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Contemporary Carioca

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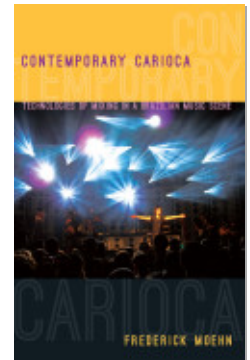
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PAULINHO MOSKA

DIFFERENCE AND REPETITION

Music is a play of mirrors in which every activity is reflected, defined, recorded, and distorted. If we look at one mirror, we see only an image of another. But at times a complex mirror game yields a vision that is rich, because unexpected and prophetic. At times it yields nothing but the swirl of the void.

—Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*

Sensations are reborn from themselves without rest,
Oh mirrors! Oh Pyrenees! Oh Caiçaras! . . .
And the sighs that I make are distant violins;
I walk the land as one who sneakily discovers
On the corners, in the taxis, in the little dressing rooms, his own kisses!
I am 300 I am 350
But one day I will finally run into myself.
—Mário de Andrade, “Espelho, pirineus, caiçaras”

“That’s my son at his seventh-birthday party playing capoeira and percussion,” Paulinho Moska said as we looked at digital photographs on his laptop computer during my visit to Rio in August 2007. “He plays in Mini-bloco—the Monobloco for children,” Paulinho explained, referring to the samba percussion workshops run by the members of the band Pedro Luís e A Parede (chapter 3). We happened upon the picture as Paulinho was showing me some of the strangely corrupted and distorted images he had amassed photographing Brazilian musicians through a marbled glass brick. Paulinho had been obsessed with photography since purchasing his

first digital camera, a Canon G2, during a visit to New York City in 2001. At the time, he was experiencing a difficult period in his personal life; his malaise was heightened by the general gloom of the city following the attacks of 11 September that same year. Deeply contemplative, camera in hand, he was fascinated with the distortion of his image as reflected in the stainless steel faucets, showerheads, and other mirrored surfaces in the hotel rooms in which he stayed during tours. He began to generate hundreds of zany self-portraits by photographing these reflections. Some of the resulting images, he explained, inspired poems that subsequently inspired songs. These songs became his album *Tudo novo de novo* (Everything new again, 2003), and he displayed large mounted prints of the images at the corresponding live show, as well as in an exhibit in the Hélio Oiticica Arts Center in Rio de Janeiro. By 2007 Paulinho was even hosting a television program about Brazilian music that incorporated his digital photography.

When I met him at AR Studios in 1999, however, Paulinho had just begun making his fifth solo album, *Móbile* (Mobile), which would mark a turning point in his career. I observed several of the production sessions for the album, beginning with a recording at AR in Rio de Janeiro, and later mix sessions in New York City. Paulinho engaged Marcos Suzano as percussionist and producer for the album, with Celso Fonseca as a second producer. In this chapter I detail how the individuals involved in producing *Móbile* conceptualized the recording in relation to the main narrative threads of this book, particularly with respect to the reevaluation of the place of rock influences and instrumentation in their music. As I did for *Pedro Luís e A Parede*, I examine how participants in this project paid close attention to various aspects of sound, from prioritizing certain instruments in the arrangements to emphasizing specific aesthetic preferences in recording and mixing. Paulinho and Suzano intended *Móbile* to be different from—but also in some ways similar to—preceding trends in MPB, and different from Paulinho's own earlier albums. They also wanted it to be different from “Americanoid” rock and pop. These instantiations of difference were to be effected in broad strokes by eliminating drum kit and electric guitar from the instrumentation, and by adding what Paulinho conceptualized as deterritorialized “interferences” to the arrangements.

Other dimensions of difference, however, were less obviously instrumental, playing out in the ambiguous location of “Africa” in Brazilian cultural heritage, for example; in the presumed listening tastes of the “masses” versus comparatively restricted middle-class audiences; in per-

ceived distinctions between mass-marketed versus specialist musical equipment, in comparatively subtle production and mixing preferences, or in a purportedly artisan-like search for aesthetic difference as such, in contradistinction to the tendencies toward homogenization inherent to industrial scales of production. While Paulinho was reconsidering the role of rock influences in his music, he simultaneously, under Suzano's tutelage, sought to incorporate into MPB certain sounds associated with *electrônica* (an umbrella term for a variety of genres that privilege electronic instrumentation such as synthesizers, sequencers, and drum machines). I read *Móvil* as a recording that showcases Marcos Suzano's talent and influence as the end of the decade approached.

It is fair to say that Paulinho's creative work is driven in large part by the urge to explore his own emotions and processes of self-realization. As I describe in the following pages, he even recognizes a degree of narcissism in his motivations. His lyrics contrast with those of Lenine, Pedro Luís, and Fernanda Abreu and their collaborators in that they typically lack obvious references to characteristic markers of Brazilian social life, or to specific local cultural manifestations or dilemmas (although this is not necessarily the case when he records cover versions of others' songs). They seem strangely deterritorialized, in this sense. All the same, this musician's idiosyncratic artistic trajectory met with the broader debates about music making that unfolded in the Rio scene and beyond in the late 1990s. Paulinho spoke of an ethical connection (*ligação ética*) that he believed he shared with a variety of pop musicians of his generation, and that ran counter to a tendency in Brazil to interpret popular music "through movements with clearly defined aesthetics." In bossa nova, for example, "everyone had to sing the same way," Paulinho observed. If somebody tried to make a "heavier" sound, he said, it was unacceptable. Then came MPB, and the pop rock of the 1980s, he added, suggesting that these too had relatively constraining aesthetics.

In the 1990s, by contrast, Paulinho felt that something important happened: MPB artists had come to be "attracted to each other through difference." Paulinho enjoyed the music of Lenine, Chico César, Zeca Baleiro, Carlinhos Brown, Arnaldo Antunes, Cásia Eller, Zélia Duncan, Adriana Calcanhotto, Fernanda Abreu, and Marisa Monte, he said, precisely because they were different from him, and from each other. He appreciated "each in accordance with the aesthetic that they put into their work." There was no movement, "not even unconscious," because these artists, his friends,

were all very different, and that was how they communicated. This development was a victory over the kinds of movement politics that often diminish “the freedom of the music itself.” He seemed to be responding directly to the question posed in the “MPB: Engagement or alienation?” debate introduced in the preface: his contemporaries in Brazilian pop music had no banners to parade, he said, except for music that was “free.” This was clear in their lyrics and in the way that they were “researching their sounds” so that they could be different, so they could “continue to be Brazilian but at the same time contemporary.”

Difference and processes of differentiation as elaborated in music scholarship have generally been conceptualized in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, and geography, or along the divide between traditional and modern (or sometimes high and low art), and we have seen how these concerns inform music making in this setting.¹ In scholarship on so-called world music, the discussion has often positioned a presumed given “Western” subject against which “the Other” is articulated. This chapter, however, reveals these dimensions to be intertwined with Paulinho’s intense desire to differentiate musical practices from both the established modes of production *within* MPB and from his own prior music making (which conformed to those more established modes). That is to say, making music different(ly) here is not only about dynamics of othering; it is also instrumental to individual and collective projects of becoming.

“Must the recognition of difference in music,” Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh ask, “necessarily be fictive and devious, ideological and hierarchical? Or can it be allied to a reflexive, analytical project?” (2000, 2). In Paulinho Moska’s Deleuze-inspired understanding of his musical trajectory, repetition does not mean sameness; it means rather the possibility for newness. What is repeated is in fact difference—“everything new again,” as in the title of one of his albums. This idea evokes Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of a minor literature, described by Claire Colebrook as one that “repeats the past and present in order to create a future” (2002, 121). “Think of all the post-colonial texts that do not appeal to their own already given voice but repeat and transform texts of the past,” Colebrook suggests. “The only thing that is repeated or returns is difference; no two moments of life can be the same. . . . The power of life is difference and repetition, or the eternal return of difference.” For Deleuze, life is not “some thing that then changes and differs,” Colebrook writes; life can be seen as “the power to differ” (2006, 1).²

The ways in which these concerns shaped the production of the *Móbile* recording form the focus of the first half of this chapter. In the second half, I examine how Paulinho gained independence from his recording label, EMI, and subsequently followed a distinct career path incorporating his digital photography and developing his television program *Zoombido*. Paulinho's multidisciplinary, as he referred to it, serves as another example of emergent forms of self-management within transforming markets of cultural production (but for him, it was also a continuation of his Deleuzian project).

Early Career

Paulinho was born in 1967 to a Carioca father and a mother from Bahia. In the late 1970s his father managed the Dancing Days (later renamed Concha Verde) nightclub on the Urca Hill (the first stop on the famous cable car that ascends the Sugarloaf), where, as a child, Paulinho was able to watch performances by major figures in MPB.³ He studied drama at a small local arts school (Casa das Artes de Laranjeiras) in the early 1980s and began to work in film, earning some minor roles. He was also a member of the choir Garganta Profunda, which performed an eclectic repertory including songs from the Beatles, nineteenth-century Brazilian *modinhas* (sentimental ballads), bossa nova, samba, and classical and early music.

