

POPULAR AND LEARNED CULTURE, CANON AND ICONOCLASM¹

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The argument

The paper starts by spelling out the theoretical standpoint adopted, that is, grounded on a historical approach. It is argued that any subject may be studied from a history of ideas approach, emphasizing the cumulative effort of scholarship, in what is usually called an internalist understanding. Or it may be studied from an externalist or social and political approach, highlighting the ways concepts and ideas change according to new social realities which foster new interpretive models, including paradigm revolutions. Adopting this social understanding, the paper then continues to address two key subjects: learned versus popular culture and canon and iconoclasm. Both couples may be traced to ancient times, but were reshaped and redefined in modern times as a result of the nation state and imperialism. Greeks and Romans differentiated high and low levels of expression, referring to what is inspiring, as tragedy and religious music, and to low, popular genres, such as comedy and burlesque music. The same applies to the early establishment of a canon of high literature and music, such as the Epic, as opposed to transient and less important genres. There was thus a kernel of distinction in ancient times, but modernity would reinvent and recreate this in a completely new social environment.

¹ Conferência proferida no dia 16 de outubro de 2014, no Departamento de Música da Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras de Ribeirão Preto da Universidade de São Paulo, dentro da programação do VI Encontro de Musicologia. Disponível em <https://youtu.be/XvyNfvOX0Co?list=UU7kMPRd6yA9Pwlj16voHXA> (acesso: 10/11/2015).

The nation state created in the 18th and 19th centuries was grounded on building a nation of homogeneous citizens, with common ancestors, sharing a common culture and language and inhabiting a state with defined borders. This process was taking place in nation states with imperial ambitions, so that nationalism and imperialism was interwoven in such polities and France, England, the USA and Germany, to mention the most paradigmatic. All this explains the modern invention of popular culture, or folklore, as the deep rooted and original culture of the nation, as opposed to learned culture of those attending schools and following tradition and accumulation of knowledge. There was thus a tension from the start, in late 18^o and then 19th c., for learned culture could not be cast aside, but popular culture received a status which it never had in ancient times. For music this had serious implications, for it was a learned practice, but nationalism led to a complex search for popular expressions. If this was early on in Beethoven's inclusion of folk dance motives, it would be more systematic since the Romantic deep involvement with nationalism, as in Chopin, but of course from then on in most composers. The situation changed again with the passing of the decades and the new roles of art in general and music in particular. The modern canon was an invention grounded on a literary convention of putting together all the key masterpieces, from Homer, through Shakespeare to contemporary authors who were always in close intertextuality and intercourse. However, this was being challenged and counter-balanced by iconoclasm, as a way of rejecting all the received wisdom of tradition and this is perhaps best encapsulated by Stravinsky's 1914 *Sacre du Printemps*, as a cry of war against the canon and for the smashing of traditional patterns. From then on, learned music turned more and more to two opposing directions: *avant gard* challenging of tradition in composition, but also enclosure in the canonic pieces for performance in theater and for recording. The mixture with so-called pop music has been important for some learned composers, such as Gershwin, mostly in interaction with jazz, in both composition and performance by learned conductors and players. On the opposite direction, pop music of different genres has always kept a firm structural relationship with the command of learned musical training, from jazz, through rock (Paul McCa-

rtney and Elton John, to name but two). In conclusion thus it is possible to say that learned and popular, canonical and iconoclastic are useful dichotomies to interpret modern (and ancient) musical trends, but as all too clear disjunctions, they must be put in social context and be taken *cum grano salis*, as interpretive tools. Let's then go to the arguments.

