MUSIC AND YOUTH CULTURE IN LATIN AMERICA

Identity Construction Processes from New York to Buenos Aires

Edited by PABLO VILA

Music and Youth Culture in Latin America

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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Laura Cambra

Adrián Pablo Fanjul

Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste

Rubén López Cano

Frederick Moehn

Jairo Moreno

Marcos Napolitano

Patricia Oliart

Juan Raffo

Rossana Reguillo

Pablo Vila

Music and Youth Culture in Latin America

Introduction

The idea of putting together this collection of essays came about when I realized that there were no books on the market dealing with something that is common sense for any person with a minimal understanding of Latin American societies: how important popular music is in the processes of identity construction among young people in the region. At the same time, the Latin American musical genres that have acquired some level of notoriety in the United States and Europe (mostly salsa, merengue, and reggaetón) buttress an image of “fiery” music and, metonymically, fiery culture and people. However, the musical manifestations that young people listen to in most Latin American countries are not only much more varied than the commercially successful ones that have entered the American and European markets, but also, and more importantly for our purposes in this book, do not have much in common with the American and European image of the young people who listen to and dance to them. The variegated identitarian uses music has for young people in Latin America usually escape the perception many people have of the Latin American music they know, and, of course, of the many more they do not have any idea even exist. This book is an initial attempt to overcome this deficit.

Here we examine the ways in which popular music is used to advance identity claims in several Latin American countries and among Latinos in the United States. Based on extensive research and written by leading scholars in the field of popular music, individual chapters address the ways in which music provides people from different countries and social sectors with both enjoyment and the tools they use to understand who they are in terms of nationality, region, race, ethnicity, class, gender, migration status, and the like.

Written from the perspectives of music, ethnomusicology, literature, history, sociology and anthropology of music, and cultural studies, the chapters attempt to unveil why popular music is a key factor in the construction of social identifications in the region. Individual chapters address, each in its own way, how age, nation, region, race, class, ethnic, migration,

and gender issues articulate with each other and with musical tastes. The common thread of the chapters of this book is, obviously, age—that is, we are trying to understand how young people articulate their different identifications with the music they listen and/or dance to. In this regard, as Reguillo correctly points out in Chapter 3, young people do not represent a homogeneous category "or possess an essence, nor can they be defined solely in biological terms. Young is a socially constructed category that is defined in complex, relational ways in which socio-economic strata, gender, educational capital, ethnicity, for example, are definitive dimensions." If this is so, our approach to the topic is an anthropological one, in the sense that each author is using the category of youth in the way "natives" in their settings understand the concept. Consequently, for Moreno, "young jazz musicians" are people usually in their early thirties; for Moehn, something similar occurs with the "Plus 2" Brazilian musicians he researches; for Cambra and Raffo, "young tango musicians" can be in their twenties or early thirties; Reguillo (because of the way she designed her research), for her part, basically collected data from people under twenty-nine years old. In the same fashion, López Cano, Oliart, Fernández L'Hoeste, and Fanjul deal in their articles with people who define themselves as "youth" in particular, contextual ways, which can extend the concept some years "down" (let's say, fifteen or so) or "up" (mid-thirties or so), while Napolitano utilizes in his research the definition of youth (people between fifteen and twenty-six years old) used by the managers of the recording industry while the music phenomena he studies occurred, that is, the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The general hypothesis of the volume is that the focused examination of different popular musical expressions Latin American youths produce as artists or follow as audiences evinces some of the mechanisms through which eminent forms of identity—like nation, region, class, race, ethnicity, and gender (and all their articulations)—are achieved, negotiated, and provisionally and locally enacted by its performers and followers. Each of the different national cases examined in this book illuminates a particular way in which popular music assists those different identification processes.

Having said this, however, I want to briefly clarify that we are not advocating any sort of "homology thesis" in this book, that is, that there is a strict correspondence between particular musical practices and determined social identities. Neither are we straightforwardly proposing the competing hypothesis, which claims that music by itself has the capacity to construct social identities instead of only reflecting them (like the homology thesis claims). The various contributors to this collection address this dichotomy in different ways and, linked to their own theoretical predispositions, tilt the balance between both differently, even though the tension still exists in most of the essays. In that regard, I want readers to challenge themselves and peruse the essays beyond what the respective authors explicitly claim or implicitly state

about their position in the constructing/reflecting debate. I would also like for readers to take into account what I am proposing in Chapter 1—that most debates between the reflection and construction theories that relate to popular music and identity do not take fully into account the fragmentary character of the processes through which people end up identifying themselves in terms of nation, gender, class, race, ethnicity, or age. At the same time, many of those theories also neglect the complex articulations that habitually occur among these different identifications. Finally, there is always the possibility that certain types of music "reflect" some of the narrative identifications people use to understand who they are, while others help (to different degrees) in the construction of such identifications. For this reason, I propose the term *to articulate* rather than *to reflect* or *to construct* because it encompasses both possibilities at once.

The fact that the reflecting/constructing debate tends to homogenize musical practice in the same way that it homogenizes identities does not contribute to the advancement of our understanding of the complex relationship people establish with music. Thus, more often than not, the attempted relationship is not only between wholly formed identitarian groups but also between these groups and musical practices in toto. If we change the focus of attention to the components of the musical practice instead of its end result, the analysis changes as well. In this regard, if we consider a musical practice as a complex combination of (at least) sound, lyrics, performance, and commentary about the music being performed, and we link this complexity to the fragmentary practice of identity construction, we end up with the possibility of different identification processes being helped by different components of the musical performance, sometimes in a very contradictory way. I think that most of the essays in this collection open themselves up to a second reading, taking into account these varying possibilities.

People do not encounter the popular music of their preference as a unified entity (youth, migrant, jazzmen, *jinetera, cumbiero*, working-class, male, and so on) and allow it to interpellate them as something that they accept simply because it either reflects who they believe they are or helps them in the construction of who they believe they will be from now on. Rather, when people engage in these encounters with popular music, they bring along myriad narrative identities about who they are in terms of their different subject positions. If these encounters occurred before, certainly some of these different narratives are already influenced by the music they perform or listen/dance to, and the new encounter challenges the connection previously accomplished between the narrative identities and the music being performed at the current event. In any case, the multiple possible identifications of our fictitious ~~fan~~ (using this term "under erasure" à la Derrida, to signify that we don't agree with the term because it unifies and materializes an actor out of what is, sensu stricto, a social practice)

enter into a process of negotiation with the multiple messages of the music event (the sound; the lyrics; the performance of the musicians; the performance of other ~~fans~~ at the scene; what is said about the performance on the venue; what is written about the music in magazines and on YouTube, websites, Facebook, and the like). Out of that negotiation, situationally and provisionally, a process of identification (or disidentification, for that matter) takes place.

As I point out in Chapter 1, music performance is part of privileged practical activities that, while condensing basic significations, construct identities through the production of an imaginary effect of having an "essential" (which, of course, is a fiction) identity inscribed on the body (as an ethnicity, race, region, class, nationality, gender, or age). Thus, musical performativity would be among the types of discourses that, through repetition and its inscription on the body, have the capacity to produce what it names. However, to finally move from the capacity (the realm of discursive offers) to the actual production of identity in specific actors, we have to reformulate the previous statement as follows: musical practices construct identifications anchored on the body through the different alliances we establish between our diversely imagined, diversely narrated identities and the imaginary "essential" identities that various musical practices materialize through their (often contradictory) different components (sound, lyrics, performances, and so on). In other words, I believe that, quite often, a particular musical practice helps to articulate (a word that, as mentioned before, we prefer over either *reflect* or *construct*) particular imaginary, narrative identifications when performers or listeners of this very music feel that it (complexly) resonates with (obviously following a complex process of negotiation between musical interpellation and argumentative storyline) the narrative plots that organize their variegated narrative identities.

In this regard, matters of national, ethnic, and migrant status identification are center stage in Moreno's chapter, because the identities of Guillermo Klein and Miguel Zenón as young jazz musicians and the way they have decided to perform jazz is analyzed by Moreno in terms of them being recent migrants from Argentina and Puerto Rico, being labeled as "Hispanic" or "Latinos" in the United States, and the like. The articulation of identifications is different in the case of Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste's chapter, where issues of race/ethnicity (how different youths relate to the Afro heritage of Colombia), region (the traditional costeño/Andean dichotomy of that country), and class (middle-class youth are the ones who follow tropipop the most) are highlighted by the author as the most prominent ones in understanding why tropipop became so popular in Colombia. In the chapter on Brazil's music scene, we discover, interestingly, how popular music can help in the process of youth identification in such diverse manners, articulating distinct narrative identities in the same historical period and through the recent history of

that country. Through this analysis of youth and music in the 1960s, Marcos Napolitano puts at the forefront of the process of identity construction via music the articulation of political (pro, against, or indifferent regarding the 1964 coup d'état) and class (working, middle, or upper middle) identifications. Frederick Moehn (analyzing a particular variant of youth music in the 2000s) highlights how the musicians of the "Pro Tools generation" compose and perform their music (and, in the process, allow the music to help understand who they are) from the point of view of a particular articulation of their regional (all of them are from Rio de Janeiro), class (they are upper middle class), racial (white), and gender (male) identifications.

In a couple of national cases, Peru and Cuba, the relationships between possible identifications and the music event are so complex that many identifications enter the process of articulation of both performers and public alike. In the case of Peru, Oliart claims that ethnic, racial, regional, class, gender, and identifications linked to migration status are central to understanding why several music bands in the country are using their particular take on rock and roll music as a space to negotiate their relationship with indigenous cultures and the mainstream society. Concomitantly, López Cano shows how in Cuba, political, ethnic, racial, religious, gender, sexual, class, and identifications connected to international migration status are complexly linked to processes of identity construction via popular music. In that regard, the author claims that from the new man of the Cuban revolution to the diasporic subject of nowadays, the subjectivity of the new marginality that grew after the economic disaster of the 1990s, the subject of ethnic difference, the dissident, the anti-"new man" subjectivity, and so on, Cuban popular music has been an important factor in the spread of "post-communist subjectivities."

That these contributors analyze particular sets of articulations (national, ethnic, and migrant status; class and gender; migration status, and so forth) and not others does not mean that the other possible articulations are absent in the phenomena they study. Rather, it means that they consider the ones they explore to be in the forefront and the others operating only in the background. In fact, more than operating in the background, all the other possible identifications are present through the echoes of their absences. That is, none of the main articulating identifications analyzed in these essays is present in isolation in the actual lives of the actors. Following Derrida, we can say that all of them have the traces of many of the other possible articulating identifications as the condition of possibility of their own existence. In that regard, if issues of nationality, ethnicity, and migration status are considered by Jairo Moreno to be the main articulation of identifications behind the way Klein and Zenón play jazz in New York, we can also conclude that in both cases there are other possible identifications involved in their particular encounter with jazz—in the way they perform the genre and in the way the genre helps them to understand

who they are—that, in one way or another, influence their particular way of composing and playing the genre. I am thinking here, for instance, of Klein's Jewish origin, his being a "porteño," his class origin, and being male as more or less obvious identitarian aspects of the Argentine musician that add thickness to his particular encounter with jazz. In the case of Zenón, the same could be said about his race, regional origin, and gender. In the case of tropipop analyzed by Fernández L'Hoeste, if the author highlights race, ethnicity, region, and class as the most important identifications articulated around the popularity of tropipop in Colombia, one wonders how gender (Is tropipop followed with equal enthusiasm by males and females?) and migration status (What is the relationship that costeño migrants living in the Andean region—like Fernández L'Hoeste himself—establish with tropipop?) can influence the process by which young people articulate their different identifications with the musical artifact known as tropipop. Moving from Colombia to Brazil, identifications in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, and region surely played a role in the process by which young people constructed an idea of who they were in terms of age during the Brazilian dictatorship—identifications Napolitano does not analyze in his chapter because he believes they were working in the backdrop in relation to the one he does analyze. Moving from reception to performance in that country, the same can be said in terms of the sexual orientation and political identifications of the musicians of the Pro Tools generation, identifications that Moehn does not explicitly pursue because he thinks that, even though they add thickness to the articulation of identifications in terms of region, class, race, and gender that he does analyze, the last ones are at the forefront of the process by which these musicians relate who they believe they are with the music that they compose and perform.

Interestingly enough, even in the cases in which the authors recognize many identifications being part of the articulation process through which young people in the countries they analyze use music to understand who they are (like Oliart in Peru and López Cano in Cuba), we still can foresee the possibility of other identifications the authors do not analyze adding thickness to the articulation they do analyze. Thus, in the case of Peru, one wonders how sexual orientation could enter the identitarian picture when a very important part of the display of identity for many of the new rock bands is bestowed by a typically male, coarse, raspy style of singing characteristic of rural areas of the country. For the Cuban case, we could think in regional variations playing some sort of role in the mix of political, ethnic, racial, religious, gender, sexual, class, and identifications linked to international migration status correctly identified by López Cano. All in all, the other possible identifications I have mentioned above per national case are the subject positions that, in their absence, make possible, as a trace, the clear appearance of the articulation of identifications that the

authors of each chapter recognize explicitly. Having clarified this issue, it is time to give the reader a rapid synopsis of what she or he will find in the pages that follow.

Navigating the Book

In Chapter 1, "Narrative Identities and Popular Music: Linguistic Discourses and Social Practices," I open the book with a theoretical essay on music and processes of identification. I start first reviewing and criticizing the most important theoretical models advanced in the last decades to understand the relationship between music and identity (the homological model, music interpellations, enactment theory, and the like). I propose that most contemporary theories that relate music and identity do not take fully into account the fragmentary character of the processes through which people end up identifying themselves in terms of nation, gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, and the like. At the same time, many of those theories also neglect the complex articulations that habitually occur between these different identifications. The fact that some of those theories tend to homogenize musical practice in the same way that they homogenize identities does not contribute to the advancement of our understanding of the complex relationship people establish with music. Thus, more often than not, the attempted relationship is carried out not only between wholly formed identitarian groups, but also between these groups and musical practices in toto. If we change the focus of attention to the components of the musical practice instead of its end result, the analysis changes as well. In this regard, if we consider a musical practice as a complex combination of (at least) sound, lyrics (as complex rhetorical artifacts), performance, and commentary about the music being performed, and we link this complexity to the fragmentary process of identity construction, we end up with the possibility of different identification processes being helped by different components of the musical performance, sometimes in a very contradictory way.

Building upon the groundbreaking work of academicians like Hebdige, Chambers, Willis, Middleton, Frith, and the like, I advance, in the bulk of the chapter, my own understanding of how processes of identification are articulated through the enjoyment of popular music. My position is that musical practices articulate identifications anchored in the body, through the different alliances we establish between our diverse, fragmented, situational, and imaginary narrative identities, and the diverse, fragmented, situational, and imaginary narrative identities various musical practices attempt to materialize. I think that we evaluate, provisionally and situationally, what a given musical practice has to offer us in terms of interpellations in relation to the basic plots that are always behind the different narrative identities

we construct to understand the diverse subject positions we end up accepting (through a complicated negotiating process) in our everyday life. Thus, often a particular musical practice helps in the articulation of a particular, imaginary narrative identity anchored in the body, when the performers or listeners of that music feel that the music (through the intricacy of its different components: sound, lyrics, performances, and so forth) offers them identificatory elements to the sketches of narrative plots that organize, provisionally and situationally, their narrative identities in particular encounters. At the same time, much more often than not, the same musical performance, given its polysemy, relates complexly (sometimes contradictory, sometimes not, depending on the type of identification at stake) with different narrative sketches (in terms of the subject positions we relate to in our daily life) and this determines the type of identitarian articulations (and often, pleasure) that we develop in relation to that musical performance. In other words, different narrative identities (among different people, but also within the same person) will process the conflictive meaning of the music performance in different ways.

To further complicate the already complex relationship between music and identity, it should be added that discourses (linguistic and non-linguistic) and practices (habits and affects) often operate in a contradictory manner in relation to the symbolic elements (many of them interpellations) emanating from the music event. In short, we can say that many times the body "speaks" what a linguistic discourse does not want to utter, because saying it would imply a more-or-less rational recognition of an identification that, for various reasons, it is difficult to recognize as our own with all the weight the verb "to be" has in our language (in some other cases, the body does not actually know how to utter an identification it clearly deploys through its habitual movement in space). Thus, the "doing" of the body (how this particular body affects other bodies in the scene) functions as a discourse to prevent the full recognition of "being" that any linguistic acceptance of an interpellation implies. In the chapter, I briefly illustrate my own use of the above-mentioned theories (I used them all during my career), as well as my more recent use of my own proposal of how music helps in the construction of identifications.

In Chapter 2, "Past Identity: Guillermo Klein, Miguel Zenón, and the Future of Jazz," Jairo Moreno deals with the complex relationship between Latin American musicians and the renovation of the American jazz scene in the United States. Moreno points out that throughout the twentieth century, musicians from Latin America and the Caribbean have gone to New York City to play what, for better or worse, is called jazz. Since the 1990s, two waves of young arrivals have received considerable and favorable critical attention. Some of them are considered essential for the ongoing renovation of the music. Miguel Zenón, a saxophonist, composer, and

arranger born in Santurce, Puerto Rico, received a MacArthur Fellowship, the so-called genius award, in 2008, the youngest musician ever to receive the award. Never before in the history of "Latin" music-making had a musician been bestowed such recognition by the American establishment. Not only that, but Zenón's music was decidedly experimental vis-à-vis folkloric traditions and uncompromisingly modernist in its embrace of complexity. The MacArthur Foundation wrote that his work constitutes "a totally new jazz language for the 21st Century." Argentine pianist, composer, arranger, and singer Guillermo Klein led an experimental ensemble in New York City from 1995 to 1999, after which—barely able to make a living—he departed first for Barcelona, then Buenos Aires. He would return in 2006 to lead his ensemble at the venerable jazz institution The Village Vanguard, where he has played yearly since, while residing in Argentina. Critics are as unanimous in their acclaim as they are in their inability to label his music. Klein is "making unnameable music.... It doesn't have much to do with the current trends in the rest of jazz, but only jazz musicians could be making it," wrote *The New York Times*.

Based on interviews with Zenón and Klein, Moreno's essay examines the question of production of musical knowledge: basically, what constitutes musical knowledge in the recent past such that musicians with little exposure to formal training in jazz in their youth may become the future of this music in the United States. Moreno traces the role that early musical pedagogy had on these musicians, and how after formal training in "jazz" in the United States they went on to develop forms indebted to their national traditions while consistently adopting a principled reticence about their ownership of and belonging to—because of birth-right or creative intervention—particular identities. In a brief comparison with contemporary discourses of cultural and creative ownership by African American musicians in the jazz and experimental traditions, Moreno outlines ways in which these musicians move past US modernity's will to representation and index the exhaustion of the North American multicultural episteme that insists on the ethno-racialization of all sociocultural production. This marks, Moreno argues, one of their most significant motions toward a future and toward a renewed understanding of jazz historiography.

In Chapter 3, "Errant Surfing. Music, YouTube, and the Role of the Web in Youth Cultures," Rossana Reguillo contends that within YouTube and Facebook there are very important keys to understanding the centrality of music in the biographical construction and worldviews of young people. This chapter discusses some of the changes in youth music cultures, those that sprung from the acceleration of digital technologies and the advent of Web 2.0. Reguillo claims that through analysis of the relationship among music, musical culture, and youth identities mediated by these socio-technological devices, it is possible to apprehend two key

dimensions of identity reconfigurations of young people in which music occupies center stage: agency and subjectivity. Using different methodological procedures that she calls "cybernographies," the text discusses representations and practices related to YouTube and Facebook in three aspects that, Reguillo contends, are rapidly reshaping the world of youth music practices: shared culture, rapid access to musical repertoires, and the rupturing of the concept of musical genre (as a configuration of identitarian nuclei). The bulk of Reguillo's analysis is accomplished with young people from different Latin American countries she contacted through the Internet.

Chapter 4, "Music and Post-Communist Subjectivities in Cuba," by Rubén López Cano, claims that the high level of support the Cuban revolution initially got in the early 1960s allowed the Cuban regime to develop a revolutionary hegemonic subject: the "compañero" [companion/comrade] or the "hombre nuevo" [new man] proposed by Che Guevara. State institutions at all levels contributed to its construction and multiplication. However, various subaltern subjectivities at various times have been questioning this hegemonic subject. Thus, López Cano chronicles how in the late 1980s the generation most supportive of the revolutionary project faced the government's authoritarianism. Subsequently, following the collapse of the socialist block and the terrible crisis that the island endured during the 1990s, new subjects emerged in an open contestation over public space with the hegemonic subject: a new ethnic and religious subject; sexual, cultural, and political subjects; rockers, new agers, feminists, independent intellectuals, and political dissidents; new marginal subjects such as prostitutes, pimps, robbers, the new rich and, especially, the diasporic subject.

López Cano claims that this fragmentation of the unitary and hegemonic subject of the revolution is now more evident with the urban tribes that roam the cities displaying fashion, look, and exclusive and exclusionary music. In that regard, music has played a significant role in the establishment and subsequent fragmentation of the revolutionary hegemonic subject. It collaborates in the construction of subjectivity in at least two ways: on the one hand, it represents subjects, characters, roles, and social agents. On the other, it helps to build viewpoints, opinions, and positionings, guiding the way listeners think of themselves and the world around them.

According to López Cano's account, in the whole historical process of the Cuban Revolution, music has played a relevant role in both modes of production of subjectivities: the hegemonic and the subaltern one. From the new man to the diasporic subject, the subjectivity of the new marginality, the subject of ethnic difference, the dissident, the anti-"new man" subjectivity, and so on, music is an important factor in the spread of what for convenience the author calls young "post-communist subjectivities."

Chapter 5, "On Whitening and Other Disaffections: The Impact of Tropipop on Colombia's Music Scene," by Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste, shows how the concrete possibility of offering popular music strongly linked to the Caribbean's folkloric tradition appears tangible in the Colombian youth music scene of the early 1990s. At the time, new bands linked to this very kind of music, soon described by the mass media as tropipop, began to surface. Nevertheless, as the result of this experience, a growing dilution of cultural practices associated with Afro-Colombian tradition became evident within the national tropical music scene. According to Fernández L'Hoeste, when tropipop is offered as commercial novelty and very little Afro-Colombian content is recognized in its implementation, the end result is a rather dissonant cultural experience. In other words, the yearn to modernize and update musical production, once co-opted by the music sector, resulted in the consolidation of a new brand of cultural contribution, personified by tropipop, which conjugated African and mestizo traditions in a rather lopsided, contemporary way. In the chapter, Fernández L'Hoeste contends that, in an unquestionable fashion, the shift led to a reformulation of the Afro-Colombian musical legacy, according to which the enactment of Negritude or Blackness dispersed, thanks to the greater support of the cultural practices of middle-class mestizo young people.

On the whole, Fernández L'Hoeste thinks that tropipop exemplifies the extension of a hardened process of musical whitening in Colombia that has contributed mainly to two aspects of the coming into being of national identity: the glorification of an upstart, uncritical disposition, proper of a carefree attitude among middle-class youth, and the increasing rejection of the contribution of groups of African descent in terms of a dominant train of thought within national culture. In addition, Fernández L'Hoeste states that an even more disturbing aspect of this continued whitening is reflected in the overall response to tropipop as a new musical genre. When the music goes viral and invades the programming of most tropical music and pop radio stations in the Andean region of the country, much of the criticism against it is directed at the class connotations of the new musical construct. The fact that tropipop is a music that extends the lengthy process of musical whitening goes, by and large, unnoticed. In the conclusion of the chapter, Fernández L'Hoeste claims that the rise of tropipop as a new, successful commercial genre is a key indicator of Colombian culture's continued failure to problematize aspects of race, instead concentrating on and reinforcing structures and readings of class. In this manner, by way of developing new musical genres like tropipop, the national cultural industry contributes to the dissemination of middle-class ethnocentrism, much to the despair of less favored segments of society, which represent almost half of the population.

In Chapter 6, "Fusion Rock Bands and the 'New Peru' on Stage," Patricia Oliart illustrates how new cultural uses of fusion rock and roll have emerged

in Peru in the past two decades. Oliart explains how some Peruvian bands of diverse social and geographical origins are using their particular take on rock and roll music as a space to negotiate their relationship with indigenous cultures and the mainstream society. The production, narratives, and performances of three fusion rock bands are examined in their explicit and symbolic engagement with different sources of social and cultural criticism, and within the context of the historical changes of Peruvian society that started in the second half of the twentieth century. Particular attention is given by Oliart to these bands' reworking of notions of gender and racial identity, authenticity, and modernity. Breaking with the recent past, the bands' different projects celebrate indigenous rural masculinity as an important and visible ingredient of their own embodied mestizo identity with the explicit purpose of re-presenting or repackaging some elements of indigenous cultures, appealing to a socially and culturally diverse young audience. Colorful clothes and makeup evoke traditional characters and humor of indigenous dramaturgies. Quechua expressions are present through names, songs, and dancers suggestive of magical beings of the underworld in indigenous cosmology. In addition, and very importantly, a typically male, coarse, raspy style of singing in rural areas is associated with the liberating and expressive style of blues and rock and roll. The transforming presence of the rural migrants in the cities is boldly acknowledged and almost glorified.

This trend is interpreted by Oliart as an expression of important changes in Peruvian society's racial formation. Those changes defy the hegemonic assumption regarding ethnic identifications in Peru—that the indigenous identity is one urban mestizos have to walk away from. The bands whose work is presented in this chapter are part of a wide variety of aesthetic expressions, self-defined as hybrids, which have emerged from diverse cultural origins, with the deliberate purpose of questioning the established boundaries between different aesthetics, normally associated with particular social groups. These new expressions, however, occur in a very productive and critical dialogue between aspects of contemporary global dissident youth cultures such as anti-racism, environmentalism, and a celebration of cultural diversity, with long-lived cultural and political dissident traditions in the country. Oliart points out that such dialogue has allowed for the emergence of a renovated relationship with indigenous cultures, which can now be considered one among several possible contemporary identities of young Peruvians, with no shame, or awkward feelings of otherness, imposed by the post-colonial order.

In Chapter 7, "Political Activists, Playboys, and Hippies: Musical Movements and Symbolic Representations of Brazilian Youth in the 1960s," Marcos Napolitano shows how the cultural and political struggles involving the redefinition of the social situation of Brazilian youth in the 1960s mobilized identity categories and various aesthetic and ideological perspectives,

revealing how the experience of "conservative modernization" sponsored by the military regime—which combined social niches marked by advanced capitalism with traditional ways of socializing and values—echoed in the Brazilian youth. According to Napolitano's account, in Brazil a good deal of the politicized youth's hopes of rebuilding the country under different socioeconomic policies were frustrated by the military coup of 1964, burying the brief experience of Goulart's reformist government that so widely mobilized the politically engaged youth. In the four years following the coup, Brazilian cultural life was marked by clashes and projects that had as their axis the redefinition of the concept of youth, and the search for a subgroup of young people who could exercise its hegemony over other youth groups. This clash was not only appropriated but also articulated by the cultural industry (and the recording industry in particular).

In this process, at least three paradigms of "being young" stood out: the young politicized leftist, the young person who identified with the behavior of teenagers, and the young person who turned to the values of the counterculture and rebellion. These identity matrices of "being young" in Brazil are indicative of how people who belonged to the fifteen- to twenty-six-year-old cohort related to the identitarian patterns constructed by the appropriation of internationalized models of being young originating in Europe and the United States that were adapted to the social, cultural, and economic structures of Brazil, within the framework of a violent process of conservative modernization. In a sense, Napolitano claims, these are matrices that still nowadays inform broad segments of youth and that preannounced a highly segmented youth culture, created in the 1950s and contemporary to the emergence of rock and roll in the United States. These modes of "being young" in Brazil were shaped in an era when there was still a certain hegemony of conservative values, oligarchic and patriarchal, which, each in its own way, all three tendencies opposed and helped to weaken.

In the chapter, the author describes, in great detail, the three main young Brazilian tribes of the 1960s, as well as their impact on the rich musical scene of the time. According to Napolitano, the "youth question" that emerged in the 1960s is the result not only of an identity self-fueled by youth in the strict sense of the term (that is, defined by the age of transition between childhood and adulthood), but also by a historical saturation in the process of modernization that hit Western (and westernized) societies since the mid-nineteenth century. In this sense, Napolitano contends that considering a specific case, such as the Brazilian one, implies a critical two-way exercise, assessing the impact of the "youth question" and "being young" within a specific historical process in Brazil, but also evaluating, in a bigger scale and by comparison, the contradictions of this process on an international scale. Thus, the modernized periphery of the capitalist system, being more exposed and sensitive to the contradictions of the system as a whole, not only reveals its own cultural

processes, but also lays bare the broader logic of the functioning of the capitalist system, a logic that is perhaps less visible in the center of such a system.

Chapter 8, "The Pro Tools Generation. Digital Culture, Liveness, and the New Sincerity in Brazilian Popular Music," by Frederick Moehn, analyzes the emergence, in the 2000s, of a new generation of musicians in the comparatively privileged area of Rio de Janeiro known as the South Zone. Moehn claims that in some respects these musicians, who are predominantly—although not exclusively—white and male, continued to privilege the processes of musical mixture that previous generations of urban pop musicians in Brazil tended to celebrate. Yet, Moehn maintains, there are important ways in which this cohort, whose central figure is arguably the eclectic producer Alexandre Kassin, indicates broader shifts in the creation, production, performance, distribution, reception, and representation of Brazilian music. In this chapter, the author shows that, while in the 1990s the tape medium was still standard in the largest recording studios of the city, by the late 1990s the Pro Tools brand computer-based system of music recording and production had begun to displace it and, by the mid-2000s, had become the new standard. Similarly, the MP3 format and the Internet had by that time transformed the music business. According to Moehn, the musicians of this generation thus grew up under the new digital culture, becoming very adept in their use of various technologies. As Domenico Lancellotti, one of Kassin's musical collaborators, observed in an interview, musical novelty is more difficult to achieve today because "practically everything's been done already." The new arose now through the progress of technology itself, he suggested. His generation felt that there was nothing left to create. However, Moehn also shows in the chapter that another trend is likewise present in this music cohort, represented by Lancellotti, Kassin, and Moreno Veloso, who comprise the well-received "Plus 2" (+2) ensemble that released four albums between 2003 and 2006. These musicians, instead, have looked to the 1960s and 1970s for inspiration, mixing their favored sounds of those decades with contemporary tendencies. Technology had begun to make music too precise, Domenico worried, and one of the aspects these musicians appreciated about earlier decades was the "messiness" of studio recording practices in which live performance tended to be valued more often than today. Things had become too "mechanized" Lancellotti lamented.

According to Moehn, a paradox arose among the musicians of this close-knit circle—seeking to make their sound "dirtier," more "human," and more "real," even as they record everything in the zeroes and ones of the digital medium, a method once derided for lacking the cozy warmth of tape and vinyl. The bulk of the chapter examines this "Pro Tools generation" of Carioca musicians and tries to explain why there emerged among them a sense that musical novelty had been exhausted. Moehn shows how this generation

can be related to so-called hipster indie musicians elsewhere (for example, in the United States). He examines another project involving the Plus 2 musicians and numerous others from the local scene, the Orquestra Imperial. Importantly, he proposes that this project evidences a certain fatigue with hipster irony, and an emerging, if perhaps non-committal, embrace of sincerity. Moehn thus reveals a generation that has matured over time, one that is, in fact, no longer precisely "youthful." In this manner, he asks us to think about how the topic of youth music cultures might be placed within the arc of the life trajectories of specific individuals.

In Chapter 9, "A Newer Tango Coming from the Past," Laura Cambra and Juan Raffo remind us that tango, which gave identity to the cultural life of Argentina since the early twentieth century, had its peak of popularity and creativity in the 1940s, but, starting in the mid-1950s, entered a long period of ostracism only animated by some isolated voices. However, in this chapter, Cambra and Raffo show how, since the mid-80s, tango has again become popular with new generations of artists who connect with it and live it as part of their identity. These young people are between twenty and forty years old, and are children of parents who viewed tango as an anachronism. Virtually orphan of musical references, these young people started a process of root searching. However, in many cases, those roots are only part of an imaginary that anchors them to tango. Some were involved with other genres until they realized that tango called them with a familiar voice, intimate and dear. Others came haphazardly from loving an instrument that is almost exclusively identified with the music of Buenos Aires, the bandoneon. Few of them, those for whom tango was the lifestyle of their parents, musicians, and singers, never considered the possibility of another musical genre that was not the one they had listened to and learned to love from childhood. Among them are those who embrace the tradition and those who walk on the edges of the genre with the security that having a sense of belonging provides. However, all agree on one thing: their entrance into the tango world was through the music of the person who kept the flame alive during the years of silence: Astor Piazzolla.

Cambra and Raffo point out that the different dictatorships that occurred in Argentina, especially the last one (1976–1983), left an indelible mark on the language of Argentines. Words such as *nationalism*, *homeland*, and *national character* were appropriated by the most reactionary sectors of society and became discredited. Gradually, during those years, feelings of attachment to the country were going through the filter of self-censorship, and disappeared from everyday speech. The central argument of the chapter is that artists who express themselves through this new tango of the early twenty-first century advance clear signs of having rescued from oblivion and disgrace those words and feelings. They have detached those words from the ultraconservative meaning that tinted them

before, releasing them from the negative connotations of the past. It is this liberation from such a past that, paradoxically, allows them to look back, dig into the history of the music of Buenos Aires, recreate the sounds of the golden decade of tango, bring the style of the great masters of the genre, and also explore other paths, composing new works and imbuing the tango with the spirit of this time.

Chapter 10, "Life Trajectories and Dejuvenilization in Argentine Rock," by Adrián Pablo Fanjul, closes the book. In this chapter, the author compares two rock nacional songs belonging to two very different periods but sharing strong similarities in terms of their declarative configuration. Those songs are "Cuando ya me empiece a quedar solo" [Once I start to be alone], by Charly García, recorded in 1973, and "Sobre madera rosa" [On Rosewood], by Gabo Ferro, recorded in 2004. According to Fanjul, those two songs can be considered two salient points of what he calls (following Bakhin) the "intimate-biographical chronotope" in the rock nacional trajectory. Comparing the two songs allows one to appreciate different ways of representing the journey of life and its stages in relation to various imaginary environments: the intimate space, the loved ones, creative activity, and the cultural industry, as well as models and countermodels for these dimensions. The chapter centers its analysis on those two songs, but it also delves into some others in which it is possible to see, in some aspects of their textual development, similar declarative rituals. Fanjul claims that some crossroads confronted by the autobiographical voice present in those songs are non-transparent symptoms of an entire epoch. In particular, he points out how certain aspects of that autobiographical representation relate (in contested ways) to the ideas of "youth" and "young" as social constructions. The chapter ends with some reflections about significant changes, underway since the 1990s, in the relationship between various sectors of the heterogeneous Argentine rock nacional and other subfields within the culture of that country.

1

Narrative Identities and Popular Music

LINGUISTIC DISCOURSES AND SOCIAL PRACTICES

Pablo Vila

Introduction

In recent years there has been an important change in the way analysts address the issue of social identifications. Obviously linked to the "linguistic turn" in the social sciences, this new way of dealing with the processes of identification points out that identities not only have a discursive basis (something already advanced by symbolic interactionism and by Althusser and Foucault in the 1970s, and well synthesized by Laclau and Mouffe in the 1980s), but also that they have a narrative origin. It is what has been called "the narrative turn" in the social sciences, gradually developing since the 1980s.[1]

This originated in the monumental works of Ricoeur and Taylor (Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative, Oneself and Another*, and Taylor's *Sources of the Self*), but with important developments coming from the new social psychology (Bamberg, Bruner, De Fina, Freeman, Gergen, Georgakopoulou, Harré, Ochberg, Polkinghorne, Redman, Rosenwald, Sarbin, Smith, Shotter, Sparkes, and Woods); feminism (Bhavnani, Butler, Haraway); and sociology (Appiah, Gubrium, Hall, Holstein, Perinbanayagam, and Somers). Scholars who adopt this new way of understanding the processes of identification distance themselves from essentialist theories of the self, and from the different structuralist variants that conceded very little theoretical space to agency.

In a nutshell, this new way to understand processes of identification claims, following Fredric Jameson (1981), that narrative is an epistemological category traditionally mistaken with a literary form. Additionally, as Ricoeur (1984) points out, narrative is one of the most important cognitive schemes human beings have, because it allows the comprehension of the world around us in such a way that human actions are related to each other and acquire meaning due to their effect in the attainment of goals and desires. In other

words, if, on the one hand, for many people there is no understanding of temporality beyond its inscription in a narrative framework, on the other hand, narrative would be one of the most important cognitive forms human beings have for understanding the causality of social agents' actions (more about this later). Narrative has moved from being considered exclusively as a literary genre, to being viewed, additionally, as "a specific form of discourse, a linguistic artifact, an epistemological category, a cognitive strategy that gives coherence and a particular meaning to certain aspects of people's lives, and a specific thinking mode" (López Cano 2008: 11).

This shift in our understanding of processes of identification relates to the issue of popular music in a very important way, since the theories we used to understand the relationship between music and identity were based on conceptions about the construction of identities that today seem to offer fewer answers than we initially believed. Thus, if nowadays we have a more satisfactory explanation regarding the process of identity construction, it becomes necessary to rethink those theories that in the past tried to explain how music affects or helps in the process of identity construction.

I should make clear that while on the one hand I understand the process of identity construction to be a discursive one, on the other hand my position does not promote a kind of "linguistic imperialism." This is so because we don't have to confuse "linguistic" with "discursive," if we understand discourse à la Laclau and Mouffe (1987) as those linguistic and non-linguistic *practices* that carry and confer meaning in a field characterized by the play of power relationships. However, if we extend the definition of discourse to all the practices that carry and confer meaning, all those practices linked to performativity (Butler) and performance (Goffman), with their clear corporeal base, are discourses in their own right. These discourses have clear identitarian implications without the necessity of exchanging any words.[2] It is with this ample conception of discourse that musical practices (and, in general, any cultural practices) are also considered discourses with precise identitarian capabilities.[3]

At the same time, Donna Haraway's idea of social identity as an encounter also helps us to understand this proposal of a discursive identity:

> There is no pre-discursive or pre-relational, using discursive as a kind of synonym for relational. One of the problems with using the word discursive is that the metaphor of language can end up carrying too much weight. I'm willing to let it carry a lot of weight, but I'm not willing to let it then finally really *be* everything. There are non-language-like processes of encounter. But there's nothing pre-relational, pre-encounter. So it is only in engagement that we, and everybody else, get our boundaries and our skins drawn. That's what I mean by saying everything is relational. (Bhavnani and Haraway 1994: 32)

Just as we rethink our definitions of discourse, our understandings of narrativity, and our notions of social encounter and relationality, so this chapter will explore ways in which these shifts might help us rethink questions of music, youth, and identity.

Music, Identity, and Homological Arguments

Why do different social actors (like national and ethnic groups, social classes, subcultures, or age or gender groups) identify themselves with a particular kind of music and not with others? This question has been answered in different ways. One of the most important answers was proposed by English "subculture" theorists (Dick Hebdige, Iain Chambers, Paul Willis, Jefferson, and so forth). According to this school, if, on the one hand, different social groups have diverse types of cultural capital, on the other hand, they share different cultural expectations, that being the reason they express themselves musically in very different ways. The outcome of this kind of analysis is the ascription of precise musical tastes to well-demarcated social classes or subcultures. Thus, the starting point of this approach is that, somehow, music *reflects* or *represents* particular groups or kinds of people; or at least that people imagine music to reflect or represent who they are, their "style."

Therefore, according to subcultural theory, specific musical styles connect, necessarily, with specific social actors, and the connection is the product of a sort of "structural resonance" or "homology" among social position, musical expression, and practice. According to Ramón Pelinski (2000: 164),

> The homological hypothesis also satisfies the structuralist impulse of viewing reproduced in the music medium diverse features of the social structure. For example: Who would not be tempted to see reflected in the social environment certain features of tango practice? The tango's rubato would reflect itself on the (imaginary) individualism of the Buenos Aires native…subcultural theory…assumed that different cultures created musical forms structurally self-consistent.

Consequently, musical practices and subcultures are generally described using rigid patterns, and the appearance of new subcultures necessarily requires a mutation of the existent musical forms, so that, homologically, they can represent the new subculture and somehow reflect its experience. This way of understanding the relationship between music and identity has many difficulties in explaining transformations in the musical tastes of social actors who neither have changed their structural position in society nor have modified the basic characteristics of their subculture. It cannot make sense of those social classes or subcultures that adopt different musical styles

simultaneously, some of them clearly non-homological regarding their social situation (Middleton 1990).

My first works on *rock nacional* in Argentina (Vila 1985, 1987a, and 1987b) were written using this theoretical framework. In those essays I point out that in the context of the persecution they suffered by the military dictatorship, the youth used *their music*, rock, in the construction of an anti-dictatorial social movement, with rock music homologously representing "the youth." This type of framework (and my work on rock was not the exception) usually ends up proposing some kind of reductionism, either economic or social. In the case of my early work on rock, one can say that my sin was to do "sociologism," drawing with very broad strokes certain social actors (the youth, the military, and so on), assigning to them certain interests linked to their social position, and relating them with certain well-defined musical expressions that I assumed "represented" them, given the structural homology supposedly linking these actors to those musical expressions. Thus, for example, I could not explain phenomena such as support for the military dictatorship by certain young people who *also* liked rock.

Consequently, when using a subcultural approach, it becomes very difficult to answer the following question: "At what point, on what level, by what mechanism, does the semiotic 'play of difference' within the music discourse meet up with and get focused upon the 'experience,' the 'demands,' the 'central values' and 'focal concerns' of a particular group?" (Middleton 1990: 165). Thus, this school of thought cannot account for the operation of the homology that, according to this theory, would be the reason for the relationship between subcultural identities and popular music.

Considering all these limitations, it is not by chance that the British subcultural theorists were accused of some sort of "cultural humanism," which proposes that clearly delineated individuals and classes constantly create cultural forms that are homologous to themselves (Middleton 1990: 166). In this way, subcultural theory tends to overemphasize structural coherence, so that overlappings, ambiguities, and changes in subcultures' musical tastes are not taken into account. That is the reason why those scholars who criticize subcultural theory (above all, British culturalists influenced by French post-structuralism, like Middleton) propose something quite different for understanding the relationship between music and identity. These scholars consider that musical practices are not necessarily homologous to some sort of "real" base that precedes them. On the contrary, musical practices enjoy a certain autonomy or specificity that is able, by itself, to create social practices that are actually generating the "real":

> Popular songs, no less than other cultural practices... produce "orientation toward reality"—though these are linked to socially generated assumptions and conventions... At the same time, music is—to use

> Wittgenstein's formulation—a "language game"... governed by the particularities of its own rules of construction. The question, therefore, is less one of "adequacy to" (a pre-existing reality)... than "adequacy *as*" (a part of reality), productive of useful knowledge and effective practice." (Middleton 1990: 254).

Thus, authors like Simon Frith (1996: 109) propose that:

> In examining the aesthetics of popular music, then, I want to reverse the usual academic and critical argument: the issue is not how a particular piece of music or a performance reflects the people, but how it produces them, how it creates and constructs an experience—a musical experience, an aesthetic experience—that we can only make sense of by *taking on* both a subjective and a collective identity.

In this sense, one of the most important criticisms advanced against subcultural theory is that the idea of structural homology does not allow any negotiation of meaning that is mandatory if the musical style is understood as a social construction (Shepherd 1994: 134).[4] Here is where the Gramscian idea of "articulation" and the Althusserian idea of "interpellation" intervene to make sense of the complex relationship between music and identity.

Music and the Interpellation of Social Identities

Based on a rereading of Gramsci, Lacan, and Althusser, and drawing on a selective appropriation of post-structuralist French thought, the ideas of "articulation" and "interpellation" try to overcome the limitations of the structural homology. Regarding identity construction, this theory points out that individuals (who are simple bearers of structures) are constructed as subjects through the process of interpellation. Its trademark is the emphasis on the continuous and precarious construction of meaning through constant discursive struggle.

In other words, "subjects" are individuals who live what Althusser (1971) calls "their real conditions of existence," as if they themselves were the autonomous principle of determination (or sole originators) of those conditions, which, actually, they are not, since the cause of those conditions resides elsewhere, in the social and economic structure.

The mechanism of this characteristic misrecognition is interpellation (Laclau 1979: 100). In studies about popular music, Richard Middleton and Simon Frith, among others, have used this theory. Regarding my own work, the *rock nacional* pieces I wrote in the late 1980s and first part of the 1990s (Vila 1989 and 1995b), but above all my essays on tango and ethnic identities in Argentina (Vila 1991 and 1995a), are clearly influenced by Laclau and

Mouffe. In those essays I explicitly use the ideas of interpellation and the articulation of meaning.

How do interpellations work at the level of popular music and in what ways do they explain the construction of identities? Interpellation theory claims that popular music is a particular kind of cultural artifact that provides people with different elements they utilize in their processes of identification. In this sense, sound, lyrics, performances—of both musicians and public—but also what is written or discussed regarding music in everyday conversations, magazines, radio, television, the Internet, or YouTube on the one hand provide ways of being and behaving, and on the other offer models of psychic and emotional satisfaction.[5] As Middleton (1990: 242) points out:

> The conative function [of music] operates most obviously in certain sorts of direct-address lyric (for example, "save the last dance for me," "come on everybody, let's rock")...It may also be associated, however, with 'imperative' rhythms, which set bodies moving in specific ways, and, in a general sense, with mechanisms of identification whereby listeners' self-image is built into the music. On this general level, it can be regarded as the function of "interpellation," through which listening subjects are located in particular positions as addressees.

At the same time, according to Simon Frith, music is particularly powerful in its interpellatory capacity, because it works with intense emotional experiences, experiences that are much more powerful than those processed by other cultural artifacts. Popular music, with its corporeal effect and sense of immediacy, can be personally appropriated in a more intense way compared to other popular culture devices such as television, soap operas, and so forth: "[The] interplay between personal absorption into music and the sense that it is, nevertheless, something out there, something public, is what makes music so important in the cultural placing of the individual in the social...[thus] music can stand for, symbolize *and* offer the immediate experience of collective identity" (Frith 1987: 139).

Thus, Frith concludes that the major reason people enjoy music is because it offers answers to key identity questions: "We use pop songs to create for ourselves a particular sort of self-definition, a particular place in society. The pleasure that pop music produces is a pleasure of identification—with the music we like, with the performers of that music, with the other people who like it" (Frith 1987: 140). At the same time, there is a constructivist element, according to Frith: "Pop tastes do not just derive from our socially constructed identities; they also help to shape them. For the last fifty years...pop music has been an important way in which we have learned to understand ourselves as historical, ethnic, class-bound, gendered subjects" (Frith 1987: 149).

The multiple codes operating in a musical event (some of them not strictly musical—including theatrical codes, choreographic, linguistic, and so on) explain the importance of music as interpellator of identities, because those multiple codes are precisely what distinguish music from other popular culture manifestations of a less polysemous character. Additionally, because sound in itself is a system of multiple strata, the strictly musical codes are diverse as well (Middleton 1990: 173). Therefore, a particular type of music can interpellate social actors quite different from each other, above all if we consider that the diverse codes I referred to earlier, instead of reinforcing among themselves, often can be quite contradictory. This is something that subcultural theory cannot account for. To this complexity we could add still another one, because popular music not only constructs meaning through its sounds, its lyrics, and its performances, but also through what is said about it: "It is certainly clear that words *about* music—not only analytic description but also critical response, journalistic commentary and even casual conversation—affects its meaning. The significations of ragtime, rock 'n' roll or punk rock cannot be separated from the discourses which surrounded them" (Middleton 1990: 221). This particular characteristic of music is central in Simon Frith's analysis of musical "meaning." Thus, according to Frith (1990: 96–97):

> Arguments about music are less about the qualities of the music itself than about how to place it, about what it is in the music that is actually to be assessed. After all, we can only hear music as having value . . . when we know what to listen to and how to listen for it. Our reception of music, our expectations from it, are not inherent in the music itself—which is one reason why so much musicological analysis of popular music misses the point: its object of study, the discursive text it constructs, is not the text to which anyone listens.

In this way, ordinary listeners would not be preoccupied, like musicologists might, by the problem of the immanent meaning of music. Instead, their preoccupation centers on what music signifies to them. Frith suggests that if music's meaning is not located within musical materials, the only alternative is to localize it in the contradictory discourses through which people confer meaning to music. Frith's proposal is central to any post-subculturalist and post-structuralist analysis of music, because the idea that music's meaning is intrinsically linked to its sound implies that music's meaning, as a social construction, could not be negotiable, something that is not consistent with the idea of "articulation." The theoretical position that advocates the ideas of articulation and interpellation in the relationship between popular music and identification processes was well summarized by Middleton (1990: 249) in the following statement:

> We do not…choose our musical tastes freely; nor do they reflect our "experience" in any simple way. The involvement of subjects in particular musical pleasures has to be constructed; indeed, such construction is part and parcel of the production of subjectivity. In this process, subjects themselves—however "decentred"—have a role to play (of recognition, assent, refusal, comparison, modification); but it is an *articulatory*, not a simplistically creative or responsive role. Subjects participate in an "interpellative dialectic," and this takes specific forms in specific areas of cultural practice…popular music has been centrally involved in the production and manipulation of subjectivity…popular music has always been concerned, not so much with reflecting social reality, as with offering ways in which people could enjoy and valorize identities they yearned for or believed themselves to possess.

In my articles about tango and ethnic identifications in Argentina (Vila 1991, 1995a), I have used this theoretical framework extensively. There I pointed out that tango, like Argentine popular music generally, participated as a particular kind of discourse in the struggle for the construction of meaning that characterized Argentine society since the turn of the twentieth century. Thus, since the 1900s, tango has been a major actor in the battle for the production of social identities in Argentina.

As a cultural tool in the construction of meaning, tango offered (and still offers) different messages that people can relate to. In this sense, tango had different messages directed to varying aspects of everyday life: leisure, family life, love, friendship, work, politics, and so on. Additionally, it directed its messages to different possible identities: gender, age, class, ethnic identities, and the like. Diverse people, in different situations, times, and circumstances used those cultural messages as raw materials and resources to construct their assorted identifications.

Thus, I argued that some people preferred to relate to the *class identifications* tango offered through its lyrics, musics, and performances, and through what was said about tango songs in everyday conversations, magazines, radio, and so forth. Other people used tango's meanings to understand their *gender identifications* because they felt comfortable with the ways tango practices expressed this kind of identity. Finally, some other people felt at odds with the identifications tango offered, and they did not use them at all in the construction of their identities.

I also pointed out in several articles how tango, as a complex cultural artifact, offered different possibilities of identity construction not only through its various parts (lyrics, music, dance, and performances) but also through the articulation of different codes in *each* of those parts. Thus, tango lyrics, despite talking about gender strictly from a male point of view, advancing a discourse on morality and sexuality that always stressed the moral

superiority of men in relation to women (Archetti 1988: 23), and despite using a very conservative approach to social change, did so using a kind of ethnic language that recognized and valued the presence of a social actor (European immigrants) who was questioned in toto (males and females, poor and rich people) by the dominant class of the period. Consequently, when tango proposed a kind of "class compromise" to its audience around the 1910s and 1920s, it did so addressing class issues in terms qualified by the vitality of struggles articulated basically through ethnicity (Gilroy 1987: 35) in turn-of-the-century Argentina. Therefore, if we analyze tango at the level of its lyrics looking only at what tango *said* in terms of gender or class (at least until the 1930s, when some lyrics and performances started to question hegemonic class and gender discourses—Discépolo, Tita Merello, and so on), we have no other possibility but to agree that tango was totally attuned to the hegemonic discourse of the period. However, if we analyze tango through the *ways* it said what it said, we can maintain, on the contrary, that tango played a very important role in the construction of a "valued" Europeo-immigrant identification questioned by those in power. Something similar can be said about the complex relationship between what tango expressed through its lyrics and the musical envelope of those lyrics. As Middleton (1990: 228) points out: "The significance of lyrics is governed not primarily by their obvious denotations but by their use of conventions, and these in turn are organized in terms of musical genres." In this sense, what tango lyrics expressed in terms of gender and class was said *within* a particular musical genre characterized by its importance as an ethnic interpellator. We have to remember here that most musicians were immigrants themselves or the heirs of immigrants, that tango is performed with a German accordion called *bandoneón*, and so forth. This kind of approach offers us another possibility for understanding why women and working-class people were so captivated by tango, in spite of the very negative images tango lyrics deployed about them. Thus, instead of relying on today's discredited "false consciousness" notion, we could argue that these social actors valued tango's ethnic message more than its gender or class message.

My articles about tango and identification processes attempted to go a step beyond tango itself, and tried to show how the understanding of other musical practices of the time allows us to better comprehend the mechanisms of identity construction in Argentina. Thus, while in the case of tango in the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, its interpellations aimed to change the *content* of the stigmatized commonsense ethnic labels of the period ("*tanos*," "*gringos*," "*rusos*," and so on), accepting them but trying to invert their meaning, transforming them from a slur into a source of ethnic pride, in the case of folk music of the 1940s and 1950s, the process of identity negotiation took a different route. Folk music advanced interpellations that tried to change both the *name* and the *content* of the ethnic labels popular then. It rejected the highly

stigmatized identification "*cabecita negra*" [the Argentine equivalent of "nigger"], proposing instead the euphemisms "*gente del interior*" [people from the countryside] or "*provincianos*" [people from the provinces], in an attempt to portray the internal immigrant as a kind of reservoir of Argentine culture and tradition.

Thus, the tango of the 1920s helped in the identity construction process so that ethnic issues continuously overlapped with class issues, because class and ethnicity were intimately related in that period of Argentine history, to the point that we can claim that one discourse was talking through the other, where ethnic references were, implicitly, class references and vice versa. Similarly, folk music's incessant references to ethnic issues were not only important for their direct allusion to those kind of issues, but also for their continuous implicit endorsement of class and political issues, since being a "*cabecita negra*" in the 1940s automatically signified classification as a "worker" and a "Peronist" (because "all people know that *todos los negros son peronistas*!"). As we can see, a very complex process of identity construction occurred in which a particular type of cultural artifact, music, had an important role to play.

Music and Identity: Anchoring Interpellations in Narrative Plots

INTRODUCTION

The problem confronted by the theory of articulations and interpellations (my own articles included) is, in some ways, very similar to the problem we mentioned earlier that afflicted subcultural theory—it cannot account for what is precisely its trademark. Therefore, in spite of the sophistication of the neo-Gramscian/neo-Althusserian theory of articulation and interpellation, the problem this approach faces is that it often cannot answer the question of why one interpellation is successful whereas others are not. Frequently, researchers in this tradition end up using some kind of homological answer (such as "that actor accepted that particular musical interpellation because it was structurally connected, or not connected, to him/her"—a very non-discursive answer). In other cases, they claim that the hegemonic interpellation is the one that allows people to better organize their everyday life, but we don't know the mechanism by which this happens.[6]

Similarly, if on the one hand the theory of articulations and interpellations addresses the issue of the struggle over meaning and how different interpellations strive to establish an equivalence between discourse and reality, on the other hand, it is not uncommon to find that, trying to explain why one interpellation is more successful than some other one, this theory seems to resort to the idea of the hegemonic power of the successful interpellation,

something that is, precisely, what it tried to explain at the beginning. To illustrate my point, it is worthwhile to look at one of the most sophisticated usages of this theory in musicology, the works of Peter Wicke (1989, 1990):

> The sounds of music provide constantly moving and complex matrices of sounds in which individuals may invest their own meanings. The critical element in [Wicke's] theory is that while the matrices of sounds which seemingly constitute an individual "piece" of music can accommodate a range of meanings, and thereby allow for negotiation of meaning, they cannot accommodate all possible meanings... This means that while the meanings and values of music are not intrinsic to music's sounds—they are intrinsic to the individuals who invest them in the sounds—music's sounds are nonetheless heavily implicated in the construction and investment of those meanings and values. The sounds of music... do not cause meanings and they do not determine meanings. They do not even carry meanings. The most that we can say is that they call forth meanings (Shepherd 1994: 135).

In this sense, Wicke offers another solution to the problem of the articulation between music and a particular identification allowing the process of meaning negotiation that is absent when one speaks of the meaning of music residing intrinsically in its sound. He leaves unsolved, however, the issue of why a particular configuration of meaning takes foot in a particular musical matrix, while others are unable to articulate themselves in such musical matrices (or, vice versa, why the same musical matrix can articulate very distinct configurations of meaning, and in this way successfully interpellates different social actors, while others can only articulate configurations of meaning very similar to each other and thus only interpellate similar social actors). In other words, Wicke cannot answer why a particular articulation of meaning, a particular interpellation, is successful while others fail in the attempt. A very similar problem afflicts Middleton (1990: 10): "It seems likely that some signifying structures are more *easily* articulated to the interests of one group than are some others; similarly, that they are more easily articulated to the interests of one group than to those of another;" and also Slobin (1992: 57), an American ethnomusicologist: "It is not that music has nothing to say, but that it allows everyone to say what they want. It is not because it negates the world, but because it embodies any number of imagined worlds that people turn to music as a core form of expression."

Therefore, if it can be argued (following both Althusser and Foucault) that individuals are constituted as subjects through the discursive formations that try to "subject" them, the theory of interpellation and Foucault's proposal (at least until the mid-1970s; see Žižek 1999: 253) come to a halt when it was time to make sense of the particular processes by which subjectivities are constructed—those processes that construct us as subjects

that, afterwards, can be "spoken." In other words, the understanding of the process of identity construction not only requires that the subject be "hailed" by particular discourses, but also that the subject has to "accept" such hailing, that is, has to "invest" in the position the discourse offers to her (Hall 1996: 6). The theory of interpellation as proposed by Althusser, or the similar Foucaultian notion of the subject produced "as an effect" through and within discourse, accounts for the "hailing" or the construction of subject positions within discourses, but leaves unanswered why the subject invests in that particular version of a subject-position and not in another one. As Stuart Hall (1996: 12) points out: "There is no theorization of the psychic mechanism or interior processes by which these automatic 'interpellations' might be produced, or—more significantly—fail or be resisted or negotiated." Attempting to solve the problem, Stuart Hall points to the work of Judith Butler as a possible way out. According to this feminist author: "Sex not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces (through the repetition or iteration of a norm which is without origin) the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power, the power to produce—demarcate, circulate, differentiate—the bodies it controls . . . 'sex' is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time" (Butler 1993: 1).

What Butler suggests regarding identity construction processes is that the subject is produced in the course of its materialization, where *materialization* is reread "not as the act by which a subject brings into being what she/he names but rather as that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains" (Butler 1993: 2). In this sense, sex, race, ethnicity, and class do not only function as norms, but, more important, as regulatory practices that produce the bodies they govern. That is the reason Stuart Hall (1996: 16) feels that now the task is "to think the question of the distinctiveness of the logic within which the racialized and ethnicized body is constituted discursively, through the regulatory normative ideal of a 'compulsive Eurocentrism.' And the suturing of the psychic and the discursive in their constitution."

In terms of the relationship between music and identification processes, this effort still remains to be accomplished. The questions that have to be answered are: In what ways does music as a practice contribute (enforcing, rejecting, or creating new regulatory normative ideals) to the suturing of the psychic and the discursive halves of identity? Why is music so important in the articulation of those related but different aspects of identity construction? How do the practices music involves (in both making and listening) relate to the regulatory practices that constitute identity? Different authors have tried to answer one or several of those questions. I will discuss Frith's very interesting approach to music as performative, and in doing so will advance my own position regarding the complex relationship between music and identity.

SIMON FRITH'S PERFORMING RITES

With clear resonances from the work of Clifford Geertz (1987), Frith (1996: 111) points out that music does not reflect people's beliefs, but, on the contrary, articulates them in a performance.

> What I want to suggest, in other words, is not that social groups agree on values which are then expressed in their cultural activities (the assumption of the homology models) but that they only get to know themselves *as groups* (as a particular organization of individual and social interests, of sameness and difference) *through* cultural activity, through aesthetic judgment. Making music isn't a way of expressing ideas; it is a way of living them.

In this sense, cultural activity, music included, is understood as the privileged sphere where the ethics of a group is formed. As Geertz (1987: 238) pointed out more than twenty-five years ago, "Because—in another of those paradoxes that haunt aesthetics—. . . subjectivity does not properly exist until it is thus organized [in art forms], art forms generate and regenerate the very subjectivity they pretend only to display." Thus, for Geertz and Frith alike, an aesthetic practice becomes an ethical one, and an aesthetic response is, implicitly, an ethical agreement (Frith 1996: 114). In this sense Frith points out that people use music as that aesthetic process through which we discover ourselves by forging our relations with others (Frith 1996: 118–121):

> The experience of pop music is an experience of identity: in responding to a song, we are drawn, haphazardly, into emotional alliances with the performers and with the performers' other fans. Because of its qualities of abstractness, music is, by nature, an individualizing form . . . At the same time, and equally significantly, music is obviously collective . . . Somebody else has set up the conventions, they are clearly social and clearly apart from us. Music stands for, symbolizes *and* offers the immediate experience of collective identity.

Notwithstanding the importance of Frith's proposal, it still presents some problems. For one thing, as Negus and Román Velázquez (2002: 137) have pointed out,

> We have to know, or make some sort of categorical assumption, that it is "Jewish," "black," or "Latin" music which is contributing to the construction of a certain "Jewish," "black," or "Latin" identity. Despite a move towards a "constructivist" position, the argument is not quite as open or non-essentialist as it might seem. In many ways, we simply have a reversal of the previous homology argument. Instead of folk music (or Latin music) being produced by folk (or people with a Latin identity), the

> folk (or Latin identities) are produced by and through the music…we surely have to assume that it's "folk" music, or "Irish" music, or "Latin" music, to be able to argue that it's constructing us with a particular "folk," "Latin" or "Irish" identity. For, if both sides of this equation were to be equally non-essentialist, then we would have to accept that *any* type of music sound (however categorised) could "construct" us *any* type of social identity.

In other words, the problem they see is that, trying to avoid the essentialization of some kind of identity as being constructed by music, Frith's proposal risks essentializing the music that would construct such an identity.

On the other hand, regardless of the novelty of Frith's proposition, he has not departed very far from the interpellation/articulation theory we criticized previously: we still do not know why particular people construct an "us" using some of the rituals the culture offers them and other members of the same culture do not. We do not know why some people discover themselves as a community through the aesthetic enjoyment of a particular kind of music, whereas other members of the same culture, exposed to the same musical artifact, do not. One more time we only know one side of the two halves Althusser and Foucault left unconnected; that is, we know a lot about how the offers of identifications are processed in particular cultural artifacts, but not much about why those offers are accepted or rejected by actual social actors exposed to those cultural artifacts in concrete social relations.

If this is so, it is not by chance that when it is time to present examples of how this construction of a group ethics works in real musical situations, the language of homology somehow still haunts a discourse wanting to separate itself from those proposals appealing to something "previous" that music only reflects. Thus, Frith points out that a good jazz performance is considered good not because it "represents" or "imitates" something already present in African American ethos, but because it "draws, rather, on the African American tradition of 'signifying'; it puts into play an emotional effect, a collusion between the performer and an audience which is engaged rather than detached, knowing rather than knowledgeable" (Frith 1996: 117). The problem that immediately appears is that the tradition of "signifying" (an integral part of the African American culture) has to be assumed as present in the performance to assure the connection between musicians and audience, to allow the construction of the "us" through music. If so, what a good jazz performance would have done is to *act* or *represent* such a signifying practice (taken as a cultural trait that would define the black ethos in the United States), and it is precisely such performance or representation that allows the aforementioned connection between musicians and audience. As we can see, homology is here again, of course not in relation to material conditions that

create a particular musical superstructure, but as a cultural repertoire that music has to draw upon in order to be accepted as a valid interpellation of identity.

But if this is so, and music is accepted because it enacts, displays, or represents a central value of a particular collective actor, the question that remains unanswered here is why, if jazz draws on the crucial African American tradition of signifying, does only a small group of African Americans construct themselves as such through jazz? In other words, if the offer of a particular African American identity coming from jazz is so appealing, why do only some African Americans accept it while others do not?

Frith is aware of the problems his proposal carries out and, for that reason, wants to move from the idea of "representation" to that of "embodiment." Here Frith claims that popular music must be understood not to represent values, but to embody them (Frith 1996: 117). I have some reservations with this move, because I do not see any advantage in moving from "representing" to "embodying," since both verbs assume that the values were there before being enacted by music; that is, those values were not constructed by the music itself.[7] Thus, when Frith quotes the work of Waterman on *jùjú* music (basic for his argument), the problem repeats itself:

> Yoruba musicians, responding creatively to changes in the Nigerian political economy, fashioned a mode of expression that enacted, in music, language, and behaviour, a syncretic metaphoric image of an ideal social order, cosmopolitan yet firmly rooted in autochthonous tradition. This dynamic style configuration, consonant with Yoruba ideologies of the "open hierarchy" as an ideal pattern of aesthetic and social organization, allowed *jùjú* performance to play a role in the stereotypic reproduction of deep, Yoruba values during a period of pervasive economic and political change (Waterman 1991: 66–67).

The problem here, again, is the contention that the appealing nature of *jùjú* music finally rests on its "reproduction of deep, Yoruba values." Once more, the unanswered question remains: if *jùjú* music really reproduced those values, why don't all Yoruba people construct their identities around such music? In other words, why were Yoruba values that came through *jùjú* music's interpellation accepted by some Yoruba people but rejected by others who still embrace Yoruba culture?

The same kinds of questions, in different formats, also apply to the other examples Frith uses to buttress his point of the performative character of musical and group identity. Thus, if music conjures up and enacts the new modes of friendship, happiness, and solidarity that are consequent of the overcoming of the racial oppression on which modernity and the duality of rational Western progress as excessive barbarity relied (Frith 1996: 118), why do so many people who were racially oppressed opt not to construct their

identities through identification with black music? Or, if chamber music is central in shaping German Jewish identity in Israel, in both articulating cultural values and enacting collective commitment to them (Frith 1996: 119), why don't all German Jews accept the offer of identity coming from chamber music? Once more we have a very sophisticated analysis of the identity "offer," but we do not know very much about why that particular offer works for some people but does not work for other potential receptors of the same kind of music—that is, people who, while sharing the same culture and recognizing themselves as members of the same social group, nonetheless despise chamber music.

I think that part of the problem is the Geertzian approach Frith uses to understand the relationship between music and identity. This approach, dealing with so-called traditional societies, assumes a quite fixed and univocal group identity, where almost all the members of the group would have the same basic identity. For instance, when Geertz describes the Balinese cockfight, he points out that the function of the cockfight among the Balinese is interpretive; that is, "it is a Balinese reading of Balinese experience, a story they tell themselves about themselves" (Geertz 1987: 234). Or, in another passage, "enacted and reenacted, so far without end, the cockfight enables the Balinese, as, read and reread, *Macbeth* enables us, to see a dimension of his own subjectivity" (Geertz 1987: 238). Thus, Geertz seems to talk about the interpretive function of cockfight for *all* of Balinese society, regardless of internal differences in terms of class, gender, or age, for instance. Without discussing here that such a unitarian construction of the colonial Other has been highly criticized by many scholars (Said's *Orientalism* is paradigmatic in this regard), Geertz makes a very problematic move when he compares the cockfight with the reading of Macbeth, a reading that, in any case, is proposing something completely different to the complex conglomerate of fragmented identities that is the contemporary Western subject. In this sense, I believe identifications are always contradictory, made up of partial fragments. As Bailey and Hall (1992: 21) point out, "identities can, therefore, be contradictory and are always situational…In short, we are all involved in a series of political games around fractured or decentered identities…since black signifies a range of experiences, the act of representation becomes not just about decentering the subject but actually exploring the kaleidoscopic conditions of blackness."

Thus, I think that part of the reason people who share the central values a particular musical experience "enacts" (black people who relate to the "signifying" tradition of black culture, Yorubas or German Jews who share the core values of their respective culture, and so on) still do not construct their identifications through jazz, *jùjú*, or chamber music is the fact that we actually are a complex combination of partially fixed multiple identifications

sharing a single body, identifications that are only precariously sutured at the moment of action (Perinbanayagam 2000), something that is usually linked to an imaginary unitary identity of the ego constructed by narrative means.[8] Therefore, maybe some of our fractured, multiple (always in process), partial identifications relate to signifying Yoruba values, for instance, but perhaps this is not true for the myriad other subject positions (in terms of nationality, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, and the like) that we accept (but that we also can constantly reject) occupying in society. In this sense, one needs a notion of a centered subject (centered in one of the varied subject positions mentioned above) to claim, as Frith does, that the enactment of values in music allows people "to know themselves *as groups* (as a particular organization of individual and social interests, of sameness and difference)." For this reason, I understand the alliances Frith talks about ("alliances with the performers and with the performers' other fans") as alliances between one of our multiple identifications and the partial identifications of others that strategically coincide in that particular musical performance. In this sense, individuals are continually making diverse alliances at the level of their different identifications and the values enacted in several musical performances.

At the same time that I was initially advancing my proposals about the relationship between multiple identifications and music (in the late 1990s and first part of the 2000s, Vila 1996, 2000, and 2001), Born and Hesmondhalgh (2000: 32–33) were writing very similar things. According to them,

> Because of the ubiquity of music in the mass-mediated world, and individual's subjectifications and socialization by a number of different music, each bearing different dimensions of both their existing and desired, potential identities, rather than musical subjectivity being fixed and unitary, several musical "identities" may inhabit the same individual. These are expressed in different musical tastes and practices, some of them in tension with each other or in contradiction with other parts of the self. Thus states of both "authentic," "essential" musical identity and more playful, postmodern relations of desire and proto-identification through music coexist in many individuals, producing a state of fragmentary and multiple imaginary musical identifications…we should adopt the insights of poststructuralism and psychoanalysis and develop an awareness of the multiple musical identifications or subject positions to which individuals are susceptible as producers and consumers. This conception allows an understanding of the complexities of mobile, conflicting, and changing musical identifications.

When I say "similar," I mean that my proposal is a little different from Born and Hesmondhalgh's. First, because I think that not only *different types of music* interpellate (and manage to activate social identifications) different existing or desired identities of the same person, but also that such a thing

occurs with the *same type of music* (i.e., the same type of music interpellates different existing or desired identities of the same person), given the complexity of the cultural artifact that we call "music"—the distinctive interpellatory ability of the sound, the lyrics, the performances, and of what is said about a particular type of music.[9] Second, because these authors seem to draw a very rigid relationship between musical taste and social identifications, as if all that exists in relation to music are identification processes, when I think many other things happen in relation to music (for example, processes of "de-identification" as spoken by Negus and Roman Velazquez; the everyday, quotidian kinesthetic relationships people establish with music so well analyzed by Tia De Nora; or the affective processes linked to music that Gilbert, Thompson, and Biddle talk about). Third, because I do not believe in the possibility of creating "authentic or essential identities" as these authors seem to believe. Notwithstanding my criticism, I think that Born and Hesmondhalgh's proposal is a clear advance in our understanding of the identification processes allowed by music, and an important critique to Frith's ideas.

A remarkable sociologist, Frith became over time fully aware of some of the problems his early positions entailed, and for that reason in the late 1990s he started considering the idea of *narrative* as a way to close the gap that separates any offer of identity from an actual identification. I agree with Frith that narrative has the capability of working as a bridge between music and identity, between the offer of identity any interpellation involves and the acceptance of that offer any *successful* interpellation entails. In this sense, Frith claims that narrative is the basis of music pleasure. He also points out that narrative is central to our sense of identity (Frith 1996: 122). Thus, on the one hand, "identity is always already an ideal, what we would like to be, not what we are. And in taking pleasure from black or gay or female music I don't thus identify as black or gay or female (I don't actually experience these sounds as 'black music' or 'gay music' or 'women's voices') but, rather, participate in imagined forms of democracy and desire" (Frith 1996: 123). But, on the other hand,

> if musical identity is, then, always fantastic, idealizing not just oneself but also the social world one inhabits, it is, secondly, always also real, enacted in musical activities. Music making and music listening, that is to say, are bodily matters…In this respect, musical pleasure is not derived *from* fantasy—it is not *mediated* by daydreams—but is experienced directly: music gives us a real experience of what the ideal could be. (Frith 1996: 123)

This last sentence is crucial in the understanding of the relationship between music and the identification processes Frith wants to advance: "Music gives us a real experience of what the ideal could be." Thus, if before Frith

advanced a similar stance (as I pointed out above when I referred to the idea of immediacy in Frith's early work) what is new here is the role Frith now gives to this in narrative as well as how narrative gives this immediacy some resonance or amplification.[10] In this sense, music is a privileged cultural artifact that offers us the real experience of our narrative, imagined identities. Therefore, *part* of the understanding of our identity (which is always imaginary) would occur when we submit ourselves to the bodily pleasure of the performance or music listening. It is precisely here where the connection between interpellation and desire, between the identitarian offer and the actual identification, occurs. Speaking of black identity, Paul Gilroy (1990: 127) points out:

> Music and its rituals can be used to create a model whereby identity can be understood as something other than a fixed essence or a vague and utterly contingent construction to be reinvented by the will and whim of aesthetes, symbolists, and language gamers. Black identity is not simply a social and political category…it remains the outcome of practical activity: language, gesture, bodily significations, desire. These significations are condensed in musical performance, although it does not, of course, monopolize them. In this context, they produce the imaginary effect of an internal racial core or essence by acting on the body through the specific mechanisms of identification and recognition that are produced in the intimate interaction of performer and crowd. This reciprocal relationship serves as a strategy and an ideal communicative situation even when the original makers of the music and its eventual consumers are separated in space and time or divided by the technologies of sound production and the commodity form which their art has sought to resist.

