

Sabotage: Torquato Neto's football in *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo*

Sabotagem: O futebol de Torquato Neto em Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo

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ABSTRACT

Torquato Neto is best known as poet and lyricist, although his activity expanded into sports coverage, specifically in *Jornal dos Sports*. However, the author's approach to football is rarely mentioned. This study aims to explore the connection between football and the script of *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo*, a project for a program on TV Globo that was never aired. From textual records, this study examined the audiovisual strategies devised by the screenwriter and director for the broadcasting piece, showing another venue for research into the writer.

Keywords: Torquato Neto, *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo*, sports coverage, broadcasting, football

RESUMO

Torquato Neto é mais conhecido como poeta e letrista, embora suas atividades tenham se expandido para a cobertura esportiva, especificamente no *Jornal dos Sports*. Entretanto, a aproximação do autor com o futebol é pouco mencionada. O propósito deste artigo é explorar essa relação por meio do roteiro de *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo*, projeto para um programa na TV Globo que nunca foi ao ar. A partir desse registro em texto, é possível examinar as estratégias audiovisuais engendradas pelo roteirista e diretor para essa peça de radiodifusão. Além disso, esse exame apresenta outro horizonte para as pesquisas a respeito do escritor.

Palavras-chave: Torquato Neto, *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo*, cobertura esportiva, radiodifusão, futebol

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Brazil is a wonderful continent, with the yellow of gold, the green of forests, the blue of the sky, the strength of the sea, the taste of beans, the nutrition of rice, the beauty of traditions. Rui Barbosa was the Eagle of The Hague who answered in all languages to the illiterate of Europe. Our football is the best in the world. We only lost the last World Cup due to sabotage
Torquato Neto, *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo*

IT COMES AS A SURPRISE that Torquato Neto, a well-known contributor to *Jornal dos Sports* in the 1960s, has not prompted in-depth studies regarding his relationship with football. However, when his texts came to light, the sports publication was experiencing an unprecedented editorial turn. A prolific composer of popular songs, the author expressed himself through different artistic expressions that were contemporary to him, many of which deserve more attention from researchers. This omission is justified by the fragmentary nature of his legacy and his early death in 1972. Another factor that explains the omission is the nature of his columns, which, despite appearing in print editions of a specialized media outlet, did not focus on match results or athletes' performances.

Given Torquato Neto's sinuous approach to football, this article focuses on the script for *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo* [Life, Passion, and Banana of Tropicalism] in order to see how this relationship was built. The purpose of the text was to organize the production of a show about the musical movement, to be aired on TV Globo, and it only came to light in posthumous volumes (Neto, 1982, 2004a): due to administrative and political difficulties, viewers did not have access to the televised show planned by the author (Vaz, 2014). It was not broadcast, but the way its two parts were scripted inspires research into the points of contact between sport and broadcasting and audiovisuals.

Previously, in the audiovisual field, efforts have been dedicated to different nuances, such as the correlation established between strategies for editing feature-length fiction films, character monologues and the intensity experienced in the sports universe (Herbert Neto, 2021a). Concern about the process leading up to the consolidation of Brazilian broadcasting, the role played by sports coverage and the political crossings resulting from the historical dynamics surrounding radio and television motivated works with different motives (Herbert Neto, 2022b; 2024). In none of these cases was a script available for consultation. The artifice, which is indispensable for the preparation of the programs, hardly goes beyond the limits of the production itself, which

does not make the researchers' job any easier. The historical source therefore requires a different approach.

As the other studies examined what reached the viewers, a look at *Life, Passion, and Banana of Tropicalism* must focus on the procedures contained in the script. The focus shifts to the explicit motivations and emphases in the script. These clues serve as a principle for its characterization. José Carlos Capinam helped with the writing, although Torquato Neto, as well as scriptwriter, is also credited as director. Musical numbers centered on the artists who made up the movement (as recorded in the name of the show), the participation of guests from music, audiovisual and literature, and the proselytizing of tropicalist theses were planned¹.

