The University of Hull

"Aquela loirinha, baixinha, não sabe

dançar...":

An ethnographic account of the accomodation

of whiteness within the discourse and practice

of the Brazilian female sexual subject in

Florianópolis, Brazil.

Being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of PhD in the

University of Hull

by

James Thomas Michael Turner B.A.(Hons), MA, MSc

March 2011.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Glossary

All of the Portuguese words I use are translated in the text, but for the sake of reference it is useful to collate the most commonly used together here. All translations are my own and are therefore reflective of the way I understand and use the words throughout.

Many words in the Portuguese language are gendered and here I list both feminine and masculine-gendered variants, where appropriate. The plurals, which I do not list here, are suffixed –s.

Baiana/Baiano – Woman/man(/thing) from the state of Bahia. The state is implicitly understood as being Afro-Brazilian.

Bateria – The drum band that is a central component of a samba school.

Branca/Branco – White woman/man. Taken from that word *branco* that refers to the colour white.

Branquitude – Whiteness. This was the most commonly used word, but there is no fixed and agreed upon term and some people use the synonym *Branquidade*.

Branqueamento – Whitening. Refers to the intentional policy of attempting to increase the whiteness of the population. Not to be confused with the verb Branquear which means 'to whiten' in the literal sense, for example through the use of bleaching agent.

Brasileira/Brasileiro – Brazilian woman/man(/thing).

Brasilidade – Brazilianness.

Bunda – The bottom, particularly that of women. In Brazil it is a highly eroticised and fetishised part of the body.

Carioca – Person (/thing) from the city of Rio de Janeiro. (Note – this word is not gender-specific).

Carnaval – Carnival, the pre-Lenten celebration that is common in many other settings. I employ the Portuguese language form to stress the specificity of the Brazilian setting.

Catarinense – Person (/thing) from the state of Santa Catarina. (Note – this word is not gender-specific).

Colónia – Literally 'colony,' but used in the South of Brazil to refer to the places where migrants from particular countries settled. Not colonies under the control of foreign states.

Escola da samba – A samba 'school' which in Florianópolis takes the form of a community association that prepares a themed parade to be performed competitively in the city's *sambôdromo* during *carnaval*.

Favela – The hillside shanty-towns that are home to the poorest inhabitants (*favelistas*) of most Brazilian cities.

Fútil – Literally 'futile' but used here in terms of people, and particularly middle-class women, who are deemed to be vacuous, pointless, and stupid – *patricinhas*.

Gaúcha/Gaúcho – Woman/man (/thing) from the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

Gringa/Gringo – Foreign woman/man (/thing).

Ilha – Literally 'island' but is often used as a synonym for Florianópolis.

Índia/ Índio – Indigenous woman/man (/thing). Not to be confused with the country of India.

Loira/loiro – Blonde woman/man.

Manezinha/Manezinho – Woman/man/thing from Florianópolis' Azorean-descended communities. Can be suffixed with *da ilha* but is usually without.

Mestiçagem – Racial mixture. Linked to *miscigenação* (miscegenation).

Mineira/Mineiro - Woman/man (/thing) from the state of Minas Gerais.

Morena/Moreno – This is too complex to describe adequately here, please see Chapter Two, pages 56-62.

Mulata/Mulato – Mixed-race woman/man, broadly seen as a mixture of black and white.

Nativa/Nativo – Literally 'native' but used in Florianópolis to refer to those from the island, particularly the *manezinhos* but also applied to the middle-class (*classe média nativa*).

Negra/Negro – Black woman/man.

Negritude – Blackness.

Nordeste – The Northeast Region of Brazil.

Nordestina/Nordestino – Woman/man (/thing) from the Northeast region of Brazil.

Patricinha – A pejorative label applied to a middle-class woman deemed to be vacuous, *fútil*, and existing only to serve the sexual and gendered desires of men.

Paulista – Person (/thing) from the state of São Paulo (Note – this word is not gender-specific).

Porteña/Porteño (Spanish) - Woman/man (/thing) from the city of Buenos Aires (Argentina).

Povo – Literally the 'people' or the 'populace,' but used more commonly to refer to 'the masses.'

Sudeste – The Southeast Region of Brazil.

Sul (Região Sul) – The South Region of Brazil.

Sulista – Person (/thing) from the South region of Brazil. (Note – this word is not gender-specific).

Vagabunda – A 'slut,' also commonly used is *puta*, meaning whore.

Vulgar/Vulgaridade – Vulgar/Vulgarity, in this thesis particularly used in relation to judgements of certain expressions of female sexuality.

1. Introductions of place, Others, and self.

I am a man from England who went to Brazil to search for an invisible man, and returned having spent fifteen months researching women who themselves appeared invisible within the discourses that define what Brazil 'is.' Given that the British Economic and Social Research Council had funded me to locate this invisible man in the Northeast[1] of Brazil how did I end up in the wrong part of the country, the South, researching the wrong people, women? To answer this question I must first explain why I was persuaded of the need to search for an invisible man in the first place, and it all starts with an unanswered question in a wonderful ethnography called *Travesti* by the anthropologist Don Kulick (1998.a). This monograph focuses on a group of transgendered individuals in the Northeastern Brazilian city of Salvador, generally from the lower classes, Black/Afro-Brazilian, and mostly working as prostitutes for a male clientele. It was this clientele, and particularly the middle-class white men amongst them who Kulick (1998.a: 157) briefly mentions, that piqued my interest. Who were these white men that paid young black transgendered men for sex, arriving and departing in the relative safety of their cars but never actually speaking within the ethnography?[2] This was the invisible man that I intended to search for, a white, middle-class man whose sexual practice is at least in part 'homosexual,' but whose sexual subjectivity remains uninterrogated. My plan

---

[1] Throughout this thesis the five regions that comprise the nation of Brazil will be presented in a capitalised form. Although they take their names from their geographical positions within the Brazilian landmass these five regions, the North/*Norte*, Northeast/*Nordeste*, Central-West/*Centro-Oeste*, Southeast/*Sudeste*, and the South/*Sul*, are also subdivisions used in political, administrative, social and cultural terms. Rendering them in upper-case is the means by which I stress that the meanings attached to the words in Brazil escape a simple geography.

[2] Kulick (1998.a: 157) recognises that these clients remain a "Great Unknown" within his work, the everyday practicalities of his fieldwork making it impossible to approach them.

was to go to Salvador and attempt to 'fill in' this gap, but things did not turn out the way I intended.

The reasons for this can be traced back to my very first trip to Brazil, which I had planned as a three month stay in Salvador in 2006, a journey made before I knew if I had been awarded the funding that would make the later fieldwork possible. My journey to Salvador was therefore partly a scouting trip undertaken in the hope of returning if I was offered funding, and partly a holiday taken in the expectation that I would not be successful. The problem with both plans was that I found Salvador to be a difficult place, one I wanted to leave almost instantly, as I will explain in greater detail in the next chapter. For now suffice it to say that I left and headed southwards, passing through the Southeast and South of the country before returning to Salvador to catch my return flight to the UK. During the course of these three months the first radical change had come about, as I decided to change my fieldwork site from Salvador to the South, and to search there for the white middle-class homosexuality that interested me. The second major change came during the course of the first months of the fifteen month period of ethnographic fieldwork I began in April 2008 in the city of Florianópolis in the state of Santa Catarina in the South of Brazil. In these formative months I came to realise that whilst I struggled with my research I was inadvertently beginning to research something rather different.

Whilst I struggled to find the 'gay world' that I imagined must exist there I got on with the business of living, during the course of which I made many friends who were not homosexual men. Indeed most of them were heterosexual women, mostly white and all members of the middle-class. We did what friends do, we socialised, we talked, and we passed time in conversation, and as often as not this conversation would turn to romantic and marital relationships, to issues of gender

and sexuality. So normal did it feel to converse over such topics that it took me some time to realise that I was accidentally researching something new and fascinating. It was connected to my original project, in being focused on the sexualities of middle-class white people, but that they were heterosexual women and not homosexual men gave me pause for thought. After three months in the field I had decided to make the change, a fairly radical change to make to a research project, but the decision was actually very easy, it felt instinctively like the right thing to do, a change dictated by the circumstance of the field. I wrote to my supervisors to say that I wanted to change my focus, and with their support my research then came to be concerned with white, middle-class heterosexual women, rather than white middle-class homosexual men.[3]

These white heterosexual middle-class women are a section of Brazilian society largely absent from anthropological accounts of Brazil. I consider this to be a problem not because they have been in any way discriminated against or sidelined, but because I found much in their lives and stories that can help us to understand the roles of race, sexuality, gender, and class in the formation of the nation and people of Brazil. Without their input, which I attempt to give here, the understandings we do have of Brazil will be necessarily partial, and this is detrimental to all of our understandings of Brazil. I will not to any great extent address the stories, opinions and views of men, although they are obviously present in the lives of these women. My reasoning behind this choice is primarily political, because as a man attempting to both faithfully represent and analyse that stories and opinions of women I cannot help but find myself from the outset on shaky ground, determined that I should

---

[3] I was confident that my desire to make this change would find a sympathetic reception with my supervisors Suzanne Clisby and Mark Johnson, the latter of whom had changed the focus of his doctoral study owing to the circumstances and serendipity of fieldwork encounters (see Johnson, 1997: 16-20).

neither replicate the old masculinist paradigms, nor to do disservice to the feminist scholarship that so inspires me. Women have been, and continue to be, listened to and represented less than men, and I believe it is necessary for me to focus on what they said to me, did with me, showed me, and, above all else, taught me. This then is their story, albeit my version, but one that I am confident will remain recognisable to them.

Intersections and articulations

To justify not only the changes I made to the research, but also the original research project, the first, and most important, question that I must answer is why this thesis is interesting, why are the subjects it deals with important? Why should we be at all interested in the four seemingly disparate areas of race, sexuality, gender, and class? Sexuality itself has long been an area that enthrals researchers who examine Brazil and it is widely recognised that sexuality is a key factor in Brazilian self-perception, indeed "it is impossible...to ignore the extent to which a notion of sexuality, or perhaps better, sensuality, plays a role in their own understanding of themselves" (Parker, 1991: 7-8). In seeking to tie sexuality to these other areas I am deeply influenced by Foucault's (1979: 103) contention that sexuality is a "dense transfer point for relations of power" that meets with race and class, as similar, and intersecting, transfer points. Just as Mayer (2000: 1) argues that

> nationalism, gender and sexuality are all socially and culturally constructed; they frequently play an important role in constructing one another – by invoking and helping to construct the "us" versus "them" distinction and the exclusion of the Other,

so it is in Brazil, where "national identities...are constituted in the intersections of other identity axes, such as gender, race, class and sexuality" (Maia, 2009: 771, my

translation[4]). Women's bodies are a particularly important site for struggles over national identities as they "have become surfaces upon which masculinist and nationalist desires are deployed" (Pravaz, 2009: 81), and in the Brazilian context these desires are particularly marked by notions of race. To understand race, gender, class, and sexuality it is therefore crucial to examine them together as interconnected fields in the construction of identities.