The theoretical standpoint: a social history

History of science is always a controversial subject. There is a long and respected tradition of considering science as the accumulation of knowledge, from generation to generation, building on previous achievements and findings. On the shoulders of giants, even small steps may be considered as advancements, as considered our Renaissance masters. This approach has been described by some as putting the main emphasis on internal factors affecting changes in any scholarly discipline. Indeed, Eratosthenes in the third century BC would not be able to calculate the diameter of our planet without the previous experiments and reasoning of earlier mathematicians and geographers (Bozic & Ducloy 2008). He has built on previous ideas and there is no dispute about that. But two main issues are to be added: Alexandrian context and setting, on the one hand, and the destiny of his ideas. The Alexandrian Library as scholarly institution resulting from the Alexandrian imperial move away from the poleis of ancient Greece is a key factor to explain his achievement, much beyond the limited scope of small towns and directly related to empire and world view. It was a move dependent on a shift from town to world, from polis to cosmopolis (Macleod 2005).

In a few centuries though planet earth was no longer considered round or Eratosthenes precise circumference of the earth measures were considered right. For several hundred years, the planet turned flat and no Greek mathematician, geographer or philosopher, even though known, were enough to change a perceived view of earth as a completely difference place. Science was not building on the predecessors, but on changed tenets. So, more important than the accumulation of

knowledge, the historical, social, and political contexts are essential to determining and explaining changes in science. This is also called an external approach to history of science, stressing how social circumstances prevail in shaping scientific thought, as put Thomas Patterson (2001) in discussing the social history of anthropology in the United States and the main guide of the approach used in this essay. In continental philosophical terms, taking Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Derrida and Foucault, among others, this stand can also be considered as a way of focusing on what is possible to think and say in specific circumstances. Whatever the level of sophistication of our understanding, be it the pragmatic one of the Anglo-Saxon philosophical stance or the more intricate and abstruse one of continental, German and French hermeneutical strings (Hunter 2006), it is clear that there is more than the mere accumulation of knowledge, the main argument of this article. Learned and popular culture is a subject which cannot be disentangled from the historical context.

The canon in antiquity and pre-modern times

As with several other aspects of our civilization, learned and canon are ancient concepts, first put into action by our Greek and Roman predecessors and upon which modernity set up new understandings, as we shall see. Greeks were the first in our Western tradition to be concerned with setting up learning as a cultural value. It was first and foremost a matter of literature, of being able to read and write, what the Greeks referred to as *graphein*, literally to scratch, but taken to mean a form of communication by imprinting signs in different objects: pottery, walls, and stones. From the start, writing was used to note spoken language, including lyrics, and soon it included musical notation. Writing was thus dependent on speech and on lyrics, for poetry, the earliest form of recorded utterance, was melody first and only much later something to be read. From those humble origins, literature established itself as defining culture, *paideia*, in ancient Greek, “what we must learn from childhood”. What a clear definition: what we learn from our early days

stays with us throughout our lives.

Paideia meant studying literature, and knowing all those lines by heart. It is a common mystery in our day and age to figure out how ancient Greeks knew the Iliad by heart: for several centuries it was not even written down. They knew it for they sang it. There was no literature without music. It would though take several centuries to build up a canon, that is, corpus of literature considered as the basis for education, *paideia* (or *Bildung*, as would put the Germans much later on). This move was an invention of Hellenistic culture, from the late fourth c. B.C., particularly in the scholarly ambiance of the Library at Alexandria in Egypt. For the first time, writing was at the heart of *paideia* and culture and it was probably only too natural that measuring standards were established. By the way, canon seems to refer to “reed”, so “standard”. Even if the term itself was not used early on, the idea that people should learn a series of established texts was there.

The Romans extended the concept much further; establishing a list of must read literary works. Greek authors and genres, as established by Hellenistic Greeks, were taken as model schemata and used to categorize Latin literature (and thus lyrics and music) as well. Romans were thus responsible for conveying all those concepts for the Western tradition, and in the process even petrifying it, as if canons were set on stone as a matter of natural choices. The mediaeval world, even if profoundly affected by the disrupting effects of an anti-intellectual ethos, epitomized by the *credo quia absurdum* dictum (“I believe because it is absurdum”), in a way kept the Western canon, as witnesses the perseverance of Cicero’s style as something to be imitated again and again. When the Renaissance returned to the ancient authors with vigor and passion, a list of authors to be studied were already there and new contributions were a natural appendix of tradition. Shakespeare is perhaps the best example of this mix of ancient and modern, for he was always referring to Greek and Latin authors and subjects, reinventing them for modern times. There was in a way a common ethos from the ancient Greeks to the modern: tradition was at the heart of learned culture. The

French historian François Hartog (2002) would label this period as the predominance of the past over the present, as ancient times, models and canons were always better. Enlightenment, industrialization, the nation state and imperialism would change this forever. Learned culture would continue, but now in a new relationship with a new term: popular culture.