The analysis contributes to, in a way, resizing *Tropicália*, even though this exercise is not one of the main actions of this work. It highlights the contours of Torquato's poetics: understanding these indications is fundamental, considering that there are many memorial accounts of this cultural moment and that the artists who took part in its decisive moments set out to describe them (Gil & Zappa, 2013; Veloso, 1997). Journalists also sought to give coherence to the troubled events in music, which had implications for the arts (Calado, 1997; Vaz, 2014). In academia, a considerable number of researchers have delved into the complexity of the author – both those mediated by his language and those attentive to the social, political, and cultural reverberations of his work.

In this sense, two broad fields can be divided: on the one hand, those with a historical bias, represented by Coelho (2002) and Branco (2015); and those with a markedly literary slant on the other, as exemplified by Ribeiro (2010), Bosi (2014), and Damasceno (2019). This does not cause isolation or make intersections impossible – a position apparently sought by Pires (2004). The references that escape the bibliography are limited to the monitoring that the country's media companies give to sport for a basic reason: the imperfect connections with sport. The document consulted to fill this gap was conceived with the expectation, which never materialized, of airing both an introduction to *Tropicália* and the intensification of the movement: on the first page of the script, the years 1967 and 1968 are noted, precisely the time when this artistic platform was launched (Neto, 2004b, p. 65).

The broadcast was scheduled to take place between the end of one year and the beginning of the next. To be able to see with the vision of history and at the same time look at Torquato Neto's poetics is the task this article undertakes. The aim is to deal with these aspects, in the evaluation of the author's work, under the conception of popular culture from Bakhtin's perspective (2010). It is from this Bakhtinian perspective that the script will be examined, with a focus

¹Both the film strategies and the discourses envisaged by the script will be discussed in the last section of the article.



²The meaning of the word “people” in this context is ambivalent, but unavoidable for understanding the engagement of artists in the 1960s. Ridenti (2014) rigorously examines this problem in the Brazilian context.

on circulation within popular trends. This is also because there seems to be no exception to the various expressions to which the author resorted: he clearly wanted to establish an approach that would be accessible to the people². This is the point where we will identify some of the main tensions surrounding the composer, journalist, filmmaker, and poet from Piauí. Before exploring this particular approach to language, it is necessary to situate the author's involvement in sports coverage, through the *Jornal dos Sports*.

‘RELATIVE OPACITY’: SPORTS COVERAGE IN THE LATE 1960S

The accounts in Torquato Neto's biography (Vaz, 2014) do not paint football in more vivid colors: there are conflicting passages, which sometimes distance him from his childhood and adolescence with a ball on his foot (p. 56), and sometimes describe his ecstasy at the Brazilian national team's second consecutive victory in the sport's main competition, during the 1962 World Cup in Chile (p. 83). The controversial familiarity would not be the alibi for Torquato Neto's entry into *Jornal dos Sports*, a traditional Rio de Janeiro publication. Holanda (2010, 2012) helps put together a mosaic of the coverage that the newspaper carried out in the final half of the 1960s, the period in which the lyricist's entry is recorded.

The writer from Piauí started collaborating with the publication well after the executive and journalist Mário Rodrigues Filho acquired it: previously, the columnist had worked for *O Globo* and had a good relationship with Roberto Marinho (Holanda, 2012, p. 88). This solid relationship made it possible for the businessman to finance the transaction, which had previously been managed by Argemiro Bulcão's group, for the management of the columnist and writer. Heir to another businessman in the press, Mário Rodrigues, and brother of playwright Nelson Rodrigues, Mário Filho circulated widely at cultural meetings (Machado, 2014, p. 89), among the most influential political groups (Holanda, 2012, p. 91), and in the leadership of clubs (Coutinho, 2019, p. 22). The newspaper was permeable to intellectuals.

In addition to his resourcefulness for intellectual circuits, Mário Filho and his newspaper helped to consolidate new protocols, from the 1930s onwards, with athletes “transformed into idols of the emerging mass culture, and therefore able to compose reports along the lines of ‘a history of private life.’ The players' lives became of interest” (Holanda, 2012, p. 87, free translation). More importantly, their work was not restricted to descriptions of sporting events, but spread toward Carnival, education, and youth with the dual function of reporting and

promoting events – as documented by works of different inclinations (Alvito, 2013; Castro, 1992; Lira Neto, 2017).