Wade (2009: 25, emphasis in original) explicitly draws all four of these areas together when he argues that "the theoretical point is that race, class and gender are able to work together and shape each other *because* they can all operate through images and practices around sexuality." He goes on to critique the fashionable term 'intersection' by arguing that it conjures up the image of a static point at which things cross, whilst otherwise being discreet and separate, and he proposes using "articulation" instead (ibid.: 26). His use of the metaphor of anatomical articulations such as the arm within which separate and discreet bones articulate together to form something dynamic and flexible, is one that I also find useful and reflective of my findings regarding how race, class, gender, and sexuality seemed to articulate together in fluid and mutable, but intrinsically interrelated, relationships. I had intended to research the articulation of the gendered, sexual, class and racial identities of men who understood themselves to be masculine, homosexual, white and middle-class, and although focus shifted to women who identified as heterosexual, white and middle-class there was no shift in my belief that these are articulated identity fields. I decided to go Florianópolis in the state of Santa Catarina

---

[4] Throughout this thesis work published in Portuguese is presented in English following my own translation, and is marked as such. The original source material is referenced in the bibliography. When quoting from interviews or conversations that I conducted I think it is important to enable the reader to perform their own translation, and I therefore include both the Portuguese original and my own translation. Translation is a necessarily subjective exercise, and facilitating the reader to challenge my own translations is for me an ethical necessity.

in the South of Brazil when the focus was still on men, but my reasons for doing so are equally valid now the focus is on women. I will now explain these reasons as I introduce the site of my fieldwork, the city of Florianópolis.

Introducing Florianópolis

As I travelled through Brazil on my first visit I noticed that the racial profile of the population changed as I moved southwards, and the increased whiteness and prosperity that I saw began to appear to me to be an opportunity. Instead of looking for a white middle-class homosexuality in Salvador it seemed that the opportunity to examine it on the larger scale presented itself in the South. The South is the region of Brazil that is comprised of the states of Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul and is home to more white people than any other region. This is the result of a history that saw little slavery compared to the Northeast and Southeast and mass immigration from Europe from the first half of the 19th Century until the 1950s. The details of this European immigration will be discussed later in far greater detail, but for now suffice it to say that it had a massive effect on the demographic profile of the whole region. The resulting whiteness was impossible for me to ignore, and it quickly struck me that it really should be in the South that I conducted my research. I knew virtually nothing about these three states at the time but I found both that my interest was piqued, and that there seemed to be a gap in the literature, a gap into which I could insert myself. It only remained to decide where exactly I would conduct the research, in which of the three states, and in which city.

I only spent two weeks in the South, and the majority of this was in Curitiba, the capital of the state of Paraná. As a large city with a reputation for modernity and prosperity and a history of immigration from Europe that is highly visible, both in

the population and the architecture, it seemed from the first moment to have potential as a site for research into whiteness and the middle-class. Even as this idea was forming in my mind it was unsettled however, as every time I spoke to people and told them what I would be researching they told me I should go to the neighbouring state of Santa Catarina, and particularly its very white and gay-friendly capital city Florianópolis. I was told by everyone, and I do not exaggerate when I say everyone, that it is the state capital with the highest standard of living in Brazil, a middle-class paradise. Despite never managing to visit it during that three month holiday and knowing no more than these few stereotypes I instinctively felt that my new research site had to be Florianópolis. The decision was made before I had even returned to the UK and discussed it with my supervisors.

Florianópolis is located on the Atlantic coast of the state of Santa Catarina in the far south of Brazil. Famous for being one of three Brazilian state capitals located on islands (the others being São Luis in Maranhão and Vitória in Espírito Santo), it is in fact divided between *o continente* (the continent/mainland) and the *Ilha de Santa Catarina* (Island of Saint Catarina) which is approximately 423km² in area and 54km long (Kuhnen, 2002: 18). The municipality known as Florianópolis[5] is one of the smallest state capitals in Brazil, having in 2000 a population of 342,315 shared between the continental part of the city and the island, with the majority living on the island (Golgher, 2008: 118). The urban economic and administrative centre is located on the island and is connected to the mainland by two bridges that span a narrow channel. This channel is narrow in physical terms, but it takes on far greater dimensions in the imaginary. Such is the connection made to the island that the city

---

[5] The municipality of Florianópolis is part of the metropolitan conurbation of 'Grande Florianópolis' (Greater Florianópolis), which also includes adjoining municipalities such as São José and Palhoça. Throughout this thesis 'Florianópolis' refers to the municipality and not to the conurbation.

is often simply referred to as '*a ilha*' (the island), and is associated with, and marketed by, its nickname, '*A Ilha da Magia*,' the Magic Island. This magical island status allows for the possibility to construct Florianópolis in unique terms, distinct from the discursively distant *continente*, the far away country of Brazil.

Florianópolis was for most of its history little more than an administrative centre, considered to be isolated, poor and 'backwards' (Flores, 1995: 118, 129). Contemporary Florianópolis is markedly different however, as in terms of the educational level of the population and employment in the professions[6] it is the second ranked city in the nation, after Niterói in the state of Rio de Janeiro[7] (Golgher, 2008: 117). This development as a 'modern' urban centre began in the latter half of the 1950s as the sleepy little state capital was swept up in the modernising fervour that gripped Brazil under the presidency of Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira. A city originally formed on a base of interconnected-yet-separate fishing communities changed beyond all recognition, and "the old Florianópolis, that of the colonial parishes, was lost in the name of a new city, a mark of the future" (Lohn, 2007: 317, my translation). It was no longer the Florianópolis of old, the city once known as Nossa Senhora do Desterro, Our Lady of Exile (Flores, 1995: 129). This quiet and largely forgotten settlement at the fringes of the Brazilian world had come in from exile and entered a new and 'modern' Brazil. Its centre became a dynamic metropolis of skyscrapers, wide avenues, and modern middle-class living, whilst at its periphery the simple, quiet, and traditional lifestyle of the Azorean-descended fishing communities, the people known as the

---

[6] Golgher (2008: 111) calls this the 'creative sector' and defines it as being comprised of people in senior positions in the public and private sectors and by professionals in the arts and sciences. He calculates that 23.7% of workers in Florianópolis are in this bracket.

[7] In regional terms it is no surprise that the top eighteen Brazilian cities in the rankings of these factors are all in the South and Southeast regions (Golgher, 2008: 118).

manezinhos da ilha, attempted to resist the onslaught of change (Coutinho, 2002: 91).

The urban geography of the city changed as the previously self contained and self-sufficient settlements scattered around the island were increasingly connected into a recognisable city as

> [t]he suburbs gradually began to grow and to integrate themselves into a single agglomeration, forming the image of a large city with many diverse parts associated, each one of which having the capacity to accommodate its residents (Lohn, 2007: 305, my translation).

A city formed, but one that retained much of its natural beauty and more comprised of forest than concrete. It became a city perfectly tailored to the middle-classes, one in which they had both a modern urban centre and bucolic neighbourhoods in which they could escape. It became an urban/rural hybrid of a city that perfectly accommodated those who desired a professional career, but without the negatives of the high-rises and traffic in one of Brazil's vast urban metropolises. The result of this is that

> the city of Florianópolis presents characteristics similar to other cities, but with distinctive particularities. It brings together factors such as traffic, security, employment and educational opportunities, leisure, and above all else contact with nature, which are favourable to a lifestyle of everyday tranquillity. Florianópolis came to be a city that attracts many people every year who seek these characteristics (Kuhnen, 2002: 17, my translation).

One of the places within Florianópolis which most epitomises these characteristics is the neighbourhood in which I lived and researched for the majority of the fieldwork, Lagoa da Conceição. My first three months in Florianópolis I lived in the neighbourhoods of Campeche and Rio Tavares, but just as I had been told on my previous visit that I must go to Florianópolis to conduct my research, I was told from the first day on the island that Lagoa da Conceição was the place to go to find the white middle-classes that I sought to research.

Founded as the Freguesia de Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Lagoa (the Parish of Our Lady of the Conception of the Lagoon) in 1750 on the banks of the lagoon called Lagoa da Conceição it was for the first two hundred years of its existence a small and sleepy fishing community inhabited primarily by migrants from the Azores and Madeira. Then in the 1960s and 1970s the tourist industry across the island began to boom and it, as with many other locales, underwent large-scale changes. In Lagoa da Conceição this saw the population increase massively, from 7897 in 1980 to 23,929 in 2000 (Kuhnen, 2002: 18), and the social profile shift from being a traditional and largely subsistence based fishing community to one of the favoured neighbourhoods of the middle-classes. Juliana, who had lived there for over thirty years, told me that the majority of these newcomers were migrants from other parts of the South and Southeast of Brazil. This has had a huge impact on both the neighbourhood and the island itself, driving the change from a quiet and traditional lifestyle to an aggressive and self-confident middle-class modernity that has changed the landscape, culture, social relations, and outlook of those that live there. It is this change in outlook as it relates to gender, race and sexuality that I will focus on throughout this thesis, and I will do so through the lives, views, opinions, and words of women of the white middle-class who aspire to, and believe in, a vision of 'modernity' in their sexual and gendered lives. It was to the lives of these women that my focus turned in the first few months in Florianópolis, and it is these women that I will now turn to and introduce.

Introducing the women

My experience in the field was of sounds and odours, emotions and sensations, food and sleep - a vast cornucopia of elements too diffuse and complex to

comprehend, let alone to explain. Notwithstanding this tremendous and fascinating depth there is no doubt in my mind that the most important and striking element of the experience was the people that I met, talked to, and shared with. They were responsible for making all the other elements, all the sounds, odours, emotions, sensations, food, and even sleep, worth experiencing. Social Science research is possible only because people share of themselves with the researcher, open themselves to our probing, and, at times, permit us to shine light into the darkest corners of their lives, places where maybe they would rather not look. In my case I am convinced that they only did this because of the relationships that each had with me, the relationships that drove them to want to help me in my endeavours. This confers upon me, as a social scientist, an enormous responsibility to represent those who represented themselves to me in the most accurate, responsible, and interesting way I can. Although it feels counterintuitive I think that maybe the best way to do this is to first reduce them to categories, before later attempting to contrive ways for them to speak as embodied subjects. I will therefore first objectify them in order that their subjectivities can later emerge on the page, that shared space between author and reader.

During the fifteen months that I spent in Florianópolis I was, in one way or another, affected by a great many people, from those I brushed against in the street and never saw again, to those with whom I had the deepest connection. To even begin to list all these people is impossible, so instead I will focus on those who made the greatest impression on me, those with whom I spent the most time. A great many people spoke to me on many different occasions about the main themes of my research, namely race, sexuality and gender, and twenty of them went on to give me recorded interviews. One of this cohort was a man, an early interview made when I

was focusing on male homosexuality, but it is the other nineteen, all women who granted me recorded interviews, that I will focus on in this thesis. This is not to say that these interviews are the foundation of my research, nor that the information that they gave me was necessarily the most interesting. On the contrary I would go so far as to say that the most interesting and productive conversations I had were unrecorded, and many of these conversations were with people that I never interviewed formally.[8] It makes sense to introduce those I interviewed formally because they were amongst the people with whom I spent the most time and talked to the most, and were representative of the vast majority of the women with whom I met and interacted. All are presented here under pseudonym, as are all the other people I met and spoke with. It is always important to safeguard those who so generously assist us in research and, following the argument of Dunne (1997: 29) that this is particularly important when sexuality is concerned, when I deem it necessary I have also changed other details in order to render the individual unrecognisable, and in two instances I have also used two pseudonyms for the same individual at different times in order to further protect their identities. This is not ideal, details do matter, but the preservation of anonymity is an ethical priority, and I have made every effort to ensure that these changes do not affect the context.

Their unifying features as a group are that they are all heterosexual women and all crossed paths with me and my Dictaphone at least once. Beyond this any attempt to definitively tie them all together makes it clear just how diverse they are. The most obvious point of diversity is the wide range of ages as the eldest was 62 and the youngest 22, and the others are fairly evenly distributed between these poles.

---

[8] I stress that they should still be understood as interviews however. I always made people aware when touching upon such areas that I was professionally 'switched-on.'