Learned versus popular culture and canon and iconoclasm

From its inception in the nineteenth century, people's culture studies have been torn by epistemological discussions on the specificity of its subject. The "learning of the people", or Folklore as it was to be referred to from the 1840s, was sometimes identified with oral tradition (Sebillot 1973:6), mostly produced by illiterate peasants ignoring the rules of the so-called official or elite standards (*Est populaire tout ce qui n'est pas officiel*, would define Marcel Mauss). Perhaps the best example of this standpoint is the overall emphasis put in compositions like the counting-rhymes:

One, two, come buckle my shoe;
Three, four, shut the door;
Five, six, prick up sticks;
Seven, eight, lay them straight;
Nine, ten, a big fat hen;
Eleven, twelve, dig and delve;
Thirteen, fourteen, boys are counting;
Fifteen, sixteen, girls are fixing;
Seventeen, eighteen girls are waiting;
Nineteen, twenty, girls aplenty.

Only in this century a comprehensive critique of this approach would develop and Croce's writings, particularly his "People's poetry and art poetry", dated of the late 1920s, would challenge some accepted features of early folklore studies (Croce n.d.:342), as their stress on the opposition between Volkslied and Kunstlied. Mikhail Bakhtin (1970:

19,21,25 et passim) would propose that the popular culture was characterized by jokes, comic rites (*narodnii smekh*) as well as magic and incantatory insultations (cf. Burke 1989a:103). But only later would “history from below” (Hill 1989:12) begin to produce monographs on medieval (Rosenberg 1980), modern (Burke 1989; Hoggart 1986), and contemporary (Golby & Purdue 1984) and on theoretical and methodological implications (cf. Wollen 1991:72). A “cultural history of the poor” (Howkins 1990:120) implies the recognition of the potentially subversive and revolutionary effect of popular culture (Browne 1989:14) but also the plurality of both popular and elite cultures and their mutual interdependence. However, I do agree with Carlo Guinsburg (1986:108) that “bipartition between popular and learned culture is more useful than a holistic model” which would not take full account of the specificity of people’s expressions and thus consider them as derived from the “dominant culture” (Trigger 1989:786).

It seems to me though that there is still some uncertainty on what would be characterized as popular culture. The negative definition as non-elite cultures is good enough in sociological terms but is it possible to define it ontologically? Croce’s (n.d.:345) metaphysical challenging remarks are worth quoting in this respect: *la poesia (o la cultura) popolare esprime moti dell’anima che non hanno dietro di s., come precedenti immediati, grandi travagli del pensiero e della passione; ritrae sentimenti semplici in corrispondenti semplici forme. L’alta poesia (o cultura) muove e sommuove in voli grandi masse di ricordi, di esperienze, di pensieri, di molteplici sentimenti e gradazioni e sfumature di sentimenti; la poesia (o cultura) popolare non si allarga per così ampi giri e volute per giungere al segno, ma vi giunge per via breve e spedita*. Croce’s opposition between elite experience, thought and feelings with different expressive degrees and people’s brief and direct ways perhaps is not completely plausible but at least his interpretation raises some important questions on their ontological differences.