In 1987 Paulinho formed a pop-rock group called Inimigos do Rei (Enemies of the King) with two other vocalists from Garganta Profunda (plus electric guitar, bass, and keyboard, as well as drum kit). Sérgio Dias, the guitarist for the Tropicália-era group Os Mutantes, heard the band one night and subsequently became Paulinho's musical mentor, producing the group's demo tape. Two years later their self-titled debut album generated two hit songs: "Uma barata chamada Kafka" (A cockroach named Kafka) and "Adelaide."⁴ Paulinho began his solo career in the early 1990s during a period when he was influenced by rock acts such as Lenny Kravitz, Nirvana, and Pearl Jam. He described the urge to make music with more "attitude" than his previous vocal groups, and he saw rock as a "vehicle for a cry of liberation" from the lighter pop for which he had become known. He listened to rock "non-stop" and he bought a steel-stringed acoustic guitar of the type popular in the United States and Europe.

For his first album, *Vontade* (Wish, or Desire), from 1993, Paulinho sought what he referred to as a garage band sound. He had in mind the grunge

bands associated with the Seattle rock scene at the time. He recorded on analog tape and as “live” as possible (that is, with limited overdubbing or postproduction treatment), consistent with the studio aesthetic priorities that Thomas Turino labels “high-fidelity” (2008). Although he recorded in Rio (at Nas Nuvens and Estudios Mega), he traveled to Los Angeles to mix and master the album because he thought it would be easier to achieve the grunge-like sound he desired there. In the album release, Sérgio Dias celebrated Paulinho’s “courage” in leaving his previous pop successes behind to try a new sound, and he lauded Paulinho’s good taste and compositional originality.⁵

Nevertheless, after the release of *Vontade*, Paulinho soon felt boxed in again when the press began to call him a rocker. “I love rock,” he said, “but I immediately felt that I had escaped the label of ‘the cute one’ of Inimigos and had fallen into a different branch of the same tree of labels. I felt lost, questioning myself about why I was an artist,” Paulinho wrote in an autobiographical essay (Moska 2004). Meanwhile, he had begun to participate in a philosophy study group organized by Professor Cláudio Piano, who hosted sessions in his home in the South Zone.⁶ With Cláudio (who passed away in 1998), Paulinho read and discussed existential philosophy and Gilles Deleuze. The lyrics to his second album, *Pensar é fazer música* (To Think Is to Make Music), released in 1995, reflect the influence on his worldview of these readings. For Paulinho, the album, again recorded at Nas Nuvens, also represented a break with the idea that he needed to have a particular style. It is a mix of pop, rock, and blues with MPB influences such as a citation of Jackson do Pandeiro’s “Cantiga do sapo” on the song “Careta,” or the echo of a cuíca friction drum from samba on “Me deixe sozinho,” from the same album. Gilberto Gil wrote an album release that praised Paulinho’s “profound interest in incorporating the variety/complexity of being in the world.”⁷ From this recording, the song “O último dia” (The last day) was used as the opening music for the mini-novela (short-run telenovela) *O fim do mundo* (The End of the World), earning the track substantial airplay and giving Paulinho some national recognition. It remains one of his best-known songs.

The following album, *Contrasenso* (Nonsense), of 1997, continues this sound of rock-influenced MPB. The inspiration of the Beatles is audible in, for example, the George Harrison-like electric guitar of the opening track, “A seta e o alvo” (The arrow and the target), while other songs draw on more typically Brazilian styles, such as “Paixão e medo” (Passion and

fear), which is in the melancholy style of a *seresta* (basically, a slowly sung choro) with a wistful accordion accompaniment.

Conceptualization and Planning of *Móbile*

I want to see a boogie-woogie with pandeiro and acoustic guitar.

—From the 1959 song “Chiclete com banana,” by Gordurinha and Castilho

Although Paulinho enjoyed successes with memorable songs such as “O fim do mundo,” “Relampiano” (the collaboration with Lenine, discussed in chapter 2, which the two also recorded on Paulinho’s *Contrasenso*), and others from his first three solo albums, the predominantly rock-pop instrumentation and sound with some blues and R&B influences of those recordings, and of his fourth album, *Através do espelho: Ao vivo no Rival* (In the mirror: Live at Rival Theater), recorded in 1997, seems quite conventional in comparison to *Móbile*. The encounter that would eventually make the latter album possible was a show called “Cinco no palco” (Five on the stage), which headlined Paulinho and fellow singer-songwriters Lenine, Chico César, and Zeca Balero along with the percussionist Marcos Suzano, and which toured the various SESC theaters of São Paulo in 1998.⁸ At this performance Paulinho observed Suzano “producing some sounds” with his mini-kit, and he was surprised at how the percussionist brought rhythm to the foreground in an MPB show rather than staying behind the band, “playing pique-poque, pique-poque” (i.e., a complementary or subordinate part). During subsequent performances together in Japan, Paulinho concluded that he wanted Suzano to produce his next album.

In December 1998, Paulinho began to visit Suzano at his home to introduce him to his new repertoire and to discuss the production of the album. Suzano, in turn, introduced Paulinho to Goldie, Roni Size, and a variety of other artists then associated with the cutting edge of techno, drum and bass, and related genres. Paulinho liked “the newness” and “the attitude” of the music, but not “the electronic thing,” he recalled. “I hated techno,” he told me (echoing Lenine’s initial ambivalence vis-à-vis electronic music), and music that depended “on programmed patterns, on loops.” Suzano, however, assured Paulinho that he could achieve those sounds with acoustic percussion and with his own samples. He insisted that he would be able to adapt the timbres of electronic-based grooves from drum and bass or jungle, for example, to a recording context that privileged acoustic percussion. Moreover, Suzano did not just show up at the record-

ing studio with “a finished product,” Paulinho emphasized, referring to the grooves the percussionist programs into his Akai MPC 1000 sampler and sequencer. “There really was an *encounter* of us playing together. I modified various rhythms on the violão; we adapted various arrangements, precisely because we were experimenting together. So we had moments in which the music happened in a very spiritual way. There were moments when we really caught on fire in that room.” This was all the more startling to Paulinho because, as he put it, “what was there was an android, you know, the MPC 1000 was an android!”

Paulinho’s astonishment and his use of the word *android* reveal how new Suzano’s entire *modus operandi* was to a musician more accustomed to acoustic instrumentation (and it connects with Paulinho’s portrayal of the percussionist as a Carioca Blade Runner).⁹ At the same time, however, Paulinho’s emphasis on their personal encounters and on their performative input and control meant that the musical outcome was more than an adoption of electronic sounds from abroad; rather, it was an intersubjective and localized process of aesthetic transformation that maintained a proprietary sense of human agency. It was the sort of selective appropriation and modification championed in discourses of cultural cannibalism (Brazil has, after all, always been “very anthropophagous,” Paulinho reminded me)—not, crucially, merely in the sense of a hybrid of musical styles but also in terms of *process*: that is, it was important to Paulinho that the timbres and grooves of techno could be performed on acoustic instruments and worked out in an interpersonal setting.

Paulinho explained Suzano’s vision of a new sound for the album, and how the latter suggested a change in the instrumentation:

I’ll never forget, at [Suzano’s] house, already working on the sequencing programs, when he said, “Man, we’ve got to give rock ’n’ roll the boot, you know. To do something modern, we’ve got to go into the past, we have to go into jazz, and into what is most new, which is drum and bass, jungle, these more techno beats, and forget rock.” So, to forget rock, the first thing that we did was get rid of the electric guitar, the symbol of rock. And the second was to take out the drum kit. Now, it’s *rhythm*—it’s no longer drum kit, it’s *rhythm*. And with the electric guitar gone, I could experiment with sounds on my violão. So, many things that we recorded, you might think are made by keyboards but actually it’s violão with a Mutator [frequency filtering processor], with

the Sherman, which is another filter, or with the Mooger Fooger [also a filter]. So, I could consequently discover my own instrument, because I was being suffocated by a—quote-unquote—Americanoid structure of making an arrangement.

I saw a certain irony in this in 1999, for this interview with Paulinho took place in a New York City recording studio precisely as press coverage in the United States about the “rediscovery” of Os Mutantes, the band that introduced rock instrumentation into the televised MPB song festivals in 1967, was beginning to crest. (The interview with Paulinho took place on 22 April; Gerald Marzorati’s *New York Times Magazine* feature article on the band and Tropicália appeared three days later.)

This seemed even more ironic given Paulinho’s personal link with Sérgio Dias of Os Mutantes, his early mentor. Paulinho cautioned, however, that he did not “hate” the electric guitar, and that it was important that Brazilian music was “colonized” by Anglo-American popular music so that it could have these sounds (and technologies) as additional options for the great mix. (Cultural imperialism can be read as an enabling force.) It was a matter of historical context: in the time of Tropicália, “there was no worldwide promotion. People didn’t have access to this.” Bossa nova may have been wildly successful internationally in the 1960s, but few abroad would have thought to listen to Brazilian rock in 1968 when it had to compete with, for example, Jimi Hendrix, the Beatles, and Eric Clapton. (Only thirty years later did David Byrne and others “discover” Os Mutantes in their own globalized search for difference.)