This gave rise to some interesting differences in experiences, ideas and viewpoints, differences that I will refer to throughout the thesis. It is more useful for me here in the introduction to focus on their commonalities, and the most obvious of these springs from the fact that I spent the whole fifteen months in Florianópolis, and they therefore all link to me through my geographical location. Eighteen lived in Florianópolis at the time that I met and subsequently interviewed them, and indeed many had lived there for a great many years, some their whole lives. The nineteenth lived in the nearby city of Blumenau, and was the only one that I did not meet and interview in Florianópolis. Three were born and raised in Florianópolis, and a further two were *catarinenses* (from the state of Santa Catarina), one of whom had lived in Florianópolis for five years. This leaves 14 women not born in Santa Catarina.

Seven women were born in the neighbouring state of Rio Grande do Sul, whose inhabitants are known as *gaúcha/os*, and whose regional identity was consistently the most marked of the various regional identities that I encountered, both in terms of the pride that almost all *gaúchos* expressed and also in the views of the other Brazilians I spoke to.[9] The distinctiveness of the *gaúcho* identity means that one cannot simply lump *gaúchos* and *catarinenses* together, but we can however draw convincing parallels between them. There have always been close ties between these neighbouring states, and in Florianópolis this has been particularly marked due to recent large-scale middle-class migration from Rio Grande do Sul. Even more pertinent are the shared historical patterns of immigration from Europe that led to large majorities of the populations of both states tracing their family histories to German and Italian immigrants. It is also important in the context of my research

---

[9] Part of the reason for the strength of the *gaúcho* identity is a history of separatist movements, the most frequently referred to being the *Guerra dos Farrapos* which began in 1835. This was a war triggered by the state of Rio Grande do Sul making a bid for independence from the Brazilian Empire, and lead to the invasion of Santa Catarina in 1839 and the formation of the short-lived República Juliana (Scheina, 2003, pp.151-155).

that of the seven *gaúchas* two had lived in Florianópolis for over 30 years, one had lived there as a child and had recently returned after several years in the Northeast, two had lived there for around six years, one had lived there for two years, and one split her time equally between the *gaúcho* capital Porto Alegre and Florianópolis. Florianópolis was home for most and an important part in the lives of all. I will argue throughout the thesis that there was a common *sulista* (Southern Brazilian) identity shared in Florianópolis amongst people from both Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul.

I do not argue that this *sulista* identity is in any sense stronger than the individual state identities, but rather that it is a point of commonality between *catarinenses* and *gaúchos*. There are enough similarities to consider the seven *gaúchas* and five *catarinenses* as a broad group of twelve *sulista* women. This leaves seven women, of whom five were *mineiras*, natives of the state of Minas Gerais, one was a *paulista* from the state of São Paulo, and one was a *carioca* from the city of Rio de Janeiro. These three states are located in a different region, the Southeast, and are therefore not part of the South, and the women therefore would not automatically be called *sulistas*. One of them had lived in Florianópolis for over twenty years, five had spent between two-and-five years living there, and the seventh had lived for four years in the third *sulista* state of Paraná, located just to the north of Santa Catarina and which shares much in terms of culture, immigration history, and demographics. These are therefore nineteen women who are either from the South of Brazil or have lengthy personal connections to it, and even those who were relative newcomers very often expressed a sense of connection to a *sulista* identity, particularly as it is articulated through race. The claiming of racial identity in Brazil is not, as we shall see, a simple matter, but of the nineteen only two did not claim a white identity, nor

had one ascribed to them. That some of the other seventeen occasionally did not claim whiteness is one of the most interesting features of my research, and is something I will discuss at length, but they, and the vast majority of the other people with whom I interacted in Florianópolis, both considered themselves and were considered by others to be white women, *brancas*.

The articulation of whiteness with other identity fields is the main theme of the thesis and rather than saying any more on it now I will instead move on to explain the final factor that connects these nineteen women, social class. All nineteen of the women were members of what I broadly define as the Brazilian middle-class, and my principle grounds for making this assertion is education. I will focus on this in great detail in Chapter Four, but it bears stating at this stage that thirteen of the nineteen interviewees held degrees of at least Bachelor's level, and four of the remaining six women were studying towards Bachelor's degrees at the time of the interviews, and one was preparing to take the *vestibular* entrance exam in order to begin studies at the local federal university.[10] On their educational records alone I would place them within the Brazilian middle-class, but most would also be seen as middle-class by other measures, particularly their occupations, or in the case of those still attending university, the occupations of their parents. There were academics, artists, small business owners, professionals in non-profit organisations, and a self-employed dance instructor, and whilst none were rich, all were financially comfortable. Four were also the employers of *empregadas* (cleaners) who would come to their houses at least once a week, but were not live-in servants.[11] People

---

[10] Of the thirteen graduates three also had doctorates, and four either had, or were studying for, Master's degrees.

[11] In the very popular Brazilian *telenovelas* (soap operas) that often represent the lives of the elite, as opposed to middle-class, the norm seems to be for the rich to have liveried servants in the house at all times, answering the door, fetching drinks, and no doubt becoming heavily involved in the intrigues of their employers. No-one that I encountered had a life that even approached such levels of luxury.

who were from, or had lived in, São Paulo, often told me that domestic labour is relatively uncommon in Florianópolis, opining that the gap between rich and poor is smaller, and *empregadas* are a less affordable luxury.[12]

Of the eighteen who lived in Florianópolis, eight lived in my very middle-class neighbourhood, Lagoa da Conceição, and another four lived in similarly middle-class neighbourhoods close to the federal university. The other six lived in various different neighbourhoods around the city, of whom only two lived in indisputably middle-class neighbourhoods, both in high-rise apartments, one in the centre of the city and the other just over the bridge in the continental part of the centre, the only one whose neighbourhood I never visited. The final four all lived in more mixed neighbourhoods that used to be traditional Azorean fishing communities, but which have become popular as the middle-classes seek to escape the 'concrete jungle.' Whilst retaining a quiet and simple identity they are all becoming increasingly expensive and middle-class, effectively pricing out the people whose families have lived there for generations. Although none of the women earnt a great deal of money, particularly not the students, and none lived in rich neighbourhoods, they all lived and worked in predominantly middle-class environments and identified themselves in one way or another with the middle-class.

Introducing the methodology

This all raises the question of how I came to know these things, how did I access the information that I analyse here in this thesis? The simple answer is that I

---

[12] São Paulo attracts impoverished migrants from the North and Northeast of Brazil, resulting in a large pool of workers that they told me makes it easier for the middle classes to afford an *empregada*. There has been no similar large-scale migration to Santa Catarina, and the migration there has been was predominantly middle-class. Juliana told me that over the period of the preceding thirty years there had been migration from poor rural areas of Santa Catarina, but this was not extensive enough to result in such availability of cheap and desperate labour as in São Paulo.

did so through the use of the methodologies of ethnography, applied throughout a fifteen month period that was typical of the traditional length of ethnographic fieldwork (Marcus, 1998: 245-246). This statement says everything that needs to be said whilst simultaneously saying absolutely nothing, ethnography being by its very nature a loose and unstructured beast. I think that this is the great strength of ethnography, but it does compel me to explain, analyse and justify what I did. This is what I will now attempt to do, but before doing so I would like to raise one important observation, namely 'doing' ethnography is not the preserve of anthropologists, or even researchers. As human beings who form part of a society, in whichever form it may take, we all live our lives ethnographically as we attempt to make sense of and live within our worlds. We continually use all our senses and our emotions, all of our minds and our bodies, to understand the world and the people with whom we interact as we inhabit it, but we usually do so without realising or acknowledging that this is the case. This became very apparent to me as I attempted to knowingly live in the way in which I always already had, as an ethnographer. To do this consciously brings to bear particular pressures, there is naught so tiring, difficult and stressful as to be forced into the awareness that we are alive.

It is this conscious practice of social living that we call ethnography, the awareness of which clearly has a history and an accumulated bank of 'knowledge' that influences how it should, and should not, be practiced. Anthropology has moved on from what Rosaldo (1993: 32), with tongue firmly planted in cheek and dates somewhat plucked from the air, calls the 'classic' period of anthropology between 1921 and 1971, when the discipline of anthropology jealously held onto its place in the sciences by claiming the objective status of its methodology, ethnography. Such

objectivist understandings are largely a thing of the past and it is more common that we view ethnography as

> an act of translation and the kind of 'truth' that it produces is necessarily deeply subjective [and therefore] the question often posed to anthropologist-ethnographers about the dangers of 'losing one's objectivity' in the field is really quite beside the point. Our task requires of us only a highly disciplined subjectivity (Scheper-Hughes, 2007: 211).

It is the discipline of this subjectivity that is at the root of the difference between the unknowing ethnography that we all practice, and the recognised and reflexive practice of the ethnographer. Rather than battling against the unfamiliarity of new places, people and situations we attempt to use the anxieties that it provokes to develop an 'ethnographic consciousness' that enables us to view everything we come across as unusual, to see nothing as 'normal' (Battaglia, 1999: 115; Geertz, 1993.a: 14).

Wekker (2006: 4-5) expresses the spirit of ethnography beautifully when she recognises that

> but for the grace, patience, and interests of the people involved there would be little research. Both researcher and the people involved are subjects, active agents with their own emotions and agendas. Moreover, all knowledge is gained at the intersections of race, gender, class, and sexual locations.

The subjectivity of the ethnographer must be recognised, but it clearly does not stand alone. There are many subjectivities at play within any ethnographic experience and it is crucial that ethnographers recognise that ethnographic research is the result of collaboration between ethnographers and their informants (Agar, 1996: 16), it is "*our* selves in interaction with *other* selves" (Tedlock, 1991: 79, emphasis in original). It is in the practical articulation of these supposedly discreet subjectivities that we find the 'ethnographic moment,' an intersubjective meeting where the actors construct and contest meanings, actions and interpretations (Galibert, 2004: 463-464). My primary motivation is to challenge by robust interrogation the racialised power of

whiteness, and it is through these ethnographic moments that this power can best be challenged, because, as Battaglia (1999: 120) argues, the

> contextualisation [of ethnographic dialogues] in the "ethnographic moment", and anthropology's commitment to context, promote a situation in which claims, ideally in the moment of fieldwork, may elicit counter-claims, rather than inscribing fixed domains of knowledge and power.

A series of these intersubjective ethnographic moments constitutes the research experience and becomes what the ethnographer presents to their eventual audience. Although we must represent and analyse these moments through our subjective experience it is by recognising their intersubjective genesis that we can avoid following objectivist and positivist traditions.

Bourdieu (1992: 32-35) warns us that these traditions can force us to view the world as an object unconnected to us, and lead to the imposition of categories constructed by disciplinary epistemology. This is why whilst I agree with Scheper-Hughes' (2007: 211) assessment in the earlier quote that ethnography requires a "highly disciplined subjectivity," I am less convinced by her description of it as an "act of translation." Asad (1986: 155) argued that the metaphor of translation can give the impression of too great a degree of precision, of the translation constituting an objective 'fact,' precisely that which Scheper-Hughes cautions against. I would therefore ask that the ethnography I present here be read using the metaphor of 'dubbing' within films and television that is proposed by Boellstorff (2005). An ethnography read as the imperfect act of dubbing one culture into the cultural language of another is more reflective of the contingencies and the subjective choices that are inevitably made in the interplay of subjectivities between the anthropologist and her Others. Reading this ethnography not as a seamless translation of the 'Brazilian' but instead my imperfectly dubbed representation will make the inevitable inconsistencies and incongruities more visible, and the various

subjectivities and cultures involved will appear as the messy and inconsistent entities that they are. An open and honest presentation of ethnography within a rubric of dubbing which claims a lesser (but not absent) sense of authority than a translation will better reflect the partiality of the knowledge produced and represented (Clifford, 1986.a: 6-7; Rabinow, 1986: 237-238). What I present here is therefore my best attempt at dubbing what I saw, heard, did and experienced in such a way as to be intelligible to others.