Nationalism and the emergence of the people

The nation state born from Enlightenment, early industrialization and political revolution broke with a Mediaeval understanding of society as hierarchical, hereditary, and grounded on differences of status. The kingdom was a stable institution, by divine will, as guaranteed by the Church, Catholic or Protestant. The new nation state was revolutionary in that it considered all people as citizens, equal, part of a homogeneous entity, sharing language, culture, mores and ways of life and understanding past and present. This was a project of the new bourgeois nation state, enacted, as possible, by the newly introduced elementary school. In the *ancient régime* it was possible to consider that the French court and nobility was Germanic, while the commons were descendants of conquered Gauls. No longer so after the French Revolution (1789), when all should have common roots and should furthermore not be related to foreigners, such as Germans. Gauls were thus invented as the true ancestors:

La voix des chaînes (1888)

Paroles: Francis Borel, Stéphane Borel

Musique: Gustave Goublier

Quand le soleil s'enfuit à l'horizon,
Semant la nuit sur les monts et la plaine,
Le vent du soir fait passer un frisson
Sur la forêt où sommeille le chêne.
Et l'on entend monter comme un doux bruit
Sous les rameaux au milieu du silence :
C'est la chanson de l'amour qui commence,
Hymne éternel qui vibre dans la nuit.
Si vous rêvez d'amour
Dans les forêts prochaines
Ecoutez au déclin du jour
La voix des chênes :
Elle vous parlera d'amour {2x}
La douce voix {2x} des chênes.
Chez nos aïeux, les farouches Gaulois,
Aux temps passés, on vénérât les chênes

Et leurs guerriers, à l'abri des grands bois,
 Ont défié les légions romaines,
 L'arbre divin s'en souviendra toujours;
 Les soirs d'hiver, quand la rafale gronde
 Il semble encore vouloir jeter au monde
 Les fiers défis de ses anciens beaux jours.
 C'est du vieux sang Gaulois
 Qui coule dans ses veines
 Allez, le soir, au fond des bois,
 La voix des chênes
 Vous parlera des fier Gaulois {2x}
 La grande voix {2x} des chênes.
 Il me souvient qu'un jour je parcourais
 Le beau pays de l'antique Lorraine,
 Je m'arrêtai près des vieilles forêts
 Pour écouter ce que disait le chêne,
 Un vieux géant, Roi de l'immensité,
 Parla longtemps de notre belle France,
 Comme un clairon sonnant la délivrance,
 Enfant sa voix, il cria : «Liberté»
 Lorrains, la liberté
 Plane à travers vos plaines
 Ecoutez dans l'obscurité
 La voix des chênes,
 Elle chante la liberté {2x}
 L'immense voix {2x} des chênes.
[http://museedelachanson.free.fr/textes_de_chanson/1888_](http://museedelachanson.free.fr/textes_de_chanson/1888_La_voix_des_chenes.htm)
[La_voix_des_chenes.htm](http://museedelachanson.free.fr/textes_de_chanson/1888_La_voix_des_chenes.htm)

This invention depended on songs like this one, to indoctrinate citizens of their unique national identity. Even prior to national states, nationalism was searching for the original cultural roots of the desired nation, and this could not be found in learned tradition, but in ordinary peasants, uncontaminated by scholarship or by the vices of urban life, possibly illiterate and as pristine as possible. Learned musicians were thus keen to introduce such peasant folk songs in their compositions, as in the case of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, The Pastoral (1808), third movement, Allegro a "Merry gathering of country folk", a scherzo in 3/4 time, depicting peasant dancing and reveling. More clearly nationalist

are Chopin's mazurkas. The original folk mazurka is a combination of three dances: a slow kujawiak, a moderate mazur, and a faster oberek or obertas. As a boy of fifteen, in a letter to his parents, Chopin described, a peasant dance he saw. This is what he wrote: "They started with leaps, waltz and oberek." Most of Chopin's mazurkas were created out of his recollections and impressions of the character, color, melody and rhythm, and, of course, the tempo rubato so significant to the Polish soul, as would put the late pianist Jan Gorbaty (http://www.chopin.org/articles/Polish%20Folk%20Music%20and%20Chopins%20Mazurkas_Gorbaty.pdf). Nationalism depended on the concept of folklore and music played a role, mainly as re-elaborated by learned composers. The emergence of the people due to nationalism was counterbalanced in a way by the constitution of a modern literary canon, mainly to be learned not by primary pupils, but by the minority of those who continued their studies in so-called Grammar Schools, also known as *Lycée* in France and *Gymnasium* in German speaking areas. Those were to be the ruling elites and they had to learn a corpus of ancient Greek and Roman authors, as well as modern ones. Learned music entered this scenario as a bourgeois learning serving both a universal purpose – scholarship and a universal language – and increasing a nationalist one.

