasil, in Rio de Janeiro, a city where Torquato would develop the artistic and journalistic production for which he would be recognized the most: the lyrics of the songs composed during the Tropicalism, as well as the column *Geléia Geral* (August/1971 to March/1972) in the newspaper *Última Hora*, among other works as a journalist. He was hospitalized for many times due to mental issues, both in Rio and in Teresina. Presently, he is considered as a myth. The myth of the young poet who died young (Leminski apud Castelo Branco; Cardoso, 2016), what leads to readings and interpretations that romanticize his biography, be it due to the radicalism employed to his procedures of writing, to the many hospitalizations for mental issues or even to the regrettable fact the he committed suicide. His creations performed before the tropicalism in Rio de Janeiro and the ones made in Piauí deserve more attention.

- ⁵ It is necessary to highlight the difference between the modernism conducted by Oswald de Andrade during the 1920s, and the anthropophagical re-articulations made by the tropicalist group, what by no means should be understood by the seals of the *rescue* or of a mere and simple *renewal*. Historical particularities, like the context of a military dictatorship and the consequent artistic censorship, for instance, need to be considered.
- ⁶ In this work the words *Tropicália* and *tropicalism* appear. *Tropicalism* refers to the interchange among many and whimsical artists during the 1960s. *Tropicália* is related to the transgressor artistic gesture caused in the 1960s by many artists and that still influences the artistic world, the critique and the academics who are interested in works (tropicalists or influenced by what may be called as *tropicalist gesture*) which aim a devouring of what is taken as archaic, modern, cheesy, erudite, and popular. Or, as better said by Torquato Neto: “I choose *Tropicália* because it is not liberal, but it is libertine, the super extensive anti-formula: the tropicalism is dead, live the *Tropicália*, all the proposals will be accepted, but the conformist. (be marginal) all the conversations, but the repressive ones (be a hero). and the golden voice from Brazil sings for you” (Neto apud Neto; Pires, 2004b, p. 63).
- ⁷ “In São Paulo [in 1968], [Torquato] had been hospitalized for the first time (of a total of four times) due to alcohol abuse. Having split with the tropicalists and being depressed, he embarks with Hélio Oiticica to Europe one week before the AI-5 and gets to know about the act when he was in Holland” (Pires apud Neto; Pires, 2004a, p. 398).

- ⁸ “The ex-partners who stayed in Brazil during the dictatorship suffered in their own flesh the truculence of the dictatorship. Arrested in a prison in Rio since the last days of 1968, Gil and Caetano receive permission to go back to Salvador, where they should stay in confinement. In July, having already left the voices recorded for their new albums, they perform a concert at the Castro Alves Theater – transformed in the record *Barra 69*, which would be released 3 years later – and leave to the exile in London” (Pires apud Neto; Pires, 2004a, p. 399).
- ⁹ It is almost always ignored that inside the renown *baiano* group there was a man from Piauí: “They [Gil and Caetano] worked in collaboration with other artists from Salvador, including the singer Gal Costa, the singer and songwriter Tom Zé, and the poets Torquato Neto and José Carlos Capinan” (Dunn, 2009, p. 18).
- ¹⁰ See the various and indispensable works of Castelo Branco (2006; 2007), Castelo Branco and Brito (2011; 2013), Castelo Branco and Cardoso (2016), Castelo Branco and Silva (2013) and Brito (2016) in the reference list.
- ¹¹ Mainly through the aesthetic-political operation of the song *Gelêia Geral* (1968), written by Torquato Neto and Gil; of the column *Gelêia Geral* (August/ 1971 to March/1972) in the newspaper *Última Hora* and the only register of Torquato’s voice, referring to the interview to the broadcaster from Rio Grande do Sul Vanderlei Malta da Cunha at the Record Festival in 1968.
- ¹² About the construction of the category *Brazilian art* as a hegemonic form, Anjos (2005, p. 52) says that the modernist movements from Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo contributed a lot to this process, as well as “the notion of anthropophagy proposed by Oswald de Andrade”, which in this paper is used through Torquato Neto and to discuss the so-called popular cultures within the scope of Piauí. It is important to perceive these occasional contradictions.
- ¹³ A person from Piauí, living in Rio de Janeiro, speaking about Piauí, directly or indirectly, but far from discussing only the state. An equivalent, so to speak, to major Cultural Studies intellectuals like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Néstor García Canclini, and Stuart Hall, who think about the post-colonial relation between colony/metropole, *center/periphery*, but in big cities of Europe and the USA.
- ¹⁴ The distance from Piauí to the axis Rio-São Paulo, the insufficient, even though increasing number of public policies made to divulge the events, touristic spots and activities of the state, and the disinterest or even incapacity of overlapping the nicknames of exotic assigned to it, sometimes generate strong ignorance of what