In this sense I fully agree with Gilroy and Frith that music performance is part of those privileged practical activities that, condensing basic significations, articulate identities (in the listener/dancer) through the production of the imaginary effect of having an essential identity inscribed on the body (in terms of ethnicity, race, nationality, gender, class, or age). Here, Judith Butler's move from construction to materialization and her understanding of the iterability of performativity as a theory of agency (Butler 1999: XXIV) are important points of reference:

> When one starts to think carefully about how discourse might be said to produce a subject, it's clear that one's already talking about a certain figure or trope of production. It is at this point it's useful to turn to the notion of performativity…So what I'm trying to do is think about performativity as *that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names*. Then I take a further step…and suggest that this

> production actually always happens through a certain kind of repetition and recitation. (Osborne and Segal 1994: 33)

My proposal, therefore, is that musical performativity would be among those types of discourses that, through repetition and its inscription on the body, have the capacity to produce what they name.[11] But to finally move from the "capacity" (the realm of discursive offers) to the actual production of identifications (that is, the acceptance of "this is me, or these are us") in specific actors—in a word, to unite the two halves that Althusser left unconnected in his proposal about interpellations—I suggest a reformulation: musical practices articulate an identification anchored on the body, through the different alliances we establish between our diverse, fragmented, situational, and imaginary narrative identities, and the diverse, fragmented, situational and imaginary narrative identities different musical practices attempt to materialize.[12]

Frith claims that "music constructs our sense of identity through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives. Such a fusion of imaginative fantasy and bodily practice marks also the integration of aesthetics and ethics" (Frith 1996: 124). While I agree with this, I believe we need to rely more on narrative theory to fully explain why the "fusion of imaginative fantasy and bodily practice" is produced, and how the alliances among myself, the musicians, and the other musicians' fans are established. I want to add to Frith's proposition the centrality of the concept of *plot* in any narrative construction of identity. My argument, in brief, is that without considering the *evaluative criteria that characterizes a plot*, we cannot fully understand either the fusion of the imaginary fantasy and the bodily practice or the actual establishment of the alliances Frith talks about.

In this sense, I think that we evaluate, provisionally and situationally, what a given musical practice has to offer us in terms of interpellations in relation to the basic plots that are always behind the different narrative identities we construct to understand the diverse subject positions we end up accepting (through a complicated negotiating process) in our everyday life. Thus, *the narrative plots of our diverse narratives, provisionally and situationally, are responsible for the different alliances we establish between our diverse, imaginary narrative identities and the imaginary essential identities different musical practices try to materialize.*

NARRATIVE IDENTITIES AND THE ORGANIZING POWER OF THE PLOT

To fully understand my proposal, we need a theoretical detour into narrative theory. I believe that *most* (but not all) people,[13] in order to understand themselves as meaningful beings, have to consider their lives as being something

more than an isolated series of events, and this is precisely where narrative identities are involved—transforming isolated events into episodes linked by a plot. As Somers (1992: 600) stresses, "we come to *be* who we *are* (however ephemeral, multiple, and changing) by our location (usually unconsciously) in social narratives and networks of relations that are rarely of our own making."

Thus, for most people, to narrate is to do more than merely describe events or actions. It is also to recount them, to organize them into plots and to attribute to them a character or personage. In this sense, the character of a narrative is, in short, concomitant with her experiences as they are accounted for in the particular plot of that narrative (Reagan 1993). Consequently, the narrative constructs the character's identity by constructing the story. Accordingly, what makes the character's identity is the story's identity and not vice versa (Ricoeur 1992: 147). This is very important because most people act or fail to act *in part* according to how they understand their place in the different narratives they construct to give meaning to their lives.

Therefore, if identity is processual and relational as I believe it is, one of the most important ways to fully understand it is through narrative. Hence, making sense of my present situation often requires a narrative understanding of my life, a sense of what I have become that can only be given in a story. As Donna Haraway points out:

> We repeatedly rehistoricize ourselves by telling a story; we relocate ourselves in the present historical moment by reconfiguring our identities relationally, understanding that identity is always a relational category and that there is no such thing as a subject who pre-exists the encounters that construct that subject. Identity is an effect of those encounters—identity is that set of effects which develop from the collision of histories. It is not an abstraction. It's an extraordinarily complex kind of sedimentation, and we rehistoricize our identities all the time through elaborate story-telling practices... And those story telling practices themselves are ways of trying to interrogate, get at, the kinds of encounters, historical moments, the kinds of key moments of transition for us—both individually and collectively. (Bhavnani and Haraway 1994: 21)

But while most people explain their present life via accounting for their past through a history, they also project their life forward and endorse the existing direction, or give it a new direction constructing a future story (Taylor 1989: 48). Consequently, most people's self-understanding always has a temporal dimension that is materialized in a narrative that habitually (but not always necessarily) tends to relate past, present, and future. As Novitz (1989: 61) points out: "narrative... is the only variety of discourse which selectively mentions real or imaginary events, orders them in a developmental or sequential way (the plot), so that the whole discourse (and the sequence of

events which it mentions) eventually acquires a significance, usually a moral significance, from the way in which its parts are related to one another (closure)."

I think that most people thus carry with them narratives that help in their self-understanding. Different people select varying articulatory elements or "nodal points" to build their narratives, but regardless of such diversity, most people prefer to select and organize the events of their past, and to foresee their future in terms of these articulatory elements. This is so because a large majority of people, most of the time, need to arrest the flow of differences that surround them and construct some kind of center around which a certain type of order can be built. I think that center is represented precisely by the plot of a narrative. As Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992: 9) point out:

> A good story presents a coherent plot. The narrative "now" must grow plausibly out of what has come before and point the way to what might reasonably come next. This literary criterion has implications for identity as well. For in telling their stories individuals make claims about the coherence of their lives. "This person I am today is who I have been years becoming." Further, what is included and omitted from the account renders plausible the anticipated future.

In spite of some differences I have with these authors in relation to their position on the "coherence" of narratives (and I will develop later on), I think that it is precisely their position in relation to the issue of what is included or omitted in any narrative what is paramount, which leads us to another key feature that makes narratives so important in the construction of social identifications: their selectivity.

There are some *evaluative criteria* in narratives that, according to Somers (1992: 602): "enables us to make qualitative and lexical distinctions among the infinite variety of events, experiences, characters, institutional promises, and social factors that impinge on our lives . . . in the face of a potentially limitless array of social experiences deriving from social contact with events, institutions, and people, the evaluative capacity of Emplotment demands and enables *selective appropriation* in constructing narratives." In this sense, the plots most people use to compose their stories are going to determine the focus of their attention regarding the "limitless array of social experiences."

As a matter of fact, what will count as "experience" itself most of the time is determined by the plot. Thus, the constant back and forth between narratives and identities (between living and telling), on the one hand, allows most actors to adjust stories to fit the imaginary "identities" they believe they have, and, conversely, permits them to tailor "reality" to fit their stories. In the most extreme cases of the canonical thinking about the relationship between narratives and identifications (such as Bruner 1987), it is claimed that "in the

end, we become the autobiographical narratives by which we 'tell about' our lives."

In this sense, although I put some emphasis on the role of sketches of narrative plots in the construction of narrative identities, I do not want my position in relation to the latter to be confused with this canonical position, wherein "self and narrative have . . . been typically brought together in ways that emphasize the ideas of autonomy, integration, consistency and coherence over those of fragmentation and relationality" (De Fina and Georgakopolous 2012: 161). This is so because I believe, following Bamberg (2004: 222), that inconsistencies and ambiguities, for example, are a very important part of identitarian narratives:

> Narratives are taken to be primary territories where co-conversationalists seek and find ways to mitigate the interactive trouble and fashion a portrayal of themselves that are interactively useful. Rather than seeing narratives as intrinsically oriented toward coherence and authenticity, and inconsistencies and equivocations as an analytic nuisance, the latter are exactly what are most interesting. They offer a way into examining how storytellers are bringing off and managing their social identities in contexts.

According to Bamberg (2004: 223), the stories people tell, even the "small stories" ("the ones that are told in mundane encounters and everyday circumstances"), are rhetorical tools the participants use in a conversation to advance claims about their identitarian positions:

> Irrespective of whether they are "revealing" personal and private issues about the speaker and irrespective of whether they thematize whole lives or a singular incidental event happening . . . narratives, irrespective of whether they deal with one's life or an episode or event in the life of someone else, always *reveal* the speaker's identity. The narrative point-of-view from where the characters are ordered in the story world gives away—and most often is meant to give away—the point-of-view from where the speaker represents him/herself. By offering and telling a narrative, the speaker lodges a claim for him/herself in terms of who he/she is.[14]

Thus, Bamberg avoids necessarily linking the issue of the inconsistencies and ambiguities that generally characterize any narrative identity with a lack of coherence (apparently a fatal issue for holders of traditional narrative theory, something that I will discuss below),[15] because for him (2004: 224), "the 'who-am-I?' (identity) question does not presuppose a unitary subject . . . Rather, the agentive and interactive subject is the 'point of departure' for its own empirical instantiation . . . as a subject that is constantly seeking to legitimate itself, situated in language practices, and juggling several story lines simultaneously."

In this sense, the relationship of identities with fragmentation and the relational that De Fina and Georgakopolous pointed out earlier clearly become relevant. According to these authors (2012: 161), “fragmentation implies a view of the self as being discursively constructed as different things on different occasions that cannot be automatically reduced to a singular and coherent entity nor easily abstracted from local contexts. Relationality, on the other hand, includes the idea that the self derives its capacity for self-perception and self-definition through relations and interactional negotiations with others.” These theoretical positions, developed as a reaction to the canonical conception of narrative identities, emphasize a much more dynamic conceptualization of social identities, “where identities are viewed as locally occasioned, discursive projects that interrelate with language forms”—and, I will add here, with other symbolic forms, such as music, for instance—“in indirect and meditated ways as opposed to one-to-one correspondences.” This new way of conceptualizing identities in interaction puts its “emphasis on the constitutive role of language in social identities, coupled with the recognition that identities can be multiple, fleeting and irreducibly contingent.” (De Fina y Georgakopoulou 2012: 166–167).

What is the reason for this frantic search for more dynamic conceptions of narrative identities? Why is the narrative coherence criterion so criticized by these new trends? Basically, this is because a racialized and patriarchal whiff seems to emanate from the idea of narrative coherence. As Hyvärinen et al. (2010: 7) point out:

> The coherent self...emerges as a cultural construction and an effect of gendered and racialized discourses and practices...Critical feminist interventions...have indeed shown that there are many different ways of narrating the female self...transgressing the limitations of coherence and closure...For postcolonial critics, hybridity and multiplicity have emerged as catalytic factors in the ways we read, analyse, understand and evaluate “coherent” narratives. What happens to the desire for textual coherence when place and location as material coherences par excellence, melt into fluid spatialities, forced displacement and diasporic subjectivities? How can coherence be sustained in narrative texts produced as effects of discourses of colonization? How can “the coherent self” be located across different national territories, ethnic locations and multicultural places when narratives of return cannot be imagined...when there is no material place of origin or beginning?

Notwithstanding what I pointed out before, these new ways of understanding narratives do not fail to recognize that some “fathers of the discipline” (clearly Ricoeur and Bruner) had already anticipated some of the

criticisms that they now advance against the canon. For example, according to Mark Freeman (2010: 184), Ricoeur

> resisted the structuralist reduction of temporality into linearity of sequences. Although he understood narratives to be complete, he nevertheless systematically resisted the ideas of temporal linearity and thematic coherence . . . He also resisted the idea of full causal and thematic coherence by maintaining that "emplotment is never the simple triumph of order" (1984: 73). The purpose of narrative according to Ricoeur is not simply to produce coherence out of disorder. It is above all an attempt to cope with the "discordant" aspects of acting and suffering.

Something similar occurs with another founding father of the discipline, Bruner, who did not believe in coherence in the same unconditional way other narrative psychologists did. He even wrote in 1991 that narratives are designed "to contain uncanniness rather than to resolve it."

However, there are authors like Freeman (2010), who wonder if the problem is actually with the idea of coherence in general, or with a very restrictive version of coherence inherited from the Aristotelian model of narrative. While recognizing that it is likely that for some people the narrative coherence criterion is not absolutely necessary for their self-understanding as people ("There are no doubt people whose lives and consequent 'stories' . . . are dispersed, heterogeneous, even fragmented"—Freeman 2010: 167), this author thinks that some kind of coherence, broadly understood, is the norm and not the exception when we talk about narrative identities. Thus, Freeman (2010: 171) points out:

> Narratives . . . are not to be understood merely as ordering machines, seeking (an illusory) unity, harmony, and closure amidst the chaotic openness of reality. Insofar as "coherence" is equated with unity, harmony, and closure, therefore, it is indeed something to be moved beyond . . . But it could also be that the idea of coherence itself needs to be rethought, in a way that at once explodes the unity-harmony-closure equation while still retaining the sense-making 'binding' function that narrative is designed to serve.

In its attempt to broaden the conceptualization of "coherence" in order to still keep the concept in studies of narrative identities, Freeman argues that even one of the pillar criteria of the narrative canon (the fact that every narrative has to have a beginning, a middle, and an end) can be abandoned without completely abandoning the idea of narrative coherence. Hence, this author points out (2010: 173) that narrative coherence can still be thought as "less 'rounded' and 'autonomous' . . . and . . . founded not so much upon the tidy flow of meaning from beginning to middle to end as it is upon a search for continuity and wholeness amidst the assaults that have come one's way."

To advance this task, Freeman also bases his proposal on the works of one of the fathers of the discipline, in this case Ricoeur (1992: 160), who pointed out:

> There is nothing in real life that serves as a narrative beginning: memory is lost in the hazes of early childhood; my birth and, with greater reason, the act through which I was conceived belong more to the history of others—in this case, to my parents—than to me. As for my death, it will finally be recounted only in the stories of those who survive me. I am always moving toward my death, and this prevents me from ever grasping it as a narrative end.

The crux of this discussion about the relationship between life experiences and the narrative identities that account for them is, really, to wonder if, in structuring our experiences in traditional narrative forms, we are not giving life a coherence and unity that life itself does not contain (Andrews 2010: 152). The answer to this question is not easy. On one hand, it is true that many times "we force" a narrative over an experience in a way that such a narrative dilutes and reduces the importance of the autonomous power of that experience (Andrew 2010: 152), because

> life is characterized by an infinite unfolding of time. There is no beginning, middle or end, just a state of forever continuing. We organize our life and our past into structured events precisely because that contains them for us, renders them more manageable. We cannot keep a "forever continuing" entity in our heads . . . the task is simply too enormous. And so experience is broken down into constituent parts. From this partitioning, we gain the ability to make sense of what we are living. But we lose something as well. Although our life can be recounted as a story, there are aspects of our human experience which cannot be contained within the boundaries of a conventional narrative structure.

But on the other hand, one cannot go that far in this posture as to say that, in essence, the only thing that a narrative can do is to falsify life itself. That is what Andrews appears to do when he says that (2010: 155), for instance, "traumatic testimony is marked by what is not there: coherence, structure, meaning, comprehensibility," and is also marked, Andrews continues, by a different dimension of time, "traumatic time," which is different from the linear time that the canonical approach uses to characterize the temporality of the narrative with its beginnings, developments, and ends.

To this posture Freeman offers his own (2010: 183), which holds that it is not quite clear that life itself (not its narration) does not contain, at least potentially, its own narrativity: "Narrative time, I would argue, is not to be equated with linear time . . . And while there surely is a distinction to be made

between 'raw life' and the stories we might tell about it at some subsequent point in time, it is not at all clear that the former is as devoid of narrative—or, more appropriately, *narrativity*—as Andrews implies or that narrative is quite as 'imposing.'" In this stance, Freeman (2010: 184–185), one more time, follows Ricoeur (1991):

> Without leaving the sphere of everyday experience, are we not inclined to see in a given chain of episodes in our own life something like *stories that have not yet been told*, stories that demand to be told, stories that offer points of anchorage for narrative?

Following Ricoeur, we are "entangled" in stories; narrating is a "secondary process" that is "grafted" onto this entanglement. "Recounting, following, understanding stories is then simply the continuation of these unspoken stories" (30).

Freeman's proposal (2010: 184), therefore, is that the "challenge at hand is neither to move beyond narrative or beyond coherence. Rather, it is to find forms of narrative and modes of coherence that move beyond—well beyond—the classical model in order to do justice to reality, in all of its potential unruliness and beauty, violence and horror." He also points out (2010: 185):

> As for narrative coherence, there is no question but that it entails some measure of what Ricoeur refers to as a "synthesis of heterogeneous elements," a seeing-together of the disparate and different. There need not be unity, in the sense of a single, circumscribed narrative arc. Nor, I would argue, need there be chronology or linearity . . . What, then, *does* there need to be in order for us to use the magical word "narrative"? There needs to be an aspect of "after-the-factness," a looking-backward, that somehow binds together, however loosely, the "heterogeneous elements" about which Ricoeur speaks. In no way does this mean that narratives deal with the past alone; they can deal with the present and future as well. Nor, emphatically, does it mean that the seeing-together and binding together process must culminate in coherent stories in the classic style . . . When it comes to the messy stuff of life . . . the classical categories break down. How messy is it? Messy enough that the classical categories will not suffice but not *so* messy that we need to relinquish entirely the idea of narrative coherence.

Regarding the other contentious term in the current academic debate on the issue, "identity," Freeman defends its use, also via Ricoeur (1991: 32):

> Our life, when then embraced in a single glance, appears to us as the field of a constructive activity, borrowed from narrative understanding, by which we attempt to discover and not simply to impose from outside the *narrative identity which constitutes us*. I am stressing the expression

> "narrative identity" for what we call subjectivity is neither an incoherent series of events nor an immutable substantiality, impervious to evolution. This is precisely the sort of identity which narrative composition alone can create through its dynamism.

In this regard, for Freeman (2010: 185), "neither incoherent nor immutable, neither senseless nor static, 'we' persist, never quite the same and, with rare exceptions, never entirely different. Even amidst profound difference, there is a measure of identity."

* * *

After this brief theoretical detour we can come back to the main topic of this chapter, that is, the relationship between music and identification processes. In that regard, I want to propose that often a particular musical practice helps in the articulation of a specific, imaginary narrative identity anchored in the body, when the performers or listeners of that music feel that the music (through the intricacy of its different components: sound, lyrics, performances, and so on) offers them identificatory elements (of course, following a complex process of negotiation between musical interpellation and argumentative story lines) to the sketches of narrative plots that organize, provisionally and situationally, their narrative identities in particular encounters.

What at first glance is clearly a tautology—people many times seem to accept a particular musical interpellation anchored in a musical practice (namely, a proposal of essential meaning linked to a particular social position) whenever that musical practice and interpellation has meaning to their construction of identity—hides a very intricate back-and-forth process between musical interpellations and plots, where both modify each other constantly.

This position distances me from authors like Wicke. I do concur with Wicke that music does not have any *intrinsic* meaning, but disagree with him when he points out that music does not have any meaning at all and that its meaning always comes from its listeners, who simply load their own meanings in the musical construction. I believe that music is meaningful (not a meaning that is intrinsic to it, but a meaning anyway), and that meaning is linked to those articulations a particular kind of music was involved with in the past, meaning that is known to the people who listen or dance to that music in the present.

Of course those past articulations do not act as straightjackets that prevent their rearticulation in new configurations of meaning. However, they do place certain limits on the range of possible future articulations.[16] In this sense, music does not arrive "empty," without previous connotations to the encounter of social actors who provide it with meaning, but it arrives with plenty of multiple (and often contradictory) meaningful connotations.

Stefani, for instance, finds at least eight different types of connotations (Stefani 1973: 40–1, quoted in Middleton 1990: 232):

> *Intentional values*: . . . recognized, intended connotations of specific structural or thematic effects: . . . synthesizers connote "technology."
> *Positional implications*: . . . connotations arising from structural position.
> *Ideological choices*: These are particular, preferred meanings, selected from a range of possible interpretations . . . [for example,] attributions of conservative political meanings to the styles of Country music songs.
> *Emotive connotations*: . . . agreed affective implications of musical events: punk is associated with aggression.
> *Links with other semiotic systems*: These are visual, kinetic, verbal, even olfactory associations.
> *Rhetorical connotations*: These are associations arising from correspondences with rhetorical forms . . . [for instance,] Randy Newman irony.
> *Style connotations*: These are the associations summoned up by coding at the general level of style: rock n' roll means . . .
> *Axiological connotations*: These refer to moral or political evaluations of musical pieces, styles or genres.

More recently, López Cano (2008) was also trying to understand the narrative capacities of music. For that purpose he proposes that music itself has narrative devices and that those narrative devices interact with people's own narrative tools to help in the construction of their narrative identities. In that regard, he (2008: 13) points out:

> Like stories, music is a time management device and a way to organize and give coherence to various events within a time frame. Just as narratives, music has goals and objectives and imposes a particular causality among events by the workings of a plot . . . These elements give rise to the emergence of various narrative "impressions" in music such as . . . directionality, the clear location of starting and ending points in the musical flow and the perception of coherence and unity.

If this is so, López Cano (2008: 14) states that the task to perform when considering the relationship between story lines and musical experience is to analyze the narrativizing elements that music can provide to the narrative construction of identity performed by the subjects who listen or dance to it. Those narrativizing elements would be responsible for music detonating "impressions" or narrative "impulses." The name López Cano (2008: 18–19) gives to those narrativizing forces is *narrative agents*, and they are divided into two types:

> 1) The *agent-subject* is the element that accuses the action of driving forces on it. It is the one that changes over time. 2) The agents or forces

transforming the subjects are termed by me with the generic label of *vector or vectors agents*. The agents-subjects would embody in what Tarasti (based on Greimas) called *actants or musical actorality* and correspond to the themes, motifs, melodies, textures, timbres, riffs, tempos, and any other "theme" or anthropomorphic or (antropomorphizable) elements of music that will be changing, developing or altering along it (Tarasti 1994: 48). Agents-vectors, meanwhile, may have many styles and modes of action. On the one hand we have the *modalities* that are subjective interpretations (but not arbitrary) imposed to a particular musical text that characterized its inertia, trend or narrative direction. Tarasti recognizes the following basic modalities: *to be (etre)*: idle state, stability and musical consonance; *to do (faire)*: musical action, event, dynamism, dissonance; *to become (devenir)*: normal music temporal development; *to want (vouloir)*: the kinetic energy and volitional logic of music, its tendency to move towards a certain point (the dominant *wants* to go toward the keynote, the dissonant *wants* to resolve into consonance, the guitar solo *wants* to return to the voice of the lead singer, etc.); t*o know (savoir)*: musical information, the cognitive moment of music; *the power to do (pouvoir)*: the power and effectiveness of music, mainly technical resources in the interpretation (playing techniques, idiomatic writing for instruments, instrumental virtuosity, etc.); *to owe (devoir)*: refers to the commitments of a work or piece with respect to the constraints (or rules) of a genre, style and form (the sonata *must* restate, heavy metal *must* saturate, the salsa *must* eroticize, dancing of cumbia *must* be synchronized and emphasize the strong beats of the music, etc.); or locally imposed by a specific piece; *to believe (croire)*: epistemic value of music and its ideological persuasiveness (Tarasti 1994: 48–49)... Vectors are also rhetorical musical figures that impose particular temporal organizations such as *la gradatio*... We can also find them in repetitive forms that lead to processes of accumulation and progressive tension affecting perceptual states providing intense experiences of trance or emotion. Among the vector-agents the indexical force of sections or narrative musical moments that were analyzed by the music semiotics of the nineties with categories like *initium* (characteristic moments of the early stages of the process), *medium* (stages of development), *finis* (phases of completion and closure process) is very important (Agawu 1991 and Hatten 1994: 121).[17]

Considering all this, López Cano (2008: 20) finally states,

It is likely that the narrativizing agents occurring in music are not self-sufficient to produce solid and well-rounded narrative identities. My working hypothesis is that musical agents can articulate, inter-semiotically interact and merge with the narrative agents of the

> identitarian stories people tell about themselves (either verbal or of any other kind), whether these stories are explicit and well formed; or tacit, fragmented or even still in very early stages of development. This fusion would be at the basis of the performative experience of music. Within this space subjects *experience* emotionally and bodily some aspects of the narrative. The performative experience makes people develop certain confidence for it and the end result is that, within the margins of the musical experience—that is both fiction and reality, an ephemeral, fragile and embodied "sonic ontology," people "live" the full development of the story in question, "enjoy" experientially its completion and closing, its consummation as a solid and complete unit.

Somehow, I proposed a very similar idea more than ten years ago (Vila 2000 and 2001) when I pointed out that music gives us the possibility of actually experiencing in the body the ideal identifications (in terms of ethnicity, race, nationality, age, gender, and so on) that we believe we have inscribed in the body but that in fact are only performative. I say "somehow" because I believe that, as it occurred in Frith's case, we have to rely much more on narrative theory to understand how it actually works the inter-semiotic play between the narrativizing music agents and the sketches of narrative plots people arrive with to the encounter of the musical artifact at stake.

If music and identity are engaged in a constant process of articulation and rearticulation, as I (and many others like Middleton, Frith, López Cano, and so forth) believe they are, it is precisely in this constant process of meaning articulation and rearticulation where the idea of narrative plot can help us understand those articulations' possible limits, giving us a better understanding of why some articulations are more successful than others—why particular musical practices actually produce social identities while others do not. Thus, my idea is that social events (among them musical practices) are constructed as "experience" not only in relation to discourses that confer them meaning in general, but also within plots that, in particular, organize them more or less coherently (but understanding coherence à la Freeman, not with the rigid connotation proposed by the canonical narrative identity stance). In this sense, it is precisely the plots of my narrative identities (the narrative plots that sustain my imaginary and situational identifications) that help in the process of selectivity toward the happenings of a life (transforming them into "events") that is concomitant to every identity construction. This is done both retrospectively (when telling a story, for example) and prospectively, at the time of designing and performing an action. That occurs because such projection and action are always performed (at least initially, before the concrete social interaction modifies the original plan of action) from the point of view of what a character did in relation to such an action in the past, a character who

is remembered by the person in question (without neglecting the actions that are done out of habitual, mostly nonconscious, stances of the subject—more on this later).[18] That what the character does is "customary" or "daring" does not change the fact that the conscious action is performed from the point of view of a known character. There is always the possibility of confronting the new action from the point of view of a different character, but that does not change that characters are always (at least partially) involved in the design of the action.

In this selection of the happenings of a life is also included the relationships we establish between our plots and the multiple interpellations and cultural practices popular culture in general and music in particular offer us for identification. My point is that the multiple interpellations that surround us are somehow evaluated in relation to the plots of our narrative identities in such a way that such evaluation triggers a complex process of negotiation between narratives and interpellations, a process that can end in very different ways. On the one hand, that process can culminate in the plain acceptance of the interpellations at stake, because they "adjust" without major problems to the basic plots of the provisional narrative identities we arrive with at the moment of the encounter with the music artifact in question. That usually happens because these interpellations still hold their purchase on those plots after the negotiations such plots have engaged with the other participants of the relationships that encompass the musical encounter (musicians, other listeners and dancers, and the like). This occurs, for instance, when a Mexican immigrant in the United States, whose plot develops around the idea of moving socially through immigration and his/her right to such a migration due to the Mexican territorial claim over the Southwest (Vila 1997), listens to Los Tigres del Norte singing "El otro México que acá hemos construído, el espacio es lo que ha sido, territorio nacional. Este es el esfuerzo de todos nuestros hermanos, y latinoamericanos que han sabido progresar" [The other Mexico that we have built here, in the space that has been national Mexican territory. This is the effort of all our brothers and other Latin American people who have been able to prosper] wrapped in a Mexican music.

On the other hand, the process of negotiation among plots, interpellations, and relationships can end in the total rejection of the interpellation at stake, because it cannot fit in any way to our narrative identities (either the ones we arrived with at the moment of the encounter, or the ones we ended up negotiating there). This is the case, for instance, of the Argentine military when they listened to Fito Páez singing: "Generales, mataron media generación" [Generals, you killed half a generation of people].[19]

If my examples mostly allude to lyrics, it is only because it is quite easy to use them in illustrating the relationship between interpellations and story lines. The same type of negotiation occurs, however, between the interpellations

that are not tied to the lyrics (those coming from the sound, the performance, or from what is said about the music) and the narrative plots.

Nevertheless, the most likely outcome of the negotiation process between narrative plots and interpellations is not full acceptance or full rejection, but a modification of both, where they adjust themselves mutually here and there in the process of constructing a more-or-less understandable version of the self in relation to the subject positions that are linked to the musical interpellations at stake. As Polkinghorne (1988: 182) points out,

> The life narrative is open-ended: future actions and occurrences will have to be incorporated into the present plot. One's past cannot be changed . . . However, the interpretation and significance of the [events of our past] can change if a different plot is used to configure them. Recent events may be such that the person's plot line cannot be adapted to include them. The life plot must then itself be altered or replaced. The rewriting of one's story involves a major life change—both in one's identity and in one's interpretation of the world—and is usually undertaken with difficulties. Such a change is resisted, and people try to maintain their past plots even if doing so requires distorting new evidence.

This kind of approach allows me to further deepen my departure from the homological proposals that suggest music "reflects" identities previously constituted in some other instance, and those that argue music does not reflect identities but instead "constructs" them. To the criticisms I have made in the preceding pages, I want to add the following ones.

I believe that most debates between the reflection and construction theories that relate music and identity do not take fully into account the fragmentary character of the processes through which people end up identifying themselves in terms of nation, gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, and the like. At the same time, many of those theories also neglect the complex articulations that habitually occur between these different identifications. Finally, there is always the possibility that certain types of music "reflect" some of the narrative identifications people "construct" to understand who they are, while others help (to different degrees) in the construction of such identifications.[20] For this reason, I propose the term "to articulate" rather than "to reflect" or "to construct," because it encompasses both possibilities at once.

The fact that the "reflecting/constructing" debate tends to homogenize musical practice in the same way that it homogenizes identities does not contribute to the advancement of our understanding of the complex relationship people establish with music. Thus, more often than not, the attempted relationship is carried out not only between wholly formed identitarian groups but also between these groups and musical practices in toto. If we change the focus of attention to the components of the musical practice instead of its end result, the analysis changes as well. In this

regard, if we consider a musical practice as a complex combination of (at least) sound, lyrics (as complex rhetorical artifacts), performance, and commentary about the music being performed, and we link this complexity to the fragmentary process of identity construction, we end up with the possibility of different identification processes being helped by varying components of the musical performance, sometimes in a very contradictory way.

People do not encounter a musical artifact as a unified entity (youth, migrant, sonidero, cumbiero, chichero, salsero, merenguero, rocker, working-class, Brazilian, male, gay, and the like) in the different venues they attend and allow it to interpellate them as something that they accept because it either "reflects" who they believe they are, or helps them in the construction of who they believe they are from now on. When people engage in these encounters with those music artifacts, they bring along myriad sketches of narrative plots about who they are in terms of their different possible identifications. If these encounters occurred before, it is quite possible that some of these sketches of story lines are already influenced by the music that is being listened or danced to in the musical event at stake, and the new encounter challenges the connection previously accomplished between the narrative identities and the music performance being enacted at the current event. In any case, the multiple possible identifications of our fictitious ~~fan~~ (where the term ~~fan~~ is used "under erasure" à la Derrida, to signify that we don't agree with the term because it unifies and materializes an actor out of what is, sensu stricto, a social practice—that of attending a concert or liking a band or soloist—but, because we want to be understood, we continue making the term visible, albeit questioned by its partial erasure) enter into a process of negotiation with the multiple messages of the musical event (the sound; the lyrics; the performance of the musicians; the performance of other ~~fans~~ at the scene; what is said about the performance on the venue; what is written about the music in magazines, YouTube, websites, Facebook, and the like). Out of that negotiation, situationally and provisionally, a process of identification (or dis-identification) takes place.

At the same time, the fact that when we analyze music genres and events we usually analyze particular sets of identitarian articulations (nation, region and class, class and gender, migration status, class and nation, and so forth) and not others, does not mean that the other possible articulations are absent in the phenomena we study. It only means that we consider the ones we explore to be on the forefront and the others only operating in the background. In fact, more than operating in the background, I believe that all the other possible identifications are present through the echoes of their absences. That is, none of the main articulating identifications that we usually analyze is present in the actual lives of the actors involved in musical events in and by themselves, referring only to themselves. Following Derrida, we can say that

all of them have the traces of many of the other possible identifications as the condition of possibility of their own existence.[21]

If, in the case of my research on cumbia villera in Argentina, for example, gender issues are clearly intertwined with class, age, ethnicity, and region, it is so because they are part of a system of synthesis, displacement, and referrals in which political identifications (being a follower of Peronism), educational status (being a person with a low educational level), and even moral considerations (being considered a "negro de alma"—having a "black soul" regardless of skin color) are present (in their absences) as echoes that add thickness to the articulations of class, age, ethnicity, and region that *do* appear prominently in the scene of cumbia in Argentina.

If I have to rapidly summarize how I currently understand the relationship between music and identity, I would say that I think the sketch of a narrative plot (situationally negotiated in a particular *symbolic exchange*) is what determines the role that the various elements of a musical performance will play in the articulation of the identities in question. I want to make perfectly clear, however, my belief that what actually occurs is the confluence of two performative acts (not the encounter between an identity and a musical performative act, or between an already established narrative and a performative musical event). At the two poles of the encounter, we find actions that are interchanged in the framework of a discursive (understanding "discursive" in the broad sense I advocated above) and non-discursive (affective) encounter.[22]

From the musical event side of the encounter, we know what kind of actions we are talking about: the sound, the lyrics, the performances—everything Stefani and López Cano tell us that music brings, as elements, to be related to a narrative identity because they already contain musical narrative features in themselves, as well as many other elements to which we can ascribe narrative meanings from outside a strictly musical point of view. What I want to emphasize is that from the identification process side of the encounter, we also have a performance, in relation to an audience (real or imagined) of a possible identity (or rather of identifications that unfold at their articulations) that takes the form of a series of imaginary identifications that are negotiated with that audience discursively (through actions and words), but always situationally and relationally. In this sense, these imaginary identifications or identity claims that are negotiated in social encounters are actually actions, performances.

And in the two poles of the relationship, there is history involved as well. Neither does music come empty to meet its listeners, nor do people come empty of narrative plots to an interaction where identitarian elements are at play. They have memories of story lines used in the past that are activated (and, eventually, modified) in a particularized manner, in each new symbolic exchange.

At the same time, the symbolic exchange involved in identitarian encounters is, on the one hand, wider than a mere conversation, because,

performatively, other types of discourses are exchanged, discourses that also have to be decoded in identitarian terms, discourses that for the performer can be either habitual actions or even personal features, but from the point of view of the audience (and even, in certain circumstances, from the point of view of the actor as well) are potential discourses (skin color, phenotype, race, ethnicity, gender, age, accent, height, weight, body movements, and so forth). As Fanon taught us, the black color of the skin is an inescapable datum of extra visibility in a racist society, a datum that profoundly alters how blacks are seen and see themselves in public identity encounters with the "others," where the others are not only others but also "the masters." Likewise, in other situations and other identitarian encounters, there are additional non-linguistic symbolic markers that are as or more important than the linguistic ones in the construction of identity (my Argentine accent while speaking English, for example, which makes me deploy a presentation of the self completely different from the one I present in encounters where Spanish is the lingua franca; or my Argentine accent while speaking Spanish with people from other Latin American countries, which makes me deploy a presentation of the self completely different from the one I present in encounters where the Argentine variant of Spanish is the lingua franca).

On the other hand, the sketches of narrative plots with which people come to an encounter with the others (real or imagined) do not have the same level of structure or presence in memory. There are subject positions with story lines much more reflected upon, practiced, and remembered than others. In societies like the United States, for example, the narrative plots (and performative discourses) associated with race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, and sexual orientation generally have an important level of structuring and reflection, and are often activated with much continuity and recurrence in identitarian encounters. Other subject positions come to these encounters with a much lower degree of structuration and add room for much more "improvisation" to those named above. Still others never move from the level of habitual practice to the level of representation to allow the actor to develop narrative identities and plots. They remain at the level of habit, which, of course, has crucial implications in social encounters, but not at the level of signification.

Notwithstanding this, in all cases the remembered story lines must be activated anew in every novel encounter and in doing so, they are never repeated exactly as they were, but are modified in their performance. This is the reason I prefer to use the expression "sketches of narrative plots or story lines" instead of narrative plots strictu sensu. The two extremes of such a hypothetical activation are the almost unchanged repetition of the character already acted in the past in similar identitarian encounters, versus acting "out of character"—being led by the interaction to performances that are not

recognized as "ours" (of the type "this is not me"), which one can reject or happily embrace, discovering a new variant of the self.

The characters and story lines that take part in identitarian encounters need not be thought of as watertight compartments that are related in terms of their strict subject positions. There is always a certain level of "overlapping" ("articulation" is my preferred term) between the various identifications we advance in identitarian encounters.[23] In most cases this articulation is determined by the special characteristics of the encounter in question. This is what I hoped to illustrate with my research on cumbia villera and the complex articulation of gender, class, and ethnic identifications produced there. At the same time, it often happens that some people have some sort of "master narrative" that, consciously or not, is the basis of many of their story lines or narrative plots. While this is true in general, it does not mean that, in particular (that is, in terms of specific identitarian encounters), such master narratives do not have to be performed locally and in doing so do not suffer some kind of modification.

In relation to music and narrative plots, something similar occurs to what happens in identitarian encounters in general. People encounter a music artifact through the mediation of storyline sketches that, at the time of listening or dancing, complexly relate to the diverse symbolic elements (some of them straight musical narrative elements à la López Cano; some others discursive interpellations) and physical effects that the music artifact offers to them. Some of these sketches are more structured and offer a lesser degree of freedom in relation to the musical narrative elements and interpellations than other, less-structured sketches. This does not mean that there is a single and unique relationship between sketches of story lines and the music artifact.

There are several reasons for this. First, because in the relationship with the music event there operates the same type of performative activation that works in any identitarian encounter, where the actual performance is what ultimately determines the types of identifications that are activated situationally and provisionally. Second, because music is much more polysemous than usual face-to-face encounters and activates multiple possibilities of identification in relation to its various components (sound, lyrics, performance, what is said of music, and the like). In this sense, locally and provisionally, and in relation to a specific musical performance and a special opening to the music event at stake (you never go to a concert or listen to a CD or a track on the iPod for the same reasons), a particular sketch of a story line corresponding to a peculiar subject position (ethnic, for sake of example, but always articulated with other subject positions and with the echoes of many more behind this particular articulation) can be activated (not without modifications) when it is articulated (not without negotiations) with the ethnic interpellation that, for example, the music and lyrics of a song offer. As I pointed out above, that such a

music articulates a narrative ethnic sketch does not mean that other subject positions that also have their own sketches and that encounter the same musical event do not relate to that music event. But in principle, many of these sketches operate in the background, or as I said before, they are present via the echoes of their absences.

This, however, can be altered rapidly when a particular ethnic musical interpellation (following previous example) advances, at the same time, some gender interpellations, for example, interpellations that, situationally and provisionally, cannot easily articulate themselves with the gender narrative sketches with which the listener or dancer arrives to meet the musical artifact in question. Here the person who finds this contradiction between one kind of interpellation and the other (in the sense of one that can be very easily articulated with a valued identification and the other cannot) has to make some decisions about what to do with the interpellations that music offers her/him regarding her/his identitarian sketches. My work on cumbia villera in Argentina shows the complexity of this type of process in relation to gender, class, and ethnic identifications of the youth who dance this music style.

Much more often, however, the same musical performance, given its polysemy, relates complexly (sometimes contradictorily, sometimes not, depending on the type of identification at stake) with different narrative sketches (in terms of the subject positions we relate to in our daily life), and this determines the type of identitarian articulations (and often, pleasure) that we develop in relation to that musical performance. In other words, different narrative identities (among different people, but also within the same person) will process the conflictive meaning of the music performance in different ways.

By way of contrast, what Rossana Reguillo (in this volume) found among her interviewees' use of YouTube and Facebook exemplifies what I am advancing here on the complex relationship between music use and multiple narrative identities. In this regard I agree with her when she claims:

> "Modern" musical culture was constructed on the basis of entire repertoires: complete albums from Pink Floyd, Bruce Springsteen, or Madonna were listened to; constant repertoires, each with its own configuration, were acquired. Today, however, the documentable increase in the consumption of "singles" is rapidly giving way to the so-called playlists that, on iPods, computers, and other reproduction devices, constitute repertoires shaped by the subjectivity of each youngster.

I think that this process of building customized music repertoires, which quite often mix not only very different artists but also equally diverse musical genres, is closely related to the multiple identifications that the youth who build such repertoires construct to understand who they are. In this sense, the fragmentation of musical taste so common nowadays does not mean the disappearance of the identitarian function that music had in the past. The

identitarian function of music is still there, but much more related to the articulation of identifications that, as the repertoires themselves, are fragmented and multiple.

Additionally, the way young people use new technologies, particularly YouTube, cooperates greatly in how music helps them in the construction of their multiple identifications, because YouTube allows the manipulation of time (past, present, and future, so central in any identity construction) so much more explicitly than the vinyl record and the CD. As one of Reguillo's subjects pointed out: "YouTube is what's the latest, recommendations of things that aren't yet on sale...I use it to see live bands that I haven't been able to see or won't see because they're already dead." As Reguillo points out,

> It could be argued that both vinyl records and CDs offer this same repositioning sense, but the addition of the visual dimension and the possibility of seeing a live concert (of bands whose members are dead or that are otherwise inaccessible as [the interviewee] says) produce a different experience; the time barrier is erased, and with a click, [young people] have within reach a musical repertoire that runs from "what isn't yet on sale" and "the latest" to historical archives. Through this type of continuity, YouTube, as immediate present, erases temporal differences.[24]

If the putting together of past and future from the point of view of the present is central in the construction of narrative identities, the YouTube platform is the first platform in the history of how music is visually broadcasted that allows an instant operationalization of the music temporal continuum, highly influencing the way people use music in the construction of their multiple narrative identifications.

The use of YouTube by young people nowadays relates to the way multiple identifications are the norm and not the exception in another way as well. As Reguillo remarks,

> A second temporal-related facet of YouTube is articulated around what one interlocutor in my sample (male Mexican, master's student) calls "continuous playback." By this he means the capacity to use YouTube as a channel for continuous listening without the necessity of any downloading... So the ways YouTube handles temporality that users like can be summed up as follows: immediacy, speed, novelty, repertoires that erase the frontier between past and present, and streaming with no obligation to download, meaning no need to take up hard disc space. This advantage, repeated continually by my cyber-informants, points, in turn, to a key dimension of youth musical cultures: lightness.

Thus, in my view, "lightness" can also be linked to the desire many young people have for avoiding centered identities and opting instead for multiple identifications. If we remember that the "hard drive" [*disco duro* in

Spanish] is also called *disco rígido* [rigid drive] in parts of Latin America, my point becomes clearer. If I am right, what many people seem to be doing is taking advantage of the YouTube platform to advance their multiple identifications constructed via their diverse music tastes in such a way as to avoid the centering or "hardening" of one of them as representing who they are in toto. In a way they are avoiding "othering" themselves, in the sense of making rigid (installing it on the "hard-rigid" drive of their computer) one aspect of who they are, or a peculiar articulation of some of them, and presenting it as representative of who they are as a whole. Instead, they use the "non-downloading" feature of YouTube to maintain the continuous fluidity of their multiple identifications (at the mercy of the fleeting click of a mouse) without centering them into a unified version of the self.[25] As Reguillo points out,

> With its immediacy, lightness, and availability (operating as a database, file/memory lodged "outside" the user's support device), YouTube places an almost unrestricted musical universe within the immediate reach of users, while at the same time turning upside down the concept of "possession," something of supreme importance in the relationship of youths with music. YouTube isn't "a possession" of users; they go there instead to possess multiple, mixed, hybrid, heterogeneous repertoires.

This has obvious identitarian implications. Thus, the clear "non-possession" of YouTube's repertoire is connected to the "non-possession" of identities as well. In this regard, what the immediate and fleeting use of YouTube videos shows is how the construction of identifications is a constant process that is plural and has no ending. Paraphrasing Reguillo, one can claim that while, on the one hand, "YouTube isn't 'a possession' of users; they go there instead to possess multiple, mixed, hybrid, heterogeneous repertoires," on the other hand nobody possesses an identity. [26] Instead, what we perform is a continuous process of articulating multiple identifications in a more-or-less understandable version of the self.[27]

Another very interesting identitarian possibility allowed by YouTube is singled out by Reguillo;

> Accelerated apprenticeships as one outcome deriving from YouTube use was frequently mentioned in my "conversations" with young cybernauts. However, the apprenticeships referred to were not only the formal, linear kind: learning also took place when apprentices "lost themselves" and proceeded to drift with no particular itinerary in mind.

I would claim that this "getting lost" and having oneself carried on in a constant trip without a planned route is, actually, allowing the possibility of finding oneself in some of the multiple identifications that constitute us. Thus, while on the one hand the suggestions for additional videos that

pop up on YouTube every time a user selects a video they are already familiar with allows these young people to learn that there is music they didn't know they liked, on the other hand this discovery opens up the possibility of seeing themselves as having identifications they either didn't know they had in advance, or (more probably), finding music interpellations that appeal to some of the diverse identifications they knew they had, but in novel ways or for the first time from a musical point of view. As one of Reguillo's interviewees pointed out,

> I begin to look for some friend's recommendation on "*feis*" [Facebook], and from there I don't know where I'll end up because I let myself be carried away (when I like something; if I don't, I start all over again), and the other day, for instance, I started looking for a song by a group from here, from my city (Toluca), and because of the chords I ended up listening to Bach, who I only knew a little about, what I learned in school. And it sparked my curiosity [*ya me piqué*] because I liked it a lot, like the style of this man was awesome [*muy padre*], and on YouTube as well I watched two documentaries on who the man was, awesome [*muy padre*]. I don't know if I like classical music, I only know I like Bach because it's like very current [*como muy de ahora*], like I can identify. And I do this a lot, I just enter and start clicking until I find things I like.

Hence, starting from the video of a rock band that he knew was going to interpellate him in some of his multiple identifications, this interviewee ends up discovering another successful music interpellation (it seems that through the chords of the song, but it could have been through any other aspect of the music performance) he didn't expect was going to get articulated with some of his fragmented identifications: Bach. Pointing out that "I don't know if I like classical music, I only know I like Bach" is very important for several reasons in the way this person constructs his multiple identifications. First, it is clear that he does not want to be "othered" in a new identity as a "classical music fan" that his discovery of Bach could eventually entail (avoiding the homogenization and loss of flexibility and multiplicity that being addressed as a genre follower usually involves). Second, he only accepts the interpellation of Bach's music from the point of view of some sort of sketch of his narrative identity (we don't know which one in the text, but it can be in terms of age, gender, class, and so on) that was triggered by the casual discovery of some kind of connection between his local rock band and Bach. As Reguillo notes: "What is relevant in these errant searches would seem to be the relation between 'discursive competence' and the 'broadening of the musical universe' in a symbolization process open to becoming 'an other' (somebody else), musically speaking." To this I would add that, perhaps, it is not so much "becoming an other (somebody else), musically speaking" that is at stake,

but rather complexly becoming "more of oneself" through the discovery of new facets of our multiple identifications via the successful interpellation of a music that, until such an encounter, was as alien as the identification that eventually triggered. Or, perhaps, it is to add thickness to an already known identification, which becomes more complex through the interpellation of an unexpected musical artifact. As one of Reguillo's interviewees pointed out: "I like to read the opinion of fans and detractors of what I like to listen to, this way I find new recommendations, as part of a continuous search of what I still do not know I already am, of what I can eventually become, or of what I want to be more of."

At the same time, young people's frequent use of the "share" option on YouTube is a very interesting illustration of how sharing a music search is, actually, a way of sharing identifications with others to whom one sends the repertoires one has built. Thus, the shared repertoire is an implicit question, something like, "What is it that you like of what I'm telling you, performatively, that I like? Tell me, of the things I'm revealing as identifying me, which also identify you?"

What another of Reguillo's interviewees expressed brings us to an additional identitarian dimension of the use of music videos on YouTube:

> YouTube brings me closer to the music when it is accompanied by original videos of the artists singing, talking about their music, which I find fascinating. There are also really interesting videos of concerts filmed by fans of samba artists, for example, singing in bars, etc. Then I find links to videos with news about them, versions other people make of their songs, and I read a lot of the commentaries that show me how an artist and his/her music affect people.

Here, the interviewee points out how YouTube allows, almost simultaneously, the putting together of the different interpellatory capabilities of music that, before this new platform, were usually separated by a certain passage of time, and, somehow, diluted in its emotional effect. "What is said about the music" (by the musicians, critics, and other fans) is as important as the sound, the lyrics, and the performance in the way music articulates identifications, and can be accessed simultaneously with those other three dimensions—not being deferred, like in the past, to printed materials (magazines, newspapers, and the like), which usually appeared well after the music event actually occurred. In addition, knowing what other fans of the same music do with that music (the versions of the songs some people put on YouTube, usually illustrated with personalized images and photographs), as well as the comments they post for different videos, allows these young "cybernauts" to clearly see how that kind of music affects other people and relate such affect to their own, establishing a complex system of identifications with the

original videos, the videos people create with the songs, the comments on those videos, and the like.

If to this use of YouTube we add the constant interface that young people create between Facebook and YouTube, the multi-identitarian dimension of the new technologies becomes even more relevant. As Reguillo points out in her chapter, on Facebook people post songs, but accompanied by quotes with opinions and moods, and therefore, "what is manifested in those states are the sets of codes–subjective, political, emotive, erudite—that 'open up' a universe of possible meanings based solely on the music." The interesting thing is that if sharing extra-musical opinions about music already occurred before the digital age and the invention of YouTube and Facebook, and many times people related to music precisely for these reasons, novel technologies open up the possibility for others to see those opinions written on the wall of Facebook all the time. In other words, my intention is for others to read the opinions, with the effect that they might view me as a complex person and see what of me is in them and what of them is in me.

Hence, these written comments make much more possible and explicit than in the past for people to discursively deploy how music articulates their different identifications and how it affects them. Before the ability to make them explicit, such articulations and effects were very limited—and the opportunity to make them explicit with the "fixity" of a written quasi-public domain like the Facebook wall was virtually nonexistent. In this regard, we are confronting a qualitative difference in terms of how the "public sphere" operates regarding processes of identification and their relationship to music. Obviously, the digital sphere shares some aspects with the "modern," analog, social sphere, but the differences are substantive and they clearly impinge on narrativity. First of all, this is because the public-private division is much more complex than in the past. But in addition, we have a problem of scale. While the construction of characters in face-to-face encounters involved few people, the posting of profiles on Facebook (or tweets on Twitter) involves thousands or even millions of people. Individuals are aware of this difference in terms of scale and construct their public personae accordingly, affecting, of course, narrativity. Another issue is in terms of permanence. In the past people could always change their personae in following encounters with the same or similar people. Right now, with all the problems of permanence occurring on the Internet (for instance, if an individual erases something from their site, someone could have still copied those things prior to their deletion, making "permanent" something that people thought was only "temporary"), many people are finding that their past haunts them in more fixed ways than before the advent of the Internet. This is particularly problematic to young people and the experimentation they partake in while young, which, with all the "traces" out there in the Internet, "haunt" them even after they have moved away from those experiments.

Going back to the issue of identitarian processes in terms of music, it is obvious that, in the past, the identitarian articulation of music was just as important. Nowadays, however, it is also important to verbalize it, write it, and share it with many others in ways that were not present in the past. That is the reason for Reguillo pointing out that

> Facebook users who constantly post links on YouTube, accompanied by informative or emotional "states of mind," acquire "value" and authority through their willingness to share discoveries and propose transit routes in the musical universe. "Creators' creators," these users trigger conversations as well, in which music becomes the pretext for crafting other texts and exchanging opinions, information, and so on. This is why the "state of mind" accompanying a post is crucial. In the YouTube/Facebook interface, music is not the only thing that is shared. In addition to music, the person who posts the song is also proposing a reading code to his/her interlocutor or "friends."

I would add to Reguillo's insight that I see those "friends" who share new findings and propose "transit routes in the musical universe" as becoming important identitarian guides or mediators as well, providing with their videos and posts those "reading codes" that are so important to transform a music interpellation into a *successful* music interpellation,[28] when such music address can be articulated to the narrative plots of the people who, click after click, "discover" who they are.

To further complicate the already complex relationship between music and identity, it should be noted that representations of identity in terms of interpellations (the main concern in the earlier pages) are not the only things involved when people encounter a musical artifact. When people listen or dance to music, there is always flesh-in-motion at stake, and that flesh-in-motion eventually can or cannot be reflected upon (depending on the encounter), and may move from unreflexive action to the kind of action that can be understood in terms of identity.

In a nutshell, my interpretation of how representations and corporeal habit/action work in particular encounters (encounters in general, not only those linked to music) goes like this: we enter an encounter with a varied combination of identifications (subject positions for which we have developed sketches of narrative plots in the past and consciously know we are performing in the present encounter) and habitual movements of our bodies in space (less conscious displays of possible identifications). Some of those body performances are, of course, linked to narrative plots well rehearsed over time (in terms of gender, age, race, and ethnicity, for example), but, at the moment of the encounter, they work more as "givens" than conscious elections. Some other body performances are linked to less-rehearsed subject positions[29] and can become more or less conscious, depending on the encounter at stake.

Still others are linked to our sheer humanity (the blinking of the eyes, for instance). But in any case, both our conscious identifications and our movements in space (habitual or not, more about this later) are, for the others involved in the encounter, "discourses" that those others have to read to be able to interact with us in relation to the subject positions they believe we are displaying in the encounter at stake.[30]

At the same time, at any point in the encounter, and linked to the development of the relationship involved, the habitual movement in space can travel from the realm of the non-conscious to that of representation and identification if that is required for the encounter at stake. Additionally, at a certain point in the interaction, more often than not, people start moving their bodies in non-habitual ways as well, consciously choosing actions that buttress the identifications they want to display on the scene. Therefore, what we have in actual encounters and relationships is a constant back and forth from identification/representation to habit/action, always depending on the requirements of the interaction.[31] And what I have pointed out earlier also applies to what people do when the encounter they are participating in involves listening or dancing to music.

If this is the case, the interesting thing that can occur when people encounter a musical artifact is that the discursive representations of who they are (actualized by the sketches of narrative identities they activate in the encounter at stake) and their body performances in the space of the encounter can differ; or, alternatively (more of this later), the sketch of a narrative identity that people bring to the musical encounter may ask the body to perform something the body cannot perform (for whatever reason), inciting some sort of "identity" crisis. Or, vice versa, the body performs something in that space that, for the time being, still does not have a narrative identity sketch.

I want to illustrate this occurrence with the study done by Rubén López Cano (2008) in Mexico, where young people who verbally addressed themselves as "heterosexual" actively participate in gay dance forms in the Mexican sonidera scene. In this particular case, we can say that many times the body "speaks" what a linguistic discourse does not want to utter, because saying it would imply a more or less rational recognition of an identification that, for various reasons, it is difficult to recognize as our own with all the weight the verb "to be" has in our language (in some other cases, people do not actually know how to speak an identification they clearly deploy through their habitual movement in space). Thus, the "doing" of the body (how this particular body affects other bodies in the scene) can eventually function for those affected by such movements (the actor himself included), as a discourse whose role is to prevent the full recognition of "being" that any linguistic acceptance of an interpellation implies.

The practice, via a discourse anchored to the body, of a less heteronormative sexuality at dance halls does not transform these young people into

"gay." They "play," in the recreational realm of the dance hall, with the fantasy of being something else sexually. That it is very important that they can do it, that surely there are many "leaks" out of the dances and in relation to their other everyday life identifications, is important as well, but this does not "center" them into a new sexual identity as gay, an identification that they roundly deny at the representational level. I think that, for these young people, the very possibility of playing with the limits of hegemonic sexuality is related to the avoidance of its verbalization, to circumvent moving their flesh-in-motion from the realm of action to the realm of representation (from a doing to a being, from affect to meaning and symbolization).[32]

In this sense I think that part of the "trick" these young Mexicans perform for simultaneously enabling multiple dimensions of their selves (some of them identifications, some others unreflected upon movements of the body in space, habitual or new ones) that could potentially collide with one another is to maintain some of them verbally narrativized, while keeping others unverbalized, at the level of action. Which ones are verbalized and which ones are not can change over time, in different spaces/scenes, or even in the same encounter if such an encounter requires that move—of course, provided the representational aspect of the movement in space is available to the person who wants to perform such a move, because many times, it is not and it will act only at the level of affect; in other words, this refers to keeping some dimensions of the self in the order of the conscious identification, while others are kept only in the realm of the unreflected-upon level of the affective embodied action.

In common parlance (which is unaware of the long philosophical tradition that harshly criticizes the sharp distinction the use of these concepts implies),[33] this allows actors to keep some of their dimensions of self in the order of "being," while others are kept only in the realm of the embodiment of the "doing," in such a way that the body allows for the performance of an action that eventually could be linked to a particular subject position—gay, in my example—without the necessary taking on of that eventual subject position as an identification. In other words, some individuals may do purposively (and I would venture to use the word "strategically" here as well) what most people do habitually in their everyday lives, that is, to have at the level of representation certain understandings of who they are in terms of their varied subject positions and, at the same time, to perform, through the movement of their bodies in space (their affective actions), those same identifications, but also (and more importantly for my argument) other possible identifications without moving them from the realm of performance to the realm of representation (affective actions that, stricto sensu, cannot be really called "identifications"). The move from "performance" (action, affect) to "representation" does not take place, either because the particular encounter people are participating in does not require such a move, or because they still do not know how to represent such an aspect of their self.

What is my point here? I find it much easier to keep the “contradiction” between the identity of “straight man” in everyday life and a more open sexual behavior in the music sonidera scene if the identification is verbalized and the behavior is only performed through the body. Of course, this does not mean that I consider the “doing” less real than the “being”; they are working on different levels of “reality” (or, more properly, “becoming” reality in different circumstances), with both contributing to the managing of potentially contradictory identifications that, somehow, in certain locales and situations, have to be “reconciled” (but perhaps not in other circumstances in which they can live together without much problems). Here, the relation Butler establishes between performance and performativity and the idea of “materialization” of the body comes once more to the forefront, where the “being” is a provisional materialization of the “doing.” In my interpretation, however, at the moment of the action there is a constant back and forth between the “being” and the “doing,” between meaning and affect, where representation and (until further notice) unreflected action enter and exit the scene of the encounter depending on the collusion of the diverse sketches of narrative plots at play in the scene.[34]

We should not forget that what is unreflected embodied action for the actor is usually discourse for the audience. With that being the case, the audience always has the potential power to turn unreflected action into a well-defined identitarian discourse when, for instance, a participant of the same Mexican sonidera scene loudly calls a dancer “joto” [the Mexican equivalent for “faggot”], and the dancer is forced to do something about the interpellation at stake, by necessity moving the action from the level of a mere doing to that of an identity (denied, accepted, or ignored).[35]

At the same time, as I mentioned earlier, in the complex relationship I claim exists between the unreflected-upon affective action of the body in space and the representation of possible identifications via the interpellations we accept in our everyday life, it is also possible that the sketch of a narrative identity people bring to the musical encounter is asking the body to perform something that the body cannot (for whatever reason) perform, inciting a different sort of “identity” crisis. Let us consider the following example to fully understand what I am talking about. One of my students, who is transgender, shared with me a brief essay he wrote in 1996 (before he underwent breast surgery). I will quote (with his permission) parts of it:

> I have often felt forced to weigh facets of myself against one another. My sixteen-year-old self let metal take the lead in physical presentation … My fourteen-through-nineteen-year-old self lived and looked 80s metal. That meant rarely washed clothing, unbrushed hair that reached three-quarters of the way down my back, and a healthy diet of Twisted Sister and Skid Row. I head-banged on request (requests were common).

> I was rarely perceived as queer . . . That fell apart a few months ago. Years of inquiry had finally led me to acknowledge my male identity and, with the help of friends and a few supportive faculty at [name of the University], I decided to begin living as a guy full-time. "Living as myself," I called it. While I would eventually learn to look at myself and see a guy regardless of my presentation, the majority of people would prove unable/unwilling to do so. The female body threw people off—and several factors made it easy to recognize my female body. I am (by choice) non-operative and non-hormonal. My face and voice are feminine. I have a large chest and an hourglass figure. Some compromises, as far as I could tell, would be necessary if I wanted others to consider referring to and thinking of me as a guy. I began binding my chest and wearing button-down shirts over my trademark black t-shirts. I cut my hair. End results: I was occasionally perceived as male, frequently as queer, and never as an 80s metal fan unless I went out of my way to make that clear. Looks of respect, solidarity, and (every now and then) interest gave way to puzzled stares at shows. When I caught glimpses of myself in mirrors, I recognized my body, but not its outfits—I was living as myself but dressing like someone else. Thus far, it has been worthwhile. I can't imagine presenting as a woman again. I am still planning to forego testosterone and surgery, which means that binding and short hair are likely to continue. This means that I may never pass well. I have also tried to reclaim some aspects of my preferred look. A leather jacket has helped tremendously—I pass for a rocker fairly well and can't really wear those obnoxious button-down shirts with it, leaving no choice but to dress as I like. My reflection better resembles me. When I walk silently by strangers, they have a decent chance of perceiving a metal-loving, teenage boy. For now, that's close enough.

What Joseph discovered was that his attempts to pass in gender terms (above all, cutting his hair and changing his clothes) were jeopardizing one of his more cherished identifications, that of a heavy metal rocker. Here we do not have a clash between a "doing" and a "being" as in the previous example, but a discrepancy between two "doings" (performing manliness and performing "metalness"), which were the non-linguistic discourses Joseph used to advance some of his most important identitarian "beings": male and heavy metal fan.[36] In order to somehow "rescue" the identitarian claim that clearly was suffering from his newly acquired gender identity (or at least the way he, at that time, understood how this male identity had to be deployed), he relied on a new change of outfit, incorporating into his attire a piece of apparel clearly identified with the heavy metal scene: a leather jacket. In other words, Joseph's narrative plot does not want his new identity as a "full-time guy" to disavow his former heavy metal identification, even though the new presentation of the self he sees as important to deploy such a gender character (above

all, the short hair) seems to require so. That is the reason why, for the time being, he looks for some kind of "compromise," and here is where the leather jacket enters the identitarian scene. But things are not as simple as they look and, some years later, Joseph changed the way he deploys these two identifications one more time because it seems that the leather jacket was not enough to fully rescue his heavy metal fan identity, which was jeopardized by the way he decided to deploy his "full-time guy" identification. Reflecting on how his male identity evolved over time, in 2002 he wrote the following:

> Even before coming to view myself as transgender, I was caught up in the discourse of passing. I spent hours poring over websites with advice for female-assigned people who wished to be perceived as male-assigned (and therefore as "real" men). I convinced myself that short hair, flattened breasts, and the pursuit of medical transition were essential for transmasculine living. These preconceptions were reinforced by some (though not all!) of the transpeople I encountered. Many were fixated with passing. We spoke endlessly about accessing surgeries and hormone therapy, bathroom safety tips, clothing choices, sitting/standing/walking motions, and conversational styles. Transgender identity was presumed to take precedence over all else.

As we can see, the issue of "passing" became central for Joseph, requiring him to go much further than he anticipated in his previous essay in terms of the transformation of his body, a drastic transformation that he now saw as an inescapable requirement to finally live his life as a "full-time guy." He therefore underwent breast surgery (something that he didn't want to do some years earlier). However, the "congruence" issue regarding his heavy metal fan identification didn't disappear with this move. On the contrary, it became worse. Part of the problem sprang from the kind of heavy metal scene that Joseph favored, which, in itself, has a very peculiar way of addressing male masculinity. As Joseph explains:

> Within the world of heavy metal, particularly the glam rock of the 1980s, the standards of ideal masculinity were [not quite]... typical. Men hit the stage with long hair, tight clothing, and layers upon layers of makeup. Curiously and compellingly, this presentation was regarded as a sort of hyper-masculinity by many artists within and fans of the genre—only the best were "badass enough to be glam." This sort of masculinity merged virulent male heterosexuality in conjunction with a transgressively feminine gender presentation. I was obsessed with heavy metal. I was fully confident that, had I been assigned male at birth, I would have emulated those masculine standards. I would have kept my hair long and worn sloppy makeup. That said, I was not assigned male at birth, and I felt unprepared/unable to live as though I had been. I cut my hair, took out

my earrings, studied the movements of gender congruent men, and did whatever else I could to follow the guidance of my fellow transpeople.

Regardless of his endless attempts to follow what seems to be the hegemonic discourse regarding transgender passing, Joseph's narrative plot had problems articulating that discourse with his other valued identifications, above all with the non-linguistic gender discourse (in this particular case the habitual way to dress in the rock scene he frequented—the "doing" of the "being") emanating from the glam rock he so enjoyed. Therefore, it is not by chance that at a certain point those contradictions exploded and an identitarian "solution" had to be advanced to, somehow, "solve" the problem and allow Joseph to enjoy both his newly acquired male identity and his long-standing heavy metal fan identification. As Joseph recounts:

> All went well for about one year. Socially transitioning into (trans)manly life was laborious and difficult at times, but I did not doubt that my efforts were worthwhile. Then I went to a rock concert. A fantastic one. So fantastic, in fact, that I rocked my head forward with abandon—only to find that nothing happened. There was no hair to whip around. No one around me moved out of the way, or got caught on my unwieldy mane. I found myself absolutely devastated! That this affected me at all was a bit of a surprise—but I could never have predicted the intensity of my reaction. I resolved to grow my hair back out, and developed the following choppy slogan for myself: *it's more important to look metal than to look like a man*.

In terms of the relationship that I argue exists among discourses, habits, narrative plots, affects and performances, what occurred to Joseph in that concert is that he felt interpellated by the music as a heavy metal fan; his narrative plot gladly accepted the interpellation (that is, everything was staged to the completion of a "successful" interpellation), but his "new" male body (as he decided to deploy it to help him pass) was now unable to provide him with the usual tools to enact his well-rehearsed heavy metal identification. In other words, with his now short hair, he was unable to do the "doings" he usually performed to fully accomplish his metal fan "being." He was unable to affect and be affected by the movement of his hair in the way he had come to expect and as he was able to do in the past.[37] Joseph continues:

> Flat-chested life and masculine-typical movements proved as liberating and comfortable as I had hoped. Yet the aspects of my presentation that contradicted what I perceived as heavy metal masculinity remained awkward and forced. I began phasing them out. At this point, I have acquired super long hair. Since having chest surgery in 2001, I have even begun wearing more form-fitting clothing—the combination of a permanently

flat chest, female-typical curvature, and insistence on masculine pronouns fits well with my notion of being "badass enough" to be glam.

Therefore, even at the risk of jeopardizing his passing efforts, Joseph has decided that "*it's more important to look metal than to look like a man*." But not really, because what Joseph finally accomplished with his current "doings" (growing his hair to his waist, wearing form-fitting clothes and the like) is a particular way of articulating two of his most cherished identifications, that of a man and heavy metal fan. Now, every time he sees himself in the mirror and reflected in the eyes of his fellow heavy metal fans while rocking his head at concerts, what he discovers is the image of *a male, "heavy metal" style, "badass enough to be glam*," an identification (achieved through a series of well-thought "doings") that has now become his new articulation of two of his more beloved "beings." Embodiment of his heavy metal identification (the "doing of the being") is so important for Joseph that he cannot see himself going to the concerts and enjoying the music, by, let's say, only "listening" to it, without participating in the habitual body rituals of the genre, without affecting and being affected by the movements of bodies in those rituals: "My love of heavy metal is very much linked with the use of my body through the acts of headbanging and pounding the air—activities that I can and do engage in by myself, but prefer to engage in socially amidst several tens or hundreds or thousands of fellow listeners."[38] Not only that, but the embodiment of such an identification clearly implies a much more difficult process of portrayal of his manliness outside the concerts, and a trying way his body affects and is affected by other bodies in spaces other than concerts (the reason why many times, in public spaces, he is interpellated as a woman). This means that he is willing to jeopardize the way he presents himself in public 90 percent of the time in order to "defend" his heavy metal identification the remaining 10 percent when he goes to heavy metal concerts.

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While I am advancing these theoretical proposals, I am nevertheless fully aware of the possible shortcomings they entail. For instance, we still have to answer the question of why some people have particular plots instead of others, and to answer it discursively, without resorting to homological approaches or using hegemony to explain everything (with all these said, also recognizing how important social constrains and hegemonic discourses are for understanding the prevalence of some plots upon others). However, I believe that the complex relationship among social identifications—musical practices, interpellations, narratives about myself and the Others—that I am proposing here allows us to advance in the understanding of the intricate process of identity construction. At least we now have a new and more concrete place to search for the complex relationship between music and identity—in

the sketches of narrative plots and the social interactions that different social actors build to understand their identifications. Moving in that direction, we offer, I think, an additional avenue to answer "questions regarding the uses and functions of sound and music as an affective force" (Thomson and Biddle 2013: 19), where instead of only dealing with issues of "what does music mean?" we also deal with issues of "what does music do?"

Notes

1. Even more recently, another important theoretical development has impacted cultural studies with clear implications for our understanding of identitarian processes: the so-called affective turn (Clough and Halley 2007; see also Massumi 2006). As Thomson and Biddle (2013: 6) point out, " 'the affective turn' marks a (return to) interest in the relationship between bodies (in the broadest sense—including animal bodies, part-bodies and inorganic-bodies) and the fluctuations of feeling that shape the experiential in ways that may impact upon but nevertheless evade conscious knowing." In terms of the relationship between affect and music, the affective turn emphasizes the extent to which music "cannot be thought without an appreciation of its affective dimension, and to emphasise the extent to which, in the tradition of Spinoza and Nietzsche, this dimension must be understood as bound up with the corporeal nature of musical experience" (Gilbert 2004: 18). In other words, the idea is that music mobilizes bodies through affective transmission. Music creates a particular ambience or atmosphere, via the induction, modulation, and circulation of moods, feelings, and intensities, which are felt, but, at the same time, do not belong to anybody in particular (Thomson and Biddle 2013: 5). In this chapter I will only briefly refer to it because I am still in the process of trying to incorporate some of its insights into my own theoretical toolbox, above all because the affective turn somehow challenges some of the theoretical presuppositions I usually rely on (see Gilbert 2004, Thompson and Biddle 2013, and Beasley-Murray 2010).

2. Often confused, performance and performative are two distinct concepts. Butler points out (1999: XXV): "My theory sometimes waffles between understanding performativity as linguistic and casting it as theatrical. I have come to think that the two are invariably related, chiasmically so, and that a reconsideration of the speech act as an instance of power invariably draws attention to both its theatrical and linguistic dimensions." Joan Nagel (2003: 51) offers a very good description of their differences. According to her, the body is an instrument of performance and a site of performativity. In that regard, we can say that many identifications (like gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, religion, region, and the like) are both performed (consciously, with an intention and explicitly) and performative (unconscious, unintended, and implicit). The notion of performance is linked to the work of Erving Goffman, who claimed that people adorn and use their bodies to present themselves in the different roles they perform in society. In this regard, people perform their gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, age, and the like in the way they walk, talk, sit, arrange their hair, use their hands, establish eye contact, create an appropriate distance when relating to other people, greet, and so forth. On the other hand, the concept of performativity is associated with the work of Judith Butler. In the particular case of gender performativity, Nagel (2003: 52) points out:

> By *performativity* I refer to the ways in which we affirm and reaffirm, construct and reconstruct hegemonic social roles and definitions. We participate, for instance,

> in performative constructions of gender by our daily repetitive acts of accepted gender performance, by our tacit or implicit approval of the proper gender performances of others, by what we take for granted, assume, expect, demand from ourselves and others in terms of gender appearance and behavior.

I agree with Nagel (and Butler) when she claims (2003: 53) that performance and performativity are both complementary and interdependent. While performances *enact*, performativity *constitutes*, and "the performative durability of gender regimes depends on constantly being reinforced and reconstituted by encore gender performances. Performative orders can weaken or mutate to the extent that the performances on which they depend are absent, defective, or subversive."