The irruption of the masses

The nation state project was not accepted by everybody, far from it. Those affected negatively by the harsh labor conditions were the first to express their dissatisfaction in towns and cities, so that labor was at the heart of those opposing the homogeneity project by the new state. Soon ideological movements, such as socialist, communist and anarchist, were active in criticizing social conditions and the goals of the nation state. Women also soon expressed their desire to be heard and have a voice, in the suffragist movement.

The so-called *Belle Époque* (1871-1914) was particularly struck by all those social contradictions. Learned culture was being challenged

from the social masses, on the one hand, and by the colonized on the other hand, as the violent encounter with Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Confucians, among a plethora of other perceptions of the world, affected learned scholarship in the West. Further complicating the picture, the idealized peasants of the early Romantic nationalism was being put into question by the lower classes in towns and cities, now understood rather negatively by the elites as a rabble, the idle mob (Wood 1989). All those changes affected the cultural life in general, particularly the literary and music circles, culminating in explicit breaking of traditional learned tenets and ways of writing and composing. Even if with a strong intertextual reference to earlier learned tradition, the break was keen to challenge the main tenets of linear narrative. James Joyce's *Chamber Music* (1907) and most of all *Ulysses* (1922) broke with tradition, while referring to the very heart of Western canon, going back to Homer and the *Odyssey*. Perhaps the best breaking piece is Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913), a revolutionary composition, even if referring to everything, including the myth of peasant rites (Whittall 1982), a mixed allusion to peasant folklore present in the early nationalism of Beethoven or Chopin, to name a couple of composers mentioned in this paper.

The Great War (1914-1918) would foster very mixed results, strengthening new social disruptions, social and behavioral changes, but also the most reactionary and conservative trends, whose results were social conflict, revolutions and ultimately a new war in a mere two decades. Futurism as an art movement is perhaps the best proof of the mixed features of those times, being at once a break with tradition, but also conservative, the result of social inclusion of the masses and a reaction to it (Gentile 2003). Rosa Luxemburg's dictum before her assassination is a symbol of the crossroads in those days: *Freiheit ist immer Freiheit der Andersdenkenden* ("Freedom is always freedom of those who think differently"). The price for freedom was sometimes death (Schütrumpf 2011). At the same period though several authors and composers were mixing with folk themes and rhythms, such as Jewish American, Black friendly George Gershwin, whose *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) perhaps best illustrate the mix of most despised peoples in WASP America, Jews, Blacks and other outcasts

(Dupree 1986). In a way, Gershwin anticipated culture industry which exploded with the likes of Benny Goodman and Glenn Miller (Mooney 1968).

After WWII and the implosion of the old order

The Second World War (1939-1945) was a landmark for several reasons, not least the unleashing of a plethora of social movements within and without the West. Women were finally at stage, Blacks and minorities were able to put their case, the colonized overthrew colonial power in India and elsewhere. Rapid social change was affected by Cold War (1947-1989), mostly in peripheral areas as in Latin America, while the rich West invented itself as liberal, social inclusive and open to social movements challenging privileges. All those social changes led to further advances of culture industry, now including TV and other ways of mechanic reproduction. Music was increasingly dependent on electricity, a clear sign of modernity. The demise of the Grammar School in Britain, in the 1960s coincides with the huge success of boys who were educated in Grammar Schools in the previous decade, the Beatles. Paul McCartney displayed from the start his learned study of both composition and literature, essential for his song and lyrics. The same applies to the others, notably John Lennon and George Harrison. Cicero and Shakespeare were not so distant and this is felt in the rather unique mix of learned and popular, via culture industry, in the huge success of the Beatles. There are references to earlier musical styles, as well as to literary subjects, such as a reminiscence of Cicero's treatise on old age, in "When I am sixty four", in 1967, when they were pretty young:

