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Performing Nationhood

Brazilian Identity in Performance

by

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degree of

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Declaration

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theatre Studies. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree.

Abstract

This thesis explores the interconnections of music and performances of Brazilian 'national identity' and interrogates modes in which the nation uses music to perform itself in both official and unofficial narratives.

It begins by tracing the discourses and ideologies formulated in modern Brazil as an attempt to define the nation, and investigates how a particular musical genre, namely samba, came to embody and perpetuate the national ideal within the notion of *brasilidade*, or Brazilianness. It suggests how these have been most clearly articulated through a specific version of samba, created in the early twentieth century, which continue to be perpetuated in official performances of the nation, like the FIFA and Olympic ceremonies performing Brazil.

It then focuses on two contemporary case studies that have used music in oppositional ways, which challenge these formulations of the nation. The first example focuses on a dance performance called *Baila Brazil* and the second example on a theatre performance named *Caliban: A Tempestade de Augusto Boal*. These examples are analysed to explore how artists are negotiating and challenging official formulations of Brazilian 'national identity' through music in present-day Brazil.

The thesis concludes by returning to the idea of Brazil officially performing itself through music in the exploration of the 2016 Rio Olympic Games' Opening Ceremony. In this analysis I consider how this official performance both reaffirms the early modernist formulation of the nation, while also exposing faultlines identified in the theatrical productions discussed in previous chapters.

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Introduction

This research aims to explore the ways in which performance and music combine to construct, perform and challenge official inscriptions of a coherent Brazilian national identity from the 1920s to the present. The study will trace the ways in which 'modern' Brazil has framed itself as a nation both through discourse and through embodied practices, such as music and dance, and how contemporary Brazilian artists negotiate the idea of 'national identity' in present-day performances. The interconnection of music, performance and 'Brazilian identity' will be analysed through interdisciplinary scholarship utilising theories from the social and political sciences, Brazilian studies, performance studies and musicology, performance and textual analysis, alongside the views of Brazilian artists and performers accessed through personal interviews. The combination of these perspectives serves to highlight the ambivalences, contradictions, and juxtapositions of diverse 'identities' that have been included in a created idea of 'national consciousness' in Brazil.

Central to this study is the notion of *brasilidade*, which I will go on to define and unpack in this introduction. It is an idea that in the early twentieth century came to express Brazil's national identity. It can be understood as being a unique Brazilian 'way' of being and creating, and has at its heart the conception of *mestiçagem*, which stands for the embodied racial and cultural 'mixture' of the Brazilian population as an outcome of its colonial past. This feature of *mestiçagem* generated discourses regarding Brazil's postcolonial situation and cultural production, which includes the concept of *Antropofagia* ('Cultural Cannibalism', Oswald de Andrade 1928) in the cultural and artistic realm, and the idea of 'racial democracy' (Gilberto Freyre 1933) in the social sphere, which was formulated to define the particular 'uniqueness' of the Brazilian nation's identity. In this work, I identify some 'ideological apparatuses' (after Louis Althusser) through which this identity was first created and continues to be perpetuated with the aim to demonstrate how these historic complexities and postcolonial negotiations are evidenced in the ideological and discursive (re)productions of Brazilian 'nationhood'. This will be done while focussing on the fundamental role that music occupies within this process of evoking the 'imagined community' (after Benedict

Anderson) of Brazil, even as artists also use music in performance to challenge and re-negotiate it.

Music occupies a significant position in this thesis for, as musicologist Frederick Moehn states, 'music plays an important role in the current re-imaginings of Brazilian citizenship' (182). Music has been articulated as 'the most Brazilian of arts' (Freyre) and, as shall be demonstrated in the chapters that follow, is intrinsically linked with the idea of 'Brazilianness'. According to theorists of Brazilian music Rafael De Menezes Bastos, José Ramos Tinhorão and Hermano Vianna, an analysis of Brazilian popular music is essential to fully comprehend the dimension and efficacy of *brasilidade*. Therefore, it will be used in this research as the springboard and angle through which I explore different performances related to 'Brazilian identity' and how the historical, social and racial composition of the nation were and continue to be performed through music in contemporary performances. For, although colonialism occurred within a specific period in the history of Brazil, it continues to haunt and define the nation in complex ways.

Following Erin Hurley, who in *National Performance* (2011) uses the term "performance" as an umbrella category, one that encompasses a full range of embodied practices and events' (6), in this thesis I examine different performative modes that somehow express (or contest) the idea of Brazilian nationhood, which are: the embodiment of a music genre called *samba*; a dance performance called *Baila Brazil* (2014-2016); a street theatre production named *Caliban: A Tempestade de Augusto Boal* (2017-); and I conclude with the example of the Rio 2016 Olympics' Opening Ceremony. By looking at this variety of performative practices – both 'official' and 'unofficial' – this research aims to explore how 'performance' highlights all the intricate and often contradictory stances associated with Brazilian nationhood, as the examples chosen can be seen to both embrace and embody the 'national' but also to challenge nationalistic approaches to 'identity'.

As Diana Taylor expresses in *The Archive and the Repertoire* (2003), embodied performance 'makes visible an entire spectrum of attitudes and values. The multicode-dness of these practices transmits as many layers of meaning as there are spectators, participants, and witnesses (49)'. Hence, to explore some of these 'many layers of meaning' within the Brazilian context, the thesis will look at how samba and specific embodied practices of the dance were central to the

creation and perpetuation of the official discourse of Brazilian national identity. It will then shift to analyse how contemporary Brazilian artists have consciously engaged these embodied performances to expose the faultlines in the ideas embedded in the dominant narratives used to define 'Brazilianness'. The focus on race is made more complex by the ways in which these contemporary 'unofficial' productions have incorporated class and gender to suggest a more multifaceted, intersectional approach to contemporary Brazilian 'identity' in their use of music and dance in performance. I then return to the quintessential official performance of Brazil in my conclusion, in which I explore how Brazil has shifted in her performance of herself in the Rio 2016 Olympics' Opening Ceremony. I consider how this event narrates Brazil's colonial history and temporal progression in ways that both (re)produce modernist conceptions of Brazilian nationhood and at the same time expose the ambiguities of contemporary Brazilian identity.

Before outlining in this introduction the thesis' specific content, structure, critical frameworks and methodological approaches, I wish to illustrate and introduce this 'Brazilian identity' with a contemporary performative example to demonstrate how the idea of *brasilidade* is ever present and still permeates Brazilian people's thought about how they identify with the nation in present-day Brazil.

Introducing *Brasilidade*

It is important to stress that this thesis is speaking of a particular notion of 'national identity', namely *brasilidade*, which can be roughly translated as 'Brazilianness', or 'things that are Brazilian'. As previously mentioned, it is a term that was created in a specific time and place, which will be depicted and analysed in the first chapter of this study. It was used in official governmental policies at the beginning of the twentieth century to foster a sense of national community/commonality to serve specific economic and political purposes related to defining an independent Brazil. It is also an idea that continues to live on in the contemporary Brazilian imaginary, as the analyses of current performative examples will here demonstrate.

As cited above, I wish to illustrate the paradoxes of the ways in which 'Brazilianness' is defined with an example: at the beginning of this PhD research

process, Brazil was hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2014. Hosting such an event in a country still struggling to provide the basic needs for its population prompted political and economic controversy given the proposed governmental spending necessary to prepare and ultimately stage the event.¹ Unsurprisingly, in the build-up to the FIFA World Cup, Brazilians had mixed feelings about the idea of hosting global sporting events such as the World Cup and Olympic Games, as can be seen with David Zirin's remarks:

Some Brazilians are excited about their country being recognized, through hosting, as the world power it is. Some are fearful that this is yet another instance of euphoria before the bottom falls out of the economy. Others are repulsed at the United States and particularly Europe – seen as the power behind FIFA and the IOC – descending once again on their country like spring-breakers at Carnival (38).

Zirin argues that Brazilians were irritated that while public services such as transportation, education and health care were inadequately run or underfunded, the 'spending for the World Cup alone [reached] the fifteen-billion-dollar mark', making it 'more expensive than the previous three World Cups combined' (19). Despite several protests and unfinished infrastructure directly related to the event - such as road works, access routes to the stadiums, airport modernisation and expansion, etc. - the FIFA World Cup went ahead and achieved a much desired 'FIFA standard' type of event.

However, despite such diverse opinions and concerns about what it meant for the country to be 'performed' on a global stage, on Thursday 12th June 2014 many Brazilian eyes were fixed on the opening ceremony of the FIFA World Cup. Worldwide, according to the Brazilian newspaper *O Estadão*, from the State of São Paulo, over 3.2 billion people watched the opening of the World Cup (Netto). The opening ceremony featured six hundred voluntary dancers coordinated by the Italian-Belgium director Franco Dragone's Entertainment Group and the Belgium choreographer Daphné Cornez who quoted the event as being a 'tribute to Brazil and its treasures: nature, people, football' (Cornez qtd. in FIFA 14). However,

¹ This controversy deepened with the Olympic Games in Rio 2016, which influenced the 'performance of the nation' in the opening ceremony and shall be further explored in the conclusion.

another layer of complexity arose from FIFA's decision for non-Brazilian directors to conceptualize and represent Brazil's 'identity' in this global event. This decision was not only highly controversial amongst sections of Brazilian society, but it also spoke to the tensions and complexities involved in Brazil performing itself both externally and internally. On the following day of the World Cup's opening ceremony, *Folha de São Paulo*, arguably Brazil's biggest and most read newspaper, posted an article written by journalist De Oliveira entitled: 'Opening [ceremony] bets in miscellanea that does not reproduce the Brazilian mixture.' This highlights the fact that 'mixture,' in Brazilian terms, has specific qualities – which will be addressed in the first chapter of this thesis – that include more than showcasing Brazil's varied cultural landscape.

Later that week, *Folha* published a series of interviews with famous Brazilian directors and choreographers, asking them what they would have done differently if they had been given the responsibility of creating the opening ceremony. Daniela Thomas, one of the artistic directors behind Brazil's Olympic ceremony performances at both the London 2012 Olympics and Rio 2016 Opening Ceremony declared: 'The spirit of the country was not shown at any moment. I didn't recognise neither myself nor my country in anything I saw' (qtd. in Vallone). Maria Pia Finocchio, a Brazilian choreographer and dancer, stated: 'We were all expecting something colourful, like the Brazilian people are. It was a disappointment' (*ibid*) and Alex Neoral, another Brazilian choreographer, commented: 'That yellow carpet chosen to cover the field does not dialogue with anything that should have been shown: football, the happiness of the Brazilian [person], the union of the people' (*ibid*). These comments suggest that the artists felt a lack of *identification* with what was being displayed as being 'Brazil'; for them, the performance did not represent the country's 'spirit', its 'colourful people' and the 'happiness and union of the people'. These assumptions and descriptions of these key defining characteristics of Brazilianness are important, and key issues that I return to in detail in the thesis.

At the beginning of the article, journalist Giuliana Vallone examined the general 'feeling' of these artists, asserting that: 'According to all of them, the show on Thursday [12th Jun 2014] displayed araucarias [a type of Brazilian tree], Indigenous people, flowers of all kinds and Claudia Lette [a Brazilian singer involved in the ceremony] in Itaquerão's field [the stadium housing the ceremony], but did

not deliver the essential: *brasilidade* (emphasis added).’ Renato Manzano also used the term *brasilidade* in his article for Brazil’s GGN newspaper, in which he stated that in the ceremony, ‘*brasilidade* was on the account of Europeans’ vision of our country.’ These examples highlight how *brasilidade* is still perceived to be at the heart of Brazilian national identity and to emphasise how many, if not most Brazilians could not identify themselves with what was being performed as ‘being Brazilian’ in the 2014 World Cup’s opening ceremony. Only two years later, Brazil hosted the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro and performed in the Opening Ceremony what Rodanthe Tzanelli identified as a potential utopian ‘hyper-*brasilidade*’ (117). Hence, despite being originally conceived as a nationalist expression of Brazilian identity, these comments by prominent members of Brazil’s cultural community exemplify how strong the concept of *brasilidade* remains within the Brazilian imaginary as it is seen to represent the country’s ‘spirit’ with its ‘colourful’ and ‘united’ people.

Structure and Content of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into four main chapters and presents four case studies that investigate the interrelation of music, performance and Brazilian national identity. In order to introduce the Brazilian context to the international reader, the first two chapters engage in an extended explanation of the genesis of the idea of national identity and unity in Brazil. They focus on how and why the specific modernist discourses were formulated by the national government and disseminated via performance, using music and dance, particularly *samba*, to evoke and embody a unified Brazilian ‘national identity’. However, whilst the concept of the nation – as discussed by Benedict Anderson (1991) – is designed to unite what would otherwise be considered separate communities, the reality of any nation is that of diversity, coexistence and friction, as Homi Bhabha has convincingly argued (1994). Here, Nadine Holdsworth reminds us that ‘there is a risk that the narrative address of the nation, references to a “people”, suggests a consensual “community” (ref), but, as Bhabha asserts, “[t]he people are not simply historical events or parts of a patriotic body politic”’ (2014, 3). Hence, chapters three and four shifts to analyse contemporary performances of Brazilian nationhood to explore how these dominant modernist national discourses and ideologies are being challenged, contested and re-negotiated in and through performance as a

result of the country's current socio-political circumstances and post-modern, contemporary revisions of itself.

The first chapter, *Nation building in Brazil: discourses and identity processes*, is dedicated to a specific contextual understanding of Brazil, tracing the discourses of modernity used to conceptualize a clear Brazilian national identity. It is an important chapter as it outlines in detail some of the ideologies that permeate the entire thesis, which can be seen as a Brazilian 'version' of postcolonialism, later revisited and re-negotiated in and through contemporary performances. The chapter focuses on three particular aspects of this modern conceptualization of nationhood in Brazil: (i) the proposal for *antropofagia* (cultural cannibalism) in the artistic and literary realm, forwarded by the Brazilian modernist Oswald de Andrade in 1928. The concept defended the idea that Brazilian culture and art metaphorically 'devours' what is foreign, implying that in this way Brazilians 'would be strong as the Tupinambá Indians became when they [allegedly] ate the first colonizers in Brazil' (Candido and Silvestre 244); (ii) the discourse of *racial democracy* generated by sociologist Gilberto Freyre in 1933 in the social and intellectual realm, which is 'the view that Brazilian race relations are relatively harmonious and that race is of minor importance in shaping identities and life chances' (Da Costa 5); and (iii) how the discourse of *racial democracy* was advanced by President Getulio Vargas' government (1930-45) in order to foster the inclusion of its three racial groups (European, Indigenous and African) in the creation of a Brazilian nationhood through the idea of *brasilidade*, and of the Brazilian 'subject' through the notion of *mestiçagem*.

Following the contextual first chapter, *Embodying 'Brasilidade': samba performing the new national identity* aims to explore how a particular genre of popular music called samba came to be considered the embodied manifestation of *brasilidade*. Eric Hobsbawm states that the majority of people become conscious of their citizenship through an association 'with symbols and semi-ritual practices, most of which are historically novel and largely invented: flags, images, ceremonies and music' (12). In the Brazilian case, one of the fundamental symbols used to stimulate a sense of a mutual and national belonging is this specific musical genre. All the contemporary case studies explored in the subsequent chapters include samba in their performances. Even today, no other genre of music has come close to taking samba's place as the country's 'national rhythm', which was 'adopted as

a defining element of *brasilidade* or Brazilian identity' (Vianna 10). This chapter aims both to map the history of samba in the construction of Brazil's 'national identity' (Bastos, Browning, Hertzman, Vianna), and to *propose* the idea that one of the main reasons for the effectiveness of the acceptance by the population of this new identity attached to the nation, and to samba, are the performative dimensions of its musical experience, which was, and still is, continuously performed by the population at large. Hence, the chapter examines how the population was exposed to the ideological discourse of national unity via access to new media (i.e. radio/recordings) and by being subject to an interventionist model of state power (dictatorship and censorship). I argue that the performative qualities within the musical experience of samba – listening/embodiment, repetition/restored behaviour and naming/interpellation – together with a specific discourse of identity operated through specific modalities of power, had the capacity to effectively produce the ideological narrative of self-representation, namely *brasilidade*.

In chapter three, *Baila Brazil re-negotiating Brazilian identity on global stages*, the thesis shifts its focus to contemporary performances of Brazilian nationhood, while continuing the conversation on the importance of embodiment in the country's negotiation of *brasilidade*. In this chapter, I analyse the dance production *Baila Brazil* (Dance Brazil 2014-2016) by the Brazilian company *Balé de Rua* (Street Ballet) and investigate the ways in which the performance paradoxically both celebrates and destabilizes the idea of *brasilidade*, while amplifying the specific African-Brazilian influences within Brazilian social memory, particularly through invoking performances and memories of slavery. I examine how the group considers the country's history to be an act of African Brazilian resistance through their articulation during interviews and in the performance's program. The analysis reveals how the artists' embodied performances display the complexities and discrepancies of the official Brazilian national identity by interweaving it with their own, often disavowed, personal histories, and thus the complexities of determining any stable formulation of a national identity. Balé de Rua's reconstruction of Brazilian colonial history seen through African Brazilian resistance reveals the 'potential role reconstructions may play when fed back into personal or, even more significantly, a national sense of identity, particularly through the historical or mythical narratives of a nation' (Hutchison 4). The ways in which the group both

embody memories of the nation's past and present and how in specific scenes they also challenge the audience's expectations by highlighting complex intersectionalities of gender, race, religion and class via both their use of African Brazilian ritual and their selection of music throughout the performance suggests how interconnected these constructions of aspects of personal and collective identity are. Ultimately, the chapter will address the problematic nature of the official Brazilian national identity, via the ideologies of *brasilidade*, *mestiçagem* and *racial democracy*, which appear to be discourses of racial *inclusion* but in Brazilian social reality function as *exclusionary*.

This notion of tension between inclusions and exclusions in Brazil continues in the following chapter, '*We are all Calibans*': *street theatre re-claiming identity to resist oppression*. However, there is a change of focus in the analysis from the role of embodiment to narrative in performances of 'nationhood'. This is due to the fact that in both *Caliban* and in the Rio Olympics' Opening Ceremony one can perceive formal narrative frames in the performances. In chapter four, I look at the performance *Caliban: A Tempestade de Augusto Boal* (*Caliban: Augusto Boal's Tempest/The Tempest*)² created by the South Brazilian theatre company *Ói Nós Aqui Traveiz* [Look at Us Here Again]; and based on Augusto Boal's *A Tempestade* (1974), which was 'an answer to, not an adaptation of, Shakespeare's play' (Driskell 77) *The Tempest* (1611). This chapter analyses how *Ói Nós Aqui Traveiz* addresses matters of oppression in contemporary Brazil by merging diverse musical forms within the plot of the play, while using a *mise-en-scene* that foregrounds a particular kind of popular theatricality. The contextual framing for the analysis of *Caliban* briefly traces the character's literary history and its links with postcolonial studies before considering the context in which Boal wrote *A Tempestade*, which was during his political exile in Brazil's Military Dictatorship Period (1964-1985). It also addresses how Boal was inspired by the ideas of the Cuban writer Roberto Fernández Retamar in his essay *Caliban: Notes toward a Discussion of Culture in Our America* (1972). Here the thesis again returns to how the concept of *antropofagia* relates to the choices the group made in the musical styles adopted and the narrative/content of the play.

² The translation of the performance has a double meaning in Portuguese. Such ambiguity will be referenced in the chapter.

After exploring these more alternative views of nationhood, the conclusion returns to the nation in analysing Brazil's Summer Olympic Games' Opening Ceremony in 2016 and its uses of music in performance. The conclusion functions to suggest how Brazil performs itself officially in the present day. According to its artistic producers, the spectacle aimed to 'focus on the future, celebrate togetherness and reach beyond the country's borders, speaking to the planet as a whole' (Media Guide to Rio 2016 Opening Ceremony 7). To better explore this performance of Brazil and the celebration of 'togetherness', the conclusion is divided in sections that aim to address how the official narrative of the nation was explored through a chronological linearity. It concludes by looking at ways in which the construction of national narratives is designed to unite the nation during times of social upheaval, and how such narratives are inherently based upon the performative act of curating a nation, of choosing what is to be 'remembered' and 'forgotten'. However, it also suggests the complexities and vagaries involved in using music and performance in such an endeavour; as it traces how the choices of music initially highlighted the contradictions in the discourses of Brazilian national identity, as the producers included a wide variety of popular musical 'cultures' in celebration of Brazil's diversity and thereby seem to undermine the 'official historical narrative' of *brasildade*; but then returned to these more stereotypical narratives towards the end.

Situating the Research

In the past five years, Brazil has been in the global spotlight particularly due to hosting two major sporting events: the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games. However, according to Brazilian theatre scholar Claudia Tatinge Nascimento, 'while the tourism industry ceaselessly promotes Brazil as a land where the party never ends, the outsider finds it difficult to go beyond such simplistic perceptions and acquire a comprehensive view of the nation's political history and social inner workings' (2015 6). Despite Nascimento's accurate remark, with the international recognition of Brazil in recent years there has been an increasing interest in the country and a growing number of publications in the English language concerning Brazil, its economy, history and cultural expressions. Hence, this research builds on and extends current scholarship on Brazilian theatre and performance with the aim to contribute to filling the gaps that existed in the

literature which saw Brazil as the forgotten 'other in Latin America: the one that doesn't speak Spanish' (Nascimento 2015 5) and to break with 'the long-standing cycle of ignoring the enormous yellow and green elephant in the room' (*ibid* 6).

Some of the works that have been published during this PhD process include: *Performing Brazil: Essays on Culture, Identity, and the Performing Arts* (2015) by editors Severino João Albuquerque and Kathryn Bishop-Sanchez, who also acknowledge that there has been 'a scarcity of English-language book-length studies of performance works originating or inspired by Brazil' (3). This book is a wide-ranging essay collection that provides a cross-disciplinary approach to looking at performative possibilities within the Brazilian context. However, the collection does not include theatre in the scope of the study and it seems to be particularly tailored for Brazilian and U.S scholars, as many of the essays investigate performances of the Brazilian diaspora in the United States (the essays are extended versions of papers presented during an interdisciplinary conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2007). In the field of contemporary dance and performance, Cristina Rosa's *Brazilian Bodies and Their Choreographies of Identification* (2015) investigates the embodied movements of Brazilian 'ginga', which are particular 'sways' of the body that 'involves the articulation of sinuous and offbeat – or syncopated — dialogues between bodily parts, especially the hips and feet' (2). This is an important contribution to dance research and embodied Brazilian performances, as Rosa explores how these bodily movements, or 'choreographies', relate to processes of identity formation within Brazilian culture while also linking them to the idea of *brasilidade*. Lastly, in the field of theatre and performance, in *Brazilian Collaborative Theater* (2017) Aleksandar Dundjerovic and Luiz Fernando Ramos published a wide variety of interviews with Brazilian theatre makers that use collaboration as main praxis within their companies. These collaborative practices were generated as a response to the oppressive Brazilian Military Dictatorship Period (1964-1985) and its stratified models of action and behaviour (one of the groups interviewed is *Ói Nós Aqui Traveiz*, which I will address in chapter 4 - 'We are all Calibans'). The most recent published work focused on contemporary Brazilian theatre (and released at the very end of my PhD process) is Claudia Nascimento's book *After the Long Silence: The Theater of Brazil's Post-Dictatorship Generation* (2019). Here, Nascimento looks into contemporary Brazilian theatre and at how key theatre groups experiment with new and

alternative dramaturgies and aesthetics that aimed to respond to the Military Dictatorship period as an attempt to make sense of the renewed 'freedom' acquired after the end of the military rule.

With the exception of the published interview with members of *Ói Nós Aqui Traveiz* regarding their collaborative creative practice (Dundjerovic and Ramos), the case studies I chose to examine in my research are not specifically referenced in any of these works, hence I am adding new performances and new voices to the conversation. I believe my thesis contributes to scholarship not only by adding new examples and performance analysis, but through the exploration of particular ways in which the ideas of 'performance', 'music' and 'Brazilian identity' interrelate in different performative modes to expose: firstly, how music performance is an effective (and affective) embodied means to foster the identification of the Brazilian population with certain ideologies and discourses related to 'national identity'; and secondly, how contemporary artists complicate this by foregrounding the co-existence of simultaneous 'identities' within the national consciousness through performance. For, following Kathryn Bishop-Sanchez, I believe that focusing on performance 'destabilizes and challenges the authority of the written word, no longer viewed as the sole holder of memory, knowledge, and power, and invites us to heighten our perception of *brasilidade*' (19).

In addition to extending current scholarship on Brazilian theatre and performance, this research highlights specific postcolonial negotiations that may be seen to contribute to the broader field of postcolonial studies and theories. This is because Brazilian 'postcolonialism' is a modernist construction with particularities that differ from those theorised by scholars countering British imperialism, from European, North American or former Anglophone colonial communities in Africa or Asia. Addressing this issue, in 'Postcolonial Latin America and the Magic Realist Imperative' (2005) Sylvia Molloy expresses the discomfort of many Latin American intellectuals when faced with a postcolonial 'model' into which they feel they are expected to fit:

a model whose terms have been formulated from, and in reference to, a 'center' whose interventions, however well intentioned, continue to be seen as imperialistic and/or simplistic. This is a postcolonialism with which modern

Latin American intellectuals and scholars have, at best, a mediated relation, one necessitating multiple reformulations and translations. Furthermore, this is a postcolonialism the nature of which very much depends on its site of enunciation, a postcolonialism that is constituted by shifting perspectives. In other words, it is a postcolonialism that formulated 'over here' (and by this I mean the U.S. academy), signifies one thing while 'over there' (in Latin America, itself a site of multiple enunciations), it signifies something quite different; or, better said, signifies many different things (370).

In this negotiation of modernities and postcolonial theories, which signifies 'many different things' (Molloy), I was reminded of Homi Bhabha's assertion that, 'each repetition of the sign of modernity is different, specific to its historical and cultural conditions of enunciation' (247). However, according to Philip Swanson the place (and the bodies) of 'enunciation' of Latin American postcolonialism can be perceived historically as a site of struggle with a continuous 'foreign sense of self'. For Swanson, 'from the moment of its inception as a concept, Latin American history has been perceived through an alien, basically European, mindset. The argument is that the development of Latin American identity subsequently involved an internalization of a fundamentally foreign sense of self that in many ways persists to the present day' (17-18). When referring specifically to a sense of 'identity', Diana Taylor brings this 'internalization of a foreign sense of self' back to the body and depicts differences in postcolonial discourses through the lens of the terms '*mestizaje*'³, 'hybridity' and 'transculturation'. She explains that these discourses differ because 'their relationship to embodiment differs. Each model highlights a different facet of colonial history' (*Archive and Repertoire* 94). According to Taylor, *mestizaje* has been historically used to explain a sense (and embodiment) of Latin American 'identity' and denotes 'racial mixing through interracial, heterosexual sex, [a] term for speaking about cultural fusion' (*ibid*). The term 'hybridity' famously theorised by Bhabha (1994), on the other hand, has been predominantly useful for the 'Indian and black cultural theorists writing in the postmodern world of late capitalism, whose history of colonization differs from that in Latin America' (*ibid* 102). Taylor further explains that in these cultural theorists works, the concept of 'hybridity' locates 'the poststructuralist, deconstructive theory of subjectivity as decentred, uprooted in conjunction with theories

³ Spanish word for *mestiçagem*.

stemming from their postcolonial and diasporic experience' (*ibid*). Taylor finally defends the notion of 'transculturation' as an option when referring to Latin American identity and postcolonialism. According to Taylor, the term was coined by Cuban writer Fernando Ortiz in the 1940s (in response to U.S scholars' theories on 'acculturation' in the 1930s) and involves a three-stage process involving the acquirement of new cultural material from a foreign culture, the loss or displacement of one's own culture, and the creation of new cultural phenomena. Luis Madureira refers to 'transculturation' as a notion which means that 'alongside inevitable processes of deracination and destruction occurs "the creation of new cultural phenomena"' (3). Returning to Taylor, she elucidates that the concept of 'transculturation'

addresses fundamental issues of transmission found in theories of mestizaje and hybridity but on a grand – *trans* – scale that notes cultural movements, shifts, reciprocities. It too has potentially liberatory role because it allows the 'minor' culture (in the sense of the positionally marginalized) an impact on the dominant one, although the interactions are not, strictly speaking, 'dialogic' or 'dialectical'. Transculturation suggests a shifting or circulating pattern of cultural transference (108).

Bringing the conversation to a more localized postcolonial discourse and 'reality', despite 'transculturation' being theorized by Ortiz as 'a notion that he regards as indispensable to the understanding of the whole of America' (Madureira 3), Brazilian theorists and artists seem to prefer the idea of *antropofagia* (Andrade 1928) or 'cultural cannibalism' as an allegory for the country's intercultural production. The 'potentially liberatory role' within this notion lies in the active engagement, or agency, in the metaphorical 'consumption' of both the foreign and national cultures, whereby one can perhaps perceive the term '*trans*' as evoking a more neutral idea of traversing, or 'moving across' racial and cultural specificities. As Roberto Schwarz affirms in his *Brazilian Culture: Nationalism by Elimination* (originally published in 1987), with the idea of *antropofagia*, Oswald de Andrade advocated a 'cultural irreverence in place of subaltern obfuscation, using the metaphor of "swallowing up" the alien: a copy, to be sure, but with regenerative effect. Historical distance allows us to see the ingenuousness and jingoism contained in these propositions' (240). Similar to the idea of fluidity in the term 'transculturation', *antropofagia* as an extension to *mestiçagem*, may be seen to

resist binary approaches to colonialism as imposition and the need to look back and extricate decolonised subjects from colonial influences, as so many Anglophone postcolonial scholars have done (Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, etc.) . Instead, it suggests the power of intercultural engagement that chooses to embrace and embody various cultural forms, including those of the colonizer, in redefining the self for the self. This highlights the complexities of these processes of articulating mixedness and assimilation that often result in paradoxical performances of contemporary Brazilian issues, especially as related to gender, class and power. I believe these processes, which will be outlined and exemplified throughout this thesis, may offer new insights into the field of postcolonial studies as it shows how Brazilian artists negotiate and strategically use particular practices and postcolonial identifications related to ‘cultural mixture’, such as the concept of *antropofagia*, whilst at the same time resist and problematize hybridizing identities.

Moreover, according to Molloy, Latin American critics who have debated on postcolonialism from Latin America, and specifically addressing Latin American difference, are ‘rarely if ever brought into general debates about postcolonialism, even when their texts are available in English’ (373). Hence, I believe that by bringing to the fore names such as Oswald de Andrade and his conception of *antropofagia* (1928) and Roberto Fernández Retamar and his approach to the character of Caliban (1972) as a symbol of the oppressed ‘Latin Americans’, this thesis also attempts to make visible ‘other’ postcolonial theorizations and negotiations and how they can be perceived in performance.

Methodological Approaches & Critical Frameworks

The main methodological approaches to this thesis entailed a strategic approach to historical and theoretical research engaged reflexively, alongside interviews with the performance groups and artists, and analysis of performances both live and recorded. As with most research processes, this study was guided by questions that, through the procedures of enquiry and discovery, shaped my methodological approaches and theoretical choices. I started by asking: How is contemporary Brazil performing itself? What is the official ‘Brazilian national identity’ and how is it being performed during the opening and closing ceremonies of events like the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games? How are the key

notions of *brasilidade*, *mestiçagem* and the long-lasting idea of ‘racial democracy’ influencing performances of ‘nationhood’? What role does music play in the creation and curation of this identity? What is ‘remembered’ and what is ‘forgotten’ in the national narrative that is disseminated? Are these official representations challenged in any way by other manifestations of these musical and embodied forms in contemporary artistic engagements with ‘Brazillianness’?

As I began developing my research guided by these questions on ‘Brazillianness’ and how it relates to music and performance, I encountered specific challenges which were similarly foregrounded in the working group ‘Theorizing from the South: Contemporary Theater and Criticism in Latin America’ during the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR) Conference, which I attended in Minneapolis, 2015. In that panel, the group discussion highlighted several issues Latin American scholars have to face when theorizing theatre and performance and which were also appearing in my own research experience. Hence, I will outline some of these issues here and explain how I have attempted to address them. This will be done with the purpose of providing a guide into how my theoretical approaches and methodological choices developed through actively and strategically engaging with these current and common matters regarding the idea of ‘theorizing performance from the South’.

Firstly, the panel expressed a common challenge with regards to negotiating and engaging with both Latin American epistemology and theories coming from elsewhere, particularly from Europe. As I started investigating Brazilian ‘identity’, I encountered discourses and theories that are coined in modernist constructions of national identity and Brazil’s specific postcolonial negotiations (explored by Marilena Chauí, Gilberto Freyre, Luis Madureira, Oswald de Andrade, Roberto Da Matta, Roberto Schwarz, etc.), as previously stated. Hence, it became important for me to engage with the significance of the fact that the Brazilian postcolonial experience (and national identity) was created through the embodiment of a plurality of racial and cultural ‘identities’ and through discourses that sought to resist the idea of Brazilian intellectual production as being a mere ‘copy’ of (slightly adapted) European models. Consequently, as my theoretical research developed, I was also faced with ‘Western’ theories – particularly from European and U.S scholarship – that somehow seemed to clarify and complement my outlook and analysis into the interrelations of music, performance and ‘national

identity' and which could not be ignored. Thus, also inspired by the idea of *antropofagia*, I have aligned this research with Brazilian theorists and epistemologies on national identity alongside more 'Western' formulations of power relations and performativity (Judith Butler, Louis Althusser, Pierre Bourdieu, Richard Schechner, Zygmunt Bauman, amongst others). Hence, *antropofagia* can be seen in this study as a conceptual tool, a Brazilian postcolonial negotiation which connotes the act of incorporation of both the foreign and the national, but also as a research method that permeates the entire thesis. Perhaps thinking 'antropofagically' could be considered as a metaphorical 'embodiment' of such national/foreign theories as I 'incorporate' them into my analyses.

This idea also extends to the very notion of 'embodiment', which I borrow from a 'Western' phenomenological perspective. According to Justin Smith in *Embodiment: a History* (2017), 'insofar as there is a philosophical problem of embodiment, the identity of the embodied subject with the body stands in need of an argument and cannot simply be assumed' (2). Therefore, I use this approach in my second chapter to investigate how in the case of Brazil, *affective* (after Hurley) and embodied responses to the musical experience of samba *effectively* shaped Brazilian 'identity' for, 'phenomenology is concerned with primary, pre-objective experience, as opposed to the secondary, objective conception of the world articulated and explored by the natural sciences' (Cerbone 133). I use the phenomenological conception of 'embodiment' by particularly engaging with theorists that have explored the embodied nature of music perception (Greg Corness, Greg Downey, Judith Becker, Nicola Dibben) and how it triggers affective, or 'pre-objective' experiences in the listener/performer. When discussing the links between philosophical theories and theatrical performance, Mark Fortier states that 'phenomenology is concerned with what it is like for human beings to be alive in the world around them and how they perceive that world' (38). This focus on the living body as the prime source of perception was famously theorised by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his *Phenomenology of Perception* (originally written in 1945). In this work, Merleau-Ponty asserts that it is through lived experience that we acquire knowledge of the world and that this lived experience is constituted by activities of the body in the world. In his words: 'I treat my own perceptual history as a result of my relations with the objective world' (Merleau-Ponty 73). Hence, following this idea, I also deploy the notion of 'embodiment' when analysing *Baila Brazil* in the

third chapter of this thesis. In this analysis, I look at Balé de Rua's own perceptions and lived experiences of 'Brazilianness' and how it relates to their performance of 'Brazil'. For, as Fernando Narduchi, director of the company Balé de Rua stated in an interview: 'what we live we bring to the stage' (cited in Bishop 2015).

Returning to that ASTR panel, the second issue highlighted with regards to 'theorizing performance from the South' was related to the impossibility of separating theatre and politics in the Latin American context, when referring to non-commercial performances. The 'political' aspect in Brazilian theatre and performance is related to, firstly, the permanent backdrop to our history as a former colony, the heritages of slavery and subsequent postcolonial negotiations; and, secondly, as Nascimento reminds us, despite the fact that Brazil culturally distinguishes from other Latin American nations due to it being colonized by the Portuguese and not the Spanish, it is important to disclose that 'Brazil shares much in Latin America's tragic political history, especially the alarming number of military coups supported by the CIA during the Cold War' (6). Hence, the years of complex colonial tensions in addition to state intolerance and political repression in Latin American countries shaped contemporary theatre and performance, which cannot seem to escape the 'political' sphere. According to Thomas Postlewait,

In the study of theatre and drama the idea of 'the political' can be defined broadly, if perhaps too simply, in two ways. We can investigate the political topics, themes, issues, viewpoints, and agendas that get expressed in plays, productions, theatre groups, and artistic movements. Or, by shifting the focus, we can describe the political conditions within the historical matrix that shape dramatic literature, the theatrical arts, performance events, and cultural practices. Which is to say, the issue before us is not only 'political theatre' but also 'theatre and politics' (197).

Extending the scope from 'theatre' to 'performance and politics', the case studies I chose to explore the central questions of this thesis also cannot be detached from the political dimension. Hence, the broader field of 'politics' and the relations between performance and its socio-political conditions, permeated my entire research. To address this 'impossibility of separating theatre and politics in the Latin American context', foregrounded in that ASTR panel, I chose to provide a contextualization of three key political moments in Brazil in this thesis: an extensive

explanation of the country's post-colonial circumstances and how systems of governance (under President Getúlio Vargas) shaped a sense of 'national identity', which is negotiated in all the case studies chosen; secondly, a contextualization of the Brazilian Military Dictatorship Period (1964-84), which I provide in chapter four ('We are all Calibans'), as contemporary performances related to the idea of 'nationhood', such as *Caliban* and The Rio 2016 Olympics' Closing Ceremony, also speak back to this repressive political period; and thirdly, Brazil's contemporary political moment, which I will refer to shortly. With the exception of *Caliban*, which can be perceived as a more overt 'political theatre', with explicit political aims in the artistic representation and expression, I look at more covert relations of 'performance and politics', such as in the case of *Baila Brazil* and the Olympics' Opening Ceremony. The example of samba can perhaps be seen as double-edged between covert and overt political performance for, on the one hand, it was directly linked to institutions of governance (fostered by President Vargas), however, its usage as an ideological tool was covertly disseminated.

In addition to this broader 'political dimension' to theatre and performance in Latin America, a third issue that was addressed in that panel was the particular precariousness of Brazil's political circumstance and how it further enhances the difficulty to theorise contemporary Brazilian performances given the constant political instability in the country. Since performance and politics are associated when performing or responding to the idea of the 'nation', shifts in meanings (and in analysis) are in constant flux, as performance – be it covert or overt political performance – also speaks to its contextual political moment. Hence, this research was conducted responsively to the changing environment of Brazil's socio-political reality which happened concomitantly with the PhD process, which is the third political moment addressed in this thesis. As will be further explicated in the chapter *Caliban* and in my conclusion, in the course of four years Brazil experienced a major socio-political shift in which one leftist president was impeached and, after two years of deep economic recession, saw the return of a far-right wing candidate as President. According to Aimar Labaki,

The political and economic crisis through which Brazil has been passing since 2014 is more profound and serious than it may seem at first sight. It signals more than the failure of the left, the return of right-wing repression and a demophobic, morally supine middle class. It is also the worst economic

depression we have seen since the end of the social pact signed at the end of the military dictatorship and enshrined in the Constitution of 1988. Faced with the permanent shortage of public financing, this crisis has led to reductions in the limited financing previously available for the arts (217).

Hence, my initial investigations related to how Brazilian identity was being 'performed' in more official representations of the nation, seen in the examples of the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Rio Olympic Games, did not suffice my new enquires related to how people/artists were *responding* to the country's (and their own) changing circumstances. In *Theatre & Politics* (2009), Joe Kelleher exposes that 'politics' has to do with some basic concerns which are about 'participation, ownership, membership and exclusion. They involve questions of who – or what – does and does not "count" as a member or owner or worker or citizen. These are questions too of how that count might be contested and also how that contestation is opposed by those in power' (5). Therefore, I felt a pressing need to include voices from the 'margin' that somehow were contesting or 'speaking back' to the 'centre' (those in power) whilst highlighting the ways in which the idea of national identity was being officially performed in contemporary Brazil.

For this reason, I chose to investigate the performances *Baila Brazil* and *Caliban* as both productions 'wrestle' with nationalistic conceptions of 'Brazilianness', seen behind the discourse of racial-democracy and *mestiçagem* ideology; but also, because the connections between centre-margin (within) and national-foreign are made visible through their performative choices, despite being different performance forms (dance and theatre). In fact, all case studies of this thesis evidence 'ambivalence', particularly in the ways in which they explore centre/margin relations. In the chapter on samba, one can see the example of the centre containing the margin through discourse and through music/dance performance; in *Baila Brazil* 'margin' both challenges and performs 'centred' discourses through selection of music to foreign audiences; in *Caliban* 'margin' contests both 'centre' and the idea of the 'foreign' but also embraces centred discourses in the idea of *brasilidade*; and finally in the Olympics, one can perceive the 'centre' performing 'margin' to the world. I believe these dynamics reveal and address a specific aspect of postcolonial complexity.

This complexity is also extended to other identities – beyond the racial identification within the national consciousness – that are negotiated and evidenced in the case studies I examine such as class, gender, and religion. Hence, another critical framework I borrow and deploy in my research is the feminist notion of ‘intersectionality’, theorised by black feminist theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw in the United States. In *Mapping the Margins* (1991), Crenshaw warns that intersectionality is not offered ‘as some new, totalizing theory of identity’ (1244), but as an analytical frame to address how one’s positionality is not dependent on ‘one element of gender, or race, or class, or sexuality but on an understanding that all of these things affect an individual simultaneously’ (Keenan 66). According to Kia Caldwell, ‘the historical absence of public discussion about race and racism in Brazil has resulted in the discursive erasure of the realities of racial domination. The field of women’s studies has been affected by, and in some ways complicit with, macrolevel political and ideological struggles over the significance of race in Brazil’ (222). Hence, due to Brazil’s discourse of ‘racial-democracy’, which historically appeased racial discrimination, the privileged status of ‘whiteness’ in Brazilian society has been fundamental to the construction of female gender identity. Hence, race and gender in the Brazilian context cannot be seen in isolation. Moreover, according to Vivian May in *Pursuing Intersectionality* (2015), ‘by focusing on how patterns and logics interact, and how systems of oppression interrelate, intersectionality highlights various ways in which, unwittingly, we can be engaged in upholding the very forms of coercion or domination we seek to dismantle’ (5). Hence, this intersectional viewpoint also allows me to identify the struggles, contradictions and ambiguities within the idea of performing Brazilian national identity more broadly. From an internal perspective (intraculturally), racial difference is pursued and articulated by artists to bring to the fore the historical erasures attached to the idea of nationhood in Brazil. From an external viewpoint (interculturally), the conversation shifts to an articulation that enhances the ‘uniqueness’ of Brazilian identity in relation to other countries – particularly to the U.S and Europe – which falls back into the discourses generated in modern Brazil and the idea of *brasildade*. As I will explore in the chapters that follow, these contradictions also extend to gendered representations, which differ when looking from an internal/external perspective. This speaks to Angelia Wilson’s argumentation in *Situating Intersectionality* (2013) when she states that the intent of using intersectionality ‘is not to homogenize the

experience of inequalities or marginalization but to widen the possibilities to articulate fluidity, political, and temporal specificity' (3). According to Wilson, 'it is important then to envision the relationship between intersectionality and identity politics not as an "either/or" but working in "conjunction with" in order to map the dynamics of power' (*ibid*). Hence, an intersectional viewpoint allows me to shift from an 'either/or' perspective into a 'conjunction with' mindset, which exposes the complexities and also the strategies deployed by artists to negotiate Brazilian identity in performance, from both an internal and external perspective.

On a methodological level, acknowledging these internal-external and insider-outsider relations led me to consider my own position as a researcher, which I will briefly include in the next section of this introduction, and as a cultural 'mediator' and 'translator'. The first way in which this impacted my research was linguistic: in an attempt to combine national and foreign epistemologies in this thesis I translated many texts/quotations from Portuguese into English.⁴ I also translated the interviews with the groups and a selection of songs and theatrical text. In *Nation, Language and the Ethics of Translation* (2005) Sandra Bermann exposes that 'translation's etymology *trans* (across) and *latus*, the past participle of *ferre* (to carry)—suggests a transportation of meaning, a physical displacement' (5) and Moira Inghilleri affirms that acts of translation and interpreting are never a mere matter of textual production, 'but are consciously and unconsciously involved in the production *and* reproduction of "cultured" meanings. Translators and interpreters are, like all social agents, positioned within this process in certain ways' (249). Hence, I must acknowledge that in this thesis I attempt to navigate through the transmission of views both interculturally ('north' versus 'south') and intraculturally (within Brazil), while providing an 'insider/outsider' analysis in the process of interpreting my case studies linguistically, culturally and performatively. The particularity of translation in performance analysis – which exceeds words and includes other elements of performance (such as the physical and aural) – has been discussed by Terry Hale and Carole-Anne Upton in *Moving Target: Theatre*

⁴ These include translations from authors: André Netto Carreira; Boris Fausto; Gilberto Freyre; Giuliana Vallone; Ingrid Koudela; Jessé Souza; José Ramos Tinhorão; Lucia Oliveira; Luciana Murari; Maria Eduarda Souza Rocha; Rafael Guarato; Sirlei Santos Dudalski and Mariana Gomes; Waldenyr Caldas; and Wander Melo Miranda.

Translation and Cultural Relocation (2014). In this work they affirm that this insider/outsider role of the interpreter is not a simple question of absolutes:

Rather, the wholly domestic and the wholly foreign are at opposite poles of a single spectrum of sophisticated possibilities. The very richness of this composite form gives the theatre its special capacity to juxtapose the alien and the familiar, thereby creating both distance and 'rapprochement' at the same time (7).

Therefore, even though I have made language choices which I thought would best transmit the ideas at hand, I have attempted to highlight the particularities and ambiguities of translation in my footnotes as an opening to other possibilities of interpretation. For, as Bermann states, if we must translate in order to 'emancipate and preserve cultural pasts and to build linguistic bridges for present understandings and future thought, we must do so while attempting to respond ethically to each language's contexts, intertexts, and intrinsic alterity' (6). I believe that recognising other possibilities of meaning feeds back into how I have used reflexivity as a methodological guide throughout my research process.

According to Roni Berger, reflexivity is the acknowledgment of 'one's own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation' (220). As Berger continues to unpack, reflexivity is the 'active acknowledgement by the researcher that her/his own actions and decisions will inevitably impact upon the meaning and context of the experience under investigation' (229). This kind of reflexivity has informed not only my research process and choice of case studies, but also my interpretation and analysis of them. As I will further elucidate when I situate myself within the thesis, I have always experienced an insider/outsider relationship with the idea of 'Brazil' because of my own personal and cultural background. In addition, my political views and research tendencies do have impact on the scope and depths of certain themes and angles of analysis, such as cultural materialism, postcolonial and feminist theories. Having gone through a constant process that has attempted to provide an insider/outsider, subjective/objective analysis, I have relied on Berger's vision of the researcher's position as being 'fluid rather than static' (231). In 'Beyond Insiders and Outsiders in Migration Research' (2015), Magdalena Nowicka and Louise Ryan challenge the

binary positionality of insider-outsider in research by asking 'what it means to be an "insider researcher" if ethnic and national belonging and gender are multi-layered, culturally constructed concepts?' (2) They unpack the notion of 'insider' by stating that it has been contested and that the 'dichotomy of insider-outsider was redefined as a continuum and redefined as contextual' (*ibid* 5). Within this idea of a continuum, I approached my research with a fluid positionality.