3. However, the fact that musical practices are discourses that convey meanings with precise identitarian capabilities does not mean that music does not also have "*physical effects* which can be identified, described and discussed but which are not the same thing as it having *meanings*" (Gilbert 2004: 6). In other words, meaning does not exhaust the effects of music on people, but music meaning plays a central role in processes of identification. In this regard, even the affective turn (with all its emphasis on affects beyond signification) still concedes a very important role to signifying processes. As Massumi (2006: 7) points out:

> The emphasis [of his approach] is on process before signification or coding. The latter are not false or unreal. They are truly, really stop-operations . . . The models criticized earlier [the model of positions in a grid and signification, representation, ideology and the like] do not need to be trashed. They are not just plain wrong. It's just that their sphere of applicability must be recognized as limited to a particular mode of existence, or a particular dimension of the real (the degree to which things coincide with their own arrest) . . . Cultural laws of positioning and ideology are accurate in a certain sphere (where the tendency to arrest dominates). Right or wrong is not the issue. The issue is to demarcate their sphere of applicability . . . This "limitation" does not belittle the approaches in question . . . From this point of view, the operations they describe are little short of miraculous.

Narrative processes of identification are precisely those processes where "the tendency to arrest dominates," where the actors in particular identitarian encounters have to "risk" a provisional understanding of who they are to be able to, at least, start a social interaction. That is the reason why Gilbert (2004: 20) also claims that: "Laclau's proposition that forms of rhetoric be understood as the basis for an entire ontology of experience . . . would still have a great deal of validity, but would have to be understood as limited to those areas of culture subject to the particular forms of organisation which that vocabulary was appropriate to describe."

4. If this criticism is true for the Birmingham school in general, it is less true for some of its practitioners, above all for Paul Willis, who early on was trying to find an alternative route to this problem. As Trondman, Lund, and Lund (2011: 585–586) point out, for Willis:

> The significations of cultural items are socioculturally constructed but with an unavoidable starting point in the objective possibilities (and limitations) necessitated

by each item's own internal, given meaning structure… When a social group establishes a cultural relation with a specific cultural item, it is the already-existing and given objective possibilities of the specific object that are used in the socio-symbolic articulation of the group's subjective experiences of its socio-material and positional conditions. Thus, the cultural relation is not entirely arbitrary. When the relation is established, the selected object already has some form of internal, given meaning that causes it to be selected; however, as soon as it is chosen, a socio-cultural production of meaning is also set in motion… the chosen cultural item possesses something specifically attractive that is not socioculturally constructed, but still possible to change without losing the given meaning. Consequently, the objective possibilities work as a proposal for new meaning-making, even in unexpected directions. According to Willis, it is this not quite arbitrary, but at the same time uncertain, process of creation that constitutes the heart of the flux in which the generation of culture and meaning flows, is maintained, and changes. It is for this reason that the same cultural item can be used by different groups…This means that despite its inner, given objective possibility, a cultural item will not always acquire one and the same meaning as a consequence of the cultural relation between group and item. On the basis of the same objective possibilities, the meanings that follow from socio-cultural use and creative exploration of a cultural item can acquire many different significations. Therefore, in Willis's terminology, the outcome of the cultural relation between group and object is "polyvalent" (1978: 201): it can comprise many links and varying meanings.

5. As a matter of fact, even any of those diverse elements in music is a complex combination of differentiated parts. Take the case of lyrics, for instance. As Frith points out (1998: 159): "In listening to the lyrics of pop songs we actually hear three things at once: *words*, which appear to give songs and independent source of semantic meaning; *rhetoric*, words being used in a special musical way…; and *voices*, words being spoken or sung in human tones which are themselves 'meaningful', signs of persons and personality." That is, "how words work in song depends not just on what is said, the verbal content, but also on how it is said—on the type of language used and its rhetorical significance; on the kind of voice in which it is spoken" (Frith 1998: 163–164).

6. For a similar critique on the way Laclau proposes "readability" to account for how a particular content succeeds in displacing another content as a stand-in for the Universal, see Zizek 1999: 179.

7. Reading the first draft of this chapter, Illa Carrillo Rodríguez pointed out that, while agreeing with me in criticizing Frith, she still sees another problem with Frith's formulation: "Embodying and representing are overlapping, rather than discrete, practices. In accounting for concrete identification processes, it is extremely difficult to separate one from the other." I completely agree with Illa on this point.

8. As Sayer (2004: 73) points out:

Identity… is a re(-)presentation of the subject, constructed wholly in the realm of the imaginary… Identity is not the living being of the subject, but its *imago*, forged (in both senses of the word) out of the *memory* of what once was but no longer is; and it is in the guise of this counterfeit that the subject enters the symbolic register of society. We could express this in the simple, if enigmatic, formula: *identity=being in denial.*

But, why does identity=being in denial? Sayer continues (2004: 75):

> What . . . the fixation of the flux of being in an *imago* of identity denies, but at the same time enables us to live in denial of, is the dispersal of the subject from which we began; the non-identity that follows from its original constitution in language . . . This specious *releve* is no small accomplishment—to immobilize the differance of subjectivity in the singularity of identity is a deception of breath-taking proportions. It comes, however, at a cost. For what it requires is nothing less than that we treat the flux of the real as imaginary, in order to treat the fixity of the imaginary as real.

9. Reading a previous version of this chapter, Jairo Moreno pointed out, "I would note that, unlike Born and Hesmondhalgh, you place some 'agency' in the music: they appeal to psychology, which explains their emphasis on the individual, and you do not. In fact, you anticipate the model of actant of Latour that Born advocates nowadays." I want to thank Jairo for an outstanding reading (and criticism) of my original version.

10. I would like to thank Jairo Moreno for pointing this out while reading a previous version of the text.

11. This is a turning point at which theories of representation like the ones I was using so far met the new affective theories that try to overcome their shortcomings. As Gilbert (2004: 19) points out: "The idea of 'discourse' as always in part a matter of transmissions of force as well as signification is not far from the assertion that all discourse has a performative as well as a descriptive character. This idea—popularised by Judith Butler . . . necessarily implies that all discourse has to be understood as operating through the production of effects, rather than simply through the organisation of knowledge and meanings."

12. Here we can start thinking on a possible point of convergence between my current proposal of identitarian articulations and new theories of affect. For instance, can we discuss the modulation of affect as facilitating the establishment of the provisional and situational alliances I am talking about? Is the materialization of the imaginary narrative identities through music facilitated by such a modulation of affect? At this very early stage in my attempt to incorporate theories of affect to my account on how people construct identifications through music, I can easily imagine that energy, as a basic modulation of affect in a punk concert, for instance, can work as a kind of "affective field" (a la quantum mechanics) that tremendously helps in the establishment of those alliances. I can also easily imagine how the "good guy vibes" as the modulation of affect in a James Taylor concert can do the same for a different articulation of music and identifications in those concerts.

13. There is a growing literature on narrative identities that claim that the search for "coherence" in one's life is not universal. A good summary of that discussion can be found in Hyvärinen, Hydén, Saarenheimo, and Tamboukou 2010.

14. Bamberg's main point is this (2004: 223):

> In entering the narrative realm the point or claim that is under construction becomes contextualized in the form of exemplary actions by exemplary characters that are appropriated (from a speaker's point of view) to 'act out' and to make currently relevant the claim the speaker intends to convey for the here-and-now of the

> conversation. This principle holds whether the speaker talks about him/herself, his/her life, or about others. However, inserting the self of the teller into the storyline opens the door to the possibility of an 'I' that has been or even still 'is' in flux, is open to interpretation, and can be viewed from different angles... In other words, the sequence of I-positions in the story-world are the means to bring off a claim with regard to "this is the way I want you to understand me," here and now.

15. Bamberg opposes the canonical conception of narrative identity studies, but does not do so with a frontal attack on the concept of "coherence" so dear to this canonical tradition. For this author, "the project of 'recontextualizing narratives' should not rest on the notion of consciousness nor cognition [that characterizes the canonical tradition], but on 'action'—or better, on what is being accomplished between co-conversationalists in terms of their strategic management of positioning selves vis-à-vis others and vis-à-vis dominant subject positions in the form of master narratives."

16. As Ramón Pelinski (2000: 169–170) correctly points out:

> What we often forget is that musical structures, although in themselves or by their very nature cannot articulate any particular configuration of meaning (i.e, they don't have fixed interpellations), have, however, a limited provision to materialize (or symbolize) some meanings and not others, provision that has been arbitrarily assigned to them by the habits of a particular culture. (For example, when the Barcelona soccer club lost their hopes of winning the 1997 Spanish league in a match against a team that had dropped to the second division, the Catalan TV transmission accompanied the news with a funeral march, not a polka.)

I would add to Pelinski's comment that, often, through parody, music can be used just to mean exactly the opposite of what it was linked to mean so far. Also, in their very interesting reworking of the pioneer work of Paul Willis, Trondman, Lund, and Lund advance a very similar position. According to these authors (2011: 588):

> We surely do not choose objects arbitrarily, because when we choose objects, they are already occupied by one or more significations. These significations are best understood as socioculturally constructed, often with a meaning that is valid over time. Needless to say, they can be changed, renegotiated, abandoned, forgotten, and rediscovered; they also may be different to different people—and old, traditional meanings can be reused in a completely new or old meaning. This argumentation constitutes our new thesis. The homologies are sociocultural and, as such, almost always constructed and changeable. However, this does not make them completely arbitrary. We do not need to search, in the first place, for inherent meanings in objects to understand the attractive force of "objective" possibilities.

17. For a very good example of current research on music and narrative, see Klein and Reyland 2013, specially Maus 2013 for a wonderful example of how to perform narrative analysis of popular music.

18. I follow Massumi's (2006: 11) definition of habit here, as an acquired automatic self-regulation that resides in the flesh.

19. There is, of course, also a third option: that the plot and narratives will change as a result of the interpellation being encountered. Some religious conversions might work this way.

20. A similar position was advanced by Born and Hesmondhalgh (2000: 31–32), who point out:

> There is a need to acknowledge that music can variably *both* construct new identities *and* reflect existing ones. Sociocultural identities are not simply constructed in music; there are “prior” identities that come to be embodied dynamically in musical cultures, which then also *form* the reproduction of those identities—no passive process of reflection . . . Thus, against prevailing views that music is primarily a means for the imagining of emergent and labile identities, we stress that music is equally at times a medium for marking and reinforcing the boundaries of existing sociocultural categories and groups . . . But the point is that the two perspectives are not contradictory. It is precisely music’s extraordinary power of imaginary evocation of identity and of cross-cultural and intersubjective empathy that render it a primary means of both marking and transforming individual and collective identities. As Born has argued previously, it is because music lacks denotative meaning, in contrast with the visual and literary arts, that it has particular powers of connotation. Thus, these authors identify (2000: 35–36) four possible relationships between music and identity (I will, however, only mention three for their relevance to the discussion we are having):
>
> 1) When music works to create a *purely imaginary identification*, an imaginary figuration of sociocultural identities, with no intent to actualize those identities: a kind of psychic tourism through music. This is an identification that only ever exists in collective or individual fantasy, and thus acts surreptitiously but powerfully to inscribe and reinscribe existing boundaries of the self and other . . .
> 2) When the musical imaginary works to *prefigure*, crystallize, or potentialize *emergent, real* forms of sociocultural identity or alliance, and thus how labile or emergent sociocultural identities come to be prefigured, negotiated, and constructed in music, so *re-forming* (or reconstructing) the boundaries between social categories, between self and other. This is the moment encapsulated by the process [construct in my terminology] model . . .
> 3) When the musical imaginary works to *reproduce*, reinforce, actualize, or memorialize *extant* sociocultural identities, in some cases forcefully *repressing* both transformation and alternatives. Here, musical representations . . . may be strongly bound, highly redundant, prevent from engaging in the “promiscuity” of hybridity. This is the moment summed up by the homology model.

My way of understanding the relationship between music and identifications differs from that of these authors because, first, I think that you can never “reflect” the same identity, nor always “create” some other completely new one. Hence, their categorical division seems a little stiff and my idea of “articulation” seems more appropriate. At the same time, however, unlike Born and Hesmondhalgh, I think that an identical musical practice (given its polysemy) can reflect/create/imagine (articulate) varying identifications not only among different participants of the musical event, but also for the same listener/dancer of such an event.

21. As many poststructuralist authors claim, meaning proliferates endlessly. The problem with meaning is not its absence but its superfluity. As Derrida points out (1982: 26):

> Syntheses and referrals which forbid at any moment, or in any sense, that a simple element be present in and of itself, referring only to itself. Whether in the order of spoken or written discourse, no element can function as a sign without referring to another element which itself is not simply present. This interweaving results in each "element"... being constituted on the basis of the trace within it of the other elements of the chain.... This interweaving, this textile, is the text produced only in the transformation of another text. Nothing, neither among the elements nor within the system, is anywhere either simply present or absent. There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of differences.

22. In this chapter I use "affect" in the way it was theorized by the members of the "affective turn," where affect does not denote a personal feeling. According to Massumi (1987: xvi), *affect* is coming from Spinoza's *affectus*, defined as an ability to affect and be affected, "a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution of that body's capacity to act." As Thomson and Biddle (2013: 13) point out, "In the *Ethics*, affect (affectus) captures for Spinoza what we might be more inclined to name modifications, accidents, misfires, divergences and the flow of causality more broadly." If this is so, it is important not to confuse "affect" with "emotion":

> An emotion is a subjective content, the socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal. Emotion is a qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized. It is crucial to theorise the difference between affect and emotion. (Massumi 1996: 221)

Therefore, the capacity of a body to affect and be affected shapes and is shaped by the ways in which it affects and is affected by other bodies (Thomson and Biddle 2013: 9).

23. Some readers will be surprised that I don't use the now popular term, "intersectionality." At the time of finishing this chapter, I am in the process of writing a piece criticizing the term.

24. Reading an early draft of this chapter, Jairo Moreno correctly points out that "one could also say that [the way young people use YouTube] affirms temporal differences in so far as at no other time in the past could temporal differences be erased. What I think happens here is that new senses of history and historicity (important distinction for Heidegger and Ricoeur) emerge, and in fact that users become impromptu historians." I totally agree with his point and want to thank him for making me aware of this important distinction.

25. Of course I am not claiming that "total fluidity" is the main characteristic of the identitarian construction processes of most people who use the "non-downloading" feature of YouTube to avoid "fixing" in their hard drives their musical identitarian markers. With the hegemonic version of the "centered" self still being quite alive and doing well,

it is not by chance that certain "centering and essentializing" moves continue to persist, even among young people who, at the same time, try to "lighten" their identifications. This is the reason why I concur with what Illa Carrillo Rodríguez wrote in response to a previous version of this chapter:

> I wonder if the YouTube playlists and channels don't also operate as a more or less fixed "repertoire" or "collection" (a paradigmatically modern artifact) through which individual and collective identities are publicly performed. While it is true that YouTube undermines the importance of the hard drive as "archive," since it operates as an easily portable collection, I wouldn't assimilate this form of "lightness" with an identitarian suppleness. After all, YouTube users who own channels are very attentive to how they publicly perform their identities through their playlists and often see themselves as "authors" and "owners" of those playlists. (It is also worth noting that many of those who create YouTube channels do so to showcase video recordings or collages of images they have put together to illustrate the emotions that certain songs conjure up in them). As a YouTube user, I have also noticed that people who own YouTube channels often add material to that channel (thus modifying it), but the channel's general thematic content and aesthetic orientation tends to remain the same.

26. Of course we have to qualify this, pointing out that there is now software that one can use to download songs from YouTube, so that one can make what one likes from YouTube a digital possession.

27. We should take into account, of course, that there are people with a very strong, master narrative identity that, somehow, "overdetermines" any process of articulating that central identification with other possible identifiers.

28. This difference actually doesn't exist, but I prefer to maintain it in order to be understood. If we call something an "interpellation," it already means that people addressed by it have accepted it (see Butler 1997).

29. As Ed Avery-Natale pointed out after reading a previous version of this chapter, "On the one hand, they may be less conscious because they are less linked to an identity. On the other hand, they may be more conscious because we have practiced them less and thus we must pay more attention to their particulars in order to get them 'right' or to eventually turn them into 'habit.' " I want to thank Ed for this insight.

30. Frith (1998: 219) even claims (and I tend to concur with him, at least in many social situations) that "to read body movements, to interpret them, is always to put them in a story."

31. What I am advancing here are initial ideas that I will develop (and surely modify) further in a future book.

32. Reading an early version of this chapter, Ed Avery-Natale pointed out that "there are many good examples of this in the American gay scene too. In the world of HIV/AIDS prevention, for example, a term was created in medical and social service agencies. This term is MSM ("Men who have Sex with Men"). The term is meant to encompass their sexual practices without insisting that those practices correspond to a being (gay, queer, etc.). This is important because it allows people to talk about sexual practices related to the spread of HIV/AIDS but also, perhaps, allows the avoidance of identification. In fact, these embodied actions go even further than what you describe

here because sex is necessarily included, not just dancing in a particular space." I want to thank Ed for this information.

33. I am not proposing here at all the usual paradigmatic opposition between embodied knowledge, experiential, habitual, pre-conscious, pre-logical, pre-rational, pre-discursive, pre-predicative (a la Merleau-Ponty), and its putative opposite: rational cognition, predicative, categorical, and so on (a la Descartes, Kant, or Husserl). Neither am I using "doing" and "being" in their commonsense usage and proposing a strict opposition between them. There is a long philosophical tradition that goes in the other direction: Heidegger and his conception of homo faber, Merleau-Ponty, via Husserl, pointing out that the "I do" precedes the "I can do it," the Cartesian "I think, ergo I am," and so on.

34. As a matter of fact, the one that enters or exits the scene is representation, because, if movements of body are involved, affect is always there.

35. I want to thank Ed Avery-Natale for fully articulating this idea.

36. In terms of affective theory, we could have said that Joseph's body affects were discursively arrested in their continuous movement, positioning them into two different identitarian grids, that of gender and musical genre.

37. As Thomson and Biddle (2013: 17) point out, authenticity performances and affective processes are highly intertwined:

> In numerous musical contexts, of course, authenticity attachments are readily exemplified in a number of affective processes. These include . . . explicit denigrations of would-be insiders that fall short of perceived communitarian standards; a range of other boundary policing rituals that draw on gender, race, class, and other identity formations to ensure that the texture and specificity of belonging, so central to the authenticity, is maintained. In other words, the affective is to be felt in those processes by which the boundary rituals are instantiated, put in place, embedded, 'somatized' to use Pierre Bourdieu's term (Bourdieu 2002: 39). It is that set of processes by which, recalling John 1.14 ('the word made flesh'), the abstractions of discourse are made to feel urgent, real . . . The affective dimension of these attachments and boundary rituals is that which disciplines and rewards political, ideological and emotional attachments through fear, pain, pleasure, thrill, spasm and shiver. It is a regimen of affects, an order of feelings that springs from the careful repetition of rituals of adherence and it takes root in the behavioural shadows cast by ritual, in what Žižek, paraphrasing Pascal, recognizes as the affective dimension of religious attachment ("kneel and you shall believe you have knelt because you believe") (Žižek 2005). We attach, then, as we affect and are affected. We are subject to that libidinal order.

38. Reading an earlier version of this chapter, Illa Carrillo Rodríguez commented: "This is a really fantastic way of unpacking how the sensible is *partitioned* (in Jacques Rancière's sense of this concept). Here, it becomes clear that we apprehend sounds through an auditory apparatus that is inextricable from bodies that 'materialize' as such in very specific spatial arrangements and through discourse. That we could ever think of 'listening' as separate from 'body rituals'—as though we did not also listen through movement—speaks to the ways in which the discursive partition of the sensible structures our perception of what are always already synesthetic experiences." I want to thank Illa for making me aware of this.

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2

Past Identity

GUILLERMO KLEIN, MIGUEL ZENÓN, AND THE FUTURE OF JAZZ

Jairo Moreno

Introduction

"We've seen the future. It looks like Ricky Martin. It sings like Marc Anthony. It dances like Jennifer Lopez. ¡*Qué Bueno*!" (Farley 1999: 74).[1] Thus proclaimed *TIME* magazine in a report of the rise, in 1999, of these performers in the US entertainment mainstream, a phenomenon the media quickly labeled "the Latin Explosion." But the "future" turned up slightly different; by 2005, they could have written that "the present looks like Shakira, sings like Shakira, and definitely dances like Shakira," but also that the jazz of the twenty-first century sounded like Miguel Zenón, a young Puerto Rican saxophone virtuoso, and Guillermo Klein, an Argentine bandleader who confounded categories for jazz critics.[2]

The work of Klein and Zenón, on which I focus, needs to be placed in the context of the symbolic value of jazz in the United States, where it constitutes a national treasure.[3] Indeed, as Timothy Brennan (2008) argues, the affective and cultural investment in this musical form is such that acknowledgment of outside—let alone foreign—influences is unheard of. This goes beyond standard nationalism. Brennan links the fortunes of jazz to the hegemonic standing of the United States in the global order of the twentieth century. Thus, under the rubric of "imperial jazz," Brennan designates "the ideological outlook that comes naturally to an imperial power." He continues, "There are demands made on researchers and the public in advance that this politically and symbolically potent music be considered officially (and only) the possession of one nation" (2008: 217).

The differing prognostics about pop music and jazz register shifts in the perception of how young Spanish Caribbean and Latin American musicians

are transforming notions of what the future of US musical creativity might entail and what that might mean for the history of continental aesthetic relationships. Klein and Zenón have been viewed as harbingers of a new era for both jazz in the US and for the place that Caribbean and Latin American creativity would now hold in the history of "American" music. This essay in part identifies this as a particular moment in history of which they are protagonists.[4] Thematically, the concern is with critical questions of identity and identification. Appealing to their histories and addressing wider antagonisms involved in regimes of identity and music expressed by black-US[5] jazz musicians at the turn of the century, I suggest that their reticence (Klein) and principled indifference (Zenón) toward hegemonic identitarian categories calls for a transformation of the conceptualization of conflictive processes attending to creativity in the United States. Without resolving these conflicts, they manage to institute and delimit identitarian categories and to redefine spaces of enunciation and forms of action for working across histories. At this conjuncture, instead of searching for sedimented sociocultural categories that they may deploy, I propose that they labor on (not merely at or from) the limits of hegemonic languages. Attending to the manner in which they conceive of musical ownership, we catch a glimpse of other modes of processing relationality.

Guillermo Klein: Reticent Identification

MANHATTAN, JUNE 2006

Throughout the second half of the 1990s, Guillermo Klein (b. 1969, Buenos Aires, Argentina) spent years in New York City playing every Sunday night at Smalls, a club off of 7th Avenue South whose Lilliputian dimensions belied its impact on the music scene at the time. Right around the corner from the Village Vanguard, a sacred temple of modern jazz, Smalls was known for intense jam sessions where young players would come to cut their teeth by experimenting with the latest developments—complex harmonic constructions in a post–Wayne Shorter fashion, or simple triadic material; a generational fascination with organizing musical time in long cycles and complex meters; and a casual relation to "swing" as well as a gradual disinterest in performing jazz standards, preferring to play original compositions, often in extended form. Many of these musicians were white, but also increasingly foreign, with a notable group of Israeli players among them who had, like virtuoso bassist Avishai Cohen, cultivated a fascination with and developed remarkable expertise in Spanish Caribbean and Afro-Cuban forms.

The musicians loosely associated with Smalls[6] informally constituted an alternative scene to the declared and programmatic experimentalism of what George E. Lewis (2008) calls Downtown II. Downtown II was identified with

places like The Kitchen and with musicians like John Zorn, whose projects actively sought to renew Jewish forms (e.g., cantorial music, Klezmer). The regular musicians at Smalls also formed an alternative to the formalized, state- and corporate-sponsored neoconservatism of Jazz at Lincoln Center, and to other clubs such as the Jazz Standard and Birdland, which, while neither mainstream nor progressive, featured more established names.

At Smalls, for a little over four years (1995–1999), and hardly making a living—as he has related, sometimes there were three people in the audience—Klein led a seventeen-piece ensemble in original compositions. He developed a highly idiosyncratic language that he had begun pursuing while a student in Boston. Neither jazz nor rock, neither folk nor erudite, neither vocal nor instrumental, but somehow related to all of these, for Ben Ratliff (2006b), jazz critic for *The New York Times*, "[Klein's] music resembled nothing else. . . . it was jazz, of a kind, but it included brass choirs, counterpoint, drones, Argentine and Cuban rhythms, and a lot of singing." Reviewing a 2006 performance during his first-ever week-long engagement at a major jazz institution, the Village Vanguard, Ratliff (2006a) again struggled. "Guillermo Klein's Los Guachos, 11 musicians, are making unnameable music. . . . It doesn't have much to do with the current trends in the rest of jazz, but only jazz musicians could be making it," he wrote. At that time, Klein had already relocated to Barcelona, then a hub of musical experimentation and a hospitable city for US expatriate musicians and searching musicians like Klein.[7]

What kind of musician was Klein? Was he what Lewis, speaking of a "coming canonization" of progressive experimentalists linked to the Association for the Advancement of Creative Music (AACM), called "a new kind of musician who works across genres with fluidity, grace, discernment, and trenchancy"? (Lewis 2008: 511). Was Klein's "unnameable music" one of the "other musical movements [—aside from jazz and avant-garde—that] have become part of a larger network in which no one scene is dominant"? (ibid.).

The themes of eclecticism, heterogeneity, and undefinability are central to accounts of new trends in jazz in New York City beginning in the 1990s. Ratliff (2011) has described the late 1990s' "new jazz" thus:

> By the late 1990s, jazz outside the straight-ahead mainstream was looking around itself and worrying. Outlasting a flicker of interest from major-record labels, anticipating audience decline as the "downtown jazz" scene grew diffuse and undefinable, it went in search of its parents and looked backward and Eastward: to Ornette Coleman, Lennie Tristano, Jimmy Giuffre, early fusion and progressive rock, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and Balkan and cantorial music. A whole field of bands gravitated toward intense polyphony, liturgical melodies and the clank: drummers playing roughed-up rhythm, rushing time and forestalling your pleasure, vexing you on purpose. All told, this was a moment of great

self-consciousness marked by efforts to overcome the past and transgressing its imposing limits, even if somehow it all dealt with the already diffuse notions of "jazz."

These mappings of what a musician might have been in those years are not incorrect; they are, however, insufficient to account for the unfolding of a more complex history. Missing is any sense of the networked histories in which musicians like Klein moved. It is also impossible to ignore the force of discursive practices that any naming and mapping mobilized. The word "jazz" was itself at the center. For Lewis (2008: 510), for example, rejecting the term "jazz" was fundamental to a project that was associated with avoiding the flattening and homogenization of music-making by African American musicians. Warding off the "essentializing impulses that discursively block freely forming conceptual, financial, social and cultural flows" constitutes a practice of resistance: Lewis's concern is with a whiteness-based marginalization of African American agency in experimental music that has historically favored a transnational, pan-European aesthetic. From Lewis's perspective, Ratliff, a white critic for a mainstream publication, might be read as engaging in a bit of essentializing of his own, unable to interpret Klein's music through an apparatus other than the panopticon of US jazz, and within the specificities of the New York City scene at that. The question here concerns the location of any enunciation, however, and Lewis is not exempt from this contingency. Lewis's injunction to disidentify from "jazz" in order to canonize a new heterogeneity of black-US musical creativity and Ratcliff's desire to identify the "new jazz" in its heterogeneity are both dimensions of an endemic national *will to identity.*

I spoke with Klein before his last night at the Vanguard in 2006.[8] The subject of our conversation was the kinds of identifications available to him as a creative musician. Neither race nor ethnicity, he said, entered into the calculus producing his music or informed any sense of jazz ownership in particular or cultural property in general. Speaking of his musical interests, he recalled an early fascination with voice-leading—the threading of individual parts in a musical texture that result in harmonies—specifically in Bach and Stravinsky, and with rhythmic processes in other European composers (Bartók, Messiaen, and, again, Stravinsky). Apart from these kinds of formalisms, he mentioned two early passions of his male, middle-class, Argentine sensibilities: soccer and rock music. Rock music meant, among other things, progressive bands like Pink Floyd, more blues-influenced groups such as Led Zeppelin, the unavoidable The Beatles, whose music he played as guitarist in a cover band, and the then—at least for him—nascent Spanish-sung, Argentine rock of Charly Garcia and Luis Alberto Spinetta. Although he recalled how extensive his experience with the local "national" form of chacarera was, if informal and nonsystematic, folk music as such was

not on his musical horizon. Neither was jazz, although he had an incipient but serious interest in the music of Astor Piazzolla. It was in fact the mention in Buenos Aires by renowned Berklee College of Music faculty member Gary Burton of his passion for Piazzolla that landed Klein in Boston, carrying a handful of contrapuntal compositions in his bag.

By his own account, when he arrived in Boston he had no idea about jazz and not much "baggage" regarding compatriots who preceded him on the journey north to learn and play the music. Asked if he was aware of other Argentine musicians who had left for the United States, he said that he had found out about them when he came to New York City. The composer and saxophonist Gato Barbieri (b. 1932), who was associated with some of Ornette Coleman's musicians, Pedro Aznar (b. 1959), a former member of the Pat Metheny Group, or Carlos Franzetti (b. 1948), a highly regarded New York City–based arranger and composer, were not figures he was aware of.[9] When I mentioned Jorge Dalto (1948–1987, b. Jorge Perez, Argentina), a pianist who worked with fellow countryman Gato Barbieri and whose membership in George Benson's band was the stuff of legend for many Latin American and Spanish Caribbean musicians growing up in the 1970s who were interested in jazz, he seemed surprised.[10] Further, when I added that Dalto was deeply immersed in the experimental Latin scene of the 1970s in New York City during which time he, like others, engaged in exploring South American forms and attempted to represent Latin America in the jazz world, he quickly distanced himself from any such enterprise. To his mind, Latin Americanism was constraining for its sheer utopian and abstract nature as well as for being for too long associated with rich and venerable Spanish Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean forms to allow much room for innovation. The time to speak of, let alone *for*, a continent was well past. Nationalism was simply an instrumental exteriorization of something he felt was inevitable given one's background—place of birth, having been raised in a location, and so on. Asked if his extensive reworking of the chacarera was not de facto nationalism, he inverted the question and said that the fact that I was asking was itself a de jure supposition that if an Argentine musician plays the chacarera he must be engaging in nationalism and declaring "his roots." From his perspective, the difference is whether one engages in some self-construction as "Argentine," which he thought was paradoxical since one either is Argentine or not, meaning by birthright and having been raised there. Declarations about roots take place in a discursive sphere that, for him, was neither here nor there. Speaking to a live audience at the Library of Congress in 2008, he echoed a similar position:[11]

Q. "How you integrate your cultural heritage into your music: is it something conscious or is it just who you are?"

A. "Yeah, yeah, yeah, but who you are could be something conscious too."

Q. "Are you conscious of who you are?"

A. "Eh, who knows, you know?!" [audience laughter] "Who knows what's conscious? I don't know, man. At this point, one thing is today and one thing was when I was in Berklee and I played this groove and it sound[ed] in 6/8 and you know... but one thing that I know, that I am conscious of, is 'it sounds good, sounds real' or 'sounds bad,' you know?... do I wanna work on this or I don't wanna work on this, even though it's my chacarera thing or even though it is like 'Blues for Alice.' "

An audience member returned to the question of Argentine folk music, asking, "What do you extract from it [chacarera]?" Klein responded in rather musical-formal terms, "Mirá, for me, what it gave me, there's two rhythms at once, it's in 3/4 and 6/8... that is what it really got me, beyond being 'chacarera,' 'my country,' beyond stuff like that."

When I raised the issue of US music, he noted its prevalence everywhere when he was growing up. His repertoire as a listener simply included a vast amount of music that he encountered in various settings of his everyday life. There were no formalized, self-conscious notions of listening "across genres," nor, in his professional work, a self-stated "fluidity, grace, discernment, or trenchancy" that marked him as a "new kind of musician," to use Lewis's words. For Klein, no discursive forces could ever block whatever creative work he had done and thus there were no calls for resistance; instead, on the face of those forces over which he had no control, he appeared to opt for a principled refusal in the manner of Bartleby's "I would prefer not to"—a point to which I will return. Indeed, the press byline for the US release of *Una Nave* on Sunnyside Records stated that "Guillermo Klein prefers his music to be judged without remarking on its biographical or historical context." But it continues with a contradictory message: "However, he wants it to be known that this music, recorded when he lived in Argentina, was made scrupulously and with passion."[12] The place of enunciation mattered, as well as the action taken in that place of which the recording is but a trace. Perhaps here there is an acknowledgment of the world-class level of contemporary Argentine musicians, an oblique claim to identity if there is ever one, but a strong assertion nonetheless that music "enunciated" from the continental South had arrived.

To be sure, the material conditions under which Klein operated had both impeded some "flows" and enabled new ones. In spite of the creative and imminent critical success from the years at Smalls, he left New York City in 2000, seeking greater financial security for his growing family. He arrived in Buenos Aires with US$500 in hand just as the country was entering into a financial crisis that soon collapsed the national economy. Wednesday gigs at the local Thelonious Club became his mainstay. Despite the crisis (or perhaps because of it), he recorded *Una Nave* with an all-Argentine cast; this project would become his first international

success. By mid-2001 the school where he was teaching stopped paying salaries, and by year's end all bank accounts across the country were frozen. Barcelona was the next stop in 2002, where he lived at the time I interviewed him, playing there and teaching composition in San Sebastian. He has since returned to Buenos Aires.

Klein's reticence does not mean that discursive practices have no force—his own stance is a manner of engaging discourse. But I think that it is important to recognize that, just as Lewis notes that there is no single dominant musical movement, there is no single dominant discursive scene. A casual review of Argentine press commentary reveals that, for local critics, he is first and foremost a jazz musician and composer, beyond what they see as reinterpretations of national folklore and his reworking of rock influences. Reviewing *Una Nave*, the acclaimed 2005 release, Cesar Prádines (2007a) wrote how Klein's music "might be included in the wide world of jazz either for lack of more precise definitions or because there is a strong improvisational slant to his compositions."[13] Prádines concludes that Klein's music constitutes a decisive step toward the continuing growth of the local jazz scene. A performance report finds Prádines (2007b) extolling Klein's "creative fire," proclaiming him a "jazz genius," and calling him "a true artisan of musics," all in a single breath. For this Argentine critic, jazz is not a musical style, a tradition, a history, or an aesthetic. It may be some of these things, but it is most of all a manner of encountering a sonic modernity that had long arrived on the shores of almost every corner of the world as part of what Jacques Attali (1985) calls the economy of repetition—the mutual imbrications of musical aesthetics and economics under regimes of reproduction—but that for the most part had eluded direct participation by those in the so-called peripheral modernity. To put it bluntly, in Prádines's commentary one senses a blurred boundary between center and periphery, so-called. Nonetheless, the valence of "jazz" as a concept-term in the national critical scene means that for Prádines, either the power of someone like Klein to destabilize its signification as an "American" creation matters a lot, or else it matters that this form lends its prestige to national creativity precisely because it has origins in another national location, and not just any location but the center of power for most of the long twentieth century, the United States.

Given the racial and ethnic stakes in US discussions about "jazz" evident in Lewis's arguments and virtually throughout the entire discursive field addressing the music, one might retort that the Argentine critic—and indeed Klein himself—is engaging in the "permanent marginalization of African American agency" and continuing to possessively invest in their whiteness, to recall what many argue is the most fundamental form of injustice perpetrated by those who readily erase race from any self-account. Klein ecumenically names "Duke" Ellington, along with Wayne Shorter, Milton Nascimento, Hermeto Pascoal, Astor Piazzolla, Luis Alberto Spinetta, Igor Stravinsky,

and Alberto Ginastera as his "masters." And, like most musicians, he does not concern himself with the material dimensions of these iconic musicians' social contexts and their national histories, however compelled some may be to learn their music-historical traditions and musical lineages. For example, Lewis speaks of the freedom of African American artists to assimilate music from anywhere in the world. But there is, of course, another history, a history of asymmetric advantages between the United States and most societies south of its border. I suppose that just as "African American musicians of the current generation are free to assimilate sounds from all over the world," as Lewis (2008: 447) remarks, so are musicians from elsewhere, obviously, and not just from the current generation, but for generations. "The world," in the form of global dissemination of US commodities, constituted their horizon perhaps earlier than it did for African American musicians. This is central to the history of the economy of repetition that Lewis seeks to combat. There is, however, a radical distinction. For Lewis, the freedom to assimilate is tempered by an imperative for these musicians to "situate their work in a complexly articulated African American intellectual, social, and sonic matrix" (ibid.). A fundamental difference, then, begins to emerge between these engagements with the world, be it the result of imperial advantages (of the United States and its cultural products all over the world) or of resistance to internal national racial logics (of white power structures over African American creativity); namely, there is, in Klein, *no imperative* to engage the world under any "matrix."

This is not to say that Klein, the white, male Argentine musician of Jewish descent (or as it is often said in the US context, an "honorary white" before he is a Latin American immigrant) is free of contingencies—after all, one could imagine that the historical traumas of political and, more recently, economic violence of the country could well force the artist's hand to promote a nationalist project.[14] Clearly, to judge from its critical reception in Argentina, Klein's work is articulated to a local-national social and intellectual matrix, and in turn to an international critical matrix that in a way preceded it and helped to shape it. What is more, these matrices rarely intersect. When they do, they disrupt as much as they enable one another. That is to say, it is not part of the reception of Klein in the United States, favorable as it is, to consider in any detail whatever impact he may have at home or in Barcelona. By contrast, it is more likely, even today, that Klein's yearly appearances at the Vanguard enter into local consideration. (Prádines, for instance, regularly notes that Klein has been "consecrated in the New York scene.") Ratliff, in typical New York City–centric mode, half-jokingly notes how for New Yorkers who are not used to getting the short end of the straw, Klein's decision to live in Barcelona and/or Buenos Aires is something of a blow. In the same gesture, he notes that only the City could be the grounds for the development of his unique music, given

the rich resources of high-level musicians, room for experimentation, and thirst for the new.

When matrices do not intersect, as in the case of Lewis, on the one hand, or in the critical reception of Klein here and in Argentina, on the other, two things take place. First, matrices operate independently from each other as embodiments of actually existing multiple modernities—modernities that are no longer local variants of a centrally dominant US or European modernity. Second, within the virtual network of discourse on the production of experimental music, the very possibility of Klein's emergence does more than add to the heterogeneity of that network. It helps to reveal other histories and other historical pressures that in their multiplicity erode the centrality of discourses emanating from the national concerns of the United States, particularly when the nondiscursive dimension of those discourses—that is, the actual musical experimentation of Klein—takes place on its soil.

In a way, what is surprising is that it took so long for these other histories to intervene in the national musical history of the United States. I say *surprising* by virtue of the sheer dimensions of the Hispanic population in the United States, well over 40 million by 2006. I would also add that it was unexpected because of the force with which minority sectors have heard themselves in terms of identities that safeguard for them a space of their own in the national body politic. Here one might include, for example, the Latino population, recognized for their shares in the constitution of the nation's music, as in the case of the "Latin Explosion," or the African American sector that Lewis seeks to represent as an equal contributor to national modernist aesthetics of post–World War II, alongside European-based white US experimentalism. This is to convey the well-known idea and widely accepted practice that, within the national space of the United States, music and group identity—race and ethnicity, in this case, but also other categories such as gender and sexuality—have played a central role in its political economy. As a result, there is an injunction, explicit or implicit, to self-consciously declare one's position, with no alternative given to withholding or being indifferent to such position-taking. This is what I called earlier a will to identity. In fact, the argument usually goes that any and all indifference to a politics of difference and to the corollary claims to cultural ownership constitutes the unmistakable sign of privilege of those whose "group experience" placed them atop the social chain and who have nothing to reclaim and recuperate. Without historical traumas to speak of, these privileged groups obey a radically different logic of cultural production from those whose very existence in the nation owes to a situation of dramatic and indeed tragic origins: slavery for African Americans and colonialization for Latinos of Puerto Rican background, for example, or massive expropriation of land from Mexico for Mexican-descendant Americans. These historical conditions of possibility inform and shape recent and ongoing situations of social and economic inequality that, some say, make it impossible for them

to forgo the past under risk of losing all claims to a more equitable future.[15] What supporters and advocates of this identity regime have missed is the possibility that others—people arriving on the shores of US late modernity in search of musical knowledge and who, too, could well appeal to tragic histories, often at the hands of the United States—would present alternatives to thinking and acting in the present and largely without proprietary designs on the future. This means that at a fundamental level, the question of music and identity holds a constitutive relation to time and temporality.

One such alternative is at play in Klein's reticence to make strong identitarian claims. No one is without a located past, he holds. At the same time, no one is without a set of relationships to a multiplicity that does not, in itself, operate as a principle of ownership. One hears stories, reads histories, listens to others, and throughout all of this forges a network of identification that might be as firmly tied to a place as to the movement across locations. Place or local histories are themselves nodes in this network. More than positioning himself in this network, Klein, in his principled reticence toward identity as such, seems to assert the *right to* and *possibility of change* as a fundamental tenet of music-making. This reticence is not defensive or offensive. It is, rather, the setting into motion of the fact that those classic archives of identity—place, infancy, language, nation—are perennially susceptible to transformation and resignification.

To be sure, there is a self-conscious avoidance of certain musical traits with strong identity signatures, primary among them the resonant Afro-Cuban and Spanish Caribbean legacies in the United States throughout the twentieth century and up to the "Latin Explosion." Here, I should add that, despite his claims to the contrary, the central place that the chacarera plays in his experimentation, his marked "ethnicity" as an Argentine Jew, and the rich signification of the term "guacho" combine to introduce a number of ambiguities into his post-identitarian position, certainly in the national context of Argentina. First, the chacarera is the most overtly "Afro" rhythmic form in Argentina, the rural form that counterpoints tango's urban and cosmopolitan image in the formation of a national identity.[16] The *bombo legüero*, a large drum on which the rhythm is distinctly articulated alternating between the drum head and its wooden side, is basically an African drum, whatever its adaptation of military drums. Second, the word "guacho," a spelling of the previously mentioned Quechua word *huacho*, plays off of the Argentine-defining "gaucho," shifting the latter's meaning. If gaucho affirms a distinct line of origin—and a paternal one at that—guacho denies it: the word denotes an illegitimate child, a bastard, or the male child of a licentious mother. In certain speech contexts, however, guacho is also a colloquial expression meaning "brilliant!" This could all be read in various ways. One could point to the fact that for Argentine speakers, or speakers familiar with the connotations of the word there, it

means that this is an affirmation of a place of origin. But for those who recognize its dual meaning, it could signify that the jazz made by Guillermo Klein and Los Guachos is as brilliant as it is illegitimate. This music might be illegitimate if one considers place of origin as grounds for legitimacy. By contrast, the very fact of its existence could signify that "jazz" can be created and produced without any concerns for paternal recognition or a paternal line, so to speak, despite Klein's strong sense of a masculine lineage of past masters. Third, although there have been no open allusions to Klein's Jewish background, the fact remains that, in the national context, he is a national marked by his "race," not quite an Argentine as, say, someone of Italian background might be. As far as I know, he has said nothing on this sensitive issue.

* * *

My interpretation of the position Klein holds, and the moment of which he is in part a symptom, proposes that there is no politics of heroic resistance to the tradition of jazz that he may have encountered; instead, there is a simpler but perhaps more subtle politics of affirmation of what there is for this individual, given the set of musical and creative possibilities he sought and encountered. What Ratliff calls an unnameable music is nothing more than a set of relations among more or less recognizable musics. What remains unnameable in the US context, however, is Klein's reluctance to embrace the national will to identity. This unnameability too has an effect on the continuing provincialization of the United States.[17] Provincialization, as the term has come to be understood, entails rendering formerly self-identified centers into provinces along with the rest of the world. In a signal shift of the logic by which centers and peripheries have been established, this does not aim to establish new centers. There is no attempt to resist or vanquish the old centers by refusing their historical impact—provincialization is not a utopian gesture. In fact, it requires, at least in the robust sense proposed by Dipesh Chakrabarty, engaging forms of knowledge and political orders of those centers as a way to interrogate the profound ways in which those forms and orders contribute to the self-constitution of someone like Klein. It also reveals the concerns of the center to be particular to its parochial needs. This is even more strongly felt when that provincialization involves a "citizen" of the actually existing imperial possession of the United States on the American continent: Puerto Rico.

MIGUEL ZENÓN: AN AESTHETIC EDUCATION, FIRST . . .

Santurce, Puerto Rico, 1980s. Zenón received his earliest musical education from Ernesto Vigoreaux (1906–1992).[18] In the 1980s, Vigoreaux began to provide free instruction to children in the Residencial Luis Llorens Torres, a rough working-class public housing development in Santurce where Zenón

grew up. The instruction followed the exacting curriculum of classical conservatories. Zenón wanted to learn the piano but had to make do with the saxophone. At US$200, the student-level instrument he eventually purchased was most certainly a high-luxury item in the Zenón household, a family of very modest means headed by his mother.

Hato Rey, Puerto Rico, 1990–1996. The *Escuela Libre de Música* is a cultural policy success story. A secondary-school program with a music performance curriculum, it has trained generations of musicians. Zenón attended "la Libre," as the school is known, and graduated in 1996. There, he continued to develop his saxophone playing. Working with Ángel Marrero, a veteran saxophonist with classical and popular music experience, he followed a strict classical routine of technical development and sound production.

The curriculum offered little in the way of jazz studies. Beginning in the ninth and tenth grade, Zenón could play in the school's big-band, but no formal training in improvisation or jazz styles and history was available. Through upper-class peers, he first heard musicians such as Charlie Parker and Paquito D'Rivera. Zenón was particularly taken by the organization he intuited in this music that was not written before it was actually played. More cassette tapes were put together by friends, occasional purchases made, and taping jazz from National Public Radio became a ritual. Still, despite Zenón's repeated hearings and omnivorous listening habits, jazz would not divulge the secrets of its constitution. "At first, what I did was to listen; I didn't even try to imitate the music because I couldn't. If there was a phrase like of the blues, I would half-learn it and I would play it; I had a little bit of improvisation but I had no language at all, it was merely the idea of it. I was rather limited."

During his last years at "la Libre," then rising-star alumnus David Sánchez and well-established Panamanian jazz pianist Danilo Pérez loomed large over Zenón. As he pithily put it, they became his "North." For a young musician deeply captivated by bebop virtuosity, it was quite an ear-opener to hear Pérez for the first time playing "acoustic jazz with Dizzy [Gillespie]." Plus, unlike the generation immediately before his, Zenón and some of his peers, for reasons unknown, found themselves listening to musicians like Ornette Coleman and to the music known as "free jazz," that is, exposing themselves to an archive other than the electric and fusion-oriented repertoire favored by professional musicians in the San Juan scene associated with "jazz"—musicians often working in the pop scene or recording jingles—or the Latin and Puerto Rican practices of those who had worked in the salsa or Latin jazz circuits there or in New York City. This "new" archive—"other things that [make] one listen to things differently," as Zenón said, referring to "free jazz"—combined with the ongoing presence of Sánchez and Pérez, which he and his classmates followed closely, created a new set of possibilities, as yet unknown,

that made it feasible for these young musicians to imagine themselves playing jazz. "That guy [Danilo Pérez] was playing jazz with the people who play jazz; that really opened my eyes and gave me another perspective as well on what I wanted to do, what I wanted to accomplish . . . my generation was already moving in a different direction," he said. But if he could imagine himself playing jazz, by his own admission he only played at it.

SECOND, "CULTURAL" LESSONS

Boston, 1996. After high school, Zenón sought Berklee as the ideal place to learn improvisation. The cost of attending Berklee was prohibitive and he felt stuck in his learning process, despite the increasing playing opportunities in Puerto Rico. Then, in the summer of 1995, Zenón won a scholarship worth $5,000 toward tuition expenses. This, he recalled, he could combine with another small scholarship and a Pell Grant from the US government to cover tuition. There was, however, no money for travel, room, or board, his family unable to contribute much. He decided to wait a semester, play professional jobs, and take academic (non-music) classes at the University of Puerto Rico in order to save time and money.

Zenón arrived at Berklee in January 1996. Although he considered himself to be "rather well-prepared" by "la Libre," his auto-didacticism with regards to jazz meant that he had yet to give conceptual form to a sound world that he had approached through what he called "shortcuts," in essence a set of melodic moves that he knew would work well in certain harmonic configurations and chord successions: his very personal music theory. In Boston, he soon came to "understand things that I never in my life had heard about," things like harmonic descriptions of common chord progressions used in jazz. These formal generalizations—music theory, in short—would label for Zenón many musical gestures that he already knew and could play by ear. The process was relatively quick and easy for him to "internalize," as he put it. As is often the case for auto-didacts, there was a mutual embedding between theory and practice, between the rational contemplation of *theoria* and the ongoing activity of *praxis*.

Under the tutelage of Bill Pierce, for the first time he would be exposed to the saxophone as an instrument with a quasi-linguistic heritage, a long lineage of the history of improvisation on the instrument that needed to be listened to, studied, and dealt with. Reticently at first, he would discover Coleman Hawkins or Johnny Hodges, secretly wishing he could be listening exclusively to "hip" younger players like Kenny Garrett or Steve Coleman, only to realize with amazement that Hawkins had an "advanced" language quite early in the twentieth century (paraphrasing his words) without which, in a way, Garrett and Coleman would not be possible. Berklee was systematic, true, but it was also committed to a particular kind of historicist program. About

such ideological matters and contested versions of the past Zenón couldn't care less, for the time being.

According to Pierce, Zenón "had a special thing, he was extremely serious...extremely intelligent and extremely purposeful...when it came to studying music, he seemed driven to really get it." "He seemed to be a guy that already had talent, number one," Pierce added, "but really wanted to get it right and understood the significance of developing an appreciation or investigating the past masters and getting a real sense of the substance of the music; before even thinking of going forward with anything, you gotta understand what it's based on, or at least get your own sort of sense of what it's based on as it is for you."[19] Pierce, an influential teacher, speculated that by the time he arrived in Boston, and perhaps because of a relation with "his own music or music that he grew up with," Zenón had a keen understanding that to do something substantial with music you have to look at the past before adding "your own sense of what you'd like to do with the music." In reality, however, developing an appreciation for the past and understanding the deeply felt effect the past could elicit in young American musicians was one of the most difficult lessons for Zenón to learn.[20]

Zenón was fearless in asking his peers who might answer his questions about how to play this or that, regardless of who they were. He soon discovered that, along with the ethnic groupings that would create social interactions at the school, there were also race-based cliques at Berklee. Thus, on the one hand, having never been surrounded by people who were not Puerto Rican, he quickly discovered "accents, words, foods, and ways of being which make you grow a lot." Here he referred mainly but not exclusively to his interactions with students from elsewhere in Latin America. On the other hand, asked whether he found that this music he wished to learn and play had a proper cultural owner and how he had negotiated that finding, he had a lot to say.

The first matter had to do with his realization of how difficult it was going to be to enter into a language that he barely played at all and had only been listening to for about four years, and at most only in a catch-as-catch-can fashion. To his mind, most African American peers had played much longer and, more significantly, more likely had had contact with "blues and gospel" traditions of which, by his own admission, he was unaware and now realized were going to be key to grasping something about playing jazz that could not quite be codified, even by Berklee's capacious pedagogy.

The second matter was slightly more complicated: how to approach and comprehend the challenging intersection of race, culture, tradition, and knowledge ownership in the United States. Although there were notable exceptions, as he was quick to point out, he found many in the African American cliques to be resistant to interaction with others. "Basically, African-American students played only with themselves; it was rather closed." Under those

circumstances, he heard for the first time references to a collective and to an initially inscrutable "we" drawn along racial lines. This "we" seemed to guarantee an uninterrupted link between their musical practices and knowledge as young music students, on the one hand, and a common cultural tradition and sense of location and emplacement in the US experience, on the other. There was talk of "us and the question of 'us,'" Zenón said, adding that "it was hard to get in those circles, you know, but once you were in you began to understand that much in their attitudes had to do with where they came from, the music they heard. Listening to them play, one became aware that what they brought to jazz was a language of their own...and then you begin to try to enter into that language." He discovered, with the indefatigable Pierce, that you had to come to terms with the musical antecedents of modern jazz, with "its roots" (Zenón's words). He talked to African American students who might be willing to answer his many queries; judiciously listened to the blues and to as much gospel as he could; and tried to sit in at sessions held at Wally's, a local club where students often played. Little by little he began to break through whatever barriers there were. Danilo Pérez, his former idol and long-time Boston resident, strongly advised Zenón to play with people from other cultural backgrounds in order "to get their stuff," things, Pérez said, that cannot be truly learned other than by failing during live performances. Eventually, they were calling him to play. He felt then that he had it—he laughed heartily when he said this, but noted that he never thought he had arrived, feeling instead that he was merely on the right track. After two and a half years in Boston, he moved to New York City.

New York City, 1999. Zenón arrived in New York with no solid connections or firm plans. Quickly, he contacted David Sánchez, by then a well-established soloist with a renowned group that included Austrian bassist Hans Glawischnig, Mexican drummer Antonio Sánchez, Puerto Rican pianist Edsel Gómez, and percussionist Saturnino Pernell, from Curaçao. Initially sharing practice time at David Sánchez's Brooklyn apartment, Zenón began to create accompanying parts for his colleague's compositions. Soon he was invited to play with the group, which he joined. Eventually, Zenón formed his own group, with Glawischnig on bass, Antonio Sánchez on drums, and piano revelation Luis Perdomo, from Venezuela. This is the core band that recorded with Zenón up until the acclaimed release of *Jíbaro*.

Several of these musicians were part of the scene at Smalls, but mainly became associated with a different space further downtown, the Jazz Gallery. Initially a rehearsal space for trumpeter Roy Hargrove, in 1995 the Gallery cut a distinct profile in the New York live music scene. A nonprofit organization, it features a simple, well-lit space with a stage more spacious than other places of its kind. No food is served, although listeners can have a single glass of wine. There are no tables and no waitstaff.

From 2000 on, with fewer art showings, the agenda at the Gallery became focused on music. Performances were kept to three nights a week, starting on Thursday. Musicians received commissions and held residencies, allowing for premiering of new projects and the development of others. The Gallery emerged as a hospitable place for immigrant musicians like Zenón and for individual projects led by his bandmates, as well as for a group of relatively recent arrivals from Cuba such as saxophonist Yosvany Terry and drummer Dafnis Prieto, and Argentine tango experimentalist Pedro Giraudo, a bassist. Its official title is International Cultural Center, something like the expression of a loose musical cosmopolitanism of many of the musicians playing there.[21]

Zenón's trajectory followed a slightly more formal path than Klein's, but he and Klein did overlap in Boston and in New York City at the beginning of the decade. In fact, seated front and center of the crowded stage at the Vanguard, playing blistering solos and performing from memory a set of extremely difficult music by Klein in June 2006 was Zenón, a long-standing member of Los Guachos from the latter, lean years at Smalls. When I asked him why he enjoyed playing with Klein, he said he felt a strong connection to the music and the concept of working with a group that came of age, so to speak, at the same time and under similar conditions as he (Zenón) did.

Were they part of a young generation that was making a concerted effort to develop a new aesthetic? Their labor, he said, may look that way retrospectively, but "at the moment, like today [2008], it had to do with experimentation and in my case with the personal challenge that it represented, the fact that my peers were working on my music." Those years, roughly after 2001, were marked by the discovery of yet more music. Pursuing a master's degree at the Manhattan School of Music, he'd delved deeply into the European twentieth-century repertoires, considering at one point working on a doctoral degree in composition. Systematic as ever, he studied the algorithms of pieces by post-war Europeans like Ligeti and others. He then incorporated those techniques into his compositions.

In many ways, the account Zenón gives of his relation to Puerto Rican musical forms parallels that of Klein's.

> You know, all these things were there—folk music, pop music, pop from the States, salsa—but then I moved to the other side, music that nobody knows, like jazz, which makes you think you are something special. But jíbaro music, plena, and bomba, all that is always around . . . but it never caught my attention. . . . [T]he notion that this is very special music and I am going to exploit it; that is something that happened here [in the United States]. I said, 'goodness, this is our music, it does not go on anywhere else.' . . . it was in the course of researching that music that I realized that I knew more about it than I imagined, and only then I began to

try to find my personality in it, the sort of thing that happens when you come with a jazz mindset.

That research, sponsored by a Guggenheim Fellowship (2008), was a formal project, at once ethnographic and music-analytical, as well as a hands-on study of performance practice. Nothing of what he conveyed in relation to Puerto Rican music revealed a proprietary relation to those repertoires, something marked perhaps by the fact that he felt first and foremost a need to learn—to truly learn—the details of the music and the way more experienced practitioners conceived of it. Noting that during the first performance of his compositions, audiences back in Puerto Rico would cheer whenever they recognized fragments of well-known musical gestures, he observed, nonetheless, that "I don't know if when anyone speaks of música jíbara, they might refer to our project, or if anyone speaks of traditional music, that [project] will be included." Still, he felt that, in his encounter with a tradition he came to know through painstaking research and study and the nod of recognition by local audiences, there unfolded "a representative process, that tickle, the wish to search for and to learn what is ours . . . there is a connection with tradition . . . and it has a Puerto Rican brand."

MODERNITY AND ITS FUTURES

I began with references to the future concerning the place of "Latin" or "Latin American" music and musicians in the United States at the turn of the century. These prognostics of what is to come are cast in a different light with the accounts of Klein and Zenón in mind.

First, after a fashion begun by Attali, some hold that music is prophetic, not because it anticipates the future or because it points to the future, but because it is the first sign of a people as it transforms a society.[22] There are obvious material reasons why music should be so in the age of mechanical reproduction and even more so in the digital age: music travels light and fast. Here, a rapid overview of early and mid-twentieth-century nationalist projects in Latin America shows that music played an important role, aided by the state's access to and deployment of the reproduction technologies of recording and radio, in short, of modernity's communication apparatuses. Less obvious and more metaphysical reasons are given in some presumed universality of music, that is, in its fundamental contrast with language and with its dense apparatus of meaning and signification. This universalism demands caution, for even a casual look at their history reveals their complicities with economic orders that are fundamentally singular, exclusionary, and proper to a particular form of power. Jazz, which is the general signature under which Klein's and Zenón's work is produced and heard, is not universal because of some immanent power of its improvisatory dimension, because of

some social aesthetics blossoming ex nihilo from so-called face-to-face musical encounter with an Other, or because of the way improvisation is said to create time as it unfolds. If nothing else, the vignettes of these very different individuals suggest that, at a young age, jazz came to their attention by virtue of its worldwide dissemination from the United States; to return to Brennan's notion of "Imperial Jazz," the universality of jazz as a form of communication cannot be divorced from its creation in the most powerful imperial power during the long twentieth century. This material history is inseparable from facile appeals to the metaphysics of universal improvisation or the discourse upholding the relation between group and individual as a beacon of liberal democratic order.[23]

How this relates to the future is my second point. It seems to me that in their widely drawn choices for the future of music in the United States, mass media and cultural institutions are less concerned with predicting the future than with missing something in the present.[24] A second point about the "future," then, is that the so-called prophetic power of music operates within a wider historical field of which the present is its only concrete, albeit uncertain, symptom. I wish to relate this symptomatology of the present to anxieties over the multiple temporalities that increasingly converged during the final decades of the twentieth century and began to feel like a norm at the beginning of the twenty-first. The coming into being of these temporalities is itself a sign of modern rationality, that is, the material and ideological conditions of possibility for positing the existence and valuation of differential rates at which people around the world moved in relation to the absolute standard of "development." In Jesús Martín-Barbero's pithy formulation, Latin America would therefore lie at the "south of modernity," a turn of phrase that powerfully condenses the spatial and temporal dislocations of a particular kind of history inscribed in the relationship between the American continental North and "its" South (Martín-Barbero 2001: 9). As played out in the sphere of musical production and throughout networks of aurality that simultaneously sustain *and* challenge these dislocations, I call them *syncopated modernities*. Borrowing here a metaphor from musical terminology, I take the work of Klein and Zenón to constitute a moment in history during which it has become increasingly difficult to tell which part in the syncopation is leading and which one is following. In fact, the question becomes if not irrelevant, at least moot. For although it is undeniably the case that as young aspiring artists both of them were compelled and even required to travel north to acquire the knowledge and skill necessary to transform themselves into "jazz" musicians, a remarkably few years later they found their work catapulted into a time ahead of their own. But syncopation is itself a semiotic displacement from physics to music. In its "original" context, it denotes a striking of material bodies. Here, then, that collision or friction takes the form of the discursive distributions by which creative relations between the North and the

South, and indeed the world, are apportioned. These discursive distributions, however, are part and parcel of material histories and actual (human) bodies in their affective, biographical, sensate, social, and cognitive dimensions.[25]

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this prognosis of the future reproduces the same modern rationality of the logic of time lag and underdevelopment: it is voiced in and by the North and under standards that it alone sets. As Reinhart Koselleck ([1979] 2004) noted, modernity aimed at a future—the single future of which it is its own telos—for which it prescribed the way (socially, culturally, economically, politically). The prognosis of the future remains, tethered to problematic but constitutive notions of modernity either as an incomplete project of which the musical creative leap to the future might be its fulfillment or as the catching up of those who once lagged behind.

Anxieties about the future are widespread at the turn of the century. Addressing temporality in his well-known idea of reflexive modernity, Anthony Giddens (1991: 29) remarks that "given the extreme reflexivity of late modernity, the future does not just consist of the expectation of events yet to come. 'Futures' are organized reflexively in the present in terms of the chronic flow of knowledge into the environments about which such knowledge was developed." One would be hard pressed to establish what "environments" these might be from, or to which knowledge is directed. Would it be the flow of knowledge from the colonial and imperial "centers" toward their peripheries? Or would it also be the epistemic by which the knowledge of the Other helped to constitute for European and North American modernity ideas of themselves? Or, indeed, is it the flow of knowledge in the form of previously nonexistent notions of creativity from the South to the North? Any satisfactory answer would have the difficult task of combining these responses. From the perspective of the North, the "future" is indeed organized at the present time that the pronouncements of the MacArthur Foundation were made, and were so organized at a moment of reflexivity. After all, reflexivity seeks to interrogate linear directions between cause and effect—here, knowledge emanating from one "environment" about some other "environment"—and proposes instead that any action reverts or reflects back into the place or actor with which it began. This is to say, then, that US institutions such as the "jazz tradition," at some point the distinct historical origin and cause of Spanish Caribbean and Latin American aurality, become loci of listening to others as these others have listened to music from the United States. To be sure, it is a truism of contemporary social and cultural relations that all of their spaces and functions are interconnected. But instead of ensuring a constructive flow, this same condition creates the possibility of constant and often accelerated change, a permanent state of risk in which no wager is as positive as the simple affirmation of what seems available in the present. This risk does not represent a crisis, however—or not only a crisis in a negative,

destructive sense. What it might represent, I believe, is a persistent occasion to interrogate not just the frameworks within which things such as musical creativity and practices of aurality operated, but also the very questions that such frameworks made possible or simply rendered nonexistent.

Under the terms I am proposing here—and from the perspective of the Spanish Caribbean or Latin American immigrant musician—some of those frameworks include the abandonment of a politics of representation and, with it, a bracketing of the identitarian claims that underlie such politics.[26] There is no duty to stand in for something as abstract—and modern—as the nation, for example, or to invoke pieties such as giving voice to a popular collective through an aesthetic form, another modern political-ethical imperative. Part of the reflexive gesture I perceive seems to reveal to Klein and Zenón that an aesthetic of emancipation such as jazz can, within the confines of national politics in the United States and of their places of origin, become an instrument for new forms of tutelage. They partake of other forms of relation, more dialogic than the monologic structure of national self-understandings often shaped by imperatives of the state. This, however, does not mean that they willy-nilly escape national determinations—I discussed the dense meanings of forms, names, and "racialization" for Klein and the inevitability of appropriation for national affect that Zenón fully accepts and even expects for projects such as *Jíbaro*. Rather, it all means that new coordinates are given for some to engage and understand what these musicians actively do. They respond in their own creative lives to dynamic operations of combination, comparison, critique, and contradiction for which the main condition of possibility is the irrefutable interpenetration of not just cultural forms but also of their constitutive political and cognitive dimensions. Change, which I earlier cast as a right, may be better conceived as the one certainty by which these musicians function. Change can no longer be accounted for as a piling of heterogeneous forms atop one another or their combination explained under models of hybridity and, in a music terminology favorite, "fusion," or even models such as interculturality. As Ulrich Beck (2002: 19) states, we must confront transformations of the "very coordinates, categories and conceptions of change itself." This means first questioning the existing norms—of identity, cultural ownership, relation to the past, and a tradition, among others—and second choosing how to interpret and live within whatever new norms emerge. In the examples I have offered, these choices are not the same. Paradoxically, the reticence of Klein may be more feasible given the robust national framework from which he currently operates, whereas Zenón's admission that his latest projects will be partly absorbed into a nationalist agenda indexes the perennial uncertainty of Puerto Rico's status. Both, however, embody three key aspects of what I consider to be a thinking past identity. First, not only Klein but also Zenón engages Bartleby's formula—"I would prefer not to"—not as a way to avoid commitment but rather, as Deleuze (1997) proposes, as

a means to enact the possibility of indistinction between preferring and not preferring (i.e., to engage identitarian politics). Indistinction is not to be confused with a cynical, ironic, or nihilistic indifference, as it involves a decision and an act by which a previously existing regime of identity is disrupted—disrupted insofar as it presents alternatives to it and complicates its logic and hegemony over definitions of what is to be musically political, not in the sense that it replaces it or overcomes it. The politics here reside in how in these musicians' actions and discursive formulations, US jazz and experimental traditions, however construed, are rendered both indispensable *and* insufficient. Second, they accept their participation in processes of redistribution of cultural ownership while staking no proprietary claims on the new structures of apportioning musical creativity. Third, because of that acceptance they engage in a non-exclusionary politics that nonetheless acknowledges that there exist opposing positions. In other words, different from the worn-out celebration of cultural flows, nomadism, and porous borders of pluralist discourses about music genre-hopping, each of these musicians, informed (i.e., constrained and enabled) by the specificity of their personal histories and that of their immediate formative context, seems to clamor: we have heard the North from a particular location; we've come to study, listen, and observe what makes what we heard "tick"; we've dislocated our lives in order to discover other locations where the main imperative, such as it is, is to accept change. The fact that change is constitutive and constituted of a future—"futures" might be a better expression—does not mean installing new forms of appropriation over time. It means, rather, that deciding over that future is deciding that one such decision cannot ever be decided on. This is not the same as deciding not to decide. It is a reflexive engagement with the idea that, just as there can be no proper memory of a global consciousness or a collective transnational past comparable to, say, memories of a national or regional consciousness, there can be no "tradition" of the future. No identity will be awaiting those who seek refuge in what belongs to them and to them only.

Notes

1. Compare this with Jon Pareles ("Reggaetón Rides the Next Latin Wave," *The New York Times*, Sept. 11, 2005, Arts Section): "Could this year bring the Latin wave that lasts? The demographics make it seem inevitable: the 2002 census found that one in eight Americans is Hispanic, and a large younger generation is bilingual and bicultural, so it would seem that American pop is bound to bend in their direction. A few years ago, Latin pop seemed ready, with English-language hits by established Spanish-speaking pop stars like Ricky Martin (from Puerto Rico), Marc Anthony (from New York) and Shakira (from Colombia); then it fizzled. But this fall brings another chance, from a familiar face and a fairly new one. . . . Shakira has already had a good year: she released the Spanish-language 'Fijación Oral Vol. 1' in June, which included a reggaetón-tinged hit single, 'La Tortura,' amid an album full of inventive pan-American

hybrids. In November comes its English-language companion piece, 'Oral Fixation Vol. 2,' a completely new batch of songs. Her previous album in English, 'Laundry Service,' was catchy, smart and an international hit; the new one has even more momentum, and could send that Latin pop wave back into motion."

2. On the award of a 2008 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, known as the "genius award," the Foundation wrote:

> Miguel Zenón is a young jazz musician who is expanding the boundaries of Latin and jazz music through his elegant and innovative musical collages. As both a saxophonist and a composer, Zenón demonstrates an astonishing mastery of old and new jazz idioms, from Afro-Caribbean and Latin American rhythmical concepts to free and avant-garde jazz. Beginning with his 2001 recording *Looking Forward*, Zenón has exhibited a high degree of daring and sophistication in the manipulation of conventional jazz forms. His third album, *Jíbaro* (2005), illuminates his intense engagement with the indigenous music of his native Puerto Rico. Forgoing the Afro-Caribbean sound that characterizes most Latin jazz, Zenón was inspired by *la música jíbara*—string-based folkloric music popular in the Puerto Rican countryside. Unlike other attempts to fuse jazz and *jíbaro,* which have retained the traditional instrumentation with little harmonic variation, in Zenón's hands the essential elements of *jíbaro* serve as the compositional and rhythmic underpinning of his contemporary jazz arrangements. The result is a complex yet accessible sound that is overflowing with feeling and passion and maintains the integrity of the island's music. This young musician and composer is at once reestablishing the artistic, cultural, and social tradition of jazz while creating an entirely new jazz language for the 21st century. (MacArthur Foundation, September 2008)

3. See Resolution 57, US House of Representatives. Passed Sept. 23, 1987, approved by the US Senate on Dec. 3, 1987.

4. Klein and Zenón were part of a much larger and heterogeneous group of musicians who came of age professionally in New York City during the 1990s, creating and performing music associated with improvisation and jazz. Others include Argentine Diego Urcola, Chilean Claudia Acuña, Puerto Rican David Sánchez, Brazilian Luciana Souza, and Panamanian Danilo Pérez.

5. I use the expression "US-black" to connote the national boundaries within which much, if not all, of the discursive practices of music and racial-cultural identity are carried out. Whenever other authors are cited, I follow their usages, either African American or African-American.

6. These included pianist Brad Mehldau, guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel, bassist Omer Avital, and saxophonist Seamus Blake, among others.

7. Much activity was centered on the Barcelona-based label Fresh Sound, which recorded an unusual number of musicians associated with Smalls.

8. Interview conducted by the author with G. Klein on Sunday, June 18, 2006, in New York City.

9. Pablo Vila (personal communication) notes that the alleged indifference of Klein to other musicians who worked in the United States is doubtful in the case of Aznar. Aznar was a member of the influential Argentine supergroup Serú Girán from 1978 until 1982, when he accepted Metheny's invitation to join his group.

10. Here, too, belong Argentine musicians such as Jorge López Ruiz, a bassist, who recorded a "folkloression" in New York with an all-star cast that included Dalto on piano and Franzetti as arranger and composer along with Ray Barretto, Anthony Jackson, Lew Soloff, and Eddie Gomez, among others, and Juan "Pollo" Raffo (b. 1959), a keyboardist, producer, and composer who attended Berklee in the late 1980s and has played with a who's who of Argentine rock and jazz. Thanks to Pablo Vila for these references.

11. Interview with Larry Appelbaum, Library of Congress, Feb. 28, 2008. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3UdUWmWmdc; accessed 5/17/2011.

12. Cited in "Un argentino en Nueva York," *El Clarin*, Buenos Aires, June 5, 2006. http://old.clarin.com/diario/2006/06/05/espectaculos/c-00709.htm; accessed 5/16/2011.

13. This album was released first in the United States and Spain, and only in 2007 in Argentina, where it was recorded in 2000. Many thanks to Pablo Fessel for providing me links to reviews of Klein.

14. One could compare Klein's case with that of Gabriel Alegría, a Peruvian trumpet player, composer, arranger, and bandleader whose project is centered in the simultaneous recuperation, establishment, and valorization of the Afro-Peruvian tradition. Another case is that of Antonio Arnedo, a Colombian saxophonist, composer, arranger, and bandleader whose recordings from 1996 to 2001 ushered in a generation of nationalist projects with folk and jazz music at their core. For the record, I was the bassist in all of Arnedo's recordings.

15. Farah Jasmine Griffin invokes the authority of a transcendental past from which "talkative ancestors" issue warnings about "black artists' enthusiasm for modernity." See Griffin 1995. Noted US cultural studies scholar George Lipsitz adopts this injunction in his work on jazz (Lipsitz 2004).

16. Vinicius de Moraes, a seminal figure in the development of bossa nova in Brazil, once declared that Argentines could develop a parallel form to bossa only if they worked from the parameters of the chacarera. My discussion of the chacarera and the term "guacho," as well as the commentary about Klein's marked character in Argentine's racial politics, are indebted to Pablo Vila (personal communication).

17. The key theoretical model here remains Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe*.

18. All biographical information on Zenón's years in Puerto Rico, Boston, and New York is drawn from an extensive interview with the author in New York City, July 2008. Vigoreaux had been a trumpet player, bandleader, composer, arranger, and administrator in the San Juan metropolitan area for decades. Thanks to Ernesto Vigoreaux, Jr., grandson of Mr. Ernesto Vigoreaux, for providing me with biographical information (telephone interview, July 14, 2010).