At a holiday gathering late in 1998 in the hills a few hours outside the city of Rio, Paulinho, Suzano, and the singer-songwriter-producer Celso Fonseca further conceptualized the *Móbile* project.¹⁰ Celso introduced Paulinho to a variety of “new artists with new sounds” (such as Portishead), insisting that Paulinho could still foreground his violão. With Suzano and Celso, Paulinho thus developed a plan to move away from the drum kit and the electric guitar, and to prioritize instead the *couro* (hide or skin) of the pandeiro, the “natural” materials of other percussion instruments, and the *cordas* (strings) of the violão as sonic markers of Brazilian musicality. The sound of popular music in Brazil, Paulinho said, “had become unbearable,” following a “structure of drum kit, keyboards, [electric] guitar and bass.” In the Deleuzian vocabulary, Paulinho sought a “line of flight” out of an intolerable situation. But it was also a difference in repetition. “Brazil

was always acoustic,” he noted. “As a poorer country, its great music was born in the morro, in the skin of the percussion and on the strings of the violão. This is perhaps what differentiates us most clearly from other cultures—principally American culture.”¹¹

MóBILE was obviously not a traditionalist effort to return to the music of the morro, so to speak, or even to “classic” MPB. Suzano, Paulinho related, elevated Miles Davis as an example of someone who changed the history of music several times, and he urged Paulinho to take risks in the production. It was “not a negation of rock”; it was “to search for an attitude of the contemporary” in jazz and other African diaspora musics. It was not about being “modern,” for trying to be modern was “very damaging to the one who is creating.” Instead, as a *contemporary* album, *MóBILE* would “be attentive to the new things that are going on in the world” such as “loops, spatial sounds, noise, the inclusion of interferences,” and what these could “bring in terms of musicality.” In this manner they would be able once again to make an album structured around rhythm and violão, like classic samba, choro, and bossa nova. “We are once again Brazilians,” he concluded, “but we have succeeded yet again in being different just when we were no longer believed that this combination would continue to produce something different.” Jorge Mautner, who wrote a press release for *MóBILE*, and who collaborated on one of the tracks, said of the recording that it represented a “marriage” of the familiar and the strange, “like a dream that we have already had several times, but with the presence of a frightful and scandalous newness” (1999).

Interferences, Electronica, and Difference

There was another key participant on the album who would help in achieving the desired “contemporary” aesthetic: the keyboardist and electronic music programmer Sacha Amback, whom Paulinho had met years earlier in his philosophy study group. Professor Cláudio Piano, perhaps thinking of Deleuze and Guattari’s writings about the synthesizer, had in fact urged Paulinho to work with Sacha.¹² Only now, however, when pushed by Marcos Suzano to consider electronic sounds, did Paulinho think of Sacha for making a connection with European art music and electroacoustic sounds. Sacha was a devotee of European composers such as György Ligeti and Luciano Berio; even after working in pop music for many years, he told me, these were the two composers who most “moved” him in music.

In 1985 he began playing with the pop musician Ritchie (born in England but living in Brazil), and from 1987 to 1998 he worked with Lulu Santos, another major figure in Brazilian pop. He also worked with the singer-songwriter Adriana Calcanhotto (one of the participants in the “MPB: Engagement or alienation?” debate). Sacha’s familiarity with both pop and contemporary art music would be ideal for the *Móbile* project, Paulinho decided.

For Paulinho, Sacha was to be distinguished from the typical keyboardist in a pop-rock band because he would never just play a standard piano or organ accompaniment through an entire song. Rather, Sacha played *interferences*. He “samples everything,” Paulinho explained, and “constructs with a mosaic of references”; his work was “fractal.” Paulinho wanted the keyboardist to incorporate “apparently non-musical sounds” into the music, to “insert noises in the service of the song.” Not “noise for the sake of noise,” but an “interference” that could “be a part of the music, the naturalness of the music, of the musical chaos.” Paulinho envisioned a “pseudo-place,” a “non-physical place where all the noises, silences, pauses, and rhythms” already existed; to compose a song was “to dive into that place and take out a few things” to combine.

Gilles Deleuze utilizes the French word *brouillage*, which translators have glossed as “interference” or “noise”; his usage seems to derive from the work of fellow Frenchman Michel Serres, whom Deleuze frequently cites (Brown 2002, 1). Serres recognized interference and noise as essential to the process of communication. The reasoning behind his argument derives from information theory, in which there is a distinction between a sender and a receiver and there is a signal that passes from one to the other. Noise or interference is external to the classical model of communication; it *interferes* with ideal transmission. Serres proposed, by contrast, that noise is “the necessary ground against which the signal stands out as something different,” making it recognizable as communication: “In order for there to be any kind of relationship between sender and receiver, some form of noise or interference, that is, an injection of difference, is required. This comes about by the very opening up of a passage, which inevitably exposes the signal to noise, and thus also to potential transformation. Serres then arrives at the interesting paradox that successful communication necessarily involves the risk of failure. Communication may be thwarted or ‘betrayed’ by the medium through which it passes. But if we take the position ‘downstream,’ at the point of destination rather than departure of the

message, we may see this failure, this betrayal, as also the process of invention” (Brown 2002, 7). Paulinho conceptualized noise “downstream” on *Móbile*, that is, as part of the process of invention and communication, while the “pseudo-place” he described resembles Serres’s concept of the “chaos-cloud,” the founding noise from which differentiation potentially emerges (Brown 2002, 14).

It was important, Paulinho stressed, that Sacha’s interferences were to be in the service of the music. “The interference itself has a human interference on top of it, placing it into a context within the song in which the noise becomes beauty” (my emphasis). For Paulinho, then, Sacha’s “studio audio art,” to use Thomas Turino’s term for recording practices that privilege electronic or computer-generated or mediated sound removed from the context of live performance (2008), in fact had to be connected to a subject-centered ideal of aesthetic value (the beauty of a song). “I am a composer of songs,” Paulinho asserted. “I’m not a musician who wants to make a twenty-minute-long techno track without words. I want to say something with my words.” Even so, within that context the noise itself was detached from specifically located subjects. Asked if there existed a “Brazilian” noise, or a Brazilian preference for a certain type of noise, Paulinho responded: “I’d like to have noise in the territory of non-nationality. Maybe this is a virtue of noise, that it doesn’t have style. . . . Maybe in a hundred years people will succeed in nationalizing noise, but . . . it still has this function for us of liberation, of denationalization, of deterritorialization.” Noise, in this conceptualization, can help free a song from being merely “national.” And yet Paulinho was sure that “that the majority of the population” in Brazil would understand the noises on *Móbile* as foreign, as representing an influence from abroad. If noises are supposed to be deterritorialized, existing in a pseudo-place, listeners nevertheless inhabit specific national spaces; Paulinho feared that his new sound would seem very strange, un-Brazilian, to many.

Suzano’s idea was that Sacha would also contribute interferences along the lines of what the British electronic musician William Orbit had done for Madonna’s *Ray of Light* album (1998). As an admirer of Orbit’s work, Sacha was pleased with Suzano’s suggestion. Orbit exemplified Sacha’s broader aesthetic preferences for “the sound from England, and from Germany,” he told me. Specifically, he felt that “in English music there is a sonority of German electronic equipment” that he found more appealing than the sonority of American popular music. Even English pop, he

thought, is “much more infused with alternative influences” than American pop. Sacha appreciated synthesizers such as the German-made Waldorf (e.g., the Attack percussion synthesizer, the Microwave XT, or the Q virtual analog synthesizer), and the German-made Quasimidi Polymorph analog emulation synthesizer popular in techno music. He also preferred English and German microphones, pre-amplifiers, equalizers, and compressors. Sacha elaborated:

The way they use filters, which today is very much in fashion, they were always doing it. The English filters, the Belgian-made Sherman, the German ones, and others that I may not even know. They always used these things, and I always liked them. I’m attracted to this even more than the synthesizers from Korg, Roland, Yamaha in general, which I love, but the kind of sonority that they look for there [in England] is something that I think is more serious. It’s not about making a synthesizer that plays drum kit, piano, that does everything. . . . People think that they buy one of these and they have an orchestra. The equipment [that I like] is for another kind of music. It’s a sound with some personality, something that only that synthesizer can do well. . . . It’s an instrument that does a special kind of thing that may not be so palatable to everyone’s taste, but which has a very strong personality.

Sacha’s preferences recall Chico Neves’s discourse about artisan music making; the synthesizers Sacha disfavors are mass produced in much greater economies of scale than the more specialized (and more expensive) gear he prizes. (In fact, Sacha saw in Chico a fellow “instigator” who did not fit in well with the music industry.)

Sacha also held up Walter Costa, the audio engineer for *Móbile*, as a technician who was willing to experiment, someone to whom one could say, “Walter, I have a new piece of equipment, I brought this new spice,” and he would respond, “Mmm, what can this new spice do for our sound?” Sure, Sacha wanted technical excellence in a mix, he said, but he was much more content “to discover *one* thing different and unusual” than he was with technical perfection. Celso, too, had advocated Walter for the project as “a kind of scientist” who would truly “mess” with Paulinho’s sound and “ruin everything” but “in a good sense,” Paulinho recalled. A spirit of experimentalism simply did not exist in the music industry, Sacha lamented, at least not as he had experienced it in Brazil. Industry personnel were inter-

ested in “filling up [retailers’] shelves” with CDs, and with “making music to play on the radio, for the market.”