This fluidity can also be seen in my different approaches to analysing the different case studies. In the chapters on samba and *Baila Brazil*, the choice to focus on embodied performance, of affective responses to music and national identity, were also made from an 'embodied' position, as I have effectively 'learned' how to embody 'Braziannes' through samba and I experienced the performance *Baila Brazil* whilst it was happening in the same space ('live').⁵ From a phenomenological perspective, this 'embodied' position informed my overall perception and could be seen to influence my analysis for, as Greg Corness argues, perception is the reflective process involving all the data being sensed, including the sensation of self-awareness, it is 'this interaction between self-awareness, sensation and perception that forms our knowledge' (Corness 21). However, despite having 'embodied' samba and its ideological meanings, historical distance allowed me to have an objective critical take on the topic which is persistent in my analysis, whereas in *Baila Brazil*, I present a more subjective response to the performance and Brazil's current issues involving race, gender, and class within the national narrative. Moreover, this personal response to *Baila Brazil* also influenced the scenes I selected to analyse, as I had to capture them from my memory and from interviews I made with the group, which provides it with an additional subjective perspective, the practitioners' viewpoints. Fortier explains that 'in tending to the analytic, scientific and abstract, semiotics misses how theatre feels to us. Thus, phenomenology's task is to keep [...] the life in theater' (37). Hence, I have attempted to 'translate' such life into my writing.

I took a different approach when analysing *Caliban* and the Rio Olympics' Opening Ceremony because I experienced them via video recording and in hindsight. The fact that I was able to rewind and revisit these performances allowed

⁵ Following Philip Auslander (2004), I challenge the idea of 'liveness' in performance in my chapter on samba.

me to focus on structure and to provide a more descriptive and analytical framework, hence my focus is less on the affective, embodied perception, but on the narrative and on the increasingly unstable political environment. The use of narrative is important insofar as it attempts to tell a coherent story of a nation, while more embodied performances (such as in the examples of samba and *Baila Brazil*) tend to suggest complexity, the concurrence of the past and present, and intersections between race, gender, and class, as they have been inscribed upon and performed through the contemporary Brazilian body. Naturally, such simultaneity can be seen in all examples as they are all being performed by Brazilian bodies through music in performance; however, I have chosen to look at how music is being used to 'tell' such a story in these final chapters, and in particular, the performances' narration of the 'nation'. Hence, the different materiality of my case studies, combined with Brazil's (past and present) socio-political turmoil, and my own fluid position as a researcher, shaped the way I conducted my analysis and approached this idea of 'Performing Nationhood' in Brazil.

Situating Myself as a Brazilian Researcher

Finally, before I launch into my specific analyses, as explicated above, it feels important for me to situate myself within this research process that has taken place over the last four years. During this Ph.D. thesis, the focus and scope of my study enabled me to question personal connections with my research on music, performance, and the idea of Brazilian national identity. I felt a need to understand my own relationship with the concept of 'Brazilianness'; my position as a researcher; and the direction of my subjective considerations regarding the themes I was investigating. Hence, beginning with my relation to the concept of Brazilian national identity: My family background is varied, and all my ancestors were immigrants that settled in Brazil from the late nineteenth century onwards. Some were forced-immigrants, such as my great grandmother who was an Angolan young girl (born to African-Portuguese parents) and later adopted by Portuguese parents and brought to Brazil. Others left their home countries in search of a 'promised' better life in the New World as part of the 'wave of immigration' program fostered by the Brazilian government at the turn of the twentieth century (and explained in more detail in chapter 1). A large part of my family is Syrian-originated; another is Italian (and I also have Spanish and Portuguese ascendance). The economic

background of my family was similar to most hard-working immigrant families of the time, extremely humble. The financial situation began to shift after my parents' generation was already grown up and pursued further education in public universities. Syrian and Italian traditions were cultivated in the family mainly through cultural expressions such as food, music, and religion. And, as I grew up, I was inclined to believe that this cultural difference and exchange within my family is what made us 'special'. However, despite having an African/European/Middle Eastern 'bloodline', the blue colours of my eyes and my relatively light-brown skin locate me in a position of relative privilege in Brazilian racial terms. I am considered 'white' in my country, although abroad (UK/Europe and the U.S) I have been called and named as 'exotic'; 'person of colour'; 'brown', etc. Hence, even though I can be seen as a 'mixed raced' woman (from a foreign perspective), I am not considered a *mestiça* in Brazil.

Acknowledging my internal position of 'privilege', I began to question and excavate my own 'Brazilianness'. I had to face the idea that I have always experienced an insider/outsider relationship with Brazil. I was born in the country; however, moved to the United Kingdom when I was two years old – as both my parents did studies in the country - and only returned to Brazil when I was turning eight. Despite my family trying to teach me Portuguese language at home while we were living abroad, getting acquainted with the language and overall ways of other Brazilian children back in my 'home' country, proved to be a very difficult and challenging process. I was often intimidated by my lack of ability to understand and communicate efficiently and, as a twist of fate, I was frequently positioned as the 'other' amongst the groups I would try to connect with. The desire to 'blend in' and affirm my identity as 'Brazilian' led me to reject the English language and culture until my late teens. And, against many attempts from my parents to place me in English language schools (from which I would escape and literally run away from), I managed to incorporate the Portuguese language and associate with other children through a very specific practice: embodying music. I was taught how to dance samba (music/dance genre elaborated in detail throughout this thesis) and lambada, a type of music/dance very popular in Brazil in the early 1990s, which had a particularly sensory configuration. My up-until-then relatively 'British' cultured body movements, used to dancing in a circle holding hands to nursery rhymes - and later on to the 1980s British pop music –, now had to learn and engage in a different

kind of musicality, of music performance, and became 'Brazilianised'. Hence, by the time I reached my teenage years, I had actively learned how to be 'Brazilian' through practices of embodiment and through resisting previously acquired 'foreign' language and cultural practices. And this closely relates to what I am discussing in this study.

As for my position as a researcher, I began my process at the undergraduate level as I received a state scholarship to develop research into feminist theatre and performance practices. This was when I first encountered cultural/materialist theories and the idea of intersectionality as approaches to analysing case studies, notions that I also apply in this thesis. However, what concretely lead me to this Ph.D. journey was my MA degree in International Performance Research (MAIPR) at the University of Warwick and University of Arts in Belgrade in 2011-12. At that time, I was interested in exploring the topic of music in/as performance, due to my passion for music playing, singing, listening and dancing. I come from a family with many musicians, I have performed in an amateur feminist rock band for a few years and, even though my academic and professional background is in Theatre Studies, music was always integrated in the theatrical practices I worked with. Thus, I wanted to understand how musical experience created something quite tangible but almost inexplicable in my body and in myself, and why it seemed to 'move' people in various ways (both literally and figuratively). Furthermore, I was interested in investigating how music provided me a sense of having both an internal connection (with my thoughts, moods, and feelings) and an interpersonal relation (with musical 'communities'). Hence, after finishing college and as I stepped outside of my own cultural reality and crossed an ocean to commence further academic studies in that MA course, I looked back into the particularity of the Brazilian nation concerning musical expressions and notions of identity and community. I realized that music was used as a means to foster a sense of self-identification (in racial terms) and national unity. And I was able to begin linking theories related to the field of Performance Studies and Musicology to the specificity of the Brazilian national experience, which started to unravel my curiosity in relation to what and how music 'does' things to people and how people 'do' things through music. Therefore, some of the ideas that are elaborated in this thesis originated from insights I began processing during that MA.

In addition to my viewpoint as a researcher, I also have an outlook from my professional/artistic practice in street theatre performances. I performed for seven years in an all-ladies street theatre company in the state of Santa Catarina, South Brazil. Hence, my engagement with the company I analyse in the chapter 4 Caliban case-study can also be seen from an 'insider/outsider' perspective. Even though for many years I shared a similar thought process and ideological (or even utopic) orientation, time and distance from the practice have allowed me to foster a more critical viewpoint.

In the frame of my life background, I have to acknowledge that albeit conducting the research and performance analysis in this thesis from an investigative distance, my views are not completely impartial; they come from an experience of becoming/being: an academic researcher, an amateur musician, a street theatre performer, a feminist, a culturally and racially 'mixed' individual, a leftist/socialist-oriented thinker, and a relatively privileged 'white' Brazilian. And so, without further ado, I begin with the geneses of the idea of national identity and unity in Brazil...

Chapter 1. Nation Building in Brazil: Discourses and Identity Processes

Brazil has an area of 3,286,426 square miles, which is nearly half the area of South America, and is currently the fifth-largest nation in the world, after Russia, Canada, China, and the United States (Levine 2). Four million Indigenous people inhabited the region until the ‘discovery of Brazil’ by the Portuguese in 1500 (most recent census counted between 650,000 and 850,000). And since then, the histories of violence, which began in colonial times, and of state authoritarianism (see Marilena Chauí), have made the quests for a narrative of self-identification as a nation, as a common ‘people’ extremely complex. I do not attempt to explore all these histories and complexities in this thesis (for that see Chauí, Levine, Skidmore, Zirin), but rather set out to highlight key moments and ideas that continue to feed into current imaginings and performances of ‘nationhood’ in Brazil. I have arranged the description and explanation of the different discourses regarding Brazilian ‘identity’ in a chronological order to better structure the chapter, which could suggest a sense of linearity, however it must be stated that these ideas and conceptions were being created in parallel as indication of post-colonial tensions and negotiations of modern Brazil.

Following Benedict Anderson’s definition of ‘nation’ as an ‘imagined political community – [...] as both inherently limited and sovereign’ (6), this chapter presents the historical context in which Brazilians began to imagine and identify themselves as a unified community. I will explore how this ‘desire’ originated in social terms, mainly through a Brazilian elite who were looking forward and outward, particularly for models coming from European intellectual, artistic and literary circles. Influenced by such circles, Brazilian thinkers aimed at articulating the idea of nationalism during the Brazilian *modernismo* movement in ways that aimed to resolve the tensions between the binaries of ‘authenticity/rootedness’ and ‘copy/foreign’. It was from these struggles that the discourse of ‘racial democracy’ emerged, and through which the racial ideologies of *mestiçagem* and *brasilidade* were disseminated in the 1920s-1930s. This process demonstrates how, as Thomas Turino suggests, ‘discursively produced categories of social identity must be understood in relation to the discourses that produce the terms and the social and

political functions of those discourses' (104). Understanding such discourses can illuminate how visions of Brazil's past are implicated in its present. As Susana Carvalho and Françoise Gemmene argue,

Nationalism, whether studied as an ideology, a vision or a political or cultural movement, lays claim to the past as part of its effort to manage the present and to justify its goals for the future. The nation is not only the central idea for nationalists but also the bearer of a history, real or imagined, which shapes national identity and values (1).

This Brazilian nationalism is linked to a particular vision of the past, via an ideological framework that, as Thomas Skidmore concurs, made 'Brazilians see themselves as very different from all other New World societies and claim to have produced their own civilization' (xiv). To explore this, I will begin by tracking Brazil's quest for a national identity, and how this identity later came to define it as a 'unique' civilization.

Brazil Searching for National Identity

In *Imagined Communities* (1991), Anderson notes that the very notion of 'nation' began in the New World, before spreading throughout European states in the nineteenth century. This was because it was crucial for the communities of the Americas to unify in order to achieve independence. In the case of Brazil, the drive propelling independence was the country's industrial underdevelopment, imposed by the Portuguese rulers, which deliberately stopped Brazil from industrializing, thereby maintaining the European industrial supremacy while Brazil would remain almost exclusively a source of raw material. This policy 'inexorably condemned [Brazil] to poverty so that foreigners might progress' (Zirin 43). In addition to this industrial underdevelopment, there was a pressure on the Brazilian court to follow other Latin American countries' efforts for independence (i.e Chile 1810, Paraguai 1811, Argentina 1816). However, despite being influenced by such liberation movements, according to Zirin Brazil has a unique history in relation to its independence from Portugal for, unlike its neighbouring countries – which conquered their independent status from Spanish monarchy through armed struggle and popular revolt – Brazil's 'decolonization efforts against the Portuguese royal court were led by its king' (46). On 9th January 1822, Dom Pedro I, son of Dom

João VI, King of Portugal, proclaimed his famous (and performative) statement '*Diga ao povo que fico!*' (Tell the people I'm staying!). This 'bizarre and seismic' (Zirin 46) instance was an unparalleled historical moment in which 'a monarch would be leading a colony's movement for independence from what was technically his family's own monarchy' (*ibid*). Therefore, even Brazil's first encounter with the perception of being an independent 'nation' was in fact a forged occurrence; a politically strategic movement from its former coloniser who would soon become its new leader.

Returning to Anderson, he suggests that one of the factors that contributed to the emergence of the concept of 'nation' was the development of ideas coming from the European Enlightenment period; hence, 'nation' is a creation of modernity. In order to understand how Brazil defined itself as a nation, particularly through a specific musical genre in the twentieth century (which will be explained in the second chapter of this thesis), it is necessary to acknowledge the way in which Brazilians perceived themselves at the end of the preceding century.

One could argue that the creation and construction of a Brazilian national identity started at the end of the nineteenth century through a negotiation of the country's colonial (1500-1750), slavery (1580 to its abolition in 1888) and immigration (post-1888) periods, in which divisions were forged along lines of class, racial derivation and geographical space. The small but powerful Brazilian elite who were concentrated primarily within the big cities along the coastline, such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, had the desire to 'modernise' the country, looking to European models of cultural appreciation and spatial arrangements to achieve this. Thus 'more fundamental efforts were made in Europeanizing the physical appearance of [Brazil's] cities – in particular its capital city, Rio – and in 'whitening' its population' (Skidmore 76).

Arguably, the period of modernisation in Brazil started after it became a Republic in 1889. It is important to stress that the Brazilian empire was not overthrown by a social revolution, but by a military coup that deposed Dom Pedro II (son of Dom Pedro I), hence the very founding of the Brazilian Republic 'began as a military government' (Skidmore 75). This emergence of a Brazilian Republic within an authoritarian political system was depicted in detail by Marilena Chauí in *Between Conformity and Resistance* (2011). In this work, Chauí unravels the

historical association between the Brazilian state and authoritarianism revealing that the country's 'present and past political imaginary contains an image of power that is formed from on high, develops from on high, and rules all of society from on high' (53). This association is significant to note here, for this thesis will address two particular moments of Brazilian dictatorships and how it influenced discourses and performances of 'nationhood', the first will be unpacked in this current chapter (Getúlio Vargas' Government 1930-1945) and the second in the fourth chapter (Military Dictatorship 1964-1985). For now, returning to the founding of the Brazilian Republic, the country was thus formally named The United States of Brazil, and the motto '*Ordem e Progresso*' ('Order and Progress') was 'emblazoned on Brazil's handsome new blue, green and yellow national flag' (Levine 77). It is significant to elucidate that the colours of the Brazilian flag were selected and arranged whilst Brazil was still under the Portuguese Empire. The colours refer to the romantic tradition of the beginning of the nineteenth century, which, according to Luciana Murari, 'turned its back to the field of history and admitted a utopic identification of the country with its edenic and primitive nature' (22). Chauí also elaborates on this utopic identification and provides an explanation as to the significance of the 'mythical' colours of the Brazilian flag:

From the French Revolution onward, revolutionary flags have tended to be tricolor, emblems of the political struggles for liberty, equality, and fraternity. The Brazilian flag, however, has four colors and it does not express politics or relate to the country's history. It is a symbol of nature. It is Brazil as garden, Brazil-paradise. Any Brazilian child knows very well that the green represents our forests, the yellow our mineral wealth, the blue the perfection of our sky, the white the kindness of our good natured hearts (117).

Unsurprisingly, Brazil's flag is still displayed in all ceremonies involving the nation, being one of the 'invented traditions' Hobsbawm refers to. Brazilians are very proud of this national icon and this binary Brazil *as* nature – seen in the flag's colours – and Brazil *as* 'civilised' nation – seen in the flag's motto – illustrates a dualism that still exists in the country's social imaginary, as will be further addressed when I examine the 'official' performance of Brazil in the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. Returning to the end of the nineteenth century, the concept of 'Order and Progress' contained within the flag's national motto, at that time

represented the desire of the state to move towards a modern and 'Europeanized' Brazil (Skidmore). In *The Dream of Purity* (1997), Zygmunt Bauman articulates that as a 'culture' or 'civilization', modernity was about beauty, cleanliness and order. Relating this to the Brazilian example, to 'modernise' and 'cleanse' itself, the country had to review its internal policies regarding social and racial relations and its city planning.⁶ Thomas Skidmore traces how even the abolition of slavery was a result of this vision:

[...] criticism from abroad helped the elite realize that slavery was an obstacle to the country's emergence as a modern nation. In the words of the Anti-Slavery Society: 'Brazil does not want to be a nation morally isolated, a leper, expelled from the world community. The esteem and respect of foreign nations are as valuable to us as they are to other people' (68).

It is important for this study to stress the brutality of the Brazilian slave trade, a disavowed history to which I will return throughout this thesis, particularly in reference to African Brazilians. Keeping this memory 'alive' is important as a means of resistance and all the contemporary performances which I analyse include certain 'memories of slavery' in their works. As Zirin expresses, 'it is a fool's errand to try to quantify the relative inhumanities of different slave trades, yet we can say with confidence that there has never been a slave trade on earth that rivalled the scale as well as the brutality of the slave trade to Brazil and the conditions in which slaves there lived' (41). The trading of slaves lasted almost three centuries, from 1580 to 1850, and the need for their labour was so profound that by the nineteenth century, 'African slaves and their descendants made up the majority of the country' (*Ibid* 41). In order to be recognised as a modern nation, Brazil formally abolished slavery and instituted the Golden Law on 13th May 1888, the last nation to do so.

However, despite slavery being abolished, social and economic opportunities for African descendants in Brazilian society remained limited. Ideological beliefs at the time called for more European immigration 'to "whiten" and therefore improve

⁶ This is evidenced in similar endeavours by European colonial powers, including France, Germany, England, etc. See, for example, Haughey (ed) *Across space and time: architecture and the politics of modernity* (Routledge, 2017), which analyses how modernity has impacted across the globe and for much longer than previously conceived, and includes analyses of Brazil, Java, India, Georgia, and Yugoslavia.

the Brazilian population' (Zirin 51), which suggested that 'civilisation' was being defined in part in racial terms. According to Skidmore, there was an enormous wave of immigration following abolition which led to a 'mammoth 500-percent explosion of immigration' (71) mostly from Italy, Portugal and Spain, which meant that they 'assimilated easily into Brazilian society and culture. Their language, if not Portuguese, was closely related to Portuguese, as was their cultures' (*ibid*). All these complexities for African Brazilians were exacerbated because the Brazilian elite fell under the influence of European and North American doctrines of scientific racism, 'which pointed to biological and historical "evidence" to justify their claims of white superiority' (Skidmore 78). This movement was later called *embranquecimento*, the 'whitening process' (Sterling 102), which assimilated African and indigenous traditions into the dominant cultural thought of the white elite's ideology of modern Brazil.

Within this 'whitening process', African Brazilians were the main targeted group. According to Cheryl Sterling, this was so because the idea of 'whitening' was also associated to social mobility. Therefore,

Governmental policy banned all immigration of African and Asian peoples and, in turn, actively sponsored the immigration of whites in order to lighten the population. In tandem with its immigrationist agenda, the policy of *embranquecimento* promoted miscegenation in order to genetically attack and alter the black being (Sterling 4).

An illustrative example of this notion of *embranquecimento* can be seen in the oil painting *A Redenção de Cam* (Cam's Redemption, 1895) by the Spanish artist Modesto Brocos (Figure 1). The artist created this work whilst he was lecturing at the University of Fine Arts in Rio de Janeiro and the widely acclaimed painting received the golden medal at the General Exhibition of Fine Arts in Brazil that year. The image portrays a family of three generations marked by the different colour shades of the characters' skin: on the left, one can observe the 'black' grandmother; to the centre of the picture, the mother, which is here representing the '*mulata*' (brown woman) who embraces a 'white' baby sitting on her lap; and situated on the right side, the presumed father of the child who is also 'white'.



Figure 1 - Modesto Brocos's 'A Redenção de Cam' (1895). Museum of Fine Arts of Rio de Janeiro. In: Lotierzo and Schwarcz (4).

The name of the painting was given in reference to a passage of the Bible (Genesis 9) known as 'Noah's curse' in which Noah's son Cam exposes the nakedness of his father to his brothers Shem and Japheth, and the patriarch condemns his son Canaan, to be a slave to Cam's brothers. According to Tatiana Lotierzo and Lilia Schwarcz, 'at a time of expansion of Western Christianity in Africa, Asia, and later the Americas, the passage was used as a justification for the slavery of Africans, seen as "natural" to Europeans' (7). Modesto's painting, therefore, inverts this idea and proposes a re-reading of the biblical episode, by 'showing a way to reverse the curse of Noah, because instead of being "blackened", the supposed descendants of Cam are whitened in the image' (Lotierzo and Schwarcz 8). In other words, by 'whitening' the population, Brazil could reverse its 'curse' of being predominantly an African-descendant country. The painting also contains connotations and intersections of other problematics such as class and gender. As frame of reference, Lilly Caldwell explains that the construction of the Brazilian female subjectivity was influenced by this attempt of 'whitening' the population,

which consequentially created gendered 'representations' that influenced the popular imaginary. Caldwell explains that:

Since the colonial era, white women in Brazil have been differentiated from non-white women through patriarchal practices that associated marriage with white women and more illicit sexual relationships with non-white women. Whereas white women were assigned to the realm of legitimate and honorable sexuality in their roles as wives and mothers, enslaved African women, and later mulatas, were associated with illegitimate and dishonorable sexual practices. Largely due to their privileged relationship to patriarchy and racial hegemony, white women have become the reference point for idealized constructions of womanhood and female gender identity in Brazil (227).⁷

I shall return to the implications of this construction of 'female' subjectivity in Brazil later in this thesis, when I explore contemporary case studies. For now, returning to the turn of the twentieth century and with a specific focus on racial identification, Natasha Pravaz states that, despite slavery being abolished, 'blacks were increasingly subjected to state repression. The transference of power from slave owners to the capitalist bourgeoisie offered them no space at all' (85). This internal repression relates to John McLeod's discussion in *Beginning Postcolonialism* (2000), when he refers to the differences between internal and external racism within the nation and how 'the perception of "race" can function as a primary strategy in constructing myths of national unity and in deciding who may or may not belong to the rightful people' (112). McLeod states that this internal racism is directed at those who 'live within the nation but are not deemed to belong to the imagined community of the national people due to their perceived 'race'' (*ibid*). In the Brazilian case, it must be stated that the claims of 'white superiority' were certainly not only related to citizens whose descendants were African, they were also applied to indigenous communities. As Skidmore explains, by this time in Brazil's history, 'the intermittent European-Indian coexistence of the early colonial days was long past. The Indians had been assimilated, annihilated, or

⁷ For further reading on complexities such as class and gender in Modesto Brocos' painting, see: Lotierzo, THP and Schwarcs, LKM. 'Raça, Gênero e Projeto Branqueador: "A Redenção de Cam" de Modesto Brocos'. *Revista Artelogie*, n.5 (2013). 1-26. [Race, Gender and The Whitening Process: 'Cam's Rendition', by Modesto Brocos].

pushed beyond the margins of Portuguese (and later, Brazilian) settlement' (81).⁸ This is in accordance with the notion that internal racism can result in its 'most extreme and violent form in the extermination of racialized individuals or the oppression of racialized groups who are awarded a low position in the social hierarchy' (McLeod 112).

Hermano Vianna identified that the growing importance of nationalism in the nineteenth century 'rooted political legitimacy almost invariably in the idea of national community, and community usually implied commonality' (35). According to Vianna, due to human populations being so diverse, a sense of homogeneity had to be created and, therefore, commonality 'was most often imagined as ethnic homogeneity' (*ibid*). Therefore, people from mixed ascendances were seen as inferior or weaker to those from a 'pure' ethnic background. As Vianna states, 'purity and authenticity go together in this 'essentializing' conceptualization of a national spirit. Each people's national essence, the untainted wellspring of collective identity, is supposedly unique and not to be plagiarized or mixed' (*ibid*), and such ideology was an extension of the nineteenth century European racial discourse, as seen above.

Although countries like the United States of America adopted discourses of 'white supremacy' and 'ethnic homogeneity' and managed them in practical ways, through segregation policies, the Brazilian reality could not embrace such an ideology for an extended period of time, despite the initial efforts of the Brazilian elite, because, as Robert Levine states: 'of all of the countries in the New World, Brazil is the largest in which people of mixed racial origin are represented in the overall population' (11). Hence, according to Adriana Johnson, it was the 'truly twisted relationship between a twisted structure (both capitalist and slave-holding, nation-state based and dependent) and a twisted superstructure (local ideas superimposed side by side with the most progressive ideas of its time)' (29), that demanded of Brazilian intellectuals the greatest of analytical efforts in order to come to terms with their surrounding world. Therefore, to raise a unifying national conscious and obtain a justifiable discourse about their identity, 'white Brazilians were betting primarily on race mixture, a process that horrified white North

⁸ Some authors use the term 'Indians' instead of 'Indigenous' when referring to native populations. In this thesis I shall use the term 'Indigenous' as it is the closest to the Brazilian term: 'índio' or 'indígena'.

Americans, to gradually turn themselves into the equivalent of the superior race' (Skidmore 78). Within this process, the feature of *mestiçagem* started to become more prominent in national discourses of what might constitute a modern Brazilian identity. Thus, the Brazilian elite's racist beliefs of 'scientific' superiority of whites was gradually replaced with an 'emphasis on the roles of health and education in countering the apparent backwardness of non-whites' (*ibid* 103). I will return to consider the implications of this shift, but first I want to consider the significance of the spatial divisions in defining a modern Brazil.

Spatial Divisions in Making Modern Brazil

According to Pravaz, the modernizing orientation of the new elites also meant reorganising Brazilian urban spaces, 'further displacing and marginalizing the city's poor by demolishing their homes and forcing their exodus' (85) to peripheral sites, or, as in the case of Rio de Janeiro - the capital of Brazil at the time – to northern regions of the city. These re-arrangements of Brazil's major city spaces can also be related to Bauman's vision of purity for Western modernity. For Bauman, purity is a 'vision of things put in places different from those they would occupy if not prompted to move elsewhere, pushed, pulled or goaded' (6). He continues explaining that purity is a vision of order; a vision of 'a situation in which each thing is in its rightful place and nowhere else' (*ibid*). Hence, spatial arrangements in 'modernising' cities – particularly in European colonies' sites – were also ideological artifices, for they imposed ideology physically.⁹ Therefore, following this tendency the city of Rio de Janeiro replaced its narrow streets with grand boulevards in order to modernise itself and 'sell' the country to foreign markets. During the mid-1870s,

to create the needed right of way, 590 buildings had to be demolished. Many of these structures had housed working-class families who were now forced to find new housing, often much further from their work. Whether intending to or not, the political elite was turning downtown Rio into a 'rabble free'

⁹ For more on European/Colonial spatial arrangements and architecture, see Morton, Patricia A. *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2000. Print.

zone that would impress the foreigner and keep the 'dangerous classes' at a distance (Skidmore 77).

The so-called 'dangerous classes' (articulated as such to justify their displacement) were displaced to the hills surrounding Rio's city centre and so thereby initiated the construction of the *favelas* (slums). It was in these communities that the musical genre of samba would be later 'discovered' by some of the country's intellectuals (topic which will be further explored in the second chapter of this thesis). This spatial segregation became and still remains (with escalating surges of violence) an enormous social disjuncture in Rio de Janeiro's everyday life. The complicated matter regarding the city's spatial divisions, particularly with regards to its *favelas*, will be further discussed in my conclusion, with the example of the Olympic Games that took place in Rio 2016. It will be explored as an example of how geographies of colonialism still resonate in the present, as evidenced by struggles at the moments in which the nation performs itself.

On a larger scale, it is important to note that spatial divisions that have existed in the whole country since colonial times further characterise Brazil's social-economic disparities. In the early 1900s, according to Skidmore, almost eighty four percent of the population lived in the coastal areas of two main regions; the southeast and the northeast. Many theorists (Levine, Moehn, Skidmore, and Souza) agree with Chauí's assertion that, 'the natural division between the coast and the backlands [gave] rise to a theory that has long persisted, that of "two Brazils"' (122). This could partly be due to the narrow geographic configuration of Brazilian rivers' estuaries of the time, restraining large ships from reaching the interior of the country. According to Levine, 'these physical barriers have over the centuries hindered access to the interior' (3), thereby preventing the same access to resources shared by coastal regions and inhibiting 'modernisation' of the interior. Such binaries 'coast vs. interior' or 'east vs. centre' created an idea of 'otherness within' in which coastal Brazil was seen as 'formal, bourgeois and enlightened' whilst the backlands were seen as 'real, impoverished, illiterate, and uncivilized' (Chauí 122). According to Chauí, this concept was fostered by the Integralists, a political party in the 1920s also known as the 'Brazilian fascists' (*ibid*). Such dualistic discourses of Brazil *as* nature and Brazil *as* civilisation reflected the way in which social hierarchy and values were marked in the country: 'by the opposition between

bourgeois European values [of the coast] and anti-European values of the interior, indicating in the country an antinomy of values, in which until these days, we feel its repercussions' (Souza 6). Hence, in the early 20th century the whole country seemed to be divided along socio-economic, spatial and ethnic/racial delineations.

Modernismo in Brazil

In the artistic and literary realm, 'modernity' began to show its influence towards the end of the nineteenth century, as many Brazilian intellectuals and artists began to 'turn away from imported culture and to probe local cultural expression for its unique properties' (Levine 25). This process of valuing national cultural expressions culminated in the Brazilian *Modernismo* (Modernist Movement). For Skidmore, until World War I, the Brazilian elite had been living in a 'French-oriented literary and artistic world [...] with little room for artistic originality' (102). According to Murari, within the country, the artistic and literary realms were following a romantic tradition which was in search of a timeless Brazilian essence that 'operated a logic of presentification of reality' (22). This was so because, according to her, romantic literature had moved away from the field of history, using the utopian form of the identification of the country with its edenic nature and 'primitivism', which had produced ideas and visions that resembled a Brazilian 'noble savage' as the true national essence.¹⁰

When World War I ended, Brazilian artists faced new European influences, 'radical innovators such as the Futurists, Surrealists and Dada' (Skidmore 102). However, despite being influenced and stimulated by these artistic movements, the Brazilian modernists 'confronted Eurocentrism and began the search for [original] national roots' (Oliveira 93).¹¹ The benchmark year dating Brazil's entry into what came to be called 'Modernism' was 1922, with the *Semana de Arte Moderna* (Modern Art Week), held in São Paulo, the country's most 'modern' city at the time. According to Christopher Dunn, *modernismo* was a heterogeneous literary and cultural movement that brought together artists who, although varied both in terms of aesthetic values and political ideologies, were broadly committed to the

¹⁰ This characterization of a 'Brazilian noble savage' became epitomised with José de Alencar's novel *O Guarani: A Brazilian romance* (1857), which later was transformed into an Opera by Carlos Gomes in 1970.

¹¹ Whilst in Europe, in order to renew art, they were reaching back to colonised 'Indigenous art'. See Morton's 'Hybrid Modernities' (2000).

'aesthetic renovation of Brazilian arts and letters and the articulation of national culture that was at once "original" (rooted in the popular cultures of Brazil) and "modern" (informed by contemporary literary trends in international sphere)' (12). In addition, Brazilian modernist artists were in search of independence from both romantic nationalism (which had 'idyllic' visions of Brazil rooted in its indigenous ancestry, as seen above) and European domination and forwarded a programme that 'may be seen as aiming at a critical appropriation of both the national and the cosmopolitan' (Cândido and Silvestre 249). This double concept of appropriation is key to this thesis, particularly because it means appropriation of Brazil as a bearer of local culture and natural resources – within the global dimension – but also incorporation of the global culture within itself (referring to the 'cultural cannibalism' movement, which shall be explored further). Hence, as Styliane Philipou states, 'Brazilians had consciously embarked on a process of creating a Brazilian modernity or a Luso-tropical modernity, as Freyre would eventually baptise it. The white cultural elite appropriated the local and marginalised, nationalised it and, thus, universalised it. At the same time, they also appropriated universalist Modernism, nationalised it and thus particularised and localised it (251).

This artistic revolution was led by the country's most influential intellectuals – such as Mario de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade – and prominent artists – Emiliano Di Cavalcanti, Anita Malfatti, Tarsila do Amaral – and contained in its heart a radical thought fed by a 'new post-war attitude toward the Afro-Brazilian [and against] the dogma of "whitening"' (Skidmore 102). I will now focus specifically on Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropofágico* [Anthropophagic Manifesto] (1928) and the notion of Cultural Cannibalism because this idea continues to gain adhesion in Brazilian artistic and cultural practices, and will be further examined in subsequent chapters, particularly where it comes to 'consuming' and 'digesting' foreign cultural products.

Antropofagia (Cultural Cannibalism)

*Only Anthropophagy unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically. The sole law of the world. A masked expression. For all types of individuality, of all collectivity. Of all religions. Of all peace treaties. Tupi or not tupi. That is the question.*¹²

(First lines of *Manifesto Antropofágico*)

Oswald de Andrade's 'Cannibalist Manifesto' was first published in the *Revista de Antropofagia* in 1928 [Anthropophagic Journal], of which he was the chief editor. The manifesto was structured as a series of 'short, telegraphic aphorisms that refer to Brazilian history, enlightenment philosophy, indigenous religions, psychology, and anthropology' (Dunn 18). According to Wesley Cândido and Nelci Silvestre, the term 'anthropophagy' has a Greek origin and it was changed to 'cannibalism' as a result of a transition from the European to the American environment in the 16th century. This change came about because of the 'similarity between the terms Caribe = cannibal = Caliban. 'The word denotes the act of eating human flesh' (Cândido and Silvestre 244). This etymology was extensively explored by Cuban writer Roberto Fernandez Retamar in his essay 'Caliban' (1974), which I will return to in chapter four. To Fernando Rocha, a 'manifesto is, by definition, an attempt at making manifest, recognizably visible that which has no existence yet' (39). Regarding Oswald de Andrade, by re-appropriating the term, he defended a new critical and creative concept in his proposal for cultural anthropophagy, which was 'seen as a type of ritualistic renewal, or rather, an act that, in cultural terms, occurs by devouring metaphorically foreign cultures' (Cândido and Silvestre 244). According to Madureira, for the followers of the 1928-29 *antropofagia* movement, 'it is in the recovery and resignification of the most emblematic and infamous ritual

¹² It must be stated that in Portuguese the letter 'u' is pronounced as the sound of the English's 'oo'; and the letter 'i' is pronounced as the English letter 'e'. Hence, 'Tupi or not tupi' perfectly rhymes with Shakespeare's existential dilemma: 'To be or not to be' (Hamlet), an intentional word play that shows how *antropofagia* could be seen to work in 'digesting' and 'incorporating' the foreign and national culture/language within itself. As Cândido and Silvestre state, 'in the context of Oswald's discourse, anthropophagy is a language process by which the colonizer's word is devoured, digested and subverted' (243).

associated with the Tupi – the “first peoples” of Brazil – that the possibility of reclaiming a genuine national culture resides’ (13).

According to Philippou, two trends ran parallel in this manifesto, which reflects the ideas of *modernismo* mentioned above: a search for a firm rooting in Brazilian land, on the one hand, and, on the other, a desire to devour the foreign models, ‘taking over the enemies’ attributes and destroying their Otherness in the process, in the manner of the imagined anthropophagous ancestors’ (250). Andrade had begun to formulate this idea in his previous manifesto, *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* (1924), which was named after the country’s first ‘export product’ and which gave name to it: brazilwood (Dunn, Madureira). According to Madureira, what distinguishes *pau-brasil* from the multiple *avant-gardes* that preceded it was ‘its radical turn toward the national, for *pau-brasil* opens Modernismo’s second or nationalist phase (1924-30), the generalized search for the pleonastic originality of a “Brazilian Brazil” (27-28). Within the manifesto, Oswald claims a Brazilian ‘poetry for export’, in which a ‘synthesis of native originality and Cosmopolitan technique would be generated’ (Dunn 12). In his view, Brazil should no longer simply import and passively consume metropolitan culture; it should and would be an exporter of culture.

Breaking with the previous romantic tradition, for Oswald de Andrade there was no national ‘essence’, ‘only a dynamic and conflict-ridden process of critical assimilation, or “deglutination” of various cultural influences’ (Dunn 18). With this view, de Andrade breaks with the aforementioned romantic tradition based upon a utopian vision of the ‘true Brazilian spirit’ laying solely in its (romanticised) indigenous past. According to Cândido and Silvestre, in the context of *modernismo* and national/artistic redefinition, anthropophagy can be seen as an artistic and literary tool which contributes towards the ‘acknowledgement of Otherness insofar as it foregrounds the devouring of the Other’s culture. It represented the deglutination of European culture and its (re)appropriation and subversion’ (243). In this sense, the attitude of deglutination allowed for a denial of established hierarchical patterns, in which what was foreign (European) was usually seen as ‘original’ and what was national (Brazilian) as ‘copy’, since ‘the absorption of the foreigner would occur within the digestive process’ (*ibid* 245). Hence, Anthropophagy become the place of enunciation in which ‘the new is born: neither European nor Indian, but Latin American ready to transform readable into

“re-readable” texts, when it appropriates itself of the culture of the Other without the malaise of cultural dependence’ (*ibid* 250).

Moreover, for Wander Melo Miranda, instead of excluding the other, the anthropophagy proposes to devour ‘the time that precedes it, whether it is the falsely primordial time of Brazilian nativism, or the artificially universal time of Eurocentrism. Founding time of another sociability, which denies its denier, without seeking its annulment’ (137). Hence, *antropofagia* within the Brazilian context could be seen as the freeing of oneself (Brazil) from the tag of inferiority by determining that European culture undergoes a process of selective absorption. These are relevant and important aspects that will be returned to when I look at Rio’s Olympic’s Opening Ceremony, for the discourses of the artistic producers of the event seem to replicate this notion within the choice of theme, which was *gambiarra* (‘Brazilian way of creating something out of hardly nothing’ – Media Guide) and in the performance itself.

Returning to the modernist period, Phillippou mentions that a confidence in the future emerged as a consequence of a new confidence in the past. In this sense, ‘the Brazilian nationalist Modernist project perceived no conflict between past and future, tradition and modernity’ (262). Referring to the notion of *antropofagia*, Maria Eduarda Rocha argues that what was made manifest then in this idea is ‘a utopia, but one that distends time, creating a continuity among past, present, and future, even if fractured and necessarily transformed’ (40). Hence, within this notion, past and future are no longer antagonistic, and in similar terms Philippou concludes that Brazilian tradition, recognisable by Brazilians as their own, ‘is a Modernist product, configured with the tools of the Antropofagists’ (*ibid* 262). And this paves the ways in which post-modern Brazil relates to itself in performance. As Dunn notes, cannibalism proved to be a compelling and controversial metaphor for artists and critics of subsequent generations, alongside the articulation of cultural mixing, an obvious extension of anthropophagi:

The Vanguard energies of Brazilian Modernism waned in the 1930s and 1940s, during the nationalistic, populist, and ultimately authoritarian rule of Getulio Vargas. The free verse poetry, experimental prose, and provocative manifestoes of the 1920s gave way to realist novels and social histories oriented primarily towards the discovery and documentation of Brazilian

culture. Of particular relevance was the articulation of a *mestiço* paradigm, which extolled cultural and racial hybridity as the unified national identity (6).

I thus turn to explore the ideas of *racial democracy* and *mestiçagem* in more detail, before delving into Getulio Vargas' policies of *brasilidade*.

'Racial Democracy' and the Ideal of Identity: *Mestiçagem*

Concurrently to the artistic modernism movement, Brazilian intellectuals in academic circles were also in search of an identity that would stem from the fusion of Brazil's 'three races' and explain Brazil's complex racial and cultural plurality. From all of the Brazilian intellectuals that emerged after World War I, the most influential was Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), a sociologist from the state of Pernambuco in the northeast of Brazil, who began publishing 'his pioneering analysis of Brazilian social history' (Skidmore 103) in the early 1920s. For Freyre:

The new and original culture that we desire to be developed in Brazil would be mostly new and original for the combination and harmonization of values from varied origins – native-American, European, African, Asian – within the necessities and conditions of the American environment in general, and Brazilian in particular (167).

It was Freyre's research into this combination of varied cultural origins that facilitated the creation of the discourse that aimed to unite the country and provide Brazil with a definition of its unique national identity (Vianna). The conception of the discourse that Brazil lived a 'racial democracy' was developed by Freyre in the 1920s and was published in his 1933 book *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (The Masters and the Slaves). In Freyre's formulation,

Every Brazilian, even the light skinned fair haired one, carries about him on his soul, when not on soul and body alike, the shadow or at least the birthmark of the aborigine or the negro, in our affections, our excessive mimicry, our Catholicism which so delights the senses, our music, our gait, our speech, our cradle songs, in everything that is a sincere expression of our lives, almost all of us bear the mark of that influence (Zirin 45).

As can be noticed with his comment, for Freyre every Brazilian carries in their 'soul' the influences of not only African and Indigenous communities, but also European, via religion. All these influences made Freyre articulate an idea in which:

mestiçagem (mixing) was seen as the central characteristic of Brazilian social relations since the establishment of the colony, producing a society which he defined as the most harmoniously created, from the point-of-view of race relations, of all the Americas (Pravaz 89-90).

Freyre's vision addressed colonial hierarchies in a particular perspective – of *mestiçagem* –, which led him to create a discourse beyond the idea of a Brazilian social democracy. To him, Brazil had developed a 'racial democracy' based upon the argument that in the country, even throughout slavery, 'whites treated blacks better than was the case elsewhere, because of their relaxed attitudes about interracial sexual activity' (Levine 13). This was thought to explain why Brazil had such a diverse population demographically. Such miscegenation involved European, Indigenous and African descendants, and Freyre inferred that, since 'slavery in Brazil had been relatively benign [the country] evolved into a "racial democracy"' (Levine 12).¹³ According to Phillipou, Freyre's grand narrative 'offered an elaborate formula that served to explain the successful mixing of these elements, expected to function as levers of cultural emancipation. Freyre's scientifically packaged and optimistic ideology was furthermore more exportable than *Antropofagia* (254). Hence, his discourse was disseminated and adopted by like-minded intellectuals of the period and, until the present day, the way in which Brazilian society relates to race-matters reflects the power of this discourse of racial democracy.¹⁴

As elucidated by Pravaz, the term *mestiçagem* became the essential characteristic used to define the hybrid nature of the Brazilian population. It translates into English as 'mixture' or 'mixing' and was used in official discourse for

¹³ This sits in tension with what was explicitly stated earlier in the chapter, that the Brazilian slave trade was the most brutal in history. Such tension will be addressed further in this thesis.

¹⁴ This feature will be further analysed in Chapter 3 where this research aims to deconstruct the ideologies explicit in this section. Although recent discourses of postcolonialism and multiculturalism embrace the notion of 'hybridity' as explored by Bhabha (1994) (mentioned in the introduction of this thesis), this chapter will maintain the use of the terms 'mixture' and '*mestiçagem*' to keep consistency in this articulation and in order to provide a greater understanding of the outcomes of this discourse in the Brazilian society, addressed in the following chapters.

many years as the term that exemplified Brazil's heteroglossic culture. According to Phillipou, Freyre's foundational mythology embraced all aspects of life: 'bodily features and personal qualities, gestures and laughter, dance, music and musical instruments, festivals, food, sport, linguistic traits, eating and sleeping habits, superstitions, dress, pets, plants, colours, architectural elements, saints, national artist heroes [...] all viewed as products of a process of transculturation of African with European and native cultures (254). Finally, the subject of *mestiçagem* became the *mestiço*, a word used to refer to people with a mixed and cross-cultural background, what May Bletz would call the Brazilian 'national type' (145) as a result of this discourse.

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (originally published in 1969), Michel Foucault explains that one of the most productive ways of thinking about discourse is not as a group of signs or a stretch of text, but as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (49). Such practices will be examined in this chapter and further analysed in Chapter 3 with respect to the policies created by official discourse towards race in order to implement dominant ideologies and consider how they effectively produced the way in which Brazilians still see themselves and relate to race affairs. As an example of how this discourse produced distinctive perceptions concerning Brazilian racial politics, Peggy Lovell says:

Brazil's lack of overt racial tensions and long history of widespread miscegenation, resulting in an elaborate system of multiracial classification, make Brazil unique in comparative studies of race. These distinctive characteristics contributed to the widely held [...] view that Brazil, unlike the United States, is a 'racial democracy,' free of race-based violence, segregation and discrimination (65).

The set of ideas behind this discourse of racial democracy promoted a complete change in the Brazilian society at the beginning of the twentieth century. Relating back to Foucault's idea on discourse analysis, Linda Graham states that one must look at particular statements not so much for what they say but for what they *do* and to examine 'why it is that certain statements emerged to the exclusion of all others and what function they serve' (667). In this specific case of Brazil supposedly evolving into a racial democracy, the discourse convened in order to

define a narrative of identity for the country, in effect constituting it. As Anderson clarifies:

As with modern persons, so it is with nations. Awareness of being imbedded in secular, serial time, with all its implications of continuity, yet of 'forgetting' the experience of this continuity – product of the ruptures of the late eighteenth century – engenders the need for a narrative of 'identity' (205).

Anderson's thought is similar to Hobsbawm's idea that the concept 'nation' is seen as a narrative of continuity and justification for those in power. In Brazil, the discourse of racial democracy was not set out only to explain how the country became the 'mixture' that it was, but to provide a narrative of identity, a unifying concept for the nation, that was particular to Brazilians, *brasilidade*. As Simon Frith suggests, 'an identity is always an ideal, what we would like to be, not what we are' (*Music and Identity* 123). Hence, in the ideological realm of this Brazilian 'identity', there was a turn to the backlands, to the *mestiços* of the interior as true representatives of *brasilidade*, and it is historically related to President Getulio Vargas' administration (1930-1945). Nevertheless, as Jessé Souza specifies: 'as an ideologist, Gilberto Freyre spectacularly inverts the country's low self-esteem into national pride' (43).

It is thus clear that the beliefs and discourses behind *mestiçagem* and racial democracy were the support for the creation of this ideology of identity called *brasilidade*. Following Althusser, it is clear here how through ideology, 'men represent their real conditions of existence to themselves in an imaginary form' (37), and as Keller argues, it creates a 'coherent set of ideas brought together not for strictly intellectual purposes but, rather, in the service of some strongly held communal beliefs or values' (93). Such communal beliefs regarding *mestiçagem* and racial democracy, in the Brazilian example, could relate to Foucault's notion of mutual reinforcing discourses which, according to him, present the potential of constructing an associated field:

[...] made up of all the formulations whose status the statement in question shares, among which it takes its place without regard to linear order, with which it will fade away, or with which, on the contrary, it will be valued,

preserved, sacralized, and offered, as a possible object, to a future discourse (110–111).

Within a specific modality of power, that being state intervention, these discourses of *mestiçagem* and racial democracy offered a valued ‘possible object’, a unified identity – namely *brasilidade* – which came to be used as one of the ‘pilasters of the economical growth proposed by the New State’ (Souza 43) under Getúlio Vargas’ dictatorial regime.

I turn now to analyse how the State appropriated this previously constructed discourse about Brazilian national identity and disseminated the ideology of *brasilidade* through specific means and media. Ellen Feder clarifies that power ‘works through culture and customs, institutions and individuals. Likewise, its effects are also multiple, not simply negative or positive, but, as he [Foucault] puts it, “productive”’ (56). Therefore, illustrating Feder’s consideration on Foucault and power, the research will consider how its ‘productive effect’ relates to Althusser’s *Ideological State Apparatus* (20) particularly when operating through music and performance.

***Brasilidade* and Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945)**

Getúlio Vargas began his presidency of Brazil as head of a *coup* that became known as the ‘revolution of 1930’. Vargas’ administration had two distinct periods: ‘The Vargas Era’ (Dávila, Goldblatt, Levine, Chauí), from 1930-45; and after he was elected president in 1951 until his suicide in 1954. I will focus predominantly on the *Estado Novo* (New State) period (1937-45), during which he ruled as a civilian dictator with the assistance of the country’s military forces. According to David Goldblatt, in 1937 ‘loyal troops surrounded the Congress building and Vargas announced on the radio the establishment of the “Estado Novo”’ (58). Michael Reid suggests that the coup was greeted quietly, without resistance.