19. Personal interview, Boston, February 17, 2010.

20. To underscore the distinct relation to a musical past, in preparing to record *Jíbaro*, the album exploring music from Puerto Rico's countryside (*música jíbara*), Zenón would engage in a year-long research project under a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship.

21. For example, Avishai Cohen and the International Vamp Band, formed by Smalls and Gallery regulars Urcola, Terry, and A. Sánchez, along with Israeli bassist Yagil Baras and trombonist Avi Lebovich, with Cohen on piano.

22. Lewis adopts Attali's position. A related position to Attali's is Antonio Negri's, who considers art to anticipate processes of transformation of objects that are revalorized, be it by capital or by the human force he calls "multitude" (Negri 2011).

23. See, for example, Marsalis 1995, 1988; O'Meally 1998.

24. This is how Benjamin thought of people who visit fortune tellers, something he called "presence of mind." See Benjamin 1969.

25. I am aware of the performative contradiction of my argument: I, too, retain strong identitarian forms ("South," for example, or "foreigners"). The dialectical operation I propose, however, reflects the impossibility of submitting these forms to the kind of closure they undergo in the United States, even in those instances where heterogeneity and fluidity are promoted.

26. Alberto Volpi, the Mexican writer and critic, refers to how, beginning in the 1990s, no writer "conserved the obtuse faith" of "regarding oneself as a Latin American writer" (2009: 176). Beginning with Roberto Bolaño, writers produce literature that might play with any national tradition in order to "reveal the fugitive character of identity"(Volpi 2009: 177). Although they remain interested and invested in what goes on in their countries, they do not endeavor to consolidate a tradition, usher in a new one, or to declare tradition to be useless as a concept or category. They do not inscribe themselves into the future. And they do not abrogate to themselves the role of spokesperson for a place, a time, a generation, or a social-historical condition. Whenever they speak of their countries, they do so "without romantic or political stubbornness, without hope or plans for the future, perhaps only with the knowing disenchantment of those who know the limits of their responsibility to history" (Volpi 2009: 170).

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3

Errant Surfing. Music, YouTube, and the Role of the Web in Youth Cultures

Rossana Reguillo

Translated by Peggy Westwell and Pablo Vila

In an article written in 2000 (Reguillo 2000), I said the Walkman, during its prime, had become the primary technological support for affirming the autonomy of young people's musical taste, an important conquest over the adult world technologically represented by home music centers. Thanks to more and more sophisticated support and reproduction technologies, youngsters had the option of "migrating," effectively isolating themselves from the musical standards and culture of their parents.

This same article—a small-scale investigation on music and youth identity—does make the point that parental musical culture clearly plays a role in the initial "taste formation" of young people. However, the empirical evidence I gathered at the time via interviews and discussion groups indicated that such an initial influence began to vanish as young people built their peer networks, which ended up playing a much more significant role in influencing their musical culture. Those peers operated as teachers, listeners, disciples, and comrades, a community for listening to music and generating meaning from it.

Another interesting finding in that study was that two fundamental factors define young people's taste: the musical genre (to which the young person and his or her network ascribed to) and complete repertoires. In other words, taste and consumption were articulated to a genre, a musical group, a record, CD or album, in which a kind of musical definition was linked to a way of seeing the world.

At about the same time, I corroborated the full applicability to my study of the distinction made by Margaret Mead (1970)[1] between post-figurative, co-figurative, and pre-figurative cultures. The category of co-figurative culture (in which subjects learn from their peers) was resoundingly apt for describing the musical terrain of the early twenty-first century: despite the

influence of parents in particular, and the adult world in general, on youth musical taste, it was peers who did the teaching and provided the benchmarks for "taking a stand on kinds of music," so to speak. In addition to functioning as a community of reference, peer groups also constituted a congenial space to be frequented when attempting to make sense out of a chaotic, multitudinous, complex world by applying certain musical clues.

The acceleration of technological change in soft- and hardware regarding the support devices and the consumer logic they implied was one of the many changes marking the first decade of the present century. My intention in this essay is not, however, to discuss the differential, uneven impact of this array of technological marvels on the world as we know it. Rather, my objective is to examine, through the analysis of some of those technological devices, the emerging culture, the new musical subjectivities, and above all, the primacy of music in reshaping sociability.[2]

The "Barbarians" Are Here: The Logic of Fragmentation

During the 1980s and 1990s, research on young people[3] in Latin America focused primarily on identity construction processes and the set of sociopolitical and cultural practices surrounding those processes. This subject occupied an important place in my own research, where I called upon the metaphor of Argonauts to refer to the incessant search for identity among youth groups and collectives at the time. Identity, symbolized by the Golden Fleece, could be acquired in three privileged ways—by belonging to a group, creating a style, and indulging in cultural consumption, each of them conforming to what De Certeau (1995) would call practices of doing.

However, there came a time when this notion of young Argonauts in search of an affiliation identity began to cause me deep interpretative discomfort. The notion seemed increasingly inadequate to cover the twists and turns I was discerning in youth cultures, such as youngsters passing from the first-person plural "we" to the singular "I," the gradual loss of importance of style or look as an identitarian assurance, and, especially, the new relationship that young people were forming with cultural objects and technology.

But it was the book *Los Bárbaros. Ensayos sobre la mutación* by Alessandro Baricco (2008) that provided me with new keys for deciphering these changes in youth culture. Although not dealing specifically with young people, the book does contains a series of provocative data and ideas on transformations in the logic of knowledge and how time is conceptualized, as well as new strategies for relating to technology, among other topics. It then occurred to me that I was no longer dealing with Argonauts in search of an identity, but instead "new barbarians," the metaphor used by Baricco to describe conveyors of new meanings, strategies, and domains.

I would like to hypothesize that it was new barbarians that burst on the scene in the twenty-first century in order to upset a set of fossilized meanings, an operation not free from violence but that is taking place, in general, far from the traditional "trenches." The barbarian breaks through a civilization that feels itself safe operating under a set of preestablished meanings, rules, and regulations. And it is precisely on the musical scene and related areas where this cultural transformation takes on full meaning.

Until a few years ago, young people consumed music (rock, among other genres); such music, alongside an identitarian belonging and style, constituted a triad capable of granting meaning to a biography, always thought of and experienced within a collective. Empirical evidence indicates that this is no longer the case; YouTube (YT) and Facebook (FB), and to a lesser degree Myspace, Lasfm, Blipp, and other social websites, have been the means for a fundamental change that is becoming increasingly apparent.

"Modern" musical culture was constructed on the basis of entire repertoires: complete albums from Pink Floyd, Bruce Springsteen, or Madonna were listened to; constant repertoires, each with its own configuration, were acquired. Today, however, the documentable increase in the consumption of "singles" is rapidly giving way to the so-called playlists that, on iPods, computers, and other reproduction devices, constitute repertoires shaped by the subjectivity of each youngster in which taste is much more loosely linked to a clearly demarcated (musical) identity than before, and much more closely bound to taste and mood.

Playlists have turned users into authors and listeners into their own DJs who, after activating the share option, go in search of others like them, nurturing themselves incessantly on other new barbarians' playlists in a semiosis, or rather musical rhizome[4] that, in my view, unravels prior logics. The Walkman is undoubtedly the precursor of all these processes. However, digital reproduction and the rationale governing its use bring to the musical scene a key factor: intersubjectivity is no longer organized around a precisely defined offer, but instead around the configuring of subjectivities. In other words, the music is less important—in the sense of a formal proposal—than the syntax constructed by the user.[5]

On the basis of the above arguments, my hypothesis is that we are witnessing the emergence of a new grammar in which "fragments" of music (information, images) are being constructed into hypertexts in which the traces of industrial production tend to be erased.

Baricco sees the new barbarians as moving swiftly through what he calls "link trajectories," turning the world into an unceasing "step or passing system." This idea seems extremely suggestive to me for analyzing youth subjectivity in relation to music. It is possible to retain some certainties, however. Throughout my work as a researcher, I am able to say that young people shape their world: their "desire for experience."

Thus, on the basis of Baricco's idea, my own understanding is that the trajectories of the new barbarians constitute a constant search for experience. In my view, this represents a fundamental change. During modernity, experience was considered a mediating dimension "for," an enabling dimension "in order to," a "for the time being." However, at present, experience constitutes a valuable space in itself: it is valued as an end in itself, not for what is constructed in its wake. I maintain that it is through experience that youth subjectivity and intersubjectivity are constructed and shaped.

In this sense, I feel the need to subvert the idea—difficult to eradicate—that societal transformations are produced solely in places consecrated by modernity, such as big politics, culture industries, the mass media, school, work. From a sociocultural perspective, taking experience as the starting point for constituting subjectivity demands traversing the terrains where these transformations are being expressed. It is precisely at the interface between technological devices[6] and cultural consumption where it is possible to observe this process at work. Proximity technologies, as I like to call them in order to sidestep the popular notion of "new technology" or "new tics" (which seems to me a meaningless generalization at this point in time), generate two basic effects: they turn users, in this case young people, into authors, and encourage the active use of devices and contents.

We still lack instruments for mapping and understanding these new grammars for producing meaning that result from these proximity technologies, and this places the challenge in Mead's prefigurative category (where adults learn from young people): we must apprehend nomadically the prints barbarians leave in their trajectories.

INSTRUMENTS CHALLENGED, ETHNOGRAPHING ON THE WEB

Some time back I researched and analyzed the use of blogs as a new instrument in the construction of the public sphere (Reguillo 2009), and this enabled me to formulate certain interpretive hypotheses that have been useful in my "cybernographies." It seems to me important to propose this term, in combination to the so-called virtual ethnography, in order to place emphasis on the study of the articulation between the Web users, the people who surf the Web, and the observational space itself, the cybernauts. This in no way detracts from or denies the utility of the traditional anthropological notion that defines ethnology as the direct study of people and groups, and whose semantic root is linked to the idea of a "people" or "race." That is why when we talk about ethnography, "last names" are commonly employed when characterizing the particular kind of relationships under study: ethnography of space, visual ethnography, ethnography of art, and so on. With that distinction in mind, I see "cybernography" as a symbolically economic way of quickly ascertaining the nature of the relationships being investigated in this essay.

With its intricate, rhyzomatic labyrinths, the Web is a privileged space for analyzing how youth "worlds" are shaped in light of two key factors: agency and subjectivity. On the one hand, a strong correspondence exists between technological skill and how the world is represented, and on the other, the process of production includes traces of young people's subjectivities.

With these basic premises in mind, for several months I analyzed on Facebook (of which I am a regular, enthusiastic user) the relationship with music of a broad-based group of young Mexicans, Argentines, Bolivians, and a few Salvadorans and Venezuelans. This involved studying the music they share on YouTube and other music sites in terms of their *posts, states of mind, and commentaries*. I consider "posts" as the posting of a song, "state of mind" the emotional/informative key accompanying the posts, and "commentaries" the conversations and forwarding that followed the original post. I did not intervene in the commentaries during my observation, thus functioning as an "invisible" researcher who observes without being observed.[7]

During this two-month observation period, I was able to construct the minimal typology below that, although sufficient for the purpose of this essay, will need to be fleshed out later on:

- There are three types of "posts": conventional, unconventional,[8] and mixed.
- There are three types of "states of mind": emotive (the majority), informative, and erudite.
- "Commentaries" do not conform to any particular typology; the point of departure is the first post, which then elicits emotive, erudite, festive, or irreverent comments, according to the slant followed by the commentator. What is interesting in these conversations stimulated by music is the way in which, in most cases, the initial post elicits other posts that, in turn, elicit yet more posts (like Umberto Eco's semiosis, 1980). This ongoing musical exchange nourishes the music repertoires.

The musical configuration of many of the "profiles" ("identities" on Facebook) is the determining factor in the communicative interaction that follows. Below is an example—indicative only, in no way representative—of how profiles, posts, and states of mind are articulated.

The diversity of musical posts associated with different states of mind, seen here in Table 3.1, allowed me to broach what I consider two important topics for understanding the relationship of young people with music in the terrain of digital technology. On the one hand, how do young people themselves or their "friends" view the effects of YouTube on their musical culture? And on the other, how does YouTube affect their musical practices? The next stage in this cybernography was to trigger a "participative" conversation with a question in the style of a group discussion (Ibáñez 1994).[9] Figure 3.1, below,

TABLE 3.1
Profiles, Posts, and States of Mind on Facebook

Profile	Post	State of Mind	Sample Post	Sample State of Mind
Female psychology student. Activist	Mixed/emphasis on unconventional	Emotive/ informative/ political	Por qué Brillamos. Baciloshttp:// www.youtube.com/ watch?v=ib9SWHg5nZk	Maybe we should accept that we are lost, and that's that...... It might be the time to escape...but life doesn't smile on you every Friday, Maybe we should accept that we are lost, and that's that, that we are lost and that's that. . . .
Male, TV camera operator	Mixed/ conventional dominant	Emotive/ informative	Keep the Faith. Gondwanahttp:// www.youtube.com/ watch?v=N-JKQYpUeK0	LYRICS, MUSIC, RHYTHM, PHILOSOPHY... THIS SONG HAS EVERYTHING... I HOPE TO SEE YOU THE 26...
Male, environmental activist.	Unconventional	Informative/ political	PLAYING FOR CHANGE: PEACE THROUGH MUSIC | One Love | PBS	The importance of human unity and the creative impulse of the language we call music give me hope!
Female. Journalist	Conventional	Emotive	Nada es para siempre. Luis Fonsihttp:// www.youtube.com/ watch?v=Ckw2lfuVTdM	Nothing is forever. I love you a lot
Male. Artist, writer	Mixed	Erudite	Air. La Femme D´argenthttp:// www.youtube.com/ watch?v=NINOxRxze9k	A breath of fresh air
Female. Graphic designer/*Artist*	Unconventional	Erudite/ emotive	Billie Jean. Aloe Blac & The Grand Schemehttp:// www.youtube.com/ watch?v=DptqlP9PYXc	This is music

is a reproduction of my Facebook wall with the questions and conversations that followed.

Customarily, when I post something, response time oscillates between three and five minutes; the day I asked these questions, however, answers started arriving immediately. There were sixty-eight responses in all, in addition to ten private messages. Three professors—a Mexican, a Bolivian, and a Venezuelan—interested in the subject of young people and technology reproduced the questions on their own walls.

FIGURE 3.1 First Facebook Wall

This college prep middle school teacher (who was a student of mine in the ITESO Science and Cultural Communications master's program) received ten responses (two female and eight male respondents between fourteen and sixteen years of age), as seen in Figure 3.2.

The Bolivian teacher formulated the questions as seen in Figure 3.3.

He got thirteen answers, all from female respondents. The Venezuelan teacher, who contacted his students by email, got five answers.

In the end, within the given age limit, the corpus constituted fifty-two responses (to each question, for a total of 110 in all) from twenty-nine female and twenty-three male respondents. There were also responses from "older" friends (some feigning "indignation" at their exclusion from the debate), three of which I selected as a contrast discourse.

Finally, I asked respondents if they had any qualms about my using their real names if necessary; no one did, and they even seemed quite proud to have

FIGURE 3.2 Second Facebook Wall

participated in an "online research project." I learned a great deal from these intense, rapid, and interesting exercises, and would like to point out certain aspects of my research that, in my view, contribute to an ongoing methodological debate. One refers to the ethnographer's efforts to maintain balance between outsider and native, seeking ways to approach and comprehend native codes while at the same time maintaining the critical distance necessary to account for the culture in question. I myself am clearly not a "native" of the digital world, having entered it through many accidents. But once there, I discovered

FIGURE 3.3 Third Facebook Wall

a "friendly" culture that allowed me to incorporate skills, codes, and ways of doing in De Certau's sense (1995). Looking back, I see that my first investigative incursions were full of the native's emotion and the outsider's astonishment. Simultaneously, I have noted that my "skills" for carrying on ethnographic conversations on the Web have been increasing, and that my interlocutors have confidence in me and a great desire to tell me what they know.

This leads me to the second aspect. Despite my many years of empirical ethnographic experience on the ground, my incursions into the Web changed my understanding of the notion of an "informant."[10] Web's horizontal nature, despite "prior" prestige—in my case my interlocutors and "friends" know that I am an academic researcher, and many of them have read my work—is not an a posteriori advantage. Rather, it is an asset that grows in the course of the interaction, but can just as easily disappear if the "community" senses an unwillingness on the part of the authors of the postings to engage in conversation. There are many important, well-known figures in different fields that use Facebook, so to speak, but whose walls are kind of refractory, reflecting a communicative "style" based on constant output, with little apparent interest in input and feedback. What I want to underline here is the enormous reflective capacity and clearly praxeological dimension of the Web,[11] where interviewee and interviewer learn together. A certain lack of horizontality in the social basis of ethnography has always been a problem for me; the Web tends to democratize positions.

Christine Hine's *Virtual Ethnography* (2004: 17) has become required reading for anyone studying the Web. The following quote taken from it touches on a crucial topic:

> The impact of technology depends on users learning how to use it in a certain way, which would be contingent on the development of social relations between designers and users through (and around) the machine. As contingency, such development would also be indeterminate: in principle, the comprehension of the technology developed by users is free and can be very different from that of the designers.

In my view, here Hine puts her finger on the area of greatest complexity of the Web for investigators, and on the epistemological and methodological challenge this represents for them. The author places at center stage two key issues for ethnography and the production of knowledge: the emergence of "the machine" as mediating (and modeling?) device in social interaction, and the historically indeterminate strip separating the norms governing these devices from the shoddy, contingent, intermittent use social actors make of them. Here a new research question appears alongside a very old one: the machine as mediator and shaper of new mediations in the production of meaning, and the unceasing slippage of prescriptive usage.

Up to this point, epistemological/methodological considerations have dominated my approach to the subject at hand; some of this input will appear again in what follows.

Broadcast Yourself or a Shared Culture

Before beginning the analysis per se, I want to introduce some structural data I consider important for evaluating the impact of YouTube on the musical cultures of young people.

According to data collected by Pingdom,[12] in 2009 there were 1.63 billion Internet users worldwide, an increase of 18 percent over the year before. Users totaled 252,908,000 in North America and 179,031,479 in Latin America and the Caribbean. The figures are certainly surprising;[13] the constant expansion of the Web is now undeniable and unstoppable. For its part, Facebook registered 400 million users in early 2010, with 200,000 being added daily. And Pingdon assigned 81 percent of the videos shared on the Web to YouTube for the same year.

Heading the list of sites dedicated to sharing information, YouTube has undoubtedly brought about a cultural revolution. Founded in 2005 by Steve Chen and Chad Hurley and defined by them as a website for "looking at and sharing videos," YouTube receives twenty thousand videos and is visited free of charge by fifteen million Internauts every day (profits are derived from publicity). This has merited it a privileged place on what is known as Web 2.0, the designation for websites with participative architecture and user-centered design. Easy to use (simple usability in sociotechnical terms), YouTube operates with different search logics and strategies that make it quick and effortless for users to find links relevant to their interests, or to take "risks" searching by category. Music ranks highest among categories visited on various surveys; in a now-dated interview published in the Spanish daily *El País,* I called YouTube "the video club of the universe" (Laia Reventos 2006).[14]

In its 2010 report on digital music, the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) listed more than four hundred digital services licensed by it to the principal recording companies around the world, and sales increased 12 percent in 2009, generating $4.2 billion in revenue. Digital music transmitted online and legally downloaded accounted for 27 percent of the music industry's revenue worldwide.[15] In addition, it is important to keep in mind the profits accrued from digital sharing.

As Figure 3.4 clearly shows, sharing music yields rewards to the market, and this is due to the intense flow of cybernauts' exchanges and retrievals. It seems to me that these data relocate the discussion on the changes brought about by the expansion of the Web, obliging researchers to look beyond the "hard" data and focus on the transformations in the life worlds of the users

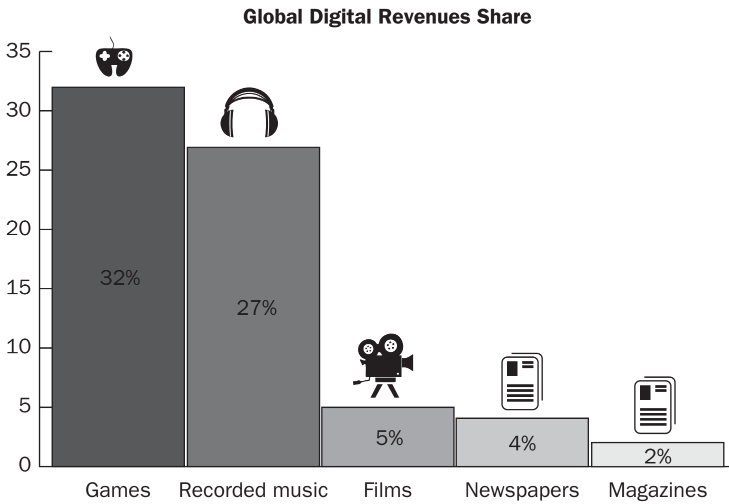

FIGURE 3.4 Global Digital Revenues Share

and their everyday dynamics. In other words, however one views the political economics of the musical culture, beyond an excessive enthusiasm or critical preventions, what is truly significant in the unprecedented spread of these digital technologies is that they propitiate, through certain musical materials, the accelerated interaction on the part of users promoting an exchange culture taking advantage of the "share" option.

SEE MUSIC, HEAR THE BITS OF A STATE OF MIND

In *Marxism and Literature* (1997) Raymond Williams, one of the founders of the Birmingham school of cultural studies, introduced the notion of "structures of feeling." As a cultural hypothesis that stands apart from more formal ideas such as "conception of the world" or "ideology," Williams's formulation makes it possible to analyze ongoing social experience in which unfolding subjectivity causes a "disturbance" or modification in the dominant, manifested, or preestablished social forms. In my view, this comes about for two basic reasons: the articulation of presence in which meanings are actively lived and felt, and because, by virtue of shared experience, a collective, however diffuse, makes perceptible and then visible relationships and meanings that "weren't present" before. Viewed from this perspective, one can affirm that Williams is criticizing the emphasis in cultural analysis on "explicitly fixed" forms and finished products, at the expense of processes that are ongoing or, in the words of the author, "in solution."

In this regard, I share the interest shown by Vila and Semán, in *La música y los jóvenes de los sectores populares: más allá de las tribus*,[16] in what they call the pluralization of musical taste "introduced both by the market and by the

productivity of the musical creations and appropriations of the young people" that would appear to be fragmenting "youth taste into particular species, often apparent or truly irreducible." What is important here is the fact that, in addition to what Vila and Semán indicate, this pluralization of taste is made possible by technological platforms. So, more than the uses, consumption patterns, and musical "genres," the focal point of analysis should be the role of YouTube in mediating the shaping of a musical culture. Thus, like Williams, my point of departure is a cultural hypothesis that gives primacy to structures of feeling (or experience) and their potential for relocating musical practices.

Ángel Quintero puts it very well: "Music is a form through which people interact with their world" (1998: 34). I would also add that it is a form of interaction with others and ourselves. If, as Quintero states, music "plays a decisive role in the symbolic shaping of the social," it is worth investigating what role the new technological platforms and the Web itself play in these configuring and exchange processes.

My analysis of this terrain is organized around a set of categories that run from formal to subjective and intersubjective.

SPEED AND LIGHTNESS

First, I would like to examine what users refer to as YouTube's "most appetizing" qualities affecting their musical consumption.[17]

Several constants in this regard can be isolated among the responses. One is the *immediacy* with which musical "needs" or "whims" are satisfied. With a single click, users accede to an infinite repertoire of possibilities, while at the same time connecting with, rejecting, or challenging a particular piece of music.

The immediacy, "the satisfaction of an immediate desire," in the words of a young female Argentine, is inscribed in the logic of speed and a continuous present that characterizes contemporary youth cultures (Reguillo 2000b). Temporality is a key factor that links up with other dimensions of experience. A young female Bolivian says, "Immediacy helps a lot, you can have something brand new right away, and besides the music that's popular now, there are videos." The sensation of constantly hearing the "latest" thing was repeated over and over again by younger users.

Within this same temporal logic, two aspects appear relevant. Young people see YouTube as letting them see/hear music they couldn't hear live or on the big rock concerts shown on television. This "musical revival" effect is very important. As VHA, a young male Mexican, put it: "YouTube is what's the latest, recommendations of things that aren't yet on sale…I use it to see live bands that I haven't been able to see or won't see because they're already dead." It could be argued that both vinyl records and CDs offer this same

repositioning sense, but the addition of the visual dimension and the possibility of seeing a live concert (of bands whose members are dead or otherwise inaccessible, as VHA says) produce a different experience; the time barrier is erased, and with a click, the "new barbarians" have within reach a musical repertoire that runs from "what isn't yet on sale" and "the latest," to historical archives. Through this type of continuity, YouTube, as immediate present, erases temporal differences.

A second temporal-related facet of YouTube is articulated around what one interlocutor in my sample (male Mexican, master's student) calls "continuous playback." By this he means the capacity to use YouTube as a channel for continuous listening without the necessity of any downloading; a female Argentine mentioned an additional advantage: avoiding "the fiasco of having to wait for the download to end[,] only to find out that you don't like it." The ways YouTube handles temporality that users like can be summed up as follows: immediacy, speed, novelty, repertoires that erase the frontier between past and present, and streaming with no obligation to download, meaning no need to take up hard-disc space. This advantage, repeated continually by my cyber-informants, points, in turn, to a key dimension of youth musical cultures: lightness.

In his *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Italo Calvino (1998: 17) said: "To cut off Medusa's head without being turned to stone, Perseus supports himself on the very lightest of things, the winds and the clouds, and fixes his gaze upon what can be revealed only by indirect vision, an image caught in a mirror." Lightness as a strategy for confronting an analogical world turned to stone? Calvino's metaphor seems to me a powerful tool for understanding how young people relate to music in these formats and platforms. The author goes on to say, "The relationship between Perseus and the Gorgon is a complex one and does not end with the beheading of the monster. Medusa's blood gives birth to a winged horse, Pegasus—the heaviness of stone is transformed into its opposite. With one blow of his hoof on Mount Helicon, Pegasus makes a spring gush forth, where the Muses drink." In Calvino's interpretation, lightness emerges from heaviness; he also affirms that lightness is not escape, but instead a change of perspective, of logic, a turning to other forms of knowledge.

In my analysis of the uses informants make of YouTube, mediated by Facebook, I found this same change in viewpoint and ways of acquiring knowledge. To continue with the Perseus metaphor,[18] the weight of modernity in the shaping of musical tastes does not disappear; it persists in order to be transformed into something else. Modern knowledge is there, in "Perseus's bag," allowing young people to deal with a world where heaviness continues to be a relevant factor; however, young people bring forth new shoots, new ways of listening and making sense out of the old codes.

Thus, the first node of relevant dimensions refers to the changes in the strategies and logic of how music is used, and this, in turn, is linked to the transformations brought about by both globalization and the temporal acceleration resulting from technological advances and devices. With its immediacy, lightness, and availability (operating as a database, file/memory lodged "outside" the user's support device), YouTube places an almost unrestricted musical universe within the immediate reach of users, while at the same time turning upside down the concept of "possession," something of supreme importance in the relationship of youths with music. YouTube isn't "a possession" of users; they go there instead to possess multiple, mixed, hybrid, heterogeneous repertoires. Regardless of gender, younger users place a higher value on these characteristics than older ones, who tend to value more the variety and diversity of available musical proposals.

For the moment, on the basis of these early results, a key dimension has been placed in evidence: the dense, complex relationship existing between youth musical practices and technological devices. I would venture to say that the substantive transformations in youth subjectivity and musical culture are more definitively linked to what I call the "youth condition"[19] and less to technological devices, although the interface between the two dimensions undoubtedly runs in parallel lines; in other words, it is impossible to isolate what is related to the subject and his/her practices from what technology makes possible on the devices it has generated. If the youth condition is viewed, as I define it, as alluding to both the structural and (especially) cultural mechanisms that frame the practices and insertion processes of concrete subjects considered young in a sociocultural dynamic that is historically and geopolitically shaped, then the structural and cultural configurations of both technology and music are evidently identitarian markers that are part and parcel of the experience of a young subject who doesn't use technology so much as inhabit it.

ERRATIC SURFING: LEARNING BY DRIFTING

Accelerated apprenticeships as one outcome deriving from YouTube use were frequently mentioned in my "conversations" with young cybernauts. However, the apprenticeships referred to were not only the formal, lineal kind: learning also took place when apprentices "lost themselves" and proceeded to drift with no particular itinerary in mind.[20] This is how a young female Mexican describes the experience:

> I begin to look for some friend's recommendation on "*feis*" [Facebook], and from there I don't know where I'll end up because I let myself be carried away (when I like something; if I don't, I start all over again),

> and the other day, for instance, I started looking for a song by a group from here, from my city (Toluca), and because of the chords I ended up listening to Bach, who I only knew a little about, what I learned in school. And it sparked my curiosity [*ya me piqué*] because I liked it a lot, like the style of this man was awesome [*muy padre*] and in YouTube as well I watched two documentaries on who the man was, awesome [*muy padre*]. I don't know if I like classical music, I only know I like Bach because it's like very current [*como muy de ahora*], like I can identify. And I do this a lot, I just enter and start clicking until I find things I like.

Erratic surfing is not a negligible search strategy on YouTube. It is not a meaningless traffic, mechanical; rather, it involves moving through what Baricco (2008) calls "step or passing systems." This not only attests to the openness of these new music lovers, but also to the possession of the superior skill set and competence that errant—not irrational—surfing requires.

For example, say someone is looking for Lady Gaga's latest video; when "Lady Gaga" is reached, a window of possibilities opens; the first click shows a primary link between Lady Gaga and Beyonce, let's say; with the next click, the surfer faces a series of choices— return to Gaga, stay with Beyonce, or tack in a different direction that may lead to a new group, a tutorial on how to apply makeup like Gaga, a tutorial on how to play a certain song on the piano or guitar, or a movie trailer. This goes on and on until, after executing a series of forwards and returns, the surfer has put together his/her own syntax in the form of a non-linear grammar that typifies how music is consumed on YouTube.

Nevertheless, some interesting differences appear when this "erratic surfing" data is broken down by sex, age, and educational capital. Among my informants, female respondents, respondents between eighteen and twenty-four years of age, and respondents of either sex with the most schooling were the most likely to "lose themselves in a search." The reasons for this are many and complex. I am going to examine several that were provided by the youngsters themselves, together with others inferred from my own analysis:

(1) While males appear to have a more "erudite" relationship with music (in general "knowledge" is valued over feeling), one of confirming their taste and exploring on the basis of "what they already know," females show more readiness to run the risk of taking up a new proposal and drifting with it. More than one respondent arrived at the following conclusion: "Women are less 'set in' their ways [*clavadas*] (less pig-headed or wedded could be the translation to this everyday slang) than males."

(2) The oldest and the youngest respondents show less readiness to engage in open-ended musical exploration. Possible interpretations

derived from my own observation and analysis are that the youngest, who are still forming their musical "taste" or "style," tend to be more faithful to certain groups, singers, and proposals than their eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old peers. And while respondents older than the foregoing did not shy away from open-ended searches, they were less technologically adept than the youngsters in this type of Web surfing. In addition, members of this age group have less time to drift (job and family responsibilities play a key role in shaping musical practices). This would seem to indicate that in the eighteen to twenty-four age group, individuals have acquired a musical foundation that lets them get involved in experimentation; moreover, their skills are superior to those of their older peers, and they also have the free time and structural conditions to indulge in the pleasures of the musical "flaneur," to borrow a word from Walter Benjamin.

(3) I have found that educational and cultural capital, in general, play a prime role in youths' openness to explore new musical universes. The greater the capital, the more likely the tendency of a young person to navigate among hybrid genres and drift. In the present analysis, I could isolate two factors that appear to underlie this tendency: a greater degree of appropriation from the world culture, which affects the speed with which the mind opens up to varied, differentiated proposals, and greater linguistic skills for establishing chains of musical searches on YouTube, enabling the interested party to advance beyond "bands in Spanish" or "Brazilian music." In short, the errant navigator possesses "a *tesauro*,"[21] meaning a greater capacity to seek out musical offerings based on representations of concepts and words.

In this sense, what is relevant in these errant searches would seem to be the relation between discursive competence and the broadening of the musical universe in a symbolization process open to becoming an Other (somebody else), musically speaking.

To reiterate, drifting, which I understand to mean moving in no fixed direction (which does not presuppose, like dictionaries imply, lack of purpose) is a key dimension in the musical culture of these new barbarians. Readiness to drift among "musical currents" is nuanced by the age, sex, and cultural and educational capital of young people desiring to grant meaning and provide background music to their biographies.

SHARE, SHARE, SHARE: CHAINS TO COMBAT COPYRIGHTS

One of the basic principles of what is called Web 2.0 is the capacity of users to share among themselves; another is their ability, through multiple operations,

to actively operate on contents. Web 2.0 modifies the formerly passive role assigned to Web navigators, who were limited to receiving contents. As was indicated at the beginning of this essay, the extent of the interaction possible among users of blogs, YouTube, and other websites was one of my most relevant discoveries when first exploring social networks.

With regard to the musical cultures linked to YouTube, the concept "share" becomes extremely relevant in that this function is what allows the formation of chains of significant repertoires, my term for the articulation of posts, states of mind, and commentaries.

But the importance of this kind of relationship with music goes beyond the sociocultural dimension: it has profound implications for the economics of culture in general in that the notion of "possession" is collectivized and inverted in ways that affect cultural markets and industries.

A twenty-three-year-old male cybernaut says: "Sometimes I feel as if on YouTube people open up their cassettes looking for someone else to share these searches with." And a twenty-five-year-old female comments:

> YouTube brings me closer to the music when it is accompanied by original videos of the artists singing, talking about their music, which I find fascinating. There are also really interesting videos of concerts filmed by fans of samba artists, for example, singing in bars, etc. Then I find links to videos with news about them, versions other people make of their songs, and I read a lot of the commentaries that show me how an artist and his/her music affect people.

What I would like to highlight in the above comments is the evident assumption on the part of YouTube and Facebook users that sharing increases both musical culture and knowledge through access to a constant stream of "information" not limited to the music per se. Rather, as indicated by the young woman above, YouTube makes available a wide repertoire of "knowledge" that far surpasses the reduced availability of the musical mainstream. A constant among YouTube habitués is the attention paid to comments by other users (not always politely proffered) as starting point for new searches. A young Mexican male puts it this way: "I like to read the opinion of fans and detractors of what I like to listen to, this way I find new recommendations."

To counter the argument that vinyl records, cassettes, and CDs are also organized around the idea of sharing, I would point to a number of significant differences between the two kinds of sharing. Leaving aside the question of the intellectual property rights of artists with websites on YouTube or other spaces, sharing through YouTube is immediate—no need to wait for a personal meeting or party to make a physical exchange, for example; a greater number of interlocutors are involved in the conversational act surrounding a musical post, and, most importantly, the notion of copyright is (symbolically) blurred. Virtual exchanges accelerate the effacing of what

Bourdieu (2010: 157) would call production footprints, increasing the value of the "discoverer," or in the words of Bourdieu himself, the "creator's creator." The Facebook users who constantly post links on YouTube, accompanied by informative or emotional "states of mind," acquire "value" and authority through their willingness to share discoveries and propose transit routes in the musical universe. "Creators' creators," these users trigger conversations as well in which music becomes the pretext for crafting other texts and exchanging opinions, information, and so on. This is why the "state of mind" accompanying a post is crucial. In the YouTube/Facebook interface, music is not the only thing that is shared. In addition to music, the person who posts the song is also proposing a reading code to his/her interlocutor or "friends."

This state of mind then becomes the starting point for the conversation mediated by music that follows. In some cases, the music itself is the main subject of the post, eliciting in turn, as was shown above, other posts, each with its own state of mind. But at other times the music around which the initial post was organized is relegated to the background by other subjects, such as how difficult men are, global warming, the protests in Egypt, and so forth, in succeeding posts.

To illustrate the post/state of mind relationship, I am going to examine the cases of five members of my witness situation[22] because, as I see it, the responses accompanying a musical post clearly show the importance of narrative in the act of sharing a song.[23]

Unfortunately, Table 3.2 freezes the movement and meaning of the posts. It is useful, however, for showing the enormous diversity of musical genres and styles, almost as incommensurable as "the YouTube video library" users have at their disposal. Here the range runs from classics like Lou Reed to the heavy metal scene in Bolivia, from heavy songs to the "self-help" music. The musical posts from YouTube, mediated by Facebook, defy any classificatory attempt based on the musical canon. The music is a vehicle for eliciting states of mind and the desire to share thoughts that is continuous and incessantly renewed, which is precisely what YouTube's immediacy and lightness allows.

Also readily apparent is the diversity of states of mind regarding extension, communicative intent, openness to the use of a key to stimulate discussion and, above all, to construct intersubjectivity. At this point I would like to clarify that my purpose in this essay has not been to write a formalist analysis on music and the uses made of it using digital technologies. Rather, my objective is twofold: to explore how music and the digital devices it is played on influence the reconfiguring of youth identities, which for me is the crux of the matter, and to evaluate the capacity of this combination to trigger interactive processes that, in my opinion, make it necessary for researchers from the social sciences and humanities to redimension how they approach the relationship among identity/music, consumption/ideology, and repertoires/musical culture. If, as I hypothesize, the discursive or narrative key employed

TABLE 3.2
Posts, Links, and States of Mind

G	PostSong/ composer	Link	State of mind
M	Lou Reed, Walk on the Wild Side	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KaWSOIASWc	It reminds me of the wild side of life . . . but always with a good song.
F	HATE, Punishment	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgzr6cvnmwE&playnext_from=TL&videos=Axlq0uaMSZA	The metal scene in Bolivia is small, but it's powerful, good, from the heart . . . This music reminds me that we're all young, free, and political—in the best sense—that especially with music everyday life is politicized, along with intimacy and also social, cultural, religious life, etc. . . . just like a musical, corporeal and political space.Punishment. HATE.
M	Doves, There Goes the Fear		Our fear of every day more than paralyzing us must mobilize us, music for me is a hint to action
F	Julia Zenko, Con las Alas del Alma	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGVLQ0KRFiw	"With the wings of the soul . . . " that's how I interpret life.
M	RODRIGO LEÃO—CINEMA ENSEMBLE—CELINA DA PIEDADE, PÁSION	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiJVNu-6dFc	"For you I am willing to change my destiny. Hold me close tonight, even if you don't want to, I'd rather you lied." Almost any verse of this song, besides the marvelous interpretation, moves me every time I hear it like it was the first time. The passion with which, with this petition, he tries to move one last time the one he loves, although he knows, he doesn't want to resign himself to singing from nostalgia.

in musical posting is a prime factor in understanding the "step or passing systems" of these new barbarians, what is manifested in those states are the sets of codes—subjective, political, emotive, erudite— that open up a universe of possible meanings based solely on the music.

In my long "cybernography," it is clear that, unlike states of mind in posts not accompanied by music, those based on music tend to be less conflictive and more open and intentionally communicative when addressing other cybernauts. Perhaps, at heart, what I want to postulate is that music and its technological articulations have become a driving force for repoliticizing, reenchanting, and reshaping the political meanings of the world, in a context that, via actual facts, tends to deny agency to youth subjects. Posts on musical subjects contain evident keys to the way young people interact with the world, their peers, society, and reality. Music in digital language loses its "aura" to become an instrument for mobilizing emotions and political will. Benjamin would say, "Within great historical intervals, together with global

modes of existence corresponding to historical collectives, perception is also transformed" (2008: 15). Perhaps what Benjamin (along with many important twentieth-century thinkers) didn't anticipate was the emergence of Internet, YouTube, and the social networks.

There is nothing new under the sun, however. Music continues to be a key device that talks to itself, reaffirming tastes and competencies. One of my female cybernauts (over the age limit but whose response is "representative" of what other females in my witness situation said, did, and do) comments with reference to *Le Passeur* by Wasis Diop:[24] "I love his music, and this one is one of my favorites. I got to him listening to African music online. His voice shakes me up. Through him I began to listen to and enjoy more intensely other African musicians in whom I recognize many Latin rhythms." In this sense YouTube and Facebook have accelerated ongoing processes; with their "share" button, they generate, foster, and increase the scope of communities of listeners and *speakers,* who see their dissemination capacity increase—a decidedly not negligible key in these times of social revolutions.

COLLECTIVE DJ, MUSICAL SOCIABILITY

Finally, among the topics I am interested in highlighting in this initial approximation is one that appeared frequently in my conversations with YouTube and Facebook users: the use of YouTube as DJ at parties. In my view, usage of this kind brings into focus a form of onsite sociability mediated by digital technologies. As certain young interlocutors indicated:

> I'm very uncomfortable going to a party where there isn't a computer with Internet…alcoholic hypersensibility impels me always to look into the most remote corners of my audio library, and sober, without YouTube, I wouldn't buy or download the musical whims that YouTube satisfies immediately!!! (VHA, male)

> besides in many get-togethers YT turns into a communitarian DJ. There's no party where YouTube isn't present as a pretext for interaction and musical nostalgia. (DF, male)

> Some months ago some friends even invited me to do the music for their bar, and a lot of the music I did wasn't on my hard disc, I programmed it directly from YouTube, hahaha. (CPJ, female)

> But it's quite impressive at parties. You can no longer say "I don't have it." If someone decides that what sets the party on fire will be "gasoline," you look for it on YouTube, and that's all there is to it. I believe that, as always, the actor is the one who makes the means. Of course, if I believe YouTube has an advantage, it's not lineal. You can mix files you are downloading in different windows—something you can't do on last.fm. (MBJ, male)

I would like to underline three key factors in the ways Internet and YouTube are used in leisure-time spaces where music plays a major role.

(1) The immediate satisfaction the platform provides for both "musical whims" and "longings." In my view, rather than annulling face-to-face relations—as is commonly supposed in many quarters—according to many of my cybernauts, digital technologies do exactly the opposite: digital mediation favors co-present interaction regarding likes and dislikes, risky searches, and memories that can be shared immediately in situ. YouTube makes it possible to make-hear, make-see, and make-feel others above and beyond discursive recreation or undocumented allusions to the music to be shared. At a party everybody gathers around a computer and YouTube to begin selecting their songs; they take turns, and this is how everyone puts together his/her party—in the company of everyone else.

(2) The environment/mood/music relationship is facilitated by the use of this tool; as MBJ points out, YouTube can make the difference between a successful party that "takes off" when music is accurately attuned to the beat of partygoers' perceivable moods, or a failure when the wrong musical decisions are made. This links up with the plasticity of the new youth identities and ascriptions, and their spontaneity and non-linearity or, to paraphrase MJB, the capacity to open multiple windows in which musical, social, and cultural mixes can, collectively, create new productions.

(3) The emblematic, solitary, central figure of the DJ in spaces such as bars, raves, concerts and parties, and in musical genres like electronic music and hip hop, among others, maintains its prominent position. However, the transformations brought about by digital mediations and articulations have resulted in an important change: we can all be DJs and provide our tastes, repertoires, whims, or nostalgias to generate a shared musical scene. Without recourse to the sophistication of turntablism and beat jugglin',[25] and without requiring complex samplers and synthesizers, anybody with a computer connected to Internet and YouTube can "program and mix," although possibly without the subtlety of a crossfader.[26] And, as if this were not enough, there are many "tutorials" on YouTube itself showing viewers how to become a DJ.

Undoubtedly this initial approach will require further in-depth investigation; my intention here has been to establish a checklist of topics for apprehending the processes of change that digital devices and platforms are making possible. In the meantime, the foregoing may help undermine the set of certainties employed, all too arrogantly at times, by certain social scientists when imputing meaning to youth universes, including musical ones.

SOME FINAL NOTES

In his essay on the value of popular music, Simon Frith postulates that "every measurement measures something different, or to be more precise, each measurement constructs its own object to be measured." Throughout what is commonly called the "sociology of music," measurements have oscillated between the value (aesthetic, essential) assigned to different kinds of music and the influence of the music industry in shaping styles and taste, expressed schematically or even a bit crudely. These swings in the pendulum have given rise to formalistic approaches and approximations that focus on the social meaning and uses of different kinds of music and their relationship to identitarian processes, among others.

Frith (2001: 417) adds that on specialists' lists, "'music for women,' for example, is interesting not as music that in some way expresses 'being a woman' but rather as music that tries to define this itself; and something similar happens with the way in which 'black music' serves to establish a very concrete notion of what 'being black' is." I agree with the author on the need to break with this type of essentialist, reductive approach. The challenge is not to think and investigate in terms of "youth music," but rather to perfect our research instruments in order to explore in a more anthropological sense the ways certain kinds of music are contesting the canon of a modernity whose chords and notes have faded away; the idea is to place ourselves in listener territory for the purpose of deciphering the codes that persist and those that are currently being transformed.

There are basic clues to be found in the interface Facebook/YouTube for comprehending the centrality of music in the biographical and social construction of young (and not so young) people. As Trejo points out concerning Facebook: "There is room for the most varied cultural expressions in the broadest possible sense of the term cultural realm. Facebook reflects and projects contemporary culture while containing spaces to make and express some facets of that culture" (Trejo 2011).

Technology marks youth identities in important ways; it is an instrument for forging, shaping, and giving meaning to life and its practices. In the early years of the twenty-first century, technology has provided the principal strategy for confronting challenges running from cultural consumption, interaction, and sociability to politics, as has been seen during 2011 and 2012 with the emergence of protest and resistance movements in which technological devices have played a key role. It is therefore imperative to take into account the fact that young people and different technologies have converged on a track that is generating profound changes. In all its different facets, technology operates as connector, prosthesis, platform, catapult, quotidian experience in youths' interaction with the world, providing tools that go from a watercolor pen to graffiti on a wall to a computer with Internet that allows

authorship (speaking with one's own voice) and access to a multitude of social networks. Technology is the trademark of an era in which youth is using it both to affirm their pact with consumer society and to pose their differences with and criticism of this same consumer society.

At this point in time, on/offline opposition is problematical, and as clearly shown in both the discursive and heuristic dimensions, youth practices—in the present context musical ones—come and go, enter and exit the Web. The ability of youths to seamlessly go from virtual to perceptible reality in their musical and political practices challenges "adult-centered" modes of understanding young people's life worlds—from the computer to the street, from a playlist to a party, and from solitary dreams and aspirations to a collective conversation.

Notes

1. Margaret Mead established an important distinction to understand the relationships between generations in relation to learning processes. In a *post-figurative* culture the younger generation learns everything from the older; this is the case in primitive and stable societies ruled by tradition. In *co-figurative* cultures individuals learn behavior patterns from their peers. The older generation is not seen as the infallible repository of wisdom; the younger generation also has its own status, and its rights are respected. Industrial societies are customarily co-figurative. Finally, *pre-figurative* cultures are those in which adults also learn from the younger generation, with young people taking the initiative.

2. I understand sociality as the dynamic process of a society making itself, communicating itself. It takes into account the communicative, ritual, and performative dimensions. In line with the formulations of the first Mafessoli (1990), and fully developed and analyzed by Jesús Martín Barbero, see, for example (1998), where he defines this notion as "the way of being together, of a society."

3. As is well known, young people do not represent a homogeneous category or possess an essence, nor can they be defined solely in biological terms. Young is a socially constructed category that is defined in complex, relational ways in which socioeconomic strata, gender, educational capital, and ethnicity, for example, are definitive dimensions. For a full, detailed discussion of the concepts of "youth," "young people," "youth cultures and identity," and "youth movements," I suggest the interested reader consult the first chapter of my book *Culturas Juveniles. Formas Políticas del Desencanto* (Reguillo 2012).

4. This seems to me a key notion in the sense that the rhizome configures an "open" map that can be dismantled or reversed and constantly modified (Deleuze and Guatari 1994: 22). The sense of rhizomatic is to be able to connect multiple points simultaneously, with a principle of deterritorialization (meaning cannot be fixed on any single territory because meaning is constructed through the connection of different nodes).

5. In 2006 singles constituted around 70 percent of all digital sales in the United States, in contrast to the sale of physical formats like the CD, whose sales were less than 5 percent of the total. By mid-2007 physical formats had decreased to less than

10 percent of the sales of the year before, due to the fact that consumers were buying single tracks, not albums. See "Music Labels: Striking the Right Chord for Stimulating Revenues." Telecom & media insights. No. 26, January 2008. The role of pirating should also be factored into the above figures.

6. This statement must be nuanced, since access to technology, as I have indicated, is not equitable, and enormous sectors of the population are marginalized from these processes. Nevertheless, it is important to note that, despite unequal distribution, evidence shows that access is widespread, and that cybercafés, for example, are playing a decisive role in a certain democratization of technology.

7. When writing this essay, I had 2,781 "friends" on Facebook, to use the terminology of the website itself; the majority were young people who added me because they knew who I was (many are students) or because of my posts. This allowed me to have an observation territory as broad as it was diverse and fascinating.

8. I can't find a word to express the extremely complex range of subjects in the unconventional posts; these ran from indigenous music, to national music, to indie music, and included a great diversity of genres.

9. I have used several times the discussion group as a powerful methodological device to inquire about the meaning produced in common. For a strictly methodological reference, see Reguillo (1998); for an example of its use, see Reguillo (2000).

10. I have never been entirely comfortable with this way of characterizing the subjects we talk to and try to understand in order to construct knowledge.

11. In other words, oriented by a *praxis* sustained by subjectivity and the subject's values through whose analysis it becomes possible to understand human action. The science of praxeology attributed to the economist Ludwig Von Mises analyzes in this way sequences of action in which "it is obligatory to take into account the meaning that the man that acts confers on both the given reality and his own behavior in relation to this situation" (1995: 34).

12. Pingdon is a company dedicated to monitoring the Web, filling the informational needs of 90 percent of interested firms worldwide. Its data is highly valued.

13. Complete information available at http://royal.pingdom.com/2010/01/22/internet-2009-in-numbers/.

14. http://www.elpais.com/articulo/sociedad/videoclub/universo/llama/Youtube/elpporsoc/20060723elpepisoc_5/Tes.

15. The complete report can be found at http://www.ifpi.org/content/library/DMR2010.pdf.

16. Available at http://www.captel.com.ar/downloads/2510010400_la%20musica%20y%20los%20jovenes%20de%20los%20sectores%20populares_seman%20y%20vila.pdf

17. The cybernauts in this small-scale investigation.

18. "Medusa remains in the bag Perseus carries with him, he can't/doesn't want to abandon it, because not only does it allow him to confront other enemies, but from this stone, from this monstrous head emerge 'little sprigs turned into coral that the nymphs seek for adornment'" (Calvino 1998: 19).

19. Defined by me as the multidimensional set of particular, differentiated, and culturally "agreed-upon" forms that grant, define, mark, and place limits and parameters on the subjective and social experience of young people. The condition refers to positions, categories, classes, situations, practices, authorizations, prescriptions, and

proscriptions assumed as "natural" by the reigning order and tending to be naturalized as "one's own" or as inherent to this age group (see Reguillo 2010: 401).

20. While I am advancing these ideas, I am fully aware of the limits the new technologies also imply. In that regard I agree with one of the anonymous reviewers of this manuscript who pointed out that "the degree to which the illusion of choice in YouTube options and 'erratic surfing' are mediated by the choices that YouTube and Facebook offer us in terms of their attempts to systematize our musical choices, appeal to our taste, and sell our accumulated profile to third parties . . . At any rate, the fairly sinister role of surveillance, of profile-building, and the like seems to invite [its] . . . acknowledgment."

21. The word "tesauro," derived from neo-Latin and meaning treasure, refers to the list of words or terms employed to represent concepts. The word comes from the Latin word *thesaurus*, which comes, in turn, from the classic Greek word meaning storehouse, treasury. The Latin neologism was coined in the early 1820s.

22. From an anthropological perspective, I use the term "witness situation" to refer to the space/time confluence of actors who move around, exchange opinions, and place themselves in an ethnographic dialogue situation on a particular key subject. I think this way of working breaks with the particularism of the "case" or so-called sample.

23. Posts are reproduced exactly as they appeared on Facebook.

24. In addition to the online questions and interaction, I asked research participants to post a favorite song on my wall and tell me why they liked it, along with giving the YouTube link. The link to Wasis Diop's song is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qiJxiE2qECM.

25. They allude to, in the order they were mentioned, the creation of sound effects by spinning the vinyl records on a turntable; and playing with tempos, rhythms, and sounds through pauses and mixing.

26. A device for going smoothly from one song to the next.

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4

Music and Post-Communist Subjectivities in Cuba

Rubén López Cano
Translated by Peggy Westwell and Pablo Vila

Introduction

Fundamental to any study of juvenile cultural practices is how they influence young people's subjectivity, especially in the process of becoming citizens. Music is, naturally, an important factor in determining how youngsters position themselves regarding the national projects and hegemonic discourses of those governing them.[1] Two key functions of music in the construction of subjectivity are, on the one hand, representing subjects, fictional characters, roles, and social agents—on occasion making visible subjects ignored in other types of discourse, and on the other, configuring points of view, opinions, and positions that orient the way young people see themselves and the world around them.

Throughout the revolutionary process in Cuba, music has been instrumental in shaping citizens' subjectivities as described above. In this essay I will summarily review the ways in which the primary hegemonic subject of the Cuban Revolution has been articulated and disarticulated in popular music over the last fifty years. This official subjectivity, historically embodied chiefly in youth, has given way to the diverse juvenile subjectivities expressed in different musical genres that proliferate among young Cubans today.

The Emergence of the Hegemonic Subject: the "New Man," the "*Compañero*"

The triumph of the revolution in 1959 had as great an impact on the large-scale metanarratives of emancipation and nation-building as it did in

the restricted space of private life and aspirations where identitarian narratives shape subjectivity. It gave Cubans faith and confidence in themselves (Pérez 2007: 687–688), injecting them with "a sense of pride and national identity they had never had before. For the first time, they were truly independent" (Latell 2008: 227). This unleashed "powerful forces that, to a great extent, had to do with the community in which being Cuban acquired new meaning" (Pérez 2007: 708): it was "the consecration of a providential destiny" (Rojas 1998: 133).

The revolutionary regime proposed building a new nation by means of a two-pronged process. First, the aim was to create a new social, economic, juridical, and military project and, above all, a new citizen: the "new man." This latter subject occupied a privileged, hegemonic place in the new nation and its government mechanisms. Next, the transformation of the revolutionary movement into public institutions led to the gradual identification of nation with state. While "the republican era experienced the effective separation of civil from political society, of the people from government, of the Nation from the State," the revolutionary era, for its part, "resolves this conflict by identifying the civil with the political sphere, the people with the government, the Nation with the State" (Rojas 1998: 110).

> This fantasy of One-People, to be embodied in the Party, the State or the Leader, acts as an ideologeme justifying the elimination of social and political differences, whether by the institutional coupling of Nation and State or the corporativisation of civil society by the state [...] From the moment the first revolutionary government is created, the people are no longer the civil people but instead the organized and uniformed people: the state people. (Rojas 1998: 113–114)

Thus, the "new man" or "*compañero*" articulated his personal aspirations with those of the nation commingled with the state that emerged after the Revolution. As all individual acts had to be aligned with the building of a new society, hegemonic subjectivity corresponds to that of the nation under construction.

This is reflected in some of the songs of the Cuban Nueva Trova, the musical movement most closely identified with the Revolution (Moore 2006: 135 and Borges-Triana 2009: 6). Hegemonic subjectivity is palpable in many of Silvio Rodríguez's songs where the poetic voice hidden in them is that of the "new man." In "*Te doy una canción*" (I give you a song) (1970),[2] romantic love and political commitment occupy the same space. A typical example is the last verse of the song, in which it is repeated anaphora "I give a song" to continue talking about political speech, freedom of expression (the right to speak), revolutionary violence (hands that kill), filial love and patriotic, weapons, literacy (books), guerrilla, poetry, and love.[3]

Here the act of love involves the same elements as revolutionary action. It is as fearful as it is tender. The rhetoric of romantic songs is merged with that of the social song, just as the amorous subject (intimate, private) is conflated with the revolutionary subject (collective, transcendental, and so on).

"*Hoy mi deber*" (Today my duty) (1979)[4] is more clearly based on musical topics[5] characterizing the bolero; here the obligations of a committed cultural worker and the political activities organized by the revolutionary regime come into conflict with personal priorities, erotic desire, and a private agenda. Throughout the song the poetic voice admits the contradiction caused by such a responsibility through a state of melancholy due to the absent love. In the end, the conflict is resolved when the poetic voice notes that there is really no contradiction: intensely loving your partner is a way of singing to the homeland, to fly its flag and to fill the square as a metaphor for integrating into the nation's collective project.

According to this song, the commitment to one's country can also be fulfilled by the love commitment to one's partner. Sublimating love is also nation-building. But it is not just any love; Rodríguez's compositions give voice to a different kind of love, one far removed from the romantic love defended in commercial music.[6] His songs advocate a new, revolutionary love that recasts relations between lovers, thus planting the seed of the new society. A "new love" for the "new man." Nation-building is coupled with a personal project; loving a lover and loving one's country converge in a single discourse that is, at one and the same time, loving, patriotic, and emancipatory.

A very interesting case is "*Ya no te espero*" (I don't wait for you any longer) (1969),[7] an emotionally charged, finely nuanced song with a wealth of interpretive resources. For several reasons, it is one of the compositions most closely related to the bolero, especially the *filin*, a variation that grew up in Havana in the 1960s.[8] The basic rhythmic strumming motif in this song is identical to the *tresillo cubano*, a cornerstone of the bolero (Ruiz 1998: 236). For its part, the singing voice goes from sigh to shout. In its most bolero-like moments, Rodríguez's song brings to mind the *intimate distance* (Hall 1966) established between voice and listener that is a proxemical characteristic of the *filin.* It is the sigh lovers use to communicate with each other. Although lacking the harmonic complexities of the *filin*, the guitar accompaniment in Rodríguez's composition is nevertheless dramatic and full of feeling. A well-executed introduction is followed by an accompaniment that varies texture to accentuate important parts of the verbal discourse, becoming emphatic with energetic strums that finish off each stanza and prepare for the next.

But it is the "improvisation" and different ways of "saying the song" with a variety of intonations, as well as a "broad sense of musical phrasing, rubato and improvisation," that brings this song closest to the *filin* (Torres 1998: 322–323). It is full of instances when the tempo is speeded up; gradually slowed down; suddenly slowed down, or expanded in determined phrases at

the end of a stanza for emphasis; there are also frequent fluctuations in the original tempo as *acelerandos*, *ritardandos*, or sudden *ritenutos*. Especially at the end of the strophes, the tempo is expanded in order to give more grandiloquence to the speech. There is no refrain, and the two types of stanzas are distributed as follows: A B B A B B. The B stanzas have six verses, with the first three accompanied by the basic *tresillo* rhythmic pattern. The strumming becomes progressively stronger in subsequent stanzas, increasing in volume and even velocity. In the fourth verse the texture of the accompaniment changes, breaking off to execute isolated, rapid strums only on the syllables accentuated within the verse. This underlines what is being said, bestowing a more prosodic quality on the way of singing. In the fifth verse the accompaniment once again saturates the texture with a rhythmic figure that is denser and more sustained than the *tresillo*; this opens the way for a return to the dominant rhythmic pattern in the next verse. Worthy of note is the sudden diminution of the tempo in the fifth verse, which has an amplifying effect, giving the words greater majesty and elevating them pompously, even bombastically. The effect is similar to when an orator broadens his words and slows down the pronunciation of certain phrases in a political speech in order to lend them more weight. The dominant rhythmic pattern and tempo returns in the sixth verse.

The theatricality of the voice in the filin has been much commented upon (Évora 2003: 148); it has even been said that "soap operas are like a dramatized bolero" (Rodríguez Rivera 2006: 110). "*Ya no te espero*" draws on this same spectacularity. The musical resources described above combine with the lyrics to produce a place for an extremely interesting poetic statement. During most of the song, Rodríguez sings to his beloved one with the hyperbolization that characterizes bolero. However, as the song progresses, metaphors become more bellicose—kissing the lead of the bullets—and then point out the guerrilla struggle, the consummation of the Revolution on January 1, and the founding of a new national project as an act of intense love enunciated as a patriotic statement. Once again the poetic voice uses the same language to talk about love and an armed revolution: death, violence, bullets, hate, the devil, and so on. Yet even more emphatically, at times it is the Revolution occupying the place of the "poetic voice" when it announces, "Now I have liberated your country." It is as if the Revolution itself is singing to its enemies with a mixture of love and hate. This feature once again brings the filin or bolero to mind: "The statement 'I hate you and yet I love you' is a perfect synthesis of the essence of the bolero: lost love, deception, a lover's betrayal, jealousy, doubt, a lovers' fight; in short, in a melodramatic context these are the ingredients of innumerable boleros [. . .] that could be summed up in the love-hate bipolarity" (Acosta 1998a: 249).

"*Ya no te espero*" exemplifies in a remarkable way the nature of the Cuban Revolution's hegemonic musical subjectivity. The Revolution and its

project have (also) become installed in that intimate space reserved for lovers. Individual emotional experience and sociohistorical commitment are articulated from the same place.[9] Just as the nation-state merges into a single indivisible identity and society is confused with the state-government, the love of two people for each other is assimilated into love of country and the individuality of the common citizen conflated with the responsibilities of the collectivized militant.

Generational Differences and Ruptures

Especially relevant to this essay is the conflict that took place in the late 1980s between the government and a group of young artists and intellectuals. At that time Cuba was a member in full standing of the economic, political, and geostrategic system uniting socialist countries. There were Russian advisors in every sector of the government, and the Cuban economy was linked to Soviet requirements: as cog in the machinery of the Eastern bloc, it exchanged sugar, fruit, certain minerals, and biotechnological and biomedical know-how for food, petroleum products, and other basic supplies. In addition, Cuba's successful military interventions in Africa appeared to offer the possibility of future alliances that would lessen dependence on the Soviet Union (Brittain 2002).

In the meantime, the island itself was enjoying the greatest period of well-being since the Revolution. Healthcare and education were widespread and efficient, and a great many households lived satisfactorily: a job and basic consumer goods were guaranteed, and there was access to recreational and leisure-time activities. A significant number of young people were convinced that "the future belonged entirely to Socialism," and that they were the chosen ones who would grow up "uncontaminated, without the shadow of Capitalism, to live in a world with no money or social classes" (De la Nuez 2006: 113). This was a generation "totally formed since the triumph of the Revolution, for whom it was not a myth but everyday life" (Mosquera 2002 [1990]: 273). The excellent training provided by the powerful Cuban educational infrastructure made these young people "the most cultured and professionalized generation in the history of this small country" (Sánchez 1992, quoted in Pin Vilar 1998: 10).

Unlike adolescents in other countries with overriding consumer needs, these teenagers devoted themselves to culture: "We lived in the clouds [...] we lived like the Greeks, eating whatever was at hand and thinking great, elevated things without touching the ground. It was a little like the society that everybody [in Cuba] hoped for."[10] There was "a lot of poetry [...] everybody went around with a book under their arm."[11] There was broad, enthusiastic participation in different cultural and artistic scenes. However,

this same generation was extremely critical of "what was obsolete, certain endemic evils and structural problems," and attempted to "make Cuban Socialism evolve by attacking its internal enemies [. . .] bringing Guevarist ethicality back to life" (Mosquera 2002 [1990]: 274).[12] Without realizing it, they fomented a certain decentralized movement of government. This produced "an unprecedented proliferation of all kinds of cultural spaces: spaces for exhibits, publications, and discussion; institutional and non-institutional spaces; private spaces and public spaces." "In them there was intense participation that was spontaneous, not reviewed or programmed in advance (for example, texts were read in public that hadn't been submitted days or weeks in advance to different cultural and political entities for approval, correction or rejection)" (Navarro 2006: 15).

This critical process was visible in the work of a number of artists who, in the early 1980s, moved away "from the type of political work understood as illustration or propaganda" that had characterized the 1970s in order to commit themselves to "projects with public participation and broad socialization." Thus, polarization was revived at the end of the decade "with an attitude in no way complacent" (Eligio 2004: 14–15). This "critical renewal" with an independent, anti-authoritarian spirit far exceeded "the limits of manipulation and tolerance of those in power, who reacted with a conservative counter-offensive" (Mosquera 1997). Although this second generation "was producing submerged, controversial cultural nuclei in areas like rock music, and in social behavior in the case of the so-called 'freakies,' a juvenile sector distinguishable by its punk-flavoured marginality" (Eligio 2004: 15), it should be emphasized that this "very serious critical questioning of problems of our reality" was not carried out by dissidents or counter-revolutionaries. Rather, protagonists were the very young people most committed to the principles of the Revolution: "however strongly expressed, it is a questioning within Socialism and by Socialism" (Mosquera 1988, quoted by Navarro 2006: 15).

The result was a " 'low-intensity' conflict between art and the institution" (Noceda 2003: 79) that did nevertheless reach critical proportions at times, producing closures, censored exhibits, and even serious repression and the jailing of some artists.[13] The young people responded with strategies that included unannounced appearances; the ephemeral appropriation of institutional cultural spaces with sudden, non-programmed performances during ongoing activities; the creation of non-institutional cultural spaces like "galleries" or theaters in houses or parks, and the Samizdat cultural newspaper, as well as graffiti, murals, and street performances in public places (Navarro 2006: 15).

However, the most metaphoric, amusing response of all was a baseball game[14] played on the grounds of the old Vedado Tennis Club between teams made up of artists, critics, and art professors pre-announcing their

"retirement" from the artistic scene, given the recent "turn of events"; the latter was in reference to the high degree of tension between artists in the "game" and institutions generated by the conflict initiated by both parties early in the decade (Herrera Isla 2003: 48).

During this period the second Nueva Trova generation emerged; outstanding members included Carlos Varela, Frank Delgado, and Santiago Feliú. The critical effervescence marking these years is reflected in many of their compositions; in the case of Varela, certain painters collaborated in his concerts.[15] In one of his early concerts in 1988, which took place in the movie theater on 23rd and 12th streets in the Vedado, the music provoked a struggle between authorities and fans, with several of the latter being detained. According to Varela, "the next day there was a meeting in which they said I was right and apologized, but I was already prohibited from singing even in spiritual centers." Although "not officially vetoed, it is no less clear that neither did he suit official taste [*sic*]: he wasn't heard on the radio or seen on TV, he wasn't invited to sing in any act organized by the Young Communists" (Pin Vilar 1998: 20–21).

During this period he released his composition "*Guillermo Tell*,"[16] in which the singer-songwriter tells the story of a son's fictitious rebellion based on the legend of William Tell. The musical accompaniment is a single guitar repeating in *ostinato* a melodic line in middle register that rises and falls chromatically within the minimal space of a tone and a half. This melodic line is the lowest for almost half the song, and then even lower sonorities appear to fill the harmonic space, suggesting mystery or suspense. In this composition, however, these musical topics give it an ironic tone. This underlines its fabular stance and the allegorical nature of the composition—the fact that, in reality, it is talking about something else. The melodic voice is notably declamatory, making the lyrics perfectly clear to the listener and administering the story line with great narrative effectiveness.

The story relates how the son of Tell was tired of being the one who always put the apple on his head for his father to cross it effectively with his arrows. He felt it was now time for his father to put the target on his own head in order for him, the son, to try his aim on Tell. The legendary archer gets scared and refuses. He would not understand that his son grew up and the time had come for him to take command. The invitation to the metaphorical reading is immediate. It is easy to understand who William Tell and his children were for Varela.

According to Varela, "I only wanted to tell an amusing story using what in the theatre is called 'the magic if': what would happen if William Tell's son grows up and tells his father that now it's his turn?" (Pin Vilar 1998: 69). Be that as it may, the song immediately became the second generation's hymn: "it is the most eloquent and complex metaphor of a pressing problem in Cuba today: the need for renovation, for rectification" (Mosquera 2002 [1990]: 273).[17]

Following Varela's arrival on the scene, there appeared "a third Nueva Trova generation," among whose members the *Habana Abierta* collective stands out. After a period of intense activity with fellow performers at the "*El Puente*" folk bar in the *Museo* on the corner of 13th and 8th streets in the Vedado, around 1991 they also found themselves shut out of their customary spaces (Borges-Triana 2004: 65–66). Even "a certain institution" that traditionally welcomed "Nueva Trova" proposals turned its back.[18] *Habana Abierta*'s response was a performance on the banks of the Almendares River, during which they broke their guitars as a sign of protest (Borges-Triana 2004: 71).

Young people of the late 1980s became the best representatives of hegemonic Cuban subjectivity. However, the government ceded them neither spaces nor any participation in decision making, nor was there any generational turnover in the power structure. The regime preferred faithful subjects to critics, despite the latter being the means for guaranteeing continuity and the perfecting of the political system: "my generation was awakened from its dreams of changing things within Socialism with a slap in the face" (De la Nuez 2006: 113). It is curious to note that the subjectivity massively reproduced by discursive and ideological mechanisms did not bring about passive fidelity to the government. This shows that the operation that identifies state, nation, government, and society has no basis: that social sector overtook the government in the construction process of the Revolution.

The government's authoritarian reaction caused disenchantment, pessimism, skepticism, and resentment in young people, over and above the hardships brought on by the collapse of the socialist bloc in the early 1990s and the subsequent economic crisis. Coincidentally, a special "opening in the concession of exit permits" resulted in "the dispersion of the greater part of this artistic intelligentsia throughout the United States and Europe" (Navarro 2006: 15). In the end, this extremely relevant "diaspora of writers and artists" is "the third in importance after the mass exile in the '60s, and the Mariel emigration in 1980" (Rojas 2006: 453).[19] Most of the 1990s émigrés never returned. This is the lost generation, the sons and daughters of William Tell who failed to produce a perestroika in Cuba.

The Special Period

The fall of the socialist bloc in the early 1990s was a devastating blow to the Cuban Revolution. Despite "receiving gigantic quantities of material aid from the Socialist bloc, above all from the USSR" in the 1980s, the Cuban state had shown "it didn't know how or was unable to turn it into the foundation for the economic structure the country needed" (Rodríguez Rivera 2006: 124).

This economic dependence exacted a high cost when the aid and supplies disappeared practically overnight.[20] The military interventions in Africa were no help: regimes formerly favored by the socialist bloc turned their back on Cuba when it fell. "[A] special period in peace time" was declared on the island, which was simply a "euphemistic and neutral" term for "a severe crisis" (Rodríguez Rivera 2006: 125). Although its end was never officially announced, the most difficult years of this period were roughly from 1991 through 1996. The impact on daily life was brutal: extended blackouts, lack of public transportation, unemployment, scarcity of food, supplies, and so forth.[21]

To deal with the crisis, the government implemented a series of economic, social, and juridical reforms: private employment was partially and intermittently permitted; the US dollar was allowed to circulate as legal tender, and later on, a parallel currency was created; foreign investment was accepted in strategic sectors, especially tourism; and social benefits were directly and indirectly amended.[22] The cost of these measures to ordinary citizens, together with their lack of any means of defense in the conflicts with the government that inevitably arose, brought about the collapse of the social pact between the revolutionary state and society. Equality, equity, solidarity, ethics, and welfare state were a thing of the past. In their place there developed an enormous black market; a massive legal and illegal exodus; an increase in criminality and the appearance of new or little-known forms of delinquent behavior; the spread of disease; an unprecedented materialism and desire for money; drug use; prostitution; evident socioeconomic segmentation; the emergence of nouveaux pauvres and riches; a severe crisis in ethical and ideological values; and for the first time, protests and demonstrations against the government.[23] This scenario contributed to the emergence of new social actors and the erosion of the hegemonic revolutionary subject.

Among the new cultural subjects arising in the 1990s is a religious subject embodied in Catholic, Protestant, and Afro-Cuban communities and Masonic lodges. Another was gender subalternity in the form of gays, transvestites, and transsexuals appearing in public and taking over the area around Coppelia Park at night, and later organizing gay and lesbian associations. New cultural agents such as "freaks," "rockers," "wolf men," "vampires,"[24] and other New Age subjects became visible.[25] There were also new sociopolitical initiatives by feminists, independent intellectuals, dissidents, and "more than 200 NGOs." In addition, a new marginality came into being comprised of prostitutes (*jineteras, pingueros*) and pimps,[26] as well as marginalized hoods (*repas* and *reparteros)*[27] and nouveaux riches popularly called *macetas*, *miquis*, and speculators.[28] To this must be added the consolidation of "bicultural enclaves of the diaspora" comprising many Cuban communities in Miami, Mexico, Barcelona, and so on that "not only reinforce the multi-culturalism of the countries where

they settle, but also influence the multicultural redefinition of Cuba." In this way, "the ironclad political sociability generated by the Revolution disintegrates" (Rojas 1998: 101).

How does music represent these subjects and collaborate in the construction of their points of view?

A Free Country or Whore Island?