Recording and Difference

Shortly before beginning the project with Paulinho, Walter Costa recorded an album of one of Brazil’s leading MPB singers with Celso as producer. They traveled to New York to mix it. He thus had a freshly comparative perspective and was able to elaborate some differences in production preferences that he had observed abroad. The singer in question had “an American vision” in mind for her album, said Walter. She wanted it “to sound different” from a Brazilian recording, and the production team was at first onboard with this plan. Walter, however, had a feeling that such an approach would not work out for the mix sessions in New York. There existed a concept of what one could call a Brazilian sound, he said, which was difficult for Americans to understand. Specifically, Americans tended not to understand the place of the percussion: “If you have an album constructed completely around percussion and you put it in the hands of somebody who puts the percussion in the background, I think the album is lost. If you give it to someone who thinks of the skeleton of the album—around which the whole album is constructed—as secondary, the rest doesn’t have support.”¹³

According to Walter, a similar dynamic occurred when a prominent British producer-engineer came to mix a project by another MPB singer: “He used sounds in a very touristic way. He liked those things that were very characteristic, and he liked them simply as mentions. He used the minimum possible for something to characterize a Brazilian rhythm. As soon as he reached the point where he thought the Brazilian characteristic was established—for an English person—the rest was unnecessary, as if the rest was an overdose of the same idea, but it wasn’t. When it is an overdose, that’s where the idea is.” Despite the local production team telling this visitor what their priorities were, the latter “didn’t do the necessary homework,” Walter said, and instead thought it was “too much” percussion. As Louise Meintjes has observed, “mediation embeds layers and layers of experience in the expressive commodity form” and “opens up multiple possibilities for interpretation of those embedded experiences” (2003, 261). The British listener of that mix (now fixed onto the CD) may find it satisfying, while the Brazilian listener may sense something off about it. Brazilian

music makers, meanwhile, may take lessons from such cross-cultural collaborations and seek to assert their priorities in subsequent work, as they did for *Móbile*.

Celso Fonseca (*Móbile*'s co-producer, with Suzano) had also observed differences precisely "on the things closer to [Brazilian] culture," such as the strings and skin that Paulinho identified as the basis of his sound on *Móbile*. For the violão, with its nylon strings, for example, Celso felt that Brazilians preferred a fuller sound than Americans typically do, with more bass frequencies, and in the front of the mix. "The American always brings out the high-mid frequencies . . . to get that bright sound," but the Brazilian violão was "more intimate," "closer," as if the performer were sitting right there playing for the listener. That was "the violão that we understand," Celso said. Even when recording an acoustic guitar with steel strings, the Brazilian would try to get a sound closer to that of the violão of nylon strings, he added, with more low frequencies. (This "fuller" sound preferred for violão corresponds to Lenine's preference for more "body" on his instrument, as described in chapter 2.) But would this kind of sound not interfere with the percussion? I wondered. "No," Celso answered, because Brazilian producers and mixers "always know the place of percussion." Outside Brazil, in his experience, people sometimes hid the percussion a bit, especially if there were also electronic elements such as loops or programmed parts on sequencers. Foreign engineers and producers tended to place the acoustically performed percussion "way behind and the loop more in front." Celso preferred to have the percussion more foregrounded. The shift toward prioritizing the sounds of strings and skin for *Móbile*, as Paulinho poetically described it, thus also bore upon priorities in the mix, priorities that were, we have seen, changing during this period, in part through the efforts of Marcos Suzano.

Paulinho's contact with Suzano was a milestone in his career, like his earlier experience with Sérgio Dias. "I began to realize that he is a genius," he said of the percussionist; he was "happy to be at his side." Suzano had complained to Paulinho about ending up disappointed with so many of the recordings he worked on because the people in the control room of the studio didn't understand what kind of sound he wanted to achieve. "They just treated him like a percussionist, you know," Paulinho said with empathy. But Suzano is "an aesthete" who draws pictures and paints paintings, Paulinho thought, by "recapturing this African thing of the low frequencies" and turning it into "the contemporary." To leave his repertory in Su-

zano's hands and to allow him to create a sound that he really loves, Paulinho concluded, was a privilege.¹⁴ My fieldnotes record Suzano delighting in this freedom to be himself while working at AR Studios, using a version of his mini-kit:

Suzano . . . has a drum-and-bass thing going, with [Indian] tabla [drum], a nylon percussion brush, and an inverted silver serving tray. He's sitting on a cajón [as if it were the seat of a drum kit]. . . . The sound of the tabla . . . is resonating down in the 60 to 90 Hz range, I would guess. He's just added a few [instruments]—the cajón, a small splash [cymbal], which he's not playing as a splash [would normally be played], a reco reco [scraper from samba], which he's not playing as a reco reco [would normally be used], and a pile of curved steel plates [vehicle shock absorbers]. For the second part of the song, playing with the brush in his right hand between the inverted silver [serving] tray and the splash [positioned above it], he's [also] playing a kick drum[-like] pattern [on the cajón], and sometimes hitting the tabla [with his left hand] . . . Walter just did a little pre-mix for playback and Suzano called a friend on his cellular phone to play it back for him. "Dá um playback [Give it a playback]," he tells Walter. "That cajón, man, sounds amazing [é bom pá caralho]," co-producer Celso Fonseca comments. (20 March 1999)

Here we witness the collective satisfaction that Celso and Suzano, together with the sound engineer (and well into the late hours of the night), take in hearing the instant playback of a distinctive sound quite outside the mainstream for Brazilian pop. (The use of the word *caralho*, in a phrase that if translated literally means "good for the penis," adds a sexual tone to the sentiment, as discussed in chapter 1.)

To mix the album, the musicians traveled to RPM Sound Studios on East 12th Street in Manhattan. For the mix engineer, Suzano chose the American Jim Ball again (with whom he had previously worked on Baez's *Play Me Backwards*, on *Olho de peixe*, and on *Sambatown*). He appreciated Ball's experience with acoustic instrumentation and sounds and knew that he would not relegate Suzano's percussion to the background. "We understood each other very well," Paulinho reflected of his musical team when we talked in New York near the end of the mixing sessions for the album. "It was very clear what we wanted." He was very excited at the time with how the project

was coming together: “Today when I see everything done, I say, ‘Caramba!’ During mixing we listened, we talked, we went crazy, and . . . I confess to you that I am still taken by this atmosphere . . . I don’t know, something inside me says that it is a *very* different album.”

A Mobile in a Hurricane

Paulinho’s songs probe questions of self, identity, and the search for meaning in life with lyrics that read like little poems. Love is a frequent theme, but it in fact symbolizes renewal more often than it refers to the intimate love between individuals. Key themes of existential philosophy permeate his songs, especially those on the *MóBILE* album. For example, a sense of disorientation and angst with respect to the apparent lack of rational explanations for events, and a belief that subjects can create value and meaning in spite of life’s absurdities; a preoccupation with intersubjectivity and with seeing other subjects in an objective relation to oneself; a sense that the past and future both also partly constitute the present, related to the existentialist concept of facticity as pertinent to the continual process of self-making; acting as one’s authentic self in accordance with one’s freedom (rather than following predetermined roles); and sentiments of despair in relation to external limits to the construction of one’s self-identity.

For Paulinho, the opening song on the album, “MóBILE no furacão (Auto-retrato nu)” (Mobile in the hurricane [Naked self-portrait]), represented his idea for the project: “simple songs, pretty, orderly melodies, within this Afro-cybernetic hurricane.” A mobile in a hurricane is something that moves “even in the middle of chaos.” Within “movements of extremely heavy *batucada*,” of percussion and other sounds, “there is a *violão*”; there is “a song moving about inside,” an artistic creation in a kinetic balance like Alexander Calder’s mobiles. The track begins with a quiet B minor chord sustained on electronic keyboard with a sound somewhere in between synthesized vocal and violin timbres; layered on top of this sustained “pad” is another one with a similar timbre, but with an oscillator controlling its volume so that it pulses. Soon acoustic guitars and percussion join in to fill out the harmony and establish the rhythm, and Paulinho begins to sing lightly in the middle range of his tenor about the restlessness of existence, about always changing and “living every second.” He is like a mobile loose in a hurricane, he sings, and calm only makes him feel lonely.

Meanwhile, Sacha and Suzano interfere with synthesized and acoustically performed “noises”; one such occasional iteration sounds like a depth charge in the sea. To this listener, such sounds fit well into the musical texture and hardly seem like noise at all, but they were certainly uncharacteristic for MPB at the time. Sacha also adds melodic synthesizer elaborations, some of which recall William Orbit’s work. There is tremendous attention to sonic detail, to dynamic buildup and contrast between sections of the song, and to the blend of acoustic and synthesized timbres in the texture and the mix. As the song progresses, the sound grows denser and busier. The second verse is about Paulinho changing his name so that no one could find him, but being brought back to where he started, as if he’d never left—the irony of life, Paulinho concludes. Whenever his anchor grabs hold, he sings in the bridge of the song, Paulinho immediately “lights the wick” and an explosion sends him to other places and other “presents” (i.e., temporal modes). Paulinho’s voice becomes more urgent as he returns to the refrain at the end of the bridge and reaches into the higher parts of his vocal range, almost shouting, “I’m a mobile alone in a hurricane!”