According to Reid, Vargas was a figure of many paradoxes, being ‘at once an authoritarian and a conciliator’ (79), and his era was a divider of waters between the rural and urban Brazil, which has historically fluctuated between periods of populism and authoritarianism. As Jerry Dávila states, ‘since for historians studying Brazil—and for contemporaries living in it—these two worlds remain present and

linked, Vargas still stands at a kind of symbolic centre of the Brazilian national experience' (260).

One of the main tendencies of the Vargas regime was political centralization. Reid argues that in order to justify his dictatorship, the oligarch 'resorted to a longstanding obsession among Brazilian conservative leaders: the fear of national disintegration' (83). Therefore, under the New State regime, elected state governors and city mayors were all replaced by *interventores* ('inspectors' or 'interveners') appointed and controlled from the then capital, Rio de Janeiro. According to Goldblatt, Vargas' centralized executive power was fused with a 'semi-corporatist model of society that owed much to Mussolini's early attempts to control working-class power through state-sponsored unions' (59). On the other hand, as Reid exposes, from an ideological point of view, Vargas' dictatorship was in sharp contrast to European fascism, as 'official ideology - for the first time - held up racial mixing and *mestiçagem* as the essence of Brazilian nationality' (85). Goldblatt mentions that, with this official ideology, the New State searched for expressions of *brasilidade* in an attempt to 'mobilize and shape the nation's popular cultures for nationalistic ends' (59). Such attempts were strategic ideological moves and not necessarily motivated by egalitarian motives, but primarily based upon economic reasoning. The Great Depression in the United States of America had an enormous impact on Brazil. According to Levine, between the years 1929 and 1932, the value of Brazilian exports, particularly coffee beans - the country's primary export and economic product - fell by seventy-five percent. Therefore, there was a vital need to develop internal industrialization and depend less on external markets for economic survival and growth.

As Vargas' dominant goal was to ascertain a strong, centralized state, he propagated discourses of national identity through the ideas of *mestiçagem* and *brasilidade* in order to promote an ideological sense of unity and support state integration. For Dávila, this process culminated in November 1937, when 'each of Brazil's state flags was burned at a pyre mounted at the base of a pole bearing the Brazilian flag—symbolizing the yielding of regional identities to *brasilidade*, and regional authorities to central power' (262-63). This action of burning Brazil's regional flags may illustrate David Apter's argument of how ideology functions as 'general ideas potent in [to] specific situations of conduct' (17), for as it links 'action

and fundamental belief, ideology helps to make more explicit the moral basis of action' (*ibid*).

This ideology of *brasilidade* fostered a turn towards the interior of the country, negated for centuries by the coastal population and representative of the contrasts between the 'two Brazils', as noted previously. Regarding this, Chauí says:

This same contrast resurfaces in images of the 'west' and the 'center' formulated politically during the New State present in Getúlio Vargas's 1939 speech, in which he calls upon the nation to march into the backlands: 'Let us march in unity, toward the center, guided not by the force of prejudiced doctrines, but by the predestination of our racial identity!' (122).

This notion of national cohesion instead of division – *mestiçagem* as an idea of commonality and *brasilidade* as the key term of national identity – adopted and propagated by the Vargas' government may also be seen as a totalitarian strategy to avoid dissent of the wider population and thereby consolidate power. According to Bauman,

Totalitarian ideologies were remarkable for their proclivity to condense the diffuse, pinpoint the elusive, make the uncontrollable into a target within reach and, so to speak, within bullet-range; the dispersed and ubiquitous anxiety exhaled by equally dispersed and ubiquitous threats to comprehension and to the sense of order were thereby squeezed and compressed so that they could be 'handled', and dealt with wholesale in a single, straightforward procedure (12).

According to Goldblatt, coercion was the foundation of the New State, but it relied largely on surveillance and co-option. In a speech in São Paulo in 1938, Vargas proclaimed:

The Estado Novo doesn't recognize individual rights against the community. Individuals don't have rights, they have duties. Rights belong to the community! The State, placing itself above the struggle of interests, guarantees the rights of the community, and ensures that duties to it are carried out (Reid 79).

One can perceive in Vargas' statement a clear distinction with respect to the positions that individuals, community and the State occupy within his vision of society. Returning to the idea of the 'productive power' of discourse, as he invalidated individual rights, Vargas was thus able to 'condense the diffuse' and 'make the uncontrollable into a target within reach' as he enforced the idea of unity and communal responsibilities. The function of the State, seen as the regulatory body above all individuals, was to make sure that the rights of the community of Brazil were secured.

Thus, to insure his political and ideological traits, Vargas relied on the military forces for communal 'stability' and installed political censorship on the media. The dictator even 'banned foreign-language newspapers in 1938' (Levine 8) and immigrants were forced to learn and speak Portuguese. According to Levine: 'Brazilians under the "Estado Novo" were subject to the cancellation of the protection of *habeas corpus* and to the imposition of government censorship, which extended to newspapers, magazines, radio programs, theatre, and films' (*ibid* 15). Furthermore, even schoolbooks were censored in order to promote a good image of Vargas as the most needed of Brazilian saviours. It is important, however, to stress that the literate population was the minority in the country during this period, as can be seen in Dávila's observations:

In 1946, Mário Augusto Teixeira de Freitas, the director of the Brazilian census bureau, concluded that of the centennial generation born in 1922 and raised largely during the Vargas era, only 17 percent had completed the third grade and fewer than 4 percent had concluded high school. Indeed, in 1940, only 45 percent of Brazilians between the ages of 15 and 19 even knew how to read. Fewer than one-third of individuals who identified themselves as black or racially mixed, and fewer than a third of the population in the north and northeast of Brazil were literate (268-69).

Due to the fact that Brazil had such a high level of illiteracy, and in order to spread the ideas of national identity and unity to the population *en masse*, the use of more popular media and entertainment were adopted. Samba, a popular music form, was appropriated as the national music and used as one of the centralizing political initiatives managed by the Vargas government. To disseminate the idea of *brasilidade* to the population, samba, together with the labour legislation, 'helped

to create an emotional bond between Vargas and the urban masses' (Reid 86). I will track this in more detail in the following chapter, which discusses how the experience of music addresses interior and emotional states in the listener. For now, it is important to illustrate that such an emotional bond assisted in the perpetuation of Vargas as a symbolic character, 'for supporters, he was a populist who championed the popular classes — workers, and the poor, and who was a defender of Brazilian culture and *brasilidade*', despite his opponents naming him as symbol 'of populist demagoguery, a man who interrupted and perhaps even derailed the course of Brazilian history in order to pacify the masses and perpetuate his power' (Dávila 259-60).

Both contradictory and peculiar, the Vargas administration was a defining moment in the country's history. Many theorists, artists and historians focus upon the 'Vargas Era' as an 'analytical site [to] surround issues of authoritarianism and democracy, national development and industrialization, populism and a bridge between popular classes and the elite, and finally to grasp at a supposed golden age of cinema, radio, and samba' (Dávila 259).

I now turn to analyse Vargas' cultural initiatives, particularly through his perpetuation of samba for political gain and analyse how this musical genre was (and still is) able to *perform* the ideals of unity discussed thus far. The aim of this first chapter was to foreground different discourses of racial identities and cultural production that were being negotiated at a time in which Brazil was beginning to define itself as a (modern) nation. There are differences between such discourses, for example, in the artistic realm. Arguably, *antropofagia* could be seen to be pledging for a Brazilian cultural identity coined in a more aggressive and intentional way on its incorporation of 'native' and 'foreign' cultural production. Whilst *brasilidade*, the particular way in which Brazilians 'do' things, due to its *mestiço* character, could be seen to represent a more 'causal' response to the discourse of 'racial democracy'. Nonetheless, these discourses live on in contemporary Brazilian imaginary and will be further analysed throughout the thesis. For now, I will explore how samba, as the main cultural representative of *brasilidade*, was heralded as Brazil's 'national music' and played a key role in performances of national identity, both internally and in the projection of Brazilian culture abroad.

Chapter 2. Embodying *Brasilidade*: Samba Performing a New National Identity

This chapter focuses on the appropriation of the musical genre of samba as the quintessential performance of Brazil, as an official representation and celebration of *brasilidade* and as a stimulation for a sense of communal identity amongst the population. I draw on Hobsbawm's argument that, 'because so much of what subjectively makes up the modern "nation" consists of [...] constructs and is associated with discourse, the national phenomenon cannot be adequately investigated without careful attention to the "invention of tradition"' (14), to argue here that *samba* is such an 'invented tradition' that was used as a political device by President Getúlio Vargas and his government (1930-1945) as symbol of the new national identity that he wished to promote and institutionalise within the Brazilian social consciousness. Furthermore, I discuss the performative dimensions within the musical experience of samba through processes of embodiment, which includes the active participation of the listener as a performer in the meaning-making process of music.

Music here is investigated *as* performance of national identity, as opposed to how music is used *in* performances of nationhood, which will be explored in later chapters. According to Nicholas Cook, music is a performing art, which is not just to say that we perform it; it is to say that music performs meaning' (2001). Philip Auslander argues that many things can be understood as performative constructs with 'the direct object of the verb to perform [not needing to] be something—it can also be someone, an identity rather than a text' (*Musical Personae* 101). Taking these two perspectives into account, I here argue that samba can be viewed as performing a new Brazilian 'identity', particularly when read through Thomas Turino's notion that:

The performing arts are frequently fulcrums of identity, allowing people to intimately feel themselves part of the community through the very act of participating together in performance. Music and dance are key to identity formation because they are often public presentations of the deepest feelings and qualities that make a group unique (2).

However, these presentations of 'deepest feelings' are contextually generated. Reading music production through a Marxist frame, Simon Frith notes that the difficulty in analysing culture is because it is often difficult to show how 'the base produced this superstructure, to explain why an idea or experience takes on this artistic or aesthetic form, and not another, equally "reflective" or "representative" of its conditions of production' (*Music and Identity* 109). Therefore, in an attempt to analyse samba as a key symbol of the new Brazilian identity, I begin by historically positioning its ascension from a marginalized culture, which was 'subject to official repression' (Dunn 25), to a dominant practice under state control, and finally to something 'consecrated as the most exemplary musical expression of the nation' (*ibid*).

As Turino argues, belonging to a nation is a subjective condition that is based on national sentiment, whereas belonging to a state is an objective condition. He goes on to explain that, 'when the cultural formation at the state level is particularly profound and comprises many shared habits among most citizens, it is a national-level formation' (117). Therefore, tracing samba's historical pathway from a marginal practice to a general product of consumption sponsored by the state may provide tools for understanding how it became a national-level cultural formation, an 'invented tradition' (Hobsbawm) that still holds its status as a symbol of *brasilidade* and is thus able to *perform* Brazilian national identity both for Brazil and to the world, as will be seen in the following chapters of this thesis.

Many authors (e.g. Dunn, Vianna) argue that samba's transformation into the quintessential music of Brazil was a culmination of a gradual process of encounters among various social groups that collectively invented the Brazilian identity and popular culture. Hence, this process depended largely on 'transcultural mediators,' including musicians, intellectuals, and politicians of diverse social origins. If, as Friese details, 'identity' entails references to the 'historically shifting relations of singular human beings to others, to concepts of belonging and a common and shared (symbolic) world, its intrinsic values and languages' (298), then this shared Brazilian 'world' had Samba as 'its prime symbol of cultural nationalism' (Vianna xiii). It is not exceptional for a common sense of belonging to emerge from, or indeed be signified by popular cultural music forms. Take for example the influential European tradition forwarded by Johann Gottfried von Herder, who, when in search of a 'national sentiment' in eighteenth-century Germany, advanced

'a Romantic belief in the importance of the cultural traditions of the common people' (Gounaridou 6). According to Wilmer, Herder believed in national uniqueness and a *Volksgeist* (spirit of the people) that encouraged 'all nations to express themselves in their own individual ways' (63). Within this search for European national distinctiveness there was a turn to the rural folk culture, particularly folk music, myths, and local histories of 'the people'. Wilmer states that

The ideas of Herder impelled intellectuals in countries throughout Europe to search for the unique aspects of cultural expression amongst their own peoples that would testify to separate and distinct identities. In seeking to formulate their own notion of what tied their people together and made them unique, cultural nationalists reinvented the past to some extent, often writing ancient national histories that came to justify the creation of separate nation-states (63).

When comparing to the Brazilian example, this idea of a 'reinvention of the past' can also be seen in the notion of 'racial democracy', and the ways in which it was used to establish a sense of Brazil's 'unique' identity (*brasilidade*) as an outcome of this discourse. However, unlike the Europeans' search into the past and into 'ancient national histories', Brazilian intellectuals (particularly Freyre), influenced by Brazil's 'modernist' movement, were searching for *new* cultural expressions, contemporary musical examples that would speak to a renewed sense of national self-esteem, which would transform the 'whitening ideal' from a scientific racism into a belief in 'racial integration'. Freyre found in samba the perfect fit for Brazil to express itself 'in its own individual way'.

Samba as Symbol of *Brasilidade*

My intention in this chapter is not to delve into the specifics of the format of samba (for that see Browning, Hertzman, Vianna), but to investigate how it came to *perform* the idea of 'Brazil'. However, as frame of reference and context, I will begin by explaining some features of this musical and dance genre before exploring how it came to be considered the 'prime symbol of cultural nationalism', as stated by Hermano Vianna.

Samba emerged from the poorest neighbourhoods surrounding Rio de Janeiro at the turn of the twentieth century. Several authors (Bastos, Hertzman,

Pravaz, Vianna) argue that because of the country's internal migration process there is a debate on the competing claims made by Bahians (people that came from the state of Bahia) and *Cariocas* (people born in Rio de Janeiro) over who invented the musical style. Rafael Bastos explains:

With the abolition of slavery in 1888, the migration of African-Bahians to Rio de Janeiro became especially marked, accentuating a trend that had begun in the first half of the nineteenth century. In Rio, these migrants concentrated around the wharf district and in Cidade Nova, a working-class neighbourhood that encompassed the mythic Praça Onze, constituting what came to be known as 'Pequena África' (Little Africa), a communal nucleus for shaping black identity, but it also served as a true laboratory of musical creation (72).

What is generally acknowledged is that samba was created by African Brazilians, former-slaves, and was comprised of multiple musical influences. Following John Shepherd's statement that, 'musical life has always been characterized by complex patterns of cross-fertilization and cultural hybridity, and that notions of organic rootedness and "authenticity" are largely mythical' (75), samba can be seen to have this same hybridity, which usefully offers a sense of dual identity:

On the one hand, it is commonly thought of as a product of Afro-Brazilian culture, with its roots in percussion-based polyrhythms such as *batuque* and *batucada*. On the other, it has been identified as a hybrid (mixed) form, owing as much to *Candomblé* as to more Europeanized dances such as the *maxixe* and its precursor, the *lundu* (Pravaz 83).

Batucada (or *batuque*), as mentioned by Pravaz, is the percussion rhythm of samba and is used in phrases in everyday life expressions: *vamos fazer uma batucada* (let's make a *batucada*), meaning, 'let's play music'. It is important to emphasise that samba is historically linked with *Candomblé*, an African Brazilian religion, and according to Pravaz, 'it was in the *terreiros*, the religious spaces established by migrant ex-slaves from Bahia at the turn of the twentieth century, that samba as we know it today took shape' (83). I will return to the idea of *terreiros* later in this thesis, because this 'space' in which African Brazilian rites and cults are celebrated and performed are present in both *Baila Brazil* and *Caliban* case-studies.

It is crucial to highlight that samba is not only considered to be a musical genre, but is also a dance, and is directly linked to Brazilian carnival. The dance of samba was intrinsically created with and through the rhythm of the music and both musical and dance forms developed simultaneously as a combination of various influences. In relation to the development of the dance and music genre, Waldenyr Caldas explains its hybrid style:

It is a musical syncretism in which, originally, are present the European polca, which provided its initial movements, the *habanera*, influencing the rhythm, the *lundu* and *batuque*, with the syncope and choreography, and the Brazilian 'way of singing and playing' (28).

This Brazilian 'way' of singing and playing is further explained by Goldblatt, who declares about samba: 'it took *choro's* mix of influences [European polkas and waltzes mixed with dances of regional variants from Bahia], emphasized African rhythms, and added call-and-response singing and some European instrumentation' (76). In addition to these influences, Cristina Rosa explores intensively the always present feature of *ginga* (swaying of the hips) in samba dance and of performances of *brasilidade*. In her studies into this particular bodily movement, she identifies *ginga* as 'a key element within a movement system anchored in Africanist aesthetic principles [in which] polycentrism and polyrhythm are two of them' (3). These polycentric and polyrhythmic characteristics can be identified in samba through the swaying of the hips and shuffling of the feet of the dancer. Given this hybrid practice of various influences and the intrinsic link of both music and bodily movement, it is important to stress that when I speak of samba in this chapter, I am referring to the entire 'experience' of samba, of both musical genre and dance form as one. I will now turn to explore its ascension from marginal culture to prime representation of *brasilidade*.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, this rich and varied musical genre was considered a marginal cultural practice, played solely in the *favelas* and 'violently repressed by the police' (Vianna 2) prior to Vargas' administration, when the state's mission turned to finding 'true' expressions of *brasilidade* and its associated ideological perspectives. Significantly, as Pravaz argues, the cultural sector 'was invested with the task of homogenizing the nation through the appropriation of regional symbols [and] Samba in particular fit the bill very well' (87). When Gilberto Freyre, the creator of the discourse of Racial Democracy, and

a group of Rio's intellectuals encountered samba players in the *favelas* surrounding central Rio de Janeiro, the musical form was propelled into being the prime representative of Brazilian culture.

According to Vianna, 'Freyre called music "the most Brazilian of arts" (14), he also considered, 'the real Brazil [to be] personified by black musicians' (9). Thus, it was in this encounter that 'the connection between syncopated (and racialized) rhythms and national identity' was first observed and which propelled samba 'to the status of Brazil's national music in the 1930s and 40s' (Moehn 188). Therefore, one could argue that the invention of such 'national tradition' occurred when the top down intellectuals encountered bottom up popular/marginal cultures, and the former saw a way of incorporating and controlling the latter group.

Thinking in terms of samba as a symbolic 'invented tradition', it is useful to address Marcello Keller's argument that music has a 'mysterious power [...] to reflect or challenge social order or, even when not intended to do so, to collect symbolic meaning and functions that easily escape the intentions of its makers' (91). Due to its hybrid form and strong African Brazilian influence, such intellectuals saw in samba the perfect representation of *mestiçagem* (Vianna). This instance demonstrates Pierre Bourdieu's conception of symbols as potential 'instruments par excellence of social integration' (78). Bourdieu further elaborates that:

[...] as instruments of knowledge and communication, they [symbols] make possible the consensus on the sense of the social world which makes a fundamental contribution toward reproducing the social order; 'logical' integration is the precondition of 'moral' integration (*ibid*).

For Souza, there is no better way for one to comprehend the dimension and efficacy of the notion of *brasilidade* than by looking into samba, as the genre became a 'privileged field for the exercise of this form of auto-interpretation' (45). An example of this is the song *Não quero saber mais dela* (I don't want her anymore 1928), composed by Sinhô, one of the most important representatives of samba of the Vargas era. Lucia Oliveira argues that the song:

[...] deals exactly with the encounter of the Portuguese man with the *mulata* [woman of mixed ascendance]. Even wanting to escape its destiny [the song] is dealing with the foundational myth of Brazilian society and culture. The Portuguese that meets with the indigenous and/or African woman and, from

this illegitimate, sinful encounter, the Brazilian man is born: *mestiço*/bastard (98).

This identification of the Brazilian man with the *mestiço* character also operates in gendered terms, which I will explore later in this thesis. For now, the general idea of *mestiçagem* can be related to Lois Althusser's approach to ideology, in which he sees ideology as first creating and then imposing a sense of 'obviousness' (46), which, without appearing to do so, creates a sense of 'ideological recognition' (*ibid*) within those who share or are compelled to share a specific ideology. Indeed, as Keller asserts, 'the extraordinary importance attributed to music in the course of history has much more to do with its uncanny potential to attract, catch, and collect symbolic meanings [and which] quite a few of such "meanings" fall into a category we might well indicate with the adjective "ideological"' (93). The notion of ideological recognition will be further explored in the conversation on samba and performativity later in this chapter, in particular with regards to the performativity of how this recognition may occur.

As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, Vargas' regime appropriated the idea of samba as symbol of *brasilidade* for political and economic reasons, particularly to spread nationalistic sentiment. The mass media policy planned by Vargas' staff included 'the radio, the singers and the auditorium programs' (Caldas 41), including cinema and theatre. The emerging technologies of the interwar period (1919-1938), particularly the growing availability of radio and sound recordings, invested music with the possibility of creating a 'national publicity' (Bohlman 52). Developing this idea, Philip Bohlman states that: 'national publics experience the nation in even more complex ways than the populations that gather at specific moments to perform the nation' (*ibid*).¹⁵ The Brazilian middle class and elite, who needed to buy into the ideologies behind *mestiçagem* and of *brasilidade* as the nation's unique, superior identity, began to listen to samba and consume the new musical form. It can be considered, therefore, that Vargas positioned himself as the bridge between social classes by deploying samba in this way, for his use of media not only allowed the elite to consume his ideologies, it was also used to control lower, working classes, comprised as a majority by labour forces. Frith

¹⁵ This notion of 'performing the nation' at specific moments will be further elaborated upon with additional discussion occurring within the conclusion and the 'national publicity' of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games as an attempt to 'selling' a national image.

states that although different sorts of musical activity may produce different sorts of musical identity, the way music works 'to form identities is the same. The distinction between high and low culture, in other words, describes not something caused by different tastes, but is an effect of different social activities' (*Music and Identity* 112). Relating to the Brazilian case, even though the people's social activities were distinct, a symbolic integration between the classes was actively promoted by state discourse and propagated through new media.

After the creation of the New State, the government would only allow the broadcasting of samba songs with lyrics that promoted nationalist interests: songs that exalted the country, its nature and its people. These songs were called *samba-exaltação* (exaltation sambas) and, according to the 'Dictionary of Brazilian Popular music' (sponsored by the national government),¹⁶ they were 'a declaration of love for the country, with praiseworthy verses about the people, Brazilian landscapes and traditions.' In fact, state censorship was applied to any song that challenged the nationalist ideal. According to Goldblatt, music was a special concern of the governmental control and 'no sheet music could be published or released without its censors having paid careful attention to their lyrical content' (60). According to Caldas, this extended to Carnival and the samba schools, which were forced to create songs and allegories inspired 'in patriotic thematic, without hurting the nationalistic precepts imposed by the policy of the *Estado Novo*. In other words, there could only be exaltation; criticism, never' (42).

As José Tinhorão ironically observes, samba transformed from a product of the margins into a product of national consumerism, sold in the form of long players and utilised as the basis of all radio programming, that dominated the market during the entire Vargas's regime 'in perfect coincidence with the nationalist political economy of incentive to Brazilian production and amplification of internal market' (299). Pravaz states that samba artists were encouraged to participate in the populist project by producing these 'nationalistic eulogies' (88), in which the lyrics 'formulated fables of Brazil as a happy people, living in a tropical paradise, and happily miscegenated, a concept usually expressed around the idea of the *mulata* or the 'brown' character of the Brazilian people' (88). Thus, the population would verbally and physically embrace and perform the dominant ideological

¹⁶ Available at: dicionariompb.com.br/ary-barroso/dadosartisticos

construction and conception of twentieth century Brazil. The significance of these 'exaltation sambas' in Brazil's musical history is noteworthy because they are still present in contemporary representations of the nation; in both *Baila Brazil* (chapter 3) and in the Olympics Opening Ceremony, samba songs of this genre appear centre-stage, and in *Caliban* (chapter 4) the role of music is overtly critiqued in approaches to decolonising Brazil.

Frith articulates that 'the issue is not how a particular piece of music or a performance reflects the people, but how it produces them, how it creates and constructs an experience [...] that we can only make sense of by taking on both a subjective and a collective identity' (*Music and Identity* 109). This perception of taking into account 'both a subjective and collective identity' in relation to music will be further analysed in Chapter 3 when the research focuses on the artists of *Balé de Rua* and their personal relationships with their national identity. However, here I want to emphasize how Frith's idea in relation to music can be associated with Foucault's argument that discourses must be seen as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (49), an idea I will develop further later in this chapter. But first, I want to consider how samba, as the national 'product' was formulated to perform Brazil 'outwardly', to foreign audiences during Vargas' regime period.

Samba Performing Brazil to the World

As with other public organisations, Rio's carnival and samba schools were subjected to the government's wider politics of cultural regulation. This was done both to perform the nationalistic ideas set by the state, and with the intention of promoting the country to foreign investors. This meant that, under Vargas' New State, the parades would be a more regimented version of carnival's street samba, and the samba schools 'were required to toe the patriotic line [and] the theme had to be tame enough that the regime could use a sanitized carnival as one of its main attractions to foreign tourists' (Goldblatt 73). Therefore, as Goldblatt stresses, the state's attitude towards carnival and samba was double-edged: 'on the one hand it welcomed them as powerful examples of a distinct Brazilian culture [...] on the other hand they were a zone of danger, immorality and potential disorder that

required co-option and control' (73).¹⁷ Vargas thus was aware of carnival culture's potential as a space for disruption and therefore he sought to 'control' such public manifestations in order to disseminate his particular version of a distinct Brazilian culture to the 'world'. This suggests that this internal/external propaganda of the country was mediated by such a powerful discourse that even carnival, historically marked as a space of subversion, was being co-opted. One could argue that it was thus Vargas' *ideal* version of carnival being performed in the parades.

The aspiration of 'selling' the country to foreign markets was also one of the goals of the 'mass politics' of Vargas' government. In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the President of the United States of America enacted the 'Good Neighbour Policy' in order to facilitate economic exchange between the USA and Latin American countries. This policy operated until 1945 and the end of World War II. Vargas recognised in such trade the prospect to export what he saw as typical Brazilian culture and music. One of the most outstanding (and controversial) Brazilian samba performers of the day to represent Brazilian culture abroad was Carmen Miranda (1909-1955) (see Bishop-Sanchez 2016, Dunn, McCann, Shaw). Despite being born in Portugal, even today her image feeds into the national imaginary of Brazilian identity. As a famous radio-actress and singer in Brazil during the 1930s, Miranda participated in numerous Hollywood productions during the 1940s. According to Dunn, even though she was not the first Brazilian entertainer to perform abroad and gain international recognition, she was the first to create a lasting impression. She eventually became the highest paid woman in Hollywood in the 1940s 'with her dynamic performance style, flamboyant gestural vocabulary, and extravagant sartorial accoutrements' (Dunn 28).

What is interesting to observe in Miranda's performance is the double-edged racial, gendered and national 'identities' she displayed both internally and in foreign terrains. Within the country, Carmen Miranda, who was a white performer, popularized the samba music of lower-classes, people of colour. At the beginning of her career, Miranda even performed 'blackfaced' (Bishop-Sanchez, Shaw) on Rio de Janeiro's stages, incorporating the image and style of the *baianas*, who are 'afro-Brazilian market women of Salvador' (Dunn 28). According to Bishop-Sanchez, when she went to perform in the United States, what in Brazil signified her national

¹⁷ Additional conversations related to carnival as a 'selling point' of Brazilian culture will weave throughout the chapters to come.

'transracial crossing' became a signifier that was 'interpreted no longer as a sign of Afro-Brazilianness but as one of exotic otherness ripe for export' (69). Her style, with 'the turbans, the tutti-frutti headgear the jangling bracelets, were camp stylisations of attire used by *baianas*' (Dunn 28) within the international imaginary, reinforced a parodic text of *latinidade*, which was in accordance to the Good Neighbour policy and Hollywood's homogenizing approach to Latin America (Shaw). Bryan McCann argues that in that Hollywood context, 'Miranda testified to her Brazilianness with references to her affinity for samba and an entirely fictive Afro-Brazilian ancestry' (148), but the role she was playing was ambiguous: 'that of the defiant nationalist *sambista*, which she had learned back in Brazil, or that of the exotic and flighty Latin beauty, which she had perfected in Hollywood?' (*ibid*). I return to this idea in Chapter 4, as the performance *Caliban* visibly criticizes the notion of 'otherness' in Carmen Miranda's performance and the way Brazil was 'exported' via samba and carnival abroad.

However one sees Miranda, it is important to note that she accompanied Vargas on his 1935 trip to Argentina and Uruguay along with her band, *Banho da Lua*, to 'reinforce empathy for the president's smile' (Tinhorão 300). This suggests that Vargas understood the influence that music and popular figures have to foster a sense of identification and empathy, thus, potentially allowing him to create an 'emotional bond' with the public internally while 'selling' the country to a foreign public in an international capacity. The degree of Vargas' control over the professional affairs of Brazilian artists to enforce his regime's nationalist doctrine both at home and abroad is highlighted by Tinhorão who reports that in 1939 Vargas recommended that Miranda should not accept the invitation of Lee Shubert, one of Broadway's entrepreneurs, if she were unable to include the musicians that accompanied her to her show. This example further illustrates Vargas' awareness of the power of performative forms in disseminating ideology.

Implications of the State-control of Samba

In the internal market, samba groups were taking the opportunity to sell their product. In 1929, the samba group of composer Sinhô was named *Gente do Morro* (People from the Hills) with an 'indication of the commercial purpose of "selling" the music of the lower classes of Rio de Janeiro because of its

“picturesque” side’ (Tinhorão 296).¹⁸ However, it is important to stress that, even though there was a discourse of social integration between classes on an official, governmental level, in practice there were not many socio-economic opportunities for the less-privileged amongst the population. Furthermore, this discourse of symbolic integration discussed thus far, in actuality concealed repression. Pravez explains that in 1930s Brazil, ““the people” became the central category in the language of *Getulismo*, creating an identity between state and nation through a rhetoric expressed in printed and oral media’ (88). At the same time, however:

[...] for the urban poor who performed the samba, embracing the state’s paternalism and participating in the production of ‘acceptable’ cultural forms was a question of social survival, one of the only available ways of avoiding police repression and obtaining cultural legitimacy (*ibid*).

Caldas explains that Brazilian popular music and the authoritarian politics of the New State ‘walked hand in hand’ (41), and that police repression was implacable, citing that, ‘in the name of the greatness of Brazil, of “austerity” and “honour”, the unemployed, the sub employed were physically and morally repressed’ (*ibid*). Goldblatt claims that even though the New State may have engaged with popular culture and publicly celebrated it, some of the regime’s most senior functionaries, with the elite’s ‘conservative heart’ (72), were not entirely satisfied with its contents and meanings. He exemplifies this mood with the declaration of an unnamed civil servant of the time stating regarding samba: ‘We recognise that all the rude illiterate louts who live in our cities are frequently linked to civilization through music’ (72).

These contradictions and disjunctions between the discourse of the nation and its social reality were placed in this conversation to expose the paradoxes inherent in the processes of establishing a common identity in Brazil, and such frictions will be further explored in the following chapters. However, here I am demonstrating how music has the capability to define and *perform* identity in a concrete way and thus has the ability to perpetuate specific ideologies through the body, and thereby establish a culture that still lives on in Brazilian society; as Judith Becker notes, ‘culture can be understood as a supra-individual biological

¹⁸ This practice of showing the ‘picturesque’ side of the hills of Rio will be referred to in the conclusion when the research explores how some cultures of Rio’s poorest neighbourhoods are shown as ‘exotic’ sites for foreigners.

phenomenon – a transgenerational history of social interactions that become embodied in the individual and transmitted through future actions’ (154).

Listening to Samba: Embodied Practice in Repetition

According to Becker, emotional responses to music do not occur spontaneously, they ‘take place within complex systems of thought and behaviour concerning what music means, what it is for, [and] how it is to be perceived’ (137). Hence, I will now turn to consider how the ways in which people experience and embody music could explain why samba effectively helped shape, establish and promote *brasilidade* in an enduring manner, beyond the Vargas’ period and become representative of the quintessential national ‘culture’. In relation to this, Becker explains how embodied performance, which from a phenomenological perspective is seen as ‘pre-objective’, or ‘pre-conscious’, becomes ‘culture’:

This embodied understanding, including dispositions in the habitus, is tacit knowledge and hence one can only be subsidiarily aware of it; this accounts for why so much of the habitus is preconscious and unable to be reflected on or modified. This conservatism leads to the practices generated by the dispositions of the habitus being transmitted from generation to generation, in other words they are potentially cultural practices [...] These practices may be verbal or non-verbal, but they must be communicative in the sense that they occur as part of ongoing histories of social structural coupling and contribute to the viability of continued coupling... Culture, then, consists of the things people do to communicate in ongoing transgenerational histories of social interaction (154).

Samba’s ‘transgenerational history of social interaction’ is complex, for as Vianna observes, ‘to the outsider, samba and carnival seem to showcase Brazil’s African heritage. Within Brazil, however, they stand for mixture – *mestiçagem*, racial and cultural mixture’ (xiii). Therefore, in order to fully grasp how this specific musical genre assisted in the creation of an imagined national identity and the perpetuation of a specific discourse, it is important for this work to articulate the performative qualities inherent in the musical experience, for as Cristopher Small

explains: 'There can be no music apart from performance, whether it's live or on record' (1995).

First, it is important to establish that the experience of music involves the encounter of all participants of a musical performance – composer, musicians, audience and technicians. Small terms this holistic experience of sharing music 'musicking' (1995). I am extending this understanding of musical performance whether on stage, via the radio or in recordings to include the notion of embodiment – which incorporates the active role of the listener, as a performer, in the process of 'musicking' – as one of the key elements involved in the perpetuation of samba and the ideologies underlying its practice. As Downey highlights in his phenomenological discussion of music, Thomas Clifton characterized the perception of music as a "'movement of the body'", pointing out [that] the listener must participate in the realization of music' (504), thereby stressing further the importance of the listener's active role in the 'musicking' process.

Focusing on the encounter between music and audience (listener) opens the possibility to understand what music means in specific contexts, because of the participants, and in particular audience members. Jason Toynbee, Becker and Frith have argued that the making of meaning in music is located in the relationship established between listeners and musical events. As Toynbee explains, like any other symbolic system music is fashioned by those who design it, however 'the making of meaning remains incomplete until [...] apprehended by an audience' (103). Therefore, the listener's role is crucial in the 'meaning making' process. In Brazil, as has been discussed by Vianna, the musical genre of samba stands for cultural mixture and represents what it means to be 'Brazilian'; however, as this research will argue, such meaning could only be established because of acts of listening (and related performances) by the Brazilian population. As Frith states, "'listening" itself is a performance: to understand how musical pleasure, meaning and evaluation work, we have to understand how, as listeners, we perform the music for ourselves' (*Performing Rites* 203-4). This chapter is arguing that, because it is embodied, music meaning may not only be internalised through listening, but it may also be externalised through the listener's performance/s, through repetitions of the 'movements of the body', as hearers perceive and realize the music for and (literally) within themselves.

Extending this idea, Frith explains that since music making and music listening are both bodily matters, musical pleasure is experienced directly in the body, for 'music gives us a real experience of what the ideal could be' (*Music and Identity* 123). This research is proposing that such 'movements of the body' through the performance of listening is so influential that, in the Brazilian case, it assisted in the production and reproduction of the state's ideal of a reality of unity through the processes of active audience participation and repetition, in what Richard Schechner defines as 'restored behavior' (34). As he outlines, 'restored behavior' is 'the key process of every kind of performing, in everyday life, in healing, in ritual, in play, and in the arts [...] restored behavior is "me behaving as if I were someone else", or "as I am told to do" or "as I have learned"' (*ibid*). Such 'twice behaved behaviors' are performed actions that 'people train and rehearse for' (34). How such training takes place will be the key aspect for the rest of this chapter.

Listening involves being 'taught' through social and cultural experience 'how' to listen, which varies depending on the contextual environment in which one is located. During Vargas' government, it was through years of applying censorship to any song that would challenge the nationalistic ideals and through rigorous repetition of particular kinds of samba in carnivals, radio programmes and recordings that such 'teaching' occurred. As Becker notes, modes of listening, more than modes of looking, implicate 'notions of personhood and identity' (137). Becker argues that this is because listening addresses interiors, providing access to 'what is hidden from sight' (*ibid*). Marcus Cheng Tan particularises this process, noting that even while music is internalised through listening, an 'interior auditory experience is [also] a cultural phenomenon' (41), for the perception of music is neither 'acultural nor ahistorical' (*ibid*). Listening to music is therefore both an interior and exterior experience, it allows for the internalisation of bodily senses or feelings – in response to the lyrics or to the rhythms of the music – whilst at the same time being socially coded. As Nicholas Cook notes, understanding music as performance 'means to see it as an irreducibly social phenomenon, even when only a single individual is involved' (14).¹⁹ The consequences of this learning to listen from a specific cultural perspective results in one determining 'what sounds right'

¹⁹ There is thus a complex reciprocal process over time through which forms a dialogue with cultural dominance and individual and collective state before becoming dominant themselves.

(Frith, *Performing Rites* 110), through what Greg Downey refers to as a socially and culturally reinforced bodily response:

Practitioners perceive music [...] not merely through a layer of cognitive categories and symbolic associations, but with a trained and responsive body, through habits copied from others and socially reinforced, and by means of their own musical skills, arduously acquired and actively engaged in listening (490).

Downey extends this notion, citing that 'cultural patterns of embodiment, acquired through social interaction, ensure that the body trained to hear is a socialized, acculturated body' (501). Thus, a body that is aware of the culture in which it exists, is familiar with the traits of that culture and can acknowledge what it is that it hears. This relates to Nicola Dibben's argument that listeners make associative links between musical elements of any given piece with the wider repertoire of music with which they are familiar:

Where the immediate information from the perceptual source (e.g., sound) is insufficient, the listener searches for additional information from the social and cultural environment: by observing the behaviour of others, by discussions with others, and by exploring the music through the discourse and other information that surrounds it (202).

In the Brazilian case, even though the rhythms of samba were originally related to particular cultures and 'marginal' communities, they were 'taught' to and assimilated by the dominant 'other'. I argue that this happened due to the fact that firstly, the musical genre was associated with an ideological discourse that most people could, or wanted to identify with, namely *brasilidade*; and secondly, through years of continuous exposure to the music, repetitive listening. The result of this process could be seen as an auto-interpretation, in which there is an automatic response to the music, which provides the potential for a 'kinaesthetic awareness that characterizes the [appropriate] participatory enactments' (Roach 'Culture' 48).

This automatic response to the music with recurrent acts of listening creates the potential for the establishment of social habits. Following C. S. Peirce, Turino states that habit is a 'tendency toward the repetition of any particular behavior, thought, or reaction in similar circumstances or in reaction to similar stimuli in the present and future based on such repetitions in the past' (95).

Furthermore, appropriating Bourdieu's theory on *habitus*, Becker explains: '*Habitus* is an embodied pattern of action and reaction, in which we are not fully conscious of why we do what we do; not totally determined, but a tendency to behave in a certain way' (138). Both of these ideas emphasize the impact and effects of the repetition of embodied behaviour through the performance of listening. Therefore, not only does the listener enable the music to 'perform' through the act of listening, the music can itself enable the listener to 'perform' its meanings through certain habits of embodiment and repetition for, as Becker acknowledges:

A habitus of listening suggests, not a necessity or a rule, but an inclination, a disposition to listen with a particular kind of focus, to expect to experience particular kinds of emotion, to move with certain stylized gestures, and to interpret the meaning of the sounds and one's emotional responses to the musical event in somewhat predictable ways (137).

When considering how embodied practice may be involved in establishing a national subject through repetition, I return to the significance of samba being both a music and dance form, and how both genres are entwined in these processes. Frith argues that dance is an ideological way of listening, a form of 'enhanced listening' (*Performing Rites* 223) and therefore 'to dance to music is not just to move to it but to say something about it' (224). This association of samba dance and music is specifically enhanced during carnival in Brazil. As Becker argues, musical listening may offer the opportunity of experiencing 'relief from one's own presentation of everyday self [after Goffman] by trying on another self-presentation' (142), which can be particularly witnessed during festivities such as carnival. During such festivities the element of fantasy is key, especially when it comes to intercultural engagement, for it allows the imagining of the self as the / an other. J Lowel Lewis elaborates on this point:

Special events like carnival intensify embodied reflection on the distinction between reality and fantasy, and so they are crucial in the constitution of that division [...] fantasy versus reality is not just a conceptual opposition alone but it arises from fully embodied experiences that seem to reach and even surpass the limits of consciousness itself (554).

In this statement, Lewis makes reference to the carnival and *carnavalesque* of Mikhail Bakhtin, in which social reality is inverted for a liminal period.²⁰ During carnival, as Caldas states, the well-known music of samba is heard even more frequently on the radio (40), with lyrics remembered from previous carnivals relating to what Joseph Roach deems kinaesthetic awareness: 'Knowledge of such memories comes more readily to the observant-participant, who has danced the dance or joined the procession, than it does to the reader' ('Culture' 48). In these festivities, a greater sense of embodied community is created with a celebratory tone, a euphoric atmosphere, of people from diverse backgrounds dancing and singing together to the same music and lyrics, thereby acknowledging and perpetuating the music while at the same time being united as a community by it. This can be seen to relate to a state of *communitas* in which people 'experience a sense of group solidarity which temporarily transcends [...] the everyday structures and hierarchies of social experience' (Mangan 159). To Becker, this sense of *communitas* in a euphoric atmosphere could be seen as 'in part the simple result of musical arousal. We tend to feel better when we are musically aroused and excited [...] Music can be a catalyst for a changing state of consciousness' (145).

However, Frith extends the affect of music communally by suggesting that popular music 'must be understood not to represent values but to embody them' (*Music and Identity* 117). In the Brazilian example, the values being embodied within such a group performance during Vargas' regime were of unity and community, uniting the European, former slaves and indigenous peoples beyond discourse through unified *communitas* of music and movement. According to Schechner, it is within this ritual of 'comradery', that people 'feel at one with their comrades; personal and social differences are set aside. People are uplifted, swept away, taken over' (70). Turino argues that the shared experience of being together in a musical performance has the capability of producing a sense of 'sameness' within a group:

Within the bounded and concentrated frame of musical performance that sameness is all that matters, and for those moments when the performance is focused and in sync, that deep identification is felt as total. This experience is akin to what anthropologist Victor Turner (1969) calls *communitas*, a

²⁰ Theories on carnival and the carnivalesque will be discussed with more detail in subsequent chapters 3 and 4.

possible collective state achieved through rituals where all personal differences of class, status, age, gender, and other personal distinctions are stripped away allowing people to temporarily merge through their basic humanity (18).

If we accept Althusser's notion of ideology, where 'men (sic) represent their real conditions of existence to themselves in an imaginary form' (37) in order to shape a sense of unity, community and a cohesive national identity, then the carnival atmosphere, in which samba is performed, could operate as the vehicle of unity within, as an imagined ideological space, formed through a communal listening, so that the embodiment of the music 'creates not only many different levels but its own level of social reality' (Da Matta 62): a reality of imagined unity. This argument suggests that the music and dancing of samba enables the listener to acknowledge, 'perform' and associate with the idea of national identity as 'music constructs our sense of identity through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives' (Frith, *Music and Identity* 124).

In her discussion of gender identity as a performative entity, Judith Butler argues that 'Gender [Identity] reality is performative, which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed' (161). If one re-appropriates her theories from gender to a broader consideration of identity, and specifically to *brasilidade* in this case, listening to (and thereby performing) samba could be seen as 'certain kinds of acts [that] are usually interpreted as expressive of [an identity]' (*ibid*). According to Butler, 'these kinds of acts either conform to an expected [identity] or contest that expectation in some way. In the case of samba, the repeated traits – such as rhythm, lyrics, stylized bodily movements, etc. – that are perceived and recognized within the listening/performing process constitute the construction of 'samba', and the perpetuation of such recognition embeds the qualities of what samba 'means' within the social consciousness of the group. Recognition is therefore passed through the framework of the ideological perspective to produce an acknowledgement of meaning, which in turn needs to be 'named'; another performative element to which I shall come momentarily.

Once this 'ideological recognition' (Althusser 46), discussed previously in relation to auto-interpretation, has been adopted, consciously or unconsciously, the sense of 'obviousness' (*ibid*) creates an immediate association with and

recognition of the music and that with which it is associated. Extending this, Keller asserts that music in particular can prompt an 'obvious' response from the listener through non-semantics:

The non-semantic art of music, perceived even when not consciously listened to, capable of generating spatial sensations, sometimes visual ones, brought about by collaborative efforts [...] is especially apt to offer a comfortable home to symbolic and ideological imports (95).

It is here that one could apply Schechner's notion of 'restored behavior' (34): through social habits of listening, samba as *brasilidade* is identified and recognized, thus seen as 'obvious'. One can therefore observe that the perception of samba by the Brazilian population has been developed through symbolic associations of the lyrics with the ideological frameworks in operation, through habits of embodied community in festivities and carnivals and through repeated listening via radio and recordings.

It is consequently important to stress the essential role that the radio and recordings played in the establishment of this social phenomenon of samba and its role in creating a sense of Brazilian communal identity. In *Liveness* (1999), Auslander discusses and challenges the perceived relationship between 'live' performances and 'mediatised' performances, which he defines as a 'performance that is circulated on television, as audio or video recordings, and in other forms based in technologies of reproduction' (4), such as those fundamental to Vargas' regime. Auslander goes on to argue that recordings should be legitimate objects for performance analysis for, 'regardless of the ontological status of recorded music, its phenomenological status for listeners is that of a performance unfolding at the time and in the place of the listening' (Auslander *Performance and Popular Music* 5). According to Mark Frontier, 'Phenomenology's primary concern is with the engagement in lived experience between the individual consciousness and reality, which manifests itself not as a series of linguistic signs but as sensory and mental phenomena' (41). This engagement between individual consciousness and reality can then be seen to happen at the moment of listening. If, as I have previously argued, the performance, and meaning making process, of recorded music happens in the encounter between music and listener, it is also true that in the process of listening, the listener 'shares' both time and space with the music. Auslander's observation relates to Frith's remark that:

I listen to records in the full knowledge that what I hear is something that never existed, that never could exist, as a 'performance', something happening in a single time and space; nevertheless, it is now happening, in a single time and space: it is thus a performance and I hear it as one (*Performing Rites* 211).

With Frith's statement one can note a double recognition of 'performance', one that relates to the ideological realm of the time when the music was first recorded (in the listener's mind) and the second happening at the exact space/time of the listening. However, both are overtly subjective and depend on each individual's relationship with the music. As has been previously discussed, the 'meaning' of music can only be located in the relationship, in the encounter of music and listener and, for that reason Frith defends that "'Liveness", in short, whether defined in social or physiological terms, is not essential to musical meaning' (*Performing Rites* 227), or indeed its social or political affect.

Frith further elaborates on the historical social effects that the recording of music generated and concludes that: firstly, 'music is now *everywhere*' (*Performing Rites* 237) and no longer needs to be restricted to specific times and places; secondly, there is a 'sheer *quantity* of music' around which can be 'endlessly repeatable [hence] it is never lost' (*ibid*); and thirdly, that the experience of music 'has been *individualized*' (*ibid*). All these effects can be seen in the effective dissemination and incorporation of samba into the nation's identity: it was 'everywhere', as recording the music simultaneously allowed samba to break out of the *favelas* whilst enabling the elite to cautiously 'join the dance' without leaving their socio and geopolitical space; there was a sheer 'quantity' of samba record production. However, because of censorship, much variation was not allowed, and therefore the 'endlessly repeatable' qualities of the music were restricted to specific ideological perspectives. With the 'individualization' of the experience of music, a greater intimacy in the relationship between music and listener could take place, which fostered a new ownership of samba whereby the elite could make samba 'their own'.

Therefore, as both a private (once one brings the performance into the house) and public (when people sing along together the same song or participate in a live performance) spectacle, samba could co-opt the marginalised communities

socially and politically, and be consumed by the elite culture without them frequenting the 'dangerous' spaces of the marginalised *favelas*. As Frith elaborates:

[Recordings] transform the material experience of music [...] it is mobile across previous barriers of time and space [...] and yet ideologically – as a matter of interpretation and fantasy – the old values remain, and listening to recorded music becomes contradictory: it is at once public and private, static and dynamic, an experience of both present and past (*Performing Rites* 227).