So what does this methodology of ethnography mean in a practical sense, what did I actually do during those fifteen months? Boellstorff (2007: 11) defines ethnography as "both an epistemological approach and a linked series of methods, with "participant observation" as the key practice." Participant observation, as the method with which ethnography, and indeed anthropology, is most commonly associated, therefore predictably played a key role in my research. This is a method that Agar (1996: 31) argues

> [s]imply codes the assumption that the raw material of ethnographic research lies out there in the daily activities of the people you are interested in, and the only way to access those activities is to establish relationships with people, participate with them in what they do, and observe what is going on.

Boellstorff (2007: 15) carries this definition further when he argues that

> [i]f the object of analysis is everyday life with all of its complexities, specificities, and inequalities, then I would argue that participant observation should be central to the analysis of this object. Participant observation refers to the method of spending extended periods of time in daily interaction with those about whom the researcher wishes to speak; it is usually the primary method used to create ethnographies – interpretations of cultural lifeworlds.

If this appears to suggest that once in the field one simply gets to know people, watches what they do, and joins in whilst they are doing it, then I am afraid that appearances are deceptive, life is seldom this easy.

The traditional anthropological outlook discussed earlier held that a disciplined and objective gaze was the key to 'being' scientific. This meant that the observation side of the dyad was privileged, and too much participation deemed suspiciously subjective. From the 1980s onwards this view has almost completely reversed, as suspicion over the academic gaze's colonising tendencies means there has been a shift in the balance from observation to participation as the idea of

> a detached observer using neutral language to explain "raw" data has been displaced by an alternative project that attempts to understand human conduct as it unfolds through time and in relation to its meanings for the actors (Rosaldo, 1993: 37).

Even this formulation is problematic in its own way, as it assumes that the pendulum can simply be made to swing back in the direction from whence it came. It fails to grasp the highly productive paradox at the heart of participant observation, that explored by Boellstorff (2007: 12) in his observation that "[t]he fact that participant observation is by definition impossible – How can one participate and observe at the same time? – is its greatest strength." By strength he means that it does not allow the ethnographer to settle, to be able to decide whether to observe and/or participate. It therefore becomes an all-consuming enterprise where everything is data and everything is incomplete, you can never truly observe or participate. This makes scientific objectivity impossible and removes any veneer of a scientific authority by refusing the colonising separation of the subject and object (Rosaldo, 1993: 41). It is demonstrative of the belief that everything once believed to be 'objective' can only be known and experienced subjectively, and that therefore 'truths', and their representation, can only ever be partial and contextual (Bourdieu, 1992: 25; Hastrup, 1994: 226, 230; Rabinow, 1986: 237). Participant observation can demand for these uncertainties and paradoxes and thrive within them in a way that a more strictly-defined method cannot.

The closest I did come to any such strictly-defined method was in the use of interviews. As I have already stressed these interviews were very similar to the vast number of conversations that I had throughout my time in Florianópolis, but they were different enough to merit discussion. Practically speaking the interviews were always conducted in a place of the interviewee's choosing, guided by my recommendation that it be a quiet and private place where they felt comfortable. For reasons that I will explain in Chapter Four this resulted in many of the interviews (and indeed most of the research) being conducted in non-domestic settings and in public places such as cafés, the beach, a university campus, and, particularly unwisely, whilst sitting by the side of a lake in gale-force winds that made the recording incredibly difficult to transcribe. Although other people would occasionally intrude upon the interviews they were always a private matter between myself and the interviewee. Moutinho (2004: 273-274) found that the mixed-race couples she interviewed about race and sexuality in Rio de Janeiro did not generally want to conduct the interviews as couples, and she also found it more useful, productive, and comfortable to be one-on-one. I also did not wish to conduct interviews with the women and their partners, always preferring one-on-one sessions for the interviews. The one time that a woman's husband did accidentally wander into the room she made him answer a couple of her own questions before she herself shooed him away.

All of the interviews were informal, by which I mean that they neither followed a rigid plan nor relied on pre-prepared questions. Although never the same as an impromptu conversation, such interviews can at their best come very close to being egalitarian conversations, places of "communicative equality and

interdependence…where participants invariably engage in the "joint construction of meaning"" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003: 17). Their flexibility allows the 'conversation' to be led away from the researcher's chosen field of interest and towards what the interviewee deems to be interesting, relevant or important (Aull Davis, 1999: 108). It would however be unwise to see any interview as egalitarian, they cannot be

> the reciprocal interaction of two equal partners. There is a definite asymmetry of power: the interviewer defines the situation, introduces the topics of the conversation, and through further questions steers the course of the interview (Kvale, 1996: 126)

The interviewer is always in charge because it is not a conversation; it is inescapably an interview (Ely, 1991: 58). Although the interviews very often went in directions that I could not have envisaged before they started, they did all begin with me asking at least one question that I had considered beforehand. These questions were usually based on conversations that we had already had, or on things that I already knew about the lives of the interviewees, a space within which I could clarify the meanings ascribed to things I had observed or experienced (Atkinson & Coffey, 2003: 421-423). I used the interviews mainly as an adjunct to my continual engagement in participant observation, I always preferred the conversations that were unrecorded and not framed as interviews, that little Dictaphone seemed at times a distraction and an annoyance. I occasionally asked people to repeat things into its little electronic ear during a conversation, but only when I was confident that it would not interrupt the flow of the conversation.

All quotes used throughout the thesis that are longer than one sentence are presented verbatim from the recordings of the interviews or those snippets of conversation that I recorded. Only those other small quotes that were written down by me directly after they were spoken and in which I have confidence as to their

accuracy have been included as quotes. In all cases I have included both the original Portuguese and my own translation. I did not see so much value to them at the time, but having such recorded information has enabled me to analyse what was said to me long after the event. I would not say that this is better or more useful than those interactions for which I have only the notes that I made at the time, or very shortly afterwards, but these interviews have added a certain kind of depth in enabling me to use extended quotes with confidence that they are faithful to the words of those who I 'use' in my analyses. That said, all the translations and analyses are mine and mine alone, and although I have spent many anxious hours in ensuring that they are an accurate reflection and representation of the words of Others they must, as I have already argued with respect to the thesis as a whole, be treated with a healthy mistrust. These interviews were, by their very definition, polyphonic, but all that is written here about them is filtered through my own subjective lens. These are not representations of 'truth' in any sense, but rather my exploration of partial truths and experiences (Battaglia, 1999: 123).

Introducing myself

In view of the fact that what I represent here must be understood as having been filtered through my subjective lens I wish now to talk about the importance of reflexivity. In all of the stages of the research process, be it the preparation, the execution, or the representation and analysis of findings, the "ethnographer, as a positioned subject…occupies a position or structural location and observes with a particular angle of vision" (Rosaldo, 1993: 19). We are located individuals and we therefore have an obligation to "uncover and make public our biases to whatever extent we are able…self-awareness is in itself an ethical undertaking" (Ely, 1991:

221). Complete reflexivity is impossible, we cannot know ourselves perfectly and cannot always recognise our biases, but the solution to this problem is not to ignore it, but instead to adopt a continually reflexive focus on the issues it raises. With this spirit in mind I must locate myself, and in recognition of this the time has come for me to formally introduce myself. My name is James Turner and I am a white, middle-class, British man whose sexual practice has always been heterosexual.[13] Like Wade (2009: 247) I feel the weight of ethics and politics of being a white middle-class, British man from the global metropole researching and writing about Latin America, and that I specifically conducted research with women only compounds this feeling.

I will discuss in a moment the dynamics of difference, particularly those of being a man researching women, but first I would like to note that even the commonalities between us, for example whiteness, are no guarantor of sameness. On the contrary an assumption of sameness can be very counterproductive. Starting with the recognition that there is no single 'truth' of whiteness it is clear that any knowledge of whiteness or experience of being white is situated, both for the researcher and the researched (Twine, 2000: 14). Simply 'being' white is not, as Gallagher (2000: 67-68) cautions, sufficient grounds to guarantee an understanding of whiteness. The 'white scripts' by which whiteness is understood are variable, located and fluid, and perhaps particularly so in my case given the large differences between racial discourses in Britain and Brazil. I therefore had to be extremely careful, even before embarking on the project, to avoid the situation described by Gallagher (2000: 81) when he says that "when I initially formulated the questions that would inform my data collection I was not aware just how much my research

---

[13] I am politically uncomfortable with claiming a heterosexual identity, but in the interests of clarity I do feel that it is ethically important to identify myself as engaging in sexual practice that is understood as heterosexual.

project was being manipulated by my own assumptions about whiteness." I had to ensure that I approached whiteness as it is understood in Brazil, and not as I understood it based on personal and national experience. This is one of the challenges that I will return to throughout the thesis.

Problematic as even supposed similarities are it is in the obvious differences that we instinctively tend to foresee difficulties. In my case particularly troubling was the question raised by Fawcett & Hearn (2004: 202) of

> whether it is possible to carry out research, especially qualitative and ethnographically-orientated research, into areas such as gender, disability, ethnicity and racialisation without the researcher having immediate points of identification or direct experience of associated social divisions and oppressions?

Given the rather patchy history of white, heterosexual men researching, and very often demeaning, the Other, this question demands serious consideration. My basic starting point was to try to always remain conscious of my own situated and relatively privileged subject positions and refuse to allow myself to forget that I am as positioned as anyone else. This is easier said than done because

> [h]aving assumed the naturalness of gender categories, many heterosexual male anthropologists tend to be less able than those of us who are marked in our own culture to bridge the gap between Self and Other, particularly when the Other is female. Reflexive anthropology is thus necessarily limited to the extent that its advocates are willing to situate themselves as gendered or ethnic beings (Blackwood, 1995: 72).

There was certainly such willingness on my part, and it also bears remembering that even relative privilege has limits, and cannot be simply assumed. Killick (1995: 81) observed that a location such as his, and mine,

> has caused many WSM [white, straight, male] students of other cultures…to become sensitive to the issues of appropriation, embarrassed by our forebears, and inhibited by the wide-spread perception that we are always in a position of power and eager to exploit it.

I am someone who was, and remains, very sensitive and embarrassed about the abuses of our fore*fathers*, and I therefore attempted to consciously and continually foreground my position in order that I never lost sight of "the position of the straight male ethnographer as something more than the 'cultural ego' or unmarked case" (ibid.: 83).

In part my way of doing this was to keep in mind Braidotti's (2002: 12-13) observation that our 'location' is not a private self-aware space, but a collection of spaces that we share with others and which can elude reflection because they are so familiar and close that they can become invisible. She goes on to argue that no subject is unitary and stable, we are all Other to our self in many ways and at all times, meaning that with regards discursive fields of selfhood we are never, in practice, completely Other to anyone else, even if we appear to occupy the opposite side of important discursive dichotomies (ibid.: 21-22). This suggests that I cannot be reduced to 'man' any more than my potential informants can be reduced to a subject position of their own, but however much I believe this to be true it cannot be taken as a guarantee that I, as a man, will not redeploy the old masculinist paradigm of separating subject and object (Schacht & Ewing, 1997: 167). To attempt to militate against this threat I have long aligned myself with feminism and been hugely influenced by feminist thought. This has led me to seek to research in a way that is in keeping with feminist epistemologies, and one that I find particularly interesting and useful is the Feminist Standpoint Theory which holds that the subjugated position of women allows for a more complete understanding of society, one that is obscured from the view of men who are not oppressed due to their gender (Maynard, 1994: 19).