"When I'm Sixty Four"
When I get older losing my hair
Many years from now
Will you still be sending me a valentine
Birthday greetings, bottle of wine?
If I'd been out till quarter to three
Would you lock the door?
Will you still need me, will you still feed me

When I'm sixty-four?

You'll be older too
And if you say the word
I could stay with you
I could be handy, mending a fuse
When your lights have gone
You can knit a sweater by the fireside
Sunday mornings go for a ride
Doing the garden, digging the weeds
Who could ask for more?
Will you still need me, will you still feed me
When I'm sixty-four?

Every summer we can rent a cottage in the Isle of Wight
If it's not too dear
We shall scrimp and save
Grandchildren on your knee
Vera, Chuck & Dave

Send me a postcard, drop me a line
Stating point of view
Indicate precisely what you mean to say
Yours sincerely, wasting away
Give me your answer, fill in a form
Mine for evermore
Will you still need me, will you still feed me
When I'm sixty-four?
Ho!

The sixties were though an era of deep social, economic and behavioral changes. The demise of the Grammar School was rather a symptom of deeper changes. The contraceptive pill liberated women from undesired pregnancy; youngsters took the streets, French President and WWII hero Charles de Gaulle (1890 – 1970) resigned as a result (1969), hippie counterculture represented the challenge to old ways. Culture industry developed ever faster, as the electronic technological revolution started what would become the brave new world of present predominance over tradition, as put Hartog (2002). The canon was

dethroned in a short while, but this move engendered a series of mixed situations and contradictions.

The mixed roles of canon in recent times

The demise of the Grammar School did not end the role of canon, but established new roles for learned culture in general and in music in particular. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu witnessed all those changes and tried to interpret them early on, from his groundbreaking studies with Passeron (Bourdieu and Passeron 1964; 1970) to his essay on social distinction (Bourdieu 1979). Democratization led to the abandonment of the canon for ordinary people, but kept it as a preserve of those aspiring to reach the intellectual elite status. However, culture industry enabled ever more people to aspire to know the classics, so that ever more people were learning the canon. Workers were able to read the canon, *pace* Penguin books, and to have recordings of classical music, as well as to listen and watch BBC proms. Even if illiterate in classical Greek or Latin, or unable to read a music score, people of even the humblest backgrounds could enjoy and even discuss Dostoyevsky or Mozart.

It is thus no coincidence the fact that the demise of Grammar School did not lead to the abandonment of the canon, but changed its perception and function. As figured out Bourdieu, the canon became more than never a way of social distinction, but it also enabled people of humble origins to assert themselves. This move led to a growing importance of the canon for culture industry and mass popular culture. The continued and growing success of learned popular musicians is a proof of that, something perhaps better epitomized by Sir Elton John's huge popularity and his role in one of the most revealing ceremonies of high and low art in recent memory, the funeral of Princess Diana, with his *Candle in the wind* (1997):

Goodbye England's rose

May you ever grow in our hearts
You were the grace that placed itself
Where lives were torn apart
You called out to our country
And you whispered to those in pain
Now you belong to heaven
And the stars spell out your name

And it seems to me you lived your life
Like a candle in the wind
Never fading with the sunset
When the rain set in
And your footsteps will always fall here
Along England's greenest hills
Your candle's burned out long before
Your legend ever will

Loveliness we've lost
These empty days without your smile
This torch we'll always carry
For our nation's golden child
And even though we try
The truth brings us to tears
All our words cannot express
The joy you brought us through the years