Coelho (2002) points out that Torquato Neto wrote the *Música Popular* column from March to October 1967 (p. 134). This was after 1966, when Mário Filho suffered a heart attack and died. Hollanda (2012) segments the trajectory of *Jornal dos Sports* into different eras and identifies a definitive break in the absence of the well-known manager. Control of the company passed to his widow Célia, who soon committed suicide, in yet another dramatic family episode (Castro, 1992). In the latter half of the same decade, it is possible to identify an inflection in the publication, parallel to the behavior of those who followed sports, more attentive to the agendas of young people (Hollanda, 2010).

Like various spheres of the public scene, football was influenced by the transformations of the 1960s. Hollanda (2010, p. 196) discusses the emergence of youth football fans in the 1960s, tuning in to this shift in behavior towards the sport: “Opposition to the club’s directives was now gaining the public sphere of the streets, in the form of semi-improvised marches, which were inspired by the agitations carried out by students in the city center” (free translation). The link to the desires of young people redirected *Jornal dos Sports* and made it possible for more poignant subjects to be ostensibly present, and at first glance, distant from sporting practices: fine arts, cinema, and popular music gained much ground, culminating in the arrival on the newsstands of the publishing project *O Sol*, which was entirely cultural (Hollanda, 2010, p. 169). More open to experimentation, the supplement achieved autonomy, with individual sales.

Torquato Neto’s involvement in the company’s routine was precisely during the period when sports coverage was less impervious. This relative opacity is linked to sporting traditions, which are closely connected to politics. Memorial accounts show the author’s early interest in popular culture, something that points to a common landscape in sports coverage by media outlets in the 20th century: the horizon of Gilberto Freyre’s propositions (Vaz, 2014, p. 75). Grandiloquence, supported by praise for miscegenation, would be a fundamental element for understanding Brazilian football and, above all, for rhetoric in print and broadcast journalism (Herbert Neto, 2023b).

Freyre was admittedly a reader of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, to the extent that the aesthetic developed around football in Brazil by the Brazilian writer was underpinned by conceptions of the European author’s youth (Herbert Neto, 2021b; Hollingdale, 2015). It is surprising that the similarities between Torquato’s work and Nietzsche’s have not been emphasized. The mention



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³In the newspaper *Última Hora*, Torquato Neto wrote the column *Geleia Geral* in the early 1970s. In one of the printed editions, the author expressed his proposal to destroy language and explode it.

by Pires (2004, p. 20) is an exception. Both Torquato and Nietzsche are authors of fragmentary legacies, which result in disputes over spoils (Brito, 2019). The proposal to explode language is a constant in both: in the explosive character of the author from Teresina³ (Neto, 1982, p. 63) and in the dynamite self-image of the writer born in Weimar (Nietzsche, 1995, p. 109). The two men's experiences of madness in sanatoriums in Brazil (Vaz, 2014) and Germany (Brito, 2019), respectively, would authorize the parallels.

Moralism was a keynote in the political activities of factions to which Freyre belonged, with a dualistic social vision and a propensity for Manichaeism (Herbert Neto, 2024, p. 142). These groups exerted a strong influence on sports coverage and their political ramifications were sensitive. To antagonize, in yet another similarity to Nietzsche, Torquato Neto's thinking does not support this narrow division of reality (Pires, 2004, p. 20). The script prepared for television fractures dichotomous perspectives on music, fine arts, and politics. It is both zealous and subversive in terms of traditions, thus creating tension in the text. A similar tension can be found in other popular manifestations with a romantic bent (Herbert Neto, 2024).

⁴The first book published by the author is markedly influenced by Wagner and romantic Germanism (Nietzsche, 2012).

The Nietzschean phase⁴ that motivates Freyre has strong inspirations from Romanticism (Herbert Neto, 2021b). By way of comparison, the iconoclastic proposal of the single edition of *Navilouca*⁵ in the 1970s, which brought together many of Brazil's leading artists, would correspond to the *Athenaeum* at the turn of the 19th century in Germany, which published experiments with decisive consequences for European philosophy (Lemos, 2022, p. 14). The problematic links between artists, intellectuals and activists of the mid-20th century and the romantic stance have been explored by Ridenti (2010, 2014), but it is not possible to look at all these references to foreigners without considering the risks of incurring Eurocentrism.