It is based on the premise that women's actual lived and embodied experience of oppression means that they will reject the epistemological location of the 'The Observer/Knower' who is the implicitly masculine subject of scientific thought, a supposedly neutral and anonymous figure who is empowered to discern 'truth' and 'fact' (Harding, 2004.a: 4). Feminism led a concerted challenge to this epistemological base, showing that it lacks the scientific neutrality it holds so dear because it is nothing more than a reflection of the partial and perverse worldview of the dominant class. Feminist Standpoint Theory was therefore aimed at providing a different epistemology that does not pretend to be neutral, but instead recognises that one's position in society affects one's view of the world, and that the position of the oppressed was a better location with which to understand society (Hartsock, 2000: 37). This involved a re-envisaging of the subject from a disembodied, objective, every*man* and towards an embodied, socially-located subject who was in the same field as, and actively engaged with, the object of knowledge. In other words the Cartesian separation of subject and object was refuted and the unitary homogenous knower denied (Fawcett & Hearn, 2004: 208). In its place emerge a plethora of embodied subjects of knowledge who are engaged actors in their object of inquiry, the social world. From their positions comes a knowledge from below which is the best way to understand the world, at least in so far as it relates to women (Harding, 2004.b).

These ideas are not without criticism, particularly due to the lack of challenge to the very notion of truth itself and homogenising of women that it implies,[14] but as I attempted to apply them throughout my fieldwork and the writing of this thesis

---

[14] For detailed critiques see Maynard (2004.a) and Hekman (2004).

they proved to be very useful indeed. I have been particularly influenced by

Hirshmann's (2004: 322, my emphasis) definition of Feminist Standpoint Theory as

> a way of seeing the world, redefining knowledge, reconceptualising social relations and renaming experience, standpoint theory provides a powerful methodology for understanding 'reality' as an ongoing process. That is, the adoption of a particular feminist standpoint allows us to gain a 'less partial and perverse' understanding of the world; *but that does not mean that we have achieved truth.*

I have not only attempted to see the world through the eyes of my interlocutors, as in

one way or another all anthropologists have always done, but also to specifically

recalibrate my male gaze in order to approach an understanding of women's worlds.

I draw encouragement that this is possible from Harding's (2004.b: 135) assertion

that,

> it cannot be that women are the unique generators of feminist knowledge. Women cannot claim this ability to be uniquely theirs, and men must not be permitted to claim that because they are not women, they are not obligated to produce fully feminist analyses. Men, too, must contribute distinctive forms of specifically feminist knowledge from their particular social situation...[even] female feminists are made, not born.

Whether I have succeeded in making myself into an acceptably feminist man or not

is probably not for me to judge.[15] The best referees in this regard are the women who

participated, who offered to help me, and who, I believe, "would never have

considered volunteering had they not been reassured…that the research was

worthwhile and, most importantly, that I could be trusted" (Dunne, 1997: 28).

    As women they are dominated within Brazilian society, but they also occupy

privileged positions in terms of race and class, and also, as heterosexual women, in

---

[15] An indication of why I am maybe not the best judge of this is found in my fieldnotes from Sunday 14/06/2009 when I reflected on having felt somewhat self-satisfied when I talked to my friend of mine about how a group of men had a terrible attitude to women compared to me. It later struck me that I felt incredibly pleased with myself because I had decided that my way of being a man was superior to theirs. I had decided that I was a better man than they were, and in so doing I had participated in the long masculinist tradition of competition within masculinity.

terms of sexuality. Does this mean that I should have tried instead to consider their standpoints in terms of the other identity categories in which they would be expected to have a dominant view? In a sense I have, this thesis is concerned primarily with their whiteness which undeniably confers upon them considerable privileges in Brazil. What I have been unprepared to do however is to interrogate their whiteness without reference to gender. They are not just white Brazilians, they are *brancas*, white Brazilian women. They are not just middle-class Brazilians, but middle-class Brazilian women. Gender is articulated with all the other identity categories, and one of the key arguments that I make throughout is that gender shows particularly clearly how whiteness in Brazil is lived in ways which are distinct from most scholarly representations of whiteness. This is important when we consider the argument of Bhavnani (1994: 29) that in order to be true to a feminist ethos we must not reproduce the researched in the ways that they are represented in mainstream society, and instead we must examine the micropolitics of the research encounter. It is exactly this kind of examination that I attempt here.

Introducing the thesis

I have now introduced the place, the people, the methodologies and myself, and that almost completes the necessary introductions. All that remains now is to introduce the rest of the thesis, and in terms of structure I am guided by the necessity to focus initially on race. One of my reasons for having embarked on the original research project was the impression that whiteness seemed to be insufficiently interrogated in Brazil. This has grown into the belief that it has barely been interrogated at all, and particularly not as a lived experience and identity. The lived experience of whiteness has therefore become the most important consideration, and

the first two substantive chapters are dedicated to explaining whiteness in Brazil as both I and other theorists have encountered it. Chapter Two is dedicated to discussing whiteness in terms with how race is understood in Brazil. It focuses particularly on whether whiteness should be conceptualised as a racial category, an ethnic category, or as a mixture of the two. Chapter Three then continues this examination by tracing the history of racial discourse in Brazil, showing how whiteness has at different times been deployed in different ways, culminating in the development of the discourse of 'racial democracy' that has dominated racial thought in Brazil for the past century. I argue that this has resulted in the discursive death of whiteness, but without a serious challenge to the position of whiteness as the dominant racial category.

Chapter Four will add flesh to the bones of the definition of the middle-class that I started here in the introduction. I examine the links between the middle-class and whiteness in Brazil generally, before moving on to introduce the *manezinhos da ilha*, the Azorean-descended inhabitants of Florianópolis who are considered to be the *nativos* (natives) of the island. They occupy a position of similitude and difference, linked to the white middle-class by race whilst being simultaneously differentiated by their supposed backwardness and stubborn ties to tradition. This complicates and confuses our understandings of whiteness and leads us towards a more nuanced appreciation of race in Brazil, one which will be further expanded in Chapter Five. Here I explore the links between race and female sexuality by demonstrating that whilst whiteness, and particularly blondeness, are intimately tied to images of beauty in Brazilian discourse, they are simultaneously placed outside understandings of 'the Brazilian' and therefore cast out as foreign. Embodied female sexuality is instead linked to a differently raced body, that of the mixed-race woman,

the *mulata*. As a consequence of a history of racial oppression she is typified by the stereotyped imagery of the Carnival Queen, but hers is also the imagery towards which white women must strive in order to realise an authentically Brazilian sexuality as it is constructed through discourse.

What makes the women I worked with so different to the other women in Brazil about whom I have read is their rejection of this imagery, and their attempts to construct and assert for themselves a Brazilian identity that can incorporate their whiteness, but which they do not construct on a basis of racial superiority. The particular conceptualisation of modernity that they deploy to these ends is examined in Chapters Six and Seven, which focus on sexuality and gender respectively. I demonstrate in Chapter Six how they reject as vulgar and undesirable the Brazilian female sexuality that is constructed and ratified through tradition and discourse. This sexuality is discursively tied to race, and particularly racial mixture, but in Florianópolis it is considered most to be demonstrated by Other middle-class women who are seen as traditional, objectified, and expressing a sexual identity that exists only to benefit men. It is these other white women that the 'modern' middle-classes describe using the language of vulgarity that is usually applied to the *mulata*. They reject this imagery, but not on racial grounds, and formulate in its place an alternative Brazilian female sexuality that is modern and not limited by racial discourse.

The efforts to realise 'modern' gender identities that I discuss in Chapter Seven are even less raced, instead being unambiguously tied to class, both as a social and an aesthetic category. I demonstrate how particular types of white lower and middle-class women are constructed as exemplars of a traditional female gender identity that serves patriarchy, and stands in opposition to the 'modern' and liberated

identities that the women I knew seek to embody. In the conclusion I return to the central argument of the thesis, that whiteness is a heterogeneous identity category that needs to be interrogated up close rather than being theorised from afar. I argue that applying an ethnographic approach to the lived experience of whiteness not only enables a better understanding of the people 'on the ground' but also of the discourses and national identity types that affect them. Throughout the thesis I stress that whiteness is the dominant and oppressive racial force in Brazil, but I also demonstrate that it is neither homogeneous nor implacable. Rather it is a racial category that instils self-doubt and negativity in many of the people identified with it, and I will point to the ways in which its power is undermined and rejected by women who could simply benefit from the advantages it brings, but who instead unexpectedly reject it and its limitations.

2. Whiteness as race, whiteness as ethnicity.

"Studies of whiteness in middle-class circles, residential areas or workplaces, *or at all*, are few and far between" (Garner, 2007: 76, emphasis added).

When I set out for Brazil it was with the knowledge that a focus on *branquitude* (whiteness) would be one of the cornerstones of the research, but I had little notion of what this actually means, of what whiteness 'is.' I explain this ignorance by the fact that there is little to actually 'know,' the study of whiteness is a relatively new development within academia, and suffers from both a paucity of attention and a lack of agreement regarding definition. According to Hartigan (1999: 16),

> [a]s a subject of academic and political scrutiny, whiteness has two primary characteristics: first, its operations are assumed to be fairly uniform, establishing the normativity of white mores and behaviours, along with the social homogeneity valued by this collective; whiteness manifests a certain logic in its political aesthetic, and historical sensibilities – that blackness is its symbolic other. Second, in structural terms, whiteness is articulated and lived by whites as a residual category of social forms that elude the marks of colour or race. Whiteness effectively names practices pursued by whites in the course of maintaining a position of social privilege and political dominance.

Whiteness has therefore been taken as the homogenised property of 'white' people, been considered as the opposite to 'black,' and been heavily connected to dominance, and therefore power. Some of this, particularly the linkage to power and domination, is relatively uncontentious, but what both Hartigan and I question is the lazy linkage of whiteness to (subjectively determined) white skin and the tendency to talk of white, whiteness, or white people, as homogeneous wholes. He writes about the United States, a large country with a racially-mixed population, with a history and demographics which suggest that whiteness can be assumed to be a factor in society, and in this sense Brazil generates the same assumption.

In Brazil talking about race can be challenging because, as Telles (2004: 218, emphasis in original) highlights, "racial self-identity is not a core component of identity for many Brazilians...and there is little sense of solidarity with or *belonging* to a racial group." This has not prevented Brazil from being the site of much research concerning race though, so why is it the case that "[w]hiteness has gone relatively unexamined, compared with blackness and *mestiçagem* (racial mixture) in Brazilian social sciences and cultural criticism" (Sovik, 2004: 315)? Just as Frankenberg (1993: 17) argued that "the white Western self as a racial being has for the most part remained unexamined and unnamed" so too has the white Brazilian self, and to an even greater extent. It was this lack of examination that motivated me, and my first task was to find the definitions of whiteness and race in Brazil. This task is not easy because race is far from being a stable and agreed-upon subject, there are many different ways in which it is approached. One route, as highlighted by Parker and Song (2001: 5), is that we should focus on racism and the processes of racialisation rather than actually looking at 'race' itself. Frankenberg (1993: 139, 189) explains this idea with the observation that because the notion of race was constructed from an essentialist discourse any focus upon it could result in its reification, concretising it as an ontological fact and thereby creating the grounds of possibility for essentialist racism. I am sympathetic to this argument, and I also worry that by simply examining whiteness we risk leading to its corporealisation and could make it 'real.' Such concerns make caution about 'whiteness' within the academy understandable, but I do not believe this is grounds for a lack of engagement. Engagement does not feed the power of white supremacy as much as the lack of engagement leaves it unchallenged. I would find just such a lack of challenge

expressed through the absence of discussion and consideration of whiteness in Florianópolis.