In 1974 Silvio Rodríguez wrote his famous beautiful "*Pequeña serenata diurna*" (Little daytime serenata).[29] With an accompaniment that brings Brazilian genres to mind,[30] the songwriter expresses his satisfaction with the Revolution. He declares that he lives in a free country and he is happy, very happy. Emblematic is his first verse: "I live in a free country."[31] Thirty years later, however, the second generation Nueva Trova singer-songwriter Frank Delgado released "*La isla puta*" (Whore Island).[32] With its *son* beat, the composition is an obvious intertextual nod at Rodríguez: "I live on Whore Island . . . where those who left live/better than those who stayed." The regime is overtly criticized throughout the song on topics such as emigration, the official celebratory discourse, obligatory attendance at official acts in support of the government, precarious housing, the plea that citizens sacrifice while the government raises prices, the omnipresence of the Cuban leader, the "double standard" and dual currency, and so on. Despite the seriousness of the complaints, the solemnity of the discourse is played down in the refrain, where, using an ironic tone and taking advantage of the mischievousness of the *son*, the singer declares that he is not a spectator of the *round table,* a political talk show transmitted daily on television and radio at different times, which gives the official opinion on domestic and foreign topics. Many Cubans criticize the program and host and don't watch it. Delgado uses it humorously to indicate the position he and an important sector of the Cuban population take regarding the official discourse.

The songs written by Silvio Rodríguez and Frank Delgado are honest, with the songwriters, each in his own way, masterfully interpreting their respective contexts. They both live in Cuba, deeply love their country, and are strongly committed leftists. They differ, however, on how they view the government and the development of Cuban socialism. Although Rodríguez has written some critical songs, his intricate metaphors obscure their meaning,[33] unlike the ironic, satirical tone employed in many of Delgado's compositions. Furthermore, the latter songwriter's parodic strategy undercuts the grandiloquence of the official discourse and the solemnity of the Cuban Nueva Trova in general. Delgado likewise relocates the point of elocution of the Trova: his songs are chronicles of everyday Cuban reality written from the perspective of the ordinary citizen, not that of a poet touched by the muses.

In his songs official paternalism is rebuffed, as is the teleology that tries to justify quotidian contradictions by immersing them in the historic destiny of the Revolution. In Delgado's compositions, contradictions are not resolved; rather, they are simply put into words, contemplated, and lived without analysis, overt critical comment, or judgment. Instead, Delgado deconstructs the official discourse with traditional Cuban "leg-pulling" humor: his ironic, satirical barbs interrupt the flow, dissecting it and showing up certain inconsistencies. Laughter is the result of his "analysis." Delgado's musicalized chronicles depict with great precision some of the alternative subjectivities that have arisen in Cuba since the late 1980s.[34]

Timba, Reggaeton, and Rap: The New Marginal Subject

The Timba, a fusion of son, salsa, and rumba with funk, jazz, hip hop, R&B, and Afro-Cuban rhythms foreign to popular Cuban dance music, is undoubtedly the music that emerged most forcefully during the crisis in the '90s. The lyrics are direct, misogynous, and full of inducements of corporal pleasure, sex, and promiscuity. By both representing subjects from the new marginality and constructing their points of view, the Timba has played an extremely important role in articulating new subjectivities. Subjects emerging in the '90s represented in the Timba include *jineteras* or prostitutes, pimps, *reparteros*, consumerist and materialistic subjects, Afro-Cubans (above all, males) and their cultural claims, the character I call the "Tough Boy from Havana," and so forth.[35]

More recently, rap has again taken up the vindicating discourse of Afro-Cuban culture, constructing discourses on marginality and racism on the island. Two currents can be distinguished in rap: a commercial one that exploits the traditional Cuban topics of sun, rum, and mulatto women (the *Orishas*), and a critical one that, in addition to denouncing racist remnants in present-day Cuba, also criticizes the marginality of women, consumerism, and, even more strongly, the global reach of neoliberalism (*Los Aldeanos, Anónimo consejo*, and so on) (Fernandes 2006: 85–134).

Concerning this latter topic, it has been noted that some rap songs coincide with the anti-capitalist values of the official Cuban discourse. This fact, together with the continuous, complex negotiations rappers carry on with state institutions, particularly with the Cuban Agency for Rap, in order to be heard and granted places to perform, is a good example of how young Cubans, immersed in a complex network of contradictory discourses, strategically maneuver to gain their ends (Baker 2011).

Rappers follow the official discourse at times, while at other times severely contradicting it against a background of negotiation, tension, and distension where the government always has the last word. This suggests

an intermittent subject that, with great flexibility, takes up and then drops antagonistic, contradictory discourses. In my view, navigating an irregular course by tacking amid contradictory discourses is one of the characteristics of young Cubans' subjectivity. More than a fact or structure, it is an event (Mansfield 2000: 178) that emerges performatively (Butler 1998) when the subject is inserted in a specific situation and is performing in a particular way. This perspective does not deny the validity of theoretical models that view subjectivity and identity as the product of a narrative (Vila 1996—see also the introduction of this book; Pelinski 2000: 163–175; Kramer 2001; and Arfuch 2005); rather, it aims at introducing instruments able to capture the performative dimension that, escaping language, falls back on many factors linked to music and the body (López Cano 2008).

For its part, reggaeton has expanded the representativity of the new Cuban consumer subject and his/her material desires and preoccupation with sex and individual pleasure (Gámez 2012).

The Diasporic Subject

Emigration was a constant in Cuba before the Revolution. Since 1959, however, leaving the country has acquired different social and political meaning. As in other communist countries, the Cuban government exercises strict control over emigration in order to hinder mass exoduses. Nevertheless, this has not prevented migratory crises, such as the massive voluntary exile when the Revolution triumphed; the opening of the ports of Camarioca (1965), and Mariel (1980);[36] the "induced" exile of intellectuals and artists in the early 1990s; the crisis of the boat people in 1994, and so on. Migration, actual and potential, has stimulated diverse imaginaries in society and politics, which have been reflected in Cuban music.

A certain stigmatization of émigrés exists in general terms, although the discourse, circumstances, and attitude of the government regarding them have changed for strategic reasons over the years and vary greatly from case to case. In his song "*La otra orilla*" (The Other Shore),[37] Frank Delgado runs down the list of official discourses on migration and the sudden switching from one to another for economic or political reasons: how at one point the government stopped calling them "worms" and replaced the term with "communitarians" once they began to be recognized as agents of income for the island. In many cases exile has divided entire families, turning members into irreconcilable defenders or detractors of the Revolution.

Pedro Luis Ferrer is another second generation Trova singer-songwriter whose relations with Cuban cultural institutions are difficult. One of his most striking songs is "I not so much as he,"[38] in which he affirms family ties and

loyalty above political differences. In the lyrics he says that his father is a communist and loyal to the regime and Fidel Castro, while Ferrer is not "as much as he." In the same song he bitterly criticizes the "bureaucracy" that has fueled rancor among Cubans. Ferrer has also written songs on subaltern subjectivities such as the homosexual, religious, black, prostitute, and so on, from a critical perspective that makes no concessions to the official discourse.[39]

In recent years the issue of migration has become an obsession for many young people who see no future for themselves on the island. While separating from family, partner, or friends is painful to begin with, this is aggravated by governmental rules and regulations that recognize many migratory statuses and refuse to recognize many others, which can frustrate visits and trips to Cuba by émigrés. In "Family photo,"[40] Carlos Varela reflects that after the painful process of forced migration, only pictures remain of homes broken by distance. With a profound despair, he points out that all these years of fighting within the Cuban nation have not done anything good, or "almost anything that is not the same but equal," intertextually referring to the "Little Daytime Serenade" by Silvio Rodríguez.

In "Habana Blues,"[41] from the movie of the same name directed by Benito Zambrano (2005), the singer-songwriter X Alfonso gives voice to a lament with a slow beat that goes from bolero to blues, in which he claims that family separation is the hard price common citizens have to pay for "others that live off the contradiction." The song continues with the author voicing his desperation by shouting how impotent he feels simultaneously struggling in Cuba against the relentless sun, politics, and God.

X Alfonso himself had failed as an émigré. As is often the case with creative artists who try to settle abroad, he experienced difficult conditions, heavy competition, and audiences that didn't always understand Cuba's intricate codes. In his "Habana 8:00 p.m.,"[42] he points out the difficulties of returning to his country of origin when everybody wants to leave: "hey, what are you doing turning around?" In the video[43] accompanying the song, images of the city include both official propaganda and national emblems, and street scenes and local characters that are not normally seen on television. During the chorus, the "turning around" is illustrated with video snippets run backwards. The false shots shown at the end of the video are comments that cast an ironic eye on the songwriter's own discourse.

The treatment given migration is especially interesting in what has come to be called alternative Cuban music. The alternative scene comprises both representatives of the latest Trova generations and rock and jazz musicians who never saw themselves as part of the Nueva Trova. Alternative fans tend to be university students with a broad cultural background and a critical discourse regarding the government. In a certain sense, it can be said that the alternative musicians have occupied the space corresponding to the Nueva Trova.

The *Habana Abierta* and *Interactivo* collectives are alternative representatives, as is X Alfonso himself. The following are some of the general characteristics of their music:

- The complex metaphors employed by the first Nueva Trova generation to sing about love and social reality have given way to a simpler, more direct poetic language.
- The universality of the complex metaphor and its infinite interpretations have been replaced by very concrete topical references to places, events, and times that are significant to the current generation and difficult for non-members to understand.
- The intellectualized overloading of the Trova has been abandoned in favor of a festive, danceable musicality.
- The solemnity, transcendence, and Latin Americanism found in the Trova have been replaced by an extremely localized sense of delight and common everyday language. Curiously, hip hop is the genre that has recuperated the "old" Cuban Nueva Trova's spirit of solemn, overacted social protest.
- Political messages are practically nonexistent, except to harshly criticize them. In their place has emerged the viewpoint of the commonplace young, cultured university student who suffers the hardships of daily life and regularly criticizes the government. This perspective incorporates the contradictions and, on occasion, the cynicism with which young people experience this quotidian reality.
- While for the Nueva Trova the musical referent was Cuban and Latin American music, alternative musicians have unabashedly assimilated rock, pop, son, rumba, and above all, funk—the Afro-American music most representative of the '70s. The formula employed by some to conceptualize this fusion is *rockason*[44] (Borges-Triana 2006: 116).

The problem of the diaspora and separation from friends, family, and partners is posed ironically, even cynically, in several songs from the album *Goza Pepillo* (2006) recorded by the *Interactivo* collective. One example is "No Money" by Roberto Carcassés, Francis del Río, Telmary Díaz, and Yusa.[45] The music of the song oscillates between funk and rumba guaguanco. The first stanza, sung in English, is followed by an assertive instance in the form of a quote from a well-known Mexican ranchera: "With money and without money, I always do what I want."[46] Next comes a festive, uninhibited lament about the departure of friends. In "Who Said?" by Roberto Carcassés and Telmary Díaz, a half-hearted, lethargic voice chants rap-like over a funky beat to the bride who left Cuba: "when you left Havana, I thought I would have more relationships, but it has proven impossible, for all the girls who remain in town are not of my generation and they do not understand me." The treatment of the diaspora in this song is very cynical, with gibes—aimed

at the nouveaux riches or *macetas* (some belonging to the government or armed forces)—claiming that capitalists disguised as socialists are accumulating money in case the island's political regime eventually changes to capitalism. The apparent passivity of Cuban society is also mentioned, as well as censorship and other government controls. A very interesting instance comes in a fictitious dialogue when another voice quotes ironically the migration imaginary: "Don't call me masochist because I don't want to go. Are you still in Cuba?"

The "double standard" (saying one thing in public and the opposite in private) and other simulation strategies that many Cubans use as survival mechanisms are cynically displayed in "*Sol en Leo*" by Francis del Río and Néstor del Prado, when they mention that behind youth's fun there exists another truth hidden behind the miraculous enchantment of lying. Beyond doubt, one of the most interesting compositions on this album is "*Los revolucionarios*" by Roberto Carcassés, Telmary Díaz, and Francis del Río, in which they express how fed up young people are with the extreme polarization of daily life that has infiltrated their most private intimacy, dividing Cubans. With an underlying beat dramatized by symphonic timbales and, once again, a funky bass, the song preserves the rebellious tone of protest characterizing hip hop. Using rap, the singer laments everyday problems in Cuba—forced migration and family separation, heightened animosity between opposing political factions, crises of identity—and calls for freedom in the broadest sense.

It is noteworthy that the fusion of private life with political activism and unconditional support of the revolutionary regime, the backbone of many Nueva Trova compositions, particularly those by songwriter Silvio Rodríguez, has now become the target of non-conformist well-educated youth in the twenty-first century. This paints a clear picture of how the hegemonic subjectivity of the Cuban Revolution has become disarticulated over the years.

The *Habana Abierta* collective, located in Madrid since 1996, has also sung about the migratory phenomenon in different ways. "*Divino Guión*" (Divine Script)[47] by Vanito Brown has cathartic effects on the young people that lived through the '90s. The song, set to a funk beat, portrays the illusion of children of the '70s, promised the dreams of communism and of becoming astronauts—a deception that eventually faded away. The songwriter treats his emigrant status ironically: he didn't leave, he only distanced himself a little bit, because from farther away it sounds better.

Boris Larramendi contributed a song to the album *Boomerang* (2006) that has become a kind of hymn of the present-day diaspora: "*Asere que bola.*"[48] With a funky rhythmic base, rumba percussion, and a vocal melody chanted in rap, the song criticizes the detention of dissidents in Havana during the dark days of spring 2003; the Cuban leadership; illegal emigration on flimsy rafts; and prostitution and other survival mechanisms.

The government's argument that all regime critics are mercenaries paid by the United States is treated ironically. However, as an emigrant, the singer also remarks on other global problems that concern him, which he places on equal footing with Cuba's domestic problems. Among them are Bush's brutal war against terrorism and the fundamentalist attacks in Madrid in 2004. Curiously, not all of *Habana Abierta*'s fans in Cuba understand the references to non-Cuban events. This song exemplifies the gradual de-territorialization of the Cuban culture, even in cultural content produced for Cubans living on the island.

The other interesting aspect of this song is the tale it tells of the migratory experience of the thousands of Cubans who have left since the '90s. This diasporic subjectivity is reflected in the fading away of the feeling of belonging in receiving centers in Miami or Madrid: "nobody is waiting for you." There is also a mention of the role played by digital means of communication in the construction of the globalized, or, more exactly, post-national Cuban community.

The song also alludes to the perpetual contradiction of values and perspectives on the situation in the country that exist within the same family: when he calls his parents in Havana, his father constantly asks him when he is coming back, while his mother advises him to never return. The songwriter eloquently externalizes a feeling very common among Cuban emigrants: to return to an ideologically unified Cuba. As in other compositions, the songwriter demands freedom of expression in an almost retaliatory tone.

Nicanor and the "Anti-New Man" Subjectivity

Since 2005 the scriptwriter, writer, and filmmaker Eduardo del Llano[49] has filmed a series of short movies, some co-produced by ICAIC (Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry), that satirize mockingly, ironically, and cynically certain aspects of Cuban social and political life. Nicanor, the protagonist of the series, was born in Havana in the 1960s and, now middle aged and disenchanted with life in Cuba, constantly complains about the government, while attempting to stay out of trouble (something he does not achieve) and devoting his efforts to surviving the hardships of daily life. In *Monte Rouge* (2005) he satirically confronts Cuban security measures; in *High Tech* (2005) and *Photoshop* (2006) he experiences the difficulty Cubans have using the new technologies; in *Homo Sapiens* (2006) he participates in the activities of a Cuban family in front of a television; in *Intermezzo* (2008) he suffers from the far-fetched notion of democracy held in Cuba, and in *Brainstorm* (2009) he shows his bewilderment toward the surprising way official news organs inform the public. Frank Delgado, co-producer of some of

the shorts, wrote the "*Balada de Nicanor*"[50] in honor of this anti-hero. The challenge of daily life demands a heroism that Nicanor never chose. He does not dream of changing the world; he doesn't want to be the "new man." He would just like to live normally like everybody else; his aspiration is the peace and quiet of simple mediocrity. His are the desires of many subjects in Cuba: "each one of us has a Nicanor inside." The poetic language and music are like Nicanor—supremely simple and direct. The great beauty of the song resides in its simplicity and lack of the grandiloquence of many Trova compositions, including ones written by Delgado himself.

Dissident Subjectivity

Rock was always viewed with suspicion by the Cuban regime. During the '60s and '70s "certain extremist leaders" arbitrarily vetoed as anti-Cuban and " 'the enemy's music' any rhythm sung in English," while at the same time censoring "the dances and ways of dressing that accompany them 'because they could corrupt our youth and distract it from the construction of the new society' " (Yoss 2005). Rockers were accused of "ideological diversionism" (Manduley 2001: 43), and many of the best left the country during the mass Mariel exodus in 1980 (Moore 2006: 139). A large number of the young people and creative artists that led the confrontation with the state in the late '80s were rock fans. Only very recently did the government change its attitude toward Rock and modified its distribution strategies, even creating a Cuban Agency for Rock in 2007. However, rock is still the music that has most consistently given voice to opinions and viewpoints diverging from the official discourse. The case of the rock band *Porno para Ricardo* is relevant in this regard. Its leader, Gorki del Águila, was jailed between 2003 and 2005 for drug trafficking, which further radicalized the hard-core content of the band's music. Del Águila was arrested again in 2008 on the charge of being a "pre-criminal social threat" and later freed following an intense international campaign on the social media.

The band's name was conceived as antipode to the official slogan: while "*Patria o muerte*" promotes collective sacrifice, "*Porno para Ricardo*" advocates pleasure for an individual subject. Its music is often erroneously described as "punk." In reality, *Porno* is a satirical band that combines various rock styles and wields a crude, violent language against the regime and all its authorities from the neighborhood police chief up to Fidel Castro. The band's album titles are eloquent: *Rock para las masas… (cárnicas)*(… meat) (2002); *Porno para Ricardo* (2003); *Son porno, soy popular (*2006);[51] *A mi no me gusta la política pero yo le gusto a ella, compañero* (I don't like politics but she likes me, compañero) (2006), and *El Disco Rojo Desteñido* (The Faded Red Record) (2008).[52]

Researchers like Fernandes (2006: 186) warn that branding certain artistic and musical movements critical of the government as cultural dissidents can be premature or incorrect. However, the way in which *Porno para Ricardo* directly confronts the state does approximate it with small, isolated opposition groups, especially with the blogger phenomenon led by Yoani Sánchez. It is on this basis that, in my view, *Porno para Ricardo*'s music also represents the subjectivity of some dissident Cubans exercising civil resistance on the island. However miniscule, dissidence does exist, whether or not it is "funded by foreign powers" as the government maintains. But many young people that are not militants and spend the greater part of their life trying to construct normalcy in an "abnormal country"[53] listen to, enjoy, and make their own the harangues of this band against the government. Within this orbit of direct, hard-core criticism with radicalization potential, the hip hop group *Los Aldeanos* and the interdisciplinary artistic collective *Omni-Zona franca*[54] also circulate.

By Way of Conclusion

This essay has examined the way in which popular music represents some of the hegemonic and subaltern subjectivities that have emerged in Cuba since the triumph of the Revolution in 1959. Special attention has been paid to the subjects arising after the '90s crisis: the diasporic subject, the subjectivity of the new marginality, the subject of ethnic difference, the dissident, the "anti-new man" subjectivity, and so on, all grouped together under the general heading of post-communist subjectivities.

In some cases mention has been made of how music not only represents this subjectivity, but also helps to construct it. Still pending, however, is an in-depth investigation of the complex discursive and semiotic field where certain subjectivities of young twenty-first-century Cubans have been developing. Of particular interest are the simulation strategies that allow them to performatively traverse contradictory discourses, moving from one to another according to contingencies in effect at the time. The process produces a fragmentation in the individual that is only overcome temporarily during a musical performance. This is when, through song, dance, or participative listening, young people are able to emotionally and corporally construct the symbolic coherency required to develop their sense of subjectivity—or one of them, at any rate.

Notes

1. This investigation deals primarily with how popular music in Cuba has represented and collaborated in the construction of the hegemonic subjectivity of the Revolution, as well as in its alternatives. This subjectivity has been primarily, but not

exclusively, embodied in young people understood as individuals from fourteen through twenty-nine years of age. However, since the ’90s in the aftermath of the post-Soviet crisis, a generational rupture has been distancing citizens from the mainstream subjectivity and populating its alternatives. Individuals born since then have adopted in greater numbers and intensity these alternative subjectivities, which have become available to individuals from other age groups as well.

2. From the album *Mujeres*. EGREM. 1978.

3. Unless otherwise noted, you can consult the complete lyrics of the songs mentioned in http://www.cancioneros.com. All the songs mentioned in this chapter can be easily found on YouTube. For Silvio Rodríguez, also see his website, http://www.zurrondelaprendiz.com/.

4. From the album *Unicornio*. EGREM. 1982.

5. A musical topic is a “subject of musical discourse” (Ratner 1980). It is a style, genre, type, or class of music to which a determined song makes reference. In present-day popular music, different musical topics are referred to at different times or simultaneously in a single song. Each genre, style, or type of music evoked by the topic brings with it a world of connotations, associations, circumstances, and meanings, as well as possible corporal interaction, which contribute to the meaning of the song. See López Cano (2005c and 2007).

6. See his song “*Debo partirme en dos*” (I must cut myself in two) and its ironic use of commercial romantic musical topics. See López Cano (2005c).

7. From the album *Mujeres*. EGREM. 1978.

8. Historians of Cuban music usually consider the Cuban Nueva Trova as having evolved from the Cuban bolero: “A current of the Nueva Trova movement officially created in 1972 built on the legacy of the trova and the filin.” (Roy 2003: 125).

9. In Silvio Rodríguez’s music, “the song is frequently linked to patriotic elements. The song thus becomes a beautiful symbol of the collective, the choral spheres” (Casaus and Nogueras 2005: 31).

10. Statement by Alejandro Gutiérrez, member of the *Habana Abierta* band in the documentary *El telón de azúcar* (The Sugar Curtain) (2005), directed by Camila Guzmán.

11. Statement by José Luis Medina, member of the *Habana Abierta* band in the documentary *El telón de azúcar* (The Sugar Curtain) (2005), directed by Camila Guzmán.

12. Emma Álvarez Tabío speaks of the 1980s as the “civic decade of the revolution” (De la Nuez 2006: 113).

13. One of the most famous instances is the imprisonment of the artist Ángel Delgado for his performance “Hope is the last thing being lost” (1990) in which he defecated on the official newspaper Granma. Exhibits by artists such as Ponjuan and René Francisco were also censured, and the opening of an exhibit by the ABTV group was prohibited. The removal of then vice minister of culture can also be considered an act of censorship (Mosquera 1997).

14. Mention of a “collective performance” appears in the catalogues of several of the participating artists as “Cuban Artists Devote Themselves to Baseball” (Círculo Social José A. Echevarría, La Habana). Some give September 1989 as the date; other sources place the event in 1990 (Eligio 2004). For a literary description (although with

many historical imprecisions) of that game and other actions in this period, see Alberto (1997).

15. Arrechea and other artists created the stage setting for Varela's concerts, which almost always recreated urban environments.

16. On the album *Jalisco Park.* 1989. The lyrics can be found at http://www.musica.com. The music is available on YouTube. The author website can also be consulted: http://www.carlosvarela.com.

17. It is also true that Varela's critical songs and career have been perceived by some as highly opportunistic. They comment that "if Carlos continues singing those texts and hasn't disappeared, he's got to be police" (Pin Vilar 1998: 48).

18. It is not hard to discern that the unnamed institution is Casa de las Américas.

19. It is estimated that around fifty-one thousand Cubans left on flimsy rafts between January 1990 and July 1994. During the August–September 1994 crisis, thirty thousand boat people left (Xalma 2007: 38).

20. Some figures from the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America are as follows: between 1989 and 1993, exports decreased 47 percent and imports 70 percent, which "gravely affected the supply of raw materials, machinery and fuel"; the GDP shrunk 34.8 percent (Xalma 2007: 33).

21. Broad sectors of the Cuban population suffered terribly from hunger. Many young people spent the day drinking sugar water to stay on their feet. The medical side effects of inadequate nutrition are visible today in the adults who were young at the time. However, there are no official data in this regard.

22. Medicine sent to Cuba as solidarity aid was sold for exorbitant prices in dollars at pharmacies catering to tourists.

23. For a detailed description of diseases derived from lack of food, disturbances, violent acts, the *maleconazo* (the riot on Havana's famous seawall) of the summer of 1994, and the "crisis of the boat people," see Campa and Pérez (1997).

24. "Freaks," "wolf men," and "vampires" are variations of "rockers." Los "*miquis*" are rich young people.

25. Around the first decade of 2000, these new subjects were joined by the "*hipoperos*," "*rastas*," and "*emos,*" among others. For information on the "*emos*" in Cuba, see González Lemes (2009) and the documentary *Conversemos* by Hansel Leyva and Christian Torres (2009).

26. Female or male prostitutes.

27. "*Repas*" and "*reparteros*" are aggressive young people from marginal neighborhoods or marginal conditions.

28. In Cuban slang, "*macetas*" are nouveaux riches that have benefitted from the economic reforms; "*miquis*" are rich young people whose parents are usually members of the government or the army. A "speculator" is someone who shows off his economic status by showing an iPod, cell phone (that often doesn't work), jewelry, glasses, expensive prosthesis such as gold teeth, brand-name clothes, and so on.

29. From the álbum *Días y flores*. EGREM. 1975.

30. According to Clara Díaz (in Alemán and Alemán 2005: 122).

31. The complete lyrics can be found at http://www.cancioneros.com.

32. From the album *. . . pero, qué dice el coro?* 2006. The lyrics can be found at http://www.letrasymusica.com.ar. There are also several versions available on YouTube.

33. "One might suggest that it is the very ambiguity of his music that has enabled much of it to avoid criticism from the state while still being read as subversive by fans" (Moore 2006: 157).

34. For more on Delgado's complex relations with Cuban cultural institutions, see the documentary *Zona de silencio*, directed by Karel Ducases (2007). On his work in general, see the documentary *Frank Delgado: una nueva trova*, directed by Juan Carlos Travieso (2002); both are available online.

35. For more details, see the Internet site for this book and López Cano (2005a, 2005b, and 2007); Moore (2006); Perna (2003); and Acosta (1998b).

36. In 1980 Nueva Trova singer Pablo Milanés wrote "*Amo esta isla*" (from the album *Yo me quedo,* 1982) in response to the Mariel crisis. "It represented a call to stay on the island and support the revolution" Moore (2006: 157).

37. From the album *La Habana esta de bala*. 1998. The lyrics of this song can be found at http://www.cancioneros.com.

38. This song is easily available on YouTube.

39. For an approach to his work, see the documentaries *No me voy a defender* directed by Ismael Perdomo (2001) and Pedro Luis Ferrer: la revolución de un hombre, directed by Armando Guerra and Waldo Capote (2008).

40. From the album *Como los peces* (1995). The lyrics can be found at http://www.musica.com/.

41. From the album *Habana Blues*. WEA. 2006. Complete lyrics can be found at http://www.letrasymas.com. The performance of the song can be found on YouTube.

42. From the album *Civilización*. EGREM. 2005. There are several versions of this song available on YouTube.

43. Produced by adn.films and *Nuevos medios*.

44. "Rockason" is also the name of a song by Ale Gutiérrez, a member of *Habana Abierta*.

45. All of Interactivo's songs mentioned in this part of the chapter are available on YouTube.

46. "*El Rey*" by José Alfredo Jiménez.

47. From the album *24 horas.* 1999. The lyrics are available at http://lyrics.wikia.com. The song itself is on YouTube.

48. The lyrics are available at http://www.musica.com. The song can be listened to on YouTube.

49. Del Llano was co-scriptwriter for *Alicia en el pueblo de maravillas*, directed by Daniel Díaz Torres (1991), which is famous for the censorship it suffered, and *La vida es silbar* (Life is whistling), directed by Fernando Pérez (1998), whose protagonists—Cuba (the mother) and Elpidio (the son whose name was a parody of the comic book character Epidio Valdéz)—metaphorically depict the distancing of citizens from the Cuban state, and the emergence of values like individualism, diversity, and personal happiness instead of collective sacrifice (Fernandes 2006: 64 and 69).

50. From the album *. . . pero, qué dice el coro?*, 2006. The lyrics are available at http://www.cancioneros.com. The song can be listened to on YouTube.

51. Satirising the title of the *Charanga Habaner* CD *Soy cubano soy popular* (2003).

52. Satirising the title of The Beatles' *White Album*.

53. The sentence "Cuba is an abnormal country" was said by Silvio Rodríguez when he launched his album *Segunda Cita* (March 26, 2010).

54. While editing this essay, I learned that some members of the collective may have left the island.

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On Whitening and Other Disaffections

THE IMPACT OF TROPIPOP ON COLOMBIA'S MUSIC SCENE

Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste

In the early 1990s, with the emergence of singer Carlos Vives, a former soap opera heartthrob turned musical superstar, the concrete possibility of offering popular music strongly linked to the Caribbean's folkloric tradition appears tangible in the Colombian music scene. To echo another nationalist project based on the resourcefulness of its cultural apparatus, the Colombian recording industry seemed primed to finally produce an equivalent to *música popular brasileira* (MPB). With his bestselling *Clásicos de la Provincia* (1993), Vives had taken *vallenato*, the accordion-based music from the Caribbean hinterlands, to new heights. In point of fact, it is mostly thanks to the phenomenal success of certain arrangements, like those of Vives's hit song "*La tierra del olvido*" (The Land of Oblivion), that it became clear that the mixing of both kinds—pop and folklore—was likely and could possibly engender an entirely new style of music. Soon after, new bands linked to this very kind of music, described as *tropipop* by the mass media, began to surface. Many, however, corresponded to improvised efforts by the local music industry, hoping to benefit from the commercial juncture. Initially, there were groups and singers like Café Moreno, Moisés Angulo, Tulio Zuluaga, and Karamelo. Later, once this first wave of musicians had tested the waters and verified the viability of cultural production, better prepared acts appeared, like Cabas, Bacilos, Bonka, Lucas Arnau, Mauricio y Palodeagua, Fonseca, San Alejo, Fanny Lu, Jerau, and Wamba, some of which managed to get nominated for awards like the Latin Grammy and the Billboard.

As a result of this experience, a growing dilution of cultural practices associated with Afro-Colombian tradition became evident within the national tropical music scene. In Colombia, most tropical music is linked, in one way or another, to the cultural practices of its northern Atlantic coast, which, from a racial point of view, appears to be the most mixed region in the country. The

Pacific coast, in comparison, has witnessed less of a racial mixture—ethnicities have remained segregated—and, until recently, its folklore has not been commercialized as pervasively as that of the Caribbean. Thus, it is only logical that if music alludes to Caribbean heritage, some African descent should remain visible. So, when tropipop is offered as a commercial novelty and very little Afro-Colombian content is recognized in its implementation, the end result is a rather dissonant cultural experience. In other words, the yearn to modernize and update musical production—initially motivated by a certain goodwill toward more urbane generations of Colombians—once it was co-opted by the music sector, resulted in the consolidation of a new brand of cultural contribution, personified by tropipop, which conjugated African and mestizo traditions in a rather lopsided, fashionable way. Undeniably, the shift led to a reformulation of the Afro-Colombian musical legacy, according to which the enactment of Negritude dispersed, thanks to the greater support of upper-class cultural practices of mestizo descent.

On the whole, within the theoretical framework of this text, tropipop exemplifies the extension of a hardened process of musical whitening in Colombia that has contributed mainly to two aspects of the coming into being of national identity: the glorification of an upstart, uncritical disposition, proper of a carefree attitude among the upper class—the belief that things are fine and will get better, never mind how broken the system might be—and the increasing rejection of the contribution of groups of African descent in terms of a dominant train of thought within national culture. In Colombia, musical whitening has a lengthy record, from the time of Costeño (coastal) music's golden age—the days of jazz-style bands led by Francisco "Pacho" Galán and Luis "Lucho" Bermúdez, as ascertained in work by British scholar Peter Wade (2000)—up to the present, passing through the nationalist peak of vallenato music, with the corresponding ennoblement of a narrative based on mixture between the Amerindian and the Caucasian, but not the African, to the delight of a pro-government cultural environment. However, that the two main products of this process are highlighted by what is happening with tropipop is, most likely, the result of a rising standard of living and diminishing worry for those left behind. In other words, someone could argue, if the Colombian music market has advanced to the point of commodification of golden-age Costeño music and vallenato, it must surely be because of the greater purchasing power of the general population (overlooking any evidence to the contrary).

In addition, I contend that an even more disturbing aspect of this continued whitening is reflected in the overall response to tropipop as a new musical genre. When the music goes viral and invades the programming of most tropical music and pop radio stations in the Andean region of the country—in Colombia, "Andean" alludes to geography rather than ethnicity—much of the criticism against it is directed at the quality of its

compositions, that is, at the class connotations of the new musical construct, closely associated to a particular kind of Colombian youth.[1] In this sense, youths play a key role in my reading, since it serves as justification for the slanted way in which tropipop is criticized and slandered as an inferior cultural product—the nonsensical dimension of the notion of an "inferior" cultural product remains a topic for an entirely different text—and, at the same time, a new kind of cultural production, *Nuevas Músicas Colombianas* (New Colombian Music), a more avant-garde product prompted by tropipop, is embraced. This avant-garde crowd includes groups like Bomba Estéreo, Mojarra Eléctrica, Sidestepper, Malalma, ChocQuibTown, María Mulata, Frente Cumbiero, Puerto Candelaria, La Revuelta, La Cumbiamba eNeYé, Mucho Indio (Teto Ocampo's latest project), Ancestros, and Velandia y La Tigra, which have tried to combine, each in a different way, folkloric tradition and commercial interest through a more paused, methodical approach. By and large, these groups have benefitted from the backlash against tropipop, which has led fans to support more experimental and autochthonously oriented forms of music. Their enactment of Colombian musical tradition espouses a more expansive understanding of national youth, vastly more appreciative of folklore. Unlike initial tropipop, these acts embrace and talk about racial difference, in a manner altogether novel to the Colombian music scene. Though associated with pop, they represent the avant-garde of a movement labeled *neotropical*, which seeks to honor musical tradition while preserving an indie streak, much unlike conventional performers of tropipop, who tend to pursue contracts with established recording labels.[2] In sum, dismissal of tropipop, one of the two main variants in the Colombian music scene resulting from Vives's work, has led to the flourishing of the other alternative: of more independent varieties of musical production, many of which happen to celebrate ethnic heritage in an overt fashion. In this way, the visibility of one kind of Colombian youth spurs the emergence of cultural forms inviting a more enhanced enactment of other kinds of youth, summoning a wider musical landscape. If on one hand tropipop is a music that extends the lengthy process of musical whitening, on the other, by way of backlash, it spurs consumption of music that relies heavily on celebration of heritage. Thus, tropipop's rise as a successful commercial genre is a key indicator of Colombian culture's continued failure to problematize aspects of race (which is ignored or embraced unconsciously) and instead concentrate on and reinforce structures and readings of class. In this manner, the national cultural industry contributes to the dissemination of upper-class ethnocentrism, much to the despair of less favored segments of society, which represent almost half of the population.

There isn't much disagreement about the origins of tropipop. A fixture of the Colombian cultural establishment, according to music critic Juan Carlos

Garay (2007), it has to do with: “A feeling started more than ten years ago by Carlos Vives. He is the true father of the tropical pop genre, a genre that has been used advantageously to sponsor a sort of festive nationalism. That is why there are so many imitators and so many places offering the formula.”

Then again, despite Vives’s repeated acceptance that his product was the result of a joint effort, which contributed handsomely to the consolidation of what he came to call “the Bogotá standard”—the more urban way of playing certain traditional instruments, product of his association with musicians like Iván Benavides, Lucía Pulido, Ernesto “Teto” Ocampo, and Einar Escaf—what remains clear is the way his figure has ended up linked in an incontestable manner to this musical transformation, in which the sounds of the accordion combine lightheartedly with guitar riffs and synthesized percussion.[3] However, this certainly does not imply that Vives is to blame for what followed. Vives contributes to the whitening of Colombian popular music individually, but to assign him paternity of a pattern of denial would be a tad risky, aside from inappropriate. On the other hand, his great contribution to this stage of the process of whitening lies in his authentication of a way to associate the idea of “the tropical,” beyond most of the influence of African or Amerindian nature, with modern arrangements of popular music, reiterating an indigenous heritage but diluting, even more, a bond with African ancestry.[4]

Keeping in mind a chronological framework, the experience of Vives reproduces what happened in the late 1960s, when the recording industry from the city of Medellín, in those days the heart of the Colombian music sector, incorporated electronic instrumentation and attenuated the folkloric sensibilities of the grand ensembles of Costeño *porro*, bringing about the musical trend labeled *chucu-chucu* and moving forth the process of whitening in the context of the national recording industry. This was nothing new. In their own day, jazz-styled *orquestas*—like the ones led by Galán and Bermúdez—had introduced this pattern. However, by removing most wind instruments and even some percussive ones, and replacing them with electric guitars and synthesizers, in a nod to US cultural influence, the Medellín labels accelerated the trend. Moreover, it is important to reiterate that, in the case of vallenato, the accordion-based genre that rose through the 1970s and 1980s to become the preferred musical expression of Colombian identity, much of its success in the Andean provinces of the country is linked to its enhancement of a mestizo component rather than an Afro-Colombian one, in comparison with cumbia, the previous holder of the title as a favorite nationalist expression. Thus, Vives’s music is, in a few words, the picture of a moment, of a crossroads in the musical development of the idea of nation. And this instance came about as a result of the maturing of two aspects of national cultural life: the yearn for the musical expression of an urban livelihood and the rise of vallenato as the primary incarnation of a myth of racial

democracy, fortifying the theory of racial harmony traditionally favored by the Andean cultural establishment.

According to popular readings, Colombia's population resulted from the mixing of three races: the African slave, the local indigenous tribes, and the conquering Spaniard. That much is granted. The end result, however, is one in which, in an Orwellian manner, some groups are more equal than others, and individuals of distinct African or Amerindian descent are noticeably relegated to the periphery of the country. Nineteenth-century authors like José María Samper (1945) and Ricardo Pereira (1883), once dedicated to providing a theoretical framework for a new project of nation, hint at racialized readings of this nature, each in their own idiosyncratic way. Afterward, as this mindset managed to materialize conditions that corroborated its views—as economic conditions progressed in a way compatible with this sort of delineation—Colombia's cultural production reacted accordingly, creating artifacts that offered consent and even celebrated societal and cultural inequity. Thus, more than a century later, the stage was set for something like tropipop to emerge. Had it not been Vives, it would have been someone else. To state it prosaically, before him, the planets had not yet aligned.

So, for practical purposes, we are talking, once more, about a hybrid genre, a new, Andean form of playing Costeño, Caribbean music. After it has been disdained prematurely as a fleeting fashion, this music manages once again to endure and prosper to the point of engendering nightly establishments in the customary Colombian locations—like El Salto del Ángel or San Sebastián, in Bogotá; Mister Babilla, in Cartagena; Palmaia, in Medellín; and Kukaramákara, in Cali, among others—dedicated in an exclusive way to the following and celebration of this kind of cultural production. Such attention to consideration is not fortuitous. Through the celebration of a national kind of music—the case of tropipop, in particular—what once stood dispersed now comes together: the narration of a common identity tinged with discrepant realities.

Yet the actual practice of whitening is not the main cause for concern. It has been practiced for decades and has been identified and researched by local (Alfonso Múnera 1998) and international (Wade 2000) scholars. The especially troublesome feature of this musical practice corresponds to the kind of reception it has enjoyed. At the start of the current century, strong criticism founded on musical purism and conservative class perspectives became common. According to these critiques, tropipop, which initially signified hopes of a boom for the music scene, had been reduced to bits, thanks to simplified expression prevailing in the production of bands like Wamba, Sin Ánimo de Lucro, and Bonka.[5] That is to say, the targets for much of this criticism were teams of Bogotano adolescents who, relying on catchy lyrics and easy arrangements, emulated the rhythms of vallenato, calypso, reggae, and even merengue, in an acknowledgment not only to Vives, but also to Dominican merengue and bachata star Juan Luis Guerra.[6]

While criticism was ample, two comments are especially representative of the nature of the attacks against tropipop as an improvised musical genre. On July 18, 2008, cultural critic and guitarist Andrés Ospina authored a note for the blog section of the national daily *El Tiempo* that showed, quite explicitly, the kind of disdain many cultural actors experienced toward tropipop:

> The world is now saturated with a new lineage of Carlos Vives wannabes, led by the Palosdeaguas, followed by the Bonkas, and bolstered by the San Alejos Fannylúes, San Alejos (*sic*), and Lucas Arnaus. I won't say much about Jerau, because, being from Cartagena, he deserves some consideration. But the rest . . . the rest. . . . With things in this shape, given lack of creativity and replication of successful formulas are perhaps the most Colombian of attitudes, there are already hundred of thousands of followers for this music, which, like an incurable viral condition, has propagated into our dials. Some of us, for quite some time now, are fed up with this. Others will continue perplexed by the deceitful spell of those who sell themselves as responsible for the world "once again" contemplating our folklore.[7]

The acerbic tone of these remarks is just the tip of the iceberg. And, as many would expect, the treatment of identity isn't exactly comprehensive. As illustration, Jerau (Gerardo Augusto Rodríguez), one of the new performers, is given ironic reprieve on the merit of being from Cartagena. Within the politics of Colombian regionalism, the Caribbean is a place imagined as "touched by Africa," unlike the Andean or interior part of the country, which prides itself on mestizo or Caucasian descent (thus exempt of Africanness). Hence, if Jerau is excused derisively from this critique, it is because, in one way or another, his Caribbean origin awards him more contact with Afro heritage. After all, Cartagena de Indias is well known as an enclave built on the back of the slave trade. On the other hand, to equate lack of creativity and reliance on easy formulas with a national disposition reflects, at the very least, despite any implicit irony, a rather essentialist assessment of national identity, according to which nationality can be best summarized with traits like "attitudes." Following this trend, through the entire year, despite the boom in sales, it was possible to find many articles lambasting tropipop's lack of merit as an expression of *colombianidad*, as in the following note by cultural critic Eduardo Arias for *SoHo*, Colombia's *Maxim*:

> It sickens me that the formula is repeated endlessly. Just as Iván Benavides describes it, it's the copy of the copy of the copy, and you well know what happens when we photocopy a photocopy of a photocopy. That's the tropipop we hear on the radio. And this simplistic formula, designed so upper-class teenagers get drunk in the name of "Colombia is Passion" and the best place to live in the world, this repetitive formula that has

> subtracted space from the many varied proposals that Colombian musicians make based on folklore, sickens me. But it also sickens me that almost all of the artists from tropipop claim to have followed vallenato since they were children. Please, boys of the Gimnasio Moderno, the Campestre, of Los Cerros, supposedly listening to vallenato from the cradle.[8]

Like Ospina, Arias is quite clear about his contempt for the music, linking its commercial success to the party scene of the scions of the upper class. The mention of a much maligned national advertising campaign (*Colombia es pasión*), which suggested a brand identity for the country, and his allusion to the habitual statement by many nationals that "Colombia is the best place to live in the world," despite all evidence to the contrary, signals his derision for this type of arriviste mentality. But most of all, the fact that he lists a group of schools—the Gimnasio Moderno, the Gimnasio Campestre, and the Gimnasio de Los Cerros—which, in the context of Bogotá's high society are well known for their patronizing demeanor, catering to the offspring of the most traditional and long-standing upper-class families, shows how the criticism directed at tropipop reflects deep social resentment. In fact, Moderno, Campestre, and Los Cerros are particularly distinctive in that, unlike many other schools of Bogotá's elite (Colegio Alemán, Colegio Helvetia, Liceo Francés, Gimnasio Colombo-Británico, Colegio Nueva Granada, and so on), they're not bilingual or co-ed (while Los Cerros is associated with Opus Dei, the activist Catholic organization, Moderno is the alma mater of many high-profile Colombians, including president Ernesto Samper). On the whole, they sponsor a particularly rigid and detached construction of masculinity—their student body is exclusively male, upper-class, and, by Colombian standards, racially speaking, almost entirely Caucasian. These are, quite clearly, institutions lacking social, racial, and gender diversity, none of which emphasizes appreciation of difference. (Female sister schools, like the Gimnasio Femenino, Gimnasio Santa Ana, and Gimnasio Iragua, incarnate the opposite side of the coin and are just as exclusionary.) Thus, beyond little exposure to an indigenous musical tradition, what stands out is the lack of diversity in these institutions' milieu and their penchant for a construction of Colombian cultural tradition in a rather isolated manner from more comprehensive viewpoints. This is why, it could be argued, the reading of Caribbean musical tradition by these youths occasionally smacks of simplification. Nevertheless, I must clarify that, although I can relate to a critique of this nature, I also find Arias's assessment of these groups rather unyielding. For Arias (and many other Colombians), it would be unimaginable that a child from any of these families would listen to vallenato, a music celebrated by the middle and lower class, from an early age. Nevertheless, the fact is that, in a country like Colombia, be it via social gatherings or personal preferences, it is very

difficult for anyone to grow amid a musical vacuum, especially when it comes to tropical music like vallenato. In this sense, Arias is describing these youths in the same essentialist spirit that he criticizes: sponsoring a very narrow understanding of a cultural practice and its followers. In other words, regardless of how one might feel about the validity of his criticism, Arias is only able to imagine these youths as narrow-minded, much as when he imagines there is only one correct way of playing a certain kind of Colombian music—both of which, in the end, prove to be self-defeating.

Nonetheless, beyond the intensity of these views, from a more critical perspective, the most disconcerting aspect of this disparagement is that, at its very heart, it conceals two misleading dynamics. First, it argues for the defense of musical tradition, promoting the impression of a hypothetic appreciation of Afro-Colombian heritage, with a class critique nurtured by essentialist overtones—the impossibility that a handful of petit bourgeois would show the capability to reproduce Caribbean musical tradition in a respectable way, given their lack of Negritude (understood as the absence of a connection with Afro tradition). Second, it ratifies the possibility of the existence of a variety within tropipop with a determined vocation of indigenous nature. To be precise, the structure of both previous quotes juxtaposes Vives and Iván Benavides with the lengthy parade of figures embracing tropipop. From this perspective, Vives and Benavides, who worked closely at the beginning of Vives's vallenato phase, are seen as harbingers of the better, more sincere musical product. Vives's story, the product of myth, is emboldened by his stature as the first cultural actor to realize the potential of a fusion among cumbia, vallenato, and rock. Benavides is a veteran of the Colombian music scene and his career, perhaps more than anyone else's in the alternative music circuit, embodies the vicissitudes of the national music industry. Starting as part of a duo (Iván y Lucía, with singer Lucía Pulido, now based in New York City) in the 1980s and then spearheading a string of well-established and respected groups like Bloque, Sidestepper, and Malalma—all bands that have contributed handily to the evolution of the Colombian musical scene in an innovative manner, by way of fusion (chill and lounge, mostly, plus a variety of tropical rhythms)—as well as laboring as songwriter and producer for Vives ("*La tierra del olvido*," among others), Benavides personifies the survivor spirit of Colombia's contemporary musicians. If the product of some tropipop bands sounds fake, it is most definitely because, as Vives and Benavides have shown well, there are others who are positively worth the trouble of listening and appreciating as valid cultural expressions, paying no heed to the likelihood that, along the way, mounting erasure of neglected groups was taking place. Most relevantly, what is never problematized in this critique—and this is taken for granted, since it remains beyond conventional criticism of the Colombian recording industry—is the relationship between the musical practice and the understanding of a pluralist nationality, colored by arrangements

and instrumentation deeply rooted in ignored populations, which would hardly ever enjoy some fleeting visibility despite their legendary contribution to official cultural patrimony. In plain terms, to the extent that tropipop is constructed as closely associated to the youths of a particular social setting in the capital, it is never conceived or interpreted as the more likely acknowledgment of the work of certain groups—Afro-Colombians, mestizos, peasants—given their degree of erasure from the national imaginary.

The essentialist mindset behind much of this criticism, the fact that upper-class Bogotano teenagers are viewed as out of touch with the social and ethnic reality of the country or lacking the cultural know-how to play tropical music well is, in itself, a troublesome facet. After all, the fact that these youths are the product of privilege does not equal, in cultural terms, their being nonfunctional. Indeed, author and columnist Daniel Samper Pizano, one of the most revered journalists in Colombia, is a graduate of the Gimnasio Moderno and is said to possess an encyclopedic knowledge of vallenato. Equally applied to other latitudes, a rationale of this nature implies that, to say the least, the degree of problematization awarded to regional identity is rather limited. Upper-class scions of Bogotá's elite are seen as out of touch with more culturally effervescent regional contexts because, in turn, these contexts are imagined in a rather uni-dimensional way, lacking complexity and nuance. This doesn't bode well for the complexity with which Caribbean identity—or for that matter, Andean identity—is being viewed. If anything, it condones a particularly reductive view of Costeño identity, and for that matter, Afro-Colombian roots. In addition, the fact that a critique pretending to deal with issues of ethnicity is being put forward, mainly, through the assessment of the class value of a cultural production—the suggestion that music by Bonka, Wamba, or Sin Ánimo de Lucro isn't worth a dime—means that, for the most part, the actual "critical" exchange isn't even embracing issues of race in an open manner. The idea that the bands' music is inferior is, as a rule, based on the "quality" of their proposal, bringing into the open issues of taste, and taste is, most categorically, an indication of class constructs. Thus, a discussion that pretends to allude to issues of ethnicity and/or race is being carried without any effective problematization of issues of ethnicity and/or race.

On top of that, the elephant in the room is the validation of the notion of a music that, diluting African ancestry even further, could do justice to the representation of a more culturally diverse and tolerant nation, as properly stated in the description of the now defunct "No más tropipop" (No More Tropipop) Facebook page, which read:

> Let's be clear! This is not a group against TropiPop, because music in any expression is something positive! This is a group against the excess of TropiPop, because every single day two new groups are being released,

> with little to propose, playing the same thing that other groups of this genre are doing, all with the same "beat," thinking it's the formula for success.

At first glance, the willingness to admit that tropipop in itself is not such a bad thing conveys the impression of benevolence. What lies beneath is the implicit acceptance that some of these "good" acts—clearly not the ones attacked by this Facebook page—must be playing something fair to national tradition. Still, in some other cases, criticism was much more detrimental, and even pretended theoretical sophistication. The column by Juan José Castillejo Martínez in Electra, a Web periodical based in an Andean Colombian province, described Bonka's emergence (Bonka being one of the bands associated with the Campestre/Cerros/Moderno scene) as the result of a fractal process and the butterfly effect, starting with earlier tropipop band Mauricio y Palo de Agua. As usual, in comparison to the new bands, the quality of Carlos Vives's production was confirmed:

> We all know that this musical wave cloaked under the humiliating label of tropipop is an offspring of Vives; though I sense that the progenitor's music is at least more decent than that of his progeny, children who were surely born from the copulation of rock musicians who failed because they lacked talent and one day, amid a hangover, listened to *Clásicos de la Provincia* (Vives's hit album).[9]

In this sense, the issue becomes a matter of numbers, of quantity and not quality. Tropipop in itself isn't disconcerting. As music, it is fine. The problem is the number of acts behind it. Or rather, what created much concern were the speed and the extemporization with which it was being embraced and reproduced by the industry and its fans. In other words, with the proper degree of attention to detail, the Colombian recording industry would surely be able to offer something more like Vives, in which folklore and pop combine to a perfect measure.

Then again, while this latter argument seemed to be widely shared, it didn't mean that musicians playing tropipop would march forth as a monolithic group. In fact, when it comes to the second generation of tropipop performers, who were viewed more as a movement that championed a particular brand of identity, given the greater time the fabrication of their proposals had taken, there are already some major disagreements. On one end, there are singers like Cali's Fanny Lu and Bogotá's Juan Fernando Fonseca, for whom an association with tropipop, following several successful recordings, is a reason to celebrate—at least initially—while on the other, there are musicians like Andrés Cabas Rosales, better known as Cabas, who from the very beginning seeks a certain distance from the movement, describing his work in these terms: "This is the continuation of

an evolution started a while ago; little by little I created a distance between the "tropipop" sound and me, since its style has become commercial and predictable."[10] In this sense, what begins to appear evident is a rearrangement of the relationship between cultural production and the practice of identity. While in its most improvised version—that of small bands made up of the children of the bourgeoisie—tropipop certainly does not figure as a prestigious musical practice, there are new formulas of understanding on the horizon. At this point, a rift becomes evident. The bands associated with the youths of the elite are increasingly stigmatized while, at the same time, a musical practice tangential to tropipop, involving elements of fusion, begins to evolve. Cabas's attitude, indicative of different preferences among Colombia's youth, is representative of this shift, but the bands that will follow will take the music in a far wider array of directions.

In the cases of Fanny Lu and Fonseca, the prevailing interpretation seems to be that of an accomplishment for Colombian identity resulting from sheer effort, independently from any class connotations or the ethnographic disposition of their work. In a sense, though they're identified with tropipop and share some of the class context, Fanny Lu and Fonseca incarnate a version of Colombian youth already different from bands like Bonka or Wamba, closely identified with the social context of Moderno, Campestre, or Los Cerros. As an illustration of commercial success, Fanny Lu and Fonseca are offered to the national public as examples of a hard work ethic and resolute determination, values that many Colombians find appealing, but which, within a more practical context, fail to translate into social mobility for many individuals. In Fanny Lu's case, for instance, her personal background is not a matter for much discussion. As Fanny Lucía Martínez Buenaventura, she attended Colegio Bolívar, an elite private bilingual school in Cali. When she moved to Bogotá for college, she enrolled at the Universidad de los Andes, perhaps the most selective private university in the Colombian capital. Thus, her privileged background situates her, even before an outstanding musical career, within the upper echelons of Colombian society, only with a provincial (coming from Cali, not Bogotá) hint. Furthermore, to ratify the reach of her class profile at an international level, since 2009, she has served as goodwill ambassador of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, with the corresponding approval of Colombia's government.

Whatever the circumstances, when it comes to marketing her product, however, her experience is substantiated by narratives focused on the coverage of the Colombian music industry from an international perspective. A story by Reuters, written by Leila Cobo (who is originally from Colombia), the journalist in charge of coverage of the Latin American market for *Rolling Stone*, speaks highly of the success of *Lágrimas cálidas* (2006), the singer's debut album in the United States, with two singles that went to the top of

Billboard's hit charts, as well as of *Dos* (2008), her following release, with a first single that peaked at number one in the Billboard hot Latin tracks chart in April 2009. At the same time, the text describes tropipop in a one-dimensional manner, as "mostly a mix of tropical and pop sounds," without any concern for the contents of its musical formula.[11]

For Fonseca, things are a bit different, but not by much. By the age of twelve, he had pressed five hundred copies of a CD featuring him singing his own music. Originally enrolled as a music student at the prestigious Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Fonseca eventually transferred to the Berklee College of Music in Boston. Upon returning to Bogotá, he played for a while with a band called Baroja and in due course landed a recording contract, thanks to which he released his first album. His earliest recordings, *Fonseca* and *Corazón* (Heart), are from 2002 and 2005, but by the third album, which was, in actual fact, a special edition of the second LP plus bonus tracks, he had already established credentials as a new figure in the Colombian music scene. With his fourth album, *Gratitud* (2008), once again followed by a special edition with bonus tracks in 2009, he launched an ambitious world tour, visiting over twenty countries. Most recently, as an echo of Fanny Lu's international achievement, he was selected by the United Nations as promoter of a campaign against domestic violence.

In terms of media exposure, a peek into his website is enough to convince anyone of his success in the circulation of a more benevolent version of Colombian identity. In fact, among the many articles in the news section of his website, there is a story by David Dorantes for *La Vibra de Houston*, a publication affiliated with the *Houston Tribune*, in which Fonseca reiterates, "What I do is a Colombian genre called tropi-pop. Many people find the name fun and strange, but I think it is perfect to define my music. It's a blend between the tropical and pop (...) I will always defend my Colombian roots but at the same time I look to pop music."[12] However, by alluding to his "roots" and assuming that they refer to some common experience shared with over forty million Colombians, the singer gives the impression that he condones an essentialist nationalist mindset, which in his case, or at least that suggested by his music, is dramatically exempt from evidence of contact with Afro-Colombians.

It is not that Fonseca hasn't enjoyed contact with the culture of the Caribbean coast. After all, he has solid connections to the region where Colombian accordion music is said to have started—at least according to revisionist versions promulgated by those interested in establishing it as an autonomous province in the 1970s. The more disconcerting aspect is that, above all, his work exhibits a rather vague connection to the region's Afro-Colombian heritage, which happens to be a trademark of most Costeño music. To advance the point further, his website quotes George Michael and Carlos Vives as his main influences, which means that, from an ethnomusicological perspective,

his blend combines a certain brand of pop with an already very mixed form of music. To Fonseca—Dorantes makes this clear—his roots are best summarized as certain nostalgia for the sun and rain in Bogotá, reasserting the role of the capital as a center of national authority in terms of identity. In this way, it is suggested that Bogotá's vallenato stands apart from Costeño mythology, regardless of its origin in the Cesar province or along the savannahs of the ancient greater Bolívar province, in an effort to conjure its own set of associations. Along the same lines, a look at some of the musician's videos ("*Te mando flores*" (I send you flowers), "*Cómo me mira*" (How she looks at me), and so on confirms the extension of his upper-class ethnocentrism—or at least, that of the identity construct with which he is being marketed around Latin America—as it comfortably inhabits exclusive apartments in Bogotá's northern district and displays frolicsome nights of partying, in an enactment of nationality even distant to the populist dispositions of Vives.

In contrast with Fanny Lu and Fonseca, the work of Andrés Cabas exhibits a different trajectory. To begin with, his evolution threatens to side with versions of Colombian identity professed by the avant-garde groups mentioned at the start, which combine folklore and commercial interest with a more disciplined approach. After several relatively successful albums, Cabas flirts with flamenco, reggae, bolero, and rock, accompanied by very relaxed electronic instrumentation, bordering the limits of chill or lounge. Recent recordings include collaborations with Vicentico, Mala Rodríguez, and Andrés Calamaro, among others, speaking to a different, more internationally driven set of preferences than those sponsored by a youth bent on vallenato and light pop. In this sense, at a first glance, one could assume that his work could share a critically unresponsive upper-class imaginary, free from greater problematizations of race or social class. Nevertheless, his compositions tend to be more cerebral, professing greater sensitivity for identity matters. This aspect is plainly evident as early as in his second album, *Contacto* (2003), with songs like "La Conquista" (The Conquest), in which, with a brooding tone, he contemplates the abruptness of the cultural clash as Spain invaded the Americas. Considering this independent streak, it is understandable that Cabas's evolution denotes a clear rupture with tropipop. This type of progress, already in open conflict with an audience partial to accordion-based music—in Cabas's latest work, the accordion is blatantly missing—marks a direct contrast with those who, like Fanny Lu and Fonseca, have chosen to rely more on the evolutionary process of a genre intimately associated with a distracted perception of national political surroundings, as evident in the Campestre/Cerros/Moderno contingent. In itself, this brand of indifference, even for harsh realities like Colombia's, is not, by definition, something negative. It takes time to process events, particularly if the pace is hectic and difficult. Even so, the more conflicting aspect lies in the

persistent denial and rejection, even concealment, of an ancestral musical tradition thanks to nationalist proclivities, when such attitudes are susceptible to ideological manipulation.

With Bomba Estéreo and ChocQuibTown at the forefront (both linked to Iván Benavides, by way of performance and production), the avant-garde groups benefit from the backlash against tropipop, embracing the title *Nuevas Músicas Colombianas* (NMC), which juxtaposes them with tropipop even though, to a certain extent, they personify a by-product of the tropipop experience. By way of rejection of tropipop, consumption of alternative types of Colombian music, also combining folkloric roots and pop sensibility, but with a significantly more autonomous streak and reliant on small recording houses and new labels, is supported. For the most part, many of these bands are associated with labels like MTM, led by Humberto Moreno and Camilo de Mendoza, responsible for popularizing the NMC moniker, indicative of a more plural, diverse, and contemporary Colombian music scene. Thus, rather than relying on a stringent, prescribed reading of Caribbean heritage, these groups explore the full gamut of Colombia's musical repertoire, expanding the public's understanding of national identity. For instance, Ancestros, a band directed by Esteban Copete, grandson of Petronio Álvarez (1914–1966, the elder of Colombia's Pacific musical tradition), and which updates *currulao*, the main staple of the Pacific Coast's musical genres, in a fashion akin to the work of Cuban band Síntesis with synthesizers, speaks volumes about an awareness of the competence of Afro-Colombian identity aside from the Caribbean tradition. Along the same lines, ChocQuibTown is a popular hip hop act from the Pacific province of Chocó that has gained a considerable following, bringing Negritude to the forefront of Bogotá's music scene. Its proposal, eagerly embraced by youths, stands in sharp contrast to the whitened version of vallenato promoted by Bonka or Wamba. Though these groups are not, generally speaking, powerhouses in terms of sales, they each have recorded one or several albums, sometimes on their own, sometimes with an indie label, but they all have interesting proposals with a solid base of fans and perform regularly around the country and internationally. If anything, their musical proposal speaks to a wider, more culturally curious audience—to a different kind of youth, socially and ethnically—willing to explore newfangled ways of enacting Colombian musical tradition.

To reassert the feasibility of more patient alternatives, it is best to review the production of groups like María Mulata and Bomba Estéreo (to explore two of the groups associated with the *neotropical* drive), with *Los vestidos de la cumbia*, the only double album of the Colombian recording industry in 2007, and *Estalla*, a recording with a very eclectic style—almost Tijuana-like in its most experimental side. In both cases, Afro-Colombian traditions come to the foreground. For María Mulata—the name alludes to a bird from the Caribbean coast, well known for its quickness at the time of stealing

food—there is a return to the classics of Caribbean music, adding colorfulness and youthful novelty. The band's organizers, Diana Hernández and Leonardo Gómez, have managed to renew folklore and participated rewardingly in events like the 2007 music festival at Viña del Mar in Chile, where they were awarded the Silver Gull in the folklore category.[13] Though from the interior of the country, Hernández honors the *cantaora* (woman singer) tradition led by renowned figures like Etelvina Maldonado and Petrona Martínez. In the case of Bomba Estéreo, there is the development of a psychedelic, electronic cumbia, positing it in a context that, despite its acknowledgment of a national conflict, tangible in some of their videos, offers more than enough reasons to celebrate. Their vocalist, Liliana Saumet, is said to recall a young Totó La Momposina, a famous Colombian folklorist who has recorded with Peter Gabriel's Real World label. Aside from this, their LPs habitually include two or three songs incorporating social commentary. Bomba Estéreo has released three albums; the most recent ones, *Blow-Up* (2009) and *Elegancia Tropical* (2012), were issued in the United States. In both instances, there is a patent concern for the updating of a folkloric tradition, though placing it in a context compatible with the habits of the multitasking millennial generations, properly bred on a diet of Internet and digital music. In a better sense of the word, they both represent cultural productions that are even more utilitarian than tropipop, though with a far more inventive streak.

Nonetheless, at this point, the most ironic thing would be that tropipop, as a new way to make urban music, could manage to project itself as a transnational phenomenon, with analogous implications in other latitudes of Latin America. A story by the *Dallas Morning News* in late 2003 already toyed with this possibility.[14] Amid the rise of reggaeton, the story quotes Sergio George, the producer for Bacilos, the successful Miami-based group, and Puerto Rican songwriter Obie Bermúdez employing the term to allude to the kind of arrangements that were being implemented back then as an enhancement of the market for salsa. Several years later, toward late 2006, a look at *Lo que trajo el barco* (What the Boat Brought), the Bermúdez album nominated for a Grammy as best pop recording, confirmed our suspicions: in a slow but consistent manner, Colombian tropipop managed to mutate and sneak into the musical repertoire of other nationalities, with the corresponding attenuation of an African legacy and the popularization of an affected upper-class message, equally appetizing for the bourgeoisie of any Latin American setting.

Notes

1. It is important to note that, unlike other Latin American nations, where the label "Andean" describes disenfranchised sectors of the population (Peru) or a minority (Venezuela), in Colombia, the word alludes to the region with the most political and cultural power. This is a key consideration for this article, as Colombian music usually

develops along the lines of a tension between a periphery (the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, the eastern plains, and even some of the Amazon region) and the center, embodied in this "Andean" nucleus.

2. Juan Carlos Garay's columns as music critic for *Semana*, the Colombian weekly, chronicle the rise in popularity of these acts, discussing their continuous run of releases. Notes like "Un poco de ron ayuda" and "Sensatez y sentimiento," available at *Semana* web archive, describe the production of groups like María Mulata and Bomba Estéreo.

3. The comments by Vives to this respect on December 9, 2006, published in "Así ve Carlos Vives a sus herederos del 'tropipop' (Vives II parte)," an article by Liliana Martínez Polo for the Vallenato Social Club in the blogs section of *El Tiempo*, the Bogotá newspaper, are quite enlightening. The text is available at http://blogs.eltiempo.com/vallenato-social-club/2006/12/09/asi-ve-carlos-vives-a-sus-herederos-del-tropipop-vives-ii-parte/.

4. See Celeste Delgado Fraser's interview with Vives, in which he was described as a Colombian Elvis, "Colombian Elvis: What rock and rolls owes the blues, Carlos Vives owes vallenato," available at http://www.miaminewtimes.com/2001-12-20/music/colombian-elvis/, as well as Fernández L'Hoeste 2005.

5. A good, contemporary example of this type of critique is the "No más tropipop" webpage, available at http://profileengine.com/groups/profile/423435139/no-mas-tropipop.

6. A key example of this kind of criticism is "No más ¡tropipop!," the YouTube parody posted by journalist Andrés Ospina, based on his arguments for the July 18, 2008, issue of El Blogotazo, in *El Tiempo*'s blog section. Other websites, like the Cantaleta collective, also published rants against the music, like "El tropipop," by Emmanuel Vargas, later removed. However, Ospina's critique is still available at http://blogs.eltiempo.com/el-blogotazo/2008/07/18/no-mas-tropipop/.

7. Available at http://blogs.eltiempo.com/el-blogotazo/2008/07/18/no-mas-tropipop/.

8. Available at <http://www.soho.com.co/wf_InfoArticulo.aspx?IdArt=9189>.

9. Once available at http://www.electrarevista.com/administrador/index.php?objeto=12, the webzine is now defunct.

10. With respect to Fanny Lu, please see her comments for her hometown's newspaper *El País*, which celebrates her as "The Queen of Tropipop," available at http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/entretenimiento/noticias/voz-y-exitos-cantante-fanny-lu-reina-tropipop. For Fonseca, see "Me siento orgulloso del tropipop," an article in the March 14, 2008, issue of the Culture and Entertainment section of *El Tiempo*, available at http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-2862613. For Cabas, see coverage of his work at *El Tiempo*, available at http://www.eltiempo.com/noticias/andres-cabas.

11. Cobo, Leila. "Colombian singer Fanny Lu makes stateside inroads." *Reuters/Billboard*. December 3, 2008. Available at http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/12/03/us-fannylu-idUSTRE4B27ZQ20081203.

12. The text is available at http://www.chron.com/spanish/entertainment/article/Fonseca-un-cantante-agradecido-1732822.php.

13. See the list of news stories at Diana Hernández's blog, available at http://prensa-mariamulata.blogspot.com/2007/03/mara-mulata-ganadora-en-via-del-mar_9557.html.

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6

Fusion Rock Bands and the "New Peru" on Stage

Patricia Oliart

> *Yo no soy un aculturado; yo soy un*
> *peruano que orgullosamente,*
> *como un demonio feliz habla en cristiano y en indio,*
> *en español y en quechua*
>
> José María Arguedas

> *...no generation speaks quite the same language as its predecessors*
>
> Raymond Williams[1]

In the 1990s, Peru experienced highly charged social, cultural, and political times, mired with tensions and ambiguities. More than a decade of internal armed conflict between the Shining Path and the Armed Forces (1980–1992) ended under the rule of a corrupt authoritarian regime and rampant political crisis. Tough economic neoliberal policies were implemented together with mainstream acceptance of cultural diversity, while neighboring countries evidenced the revitalization of a transnational indigenous movement, which advanced criticism of racist discourses and practices in the region. The new century started with the overthrow of Fujimori's dictatorship, the growth of a massive protest movement, and the installation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) with a mandate to report on twelve years of armed conflict. The TRC report published in 2003 brought forward the unavoidable discussion about the relationship that the nation had with the rural indigenous Peruvians who constituted 69 percent of the victims of the war.

This occurred in a time of unprecedented free access to global dissident discourses and global culture, facilitated by the widespread availability of the Internet[2] and the "democratization" of international migration, aptly described by Freddy Roncalla (2006) as "access to globalization not mediated by the elites." Thus, even in a context of hegemonic neoliberalism,

different dissident discourses such as anti-colonialist or decolonization ones, together with anti-racist, pro-indigenous, and environmentalist movements, circulated freely, together with independent sources of information and a direct flow of communication with the rest of the world.

This chapter is part of a larger project aimed at identifying explicit reactions to the above complex scenario and exposure to multiplicity of discourses, among those who, by then, were between fifteen and thirty years of age and felt compelled to reflect, take up a stance, and express it aesthetically and/or politically. This generational experience and production has had a long-lasting impact and has influenced contemporary youth cultures in Peru, which explains the ongoing interest granted to the protagonists of this piece.

The musicians who started the bands I deal with in this chapter were born between the late 1960s and early 1980s (except for Hernán Condori, born in 1961). They created the bands in the 1990s, while mostly in their twenties. Their music is part of a wide variety of aesthetic expressions self-defined as hybrids, which emerged in the past three decades with the deliberate purpose of questioning the established boundaries between different aesthetics, normally associated with particular social and cultural groups in Peru. As non-indigenous Peruvians taking advantage of the malleability of rock and roll as a genre, these bands have used their songs as a space to perform particular negotiations around their relationship with indigenous cultures and Peruvian mainstream society.

In highlighting the Peruvian rock bands *Uchpa*, *Los Mojarras*, and *La Sarita*, I analyze their performances and narratives about their projects in the light of Laclau and Mouffe's optimistic description of the turn of the century as "a most exhilarating moment in which new generations, without the prejudices of the past, without theories presenting themselves as 'absolute truths' of History, are constructing new emancipatory discourses, more human, diversified and democratic" (Laclau and Mouffe 1987). A productive notion to describe those emancipatory discourses is structure of feeling, coined by Raymond Williams (1978) to talk about the values and perceptions that, not constituting a world view or an ideology, still inform shared ways of experiencing society and social relations in a particular group of people or generation and find an articulated expression through some artistic forms.

The artistic form chosen by these bands is generically referred to as fusion rock, although this classification is not always used by the bands to describe what they do. Typically, each band has articulated a narrative about their respective musical projects including a reflection about their own place in Peruvian society and the world. Borrowing from Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of an intentional hybrid (1981: 359–361) as opposed to an organic hybrid in novel writing, Pnina Werbner states that "intentional hybridity as an aesthetic is inherently political, a clash of languages which questions an existing

social order" (Werbner 2001: 137), adding also that to display hybrid forms in cultural performances usually conveys challenging representations around issues that are part of a struggle. I am not going to link these bands to particular political movements, or to force political coincidences among them, but all three (and the few bands that have emulated them) define their projects as taking a critical stance at least around discriminatory racial relations and social injustice, defending respect for cultural diversity, and praising different moral values of indigenous cultures. Their performances go a step further. On stage, these bands richly explore intimate aspects of the relationships between cultures. They explore new exchanges with different Peruvian cultures that challenge common sense about cultural differences in Peru. They defy rigid dichotomies that separate modernity and cosmopolitanism from the provinces of the country, or indigenous cultures, thus opening new possibilities for being a multicultural person in Peru and the world (García Canclini 1999: 63).

Thus, they use the stage as a space for self-representation and for the elaboration of embodied forms of experiencing Peruvian society. I wish to discuss the production and performances of these three bands as related to three components that have contributed to the structure of feeling that seems to infuse the production of independent or non-conformist artists of two generations in contemporary Peru. First is the context of historical changes of Peruvian society, occurring in the late twentieth century and succinctly captured by José Matos Mar in the title of his influential book *Desborde popular* (Matos Mar 1984).[3] Second is the way in which recent global developments in the experiences of indigeneity—from being talked about, to formulating their own political platforms (De la Cadena and Starn 2007)—are incorporated in the discourses of non-indigenous Peruvians but mediated by the intellectual and emotional legacy of the iconic image of José María Arguedas. Third is the role of rock and roll as a "revolving door to globalization" (Fernández L'Hoeste 2004). Using the unprecedented freedom that rock and roll allows for incorporating styles, rhythms, and instruments, musicians have found a liberating space to develop original projects to process and elaborate their views on society and their identities.