Guest wind instrumentalist Carlos Malta (of Pife Muderno) begins a meandering soprano saxophone solo as the song concludes, adding to the increasing impression of turbulent weather conditions swirling around the singer. After the final refrain, Carlos’s solo first begins to get more intense and wild, climbing high and diving low in its range, circling through short motifs, but then calming down as all other instruments fade out completely and nothing is left but the last few embellished and sustained notes of the soprano saxophone solo, completely lacking any reverberation (i.e., room sound), as if on a wide open sea after a hurricane has passed. The saxophone sound is raw and dry as Carlos repeats a catchy melodic phrase built on a sequence of arpeggios that Sacha established earlier in the song. The “irony of life,” Paulinho said in one of our interviews, extends to the way he ended up incorporating electronic sounds into the album when he had disliked synthesizer so much, and also to the fact that after four albums of pop-rock instrumentation, he was returning to where he started from—the couro and cordas so characteristic of MPB.

“It is something impressive,” the author-musician Jorge Mautner wrote about *Móvil* in the customarily hyperbolic tradition of press releases. Paulinho “extrapolated modernism, postmodernism, tropicalism, futurism, cubism, dadaism, anthropophagy, and surrealism and reached the peak

of nirvana of all the ecstasies and all the culminations of all the sensationisms, including the sensationism of [the celebrated Portuguese poet] Fernando Pessoa” (1999).¹⁵ Mautner co-composed the lyrics to Paulinho’s “Castelos de areia” (Sandcastles), a kind of funk-shuffle-baião-samba mix with Middle Eastern-sounding world music samples (e.g., a muezzin-like chant and a sampled melody with a timbre that sounds something like a zurna) provided by André Abujamra, a guest “interferer” from São Paulo.¹⁶

The song begins with a few seconds of Mautner playing a dissonant and strident improvisation on violin, which is suddenly interrupted by noises that sound like the static that leaps off high-power electric cables, but here emanating from Sacha’s machines. Paulinho enters with a funky chord vamp on violão that is reminiscent of Lenine’s guitar playing, along with a few measures of ringing sixteenth notes on the triangle, while the bassist Dunga (who also played in Lulu Santos’s band) works with Suzano to hold down the groove. Paulinho also plays bell-like ostinatos on steel-stringed acoustic guitar in 6/4 meter over the 4/4 shuffle, but this instrument is electronically filtered to sound something like a sitar (the buzzy and twangy Indian chordophone). Sacha’s digitized static and other sounds interfere throughout the track. The verses to “Castelos de areia” present miniature cases of dashed hopes and expectations, such as that of a pious Christian who spends a lifetime in prayer waiting to encounter Jesus, but when a burning light fills his (or her) heart, it is not Jesus but simply pain.

The last verse of the song envisions the human race achieving immortality in the year 4000. There is no longer hot or cold and no one gets ill or dies, but what still troubles people is the knowledge that despite being immortal, everyone and everything will eventually, one day, be swallowed up by a black hole. “That’s right, my love,” goes the refrain. “Sandcastles dissolve when the wave comes.” (The line is in part an homage to Jimi Hendrix, Mautner notes, as it borrows its central metaphor from his song “Castles Made of Sand.”) Interestingly, Mautner interprets the dilemmas of the lyrics as another allegory of Brazil, in reference both to Greek mythology and to Albert Camus’ existentialist classic *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942): “What’s most important about this song is the lesson that it is precisely in defeat that strength is tested. . . . The strongest being is not the one who never falls, but rather the one who . . . upon falling profoundly . . . has the knowledge and faith to lift himself up and begin all over. It is like the myth of Sisyphus. It is like the key to the secret of the Brazilian

people.” Mautner also interferes in the track with “cataclysmic recitation” (as he calls it in the press release); that is, he declaims a text at the end of the track that complements the theme of the lyrics. As all the instruments drop out, Mautner’s voice, distorted by a Mutator filter, is left ominously reciting, “—would inevitably, inexorably, one day or night, be swallowed by the black hole.”

Carlos Malta interferes with short melodic bursts on pífano for the second track on *Móbile*, “Onde anda a onda” (Where the wave goes). This fast-paced song spins a noisy, insistent, kind of hard-bop, jungle-influenced groove unlike any other Brazilian music I know. Paulinho’s wordplay lyrics speak about allowing oneself to be carried along with different kinds of waves, including sound waves, each with its own “strange spirit.” Carlos also enriches the texture of Paulinho’s moody, bluesy *milonga*-like “A moeda de um lado só” (One-sided coin) with bass flute.¹⁷ “Come, let’s go nowhere,” Paulinho sings, reaching into his lower range. “Let’s leave our clothes on the floor / Let’s forget our names, our prison / Yes, I agreed to enter into your sea / without knowing where the waves would lead / to navigate only if it were for passion.” Sacha’s interferences on this pensive track include orchestral samples and synthesized sounds that occasionally fill out the harmonic and timbral palette.

On another track, “Tudo é possível” (Everything is possible), Sacha’s samples include brief portions of what he thought might have been an Alban Berg piece (not remembering well where he had originally appropriated it)—perhaps, he said, reversed and inverted in his sequencer (a “retrograde inversion,” in music theory), as well as some “spacy” sounds reminiscent of an *ondes Martenot*. Somewhat hidden in the percussion and rhythmic guitar playing is a 4/4 rock backbeat. The basic pulse is at first articulated by a sound that has been filtered enough to obscure its origin (Paulinho’s violão?), then Dunga’s electric bass repeats pulsing eighth notes of chord tones. Paulinho’s violão solo on this track is also filtered into oddly plaintive, not quite “natural” but still acoustic-sounding timbres. As with the other songs, the lyrics to this one borrow themes from existential thought, in particular, a sense that time is not strictly linear. Rather, time is “a great tree of infinite branches,” Paulinho sings, that bears “its most beautiful fruit in the present moment.” And “tomorrow perhaps everything will be as clear to us as it was in the beginning.”

Love is another theme, but not in the customary sense of a love song; rather, it refers to “a new feeling,” like the intensity of emotion and new-

ness that Paulinho experienced with the birth of his son in 1997 (Mautner 1999). It is the “same illusion of love that makes us happily leap from a new precipice,” he sings in “Tudo é possível,” to “feel anew the pleasure of eternity.” A gem of existential pop-song poetry is “Por acaso em Osaka” (By chance in Osaka), which treats the theme of loneliness when away from home—in Paulinho’s case, during performance tours. He describes wandering about alone through city streets, crying or laughing, not wanting to understand why pain sometimes “invades” him, a loneliness so raw that he has to write it down. Paulinho sings in a lilting, perambulatory melody lyrics that draw on a classic existential dilemma in which one fears falling from a height or yearns to leap or decides out of pure free will to stay put. The song’s narrator, in Osaka, Japan, climbs to the top of the highest building and contemplates “the infinite landscape.” He knows that “it is necessary to fly,” but to leap is difficult. Then, from the heights he begins to think of life back down below (“Perhaps a visit to that exhibition”), as he experiences the existential pain that always “attacks” him when he travels, this time, by chance, in Osaka.

It is a very Zen-like sentiment, and indeed Osaka spelled backward is *akaso*, phonetically identical to the Portuguese *acaso*, meaning “chance.” Paulinho’s relaxed, offbeat groove on the guitar evokes a *xote* (a north-eastern dance that derives from the European *schottische*), or even reggae a bit, and he plays an *ostinato* figure on the Japanese *samisen*. Sacha adds melodic and harmonic interferences with synthesized and sampled sounds that have wind instrument-like timbres or, in some cases, again like the *ondes Martenot*. Suzano’s rhythmic rattlings fall on the beat, then seemingly randomly off the beat, sonically suggesting the noise of chance. This cinematic soundscape then segues into the song “A moeda de um lado só” as Carlos Malta evokes the sound of the *shakuhachi* on his bass flute.

“Ímã” (Magnet) is a funky shuffle blues about two individuals who cannot remember who they were before they came to know each other. It could be Paulinho and his son: “The end of your line is the beginning of mine / The place from which you will bring a new love.” The “lines” are another reference to Deleuze, whose concept of the *rhizome* is constructed of lines of segmentarity and stratification, as well as lines of flight (see Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 21). “Sem dizer adeus” (Without saying good-bye) is another well-crafted pop tune with perhaps a more “radio-friendly” sound (a sing-along melody with fewer obvious noises or other “interferences”), and lyrics that once again treat the theme of a peregrination in search of

love, in which space-time doubles back on itself. The subject of the song sings of having traveled until arriving at the last place where no one had been, only to prove “what it was to be after the end of the beyond.” There is, however, another personage mentioned in the song—the intersubjective gaze—as the subject in fact only arrived where one day “you said you would depart never to return.” “I was already there,” he sings, “waiting for you without having said good-bye.” None of the tracks, it is worth noting, sounds much like jungle, techno, or drum and bass, or like jazz for that matter. Given the transformation of these influences in Suzano’s appropriations, most listeners would not make the connection. The track “Debaixo do sol, morrendo de frio” (Beneath the sun, freezing to death), however, begins in a slow dirge-like tempo with a pedal point on the bass and synthesized and percussive interferences but then suddenly switches to a jungle-like rhythm and tempo for the second verse, sounding something like William Orbit’s work for Madonna on *Ray of Light*, but with a rich range of acoustic timbres.