⁵The single volume of the almanac (1974) was edited by Torquato Neto and Wally Salomão, at the time under the surname *Sailormoon*, and only published after the Piauí native's death.

This composition of references makes Freyre's presence in *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo* less unusual. The script anticipates the interest in visiting the author in Recife to film a brief interview, outside, based on the following question: "Professor Gilberto Freyre, sociologist of *Casa Grande e Senzala*, illustrious thinker of the *Casa de Apicucos*⁶, is your tropicalist science being distorted by these young composers, teatrologists, and filmmakers?" (Neto, 2004b, p. 70, free translation). To get a sense of their relevance in the text, just look at the cast, which obviously starts with the names of Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil: "Renato Borghi, Othon Bastos, Ety Fraser, Ítala Nandi, Emilinha Borba, Vicente Celestino, Linda Batista, Jorge Ben, Aracy de Almeida, Nara Leão, Nana Caymmi" (p. 65). These figures are the notable *tropicalistas*, plus their main inspirations – "Gal Costa, Marlene, Maria Bethânia, José Celso,

⁶The script has a number of spelling mistakes. The neighborhood Gilberto Freyre was known for was Apicucos, in Recife.

Glauber Rocha, Flávio de Carvalho, Gilberto Freire⁷, Chacrinha, Nelson Motta, Luiz Jatobá, Grande Otelo, Os Mutantes, Luiz Gonzaga” (p. 65).

The original list differs from the following list, with the guests. There are names of famous people, such as Ibrahim Sued, Jacinto de Thormes, Carlinhos de Oliveira, Pedro das Flores, and Nelson Rodrigues (Neto, 2004b, p. 65). It is worth highlighting the presence of the brother of the historic owner of *Jornal dos Sports*. Also listed are institutions, collectives, associations linked to carnival and generic figures, such as the Brazilian Academy of Letters, Misses with sashes, the Banda de Ipanema carnival block accompanied by cartoonist Jaguar, the carnival’s winning samba school, application colleges, conservatories, the Pedro II College band, uniformed fans, deputies and senators, Indians and Indian protectors, transvestites⁸, Marlene and Emilha fan clubs, the ten most elegant, the bottle boy, American tourists, Peace Corps, and the circus.

Norma Bengell and Grande Otelo, other artists mentioned in the script, do not appear in any of the lists (Neto, 2004b, p. 65). The volume of participants, including protagonists and guests, is not an isolated sign of the show’s profusion. The script suggests sequences of collages, which would mix external filming, such as the interview with Freyre; musical performances; voice-over narrations and inflammatory speeches on the set; parades and flag-raising with slogans or mottoes of the ongoing dictatorship; and even explosions and the destruction of the theater in which *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo* would take place. The intention to establish an “atmosphere of reportage” is noted (Neto, 2004b, p. 66, free translation). Despite the latent intention of resembling popular auditorium shows – such as the Chacrinha show, which is mentioned prominently in the cast – it is difficult to associate what was scripted with any particular television genre, even if based on less static approaches (Herbert Neto, 2020; Mittel, 2004). The anarchic particularities and the constant use of irony are further hindrances.

The interface with football manifests itself subtly on the front page, which shows the cast and guests. The mention of uniformed supporters may be directly related to the changing behavior of those who followed their teams in stadiums during the period. In the second half of the 1960s, a distinction emerged between fans who organized themselves into new, independent groups, compared to those who concentrated around small ensembles with wind and percussion instruments (Hollanda, 2010, p. 214). The emergence of the so-called *torcidas jovens* (young football fans) can be seen as another sign of the generational transition that Brazil was going through and which had Tropicália as a symbol on the popular music scene.

⁷In other passages, the writer’s name also appears in this way, in a clear deviation from the original.

⁸There is no further information, so it is impossible to say whether they were trans women or trans men.



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The text proposes that the organized fans appear in the first *take* after a shot of the map of the southern hemisphere (Neto, 2004b, p. 66). The impasse of the boundary between tradition and modernity runs through *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo* until the very last page. It culminates in a quote in quotation marks: “Each generation must, in relative opacity, discover its mission. And fulfill it or betray it” (p. 85, free translation). It is a reference to Fanon's thinking (1961, p. 214) with an almost identical transcription of a passage by the author, which takes up the escape from the mentality of Europe or the United States, but carries another feature of the generational discussion: the Martinican psychiatrist had died prematurely, a few years before the script was written.

