

das inconvenientes sobrevivências e as irreversíveis quedas; das dores e tristezas maternas, fica a imagem das crianças errantes em busca de um futuro que jamais existiria, inconscientes da alteração de rota que se abateria sobre o Continente naquele período, prenhe de mudanças e parturiente de frustrações.

Nessa mistura de textos, alguns na forma de conto romanceado, outros de narrativa à *bang-bang*, até os estritamente acadêmicos, o comum é a certeza da importância histórica da memória. Da necessidade de recuperar as marcas de um passado ainda recente e que teima em queimar, no altar dos sacrifícios da democracia, periódicas gerações de jovens para alimentar o interminável capítulo da história dos silenciados.

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CHRISTOPHER DUNN: *Brutality Garden. Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

In the late 1960s, Brazilian artists were in a curious position: the military had seized power in 1964, overthrowing a left-leaning populist government that proved powerless to rally resistance to the coup. In the realm of culture, however, specifically in those film, theater and musical circles which straddled the erudite and the popular, and where educated, urban middle-class influence was decisive, the left, or the various lefts, seemed to hold almost absolute precedence. Although they ranged in their political conviction from Maoist to liberal democratic, these lefts largely agreed on an interpretation of popular culture deeply structured by the overthrown populists: they believed that national popular culture arose spontaneously from *o povo*, the people, and that, if properly nourished, harnessed and directed by educated leaders, it could prove a driving force in bringing that *povo* to power. Artists who catered to this understanding were the darlings of these fragile and increasingly marginalized lefts. Artists who rejected this understanding, along with the more conservative nationalist cultural overtures of the military regime, found themselves criticized from all sides.

But criticism was publicity, and publicity was the first step to attracting a popular audience and to achieving broader cultural relevance. A small core of artists working in film, theater, the visual arts and, predominantly, popular music, invited that criticism and pursued both the audience and the relevance. Along the way, they articulated a forceful criticism of Brazil's cultural and political

structures, including their own positions in a cultural marketplace. Their movement — although brief and multivalent, it was a movement, at least in popular music — was known as *Tropicália*, after a Caetano Veloso composition of that name, which itself took its title from an installation by visual artist Hélio Oiticica. Over the past three decades, this movement has provoked a considerable body of scholarship. Responding to both the movement itself and the subsequent scholarship, Christopher Dunn has produced an enlightening and thorough account that should become a standard work on Brazilian culture in the second half of the twentieth century.

One of the strongest aspects of Dunn's work is his elucidation of the tensions implicit in tropicalist attitudes towards the canon of Brazilian popular song and, by extension, in their attitudes towards Brazilianness itself. The tropicalists claimed as influences Carmen Miranda's Hollywood *exotica*, the melodramatic pop-opera of 1930s tenor Vicente Celestino, the rustic Northeastern stylings of Luiz Gonzaga, and the restrained, urbane bossa nova of João Gilberto. Processing and reconciling these diverse and seemingly opposed influences almost required a deep ambivalence towards the material being consumed — the tropicalists cherished, lampooned and devoured these influences at the same time. Similarly, their complex allegories of a "Brazilian absurdity" — an inegalitarian modernization that perpetuated poverty and underdevelopment in some sectors while enriching others — revealed the hollow nature of both the regime's brutal jingoism and the romantic nationalist essentialism of the various lefts. At the same time, the tropicalists were deeply committed to a vision of Brazilian exceptionalism, an understanding with its own nationalist underpinnings.

As Dunn demonstrates, ambivalence became one of the defining characteristics of the movement. In the 1970s, this ambivalence led the former tropicalists into more intimate explorations of shifting personal, as opposed to national or political, identities. In more recent years, it has been revived and celebrated by a hip, younger audience, eager to express its own ambivalence about the market structures that shape its cultural consumption. As Dunn suggests, this recent tropicalist revival lacks the disruptive and ultimately productive power of the initial movement, because it responds neither to censorship from the right nor to ideological patrols on the left, but rather to the almost complete lack of either. It is an irony with no target but itself. A more salutary, if less direct, influence of the movement is a far more flexible general understanding of the meaning of musical Brazilianness, one which informs a wide range of recent experimentation. In illuminating the history behind these changing understandings, Dunn has given us a provocative and significant book.