These observations on the experience of listening to recorded music can be related to the processes of repetition and perpetuation that Josette Féral explores. She states that through repetition and perpetuation, two performative acts may occur: construction and reconstruction (66). In Brazil, the performance of samba was constructed from an initial intervention into a specific source, and then through repetition and perpetuation the original construction became a reconstruction, displaced from its specific source. Thus, samba came to represent its dominant other and the nation as a whole. Thereby, reconstruction through repetition, when considered in relation to Schechner's 'twice behaved behaviour' (34) and the new context in which the reconstruction occurs, becomes in itself a new and unique construction, which in turn is further reconstructed through further repetition and new contextual parameters (which we can relate to nowadays in the following case studies). As Roach explains:

[...] the paradox of the restoration of behavior resides in the phenomenon of repetition itself: no action or sequence of actions may be performed exactly the same way twice; they must be reinvented or recreated at each appearance. In this improvisatory behavioural space, memory reveals itself as imagination (46).

Thus, this phenomenon can create a persistent loop circulating both construction and reconstruction that is 'an experience of both present and past' (Frith, *Performing Rites* 227). This is important because it addresses how ideologies can remain steadfast while responding to fluidity and change. As such, the recognition and classification of samba must constantly adapt in order to adjust to shifting classifications of identity, such as changes in ideological perspective, determining its current function and position within society. Music is a powerful conduit for this complex process because, as Frith states, music offers 'so intensely,

a sense of both self and others, of the subjective in the collective' (*Music and Identity* 110). Within each period of time, the forged subjective divisions, depending on the intention of the division, have a different set of contextual traits, thus providing a unique over-arching lens with which to view the entity of samba. Thus, samba can never be seen as a fixed entity, it is a constant (re) negotiated performative idea, as will be seen in the analyses of the following examples/case studies in this work.

Naming Samba: Interpellation, Performativity and Power

Thus far we have considered the traits of samba and how it relates to *brasilidade* and by association, *mestiçagem*. However, naming something, affects how it is recognised, categorized and comprehended. So, if samba is the central means by which Brazilian identity has been defined, it is important to consider the processes of creating this common understanding about its status and meaning in relation to various socio-political systems.

The name 'samba' is said to have derived from the *Kimbundu* (Angolan) term *semba*, which makes reference to specific movements of the hips and touching of the belly, called *umbigada* (belly-buttons movement), meaning: 'an invitation to dance.'²¹ Hence, the very name 'samba' is performative, insofar as it refers directly to a bodily action, a specific 'movement of the body'. In this analysis I will consider how the act of naming a specific musical form *as* 'samba' and identifying it *as* *brasilidade* – through an interpellatory process – can be a significant factor contributing in the affiliation of the Brazilian population to its national identity.

According to the theories of Erika Fisher-Lichte (in Bleeker 75), the process of naming can produce an image of affiliation in which one is able to create an identity for oneself. Althusser explored this process of identification with a 'name' – or with how one is called (by others) – and sees the subject as produced 'through the process of "interpellation", in which s/he is "hailed" or "addressed" by a powerful ideology' (Loxley 130). This process of interpellation provides the interpellator – the individual naming the entity – with the ability to determine,

²¹ See <http://www.sambassadorsofgroove.org.uk/history-of-samba.html>

classify and subsequently impose their definition upon an entity. Therefore, with a sophisticated understanding of language, the interpellator operates from a potentially powerful position in which the use of language can operate as a unifying or dividing device. In the Brazilian example, the intellectual and governmental discourses claimed samba by addressing it as *brasilidade* as opposed to ‘othering’ it, thereby using the entity of samba as a unifying device. Brad Haseman, describing the work of J.L Austin, determines that ‘performative speech acts are utterances that accomplish, by their very enunciation, an action that generates effects’ (150). Thus, he suggests that ‘performative speech acts’, such as classifications, potentially result in the affiliation with or disassociation from the entity identified and labelled under specific classifications. Therefore, the use of the classification and term ‘samba’, attached to its perpetuated reminder *as* the Brazilian national unifier of identity, has the potential, based on the theories outlined above, to act as a mechanism for defining and constituting unity, communal and national identity cohesion.

One could, therefore, suggest that the act of naming brings an entity to life. It generates the entity that it names through the recognition of repeated traits and properties attributed to it, which in turn prompts the entity to materialize. For F. Elizabeth Hart, commenting on Butler’s notion of performativity, it is only after this process of recognition, in this instance through listening/performing, that an entity has an ‘identity’: ‘[an entity] that has no inherent agency, no basis for self-assertion prior to its interpellation into subjectivity’ (30). Therefore, interpellation, the process of naming and classifying, is essential to the construction and recognition of samba *as brasilidade*, as it is from this point of definition and imposition that the entity can be manifested.

In the process of naming samba, traits are identified that define samba – content of the lyrics, rhythm, stylised gestures, etc. – thus the listener is invited to acknowledge these traits as ‘samba form’. To a greater extent, this process institutionalizes these qualities *as* samba within the social consciousness by stabilizing the notion of samba. However, this logical and obvious process is subject to the context in which the music is played and received, with the additional consideration as to how the music is transmitted and received – its mode of dissemination – and the always subjective notion of ‘personal taste’ which can transcend any general classification concept. This in turn, if assessed through

another re-appropriation of Butler's performativity of gender to a performativity of identity, can develop a 'process of becoming'. In her appropriation of Simone de Beauvoir's statement that 'one is not born, but, rather, becomes', Butler locates gender, here read 'identity', as developmental, always in motion and never finalized (154). In this context, the entity 'samba' is not something fixed, rather, through performative means, repetition and complex cultural and contextual *negotiations*, samba becomes what people recognize samba to be. Thus, the process of naming is only one aspect that can be moderated by Butler's notion of a permanently developing identity – both individual and collective – that is forced to constantly negotiate its cultural and contextual environment in order to exist and persist. This can also be seen in how the social need to name and define a single category of classification has paradoxically resulted in the formulation of a term for people who embody hybridity and mixture: *mestiçagem*. Thus, we see how samba itself has been subject to this contradiction, for both the music and dance form developed through cultural and heteroglossic negotiations.

As has been discussed with respect to the process of recognition through socially trained acts of listening, the act of listening is in itself a constant cultural negotiation, a continual contextual flux. Therefore, it is important to consider that the interpellatory process subsequent to the act of listening and recognition is dependent upon this contextually changing *act*, thus, what is considered to be samba in the present may not have been samba at its original inception or of previous generations. Likewise, what may have constituted samba at its conception may not have carried through into how the music is perceived by a contemporary listener. Paradoxically however, although the musical form may present variations in its structures, its meaning as a national identity remains a constant idea in the Brazilian social imaginary. This can relate to Butler's notion that 'gender [here identity] is made to comply with a model of truth and falsity which not only contradicts its own performative fluidity, but serves a social policy or regulation and control' ('Performative' 162).

The following discussion will address the link between the construction and perpetuation of samba and the government's ideological structures of regulation and control under Vargas' administration. As mentioned above in this chapter, Vargas' regime disseminated the new musical genre, with its attendant ideological associations throughout the country via governmental sponsorship of live musical

performances, promotion of carnival, and the new commodities of radio and record perpetuation, recently introduced into the country. As Goldblatt exposes, in a country where still less than half of the population could read, radio was the single most important means of communication of the Vargas era.

Althusser proclaims that 'No class can hold State Power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the Ideological State Apparatus [ISAs]' (20), referring to social frameworks that disseminate knowledge within a state. Therefore, through ISAs such as the SPHAN (Historical and Artistic National Heritage Service) and DIP (Press and Propaganda Department) introduced earlier as governmental regulatory bodies, along with the increased exposure of the radio and recordings, both promoted and financed by the regime, a projection of the regime's ideological policy of *mestiçagem* and *brasilidade* infiltrated the public consciousness, influencing and enforcing subjection to that ideology. This in turn affected the interpretation and recognition processes of the public, regulating and, to a more sinister extent, indoctrinating the public on a widespread basis, enforcing an affiliation between the listening to samba – and all associated with it – and the ways in which the State was defining national identity.

The Vargas administration's intention was to perpetuate a national identity through a nationalist approach to promote ideological stability and economic prosperity. Thus, by using the media, the regime had the potential power to present a 'falsified representation of the world which they have imagined in order to enslave other minds by dominating their imaginations' (Althusser 37). Their reasoning for this, as has been outlined throughout this chapter, was to facilitate economic internalization, political centralization and regional yielding to the discourse of *brasilidade*. Samba's coincidental rise to prominence with the 'nationalist political economy of incentive to Brazilian production and amplification of internal markets' (Tinhorão 299), along with its non-literal form of dissemination, which was important due to the illiteracy throughout the country as documented by Jerry Dávila, led to it *becoming* the celebration and symbol of *brasilidade*.

The shift from the 'Europhile' Brazil to the racialized history and rhythms of samba's constitution, as elucidated by authors such as Souza, demonstrates how samba is the quintessential representation of *brasilidade*. What Vargas and his administration attempted was not only an economic and political homogenization of a country with a really diverse population, but, through samba, a cultural

homogenization too, in order to create a sense of *belonging*, promoting a national sentiment (Turino 117), of shared habits (*ibid*) and 'restored behaviour' (Schechner 34). Through this, and with the symbol of samba as the instrument of social integration (Bourdieu 78), the traditional class and race divides that had separated the country would be transcended. Vargas, therefore, was able to control knowledge dissemination through samba and position himself as the bridge, thereby unifying Brazil.

This, therefore, demonstrates how an inherent ideology can be embodied and transmitted by performative acts to create an identity that is then subsequently sustained through repetition. This in turn creates the potential for not only the initial construction of the 'invented tradition' (after Hobsbawm) of samba, but its perpetuation from the perspective of the ideological position from which it was disseminated and its subsequent reconstructions, as discussed previously. Samba is thus a central performative manifestation and device through which Brazilians view Brazil and what it means to be Brazilian.

Despite the somewhat negative or sceptical tone of the argument within this study thus far, it is possible to consider the position of power that Vargas's administration operated from, in their policy of cultural integration, as a force for good within the country. As Foucault outlines:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effect of power as negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production (1979 194).

Vargas' project 'produced' the notions of *mestiçagem* and *brasilidade* (largely for political and economic reasons) in so far as he and his administration perpetuated their qualities through music. However, as Mills states, to Foucault:

[...] it is clear that power circulates through a society rather than being owned by one group. Power is not so easily contained. Power is more a form of action or relation between people which is negotiated in each interaction and is never fixed and stable (39).

Therefore, Vargas' instigation of samba in order to unite the country was only feasible through the active enforcement of policy through the ideological state apparatus (DIP, SPHAN, etc) and the subsequent assimilation of this policy through embodied practices and positive associations of the form by the people themselves. This framework, in the end, was dependent upon its adoption by the Brazilian people.

Whilst Anderson's concept of the nation, as discussed earlier, is designed to unite what would otherwise be considered separate communities, the reality of a nation is that of diversity, coexistence and friction (Bhabha). Therefore, it must be noted that there were, and continue to be, regional variations of not only samba but other cultural manifestations which contribute towards Brazilian national identity, something that will be formally addressed in the following chapters. However, as has been discussed thus far, the influence of samba was harnessed by those in power to further a particular ideology, which was perpetuated through social structures and state functionaries and disseminated through emerging technologies in order to be recognized, both domestically and internationally, as the quintessential Brazilian experience; *as Brazil*.

Summarising what has been explored and discussed in this chapter, samba was 'discovered' in the small communities surrounding central Rio de Janeiro. This new musical form correlated with ideas central to the ideologies of a class of intellectuals – namely Freyre – and of the government, for it was an example of intercultural production that could, in their eyes, represent the nation. Samba was, therefore, upheld as the ultimate symbol of the official Brazilian national identity. Sponsored by the government and with the support of the media, samba reached into people's homes, becoming a nation-wide phenomenon and, until this day, is a prime representative of Brazilian culture. However, this chapter has argued that the performative qualities within the musical experience – listening, embodiment, repetition and naming/interpellation – together with a specific discourse of identity, operated through meticulous modalities of power, had the capacity to effectively produce this ideological narrative of self-representation, namely *brasilidade*. These processes would have allowed this sense of communal Brazilian identity to be effectively produced, performed and thus, perpetuated by the Brazilian population.

The conversation will now move towards deconstructing the idea of *brasilidade* in order to expose the contrasts, frictions and challenges within this concept by analysing a contemporary performance of Brazilian identity: *Baila Brazil* (Dance Brazil), a dance performance by the group *Balé de Rua* that was on international tour 'from 2014 FIFA World Cup until 2016 Rio Olympic Games'.²²

²² Information obtained at the performance's official website. See: <http://www.baila-brazil.com/>.

Chapter 3. *Baila Brazil* Re-negotiating Brazilian Identity on Global Stages

In this chapter, I will analyse the performance *Baila Brazil* (Dance Brazil) by the Brazilian dance company Balé de Rua (Street Ballet) and investigate the ways in which the group endeavours to critically perform Brazilian history on global stages. I attended this performance during its run at the London Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in August 2015 and it was chosen to be included as a case study in this thesis particularly because it stages the intricacies of performing contemporary Brazilian 'identity' to foreign audiences. It does so by addressing and exposing concerns regarding the country's internal negotiations and struggles – related to issues of cultural legitimacy and representations of race and gender (legacies of the discourse of 'racial democracy') – in juxtaposition with more 'stereotypical' and 'festive' examples of 'Brazilianness'. I will examine how the group considers Brazilian history to be an act of African Brazilian resistance, and how through their use of music as embodied performance the artists make visible the complexities regarding the idea of Brazilian 'nationhood'.

As Heidrun Friese declares, 'against (ideological) strategies of containment and closure of the modern national space, the nation comes into being in the nation's liminal spaces, its articulations and productions of difference' (305). Thus, to explore current articulations of 'difference' within the Brazilian nation, the chapter is divided into sections that address: firstly, the problematic nature of the official Brazilian national identity, as seen through the ideologies of *brasilidade*, *mestiçagem* and 'racial democracy'. This follows John McLeod's observation that 'racial differences are best thought of as *political constructions* which serve the interests of certain groups of people' (110).²³ Hence, this section attempts to explain why individuals and groups opt out of open frameworks of multiplicity and articulate 'racial difference' within ideologies of racial inclusion, seen in the Brazilian discourses of 'identity'. It follows Cheryl Sterling's reasoning that the conception of 'identity' arises from what group members 'choose to emphasize in

²³ Emphasis in original.

their cultural repertoires: by selecting stories, songs, dances, texts, and rituals based on their use value, they create new artefacts and cultural practices to meet their needs' (2-3). It is within this idea of agency and cultural selection that 'racial difference' can be here seen as a strategic positionality, as an internal negotiation that Balé de Rua exposes to international audiences in *Baila Brazil*.

Secondly, the chapter will provide an explanation of the context and origins of Balé de Rua – which began in the social margins of Brazilian society – and is currently performing 'Brazil' to international audiences in major theatres around the world. In *Theatre and the World* (1993), Rustom Bharucha articulates that 'before theorizing about any performance tradition, I believe it is necessary to question what it could mean to its own people for whom it exists in the first place' (5). I shadow Bharucha's appreciation of tracing back to practitioners the particular meanings of their performance traditions, hence I rely on interviews I made with Balé de Rua to expose the group's points of view in relation to their artistic and creative practices. Moreover, as part of this contextualization, the chapter will also consider the ways in which, through *Baila Brazil*, Balé de Rua brings to the stage embodied memories of their own personal histories co-related with the nation's past and present. These embodied memories can be viewed through the lens of phenomenology, which according to Daniel Primozic, 'aims to account comprehensively for the total horizon of our lived-experience, of the only world that is before us, by trying faithfully and authentically to describe the phenomena that are constituents of that experience' (10). I believe that by converging their embodied knowledge acquired through 'lived-experience' with the idea of 'performing Brazil' on stage, Balé de Rua effectively foregrounds the ambiguities latent in the processes of identifying with contemporary Brazilian 'national identity'.

Thirdly, following Jen Harvie's take on seeing identities as not being formed 'in isolated, discrete categories but in dynamic, overlapping networks' (2005 7), I will investigate how in specific scenes Balé de Rua intersects and challenges notions of gender, race, religion and class in the presentation of African Brazilian ritual, and in their selection of music throughout the performance. This will be done by using the conception of 'intersectionality' as analytical framework. According to Vivian May, intersectionality 'remains germane for analyzing and contesting systemic inequality and for reimagining how we think about agency, resistance, and

subjectivity' (1). Hence, an intersectional approach to understanding these multiple convergences of constructed 'identities' is useful to unpack the overlapping networks of power relations within Brazil's national consciousness and its dissonance with the social 'reality' of many Brazilians.

Problematizing 'National Identity' in Contemporary Brazil

The construction of *brasilidade* – or Brazilianness – has been discussed at length in the first and second chapters of this work. In contemporary Brazil, this 'national identity' continues to be performed during official public displays, like the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, and continues to operate within the wider Brazilian imagination. However, as Warren Hoge notes in his *New York Times* article 'Always the Country of the Future', because of its 'fleeting, antic, episodic nature, Brazilianness doesn't yield easily to analysis' (1995). As with many national identities, *brasilidade* is paradoxical. Radical at its inception – being partially related to Oswald de Andrade's *Cannibalist Manifesto* (Bary 1991) – and following 'post-racial' ideologies seen within the notion of *mestiçagem*, *brasilidade* embraces multiple threads of cultural manifestations under a single narrative of identity and belonging. Hence, *brasilidade* interweaves a complex and intricate web of discourses and practices focused on inclusion and/or exclusion.

In her essay 'On the (Im)Possibility of Performing Brazil' (2015), Bishop-Sanchez articulates *brasilidade* as a semiotic notion that 'can and does exist in [a] performative mode' (18), due to the fact that she links Brazilianness to cultural representations of the nation and 'any performative recreation of the broadly construed idea of Brazil' (17). However, this broader reading of Brazil is still associated with the ideology of *mestiçagem*, for, as argued in the introduction to this study with the example of the response towards the opening ceremony of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, not 'any performative recreation' of Brazil is identified as being 'Brazilian'. There is a particular specificity to *brasilidade* that is coined in terms of modernist ideologies that assimilated specific African Brazilian cultural forms and embodied practices, such as the musical genre of *samba*, the martial art *capoeira*, and derivations of the African-based religion *Candomblé*, which were then co-opted into rather than just being eradicated in the formation of *brasilidade*. For Diana Taylor, this is common practice in many Latin American nations, with the

disappearance of unique identities occurring through a 'politics of inclusion rather than exclusion' (*Archive and Repertoire* 98). However, this narrative of identity 'emphasizes a selective criteria of Africanness through topical invocations of cultural melding' (Sterling 5-6), which on the one hand allowed them to be folklorized as popular performance genres, but on the other, denied a sense of ownership and cultural specificity to their original practitioners, thereby positioning them outside of their historical heritage.

It is fundamental to expose that while the celebration of cultural diversity witnessed in the official discourses of Brazilian nationhood activated a sense of pride within the national - foreign relationship, internally, it actually reinforced the country's reality of social inequality, and promoted an 'undercurrent of racist exclusion and contempt' (Pravaz 82) throughout the years. These inequalities have a deep root, based on the way in which Brazilians identify themselves as individuals via race, class, gender, history, etc., and how they relate to each other in social spheres. Cheryl Sterling provides an important reminder of these complexities when she argues that what becomes dangerous camouflage in the Brazilian national imaginary is the fact that 'these economic and social cleavages are considered class-based issues, rather than racial ones' (5). Alexandre Da Costa concurs with this sentiment, stating that, 'the colorblind and "post-racial" logics of mixture and racial democracy, especially the denial and/or minimization of racism as a problem, maintain a strong grip on public thinking, social action, and institutional practices when it comes to race' (1).

Linking to Da Costa's remarks, many scholars studying the intricacies of the Brazilian nation agree that the principles behind racial democracy are largely mythical, and that, through its perpetuation, it has in fact concealed the racial discrimination present within the country since its colonial origins (Bishop-Sanchez, Da Silva, Levine, Skidmore, Sterling). These notions of convivial race relations – a key pillar of *racial democracy* – shaped ideas about the Brazilian racial system as 'less oppressive, [and more] a form of racial exceptionalism' (Da Costa 6). This relates to Sterling's earlier remark that, 'what is seemingly a natural heuristic system, in which mutual exchange leads to greater knowledge, becomes quite nefarious within an asymmetrical power dynamic' (2). Within Brazilian social

reality, the asymmetrical power dynamic operates in ways that historically disguised racial oppression through discourse.

However, it is important to consider how these historic constructions inflect into the present in Brazil. In *Shades of Citizenship* (2000), Melissa Nobles explores the interrelation of twentieth century racial discourses in Brazil with what was expressed in the national census in terms of racial identification. Nobles provides a comparative approach to the US censuses during the first half of the twentieth century, exposing that, whilst in the US the national census contributed to a racial discourse that justified racial discrimination, in Brazil the census 'contributed to a racial discourse that denied existing racial discrimination, thus justifying state inaction' (86). One way in which this was done was through the use of specific terminology: the Brazilian censuses registered colour as it was and is understood: the Portuguese word *cor* refers to physical appearance and not to racial origins. As Nobles explains, in Brazil, 'color and race are related but have been conceptually distinguished: color refers to appearance, race to origins. In the United States, race trumps color; in Brazil color trumps race' (87). This approach to colour terminology has contributed to the Brazilian context by presenting a situation in which, the 'degree of blackness of one's body shapes one's position at the juridical, economic, and symbolic levels of the social configuration' (Da Costa 5). Sterling argues further that:

Phenotype determines representational identity, and Brazilians choose how they want to identify and be identified in a chain of raced-based, color-coded significations, but the choices are never between racial identities or color codings that are equal; rather, a clear privilege is given to an individual with a white/European aesthetic over an African/black one, or simply put, the whiter one's looks guarantees greater access to social and economic ascension (4).

This privilege given to the individual with a 'whiter/European aesthetic' exposes that the ideologies of *mestiçagem* and *racial democracy* historically 'appropriated blackness and Africanity to inscribe the particularity of the Brazilian subject, but without producing Brazil as a black nation' (Da Silva 166). To exemplify, in the 2011 IBGE's (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) ethno-racial census, 47.7% of the Brazilian population considered themselves white; 43.1%

mixed race; 7.6% black; and less than 2% other.²⁴ The criteria used by IBGE is one based on self-declaration. As Sterling states, Brazilians decide for themselves how they are identified, which can distort any attempt at a statistical analysis or can reveal much on the conceptions of race and color in Brazil. Nonetheless, this argument appears dissonant when placed alongside Levine's statement that 'Brazilians include more blacks and browns than any country on Earth except for Nigeria' (11). Brazilian official data thus shows the depth and the persistence of color inequality, and such discrepancy, according to Nobles, 'suggests that color terms may be flexible, but they are not materially inconsequential' (128).²⁵

However, this is not all negative, in *Rewriting the Black Subject* (2002), Denise Ferreira Da Silva challenges the idea of conceiving race as a purely exclusionary principle, and instead considers it to be a 'productive strategy of power/knowledge' (165). Da Silva conceives of this notion by looking into the ways in which African Brazilian narratives – which surfaced after the military dictatorship of the 1970s – articulated Blackness as racial difference, 'enabling a challenge to racial democracy coupled with the demarcation of a black space [...] necessary for the articulation of a productive and active black subject in a region lacking geographical boundaries' (168), as achieved by segregation in the US and South Africa. Therefore, following John McLeod's remarks on the importance of comprehending that all constructions of racial difference are based upon human invention and not biological fact, and that 'racial differences are best thought of as political constructions which serve the interests of certain groups of people' (110), Brazilian racial difference can be seen as being built on the necessity of African Brazilian narratives being negotiated in terms of exclusion within a discourse of inclusion. Da Silva explicates:

The hegemonic Brazilian narrative needed to articulate the subaltern raced Other in the national text in order to narrate the nation's history as the process of elimination, via miscegenation, of these Others as a necessary step toward the building of a modern nation outside the European space.

²⁴ See: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, available at: <http://www.sepm.gov.br/>

²⁵ For a more detailed study on the complexity between concepts of race and colour in Brazil, see: Telles, Edward. 'The Overlapping Concepts of Race and Colour in Latin America'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35.7 (2012): 1163-168.

This defines the context of articulation of black Brazilian desire. Because this subaltern raced subject does not exist outside the text which produced its alterity (171).

Thus, in her writing, Da Silva exposes two elements as being crucial to the articulation of black Brazilian subjectivity, or what she calls, 'black Brazilian desire': the attempt to rescue African cultural practices, and a 'demarcation of the subaltern region resulting from the temporal historical oppression of blacks in Brazil' (167). Hence, black Brazilians felt the necessity of an identification rooted in Africanness in order to promote racial difference and resist the hegemonic discourse of racial inclusion, which in reality excludes them. This was achieved through the re-writing of Brazilian colonial history, by focussing on how 'the violence of slavery did more than offer counter-explanations of racial democracy as an outcome of mild slavery' (Da Silva 167). Notably, 'because this African culture had already been incorporated in the articulation of the national (culturally and physically mixed) subject, the early anthropological notion of resistance, rather than authenticity or purity, would organize this account of black subjectivity' (*ibid* 169). Thus, it was essential for African Brazilians to write about the slaves as active subjects, and thereby create the possibility for the 'emergence of the subaltern as a subject of self-representation [which are] also the conditions of the possibility of the articulation of projects of emancipation' (165).

Following Da Silva's insights, this chapter will examine the ways in which Balé de Rua's performance *Baila Brazil* reclaims Brazilian colonial history in terms of African Brazilian resistance: an 'articulation of a project of emancipation' (Balé de Rua 2015). However, it will also expose how the performance highlights the complexities of Brazil's national identity as it both embraces and destabilizes *brasilidade*, revealing how interconnections and paradoxes between ideologies and lived experiences often coexist in music and performances of 'nationhood' and 'identity'. Such entanglements can be analysed through Peter Wade's idea of a 'mosaic' of identity. In *Rethinking 'Mestizaje'* (2005),²⁶ Wade examines the *mestizo*

²⁶ As explicated in the introduction to this thesis, *mestizaje* is the term in Spanish that has been used to identify the 'mixed' character of identities in certain Spanish-speaking Latin American countries with their Indigenous and European ancestry (extensive scholarship on Mexican identity, see Taylor 2003). The case of Brazil differentiates slightly from these other Latin American contexts because of its history of slavery (explored in the first chapter), which provided a stronger influence of African cultural practices than its neighbouring

identity in Latin America as an instance in which different racialised elements and heritages 'are perceived to co-exist, rather than melding into an undifferentiated fusion' (246). Wade associates this mosaic with the persistence of a *symbolics* of origins that exist alongside a *symbolics* of mixture, in which 'the original elements of the mixture retain their presence in the imagination of the cultural and racial panorama' (245). This is important when thinking about subjects' desire for specific, distinct identities within a national identity, and the place of difference within it. Hence, one cannot escape the idea of ambiguity when thinking in terms of embodied performances of the *mestiço* identity, which is often embraced and challenged or rejected simultaneously. In *African Roots, Brazilian Rites* (2012), Sterling re-appropriates Edouard Glissant's theories on the rhizome to make a similar argument regarding Brazilian identity, which she sees as 'the relational root, the spreading of different aspects of Afro-Brazilian subjectivity and identity' (9). The rhizome theory comprises identity as being made up of 'contradictory experiences of cultural contact, reproduced in a network of *relations*' (*ibid*, emphasis in original). Sterling explains that in such a process, identity is constructed as 'part of an amalgam with relativized, multiple centers that coexist with each other' (9-10).

Extending the implications of moving from an arboreal to a more rhizomatic approach to identity, Denis-Constant Martin in *Sounding the Cape* (2013), examines the interrelations of music, identity and politics in South Africa. He rejects the term 'identity' and offers the phrase 'identity configurations' and 'identity narratives' as alternatives to express the constructed nature of identity processes, and to avoid essentialist notions of identity. Martin suggests that the polysemy of the word 'configuration' can adequately convey the flexibility of the phenomena related to 'identity', meaning 'not only the contour of an ensemble and its internal structural arrangement, but also the action of configuring, that is the elaboration process of which both contour and structure are the result' (8). It is with these ideas of 'identity' as a 'mosaic', as a 'network of relations', as a 'configuration' and, ultimately, as a 'narrative' that is not necessarily linear that this

countries. As Phillipou remarks, 'in the twentieth century, African culture was recognised not merely as an important constituent of Brazilian uniqueness, but as the pronounced part of the Brazilian mixture that strongly distinguishes it from Hispanic America' (247). Hence, I do not delve into theories of *mestizaje* in this thesis, but of *mestiçagem*, the particular Brazilian notion of it.

study is being conducted. Thus, I now turn to Balé de Rua and how they created *Baila Brazil's* 'performance' of Brazilian identity.

Context of Balé de Rua

Established in 1992 by Fernando Narduchi, Marco Antônio Garcia and José Marciel Silva, Balé de Rua began as the informal gathering of dancers in the streets of underprivileged neighbourhoods in Uberlândia; a city located at the heart of Brazil in the state of Minas Gerais. As outlined in *Baila Brazil's* program, Garcia and Silva were dancers who specialized in street dance – particularly hip-hop and breakdance – whilst Narduchi studied classical and contemporary dance and took a keen interest in various marginalised styles, particularly African Brazilian traditions. After collaborating for several years, the trio formed a group based on their 'mutual desire to establish a new style of dance, always urban but with a marked Brazilian identity' (Balé de Rua 2015). This aesthetic arrangement of combining street dance with a 'marked Brazilian identity' was presented in *Baila Brazil*. Balé de Rua's fusion of dance and musical styles will be explored in depth as the chapter progresses, as it is an amalgamation of the company's vision of their own history and trajectory alongside what they perceive to be 'Brazilian identity', namely African Brazilian cultural practices. I want to begin by providing a contextual framework of the group in order to allow for a greater understanding of their artistic choices in terms of aesthetics and subject matter.

When I first approached Fernando Narduchi to request an interview with him as part of this research, he answered by stating that Balé de Rua had a 'long history of love, of overcoming obstacles, and of resistance' (2016).²⁷ I understood this sentiment better when he later shared some of the company's stories with me: Narduchi commented that when Balé de Rua was formed, they were a company of 'friends who loved dance' (*ibid*). He expanded upon this further by stating that, back in 1992, they were a 'group of young poor black people', highly discouraged by friends and family who would proclaim that 'dance doesn't provide a future' (*ibid*). In his own words: 'when we started, nobody believed we could get anywhere by doing dance' (*ibid*). Nevertheless, as Narduchi continued

²⁷ The comments that follow are my translation of my 2016 interview with Fernando Narduchi, from its original Portuguese into English.

explaining, they persisted in the pursuit of their passion for dance as Balé de Rua slowly became their 'ideal of life, [their] common dream' (*ibid*).

Since the company was formed, every performer that has joined Balé de Rua has originated from the peripheral neighbourhoods of Uberlândia and has had no formal classical dance training; the dance experiences and abilities they brought with them were honed on Uberlândia's streets. Narduchi stated in a separate interview with dance reviewer Clifford Bishop that, 'many groups existed outside the centre, completely unknown to official culture' (2015) and therefore, in order to maintain what they considered to be their 'roots' – specifically street dance – the co-founders 'never recruited from dance classes' (*ibid*). In its early years, the company enlisted both male and female performers. However, according to Narduchi, with time and for various undisclosed personal reasons, all but one of the female cast left, with only Sandra Mara Silva Gabriel remaining (although she later left the company in 2008).

During the company's development years, its members worked as 'cleaners, couriers, mechanics, carpenters, students, soccer players, samba dancers, [and] house painters' (Balé de Rua 2015) during the day, with their evenings reserved for company rehearsals and performances. After years of struggling to find financial sponsorship, Balé de Rua successfully became a professional dance company in 2000, and since then they have provided free dance training lessons to the youth of Uberlândia as a way of giving back to the communities they originally came from. The group estimates that they have taught over 300 children during this period, and consider this act as a means of realizing their vision that Balé de Rua is 'more than a dance group [...] it is an ideal vision of life' (Balé de Rua 2015).

Perceiving that Balé de Rua created an urban style of dance with a 'marked Brazilian identity', author Rafael Guarato noted that there was a shift in the company's aesthetic choices once they began participating in national dance festivals at the end of the 1990s. According to Guarato, when Balé de Rua first started performing in Uberlândia, they were considered to be a street dance company with a very specific 'street dance aesthetic' drawn from 1980s North American influences. However, the context of dance festivals allowed the members of the company to broaden their aesthetic perspectives once they were

introduced to various dance genres and styles and also to participate in dialogue with the country's leading contemporary dance critics.

In so doing, Balé de Rua became acquainted with the notion of *brasilidade* and began to incorporate African Brazilian dance styles and rhythms²⁸ into their repertoire, in order to create a specific 'Brazilian street dance' (Guarato 104). For Guarato, it was through this dialogue with dance critics and the group's engagement with 'Brazilianness' that Balé de Rua first became established within Brazil's contemporary dance scene ('Entering Contemporaneity' 3). Furthermore, Guarato states that Balé de Rua were strategic to ensure the survival of their unique dance style as they established links with the creative ideas and aesthetic compositions shared by contemporary dance critics.

However, Balé de Rua did not fully comply with the demands made by dance experts in Brazil, as they refused to break completely with their street dance origins and engage in the intellectual discourses that interested Brazilian dance specialists (Guarato 2011). As Narduchi stated in our interview, 'we never made an abstract show, we always dealt with themes connected with our reality' (2016). According to Guarato, this non-compliance with Brazilian contemporary dance critics left the company in a state of in-betweenness: on the one hand, they were no longer acknowledged by other street dance companies 'who accused them of having "contaminated" street dance with references of other popular dances' (Guarato 'Entering Contemporaneity' 4), and on the other, they did not achieve full artistic recognition from dance specialists and critics because they refused to continue with the rupture processes with more 'popular' dances demanded by the Brazilian contemporary dance scene. For Narduchi, the group simply refused to let go of their 'street dance roots' (Bishop 2015).²⁹ From this isolated position, however, Balé de Rua developed their own unique dance style

²⁸. These styles are often related to popular genres of samba dance/rhythm, martial art/dance form of *capoeira*, *congado* festivities, which I will analyse later in the chapter.

²⁹. Whilst undertaking the necessary research to write this chapter, I became intrigued by the lack of academic material on Balé de Rua both in English and Portuguese. Most academic resources on contemporary dance in Brazil focus on the dance groups Cia de Dança Deborah Colker and Grupo Corpo (see Rosa 2015), which were featured prominently in the Rio 2016 Olympic opening and closing ceremonies, respectively. The only academic material sourced on Balé de Rua was that of Rafael Guarato's MA thesis and a subsequent presentation at the 2011 ABRACE conference in Brazil. I suggest that this lack of scholarly interest on Balé de Rua is related to the state of in-betweenness that Guarato mentions in his work, particularly given the fact that the company has a long history within Brazilian contemporary dance and regularly performs to critical acclaim throughout the world.

and achieved critical acclaim when performing outside of Brazil for their fusion of popular African Brazilian styles and urban street dance aesthetics. In 2002, the company's international career was launched when they performed at the 10th Dance Biennale in Lyon. With 'Latin Earth' as its central theme, the Biennale attracted dance troupes from across Latin America. Balé de Rua performed *E Agora José?* [What Now José?], a show inspired by the poem *José* by Carlos Drummond de Andrade, one of Brazil's most celebrated poets. It was in Lyon that the group were first introduced to Pierre Morand, who was based in France, and who would later become their international producer.

Guarato states a clear reminder that, to international eyes, Brazilian culture is perceived as being exotic and of 'difference' (105). According to Guarato, Balé de Rua was not immune from these readings. However, I would argue that by strategically incorporating the ideas of the Exotic Brazil and 'difference' into their performances, alongside their specific critiques, the company was able to achieve international artistic recognition during the successful world tour with their productions. Since 2002, their international repertoire has included: *O Bagaço* (The Bagasse), *O Corpo Negro na Dança* (The Black Body in Dance) and *Balé de Rua – Dance and Percussion of Brazil*, which was later renamed as *Baila Brazil*.

***Baila Brazil* (2014-16)**

Baila Brazil toured internationally and was presented in many of the world's top live performance venues, including the Sydney Opera House, Casino de Paris, London's Royal Festival Hall, and the Israeli Opera House. The performance was choreographed by Marco Antônio Garcia, who also created the costumes and set design. Narduchi was responsible for the artistic direction and physical preparation of the performers, and Pedro Paulo da Silva Ferreira was in charge of the production's musical direction. *Baila Brazil* includes 15 dancers in the cast – who also double as percussionists – and a live band on stage. In the performance I attended at the South Bank Centre's Festival Hall in August 2015, the 16 year-old singer Alexia Falcão Lopes headed the live band.³⁰ The set design comprised of large metal scaffolding towards the back of the stage, resembling a construction site, in

³⁰ It is important to note that *Baila Brazil* is constantly adapting. For their 2016 season, Uiara Cristina Ferreira, one of the dancers of the show, replaced Alexia Falcão Lopes and also provided lead vocals.

which the musicians were positioned and on which performers climbed and danced. *Baila Brazil*'s running time was 90 minutes, without an interval, and the performers danced to a total of thirty Brazilian songs, each performed live by the musicians.

When asked about the conception of *Baila Brazil*, Narduchi revealed that it started in 2005, when Pierre Morand made the company a proposition to develop a show designed to tour internationally. When the co-founders and producer had a conversation on what the production's theme would be, they 'came to the conclusion that [their] own story/history was a very interesting theme' (2016). The first version of *Baila Brazil* was entitled *Balé de Rua – Dance and Percussion of Brazil* (2005). The production featured various scenes from the company's previous shows, such as *E Agora José?*, *O Bagaço*, and *The Black Body in Dance*. In addition to this compilation, Marco Antônio Garcia created various scenes to 'stitch the performance in a coherent way, introducing a lot of new material' (Narduchi 2016). Narduchi stated that 'as performance is a living body, [*Baila Brazil*] went through many modifications over the years' (2016). With every passing season since its first performance as *Balé de Rua – Dance and Percussion of Brazil*, Narduchi continues to see the production maturing and improving (2016). It is important to note that this shift in the performance's name could relate to a repositioning of the idea of locality and specificity of the group to a broader sense of identification and performance of the nation, which will be addressed in a further section of this chapter.

One of the company's main objectives is to bring their lived reality to the stage. During our interview, Narduchi provided an example of the way in which this occurs during the creation process of a production, sharing how the performance *O Bagaço* (2004) was created. In 2003-2004, *Balé de Rua* encountered significant financial difficulties. According to Narduchi, the company 'spent 8 months without one cent, with dancers going through basic challenges, some with families and children to support' (2016). As a result, the co-founders felt compelled to allow the cast to seek alternative work in order to support their families (*ibid*). However, no one wanted to leave the group. As Narduchi proclaims, 'The kids said: we've been through a lot of good stuff together and we are going to go through the bad stuff too, now is the time to be more united than ever' (*ibid*). That attitude gave the co-founders strength as they realised: 'Balé de Rua was bigger than any of us

individually' (*ibid*). Inspired by this display of solidarity, Marcos Antônio Garcia began to devise a new production, which often saw him asking the cast for insight into their lives: 'what is inside your fridge? When was the last time you bought a new pair of shoes? When did you last go out for an ice cream or to the cinema? What are your children eating? Who is late in paying their rent?' (Narduchi 2016). From this material *O Bagaço: espremendo tudo até a última gota* [The Bagasse: the act of squeezing everything to the last drop] was eventually created. Balé de Rua toured several Brazilian cities with the show and received an invitation to perform at the international festival *Brazil moves Berlin* in Germany (2007). According to Narduchi, 'Today, when we dance *Baila Brazil* we are taking this and many other stories to the stage. This is why we dance with so much truth, because what we dance is a reflection of our lives, our history' (*ibid*), and this history is narrated in terms of economic struggle, racial difference and love for the craft of dance and the country. One can link Narduchi's observation with a phenomenological perception and engagement with the world. According to Frontier,

Phenomenology's primary concern is with the engagement in lived experience between the individual consciousness and reality, which manifests itself not as a series of linguistic signs but as sensory and mental phenomena – the 'world' is what we encounter in perception and reflection, while the 'earth' is things as they may be in themselves outside human perception (41).

In addition to placing their 'reality' and their experience of the 'world' into performance, Balé de Rua also co-relates their own history with the history of Brazil. As Narduchi outlined in his interview with Bishop:

When we began thinking about this show, our first idea was to present our history: how we came from the streets onto stages all around the world. Then we realised, when we were talking about Balé de Rua, we were talking about Brazil (2015).

It is this identification of a relationship between the personal and the nation that propelled my further investigation into how Balé de Rua performs Brazil.

Performing the Nation in *Baila Brazil*

*We want to talk about our country,
Our culture, our traditions.
We want our shows to sweat Brazil,
which is the roughest and the most beautiful.
The most musical and the most contradictory.
The most colourful and the most human.
This is our Brazil!
The Brazil we love.
(Balé de Rua 2015)*

I recall feeling a sense of estrangement as I sat in the auditorium of the Royal Festival Hall in London with *Baila Brazil's* program in hand. Balé de Rua's initial statement (positioned above) in the form of a poem/cultural manifesto laid out all the complexities that I had been engaged with as a researcher thus far. These complexities are related to the question of how contemporary Brazilians negotiate their sense of identification with nationhood given the intricacies of racial inequality and social exclusion in the country. Moreover, most striking in Balé de Rua's case was that, within this sense of identification, there was a clear juxtaposition between their condemnation of a system of racial oppression within the country on the one hand, and on the other hand, the expression of a substantial feeling of affection – of *love* – towards the nation.

Consequently, Anderson came to mind with his reminder that 'nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love' (141). However, Balé de Rua's vision of the Brazilian nation was not that of an imagined community conceived of as a 'steady, solid simultaneity through time' (63). Rather, in the program of *Baila Brazil*, Balé de Rua narrates Brazil's reality of the nation as being 'rough', 'beautiful', 'colourful' and 'contradictory'. They also portrayed Brazilian history in the program as the performance of African Brazilian resistance that exists alongside the hegemonic narrative of mixture, as can be seen in the following statement:

Our country is a fistful of multi-coloured earth from all continents and all nations. But we, the black-skinned workers, have left our Africa. We have crossed the oceans, and endured the storms, at the bottom of the holds of ships. We have known Ouro Preto and its mines of black gold and laid the slabs of stone on the roads that took us to the favelas, in the depths of a night that was 350 years long. But these interminable centuries have not managed to extinguish the powerful fire in our hearts (Balé de Rua 2015).

In my quest to engage with a formulation of this group in relation to the idea of Brazil, I turned to Erin Hurley's suggestion that performance scholars use the category of 'affect' as a point of departure for perceiving the national. Hurley asserts that considering affect instead of semiotics as a starting point 'opens the door to seeing how people may produce themselves as national, even in conditions that militate against it' (2011, 199). According to Hurley, affect as an 'immediate, skin-level registration of relation [...] gives us an immediate sense for what matters to us, for what moves or, indeed affects us' (*ibid* 147). I agree that Hurley's suggestion may be applicable when thinking of embodiments of 'identities' through performance and musical experience in the example of samba. However, Balé de Rua's narrative of themselves did not correlate to this particular theorization of perceiving the national through 'affect' because 'affect precedes interpretation or "qualification" [and] also emotion' (Hurley 2011 148). As Balé de Rua had an *a priori* intention that informed both the process and the product of the performance, engaging with it purely through affect theory was not enough. Although Balé de Rua's creative processes may have been coined in affective responses – in the choreographer's proposals and the incorporation of notions of the 'everyday' in performance – and possibly produced affective responses in the audience – their engagement with the nation has a precise and intentional emotional character: one of love.

So, I found myself unable to escape from this 'feeling/word' which was used to express Balé de Rua's emotions towards the nation, and was also mentioned in Narduchi's very first response to my inquiries, when he narrated Balé de Rua's history as being one of 'love, overcoming of obstacles, and resistance' (my emphasis 2016). Moreover, when I watched *Baila Brazil*, it was being performed as part of Southbank Centre's festival of *love* in the summer of 2015.

Thinking through these emotional expressions of love, one can make links with Hurley's (2010) articulations of different aspects associated with 'feelings' and their relation to performance. According to her, 'emotional expression displays the subjective, affective response in a socially readable way' (17), hence, emotion is relational to context and social situations. It differentiates from 'affect' as it is as an act of *interpretation* of bodily response; but it is similar to 'affective' emotion as it 'moves out of ourselves by taking subjective experiences and inserting them into a social context of meaning and relation' (21). This relates to Dacher Keltner in *Understanding Emotions* (2014), who sees emotions as relational, 'in that they help us deal adaptively with concerns specific to our current context' (4). Moreover, here emotions are identified as being 'locally rational', as opposed to being 'irrational', as in early formulations of psychology, for 'their rationality doesn't range over all possible considerations' (*ibid*). Hence, emotional expression could be seen as a way of somewhat 'rationally' expressing subjective experience, or perhaps even at times 'selecting' such experience to express the experience of context and/or social circumstances.

However, in *Desire/Love* (2012), Lauren Berlant makes an important connection, as she positions the feeling of 'love' as the most conventional form of 'desire', arguing that, 'love is the embracing dream in which desire is reciprocated: rather than being isolating, love provides an image of an expanded self' (6). Berlant suggests that 'desire' creates a space 'in which its trajectories and complexities are repeatedly experienced and represented; and as its movement creates tracks that we can follow on "the body" and in "the world", it creates an urge for mapping' (*ibid* 15). Even though these ideas are formulated in relation to different subjects, Berlant's notions on desire, when confronted with Da Silva's reference to 'Brazilian black desire', may provide an illuminating way to think through the complexities of *Baila Brazil's* approaches to Brazil. Da Silva explores 'Brazilian black desire' through the ways in which black Brazilian narratives created a space to map the active black subject in Brazil's history. This was achieved in part by reclaiming African cultural and religious practices and by narrating the black subject in politically racial terms, as an expression (or performance) of resistance.

Eventually, I was able to bring together what seemed to me to be incompatible instances in Balé de Rua's discourse by examining the precise ways in which the company relates the idea of *love* with the idea of *resistance* in their

experiences of Brazil. When Narduchi, during our interview, cited the difficulties Balé de Rua went through, he stated:

Many times in rehearsals I ask myself: what brings these young people to rehearsal every day, why don't they leave it all and look for another profession? I can't find another answer except passion for what they do, love for the group, the shared dream, the history built so far. We've been through a lot of difficulties that could have made us give up, but we carried on, we resisted and I believe that only love gives us strength to overcome obstacles (2016).

In this romantic vision, love is not seen as weakness or as being oppositional to struggle. Rather, love is seen as the driving force in the members' desire to persist in the 'fight' to overcome obstacles and express their experiences of being Brazilian. Da Silva reminds that it was through an association with slaves' forms of rebellion – such as the *quilombos*, communities of runaway slaves – that 'Africanity was deployed as a signifier of resistance indicating a refusal to occupy the position the hegemonic national narrative attributed to blacks' (169). In *Baila Brazil* this can be seen in the embodied performances – as the performers embody *Preto Velho*, a former African slave's spirit - and in discourse, in the clear reference to Zumbi, 'a slave who lead a community into a revolt known as the *Quilombo dos Palmares*, and who died on November 20th 1695' (Balé de Rua 2015). The company stated that, 'this day [November 20th] of "*Consciência Negra*" [Black Consciousness] aims at a reflection about the influence of the African culture on the evolution of Brazil, it became a day of celebration of Afro-Brazilian culture' (*ibid.*)³¹

However, while clearly aiming to celebrate Brazil's African cultural influences, Balé de Rua is careful to articulate their version as 'a history of Brazil', acknowledging the pluralist construction of Brazilian narrative. For instance, in the first line of their poem/manifesto it reads,

*It is a history of Brazil,
The history of a city from the center of Brazil,
The history of a birth, of an encounter in the
neighbourhoods of Uberlândia.* (Balé de Rua 2015)

³¹ This tribute day was officially launched at the national level through the federal law n. 12519/11 in 2011 and in some states, it is celebrated as a holiday.