Using material from online and TV videos, as well as live performances and interviews, I hope to make evident and reflect on how these bands are challenging dominant notions of gender and racial identity, authenticity, and modernity in Peru, re-working them, embedded in their performances and the discourses they have elaborated around their practice. I mostly concentrate on the lead singers and composers of the lyrics of these bands: Freddy Ortiz, lead singer of the Quechua blues and rock band Uchpa, Hernán Condori, "Cachuca" from Los Mojarras, and Julio Perez from La Sarita. I reconstruct each band's music project and narratives about themselves based on recordings of concerts and published

interviews. I also use posted comments on YouTube about their performances at concerts, on television, and in their official videos. These grant access to an important space for music consumption and commentary, allowing access, although limited, to the reception of their work. The combination of Myspace, Facebook, and YouTube allows for a dialogic relationship that guarantees continuity and a sense of immediacy between musicians and the audience in spite of the bands' marginality or ambiguous connection with the mainstream media. Apart from the comments, uploaded videos on YouTube give access to a myriad of possible interventions from the viewers in the songs, ranging from Spanish subtitles to some Quechua songs by Uchpa, to registers of live concerts where both participants in the concerts and Internet viewers compare performances of other concerts of Los Mojarras. Songs of La Sarita or any other band are also used as background for personal images to convey messages of a diverse nature, which are then commented on by unrelated viewers. All these interactions give audiences a particularly active role in the social production of a genre.

Uchpa: *Andinizando el Rock*

During 1999 I spent some time in Ayacucho while conducting research on university life and masculinity among education students (Oliart 2011).[4] Apart from the obvious visits to the School of Education at the San Cristobal de Huamanga University, other fieldwork sites were *peñas*, bars, discos, football courts, and shops where students spent their time and money. Near Plaza de Armas, there used to be a few stalls selling mostly pirate copies of a very eclectic and wide array of albums and musical genres popular with students.[5] Passing by, a boombox drew me toward one of the stalls, where I could identify the melody of House of the Rising Sun but sung in Quechua by a voice reminiscent of Axl Rose's. This very simple arrangement of "*Intipa Lluqsinan Wasi*" (the Quechua title of the song popularized by The Animals), with just an acoustic guitar and a raspy male voice, was the first song I heard from Uchpa. I felt mesmerized by the honesty and power of the sound: heartfelt rock sung in slick harmony with heartfelt Quechua conveyed by a confident young man's voice.[6]

The source was a worn-out cassette tape of *Qawka Kawsay* (Living in Peace), the second recording of Uchpa (1995), where Freddy Ortiz, a native of Ocobamba, Apurimac, and Igor Montoya, also from Apurimac, presented a selection of eight blues and rock and roll hits from the 1960s and 1970s. The first recording was *Wayrapin qaparichkan* (Crying in the Wind), made in 1991 with cover versions of Nirvana songs in Quechua. Both tapes were produced at an informal studio in Ayacucho, and then distributed by the studio owner

(Marapi 2010). These recordings circulated far beyond what Freddy and Igor ever imagined, reaching other cities in Apurimac, Ayacucho, Junín, and even Lima. The unexpected success gave Freddy the determination to continue with the project.

Uchpa means ashes in Quechua, as a reference to the death and destruction brought about by the armed conflict. The band started off in Talavera, a town of less than six thousand people in Apurimac, in the Peruvian highlands. Freddy, a young member of one of the national police forces, was transferred to Ayacucho during the conflict. Once there, he reformed Uchpa with Igor and three other musicians from Ayacucho until they disbanded and Freddy moved to Lima, eventually retiring from the police to be entirely dedicated to the band.

I had a chance to see the third configuration of Uchpa performing live in Lima at the auditorium of La Casa de Yuyachkani[7] in 1999 with Freddy Ortiz, Marcos Maizel on the guitar, Bram Willems on the bass, and Ivo Flores on the drums. They played some covers as well as some original themes from their next release *Qukman Muskiy* (New Breath 2001). The songs were mostly traditional *huaynos* (a traditional genre of Andean music with a diversity of distinctive regional variations) with blues and rock arrangements. The band performed with three other musicians on stage that I had wrongly assumed were guests for the occasion. With some variations depending on their availability, they are normally present in Uchpa concerts. The three musicians are representative of the folklore of the Chanka region:[8] Two *waqra phuku*[9] players, a violinist, an occasional female singer of traditional huaynos, and a *dansaq*.[10]

Uchpa was the closing act after a roundtable discussion at the public launch of a book featuring a collection of Quechua stories from Apurimac, to be used in bilingual education programs.[11] Bram Willems's parents, Belgian NGO workers based in Andahuaylas, were in charge of the publication of the book, and Freddy had also been part of the project. The unusual audience for a blues and rock band was made up of linguists, bilingual education teachers, researchers, and activists of indigenous language revitalization, and I could gauge mixed reactions toward the band at the reception afterwards.

Reebee Garofalo mentions how criticism and distrust toward rock and roll among folklorists and left-wing people was common in the United States or the United Kingdom in the 1960s (Garofalo 1992). In Peru in the late 1990s it was still possible to find a very conservative attitude against any kind of rock and roll, because it was perceived as linked to commercialism, mass-mediated culture, and US "cultural imperialism." I have encountered these ideas among people involved in the struggle for indigenous language preservation and revitalization, particularly teachers. This is perhaps a late residue of the education reform on the 1970s, when the military regime of General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968–1975), self-defined as nationalist and

anti-imperialist, designed several "cultural interventions" in education and the media. During Velasco Alvarado's regime, among other things, Quechua was declared an official language and folk dancing was made a mandatory part of the school curriculum for all levels as means of promoting a better knowledge of the diverse geography of the country, together with respect and appreciation of its cultural diversity (Oliart 2013). Concurrently, after the expropriation of the media, rock and roll was considered alienating, and its broadcasting banned as a way of stopping US "cultural and ideological penetration" on the youth (Cornejo 2002, Gonzáles 2001). According to Torres (2009), they went as far as deleting tapes of television shows where rock bands used to play, in order to recycle them.

Added to the historical particularities of Peru, the controversial perception of rock and roll as either progressive or rebellious, or commercial and complicit of capitalism, (Frith 2007 [1987], Alabarces 2008) made Uchpa vulnerable to criticism among a section of the audience they wanted to entertain. I found Uchpa's choice of singing Quechua blues rock and roll in middle-class venues very daring, however, particularly since disdain, racial prejudices, and discriminatory behavior against indigenous Peruvian cultures still persist among the urban middle classes.[12]

In 2003 I attended an Uchpa concert at La Noche, a well-known stage for live music in the bohemian area of Barranco. By then Uchpa already enjoyed a well established nationwide audience and a good record of very successful concerts in provincial stadiums, particularly in the Southern Highlands, where Quechua is still spoken in both rural and urban areas. Next to the bar where I was sitting, there was a table of four men and women in their mid-twenties who were in a state of total disbelief when they heard Freddy Ortiz singing in Quechua. They then burst into laughter when they saw the homonymous cousins Juan Espinoza in their indigenous attire coming to stage to play the *waqra phukus*. After voicing very insulting comments, they left.[13] But in contrast to the audiences in stadiums in the highlands, especially where people know Quechua and quickly engage with the catchy lyrics and chorus of traditional huaynos with rock arrangements,[14] I could describe the rest of the audience at La Noche as curious, appreciative of the quality of the band, and yet, at the same time, distant and rather cold.

As creators of an "intentional hybrid" (Bakhtin 1981: 360), Uchpa members have gradually developed a very articulate narrative about what they do and why they do it. Ortiz and Maizel have presented it through interviews where they emphasize their deep rock and roll roots and their non-indigenous Andean identification. They openly defy commonsense notions about musical taste and consumption in the country, which would easily assume that the provinces see the reign of traditional music, while Lima represents the most cosmopolitan tendencies in musical taste. However, for Freddy Ortiz, there are more "authentic rockers" in the highlands than in Lima, where he thinks

a preference for *cumbia andina* predominates. Ortiz and Maizel define Uchpa as a non-commercial band of contemporary music with an Andean soul, that plays music from the heart. Ortiz has also declared the satisfaction he gets from producing his records as an artisan who is rooted in, and in control of, the whole process (Villar 2009).

Several times both musicians have compared blues and the *qarawy*[15] on one hand, and rock singing with the chacra huayno on the other (Zevallos 2011). Ortiz says that they share the same commitment with honest and deep expression of feelings and the defiant and energetic attitude, respectively. "Blues and rock and roll come from below and so do chacra huaynos and qarawys, from oppressed people with a great creative energy and deep feelings" (Villar 2009).

Uchpa has had special coverage in Peruvian major newspapers such as *El Comercio* and *La República*, and television appearances both in rock and roll programs and prime time magazines on television. In addition, rock radio programs and numerous websites have published interviews with them. Once their audience started growing in Lima and Uchpa enjoyed wider media exposure, Freddy created the attire for his performances, which he explains in detail: "The way I dress for the concerts is a fusion. The necklaces are my private homage to the feeling of Janis Joplin's singing. I don colorful shirts in memory of Jimi Hendrix but also to resemble the colorful dansaq's attire, where my hat also comes from. I also don a belt of colorful ribbons because that's what men use for Carnival dances of Cupisa and many other places in Apurimac. My ragged jeans and cowboy boots are my homage to the blues and rock from the seventies" (Villar 2009).

Explanations about the origins of the scissor dance are diverse and contested, but aside from the historical evidence and current academic discussion about it, a common narrative among people from the region associates the dance with a millenarist movement of resistance to Catholicism, and some link the acrobatic moves of the dansaq as being inspired or animated by Andean deities (Ortiz 2009, Arce 2006, Cavero 1998, Nuñez 1985). I think that Uchpa's inclusion of the dansaq on stage, together with Freddy donning the hat and imitating some of the difficult and acrobatic moves of the scissors dance as he sings, is a way of embodying a contemporary mestizo Andean identity where the indigenous rural masculinity is an important and visible ingredient, and not something that needs to be hidden or masked as an unavoidable evil.

Juan Zevallos has commented on the lyrics of Uchpa's repertoire and Ortiz's use of Quechua poetics not just when he freely adapts traditional huaynos, but also in his original songs, suggesting that he achieves a deep connection with his audience because of his command of Quechua poetics that have deep emotional resonances among Quechua speakers (Zevallos 2011). Zevallos also links Uchpa to the *Canción Social*, or testimonial song

that emerged in Ayacucho in the 1980s, as a vehicle found by local composers to elaborate on the suffering caused by the internal conflict in the region (Ritter 2009). In fact, the band's name, as well as a few songs, are inspired in Freddy Ortiz's experience as a young member of the police in the conflict area. "*Pitaqmi Canqui?*" (Who Are You?) has very simple lyrics, and the question posed by the song addresses at the same time an orphan child raised by other relatives after the child's parents' death during the conflict, and his own situation as an outsider in the conflict area.[16] "*Añas Blues*" (The Skunk Blues) is about a contemplative moment of nature in the midst of the conflict, when Freddy stopped focusing on his duties to admire a skunk's courtship dance, described in detail in the song. When I have seen Freddy presenting both songs, he questioned the alienation from nature and humankind that violence imposes on people's lives.

Although Zevallos does not analyze his material in this light, his translations of Uchpa lyrics show how Ortiz's love songs reflect on cultural changes in heterosexual relations, and men's bewilderment and sense of vulnerability facing changes in female agency, sexuality, and power. Zevallos also notices how Ortiz has sometimes edited lyrics of traditional huaynos, suppressing fragment that reflect a *machista* attitude toward women (Zevallos 2011).

Beyond the contents of his songs, Freddy Ortiz's ideas about the use of Quechua by the band deserve careful attention and contextualization. In the early 1960s and even well into the 1970s, there were discussions among rock bands in Latin America about the suitability of any language other than English to sing rock and roll (several authors in Pacini Hernandez et al. 2004). In the 1960s local rock and roll projects started to emerge in the world (Garofalo 1992), but singing it in non-English local languages took a while to become accepted, particularly by the recording industries. In countries such as Mexico, Argentina, or Spain, recording labels were hesitant to accept bands singing in Spanish. But controversy was also present in countries where there was no recording industry (Alvarado 2004) or even among bands who were not planning to record. The Saicos from Lince—an emerging middle-class neighborhood in Lima—were true innovators in Peru in 1964 when they started singing their own songs in Spanish.[17] Only well into the 1980s did *rock en español* establish a well-legitimized and popular presence in the recording industry and the media (Pacini Hernandez et al. 2004). Perhaps this process facilitated using Quechua to sing rock and roll, but Freddy's arguments go further than that. He says that the expressive power of Quechua makes it better suited than Spanish for singing blues and rock and roll.

Uchpa Quechua rock and blues started with a group of friends in Talavera interested in classic American and British rock from the 1970s. They used to gather in a plaza around Igor Montoya's guitar, humming tunes or imitating English word sounds without understanding them. Freddy thought of using

Quechua lyrics to sing them, not necessarily with a literal translation, but with a free interpretation in Quechua of the same feelings (Zevallos 2011). After that exercise, the leap to writing their own lyrics and music was not difficult. Freddy Ortiz shares ideas commonly used by mestizo bilinguals of Spanish and Quechua about the expressive strength of the Andean language. In the introduction to their anthology of Quechua songs, the Montoya brothers declare: "At an early age we learned that for our parents the deepest feelings were expressed in Quechua. We did not belong to an indigenous ethnic group but their language was, and is, the most adequate vehicle to express our major and deepest feelings" (Montoya 1987: 4).

This native bilingualism was also praised by Freddy Ortiz's cultural hero, likewise born in Apurimac, José María Arguedas, who neatly stated that "only those who have heard the Indians speaking Quechua from an early age can discover (...) the singular richness of this oral language." Furthermore, commenting on his own doubts about acting as translator of Quechua folk tales into Spanish, Arguedas wrote that even though he tried to be as accurate as possible, there was always a danger of misrepresenting the exact meanings of the tales, since the bodily movements and gestures that were such an integral part of the narrative, and that provided part of the content of the stories, had to be left out of a translation (Arguedas 1949: 67–68).

It is also common to hear bilingual speakers of Quechua say that the subtlety and complexity of the feelings that can be conveyed in Quechua lyrics are impossible to translate into Spanish. Thus, in live concerts, Freddy explains what the songs are about, trying to generate interest in the language while also establishing an intimate complicity among the Quechua speakers in the audience. Himself an activist involved in language revitalization,[18] Ortiz shows clear engagement with the power issues involved in the use of Quechua and the social vulnerability of Quechua speakers, widely reported and analyzed by Andeanist sociolinguists and anthropologists.[19] During any appearance in the media, Freddy Ortiz will always say a few words in Quechua to his audience, usually encouraging people not to feel ashamed of speaking it and clearly denouncing how Quechua speakers are still marginalized and humiliated for speaking their language.

Several sociolinguistic studies about the Andes point at evidence of the deep relationship between masculinity and linguistic competence in Spanish both in rural and urban spaces. Penélope Harvey (1989), Aurolyn Luykx (1996 and 1999), and Alison Spedding, among others, have shown how linguistic competence in Spanish, and particularly in registers adequate for certain public spaces that demand some degree of formality, is a highly valued and sought-after skill among men. In my research among university students of education in Ayacucho, I saw how varying linguistic registers were actively used by students to establish differences among themselves. For example, urban girls assigned a very high importance to the quality of spoken Spanish

the men they date would possess. Whether with the goal of establishing long-term relationships or just for fun, girls would choose a man with a solid command of Spanish in order to be respected among their peers. Very few are probably prepared to be criticized for having a boyfriend "who does not even speak proper Castilian."[20]

Uchpa's use of Quechua lyrics and the presence of indigenous musicians in the scenario performing with them in their concerts stand clearly against this social and cultural dominant background, connecting instead with counter-hegemonic attitudes among Quechua speakers to use their language in an empowering fashion. Firestone (2007) observed in Ayacucho that some young people of Quechua origin were experiencing a renewed interest in improving their Quechua skills in order to sing Uchpa songs. In addition, during my research experience in Ayacucho I collected evidence that in some situations, Quechua-speaking students would use their language as a social divider in a reverse fashion. They seemed very comfortable when they knew they could switch from Spanish to Quechua without having to provide any explanations and sometimes deliberately used Quechua as an empowering medium by employing witty jokes and laughing, making the non-Quechua speakers in the group feel uncomfortable and somehow ashamed for not being bilingual.

Uchpa live concerts, whether in the outskirts of Lima or in parks and stadiums in the highlands of Peru, provide an opportunity for the collective enjoyment of the shared experience of living "in between." To have unabashed indigenous musicians on stage, dancing and playing rock and roll in Quechua in their traditional attires, singing lyrics using the Quechua language of love and life, constitute a very powerful material experience that offers "a transitory experience of the ideal" (Frith 2007: xxii), where the imposed need to deny or mask indigenous roots to fit in with mainstream society has no place.

Freddy does not always know enough about the local contexts to establish an immediate connection with the audience. He may even resort to some cliché references to the Quechua cultures of different regions, such as saluting the Apus of Cusco and repeating Kausachum Cusco, clearly lacking other things to say. But once the band starts playing and the catchy lyrics are sung by the audiences, it becomes apparent that there are new social, gender, and racial relations in the making that do not need to be acknowledged as local. A strong sense of reaffirmation and celebration of a particular contemporary way of being young, Peruvian, and Andean can be felt, with no shame or sense of humiliation attached to it, and with no sense of betrayal to their cultural communities.

Even non-Quechua speakers who post comments about Uchpa linked to their videos on YouTube are generally celebratory of the use of the indigenous language and appreciative of the clean "classic" rock style. Spontaneous

translators of the lyrics also often come along, whether or not a request for translation is made.

Despite its origins being in the highlands, Uchpa is now a Lima-based band. They don't tour much, but their concerts in the interior are always very well attended. Their popularity has generated an interest in singing rock and other Western popular music genres in Quechua, including hip hop.

Los Mojarras: *Rock and Roll de los Pobres*

El Agustino is a district east of the city of Lima named after a hill that in turn gave its name to a hacienda. Well into the 1940s it was mainly an agricultural area, gradually urbanized after receiving a constant flux of migrants, mostly from the Peruvian Andes, seeking a place to live as close as possible to the already overcrowded city center. With close to 180,000 people, "*El Agucho*" (the familiar nickname for El Agustino) is home to a majority of second- or third-generation immigrants. Almost forgotten now are the old stories of the epic occupation of the hill and subsequent waves of squatting in the lower area, followed by decades of organized struggles to access basic services and to legalize their properties. Later dwellers came to the district through organized cooperatives of low-income buyers, who built their houses from scratch and did not wait to move in until the whole area was fully urbanized. Avenida Riva Aguero cuts the district west to east and is a vigorous spine that links the district with the rest of Lima through numerous formal and informal lines of public transport, and around which lively communities forge their existence. During the 1980s strong communal organizations were characteristic of the district, together with a vital social and cultural environment. Similar to other *barrios populares* in Latin America, this atmosphere was enthused and supported by a de facto coalition among the progressive Catholic Church, some left-wing parties, and grassroots activists.[21]

A surprising grassroots rock movement emerged by the end of the 1980s in El Agustino. Their chosen acronym was GRASS, standing for *Grupos Rockeros Agustinianos Surgiendo Solos* (Rock Bands from El Agustino Emerging on Their Own), and they soon started a yearly rock festival named Agustirock. The first version of Agustirock was in 1990 and it has been running for twenty years, having proudly acquired national standing.[22] In many ways this movement was organic to the aforementioned coalition.[23] This is reflected in their current narrative about themselves, where a clear memory of the social movements of the 1980s is expressed in the language used in the speeches of the festival organizers. Their website, for example, defines rock music as a space for the development of the local youth, fostering creativity, love for music, and independence from the

mainstream market, emphasizing the collective ethos of the festival and its historical roots in a social movement.

From their first appearance in Agustirock in 1991, when it was still a local rock band contest, Los Mojarras (The Crappies)[24] became a favorite in El Agustino.[25] Hernán Condori, known as Cachuca, is the lead singer, composer, and carrier of the name throughout the band's different configurations in the past twenty years. A conspicuous character in El Agustino, Cachuca used to make a living alternating among diverse occupations, from peddling iron refuse to cab-driving; he used to show up drunk in different public events, grabbing people's attention and applause after singing his own compositions together with *boleros*, *baladas*, and Peruvian *valses* with his firmly gripped acoustic guitar, a very theatrical style, and a powerful, well-controlled voice. In the late 1980s he started a cumbia andina band[26] with two electric guitars, a bass, and drums that soon gained a faithful audience in the district. On one occasion the band needed a replacement for their rhythmic guitar player for a gig, and asked Kike Larrea, rock musician and sociologist working at a local NGO, to help them out. Larrea suggested changing the arrangements to fit his rock style, and the resulting effect was very well accepted not just by the band, but by the audiences as well. The combination of cumbia andina and rock and roll gave Los Mojarras a very unique sound that people immediately recognized as "native" of El Agustino.[27]

But what people identified as theirs was not just the new band's sound. As an equivalent of naïve paintings, combining rough colorful strokes with detailed scenes and identifiable characters, Cachuca's lyrics were a celebration of life in El Agustino, expressing at once the hurt inflicted by poverty, discrimination, and exclusion, and the pride and joy of facing adversity collectively, with rooted cultural values and moral strength. Even though Cachuca's lyrics are written from the point of view of an observer, the imagery used, the Spanish syntax, grammar, and vocabulary, are those of an insider, offering a chronicle and a critical commentary of poverty, insecurity, and discrimination toward *provincianos* as a result of racism, social prejudice, and greed. His songs "*Sarita Colonia*" or "*Nostalgia provinciana*" are good examples.[28]

Quoting Steven Feld, Gilka Céspedes (1993) reminds us that as a communication process, music is socially and historically situated, and that "the social, the cultural and the political are embedded in the sonic" (1993: 54). In turn Semán, Vila, and Benedetti (2004) reflect on how, once the musicians establish an intense emotional connection with specific aspects of the audience's common experience, the audiences themselves play an active role in the process of interpreting what is happening on stage. The audiences are also producers of a genre, through their interaction with the musicians. In particular circumstances the mainstream media can pick up on this strong connection and attempt to reproduce it on a massive scale, and that is precisely what happened with the *rock cholo* of Los Mojarras.

In 1991 Kike Larrea was about to leave Peru for personal reasons and thought of producing a recording of the band's music. He contacted Micky Gonzalez, a well-known producer and musician, who was soon impressed by the power and originality of the band—so much so that he invited several rock musicians to the Mojarras' recording sessions. The tape—which had no commercial purpose and which later became their first album *Sarita Colonia*[29]—circulated informally in Lima, making Los Mojarras a cult band. That was the start of a chain of fortuitous events that took Los Mojarras from the feisty scenarios in El Agustino to a national central stage in a way that they had never imagined or aspired to.

There was a special item on a Sunday prime time television show devoted to them, as well as centerfolds in national newspapers and cultural supplements. Their quick rise of public attention led them to be invited by filmmaker Augusto Tamayo to compose the soundtrack for his film *Anda, Corre y Vuela*, after which came a long-term association with TV producer Michel Gómez, making Los Mojarras part of the soundscape of Lima for at least five years.

For several months during 1994, millions of Peruvians sat in front of their TV sets at 8:00 p.m. to watch *Los de arriba y los de abajo*, a successful Peruvian social *telenovela* combining, for the first time, narrative resources used by Brazilian soap operas since the 1980s and the everyday social commentary recently included in Venezuelan ones (Vivas 2008). *Los de arriba y los de abajo* included a bundle of romantic stories embedded in richly described social situations, with actors recruited from all social echelons and phenotypes, in real-life scenarios, and using carefully recreated registers of speech associated with distinctive social and cultural groups in Lima. The song "*Triciclo Peru*" by Los Mojarras was the opening theme, and it would not be too farfetched to say that almost anyone who had access to the media in those years could identify it from the first chords because it also became a hit on the radio.

Recurrent among the many comments and discussions that listeners to Los Mojarras on YouTube engage in are questions about how it was possible for them to get so much media attention and national appeal despite coming from El Agustino and playing a non-mainstream variety of rock and roll. Some commentators attempt an explanation saying that if Cachuca had been playing cumbia andina (also known as *chicha*) without fusing it with rock and roll, Los Mojarras would have never been successful outside of El Agustino because of the social stigma chicha music had.[30] Others say that it was the universal appeal of rock music that made him palatable to middle-class people.

But this idea does not correspond with the presence of Peruvian rock bands on the radio. After several years of minimal attention given to rock bands by the media during the 1970s, the remarkable nationwide surge of bands in the late 1980s and early 1990s still received little representation on

radio and television, with just a handful of white middle-class bands from Lima being played regularly. Marginal groups such as punk bands from the *Rock Subterráneo* movement were included only as an exoticism in the news, or to suggest links between them and terrorist groups.

The extraordinary success of Los Mojarras in the media can be better understood within the wider economic and political context. It occurred while neoliberal reforms were carried out by the controversial first regime of Alberto Fujimori, and while the Shining Path guerrillas were facing strong organized civilians' resistance in both urban and rural areas. A struggle for the representation of "the poor" or "the popular classes" was taking place between very diverse contenders. The vitality and strength of the informal economy and the development of home-grown survival strategies in the midst of the debt crisis that deeply affected most Latin American countries in the 1980s gave rise to disputed interpretations and discourses about the visible economic dynamism and political resources of the urban poor.

On one hand, they were praised because of their agency to transcend social and economic barriers. A post-socialist left-wing coalition comprising social activists, the radical Catholic Church, academics in the social sciences, and artists were keen to highlight the ability of the urban poor to act with autonomy from the state, supported by strong networks and organizations, bonded by moral values that were grounded in rich traditional cultures of solidarity, while at the same time regarded as a driving force in the modernization and democratization of the country.

On the other hand, the demise of the traditional political parties that allowed a newcomer like Fujimori to get into power made room for new voices among the elites who were aligning with "the silent revolution" of neoliberalism (Green 2003). In his book *El Otro Sendero* (1986), economist Hernando de Soto advocated legal reforms to "formalize" the informal economy in Peru, through the simplification of legal procedures for granting property titles in urban and rural areas in order to guarantee the growth of the credit market, or by eliminating the red tape that prevented informal entrepreneurs benefitting from the market economy. De Soto, an important advisor during Fujimori's first period (1990–1995), became an active contributor to recycled narratives about *provincianos* and the slum dwellers, as both the visible capitalist heroes of the economic crisis and key potential beneficiaries of the neoliberal reforms. These ideas also included a sometimes overt, sometimes subtle criticism toward the prejudiced and racist middle classes, with the argument that in a market economy anyone's money should have the same value, and that pervasive social exclusion can generate political violence and, therefore, economic instability.

Cachuca's lyrics accommodate both representations of the urban poor. He praises the neighborhoods formed by rural migrants. He describes how the strength of their organizations conquered the city, how hope for a better

future and love for their cultures allowed them to endure racism and the social class rift. The songs "*Nostalgia Provinciana*" and "*Sarita Colonia*" are clear examples of that, while "*Triciclo Peru*" fits well with Hernando de Soto's vision of a country where every individual is thriving to reach the summit of wealth and prosperity. On one hand, in "*Nostalgia Provinciana*" Cachuca refers to the Andean iron race, forged by marginality and discrimination, while in "*Sarita Colonia*" he praises the strength of the provincial dwellers of the shanty towns, carving the rocks in the hills of Lima with their mallets to make room for their houses, organized and united in spite of the cultural and religious diversity to achieve the common good. On the other hand, the chorus of "*Triciclo Peru*" has social ascendancy as the main theme, and hard work and persistence are presented as the guaranteed road for the poor to become rich.

I reason that this ambiguity granted Los Mojarras such privileged attention and popularity. It connected very well with the populist liberalism that Fernando Vivas (2008: 287–299) attributes to the narrative of *Los de arriba y los de abajo*, and to Hernando de Soto. According to Vivas, populist liberalism encouraged a drive for social ascendancy regardless of the routes or the costs involved in achieving it, and allowed—at least until 1996/97—for a wide opening to both representations and self-representations of urban popular culture in the media. Coincident with Vivas's assessment, the media interest in Los Mojarras dimmed around the second half of the 1990s, and only devoted occasional attention to the disorderly conduct of the band leader, cannibalizing the clichéd images of drunkenness and drug-addiction with a tinge of racism and contempt that were difficult to hide.[31]

By 1997 Cachuca had alienated himself from the original band lineup for different reasons. He kept the band name, playing with different members and a much lower profile for several years until 2005, when he staged his comeback walking out of a coffin to sing "*Catalepsia*," a song about a man who had been buried alive. Since then and with further changes in the lineup, Los Mojarras tour Peru playing the repertoire and arrangements from the first lineup, a few new songs, and covers of cumbias with rock arrangements.

Cachuca has described Los Mojarras as a band playing "*el rock de los pobres*" so that they, "the poor" could recognize and identify themselves in the form and content of their music, hearing about their lives and familiar places, with rhythms "evocative of their roots."[32] He has described himself as a chronicler of life in the margins of Lima, and his unwavering marginality seems to have granted him the affection and respect of audiences and other bands. Cachuca wrote "*Humareda*" and dedicated it to Victor Humareda, a celebrated painter from Puno (where Cachuca's parents are from) who lived in downtown Lima and frequented the brothels of La Parada, an ill-famed neighborhood and market that sat at the bottom of El Agustino, where Cachuca met him when he was a peddler. The lyrics don't reflect accurate facts about Humareda's life, but reiterate images about the

artist's entrenched marginality and loneliness that seem to make the song rather self-referential.

Different Peruvian filmmakers, such as Juan Manuel Calderón, worked with Mojarras on their videos, some of them attracting national and international recognition. There are over a hundred videos of Los Mojarras on YouTube, many of them showing very recent commentary entries from viewers not just from Peru. Comments are very telling of both the reception they had and still have, and the reasons for their appeal and currency among young people and rock cholo lovers. Songs from the first three albums, *Sarita Colonia* (1992), *Ruidos de la Ciudad* (1994), and *Opera Salvaje* (1996), remain the most remembered and commented on. One of them is listed among the best ten videos of Peruvian Rock bands by national mainstream newspaper *El Comercio* (Lima, June 6, 2010)[33] and today, in spite of the increasing popularity of hip hop, R&B, and reggaeton among the youth in the outskirts and inner-city barrios of Lima, new rock bands from Lima or from the provinces play covers of Los Mojarras in their gigs, and hundreds of YouTube viewers praise Cachuca, describing him as a marginal culture hero, or "living legend," as some enthusiasts like to call him. Bloggers posting downloadable mp3 files of Mojarras' first albums are deeply thanked and asked to post more; comments about arrangements or lyrics—with rare exceptions—seem forgiving of what some see as a progressive decline in the quality of the lyrics and the music of Cachuca and Los Mojarras, particularly in the past decade.

Drawing on Middleton and Frith, Pablo Vila (1996) reminds us of the relevance of discussions about music as the practice through which meaning grows in social and cultural significance, and YouTube provides a unique window to capture feelings and opinions that are expressed in a very economic and effective way, allowing us quick access to the tensions and mixed feelings that Los Mojarras produce in their audience.

Followers of Los Mojarras on YouTube have almost tripled in the two years since I started following them for my research. Viewers sometimes feel compelled to mention their age, and there are several who identify themselves as listeners under twenty at the moment of the post. A few detractors post mostly racist comments, while others contest the idea that Los Mojarras are a rock band. Positive entries mainly praise the band for the creation of a new genre and for bringing "the reality" of living on the margins to public light. Many comments reflect a deep emotional satisfaction and identification with Cachuca as a "man of the people,"[34] stressing that he shows the good values of people who are not well-regarded by society due to racism or social prejudice. Music critics have also acknowledged the band's popularity and attributed it to their originality and local color.[35]

Los Mojarras are, in sum, praised for being transgressors and for having crossed a border to make visible and appreciated by millions what was

marginal or invisible: the life of the urban poor in their “messy,” “dangerous,” and “ugly” neighborhoods, or in the areas that they “took over” in downtown Lima, transforming them into no-go areas for the middle classes. Los Mojarras vividly describe these areas in their vibrancy, laboriousness, diversity, joie de vivre, and solidarity, without hiding the violence and the different wounds inflicted by poverty and injustice on their streets. They have given their followers the feeling of having crossed a border without necessarily becoming like those at the other side of it.

La Sarita: *Soldados de la Energía Vital*

In 1997 three members of the first lineup of Los Mojarras left Cachuca to create a new band they chose to name La Sarita, the colloquial form used to talk about Sarita Colonia, the blessed of the poor. Martín Choy-Yin (lead guitar); Kelvi Pachas (keyboard) and Danny Tayco (drums) invited Julio Pérez (lead singer and composer) to be part of this project, and he introduced Renato Briones (bass) and Dante Oliveros (percussion) to the new band. From then onward there have been changes in the lineup. Pachas and Tayco left,[36] and were replaced by Paúl Paredes on the keyboard and Carlos Claro on the drums. Also, a whole scissor dance ensemble from Ayacucho joined the band in 2004: Marino Marcacuzco (Andean violín), Hernán Condori (Andean harp), Carlos Saire, and Julio Salaverry (dansaqs). The most recent member is flute player Demer Ramírez, from a Shipibo community in Pucallpa in the Amazon region.

Julio Pérez, a former student of agriculture engineering and trained musician of middle-class origin, is the voice of La Sarita, who explains the band’s intellectual and political project. After four albums and over a decade of creative work and extensive touring around the country, the band conveys well a very clear message: Peru is a different country than it used to be, “a place where everyone is invited, where no one should be left out.”[37]

La Sarita has an ambitious musical project. They call themselves “a rock band of the new Peru,” and have experimented with rhythms typically associated with the main three regions: the coast (including the traditional *vals criollo* and Afro Peruvian rhythms), the highlands, and the Amazon (including varieties of *cumbia andina* typical of both regions). Pioneering fusion rock bands such as El Polen (of clear hippie influences in the 1970s) or Del Pueblo del Barrio (1980s) used mainly acoustic instruments typical of Peruvian folk music from the Andes (*charango, quena, zampoñas*), and a limited range of folk rhythms, which were “rocked-up” with an electric bass, Afro Peruvian percussion, and sometimes a set of drums. La Sarita’s project is different. They keep regional genres clearly recognizable, but draped in an eclectic rock band vessel.

Compared to Uchpa and Mojarras, La Sarita has a clearer professional profile, but also a more defined political stance. From their beginnings they recorded with I.E.M.P.S.A., the strongest Peruvian recording label. They have had international exposure playing in four Latin American countries and also in Europe, and are still very active. Despite their prominence, however, they remain self-managed and have an independent relationship with the recording label, which has not interfered with the political stance of the band.

La Sarita's first album *Más Poder* (1999) came out in the midst of a strong opposition movement against President Alberto Fujimori that included nationwide protests and well-organized union strikes. It was Fujimori's second term and he was ruling the country with dictatorial control over all state powers, surrounded by several major corruption scandals. President Fujimori was also running illegally for reelection (Poole and Renique 2000). Most songs on the album targeted salient political and moral issues that reflected the atmosphere of anger and rejection toward the regime, and shared the aesthetics and irreverent spirit of a protest movement led by *Colectivo Sociedad Civil*, formed by well-known artists based in Lima, who played a crucial role in curtailing the legitimacy of the regime. Several symbolic forms of protest designed by this group served to channel the criticism and discontent toward the political group in power (Vich 2004, Buntix 2004).

The movement included the *lava la bandera* (wash the flag) campaign, where groups of people gathered with plastic washbowls, water, and bars of soap (by chance branded "Bolivar" and "San Martin") to wash the national flag, and then put the clean flags on display to dry in front of important public buildings. They also organized "interventions," known as *escraches* in Argentina,[38] on the houses of corrupt officials, throwing garbage bags—filled with old sheets of newspaper crumpled up to make them bulky and light—with their faces printed on the outside. Another initiative was to create a Wall of Shame (*el muro de la vergüenza*), a big board displayed on a main plaza where passersby could write their opinion under the photos of corrupt public figures. These and other forms of protest were taken up enthusiastically by other artists and university students. Soon after, however, they attracted the general public, and were replicated in other cities where people were eager to express their rejection of the regime, as well as their anger and shame about what was going on in the country.

La Sarita connected very well with the aesthetics, the language, and the spirit of this movement. Perez's lyrics in *Más Poder* are sketchy, with simple images and rough edges, but on the whole, they are effective in exploring feelings toward social, moral, and political issues. The band has further worked the visual and dramatic effects of their songs by taking up elements typical of the independent theater movement from Peru, particularly those put together by Yuyachkani, an important theater collective from the 1970s generation

of Latin American groups of *Teatro Popular*, who are still active and influential in the alternative cultural scene in Peru. Yuyachkani's productions developed under the influence of the political theater aesthetics of Bertolt Brecht; they also kept very attentive ears and eyes to the performance aesthetics of Andean culture: the dramatic dances, music, masks, and costumes of its fiestas that Yuyachkani combined well with the anthropological approach to theater of Augusto Boal and Eugenio Barba (Bell, 1999). Yuyachkani's political activism supporting working-class and peasants' struggles with their performances in the 1970s and 1980s helped them understand—and use in their work—the significance of masks and color in the dramaturgy involved in folk celebrations and traditional dances; hence they developed a characteristic style that has left an indelible mark on many Peruvian actors and performing groups, including La Sarita.

Most songs by La Sarita tell a story, and members of the band sometimes use masks, colorful garments, and other visual props to support the lyrics. When performing the song "*Mas Poder*," Julio Perez dons a mask, and uses his voice in a theatrical fashion to impersonate a power-crazed man. The song is a timeless criticism of greed and power, but together with the contextual references of other songs in the album, it was very timely and in tune with the political moment of anger and criticism toward the Fujimori regime.

The second album is less visceral, showing a more elaborate musical project with the participation of many guest musicians.[39] Martin Choy, lead guitarist and less visible intellectual leader of the band, states that *Danza la Raza* (2003) reflects the band's desire to tell stories of everyday people in the streets of Lima (Choy 2007) and to give their audience a glimpse into what goes on in their lives beyond the common stereotypes about them.[40] They also engage with the epic narrative of the occupation of Lima by immigrants from rural areas and indigenous cultures, openly revealing their fascination for them.[41] After *Danza la Raza*, La Sarita toured extensively in Peru and attended invitations abroad, while creating the repertoire for the third album, *Mamacha Simona* (2009), where they embrace indigenous spirituality as an integral part of their identity.[42] Mamacha Simona is a mountain/female deity in Cusco. La Sarita have adopted her as their spiritual protector. The scissors dance and other expressions of Chanka music constitute an important part of La Sarita's repertoire. Julio Perez has taken up Quechua lessons to include it in some of the songs, and has also learnt moves for scissor dancing. About their last release, *Identidad*, Perez said it has "more of the same, but better."[43]

La Sarita's commitment to making a living as musicians, keeping their independence from the mainstream market, and learning more about the country has taken them to travel Peru's length and breadth, playing for students, neighborhood associations, and rock festivals, as well as middle-class

pubs, local theaters, and stadiums. Thus, even if they are not featured in mainstream media, they are, nevertheless, well known.

In their terms, La Sarita is "a group of first- and second-generation migrants, singing their own stories. We use music as a beautiful pretext to keep our traditions alive, recuperating our memory and redefining our identity." They also say, "We are the image of an emerging new face, of a new singing voice. We are the rock of the new Peru."[44] My deep reservations toward any kind of ventriloquism notwithstanding, La Sarita's stance is stimulating because they richly articulate a wide array of discourses, forging the transformation of Peruvian society in tune with global anti-racist, environmentalist, pacifist, and anti-capitalist movements, but in a well-nurtured relationship with their followers in Peru and Latin America.

Staging the New Peru

José María Arguedas's phrase celebrating his bicultural/bilingual identity used as epigraph to this chapter comes from an almost iconic speech delivered in 1968, where he tried to explain his literary project in personal, cultural, and political terms.[45] Freddy Ortiz used it as his final words in an interview with Apasanca Rock, an online rock magazine from Apurimac. Not necessarily corresponding with the contents of Arguedas's novel *Todas las Sangres*, this phrase has also become a ubiquitous metaphor to evoke the ideal representation of Peru as a harmonic pluri-cultural society. During an interview for a television show, after a comparison the interviewer made between La Sarita and Arguedas's attributed views, Julio Perez expressed his desire to achieve "the same as Arguedas, but in music."[46] I have not found explicit comments about Arguedas in interviews to Cachuca, but his view of the presence of *provincianos* in Lima as a heroic deed, and the celebration of the preservation of their culture once in the cities, shares the tone Arguedas used for the same topics in his poems and novels. In his poem *A nuestro padre creador Tupac Amaru*, Arguedas says:

> Al inmenso pueblo de los señores hemos llegado y lo estamos removiendo. Con nuestro corazón lo alcanzamos, lo penetramos; con nuestro regocijo no extinguido, con la relampagueante alegría del hombre sufriente (...) con nuestros himnos antiguos y nuevos, los estamos envolviendo. (Arguedas 1983)

Scholarly debate about the complexity of Arguedas's work is intense and ongoing (Rama 1975, Rowe 1979, Lienhard 1981, Rochabrun 2000, Moore 2003, Pinilla 1994, Portugal 2007, De la Cadena 2007), but what is relevant here is to recognize the social function of Arguedas as an author (Foucault 1977) when his name is used to legitimize feelings and aspirations that

challenge hegemonic ideas fostering cultural homogenization, which have been, in turn, instrumental in justifying racism and social discrimination. Arguedas has become an iconic cultural hero, who through his own suicide embodied the drama of being a Peruvian individual who would not conform to the hegemonic social and cultural boundaries, reinforced to reproduce a fragmented society, based on the oppression and exclusion of the indigenous population.

Regardless of how well any of the singers or band members knows Arguedas's literary or anthropological work, the repetition and circulation of some of his ideas, or what is said about his ideas and personal drama, have certainly connected with the experience and projects of these bands in a remarkable and inspiring fashion.

Angel Rama (1978) commented that Arguedas was mainly concerned with establishing the place of indigenous cultures in contemporary Peruvian society as valuable contributors to a national culture, which could be vigorous, free, and modern. In the production of Los Mojarras and La Sarita, there is a constant tension between the subtle or open denunciation of different forms of oppression, accompanied by the celebration of the vitality of "the oppressed," or "the glinting joy of the miserable" as Arguedas put it, overcoming sympathetic or purely victimizing and homogenizing images of the miserable and "pure" *indios*. Instead, both bands and also Uchpa celebrate the value, richness, playfulness, and transgressive poetics of indigenous urban and rural cultures, both in their songs and live performances, from a clearly non-indigenous identity.

Critics have identified in Arguedas an urge to "set the record straight," providing descriptions or representations of indigenous and mestizo Peruvians that would allow for a nuanced view of the country. On one hand, he was against ideas about an assimilationist development of indigenous cultures, proposing instead the route of liberation that would be possible only with due respect for their identities and ways of managing their cultural manifestations, while pursuing their own paths to modernization, which included the free and creative adaptations and incorporations of other cultures in a productive relationship with their own. On the other hand, he was concerned about the danger of rigid dualistic interpretations from the traditional left, which implicitly identified the reproduction of oppression with the reproduction of indigenous cultures. Arguedas thought that he could achieve a more accurate understanding and description of the indigenous and mestizo worlds and dilemmas because of his own biography, and he sought to promote that knowledge and understanding in his different areas of work.[47]

I contend that ideas about Arguedas's work (not always informed by close readings) have contributed to important changes concerning racial relations and the politics of ethnic identification in Peru. These changes in turn have

found an expression in the self-representations of gendered racial and social identities that challenge those that were instrumental to the reproduction of racial and social fragmentation and domination in Peruvian society for most of the last century.

The debates Arguedas started, together with the development of a transnational indigenous movement and the emergence of discourses fostering a dialogic relationship between different cultures, have opened the path for discourses and practices that allow groups like Uchpa, Mojarras, or La Sarita to address these controversial issues with much more freedom and room for creativity. All three bands hold a pedagogical anti-hegemonic stance about how to relate with indigenous cultures without belonging to one of them. This involves displaying the indigenous elements of their mestizo identities with pride and joy, without concealing them, but also performing processes of hybridity that go in "the opposite direction" as they are supposed to happen. Following hegemonic ideas about mestizaje in Peru, change is supposed to happen when indigenous individuals or cultures voluntarily whiten or westernize, but not the other way around. The singers studied here subvert this mandate. Freddy composes a hybrid attire including elements of indigenous dances and rituals; all members of La Sarita entrust their soul to Mamacha Simona; Julio Perez learns some Quechua and a few steps of the scissors dance. At the same time, the waqra phuku players, as well as the violin players and the dansaq, become part of the bands, sharing the stage, and integrating their music into the rock and roll pieces, without changing what they do, keeping their individuality and their traditional attires.

The inclusion of the scissor dance and music on stage in Uchpa and La Sarita performances is a very powerful symbol that has gained centrality in their concerts. Martin Lienhard (1981) has studied the significance of the presence of the dansaq in Arguedas's narrative, stating that they appear as "messengers of a different text," a theatrical devise to represent the continuity of the indigenous religion in contemporary Peru (1981: 130–134). Apart from this spiritual connection, I think that the choice of including dansaqs and the scissor dance ensemble in both bands appears as a vehicle to represent an indigenous masculinity that is defiant, wise, magic, and physically and spiritually strong, but also "with an attitude and certain values," which is one of the main unifying definitions of rock and roll.

Just as elsewhere, in Peru rock bands are very diverse and eclectic in the styles they choose to play. The genre is thus defined more by an attitude than by the formal characteristics of the music they play. All three bands have elaborate answers when the issue of authenticity is raised. They see it as grounded in their own experience and not on rigid traditional music forms. Their authority to do what they do is based on their own biographies, and the stories they want to tell. Their music is eclectic; their songs include sampling from old songs, and a wide diversity of genres to serve the purpose of what

they want to communicate. It is the ownership of their band projects that makes them authentic.

Uchpa, Mojarras, and La Sarita were part of a rock and roll grassroots movement in Peru in the 1990s that involved hundreds of local rock bands in Lima and different cities in the country. In fact, Pedro Cornejo (2002) has identified more than three hundred bands performing in Lima and other provincial cities between 1991 and 1994. Most of these bands did not aspire to "make it" in the recording industry, as long as they could perform before an audience. Some of them occasionally recorded their best songs for their own pleasure and that of their closest followers, taking pride in their marginality and DYI punk style, as was the case elsewhere in Latin America and the world (Cornejo 2002, Semán et al. 2004, Torres 2009). It was a movement that went beyond the urban westernized lower or upper middle classes that rock and roll is normally associated with in Peru. These three bands, for example, belong to the social and cultural contexts that have been dealt with in music studies, as associated to either Cumbia Andina (Lloréns 1983, Turino 1990) or new forms of Andean music (Tucker 2009), but not with rock and roll.

The different ways in which Uchpa, Mojarras, and La Sarita revisit the difficult relationship with indigenous cultures in Peru—pervasively smudged by the "coloniality of power" (Quijano 2000)—are embodiments of the "liberating aspirations" acknowledged by Laclau and Mouffe (1987). Through the explicit contents of their lyrics, the visual displays of their performances, or the discourses about their practice, these bands have taken a pedagogical anti-hegemonic stance to contribute to the imagination of how living in a non-racist country is possible. They use the stage and their music as a space to express and elaborate, in their own terms, aspects of contemporary global dissident youth cultures such as claims for social justice, anti-racism, environmentalism, and the celebration of cultural diversity, referring them to Peruvian society. In such dialogue, they use the legacy of José María Arguedas to explore a renovated relationship of non-indigenous Peruvians with indigenous cultures. Without claiming an indigenous identity, they openly confront the feelings of shame and awkwardness imposed by the racist post-colonial order on those who wanted to preserve an indigenous identity, or, as mestizos, were prepared to acknowledge their indigenous heritage.

Notes

1. Thanks to Kike Larrea, Carmen Ilizarbe, Sarah Bennison, Fernando Gonzalez-Velarde, and Rosaleen Howard for their comments and suggestions.

2. Peru has one of the highest rates of Internet access in the world for all economic groups thanks to the flourishing business of *Cabinas de Internet*; 87 percent of low-income Internet users go to *Cabinas públicas*, as opposed to a still high 75 percent

of middle-income users and 53 percent of users living or interviewed in high-income districts, http://www.osiptel.gob.pe.

3. In the introduction to his book, Matos Mar refers to: "[T]he spontaneous mobilization of the popular sectors who, questioning the State's authority and resourcing to multiple strategies and parallel mechanisms, are altering the rules of the game and changing the face of Peru. The ongoing surge alters the society, culture and politics in the country, incessantly creating new conducts, values, attitudes, norms, beliefs and lifestyles, that translate in multiple and varied forms of social, economic and educational organizations, representing one of the major changes in all our history" (Matos 1984: 17, my translation).

4. Ayacucho is one of Peru's poorest departments, 2,577 meters above sea level and 543 kilometers southeast of Lima.

5. Orin Starn (1998) and Ludwig Huber (2002) have documented the presence of global trends in young people's cultural consumption in Ayacucho.

6. I do not speak Quechua, but I grew up exposed to it enough to manage some vocabulary and limited contextual understanding of conversations (and lyrics).

7. A venue owned by theater company Grupo Yuyachkani, to which I will refer later.

8. This cultural region comprises parts of Ayacucho, Huancavelica, Junin, and Apurimac, where Quechua is spoken by more than half of the population and where, on average, poverty affects more than 65 percent of people.

9. The waqra phuku (literally blow horn) is a wind instrument made of bull horns tied in a spiral shape with dried goat skin or intestines.

10. *Dansaq* is a performer of the scissor dance, a traditional male ritual competition of physical strength and spiritual superiority, now widespread as a folkloric spectacle representative of the Chanka region.

11. Peru has a long tradition of work and independent efforts from different education institutions and NGOs promoting the use of indigenous languages in education (Ames 1999).

12. The literature about Peruvian racism has grown enormously in the past two decades, particularly in Peru. Two important studies in English are Poole 1997 and de la Cadena 2000.

13. YouTube is also a good place to occasionally read this kind of intolerant reaction. Together with celebratory comments there are also many insulting ones that are quickly criticized, showing how sensitive these issues are. For a study of the linguistic ideologies in the Andes and the experiences of bilingual Quechua speakers, see Howard 2007.

14. See, for example, Chachaschay, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TWUo 73eVdg and Corazón Contento, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5bUWAOUGHo.

15. *Qarawy*: An indigenous type of lament song common in the Chanka region, usually sung by women.

16. Access to video at http://tu.tv/videos/uchpa-pitaqmi-kanki.

17. Their most popular song "*Demoler la estación del tren*" has been covered by both Café Tacuba and Maldita Vecindad y Los Hijos del Quinto Patio from Mexico. The film Saicomania (2010) tells the story of this pre-punk band in Peru.

18. Personal communication with Juan Zevallos Aguilar, May 2012.

19. In 1987 Peruvian linguist Juan Carlos Godenzzi edited an influential volume of *Allpanchis* (1987) compiling more than twenty-five texts authored by influential sociolinguists discussing the relationship among language, power, and nation in the Andean world. This continues to be a large area of scholarship.

20. Conversation with girls, fieldwork notes Oct. 1999.

21. Between 1981 and 1983 I was a youth worker at *Servicios Educativos El Agustino* (SEA), a multiple-service center run by the parish Virgen de Nazareth.

22. The whole 2009 version of the festival can be seen here: http://www.agustirock.com/.

23. A frequent act at Agustirock is Father Chiqui, a Spanish Jesuit and rock singer (with a pierced ear and leather string bracelet) who has successfully promoted an organization of young ex-gang members called Martin Luther King, which works in environmental projects with the municipality.

24. Mojarras are small fish with no commercial value that fishermen either discard or give out to people who cannot afford to buy fish at the docks.

25. No lyrics of Los Mojarras will be quoted because Hernán Condori refused to give permission to the publishers. He argued that they are already available online for everybody to read.

26. Music associated with the second generation of migrants from the highlands, living in the shanty towns of Lima (Lloréns 1983, Turino 1990).

27. Interview with Kike Larrea, May 2010.

28. Nostalgia provinciana, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVwKs05flbo; Sarita Colonia, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2H2ZTM99Gw.

29. Sarita Colonia is an unofficial saint worshiped in Peru by the poor and marginal. The cult started in the 1940s after Sarita's death in Callao (Ortiz Rescaniere 1990).

30. This comment is now an anachronism, but in the 1980s, Chicha or cumbia andina was considered a marginal music genre, deeply disliked by the urban middle classes. Now it is played by middle-class groups and danced to in mainstream night clubs.

31. Some songs by Los Mojarras that were less politically ambiguous or openly controversial were simply never aired on the radio or television. For example, "*Cayara*," a theme by Cachuca, is named after a town where a massacre of peasants took place by the hands of the armed forces in 1988.

32. Interview with Cachuca on *Zona 103,* aired in Radio Nacional on July 25, 2008.

33. The video shows well-known soap opera and theater actors for whose work Los Mojarras had contributed with their music, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5yyYTZ-gfM.

34. Some share in the fact that they had a few drinks with him at his favorite bar and comment on how approachable he was, and how good he made them feel. Others rejoice in sharing anecdotes of having seen him drunk and disorderly, a "true transgressor."

35. See, for example, "El Rock Mestizo de los Mojarras," by Pedro Cornejo, El Comercio, June 19, 1992.

36. Dani Tayco is now the percussionist of a band very similar to La Sarita and Mojarras, called Nacion Combi.

37. Information about band members and basic chronology of the band comes from their website.

38. "The escrache is a form of collective action that appears in Argentina at the end of the 20th century. The word comes from lunfardo, slang from Buenos Aires city, and means to uncover in public" (Benegas 2004).

39. Teresa Ralli, legendary actress from Yuyachkani, sings the chorus in Entre Dios y el Diablo, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3p-MKEmXlJI&feature=youtube_gdata.

40. Guachiman (watchman), http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHFRvI8aEYs.

41. Fragments for "*Canto Enfermo*": A pesar / de la adversidad su gran ingenio les hizo prosperar /fortaleza y sabiduría /Pachamama no murió /fe que guarda hasta hoy día Despojados, expulsados/ dejaron la tierra de sus antepasadosmigración, violencia oficial/ abuso y desprecio que aun no ha cesado./Partieron, llegaron y conquistaron la tierra que dios/ nunca les prometió,/sedujeron, al arenal y/ forjaron así una nueva nación.

42. Lyrics of "*Mamacha Simona*":

Subo a tus cumbres y siento que la vida está más cerca
hay una verdad escondida en mi cabeza
siento el camino que el destino me ha trazado
es como el camino que mi ancestro ha levantado
claro y fuerte, hecho de piedra caliente
caliente como el alma de mi gente
pueblo andino, antiguo y milenario
que nunca ha olvidado que la tierra lo ha creado.
Porque esta piedra está viva
late un corazón bajo este lomo plateado
siento el intenso llamado interno, tu voz de viento he escuchado,
por eso Mamacha Simona, patrona protectora danos tu bendición
danos la fuerza, el temple y coraje
para poder seguir con nuestra función.
[. . .]/Por eso debemos luchar, pelear,/ser soldados de la energía vital tal /
como lo enseña el hombre andin/odel cual todo esto hemos aprendido.

43. Link to reel for last CD Identidad: http://ricardomarapi.blogspot.co.uk/2011_01_01_archive.html.

44. www.lasaritaperu.com.

45. This is one of the many online sites where it can be found:
http://servindi.org/actualidad/3252.

46. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1geY1iYufGY&feature=player_embedded.

47. This granted him public criticism from his contemporaries that has been widely discussed (Rochabrum 1992, Pinilla 1994, Portugal 2007).

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7

Political Activists, Playboys, and Hippies

MUSICAL MOVEMENTS AND SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS OF BRAZILIAN YOUTH IN THE 1960S

Marcos Napolitano

On September 15, 1968, Caetano Veloso took to the stage at the Theatre of the Catholic University of São Paulo (TUCA) and before an audience who was revolted by what they saw and heard on stage, he gave a historic speech,[1] which started with him screaming a phrase symptomatic of the debate on youth identity in those turbulent years:

> "*But is this the youth that says that it wants to take power*?"

Veloso's ironic tone of disappointment at the audience—almost wholly composed of young politicized leftist students—booing his song "*É proibido proibir*" (It's forbidden to forbid) is indicative of the cultural processes in Brazil in the 1960s, a critical moment for the "youth question." These tensions focused on two fundamental issues: (1) the dispute over the identities of young people who were at the epicenter of cultural and political struggles, and (2) the different political agendas of the Brazilian student movement at the time, in relation to their peers in Europe and the United States.

Caetano Veloso provided a new paradigm for young people geared toward a broader and more critical cultural and behavioral approach, synthesized by the countercultural[2] direction of the Tropicalism movement (Dunn 2009). The student audience with whom Veloso clashed was symbolized by politicized youths who fought against a more immediate and concrete enemy: the military regime that had taken power in March 1964, under the aegis of the struggle against communism, and guided by the pursuit of economic development without concerns for democratization or social justice. In this confrontation, categories such as "alienation" and "political engagement" gained new meanings and were mobilized as sociocultural values by those waging the cultural struggles of the period. For the Tropicalists, leftist

youth was morally and aesthetically conservative, and it is in this sense that during his speech Veloso compared them with the truculent political right, who fought the most provocative artistic vanguard. For young politicized leftists, on the other hand, the countercultural Tropicalist supporters were "alienated" and depoliticized because they prioritized "petty bourgeois" issues such as "free love," drugs, and personal freedom, among others, rather than political revolution. Consequently, they were, albeit involuntarily, at the service of the right-wing forces in power.

The leftist audience at TUCA wanted a more direct message against the Brazilian dictatorship that had been established in 1964, as well as a more "serious" singer than Veloso, who interpreted his song wearing strange plastic clothes, accompanied by an American hippie (Johnny Dandurand) he had met just prior—things never before seen at Brazilian song festivals. While Veloso practically screamed his speech, Os Mutantes, a contemporary Brazilian rock group, played their instruments with their backs to the audience. The scene was set for a performance that broke with its symbolic boundaries, becoming a real conflict about youth and its political role in Brazil in the 1960s. Veloso was almost physically assaulted while leaving the event.

Ending his speech, Caetano remarked to the audience: "If you were in power politically, as you are aesthetically, then we'd be done for," a comment very close in meaning to the famous slogan written on Parisian walls in 1968—"Run, comrade, the old world wants to catch you." The "comrades" in that TUCA audience were more concerned about strictly political struggle against the authoritarian political regime and were not particularly sensitive to broader cultural and behavioral criticism, which was always predicted to take place at some unspecified date "after the revolution."

At the very same song festival in 1968, Geraldo Vandré, a politically committed singer more in the traditionalist line, was cheered by the audience while performing his revolutionary anthem "*Caminhando*" (Walking), regarded by the press as the "Brazilian Marseillaise." Ironically, however, after the 5th Institutional Act, which represented a harder line by the military regime and gave it the means to repress civil society as a whole, the two strands of the Brazilian "revolution"—the behavioral and the strictly political—became targets for repression. Veloso and fellow composer/musician Gilberto Gil were imprisoned for three months, then left for exile, and Geraldo Vandré had to flee the country, inaugurating a lengthy period of absence in several nations, while his most famous song was banned by the censors until 1979.

These events are symptomatic of the struggle regarding the redefinition of what it meant to be young in Brazil in 1968, and they represent the pinnacle of a tension that had started earlier, historically speaking. According to Irene Cardoso, 1968 subsequently came to be seen as something imaginary and historically mythologized—fixed as a heroic youth memory of the 1960s.

The process of the myth of the 1960s and its generation was built over time, diluting the complexity, heterogeneity, conflicts, inheritances, and historical context of the movements. The construction of the myth obscures the traces of the experiences of rebellion and turns what were plurality and a movement of de-identification into identity. Thus, the identity of the generation of the 1960s ("the generation of '68") is constructed—a caricature, whose traces express a simplification of what came to be assimilated and standardized (Cardoso 2005: 103).

The cultural and political struggles involving the redefinition of the social place of Brazilian youth in the 1960s mobilized identities and various aesthetic and ideological perspectives. This historical process reveals how the experience of "conservative modernization" endorsed by the military regime—which resulted in a mixture of advanced capitalism and traditional values—was echoed in youth experiences. Furthermore, this somewhat diffuse sociological category[3] gained greater kudos from the prestige surrounding being young in the 1960s, exploited by the media and advertising, and became a symbol of struggle against traditional structures and behavioral models. According to Rocha and Portugal (2008: 4):

> The passage of the decades from the 1960s to the 1970s is a paradigmatic moment in the relationship between youth cultures and cultures of consumption. It was a social and analytical epiphany that ushered in the inauguration of a relevant social discourse, in which practices, habits, and material and symbolic consumer goods become crucial elements in the construction of a narrative and the visualization of what would be a way of being young in Brazil.

Much of the politicized youth's hopes of rebuilding the country under different socioeconomic and political policies were thwarted by the military coup of 1964, which buried the brief reformist experiment of the João Goulart government that had widely mobilized politically active young people. In the four years following the coup, Brazilian cultural life was marked by clashes and projects that had as their axis a redefinition of youth and the search for hegemony by one subgroup over another—a struggle that was not only appropriated but also articulated by the cultural industry (and the music industry in particular). In this process, at least three paradigms of "being young" stood out: the young politicized leftist, young people identified as teenagers, and young people connected with the values of the counterculture and rebellious behavior. According to Helena Abramo (1997: 31):

> During the 1960s and part of the 1970s, the problem appeared to be that of an entire generation of young people threatening the social order, in political, cultural and moral ways, by an attitude of criticism of the established order and by triggering concrete acts in search of

> transformation: student movements and opposition to authoritarian regimes, against technocracy and all forms of domination, peace movements, the propositions of the counterculture, the hippie movement (. . .). In Brazil, it is at this particular moment that the youth issue gains greater visibility, exactly through the engagement of middle-class, high school and university-educated young people in the fight against the authoritarian regime, through the mobilization of student organizations and the engagement of the political left, but also by cultural movements that questioned standards of sexual and moral behavior and in relation to property and consumption. It is worth remembering that this fear generated violent responses in defense of this order: young people were persecuted by repressive means, both because of their behavior (drug use, mode of dress, etc.) and also because of their ideas and political actions.

These various identity matrices of being young in Brazil reveal how a portion of society, aged roughly between fifteen and twenty-six,[4] related itself to patterns of identity constructed by the appropriation of internationalized models from Europe and the United States and adapted them to Brazilian economic and sociocultural structures, in a violent process of conservative modernization. In a sense, they are matrices that still inform large sectors of today's youth, having foreshadowed a highly segmented youth culture—already created in the 1950s—that blended with the emergence of rock and roll. According to Richard Peterson, in the late 1950s, the US music market was conceived as a "mosaic of segments" of defined tastes: "Rather than seeking a neutral sound that would not shock anyone, creative programmers started to look out for songs that could confront, shock, or bore many people, but they would receive the passionate devotion of a specific audience" (Peterson 1991: 33).

These diverse forms of being young in Brazil occurred at a historical moment in which there was still a certain hegemony of conservative, oligarchic, and patriarchal values, against which, each in its own way, all three trends were opposed and helped to weaken. I will now consider the three major young Brazilian "tribes" of the 1960s in more detail, as well as their impact on the rich music scene of the era.

MPB and the Young Politicized Leftist

The period from 1959 to 1966 featured a process that was fundamental to the cultural assertion of modern Brazilian popular music, created and consumed mainly by young students and recognized as a cultural product by music critics and intellectuals. This process meant that the ruptures and innovations of bossa nova, a musical style largely created and influenced by university students, were filtered and incorporated into a politicized perspective. This

process gave rise to the origin of MPB—Brazilian Popular Music—whose meaning should be understood more as a sociocultural institution rather than merely a musical genre (Napolitano 2001). MPB was, simultaneously, a tributary of tradition— in the way that it upgraded traditional genres (samba, march, *baião*), but also of modernity, as it claimed for itself the contributions of bossa nova (stripped-down interpretation, more diverse and richer harmonies, a dialogue with jazz, lyrics with a high poetic-literary content).

When bossa nova emerged around 1959 it attracted the attention of the music industry and the elite's youth, as evidenced by the early shows, almost all linked to the cultural life of the universities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The breakthrough year, marked by João Gilberto's LP, *Chega de Saudade* (Napolitano 2000), also coincided with the arrival of rock music on the Brazilian musical scene, announcing the future division of the musical market for young people between MPB and Jovem Guarda (Young Guard), as we shall see.

The interests of the music industry, especially those of the Odeon and Philips labels in young bossa nova musicians, had a very clear goal: the targeting of the booming music market aimed at young people, which was growing rapidly along with the urban and industrial development of the country. It should be remembered that in the late 1950s, Brazil seemed to finally enter the modern world, under President Juscelino Kubitschek and his audacious Target Plan (*Plano de Metas*), which demarcated a new phase for Brazilian capitalism, in a bold and contradictory relationship between national-developmentalist industrialization and integration into global capitalism. By opening up space for modern and sophisticated songs, which were marked by a radical renewal of samba, both musically and poetically, record companies sought to consolidate and diversify their position in a market where rock was forcefully making its mark. In this field, the opening of the *Clube do Rock* in Rio de Janeiro and the commercial success of Celly Campello, Brazil's first rock star, were important milestones. Thus, two behavioral paradigms of being young in Brazil were consolidated, the hedonist-deviant (rock) and the hedonist-contemplative (bossa nova).

Despite its initial contemplative and subjectivist approach, bossa nova eventually formed the basis for the creation of a form of popular music that was both modern and politically engaged at the same time, which in 1965 became known as modern MPB (Treece 1997). Its first stars were singers and composers embodying the ideal of the young artist who was politically engaged, nationalist, and leftist: Carlos Lyra, Nara Leão, Edu Lobo. For these artists, the affirmation of a group identity passed, necessarily, into an affirmation of two other identities: the national and the popular, in the mold cast by the Center for Popular Culture of the National Union of Students (CPC) from 1961 onward. From this perspective, young people cast themselves in the role of idealized mouthpiece for the nation-people in

the struggle for the political reforms proposed by President João Goulart (1961–1964) and in the fight against imperialism. The great contradiction was that most of these young people came from the sociocultural elites, whose cosmopolitan and modern backgrounds were not always compatible with the simplistic imitation of elements drawn from popular culture, proposed in the CPC Manifesto, written in 1962, and considered one of the basic documents in the foundation of the ethos of politically engaged Brazilian art (Garcia 2007). In the case of music, the presence of jazz as a central influence in this project is also indicative of the asymmetries between the nationalist and folkloric intentions of the young and their compositional techniques and aesthetic influences. Luckily, for the quality of the musical works that were forthcoming, they went beyond the ideological restrictions proposed by the nationalist ideologues of the left, reflecting diverse influences and plural aesthetic perspectives, albeit under the influence of political engagement. Even when their lyrics criticized jazz, which was supposedly leading samba away from its original Brazilianness, the songs reaffirmed the jazz style in their musical structure. The most famous case of this is Carlos Lyra's song "*Influência do Jazz*" (Influence of Jazz), in which the tension between the meaning of the lyrics (critical of jazz) and the song's musical structure (affiliated to jazz) is clear.

The crowning moment for this form of politically engaged music with roots in bossa nova occurred during the circuit of shows organized by various student bodies in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro between 1964 and 1965, such as those staged in the Paramount Theatre in São Paulo. This tour coincided with the implementation of the authoritarian regime in Brazil, and gradually gained a sense of cultural resistance, embodied in a youthful student ethos and pathos. Many of these young people made up the studio audiences of televised song festivals, which were designed for a massive and diverse audience and became a cultural (and financial) sensation from 1965 onward (Homem De Mello 2003). These festivals, especially those organized by TV Record in São Paulo, were the setting for the crowning moment of MPB, although there was also room for other types of songs.

The aesthetic-ideological project represented by MPB dreamt of an art that was nationalist and cosmopolitan, politicized and intimate, communicative and expressive, elements seen as dichotomous and self-exclusionary by some segments of the cultural policy of the more orthodox political left. In this process, a self-image of young, politically engaged Brazilians was created that would eventually be shaken by Tropicalism. In the political context of the late 1960s, this concept of being young gained even more social and political relevance, as it was a kind of critical consciousness of the middle class, who in 1964 had supported the military coup. The large student demonstrations between 1966 and 1968 against the military regime were the moment of public affirmation of a politicized form of

being young, whose developments would lead to armed struggle, martyrdom in military dungeons, and, for some, exile during the 1970s. For this segment of youth, the soundtrack of the revolution was MPB, particularly the song "Walking" by Geraldo Vandré. The song's lyrics criticized young people who believed that flowers could overcome cannons and reaffirmed Brazilian youth as combatant and similar to guerrilla fighters—"we are all soldiers, armed or not"—as well as the revolutionary voluntarism of "make the moment and don't just wait for it to happen." For this politicized sector of youth, the idealized young person should have "loves in the mind" and "history in the hand," avoiding subjective issues that might divert their revolutionary energy.

However, Brazilian youth of the 1960s, often remembered for this paradigm of political activism, was also shaped by other representations and models, more associated with hedonism and deviance, either in the form of the moderate Jovem Guarda or the radical Tropicalism.

Jovem Guarda: Youth under the Banner of Conservative Modernization

From the perspective of influential leftist opinion-makers, the Jovem Guarda movement was related to the effects of cultural defeatism and political alienation among young people and, in this sense, was seen as the spearhead of the Brazilian military in the cultural (and political) war that Brazil was undergoing in the 1960s.

The term Jovem Guarda itself is derived from a Sunday TV music program called *Jovem Guarda*, which went on air in September 1965, fronted by Roberto Carlos, Wanderléia, and Erasmo Carlos. All three were the epitome of young, modern, urban Brazilians, in tune with international trends of consumption, language, and sociability. The program was televised on Sunday at 5:00 p.m. on the TV Record channel, the same station that capitalized on the expansion of the Brazilian music market by broadcasting musical programs and song festivals that had a huge impact on the audiences of the time.

Taking advantage of the elements of subculture that found their origins in rock music, the program launched the new rhythm of youth: *Iêiêiê* (a corruption of The Beatles' lyric "Yeah, Yeah, Yeah"). Aesthetically closer to early 1960s' American pop ballads than the music of The Beatles, *Iêiêiê* alternated songs with traditional romantic themes with more aggressive themes, mixing elements of the teenage world and "wayward youth": cult cars and clothes, long hair, gangs, street fights. In this sense, Jovem Guarda was a mild version of rock rebellion. According to Erik Neveu, pop accentuates this claim of autonomy, making explicit a social identity defined by age group. The opposition between rebellious youth and adult social order—the basic formula of the pop-rock myth—marks the process of the social ascension of young

teenagers, who are emancipated by "active depoliticization" and become an "international ethnicity" (Neveu 1991: 52).

Roberto Carlos epitomized Jovem Guarda and soon established it as the biggest phenomenon of mass consumption of all time in Brazil. From a sociological point of view, Jovem Guarda brought together the young urban lower middle class, who, as a rule, did not attend university, an institution which at that time was strictly limited to young people from the economic elite and the upper middle class.

From the moment of Jovem Guarda's inception, leftist artists and intellectuals questioned its musical quality and its ideological intentions. For these critics, its formal poverty and alienation in the light of the dilemmas facing the nation were seen as the antithesis of MPB, which was perceived as educated and politically engaged. The incorporation, however timid, of electric elements in the arrangements of Jovem Guarda recordings, mainly guitars and keyboards, was also seen in a poor light because many felt that MPB should remain true to the acoustic guitar and percussion instruments associated with samba and other "authentic" genres. Despite this initial contempt, reality soon took over: Jovem Guarda was very successful, especially among young people of the lower middle class, who seemed to fall out of the orbit of the aesthetic and ideological reach of MPB. Politically motivated artists and intellectuals took upon themselves the task of opposing Jovem Guarda. Because both *Jovem Guarda and O Fino da Bossa* (a televised music program that focused on MPB) were transmitted by the same television station, the ideological dispute ended up creating a media controversy, further increasing the amount of advertising centered on the programs, especially around Jovem Guarda, which was linked with the fashion-related industries and youth behavior. The ideological/market competition between MPB and Jovem Guarda intensified during 1967 and provoked a rather bizarre event: the so-called march against electric guitars attended by several politically engaged artists such as Elis Regina, Geraldo Vandré, and Gilberto Gil, who was by then an artist starting to align himself with Tropicalism.

In defining the *Iêiêiê* genre, as this form of rock-ballad was called in Brazil, parameters of performance and poetic-musical expression were employed. Thus, as Enor Paiano points out, "Iêiêiê constructs itself, and musicians already know what patterns to create within it, the industry knows which paths to follow and the audience already knows what to expect" (Paiano 1994: 121).

The controversy and conflict between Jovem Guarda and the leftist element of MPB were exploited in aid of the restructuring of the music industry and the setting of new standards in the structure of musical taste. At a time of reorganization of the market for cultural goods, as was taking place in Brazil at that time, consumers were not rigidly delineated. Both movements—Jovem

Guarda and MPB—vied for fringe elements of the public, especially the younger age groups.

In this dispute, the musical "third way" proposed by Tropicalists praised Jovem Guarda for its naivety and "alienation" as a more modern and authentic product than the songs of politicized young people who relied on folklore in traditional genres (such as samba) and national-popular types of music from the *favelas* and the Brazilian interior, completely alien to the experience of the young urban middle class.