The blinding ubiquity of whiteness

With every new acquaintance I made it was inevitable that I would be asked what I was doing in Florianópolis, what I was researching. I struggled each and every time I was asked this question, every time I was called upon to define my research project, something that was at the beginning frankly indefinable, even to myself. To do this in Portuguese was difficult throughout, but at the beginning it was almost impossible - how was I to explain in a language that I was struggling to master, and maybe never truly did, something that I did not fully understand myself? That this caused me stress and anxiety should therefore maybe come as no surprise, and I cannot deny the desire to use a stronger word, perhaps dread, to describe the feeling that this seemingly simple and logical question sparked within me.[1] It did trouble me and cause me stress but it also forced me to think, to verbalise to myself as much as to others exactly what it was that I sought to do. It was difficult and stressful to always be greeted by a reaction of bemusement, and my anxiety caused me not to see at the time that this bemusement was due not only to my linguistic deficiencies, but was also a simple insight into the thoughts regarding race of the people around me. They often asked me, subtly, whether I was aware that there really are not very many *negros* (black people) in the South of the country, and certainly not in Florianópolis? With a somewhat forced assurance I would reply that yes, of course I was aware of this, and that it was for that very reason that I was in

---

[1] I also cannot deny that there is perhaps a drive within me now to overstate the situation, perhaps due to an unconscious drive to gain legitimacy, to demonstrate that I suffered for my art, that what I present here was forged in the most difficult and trying of crucibles, and therefore simply *must* be taken seriously.

Santa Catarina, a state whose racial demographics make it so conducive to such an investigation.[2] It became clear that the idea of researching *brancos* (white people) and *branquitude* (whiteness) was so unusual that it genuinely took people by surprise to learn that it was even possible. Surely studies of race should focus on the Other?

Frankenberg (1993: 32) found that the notion of researching whiteness as a race, and of white people as raced, was met with hesitation, confusion, suspicion, and often defensiveness in the USA, just as Garner (2007: 36) found in the UK that "[o]ne of the themes to come out of fieldwork with white people is their general unease at thinking of themselves as white per se." My experiences were remarkably similar in Florianópolis, whiteness often appeared to not really exist, at least not as a racial category. The reason for this is that 'race' is most frequently associated with blackness, which is cast as a deviation from the white 'mean' (Maynard, 1994.b: 21). For white people race is something 'Other' which is not connected to their 'self.' Everyone 'knows' if someone is white or not, but this is something that people never really consider, let alone understood, because "[t]hose who are securely housed within its borders usually do not examine it" (Frankenberg, 1993: 229). People unreflexively adopt the category white, but this whiteness becomes present in the racial fundament only as an unmarked 'self' against which to read the heavily, and negatively, marked Other, *negritude* (blackness). *Branquitude* remains aloof, and (including in academic considerations of race) it is present only as the occluded and uninterrogated side of a dichotomy, the silent partner in a racialised and racialising venture that only tends to shine its light upon the 'darker' half of the equation. As

---

[2] It is necessary to mention that although I am convinced that whiteness is hugely under-interrogated in Brazil, and that Florianópolis is a good place to begin this critical examination, on a local level this can mean, as Gomes at al (2008: 4) argue, that the lives and cultures of Afro-Brazilian residents are ignored, eclipsed by the Italian, German, and Azorean traditions. This is something that sadly I can do little here to address.

Frankenberg (1993: 197) argues, it is the epistemological 'self' against which 'Others' are measured and defined, whilst leaving itself free from definition.

That whiteness does not spring to mind so readily in Brazil is also the result of historical and regionalised developments. This is the non-African country with the largest population of people of African descent in the world, a country that is often used as an exemplar of racial mixture and miscegenation, and one where in the most populous regions, the Southeast and Northeast, the majority of the population is categorised somewhere between the Brazilian racial categories of *negro* (black) and *mulato* (mixed-race, black and white). The South is however subject to a different history than the other regions of Brazil, a history that has led to a different demographic and racial profile. The most important of the various factors here is the history European migration between the 1830s and 1950s, an extremely important development that is often overlooked as,

> [s]cholarly and popular sources on Brazilian society often focus on the African roots of much of the population, ignoring the millions of immigrants who settled over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The largest numbers came from Europe (namely Italy, Portugal and Spain) and were considered desirable by the elites who hoped to "whiten" Brazil, and thereby mirror both the industry and status of central Europe and the United States (Lesser, 1999.a: 374).

This story of whitening, and its role in the development of Brazilian racial discourse, will form the focus of the next chapter, where I explain why people struggle to place whiteness in Brazil and found it strange that I sought to talk about it. For now however suffice it to say that the presence of a majority of white people and a history of white European migration forces us to engage with whiteness if we are to understand race in the South of Brazil. The necessary first step towards this understanding is to explain what whiteness 'is' in Brazil.

My whiteness made manifest

The task of demarcating of the parameters of whiteness, deciding exactly what it is and how it should be examined, is extremely important before any progress can be made into the specifics. I found this task very revealing personally because I used to be exactly like those I spoke to in Florianópolis, I had also never thought before about the racial elements of my identity, although they had clearly always been there. I am from Hull, a medium-sized city in the north of England that has one of the highest percentages of 'white' inhabitants of any English city.[3] It is perhaps no surprise that as a member of the largest, and overwhelmingly dominant, racial group I had seldom, if ever, thought about myself as a racial/racialised subject. I was in the majority, and it was those who were different that were named by race, not 'us.' Travelling to other cities in England that have larger non-white populations, most notably London, would make me more aware of racial difference and diversity, but I remained always in the majority and therefore never questioned what being white meant. Race was a matter for those who did not look like me. This changed in June 2006 when I flew from London, via Lisbon, to Salvador, the capital of the state of Bahia in the Northeast of Brazil. What greeted me there was a culture shock of the highest order, everything was different, and although it was exciting it was also intimidating and stressful for an individual who has long been bedevilled by anxiety. Multiple factors contributed to my anxiety, not least that despite being 26 at the time I had never travelled abroad by myself before, but particularly difficult was the fact that Salvador was the first place I had ever been without a white majority.

Salvador is generally considered to be the capital of Afro-Brazilian culture, and is a city where I, for the first time in my life, found myself in a racial minority. I

---

[3] The 2001 census reveals that the UK itself has a very high percentage of 'white' inhabitants, 91%, but Hull exceeds even this, with 97.7% of inhabitants self-defining as 'white' (UK Census, 2001).

became aware for the first time of my race and of the fact that I am the possessor of a race. I was forced to understand myself as a white person, if only due to the (assumed on my part) perception of the local population, which I believed to mark me out as (an)Other.[4] I found this unsettling, this sense of being 'visible' was something that I had never experienced before. Whilst I also found it difficult being confronted with my racial, national, and economic privileges, which generated a sense of guilt and unearnt entitlement, the hardest thing for me was my perception of just how visible I was. In part I was scared, fed by the myriad warnings I had been given about how Salvador is a dangerous city where tourists, particularly foreigners, are targeted due to their likely comparative wealth. More powerful and abiding than that however, although it was clearly connected, was my sense, felt for the first time in my life, that I was the one who was different, that suddenly I was in a minority, I was Other. It is absolutely essential to stress at this juncture that I was not discriminated against in any way, nothing 'bad' happened to me and I had no brushes with the crime that I had been warned was endemic. The 'problem,' such as it was, was within me. Just as Fechter (2005) discusses as regards white foreigners in Jakarta I found it uncomfortable to feel visible, to feel that I was no longer just another face amongst many on the street. I was, or felt myself to be, marked.

Whilst I did not enjoy the sensation at the time I look back on it now as positive, as having been a crucial learning experience, not least in having had some small taste of being a racial minority. I say a small taste not only because the length of time involved, one week, was short, but also because I am very aware that for most people who live their lives as a racial Other the experience is one of discrimination and being marked not only as different but also as inferior and

---

[4] This perception was also one constructed around the othered position of 'tourist,' within which are imbricated nodes of power, affluence, privilege, and, bizarrely for me, a sense of exoticness – certainly the first time that I was ever aware of being seen by anyone in any way as 'exotic.'

abjected. This was not my experience, and it is this realisation that makes me feel a twinge of shame that my brush with Otherness-lite led me to flee southwards, to escape what I felt at the time to be an unsupportable situation. My discomfort drove me to leave Salvador and the further I went the more comfortable I became. I am in no doubt that this increased comfort was primarily due to the increased affluence and whiteness that made me feel less racially and economically different from the people around me.[5] It is certainly the case that for the duration of my fieldwork in Florianópolis from April 2008 to July 2009 I never once had the same sense of being racially Other that I had felt in Salvador.[6] The degree to which I was marked by my race reduced, to the extent that it seemed to disappear. Obviously it does not disappear, it instead becomes what marked me as un-marked, as invisible within a majority of people that were categorised in the same way as me. The excess of all our whiteness ended up occluding whiteness itself. My visibility decreased and my sense of comfort grew, and whilst I am still ashamed that my experience of a privileged Otherness caused me to turn and run, I also now consider it to be felicitous. It drove me to Florianópolis, where I found an uninterrogated white majority of which I may never have become aware had I not been confronted by my race in Salvador.

Why interrogate whiteness?

The most basic analysis of this tells us that I am white, that in Salvador there were few people that looked like me, and that in Florianópolis most did. This simple

---

[5] I do not remember having consciously considered this at the time, but with hindsight it seems likely that at a subconscious level the demographics, and my increased 'fit' within them, were a factor in choosing the South as my research site. Thankfully this also turned out to be a sound decision in academic terms.

[6] I also felt less of an economic Other because Florianópolis is a more affluent city than Salvador and I was not much more, if at all, economically advantaged than the majority of those around me.

conclusion, that most people in Salvador are not white whilst in Florianópolis they are, is where most laypeople would leave the story. Simple observation leads to simple conclusion, and no further thought or analysis is necessary, and so when everything is going well most people do not even think about their 'whiteness' and take it for granted. This lack of critical analysis tells us nothing about what whiteness or white people 'are' however, and after alluding to it earlier before then conspicuously avoiding it I must now turn my attention to the question of what whiteness 'is.' Whilst in the field I certainly held preconceived notions about who was white and talked to people about whiteness having already decided, albeit unconsciously, whether they were white or not. It can seem an obvious question of common sense, of simply looking at someone, but this tendency towards casual categorisation is deeply problematic, and contributes to allowing white privilege to continue unchecked. It was when I was forced to challenge my assumptions that I moved into a position of being able to also challenge this privilege.

That I realised that it was not acceptable for me to simply follow my instincts was primarily a result of my general and constant anxieties about the fieldwork, and my suitability to conduct it. This forced me into reflective cycles of self-doubt and recrimination which came to feed my awareness that I must consciously and continually make myself mystify race and not jump to conclusions, prejudge or predefine. This led me to doubt myself and always ask people to define themselves racially, even though I always already had a preconceived, if not necessarily accurate, definition in mind. These preconceptions were proved wrong on a few occasions, and the most notable is the case of Luisa, who I had assumed to be 'white' due to her red hair. When she then told me that it is actually due to her Syrian ancestry it not only justified my decision to always ask for self-definition, something

that at times did feel to be an absurd question, but would also unsettle my notions, largely undisturbed until that point, that 'white' and 'European' were inextricably and unproblematically linked. At moments such as this I began to see that the apparently simple and obvious nature of racial identities can perhaps explain the lack of rigour in definitions of whiteness. Sovik (2004: 315) alludes to this when she argues that in Brazil "[i]n practice, being white requires light skin and European features." This 'common sense' approach is clearly too simple because, as she goes on to point out, race is not merely concerned with phenotype, with skin colour and facial features, it also directly impacts on other facets of life in very practical and meaningful fashions.