Moreover, in these opening sentences the company relates their history with that of Brazil as a whole, linking the idea of self-identification with national identity and with the notion that ‘when we were talking about Balé de Rua, we were talking about Brazil’ (Narduchi qtd. in Bishop 2015). In addition, this statement also suggests the interrelations of scale and locality within the performance; for, in a global setting (world stages), they present the view of the national (Brazil) gradually becoming local (centre of Brazil) and personal (birth), ultimately seen through the lens of an encounter in Uberlandia’s streets. This once again relates to a phenomenological perspective of experience, which expresses ‘a commitment to grounding theory in lived experience, and in revealing the way in which the world is produced through the constituting acts of subjective experience’ (Fortier 46).

Following the poem/manifesto, Balé de Rua provides a contextual approach to Brazilian social distinctiveness by further informing the reader about the country’s period of slavery, which brought 3.5 million Africans to Brazil over 350 years, making it the biggest and longest slave-trade system in world history. Although the program also signals Brazilian culture as a ‘melting pot’ (Balé de Rua 2015) of various influences, with a national hegemonic view of ‘mixture’, it also very clearly aims to dispel the myth of a ‘racial democracy’ by suggesting that ‘there are numerous blacks who state they are “racially mixed” and racially mixed people who state they are “white”’ (Balé de Rua 2015). This links to Sterling’s remarks that ‘in formulating Afro-Brazilian subjectivity, it must be understood that identities considered black in other spatialities are not necessarily black in Brazil’ (8). Drawing on Marshal C. Eakin’s statement, she clarifies that, ‘To be black in Brazil means to have no white ancestors’ (*ibid*), which, according to the Sterling, means that to identify with ‘blackness’ in Brazil connotes social and economic exclusion rather than a racial identification. Hence, one’s identification with ‘blackness’ can also become an act of resistance.

In addition, the vision of Brazil being seen as a ‘social paradise’ is downplayed as they stress that it undermines what they consider to be the ‘principal cultural expressions of the country’, namely African Brazilian (Balé de Rua 2015). As Bishop states, the company wanted to ‘highlight how Brazilian blacks had not merely survived slavery but through resilience, strength and guile had managed

to survive it without losing their traditions' (2015). In our interview, when I asked about the reasons why the group decided to expose the fictional notion of Brazil being a 'racial democracy', Narduchi replied:

Racial prejudice exists in Brazil, yes, and we insist in always bringing it up in conversations with the group. In our performances we try to show this [...] We talk about slavery and suffering not to position ourselves as victims but to say: we've been through this but we've overcome it, we are proud of being black. We think it is important to say this because we don't want to show an imaginary Brazil, a tropical and superficial paradise, we need to tell the truth, we need to be honest with ourselves in the first place. To sell the idea of a wonderful country that only has carnival and football would be shameful for us (2016).

This comment is a doorway into analysing how the company embodies this vision of Brazil in performance, given Taylor's argument that, 'embodied expression has participated and will probably continue to participate in the transmission of social knowledge, memory, and identity' (*Archive and Repertoire* 16). The embodied expressions of specific African Brazilian cultural forms – such as those specifically used as symbols of *brasilidade*, namely *samba*, *capoeira* and derivations of African religion *candomblé*, are performed in *Baila Brazil* as the members of the company also 'live' these expressions on a daily basis. However, despite these forms having been assimilated into the hegemonic narrative of nationhood – and even though adaptation of these forms was detrimental for their survival – their meaning for African Brazilian resistance and subversion continues to persist through Balé de Rua's articulation of them. I turn now to discuss how through embodied performance, *Baila Brazil* both performs and subverts *brasilidade*.

In their studies of African Brazilian pluralities, both Da Costa and Sterling investigate contemporary African Brazilian performances and artists that offer a complete rupture from the Brazilian national narrative of identity in their works. According to these authors, one of the ways this rupture can be achieved is through the performers' rejection, in their practices, of African Brazilian cultural forms that have been historically associated with *brasilidade*. Therefore, Da Costa and Sterling investigate the ways in which contemporary artists explore alternative African Brazilian cultural expressions – which include hip-hop, rap and the Brazilian funk movement – to resist the dominant narrative of nationhood. In *Baila Brazil*, these

cultural expressions are also present and staged through some of their choices of music and street dance performances. However, they are presented alongside African Brazilian forms that have been co-opted into the discourse of *brasilidade* in a non-linear structured performance. The scenarios shown by Balé de Rua thus suggest fluidity in the representations of identities that are displayed as constructed, and performed through recognised embodied practices. This, from an analytical perspective, blurs the boundaries between what Sterling and Da Costa define as being in 'resistance' and/or 'co-option' and thus highlights the complexity of what it means for many African Brazilians to identify with 'Brazil'. This is particularly evident in *Baila Brazil* displaying on the foreground some key markers of *brasilidade*, which relates to company members' personal experiences of embodying these cultural practices in their everyday lives. As Narduchi earlier explained, 'we deal with themes connected to our reality' (2016). For example, when I asked the company's artistic director how he considered the use of samba in *Baila Brazil*, he replied:

You can't really talk about Brazil without talking about Samba. Samba is part of the everyday life of every member of the company since they were kids. [In Brazil] the black person in a more general way is born listening to samba, it is part of the everyday [...] Samba is a matter of pride for the black person; it is affirmative (Narduchi 2016).

Given samba's link to 'Brazilianness', explored thus far, the idea of the personal relationship that members of the group have with samba since childhood can be related to Nadine Holdsworth's quotation from Steven Grosby:

The child learns, for example, to speak the language of his or her nation and what it means to be a member of that nation as expressed through its customs and laws. These traditions become incorporated into the individual's understanding of the self. When those traditions that make up part of one's self-conception are shared by other individuals as part of their self-perception, one is then both related to those other individuals and aware of the relation (2010 18).

However, as can be seen in Narduchi's remarks, this articulation of samba is one that does not just accept what has been disseminated regarding the form and its relation to Brazil, but rather it reclaims the cultural form for the sub-group's

specific local identity as well. To him, samba represents not only a national symbol, but particularly has a specific relation with African Brazilians. This self-perception is thus ambiguous, as it can relate to both localized as well as nationalized ideas of social community. In a separate interview with Lusy Basaba, Narduchi stated:

The African people who came to Brazil as slaves brought drums, rhythms and dance with them. They were slaves to begin with but eventually they won their freedom and they maintained their traditions, which became a strong influence on the Brazilian culture. Samba, which is a precious jewel of our culture [...] followed (Basaba 2015).

Here samba, as well as other African Brazilian practices, refer to more than aspects of these performers' everyday lives; they are also seen as an affirmative way of perceiving and demonstrating African contributions to nation building and national identity in Brazil. However, even though samba takes 'centre stage' in *Baila Brazil*, comprising around 80 per cent of selected songs, and includes national characters such as the *malandro* – which will be further addressed in this chapter – there are specific moments of rupture of these recognisable, official narratives of self-representation of the country. These moments show incorporation of forms mainly associated with ritualistic African Brazilian practices that survived through adaptation. These practices are performed in terms of intersectionality, exposing relational and co-production of meaning and identity. As Taylor suggests, it is impossible to separate 'cultural memory, race, and gender' (*Archive and Repertoire* 86). In many scenes of *Baila Brazil*, matters of class, gender, religion, race, and historical narratives intersect and are juxtaposed on one another, thereby exposing the complex layers that comprise Brazilian identity. Following Vivian May's framing of socio-political realities (or performances, in this case) through intersectionality, allows scholars to undertake a critical orientation that is both 'forward looking and historically focused' (7). May has argued that due to its multidimensional 'matrix' orientation, intersectionality 'is often at odds with "single-axis" sociopolitical realities, knowledge norms, and justice frameworks' (1). This complements my approach to *Baila Brazil's* performances of identity as a 'mosaic' (Wade) or 'identity configuration' (Martin), and thereby 'helps to expose historical silences and to understand oppression and privilege as lived experiences and processes situated in and shaped by material, political, and social conditions' (May 7).

In addition to highlighting this intersectionality, I believe that the ritualistic elements performed in the show offer the possibility to position the past in the present, by placing simultaneous time frames in the episodic structure of the performance. As Roberto Da Matta states, 'ritualization basically comes down to an established way of shifting objects from their places of origin or familiarity to other domains' (71). This displacement or dislocation of some element from one domain to another heightens one's awareness of the nature of the object, the qualities of its original place and the accordance to its new position. He explains that, 'such displacements, then, lead to a heightened awareness of all social processes, especially on the arbitrary nature of ideological constructs which sustain social life' (Da Matta 71). Thus, through ritual performances that reference both traditional African and recognisable contemporary forms of music and dance in Brazil, *Baila Brazil* displaces specific cultural meanings of identity, belonging and nationhood, as I will go on to show.

Intersectional Moments in Performance

To Andre Musskopf, religion is yet another strong ingredient that lies within ideas of Brazilian identity, which is 'formed by a complex mixture, full of syncretisms and hybridizations that cannot be reduced to a single concept but that constitute a "land of contrasts"' (147). Within this idea of 'contrasts', he states that religion plays an important role in this 'strange (perhaps queer) configuration' (*ibid* 147). In the introduction to *Religion, Theatre, and Performance* (2012), Lance Gharavi explains 'religion is, among other things, a marker of identity that, like race, gender, and sexuality, overlaps, and often intertwines with, other markers' (1). This can be seen in *Baila Brazil* as Balé de Rua's religious faith *Umbanda* is brought to the stage in ways that intersect with race, class and gender issues. Narduchi stated in an interview with Bishop, 'we live *Umbanda*, and what we live we bring to the stage' (2015). Narduchi's statement makes reference to Gharavi's suggestion that, 'one does not merely or primarily *believe* one's religion. One *does* one's religion' (19), highlighting the performative and embodied quality of religious practices. According to Gharavi, 'such performances are always produced in relation to, or situated within, a pre-existing set of historically and culturally specific, materially and/or discursively operative institutions and regimes of representation' (*ibid*); and

in *Baila Brazil* such regimes of representation are performed in ways that suggest how agency operates through spirituality.

Umbanda is a popular African Brazilian religion created at the beginning of the 20th century from a combination of African *Candomblé*, Roman Catholicism and French Kardecist Spiritism. According to various authors (Chauí, Musskopf, Cristina Santos), *Umbanda* has an ambiguous stance in the Brazilian context: one is a nationalistic interpretation, which associates its emergence between 1920 and 1930 to the social and cultural context of the country. The context was marked by a new understanding about the Brazilian identity, by its recognition as a civilization shaped by a triple racial and cultural heritage. Hence, this is another performative dimension of *brasilidade* that emphasizes its African origins, its *Africanness*, through discourses and embodied practices, such as possession by ancient African spirits.

In her seminal work *Between Conformity and Resistance* (2011), Marilena Chauí traces various aspects of Brazilian popular religiosity and how it can be seen as modes of transgression instead of primarily being attributed to a means for popular alienation. One of the aspects the author identifies in such religious practices, which includes *Umbanda*, is ‘the simultaneous acceptance of a plurality of seemingly incompatible beliefs’ (Chauí 192), some of which are performed in *Baila Brazil*.

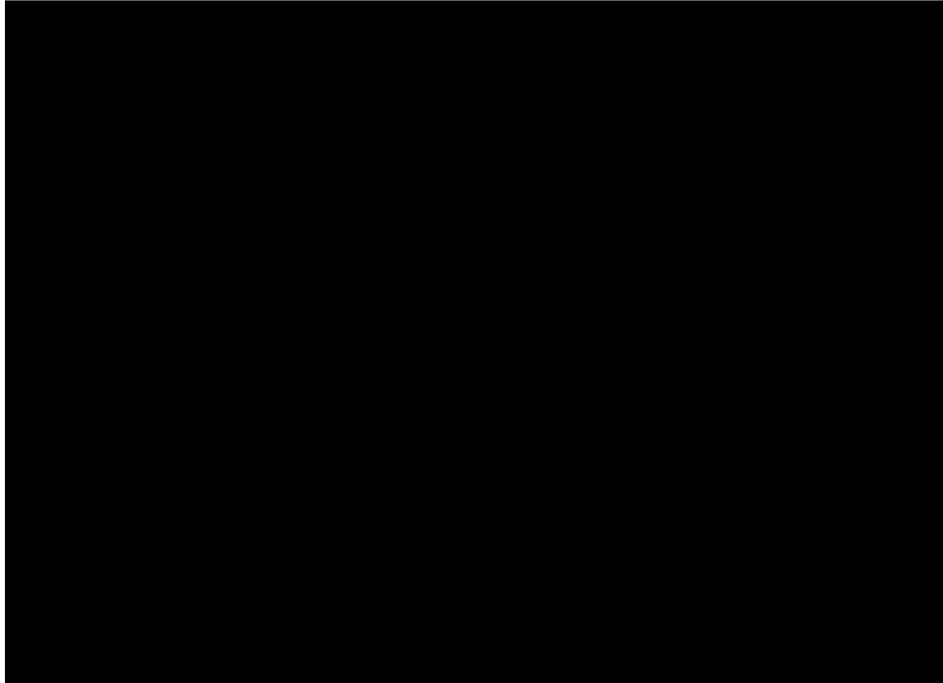


Figure 2 - Virgin Mary's Devotees. Photo: Yui Mok, Irish Examiner.

The performance begins with the French composer Charles Gounoud's *Ave Maria* (1853) playing in the background under a samba rhythm (using percussion). Then, what seem to be veiled women in prayer enter the stage space, but these are soon revealed to be a 'dozen muscly black men in light summer dresses, stamping and clapping and exhorting the audience to do the same' (Bishop 2015) (Figure 2). Narduchi revealed that in some of the performances during the tour, 'when the public realizes they are men there is at first a small reaction of laughter, which soon stops as they [audience] recognize that the scene is not funny, it is pure spirituality' (2016). The director explained that the scene was created as a celebration to the Virgin Mary and that 'each one of the performers represents the Virgin' (qtd in Bishop 2015). I turn now to consider some elements of subversion that one can associate with Mikhail Bakhtin's analysis of the *carnavalesque* and the interrelation between the sacred and the profane in a world turned 'inside out' in this scene. According to Bakhtin,

All symbols of the carnival idiom are filled with this pathos of change and renewal, with the sense of the gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities. We find here a characteristic logic, the peculiar logic of the 'inside out' (11).

In this world turned upside down or inside out in the *Ave Maria* scene, many subversions of 'prevailing truths' are uncovered: firstly, it can be seen in the widely recognizable sacred melody of *Ave Maria* played to an African Brazilian samba rendition, a musical genre associated with Brazilian carnival. This relates to Bakhtin's notion of Carnival laughter, which 'builds its own world in opposition to the official world, its own church versus the official church' (88). The interplay between spirituality and laughter that the performers embodied was also made apparent by them occasionally performing prayer with a more serious countenance and, at other times, gracefully smiling and laughing with closer audience members, inviting them to clap along to their dancing. With this interaction, the group interchangeably shifts the recognised sacred song, and its religious 'meanings' and spirituality into the 'profane' world of carnival and laughter.

Secondly, one can observe the addition of an intersection of race and gender, seen in the cross-dressing of the 'dozen muscly black' (Bishop 2015) male performers, which challenged gendered expectations of many audience members (myself included), inducing them to have a 'small reaction of laughter', as Narduchi stated. In 'Men in Color' (1997), Michael Ueber studies the intersection of race and masculinity and affirms that 'configurations of maleness transmute racial difference into a model of masculine sameness by disavowing the complex interplay of racial and gender difference that crucially underwrites masculinities' (5). Bringing this to the Brazilian context, this scene brings to the fore this complex interplay by subverting what has been shaped as Brazilian 'black' and 'male' subjectivity. This subjectivity was coined during the country's post-colonial negotiations in which, after the abolition of slavery and due to social and economic exclusion, 'Afro-Brazilian males in general were defined as weak, sickly, and incapable of providing for a family or fulfilling the expectations associated with masculine honor' (Hertzman 592). Hence, this led to particular ways of perceiving 'black male Brazilianness' within the country, which historically associated them either with trickery or *malandragem*, 'the art and lifestyle of the flashy, womanizing, hustler figures' (*ibid* 593), which I will address shortly, or with violent behaviour and assault. In addition, the ways in which the grave tone of the performers' voices – which were shouted at particular dance movements in the scene – juxtaposed with their visual images in 'light summer dresses' provided an even pronounced contrast between sound and image. These 'shouts' resembled

roars of release and liberation and brought to my mind Roland Barthes' phenomenological articulation on 'The Grain of the Voice' (1977). According to Barthes,

The voice is not personal: it expresses nothing of the cantor, of his soul; it is not original (all Russian cantors have roughly the same voice), and at the same time it is individual: it has us hear a body which has no civil identity, no 'personality', but which is nevertheless a separate body. Above all, this voice bears along directly the symbolic, over the intelligible, the expressive: here, thrown in front of us like a packet, is the Father, his phallic stature. The 'grain' is that: the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue (182).

This materiality of the performers' voices created an affective reaction in my body as I experienced the interplay between sounds and images. Barthes continues by analysing that by perceiving the 'grain' and granting 'this "grain" a theoretical value (the emergence of the text in the work), I inevitably set up a new scheme of evaluation which will certainly be individual - I am determined to listen to my relation with the body of the man or woman singing or playing' (188). Hence, Barthes argues that one can hear the sounds as produced directly by the performer's body and therefore transcending cultural and textual norms. This links back to affective experience as the pre-objective, 'immediate, skin-level registration of relation', that Hurley refers to. It was this relation with the bodies on stage juxtaposed with the images and the music, that allowed my evaluation and interpretation to occur. And perhaps this is why the international audience members stop 'laughing' and soon 'recognize that the scene is not funny', as Narduchi identified in our interview.

Another ingredient to this 'inside out' scene is the point that the creators of *Baila Brazil* perceive each performer as 'representing the Virgin'. As Narduchi stated, 'during the creation of this show [Garcia, the choreographer] did not think in terms of male/female, he thought on the image of the Virgin' and they believe that this scene 'is pure spirituality' (2016). Hence, one can see a sense of 'embodiment' of the Virgin's image in the practitioners' view. This subversion plays with Justin Smith's assertion on 'embodiment':

the fact that human existence and subjective experience require a body, and the fact that the condition of the body largely determines the sort of

experiences each of us will have, seem to be in tension with other convictions we have about ourselves—for example that our moral character and cognitive abilities, perhaps even our beauty, should not be dependent upon our mortal and precarious bodies. (4)

Such experiences that are determined through the conditions of the body in 'lived experience' are subverted and played with on stage through this intersection of the sacred and profane, of gendered and racial 'identities', hence, destabilizing audiences' expectations. Moreover, this scene could provide a sense of 'queering the nation', if one links it to Muszkopf's earlier observations on the Brazilian 'contrasts'. As Uebel states, 'crossing racial, class, and national boundaries, and, most significantly, the lines imposed by normative sexuality and erotic practise, is a vital, empowering act of social critique' (8).

In terms of music choices, these distinct layers of meaning that play with the public's expectations and perceptions illustrate Nicola Dibben's argument that: 'musical materials are heard in terms of their historical usage, such that if they have been associated with particular social (or musical) contexts or functions those meanings remain when they are used outside of those contexts or functions' (196). Therefore, relating to the scene played to an international audience, the familiar meaning of the *Ave Maria* remains, although varied levels of new information are added, like the local samba arrangement, suggesting religious fusion. In a more domestic context, one can relate the scene to Dilmar Miranda's articulation of Ash Wednesday performances in Brazil in which, after celebrating all night, 'unlike the Catholic tradition, where the faithful go to the churches [...] thousands of revelers, remaining in the same festive-profane scene, dressed with their multicolored fantasies [...] listen to religious pieces performed by the same musicians and instruments that played the carnival pieces' (145-46). He states that one of those pieces is precisely Gounoud's *Ave Maria*. In this way, Miranda concludes, 'the sacred and the profane seem to want to merge into one same rite, perhaps in a vain attempt to postpone the restoration of that primordial and archaic ritualistic unity lost, noted by Bakhtin' (*ibid*).

Later in the performance, and still playing with the relationship between the sacred and the profane and with possible audience expectations, halfway through the show, Balé de Rua re-enacts a little *congado*, a drum-based music and dance ensemble that leads to a procession like the one that takes place once a year

in the state of Minas Gerais for *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* (Our Lady of the Rosary). In *Umbanda* religion it is very common to make reference to Catholic saints, and particularly to Our Lady, who is an 'object of worship since the period of slavery in the brotherhoods and confraternities organized by them' (Santos 131). The most widely known myth to explain the origin of the tradition claims that *congados* emerged to celebrate the abolition of slavery and that today the festivity is a privileged site for the 'construction, preservation, and transmission of black social memory' (Reily 5). However, the form is of particular significance. When referring to modes of displacement seen in ritual practices, Da Matta explains that procession is a distinctive type of journey, which 'comes from a Latin word meaning "to move forward"' (75). The author states that it is a basic variation of the pilgrimage. The difference between pilgrimage and procession is that in a pilgrimage, the public comes to meet the centre and in a procession, 'it is the *center* (represented by the image of the saint) who comes out to meet us, leaving its sacred niche' (*ibid.*, emphasis in original). In *Baila Brazil*, both procession and pilgrimage are performed. As procession, the scene begins at the right side of the stage, with performers wearing typical rag clothes used in the *congado* festivities and carrying what seems to be an image of the Virgin Mary. Once the group reaches centre stage, the dancers organize a circle around the statue, which suggests a pilgrimage. However, in a very sudden movement the white fabric covering the statue, is removed and the Virgin is revealed to be a man, held upside down, who then starts to perform non-stop spins on his head as the scene turns into a street breakdance sequence (Figure 3). In breakdance, the performers interact with each other and with the public, by showing their acrobatic dancing skills and breakdance moves. This shifts again, transforming the scene into a game in which they compete for the audience's applauses between them. This act functions as a 'demand' to the audience to consider how they have constructed meaning from what they do or do not know, and have seen.



Figure 3 - Congado/Breakdance scene. Photo: Balé de Rua's Facebook page (open domain).

Both these scenes intersect notions of the sacred and the profane, bringing together ritualistic elements of African Brazilian traditions seen in street performances and more traditional Catholic rituals, which refer to colonialism and forced intercultural encounters, whilst at the same time exposing ambivalent notions of gendered representations. In addition, they generate a sense of playfulness within these intersections, a game in which the audience is at times taken by surprise and at times left wondering how to make sense of what is happening on stage.

The idea of displacement is borrowed from Roberto da Matta, a Brazilian sociologist who investigated the peculiarities of the Brazilian social life through its everyday rites and carnivals. He argues that it is through this process of displacement that one can 'exaggerate, invert, and even neutralize' (72) an object's qualities. It can also be related to the idea of 'play' in which the game created is generated from the interconnection of different sets of meanings. In my view, these scenes create a game of interactions, a game of possibilities and of transgression. As André Carreira suggests, when penetrating the structures of social life, the act of play can become transgressor, 'when it materializes on the surface of the social being, the act of play shapes into cultural manifestations that rupture the existing order' (29). This is due to the fact that the playful energy of a collective mobilization may turn into the questioning of social codes and established rules. I believe that it

is within the associations created by the act of playing with socially established meanings and displacement of perception, that Balé de Rua challenges pre-conceived expectations of gender, of what the various sacred figures that are part of Brazilian peoples' identities are meant to be and how these are relativized in and through performance.

I now turn to constructed gendered representations, and address scenes in which Uiara Cristina Ferreira, the only female dancer of Balé de Rua, who entered the group as a substitute for Sandra, performs. In one of the scenes, Uiara appears dressed as a *malandro* dancing samba (Figure 4). As briefly mentioned in the second chapter, *malandros* are considered male symbols of *brasilidade* and can be translated to English as 'hustlers' or 'rogues'. According to Ruben Oliven, as he returned from a visit to Europe in 1933, 'Oswald de Andrade had a fine insight by stating that, in Brazil, the opposite of the bourgeois was not the proletariat, but the bohemian' (69), thus, in the context of the modernist movement, 'the *malandro* became an archetype for what it means to be Brazilian' (Musskopf 151). However, this 'male Brazilian' was constructed in racial terms and the word can carry negative connotations 'as it often did during the early twentieth century, when some saw *malandros* as proof that Afro-Brazilians were unable to adapt to a post-slave economy' (Hertzman 593-94). However, according to Hertzman, 'more often *malandragem* is cast in positive light as a quintessentially Brazilian form of cleverness' (*ibid*).

According to Da Matta, *malandros* are performative constructs based on ritualistic practices, male characters that are roguish, 'womaniser' figures that perform the 'Brazilian art of using ambiguity as a tool for living' (Da Matta 64). Da Matta follows stating that the *malandro* character 'is always contrasted with the myth of the working man, representing two different matrices for the construction of identity where everyone has something of both' (151). Maite Conde also articulates this 'ambiguity' as she defines *malandros* as representing 'a countercultural ethos of playfulness, the circumvention of social rules, and a defiance of discipline and order, which emerges as an immediate creative response to the needs of the present' (7). This ethos of playfulness and defiance of social rules is gender-inverted in Uiara's performance as her cross-dressed image appears centre-stage and offers the possibility of subverting and exposing the social construction of male 'Brazilianness' with her female '*malandranness*'.

Narduchi stated in our interview that, ‘in the case of the scene with the *malandros*, I believe we wanted to avoid the cliché of a sexy *mulata* interacting with the rogues’ (2016). I will return to this as I explore the ‘female’ performance of *brasilidade*, which indicates very complex notions of sexualised and exoticized gendered identity with a sense of ownership and pride within the craft of performing samba.



Figure 4- Cross-dressed Malandra. Photo: Balé de Rua's Facebook page (open domain).

As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, the subjectivity of the *mulata* was constructed as a symbol of the Brazilian female character of *mestiçagem*. In ‘Performing Mulata-ness’ (2011), Pravaz argues that the icon *mulata* is also a constructed identity, a performative instance, and so is her relation to samba. It is important to stress that in samba songs, particularly the ones that were perpetuated in the 1920s-1930s, ‘many musicians carefully made mixed-race or black (but rarely white) women the objects of their desire’ (Hertzman 611). These lyrics still live on in the country’s repertoire, as I will soon demonstrate, in which ‘caricatures of dark-skinned women are central [...] often as objects of desire or as targets of violence’ (*ibid.* 613). According to Pravaz, whether it is during Carnival season or not, *mulatas*’ bodies ‘are on display for visual consumption and have become multifocal symbols eliciting associations that resonate both with colonial morality and with *mestiçagem*, the narrative of racial and cultural mixing

as a cornerstone of nationhood' (2011, 114). Hence, once again, one can observe the interrelation between 'race', 'gender' and 'nation' in the Brazilian imaginary.

In the scenes in which Uiara dances samba, Balé de Rua attempted to not reproduce images frequently related to Brazilian samba dancers as the sexualised stereotypical figures often shown in images of the country's carnival. Instead, they wanted to focus on the craft related to the dance, which speaks to Pravaz's assertion that 'women of Afro-Brazilian descent who dance the samba in Carnival parades (locally known as *passistas*) defend their dance as a highly skilled practice that requires dedication and profound knowledge of samba's intricate polyrhythmic percussive patterns' (2011, 114-15). This endeavor of taking ownership of the craft of samba in an international setting relates to Uiara's performance of the *passista* in *Baila Brazil* (Figure 5).



Figure 5- Uiara Cristina Ferreira dancing samba in a Tutu. Balé de Rua's Facebook page (open domain).

According to Narduchi, 'in the scenes of carnival in which she performs as *passista* she uses a ballet *tutu* to, in a metaphorical way, emphasize her image as a professional dancer and not as a mere object of desire' (2016). Despite the group's attempt at redirecting the focus to a less 'sexualized', more 'professional-like' performance, it does not however, avoid the risk of exoticization of the 'other' from an international perspective, as can be seen in Sanjoy Roy's remarks when writing a review for *The Guardian* (2015): 'The only female dancer of the group comes on dressed like a ballerina but dancing like a carnival queen, and you've never seen a

tutu with this much bounce'.³² Moreover, this attempt to transform the image of the samba dancer touches upon another element, which is the intersection of class and race, within the high art (classical/'white') - low art (popular/'mestiço'/'black') paradigm. Pravaz states that the social divisions upon which the subordination of *mulatas* rests are 'historically produced, symbolically loaded structures' (116). Within these structures, class becomes integrated with race and gendered issues. According to Maria Pena, in contemporary Brazil

income is more sensitive to gender than ethnicity. With the exception of those with postgraduate degrees, white and black men consistently earn higher wages [...] in terms of income level, white women are better placed than black women when their level of education is constant (119).

According to Kia Caldwell, this is because historically black women's domestic service in the homes of white Brazilian families has allowed white women to enter the paid labour force in increasing numbers. Therefore, African Brazilian women 'experienced triple oppression from gender, racial, and class domination' (222), which locates 'Black women's positioning at the bottom of the Brazilian socioeconomic structure' (*ibid* 224). Returning to the idea of gendered 'representations', according to Pravaz,

In understanding systems of visibility, discourses of sexuality, and the construction of the mestiço subject/object, it is therefore important to look at not only representations of gender but the way in which such representations are subjectively absorbed, performed, and transformed by those being interpellated (129).

Hence, one can perhaps perceive a friction between the 'subjectively absorbed representation' of the *mulata* and its historical associations, and the way in which the group attempts to transform it by, yet again, reinforcing the idea that a 'whiter', 'higher class' tradition is linked to professionalism and expertise. This relates to Crenshaw's elaboration on 'representational intersectionality' (1282), which notes how cultural constructions can disempower and reproduce, for example, racial and gender hierarchies. This reproduction can sometimes escape

³² Roy, Sanjoy. 'Infectious Energy in Need of Channeling'. *The Guardian*. Review. Aug 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/aug/07/bale-de-rua-review-high-powered-energy-can-crowd-out-the-show>

the intentions of its makers, as we can see with the example of this samba dance scene, which suggests the limits of signifiers, like the tutu when worn in the context of performing a deeply historicized and embodied tradition like samba, with all its association and ‘contested sets of relationships embedded in locally defined struggles for power and recognition’ (Pravaz 116).

Embodying Memories of Slavery

Before briefly discussing Balé de Rua’s choice of music to close the performance, I would like to highlight two key moments in which *Baila Brazil* seems to bring to the stage collective memories of slavery in Brazil. For, in addition to the above-mentioned intersections, there seemed to be an overall desire to explicitly perform and remember slavery within a discourse of nationhood that undermined this violent history. According to Hutchison, memory processes comprise ordering and interpreting the material in ways that also affect notions of identity ‘insofar as we feed these “meanings” back into our understanding of ourselves and into how we relate to these collective narratives of our worlds’ (5). Within the choice of remembering slavery on international stages, the group thus reclaims their African Brazilian identity by performing through ritual these memories of trauma, as exposed below.

The opening is the embodiment of the spirit of *Preto Velho*. Umbanda’s ‘guides’ or ‘spirits’ have different origins and qualities; they are ‘incorporated into *Umbanda* ceremonies by the mediums and offer advice and consolation to the faithful’ (Balé de Rua 2015). Some of these guides personified on stage symbolise *Preto Velho*, a ‘former African slave spirits who are bruised by their wounds and represent knowledge but also love, patience and charity’ (*ibid*). According to Eufrazia Cristina Santos, in *Umbanda* cosmology, *Preto Velhos* represent the spirits of the old Africans and former slaves who worked and lived in Brazil [... they] work for good, providing aid to the ones in need, and practice charity through word or magical-religious services’ (Santos 127). Santos continues explaining that when in the ritual process the medium goes into a trance, an entire display technique is involved which includes specific gestures, posture, tone of voice, movements and the use of certain objects (132). During *Baila Brazil*, such presentation techniques,

or performances, are enacted as dancer Marcos Paulo embodies the spirit (Figure 6).

In our interview, Narduchi stated: 'The dancer (Marcos Paulo) [who is an *Umbanda* practitioner] first consulted the [*Umbanda*] centre that he goes to and asked for the permission of the house's *Preto Velho* to do the solo' (2016). Narduchi stated that 'sometimes in performance, and even rehearsal, we feel that the spirit is really here' (qtd in Bishop 2015). The dancers gather around performer Marco Paulo 'spraying sparks on to one man's bare skin' (Sanjoy Roy, 2015 *The Guardian*).



Figure 6 - Possession of *Preto Velho*. Photo: Balé de Rua's Facebook page (open domain).

What is intriguing from an analytical perspective is that this performance of embodiment of *Preto Velho* can be seen as both actual ritual, in which performers and possibly some Brazilian audience members can perceive the possession of the spirit (they believe in the possession), and it is also a performance of ritual framed by a fictitious stage for others. This suggests how *Baila Brazil* can include various perspectives simultaneously, illustrating the group's inclination to highlight complexity and ambiguity, refusing a single positionality. According to Lindsay Hale, *Preto Velho* 'explores, at times deeply, the existential dimensions of an imagined, historical moment that lasted nearly four centuries. Every one of these stories depicts a working-out of the fundamental existential dilemma of the slave: the loss or denial of full humanity under a regime of domination' (408). By

performing a positional moment in which a performer embodies a specific spirit of a slave, which represents a historic moment and at the same time, because it is a religious reference to an actual indigenous African (and Brazilian) belief, it could also be read as ritualistic spirit possession, and not mimetic. This creates a complex, paradoxical illustration of the place of frames in interpretation. This moment highlights key tensions in Brazilian ideology in representation and both the embodiment and performance/ performativity of diverse and often counter narratives and identities.



Figure 7 - *Bacias (Buckets)*. Photo: Balé de Rua's Facebook page (open domain).

The last scene, which I would like to comment upon is the 'slave ship/buckets' scene (Figure 7). In the scene, only male dancers are present and have most of their skin exposed. They make movements that suggest they are rowing together and are aligned in the shape of a ship. They make gradual movements of dancing to a slow samba song (by contemporary singer Seu Jorge) called *A Carne* (The Meat 2001). Here is an extract of the song's lyrics:

*The cheapest meat in the market
is the black meat
That made and still makes history
Holding this country in its arms [...]
And this country*

*Turns everyone black
But straightens their hairs
Even so
I still hold the rights
Of some ancestor of color*

<i>To subtly fight for respect</i>	<i>Of some ancestor of color</i>
<i>Of some ancestor of color</i>	<i>To fight, to fight, to fight</i>
<i>To bravely fight for respect</i>	<i>The cheapest meat in the market</i>
<i>Of some ancestor of color</i>	<i>is the black meat.</i>
<i>To fight for justice and respect</i>	

(*A Carne*, by Seu Jorge)

Each performer then takes a *bacia* (basin) that is a symbol of those used in the mining of gold and precious metals, particularly diamonds, in Brazil during slavery. Ouro Preto, Balé de Rua's hometown, which literally means 'Black Gold' is historically linked to this enforced practice of mining. Hence, they are bringing to the global stages, particularly local (and perhaps personal, through ancestry) memories of labour during slavery. As Zirin notes, in early to mid-nineteenth century Brazil, 'sustaining the lives of slaves was secondary to getting as many of the precious stones and minerals out of the ground as humanly possible. If slaves died in the mines, they were dumped, and new slaves brought in. That is why the life expectancy of slaves in Brazil was so cruelly brief by comparison to the United States' (43). The remembrance of this brutality was brought to light in performance when a samba song, which is historically linked to *brasilidade*, is combined with lyrics that clearly protest the way African Brazilians are still oppressed in Brazil.

Music Highlighting the Complexities of National Identity in *Baila Brazil*

The songs *Balé de Rua* have selected to close the show are a final example of how Brazilian nationhood can be seen as both a 'melting pot' and 'African-Brazilian', as the company states on their program, enhancing the ambiguity of their performance. For the 'grand-closure' they chose the song *Aquarela do Brasil* (Watercolour of Brazil, 1939), by composer Ary Barroso³³. This song was produced for the Rio Carnival of 1939 and was the tune that initiated the entire genre of 'exaltation sambas', explained in the previous chapter. *Aquarela* is so intrinsically

³³ Outside of Brazil, this song is simply known as 'Brazil' (Goldblatt).

linked to the idea of Brazilian ‘identity’ that even in the present day it is considered to be a ‘second national anthem’ (Miranda 63), and is still played on the radios, in national stadiums, and television commercials. What is most significant about music is that it extends beyond ideas or philosophies to engage emotion, and bring together the private and public. According to Frith, ‘if the singer’s voice makes public the supposed sounds of private feeling, then these public gestures are consumed privately, fitted into our own narratives, our own expressive repertoires’ (*Music and Identity* 211). Possibly because of this feature of music, and through constant embodied performances of the song in repetition, *Aquarela* can be seen to work in *Baila Brazil* as a ‘representational labour’, which ‘have a referential relation to an existing (if variable) idea of nation’ (Hurley 3).

As was previously discussed in chapter two, affective experience is key to musical experience/appreciation. Likewise, emotion is central to nation building for, as Anderson notes, ‘it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love [...] The cultural products of nationalism – poetry, prose fiction, music, plastic arts - show this love very clearly in thousands of different forms and styles’ (141). Returning once again to the idea of ‘love’, in order to express such feeling, the lyrics of *Aquarela do Brasil* were composed to celebrate the national culture embedded in the image ‘that depicted Brazil as a peaceful tropical paradise, a newly found Eden’ (Goldblatt 77). I here include a small extract of *Aquarela do Brasil*:

<i>Brazil, my Brazilian Brazil,</i>	<i>Brazil, beautiful and pleasant</i>
<i>My intriguing mulato,</i>	<i>land,</i>
<i>I will sing you in my verses:</i>	<i>Of the naughty little ‘morena’</i>
<i>Brazil, samba that gives,</i>	<i>With her air of indifference.</i>
<i>A swaying that makes you</i>	<i>Brazil, a greenness that offers...</i>
<i>waddle;</i>	<i>For the admiration of the world.</i>
<i>Brazil of my love,</i>	<i>Brazil of my love,</i>
<i>Land of our Lord.</i>	<i>Land of our Lord.</i>
<i>Brazil! Brazil! For me! For me!</i>	<i>Brazil! Brazil! For me! For me!³⁴</i>

³⁴ My translation.

According to Miranda, the choice of words in the song represented the ideology behind *mestiçagem*, i.e. instead of using the words ‘black woman’ or ‘black man’, the composer chose ‘*mulato*’ (‘mixed’ man) and ‘*morena*’ (brown woman) (Miranda 64), thereby highlighting the *mestiço* quality of the Brazilian nation. Even the simple chorus ‘*Brazil pra mim, pra mim, Brazil*’ (Brazil for me, for me, Brazil) expresses an attempt to internalize one’s relation with the country, pronouncing that Brazil belongs to each and every Brazilian.

However, after the performers leave the stage and return for the ‘encore’, in response to applause and standing ovations from the public, the dancers and the lead singer ‘invade’ the audiences’ space, inviting them to dance to *Rap da Felicidade* (Rap of Happiness), a 1994 Brazilian funk/rap song in which the chorus proffers: ‘All I want is to be happy, to be able to walk calmly in the *favela* where I was born and to be proud and conscious that the poor have their place’. This song will be returned to in the conclusion, as it was also performed in the Opening Ceremony’s stage at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. However, I highlight the use of this song in *Baila Brazil*, both because of how it contrasts to the previous ‘exaltation samba’, and because there was an even greater sense of ‘togetherness’ as the dancers stepped into the audience’s ‘space’ and danced with many members of the public to the music of the *favelas*. I believe these examples show how in this performance two conflicting narratives are presented alongside one another to suggest how they can coexist as contrasting but legitimate expressions of Brazilian identity and performance.

In this chapter I have attempted to show how *Baila Brazil* both narrates and destabilizes the discourses behind *brasilidade*, amplifying the specific African-Brazilian influences within Brazilian social memory. As Holdsworth suggests, national identity ‘is the meeting point between the individual and the collective conception of the nation, but crucially both are variable’ (21). I believe that an analysis of the group’s official standpoint on the narratives of Brazilian identity and their emotional connection to the idea of Brazil, read against their selection of Brazilian music embodied through dance and subverted when African Brazilian ritualistic practices are performed, may offer ways to explore how the meeting point between an individual and collective conception of a nation is not only variable, as discussed by Holdsworth, but also fluid. It may also allow us to consider the implications of what remains, which is a constant (re) negotiation between

personal and collective identity, and a sense of then and now. As Bishop states, 'even as the audience is invited to cheer and clap along, it is being told an often dark and terrible history that showcases what the outcast of Brazil do best: celebration as a means of survival' (2015).

The thesis will now move on to a conversation that explores how Brazilian identity is performed through music in a theatrical representation which deals more overtly with the country's colonial history and current political oppressions through the metaphor of Caliban, and more precisely, through Augusto Boal's vision of Shakespeare's famous character.

Chapter 4: 'We are all Calibans': Street Theatre Re-claiming Identity to Resist Oppression

To me, it is important that it [the performance] be made with a lot of truth, a lot of sincerity, a lot of colour, it can even be a little exaggerated, but it must be made clear, very clear, that we are beautiful because we are ourselves, and no imposed culture is more beautiful than ours. It must be clear that we are Caliban.

(Augusto Boal)

The above excerpt can be found in Augusto Boal's initial stage directions for *A Tempestade* (1974), a play he wrote whilst in exile during the Brazilian military dictatorship period as 'an answer to, not an adaptation of, Shakespeare's play' *The Tempest* (1611) (Driskell 77). It is also referenced in the program of the performance *Caliban: A Tempestade de Augusto Boal (Caliban: Augusto Boal's Tempest)*³⁵ (2016-2018), the production which is the main focus of this chapter. As its title suggests, *Caliban* is an adaptation of Boal's text and was created by the Brazilian theatre group *Oi Nós Aqui Traveiz*, who are from Porto Alegre, South Brazil, as a means to address Brazilian 'identity' and socio-economic and political concerns that have been afflicting the country in recent times. The production toured most regions of Brazil in 2017 and used the aesthetic format of Brazilian popular street theatre, which I will analyse in this chapter. When I interviewed the group, they affirmed that it was Boal's last words in his initial stage directions that propelled the conception of this performance. *Oi Nós* said,³⁶ 'we were driven by the idea that "we are all Calibans", that we Brazilians are colonized, oppressed and exploited.'³⁷ Hence, this performance was chosen to be included in this thesis as it uses the allegory of 'Caliban' to address the ongoing social and political changes in

³⁵ To facilitate the reading, I will use the word *Caliban* (in italics) to refer to *Oi Nois'* performance; *Caliban* (without italics) to refer to the character of the play; and 'Caliban' (in quotation marks) to refer to Roberto Fernandez Retamar's essay.

³⁶ From this point onwards, *Oi Nós Aqui Traveiz* will be abbreviated to *Oi Nós*.

³⁷ I interviewed *Oi Nós* in 2017 via exchange of e-mails in which they offered answers to my questions in a word document.

contemporary Brazil, which can be seen to influence performances of ‘nationhood’. In addition to identifying Brazilian people with the main character of the performance, as cited in the title *Caliban*, the group aims to critically analyse ‘the conservative “tempest” that Latin America is currently suffering, especially the great setback in social rights and the struggle for autonomy of the economic, political and cultural life we live in Brazil’.³⁸

Ói Nóis presents thirteen scenes interspersed with fourteen songs, which highlight the centrality of music in this production. Hence, *Caliban* was chosen to be included in this study because it speaks directly to the central theme of this thesis: which is an examination of the intersections of music and performances of Brazilian ‘identity’. As discussed in the previous chapter, even in contemporary Brazil the matter of ‘national identity’ is recurrently being analysed, critiqued and explored in public discourse and in performative practices. In addition to ethnic and racial complexities and anxieties, seen in the examples provided in this thesis thus far – with the performativity of samba and the performance *Baila Brazil*, *Caliban* highlights that within this ‘identity’ resides the seemingly unresolvable tension of not only post-colonial and modernist visions of Brazilian ‘identity’, but also particularly neo-colonial struggles and political oppressions still current in Brazil. When referring to the central character of the production, Ói Nóis states that ‘nowadays Caliban symbolizes resistance to neo-colonialism’,³⁹ a force which can be seen to operate both internally, with Brazil’s military history and its contemporary political turmoil and ‘conservative “tempest”’ (Oi Nois 2017), and externally, within the country’s position in the global context.

With the adaptation of Boal’s text into a street theatre format, and respecting his wishes that the performance ‘be made with a lot of truth, a lot of sincerity, a lot of colour’ and a little ‘exaggerated’, as stated in the opening remarks of this chapter, *Caliban* addresses matters of oppression by merging diverse musical forms within the plot of the play, using a *mise-en-scene* that foregrounds a particular kind of popular theatricality – with its uses of chorus, acrobatic movements, irreverent humour, clownish characters and epic narrative that, according to Ói Nóis, ‘allegorically reflects our [Brazilian] society’.⁴⁰ Here *Caliban* provides an allegorical

³⁸ Available at *Caliban’s Program* (4).

³⁹ My translation. Original available at: www.oinoisaquitraveiz.com.br

⁴⁰ My translation. Original available at: www.oinoisaquitraveiz.com.br

reflection of Brazil, where allegory is being used to critique systems of power. This is an effective strategy, given Lynette Hunter's argument that, 'systems of power that are perceived as all-pervasive and determining are impossible to describe, so allegory enables a critique by sidestepping a realist agenda and positioning writers [and artists] to use strategies and techniques that foreground the assumptions of the system so they can be questioned and challenged' (268).

In order to provide a contextual framing for the analysis of *Caliban: A Tempestade de Augusto Boal*, this chapter will briefly trace the character's history and its links with postcolonial studies. It will then focus on the context in which Boal wrote *A Tempestade*, and how he was inspired by the Cuban writer Roberto Fernández Retamar's essay 'Caliban: Notes toward a Discussion of Culture in Our America' (1972). Retamar's essay foregrounds both a postcolonial reading of Shakespeare's character, and also attempts to recognise a particular type of identity unique to Latin American countries as providing a means to resist the neo-colonial power of the United States and its influence in the continent. However, despite Boal's and Ói Nóis' endeavour at broadening the discussion of identity to the entirety of Latin America, this study will focus mostly on the Brazilian context, to maintain consistency with the scope of this thesis.

The chapter will also provide a historical contextualization of the Brazilian Military Dictatorship Period (1964-1985), for it was in this intense period of state oppression that Boal's text was written and also the context out of which the group Ói Nóis was formed and to help understand current responses to and views of Brazilian 'identity'. Additionally, the possibility of the military returning to occupy state power has become a pressing topic for Brazil right now. Hence, this fragment of Brazilian history must be included in this thesis as it is almost impossible to escape confronting issues of state violence and oppression when analysing *Caliban* and the Brazilian nation more broadly. The chapter then moves on to examine the specificities of Popular Brazilian Street Theatre, before finally considering how music operates in the performance *Caliban*, in a conversation with Boal and Retamar's views and current national colonial/neo-colonial criticism.

First, I will position the figure of Caliban within wider postcolonial discourses, which speaks to a more global perspective on colonization and its oppressive relations. I will then begin to move the discourse to a Latin American

context before focusing on the Brazilian contemporary approach seen in Oi Nois' performance.

Tracing Caliban in Postcolonial Studies

The character Caliban first appeared in what is considered to be William Shakespeare's last play *The Tempest*, thought to be written between the years 1610-11. This iconic Shakespearean text has been revisited a number of times, particularly due to the emblematic configurations that surrounds both its plot and characters. The story takes place in a 'magical universe', in an island with 'mystical beings' and includes matters that address power struggles, slavery and colonial relationships, revenge and conspiracies, romantic love and ultimately, forgiveness. I will not delve into the specifics of Shakespeare's plot and storyline, for this chapter is focused on an adaptation of a 'response' to Shakespeare and speaks to a different (namely, Brazilian) reality. Rather, I want to focus on what Silvia Bigliuzzi and Lisanna Calvi address in the introduction to *Revisiting the Tempest* (2014), that with the ambiguities of its characters, the text offers such complexity and contradictions that 'its semantic, structural, stylistic, poetical and ideological density raise questions without offering final answers, thus making meaning opaque on several levels' (5). I am interested in how these ambiguities, particularly regarding Caliban's image – what and who he represents - have endured fluctuations and mutations within each new interpretation of *The Tempest* through time and in different contexts, in order to situate the contemporary 'Brazilian' Caliban.