Gilberto Gil highlighted the divide in the music scene, represented by Roberto Carlos:

> A song like "*Quero que tudo mais vá pro inferno*" (Let everything else go to hell) cannot remain in the musical history of the Brazilian public as a living thing, in other words, always sung. But of course, it will be remembered as a strong statement that marked a very important era, which influenced the emergence of a unique career of a modern Brazilian popular singer, who is Roberto Carlos (…) art, in the academic sense, with its values determined and maintained, is something that is practically ceasing to exist. (Quoted in Mello 1976: 216)

The argument, consolidated by the social memory of the left, which saw in the genesis of Jovem Guarda a manipulation of the conservative post-1964 system against MPB's social consciousness, should be viewed with caution. Obviously, for the military and conservatives in general, Jovem Guarda's cultural product could be much more useful than MPB, channeled toward the depoliticization of the political environment of youth, at a time when the leftist student movement was the main public face of "being young." At the same time, conservative public opinion assimilated the symbolic transgressions of the young *Iêiêiê* singers more easily, as they were seen as a harmless and passing deviance, which nevertheless demanded attention from adults. It is plausible to assume that Jovem Guarda provoked less moral panic among conservative adults than did politicized youth or the radicalized youth counterculture.

There is a big difference in interpreting this conservative condescension toward Jovem Guarda as proof of the existence of a right-wing conspiracy that manipulated the cultural movement. Indeed, the trajectory of Jovem Guarda within the music scene is rather complicated as in this particular dispute, the biggest loser of the clash between MPB and Jovem Guarda was the latter. By the end of 1967, Roberto Carlos began to move away from his image on television, trying to redirect it toward a paradigm of youth that was more serious, toward a public that was more likely to appreciate songs of a romantic or existential nature.[5] His official departure from *Jovem Guarda*, in January 1968, virtually ended the television program and hastened the dispersal of its other stars, who either turned to other musical genres or watched

their careers stall. The movement sought to create another young role model, the singer Ronnie Von, whose more intellectual and sophisticated image—that of neither a teenager nor a deviant—timidly announced the arrival of the young countercultural rocker. However, this strategy did not survive the end of the televised program and of the Jovem Guarda movement.

Studying the development of musical consumption, television, and the music industry in Brazil, one realizes that politically engaged MPB was a commercial product that was actually much more effective than Jovem Guarda because it consolidated a specific type of musical behavior, staked out a consumer public (concentrated on the younger, university-educated socioeconomic elite), and instituted a new musical and cultural tradition. For the music industry, MPB helped consolidate a strategy of forming a stable cast of performers, with prospects for long-term sales and greater added value in the long term (Napolitano 2001).

Tropicalism: Entranced Youth in the Banana Republic

Tropicalism (or *Tropicália* as it is also referred to) is one of the most studied movements of recent cultural history. Indeed, it would be impossible to speak of the "Brazilian 1968" without mentioning it.[6] This movement, closely linked to the countercultural wave that swept the west in the 1960s, also dialogued with specific issues of modernism and the culture of the Brazilian left (Naves 2009).

As a cultural and musical movement, Tropicalism can be analyzed from both a diachronic and a synchronic perspective. The first implies a positioning in relation to the modernist avant-garde tradition in Brazil. The second requires a view of Tropicalism as the unfolding of the cultural influx generated by international counterculture into the Brazilian cultural environment. These two perspectives are not mutually exclusive, but writings on Tropicalism have tended to emphasize either one aspect or the other. Celso Favaretto, in his classic book on the musical aspects of Tropicalism, points to the resumption of interest in Oswald de Andrade's anthropophalogical theories (one aspect of Brazilian modernism in the 1920s) as being central to understanding Tropicalist works and performances (Favaretto 1995). This had already been suggested in the 1960s in essays on Brazilian music by Augusto de Campos (Campos 1993), which suggested that the Tropicalism of Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil formed part of a modern Brazilian tradition that viewed the avant-garde within mass culture and continued the tradition started by anthropophagy, and was developed by the Brazilian Concrete poetry of the 1950s and the avant-garde classical music of the 1960s. It was exactly for being a "false avant-garde" that Tropicalism was criticized in a famous essay by Roberto Schwarz (Schwarz 1978) in the late 1960s. Although

the focus of this criticism was the theatrical Tropicalism of the *Teatro Oficina* (Workshop Theatre), some general aspects of the movement were viewed as insufficient to express the real contradictions of Brazilian society under authoritarian military rule; for example, the break with the language and behavior of the bourgeois spectator. These aspects, according to Schwarz, were not developed by the movement, which operated in a closed loop of aggression that expressed the aesthetic crisis of leftist intellectuals without suggesting aesthetic and political solutions in a coherent manner.

The idea of Tropicalism as a form of cultural critique, as it is explained in the diachronic view of modern Brazilian culture, in its moment of crisis, is found in the writings of Marcelo Ridenti, Marcos Napolitano, and Mariana Villaça. Ridenti sees Tropicalism as the exhaustion of the process of "socialization of culture" developed by politically engaged art in Brazil since the late 1950s (Ridenti 2000). From that time on, art (even leftist art) entered into huge circuit that partly neutralized criticism and political engagement. Napolitano and Villaça, writing in a joint paper, cast doubt on the cohesive character and early phase of the movement, suggesting that Tropicalism was the name given to the convergence of many movements of cultural criticism and aesthetic experience, without a common programmatic axis, assuming various forms depending on the area of operation (Napolitano and Villaça 1998). In the case of musical Tropicalism, Mariana Villaça has pointed to its experimentalism (rather than avant-garde aspects) as being essential for the understanding of the movement, comparing it with the experimentalism of Cuban *Nueva Trova* (Villaça 2004). In all these studies, the element of youth itself within Tropicalism is not emphasized, whereas its link to the modernist avant-garde Brazilian musical tradition and aesthetic experimentalism is highlighted. The category of youth is subsumed to these other processes.

In Heloisa Buarque's classic book (Hollanda 2004), the theme of youth is seen as an explanatory factor for the rise of Tropicalism. In a way, the author fuses the two analytical perspectives—diachronic and synchronic—situating Tropicalism within interventionist cultural and literary movements instigated by Brazilian youth. Tropicalism was a classic moment in the crisis of political engagement because the military regime severed the link between artists and the popular classes. Out of the examination of conscience of young artists submitted to this new historical reality, Tropicalism was born as a form of self-criticism, and existential and cultural openness. The theme of the counterculture, always present in comments about Tropicalism, has been explored deeply by Christopher Dunn, who demonstrates that the movement cannot be dissociated from the historical framework of global counterculture such as it was expressed in Brazil in the late 1960s (Dunn 2009).

Whichever focus of analysis one might choose, it is clear that Tropicalism effectively created an aesthetic opening in relation to another form of youth behavior. With its psychedelic visual appeal, full of colors

and sharp shapes, it was an ideal spearhead to test and promote new trends in young fashion, as evidenced by the interest of the multinational textile manufacturer "Rhodia" in sponsoring the movement and its artists. For the Tropicalists, in turn, this sponsorship was an opportunity to establish themselves within the scenario of consumer culture, even if it was to subvert it, as they claimed. The fact is that this subversion was going to meet an expanding youth market, consolidating the aesthetics of youth consumption with confrontational behavioral and cultural attitudes that were particularly apparent in 1968. Student demonstrations in Europe, the political struggles in the Third World, political radicalization, the sexual revolution, and the aesthetic of radical experimentation were all frequently in the media and created an atmosphere of excitement and debate, even among young people who were not directly involved in these issues. In Brazil, there was a radicalization of another type, more politicized, that converged in the proposed armed struggle of leftist groups against the military regime. The two axes—the behavioral challenge and the political challenge—although differing in many ways, created a cultural backdrop that was conducive to aggression, to shock, and to aesthetic experiences of all kinds. It was in this context that *youth*, as a category of cultural consumption, was consolidated in Brazil, abandoning the earlier prototypes, and marked by the hedonism of the "wayward teenager" or by the young contemplative bossa nova fan.

The roots of the Tropicalism movement were launched in São Paulo at the 1967 TV Record song festival, when Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil performed their songs "*Alegria Alegria*" (Joy, Joy) and "*Domingo no Parque*" (Sunday in the Park), respectively. These songs possessed musical and poetic elements that differed from the recent tradition of politically engaged MPB. "Joy, Joy" spoke of the life of a young, urban, uncompromising person, loitering around town and perusing the media, in a pop collage. Although this song fitted into a traditional Brazilian genre (the march), its arrangement broke with the traditional festival type of song; it was fully electrified (guitar, keyboards, bass, and drums) and accompanied by an Argentine rock group, the Beat Boys. Gilberto Gil's performance of "Sunday in the Park," (a *baião*, also a traditional Brazilian musical genre) was accompanied by Os Mutantes, a legendary and seminal Brazilian rock group. The lyrics delve into the dysfunctional and alienated experiences of the popular classes, narrating a commonplace crime of passion, without the epic tone of the politically engaged songs of the left. The arrangements, by Rogério Duprat, a classical conductor linked to the avant-garde, presented a new concept: instead of accompanying the voice of the singer, orchestral passages commented on the song's poetic images, almost like a movie soundtrack.

The poetic character of "Joy, Joy" also comments on the world, employing collage and a simultaneous cubist-style approach. The lyrics allude to

both existentialist philosophy and mass culture, building allegories for the purpose of criticizing the excess of information produced by the media. Moreover, it is a libertarian ode, suggesting even disengagement from the values of the orthodox left.

The questioning of the media and industrial society (which sells songs and margarine tubs within the same market logic) is given tension by the pursuit of an existential and political openness to all experiences and information, transforming the apparently bland consciousness of urban youth, bombed by advertisements and fragmented information, into a deconstructive critique of the cultural system itself. In this sense, Tropicalism put into focus the two aforementioned youth identities, derived from MPB and Jovem Guarda. Rejecting the politically engaged, rational, conscious youth connected with the former and the young, purely hedonistic, superficial youth involved with the latter, the Tropicalists took on an iconoclastic role in relation to these two basic identities. This is not to say, however, that Tropicalism was free of internal contradictions and external appropriations that put into question the movement's radical and critical intentions (Napolitano and Villaça 1998).

These poetic, musical, and performatic developments were radicalized during 1968, when the Tropicalists, already recognized as a cultural group, dominated the cultural and media circuits. The great musical event of 1968 was undoubtedly the launch of the manifesto/LP *Tropicália*, or Bread and Circuses (*Panis et Circensis*), in which the group proposed a critical fusion of Brazilian musical tradition and the vanguard of Brazilian music (classical and pop rock), questioning and parodying ideological, cultural, and aesthetic strands of the entire Brazilian musical tradition at the same time (Favaretto 1995). The musical and poetic collages inherent in the songs meant that the record did two things at the same time: on the one hand, it opened up Brazilian musical culture to a more direct dialogue with international music and avant-garde popular movements, and on the other hand, it was a deconstructive critique of what was considered at the time to represent Brazilian culture, a nationalist ideology whose symbolic bases were by the left and the right, imploding symbols, values, and cultural and artistic icons.[7]

This culture struggle was radicalized during 1968, mainly due to the performances of Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil at the International Song Festival and their brief and intense appearance on the television show "Divine and Wonderful." At these events, the Tropicalists put aside the apparent levity of their earlier songs and affirmed a radically transgressive persona, calling for another revolution—sexual, but also political—in which the young could neither afford the luxury of a good conscience of the political left, nor the alienation of superficial consumption. Their symbolic aggression was a tactic to argue that there now existed another way of being young, and it was synthesized in the speech by Veloso cited at the start of this chapter, as well as other live events by the group in 1968, such as interpreting the Christmas

carol "*Noite Feliz*" (Silent Night) on stage with Veloso pointing a gun to his own head, or performing, at the aforementioned song festival, an anarchic rock song entitled "*Questão de Ordem*" (Point of Order) a phrase much used in student meetings at the time.

Even if Tropicalism is not seen as a cohesive movement, it had some common characteristics.[8] First was its critique of the belief in the redeeming nature of historical progress, a value shared by both the political right and left. Instead, Tropicalist movies, songs, and plays expressed an immobilizing conflict between the archaic and the modern, as central features of the historical "farce" that was Brazil, with all previous political illusions destroyed by the military coup. Another element was the resumption of interest in the avant-garde, revisiting the dialogue between Brazilian culture and the Western world, and at the same time incorporating pop culture. Yet another factor was the development of a specific aspect of the Brazilian modernist tradition that began with Oswald de Andrade's "Antropofagia," continued with the Concrete poets, and pointed to a cultural tradition that was different from that of the political left. This trend was linked to the other, more nationalistic branch of modernism, connected to Mário de Andrade, Villa Lobos, and the realistic literature of the 1930s. Moreover, Tropicalism was the culmination of a series of contradictions and political and cultural impasses during the 1960s that worsened after the 1964 military coup, whose center was the very definition of being young in Brazil. The classic issues raised by politically engaged art, which had received positive responses in the debates of the more orthodox left, acquired a new perspective in the wake of Tropicalism: what is the social function of art in a developing country? How to reconcile form and content in politically compromised works of art? How can politically engaged culture survive in the media? How to sociologically and culturally define the "people"—the idealized target audience of the leftist artists and intellectuals? What are the boundaries between the "people" as a political category and the "public" as a marketing category?

The unfolding of Tropicalism followed two historical paths that were entwined: (1) the radicalization of behavioral and aesthetic experiences, as evidenced by the post-1969 stage productions of *Teatro Oficina* and the artists associated with conceptual art;[9] and (2) the expansion of the counterculture and its basic values (sexual liberation, drug experimentation, individual liberty, and the pursuit of new forms of community life), which eventually found space in the media and the press. Both these paths pointed to the critical moment of being young in Brazil in the 1970s, in the search for a radical resistance to the system and any behavioral, aesthetic, or moral constraints.

After Tropicalism, MPB opened up to other musical influences and poetic themes, dialoguing with the international youth music scene, and influenced by pop and rock. In this sense, it is undeniable that Tropicalism was

the starting point for a new type of relationship between music and youth in Brazil, especially from the 1980s onward. But this moment of rupture would only be fully historically appreciated from the end of the early 1980s, when MPB, influenced by the fusion of political engagement with mainstream samba-bossa nova, ran out of steam, at least as the figurehead of the music industry. Although it is not, strictly speaking, part of the scope of this chapter, I would like to make a few observations about this other historic moment.

The Youth Music Scene from the 1970s Onward

Throughout the 1970s, the sophisticated and politically engaged form of MPB was still the mainstay of the market, and within it were invested expectations that went far beyond the assertion of youth cultural identities. Moreover, being the flagship of the Brazilian record industry, MPB posed two problems for that industry. First, it was a genre that attracted restricted sectors of the youth consumer market because it was the type of music typical of students and young professionals who had passed through higher education (Miceli 1994). Second, its creative base came from a sociocultural upbringing that was committed to so-called democratic resistance against the military regime, an issue that went beyond the simplistic affirmation of identity in the lineage of a "rebel without a cause."

In the late 1960s, due to the difficulty of consolidating the segmentation of the Brazilian youth music market within the standards that were beginning to be imposed internationally, music industry managers—including the most important man in that industry at the time, André Midani—were becoming worried (2008). According to Midani, the profile of consumers of LPs in Brazil was dominated by the highest age group until the 1970s, requiring a great deal of marketing and creativity to bring the Brazilian market up to the highly targeted and focused international (American and British) standard, for the age group between fifteen and twenty-four (Negus 1992: 68). Thus, as part of a strategy to musically bring young people in Brazil up to date throughout the 1970s, yet without departing from the mainstream of MPB, the industry started to invest heavily in Brazilian pop-rock, in a format closer to international symbolic paradigms and creative standards.

This strategy of realigning the youth market as the axis of musical consumption in the 1970s can be seen in the launch of new composers who dialogued with pop culture and the counterculture, following the path opened up by Tropicalism. Raul Seixas, Belchior, Fagner, Secos e Molhados, not to mention the Clube da Esquina (a group comprising Milton Nascimento, Marcio Borges, Wagner Tiso, and other great musicians and composers from the state of Minas Gerais) developed distinct styles, even though the issue of youth influenced them all. If Raul Seixas, Belchior, and Secos e Molhados

openly assumed the influence of rock, albeit mixed with other influences, the Clube da Esquina were more eclectic and plural, making mainly progressive rock that was also influenced by regional music, Colonial church music, Latin American *Nueva Canción*, and jazz. Within the lyrics of the songs of these artists, a new paradigm for youth living in dark times, later known as the AI-5 Generation, emerged. In this paradigm, the heroic young, transgressive, radical, militant of the 1960s symbolically gave way to a melancholy, solitary young person seeking libertarian assertion of the subjectivity of their position in the world, recognizing impotence and flight as valid strategies for survival during the so-called years of lead of the Brazilian military dictatorship. Looking at the center of the world from a peripheral modernity, the generation of the 1970s revised the legacies of being young of the previous decade, whose elements were simultaneously perceived as both a model and a burden. Compositions such as "*Vapor Barato*" (Cheap Vapor, Jards Macalé and Wally Solomon), "*Nada sera como antes*" (Nothing will be as before, Milton Nascimento and Ronaldo Bastos) or "*Como nossos pais*" (Like our parents), Belchior are the main songs of this phase.

In the early 1980s, with the dictatorship giving signs that the economic and political crisis was irremediable, and forcing it to accelerate the transition to a civilian government, the Brazilian music scene definitively opened up to rock, this time led by bands that became legendary within the Brazilian music market, such as Titãs, Barão Vermelho, Paralamas do Sucesso, and Legião Urbana. These bands were the face of a wider massive rock culture, influenced by punk, whose more aggressive underground outlook can be seen in the trajectory of bands like Ratos de Porão, Os Inocentes, and Olho Seco. From the start of 1982, and the so-called Summer of Rock in Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian rock had a growing presence in the music scene, rivaling MPB and reaching a climax with *Rock'n Rio*, a huge musical event held in January 1985, at the precise moment when the dictatorship ended and the new civilian government took power. At the beginning of the 1980s, MPB passed from being the music of democratic resistance to being music for old people, giving way to other poetic themes and sounds derived from rock culture.[10]

From the 1982 Summer of Rock onward, the recording industry intensified the internationalization of the Brazilian music scene in search of a younger audience in tune with pop-rock. The relationship between music and youth after the 1960s must be examined from this new perspective of social demand and the marketing of musical product. The vigorous Brazilian Rock scene of the 1980s or the *Mangue Beat* movement of the 1990s are in this lineage and it is no coincidence that for artists of both movements, Tropicalism represents an important reference as the benchmark of a new evolutionary line that merged references to Brazilian culture with international pop music. Nor is it by chance that Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Os Mutantes, and Tom Zé, among other Tropicalists, remained as icons for the younger

generations, performing in many cases alongside groups and artists from the new Brazilian pop scene.

Throughout the 1990s, another movement emerged, at first invisible within the vast music industry and the Brazilian media, but one which currently represents the greatest challenge to concepts of musical tradition, and even rupture, constructed throughout the twentieth century in Brazil: rap. The international black music of the late 1960s could be said to be in dialogue with MPB (consider the trajectories of Tim Maia and Jorge Ben, for example), even allowing for the expression of the experiences of young people who were initially excluded from the leftist ethos that marked MPB—black youth from the urban periphery. But rap, even within the lineage of black music, constitutes a rupture. This break in tradition is both in terms of music and of the ethos of being young in Brazil. Musically, rap suggests another system, completely apart from the tradition of urban song, whose epicenter was MPB (Garcia 2006).

It is important to recall that not even Tropicalism, in all its radicalism, managed to achieve this, because it was subsequently phagocytized by the institution of MPB (Napolitano 2001). Representing a new ethos of urban youth, rap brings forward the excluded young from the periphery or ghetto that is their place of intervention in the world. In this intervention, the acknowledgment of the role of violence within society, and exclusion as an existential condition, manifests itself in harsh and naturalistic poetic narratives in which young people cease to be the bearer of the future, but rather the main victim of the archaism of the "system." Rap does not demonstrate its revolt in the form of shouting or screaming, like punk, another popular musical movement in the Brazilian suburbs since the 1980s, but instead conspires in a rhythmic whisper that seeks to pass on a message of survival. Even though they are influenced by movements linked to international pop, Brazilian rap and punk have adapted themselves to the social contradictions of the Brazilian suburbs. I would venture to say that the first has its social base in young people of African descent who represent the excluded in Brazilian society par excellence, while the latter is better adapted to the young white lower middle class from the suburbs of the Brazilian center-south cities.

Obviously, these general observations do not exhaust the rich and diverse youth music scene that has grown up in Brazil since the 1980s. There are many diverse tribes, and their apparent segmentation often merely reproduces the "ghettoization" of pop culture, marked by a false diversity and basically very similar aesthetics of behavior (gang culture, media-awareness and specific consumption habits, occupation of segmented urban spaces). These tribes coexist with young people who enjoy broad, mass-produced cultural consumption from mainstream media, influenced by pop music or musical genres of local origin, but based on their sound (in the case of Brazil, *pagode*, university *música sertaneja*, and *axé*-music). In short, since the 1980s,

the segmentation and tribalization of the youth ethos have constituted the hallmark of Brazilian society, indicating that the capitalist modernization of culture, dreamt up the 1960s, has completed its historical process.

Conclusion

Current academic literature, especially the field of cultural studies, tackles the issue of musical subcultures dichotomously, separating music into either mainstream or underground categories (Shuker 1998: 316). In Brazil, this perspective needs to be nuanced. If it was valid for the 1990s, a time when the sociocultural hierarchy of popular music was questioned as never before by movements such as Brazilian rap, it is not for the 1960s and part of the 1970s. During the latter decades, the emergence of young musical subcultures such as bossa nova, MPB, and Tropicalism helped to form the Brazilian musical canon—the most valued segment in the sociocultural music hierarchy. However, what existed up until that moment was the pursuit of youth music par excellence, taken as a generational unity rather than an assertion of youth subcultures that were alternative and differentiated from each other. Even Tropicalism, a landmark revision of being young in Brazil, was eventually placed in another aesthetic plane, and was absorbed by mainstream MPB early in the 1970s.

The analysis of representations—inherent and derived—of being young, which is particularly intense in the musical field, points to issues that are related to the analysis of other aspects of society as a whole, because the representation of youth is a projective aspect of society itself, understood in all its segments and institutions (Abramo 1997: 29). The youth question that emerged in the 1960s was the result not only of an identity based on the idea of youth in the strictest sense (defined by the age group in transition between childhood and the adult world) but also a historical consolidation of the modernization process that affected Western (and westernized) societies from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Thus, analyzing a specific case, such as that of Brazil, demands a two-way critical exercise, assessing the impact of the youth question and being young within a specific historical process (in Brazil), but also assessing more broadly and by comparison the contradictions of this process on an international scale. In this sense, the modernized periphery of the capitalist system, being more exposed and sensitive to the contradictions of the system as a whole, not only reveals its own cultural processes, but also reveals the broader, and perhaps less visible, operational logistics at the center of the system. This systemic perspective does not negate the need to understand specific historical processes like Brazil, which despite its uniqueness can contribute new theoretical and methodological issues in historiography and for the social sciences as a

whole. In the Brazilian case study treated in this text, we are discussing one of the richest and most sophisticated musical experiences of the twentieth century, either from a purely aesthetic perspective, or in terms of analyzing how far a system of songs[11] can culturally and politically impact upon a given society.

Notes

1. This is the text of Veloso's speech in full:

> But is this the youth that says that it wants to take power? You have the courage this year to applaud a song that you would not have had the courage to applaud last year; the same youth who will always, always, kill the old enemy who died yesterday! You understand nothing, nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing (. . .) Gilberto Gil's with me to finish with the festival and with all the stupidity that reigns in Brazil. End it for once and all! We only entered this festival for that, didn't we, Gil? We didn't pretend, we didn't pretend to be unaware of how the festival would be, no. Nobody ever heard me say that. You know what? Us, me and him, we had the courage to go into all structures and exit all of them, and you? And you? If you were in power politically, as you are aesthetically, then we'd be done for!

2. The term *counterculture* can be defined from the North American experience of community lifestyle and anti-conformist behavior. The term was seen at the time as the product of a generational unit—youth—who rebelled against Western behavioral patterns and political values (see Roszak 1972).

3. For a critical review about the category of youth, see Pais (1990: 139–165).

4. I am using here the definition of youth employed by the managers of the recording industry while the music phenomena occurred—the late 1960s and early 1970s.

5. His 1968 LP, "*O inimitável*" (The inimitable), which utilizes less aggressive woodwinds and strings, can be seen as a turning point away from his Jovem Guarda style.

6. It should be recalled that the expression *Tropicália* refers to the eponymous song by Caetano Veloso that, in turn, refers to the art installation of the same name by Hélio Oiticica, one of the most important artists of the second half of the twentieth century, not only for his works, but also for his sophisticated reflections on the conditions of the vanguard in a country simultaneously modern and also peripheral to the West.

7. For an analysis of the album tracks, see Favaretto (1995).

8. For a general view of the aesthetic basis of the movement, see Villaça (2004).

9. For an insight into the relationships between conceptual art in Brazil and the political context of the late 1960s, see Freitas (2007).

10. Between 1980 and 1990, a markedly young, black, proletarian culture developed within Brazil (whose locus was the poor periphery of big cities) through a process of appropriation of black North American hip hop culture. In the main period analyzed by this article, a young black proletarian identity was not apparent within the Brazilian music scene.

11. Here, I use the term *system* proposed by literary critic Antonio Candido to refer to a moment of saturation of a historical-cultural process of formation training, when there is integration between authors, works, and the public. See Candido (2007).

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8

The Pro Tools Generation

DIGITAL CULTURE, LIVENESS, AND THE NEW SINCERITY IN BRAZILIAN POPULAR MUSIC

Frederick Moehn

This chapter focuses on a musical cohort based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Most of the musicians in this close-knit group began their careers in the mid-to-late 1990s but attracted greater attention in the Rio music scene and internationally in the first decade of the 2000s. They are predominantly, although not exclusively, middle class and male. I will concentrate on the musicians who collaborated on a series of recordings known as the "Plus 2" (or "+ 2") albums, and who are also founding members of the big band Orquestra Imperial: Alexandre Kassin, Domenico Lancellotti, and Moreno Veloso. Between 2001 and 2006, the three released a trilogy of albums for which each had a turn as lead singer-songwriter (hence, Moreno + 2, Domenico + 2, and Kassin + 2). Orquestra Imperial, by contrast, is a large ensemble (19 + musicians) that is oriented primarily toward live performance.

Some describe these three musicians and their colleagues in the Orquestra as being at the vanguard of a "New MPB" scene (F. Coelho, in Soares 2011). MPB, an acronym for *música popular brasileira*, came into use in the mid-1960s as a loosely defined marketing category for the music that was popular amongst the middle-class university youths. Associated especially with the figure of the singer-songwriter, MPB was a mainstay of Brazilian radio for a few decades. In the 1980s, however, a generation of middle-class youths largely rejected the earnest "songbook" aesthetics of música popular brasileira.[1] They turned instead to Anglo-American models of rock for a heavier, insistent sound. Then, in the 1990s, the genres *pagode*, *música sertaneja*, and *axé music* began to enjoy tremendous commercial success nationally, particularly among the working classes. Urban, middle-class youths came to appreciate anew certain musical practices that, from their perspective, seemed more "authentically" to represent Brazil

than these genres, or that seemed to them to have a less homogeneous production sound. Meanwhile, electronica and related genres such as techno were growing increasingly influential in Brazil, while rap music extended its global reach. The generation of musicians who grew up listening to Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, and, later, the Police, now began methodically to synthesize rock, rap, and electronic genres with, for example, the traditional maracatu drumming of Recife in the northeast of Brazil, or the samba of Rio de Janeiro. The new MPB begins to take shape with these tendencies in the early to mid-1990s.[2]

Around the turn of the millennium, the individuals under consideration here began to grow into their mature musical voices. They have unreservedly absorbed the sounds of metal, hardcore, punk, and grunge from the United States and the United Kingdom, but also the driving rock of the band Nação Zumbi, associated with the influential mangue beat scene in Recife, Pernambuco. They have poached Brazil's musical history to retrieve and remix genres such as the *gafieira* (a kind of dance hall samba with horns) and bossa nova. They have rediscovered classic boleros from Mexico, for example, and they cite Caribbean dance styles. They have assimilated the musical logics of DJ culture, of samplers, sequencers, and looping. They mix with poised subtlety. They cite with crafty irony. They compose and sing with cool sincerity. And they perform with virtuosic informality. They are avant-garde and kitsch at the same time.

This generation came of age in a period of noteworthy transformations in the music industry. Alexandre Kassin (or just Kassin) is a guitarist, bassist, singer, songwriter, and a busy and influential producer. When he started his career, recording studios were gradually transitioning away from the use of magnetic tape and toward increasing reliance on the Pro Tools brand of computer-based recording system. The two-inch tape required for standard twenty-four-track machines was expensive, as was the studio time. "You needed to plan very carefully what you would record," Kassin remembered. "You had less liberty . . . you didn't experiment a lot in the studio." By the end of that decade, Pro Tools was in most professional studios, but it was still utilized primarily for editing tracks rather than being the main medium for recording. "The labels hadn't yet collapsed. There wasn't that much Internet yet. Things were still being made in the same way," Kassin noted. As more and more people began to acquire Pro Tools for their home studios in the 2000s, however, music production practices "became less homogeneous." New bands began to appear, and the scene diversified.[3]

Meanwhile, piracy permanently eroded the profits of recording labels. Today, older models for the production, promotion, and distribution of music under a major label are irrelevant to most young artists. They work together in more horizontal scenarios than the earlier hierarchical arrangements that had directors of Artists and Repertoire (A&R) at the top. They

perform multiple roles in their musical projects and see no need to adhere to marketing segments defined by a particular musical style. Likewise, gaining radio airplay is not usually their objective; they tend to see the medium as corrupted by commercialism and payola. Unfettered by industry timetables, they release new albums when they are inspired or motivated to do so.

If these musicians represent the first generation to be fully accustomed to recording and mixing in Pro Tools, however, they were also initially ambivalent about the technology. Kassin's collaborator, the drummer and songwriter Domenico Lancellotti, went so far as to suggest that Pro Tools could be "the death of music." It was tempting to overuse the technology. Some producers became "obsessed with pop perfection," Domenico observed. Other musicians, he added, would simply play a measure of music into the software and make a whole song out of that one bar by "looping" it (i.e., repeating it electronically for as long as desired). Kassin, Domenico, and others in this scene thus deploy digital technologies with care. On stage, Domenico might use an Akai MPC drum machine, but only to trigger his own acoustic instrument samples, rather than the stock electronic drum sounds that came with the machine. In the studio, they refrain from digitally cutting and pasting various performances into a more "correct" version. This generation thus has a relationship to digital and electronic music technologies that is both fraught and fruitful. Conveying a sense of control over that relationship is a point of pride.

They also understand that the restructuring of how capital flows through the music business is incomplete. They earn very little from CD sales and have no hope of getting radio airplay. Yet without the "market or the big industry producers telling us what to do," Domenico felt that his cohort "ended up having great freedom" in the way they do things. "I have no doubt that the moment we are experiencing now is the most fertile of my whole life," he affirmed. The album, under these new circumstances, can facilitate getting shows, which bolster a musician's or band's reputation. Domenico even joked that in reality he had mostly been accumulating "prestige," rather than income, throughout his career.

Some have labeled the musicians in this scene as neo-Tropicalists, referring to the Brazilian Tropicália movement of the late 1960s. The Tropicalists celebrated *antropofagia*—a discourse about "cannibalizing" cultural practices from the "First World" into new mixtures that use forms and practices understood as Brazilian. The movement's initial impact, in the context of televised national song contexts, was fairly short-lived. However, as an explanatory discourse about cultural mixture and the importation of new technologies, antropofagia had a major resurgence in the second half of the 1990s. Surprisingly, this still seems to be a dominant mode of presenting much Brazilian popular music outside of Brazil. Consider the program notes for a recent Orquestra Imperial concert at Zankel Hall in New York

in December 2012 (a double billing with Arnaldo Antunes). A critic opened the notes with the conventional references to Tropicália and Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropofago* of 1928, the foundational text for this cultural discourse: These artists' music offered "celebrations of some of the improbable mixes, the many sources, the generous embraces that have shaped, and continue to shape, the culture of Brazil," he proposed. "It's 'Tupy or not Tupy...'—played out loud, with electric guitars, pandeiros, and trombones" (González 2012; the reference is to Andrade's wry appropriation of Hamlet's line for his manifesto). Similarly, when the Orquestra traveled to London in 2006 for their first UK performance, they went to participate in a Tropicália festival at the Barbican cultural center, on the program for the "Tropicália Remixed" evening.

This almost knee-jerk comparison with the earlier movement is objectionable to many of this cohort. Domenico saw a significant difference with his generation. "I think our term would be chaos," he said. "Creative chaos." He and his cohort, he reflected, "grew up in a very crazy context of influences from various sides, of lots of information, so much so that one is obliged to be rather blasé in order not to be infected with the amount of stuff that enters one's mind all the time." His generation does have the impulse to mix, he affirmed, but they do it more organically, not strategically as if "wanting to mix such and such because it's cool, or because it lends a pop sound." For Kassin, Brazilian popular musicians of the 1990s (and of the Tropicália era, for that matter) were "very cerebral" about musical mixture, sort of planning it out. If ideas about cultural mixture and national identity have been debated for decades in Brazil, many younger urban musicians feel that the issue has been resolved, or at least that the theme, formulated as a problem needing to be addressed, is uninteresting.[4]

Despite Domenico's protestations, the + 2 musicians build on a rich history of MPB songwriting that includes the work of musicians who participated in Tropicália and who are legends today, among various other artists. Moreover, there are family links. Domenico's father, Ivor Lancellotti, was a well-known samba and MPB composer, and Moreno's father is Caetano Veloso, a leader of Tropicália. One of Moreno's collaborators is Daniel Jobim, grandson of the great bossa nova composer Tom Jobim. Musicians of Caetano Veloso's generation sometimes participate in the recordings of Moreno's cohort (João Donato, for example, and Caetano himself), or vice versa (Pedro Sá of the Orquestra Imperial has worked as Caetano's electric guitarist). Jorge Mautner, a writer who was close to the Tropicalists, was also an inspiration for (and sometime participant in) the Orquestra Imperial; he is among those who have pointed to Tropicalist attitudes in that group. (In fact, Mautner elaborated a theory of Kaos in a 1963 publication bearing that title.) Such family and friends no doubt offer a privileged circle in which to launch a musical career.

The + 2 Trilogy

Indeed, cultural production among the middle classes in Rio tends to develop out of personal connections and casual encounters. Domenico, Moreno, Kassin, and Pedro Sá were schoolmates in the South Zone and played in bands together when they were teenagers and young adults.[5] Although Moreno has professed that he is too shy to be comfortable on stage, the pull of music was strong in his milieu and he did compose a handful of songs in his twenties. In 2001 he decided to record an album with Domenico and Kassin, which included his own compositions as well as a few cover versions of other songs. Rather than use a recording studio, they rented a house outside of the city in Araras, a popular spot for weekend homes. They took a computer, a few microphones, and a small selection of borrowed signal processing gear. In contrast to the multi-tracking technique in which most instruments are isolated to separate tracks, they often recorded several instruments together. This practice captures the live blend of the acoustic instruments, preserving some of the warmth and spontaneity of group performance (but surrendering some control over the resulting sound in the mixing stage). It is not new; rather, it is an older way to record first practiced in the early analog tape era, when fewer tracks were available. Domenico felt that their method of recording was simple, "artisanal."[6] This quality was so important to them that when they heard the first master of the album, they rejected it for not having preserved the production sound they had fashioned by recording with few microphones and limited equipment in the house in Araras. It had become "grotesque, heavy," Domenico recalled. It had the sound of "pop music, and we didn't want that." It was only when they decided to master it locally that they found the sound they wanted.[7]

The Moreno + 2 album is titled *Máquina de Escrever Música*, released in the United States as *Music Typewriter*, also in 2001. The recording label Palm Pictures sponsored the ensemble's tour and arranged for press coverage. "We got the tail end of what was left of the music industry," Domenico said. Three years later, when they wanted to release Domenico + 2, Palm Pictures evidently did not want to pick up the album and Domenico had to look elsewhere. (All three albums are currently distributed in the United States on David Byrne's Luaka Bop label, and via iTunes and amazon.com.) On *Music Typewriter*, rock influences are almost imperceptible. Rather, bossa nova, samba, and the MPB tradition of well-crafted songs are the main references. Electronic "interventions not common to the universe of song," as Domenico called them, adorn the tunes. Thus, for example, on the song "*Para Xó*" (For Xó), Kassin contributes sounds from a smartphone video game. And on "*Das partes*" (Of Parts), the three perform a wacky counterpoint of improvisations

on the Theremin, once a favorite instrument of the early twentieth-century European avant-garde.[8]

Such "noises" also speak to another key influence for the + 2 musicians: Arto Lindsay, who was active in downtown New York experimental rock and jazz scenes in the 1970s and 1980s, and who produced Caetano Veloso's 1989 *Estrangeiro* album. On that album, Lindsay performed "noisy" interventions (mostly on electric guitar), particularly on the title track. On *Music Typewriter* such interferences seem to be holistically integrated into the production sound. This approach is facilitated, in part, by the "artisanal" (as opposed to "industrial") attitude that can, counterintuitively, bloom in the digital environment. Quirky ideas that would not function well on mainstream radio have a place here. What major label A&R representative, for example, would have allowed the full sixty seconds of complete silence that follow the first 2' 30" of the last song of the album, "I'm Wishing" (from the Disney movie *Snow White*), before a final chord is gently struck on the piano?

Moreno has a thin, almost childlike voice, but he uses it well, singing very high in his range, with precision in the pitches and, as is common in MPB, entirely lacking vibrato. It almost sounds as if he is straining, but it remains flawlessly under control. There is no denying that he sounds like his father on some songs such as "*Eu sou melhor que você*" (I'm better than you), "*Enquanto Isso*" (Meanwhile), or "*Das partes*." "*Para Xó*" is a bolero sung in Spanish. In the tradition of João Gilberto's bossa nova recordings, Moreno's vocals are placed in the foreground of the mix. The listener can hear every sibilant and the articulations of different consonants in brilliant detail. The opening song of the album, "*Sertão*" (Outback), which Moreno co-composed with his father, is so dry and intimate that it sounds like he is sitting bedside singing a lullaby. "*Deusa do amor*" (Love goddess) follows with an unambiguous homage to bossa nova. In fact, the "stuttering" rhythm articulated on acoustic classical guitar, a characteristic aspect of bossa nova, is strikingly reminiscent of the groove to Caetano Veloso's 1966 bossa nova classic, "*Coração Vagabundo*." The lyrics of the songs mostly treat the theme of love; in this sense, they are a throwback to the sentimentalism of early bossa nova and much MPB.

While making Moreno's album, it occurred to the trio to record a second album as an ensemble, but with Domenico as the songwriter and lead singer, and subsequently, Kassin's + 2 album. It was something they wanted to do to help each other, Domenico related. Such horizontal modes of production allow for a kind of popular music mutual aid. After touring internationally in promotion of *Music Typewriter*, they began recording Domenico + 2, *Sincerely Hot*, at the studio Kassin was starting to construct with keyboardist/programmer Berna Ceppas. Located in the Gávea neighborhood of the South Zone, "Monaural" didn't have a proper tracking room yet, so they recorded in the bathroom. They began with jam sessions with only bass

guitar and drum kit. As Domenico described, the idea was, "Let's play some grooves . . . recording it all, because it's Pro Tools and we don't need [to waste expensive] tape." *Sincerely Hot* adheres less to the MPB songbook aesthetic than *Music Typewriter*. It opens with the droning, dissonant, noisy, melodically fragmented, and repetitive "*Alegria vai lá*" (Go on, happiness). In its experimentalism it recalls some of Tom Zé's work. Yet, just as on *Music Typewriter*, the second song of the album unmistakably signals the influence of bossa nova. It could be from 1965. This is on purpose: Domenico originally intended his album to recall the sound of the jazz-influenced instrumental bossa nova–era combos such as the Milton Banana Trio (in which the drummer leads the ensemble). Overall, however, the sound is probably more of an homage to two 1973 albums that Domenico cited as inspirations: João Donato's *Quem é Quem* and Marcos Valle's contemplative *Previsão do Tempo*. Both of these classic albums have a mature bossa sound with soul-funk influences. Samba is another key influence for Domenico, via his father's career. "I was born in the samba. It was something that always influenced me," he observed. "If I have to play a shuffle or something, I have to think [about it]. It's not natural."

The influence of Donato, Valle, soul, samba, and the sound of early 1970s' vinyl recordings is clear on the song "*Te convidei*" (I invited you). Domenico shouts the lyrics—"I invited you to the samba and you didn't come / You left me in the samba and I'm going to forget you, woman!"—over a soul-funk groove with gospel-like backing vocals (Figure 8.1). His voice is distorted, as if through a megaphone. It is a memorable effect—more mangue beat than bossa nova—and it results in a delightfully funky soul-samba. The short title track evokes a *samba de roda*, a traditional form of circle samba, here rendered with *pandeiros* (tambourines), shaker, snare, an Afro-funk guitar ostinato, a ringing *agogô* (cowbell used in samba), synthesizer, and odd, half-spoken lyrics that at times sound like come-ons from fanatic admirers of the + 2 musicians. If Moreno's album is more "songbook," Domenico's is groove and soul. On the other hand, the noisy, dissonant "*Você e eu*" (You and I) is an energetic mixture of jungle with hardcore/punk. The final song, "*Despedida*" (Goodbye), by contrast, returns to the bossa nova once again, with sentimental lyrics sung in a quiet, intimate voice, and occasional accompaniment from a string quartet. Still, even this track evoking classic MPB features sonic "interventions" that are not integral to the song form as such.

Kassin's self-produced + 2 album, released in 2006, is titled *Futurismo* (Futurism). He was concerned that a lot of albums from recent years have limited dynamic range and sound too "mechanized," one of the consequences of recording and mixing everything through a computer. In an effort to avoid this outcome, the trio thoroughly rehearsed the live dynamics of the repertoire before recording. This is another way in which the + 2 project sought to reintroduce aspects of live performance into the Pro Tools environment.

FIGURE 8.1. Kassin, Thalma de Freitas, and Domenico Lancellotti performing at Nublu, New York City, December 4 2012. Copyright by Frederick Moehn

Kassin and his studio partner Berna also make use of vintage or "outmoded" studio gear such as ribbon microphones, or tape echo effects. They use such equipment in conjunction with Pro Tools. In a way, Domenico felt, they used the computer interface and software as if it were a tape machine, recording entire takes live, for example, and keeping the imperfections.

The bossa nova is again a key reference on this album, as can be heard on the song "*Namorados*" (Lovers). A typical, classic "stuttering guitar" rhythm is destabilized by a variety of electronic noises and interferences, and by a somewhat limping bass drum that gestures toward the *surdo* of samba. The lyrics treat the classic bossa nova theme of love. "Latin" music is another key reference in much of Kassin's work. For example, the opening song, "*O seu lugar*" (Your place), recalls a classic cha cha cha. João Donato contributes a straightforward *montuno*-like accompaniment on Fender Rhodes, and a *güiro* adds the rhythmic scraping characteristic of the genre. Still, electronic and other interventions make sure it is something more than a retro homage to Cuban music. For the last couple of minutes of the song, one hears a conversation between Donato and a friend during a cell phone call, captured on Donato's live microphone in the studio. The humorous conversation has nothing to do with the recording session (it is about a third friend who got drunk and wet himself), yet it somehow fits into the arrangement seamlessly.

"*Quando Nara Ri*" (When Nara laughs), a song about Kassin's young daughter keeping him up at night, draws on the Cuban *son*, with *güiro*, cowbell, and *timbales*. The song "*Água*" (Water) is like a zouk-samba mix, with an uplifting, twangy electric guitar accompaniment. It recalls the sound of the golden era of Angolan popular music in the 1960–1970s, which was influenced by zouk and other Caribbean genres but which highlighted the sound of the electric guitar. Toward the end, while Kassin is soloing with this bright guitar sound, an electronically altered voice enters, booming "*K-k-k-k-Kassin mais dois*" (Kassin plus two) in the way that pop music radio stations sometimes insert the station ID into the songs as they are broadcasting. "*A máquina do som, som, som!*" (The sound machine). "*O chefão das mixagens!*" (The big boss of the mixes). It is both ironic and sincere. "*Samba Machine*" is an electronic samba. Domenico performs the percussion on the Akai MPC drum machine. The listener can barely discern the word "samba machine" in the vocals emanating from a vocoder.[9] Syncopated electronic keyboards and a fuzz guitar solo evoke the sound of 1960s rock. "*Mensagem*" (Message), with Kassin playing a lap-steel guitar and featuring special guests Marcelo Camelo and his band Los Hermanos, is a medium-tempo rock song that, aside from the Portuguese lyrics, could easily be from a US indie band.

Then, suddenly, the final track, "*Astronauta*" (Astronaut) is two minutes and three seconds of hardcore rock reminiscent of the Brazilian band Sepultura. To some, it may seem utterly incongruous. This eclecticism, however, comes easy to Kassin, a vinyl aficionado. He described how, in his role as the producer for the + 2 albums, he sought to avoid making the recordings sound as if they were from a specific era. He did not want them to be datable just by ear, "so that you'd remember the sound of Moreno's album and say, 'Oh, this was made in such-and-such time period.' " Rather, the albums might contain "elements from various periods, yet be strange in each." Or in fact, Kassin elaborated, a listener might think one of them is from a certain period and it could make sense, but if it turned out to be from another period after all, it would fit that one as well. This desire to transcend identification with a particular era is not in itself a new sentiment; it speaks as much to the urge toward universalism in creative expression as it does to the wish not to fit into marketing categories. Nevertheless, it suggests a subtle shift in the way musical mixture is conceptualized in this scene. In the 1990s the musicians I interviewed in Rio often compared their work with what was going on *lá fora*—"out there" (abroad). Now, it seems, there is no longer such a strong distinction between what is *fora* or *dentro*—without or within—which is one of the problems that antropofagia tackled. Instead, the capacity for savvy cultural juxtaposition that Brazilians claim is theirs plays out along an axis that perhaps privileges temporal dimensions over spatial ones.

Orquestra Imperial: Brazil's Musical Hipsters?

The emergence of the new MPB parallels the rise of indie and "alternative" rock in the United States and Europe in the last decades of the twentieth century and especially in the late 1990s, when the music industry entered into decline. A protagonist in these tendencies was the figure who came to be called the hipster. Typically white and middle class, the hipster grew up with rock music but now saw it as an exhausted, overly commercialized and bombastic genre, as John J. Harvey has observed. This anti–rock star figure favored college radio and ill-fitting thrift clothes, and embraced the "subtle irony" of "a more globally aware, historical cultural miner who dealt in countercultural capital" (Harvey 2001: 117). One US-based reviewer of Brazilian recordings noted that Kassin co-produced the bonus tracks on *Futurismo* with Sean O'Hagan of the band the High Llamas and John McEntire of the band Tortoise. "Hipster lovefests," he called these collaborations (Kay n.d.). Of *Sincerely Hot*, he wrote, approvingly, that the point of the album seemed largely "to make sure that we can see that the kids in Brazil are keeping up with hipsters in the rest of the world" (ibid.).

The "mining" of the past that is purportedly a hipster trait is particularly pertinent for the Orquestra Imperial project. It is a large ensemble of nineteen or more musicians inspired by an earlier era, when big bands with horns performed a style called *gafieira*. Especially popular in the 1940s, the gafieira incorporated elements from American swing bands and Latin jazz into the samba repertoire, creating arrangements for dance halls. The idea for the Orquestra was for the musicians to be able to perform repertoire that they liked but had not had the opportunity to play. Latin genres such as the Mexican bolero and the Cuban son and cha cha cha seem to be of special interest, alongside classic sentimental big band sambas.

Kassin, Berna, Domenico, and Moreno initially assembled the band for an ad hoc series of dance parties in the South Zone, calling on their available friends and invited guests. Those friends included the actor/singer Seu Jorge, the actress/singer Thalma de Freitas, and members of the rock band Los Hermanos. "It was like a Funkadelic gafieira," Domenico said. "The shows lasted four hours. Anything could happen.…Famous people would show up, without rehearsing. They'd just showed up to sing." (Moreno's friend the American rocker Chrissie Hynde of the Pretenders was among them.) When the septuagenarian Wilson das Neves—who began a distinguished career as drummer and percussionist in the 1960s—replaced Seu Jorge, the band members were excited, "because he sang in the orchestras back in the day, and he made sure that the 'kitchen' [the rhythm section] was correct, everyone playing with dynamics," Domenico said.

For several years, the Orquestra performed live for these parties in Rio; the ensemble's success resonates with the revival of live music in the Lapa district in the old Center area of Rio. There, middle-class musicians have,

in recent years, actively participated in a rejuvenated music scene focused in large part on acoustic genres that first gained popularity in decades past (see Herschmann 2007). These include choro, a style that privileges relatively informal jam settings and instrumental virtuosity, gafieira, and samba. Orquestra founder Berna Ceppas described how a young generation of largely white university students in the urban centers—"a public with money"—began to retrieve things from the past. Berna sought to distance the Orquestra from what he identified as a tendency among the white bourgeois youth to "appropriate certain musical and cultural roots styles" and try to manage them as if they were in a museum. They "over-defend" tradition, he felt, as if wanting to preserve it for themselves. The members of the Orquestra play repertoire from previous eras in Brazilian popular music not because they want to preserve it, he claimed, but because it quite simply makes them happy.

Indeed, the abiding principal of the ensemble is informality and being relaxed about everything. The members of the orchestra are aware that this can be puzzling for the audience when they perform in prestigious spaces such as Barbican in London or Zankel Hall in New York. In fact, when I saw the group play a show at the latter space, I was surprised at their casual attitude, and at the looseness of the arrangements and the transitions from one song to the next. It seemed rather like a rehearsal. At one point between songs a couple of the musicians moved around the stage somewhat aimlessly for a little while. Finally, singer Thalma de Freitas addressed the audience, smiling, "This is completely an Orquestra Imperial moment. We don't know what to play next." The audience did not seem particularly amused, but the musicians were enjoying themselves. As Rodrigo Amarante explained on stage that night, the Orquestra is like a kindergarten playground. It is determinedly anti-professional. To be sure, its members are busy and successful musicians for whom the Orquestra is a side project. (Amarante, for example, was a member of the very successful rock group Los Hermanos, now disbanded.) But there are, in any event, too many musicians in the ensemble to make money from the performances. Tours are difficult for the same reason. Instead, the non-hierarchical social aspect is paramount. It is about "having fun, everyone joking around with each other," Amarante said in one interview (Preto 2007).

The distinction between a rescue/preservation impulse and the professedly naïve desire for recreation may seem inconsequential. Berna's characterization of a sector of middle-class musicians as rigidly traditionalist may be exaggerated, and we have to bear in mind how musicians often seek to distinguish themselves from that which seems trendy. Notwithstanding, the distinction is significant. It means that the members of the Orquestra have no qualms about, for example, using a computer and sequencer on stage, as Berna Ceppas does, or adding distorted fuzz bass on the otherwise straightforward samba de gafieira "*A saudade é que me consola*" (Longing consoles

me), as Kassin does. Certain characteristic elements of the samba—starting off the groove with the pandeiro on this latter song, for example, call-and-response between the singer and backing chorus—may remain prominent, but they seem liberated from the representational politics of traditionalism.

Over time the Orquestra accumulated a repertoire, including some original compositions, and in 2007 they finally decided to record an album, *Carnaval Só Ano que Vem* (Carnival Only Next Year). One of the aspects these musicians appreciated about earlier decades was the "dirtiness" of studio recording practices that placed value on live performance. Thus, the entire ensemble recorded live in a large tracking room, "fifteen songs in fifteen days," Berna recalled, "with twenty people playing." "It was live like in the old days, everyone in one room, one-shot vocals," Berna said. "We are always trying to play more like the older generations," Domenico explained. They liked to record a complete take and keep the little "errors" because the bigger picture of the ensemble is more important than perfection on individual parts. The orchestra, he said, offered an experience that no one of his generation had had: *recording on tape*, using "only" twenty-four tracks (Pro Tools allows many more tracks). "Everyone performing together…It was as if it was an old orchestra."[10]

Despite the Orquestra's attempts to preserve in the studio some of the social and acoustic aspects of live ensemble music-making, something, apparently, was lost. One enthusiast of the + 2 discography lamented that he found this album "hard to get into," with "slick" and somewhat "cheesy" production (Kay n.d.). The slickness was "(partially) being used in an ironic way," he wrote, but "the joke doesn't really carry" (ibid.). Interestingly, to him the musicians were "so busy being clever, cool and self-congratulatory" that "they never really seem to let their hair down and just enjoy the music, or to let the music take over, rather than the recording of the music" (ibid.). Given the musicians' insistence that their main objective is to enjoy themselves, it is curious that this listener found the album "heavy on concept and coyness, and light on either the genuine joyfulness or the cool reserve that has made many of the earlier albums (under their individual names)…so noteworthy" (ibid.). What happened to these musicians' sincere attempt to transmit some of the lighthearted atmosphere of their South Zone bailes? It seems to have come across—to this particular reviewer—as hipster irony.

Princeton University professor Christy Wampole ignited a vigorous debate about hipsters in the US press and blogosphere late in 2012 when she published an opinion editorial in *The New York Times* in which she claimed that irony "is the ethos of our age" and the hipster "our archetype of ironic living" (Wampole 2012). The hipster, she wrote, "is a scholar of social forms, a student of cool. He studies relentlessly, foraging for what has yet to be found by the mainstream.…Before he makes any choice, he has

proceeded through several stages of self-scrutiny." He has nostalgia for "outmoded fashions...mechanisms...and hobbies." "He is a walking citation; his clothes refer to much more than themselves." He cultivates "awkwardness and self-consciousness." The hipster's "ironic frame" shields him or her against criticism, Wampole asserted. Ironic living is "a provisional answer to the problems of too much comfort, too much history and too many choices" (ibid.).

Wampole's characterization of the hipster archetype drew swift reaction from readers. Jay Magill Jr., a scholar of irony and sincerity in Western history, wrote in the *Atlantic*, "Forget that recent, naive...column. Proto-hipsters were around before Christ" (Magill Jr. 2012). Despite the editorial's weaknesses, however, the professor clearly struck a resonant chord for a brief media moment. This public discussion happened to coincide with the above-mentioned visit to New York City of the Orquestra Imperial. I could not help but think of these themes when I went to see Kassin head a jam (billed as "Kassin and Friends") at the eminently hipster downtown spot Nublu the night before the Orquestra's Zankel Hall show. Kassin's "ill-fitting" jeans, unkempt hair, bright orange Dusty Grooves record label T-shirt, and overly large eyeglass frames seem to evoke what Wampole describes as the "anti-style" of an intentionally "nerdy" look (Figure 8.2). The blue T-shirt featuring an image of the Star Wars character Jabba the Hutt that Kassin wore the next evening for the Zankel Hall show seemed even more patently to call up this hipster archetype. "Your mind powers will not work on me, boy," Jabba tells Luke Skywalker in the bubble caption. Wampole charges that the hipser "communicate[s] primarily through inside jokes and pop culture references" like these. He surrounds himself with things he likes "only because they are absurd" (Wampole 2012).

It would be difficult to interpret Kassin's use of the Auto-Tune software plug-in to alter his vocal in the track "*Sorver-te*" on his solo album *Sonhando Devagar* (2011) as anything but ironic. Auto-Tune digitally adjusts vocals to make them perfectly "on pitch." Journalist Josh Tyrangiel cited a recording engineer who described the process as "just like plastic surgery." If you fix one thing with Auto-Tune, the engineer said, "it's very hard to resist the temptation to spruce up the whole vocal, [and] give everything a little nip-tuck" (Tyrangiel 2009). Kassin is not a trained singer; his voice is faint, timid, and nasal. The Auto-Tune effect does nothing to redeem his limited vocal skills. Rather, it draws attention to its imperfections. His use of the plug-in for a track that has no ambition to make it onto pop radio would seem to have the effect of creating an "ironic frame" in sound, one that speaks to Domenico's complaint about Pro Tools potentially killing music with pop perfection. Another example that could be read as a hipster gesture is making an album on which all the sounds aside from the vocals

FIGURE 8.2. Kassin and friends performing at Nublu, New York City, December 4, 2012. Copyright by Frederick Moehn

come from a Nintendo Game Boy device, as Kassin did under the pseudonym Artificial (*Free USA*, 2005).

However, when it comes to the Orquestra, the members of the ensemble do not sing boleros because they wish to construct an ironic frame, if guitarist Pedro Sá is to be taken at his word. "We don't sing any of those songs in a style intended to show, 'Look, I'm singing [like the crooner] Assis Valente,'" Pedro told *Rolling Stone Brasil* (Preto 2007). Perhaps, when the Orquestra started in 2002, they crooned with a sense of hipster irony. Now, about a decade later, they are concerned with preserving the Orquestra as a space where the constraints of financial gain and a professionalized structure do not impede on the joy of social music-making. In a typical band, Kassin said, one starts out playing with one's friends, but, as the daily routine of making music becomes a business, it is not unusual for people to end up hating each other. "Not in the Orquestra. People go there to get together, play, and converse. It's about the music and the friendship. No one earns money" (in Preto 2007).

For Rodrigo Amarante, the process of learning repertoire already recorded by great vocalists and then finding new ways of singing the songs helped him to discover his own voice (ibid.). Moreno, too, felt that he had grown a lot as a "crooner" by singing older repertoire (ibid.). Similarly, they do not have Wilson das Neves on stage with them because it is ironic to do so. They may look like hipsters, but they have become quite sincere about this project, even if that sincerity was not so well captured on *Carnaval Só Ano Que Vem*. Indeed, the album seems quite incidental to the social aspect of the project.[11]

Conclusions: Sincerely Yours

Perhaps the musical activities of this cohort bear witness to a generalized shift toward a new sincerity. If the appreciation of the kitsch and the cheesy was a symptom of postmodern irony, the Orquestra is so sincere that the band members seem almost not to care what people think of them, or whether anyone buys or listens to their albums. At the least, they prefer to *appear* unconcerned. The term New Sincerity was used in a musical context already in the mid-1980s to refer to alternative rock bands based in Austin, Texas, that spurned the ironic attitude of certain contemporary punk rock groups. Punk bands in Austin yearned "for a cultural marketplace free of deceit, where a sincere expression, a pure representation, could arise from some essence of the performer untainted by the polluting structures of capitalism and then could be distributed through direct channels to a populace longing for it" (Shank 1994: 147–48). One of the key elements of this new sincerity in Austin bands was "a reduced emphasis on the precisely accurate execution of musical structures" (Shank 1994: 148). The energy, the live show, was more important. These attitudes apply to the members of the Orquestra as well; they want to recuperate some of the relaxed sincerity of pre-ironic and pre-digital popular music.

At the same time, direct channels of distribution have become a reality precisely because of digital technologies. This is how Thalma de Freitas, one of the singers with Orquestra Imperial, described the contemporary scenario:

> People are creating their own circuits. . . . I have my . . . MySpace, my blog, Skype with a telephone number in Brooklyn, and there's a cohort in New York at the Nublu bar . . . Next summer I'll probably go to New York [and] play in Nublu. I'll play and record with other people. And all this will give me a return, perhaps not immediately financial, but a return in production that allows my things to survive. So the artist is ever more independent, producing her own things, making them sell.

Irony, perhaps, is not as galvanizing a stance to take under these circumstances.

Jesse Thorn, the host of the Public Radio International (PRI) program The Sound of Young America, advocated for a new sincerity movement for some years. His succinct and cheeky "Manifesto for the New Sincerity" (2006) describes an ethos that *joins* irony and sincerity. It is "a rejection of what we called The Old Irony, which ruled the cultural roost, or at least the hipster part of the cultural roost, for the past fifteen years or so." The Old Irony was scornful, "essentially presenting something bad and laughing about how bad it was." Thorn rejected this and declared of the New Sincerity movement: "Our greeting: a double thumbs-up. Our credo: 'Be More Awesome.' Our lifestyle: 'Maximum Fun.' Throw caution to the wind, friend, and live

The New Sincerity" (ibid.). The New Sincerity thus trades post-modern irony and cynicism for "an almost childlike exuberant appreciation of everything that is awesome" (Reynolds 2008). Hipsters "make for useful lab rats" in social analysis, Jonathan D. Fitzgerald wrote in another critical response to Christy Wampole, but they are in fact "just kids making their way from young adulthood to the rest of their lives" (Fitzgerald 2012).[12]

In the period from the turn of the millennium to 2012 in Rio, we can observe a cohort of middle-class musicians for whom the transition from young adulthood to positions of a certain prestige in popular music occurred precisely as digital technologies shook up the old models of production and distribution. We can also point to some continuities with earlier tendencies such as Tropicália and, in general, a certain predilection for mixture found in much Brazilian music. However, the driving logic of their work seems not to be antropofagia and the dynamic between Brazil and the most "developed" nations. Rather, as these musicians have grown accustomed to working outside of the older market paradigms, they are probing new ways of enjoying music-making.

Notes

1. The idea of "songbook" aesthetics in this context refers to a series of widely known and carefully edited published sheet music collections, each dedicated to a major individual songwriter in the MPB canon.

2. I prefer "new MPB" to "New MPB" because the term is not in wide use. Unless otherwise noted, direct quotations from musicians are from my own interviews conducted in Portuguese, and in my own translations. Quotations from other sources in Portuguese are also in my own translations. I examined what might be thought of as the first generation of "new MPB" artists in Moehn 2012. This article is about a slightly younger cohort.

3. There are various alternative software or hardware interfaces, but Pro Tools is the industry-leading standard for digital recording.

4. See also Magaldi 1999: 309.

5. In high school Kassin formed a rock band called Acabou La Tequila. Pedro Sá had a band called Mulheres Q Dizem Sim with Domenico Lancellotti as drummer. Kassin, Domenico, and Moreno later formed another band called Gold Night Varsóvia.

6. The producer Chico Neves, a pivotal figure in the first generation of the new MPB, lent some of the equipment. Domenico's choice of the word "artisanal" to describe their recording practice is likely influenced by Neves (see Moehn 2012: 67–73).

7. Preparing a master typically involves comparatively minor adjustments made to the final two-channel stereo mix in preparation for the CD. Its main purpose is usually to render the overall sound more consistent across the entire album. They were finally satisfied with the master engineered by Ricardo Garcia at Magic Master in Rio.

8. Although the literal translation of the song title "Das Partes" would be "Of the Parts," the published translation of the title in the listening notes to the US release of *Music Typewriter* is "Of Parts."

9. The vocoder is an analog synthesis device that reproduces the sound of human speech.

10. Kassin released *Carnaval só Ano que Vem* on his own label, Ping Pong (with distribution from Som Livre).

11. The Orquestra released a second album in 2012, *Fazendo as Pazes com o Swing*. To this listener, it has a more confident production sound and avoids self-conscious cleverness.

12. Academic discussion of New Sincerity has largely taken place in film and literature (e.g., Collins 1993; Rombes 2005; Wallace 1993). Some of the most interesting writing on the topic, however, has been published on the Internet (e.g., Morris 2008, Jameson 2012, or the responses to Wampole's editorial).

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9

A Newer Tango Coming from the Past

Laura Cambra and Juan Raffo
Translated by Christine Paiva

What is it that has led a certain group of young musicians to experience today's tango through the recovery of its traditions? Why is it that tango, for them, has once again become an expression unambiguously linked to identity?

In writing this chapter, we set out to explore something that is as impalpable as the object of the study itself, since tango is currently going through a phase where various styles coexist, as well as different forms and expressions that go far beyond the music. Indeed, these variations are transforming tango into a "brand," a label under which not only the music and the dance, but also an entire industry linked to tourism—a permanent source of demand—are developing and evolving.

In the past few years, tango, also considered "the music of Buenos Aires," has experienced a rebirth following a long silence that was only interrupted by a few isolated voices. This newfound appreciation for the quintessential music of the city has come about from different angles. On the one hand, the dance received a notable boost in many corners of the world. Propelled by the international tourism that travels to Buenos Aires, *milongas*[1] recovered the flow of an abundance of people interested in experiencing tango as a dance; and in a way, foreign visitors were the ones who pulled the *porteños* (residents of Buenos Aires) along, both those who already danced and those who never had, populating these dance halls where customs and codes from the 1940s, recognized as the most prominent period of the golden age of tango, still reign. According to historian and music critic Sergio Pujol (2008: 240), "It is notable how tango has rewritten its original narrative: it was born in the feet and rose to the throat, where it was turned into music in the docile hands of arrangers and soloists. And it was so, in that order, that tango was reborn at the end of the 20th century."

Its being born "in the feet," as Sergio Pujol points out, is the characteristic upon which the world's image of tango was built. Two dance partners, the publicly displayed sensuality on the dance floor, and the exaggerated step are all part of the popular imagery of tango. This repertoire of common images that have been repeated on stage and on screen all over the world is, however, quite foreign to the Argentine way of expressing and feeling tango. For if the word "tango" essentially connotes a dance to most of the world, for Argentines, "tango" is above all music and poetry, mood, and feeling. And it is through this perspective that we approach the present work.

In *The Golden Age of Tango*, the poet and main example in what concerns tango, Horacio Ferrer (2000), responds to the question "What Is Tango?" by listing the following definitions (2000: 13–23): "it is to relate life in a ritual," "it is a culture within another culture," "it is the style of a people," "it is a madman devouring almost everything," "it is an art heritage." In addition, he unequivocally links tango to a lifestyle and to the people's way of being:

> Tango culture, as any other, comes from a lifestyle. Just like the flamencos live in flamenco and, in the United States, some people live in the blues, the *tangueros* live in tango. [...] Tango is a soul deed and therefore a set of memorable facts. It is the history—and a dearly loved prehistory—of the national style of the peoples of the Río de la Plata. [...] Since it is first a way of walking and then a dance, a way of talking and later a way of singing, a way of dreaming and later poetry, the sounds of the heart, the bells, the anvil, the kiss, the wind and later music. (Ferrer 2000: 16–17)

In the same way, bandoneonist, composer, and bandleader Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992) signals the differences between the idiosyncrasies of Argentina and of Brazil in the documentary "Astor Piazzolla in Portrait"[2] and relates them to their respective types of music:

> Brazilian people are extroverted and we are introverted, that's why the tango is always very sad. It is not happy music. It didn't have the richness, as Brazilian music has, of the percussion that comes from Africa, because we inherited the Mediterranean culture of Italy and Spain instead.

A Story of Notes and Rests

Born between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth as an expression that synthesized the multiple cultural influences that formed the port cities of the Río de la Plata, tango went through various different phases in its growth and evolution to become the music that is identified with Buenos Aires.

Between 1900 and 1920, the so-called old guard witnessed and played a main role in the period in which the dance acquired its definitive structure, instrumental combinations came to include one or more violins, one or more bandoneons,[3] piano and double bass, and the first recordings were produced.

The golden age, which took place from 1920 to 1950, was the period in which tango was transformed into a mass phenomenon. It came to be generally socially accepted; musical lineups began expanding; tango could be heard both on the radio, where it was listened to daily by the whole family, as well as in cabarets, attended by the *niños bien*[4] ("rich kids") who belonged to the higher social classes and who spread the music of Buenos Aires to Europe. In discussing this period, it is impossible not to mention Carlos Gardel, his international presence, and the tragic circumstances of his death in 1935.[5] During these years, there were abundant work opportunities for musicians who played in the morning on radio programs, in the afternoon in cafes, and at night in local theaters frequented by people looking for some enjoyment after hours.

However, beginning in the early 1950s, tango gradually started experiencing a quiet stillness of sorts. While it is not possible to attribute this growing silence to just one cause, what is certain is that by the end of the 1950s, tango had begun to be perceived as something "old," associated with the urban working classes, and linked to the strong growth experienced by Argentina in general, and the city of Buenos Aires in particular. Contributing to this growth, without a doubt, were the policies on social inclusion and workers' claims put forth by Juan Domingo Perón starting in 1943. It is necessary at this point to synthesize the political panorama in Argentina during these years, given that the process to access power, and later the consolidation of the *Movimiento Nacional Justicialista* (National Justicialism Movement), greatly influenced all aspects of national life. In 1943, then-colonel Juan Domingo Perón held office in the Labor and Social Welfare Ministry of the military government that had overthrown President Castillo. From this position and his close relation to the Argentine union movements, Perón boosted policies aimed at improving labor legislation, which for workers meant gaining access to paid vacation and retirement, and the possibility to count on labor courts to protect their rights. One year later, in the middle of a crisis taking place within the de facto government, the colonel was named minister of defense and vice president of the nation. Thus, Perón accumulated power in the executive branch and simultaneously acquired a space for leadership and prominence rarely seen in the country. Warned about Perón's increasing popularity, the generals at the head of the de facto government attempted to displace him, forcing him to resign and sending him to Martín García, a small island in the middle of the Río de la Plata, for imprisonment.

In October of 1945, the people went out on the streets and gathered in Plaza de Mayo. The protestors demanded for Perón's return, and were prepared to remain there until he appeared on the balcony of the Casa Rosada (the Argentine equivalent of the White House). The pressure from the people was so strong that the governing generals had no option but to give in to their clamor. Juan Domingo Perón had won the battle. He became president of the nation, and almost immediately made a call for elections that would allow him to return to office.

Perón won both subsequent elections—1946 and 1952—in an indisputable manner. During his presidency, the country experienced great economic growth, which was benefitted by the needs generated by World War II on the international scene. Public policies boosted several industries, including communication, transportation, and, especially, the heavy industry, which had prior been nonexistent. Perón's second wife, María Eva Duarte—Evita—although she held no position in public office, took on a great social task that was translated into the construction of schools, hospitals, shelters for children and the elderly, and financial help for those most in need. Additionally, until reaching her premature death in 1952, Evita held a vital role in the designing of comprehensive health coverage plans, preventative medical attention to children and teenagers, education, and recreation.

However, just as President Perón and the Justicialism movement helped Argentina grow and progress, they also tended to exercise reprehensible practices against their opponents, such as censorship, intimidation, and even repression. This led to a progressive rise in social tension, especially among parts of the middle and higher classes, as well as with military authorities and clergymen. Furthermore, after Evita's death, the government seemed to have lost its way. Finally, in 1955, a coup d'état named "*Revolución Libertadora*" (Liberating Revolution) removed Perón from office.

Silvia Rojas, director of *La Milonga Argentina* magazine, tells of how, when along with Peronism came the unionization of the working class, musicians gathered under the protection of the union to make their claims for higher wages. In fact, the Argentine Musicians' Union was founded in 1945 and established its first offices at 1100 Paraguay Street in Buenos Aires, in a building donated by Eva Perón.

The first ones to receive the request for pay raises were the owners of cafes where typical orchestras played for the clientele every evening. Owners refused to increase pay; musicians persisted in their claim. The result was that in almost every café, live music ended up being replaced by recorded music. Musicians were betting on being called back once attendance dwindled and owners would be forced to attract clients by once again offering live music. Meanwhile, the space yielded by musicians came to be occupied by the record industry, which was becoming more and more popular. This meant that little by little, the space once dedicated to orchestras disappeared from bars and cafes.

Another motive that certainly contributed to silencing tango was the long period of constitutional processes interrupted by coups d'état that started in 1955 with Perón being overthrown and ended in 1983 with Doctor Raúl Alfonsín taking office. The latter event closed one of the most violent and painful periods in Argentine history, the self-named "National Reorganization Process," a dictatorship that has left an indelible mark on the lives of *porteños* in particular, and of Argentines in general.

It is also important to highlight that in the mid-1950s, the whole world was shaken by the emergence of rock and roll, a rhythm that would receive widespread acceptance among youth and transform the international music scene.

Returning to the Argentina of 1955, it can be said that tango preserved its place among the preferred rhythms of the working classes, along with chamamé and other genres of rural folklore marked with a festive character that had arrived in Buenos Aires hand in hand with internal migration.

In his piece "Tango to Folk: Hegemony Construction and Popular Identities in Argentina," Pablo Vila (1991) situates the first signs of the decline of tango in the late 1940s, and takes a deeper look at the reasons for this. Vila's hypothesis proposes that the internal migration from the provinces to the city of Buenos Aires and its surroundings marked a milestone in the shift of musical preferences:

> Something happened during the late forties that produced a series of consecutive events: a disengagement of the internal migrants from tango, the growth of folk music, and the development of a type of festive music played by the *orquestas características* [characteristic orchestras]. These events are reflected, for instance, in the change made by the most important Peronist tango singer, Alberto Castillo, from tango to festive music. Each of these contributed to a segmentation of the musical taste of the city that finally, during the late fifties, appeared as a sharp decline in the popularity of tango. I will argue that the *cabecitas negras* relied on their cultural and musical background to process not only their move from the countryside to the big city, but also, and more importantly, their central participation in the Peronist decade. Tango, for various reasons, was not able to help in the process of identity construction the internal migrants were engaged in. (Vila 1991: 107)

The *Revolución Libertadora* that overthrew Perón in 1955 tried to extinguish all popular forms of expression, including tango, due to their consideration that they resonated strongly with Peronism and, therefore, were vulgar. Thus became apparent the profound difference between Evita's ever-spontaneous words, spoken directly to her "*grasitas*"[6] and "*descamisados*,"[7] and

the structured formality of the leaders of the armed forces that had begun governing the future of the country.