‘FULFILL IT OR BETRAY IT’: TORQUATO NETO AND LANGUAGE

Napolitano (2005, 2010, 2014) highlights the dilemmas that young Brazilian artists faced during this brief period and reiterates the need to unravel the social, political, and cultural implications of their actions through records that are not always considered legitimate historical sources. Still on the generational question, Coelho (2002) points out the pitfalls to which researchers who are interested in this moment are subject, especially when the study is aimed at characters who are still obscure. The example of Torquato Neto is symbolic. With consultations of the same documents, guided by similar motivations, the results do not usually give the necessary emphasis to the nuances of this time period, warns Coelho. In the end, generalizations become constant, with the imminence of determinism.

The Piauí author's dealings with language are entirely connected to the repressive yet unique context. This ambiguity is an integral part of the script. On the other hand, Torquato's poetics manifests these traits through football in different ways. One could mention the writings, made public after his death, in which idols and martyrs are listed: after mentioning Ernesto Che Guevara, Jimi Hendrix and Décio Pignatari, Baker Futebol e Regatas appears, an imaginary club that pays homage to Chet Baker with the formulation of a sporting entity (Neto, 2004c, p. 300). It's just one of those expressions, which would reappear with force in the idea of the TV program.

In a long exposition, under the responsibility of actress Etty Fraser in the script, *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo* synthesizes the ideal of country contained in the movement, by defending elements related to the country: “Brazil is a wonderful continent, with the yellow of gold, the green of the forests, the

blue of the sky, the strength of the sea, the taste of beans, the nutrition of rice, the beauty of traditions” (Neto, 2004b, p. 74, free translation). The characterization of Brazilianness and the nation itself should not be taken literally. Humor, very close to sarcasm, shapes the fragments that follow one another, which makes their concatenation in time equally complex.

The mockery is far from being a mere vice of language or an idiosyncratic mannerism of the author: it is part of a strategy of challenging during repressive periods, as often happens in sports coverage (Herbert Neto, 2024). The *Jornal dos Sports*, for which Torquato Neto wrote, exemplified this subtle way of opposing the dictatorship and reverberated tendencies that refer to the orality of broadcasting vehicles. The characteristics of talking about football in Brazil go back to centuries-old traditions of confronting or subverting seriousness and the official character in times of persecution and oppression (Bakhtin, 2010). Because of its well-known closeness to the Popular Culture Center (CPC) of the National Student Union (UNE) and to engaged art (Vaz, 2014), this conflictual dimension deserves to be highlighted.

The text is built on the ambiguities of binomials such as national-foreign and aesthetic-political. “Rui Barbosa was the Eagle of The Hague who responded in all languages to the illiterates of Europe. Our football is the best in the world. We only lost the last World Cup due to sabotage. Our women are the best wives and cooks in the universe” (Neto, 2004b, p. 74, free translation). Although the passage incurs the moralism it was trying to deny – by relegating the country’s female population only to childbearing or domestic roles – it is the most straightforward, as it links football, national identity, and international success. Other layers lie in the affirmation of Brazilian superiority in the sport, starting with the campaign of the national team that represented Brazil in the 1966 World Cup – much criticized for its lack of organization and the search for popularity, by the authorities of the dictatorial regime in force, at the expense of the team (Herbert Neto, 2022a, p. 11). The praise is coated in irony and scathing criticism of the government.

Next, it is the motto of sabotage that deserves to be highlighted. As the country’s sports administration bodies were coordinated by federal policies until the end of the 1970s, there were many suspicions of boycotting opponents through football (Herbert Neto, 2022a, p. 17). Despite the authoritarian atmosphere, accusations of favoritism towards teams with good relationships with the top management came to light through sports coverage, both on radio and in print. The *Jornal dos Sports* was decisive in this mission, but the script and the denunciations, published in sections specializing in the sport, lend a comic touch.