It is crucial for this study to note that many interpretations of the Shakespearean text's 'meaning' and critical understandings, can be located within the frame of postcolonial studies, because they engage with ideologies from the 17th century, the period when European colonialism was gaining momentum, alongside associated discourses on modes of othering non-Europeans and thus justifying various forms of subjugation, as discussed by Bigliuzzi and Calvi and others' (Cartelli, Vaughan and Vaughan) critical approaches to this time and material. In her essay 'Recent Perspectives on *The Tempest*' (2014) Brinda Charry succinctly articulates that postcolonial studies was developed after the dissolution of Europe's colonial empires 'as a literary approach based on the premise that every branch of knowledge and cultural production is part and parcel of the European conquest and colonization of much of the world' (66). Hence, postcolonial theory

and criticism, from Bill Ashcroft et. al. (1989), has been concerned with 'analysing the relationship between culture and colonial power, exploring the cultural products of societies that were once under colonial rule' (Auslander *Theory for Performance* 143), to expose the modes of discourses that perpetuated colonial ideologies. Within this analysis, many of the postcolonial readings of *The Tempest* perceive the relationship between Prospero and his slaves – Ariel and, particularly, Caliban - as key markers of colonial encounter, power, domination and exploitation. As articulated by Nadia Lie in *Constellation Caliban* (1997):

To Ashcroft e.a, *The Tempest* is perhaps the most important text used to establish a paradigm for postcolonial readings of canonical works. The alternative reading strategies that were applied to it by people like Brown (1985), Hulme (1985,86) and Greenblatt (1988,1990) re-site this 'timeless' work as part of a broader 'colonial' discourse, and Prospero and Caliban are turned into a kind of archetypal colonizer and colonized (247).

My aim in this chapter is not to explore too deeply into various postcolonial interpretations and appropriations of Shakespeare's text, for these revisions have been studied and articulated by many authors in the field of theatre, literature and cultural studies (Bigliuzzi and Calvi, Cartelli, Charry, D'haen and Lie, Lie, Vaughan and Vaughan, Voigts, etc.). Rather, I will focus on the implications of scholars investigating this relationship between Prospero as Colonizer and Caliban as Colonized which, ultimately, came to see Caliban as a figure that is in opposition to dominant ideologies, and how works like Retamar's essay have been used in Boal's *A Tempestade* and in Oi Nois' appropriation of it, to provide the character with 'a spectrum of interpretations seldom matched in the history of western literature' (Vaughan and Vaughan *Shakespeare's Caliban* xvi).

When referring to postcolonial readings of the play, it is important to begin by considering the work of Octavio Mannoni, as articulated by Sirlei Dudalski and Mariana Gomes (2012), because it challenged the relationship between Prospero and Caliban from being 'top down' to propose a more complex dependency model. Mannoni's book *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, published for the first time in 1948, borrows *The Tempest* in an attempt to theorize a 'Dependency Complex' of the colonized in relation to the colonizer. In Mannoni's view, this complex happens simultaneously and unchangeably: the colonizer always

oppresses and the colonized always complies with the oppression. Thus, a parallel was noted between the attitude of the colonized towards the arrival of the foreigner and the attitude of Caliban towards the arrival of Prospero. Mannoni's formulation was widely criticized. In his seminal *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon dedicates a chapter entitled 'The So-Called Dependency Complex of Colonized Peoples' in answer to Mannoni where he challenges Mannoni's argument based on the premise that there is no way out for the colonized people unless they consider themselves inferior. To Fanon, complexes are built precisely because of racist ideas that consider Europeans to be superior, as he says, 'the feeling of inferiority of the colonized is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority. Let us have the courage to say it outright: *It is the racist who creates his inferior*' (69, emphasis in original). Hence, according to Fanon, in colonial settings these racist ideas are always present, specifically through modes of oppression and representation that result in the colonized always being considered inferior, in a never-ending loop that reinforces the racist relations inaugurated by the Europeans. Within this formulation, the colonised are implicated in the relationship, and the synergies continue into the present identity politics of post-colonies.

The critical approach to the relationship between colonizer/colonized put forward by Fanon was articulated further from 1959 onwards, when, according to Jyotsna Singh, African and Caribbean scholars began to work for their national liberation. Part of this included their beginning 'to revise and mobilise the play in defence of Caliban's right to the island on which he is born prior to Prospero's arrival' (2016). Singh affirms that Caliban's assertion in the play, "'This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother, / Which thou tak'st from me,'" became the rallying cry for African and Caribbean intellectuals from the 1960s to the 1970s' (*ibid*). It was at that time that, according to Claudia Buchweitz (1999), some of the most important non-English appropriations of *The Tempest* appeared, namely Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête: Adaptation pour un Théâtre Nègre* (Martinique, 1969) and Retamar's essay 'Caliban: Apuntes Sobre la Cultura en Nuestra América' (Cuba, 1971). These works support Charry's remark that postcolonial readings also 'typically place Caliban at the centre of the play; he has come to signify the colonized native, the complex villain-victim, political rebel, poet and dreamer' (69). This idea will be further examined when I closely look at the performance *Caliban* later in this

chapter. For now, I will turn to briefly discuss Retamar's essay, which presents a more focused 'Latin-American' postcolonial approach to viewing the figure of Caliban, which was used to inspire Boal's text and still echoes in the work and rhetoric of the group *Ói Nós Aqui Traveiz*.

Roberto Fernandez Retamar was the editor-in-chief of the Cuban journal *Casa de las Americas* when he wrote the essay entitled *Caliban* in 1972. Nadia Lie mentions in 'Countering Caliban' (1997), that Retamar's essay rapidly gained a very wide circulation in Latin America and beyond. According to Lie, the article's success can be attributed to its 'polemic character, and to its programmatic promise of a form of literary criticism which would take into account Latin America's specific cultural identity' (245). Alden Vaughan and Virginia Vaughan contextualized the essay's re-appearance in English in 1974 in a special issue of *The Massachusetts Review*. According to them, the journal's guest editor Robert Marquez described the issue's purpose as being 'against the hegemonic, Europocentric, vision of the universe, the identity of Caliban is a direct function of his refusal to accept – on any level – that hegemony... This, then ... a fragment of the world-view of the victim, is the world of Caliban' (qtd in Vaughan and Vaughan 157). Marquez's remarks resonate with Charry's affirmation on the tendencies of postcolonial readings to position Caliban at the centre of *The Tempest*, thereby highlighting the figure of the 'subaltern' and inverting his positionality within the story/history of colonization. It is thus not surprising that Retamar's 'Caliban' later became associated with postcolonial thinkers such as Edward Said, as presented by Lie:

On the back of the 1989 English book translation of 'Caliban', Retamar is praised for this 'meticulous efforts to dismantle Eurocentric colonial and neocolonial thought,' and in his foreword Fredric Jameson considers 'Caliban' to be 'the Latin American equivalent of Said's *Orientalism*' (246). [...] Edward Said [...] acknowledges the essay and treats it as an example of what he calls 'the culture of resistance' that originated in the (ex-)colonies as a reaction against 'imperialism' (248).

Here we see parallels between Retamar and Said's attempts to both expose the role literature played in constructing images of the colonised in the European imaginary, and therefore, its potential for similarly being used to deconstruct these same colonial inscriptions of subjugated peoples via literature in other contexts.

Thus, twenty years prior to Stephen Greenblatt and Bill Ashcroft's (in *The Empire Writes Back*) proposal that Caliban's "'you taught me language and my profit on't/ Is I know how to curse" was emblematic of the postcolonial situation' (Voigts 2014, 55), Retamar had made this argument:

Right now, as we are discussing, as I am discussing with those colonizers, how else can I do it except in one of their languages, which is now also *our* language, and with so many of their conceptual tools, which are now also *our* conceptual tools? This is precisely the extraordinary outcry that we read in a work by perhaps the most extraordinary writer of fiction who ever existed (Retamar 5).

I will return to this iconic passage when analysing how in the performance *Caliban*, the central character not only appropriates the colonizer/oppressor's verbal language, but also their 'musical language/s' to curse back. Returning to Retamar's essay, occupying centre position in the discussion about *The Tempest*, Shakespeare's Caliban is considered and conceptualized 'not as the disobedient slave, but rather as the oppressed native' (Lie 250). Retamar envisions the character as being not on "'the wrong side" of the piece, but rather as "the other side"' (*ibid*) of/to it, invoking Fanon's argument of reciprocity, interdependence of the coloniser and colonized in defining their respective identities. This idea of the story being told by 'the other side' resonated with the group Ói Nóis, who said,

Boal, in explaining that we are Caliban, makes a clear allusion to Roberto Fernandez Retamar, who had already called attention to the implications of rethinking the history of Latin America from the 'other side', assuming our marginalized status: 'Caliban (which is an anagram of cannibalism) [is] for me, a symbol of the people of Nuestra America and the peoples of the Third World' (Retamar qtd in Ói Nóis' interview 2017).⁴¹

As can be seen through Ói Nóis' observation, some of the ideas forwarded by Retamar's essay continue to be revisited in contemporary Brazil through *Caliban*, which has been used as an allegory to represent the Brazilian social reality, and thereby used to re-examine Brazilian national identity. However, before delving

⁴¹ My translation.

into Ói Nóis' *Caliban*, I will provide a brief contextualization of Boal's milieu when *A Tempestade* was written.

Brazil's Military Dictatorship Period (1964 - 1985)

As described in chapter one, the first official dictatorship period in Brazil was from 1937-1945, under President Getúlio Vargas' government. Despite being considered a 'civilian' dictatorship, the Brazilian military forces sustained Vargas' presidency and monitored his actions. This can be supported by Ana Elena Puga's observations in *Memory, Allegory, and Testimony in South American Theater* (2008), in which she states that throughout the years in Brazil, as in Argentina, 'the military developed the habit of stepping in to, in its view, sort out the muddles created by civilian politicians' (70). When Vargas' dictatorship ended however, Brazil entered into a 'redemocratization period' in which five presidents were elected between 1946 and 1964. In those years, the country experienced exponential economic growth and developed a sense of national self-esteem. Marlene Soares Dos Santos suggests that, due to Brazil's growing prosperity within that time frame, the 'feeling of inferiority, developed through years of European and then North American economic and cultural domination, was gradually disappearing' (44). However, she further argues that in the first years of the 1960s Brazil was caught in the middle of the Cold War between the United States of America and the Soviet Union and was affected by the ideas of the Cuban revolution. In addition, the country experienced internal political turmoil, what Chauí described as the 'struggle between a new powerful bourgeoisie associated with international finance, and the national bourgeoisie' (52-53). All these factors provided the military with the 'opportunity and the excuse they were waiting for to occupy their own country' (Dos Santos 44). Therefore, on March 31st 1964, the Armed Forces staged an overnight *coup*, which dispossessed the president João Goulart, sending him to exile in Uruguay.

On 1st April 1964, the Brazilian nation woke up to the announcement that a military *coup* had taken place. It was the first time that the heads of the Armed Forces acquired power directly in Brazil, taking over most of the government functions. As Chauí, Dos Santos and others (Arraes, Atencio, Fausto, Levine, Tinhorão) argue, the military were allied with key sectors of Brazilian civil society, mainly members of an elite connected to international forces, particularly from the

United States, who had an interest in controlling the country and fighting communist ideologies that were gaining traction. As Ana Elena Puga states, the *coup* was an attempt to ‘steal the Left’s thunder by declaring itself the leader of a “revolution,” a revolution from the right’ (68).

The new military regime promised to ‘cleanse’ Brazil of corruption and communist influence, with this occurring also through censorship of media and public expression which was gradually enforced by the creation of decrees called Institutional Acts (*Atos Institucionais* – AI) that justified the regime as ‘a result of the exercise of the Constituent Power inherent in all revolutions’ (Fausto 465). According to Miguel Arraes in *Brazil: The People and the Power* (1972), by 1968 the dictatorship experienced the ‘growing opposition of the masses, and the first armed resistance’ (188). In response, on 13th December 1968, the military established its most punishing and authoritarian of all acts, the ‘draconian Fifth Institutional Act’ (AI-5) (Atencio 9), which remained imposed until 1978. Under the AI-5, media and press censorship were officially established in the country. According to Levine, up until that point the Federal Police subjected the press to daily censorship by ““encouraging” editors to do what the censors demanded’, in a system known as ‘self-censorship’, since ‘compliance was technically voluntary’ (16). What the AI-5 came to represent was a legitimisation of the ‘prior censorship on all media outlets in the country’ (Caldas 59). And so, it legitimised ‘[the] arbitrary arrests, and [the] forfeitures of political mandates’ (*ibid*). Unlike the previous acts, the AI-5 had no expiring date and under this act the presidential powers expanded and the closing of the Brazilian Congress was demanded. In addition to practices such as media censorship and persecution of those who opposed the regime, torture became an integral method of government action, along with the suspension of the right of *habeas corpus*. In Dos Santos’ words, ‘as the opposition grew, the methods to crush it increased in number and cruelty: censorship, arrests, tortures, exiles, total abolition of civil and human rights’ (44). Under AI-5 many artists, intellectuals and journalists were held in prison and forced into exile, including Augusto Boal.⁴²

⁴² Well-known musicians were also famously exiled, such as Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil - exponents of Brazilian popular music. Both artists performed in the Rio 2016 Olympics Opening Ceremony, the subject of the following chapter.

As briefly stated, the military coup brought to power the ‘most reactionary and backward military factions in Brazil [and the] supporters of the economic integration of the country with the imperialist interests of the American economy’ (Arraes 69). In addition to Arraes argumentation, other authors have extensively depicted the role of the U.S in the Brazilian military dictatorship (Dreifuss, Fico, Parker). This is a crucial point that allows for a better understanding of Boal’s criticism of U.S imperialist influences in *A Tempestade* and why *Ói Nós*’ performance of *Caliban* redirects and recontextualizes this responsiveness against current neo-colonialism in contemporary Brazil. Returning to Arraes, he further develops his point by stating that this ‘integration with the imperialist interests’ (69) meant, in fact, subordination of the Brazilian economy to North American affairs, and exposed five conditions of this subordination:

- 1) At the *economic* level the regime must control directly the country’s production [...];
- 2) *Politically* the new regime must dominate the machinery of government in order to make it serve the interests of foreign capital [...];
- 3) So far as *security* is concerned, political and police control of the whole population is essential in order to foresee and prevent any attempted opposition to the regime;
- 4) *Socially* it is necessary to establish attractive future prospects for the middle classes and to create jobs for technicians and intellectuals [...];
- 5) *Psychologically*, the regime must create an ideological climate favourable to the acceptance of the new system by large sections of the population (171).⁴³

This ‘ideological climate favourable to the acceptance’ of the regime relates to Tinhorão’s observations as he affirms that there was, in general, an apparent consensus in the acceptance of the military coup by the Brazilian population. This recognition helped establish, then, what he ironically calls a ‘bourgeois counter revolution in a continental scale’ (*História* 328). Boris Fausto also criticizes this alliance of military force with civilian affirmation, noting that ‘the military did not rule alone and often did not closely control civilians with whom they shared the power’ (513). These civilians Fausto comments upon were not the majority of the

⁴³ My emphasis.

population, however, as Puga notes, the military did seem to have the 'support of a large segment of the middle class' (69).

As can be seen in the above segment, the role civilians played during the Brazilian military dictatorship has been discussed and debated upon.⁴⁴ This matter can be seen as further complicated with the Amnesty Law, signed in 1979 by President João Figueiredo and lengthily described by Rebecca Atencio in *Memory's Turn* (2014). According to Atencio, with this law 'Figueiredo proposed a measure that not only excluded ex-guerrillas accused of violent crimes but also *included* agents of the state implicated in torture, murder, and political disappearance' (11).⁴⁵ Congress voted and approved this proposal for a 'so-called reciprocal amnesty' (*ibid*), which went through without significant public resistance, despite allowing for the possibility that members of the military and police could be held unaccountable for their crimes. Atencio theorises this state policy founded by the Amnesty Law as promoting a *reconciliation by institutionalized forgetting* (12).⁴⁶ Instead of resisting, Brazil chose the path of compromising with its past.

Such compromise can be explained by the context Brazil was immersed in the early 1980's. According to Atencio, with the intense economic and social crises – and exponential growth of crime -, other issues that had been foreshadowed by the military rule, such as those 'associated with the workers', women's, black pride, gay rights, and other movements' (12), were more pressing at the time for the Brazilian left than repealing the Amnesty Law. Brazil only truly experienced official reckoning with its military dictatorship past in 18th November 2011, when the then president Dilma Rousseff (who was also imprisoned and tortured by the military between 1970-72) signed a Law creating the National Truth Commission (*Comissão Nacional da Verdade* – CNV).⁴⁷ Up until that point the names of the prisoners and those persecuted by the dictatorship remained enclosed in the archives of the military forces. With the CNV, those archives were finally open. The commission delivered their final report on 10th October 2014, bringing to light the stories of crimes and tortures committed by the military force and the uncovering of the 434

⁴⁴ Growing up in Brazil in a leftist oriented household at the beginning of the 1990s, I have often heard friends of my parents discussing (and criticizing) the majority of the Brazilian population for accepting and complying with the military regime.

⁴⁵ Emphasis in original.

⁴⁶ Emphasis in original.

⁴⁷ CNV's official website: <http://cnv.memoriasreveladas.gov.br/index.php>

people who were killed or 'disappeared' during the dictatorship period.

Returning to Atencio, she resists thoughts that suggest that the reason there were 'few mechanisms of official reckoning in Brazil for so many years [was] in part because society was apathetic' (12) and inverts it to the idea that society was so apathetic *because* of lack of official reckoning in Brazil, as can be seen in the notion of 'reconciliation by institutionalised forgetting'. As for the possible reasons there seemed to be a general 'compliance' of the population with the military regime and a seeming 'apathy' afterwards, she stresses:

In the mid-1970s, there was a real risk in protesting the deaths and disappearances, for by expressing dissent one might be taken as a sympathizer of the armed struggle. By the early 1980s, the ever-present possibility of a setback or a reversal in the transition process served to discourage pressure for truth and justice. After the military left power in 1985, new problems [...] demanded attention and may have seemed more urgent than reckoning with a painful past that many preferred to believe had already been overcome (19).

In addition to what Atencio states, it is important to stress that, at the same time that Brazil was under the military regime, other South American countries were undertaking similar experiences of dictatorship, in which democratic governments were being deposed by the military. When the Brazilian dictatorship faced a chronic inflation that led to a pro-democracy movement in the late 1970's early 1980's, its neighbour Argentina was experiencing its horrifying civic-military dictatorship and Chile was under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. The atrocities committed by the governments of those countries were of such extreme dimensions of terror - with its thousands of killed and 'disappeared' - that caused a state of 'paralysis' in the population of those countries (Taylor *Theatre of Crisis* 3).

Taylor theorizes this state of paralysis as 'percepticide' (*Disappearing Acts*), in which 'many pretended not to see or hear the atrocity – a numbing, self-blinding response [...] An active inaction or a concerted not doing seemed the best defence' (*Trauma and Performance* 1676). According to Taylor, this state was caused by the trauma of experiencing the 'excruciating visibility of disappearance' (*ibid*), intended by the military to frighten and 'shock everyone into submission' (*ibid*). This idea

links to Atencio's previous remarks and Puga's statement on the authoritarian ideologies taking place in overall Latin America during the dictatorship period:

Ideologies of dictatorship were dominant and appeared hegemonic, I believe, not because every citizen subscribed to them, or not even necessarily because a majority of citizens from any particular class subscribed to them, but because the vast majority of people were afraid to publicly contradict those who had the power to kill them, or to make their life a living hell (12).

Puga is careful to state that she uses the term 'ideologies' in the plural form for she doesn't conceive dictatorial ideology as a 'monolithic entity' (12). Possibly, these ideologies can be linked with Arraes' previous remarks on how the military, subordinated to political and economic forces coming from the U.S, affected the population in various levels of social domain, particularly the psychological. What is central to the understanding of Ói Nóis' *Caliban* however, is that, despite having gone through this historical moment of extreme political repression, contemporary Brazil is shifting towards particular 'ideologies' that speak back to ideas of state authoritarianism with an extreme right wing, neoliberal political orientation which, once more, is relying on U.S support.⁴⁸ According to Chauí, Brazil's 'present and past political imaginary contains an image of power that is formed from on high, develops from on high, and rules all of society from on high' (52), thus, once again, Brazil is relying on the state and its authoritarian past in hope to solve its current crisis, which will be addressed shortly. Hence, it is also with the idea of resisting these authoritarian forces that Ói Nóis relies on Augusto Boal's 'Caliban' to bring to the fore the question of what is the current racial, social and political 'identity' of the oppressed 'Calibans', adding further complexity to the matter of performing 'national identity' in present-day Brazil.

⁴⁸ For example, as I write these words, the elected candidate in the 2018 Brazilian elections is the former military officer Jair Bolsonaro who has demonstrated support in defence of the actions taken by the military during the dictatorship period and is in cooperation with Donald Trump's administration. See: Philips, Tom. "'A second Trump": Bolsonaro's offensive rhetoric adds to Brazil's discomfort'. *The Guardian*. 19 Aug. 2019.

Augusto Boal

Son of Portuguese parents, Augusto Boal was born on March 17th 1931 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Boal graduated in chemical engineering; however, he chose to dedicate his life to his passion: making theatre. In an interview with Charles Driskell in 1975, Boal states that he began his theatrical experience with 'workers and Black theatre' (qtd in Driskell 71). In his words: 'I started to work in theatre when I became concerned about things that were happening to the Brazilian people' (*ibid*). It is thus clear that from the beginning, Boal's involvement with theatre was attached to explicit social concerns.

This concern was further developed in the years he worked in the theatre group *Teatro de Arena* in São Paulo, which he joined in 1956, after returning to Brazil from a two-year period in the U.S, where he studied playwriting and modern drama at Columbia University. It is important to stress that Boal is considered one of the most significant theatre directors in Brazilian theatre history, not only because of his formulations of the internationally well-known *Theatre of the Oppressed*, but also because of the sixteen years he worked as the artistic director of the Arena theatre (1956-1972) (see Boal, Dos Santos, Puga, Taylor 1991). To contextualize the national moment of dictatorship, Brazilian theatre practitioners developed research related to Brazilian 'popular' cultural practices, such as carnival and national mythologies/festivities, in fusion with the aesthetics of epic theatre, explored mainly through re-readings of Brecht, to relate to their political moment. This tendency can be observed not only in Brazil, but also in other Latin American countries, as Diana Taylor depicts in *Theatre of Crisis* (1991).

However, 'the relationship between Boal and the Arena was over in 1972, when he was arrested, tortured, and obliged to leave the country' (Dos Santos 48). Boal wrote *A Tempestade* when he was in exile in Argentina, in the same year he was formulating his *Theatre of the Oppressed* and where, as Buchweitz (1999) traces, he formulated his response to Shakespeare's text. Inspired by Retamar's essay, in *A Tempestade* Boal positions Caliban as the protagonist of the play instead of Prospero and tells the story of colonization from the 'other side', from the perspective of the oppressed. According to Dos Santos, Boal's text 'tells a simple story, through a simple structure, using a simple language that inserts the piece in

the long tradition of popular didactic theater' (51). It is this story that Ói Nóis brings to contemporary Brazil, with a new hybrid aesthetics.

First, I will contextualise the group and then analyse the specifics of the performance in terms of how it claims identity with the intent to create awareness in the public of the streets and to resist oppression.

Tribo de Atuadores Ói Nóis Aqui Traveiz (Tribe of Actuators Look at Us Here Again)

The years of intolerance and police repression by the civil-military dictatorship that had been established in Brazil since April 1964 and intensified in 1968 were still operational when Paulo Flores and Julio Vieira Zannota, co-founders of Ói Nóis, first met in 1977 in Porto Alegre. At that time, Flores had just completed his undergraduate studies in the Performing Arts Centre at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), whilst Zannotta had finished a second round of guerrilla training in a far-left organization in Peru. According to the group, these two young artists envisioned a type of theatre that was committed to Brazil's political moment when they created Ói Nóis Aqui Traveiz in March 1978. That year was marked by a great social upheaval in Brazil, with the return of large street demonstrations against the military demanding democratic freedom and amnesty to political prisoners and exiles. Influenced by this re-gained revolutionary national 'spirit', the founders named the group in a purposely illiterate spelling as a warning that the company 'intended to take unusual and contentious actions' (Ói Nóis' website).⁴⁹ These actions had a direct political dimension that came to reflect the group's ethical and aesthetic principles throughout its forty years of existence, in which the fusion of art and life occurred under the motto: 'Utopia, Passion, and Resistance' (*ibid*).

From its founding, Ói Nóis' ethical standpoint means that the company 'disseminates collective ideas and practices of autonomy and freedom, sharing the experience of coexistence and theatrical laboratory' (Flores 2016 interview). This concept of seeing theatre as a collective/collaborative practice is strongly held by many Brazilian theatre practitioners, as Dundjerovic and Ramos have articulated in *Brazilian Collaborative Theatre* (2017). Such practices of collaboration came as a

⁴⁹ Available at: www.oinoisaquitraveiz.com.br

response to, and with the aim of ‘contradicting the dictatorship’s model or the stratified structure of commercial productions’ (Nascimento 12). Ói Nóis explored this idea further when they ‘closed’ the group from 1981 to 1984 for internal integration and experimentation involving theatre and community life. During this period of enclosure, the group added the term *Tribo de Atuadores* (Tribe of Actuators) to its name in an effort to define the collective. Extending this, Rosyane Trotta elucidates that the incorporation of the word *tribe* ‘defines an ideology of internal behaviour’ (2005, 152) that is based on collectivism and can be seen to operate on diverse levels, such as in terms of authorship and social activism. As Aleksandar Dundjerovic and Luis Fernando Ramos state, ‘the company believes so strongly in the collective identity of the group that the actors refuse to use their own names when talking about the creative process’ (101).⁵⁰ Moreover, the use of the word *atuadores*⁵¹ instead of *atores* (actors/performers) was adopted to enhance the view that the members of the tribe were more than artists, they were ‘actuators’ – or ‘action makers’ – people taking action in the community. In Flores’ words, ‘within Ói Nóis, the artists seek to develop themselves not only as actors [performers], but also as political activists [...] as social agents’ (Paulo Flores 2016 interview).⁵² Hence, ever since that enclosed period, artistic and community life are mixed intentionally within Ói Nóis’ ethical and political principles. Moreover, this idea of collectivism and social agency was aimed at expanding into local communities of the city of Porto Alegre. Through the years, the group has developed a project called ‘Artistic-Pedagogical Action’ through which they provide free workshops – namely ‘Theatre as Instrument of Social Discussion’ and ‘Popular Theatre’ – to members of poor neighbourhoods of the metropolitan region of the city. These workshops aim to foster a small cultural nucleus that uses theatre as a means to discuss and integrate local social issues with artistic practice. The objectives of such actions in these communities are reflective of the group’s view that ‘somehow the actor influences society through his aesthetic and ideological values, making theater a permanent companion in the fight for the construction of

⁵⁰ In the interview I conducted they also signed/answered as *the tribe*.

⁵¹ There is no precise translation for this word in English.

⁵² I believe it is important to signal that in the Portuguese language the word ‘actor’ is meant to define both male and female performers. When using a collective noun, the ‘male’ version and its subsequent conjugations dominate the sentences (the neutrality of the word ‘performer’ does not exist in Portuguese). Hence, when the group and other authors, such as Trotta, use such conjugations, although it may seem uncomfortable for the reader, it is meant to embrace all genders. ‘*Atuadores*’, on the other hand, is a neutral term.

citizenship' (Ói Nóis qtd in Dundjerovic and Ramos 105). The group also hosts a 'School of Popular Theatre' in their workplace, called *A Terreira da Tribo* (The Tribe's Yard), in which they provide free acting training techniques every year to selected members of the community. According to the group, this eighteen-month course is aimed at not only supporting young performers into creating/developing their acting careers, but also fostering the company's belief that the 'formation of citizens with a political and social consciousness is as essential as the artistic development of performers' (Ói Nóis' website).

In terms of aesthetics, the group was formed 'with the idea of a theatre designed out of conventional standards' (Oi Nois' 2017 interview). According to Trotta, this mainly refers to the founders' aim to break the binary division of stage/audience with a political theatre in which the performer, aiming to change society, has to 'change themselves before everything else' (2005, 151), though that can operate through their ethical and ideological perspectives mentioned above. To break this binary, Ói Nóis explored the performer-spectator relationship and interaction 'through participatory performances, both in the theatre and in the street' (Dundjerovic and Ramos 101). Therefore, the group's creative and performance practices were developed and divided into two main sections: *Teatro de Vivência* (experience/living theatre) and *Teatro de Rua* (street theatre). The first was created to investigate fusions of external influences based on avant-garde movements and revolutionary theatre practitioners that took place in different parts of the world – such as Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, and the Living Theatre – within the Brazilian context. According to the group, this practice is an immersive experience and usually takes place at the *Terreira da Tribo*, which involves 'a large area that allows different uses of the scenic space' (qtd in Dundjerovic and Ramos 107). The second practice, street theatre, was also inspired by 'foreign' influences, however it was focused on a 'popular' and 'western' aesthetic in fusion with local Brazilian cultural manifestations with the aim to explore the interaction of theatre and politics in a way that is 'irreverent, lucid and with direct intervention in the daily life of the city' (*ibid*). 'Popular Street Theatre' became the group's most well-known theatrical practice and its 'signature' in the national repertoire. It will be the focus of this study and explored further in the following section in order to situate the political and aesthetic universe of *Caliban*.

Ói Nóis' Popular Street Theatre

As already argued, the interface between politics and theatre is of most importance in Ói Nóis' street theatre practice. According to the group, this modality of performance 'creates a popular theater in which art and politics fuse [...] it transforms the street into a theater stage in a constant rethinking of society' (qtd in Dundjerovic and Ramos 105). Moreover, this fusion between art and politics is thought of not only in terms of political content, but also extends to their aesthetic principles, for, as Flores emphatically affirms: 'our aesthetics is political' (qtd. in Aguilera 38). Reflecting further on this last statement, Ingrid Koudela reminds us that in the group's work, both the political and the aesthetic spheres are subjected to a common denominator in which there can be no separation, 'since they are interrelated continuously through a process of oscillations' (213). Having in mind that these domains cannot be detached in Ói Nóis' view, I will contextualize a few political aspects intrinsic to their Popular Street Theatre and then move on to explore how they intersect with the aesthetic tendencies of such performances.

Firstly, as was the case with practices of collaborative theatre in Brazil, the tradition of what could be considered a 'Brazilian' contemporary popular street theatre began as a direct response to the military period, as articulated by André Carreira in *Popular Theatre in Brazil* (2002).⁵³ If performances in enclosed theatre spaces that challenged the military in any way were censored and the theatres forced to shut down, as was the case with Boal and The Arena Theatre, street performances were not allowed at all in Brazil during the dictatorship regime. As Da Matta states in his analysis of Brazilian identity in relation to rituals and carnivals, 'as a general category in opposition to the house, then, the street is the public arena controlled by "the government" or by *destino* (destiny) – those impersonal forces over which we have minimal control' (66). Hence, unsurprisingly, the attempt to regulate the public sphere or the 'uncontrolled aspects of the urban world' (*ibid* 67) by banning social gatherings in the street setting was one of the main concerns of the military forces. During the democratic transition in the late 1970s and 1980s, alongside street demonstrations in favour of a return to

⁵³ For more information on Brazilian Street Theatre, see: Telles, Narciso and Ana Carneiro (eds). *Teatro De Rua: Olhares E Perspectivas*. Rio De Janeiro: E-papers, 2005. [Street Theatre: Viewpoints and Perspectives]

democracy, theatre groups were able to explore the cities' streets to share their political world views and activism through artistic means with the general public, the 'popular masses'. In Ói Nóis' experience, this direct political activism began to take place in 1981 when the group first performed what they call 'scenic interventions' in Porto Alegre's streets, where they dealt with topics that were pressing at the time, such as ecological and anti-military demonstrations. Nowadays, the way they 'intervene' in the public sphere to reflect on current socio-political issues is mainly through their street theatre performances.

In addition to this direct response to the Brazilian military dictatorship, the act of bringing 'the theatre' to the street can be seen, in itself, as a political one. Lara Shalson suggests that 'activist theatre-makers have long argued that, to be politically relevant, theatre needs to *leave the theatre*' (emphasis in orig 25). This idea was signalled by theatre scholar Christopher Balme in *The Theatrical Public Sphere* (2014), which also speaks to Carreira's research on Brazilian street theatre. For Carreira, the condition of marginalization of street theatre is one of its main key features. Due to the fact that performances in closed spaces have become, in general, a specific type of artistic commodity that speak to specific groups of a society, when performed in the streets, theatre assumes a different role. Carreira explains that:

This commodity is more valuable in enclosed spaces where the payment of an entrance not only generates profit, it grants hierarchy. In this framework, theatrical manifestations on the streets occupy [...] a space of marginality. The expression of this marginality denounces the segregationist system and, therefore, questions it, as it transgresses the rules of the use of cities' spaces (2005 9).

This space in the margin and of transgression that Ói Nóis aims to occupy promotes a reflective area that can be seen to challenge ideas regarding the place of theatre in contemporary Brazil, a country in which the number of theatre-goers is limited to either specialized groups (artists/academics) or to upper-middle classes that can financially afford to attend mainstream productions. When referring to the contemporary Brazilian moment, the group states that street theatre 'plays a fundamental part in the democratization of the arts [for] the economic and cultural situation deprives the majority of the Brazilian population of access to shows and

theater houses' (qtd in Dundjerovic and Ramos 105). This last statement links with Carreira's suggestion that the ideological discourse of a 'need to approach a popular public that would be particularly excluded from the theatrical phenomenon' (2005 25), appears as vital element in Brazilian street theatre. It is with this attentiveness to and claim for democratic access to both the public space of the street and to 'the theatre' that the group aims to convey their political/artistic views with the cities' citizens through their street theatre practice/performances.

I now turn to briefly address a few aesthetic characteristic approaches to 'form' of Ói Nóis' popular street theatre and later how it speaks specifically to the choices the group made in bringing Boal's *A Tempestade* to contemporary Brazilian streets. For it is through this fusion of politics with an aesthetics focused on hybridity and popular theatricality that the group aims to discuss colonial/neo-colonial oppressions with the Brazilian people via *Caliban*.

Beginning with the idea of a 'diverse aesthetics', Carreira articulates that hybridity, social, racial, etc. is a key feature of the street and that 'it is in this hybrid territory that the approximation between street theatre and popular culture takes place' (8). This approximation, namely, this interaction between the 'theatre' and 'popular culture' is not only thematic but was incorporated into the theatrical form and aesthetics of 'Brazilian Popular Street Theatre' – which became a sort of 'subgenre' within contemporary (namely, post-dictatorship) Brazilian theatre practices – due to interactions with audience members, through improvisation, and the need to retain the public's attention. He identifies that this theatre presents a particular type of popular theatricality, coined in circus techniques, popular Brazilian festivities and carnival parades, that embraces the involvement of the multi-faceted (and multi-social) public of the street and develops the potential to 'transform the character of the theatrical spectacle by incorporating components of popular culture [hence] building the spectacular event as an event of popular culture' (*ibid* 10). This idea will be analysed in the following section, when I read *Caliban* closely. However, as a frame of reference for an international reader, as Dundjerovic and Ramos have observed, with its 'eclectic approach to the mixing of artistic forms – texts, music, dance, masks and puppets with various performance traditions and styles' (101), Ói Nóis' street theatre aesthetics is evocative of the Bread and Puppet Theater in New York. This association is overtly referenced in Ói

Nóis' essay 'Street Theatre' (2018), in which the group cites Bread and Puppet's founder Peter Schumann's idea that the streets' audiences 'are not sensitive to a realistic theatre; it is necessary to create metaphors, fantasies' (qtd in Ói Nóis 2018). Ói Nóis appropriated this use of 'metaphors' and 'fantasies' to relate to the concrete political circumstances that affect the 'oppressed Brazil', as evident in the ways they chose to create and stage *Caliban* in contemporary Brazilian cities.

Caliban: A Tempestade de Augusto Boal

According to Ói Nóis, the idea of bringing Boal's *A Tempestade* to contemporary Brazilian cities' streets originated in 2015 when the group was invited to participate in a series of events held at the *Augusto Boal* exhibition at Banco do Brasil Cultural Centre, in Rio de Janeiro. At the exhibition, Ói Nóis staged readings of texts Boal wrote for The Arena Theatre in the 1960s and so came into contact with *A Tempestade* through Cecília Boal, Augusto Boal's sister.⁵⁴ At that time, the group was searching for a text to inspire a new street theatre piece and decided to stage *A Tempestade* as they considered the play to have the 'capacity to dialogue with the current political moment lived in Brazil and Latin America' (Ói Nóis' 2017). I will briefly address this current political moment before I move on to explore the aesthetic realm of *Caliban*, for I believe this is crucial in order to understand *Caliban's* contextual framework.

Ói Nóis comprises three particular (historical/political) instances in this performance. As Dos Santos has articulated, Boal's *A Tempestade* 'centers on the denunciation of the two types of colonialism and their mechanisms of oppression' (51), the first being against European colonialism in the American continent, and the second denunciation was against North-American neo-colonial forces, which had a direct impact on Latin American/Brazilian military dictatorships. *Caliban* adds a third element of oppression, operated by contemporary internal political and economic forces. In a more concrete and direct manner, this third element comes to reflect what the group considers to be a 'conservative "tempest"' affecting Latin American governments nowadays. When referring back to the time Boal wrote his text in relation to the present-day, Tania Farias, who plays Trinculo in *Caliban*, stated:

⁵⁴ This same text *A Tempestade* was informally forwarded to me by the group.

We are seeing the same thing again. Several Latin American countries, which had leftist governments, are suffering setbacks of all types. Perhaps the difference is that today the coup is no longer military, at least not all, and not most. But it is evident that the countries are suffering setbacks for this reason: for trying to create markets for themselves, for trying to think with their own head, for trying to have autonomy of their nation (2016).⁵⁵

In the Brazilian context specifically, this 'coup' Farias mentions exposes a direct criticism towards current president Michel Temer (2016-2018), who took over the presidency of Dilma Rousseff from the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT), when she was impeached in 2016. This impeachment is considered by members of the group (and by many Brazilians) as a political 'coup in disguise', in which only one political party (PT) was persecuted (and prosecuted) for corruption, whilst representatives of the main conservative parties (PSDB and PMDB – party of Temer) were left untouched, despite evidence of their involvement in major corruption scandals, including current president Temer.⁵⁶ Hence, this contemporary internal political turmoil is another element that adds more complexity to this adaptation of Boal's text.

In addition to this, accompanying the political crisis came an economic recession which has affected the country enormously since 2014. Under Temer's government, the Brazilian cultural sector has experienced major financial cutbacks,⁵⁷ the result being that current 'censorship is mostly economic' (Flores 2018). This remark refers to the fact that the group created *Caliban* in one of Ói Nóis' worst financial crises, so that *Caliban* displays a much narrower scale than the group's previous street performances *A Saga de Canudos* (2000) and *O Amargo Santo da Purificação* (2008), in which huge 'allegorical cars' (frequently used in carnival parades) and giant puppets/figures took over Brazilian streets in a

⁵⁵ My translation. Original available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mCRs-OdGqo>

⁵⁶ For further information on Temer's involvement in corruption scandals see: Associated Press. 'Michel Temer, Brazil's unpopular president, avoids corruption trial'. *The Guardian*. Oct 2017. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/26/michel-temer-brazils-unpopular-president-avoids-corruption-trial>

⁵⁷ President Michel Temer even closed the Ministry of Culture in 2016 as an attempt to gain more popularity. However, his plan backfired as protests began to take form nationwide, with local artists occupying federal buildings. Temer was forced to reverse his decision, particularly after famous music and television artists joined the campaign to reopen it.

grandiose spectacle format.⁵⁸ According to the founder, it was within this crisis that the decision to stage *Caliban* became even more compelling: ‘because we thought it was important to go to the street to talk about resistance. Caliban is a character who is enslaved, colonized, but that resists. That’s it: even enslaved, we must resist’ (Flores 2018). Therefore, the ‘Manichean approach’ that Dos Santos identifies in *A Tempestade*, which structured ‘Shakespeare’s story as a fight between good and evil, that is, between the oppressors/exploiters/capitalists and the oppressed/exploited/workers’ (51), can still be detected in *Caliban*. However, this other layer of signification – now of internal power/economic relations – is added and the ‘identity’ of such oppressors/oppressed can be seen as multiple and dependant on the contextual framework of analysis. I will discuss how all this interrelates within the performance and how music is used to highlight such complexities in specific scenes, but for now, I will address the aesthetic universe of *Caliban*, for despite also speaking to the contemporary ‘gloomy Brazil in which we are living’ (Flores 2018), *Ói Nóis* uses the colourful languages of carnival, circus and laughter to bring all these issues to the fore. As Justin Edwards and Rune Graulund have identified in Bakhtin’s approach to laughter, the use of such aesthetics is a ‘response associated with the popular energies of the carnival: the overthrow of authority, the dismissal of the sacred, the dissemination of counter discourses and the grotesque realism of the body’ (104), and all of these characteristics are used in *Caliban* as an attempt to question and subvert ‘the constituted order’ (*Caliban’s* program) of things.

Within the aesthetics of *Caliban* one can observe a return to the ideas of a Brazilian ‘national identity’ coined in miscegenation/*mestiçagem*. Unlike the previous example of *Baila Brazil*, in which all members and performers have African ascendance and had personal experiences with African Brazilian performative heritages, *Caliban* presents a cast that comprises multi-racial backgrounds. Hence, the cast is ‘mixed’. For example, the character Caliban is played by an African Brazilian performer and the character Miranda by a ‘white’ performer, whose position as racial signifier is further enhanced in the performance by her wearing white and a ‘red headed’ wig. At the same time, however, the chorus of ‘Calibans’ (used to multiply the voice of Caliban) is comprised of performers from multi-racial

⁵⁸ For a detailed examination of the group’s previous performances, see Trotta’s *Ói Nóis Aqui Traveiz: History seen through the Critics* (2012).

backgrounds, thereby reinforcing the idea of ‘we are all Calibans’. In addition to this ‘diverse’ cast, within the group’s theatrical practice, notions of what is ‘popular’ and what is ‘Brazilian’ are accompanied by a discourse that at the same time both recognizes and celebrates and/but also problematizes *brasilidade* and modernist interpretations of it, which I will uncover through my analysis of specific scenes. Moreover, it is also interesting to note that this ‘mixture’ seems to operate in terms of aesthetic choices regarding theatrical form as well. When asked about how the group integrates popular culture into their creative process, Ói Nóis answered:

Brazil is a country of miscegenation, where a diversity of dances and festivities mix: Indigenous, African and European. These mixtures gave birth to a diversity of dramatic dances and celebrations, which have spread out across the country, making it impossible to think in terms of a Brazilian theater without the influence of these manifestations (Dundjerovic and Ramos 104-105).

In *Caliban*, these manifestations and celebrations are ‘mixed’ with what Schechter has explored as having a ‘popular’ characteristic from a particularly European perspective. According to Joel Schechter, some of the lines in which what can be considered ‘popular theatre’ has engaged with,

[...] can be found in the itinerant minstrelsy of the Middle Ages; in carnival clowning, *commedia dell’arte*, farce and stage jigs of the Renaissance period; vaudeville, circus, pantomime, Punch and Judy, and melodrama from the eighteenth century to the twentieth, to mention but a few of its western incarnations (4).

It is precisely some of these ‘western incarnations’ that Ói Nóis has incorporated into their popular street theatre practice throughout the years. Particularly, the group has developed an intensive research practice coined in *commedia dell’arte* figures, carnival clowning and circus aesthetics. All these influences are present in *Caliban* and the group felt it was important to state in our interview that ‘we improvised all the scenes, with at least two different versions of each scene [...] sometimes already introducing it to the street setting, sometimes in the Terreira’ (Ói Nóis 2017). According to Janaina Aguilera, through techniques of improvisation and mixing of narrative forms, ‘*commedia dell’arte*, which existed

primarily to deny the formulas of perfection, the sublime and the existing notion of beauty [...] meant the matrix, albeit with another bias, that many Brazilian theatre groups would experience in the twentieth century' (22). She refers to this matrix as existing not only in terms of acting techniques and formal characteristics, such as the performance being based on improvisation, the uses of masks, set characters, and comedy routines to generate critique, but also in the collaborative form by which performers create their scenes and the ways in which life and art are mixed in the community of troupes. This idea is clearly intrinsic to the way Ói Nóis engages their own artistic practice. Hence, extending the analogy and borrowing from Bakhtin's words – in relation to the clowns and fools of Rabelais' novels – throughout the years the tribe also 'represented a certain form of life, which was real and ideal at the same time [standing on] the borderline between life and art, in a peculiar midzone as it were' (8).

Thus, it becomes impossible to look at *Caliban* without considering notions of the carnivalesque and the use of allegory as conceptual frameworks. In addition, returning to the idea of a 'mixed aesthetics', *Caliban* also seems to offer an appropriate 'frame' for the group to explore further this allegorical aspect, as it uses the imagery setting of a 'far away land' (an island in the Caribbean) in a 'far away time' (imprecise – although alludes to 16th-17th Centuries) to address the issues of colonialism and neo-colonialism in Brazil and Latin America nowadays. Hence, using both 'Brazilian' and 'foreign' influences as springboard, Ói Nóis fuses this 'European' aspect (mainly through representations of 'nobility') with contemporary Brazilian manifestations of popular culture, such as the 'Brazilian' carnival (with samba as the main musical genre), African Brazilian percussion and rhythms, and indigenous rituals very forthrightly. This shall be further explored in the following section in which I provide a description and analysis of the performance *Caliban*.