Paulinho recorded three songs by other composers on the album, the most rousing of which is his version of Jorge Ben Jor’s classic soul samba “País tropical” (Tropical country, 1969). Suzano establishes a hard-driving samba-rock rhythm on pandeiro. The thumb-stroke bass notes on his instrument are so aggressive and “tight” that they sound like hits on a kick drum. Insistent sixteenth notes from the cymbals of the pandeiro and other percussive sounds (some of which are electronically filtered) propel the song. Paulinho, similarly, plays a forcefully funky down-and-dirty acoustic guitar vamp. Dunga’s bass lines hold down the bottom end and fill out the harmony. Guest musician Roberto Marques contributes a trombone solo that evokes gafieira (the brass-filled salon samba). Jorge Ben Jor’s lyrics proudly tell of living in a tropical country blessed with natural beauty by God. Particularly effective are the changes in texture and groove as the musicians switch to a half-time samba-funk with a backbeat for the bridge of the song. In contrast to Paulinho’s existentialist texts, “País tropical” is something of an ode to Carioca life, a celebration of carnival, soccer, the popular vw Beetle, the violão, and a lover (*nega*) named Tereza. (See chapter 2 for a discussion of the use of the word *nega*.) Jorge Mautner calls it “a hymn to all the music of the Brazil-Universal” (1999).

Another cover song on this album is a version of André Abujamra’s “O mundo” (The world), with Lenine, Zeca Baleiro, and Chico César providing guest vocals. Paulinho chose to close the album, however, with

Benito di Paula's 1972 classic samba-canção "Retalhos de cetim" (Satin scraps), which tells of a working-class Carioca who rehearses with his samba school for an entire year and struggles to pay for his instruments and for his girlfriend's carnival costume on her promise that she would parade with him, only to have the promise broken. After the tour de force of skins and strings, of noises and interferences, of mobiles and hurricanes, Paulinho performs this song with only his violão as accompaniment, playing the chords in a xote-like offbeat rhythm, rather than as a samba. The track has an extremely "dry" sound lacking any reverb—no noises or interferences at all—with little "production" beyond recording onto tape a skillful solo performance.¹⁸ (Interestingly, despite therefore being what Turino would call a high-fidelity recording in which liveness directly affects the recorded sound, this track sounds "less than live" because it lacks room sound, i.e., reverberation.) Paulinho thus ends the album with this unadorned voice-and-violão rendition of a classic samba about loss, heart-break, and carnival, seeming to demand renewal or rebirth again.

Through the "False" to Freedom

In 2007 I asked Paulinho to reflect back on the recording of *Móbile* and contextualize it within his career trajectory. The album, he said, was a way for him "to get out of an abyss" (or, if we think of Deleuze, it represented a kind of "line of flight"). He wanted "to create an identity," he elaborated, and to find a "signature," a uniqueness without which he feared he would not be recognized as a musical artist in Brazil. He didn't know precisely what he was doing, but Suzano had awoken in him the desire to do something new and risky. Most importantly, Paulinho said, *Móbile* had "a sound," and "an idea": the flirtation with electronica, with samplers in order to incorporate them into MPB. Paulinho brought up Caetano Veloso's 1972 experimental album, *Araça Azul* (Blue araça), a recording that used tape loops, splicing, and even dodecaphonic techniques to create a kind of musical concrete poetry far removed from MPB. (It was in fact a failure in terms of sales.) The first time Paulinho heard the album, he related, he found it strange and difficult. But later he came to appreciate it for Caetano's audacity.¹⁹ He came to feel that he needed to find his "signature" in Brazilian music, and that to do so he "needed to make an experience" and reflect on what kind of artist he was.

However, the experience of *Móbile* was too good, he fondly recalled: "It

wasn't so good for the label," Paulinho conceded, "but it was very good for me." Three trips to Japan, and then to Europe with the live show—it was "an incredible adventure." Then EMI cut short the *MóBILE* tour and requested the next album. In response, Paulinho recorded *Eu falso da minha vida o que eu quiser* in 2001, which, he noted with a laugh, was "even more radical" than *MóBILE*. "The more they wanted—," I interjected as I listened to his tale. "That's right," he continued emphatically, "the less I gave. It was a complete rupture. . . . My last album for the label is called *I false what I want of my life!*" The album's title takes the adjective *falso* (false) and treats it like a first-person singular verb form, but it is also a reference to Deleuze, who, in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, elaborates on "The Powers of the False," drawing on Nietzsche's idea of the "will to power" (1989).

Discussing the film *Stavisky*, Deleuze writes that "contrary to the form of the true which is unifying and tends to the identification of a character (his discovery or simply his coherence), the power of the false cannot be separated from an irreducible multiplicity. 'I is another' ['Je est un autre'] has replaced Ego = Ego" (Deleuze 1989, 133). Paulinho was drawn to this idea of a fundamental multiplicity of the self (and its consequent potential for identifying with the Other). The following passage from Deleuze's "The Powers of the False" is revealing here: "The forger will thus be inseparable from a chain of forgers into which he metamorphoses. There is no unique forger, and, if the forger reveals something, it is the existence behind him of another forger. . . . The truthful man will form part of the chain, at one end like the artist, at the other end, the *n*th power of the false. And the only content of narration will be the presentation of these forgers, their sliding from one to the other, their metamorphoses into each other" (133–34). If *MóBILE* was pivotal for Paulinho, *Eu falso* was more of a sonic scream that he had to let go before beginning a new phase in his career. It was a far edgier recording and it was too "noisy" for mainstream MPB audiences (that is, for radio airplay; it sold 8,000 copies). Paulinho's separation from his wife, he frankly stated in his own press release for the album, permeates the lyrics. While the album may "seem simply like a handful of romantic songs," Paulinho advised his listeners, "they are also false." A text that he declaims at the end of the last track ("Vênus"), he noted, affirms his "need for the false in questions of love," suggesting that what may seem like typically romantic lyrics are also expressions of doubt and irony, and that the musical treatment is intended to undermine their sentimentality.

Paulinho continued experimenting with Suzano, Sacha Amback, and the

recording engineer Walter Costa. His encounter with these musicians, he declared, modified his “relationship with music, with sound, with life.” In fact, by the middle of the *MóBILE* tour, he’d begun to call his show the *MóBILE/Moska* Quartet because, he wrote in his press release, it had become evident that the group was not merely presenting his music and poetry; they were researching sound. This recognition indicates a significant change in Paulinho’s understanding of his creative role. Rather than having a live band or session musicians in the recording studio as a backup to the singer-songwriter whose creations they merely realize and adorn, the idea of a quartet, associated more typically with jazz and classical art music, legitimizes the sonic work of the ensemble. “It is an honor to say that we are a Quartet,” Paulinho wrote. It is “a privilege to create music with them; to steal a little of their genius; to exchange, to play, to travel and be false with them.” Is this not, after all, a humanist, participatory view of musical becoming, just as much as it seems eminently bourgeois?

Suzano reaffirmed “his sophistication as a producer and instrumentalist,” Paulinho wrote. With his pandeiro and mini-set, Suzano emits “a truly new sound quality, with an almost magical and very unexpected poly-rhythm.” Samba “gushes through his blood and is imposed in between the lines of his grooves,” Paulinho continued, “making the sound always Brazilian and universal.” Sacha Amback, on the other hand, is a musician with such “an expansive musical culture” as to make him “someone of enviable nobility.” Sacha’s “atmospheres, textures, noises and interferences,” Paulinho wrote, seemed “like the colors of chameleons multiplying in intense sonic paintings.” And now Paulinho “adopted” the audio engineer Walter Costa “as a false musician of the Quartet,” for he “manipulated, ‘destroyed,’ and transformed everything that was played into another sound, a false sound. Distortions, filters, effects and noises are music now. And they were ‘played’ by him.” Walter was only a member of the quartet in the studio, Paulinho specified, while on tour, besides Suzano and Sacha, there is a bassist who is part of the quartet only in the shows. “That is, the Quartet is false.” (In the studio, the bassist was Dunga, who also recorded *MóBILE*.) The album, he believed, had a “pop electro-organic” character, with “the attitude of rock, MPB, samba, electronica, pop, jazz, funk, etc.,” in the “alchemy of the *MóBILE/Moska* Quartet.”²⁰

His press release reads like a personal letter or manifesto. It is, to be sure, a bit self-indulgent, but it is an interesting statement about how this singer-songwriter saw his personal crisis as directly relevant to his ex-

plorations of sonic difference together with his fellow “alchemists.” “My name is no longer Paulinho Moska,” he wrote. “Now it is just Moska. *MóBILE*/Moska Quartet. I false what I want of my life.” He elaborated on “falsehood,” clearly drawing on Gilles Deleuze’s writing on cinema: “False because I’m alive and life is a labyrinth of encounters in which each turn that we choose reveals the ‘beginning’ of a new labyrinth of possibilities. And the turns that we leave behind are transformed into ‘false’ realities. Encounters that we will never have. My insistence on aesthetic difference in my music is an attempt to try out some of these turns, so that they can take me down other roads, and remove me from the path of a familiar place.”²¹ “There is no more truth in one life than in the other,” Deleuze writes. “There is only becoming, and becoming is the power of the false of life” (1989, 141). Listening to the completed album, Moska heard his “pained and vigorous” falsetto on certain songs, singing with “soul,” alternately “outside of himself” and “delving into himself.” He heard a “False I.” The quartet’s “false music,” he asserted, saved him from the loneliness and pain that he experienced composing the songs.