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The act of sabotage, however, takes on a different form with Torquato Neto: it is in language that the gesture is most vehemently consummated. In the bifurcation that defines the alternatives for the generation to betray or fulfill its own mission, the author sets himself up as a saboteur and imposes a third option. Reviews of his work acknowledge the violence of his constructions, which range from poems to horror in cinema (Ribeiro, 2010). The sabotage perpetrated by the overthrow of President João Goulart's Labor Party in the 1964 coup, whose leaders had prevented the Brazilian national team from winning a third world title in a row, is reciprocated by a saboteur of poetics. Jango's line of action even has a strong relationship with the intersection between football, politics, and communication in the history of broadcasting (Herbert Neto, 2023a). The seemingly random images that follow, in texts with no automatic connection and sequences based on the absence of a lighter chain, represent this.

The long speech attributed to Etty Fraser continues: "Our music is the most inspired and our cinema has won the Palme d'Or. In terms of natural wealth, we've had the greatest economic cycles in the world, with the sugar cycle, the cocoa cycle, the coffee cycle, the gold cycle, the rubber cycle, and now we're having the oil cycle" (Neto, 2004b, p. 74, free translation). Just as in the case of football, international recognition was unavoidable in order to safeguard Brazilianness: what attests to the merits of the national team is success in the World Cup, while the synonym for the prosperity of the country's cinema is success at the Cannes Film Festival in France. Despite trying to defend Brazil's potential, the script is still conditioned by somewhat European parameters.

After presenting the economic, cultural, and social amalgam in the form of a historical aphorism, *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo* ironizes the result of Brazil's centuries of history – "All these cycles left beautiful architectural ruins" (Neto, 2004b, p. 74). The wreckage that resulted from historical sabotage, such as the aforementioned 1964 coup, is brought into the script. Ultimately, even the program was sabotaged. Filming was confronted with location transfers between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo until, in the end, the show was not carried out (Vaz, 2014, p. 199). As it draws to a close, *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo* brings together football and politics in an explicit bricolage.

When the cast and guests piled onto the set to form the choir, images of matches would be projected (Neto, 2004b, p. 79). In unison, there would be goal shouting. The reference to sport is shown in two other shouts, chanted together: "The cup that is coming to us"; and "The cup that is leaving us." The imbrication with political disputes would be due to editing resources, which

would place the brief and striking allusion to the football universe after political speeches – in the author’s words, “excessively patriotic, laboristic, optimistic, opportunistic” – before a film about the President of the Republic Getúlio Vargas, who committed suicide in 1954 (Neto, 2004b, free translation). The application to the national context reverberates in contemporaries, but in no way should Torquato Neto and, consequently, *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo*, be examined in the wake of his generation.

The peculiarity that distinguishes him from his peers at first sight is his posthumous nature: it was only after his death in 1972 that his first books were published, such as *Os Últimos Dias de Paupéria*⁹ and *Torquatália*¹⁰ – both collections of unpublished texts include the script for the television program, complete with notes and poems. The biographical data entices researchers to look for indications of future suicide in the writings (Neto, 2004a). There is, therefore, a danger of being held hostage by determinism. The stereotype of the romantic author with an early death sentences readings to very specific biases¹¹. In other words, death wrongly serves as a metric for measuring Torquato’s poetics and biography.

⁹ Organized by Wally Salomão and Ana Maria S. de Araújo, the book was later reissued (1982).

¹⁰ It was published in two volumes, organized by Paulo Roberto Pires.

¹¹ *Torquato Neto: Todas as Horas do Fim*, a documentary released in 2018, gathers important records, but falls into the temptation of suicidal morbidity.

“IF YOU PLANT IT(SELF), IT WILL GROW”: FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo points in the opposite direction. The word that opens the title of the script is symptomatically the antonym of death. The name given is consistent with the intensity of the project. Strengthening the perception that liveliness is the foundation for the show is the ambition to invite many of the main names in Brazilian culture – different or even antagonistic to each other – and the break with thematic linearity and time sequencing during the course of the television show. Football is inserted in order to contribute to the movement that viewers will experience during the broadcast. Even though it became consolidated throughout the 20th century as an element of national identity (Helal, 1997; Wisnik, 2008), the sport is first and foremost a game for which bodies in displacement are required. Film strategies meet this production of meaning, with the suggestion of abrupt cuts, dynamic external filming and in the theater.