Before moving on to the analysis however, it is important to foreground that *Caliban* is an *adaptation* of Boal's *A Tempestade*. As noted previously in this chapter, according to Dos Santos, Boal's text centres on the denunciation of the two types of colonialism and their mechanisms of oppression: European colonizers and North Americans and their influence on Latin America, particularly by 'interfering' in Brazilian dictatorships. She further explains that Boal uses a Manichean approach, 'structuring Shakespeare's story as a fight between good and evil, that is, between the oppressors/exploiters/capitalists and the

oppressed/exploited/workers, in two acts' (act 1 has three scenes, and act 2, four) (51), in an Epic/Brechtian format. In Ói Nóis' *Caliban*, the plot remains the same as Boal's and the structure is also based on an 'epic' narrative/form. However, as most scenes were created through improvisation to 'dialogue with the street, with the public space' (Ói Nóis 2017), some aspects of the play were adapted. For example, the group shortened the text, transforming long dialogues into images and physical action sequences, such as in the scene in which Próspero conquers the island and kills Sicorax.⁵⁹ Other features were accentuated, such as the caricature appearance of the noble European characters and the presence of the chorus. In terms of music, the group maintained the ratio of music/scene that Boal had originally structured, in which for each scene there is a musical accompaniment (there are 13 scenes and 14 songs in *Caliban*). The lyrics and general idea of the songs remain similar, however, Ói Nóis freely researched musical genres and composed most of the songs with Alex de Souza, a musician that works in collaboration with the group. All music in the performance is played and performed live by a few members of the group and the songs function at times to narrate certain events and other times to enhance and give voice to what the characters proffer. Here is a glimpse of the plot of the storyline in Ói Nóis' words:

The story is seen from the perspective of Caliban, a metaphor for humans originating in America who were decimated and enslaved by the invading colonizers represented by the character Prospero. In Boal's version, Prospero is as perverse as the European nobles who usurped his power. All representative of the violent colonial and cultural domination. Prospero's daughter, Miranda, and the prince of Naples, Fernando, make an alliance not out of love as in Shakespeare's play, but out of capitalist interests. Ariel, the 'spirit of the air', represents the alienated artist, a slave and a mercenary in the service of the constituted order. Only Caliban revolts until finally is defeated. The villains remain on the 'tropical island' to enslave him. Even as a slave, Caliban resists. As in any good political theatre, the public must

⁵⁹ Most characters' names from *The Tempest* were 'Brazilianised' by Boal in *A Tempestade* (with the exception of Ariel, Caliban and Miranda) and *Caliban* maintains Boal's version. I will use the Brazilian spelling in this analysis to maintain consistency. Hence: Rei Alonso (King Alonso); Antônio (Antonio); Fernando (Ferdinand); Sebastião (Sebastian); Gonçalo (Gonzalo); Próspero (Prospero); Sicorax (Sycorax); Estevão (Sephano); and Trínculo (Trinculo).

realize that the symbols of the work refer to their reality, to arouse in them - emotionally and rationally - a critical response outside of the fiction. Caliban today symbolizes resistance to neo-colonialism. (*Caliban's Program* 2017)

Description and Analysis of *Caliban*

The group first brought *Caliban* to Brazilian streets with a national tour promoted by a private, non-profitable Brazilian institution called SESC (Portuguese acronym for Social Service of Commerce) in 2017. One of SESC's projects, destined to promote the performing arts, is named *Palco Giratório* (Rotating Stage), which embraces and sponsors multiple performances simultaneously each year with the aim of 'traversing all of Brazil's states and contributing to a policy of decentralization and diffusion of theatre productions in the country' (Ói Nós 2017). In 2017, *Palco Giratório* celebrated its 20th edition and Ói Nós' *Caliban* was especially invited to participate, as homage for the group's 40th anniversary, which shows recognition for the group's influence and relevance for contemporary Brazilian theatre. Hence, it was within this context that *Caliban* was first performed and toured to all five regions of Brazil (North, Northeast, Center-West, Southeast and South) between July and November 2017. Since, it has been performed in theatre festivals throughout the country and in the group's hometown, Porto Alegre, South Brazil. It is important to emphasize that, despite being presented in urban centres, *Caliban* is not a *site specific* performance. Its format is adaptable to a multiplicity of open air spaces and was not created to co-relate to particular sites.⁶⁰ In my analysis I will only describe and analyse particular scenes that I believe highlight the intersections of music and the complexities regarding 'Brazilian identity' and colonial/neo-colonial criticisms discussed thus far. These are specifically the scenes: 1) Opening - 'Arrival and The Tempest'; 2) 'The Conquest of the Island'; 3) 'Caliban's Curse'; 6) 'Identity Song'; 8) '*Carnaval no Bananal*' (Carnival at the Banana Plantation); 11) 'Repression'; and 13) Final – 'Song of everything remains the same'.

⁶⁰ The videos of the performances I was able to watch were sent to me by the group during this SESC touring period. I selected to analyse particular scenes of a performance, which took place in the city of Recife, state of Pernambuco, Northeast Brazil, on 21st November 2017 as it was filmed uninterruptedly. The Figures that are inserted in this chapters are from various locations and are available on Ói Nós' website (open domain).

Scene 1. Arrival and The Tempest ⁶¹

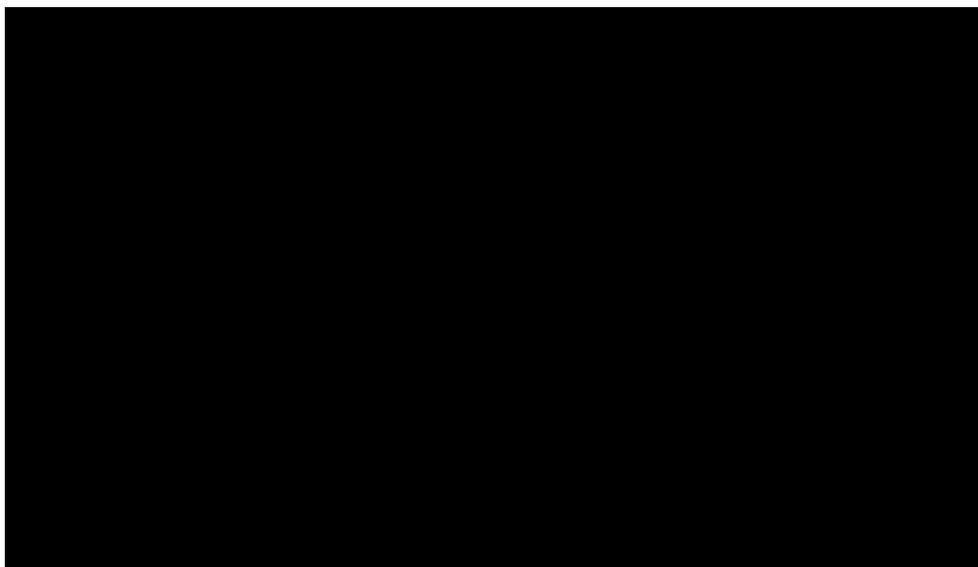


Figure 8- First Scene 'Arrival and The Tempest'. Photo: Victor Natureza

The play commences in an area away from the designated space of the performance, which in Recife took place at a large square in the middle of the pedestrian area. One of the ways in which Ói Nóis explores the idea of fluidity of the streets and its 'mobility' is by using the practice of procession in their performances. It occurred more predominantly in their previous work *O Amargo Santo da Purificação*, in which the entire play had an itinerant format. In *Caliban*, this itinerancy happens particularly at the beginning and also functions as a tool to attract the transient public. The sounds of African Brazilian percussion instruments (*atabaques* and *xequeries*) begin to echo, and a procession is formed, consisting of a chorus of sailors/workers vocalising the *Song of the Mistaken Tempest*. As the sailors/workers walk, they move their bodies to the rhythm of the drums, whilst pushing and pulling a metal structure that resembles a ship ahead of/behind them. In the centre of the structure are the 'noble Europeans': Rei Alonso; Antônio; Fernando; Sebastião and Gonçalo (Figure 8).

In *Caliban* power relations can be seen to operate at diverse levels from the onset. This appears not only in the relationship between Próspero and Caliban, but also between the nobility and the 'people'. Even though all performers are singing,

⁶¹ The text *Caliban: A Tempestade de Augusto Boal* has not been published. The group sent me the script of the performance and I freely translated segments from Portuguese to English, including the lyrics of the songs.

to create amplitude of voices in the street setting, the class divide in this first moment of the performance is evident: Firstly, in the spatial organization of the procession, as the chorus occupies the surrounding areas of the 'ship' and the 'noblemen' the central part. Secondly, in the materiality of 'labour', in that the chorus physically moves the ship while the noblemen are not required to push or pull the structure. Thirdly, in the costumes: the chorus of men and women wear brownish coloured overalls with hoods, which makes them indistinct from one another, they resemble a singular 'mass' of people. The European characters, on the other hand, have detailed costumes, tailored to symbolise each character's social position and role in the plot of the story. This is due to research the group has conducted in relation to what they call 'installation costumes', which allows visually 'placing the characters in the larger context' (Ói Nóis 2017). The noble Europeans are also the only characters in *Caliban* wearing *Commedia dell'arte* inspired masks and their associated performative style, in which 'each mask holds one set facial expression; [...] the bodies of the actors express considerable variation and nuance in character [and] actors perform with heightened, non-naturalistic physical movement' (Schechter 79). Here, Ói Nóis use this European theatrical tradition to emphasize their 'foreign' nature, heightened by the masks and non-realistic acting style. At the same time, from an internal perspective, they can also be seen to allegorically address Brazil's current socio-political turmoil, for 'to compose allegorically is usually understood as writing with a double meaning: what appears on the surface and another meaning to which the apparent sense points' (Copeland and Struck 2). In this sense, Antônio carries a firearm on his hip and displays a small metal structure that resembles prison bars in front of his face, which alludes to him representing the police or a military officer (security forces); Sebastião carries a huge cross in his hand, has a crown of thorns on top of his head and displays a 'sacred heart' on his chest, images that make clear reference to the figure of Christ and Catholicism (religious forces); the King and his son have the exact same outfits, although the king is portrayed as a grotesque caricature of a monarch in the carnivalesque style where, 'images of the body are offered ... in an extremely exaggerated form' (Bakhtin 18), with an extra-large abdomen, mask and a crown, with which both emphasizes and ridicules the monarchy (or the 'power of the state').

All performers sing the lyrics with a serious semblance and choreography that suggests the movements of bodies on a ship in a thunderstorm. The interplay of the lyrics of the song and the African Brazilian rhythms of the percussion sets a tone that links class struggle in racial terms, providing an idea of association between these instances:

Rows, releases the sail, the free waves of the sea... Nothing can calm them down.

Something has gone wrong with the hurricane, this tempest is mistaken!

The soldier who battles obeys the general: his whole life he offers, which is quite natural.

Dying for his Lord is normal.

(Caliban, scene 1)

The procession stops and the King, who is now on the upper deck of the structure, shouts and commands the tempest to cease. The sailors/workers laugh and reply in chorus stating that, 'the tempest knows no authority', which mocks the King's ironic foolishness in trying to control the storm, which is ambiguous since it could be literal or refer to the political and social storm of protest. The chorus' laughter can also be read as carnival laughter whereby the grotesque social body is 'mocking, degrading and inverting high culture' (Wills 134). This playful energy is then interrupted by Rei Alonso as he replies, shouting from the top of the metal structure: 'In that case, this tempest is mistaken!' This word play between Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, which in Portuguese is also *A Tempestade*, can suggest both a sense of resistance to western/colonial authorship, by stating that Shakespeare's 'Tempest' is mistaken; while at the same time alluding to the view that the king's attempt to control the tempest is senseless, hence, it shifts from irony to audacity and establishes from the beginning that 'this is a play of exaggeration, and also a play in which the powerful are shown to have a rash trust in their power' (Buchweitz 35).

The sailors/workers continue to walk and now sing to the lyrics: 'Something has gone wrong with the hurricane. This tempest is mistaken. Authority is mistaken. Here this authority no longer commands!' Here, the voices of resistance allied to African-Brazilian percussion rhythms (*batucadas*, used in *terreiros*, religious spaces

for African-Brazilian rites) now allude to an association between resistance and cultural/racial/class specificity, suggesting their own power to resist the dominant 'authority'. The performers continue singing with a serious semblance, until the chorus decides to stop and strike, demanding food before their imminent deaths, chanting 'sailors who organize cannot be deceived'. There is an interesting and ironic association between food and striking, but also the relationship between organisation and being immune to propaganda, suggesting that a different kind of power resides with the people. The chorus are given food and remain singing in procession until they reach the allocated performance space, in the middle of a main pedestrian area. The audience gathers around the metal structure, which still resembles a ship, forming a large circle. Outside the metal structure, the 'Ariels' - here performed by three different performers (one male, two female) wearing blue tight overalls and on jumping stilts – perform acrobatic movements and juggle with fire. One Ariel holds a small wooden ship, whilst the others play at spitting fire to burn it down. The sailors/workers and the noble men are on opposing sides, which returns to the idea of a clear class division, and struggle to control the ship bringing the colonisers/ oppressors, whoever they may represent. They all choreograph a shipwreck. The metal structure then collapses into two parts and the characters all disperse.

The figure of Ariel and his role in this performance is important, so I pause and return to Retamar's essay, for 'Caliban' was written as a response to the essay *Ariel* (1900) by the Uruguayan writer Jose Enrique Rodó. In Rodó's work, Ariel was seen as a symbol of Latin America whilst Caliban, represented the imperialistic United States. To Rodó, 'the background to this comparison is that Ariel is equated with art and spirituality, while Caliban is considered a materialistically inclined Philistine' (Lie 250). Retamar states that, even though Rodó's essay is correspondingly anti-imperialistic, he is mistaken in the symbols he used: 'Our symbol then is not Ariel, as Rodó thought, but rather Caliban. This is something that we, the *mestizo* inhabitants of these same isles where Caliban lived, see with particular clarity' (14). Retamar, sees Caliban as representing the 'people' (within a discourse of *mestizaje*) and Ariel as symbol of a class of Latin American intellectuals that compromise by adopting, accepting even pursuing 'foreign' epistemologies and cultural values. This matter is important to address for, in *Ói Nóis*' performance, Ariel not only represents the intellectual that takes 'the side of the foreigner' but

also is 'a symbol of the submission and opportunism of those who, even though they are oppressed, are integrated into the oppressive system to obtain the diminished benefits of the exploitation of their congeners' (Corzo and Trancoso 290).⁶² Moreover, in Oi Nois' view, Ariel also represents 'the alienated *artist*, a slave and a mercenary in the service of the constituted order' (*Caliban's* program 2017),⁶³ which brings their criticism to the artistic realm. This scene thus sets up the various players and referents, colonial, post- and neo-colonial at play in contemporary Brazil.

Scene 2. The Conquest of the Island

In this second scene, Próspero enters and speaks with the three Ariels, who explain what happened to the ship, ruined at his command. Prospero is characterized by a costume that displays many signifiers of European enlightenment: of knowledge and technological advancements (such as a small watch, an hourglass, a small globe, a magnifier glass, etc.), which orbit around his figure. This gives Prospero a unique character that differentiates him from the other Europeans, as he does not wear a mask and is not performed in *commedia* acting style; his performance has a particular 'sobriety' and seriousness to it, which can be seen to operate on another level of power relation, now relatively 'domestic'. Miranda, dressed in white with a 'red/orange' wig and with an exaggerated childish semblance, approaches Prospero riding a children's bicycle, stating that her father was the one to blame for the shipwreck she had witnessed. This characterization of Miranda emphasizes her 'whiteness', her 'naivety', and her compliance in the systems of oppression, as she tends to concur and repeat what her father says throughout the storyline. This may suggest how generations of colonisers continue to perpetuate the discourses and ideologies of their predecessors, with the invisibility of whiteness maintaining hegemonic power through the dominant discourse of racial democracy.

A high-pitched flute begins to whistle from outside the circle formed by the audience, and a chorus of four musicians, resembling a medieval royal court concert, sing and narrate with Próspero the *Song of Fraternal Treason*, in waltz style and tempo. This choice of musical style speaks to a direct European influence and

⁶² I freely translated quotations from Corzo and Trancoso from Spanish to English.

⁶³ My emphasis.

hang-over of European elitism, for Brazilians rarely ‘waltz’ – apart from at middle-class/elitist weddings or graduation balls. The lyrics explain how Próspero, betrayed by his brother King Alonso of Naples, was thrown out of Milan and escaped to the island, thus Carib. Concurrently, the characters of King Alonso and Antonio enter the circle and re-enact, in a clownesque/grotesque manner, the events being narrated in the song. They play with members of the public, by joking and whispering in their ears, making some of them laugh. This playful atmosphere is again subversive, as it generates laughter which degrades the ‘powerful’, in this case, the noble Europeans’ power. Alonso and Antonio leave the scene, giving way to the entrance of Sicorax and her chorus.

Sicorax is represented by wooden figures that reference indigenous art from the native Brazilian community *Kaingang*. These figures are raised higher than the rest of the characters and the performer embodying Sicorax wears wooden stilts that elevate the character even further. Sicorax’s scene is not included in Boal’s *A Tempestade* but was introduced by Ói Nois in order to ‘transform into dramatic form that which appears only as narrative [...] we wanted to show the power and beauty of what in the eyes of white Europeans is exotic and barbaric’ (Ói Nóis’ interview 2017). This shows, once again, an attempt to subvert and challenge dominant views of indigenous Brazil established through the foreign ‘gaze’. The colours of the figures’ costumes are ‘earthy and have natural elements (strings of sisal, and rope, etc.), referring to the relation with the telluric’ (*ibid*). According to the group, the faces of Sicorax and her chorus were inspired by both African masks (found in some books) and indigenous Brazilian references. This gives Sicorax’s figure an ambiguous character as her face (and that of her chorus) is not shown, and references to her ‘identity’ are not explicitly referred to (via) a particular or singular location/ancestry. If related to the idea of contemporary Brazil, one can see once again this indistinct character of precise ‘origin’ and that what it means to be ‘native’ in present Brazilian terms is ambiguous, fluid.

Sicorax and her chorus sing and perform choreographies in circles reminiscent of an indigenous ritualistic occasion. Here, Ói Nóis inserted an extract of a text taken from Leonardo Boff’s account on Ramiro Reynaga, a representative of the Indigenous Movement Tupac Katari (of Quechua origin), who, in 1985, took the opportunity to deliver a letter while Pope John Paul II was visiting Peru, which said:

Indigenous of the Andes of America, we decided to take advantage of the visit of John Paul II to return his Bible, because for five centuries he has not given us love, peace or justice. Please have your Bible again and return it to our oppressors, because they need your moral precepts more than we do (12).

Ói Nóis wanted to translate this passage of ‘resistance’ to a dominant doctrine, namely Brazilian Catholicism, into a Brazilian indigenous language, so they contacted a professor from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul who worked with the Kaingang people, a native Brazilian community from the southern region of the country (where the group is from), who were willing to assist with the translation. The rhythm and tempo of the song were composed ‘inspired by Brazilian indigenous musicianship’ (Oi Nois interview 2017). Hence, Sicorax and her chorus exclaim in the Kaingang language:

Êg ta kanhgág ta ge sór, Papa ta êg ve kotíg, êg ta ti my bible nim jé. Mar pryg ta pénkar centuries thou pi êg you there come mû, kar êg jatum my ny tî han mû. Ka ã bã maia mãã, kar êg jatum my êg tug vÿn. Ka ag há há my nim, ag kanhrãn jé, ju êg ta kanhró na ti ha (Caliban, scene 2).

A short ‘dialogue’ between the waltz music of the court, with whom Próspero sings along, and the music of Sicorax’s chorus takes place. The court of musicians narrates with smiles and a countenance that conveys contentment at Sicorax’s death, singing: ‘Here Sicorax reigned, old bestial witch, whom I defeated by treading on with mortal elegance, destroyed her reign, and her infernal horde’. Sicorax’s chorus replies with extracts from Reynaga’s letter in Kaingang language. This interchange of musical styles creates a sharp contrast in this ‘conversation’ between language and music. It is crucial to stress that the Kaingang language is not understood by the general Brazilian public. Hence, on one particular side, the spectators are able to understand the narrative, the ‘story’ being told from Próspero’s perspective, whilst on the other side, what Sicorax chants is unintelligible to the public. This ‘incomprehensibility’ regarding Sicorax’s speech has two effects: it reminds its audience of how colonial forces erased native languages, highlighting the power of language and education in the politics of representation, history and memory. At the same time, it highlights an ‘otherness’ internally, within Brazil’s own borders, in Brazil’s politics of inclusion – within the

national discourse of Brazilian 'identity' coined in *mestiçagem* – that in fact excludes, via history, language, cultural representation, education, etc. When thinking in terms of exclusion of Brazilian native communities, Zirin (2014) elucidates:

In a country of two hundred million people that purports to celebrate its diversity like few other places on earth, it's as if a velvet rope keeps Indigenous people out of the Carnival. The most recent census counted between 650,000 and 850,000 Indigenous people in all of Brazil, which is ludicrously low [approx. 0.4%]; Indigenous people in cities tend to not disclose their ethnic heritage because of the institutional racism and disrespect they still face (31).

Hence, one can read this scene as both dealing with colonial violence towards native populations and reflecting present day 'exclusions' within Brazilian racial identifications and classifications. This can be seen in the actions that follow: A bible is given to Sicorax, who rejects it by throwing it on the floor; alluding to Reynaga's resistance. Próspero negates this act by doing a magic trick that sparks a controlled 'explosion' of the book he carries around, setting it on fire. At the same time, Sebastião, here representing a catholic priest, delivers a sermon in Latin with a giant cross in his hands. Sicorax is then stabbed and falls to the ground, whilst the musicians of the court return to sing and smile: 'the black witchcraft, my royal white magic hit with a beautiful and civilized final stroke.'

The overall lyrics of the waltz denounce old binaries between civilized and barbarian (bestial); and 'black' and 'white' magic. According to José Ramón Corzo and Ana Lucero Trancoso, white magic and black magic have been traditionally associated to 'emulate the color from the skin of its craftsmen [...] with kindness (white) and evil (black) [...] the colours, phenotypic trait preferred by racism, also serve to qualify and differentiate the supernatural powers in both cases' (293). Singh signals that if, traditionally, Prospero's art represented 'the world of civility and learning in contrast to the "natural" black magic of Caliban's mother Sycorax, anti-colonial revisions of [Shakespeare's *The Tempest*] challenged this rather abstract Eurocentric division between art and nature' (Singh 2016). However, Oi Nois' challenge this simplistic rhetoric designed to co-opt and thereby deny difference through sarcasm and irony, apparent in the interplay between the way

the song is performed, and the violence represented in the scene. This was intentional, and was used to question and refute the supposed superiority of 'white magic' and its presumed civilizing function. According to the group, the explosion and fire rising from the book is seen as 'the symbol of violence used to subdue the other [...] the civilized man, one can say, as usual, does not use knowledge to dialogue with the other, but rather uses violence, fire' (Oi Nóis' interview 2017) to subjugate or 'disappear' them. One can observe other potential meanings in the contrast between a 'non-violent' song and the violent actions in the scene: its explicit allusion to historic catholic catechization efforts/enforcement towards indigenous populations; and the idea of 'camouflage' or 'concealed' violence within the serene way in which the court narrates this violence. This links with the discourse of racial democracy, which concealed colonial violence in its narrative of fusion and difference 'while also presenting an unacknowledged undercurrent of racist exclusion and contempt' (Pravaz 2008 82), as has been extensively discussed in this thesis.

At the end of the scene, after Sicorax's death, her chorus exit chained to one another, with the last figure in line carrying Prospero's flag (Figure 9).

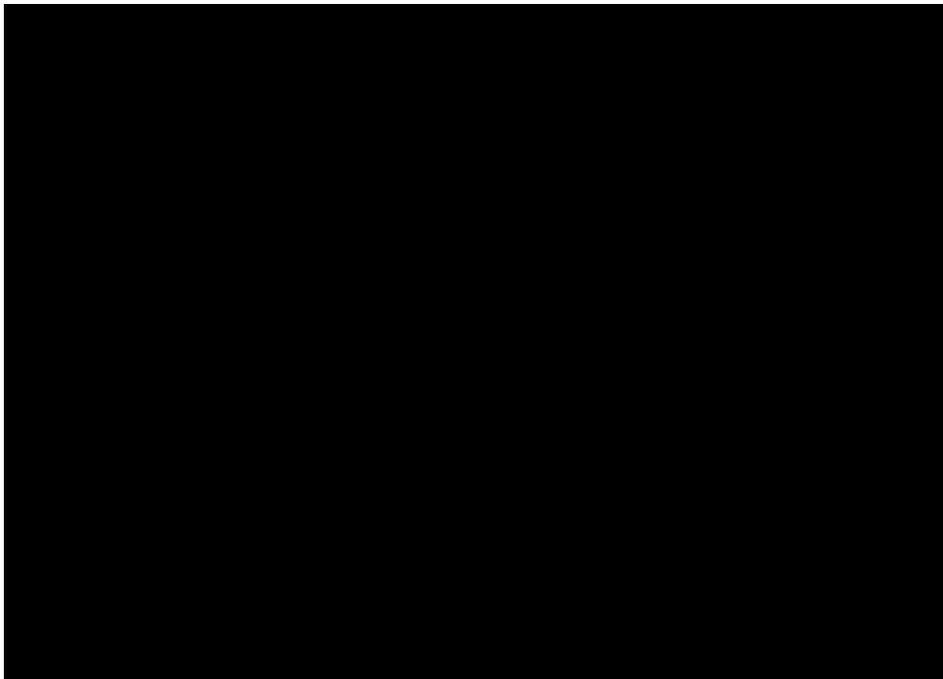


Figure 9- Prospero and enslaved Sicorax's chorus. Photo: Pedro Isaias Lucas.

Scene 3. Caliban's Curse

In this scene Caliban appears for the first time. He enters accompanied by his chorus, comprised of male and female performers, dressed as he is, and carrying large metal barrels which reference their labouring activities. Their semblance also 'alludes to the telluric', as did Sicorax's. Alongside the text, in which Caliban makes clear that he is son of Sicorax, the earthly orange colours in their costumes suggest a relation between the two 'native' groups, despite their clear difference in physical appearance, as Caliban and his chorus are not wearing a mask, nor wooden stilts. As he enters, Caliban confronts Prospero, claiming that he had stolen his Island. After commenting that he had given Prospero his natural resources in exchange for Prospero's superfluous gifts, Caliban shouts: 'You reign in my land and I am a slave in my own country'. The chorus repeats every phrase Caliban enunciates, thereby 'multiplying the voices of the oppressed' (Ói Nóis' interview). Caliban and his chorus wear animal skulls on their chests, which suggests a sense of 'primitivism' and perhaps even 'barbarism' for the figure of this contemporary Brazilian Caliban. Vaughan and Vaughan (1991) affirm that the character of Caliban has 'in various eras been seen as a tortoise, a giant fish, a grotesque monster, a primitive everyman, an anthropoid missing link, and – especially nowadays – an American Indian or a Caribbean slave of African or mestizo ancestry' (xiv). Hence, Caliban can be seen nowadays to be a vital figure that symbolises the various, but always engaging postcolonial politics of the 'other', signed most notably in the animalistic qualities that are associated with him by Europeans, which are made complex by the magical or fantastical frame, and which somehow facilitates these imaginings, and places them out of 'real' time and place. Given these colonial constructions, I wondered why Ói Nóis chose to enhance such a 'primitive' trait in their characterization of Caliban, since the idea of the performance was centralised in the notion that 'we are all Calibans'. However, it is perhaps by looking at the scene through the lens of *Antropofagia* (cultural cannibalism) that one can begin to unpack the reason for this decision.

In his essay, Retamar describes the meaning of Shakespeare's character's name, tracing its etymology to an 'anagram for "cannibal", an expression that he had already used to mean "anthropophagus"' (Retamar 6), which could suggest that Caliban survives by consuming other cultures and reinterpreting them for his

own needs/ends.⁶⁴ This study into the origin of Caliban's name was later echoed by Vaughan and Vaughan (1991), Buchweitz (1999), Charry (2014), amongst others. Bringing this link back to contemporary Brazil, it becomes impossible to overlook this association between *Caliban* and Brazilian *Antropofagia*. Moreover, as explained in chapter one, *antropofagia* was formulated 'not from the insipid and resigned perspective of the "noble savage" but from the point of view of the "savage savage", white-eater, the cannibal view does not involve a submission, but a transculturation' (Nascimento 11), moving beyond specific cultures, but in one's own terms. And it is this idea that Ói Nóis' characterization of Caliban enhances.

Ói Nóis' takes on this famous 'curse' scene, by having Caliban thank Prospero for teaching him 'the language of civilized men' (*Caliban*, scene 3), while climbing to the second level of the metal structure, which was once a ship but now functions to display different layers/levels of power between the characters. Hence, Caliban positions himself above Prospero, providing him with a relative new position of power. Caliban utters that now that he knows his language, he could curse Prospero with the certainty that he would be understood. The chorus begins to curse Prospero in sync, whilst drumming on the metal barrels, used as instruments with amplified metal sounds (as they are hollow inside). Caliban pulls out a microphone and a guitar, attached to the metal structure and sings with his chorus *All the World's Plagues*, a song with a Rock' n 'Roll tone and Heavy Metal guitar style (Figure 10). He shouts the lyrics into a microphone with distortion, resembling the sound of megaphones frequently used by protesters on the streets: 'May alive you go to hell, and suffer all the pain that pays for all the deaths you have caused. To all your agents and to your brutal imperialism may them be

⁶⁴ For a very detailed explanation of the etymology of the word 'Caliban'— see Retamar pp. 6-7.

destroyed by a colossal cataclysm! May all the plagues of the world fall on the invaders, the invaders, the invaders' (*Caliban* scene 3).

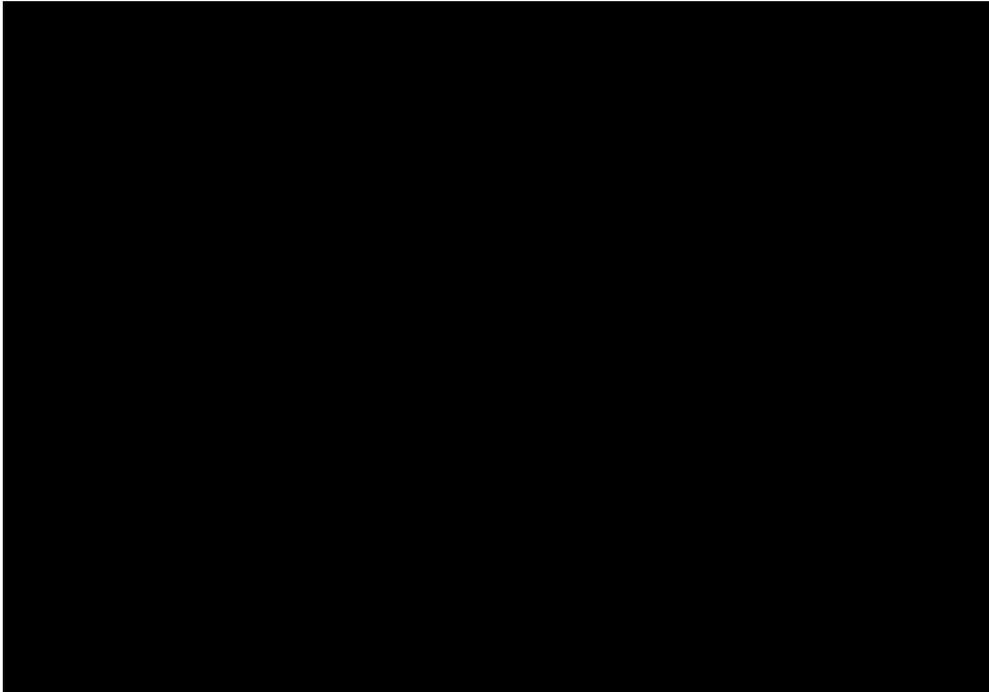


Figure 10- Scene 'Caliban's Curse'. Photo: Eugenio Barbosa

The intention of Boal, and of Ói Nóis in replicating Boal's choice of music genre, was to emphasize the foreign nature of Prospero's neo-colonial cultural/musical 'language'. So, in this scene we see a Caliban that is resisting an external and foreign 'current' mode of oppression by appropriating its associated musical form and the relative 'technological advancement', symbolised by the electric guitar and microphone, as opposed to the acoustic instrumentation used thus far in the performance. It is worth noting that the genre of Rock music is thought to have evolved through the meeting of various cultural influences in the United States: African musical traditions, European instrumentation, and a strong slave influence, as former slaves moved to urban areas and black and white people heard and shared their music styles and traditions. Thus, rock also was born out of hybridity.⁶⁵ Frith analyses the performativity in the British rock scene and links it to youth culture, one which has a 'radical, rebellious edge' (*Sociology of Rock* 206). Within this culture, Frith states that rock has been used 'simultaneously as a source of self-indulgence and individual escape, and of solidarity and active dissatisfaction' (*ibid*). Hence, Caliban can be seen to incorporate the 'invading identity' through an

⁶⁵ See: Bertrand, M.T *Race, Rock, and Elvis: Music in American Life*. University of Illinois Press, 2000. pp. 21–2.

appropriation of the oppressor's verbal language and music form: through the use of USA/British rock, historically related to ideas of hybridity and rebellion, to counter the same oppressors' discourses, alongside internal systems. This approach can also be linked to Bhabha's (1994) notion of colonial 'mimicry' as an intentional misappropriation of the dominant discourse, locating the power of the subaltern in a kind of textual insurgence, in which the subaltern is defined only by its internal negation of the colonizer. This intentional misappropriation is linked to the idea of *Antropofagia*, as an intentional 'type of ritualistic renewal, or rather, an act that, in cultural terms, occurs by devouring metaphorically foreign cultures' (Candido and Silvestre 244).

Before moving on to the next scene, I want to emphasize that 'Caliban's Curse' can be seen to relate to the national-foreign relationship and represents the colonial (and neo-colonial) situation in Latin America/Brazil within a more global context. In this relationship, Brazil stands in opposition to Europe and/or the United States, and that by identifying oneself as being the 'other', essentially different, can be seen as an act of resistance to the dominant definition of Brazilianness. This 'otherness' can be linked both with the idea of *Antropofagic* resistance and with Retamar's view of Latin America when he states: 'Within the colonial world there is a unique case for the entire planet: a vast zone for which *mestizaje* is not an accident, but the essence, the center line: ourselves, "our mestizo America"' (2005 4). And this becomes evident in this scene, in which the Caliban affirms his identity as being 'other' than Próspero's, by evidencing his relation with Sicorax, takes the electric guitar that belongs to the oppressor and sings his resistance not only using the language of the colonizer/invader to curse him back, but also using a 'foreign' musical genre that is itself tied with meanings related to hybridity, slavery and youth resistance.

Scene 6. Identity

In this scene, Caliban, while drinking with Trínculo and Estevão, begins to plot 'to kill the invader' (*Caliban* scene 6). Caliban questions why the masters are masters 'if the grapes we cultivate with our hands; if wine we ferment with our science; and the wineries we build with our wood?' 'It's tradition,' Trínculo replies. Caliban screams 'Death to the invader!' Próspero enters the scene and disarms Caliban's attempted revolt with a 'paternalistic and peaceful attitude' (*Caliban's*

program), convincing Trinculo by arguing that there is a natural order that justifies the place each one occupies in society. Here we can see how discourse again is used to disseminate particular ideologies, particular in asymmetric power relations. Próspero then proffers his identity thus: 'Próspero, of all men, the master', and finally he asks: 'And who is Caliban?' Caliban replies singing on his own: 'I am black, all black [...] I am black, I am poor, I am pity and I am mourning. I am Indigenous, yellow, I am sad, but still I sing [...] with weapons in black hands, I sing, white man, I sing'. The chorus re-enters and joins Caliban in singing the *Identity Song*, whilst clapping to the sound of African Brazilian percussion drums (*atabaque*) that resemble the religious rhythms of *Candomblé*. They create a circle and with matching choreographies, allude to performing a ritualistic occasion (Figure 11). An extract of the lyrics follows:

And who am I? I want to see myself. And who am I? Who am I supposed to be?

You taught me which the most beautiful colour was.

Blue are your eyes, white is my lord.

With whites I learned by force how to conquer, all things in the world can money buy.

All blacks in the world can kill whites.

I'm black, all black [...]

From Asia and Africa I come

All the poor of the Americas will conquer their destiny. I am also yellow

I am earth, I am a peasant. One day we will take revenge on every white killer.

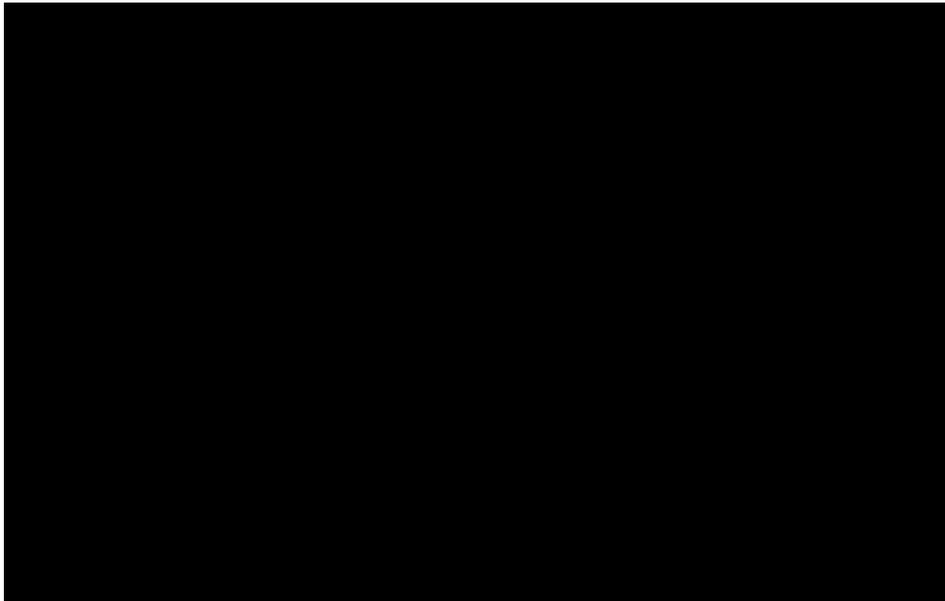


Figure 11- 'Identity Song'. Photo: Pedro Isaias Lucas (Oi Nois' website)

In this scene, Ói Nóis' Caliban takes on a particular identification in which differentiation and separation processes can be observed: Caliban is explicitly the 'non-white' Brazilian, who is economically oppressed and socially excluded, and who calls for resistance (violent, if necessary). This view of Caliban's identity can be linked to Retamar's essay in which the author forwards two symbolic meanings for the character of Caliban. The first, is coined in the idea of *mestizage* as a unique identity in opposition to Europe/US, as explored in the previous scene. The second symbolic meaning through which Caliban can be analysed, is as an internal representation, as an expression of 'the "people", the social class of the "oppressed"' (Lie 249). If we look at internal Brazilian issues related to discourses of nationhood and disguised oppression, more specifically, the link between racial and economic exclusion becomes more visible in Caliban's performance. Here we can see an association between what is perceived to be African Brazilian, through the music and ritual style of performance, and the lyrics which denounce racial specificity and economic exclusion, and the need to unite to create class strength. As discussed in the previous chapter, Levine, among others, had already pointed to the fact that the prevailing explanation of Brazil's socio-economic discrepancies lies in the fact that prejudice in Brazil is a matter of class, not of race and that 'despite the long history of racial mixing in Brazil, race continues to be the main indicator of privilege in society' (2003 11). Hence, as with *Baila Brazil*, there is an articulation of the internal 'subaltern' as a resistant identity. What I find interesting is that, even

though Brazilian identity seems to be articulated through the indication that 'We are all Calibans', the articulation of this identity as including 'everything but white' identity seems to resist the *mestiçagem* ideology of racial fusion. Despite Caliban narrating himself as coming from Africa, Asia and as being 'black' and 'yellow', he excludes the 'white' category from this process of identification. Hence, he also provides an indefinite and ambiguous sense of what constitutes Brazilian 'identity'. Somehow it seems to reside in class and economic struggle, that remains linked to race and ethnicity.

Scene 8. *Carnaval no Bananal* (Carnival in The Banana Plantation)

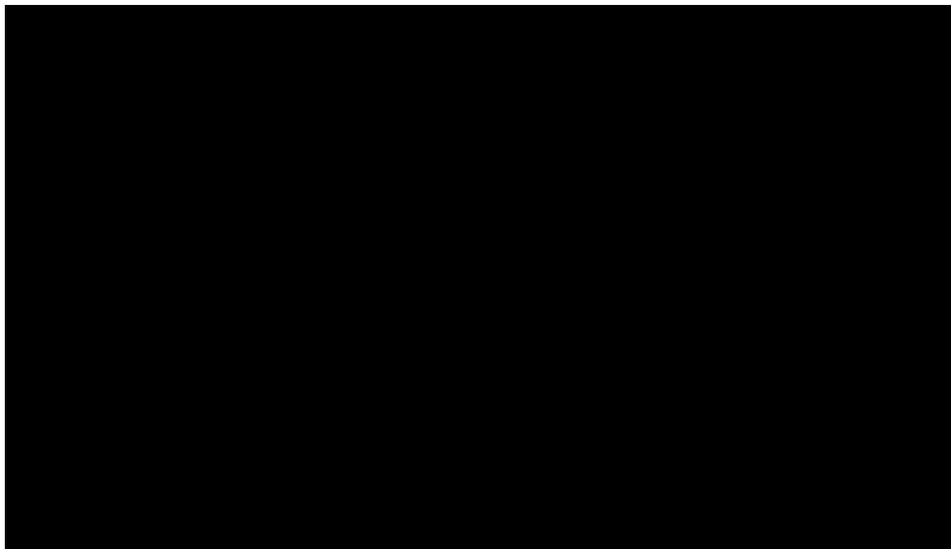


Figure 12 - Carnival Scene Caliban. Photo: Pedro Isaías Lucas.

In this scene, the noble Europeans 'discover' Brazilian Carnival. They enter the main performance space with a band, whose members are wearing transformed and stylized Sicorax masks on their heads and who are accompanied by three female samba dancers. Two of the dancers are performed by women wearing giant caricatured doll-like heads, with traits that emphasise their 'mulatanness', and who are wearing tight shining tracksuits. These women can be seen to be representative of the female *mestiça* (hence, *mulata*) as they have green eyes, dark skin, and emphasised red lips (Figure 12). The appearance of these gigantic heads can be related to an idea of minstrelsy, in which racial (and racist) stereotypes are reinforced through performance to accentuate their 'otherness'. This is emphasised by the conversation between King Alonso and Gonçalo:

Gonçalo – You can tell that they are all tropical.

King Alonso - Yes, by the rude and rustic way they dance. The movements are beautiful, but poorly finished, primitive, as befits savage art.

Gonçalo – There is no tradition.

Antonio – And they smell like sweat.

King Alonso - Precisely because of this they would have much success in Europe: for there, people don't sweat.

(*Caliban* scene 8)

It is significant that 'civilisation' is articulated in terms of not 'sweating' or labouring, which again emphasises class as a central marker of difference. Significantly, this is articulated in embodied terms, or repertoires of cultural expression. Here we begin to see the intersection between rhetoric, discourse and embodied practices.

All performers dance surrounding a character resembling the *baiana*, a female figure that Carmen Miranda explored in performances both within the country and more explicitly abroad, in Hollywood in the 1930-40s, as mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis. This figure has tropical fruit on her head, from which the noble Europeans are feasting. They all sing the following lyrics in carnival samba: 'If you are tired and need a break. If you are stressed and need a vacation. Please, do not go far. *Come to South America, Come down my way.*' With these final lines being sung in English. The lyrics of the song also make reference to Carmen Miranda's recording of 'South American Way' (1939) performed in the Hollywood film *Down Argentine Way* (1940) in which the lyrics say:

Have you ever danced in the tropics?

With that hazy lazy

Like, kind of crazy

Like South American Way

Ai, ai, ai, ai

Have you ever kissed in the moonlight?

In the grand and glorious

Gay notorious

South American Way?

Here one can identify two associations and criticism towards the figure of Carmen Miranda, as she embodied the idea of *brasilidade* being sold as a gendered exotic 'export product'. Firstly, the clear association between the image of the *baiana* with the fruit hat and lyrics of the song, which in both cases emphasize the 'lazy' and 'gay' South American way. Secondly, Miranda's own 'double identity', discussed in the first chapter, as representing *brasilidade* internally and Latin/South American externally, which generated a stereotypical vision of *latinidade* (McCann). Moreover, the minstrelsy Ói Nóis use in *Caliban* could be referencing Miranda's own 'blackfacing', in which she browned her skin in her *baiana* presentations in Brazil and embraced and appropriated African-Brazilianness in her mode of speaking, the lyrics she sang, her choice to sing samba, and her costumes when performing (Bishop-Sanchez, Shaw).

The ideas being performed in 'Come to South America, Come my Way' and in the 'blackfacing', presented in this scene can also be related to the handover ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games in London where Brazil had eight minutes to show what the country had to offer culturally to the millions of spectators that watched the Closing Ceremony on television, in anticipation of the Olympics in 2016 in Rio. This performance was called *Brazil: the country of the multicultural embrace* and had a sense of 'invitation' to the foreigner of 'this is what Brazil can offer you'. Within the event, the organizers used Brazilian and non-Brazilian volunteers to dance and perform the idea of 'Brazil' to the world. One of the sections of this performance displayed samba dancers, representing Brazilian Carnival. These samba dancers were performed by volunteers (some non-Brazilian), wearing shiny

tight tracksuits, and featured 'blackness', with artificial wigs, that characterizes the stereotype of the *mulatas* (Figure 13).



Figure 13 - Samba dancers in 2012 London Closing Ceremony. Photo: Belle News (Pinterest)

Caliban's Carnival scene read in contrast to these past and present ideas of referencing Brazilian women in terms of their 'exotic otherness', speaks to Pravaz's reminder that 'samba remains contested territory, a stage upon which the economic needs, embodied desires, and ethnic identities of local Brazilian women clash and collude with the neo-colonial dreams of tourists and cosmopolitans alike' ("Performing" 130). Within uncritical representations of the performance of the *mulata*, which Ói Nóis seem to criticize with this scene, these dreams can continue to be imagined.

Scene 11. Repression

As the performance approaches the end, the three Ariels converse with Prospero affirming that Caliban and his crew were dangerously approaching, for they found out that Prospero is a '*golpista* with no rights to be in power'. *Golpista* means someone who operates a *coup* – which may explicitly reference the Military Dictatorship and also Michel Temer, the current Brazilian president. Próspero orders Ariel to release the dogs on Caliban and 'the people' (*ibid*), an act that again explicitly references a colonial strategy used to control indigenous peoples, and they leave. Caliban, with an axe in his hand finally states: 'remember that we are

not doing this for revenge; remember that Prospero does not have any right to be in power' (*ibid*). Prospero climbs to the second level of the metal structure with his 'dogs' in front of him and then surrounds Caliban, Estevão and Trínculo. The 'dogs' are performed by men wearing overall black tracksuits with hoods, they have dog masks on the lower part of their faces (Figure 14).

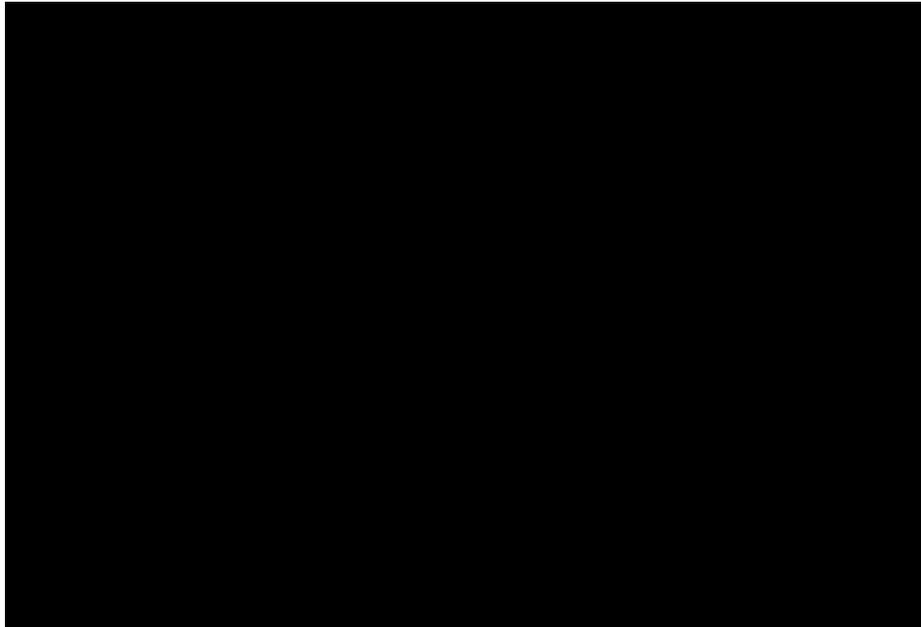


Figure 14 - Repression scene. Photo: Pedro Isaías Lucas

However, their movements are those of gorilla animals, which is historically linked to the military in Brazil, for that is how the population used to refer to Brazilian security forces: 'the military gorillas'.⁶⁶ In a more contemporary sense, the use of these 'dog' figures can be seen to represent the police and their brutality towards the population in the mass protests staged throughout the country against the organization of international sporting events, particularly the Confederations Cup in 2013. These protests were the biggest political protests in the country since 1984, in which demands for the end of the military regime 'saw millions in the streets rallying for the right to vote' (Zirin 60).⁶⁷

⁶⁶ See interview of journalist Miria Leitão for the association of the name 'Gorilas' and 'Military': <http://g1.globo.com/globo-news/noticia/2012/03/os-gorilas-do-exercito-achavam-que-violencia-era-maneira-de-resolver-os-problemas-lembra-cientista.html>

⁶⁷ For more on police brutality during the 2013 protests, see: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/12/thousands-streets-brazil-protests>

One of the Ariels now plays the guitar, whilst Próspero sings on the distorting microphone, which emphasizes the group's view of Ariel as 'the artist who works in cooperation with the oppressor'. The song is called *The Law of the Beasts*, once again in rock 'n roll in style with the lyrics highlighting the fact that Próspero 'has no rights' to be in power: 'my rights are my dogs', as Próspero sings. Here a word play can be observed: in Portuguese '*Besta*' means both 'beast', as a dangerous animal, but also in popular language someone who lacks intelligence, which reinforces the government's use of 'brutality' and 'violence' instead of 'diplomacy' and 'conversation' to control and oppress the people. According to Corzo and Trancoso, in Boal's text Próspero can be seen to be a charlatan who uses tricks and lies to manipulate people through a successful formula: ignorance and fear, 'taking advantage of their knowledge of nature, these alleged powers are fabricated, which in fact give it a real political power' (293). In Ói Nóis' scene, Próspero can be thought to represent both the internal oppressor, with his dogs/gorillas and references the wider Brazilian political situation but also an external power, as he regains control of the 'foreign' musical form, with its instrument and the microphone to physically and audibly control Caliban. In previous scenes Caliban has been shown to have an ambiguous identity, in this Repression scene, Próspero takes on a similar ambiguity, i.e. both the internal oppressor and the country's political situation, as emphasized above.