It is one of these impacts that most clearly demonstrates that the critical investigation of whiteness in Brazil is essential, particularly given the lack of interest demonstrated by both the academy and Brazilian society. This is the fact that "being white means fulfilling a certain role, taking a place or position in society that carries with it a certain authority; whiteness allows movement, lowers barriers" (Sovik, 2004: 315). Whiteness confers authority and power, and the privileging of this one particular skin colour above all others means that it is simply unacceptable to not attempt to analyse and understand its operation in Brazilian society. This is a society where more than once I was told that a *branca* in a relationship with a *negro* will often be described to be *virando pra trás* ('turning backwards' in a regressive sense), and where on several occasions I heard people talk of *traços finos* ('fine' facial features, associated with whiteness) as being attractive, and features associated with other races as being ugly. On one memorable occasion I was even told by a teacher that the *negro* and *mulato* pupils at the school she worked in were naturally less

intelligent than the white children, as well as being more violent and disruptive.[7] Observations like these lead me to agree without reservation with the view of Nascimento (2007: 35) that "[w]hiteness must be identified and understood as the silent and obscured implicit standard that conducts the reproduction of discriminatory race relations." It is for this reason above all others that lay considerations, or rather the lack of consideration in lay thinking, cannot pass unchallenged.

I am committed to following Garner's (2007: 1) call for the study of whiteness to always contribute to antiracist scholarship, but my commitment comes with the observation of Steyn (2001: xxx) that whilst looking at whiteness and its role in racism is essential, it is perhaps not helpful to consider a large and diverse group of people in only these terms. I do not believe that the best way to counter racism is to assume its existence without first investigating. When I did so I found that incidents of overt racism were rare and people were far more likely to condemn racism than exhibit it.[8] That I did not see or hear it does not mean it is not there, but it does make it even more important to understand how whiteness, which largely remains unchallenged in its position of privilege, is constructed and understood. Following from McCallum's (2005: 101) argument that most anthropologists are based in the *favelas* and only 'know' the middle-classes through the descriptions of the *favelistas*, I would argue that most anthropologists only 'know' whiteness and white Brazilians as a homogeneous and racist group, through the descriptions of racial Others. This is not suggest that their views are not important, but rather that

---

[7] That she quickly added that she herself is not racist is, in a sense, indicative of the view that Brazil has of itself, to be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, that Brazil is not racist, and has no racism, and that therefore any such commentary cannot be racist itself.

[8] It must be remembered that I was always very frank about my own views before people spoke to me, and it is possible that my presence may have reduced the likelihood that people state such views to me, as well as increasing the likelihood that people seek to be seen to distance themselves from them.

without talking to white Brazilians we cannot get to the root of the racism that exists. When people are assumed from the outset to be racist it makes rapport more difficult to establish on the part of the researcher, and trust more difficult on the part of the researched (Cambraia Windsor, 2007: 500). It is this gap that I hope to have bridged.[9] Racism is easy to find, but something more interesting is the interaction between races that is not so clearly racist, but which can lead to outcomes that are every bit as negative. This, if anything, is more difficult to uncover and more pernicious in its effects.

McDermott Hughes (2010: xviii) found in most instances in Zimbabwe that the word 'racism' is rather too wrought, and that instead it is more common to encounter what he calls "Other disregarding." White people there simply do not pay very much attention to racial Others, and cannot be said to have either positive or negative views on race. Not having a view clearly allows racist or racially discriminatory social patterns to continue, and it is important to bear this in mind, but this is different than outright prejudice. I found in Florianópolis that the presence and injustice of racism were well recognised, but not always actively contested. McDermott Hughes (2010: xviii) goes on to argue that "whites seek less to dominate blacks and more to find for themselves a secure place in Zimbabwe" and this again mirrors what I encountered. I found again and again a desire amongst white Brazilians to find a secure discursive space in Brazil, something I will examine in great detail in the coming chapters with respect to Brazilian femininity and female sexual and gendered identities. I argue that this is distinct from Frankenberg's (1993:

---

[9] I am also duty bound to consider the possibility that the strength of ethnography, as a means by which one can become close enough to people that they say those things that they may otherwise hesitate to express, can also be a weakness. As McDermott Hughes (2010: xvii) states "most previous academic work – little of which was anthropological – had denounced their economic and social position. An ethnographer, however, cannot avoid humanising his or her subjects, some of whom, in this case, became genuine friends." Who would want to believe that their friends are racist, and would not instead be inclined to give the benefit of the doubt?

197) findings in the United States, where due to being beneficiaries of white privilege in a country which is majority white and has a dominant white national identity, the women she spoke to had the privilege of not having to name themselves and their racial identities. As I will go on to demonstrate, Brazil has no such white national identity, and that white privilege, although indisputable, is not sufficient grounds for an unnamed or unmarked whiteness. So what is whiteness understood to 'be' in Brazil?

'Whiteness' as race

Whiteness in Brazil and beyond is under-researched and poorly understood, often leading to it being too often taken for granted that whiteness is homogeneous, even by those who specialise in studying race. When a scholar such as Telles (2004: 22) says of the language applied to race that "almost all the terms (except perhaps white) are problematic" it speaks to a real lack of attention paid to whiteness, the racial category that I believe most requires problematising! We cannot simply accept casual homogenising definitions without interrogating more deeply the effects that these categorisations have, but instead require an understanding of what people consider whiteness to 'be' and how it operates throughout society. The growing number of studies that Twine & Gallagher (2008: 7) argue "demonstrate the situational, relational and historical contingencies that are reshaping and repositioning white identities within the context of shifting racial boundaries" also mean that we have to avoid the tendency to view whiteness as static. We must unpack 'whiteness,' and this requires as its first step a decision about which analytical framework it be judged under. Wade (1997: 5-6) argues that the two most commonly used options are 'race' and 'ethnicity,' but also that these terms are not

self-evident and simple and are instead embedded within discourses that circulate within academic, popular and political milieus. I have drawn upon just such a discourse of race up to this point, and the concept of race is therefore the logical starting point in this discussion.

Frankenberg (1993: 138) argues that at the most basic level the "use of the term "race" raises the idea of difference, for "race" is above all a marker of difference, an axis of differentiation." This differentiation is considered by Wade (1997: 14-15) to be based primarily on differences in physical appearance, phenotypical differences that are arbitrarily assigned and valued in a process whereby 'race' is constructed by societies and cultures. This process, which McCallum (2005: 100) calls 'racialisation,' imbues bodily features like skin colour, hair type, and the appearance of various facial features, with meaning. People are grouped together according to perceived similarities and differences in physical appearance. It is through racialisation that society constructs different 'races,' with the result that members of a society know 'what' someone 'is' by looking at them, just as I had to prevent myself from doing. This process is then essentialised as these 'racial signifiers' are discursively imbued with the appearance of markers of a genuinely scientific and objective difference, and people appear naturally to belong to separate biologically differentiated groups. This is a function of a particular racial discourse that was constructed through European colonial encounters and the concomitant discursive constructions of Othernesses that they produced, meaning that 'race' is an epiphenomenon, the result of another phenomenon, namely the belief in biological races, which itself has no proven objective basis (Guimarães, 2002: 53).

Although it lacks an objective basis this racialisation does have real effects, and these effects are unique to context, location, and intersections with other factors, often themselves socially-constructed. This leads it to be, in the words of Maynard (1994.b: 11), an unstable and fluid "complex of social meanings" that makes the step from the discursively constructed to the ontologically essential. This step is at the root of the danger that I highlighted at the start of the chapter, namely that studying whiteness could potentially strengthen its appearance as ontological fact, rather than challenging and weakening it as discursive construction. This is because using 'race' forces us into an unwilling acceptance of the presence of difference, a proposition that can easily lead to the reification of this difference as essential. This is not something that I want to risk because I, along with many other, subscribe to a project that aims for the destruction of difference. The balancing act between engaging with discursively constructed difference in order that we can deconstruct it, and the perils of inadvertently solidifying notions of essential difference is a difficult one to undertake, and this raises the question of whether we should therefore discard 'race' as a concept. Is it simply too dangerous? Frankenberg (1993: 189, emphasis in original) is again useful at this stage in reminding us that racial difference cannot be ignored "because racial difference was produced in *essentialist* rather than any other terms, it is to those essentialist terms that later critique remains accountable." This belief in essential difference was at the centre of the development of the first discourses of 'race' and therefore we must engage with it. The other option, to overlook the presence of 'race' so as not to feed its essentialising tendencies, will not alter the very real inequalities and discriminations that it makes possible. Put simply, pretending it does not exist will not make it go away (Nascimento, 2007: 18-19; Maynard, 1994.b: 10-11).

We must therefore distrust the concept of 'race' (Goldstein, 1999: 567), but we must also use it precisely. The ways in which discourses of racial difference were developed were not universal, and the racial discourse that is prevalent in contemporary Brazil developed in the context of specific social and historical conditions. It may converge in some ways with other constructions, but specific taxonomies of racial 'type' were constructed that are particular to Brazil. We find then that black and white form only the poles of a continuum which has a vast number of potential identifications in-between, a diversity of fluid racial categories that is far in excess of what often boils down to a black/white split in North America and Europe (Wade: 1997: 68). In these settings racialisation follows a 'one drop rule,' whereby it only takes one drop of black blood to make one black, and those of mixed black/white race will usually identify themselves, and be identified by others, as black[10] (Marrow, 2003: 428). The racial categories of white and black are therefore more static and strictly bounded, and tend to be analysed as such without any consideration of how they can be transcended or challenged (Hartigan, 1999: 3). In Brazil however there is far greater range and nuance, and whilst Brazilians evaluate race with reference to a familiar range of phenotypical features (skin colour, hair type,[11] and facial morphology) they are more often viewed as belonging to continuums and are not always predictive of each other (Goldstein, 1999: 563-564). This means that someone with darker skin may be adjudged to be less 'black' than someone with lighter skin if they have less 'black' facial features, and it is more common that those of mixed race will identify either with their 'white side' or with the available categories that specifically describe mixture (Fish, 1999; Warren, 2000: 150). Using one such category of mixture, *morena*, perhaps allows me to illustrate

---

[10] Or a comparable identity category such as African American or Afro-Caribbean, for example.

[11] Hair has been highlighted by Baran (2007: 388) as a critical phenotypical marker in Brazil.

the complexity of these Brazilian categories of racial mixture, and through this the complexity of the idea of race.

The *morena* example

Early in my fieldwork I went for a coffee with a friend called Ana who was originally from the state of Minas Gerais in the *Sudeste* (Southeast) region of Brazil. We talked about my research and when I said I was interested in whiteness she asked if I would include her within 'white.' I responded that it would depend on how she classified herself, and then taking it from there I would ask her about the subject. She told me that she is *morena clara* and I would have just accepted what she said without comment if I had not heard it used the previous day by Daniel to describe the Spanish actress Penelope Cruz. When I had asked him for clarification he said that a *morena clara* is a white woman with olive skin and black hair, generally southern European in appearance. Ana's appearance matched far more closely the descriptions I had heard of *mulatas*, and whilst I was clearly not going to contradict her, I realised at that moment that Brazilian racial classifications really were a mystery to me. I asked her what made her *morena clara* and she explained that she has *traços brancos* ('white traces,' a common phrase that refers to 'white facial features'), light skin (although not light enough to be '*branca*') and wavy (but not curly) hair. She then explained that this combination of phenotypical attributes means she is not *negra* or *mulata* because "não tenho traços africanos, tenho traços brancos com pele um pouco mais escura" (I don't have African features, I have European features, but with slightly darker skin).