The new orientation, which ruled out suicide for his entire oeuvre, meant that his works during his lifetime were also re-evaluated. The compositions, in partnership with other Tropicália artists or not¹², and the texts published in print media reached the ears and eyes of the public with Torquato Neto’s deliberate authorship. This did not happen with many of the fragments that were published in books: the poet even took it upon himself to burn most of his own records

¹² The composition “Dente no Dente,” released after the lyricist’s death in partnership with Jards Macalé, exemplifies this emphasis on intensity and movement. The song is also called “Sim, Não” on other occasions. The inclination is opposed to the morbidity of the other interpretations (Macalé, 2016).



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before he died (Pires, 2004, p. 209; Vaz, 2014). The intensity foreseen for the script runs through his participation in the musical and journalistic contexts.

Both the songs and the newspaper columns were easier to circulate. Without understanding the author's biography merely as a project that was interrupted before the right moment, it is possible to ponder his predilection for pieces with these nuances, to the detriment of bookish or baccalaureate traditions. Much less accessible, the books are not in keeping with the latent claim to be popular – with all the ambivalence that term brings. The choice was justified in order to move their propositions forward in 1960s Brazil, where almost 40% of young people and adults were illiterate (Haddad, 1995). What's more, a country with ancestral oral traditions, with Afro-Amerindian origins (Simas et al., 2020)¹³.


¹³In an attempt to re-read philosophy in a popular key, Simas et al. (2020) present a proposal linked to orality that contributes to the analysis – although it does not focus on the case of Torquato Neto.

If taken to its ultimate consequences, the program for alternative horizons based on Torquato Neto's work is even capable of sabotaging a certain canonical geography about popular song and, in particular, the movement that motivated the script for TV Globo. While the memoirs focus on São Paulo or the south and center of Rio de Janeiro as the epicenters of the cultural effervescence that erupted at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s (Gil & Zappa, 2013; Veloso, 1997), the trajectory of the author from Teresina makes the spotlight move towards Usina, a region in the Tijuca neighborhood: where he spent many of his last months (Vaz, 2014, p. 359). The area is close to Maracanã, a traditional football stadium in the northern zone of Rio de Janeiro.

A Jornal dos Sports with less precise boundaries, capable of also following music, theater, cinema, and, of course, football, received Torquato Neto's column. In the printed editions, the section was accompanied by the suggestive title *Música Popular*. The company launched its youth-oriented graphic design with *O Sol*, reinforcing this relative opacity. The attempt to win over younger audiences with different approaches is not a privilege here. Kucinski (1991) shows that, in this decade and the next, equivalent proposals emerged in capitals far from the southeast of Brazil. A critique of this vehicle for the artist's poetics is equally essential.

The specialized sports publication, which gained notoriety under the direction of executive Mário Filho, is known for its good relations with football and government authorities (Herbert Neto, 2023b). This dissuades any attempt to turn *Jornal dos Sports* into a libertarian libel. The conditions of the historical period, with the emergence of youth movements on the public scene and the commercial interest in this dynamic, make it easy to understand the openness to approaches such as that of the author of the *Música Popular* column. Still on the subject of the media outlets in which the poet worked, it should be

pointed out that, although *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo* did not air, other Tropicalismo initiatives reached viewers at the end of the 1960s, such as TV Tupi's *Divino Maravilho*¹⁴ and TV Globo's *Direito de Nascer e Morrer do Tropicalismo*¹⁵.

The author's language could not be confined to media defined by writing. Hence his prolific output in the field of popular song. The sabotage plan included the symbolic takeover of broadcasting with *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo* when viewers would be able to see the effects of his verve in images and sounds, as part of the movement led by Bahian singers and songwriters. After looking at the indications for text and film, it would be frivolous to say that football appears peripherally in the script. On the contrary: it offers a link with popular culture and, even with the still incipient techniques of capturing and storing video for television, it helps to show the dynamism that marks the stillborn program and, even more so, the expressiveness of the author from Piauí. It is a sign of vitality. 

¹⁴Information from the Chamber of Deputies (October 28, 68, 2004).

¹⁵It is possible that, after long negotiations and transformations, *Vida, Paixão e Banana do Tropicalismo* became a TV Globo program (Evangelista, 2011).

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