Scene 13. Finale

In the final scene, Próspero forgives his old European enemies and proposes a commercial partnership for the exploitation of the island. The noblemen are to become landowners, entrepreneurs, and exploiters. Próspero leaves Antônio and Sebastião on the island, and they immediately assume their masters' roles of whipping Caliban, Trinculo, and Estevão and forcing them to work. These actions suggest a continuum of oppression, but now with new masters on the island. Próspero also takes some islanders to exhibit in Europe as exotic curiosities. Ariel enters with a tutti-frutti hat and with a cage surrounding her head and happily dances 'Carmen Miranda style' (*cuticotico*), once again complying with Próspero, despite it being evident that she is in a 'cage'. Caliban is forced to wish Miranda and Fernando well for their wedding, and he finally curses them one last time before Sebastião and Antônio, who now are responsible for the Island, raise their

'weapons' to hit him. Miranda finally exclaims as they leave the scene in the ship (reassembled metal structure): 'People, we're going to Europe!'

The performance ends with a sober tone as all performers return to sing the final song. They are dressed in neutral, workers suits with hoods, as in the beginning of the play and look at the public whilst they sing the song *Everything Remains the Same* in a samba and carnival rhythm. An extract of the lyrics follows:

*Everyone comes together in the end,
everything stays the same.
Turns the world, turns, turns,
Passes the time, passes, passes,
wins the rich, always wins,
loses the poor, suffers, suffers
always expects, never reaches, always lives to work,
already lost hope, can no longer trust.*

The carnival rhythm of the song contrasts with the performers' serious faces and with the lyrics, which creates a sense of estrangement in the Brechtian style of the epic narrative of Boal's play. They walk in a circle, around the flag of the group with the motto: 'utopia, passion, and resistance'. According to the Ói Nóis, the group added a final strophe to Boal's original lyrics: 'As long as we accept that everything stays as it is, we'll always live to work; when is it going to change?' (*Caliban's* program 2017). Here they once again play on the idea of resistance and change as a means to escape the historical loop of oppression in Brazil. Thus one can link Ói Nóis' *Caliban* to Augusto Boal's vision for a *Theatre of the Oppressed*, where he states that theatre should not present images of the past:

But rather prepare models of action for the future. All viewers should be aware that the topic dealt with refers to something that will actually happen. It will happen: therefore it is necessary to prepare for when it happens! It is not enough to be aware that the world needs to be transformed: it is necessary to transform it! (*Técnicas Latinoamericanas* 19)

This creates an interesting link between Boal and Fanon, as he appealed to artists and intellectuals in the wake of the Algerian liberation struggle of the late 1950s:

[...] it is not enough to try to get back to the people in that past out of which they have already emerged; rather we must join them in that fluctuating movement which they are now just giving shape to, and which, as soon as it has started, will be the signal for everything to be called into question. Let there be no mistake about it; it is to this zone of occult instability where the people dwell that we must come [...] (1990, 182).

Here Fanon insists that artists and intellectuals need to do more than just look back at colonial pasts to re-establish a stable narrative of a country's history or identity. Instead, they need to question what aspects of the past are being reclaimed in the present, how they are being reclaimed and the consequences of these choices for the people who are most affected, in the 'zone of occult instability', where the oppressed people's sense of themselves has been formed. Hence, to Fanon, overturning colonialism, and its most recent forms, 'is not just about handing land back to its dispossessed peoples, returning power to those who were once ruled by Empire. It is also a process of overturning the dominant ways of seeing the world' (McLeod 22).

I believe the way Ói Nóis play with narratives of both past and present forms of oppression, through the allegory of Caliban, can be seen as an attempt to change 'dominant ways of seeing the world' and also of seeing Brazil itself with its internal discrepancies and inconsistencies. According to Hunter, allegory has been used to critique systems of power because 'allegory enables a critique by sidestepping a realist agenda and positioning writers to use strategies and techniques that foreground the assumptions of the system so they can be questioned and challenged' (268). By taking up the metaphor of Caliban as being 'all of us' in contemporary Brazil and making him 'lose' at the end of the play, continuing to be enslaved and oppressed, Ói Nóis is asking the Brazilian population to also step outside of their reality into this 'mystical' world which plays with and offers continuous references to the 'real' one, within a hybrid theatrical form and 'carnavalesque' style, to question their assumptions and lived realities.

The way music functions in this performance can be seen to be an essential theatrical device to foster this idea, as it is both didactic and choric, clarifying parts of the action, explaining the behaviour of the characters, and commenting upon the dialogues in the play. Moreover, within the scenes I have selected to analyse in this chapter, the interplay of music genre, lyrics and performance styles, enhance even further the contradictions and ambiguities related to Brazilian nationhood and contemporary performances of 'national identity'.

In this chapter, as in the previous one on *Baila Brazil*, I have explored representations of Brazilian 'identity' through music from a relatively 'marginal' standpoint. For the artists of both case studies have explored a vision of the country from their own practices, perspectives and artistic forms. I will now turn to my conclusion in which I explore the 'official' representation of Brazilian 'national identity' seen in the Rio Olympics Opening Ceremony and how the country negotiated this identity for the world on 5th August 2016.

Conclusion. Performing Brazil on the Global Stage: Rio 2016 Olympic's Opening Ceremony

In this thesis thus far, I have explored ways in which music and performance have been used in combination to formulate, perpetuate and negotiate a particular sense of Brazilian nationhood. In my introduction, I sought to demonstrate how music, national identity and Brazil interrelate in and through 'performance', while tracing the evolution of the discourses and ideologies involved in the creation of Brazil's definition of itself primarily through the idea of *brasildade* that was, and still is, rooted in the idea of racial 'mixing' (*mestiçagem*). I proposed this approach was a means for the country to acknowledge and reconcile its colonial past in the post-colonial period, by co-opting the three separate histories of Brazilian citizens: the Europeans, African slaves and indigenous peoples into a single nation, without needing to reconsider these separate histories or current socio-economic inequalities caused by the histories of colonialism or contemporary power relations. I proposed that approaching a re-evaluation of Brazilian identity via Performance Studies and Musicology, would highlight the particular ways in which this ideology and view of the nation was effectively produced and transmitted through embodied practice, namely, through the dance and music genre of samba in a combination that involved: state authoritarianism (and its interpellatory mechanisms and ideologies) and active audience participation through embodied performative practices. I traced how samba continues to be viewed as central to Brazilian identity, involving the articulation of happiness. However, despite the particular articulations of the nation that have been promoted officially via samba, both music and dance, on the radio, during carnival and in public events like the FIFA and Olympics ceremonies, other aspects of Brazilian identity, beyond race, are unavoidably also included in performances. This inclusion is evidenced in the ways, for example, that the Brazilian woman is characterised as a *mulata*, referencing particular racial and gendered characteristics, despite the dominance of whiteness in contemporary Brazil. These official articulations of Brazilian men and women are more nuanced or troubled when an intersectional approach to identity is engaged through music, and embodied practices, with other important aspects of Brazilian histories and identities, including gender, religion and class. I thus shifted from

official performative articulations and representations of the nation to consider how theatrical groups were articulating more complex versions of Brazil today.

To explore how this idea of Brazilian 'national identity' is being performed through music in contemporary times, I considered how two contemporary companies are using music and dance within theatrical practice to critically engage with the ways in which Brazilian identity is performed both internally, to its own people, and externally to the world.

Baila Brazil was an important starting point to consider the implications of the formal articulation of Brazilian identity because it demonstrates clearly how Brazil's post-racial ideology, articulated in the early twentieth century and embedded in the national discourse, historically undermined or erased specific cultural practices, particularly from African 'origins', through an assimilatory process. The ways in which these African Brazilian artists choose to resist such 'erasure', re-claims Brazilian 'identity' and historicity by emphasizing 'Africanness' in the narrative of the nation. At the same time, the ways in which they explore this in performance emphasizes particular African Brazilian rituals and memories of slavery, which in turn troubles the official articulation of the nation as Christian, catholic, unified as one, with equality at its centre. It is important to note in the discourse of the artists of Balé de Rua and in the performance of *Baila Brazil*, that samba remains an embodied practice of 'everyday life' for many Brazilians. What this means for the company is that by combining their personal histories with that of Brazil itself, through the dominant samba forms, they could not avoid performing and celebrating *brasilidade*, despite their subverting more common place stereotypes of racial and gendered performances, and challenging dominant histories and cultural paradigms of Brazil. This exemplifies the complexities of narrating the nation, and samba itself. In challenging the articulation of the nation through samba, the form used to articulate racial mixing, the group ultimately cannot escape re-enforcing/ rearticulating this ideology. It also suggests an ambivalence in Brazilians, who seem to want to embrace the idea of racial democracy while at the same time also wanting to insist on specificity and diversity of cultural, ethnic, racial, gendered identities within the nation. This performance was very focussed on internal articulations of the nation, but when it travelled, again there was ambiguity in how external audiences would 'read' these as challenges, as opposed to their reinforcing colonial stereotypes of Brazil.

In analysing *Caliban: A Tempestade de Augusto Boal*, I focussed on the interrelation of music and Brazilian 'identity' in the contemporary performance of Brazil as a postcolonial nation in the context of Latin America, where the relationship between the characters in Shakespeare's/ Boal's *Tempest*, Prospero, Ariel and Caliban are symbolic of colonial modes of oppression. I read this contemporary Brazilian example as a more localized engagement with Brazil's postcolonial experiences, linking it with Brazil's history of external (colonial) and internal (contemporary) oppressions. Through the interplay of music, narrative and performance, *Ói Nós* complicates Brazil's narrative of itself by dealing with different time-frames simultaneously in the performance. They tackle Brazil's colonial history through the figure of Sycorax, and specific modernist interpretations of identity via Caliban. They also use samba, the 'symbol of Brazil', to criticize the notion of the country being an 'export product' which facilitates neo-colonial fantasies of exploitation/exotization. By drawing on Boal's play *A Tempestade* and Cuban Roberto Fernández Retamar's essay *Caliban: Notes toward a Discussion of Culture in Our America* (1972), this play addresses the country's political turmoil in the colonial past, recent past, as artists attempted to resist the military dictatorship, and present, as the group challenges ongoing socio-economic inequality and oppression in the many images of uneven labour and exploitation. Throughout, music is used to articulate the central issues and conflicts. It is particularly interesting to see how 'foreign' forms, like Rock 'n Roll are used to suggest how cultural "anthropophagus" (Retamar 6) may be used as a form of resistance. Here Caliban offers a model for Brazilians to survive by consuming other cultures and reinterpreting them for his own needs/ends. This is particularly pertinent given that the play finally suggests that 'we are all Calibans'. Notably, in all the forms used in the play, samba returns at the end to provoke an estrangement between the idea of a 'happy nation' performed in Carnival song and the 'reality' of the peoples' socio-economic oppression. The notion that Brazilians 'are all Caliban' destabilizes the idea of a fixed identity coined in *mestiçagem* as the character fluctuates between modes of identification, taking on a more *antropophagic* version of intentional cultural appropriation, also coined in the notion of *resistance*.

As I move to my conclusion, I return to official articulations of Brazilian identity to explore the ongoing interrelation between music and performances of

Brazilian identity. In the course of this PhD process, Brazil has hosted two major international sporting events, which are, arguably, the largest events in the contemporary global sphere (Tomlinson and Young): the FIFA World Cup (2014), which I used to exemplify how the idea of *brasilidade* is articulated in contemporary Brazil in the introduction of this thesis, and the Olympic Games (2016), which I will now use to suggest the ways in which the nation continues to perform itself to the world, as a quintessential spectacle of 'Brazil'. Hence, I close this thesis by analysing the intricacies involved in Brazil negotiating its constructed national 'identity', discussed thus far in this thesis, and how it officially relates to its past in the present. Moreover, I will attempt to show how music was used both to highlight these contradictions within the national discourse and to return to and restate its sense of itself as a harmonised, integrated nation at the end.

When Brazil won the bid to host the Olympic Games, the then president Luis Inácio 'Lula' da Silva,⁶⁸ presented an emotional speech to the international press in 2009 stating:

Today I have felt prouder of being a Brazilian than on any other day. Today is the day that Brazil gained its international citizenship. Today is the day that we have overcome the last vestiges of prejudice against us. I think this is the day to celebrate because Brazil has left behind the level of second-class countries and entered the ranks of first-class countries. Today we earned respect. The world has finally recognized that this is Brazil's time (qtd in Zirin 13).

Lula's speech resonated with the country's general feeling of pride in the idea of 'gaining international citizenship', for Brazil has often had an 'underdog complex', being perceived as part of the developing world. This suggests a deep desire for the nation to be seen as developed, as opposed to developing, as having achieved the equivalent status as the USA and Europe. However, in the aftermath of the worldwide economic crisis of 2008 and due to a lack of good internal administrative planning, in the past five years (co-current with this PhD research), Brazil has experienced one of its most severe socio-economic and political crises. This includes enormous corruption scandals involving most factions of the government (left- and right-wing politicians), an economic recession that has led to

⁶⁸ Lula has been charged for corruption in 2018.

the rising of unemployment rates, and an overall sense of a lack of security due to widespread violence and crime in the country. In addition to this, the difficulties of the World Cup and the Olympic Games, with their huge demands for increases in security funding, the displacement and eviction of Rio's poorest residents due to the construction of the buildings for these events, and the incredible expansion of costs, proved to be 'a recipe for tensions and conflicts that would be difficult to keep under wraps' (Zirin 7). Such tensions culminated in massive protests, with millions of people on the streets, which spread throughout the country in 2013 and following years, particularly against the use of public money to invest in hosting such events in a country still struggling to provide basic needs to its citizens. Brazil became the spotlight for the international press, not only because it was hosting such large-scale international events, but also because of its internal turmoil. As an example, *The Economist* used Rio's iconic sculpture of 'Christ The Redeemer' to illustrate the crises in 2009 and 2013 (Figure 15).



Figure 15 - Front Cover of *The Economist*: 2009 (left) 2013 (right)

It was within this context of political and economic chaos – which led to 'an unprecedented identity crisis' (Glenny 2016) in Brazil – that the producers of the Opening Ceremony had to articulate and negotiate an idea of Brazilian national 'cohesion' (Penfold). As many authors have argued (Ellis, Hogan, Tomlinson and Young, Tzanelli), international sporting events, and the Olympic Games more specifically, offer host countries a unique opportunity to showcase their nation as

a tourist destination, but also they offer a key site in the discursive construction of an idea of the nation (Ellis, Hogan, Penfold). This opportunity is principally enhanced in the opening ceremonies of such events, in which a particular type of national storytelling is chosen, 'one which will show the nation in the best possible light' (Ellis 105).

The opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games are cultural rituals (MacAloon) in which certain conventions have become standard elements of the events, such as their location in an Olympic stadium, the appearance of athletic delegations, and the lighting of the Olympic flame. Daniel Gough adds another variable aspect of these rituals, which is 'an artistic performance highlighting elements of a host country's culture and history through dance, music, and visual displays' (205). This artistic performance in the 2016 Olympics Opening Ceremony in Brazil had the aim to 'celebrate togetherness and reach beyond the country's borders, speaking to the planet as a whole' ('Message from the Creators' Media Guide 7).⁶⁹ Within this message from the artistic producers of the ceremony, one can observe an idea of celebration of unity but also a goal to relate to the global sphere, extrapolating the country's borders. This idea of the spectacle 'speaking to the planet as a whole' can be linked to Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young's view on global spectacles being 'justified on the basis of their potential to realize shared, global modes of identity and interdependence, making real the sense of a global civil society' (Tomlinson and Young 1), an aspiration reflected in Lula's speech quoted at the beginning of this chapter: the world would finally recognize that 'it is Brazil's time', Brazil would come to be considered 'part of the world'. This outward-looking mode of the ceremony was, in the words of one critic, 'designed to appeal to the greatest number of people, in contrast to the divided country' (De Sa 2016). From an internal perspective, however, the performance displayed an overall theme of 'looking for similarities and celebrating differences' in the fight against intolerance (Mattoso 2016). And within this idea one can observe, once again, an attempt to negotiate and narrate a Brazilian 'identity' which is multiple and diverse, but coherent, a racial democracy.

The creative directors were Daniela Thomas, artistic director of the 2012 Flag Handover ceremony in London; Andrucha Waddington, Brazilian filmmaker and

⁶⁹ The Media Guide of the Rio 2016 Olympics' Opening Ceremony is available at: <https://library.olympic.org/Default/doc/SYRACUSE/166141>

producer; and Fernando Meirelles, a most well-known film director in Brazil, particularly due to his work on the film *City of God* (2002). According to Maria Eduarda Rocha, despite the differences in age, the creative directors are part of a generation of artists and intellectuals formed in the consolidation of a cultural industry in Brazil that emerged in the 1980s after the military dictatorship that, 'breathed the air of criticism of nationalism for its association with the Military Regime, and of increasing appreciation of "diversity"' (160). This idea of 'diversity' was explored throughout the ceremony, at times in accordance to the nationalistic ideal of *brasilidade*, and at other times enhancing the conflicting realities of a 'contradictory country', as will be explored. When Meirelles was asked what view of Brazil they wanted to showcase, he answered: 'We decided on three axes that define us: Our forests and rich biodiversity; The fact that we are a mixed people, which at first makes us more tolerant (although at the moment things are a bit ugly); And the talent to enjoy life, an atavistic joy that we have' (qtd in Luna 2016). This statement rearticulates ideas of Brazil as 'nature', Brazil as 'mixed', and Brazil as 'joyful' proposed when the national identity was formulated at the beginning of the twentieth century, as has been discussed in this thesis, and suggests how they remain current in official terms.

This 'talent to enjoy life' Meirelles refers to can also be linked to one of the key themes of the ceremony: the notion of '*Gambiarra*', which is a popular expression to address the 'Brazilian talent for making something great out of almost nothing' (Media Guide 10). The term is used to refer to a particular 'Brazilian way' of improvising solutions to problems using any means or material available. *Gambiarra* is considered a widespread cultural practice that is historically linked with the roguish figure of the *malandro* (explained in chapter three), and with the Brazilian *ginga* (Rosa), which is a kind of malleability, a particular sway of the body associated with samba, capoeira and Brazilian football. According to Roberto Da Matta, this 'Brazilian way' of improvising innovative solutions to unforeseen scenarios may be understood as an 'acquired behavior that has been carefully constructed and continuously performed [and which] has given unified meaning to a diversified (social) body within the discourse of national identification in Brazil' (Rosa 222).

The notion of *Gambiarra* was chosen because of funding cuts for the Opening Ceremony spectacle – due to the national economic crisis, which even caused the

city of Rio to call a “state of public calamity” amidst a huge funding shortage’ (Penfold 5). Hence, the spectacle comprised one tenth of the budget of London, its predecessor in 2012. In Daniela Thomas’ words, ‘we have to do it with the resources we have, but this is not a problem. Out of this *MacGyver-ing* came what was basically pure creativity’ (qtd in Lutz 2016).⁷⁰ Rodanthi Tzanelli recognizes this feature of *gambiarra* as ‘Rio’s very own impetus to enthusiasm, an alternative to conventional notions of “resilience” under neoliberal globalisation’ (102). According to Cristina Rosa, this aesthetic system enables artists ‘to question and rearrange both local and foreign materials, dismantle some ties and strengthen others in a rhizome like fashion, juxtapose unpredictable alliances and fragmentations, or articulate dissonant utterances’ (212). One of the ways in which the creators rearranged both local and external materials was through the use of foreign technology in the projections on the ceremony’s stage floor throughout the entire performance, which relied on their cinematic and choreographic expertise. As Misha Glenny mentions in his article, ‘whereas Danny Boyle produced a theatrical spectacular with expensive props [in London 2012], Meirelles relied on his cinematic skills to overcome the budgetary challenges’ (2016).

Another important theme the creators wanted to address was an ecological message warning the world of the dangers of global warming and exploitation of natural resources, which also played a part in their *gambiarra* notion, with a mentality that followed the idea that with less spending, simpler choices meant more sustainability. The organisers also were eager to express that they did not want the ceremony to be ‘military’, which alludes to a rejection of a possible (return of a) ‘militarization’ of the country. Hence, in the performance of the national anthem, for example, they chose members of the Rio de Janeiro State Environmental Police to hoist the national flag, one of the rituals that is mandatory by the IOC (International Olympic Committee) in Opening Ceremonies. In Meirelles’ words: ‘A national force would usually be responsible for this duty, such as the navy or the army. Since we like to consider ourselves a peace-loving people, instead of inviting a group with offensive capabilities, we’ve brought a defensive-oriented group, the Environmental Police. They help to reinforce the ceremony’s message’ (Media Guide 12). In addition to this environmental message, the musician that was

⁷⁰ My emphasis. In English the word has also been used as ‘MacGyver’ing’ after a character from a TV show in the 1980s.

chosen to perform the national anthem was Paulinho da Viola, a famous Brazilian samba musician. He sang the anthem accompanied by an acoustic guitar in a manner that linked the patriotic nature of singing the national anthem - something Brazilians are very familiar with and enjoy doing, particularly in celebration before football matches – in an ‘intimate’ way and, in particular verses, with a soft samba rhythm. It is important here to consider the role of music when thinking about the role of performance in national anthems, as Anderson states:

[...] there is a special kind of contemporaneous community which language alone suggests – above all in the form of poetry and songs. Take national anthems, for example [...] at precisely such moments people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. [...] How selfless this unisonance feels! If we are aware that others are singing these songs precisely when and as we are, we have no idea who they may be, or even where, out of earshot, they are singing. Nothing connects all but imagined sound (145).

I believe that in Rio’s Opening Ceremony, this ‘imagined sound’ was even more affective as it connected the melody and lyrics of the national anthem with the ‘imagined community’ of Brazil fostered by samba in the nationalistic ideal. Most significant was a performance of Brazil that would be ‘solemn without being military’ (Media Guide 12), and thus disavowing a central part of how Brazil was constituted as a nation, while at the same time performing the nation’s desire to be seen as ‘peace-loving’.

Moving towards thinking of the structure of the ceremony, I will now turn to discuss the overall ‘narrative of Brazil’ in this global spectacle. If, as Jackie Hogan argues, a ‘narrative of the nation’ (after Stuart Hall) is ‘a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols and rituals which stand for or represent the shared experiences, sorrows, and triumphs and disasters which give meaning to the nation’ (101), then what is selected to display the story of Brazil in the opening ceremony and the music to narrate it is important. I turn now to consider how the images and music chosen both exposed the country’s internal conflicts and celebrated an idea of its ‘togetherness’.

Colonial 'Encounter'

The ceremony was arranged to tell an expansive narrative of 'Brazilian history and contemporary society' (Gough 2016), which in this performance comprised of at least four phases: '*Pindorama*', which included the genesis of life on Earth (before humanity) and a celebration of the first people in Brazil (indigenous); 'Geometrization', which addressed Brazil's colonial situation, slavery and subsequent immigration processes; a long segment that highlighted Brazil's contemporary and diverse 'metropolitan' musical culture; and a future oriented environmental message entitled 'a simple idea that helps a lot'. Despite being described in a linear way, one can perceive a cycle within this narrative, as it returns and ends with a vision of Brazil 'as nature', as the organizers warn that the future can only exist if the country (and the world) takes care of its natural resources.

Pindorama was the term native Brazilians, the Tupi-Guarani people, used for the land that now is Brazil. To interpret this segment of the ceremony, seventy-two performers from Parintins, North Brazil, danced in an installation that comprised hundreds of elastic bands with which they choreographed patterns inspired by indigenous art. Within the choreography they formed three huge '*Ocas*', indigenous native huts, in the centre of the Olympic stage. There was a tone of romanticism and nostalgia to the segment, which speaks to the idea of the 'foundational myth' of Brazil, which is coined in an idealized vision of perceiving the nation as a 'garden', as articulated by Chauí (2011). Within this mythology, there is a sense that:

Our past secures our future in a temporal *continuum* that dates from the origins to our destiny. If Brazil is, as we often say, 'a country of the future', it is because God provided us with the signs to know our future: the constellation of the Southern Cross, which protects and orients us, and Nature-Paradise, the gentle mother (120).⁷¹

However, Chauí criticizes this view on the basis that the 'mythical production of the nation-garden throws us into the bosom of nature and, in doing so, it throws us out of the world of history' (117), including the almost total disavowal of indigenous cultures and colonial experiences in contemporary Brazilian histories.

⁷¹ Emphasis in original.

This vision of Brazil was also criticized by Sonia Guajajara, head of The Association of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil, who told *The Guardian* in an interview in relation to the opening ceremony's display of indigenous populations:

The images are beautiful but they hide the reality [...] that the Amazon is threatened with extinction from logging and fires and the growing demand from soy and beef. So much from demand for what people eat in other countries. *We are not folkloric we are real* and we are the only ones who can protect the forest (Lutz 2016).⁷²

The romanticized vision of the foundational myth throwing Brazil 'out of the world of history' contrasted with the reminder of the reality of the nation in opposition to a 'folklorized' version of it, seen in the above segment, shows how such official displays of nationhood are very often coined in utopian visions of the nation, both of its past and its present. This speaks to Hutchison's remarks that 'nostalgia often reveals the gap between the way in which the nation is narrated and represented and the memories of individual people who do not feel fully represented by these representations nor ascribe to the narratives' (9). There is no sense of how indigenous peoples, their cultures, knowledges or histories fit into contemporary Brazil in this articulation of the nation. It is another appropriation, similar to how samba was appropriated from the *favelas*, to tell a dominant story of inclusion.

The following section 'Geometrization' dealt with Brazil's colonial history. The creators narrated this segment in the ceremony's Media Guide as 'the encounter of natives, Europeans and Africans [which] marked the birth of the Brazilian nation and the first occupation of our territory' (16). Hence, we return to the idea of the three races 'building' the nation. The notion of 'encounter' softens the narration of colonial engagements in Brazil, thereby avoiding any explicit exposition on the actual brutalities of these encounters with both indigenous peoples and with African-Brazilians via the transatlantic slave trade. The way in which this was performed, however, showed Brazil's colonial history as more complex than the racial democratic discourse suggests.

The segment was divided into three 'arrivals': of the Europeans (Portuguese); of the Africans (slavery); and of the Arabs and The Orient (Lebanese,

⁷² My emphasis.

Syrian and Japanese). Three mechanical Caravels, on which acrobats simulated the movements of a ship in a storm presented the journey of the Portuguese. When they reached the centre of the stage, the caravans entered the *ocas* (huts) and were surrounded by indigenous performers. There was a certain estrangement within their semblances, but the way in which the space was arranged, with the caravans occupying the centre of the indigenous huts, seemed to suggest an 'embrace', through which the native population 'took in' the European settlers. Hence, the ceremony seemed to have erased the conflicting nature and violence of these colonial 'encounters', which extinguished entire populations and/or assimilated them.

The representation of the arrival of the Africans was more precise than the initial 'encounter', with four groups entering the Olympic Stage on sugar plantation wheels with weights on their feet, representing shackles. The representation of 'slavery' and its cruelty was marked and made visible. According to Gough, 'this performance acknowledged the brutality of slavery more explicitly than many nationalistic accounts of Brazilian history, which tend to minimize the particular cruelty with which the practice was carried out in Brazil' (206). When referencing this section of slavery in the performance, the organizers explained that they attempted to highlight that 'African culture is at the basis of everything we call "Brazilian"' (Media Guide 16). This is an interesting and important acknowledgement, given how the need to resist cultural erasure is clearly evidenced in the work of contemporary groups like Balé de Rua, as seen in *Baila Brazil*, discussed in chapter three.

The final group to arrive represented the many migratory waves of the twentieth century. However, instead of picturing the earlier mass European migration, the organizers focussed on the arrival of Syrian, Lebanese and Japanese migrants in the first half of the twentieth century, which complicates further the idea of Brazil being a 'mixed' country of three main racial origins, expanding the notion to other parts of the world. With this combination, the creators wanted to showcase that 'being a country made up of immigrants from every corner of the world, Brazil has the ability to absorb cultures and integrate them into its own. In here we mix' (Media Guide 16). Here the discourse of the organizers of the ceremony echoes the *anthropophagic* notion of Brazilian culture digesting other cultures in order to incorporate them and grow stronger, and again evidences a

return to earlier modernist ideologies of Brazil, though slightly more complicated, in line with what Rocha identified as being a “‘multicultural’ re-reading of “Brazilian identity”” (172). The diversity of races was expressed in a ‘mosaic’ of colours and marks that were imprinted via projection on the stadium’s floor with the passage of each group, which further enhanced the idea of Brazilian identity being ‘multiculturalism’ rather than articulated through the earlier idea of a *racial democracy*.

These first performances of Brazil follow expected lines, both ideologically and in terms of imagery, replicating many of the modernist discourses established in the early twentieth century, and disavowing many of the complexities of Brazil’s histories and cultural identities. However, I turn now to consider how the ways in which music and dance was incorporated in the ceremony highlight some of the tensions, hierarchies and issues that continue to trouble contemporary Brazilian national identity.

Music and ‘Diversity’

From the last arrival of immigrants, the ceremony leaps to the idea of the construction of contemporary metropolitan Brazil. Performers choreographing *Le Parkour*, an urban street style of acrobatic movements, in alliance with 3D projections on the floor, cross the stadium until they reach a far side in which a ‘Box City’ (Media Guide) is being built. In this installation, a series of dance performances, in samba and hip-hop styles, take place in spaces representing the hillside *favelas* where samba, Brazilian funk, and other musical styles originated. However, before they move on to those specific musical expressions in a segment which they called ‘*Favela Voices*’, they showcase a number of Bossa Nova music numbers. I wish to briefly discuss this section of the performance because, unlike all other musical styles and genres, which were categorized under the umbrella term ‘Pop’, meaning ‘popular’ Brazilian music, Bossa Nova was specifically ‘named’ and had its own segment. In an interview Meirelles suggested that Brazil lacked ‘high culture’ as it is perceived elsewhere, but that Brazilian ‘high culture was complemented by “roots” or “authenticity”’ (Tzanelli 97). Here he was referring to the notion that ‘classical music’ does not thrive in Brazil nor does it express ‘Brazil’,

for the country has its roots in popular culture. However, I believe this segment on Bossa Nova contradicts this idea for, despite being a form 'mixed' with popular culture (samba), the section exposes an elitism or internal 'high culture' standards which sits in contrast to the musical expressions of the *favelas* and explicitly showcases that 'Brazil has created, beneath a façade of harmony, a contradicted society' (Skidmore xiii).

Bossa Nova was created by a group of middle/upper-class musicians in Rio de Janeiro during the 1950s, which was a period of national 'optimism' in Brazil, of democratic modernisation and industrial development (Dunn). These musicians, one of which was Tom Jobim, who later became internationally known, appropriated the popular rhythms of samba and fused them with the 'anti-congruent music of cool jazz' (Tinhorão 311). According to Caldas, the history of Brazilian popular music had changed course, for 'musical refinement, especially in harmony and instrumentation, differentiated bossa nova from everything that had already been done in music in Brazil' (38). As a mix of jazz and samba, Bossa Nova was 'a sophisticated new style that gave expression to the cosmopolitan aspirations of Brazil's cultural elite' (Dunn 13) during this phase of national optimism. However, according to Dunn, although this period of national confidence was short lived, it produced lasting cultural achievements such as Bossa Nova, that 'demonstrated to emerging artists that a poor and unevenly developed country could still produce "a poetry for export" and receive international acclaim' (*ibid*). Within this idea of 'poetry for export', Dunn is referencing Oswald de Andrade's claim that Brazilian culture was so distinct that it should be 'exported', instead of only importing foreign influences, as explicated in chapter one. Here, we can observe a relational stand with the Brazil x Foreign perspective in which, once again, Brazil is seen as the 'underdog' and needing to establish itself as a distinct cultural entity.

Internally, however, Tinhorão argues that Bossa Nova fostered the establishment of a class line in popular music which was 'forged by a clear division between the rhythms and songs cultivated by the lower urban layers, and the music produced for the "good people"' (312). I believe that this 'class line' was reproduced in the opening ceremony where the song *Garota de Ipanema* (The Girl from Ipanema 1962), which according to the organizers is the 'second most well-known song in the world' (Media Guide 21), was performed by Daniel Jobim, Tom Jobim's grandson. Whilst he played the song on the piano, the internationally famous

Brazilian super model Gisele Bündchen crossed the entire stadium floor as if on a cat-walk, which she announced would be the last one of her modelling career. Bündchen is a 'white', 'golden blond' Brazilian (Tzanelli), of German ascendance. Her walk is part of a segment the creators called 'curves', in which she 'leaves a long trail wherever she goes [with] her *delicate lines* [...]' (Media Guide 21)⁷³. After she reaches the end of her cat-walk the song ends and there is an abrupt change of musical style for the next section, '*Favela Voices*' which enhances the contribution of African Brazilian culture to the contemporary urban *favela* aesthetics. As Tzanelli ironically notes:

Significantly, as the 'golden blonde' Bündchen completes her performance on stage, she smiles at the group of mostly black funk and parkour performers of the city-stage, extending her hands to them: only an 'educated' (Europeanised) and white desire can provide recognition to Rio's disenfranchised *favela* populations (107).

Within this 'recognition', a clear change of tone and performative style takes place. The song 'Rap of Happiness' (Mc Cidinho and Doca 1995), previously introduced in the *Baila Brazil* chapter, is performed. The lyrics expose: 'All I want is to be happy, to be able to walk with tranquillity in the *favela* where I was born, and to be proud and conscious that the poor have their place in the world'.⁷⁴ This well-defined division between the culture of a 'white elite', represented by Bossa Nova and by Bündchen and her 'delicate lines', and the culture of the 'favelas', represented by rap music and by African Brazilian performers, highlights the contradictions inherent in the national imaginary which follows the notion of 'togetherness' in a *mestiço* utopia. Contrary to the discourse, there are dissonances, distinctive hierarchies and inequalities. Moreover, the spatial division in the performance setting, in which Bündchen has the entire floor to herself, to walk on and over, while the 'favela voices' are 'put in their place' at the end of the stadium, resembles the spatial divisions created in Rio's attempt to modernise itself at the turn of the twentieth century as explicated in the first chapter, where, in order to create grand boulevards, the city pushed the lower classes to the city's

⁷³ My emphasis.

⁷⁴ My translation.

edges, or to the hillsides. Relating to contemporary Brazil, Zirin notes that in the tourist zones of Rio there is:

A full-court press to pacify, sanitize, and Disneyfy the favelas. The goal is to incorporate them into the city [...] and slowly gentrify them. This process involves evicting the pesky people who have to live in the favelas, the *favelados*, who are being pushed out to the distant edges of the city and beyond (22).

Hence, the city's underprivileged are either being co-opted and brought into the formal market or are still being pushed away to the city's borders. Perhaps it was with an ideological motivation to return those 'marginal voices' to the Brazilian stage that the organizers included various segments of *favela* culture for the world to see. It could, however, also be read as yet another way of 'commodifying' this marginal culture for the international gaze. The organizers stated in the Media Guide that 'any history of pop will tell about the same origin: it is from the poorest, the most underprivileged neighbourhoods, that the rhythm, songs and dances moving the planet originate' (22). Within the utopian vision of the Olympics opening ceremony, despite showing a 'sanitized' version of the *favela* in which all performers are dressed in white – making reference to the idea of 'pacification' of/in the *favela* – the performance did bring to the Olympic stage alternative voices that perhaps would not have been heard otherwise. This was particularly enhanced with the dance *passinho*, 'a lightning-quick dance style that evokes 1980s b-boy battles in the Bronx' (Smadja 2014), which originated in the marginal *baile funk* culture of Rio, 'those raucous, illicit parties that light up Rio's outer neighbourhoods' (*ibid*) and, particularly, with the performance of MC Carol Konka and 12-year old MC Soffia in a segment called 'Empowerment'.

In this segment, both performers rapped lyrics that tackle the intersection of racism and gender issues in contemporary Brazil. The lyrics of the song – which included 'look and listen to this black girl, focus only on the empowerment, respect our fight and our movement' – were displayed on the Stadium's LED screens so all could see them, whilst a solo *capoeira* dancer/fighter performed in the centre of the stage, a reminder of African Brazilian resistance and negotiations of racial identity. Mc Soffia, who lives in a social housing project in Sao Paulo, won followers around Brazil because of her raps with lyrics that refer to the troubles of being a 'black girl in a racist and sexist world' (Roper 2016). In an interview to the *Daily*

Mail, Soffia said that she hoped her Olympic performance would also shine light on a campaign to enforce a 2003 law that requires Brazilian schools to include African culture in their curriculum. From her perspective, 'when people do talk about Africans in Brazil, it's about them being slaves, not about how much we have contributed to making Brazil what it is today [...] that just encourages white kids to treat us bad' (qtd in Roper 2016). Soffia's view is perhaps representative of a new generation of African Brazilian artists who wish not necessarily to 'erase' the memory of slavery, as she campaigns for African Brazilian history and culture to be included in the national curriculum, but rather to campaign for the focus on contemporary contributions and performances of identity of the various peoples of Brazil. The organizers stated in the Media Guide that this section was 'a tribute to the contribution of black people to the Brazilian popular culture' (24), which does provide a sense of 'difference' and 'otherness' within the national discourse. The fact that MC Soffia was able to perform on the Olympic stage and 'share' her vision of Brazil as a racist country with the world, was a key point in exposing the problematics within the idea of Brazil as being seen as a harmonious racial democracy.

Tropical Brazil and Samba in the Celebration of 'Togetherness'

'Favela voices' was followed by the segment called 'Disputes' in which various performative styles and dance genres from the north-eastern region of Brazil were displayed. These were based on games and performative disputes seen as the 'basis of popular festivities in Brazil, a heritage of medieval traditions passed to us by our Europeans ancestors' (Media Guide 25). Up until that point the ceremony displayed various features of Brazil's 'diverse' cultural identity in a way that did not seem to perceive Brazilian culture as a 'melting pot', but as distinct and coexistent modes of identity that are complicated, and mixed, but not necessarily fused. This echoes the idea of Brazil having a 'mosaic' identity, explored in chapter three, in which different racialised elements and heritages 'are perceived to co-exist, rather than melding into an undifferentiated fusion' (Wade 246).

However, as the staged dance disputes increased in intensity, Regina Casé (Brazilian TV presenter) screamed from the top of the 'Box City': '*Parou*. Stop fighting. *Chega de briga* (enough fighting)'. She speaks briefly of the idea of looking

for 'our similarities' and in 'celebrating our differences'. This segment speaks to the socio-political context of Brazil at the time of the Olympics, which was of unrest, turmoil and disunity and perhaps to an idea of transmitting to the world a vision of Brazil which is cohesive, despite being diverse. The festive synthesis came through Brazilian musician Jorge Ben Jor's performance of 'Tropical Country' (1969), his composition, usually sung in Carnival in Brazil and which the lyrics chant: 'I live in a tropical country, blessed by God and beautiful by nature'. Hence, one can see another return to the 'foundational myth' of Brazil, which combines the features of God and Nature in blessing Brazil, the 'paradise'. This was one of the most vibrant moments of the ceremony in which performers and the audience danced and sang along, joining in the festive atmosphere, which one critic ironically observed, extrapolated the stadium and invaded an NBC Studio influencing its presenter, Meredith Vieira:

When Jorge Ben carried the party and NBC displayed Gisele Bündchen jumping, Vieira even said: 'I want to get up and dance!' She then tried to explain the anthropophagy of Oswald de Andrade: 'Like cannibals, they take the music of the entire world and make it their own' (De Sa 2016).

This festive atmosphere was revived at the end of the ceremony, after the athletes' parade and subsequent IOC Olympic rituals, including the official speeches, releasing of doves symbolizing world peace, etc. In a final section called 'Apotheoses', the performance concluded by bringing on stage Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, two prominent names from Brazilian Popular Music (MPB), creators of the *Tropicalista* movement at the beginning of the 1960s Military Dictatorship in Brazil, a movement which incorporated foreign influences of rock'n'roll in a form of 'neo-cannibalism relevant to the cultural context of the 1960s' (Dunn 6), within an 'anarchistic, anti-authoritarian musical and lyrical expression [which] made them a target of censorship and repression by the military' (Tzanelli 96). Both singers, along with Annita, a female contemporary *carioca* singer, sang Ary Barroso's 1930s popular 'samba-exaltation' song '*Isto aqui o que é*' (What is this?). They were accompanied by percussionists of Rio's twelve samba schools (which are usually in competition with each other) in a 'party' that celebrated the idea of samba and togetherness. The lyrics say, in part:

What is this? This is a little bit of Brazil. This Brazil which sings and is happy, happy, happy. It is little bit of a race, that does not fear smoke. And doesn't

give in. Look at the sway of the hips as she moves [...] Good/Sexy Morena which makes me suffer, put on your silver sandals and come dance the samba.⁷⁵

Hence, after an ellipse course that seemed to have suggested a reformulation of the idea of *brasilidade* within earlier segments of the official performance, with disparate performances that marked and acknowledged cultural and historic 'differences' and notions of 'empowerment' within the representation of the nation, the closing segment of the ceremony again returned to and celebrated the essentialist vision of the modernist formula of *brasilidade*, a mixed but happy group of people that make up Brazil, which brings the content of this thesis back to its starting point. In Meirelle's view:

Despite the historical motives for sadness, like 300 years of slavery, I feel we are a country with an inclination for happiness [...] I look out the window and I see that. It's that simple. The press only talked about zika, restraint, robberies and poop in Guanabara Bay. Our response was to speak of 'this Brazil that sings and is happy, happy, happy' (qtd in Luna 2016).

I have to concur with Gough when he states that this closing segment of the ceremony demonstrated how the nexus of carnival musicality and ideas of racial democracy have persisted for nearly a century as a 'strategy of representation in spite of dramatic social transformations in Brazil and ubiquitous evidence of structural racism in the country' (210). This serves to reinforce my idea that, perhaps by looking at the interrelation of performances of music as performance of identity and nationhood, we can begin to understand why this is so, while also remaining aware of the fault-lines and contradictions that are often simultaneously being performed, so that as the dominant discourses are articulated, they are also simultaneously being undermined, or at the least, questioned.

Looking back at the beginning of this PhD process, I would not have imagined how immense the socio-political landscape of Brazil would have changed in the course of four years. As Aimar Labaki stated in 2017, 'Brazil is going through a political and economic crisis of major proportions – an unprecedented recession and the rise of an illegitimate government following the impeachment of the elected president' (217). Adding to this, at the end of 2018 Brazil elected the far-

⁷⁵ My translation.

right wing, former military officer Jair Bolsonaro for president, which signals a major ideological shift in political representation in the country, which, once again, tends towards authoritarianism (disguised behind a neo-liberal agenda).⁷⁶ As Holdsworth argues, 'the vast majority of theatre practices that engage with nation, directly or obliquely, do so to respond to moments of rupture, crises or conflict' (2010 6-7). This response to 'moments of rupture' applies to the contemporary performances I examined in this thesis, but also to my research process. As I have attempted to respond actively to such crisis and shifts in Brazil's social reality, I must recognise that my affective responses to the political atmosphere also influenced my choices of case studies. According to Bishop-Sanchez, 'imagining Brazil as a nation – a concept as broad as it is elusive, simultaneously virtual and real – unfolds through infinite forms of representation of which performance provides an embodiment of nationness in accordance to the relationality of space and time' (22). Hence, this thesis can be seen as a stance on how contemporary artists engaged with the idea of 'national identity' in performance during a particular time-frame: a moment of crisis and of transition between ideological political orientations and representations. I must recognise that, looking in hindsight, despite negotiating different intersections of 'identities' and points in time within the idea of Brazilian 'nationhood' (colonial/post-colonial/neo-colonial), all contemporary case studies present a 'leftist' inclination in the practitioners' discourses. This includes the 'official' performance of the nation in the 2016 Rio Olympics' Opening Ceremony which, on that occasion, artistic director Fernando Meirelles posted on social media a message stating: 'Bolsonaro will hate our Opening [Ceremony]. Trump will as well. At least this we did right'.⁷⁷

When referring to periods of crisis within the Brazilian context, Labaki expresses a sense of disturbance with the country's historical shifts between periods of authoritarianism and democracy:

⁷⁶ For more information on President Bolsonaro, see: Brum, Eliane. 'How a homophobic, racist, misogynist "thing" could become Brazil's next president'. *The Guardian*. 6 Oct 2018. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/oct/06/homophobic-misogynist-racist-brazil-jair-bolsonaro>

⁷⁷ 'Fernando Meirelles diz que Trump e Bolsonaro odiarão abertura dos Jogos'. *G1*. 12 Aug 2016. Available at: <http://g1.globo.com/rio-de-janeiro/olimpiadas/rio2016/noticia/2016/08/fernando-meirelles-diz-que-trump-e-bolsonaro-odiarao-cerimonia.html>

History can be read as a chronicle of an interminable crisis, a crisis of the human being in society. It is no different with Brazil. What distinguishes us, perhaps, is that we always behave as adolescents. We have been living our first real experience with formal democracy only since 1990 – the first one, lasting from 1945 to 1964, faced limits such as the banning of the Communist Party, censorship of performances and the media and so on. We experience alternating periods of great euphoria and megalomania, with times of depression. And, even as adults, we never reach a satisfactory answer to the question, who are we? (222)

As I conclude this PhD journey, I am no closer to answering Labaki's final question than when I started. However, despite sharing his tone of frustration, I am currently relying on the inspiration which came from the artists I interviewed and the performances I analysed in this process. Within this stimulus, lies a sense of resilience and 'resistance' to oppressive social forces: in Balé de Rua's *Baila Brazil*, this was made apparent through relying on African Brazilian resistance and an articulation of 'difference' within a discourse of racial inclusion, which historically functioned as exclusionary; in *Caliban, Ói Nós* used the Brazilian notion of '*antropofagia*' to resist neo-colonial forces and internal political oppressions in their performance; and in the 2016 Rio Olympics' Opening Ceremony, the organizers presented an idea of resistance to both global and national political forces currently refusing to acknowledge environmental issues affecting the nation and the world. I believe these different negotiations of 'resistance' within performances of Brazilian 'identities' follows the idea of the nation coming under meticulous scrutiny 'during moments of social breakdown and urban unrest that unsettle any idea of the homogeneous nation by revealing the fractures caused by racial discord, socioeconomic differences and abuse of power' (Holdsworth 2010 42). As Diana Taylor asserts, 'the very concept of crisis represents a suspension, a rupture between two states' (*Theatre of Crisis* 20). We are yet to see what will come of Brazil's near future social reality and what performances of 'nationhood' will emanate in response. For now, I shall pass on these new insights, negotiations and claims for social 'agency' to upcoming research and scholarship on performances of Brazilian identity.

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