And it seems to me you lived your life
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Like a candle in the wind
Never fading with the sunset
When the rain set in
And your footsteps will always fall here
Along England's greenest hills
Your candle's burned out long before
Your legend ever will

Goodbye England's rose
May you ever grow in our hearts
You were the grace that placed itself
Where lives were torn apart

Goodbye England's rose
From a country lost without your soul
Who'll miss the wings of your compassion
More than you'll ever know

And it seems to me you lived your life
Like a candle in the wind
Never fading with the sunset
When the rain set in
And you footsteps will always fall here
Along England's greenest hills
Your candle's burned out long before
Your legend ever will

There is possibly nothing more intertextual than both the music and lyrics of this composition (ARIESTYANTI 2009). The vocabulary refers to Christian Mediaeval images, in a way remembering Marc Bloch's *Les Rois Thaumaturges* on French and English Mediaeval sanctity (Bloch 1924). And, by the way, Princess Diana died in Paris!

The knowledge of standard language, as well as the proper understanding of canonic authors and composers did not lose any significance, to the contrary, in postmodern times. However, it assumed new social functions, including social distinction (*sensu* Bourdieu), but more than that. On the other hand, ignorance of the standard is often a bonus in modern mass democracies, be it natural or studied, as is the case of former US president George W. Bush, whose many disregards for Standard English is well attested. Who will forget passages like:

Rarely is the question asked: Is our children learning?"— Florence, S.C., Jan. 11, 2000

You teach a child to read, and he or her will be able to pass a literacy test.

The same applies to a populist demise of learned culture in general, including reading, by the same George W. Bush: "One of the great things about books is sometimes there are some fantastic pictures."— U.S. News & World Report, Jan. 3, 2000

However, this anti-intellectual ethos and despise for learned culture is only part of the picture, for increasing access to learned culture means that never so many people are lured by the canon.

A word on Brazil

This paper does not aim at addressing the relationship between learned and popular culture in Brazil, for it should then need to address a series of specific issues. However, suffice it to say that Brazil, as a colonized country, beset by slavery for several centuries, and characterized as patriarchal, grounded on personal relationship and patronage riven (pace Gilberto Freyre (1998), Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1936), Raymundo Faoro (1975), Roberto DaMatta 1997) experienced all the changes from the 19th c. to now in odd conditions. Learned education was an elite preserve for much longer and general primary education was generalized only at the end of the 20th c. However, it is worth mentioning that culture industry affected the country as well, and particularly since decline of authoritarian rule, in the 1970s, there has been a growing convergence between what was happening in Brazil and in the rich West, as discussed earlier. It is no coincidence that the founding fathers of Brazilian Popular Music (*Música Popular Brasileira*), such as Chico Buarque or Caetano Veloso, were trained, as the Beatles or Elton John, in the Grammar School tradition of learned scholarship, suppressed in Brazil in the same period, even if in Brazil in a much somber context of military rule. Several decades on, learned music continues to play an important role, even if, as elsewhere, an anti-intellectual ethos may consider that the best way of controlling people is to keep them out of learned knowledge.

Conclusion

At the end of the Old Regime, in the 18th c., learned culture served the nobility, but soon the bourgeoisie seized it to serve new

purposes, building the nation state and empire. It tried to impose a homogeneous ethos soon challenged by the workers and other outcasts. The 20th c. witnessed the ascension of the masses and the spreading of culture industry, leading to the demise of Grammar School, in the 1960s, which was however responsible for the huge success of mass culture in the following decades. The onset of the digital world strengthened the popularization of learned culture as a mass product. Learned music continues in this context to play a unique role not only as social distinction but also in influencing pop music.

Acknowledgments

I owe thanks first and foremost to Marcos Câmara de Castro for inviting me to write this essay, and to Thomas Patterson, and Ellen Meiksins Wood. I must also mention the institutional support of the University of Campinas, Unicamp, the National Science Foundation (CNPq), and the São Paulo Science Foundation (FAPESP). I am solely responsible for the ideas.

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