Lastly, with the period of consecutive de facto governments now overcome, the serious economic crisis that erupted in early 2001 and left a large part of the country in poverty led Argentines to deeply question their identity. So signals Morgan James Luker:

> As a young tango composer told me in 2004, "with the crisis we thought the curtain was coming down on Argentina for good; that was it, the end of the show. After that many people asked 'who am I? Who are we?'" (Possetti 2004). These are not abstract questions, but immediate and real dilemmas that have framed much of everyday life in present-day Argentina, including the production and consumption of music (Luker 2007: 69).

Astor Piazzolla: The Keymaster

Over almost three decades of forced interruptions in the electoral sequence (from the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s), the prominent Astor Piazzolla began to stand out as one of the few musicians to continue contributing his creativity to tango, creating controversial work that would be questioned by the majority of his colleagues but passionately deified and defended by urban intellectuals: excluded from tango in its own territory, yet strongly tied to tango beyond Argentine borders.

Regarding the violent discussion about whether or not his music belonged to the genre, Astor says, in "In Portrait":

> With this music, I was supposed to be out of my mind, I was supposed to be a Martian . . . anything but a man of tango [. . .] It was like a war . . . one against all. They were all against me in that moment. It was really terrible. I mean, they threatened me and my family, they gave me a beating once in the street, just because I was changing the music.

Gifted with several qualities that were not common for a musician of his generation, such as his musical curiosity, incredible ear, discipline, and working ability, Astor Piazzolla—born in Mar del Plata, raised in New York City, and musically matured in the golden age of tango in Buenos Aires (where he joined Aníbal Troilo's orchestra at only eighteen years old)—broadened the horizons of tango as a genre and permanently redefined its codes. According to writer and music critic Diego Fischerman (2004), Piazzolla's work captures the evolutionary spirit of Julio De Caro's sextet in the 1920s; it incorporates and restructures elements of European classical music such as the additive accentuations of Béla Bartók and Stravinsky, and the harmonic sequences and worship of counterpoint

that are characteristic of the Baroque period; it uses attacks, syncopation, and improvised gestures—although rarely would it be genuine improvisation—also present in jazz. The result is dazzling music that, as stated by pianist Pablo Ziegler, a member of Piazzola's quintet in its second period (1978–1988), "is a blessing and a curse at the same time" (quoted in Pujol 2008: 238): virtually impossible to use as an influence without falling into imitating and copying, because "its characteristics spread like a virus throughout every composition that uses them as its sources" (quoted in Pujol 2008: 238).

During those thirty years, as it was excluded from the list of popular favorites, which then leaned toward rock; as it was defeated in the battle against "that-music-that-isn't-tango" displayed by Piazzolla; as it was associated—on occasion rightly so—with the sectors that violated the institutional order and democratic system, the "traditional" tango began to fade out.

Piazzolla himself analyzes the stagnation and decline of tango:

> By 1955 in Argentina tango was starting to die. The cause of it was that rock and roll music (Elvis Presley, Bill Haley) started coming to Argentina and the younger generations started to get more excited about rock and roll than about tango. Then the Beatles came in in the '60s and that was the end of the tango. But my music kept going on and the young people understood my music because it wasn't boring. The old traditional tango is very boring. It is repetitive; there are no changes. There had been no changes in that music for at least forty or fifty years until I came in.

However, from that silent lapse, artists were born who today see themselves reflected in tango and live it as part of their identity. The musicians who oscillate between twenty and forty years old are the offspring of parents who listened to virtually nothing but rock and pop; who considered tango to be an anachronism, a type of music outside of all style rules, a dance for older people closer in age to their grandparents than their parents. They were also the gang who founded, between the mid 1960s and early 1970s, the youthful progressive Argentine music later crystallized—canonized?—as "*rock nacional*" (Argentine rock). This form of expression, as described by songwriter Acho Estol in the film "*Tango, un giro extraño*,"[8] inevitably fed off of tango:

> Argentine rock is like tango in exile. After many years of tango being "dead,"[9] Argentine rock musicians wanted a revolution, wanted to show something different, do something different, but inevitably, upon inventing Argentine rock, they were using *tanguero* poetry and the traditions of the popular music of Buenos Aires as a trampoline.

This generation, for the most part, essentially did not have parents involved in tango. As a result, they had to look further into their past to seek

guidance and inspiration from the masters. One could dare say that, as Astor Piazzolla himself emerged from this very spring, the youth of this time grew up mainly with the example of their musical grandparents and the company of a mere handful of musicians—Rodolfo Mederos, Daniel Binelli, Néstor Marconi, Julio Pane, Juan José Mosalini, among others—who belonged to the middle generation that kept the flame burning. In addition, regarding cultural preservation, we cannot fail to mention the role of the School Orchestra of Tango (*Orquesta Escuela de Tango*), an initiative set forth by the City Government of Buenos Aires, created in 2000 with the late master Emilio Balcarce as its director. As stated on the official site, the orchestra was conceived "with the aim of forming young musicians in instrumental practices with a dynamic approach that strives to recover the orchestral experience that took place following the golden years of traditional orchestras." It is likely for this reason that there has been a return today to the tango styles consolidated between the 1920s and 1940s.

The path traveled by these young tango musicians represents a paradox of sorts: having to go back in time in order to move forward into the future. On the other hand, the result of this path, with its constant comings and goings, gives way to a present in which the variety of musical expressions and proposals that coexist within the genre are quite notable. We can then encounter those who embrace tradition, as well as those who walk along the limits of the genre so confidently that it grants them a sense of belonging. However, everyone agrees on one thing: their entry into tango came about through Piazzolla's music. It was Astor who opened the door for them. It is worth noting that many also share a deep respect and consideration for a set of style conventions established throughout the twentieth century, including those brought about by Piazzolla, among which we list here:

- Basic instrumentation consisting of violins, bandoneons, piano, and double bass. Nevertheless, the Spanish guitar (*guitarra criolla*) has a very important role as an accompanying instrument for solo voice. The electric guitar (hollow body, jazzy tone) was introduced for the first time by Astor Piazzolla in the 1950s and became a standard instrument for small ensembles since then.
- Melodic role mostly in charge of the bandoneons and the violins. The bandoneons also function as a link between the string section and the rhythm section of piano and double bass.
- Compositions and arrangements that most of the time follow a binary form (A-B). The A and B sections may be of contrasting character (one rhythmic, the other more melodic) and/or of contrasting mode (one major, the other minor). Nevertheless, early tangos written in the first decades of the twentieth century often

follow a ternary form (A-B-C) similar to the European march or the American *ragtime*.

- Use of specific and very characteristic rhythmic patterns in the accompaniment: *marcato, síncopa,* "*yumba,*" *3-3-2, bordoneo*. Combinations of several of them in the same piece of music.
- Contrast, in the same piece, between melodies of rhythmic character and melodies of lyrical character. The latter often follow a melodic model crystallized by the romantic period in the nineteenth century in Europe: wide range, angular design, big leaps, extensive use of suspensions and *appogiaturas*, and so on.
- Contrast and alternation between detached *(staccato)* phrasing or "picado" and slurred *(legato)* phrasing or "ligado."
- Extensive use of countermelodies.
- Remarkable use of dynamics: *piano* (soft), *forte* (loud), *crescendo* (increasing volume), *diminuendo* (decreasing volume). This is often used to create a dramatic effect.
- Use of "*arrastre*" (drag), as defined by maestro Horacio Salgán, in every instrument.[10]
- Use of noises and percussive effects in non-percussion instruments: *chicharra* (cricket), *tambor* (drum), and *látigo* (whip) on the violin, knocking the bandoneon's body, *strapatta* on double bass, and so on.
- Rhythmic and expressive freedom in both melodic phrasing and accompaniment. Also, a somewhat free approach in the *tempo* (beat speed). Both characteristics flow naturally because in tango, unlike other "Latin" genres, there are no percussion instruments keeping a steady rhythmic pattern or groove.

Keeping Time by Going Backwards

These young musicians, practically orphans of musical parents yet certain that this baggage of resources acted as a shared inheritance, set out to search for their roots. Roots that, in many cases, were barely part of an imaginary concept that anchored them to tango. Some passed through other styles before realizing that tango was calling out to them like a familiar, pleasant, and endearing voice. Others arrived randomly, for love of an instrument that is almost exclusively identified with the music of Buenos Aires: the bandoneon. Others, though they were few, those for whom tango had been a way of life for their parents—musicians and singers—never considered the possibility of a genre other than the one they had listened to and learned to love since childhood. For all of these groups, tango seemed to be like a mother tongue, like one's accent in their language or something engraved in one's DNA.

Certainly, the journey that starts with Piazzolla for most everyone, follows a path whose continuation only recognizes a deeper immersion in its roots. Pugliese, Troilo, or De Caro first, and then earlier styles of tango.

No wonder, then, that since the definitive return of democracy to Argentina, there are many cases of jazz or rock artists whose journey has led them to tango and other Latin American genres. Specific cases include Miguel Cantilo, León Gieco, Daniel Melingo, and the twice-in-a-row Academy Award winner for best original score, Gustavo Santaolalla. In the collective scene, rhythms of Latin America and sounds of tango have become standard since the '90s in popular musical expressions like the "Rock chabón," defined Semán, Benedetti, and Vila as "Pro-Argentinian/Pro-Latin American" (Semán, Benedetti, and Vila 2004). Even among those interviewed for this chapter, Federico Marquestó and Pablo Marchetti originated from rock, while Nicolás Guerschberg and Diego Schissi came from jazz.

In striking contrast, there are virtually no examples of performers or composers who have made a successful or sustained journey in the opposite direction—that is, originating from tango and moving to jazz, rock, or pop.

Emiliano Greco defines himself as a *tanguero*. Heir to a tradition handed down to him by his family, his first professional contact with tango took place in his early childhood, when he played the guitar alongside his parents in their shows. "I never doubted that I would be a musician," he says. "A *tango* musician…because I never diverged," he adds, with a touch of shy pride. Juan Pablo Saraco, who came upon tango after passing through various other genres, puts things in his own perspective: "I am a musician, point blank. I can't be too categorical, because different types of music make me feel different types of things." Emiliano—piano, composition, and direction—and Juan Pablo—guitar—are members of Quinteto Viceversa, a group that implements the instrumental formation of the Piazzolla-style quintet—piano, bandoneon, violin, electric guitar and double bass—and expresses itself in the classic forms of modern tango, although it does not avoid the use of contemporary elements. Both Greco and Saraco recognize that, at present, tango is a genre that offers many job opportunities, such that there is a generation that has begun to uncover things that were once silenced, and that it is virtually impossible to escape the contextual and geographical predetermination that renders *porteños*, while they may not admit it, irremediably connected to tango, the culture around it, its customs, and its forms of expression.

For Emiliano, until 1990, tango was a "still genre." That is to say, it was limited to the parameters of the repertoires of the great orchestras from the 1920s to the 1940s, respecting those styles and arrangements to the maximum. Starting at the end of the 1990s, with the tourism boom, "it is the foreigner's attention that legitimizes tango." Here it is possible to draw a parallel with the triumph of tango in Paris in the 1920s, when what was once a marginal

dance was brought to Europe by "rich kids," returned to Buenos Aires legitimized, and was transformed into its own music and its most characteristic expression.

Greco recognizes that it was in those years that there began to be much available work in tango, and that the number of groups that "tangoed" (in any of its forms of expression) was multiplied. However, outside of the tourist track and dancing spaces where recorded orchestras and traditional pieces reigned, very few locals were summoned by tango, and generally speaking, there was not much space available for newer things. While as a composer he did not cease to write his own pieces, the example he maintained were the musicians from the golden age. "To go backwards in time, not to copy but rather to position oneself, is a good thing to me. It allows me to put what I am doing in perspective and confirm that what I am creating is tango. I will never create anything that I don't feel is tango," he states.

Emiliano and Juan Pablo are also organizers of the *Conciertos Atorrantes* (bad concerts) series at Sanata Bar, a space that has welcomed young—and not so young—tango musicians, as well as a less *tanguero* audience looking to appreciate what takes place outside of the official and touristic tango circuit in the city of Buenos Aires. In fact, it is there that various musicians who work in said circuit come together at tango "after-hour" sessions of sorts, once their respective performances have finished. It is, according to Emiliano's definition, "a place to play, in a non-traditional-*milonga* kind of way." The space even received the informal visit of acclaimed singer and bandoneon player Rubén Juárez, now recently passed, who improvised a masterly class for all the bandoneon players present, and later said in a television interview: "If you want to hear new tango, go to Sanata."

"I would love to be able to say that there is an underground tango movement and that the government supports it and the public keeps it going," comments Federico Marquestó, guitarist, composer, arranger, and music director of Conjunto Falopa, a group that strives to find the interaction between music and literature. "Falopa represents everyday personal chats, irony, something that is floating around out there and someone grabs it and makes it into a song," tells Pablo Marchetti, singer and author of the group's lyrics.

Falopa takes, among other things, the musical structure of the *milonga* and with the *decimal*—the octosyllabic, ten-lined stanza deeply rooted in Latin America—composes its own repertoire where the traditional musical form is intermixed with a very current poetic language not void of irony and humor. As an example of this universe, we can mention the song "*Tu Querida Presencia*" (Your Beloved Presence), which narrates the delirious story of a group of leftist activists that clone Che Guevara to later propel the socialist revolution to the global scale, financing it with the profits generated by the merchandising of the hero's figure.

In his own words, Marchetti comes from the writers' side of things, where politics and poetry meet, cross, and interweave. He places the birth of his relationship with tango at childhood, and recognizes that despite having gone through a rock phase, his connection with the music of Buenos Aires never falters.

As for Marquestó, he also recognizes the longtime link he has held with tango, from a distance. He recounts: "I remember the tango-candombe gatherings in my family as something rather boring. I started out in rock with influences from '90s fusion. Little by little, I started crossing over to a more Latin American tendency. My definitive turn towards tango came later, when I needed a repertoire for different guitar ensembles for my students, and then later on when I started teaching classes on the history and appreciation of tango in a private university in Buenos Aires that offers programs for foreign students, where I got into studying the leaders of the genre: Piazzolla, Pugliese, Troilo." In spite of all this, Federico admits that his main influence was rock: "When I had to figure out how to arrange music for several guitars together, the elements that came out naturally were things I had heard in records by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones," he says. He also points out a profoundly interesting parallel: "When the Beatles played '50s rock and roll classics from the US, they displayed the foundation upon which they built and developed their own style and voice. When we play a *milonga*, I experience it in a similar way. I feel like I'm styling my quiff and putting on my leather jacket. And that is what then allows me to go nuts with it."

For both Marquestó and Marchetti, the humor conveyed in Falopa's pieces emerges due to their decontextualizing—an unfamiliar concept in tango, which never makes reference to anything not firmly anchored in reality. However, they concur in that the music they make is not humoristic tango, a style that they associate with some groups who draw influence from *murga*[11] traditions, and therefore are more tied to an element of performance where one can detect a deliberate presence of musical clumsiness. Rather, their music carries a greater degree of complexity and generates laughter or a smile as a side effect. "Humor is something that is conveyed through words. In music, the effect is more subtle," says Federico. This vision of humor in tango is very different from that which can be traced in the past. The *milonga* of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s was associated with roguishness and later took height in musical theater performances from that period: in comedy sketches and revues. Tango, however, began to steer toward irony, and instead of provoking laughter or smiles in its listeners, was more likely to cause a grimace not lacking certain bitterness, as is typical of the melancholic spirit of *porteños*. This characteristic is easily perceptible in the works of authors such as Enrique Santos Discépolo.

"There is a certain irrepressible and incomprehensible desire that brings you in to tango. It's an 'I want to die here,' I want to make this music regardless

of the other musical experiences I have lived before," states pianist and composer Nicolás Guerschberg. Alongside him, Diego Schissi, also pianist and composer, concurs: "In some mysterious way, there is something that calls out to you. It is a necessity and at the same time a kind of joy. It is a cultural legacy. In order to know what to do, you have to go backwards and then come forward again. And legitimize your pertinence with your own voice." Both Schissi and Guerschberg lead their own musical projects and, in addition, share the organization and management of Tango Contempo, a group of composers and interpreters, along with violinist Sebastián Prusak, guitarist Esteban Falabella, double-bass player Juan Pablo Navarro, bandoneon player and composer Daniel Ruggiero, and the aforementioned Emiliano Greco. Tango Contempo is "a movement in which the classic figures and the newer generations join together to create their art, new music seeking a new audience."[12] The group's name plays with the concept of "tango" and the neologism "contempo" evoking a double meaning: "contemporary" and "*con tempo*" ("with consistent rhythm").

Tango Contempo was born in 2009 out of the need to create a space where one's own production could be displayed. "It would be great if there were more efforts with musical unity that were related to the genre. It doesn't matter if they are more or less *tanguero*. The ones that exist today are few and far between," insists Diego.

The Tango Contempo series is organized into weekly concerts where two groups representing one of the many different sides of tango, or other types of music that are closely enough related to tango, share the evening event. "After one year we still think it should be simply a *music* series, although it is clear that it's not a jazz series but rather something closely linked to tango or this city's music. Tango Contempo is a place to play, not just for us but for people who have a project, who have both the desire and the talent," explains Nicolás.

Asked about their decision to include the word "tango" in the group's name, Diego and Nicolás admit that both they and the other group members hesitated quite a bit before deciding to use it. In the end, the practicality of an easily identifiable label for the public prevailed. But internally (and as a bit of a witticism), the events that they call "tango" are those that feature musicians whose style is more traditional or orthodox, and the "contempo" nights are those where the artists work closer on the edge of the genre.

The thing is that there is a whole marketing issue around the use of the word "tango," as if this label were indispensable for the listeners, consumers, and, especially, the tourists to feel assured that they are not going to be disappointed and that what they are going to hear is classified under the umbrella of this genre. For so-called electronic tango groups, for example, it would seem that the "tango" part were necessary in labeling the group. Federico

Marquestó makes a sarcastic interpretation: “If you need to put the word ‘tango’ in the name of the group, it’s because you’re not sure you are actually producing tango.” On the other hand, Nicolás Guerschberg points out that “among the many innovations introduced by Astor Piazzolla is that of playing with the word ‘tango’ in his work: *Libertango, Violentango, Tanguedia.*” Perhaps it was the very fact that the topic of whether his music fit into the ‘tango’ category was so debated by his colleagues, and even by the public, that led Piazzolla to use all these variants.

Matilde Vitullo is a bandoneon player and the director of the Orquesta Típica Imperial. Unlike her colleagues who have been cited here, she came upon music later in life when, at twenty years old, she took on the bandoneon with no prior experience. Some time before that, when tango was not yet in her plans, the film “*El exilio de Gardel*,”[13] whose soundtrack was composed by Astor Piazzolla, had moved her. This distance between herself and music was, nonetheless, apparent: “I would never put music on, but now that I think about it, when my dad used to, the music would drive me mad. That is one of the things that most attracts me about this art: it can cause immediate emotional reactions.”

When she says that “in tango you start from the beginning: first Piazzolla captivates you, then you move to Troilo, to De Caro,” to those who can convey a tradition, a feeling that is interconnected with a certain geography but does not exclude those who are not locals, Matilde Vitullo confirms that the path that leads to tango is, inescapably, a journey back in time in which Piazzolla is the first landmark and has the critical role of being the one who introduces us into a world that we will never want to leave, that is universal. “There is something about the *arrastre* of a guitar in a tango that a Norwegian will have more trouble grasping than I will. There is something inevitable in our relationship with tango, a generational here and now that is more difficult for someone from abroad to perceive,” agrees Federico Marquestó.

The accounts of these young musicians make it clear that, for their generation, Piazzolla is the first and most important example from which the backwards journey begins, where they must go back in time to recover a history that has not been transmitted to them by the immediately preceding generation. Paradoxically, in terms of the history of tango, Piazzolla—that point identified as a beginning by today’s youth—is, in reality, almost an end. “The point is not to try to do something that Piazzolla did not do, but rather to attempt to explore the holes that he left,” ventures Emiliano Greco, and he cites a phrase that he personally heard uttered by pianist, composer, and professor Nicolás Ledesma: “Piazzolla went so far up the tree that we now have to fill in the branches.” Vitullo concurs in that “there are years with nothing in the middle, there are new generations taking up the past who are not going to argue over that; there is more of a sense of impunity. Who today is going to

argue over whether what you do is or isn't tango? There was this black hole, a void in time that left you with no one to question you. You are freer to go beyond the traditional limits."

All of these young musicians have chosen to express themselves through tango, though in varying ranges of the genre, since contemporary tango allows for this scope. But does the genre retain and protect, or become a limitation? What is the genre's limit? What will the innovation be that puts them outside of tango, into a territory with another name and identity? How can one innovate within the genre of tango?

"Innovation is not something that you find through a precise search, but rather through a ton of different aspects that you incorporate naturally, and I would even say that you almost don't even realize you are doing something new," says Emiliano Greco.

For Matilde Vitullo, "there was a really stupid generation of *tangueros* who were already old and recalled, mixing everything up, when they would go dancing; like you couldn't just go dance in sneakers . . . music, fashion, clothes, it was all the same to them. Instead of applauding that there were people keeping tango alive—and alive also means evolving—they stayed stuck in those old days and got upset over anything new. That happened a lot. With Piazzolla, for example . . . I don't know if the ones criticizing him were old, but he had fallen out of tango. Today it is valued in a different way."

For some, the rules of the genre are strict and classified according to the style conventions listed above. For others, the limits are more vague, and the discussion around where they are has not yet been had: "In music there is very little discussion about what the genre is. It is not something that we as musicians talk about," says Diego Schissi.

Strictly and precisely speaking, tango today is much more than music. It is the brand of a city, a brand that contains an entire productive structure: from the very music, especially in dancing form, which fuels shows that are part of the for-export circuit, *milongas*, festivals, and all the surrounding industries—clothing, shoes, souvenirs, and memorabilia—even initiatives like Tango Contempo, which, as stated by its own organizers, maintains itself thanks to that same circuit in which they do not feel included, but that, one way or another, provides jobs to some that while they do not make the music they would like to make, at least they are able to stay within the same genre and attract both a local and foreign public interested in their musical production.

In 2009, the highest peak of touristic affluence linked to tango was reached, a situation that led engineer Mauricio Macri, mayor of Buenos Aires, to say: "Tango is the soy of Buenos Aires," in reference to the economic importance that soy cultivation has had in the last few years in

Argentina. That same year, tango was added to the World Cultural Heritage list by UNESCO on the grounds that it is considered a valuable tradition to safeguard.

"What one hears and defines as tango is not tangible. That is, there are technical and interpretive elements that are identifiable, with which one can draw up a list; but there are others that are not so obvious. There is a *tanguero* element that emerges when composing, which is mostly a matter of rhythm. Rhythm is what defines it all," explains Emiliano Greco, who possesses a keen sense of tradition.

Identity Code

In the surveyed accounts, there has been a perhaps surprisingly strong emphasis put on the nationalistic feeling that "pushes" one toward tango. It is inevitable to observe that almost all interviewees belong to generations that grew up in democracy.

It is largely known that totalitarian regimes—regardless of their inclination—extend control mechanisms across all aspects of public and private life, which includes language. Crystallizing and fixating meaning, associating meanings to certain concepts or ideologies, excluding or appropriating words, using metaphors and euphemisms with an intimidating effect, intensifying the use of slogans or expressions, exacerbating formal and hierarchical language—these are some of the strategies that these regimes implement in a progressive and systematic manner.

The dictatorships that took place in Argentina, especially the last one (1976–1983), left permanent marks—and oftentimes without warning in everyday life—on the language of the people. Words and expressions such as "nationalism," "homeland," "national Being," and "flag" were appropriated by the most reactionary sectors of society—led by the military, the most conservative wing of the Church, and some economically powerful groups—and disappeared from our daily language. Gradually, over those years, the feelings of attachment to one's nation were placed through the sieve of self-censorship, as if being nationalistic, loving one's country, recognizing a sense of belonging, honoring the flag, or feeling proud to sing the national anthem meant adhering to this reprehensible, reactionary, ultraconservative, and chauvinist ideology. "For my parents, tango evoked fascism," asserts Pablo Marchetti, exemplifying how tango, a value that alludes national identity and a sense of belonging, remained stuck to this chain of concepts co-opted by the most reactionary line of thought.

Indeed, the artists who express themselves via early twenty-first-century tango show clear signs of having rescued those words, and that sense of belonging, from a place of oblivion and dishonor; of having stripped them of

the ultraconservative meaning that once tainted them; of having recovered them, first for themselves, and then for all of us; of having freed them from that past.

It is this freedom, perhaps, that allows them to look back, to delve into the history of the music of Buenos Aires, to recreate the sounds of the golden age of tango, to bring us the style of the great masters and, moreover, to explore other paths, compose new pieces, and pervade tango with the spirit of this time.

Upon freeing itself, this nationalistic feeling in turn frees tango and brings it to the present. It gives renewed value to its past, and at the same time reinvigorates its essence. It is a fusion produced by the interweaving of two periods of time. It is the recognition of its inscription in the genetic code. It is the tango of yesterday, with its characteristics and spirit. And it is, undoubtedly, a new tango.

Notes

1. *Milonga* is a term that not only defines a musical genre that precedes and is related to tango, but also a form of dance, and, moreover, the place where tango is danced.

2. “Astor Piazzolla in portrait,” Mike Dibb, director, 2005.

3. The bandoneon is a free-reed aerophone of the concertina type created in Germany in the 1800s. It was brought to the Río de la Plata toward the end of the nineteenth century and became the quintessential instrument in tango.

4. “*Niño bien*”: a somewhat vacuous and presumptious young person from a well-off family, *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*.

5. Carlos Gardel was a singer, composer, and cinema actor who was considered the most important tango artist of the first half of the twentieth century. He spread the music and image of tango throughout the world, starring in several films produced by Paramount Pictures and filmed in the United States—New York and Hollywood— and France. He died in an airplane accident at the peak of his popularity, which quickly transformed him into an icon whose importance and relevance has lasted until today.

6. *Grasitas*: (in Argentina) derogatory name for a working-class person. Eva Perón used the term in an affectionate way to address the people who supported her.

7. *Descamisado*: (in Argentina) Literally, shirtless. Colloquial word for working-class men who did not use a suit and tie, and which was used frequently during Juan Domingo Perón’s first two terms in office.

8. “*Tango, un giro extraño.*” Mercedes García Guevara, director; 2005.

9. The quotation marks here are ours.

10. According to the master Horacio Salgán in *Curso de Tango*, “The *‘arrastre’* (drag) is the beginning of a syncopation or marcato anticipating the attack . . . It is used when anticipating the bass note only, or also when anticipating both the bass note and the chord . . . The *arrastre* can be considered as almost a percussion effect, since when using it one is not aiming for total clarity, but rather the opposite: a rhythmic effect of imprecise tone.”

11. *Murga*: a popular musical-theatrical genre from the Río de la Plata region that satirizes political and social events.

12. www.facebook.com/tango.contempo.

13. "*El exilio de Gardel*," Fernando Solanas, director, 1986. Music by Astor Piazzolla, J. M. Castiñeira de Dios, and Fernando Solanas.

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10

Life Trajectories and Dejuvenilization in Argentine Rock

Adrián Pablo Fanjul

Translated by Peggy Westwell and Pablo Vila

Introduction

In the essay that follows, I contrast two musical compositions from two different periods in Argentine rock—"*Cuando ya me empiece a quedar solo*" (Once I start to be alone) by Charly García, recorded in 1973, and "*Sobre madera rosa*" (On Rosewood) by Gabo Ferro, recorded in 2004—that, in my view, share strikingly similar enunciative configurations. I approach them as two milestones along the pathway of intimist biographical modulation in the field of Argentine rock. When compared, we can see two different ways of representing a life trajectory. Such representations are related to other dimensions—interior space; the loved one; creative activity; the culture industry; and to models utilized in the construction of social identities. Of particular interest are the moments when this representation assumes different relationships with what is considered "young" (*lo joven)* and youth as a social construction, which run from feelings of closeness to refutation and disregard.

My aim is to employ the contrast between the above-mentioned songs as point of departure for showing the tension existing between two eras in Argentine rock. I say "contrast" because the backgrounds against which the two songs were composed are dissimilar enough that to account for one song bringing to mind the other would be unexpected. However, commonalities among them (certainly unplanned and indeed unplannable by their composers), stand out in sharp relief. Moreover, the similarities only become apparent if, as in the present case, the focus is placed on certain specific discursive features characterizing Argentine rock.

My prime objective is not to compare lyrics, but rather to approach the two compositions as salient examples of a certain type of autobiographical

representation in the field of Argentine rock. We will read some crossroads of the life journey represented as nontransparent symptoms of their era. In addition, in accordance with the subject matter of this book, I will pay particular attention to the moments when the autobiographical representation shifts position—from closeness to refutation or disregard—with regard to the significance of what is "young" (*lo joven*), and youth as social constructions. The analysis will include reflections on telling changes taking place since the '90s in how diverse sectors in the heterogeneous field of Argentine rock relate to other subfields of Argentine culture.[1]

Before Beginning

In this section I will briefly describe several theoretical-methodological assumptions I employ, together with certain terminology utilized and some necessary background information.

I work in the disciplinary field of discursive studies, which means I approach social practices from the perspective of linguistic materiality and the statements that, within it, produce meaning. Of the diverse currents that make up this heterogeneous field, I concur, in general, with those in which text and empirical subjects producing it are decentralized in order to give primacy to the relations among statements and historically constituted subjectivities that take place therein. A statement is seen as a link in a social dialogue, and social identities are approached as identification processes growing out of this discursive operation and made apprehensible by its linguistic materiality.

This is why the individual author or artist is not the focal point, even for statements with an aesthetic function. However, this does not mean that the singularity of the two composers in question, or of each one within the period in which he wrote the song, is irrelevant. As we will see in the following analysis, the singularities of the lyricists are not ignored. First, I will methodologically differentiate the facets of each one that has to do with my objectives—investigating the representations of life trajectories in Argentine rock as the basis for analyzing creative activity and the notion of "juvenile." Next, I will focus on how, in my view, the singularity of each artist is related to the discursivity of a particular cultural field, mediated by his positioning within the field and the immediate contexts of production.

For example, it is a fact that Charly García recorded "*Cuando ya me empiece a quedar solo*" at twenty-three years of age, almost at the beginning of his career; there is even information (Polimeni 1997) indicating that the song was composed when he was eighteen. By contrast, when Gabo Ferro wrote "*Sobre madera rosa*," he was a mature artist of over thirty who had already changed direction several times in the course of his career. If my objective was to examine the place each piece of music occupies in the work of its

composer, this distinction would be crucial. But this is not the case; my purpose is to approach the compositions by examining whether the relationship established by their semantic affiliation is one of confluence or opposition to the traditions determining how rock music has been produced in Argentina.

In other words, I privilege a non-singular approach to the singular. This is not to say that I won't consider the unique identity that these two artists have carved for themselves, leading to the great admiration that many people (myself included) have for them. Nevertheless, to investigate such singularity won't be my main objective in this chapter.

Prominent among the analytical instruments employed will be the notion of "enunciative scenography" (Maingueneau 2008a). From the perspective of language as representational activity, the statement is seen as a stage setting with three dimensions that will be referred to many times during the chapter: the configuring of personal instances (the enunciators, characters, and interlocutors represented), *topography* (how space is represented), and *chronography* (how time is represented). When discussing the instance of voices in an enunciative setting, I will also have recourse to the category of *ethos* as employed by Maingueneau. Ethos (plural, *ethé)* is the temperament, attitude, and corporality that comes to mind when we listen to a voice. I see this category as especially pertinent when dealing with words that are sung, since certain musical genres can be perceived, recognized, and associated with them due to the relatively stereotypical traits that can be evoked by a voice.

Last but not least, in relation to musical compositions as objects of study, one might question the relevance of an approach focused on their verbal materiality. We will answer such a query by pointing out that we do consider the sound dimension. On the one hand, the compositions chosen, besides being well framed in one particular field of popular music—the "rock nacional" of Argentina—also share their materiality musical traits, since they assume a mode that cuts across genres and nations, that of the "song." The song has been defined not as a genre but as a poetic-musical form characterized, among other features, by a repeated melodic progression (Tatit 2003: 9), whose circular melody gives it narrative potentiality (Valverde 2008). Furthermore, we think that our observations about the lyrics are justified by the objective of our work: to investigate a memory of statements, which, as we shall see, leads us to other non-musical genres as well. Therefore, without dismissing the importance of the musical dimension for other approaches, in our work the verbal is highlighted because it is precisely such materiality that shows, in its own semiotics, relations with a discursive memory.

I should also mention that on occasion, I will refer to "*rock nacional*" as a "field," in accordance with Diaz's (2005) usage of Bourdieu's notion of that word (1989 and 2003). Díaz views Argentine rock as a subfield of cultural production that belongs, in turn, to the larger field of the industrial production of symbolic goods. This enables him to study symbolic confrontations to

demarcate rock from other musical subfields, the rules of production emerging from its discursive practices, and its relationship with fields linked to other artistic practices. The concept of subfield is especially well suited to the path I follow in this chapter, in which I will deal with hegemony conflicts, representations that the field constructs about itself, and relations of this particular subfield with the culture industry, other artistic practices, and the demarcation of juvenile identity.

With regard to this last aspect, much has been written about the relationship between rock and youth, which has resulted in the view (one I adopt) that Argentine rock is “use music” (*música de uso*) as defined by Vila (1987a) and Semán and Vila (2001: 227), in the sense that “more than listeners, it produces social collectives.” Viewed in this light, “young” is neither an intrinsic characteristic of the musical forms that make up rock nacional nor a permanent presence in its poetics. It will be important to keep in mind in what follows that voices, words, or figures relatable to a youth identification do not necessarily participate in the scenery represented in the enunciation, and not even in the *ethos* inflections the voices assume.

Finally, although a number of these points will be elaborated upon below, it should be noted that the two musical compositions underlying this investigation occupy entirely different places in the evolution of Argentine rock, especially regarding circulation. Recorded in the 1970s, Charly García’s song corresponds to a second generation of classics at a time when both the identity and popularity of rock nacional were at a high point. To this day, García remains one of the most famous and central figures of the genre. Although Sui Generis, the band with whom García recorded this song, broke up in 1975, it is still one of the most popular groups in Argentine rock, with songs that entire generations know and love. The song recorded by Gabo Ferro thirty years later, on the other hand, belongs to the twenty-first century. To date, the singer-composer has recorded six CDs, and has been highly praised since embarking as soloist. He has not only won a number of prizes and earned honorable mentions, but his image is held in high esteem in a particular sector of the space and public of Argentine rock. However, his followers belong to a minority sector of Argentine rock, at a time when the field has become so diversified that it is not clear whether it can still be referred to as a movement, or even a field. The fact that the two compositions belong to totally different coordinates is a key factor in the analysis that follows.

I recommend reading the lyrics of both songs before proceeding; listening to them, if possible, would be especially desirable.

A Sort of Biography

In the two musical compositions under study, the voice modulates unmistakably in the poetic/musical category of song. At the same time, however,

such a voice is inscribed in one of the registers consecrated by the *canción* modality in Argentine rock: a slow, almost taciturn cadence, accompanied unstridently by a single instrument (piano in one case, guitar in the other).

Speaking in the first person, the voice constructs an enumeration that is everything it says. What is being named, what objects are being strung together, making up a soliloquy that, from beginning to almost the end, takes the form of a simple list? The voice names what is within the domain of the person it represents and delineates. Each item in the inventory is a brush stroke, suggesting some part of the environment of the quasi-character being constructed.

The lyrics of "*Cuando ya me empiece a quedar solo*" and "*Sobre madera rosada*" are wholly made up as relations among objects linked to different spheres of the person: corporal, memoristic, those related to clothing, furnishing, or domesticity. The syntax is the bare bones of this program: dependent phrases with the verb "to have" are the starting point in both compositions. *I will have* in the first, *I have* in the second—a temporal distinction that will be discussed below—are the sprigs to which, with different degrees of intermediation, the images cling. To be sure, a "having" does not always mean "owning something," since it can name something presented as abstract (especially in García's lyrics), as magic or emotional.

The last link in the enumeration is fixed in both cases by the use of the word "and" indicating the last item. But this final object is not just any component, not simply one more quality or utensil. It is the zenith of the intimate space represented, rising "above all else," above something "formidable." It is a trace of an intimate you (*tu*), "your ghost" (*el fantasma tuyo*), "your image" (*una imagen tuya*). Its role consists of not being there anymore; it is the complement of the one who "is left alone" or "off camera."

The treatment of time—as future prospect for Charly García or vaguely perceived past for Gabo Ferro—does not take the form of a narrative sequence; rather, time is a function of traveling through a space, through an intimate topography. Since a similar declarative configuration can be present in different genres, one wonders about its place in the Argentine rock scene, in its more than forty years of history. By addressing rock as an intersemiotic discursive practice—one involving several languages (verbal, musical, corporeal)—I understand that those languages, converging in rock nacional, suffer the effect of the same system of semantic constraints (Maingueneau 2008b: 138), led by this quasi-genre and the field that forms in its milieu. That is the reason why this biographical stage setting constructed in an intimate space is not solely a variable of "issue" or "topic," a possible "theme" in rock lyrics. It also serves a discursive compositional function, providing a *form* to the space/time/person relationship represented, carrying with it an attraction for another form, the musical materiality of the song. The compositions under consideration are perhaps the two most important examples in Argentine rock in which this configuration of form, meaning, and objects

represented appears with such remarkable regularity: *to prefigure a life trajectory describing an intimate spatial domain that begins with a "have," culminating in the presence/absence of another human being, a companion from the past, that flutters over the space.*

How do these compositions shed light on the question anticipated above—the different ways in which the stages in a life trajectory, interpersonal relations, creative activity, and the limits assigned to "individuality" itself have been represented and valued in different eras and sectors of rock and other fields of Argentine urban culture?

I will begin my answer with a topic that might appear secondary were these lyrics studied in isolation, but in fact becomes key once the lyrics are viewed in the context of the field of rock: the ellipsis of youth and the young that has resulted in a certain "dejuvenilization." In neither set of lyrics is the life trajectory represented showing specific marks of youth as a stage of life; the possibility is not ruled out, but is simply not treated as the focal point of the lyrics. Neither the objects mentioned nor the space described or the vocabulary employed point to a juvenile world; nor do the voices of interpretations construct, in their modulations, a young body.

Another feature distinguishing "*Cuando ya me empiece a quedar solo*" and "*Sobre madera rosa*" from other Argentine rock lyrics describing life trajectories is that, in the lyrics of García and Ferro, *there is no underlying tale of apprenticeship linked to that trajectory* (a common figure in rock lyrics in general). In the configuration corresponding to these lyrics, intimacy dominates the biographical information. And the intimate-biographical chronotope[2] they correspond to presents a life trajectory from a *resultive* perspective: the emphasis is not on the process of acquiring or keeping that generally characterizes apprenticeship narratives, but rather on what one has or what remains. I see this as contributing to making the juvenile figure dispensable.

However, the juvenile figure is not equally alien to both sets of lyrics. In "*Cuando ya me empiece a quedar solo*," youth is not among the objects represented, but, as will be shown in the next section, neither is it absent from the critical perspective of the external enunciator who brings the first-person voice on the scene. It is clear that showing this person describing his decadent space implies an exterior expectation according to which life can be different, and in that exteriority can be read, as a counterpoint, the values characterizing the classic relationship of rock to a particular generational identification. By contrast, in "*Sobre madera rosa*," enunciator and character represented share the same perspective. Counterposing the two songs from this vantage point reveals in the latter traces of the great crises in the relationship of Argentine rock with social identities and the social construction of what is "young" (*lo joven*) that occurred in the almost thirty years separating them. Fundamentally, also visible are traces of the quagmire of reconfiguring identities that accompanied the transformation of the social formation and

Argentine culture during the decades separating García's composition from Ferro's.

Now that the configurational and enunciative features that the two musical compositions have in common, and that in my view justify grouping them together, have been described, I will proceed to consider what differentiates them, with special emphasis on the multitude of images both contain. This is the path I will follow in the next section, the most extensive of the essay, which is divided into five subsections; the point of departure in each case will be the models or lack of models perceived in the construction of space and time. I will then consider certain identifications offered and in conflict in the social space, along with their prominence in rock imaginary at different times. With regard to this last point, the question of the form artistic activity takes will be touched upon, as well as the level of interaction between rock and other cultural practices, primarily poetry. In the last section, I will return to aspects of the representations found in each composition, in this case those of people and their settings, in order to examine how they are related to the identitarian displacements under consideration.

Divergent Paths

SPACES AND MODELS

Starting with the way space is treated when setting up a scene, García's lyrics were much more likely to use models and counter-models. Indeed, the space suggested in "*Cuando ya me empiece a quedar solo*" is identifiable as a domestic interior in which rooms and specific places are somewhat differentiated. There are windows, and there is a bed. A cat is walking around, and from the start, there is a body from whom the scene emerges. Described starting with the eyes and the mouth, this body and its position make it possible to calculate the dimensions and placement of certain objects: on various surfaces or in corners, at a greater or lesser distance, there are a book, the television, the radio playing full blast, the pile of newspapers, the flower. There is also an empty stage, a space perhaps evoked, perhaps present. Voices that shout and hands that applaud are presented as distant, past.[3]

In contrast, in "*Sobre madera rosa*," objects really alternate, as Gabo pointed out in an interview:[4] there exists a truly "pure space," a description I take to mean lacking any indication of interior or exterior space or of positions and distances. Also lacking is any representation of a body that might organize these dimensions, if only through the mention of body parts, positions, or gestures. The only body is the voice, and the person is reduced to—magnified in—an "I have" that, if it weren't for the dilemma presented at the end of the song, would be all-inclusive. Here, all of the objects, including the magic or sacred ones, require a representation with materiality and volume;

there is not a single element (unlike García's composition, where some do exist) that doesn't need it.

If the way space is configured in García's composition tends to affirm models to a much greater degree than does Ferro's, its temporal dimension also serves to demarcate them. The projection into the future in the "*Cuando ya*..." lyrics brings to light quite clearly what one *doesn't* want to be, a feature reinforced by the abundance of negative expressions: a book that is dead of grief, a drawing that has been destroyed, things classified as useless, a figurative prison, and so on. Fame and applause didn't serve any purpose, because creative ability has withered: the distant eyes do not seem to be on a creative journey and the stage is empty. Love has also been lost; it is only a ghost that mortifies. In opposition to this person and the place he finds himself, there emerges the counter-model sustained negatively by the lyrics.

That counter-model is a restless life, not worried about reaching a secure old age. Priority is given to artistic creation over the repercussions and applause the entertainment industry can bring about. It searches for an open, free exterior space without enclosures or hollow places. It rejects both radio and TV, looking for direct contact with other people; a sort of non-electric company, human, "natural," with sensibility. A veritable prototype of the image Argentine rock constructed for itself during its period of greatest cohesion and vitality. Even though each of the values figuring in this imagery can be considered a relatively permanent feature in the discourses that have shaped the field over the years, the perception of an interaction and reciprocal correspondence among them and the "preconstruction"[5] of a solidarity-oriented hegemony truly belong to the particular moment when "national rock" first burst on the scene. Because of the desire to be creative and sensitive, *naturally* a high value is placed on risk; *certainly* open space in nature and fresh air are preferred, as is group or communal living; *obviously* the artificiality of the mass media and the promises of the culture industry are despicable. Authenticity is valued (note that the subjective prison is made worse by not being "mine"), and that is *naturally* why everybody "understands" that the person represented in the song has had an unhappy life. The ethos that incorporates[6] this *everybody* is evidence of the relative homogeneity of these values, and the dichotomy young/not young has been effective in constituting them.

Any attempt to apply this ethos to the intimate-biographical chronotope in "*Sobre madera rosa*" leaves no doubt that a hiatus has occurred, that the perspective is totally different. The "pure space" inhabited by the objects in Gabo's lyrics seems to favor the non-production of a model or counter-model of a life trajectory. Another factor, referred to in passing above, is that the objects being "inventoried" do not include qualitative or "abstract" entities like the ones we found in García's song, whose generalizing power suggests a judgmental positioning. The only "abstraction" mentioned, "serenity,"

is turned into a thing: written in blood. Another factor pointing to the non-production of models is the apparent representation of a "pure present" in the temporal dimension of the lyrics.

This should not be taken to mean, however, that there are no values or hierarchies represented. The way the voice presents the objects makes perceptible how much the person placed in the scene appreciates them. In a cautious but discernible distribution, expressions like "hoard," "sacred," "magic," and "formidable" reinforce a positive value judgment. Neither is the present absolute: it doesn't even dominate the chronography of the scene. The present is constantly traversed by terminative forms that make many of the objects presented the result of a process that has fallen on them and that, like all processes, attests to the passage of time.

The mandala has been painted; the little doll, mended; the sacred seeds have bloomed; the woman in the engravings has been cut in three; the wheel, tied, and so forth. In that way the present is insinuated as the effect of a past. In the first stanza of the song it was stated that a mirror "treasures the origin of time." Analogously, the images we are enumerating keep something quite perturbing and are the reverse of the embellishment of the voice with its valued objects. In several of them, afflictions and even sordidness appear, presented with such delicacy that the tone never becomes strident: the mending with black goat hair, the tripartite division of the image, the writing in blood, and the disturbing final stanza of the song, to which we will return later.

When approaching the question of possible "models" for or identification processes in "*Sobre madera rosa*," we discover that the confluence of several aspects of the lyrics' poetic materiality make this dimension difficult to grasp. At the same time, however, something perceptible is there, a non-singular something that manifests itself in the lyrics and links up with identification processes in conflict among themselves, and, in particular, in conflict with rock-related discursitivities.

SCRAMBLED KNOTS

As indicated earlier, the counter-model emerging from "*Cuando ya me empiece a quedar solo*" is a product of the interaction between values and hegemonic premises governing that particular period of Argentine rock. Representations of creative activity, romantic love, the culture industry and "success," youth as opportunity for communion, and the field of rock itself functioned more or less harmonically during this period.

In the almost thirty years between García and Ferrós's lyrics, each of the above objects was reconfigured time and again; the result was not the definitive substitution of one set of representations by some other set, but instead their contradictory coexistence, and a diversification that supplanted the homogeneity of the early years. In the field of Argentine rock—if the term

still has meaning—one is hard-pressed to find discourse circulating "naturally, with certainty" preconstructed around any of these topics. In illustrating this point, I will limit myself here to a few general observations; readers desiring a more detailed analysis are referred to the pertinent bibliography.[7]

Argentine rock became consolidated in the mid-1970s: not only were bands later considered "classic" performing regularly, but a number of magazines and radio programs covered rock in the mass media; there was TV coverage as well, albeit with less frequency. The record sales of some bands—Sui Generis is a good example—were also relatively high. In a word, the movement was abandoning the vanguard to become a part of the massive popular culture, appealing to ever greater numbers of urban youth in Argentina's large cities. During the early years of the military dictatorship that took power in 1976, growth ceased; although in general rock musicians did not suffer the severe persecution that artists in other fields did, rock concerts were boycotted after police began attacking and detaining attendees, and censorship became widespread. For their part, the culture industry and mass media fostered the consumption of disco music, and for many young people, going to the discotheque became their entertainment option. The identitary model that resulted was rejected by national and foreign rock fans, who also began reconfiguring their group identity in opposition to this model. When the dictatorship began to wane in 1979, rock nacional, especially rock concerts, gained in popularity, taking on a political cast for the first time as reference point for young people resisting the military regime.

It is practically a foregone conclusion among those who study and critique Argentine rock that the Malvinas/Falklands war in 1982, and the end of the military dictatorship, greatly increased genre production. For the first time, rock nacional attained mass popularity; the number of bands grew incessantly, and the music they played became more and more diversified with the development of a wide variety of currents and styles drawn from other types of musical expression such as the rock, punk, and pop played abroad, and also from other fields of music in Argentina. In the years that followed, Argentine rock became more and more closely integrated with the recording and entertainment industries. With the dictatorship gone, the genre's significance as a space for resistance faded, while the political activity of the middle and lower classes under the constitutional government diversified.

During a large part of the 1980s, the so-called underground became the possibility of an autonomous space beyond the reach of the culture industry. In time, some of the bands and the marginal scenes they played in became so well-known and their fans so numerous that their underground status was called into question. As a result, in the 1990s, the field of Argentine rock was marked by a controversy regarding what was "alternative" and what was not; this gave rise to a paradoxical situation that

entrapped a number of rock bands and artists. Announcing that one is "outside" the culture industry and not subject to its dictates became one of the banners raised to attract fans and court popularity. However, the success of "alternativity" converted the "outsider" label into just another advertising slogan for the entertainment industry and the functioning of the increasingly lucrative rock market.[8]

During this same period of time, Argentina underwent drastic socioeconomic changes that produced a staggering increase in social inequality. Being "young" in one or another socioeconomic class became radically different, resulting in a totally different set of expectations regarding social insertion and market relations, as well as in the possibility of being the victim of abuse by the repressive apparatus of the state. These transformations brought about reordering and new demarcations in the now vast field of rock, where collective enjoyments and identitarian constructions taking place among the most relegated social sectors was making its appearance in the form of "barrio rock" or "rock chabón."[9]

The upshot of the above transformations in the field of rock has been that, in the late twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries, statements demarcating what is considered "young" or "alternative," and what can properly be considered rock nacional from what is supposedly its outside, has become increasingly banal, leaving a vacuum requiring new formulations. This will be the subject of the next section.

YOUTH FOR A PRICE

As neoliberalism swept the globe in the 1990s, "youth" as an identitarian construction was directly dismembered by the market and hegemonic sectors in Argentina, where a combination of circumstances caused a series of effects that were both extreme and, to some degree, unique.

Labeling something "young" and profiting from youth's most rebellious productions is nothing new in Argentina. But during the 1990s the phenomenon turned into a true process of expropriation and discrimination that came close to engorging the very notion of "young" by emptying it of substance and meaning.

In the first place, youth seemed to be a space to be occupied by exercising purchasing power. As Beatriz Sarlo (1994: 41) astutely observed in a contemporary essay, "youth is more prestigious than ever" and is seen as "a territory in which everyone wants to live indefinitely." The surge of new technologies for modifying the body, together with the increase in the supply and diversity of gym and sportive resources for keeping in shape, accompanied the hypervaluing of attaining and preserving a "perfect" body and "visible" youthfulness. Simultaneously, images often take precedence over the written word, even among certain groups of intellectuals.

Large contingents of rich and upper-middle-class "over-aged" people sought to establish their own youth credentials, a sort of "youth by cash" that is raised in the mass media as an obligatory panacea. In Argentina the president himself joined the party. Carlos Menem strove to show off his abilities as athlete and playboy, while his presidential body became a metaphor for the new object of desire via botox injections and the insertion of hair follicles. An individual's sex life was also placed nervously on view as part of the "package" that came with the new body, an apparent "liberality" that made sex just another imperative. For the biologically young, this new market mandate for a "successful" body, far from facilitating the pleasure of discovery, usurped it; at the same time, AIDS continued accumulating victims, and anorexia assumed epidemic proportions among teenagers.

An unprecedented exclusion completed the expropriation: the biologically young were obliged to acquire their juvenile identity in the marketplace at a time when the brutal rise in unemployment and social inequality made this more and more difficult. Precisely because youth was "in style," the mass media was replete with parameters for determining what "young" looked like. Limited in the past to the advertising discourse and its isolated and fleeting interpellatory activity, defining "youth" was now carried out by a multiplicity of agents that included journalists and prime time television series. The models produced might be more or less rebellious, but they were always enterprising and competitive. In the words of Elbaum (1996: 117), "Youth has become a discriminatory category: the others, the unfit, aren't young: they are marginal or simply delinquents."

VERY YOUNG, VERY VIOLENT

In the same interview already mentioned, Gabo Ferro describes "*Sobre madera rosa*" as a "post-Menemist manifesto," and this is not coincidental. Despite the song's being situated on the plane of intimist representation, it would be hard to imagine it formulated outside the discursive memory[10] of the symbolic violence I described above and the strategies of resistance opposing it. On the one hand, the character of the song is represented almost exclusively by a series of unmistakably material belongings; on the other, market rationality is subverted by enumerating objects impossible to price or buy and sell, which would not yield any distinction in the economic field. Some of the objects appear linked to personal aesthetics (the mirror, bracelet, and skirt), but no actual body is represented or insinuated by them; in addition, they refer to a feminine body but are named by a masculine voice.[11] The images that seem to refer to a sex life in no way record it as a collection of acts performed by a triumphant body; the image of "*los ojos picados por querer aparearse*" (eyes bitten for wanting to mate) is eloquent in this regard. And

the lack of any reference to age by either individual or objects described also reflects the depletion of the notion of "young."

In order to continue observing *historicity* in "*Sobre madera rosa*," at this point it is required that the song must be placed in the immediate context in which it was produced. Although unarguably singular as composer, Gabo Ferro is not isolated: he belongs to a quite specific creative space in the cultural life of Buenos Aires that will be referred to from here on, and which is related to the genesis and continuity of the cultural resistance that emerged in the '90s in the fields of music and poetry; my aim is to shed light on this subject, which has been little studied to date.

It is opportune here to mention a statement that, in an out-of-the-way corner of '90s rock, puts into words the usurpation of what is "young." "*Mis muertos conocen la muerte entre las piernas. Bien joven, bien violenta*" (My dead know death between the legs. Very young, very violent) was the leitmotif of a song recorded by the hardcore band Porco;[12] in it the voice of the "juvenile" singing rises an octave, with two drum beats for emphasis. The voice-character is represented, in the first person, in different situations of subjugation, and the last stanza consists exclusively of the repetition of the above verse with a strident, drawn-out drum, electric guitar, and bass accompaniment. The voices, multiplied and mixed (all by Ferro himself, a member of the band and author of almost all its lyrics), isolate and work over the diction of the word "juvenile," carving it and turning it into the words "*comen*" (eat), "*tomen*" (might take), "*toman*" (take or drink), and "*joden*" (fuck), in the frenetic repetitions that end the song. The apparently unlimited liberty and glorification of youth is countered by death "*entre las piernas*," which does away with hedonism. The parallel structure "*bien joven / bien violenta*" not only evokes and resignifies a memory of statements associating youth with violence, but also refutes the perception of determined deaths as "natural" or "from illness," making plain the violence at work, which is also extended to the signifier "young" itself, crushed and degorged.[13]

This symbolic violence linked to the representation of what is juvenile is refuted in other songs performed by Porco, a band with a relatively short life (it broke up in 1997). Despite its limited poetic crafting when compared to other compositions of the band, "*No salven al Panda*" (recorded on the first of the band's only two CDs) is interesting because of the polemic it makes explicit. After affirming that "*entre nosotros la muerte nunca se sintió tan cómoda*" (among us death never felt so comfortable) and that many people die "*de SIDA, de hambre, de solos*" (of AIDS, of hunger, of being alone), the author throws out the sentence: "*El amor no es fuerte y la fe es de ellos*" (love isn't strong and faith belongs to them). The refutation expressed in the Porco lyrics underlines the alienness of the discourse that puts maxims in the mouth of the juvenile "rebel" model. The song ends rejecting other aspects of this condescending strategy: "*No nos pidan que lo hagamos mejor.*

Nosotros ya tenemos sentencia." (Don't ask us to do better. We have already been sentenced.)

Praised by the most discerning genre critics and awarded a prize in the *Bienal de Arte Joven*, Porco made an impact on those who came into contact with it because of its originality and performativity. It was described as "nihilist," a term that appears to this day in reviews of Porco from different cultural sources. The term is less interesting for its applicability, which is debatable, than as a symptom of the discursive confrontation surrounding the band's lyrics and public appearances.

Despite the differences at so many levels distinguishing Ferro's current work as soloist from his contribution to this band seven years earlier, there is an undeniable connection between the two. This is especially true with regard to "*Sobre madera rosa*," considering its quasi-manifesto character as the song with which Ferro initiates his career as soloist—a song that still shows, on the points already noted, some wounds of those attacks. The reference to the band is thus relevant not only for these reasons, but also because tracing the places in which it circulated identifies spaces in the '90s where a specific type of cultural resistance was mounted. It was here that a certain logic first appeared, expressed today by a sector still perceived as belonging to rock nacional; this rationale plays an important part in the current modulations of the biographical voice whose path I am following here.

In the 1990s, the rock audience had increased and reached an unprecedented mass character, but also unprecedented was the campaign on the part of the business sector to control all possible stages of its production. Given this panorama, some musicians and bands launched independent production initiatives[14] in order to free themselves as much as possible from circuit demands while still having their music heard. Advances in recording and reproduction technology made their efforts slightly more feasible than similar campaigns in the past. In addition, many small spaces opened their doors to live music from alternative sources and were also important in this regard. Too heterogeneous to be considered as forming any kind of movement, musicians taking this route often rubbed shoulders in the same spaces with others under the management of commercial entrepreneurs. Some intermingling would occur here, with independents signing contracts with recording companies and mainstream musicians going the other way. There were, of course, also those who simply dropped out of sight.

Amid this mixed bag of independent and quasi-autonomous production, one distinguishing characteristic can be pointed out: a renewed interest in the poetic use of words in compositions that frequently adopted the *canción* form. This production, too inorganic to be called a movement or merit a special name, but that, nonetheless, constitutes a rupture even today, is the subject of the next section.

HANDCRAFTED WORDS

Returning to the prized objects named by the voice in "*Sobre madera rosa*," in addition to their necessary materiality, they have another feature in common: they are all necessarily *handcrafted*. Viewed in opposition to industrially produced objects, giving them prominence is not an innovation in rock discourse. But when counterposed against what is considered "natural" in this same discourse, the opposition is revealing. Nature and the spaces offering contact with it are a commonplace in rock discursivity, and they are always given a positive connotation in contrast to what are seen as the negative aspects of the urban environment or to different kinds of reclusion. References to "natural" as a type of "being disposition" that ideologizes "genuinely" creative activity as spontaneous, instinctive, unhesitating, and unreflecting also abound.

But no natural space is present or even evoked in "*Sobre madera rosa*," and what comes from nature has been carefully worked on and turned into handcrafted objects. There is also nothing in Ferro's lyrics like the abominably industrial "*televisor inútil*" (useless TV) and "*radio a todo volumen*" (radio playing full blast) that figure in García's reclusion of the '70s.[15] Apparently, the disjunction between industrial products and nature is no longer relevant, and attention is still paid by Ferro to the vitality inherent in certain raw materials used in handmade objects. There is something special about the fact that the seeds in the bracelet have "flowered and are fragrant"; by the same token, the origin of the blood appears to enhance the words written in a dead language. And any representation of creative activity in the scene described is in no way "spontaneous." Rather, it is derived, in this case, from the pleasure of turning words into poetic constructions: creativity is an integral part of the very materiality of original, handcrafted lyrics.

An attempt was made in the '90s to recuperate the relationship with words in rock music and production by certain artists from what I term "independent" or "autonomous" spheres.

This effort to revitalize lyrics has continued to this very day, accompanied in the case of several musicians by a questioning of the field of rock's identity. As has already been said, these artists do not constitute a movement, nor are they grouped under a single heading in serious rock criticism, although many of them have shared scenarios and experiences.

A starting point for exploring this area is Palo Pandolfo, ex-leader of Don Cornelio y la Zona, and later, in the '90s, of Visitantes. Primarily with the latter band, which attained some fame, he signed contracts with commercial recording companies. But his subsequent solo career has been mostly autonomous and characterized by its low profile in the mass media. Yet even at the peak of Visitantes' popularity, Pandolfo and his partner and fellow

band member at the time, Karina Cohen, were active participants in a poetry collective made up of musicians, poets, and painters. The original aim of the group was to gain an audience for poetry recitals, which was then extended to publishing a book of written poetry (AA.VV 1999).

The collective, called *Verbonautas*, was active between 1995 and 2000, during which time members read poetry in public, occasionally accompanied by music. Indeed, when people saw the name Pandolfo among participants in the program of the collective's first poetry recital in *La Luna bar* in 1995, some went in the hope that at some point *Visitantes* would play (Arévalo and Daza 2008: 32). Regular participants were Osvaldo Vigna, Hernán,[16] Gabriel Coullery (died 1998), Vicente Luy, Carlos Nuñez, Eduardo Nocera (currently a journalist), the already mentioned Pandolfo and Cohen, and the painter Pablo Folino. The latter and the musicians named wrote poetry while members of the collective and musicians and poets who were not members also participated in the recitals; one of them was Gabo Ferro (even back in the days of Porco), who later belonged to the collective for a time.

For its part, *Verbonautas*, in many aspects of its poetic activity, maintained an identificatory link with music, especially rock music. During the poetry recitals, music was played alone and to accompany certain poems. Even after the collective broke up, the link with music was continued by some members.

In this and other analogous experiences, composers and bands have crossed paths with poets. Not coincidentally, many of these musicians, although aesthetically diverse, have shared experiences on the independent production circuit, and have shown a marked affinity for the song (*Canción*) form and the careful crafting of the verbal dimension of their compositions. In addition to the above-mentioned Pandolfo and Ferro, musicians following this trend have included, from the '90s on, Ariel Minimal (soloist and member of the *Pez* band); Flopa Lestani; Mariano Esain ("*Manza,*" has played with Menos que Cero and Valle de Muñecas, besides forming a trio with Flopa and Minimal); and Francisco Bochatón (who has also published poetry), along with the members of bands such as Me Darás Mil Hijos and Pequeña Orquesta Reincidentes (dissolved in 2008). Appearing in the 2000s, Florencia Ruiz and Juan Ravioli should also be mentioned, along with the proviso that works unknown to me have undoubtedly been produced in both periods that further research could bring to light. My aim here is not exhaustiveness, but rather to sketch out a largely unexplored territory that raises questions regarding the official history of Argentine rock and its offshoots, especially its relationship to other artistic disciplines.

First of all, seeking out writers and poets in the '90s on the part of rock artists was, in my view, truly an act of resistance. None of the identificatory offerings within the field of rock proposed any type of poetic crafting of words, nor was any forthcoming among "*alternativos*" performing at "new

rock" festivals; from the point of view of other discourses and reasons, the "barrio" or "beer-drinking" tributaries were also disinterested. Familiarity with the mainstream Argentine rock of the period suffices to exemplify just how devalued the verbal dimension was at the time. Prioritizing words over images or looking to the fine arts in a period when the video clip was sweeping the field also constituted a challenge. Seen from a distance, the expression "an army of words advances towards all of you" that appears in the preface of *Verbonautas* (AA.VV 1999: 7) may seem overblown given the limited size and scope of the project, but the nature of the confrontation suggested is exactly right: rising to the defense of the poetic use of words was a belligerent act that transgressed the rationality dominating not only rock music, but also the market for "young" cultural products. Seeking to act with one foot in the area of poetry also implied using a field not necessarily linked to a "juvenile" delimitation label that, as was shown above, had been completely banalized and emptied of meaning by that time. It is no accident that the *Verbonautas*, who were all young in the '90s, did not define themselves as such, or that in the production and self-descriptions of the artists referred to above, it is hard to find poems and songs with references to a juvenile identity or that evoke it either as the recipient or the place of belonging.

Second, irrespective of either of the concrete experiences described above, it is significant that a specific modality within Argentine rock was developed in the context of an interaction, still occurring, with a (marginal) sector of the literary field. It points to the need to delve more deeply into the relationship between rock and literary activity in Argentina, which has been considered insignificant for far too long.

THE PERSON AND THE SETTING

In this last section I will return to the "interior" of the scenes created in the musical compositions of García and Ferro that were my starting point. I am going to examine how personal entities are delimited in the two settings portrayed by the songs as ways of representing individuals and their sociability. In my view, in both cases the configurations accurately correspond to divergent tendencies. Between the periods of time delineated in the biographical-intimist statements of the two sets of lyrics, a displacement can be observed that I see as related to the historical destabilization of voices taking place in Argentine rock; this, in turn, is related to the identitary reordering that has been detailed above.

In "*Cuando ya me empiece a quedar solo*," the character is (self) presented employing a strong *evaluative* tone. This evaluative discourse corresponds to the visionary knowledge of someone who is never in doubt nor reconsiders what he has said, someone narrating almost from an external point of view. In contrast, the character represented in the future vision of himself

occupies absolute center stage, and is the starting point for the scene. Indeed, the image of the very faraway eyes is the beginning of a vision that expands to include the mouth, then the chest, making the character the central presence that organizes all the figurative space around him. In spite of being a ghost, the familiar "you" (*tu*) is clearly outlined in his place of maximum relevance and projection: the figure is, *most* importantly, an absence capable of reigning over the character's loneliness.

This configuration reproduces certain features of tendencies I have indicated (Fanjul 2005 and 2010) as firmly implanted in the poetics of Argentine rock; I have also found facets linking them to other genres of the country's mass culture. There is customarily a quite clear demarcation, or even an outline, of the contours of the characters in a scenography. Any blurring is a cause for anxiety.

The representation of human figures in "*Sobre madera rosa*" departs markedly from this modality. As was observed above, the location of the character in the scene is extremely uncertain and does not serve as reference point for the rest of the description. In reality, we only access the character through having and prizing his/her objects—one of which is precisely a mask—and through the fascination and painstaking labor crafted into them. Not only does the profile of the figure defy definition, the voice's sex is never fixed, nor are the objects rooted in any particular set of beliefs or other means of identification. Voodoo, a mandala, sacred seeds, magic, and writing in blood all point to a heterogeneous spiritual dimension lacking models, as was mentioned above. The objects are both heterogeneous and globalized: they come from places like Japan, South Africa, and Turkey. Descriptions do not dwell on contours, which are imprecise, but instead detail joints and cracks: the drops of gin cutting the water, the mends in the doll's arms and legs, the partitioned woman in the engraving.

Worthy of special distinction is one of the most beautiful and disturbing images ever produced in the poetics of Argentine rock, which flutters over the places corresponding to the *I* and *you*:

> And over a formidable, embalmed insect
> With its eyes bitten from wanting to mate
> With its cracked wings, still bloody
> An image of yours with me off camera

In the lineal accumulation of the description, the wound from mating can be easily displaced from the insect to the *I* or to both people: there is still blood in the eye, a sign of union or abandonment. The image (*an* image of yours, not *the* unmistakable ghost in García's lyrics) in itself indicates a relationship, not identity: it is *yours* but *with me off camera*. The I-voice-character that has constructed the scene closes the picture, maintaining both its own exteriority and the elusive outline of the two people.

Viewed as a link in the chain of biographical-intimist statements found in Argentine rock, the lack of centrality and clear-cut representations of individuals in Ferro's lyrics suggests an ethos affected by the destabilization of identities in its interlocutory field, this related, in turn, to the displacement of identities in the social space described in historical terms above. But perhaps for this very reason, it is a more *joyful* manner of speaking installed in a less certain place that doesn't demand the formulation of models.

The Road Taken

The observation of the life trajectories represented in the two musical compositions chosen has contrasted two ways of demarcating the individuals in the scenes created, as well as whether or not models emerge in the plotline of the two sets of lyrics. These contrasts were my point of departure for approaching identification processes in the social space, specifically within the field of rock nacional.

I was particularly drawn to the production of juvenile identities, while extending my analysis to include the evaluation and representation of personal bonds and creative activity. In that regard, I related that process of identity construction to two different issues. On the one hand, we considered the transformations that have taken place in the Argentine's social formation, affecting the possibility of being "young." On the other hand, we drew attention to the growing influence of poetry and other art forms in the evolution of one sector of the genre in Argentina.

With this exploration of aspects of discursive materiality, I hope to have contributed to making manifest certain intersections, separations, and recurrences in a specific field of Argentine urban culture.

Appendix: Lyrics

"*Sobre madera rosa*"

GABO FERRO

Tengo un mándala pintado en Jaipur	I have a mandala painted in Jaipur
bajo un vaso con agua con dos gotas de gin;	under a glass of water with two drops of gin;
una trampa cazadora de espíritus del Japón,	a trap for catching spirits from Japan,

y un espejo que atesora el origen del sueño.	And a mirror that treasures the origin of the dreams.
Una muñequita vudú con los miembros zurcidos con pelo de cabra negra; una pulsera con semillas sagradas, florecidas y perfumadas.	A little voodoo doll with arms and legs mended with black goat hair a bracelet of sacred seeds, flowered and fragrant.
Tengo un manuscrito sin rótulos ni tapas,	I have a manuscript without title or cover,
con grabados de una mujer partida en tres; una máscara del Durban, y una rueda mágica enlazada a un asno.	with engravings of a woman cut in three; a mask from Durban, And a magic wheel tied to a donkey.
Una falda turca de un ajuar y un retrato grabado sobre madera rosa. "Serenidad" escrito en una lengua muerta, con sangre de niño y de casadera	A Turkish skirt from a hope chest And a portrait engraved on rosewood. "Serenity" written in a dead language, With the blood of a boy and a nubile girl.
Y sobre un formidable insecto embalsamado con los ojos picados por querer aparearse con las alas cuarteadas y todavía con sangre una imagen tuya conmigo fuera de plano.	And over a formidable embalmed insect with its eyes bitten from wanting to mate with its cracked wings still bloody An image of yours with me off camera.

Notes

1. The lyrics of Gabo Ferro's song are transcribed in their entirety in the Appendix at the end of the chapter. While Ferro was kind enough to allow the publication of his song in this book for free, Peermusic (the owners of García song's rights) asked for an astronomic fee to allow the publication of the lyrics in the chapter. I am therefore unable to quote them here. The absurdity of treating academic products as if they were commercial ones makes even less sense since we know that the lyrics are easily available on the Internet.

2. Bakhtin (1998: 211) uses the term "chronotope" to refer to the ties between the temporal and spatial relations assimilated into the representation produced in the literary text, as well as in other poetic modalities in which a world and characters are represented.

3. When played in a concert, such a constitutive part of Argentine rock, that can be our voices and our hands clapping in the audience, as I have seen happen more than once when this song was performed in concert.

4. In the electronic magazine Vuenosairez.com (see Vismara 2006).

5. I employ this term as it is used in discursive studies, beginning with those of Pêcheux (1998), to refer to *what has already been said* that sustains the construction of the statements and, at the same time, participates in the construction of the subject's place proposed by them. When approaching discursive practices related to a determined cultural field, in this case rock, preconstructions that sustain them can be found.

6. Maingueneau (2001: 140) uses the term "incorporation" to refer to the conformation as a "body" of the collective imaginary that participates in the "enjoyment" of a work of art.

7. A large part of the research into and critiques of national rock in Argentina has been dedicated to interpreting and explaining, from different perspectives, the relationship of rock with diverse social and cultural identities, and with the market. In addition to the bibliography referred to in other parts of this essay, useful texts include Vila (1985, 1987b); Semán, Benedetti, and Vila (2004); Correa (2002); Di Marco (1994); and Noble (1994).

8. Lunardelli's (2002) investigation, although not impartial, takes an interesting look at this vicious circle.

9. Semán and Vila (2001) acutely analyze the construction of new juvenile identities during this process, using the plotlines of identitarian narratives underlying Argentine discursivity.

10. I use "discursive memory" in the way it is used by Pêcheux (2002), that is, as meaning semantic affiliations among discourses resulting from a particular sociohistoric regulation.

11. Although outside the scope of this essay, it is worth noting that Ferro is the only singer-composer that, in more than forty years of rock nacional, has made gender/sexual identities one of the frequent issues and questionings in his lyrics. Others have made use of their presence on the stage or their scenographic displays as a source of destabilization or uneasiness regarding gender, something that never occurs with Gabo; but he is the only one to thematize those identities.

12. The song is "*Gogogodoy y su mona marido*" (Gogogodoy and her monkey husband), del disco *Porco*, released in 1994 by Discos el Club.

13. In the same interview in Vuenosairez.com referred to above, referring to the Porco era, Gabo Ferro says: "We were a generation of young people that had no anti-AIDS campaign, and we were dying because of this, and that had to be said. Now you see your friends sporadically at birthday parties, but at that time you met at wakes, it was horrible."

14. By this I refer exclusively to initiatives for which there was no signed contract to remain with a recording company for a determined period of time, nor the intervention of a manager.

15. Noteworthy is the fact that even the act of reading is represented as happening over a handcrafted artifact: a manuscript, while the same topic in García's lyrics is "a book consumed with grief."

16. This Argentine poet has a number of books published and CDs recorded, all under this single name. For further information on his production, his personal web page, with the name of one of his books of poetry, can be consulted: *Trenes hacia afuera*, www.treneshaciaafuera.com.ar.

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