Moska owed EMI a third album on his contract, yet *Eu falso*, the second (*MóBILE* being the first), would be his last for the label. So what happened after the *MóBILE*/Moska Quartet recorded this album that Artur Dapieve would affectionately refer to as “almost terminally depressing” (2003)? One of the artists and repertoire directors evidently started complaining that Moska was not making marketable pop music. (It was a long and complicated story, Moska said.) But Moska convinced the president of the label to end his contract and pay him a breach-of-contract fee, which he would use to record the third album: “I told the president that I would record an album of songs, nice songs, and this album would be mine. I would give them the licensing, but the album would be mine. And he agreed. A marvelous person. Because I play clean, you know, Fred. I tell it like it is . . . Little did I know that this would be the work that I most love in my life, this one that I did promising the president that I would make an album of songs to play on the radio, that I would not make an experimental album. And it ended up being an album that became a television show, a gallery exhibition, a DVD—the biggest project of my life. I’m doing this already for four years. I never spent so much time on one album. And I am doing lots of shows. I travel a lot. I don’t have a reason to record another album.” Moska formed his own label, Casulo Produções, to produce *Tudo novo de novo*. His glee at how he stepped into this new role is palpable in his talk:

“As soon as I freed myself of the company, to form my label—which is nothing more than a name, you know—I became the president of my company. And the first thing I did as the president of my company was to decide that I wouldn’t have a deadline. I wouldn’t have a deadline for composing, I wouldn’t have a deadline for recording, I wouldn’t have a deadline for releasing the work, I wouldn’t have a deadline for rehearsing it, I wouldn’t have a deadline for success, I wouldn’t have a deadline for saying that the idea that I have for the project is finished.” The recording companies, naturally, have production schedules: “They need to sell it quickly. So . . . they don’t know how to do anything but sell records.” *Tudo novo de novo*, he noted, was released in December 2003, and nearly four years later, in August 2007, he was releasing the DVD and about to begin traveling with it; he had exhibitions planned, and he had developed the television program. He was not demanding a new repertory or a new album of himself each year. “You start to work with what is flowing better, and this has been very gratifying.” Surely he would not have had the luxury of this kind of time frame under his recording label contract.

A “New Kind of Artist”

As Moska recounts in his DVD *Moska: Tudo novo de novo*, he often finds himself feeling lonely when on tour and spends a lot more time walking around or sleeping or hanging out in the bathroom than he does when he is home. After he bought the digital camera during a trip to New York City, he began experimenting with the macro button. “I discovered that through a door-knob’s reflection,” Moska narrates on the DVD, “I could fit the whole bathroom, even myself, in the frame. From that moment on, I took pictures of every reflective object I found in the hotels I stayed in.” Soon he had collected over 2,500 photographs in this manner, and he realized that he had “developed a visual language of longing and solitude.” At one point in this DVD, which Moska refers to on the DVD cover as a “false documentary of a real story and of the show that resulted from this adventure,” a reflection that has apparently materialized into a double of Moska sits on the sink of a cramped bathroom in a sleeveless undershirt and, scratching his head, says to his identical other, who is fiddling with a reflective surface, “Listen, don’t you find this all a little narcissistic?” “I do,” the other responds as he turns to look his double straight in the eye. “All you do is photograph yourself,” the seated one continues. “You’ve got to do something with this!”

Moska thus turned his self-absorption into creative expression and entered a new phase of his career that has brought him considerable satisfaction. In one faucet Moska found an image in which it looked like his eyes were crying huge diamonds (the knobs of the faucet). He wrote a short poem about it, “Lágrimas de diamantes” (Diamond tears), and then a song with those words. Selected images inspired more songs, and eventually the album *Tudo novo de novo* came together. Although some of the themes of the poems/songs are vaguely melancholy, they are given a much livelier musical treatment than the songs on *Eu falso*, including two sambas. Moska was starting anew.

The core group of musicians remained the Móbile/Moska Quartet (but now Moska’s bassist Dunga is included, while audio engineer Walter Costa, who also recorded and mixed this album, is not specifically named as part of the quartet proper). Among the notable guest musicians is Fernando Alves Pinto on the handsaw for two tracks, contributing that instrument’s characteristically eerie sound (also similar to the ondes Martenot). The samba singer-songwriter Mart’nalía joins Moska for the lively pop-samba “Acordando” (Waking up). The album returns more concretely to an MPB sound within a largely pop-rock format, with drum kit (but no electric guitar), and lacking noise “interferences.” The lyrics continue Moska’s preoccupation with finding one’s path in life. “Let us begin,” are the first three words of the first song, a sort of anthem to Moska’s artistic rebirth. “Let us place a final period / At least it is a signal / That everything in life has an end / Let us wake up / Today there is a different sun in the sky / Bursting with laughter in its merry-go-round / Shouting nothing is that sad / It’s everything new again / Let’s play where we’ve already been / Everything new again / Let’s dive from the height we climbed.” It is a beginning at the end, a serious game played where one has already been, a difference in repetition.

Moska’s mastery of pop songwriting is fully evident on “Lágrimas de diamantes” and other songs such as “Cheio de vazío” (Full of emptiness) and “Pensando em você” (Thinking of you), in which clever lyrics and catchy melodies and hooks combine with familiar yet satisfyingly inventive (to this listener at least) chord progressions. “Cheio de vazío,” for instance, features a restricted melody on the verses that starts on the fifth scale degree and struggles on steady eighth notes to climb stepwise just a major second, only to slink back down to where it started at the end of each line, before opening into an arching melody on the refrain with “tight,” Beatles-

like vocal harmonizations: “Oooo, and there on the other side of the sky / Someone pours onto a piece of paper / New poems of love.”

Moska collaborated with Pedro Luís and others for the blues-shuffle “Essa é a última solidão da sua vida” (This is the last solitude of your life), and he sings a charming love song duet with the Uruguayan Jorge Drexler, “A idade do céu” (The age of the sky), at the very end of the album, in classic *nueva canción* voice-with-acoustic-guitar style. Other songs delve into the blues, funk, samba, and Cuban son. Artur Dapieve writes that “*Tudo novo de novo* could only have followed *Eu falso da minha vida o que eu quiser* and [the latter could only have followed] *Móbile* and so on (going backwards in a kind of personal ‘evolutionary line’). Through them, we observe the human and artistic growth of Moska. He knows — and he teaches us — that no metamorphosis is without pain” (2003). Dapieve would seem to be in on Moska’s Deleuzian reading of becoming. (Franz Kafka, author of the classic *The Metamorphosis*, served as Deleuze’s principal example of a writer of minor literature, in the way that the Czech author creatively deformed the “major” language of German [Deleuze and Guattari 1983].)

As it turned out, five songs from *Tudo novo de novo* got radio airplay, more than any from Moska’s previous albums, yet without any intervention from a recording label. How, I asked Moska, did he accomplish this? He approaches the stations himself, he answered, elaborating on his method:

I tell them, “Listen, I make music. You have a radio station. I have already been played a lot on this station because my label worked with you. Now I don’t have a label, but I have music. . . . You need music, and I need you to play [mine]. So I will do the following: you play my music, and I’m your *partner*. . . . I won’t give you [payola]. I’ll do a show. I’ll come do interviews for the station. I’ll appear at events in support of the station. [switching to English and speaking deliberately] I sit my ass in a chair in front of the directors and say, “I’m a new kind of artist.” . . . And they say, “Oh.” . . . [And I say] “So, I’m the president of this side of the game, and where is the president of your [side]?” . . . I’m so polite. . . . [I say,] “I want to sit with you and talk about what we are going to do with our product.” You don’t have to have a manager that negotiates for you and you have to talk with him and pose like a celebrity and nobody talks with you, only with your manager. That’s so crazy . . . I have been working in music for thirteen years . . . and they know me. And when they see that the artist [himself] came [to see them], it has the

[effect] of “Let’s be polite with him,” and I sit and talk like a—like a human.

Tudo novo de novo ended up seeing modest sales (about 20,000) but, as Moska noted, by 2003 “the market was cut in half” because of the transformation in the music industry, and Moska has, in his own estimation, done well with the shows and the DVD, distributed by the *Som Livre* subdivision of the Globo media corporation.

Major labels and media corporations have of course not dissolved, but many musicians now enter into contracts with them only for distribution of creative products of which they retain the ownership. Musical artists, Moska felt, used to be developed following the paradigm of specialization that emerged with capitalism. It was an “extremely negative” idea, he thought, because you then have to “compete with everyone else who specializes in that same thing, and it is not possible . . . for everyone to be the best.” Specialization required individuals to “go so deeply into a particular thing” that one ended up “comprehending life, the world, everything” through one lens. We have arrived in a new era of multidisciplinary, Moska held, as individuals begin “to understand the world from various disciplines.” The “new artist” is multidisciplinary, and technology and information, in his view, have allowed the contemporary artist to have “a multi-communication,” and to present him- or herself in various forms, using various media—he or she had to be multiple (an idea that also draws on Deleuze; see, e.g., Badiou 2000).