happens in the state and lead to misconceptions like these. The following excerpts belong to two open exhibits in Rio de Janeiro about Piauí: *Projeto Piauí*, at the newly opened *Espaço Jacarandá*, in Glória neighborhood, and the exhibit *Modernidades fotográficas (1940-1964)* at *Instituto Moreira Sales*, Lagoa neighborhood, both the southern part of the city. “Besides the rock art representations, crossing the hinterland of Piauí by car was an idea that attracted the group, that went from the countryside of the state until resulting in the wide sea of the Parnaíba Delta, on a 12-day journey. [...] The experience of living and the crossings were intense, and from this experience the artists highlight the silence of the inhospitable region [...] (Projeto ..., 2016, online). “Medeiros, a Brazilian from Piauí, a poor state with no artistic tradition, was the photojournalist by excellence, learning the job in the daily life of the offices in Rio de Janeiro, where he established himself” (Instituto..., 2016 author’s emphasis, on line)”.

- ¹⁵ It cannot be forgotten that the intellectual and aesthetic radicalism of Torquato Neto is not an isolated point, but it belongs to the experimental tropicalist context, thus, it cannot be interpreted in a single way.
- ¹⁶ Seeking to present the relations between cultures as something dynamic, participant of the globalization process and the exchanges between *center* and *periphery* cannot be understood necessarily as a synonym of the discussion the has been intensified about the issue of *cultural appropriation*. In this work, sometimes the term appropriation appears, but with a totally different connotation from the sense of *cultural appropriation* defended in the necessary critics made, for instance, by Djamila Ribeiro, a black intellectual feminist. Differently, for instance, from the mass fabrication of turbans, what extracts from the piece the characteristic of black resistance, Torquato does not use the *Bumba-meu-boi* in the song *Geléia Geral*, for instance, emptying the referred cultural manifestation in the sense of a Brazilian party with an aim of commercialization. As it also seems “[..] reducing to impose to the Oswaldian anthropophagy the ‘productivist’, ‘consumerist’, and ‘expansionist’ practice, in a certain ‘capitalist logic’ of accumulation, translated by the current reading of ‘ingesting for ingesting’, in a non-associate melting pot” (Azevedo, 2016, p. 31).
- ¹⁷ Cultural Studies are a field of study whose approach is interdisciplinary, incorporating sociology, critic, and anthropology around discussions concerning the following themes: Nationality, Culture, Identity, Gender. See Hall (2003; 2004).

- ¹⁸ It can be added, also about the perspective of *Brazilianess* by Mário de Andrade and about his relation to the cultures considered as popular, with the finality of the differences being perceived more clearly when it comes to the perspectives hereby presented: “It will be needed only to the scholar to discern in the urban folklore, which is virtually native, what is traditionally national, what is essentially popular, anyway, of what is really popular, meant to be popular, or influenced by international trends” (Andrade apud Wisnik, 1982, p. 131-132).
- ¹⁹ Ferreira Gullar reminds the difficulties he used to find, with the Popular Centers of Culture (CPCs), the National Union of the Students (UNE), in the 1960s, a group that was trying to supply the “cultural lateness of the people” and to provoke a “changing effect” in the “Brazilian man” according to a preliminary draft of the group (1962) in Hollanda (2004): “Actually, things are not what we think they are. In theory, everything was OK, but, for instance, how could I sell this *cordele*? Should I go to *Central do Brasil* rail station to sell it? How do I distribute it? At the bookstores? How do we do it? It ended up being sold to university students, who were not exactly the real people. [...] Something was wrong: we were making bad theater and bad poetry, under the guise of giving awareness to the people, but we were no doing it. So, we were fulfilling neither the artistic role, nor the political role” (Gullar apud Braga, 2014, n.p).
- ²⁰ “Global and local are, therefore, *relational* – like center and periphery – terms, and not descriptions of physical or symbolic, well defined and isolated territories. The relations between these instances are not established, however, in a polarized way, existing among them an extensive communicative web meant for the ‘diversity negotiation’, being part of it the media, the academy, the museums and many other institutions. The intensification of the exchange relations along this web make them gradually impure, integrating of a field where, in a greater or lesser extent, cultural forms that did not use to exist are woven. It is these constant contacts with what is different that produce, after all, the *multicultural* character of the contemporary societies” (Anjos, 2005, p. 15).

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