Zoombido: To Make a Song

“I don’t know if I invented the program just to take pictures of the artists I admire,” Moska said of his cable television show during our 2007 interview, only half joking. He wasn’t sure, that is, if the priority of the show *Zoombido: Para se fazer uma canção* (Buzz: To write a song) was talking about and playing music, or taking photographs of the musicians. Moska developed the program around a simple premise: in the first episode he creates a single verse of music and lyrics; his guests—established figures of Brazilian popular music—then add a verse on the spot, and the composition thus grows in each episode, with each new guest. This collective project, however, actually occurs at the very end of a given episode. Moska begins each episode by interviewing his guests about their lives in music, with a



focus on how they compose songs and what songwriting means to them. He then requests of his guests that they perform a couple of original songs acoustically (usually with a violão), and he advises them that he will photograph them through a glass brick. “I tell them I am going to make some images that are crazy” (see figures 18, 19, and 20).²²

The invitee then performs while Moska takes over a hundred snapshots, of which he typically finds two or three that he likes because they have “some life” and “say something.” Guest Ivan Lins, Moska reported, was shocked by the photographs of him because they were “so strange and beautiful at the same time.” “He was almost scared,” Moska recalled. What Moska in fact accomplishes with this photographic work is an exploration

FIGURE 18. Lenine. Photograph by Paulinho Moska.



of the meanings of portraiture. He was, on the one hand, influenced by Francis Bacon's distorted and sometimes terrifying portrait paintings (about which Gilles Deleuze has written [2005]). But we can trace also an interesting precedent in the photographic work of Brazilian modernist Mário de Andrade, who during the early 1920s "began to experiment with his 'codaquinha'" (little Kodak camera), as described by Esther Garbara (2004), and who was eminently "multidisciplinary" (a poet, novelist, musicologist, etc.). Like Moska, Mário became obsessed with the medium, assembling an archive of nearly one thousand images that became "the site for his development of a theory of a modernist sublime" (57). The author grew preoccupied with questions of truth and falsehood in portraiture,

FIGURE 19. Fernanda Abreu. Photograph by Paulinho Moska.



wherein a naturalistic representation of a “visage” may express less of an aesthetic truth than might a less “documentary” pictorial representation of a “face.” Mário altered “the value of photography’s indexical function,” Gabara writes, such that “questions of truth and lies are no longer at the core of the ethical or aesthetic definition of photography” (54). Moska’s wildly distorted digital photographs of himself in reflective surfaces, and of his friends and colleagues through glass bricks, similarly destabilize the presumed coherence of individual subjectivity in favor of reflexive and intersubjective emergence, becoming. The mirror, the glass, the lens, and the screen or the enlarged print on which the images may or may not be fixed are all forgeries, and all the more truthful for it.

FIGURE 20. Pedro Luís. Photograph by Paulinho Moska.

After Moska photographs his musical guests performing a solo song in the studio for *Zoombido*, he plays a duet with them. “The level is really high,” he said, and indeed, I was captivated by the musicianship on display in the excerpts I have seen, such as one of Arnaldo Antunes singing his song “Saiba” and Moska in duet with Arnaldo on the latter’s “As coisas.” I savored the footage of the legendary samba musician Martinho da Vila, and of the University of São Paulo literature professor and composer José Miguel Wisnik. The program is recorded and filmed in the Palco recording studio (owned by Celso Fonseca and Gilberto Gil), in the Gávea neighborhood of the South Zone. It is fair to say that the production values for the show favor the “high-fidelity” aesthetic (Turino 2008), whereby the aesthetics of live performance influence the recorded sound. “We work in the studio with good microphones, with studio engineers,” Moska emphasized. “We work with rigor [and] the sound is good.” Moska’s longtime associate Nilo Romero is in charge of the sound, while the cinematographer Pablo Casacuberta, from Uruguay, films each duet with six cameras trained at various angles in the recording studio, some of which capture images of the guest from various reflective surfaces placed throughout the room. You never see any of the cameras in the mirrors, Moska pointed out, and Pablo’s work, he thought, was “very emotional.”

Yet the audience for the program is highly restricted: it airs on a cable channel that shows only Brazilian content, mostly history programs and documentaries, and that requires an additional premium beyond basic cable (Canal Brasil). It is lamentable, Moska commented, that a Brazilian “culture channel” should have such a limited viewership, but it was precisely for this reason, he proposed, that Canal Brasil was “more free” and open to new ideas. It is a good example of Bourdieu’s restricted production with a certain degree of autonomy from the mass market (Bourdieu 1984; Hesmondhalgh 2006, 214). Finally, after the interviews, performances, and photographing, Moska asks each guest composer to “make a very small work,” just “one sentence” with a couple of chords, a piece of a melody, and a few lyrics — “The first idea! . . . Maybe it’s not the best idea, but it’s the first idea” — so that song is composed of the first musical idea of each guest added one to the other as the season progresses.

As the credits roll, the viewer hears the extended song performed by the various guests, with their distinctive voices and musicalities, a collective musicalization of becomings. One has “to find geniuses” to work with, Moska told me, and “be a very good student.” Several guests, Moska

claimed, told him the show was like “therapy,” that it was not like a TV show at all, but rather like “life, art.” Drawing on the cultural capital he has accumulated over his career (and on his connections in media circuits), Moska succeeded in establishing a space for creative expression well removed from mainstream commercial television. It was, perhaps, a space of privilege (insofar as few pop musicians are actually able to find such a creative outlet), but it was not cynical. It required what Deleuze referred to as “noble energy,” as “artistic will” in “the creation of new possibilities, in the outpouring becoming” (1989, 141).

“I am doing *exactly what I want*,” Moska told me, existentially affirming his lines of flight. He is a self-managed entrepreneur who seeks new forms of partnerships in order to continue creating. For example, he explained how he entered into a partnership with the Orsa Foundation, an NGO associated with a conglomerate of companies. The foundation claims to emphasize “People, Profit, and Planet” in their mission, “economically viable, socially just, and environmentally correct models for society,” and social change brought about through market mechanisms (textbook neoliberal discourse).²³ In 1994 the foundation established a youth percussion group called Bate Lata (Beat Tin; recall Fernanda Abreu’s song “Da lata”). As with numerous similar initiatives, the idea is social uplift through music making, typically utilizing percussion instruments (or recycled industrial materials made percussive). This kind of project accords with what George Yúdice (2003) has termed the “expediency of culture,” whereby NGOs mobilize cultural practices in their efforts to reform society independently of the state. It makes for good corporate publicity, but it might be faulted for playing to stereotypes of economically disadvantaged social strata having little access to formal music education and instruments.

Moska invited Bate Lata to perform with him when he recorded the *Tudo novo de novo* DVD; he saw the children as representing “real renewal, everything new again.” In exchange, the Orsa Foundation gave him half the budget he needed to film the DVD, while he negotiated with Som Livre for the other half of the production budget in exchange for the license to distribute the DVD. Meanwhile, Moska retains ownership of the master. “Tomorrow,” he said in our 2007 interview, “I will have lunch with the president of Som Livre, Gustavo Ramos, about the tour for the DVD.” Moska thus makes good use of his relationships with NGOs, with industry executives and radio personnel, and, finally, with his fellow musicians, in working as his own manager.

Conclusions

The first half of this chapter highlighted how Paulinho Moska's contact with Marcos Suzano facilitated a reconceptualization of his sound away from the pop-rock instrumentation he used on his albums before *MóBILE*. I examined how various dimensions of sonic difference came into play in the way the musicians involved in the project went about their work. Unlike the lyrics of Lenine, Pedro Luís, and Fernanda Abreu, Moska's largely lack overt references to national identity or Carioca culture. Nevertheless, my examination of *MóBILE* showed how local concerns about being "Brazilian once again" informed the production of this album, specifically in the emphasis on couro and cordas, or skin and strings, at the expense of electric guitar and drum kit. Efforts at "deterritorialization" — in purportedly universal aesthetics, song themes, or noisy interferences — are continually "reterritorialized" in cycling back through tradition, or in singing classic songs such as "País tropical" or "Retalhos de cetim," or through other references and musical practices. Deleuze argues that "movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterritorialization" are always relative and connected, "caught up in one another" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 10), as illustrated in his example of the symbiosis between an orchid and a wasp, wherein the latter is deterritorialized by "becoming a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus," only to reterritorialize the orchid by transporting its pollen: "Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome. It could be said that the orchid imitates the wasp, reproducing its image in a signifying fashion (mimesis, mimicry, lure, etc.). . . . At the same time, something else entirely is going on: not imitation at all but a capture of code, surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp. Each of these becomings brings about the deterritorialization of one term and the reterritorialization of the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization ever further." Like the orchid and the wasp, sounds and influences from the past and "the contemporary," from local settings and international flows, from high art and pop culture, seem to have this rhizomatic relation to each other in Moska's musical trajectory.

I would like to keep questions of power, agency, and projects in this story. In his increasing self-management, Moska has surely had more room to maneuver than, for example, the youths in Bate Lata. His famil-

ilarity with the oeuvre of Deleuze speaks to a form of privilege in the Brazilian context, and some readers may find his immersion in French philosophy from a certain influential era (1960s and 1970s, especially) alienated from contemporary Brazilian realities. Indeed, intellectualism in general can enhance one's status among the more restricted cosmopolitan formation of middle-class audiences for MPB. (Chico Buarque, Caetano Veloso, and Tom Zé, for example, are public intellectuals as well as pop musicians.) I see nothing alienated, however, in the musical camaraderie found on *Zombido*. Moska is a gifted and dedicated pop musician who can play the heck out of a classic samba—or write a lively samba of his own (or a bossa, a choro, a forró, a xote, for example). He can sculpt inventive melodies into bluesy or Beatles-esque chord changes. And there is something singular about his becoming, as a negotiation of the so-called evolutionary line of Brazilian popular song (Caetano Veloso's oft-cited term), of changing technologies and market priorities, and of his readings in philosophy.