She then added that *morena clara* is what she 'is' because that is how she is categorised in her home city, which is, she said, darker ("uma cidade mais escura").

In Florianópolis, a much whiter city ("uma cidade bem mais branca"), she is often referred to as being *mulata*, and does not feel comfortable being so described. This points to the kind of geographically specific racial taxonomy which McCallum (2005: 108) argues is one site where the boundaries of racial classifications are often pushed. In Minas Gerais Ana is located at the lighter end of the spectrum, whereas in Florianópolis she is racially re-classified, and treated/seen, differently. Ana became 'blacker' in the South because although the colour of her skin, the ontological fact, did not change physically, the way in which it was read and understood culturally did. The way the phenotype was perceived and its discursive position changed, and therefore so did the racial identity she was assigned. In both locales her physical appearance is 'read' and assigned a category, but in each a different significance is attached. This is important because it clearly demonstrates the argument of Pravaz (2009: 90) that "these [racial] distinctions do not have an "objective" reality: rather their boundaries are constantly negotiated and pushed," and that we therefore have to play close attention to context.

The category of *morena* as I encountered it in Florianópolis has its own boundaries, and these are different than in other parts of Brazil. The descriptions that I was given were different than that provided by Nascimento (2007: 54), which is as

> a favoured color identity, but the term is so elastic and arbitrary as to be a common euphemism for blackness – used in place of the offensive term *negro* – as well as a popular designation of near-whiteness.

Rezende & Lima (2004: 766) also found a great degree of variation in those women who self-described as *morenas*, but both they and Maia (2009: 774) conclude that the most common usage is based on the view that *mulata* (broadly speaking mixed-race black and white) and *morena* are synonymous. This is, I suspect, a fair reflection of the prevailing usage in much of Brazil, but in the South, the whitest region, this was

not what I encountered. Ana was assigned a racial identity at the lightest/whitest end of racial mixedness in Minas Gerais, as a *morena clara*, but in the South this changed. There *morena* seemed to move into a category of whiteness that excluded racial mixture, its definition was much tighter than the wide and elastic example reported by Rezende & Lima and Maia. If, as Ana described, the category of *morena* excludes racial mixture in the South, even the 'near-whiteness' that she believes herself to exhibit and which Nascimento describes above, then the question becomes one of why it exists at all? Is it not just whiteness?

This distinction would become personal after I was described as *moreno* by a friend. Having read widely about the different Brazilian racial categories I believed, despite knowing that the racial topography is incredibly complex, that I would at least know where I would fit within this schema. I was surely *branco*, white, as had felt so abundantly obvious in Salvador. This assumption was shaken when I met Fernanda for the first time, and she realised as soon as I spoke that I was not Brazilian. She asked me where I was from, and when I replied that I am English she looked at me with surprise on her face, asking where my family was from. Now puzzled myself as to where the conversation was going I replied that my mother is from Northern Ireland and my father was born in London. Fernanda looked even more puzzled, and she told me the following,

> Não tem cara de gringo…não parece gringo, parece mais brasileiro...Tu é bronzeado, mais como um brasileiro que um inglês, tu é bem moreno.....não tem cara de inglês, tem certeza que não tem nada de espanhol, italiano?

> You don't look foreign...you don't look foreign, you look more Brazilian...You are tanned, more like a Brazilian than an English guy, you are really *moreno*.....you don't look English, are you sure you haven't got any Italian or Spanish in you?

I did not really know how to answer this question so I simply assured her that my appearance is not incongruous in England, and that as far as I am aware no-one has ever been surprised to hear that I am English, nor thought that I might be Spanish or Italian. To be honest I was confused, and told her that I would take her belief that I do not look English as a complement, although I had no idea why it would or should be! Whilst I had been forced to engage with my whiteness in Salvador, I had never been given reason to challenge it before, and I was somewhat thrown by the conversation. Just as had happened to Ana I found that a shift in my geographical location had seemed to lead to a shift in my perceived racial category. I appeared to have moved from being *branco* in Salvador to the seemingly distinct *moreno* in Florianópolis.

Being told that I was *moreno* and did not look English was strange the first time, but it was an experience that would be repeated many times. I would even go so far as to say that the phrase "não tem cara de inglês" (you don't look English) became a motif that threaded its way through the experience, something that I came to expect to hear, and would be inexplicably disappointed if it was not forthcoming. It also presented me with an excellent opportunity to inquire exactly what made me *moreno*, and from there elucidate what is/is not understood as *moreno*. The most common response, by some distance, was simply that *moreno* refers to a person with dark hair, basically that which in English is called brunette. When I inquired as to whether skin colour was a factor the answer was invariably that it was not, and that as with *loiro* (blonde) it refers only to the colour of the hair. Clearly this is not actually the case, *loiro*, as with the English word blonde, is used overwhelmingly to refer to white people with fair hair, and *moreno* too was used to refer to white people with dark hair, as is the English 'brunette.' Skin colour is present in the equation if

not in the discourse but, leaving aside this gaping anomaly in the logic, it is still instructive that the consensus held that *moreno* refers to white people with dark hair. So what in Britain might generally be called a Mediterranean skin tone, dark but without escaping the category of 'white,' and what would be understood as a fairer northern European skin tone, also within 'white,' could both be located within the *moreno* category in Florianópolis as long as the hair was dark.

This seemed then to be done and dusted. Case closed. I could present to the world my unravelling of the racial taxonomy in the South of Brazil, it is not all that complicated, *moreno* refers to brunette. Simple...except for the fact that it really is that complicated after all. I had come to believe so completely, and to use so unthinkingly, this simple construction of *moreno* that when one day it crumbled to dust in front of my eyes I had no idea how to react. I was talking to a close friend of mine, Francesca, when I casually used the word *morena* to describe her, and was then amazed when she rejected this, saying "o que é isso Jimmy? Não sou morena, tu acha que sou morena?" (what you talking about Jimmy? I'm not *morena*, you think I'm *morena*?). When I responded that yes, I did think she was *morena*, because her hair is brown, she informed me that brown hair is not sufficient to qualify as *morena*! I stuttered, then I stuttered some more, and eventually managed to reply "mas foi tu que me disse há dois dias atrás que é justamente isso que morena significa!" (but it was you who told me two days ago that this is exactly what *morena* means!). And it was. She herself had told me two days previously that *moreno* refers simply to dark hair. I apologised that I had seemingly insulted her, although I had no idea how or why, and asked her what she 'was,' if not *morena*? She said that she is simply *branca* (white), and that her skin would have to be darker to be *morena*. But, I responded, I had specifically asked her two days previously

whether or not skin colour was a factor, and her answer had been that no, it was not! Maybe she had, she responded, but on reflection it is a factor, a person would have to have darker skin than her to be *morena*.

This shook me from my recently found certainty, and returned me to my original belief, that *morena* is a category referring to those seen to be either at the margins of, or just beyond, the 'territory' of *branca*, almost 'white', but not quite. This represented a return to the original expectations that I had regarding the complexity of the racial categorisations in Brazil, but was still a difficult moment for me. What had briefly felt like a small victory in my understanding of the milieu in which I found myself had become a defeat that I could not explain. I felt somewhat foolish for having believed that I could have 'solved' one of the many mysteries of Brazilian culture, and a little bit dispirited at having been flung once more into the morass of incomprehension. If the category *moreno* was at least as complex as I had initially believed it to be, how could I go about understanding this complexity? Luckily there was an opportunity that very same day, when Francesca and I met some mutual friends of ours for coffee. With no prompting from me Francesca formed us into an ad hoc focus group, as much to answer her recently discovered doubts as through any consideration of my research!

The discussion proved to be very interesting, diverging opinions and beliefs were aired within the group, and it quickly became clear that there was no definitive answer as to who, or what, a *morena* 'is.' Angela first claimed that skin colour is a factor, but was promptly challenged by Juliana. Then five minutes later the waters would became muddied further as Francesca, who had so vociferously denied the presence of skin colour in the formulation of *moreno*, suddenly was adamant that is was unequivocally and absolutely fundamental. For a while I sat there struggling to

understand what was happening, convinced that I was missing something, the Rosetta Stone that would unlock the mystery for me. Here were five women from two neighbouring states in the South of Brazil, surely they would be able to solve the mystery with a definitive answer? Then as I gazed out of the window it hit me, the obvious truth. I had known from the start that the racial taxonomy in Brazil was both complex and very different to that in Britain, but it had for some reason never occurred to me that in fact it never actually existed, at least not as a functioning taxonomy that could provide definitive answers.

It was not just a case of regional differences, although these are certainly a factor, because even within regions there is not necessarily total agreement. In my experience it is absolutely not the case, as Telles (2004: 186) argues, that in the South it is a case of white/not white, and that therefore the racial categorisation is simpler than in the rest of Brazil. I would instead argue that in the different context of the South there has developed a different understanding of race which retains the overall level of complexity, but concentrates this complexity more at the whiter end of the spectrum. Markers of phenotype like skin tone/colour and hair colour/type are still used to differentiate between the various categories, and the space for interpretation always remains. This, it now seems obvious to me, has to be the case for taxonomies of race that are based upon perceived phenotypical difference, they simply must be subjective. Race, the classification of people based on subjective and arbitrary understandings of phenotype, exists only in the perceptions that people have of others and the intersubjective ways in which these are understood through discourse. This discourse is very important as the means by which sense is given to race, and it is this that I will examine further in the next chapter.

Whiteness as ethnicity

Another means by which people can be categorised is by the use of 'ethnicity,' a term that is often used as a synonym of race, but which does have a specific genealogy of its own. Wade (1997: 16-19) argues that ethnicity is properly used to refer to those groups which are considered minorities within larger nations, and to cultural differences rather than perceived biological/phenotypal differences. In this respect it also tends to be seen as less offensive and emotive, but whilst being less arbitrary it must be remembered that it is still based on a process of Othering, and therefore divides, rather than unites, humanity. It is also very difficult for it to 'escape' phenotype, which is very often used as an indicator of first recourse. It is therefore, like race, an imperfect concept, but could it be useful when applied to whiteness? Taking Wade's argument from above would seem to suggest not, because self-defined whites are after all not a distinct minority in Brazil, and certainly not in the South. There is however another definition offered by Levine (1999: 168) which holds that "ethnicity is that method of classifying people (both self and other) that uses origin (socially constructed) as its primary reference." By using this as a starting point one way to approach the question of whiteness as ethnicity in Brazil is to judge whether attachments to Europe and elements of European culture persist amongst the white population.

One very interesting example of an analysis of whiteness focused on ethnicity is found in the research of Galen Joseph (2000) in Argentina.[12] He examined the construction of whiteness amongst middle-class *porteños* (inhabitants

---

[12] I do not seek here to claim a necessary equivalence between the two nations and cultures based on a neo-colonial belief that they must be the 'same'. Instead I base it on historical similarities in immigration and Boellstorff's (2007: 186) argument that the region is "a spatial scale useful for interrogating the theoretical lacuna so weakly papered over by the slash separating "local" from "global.""

of Buenos Aires) and found that they had doubts over whether they were 'white' enough, and that their 'whiteness' was therefore precarious. The research unpacks the construction of the discourse of 'whiteness,' showing it to be related not only to racialised phenotype but also to ethnic considerations of culture, history, civilisation,[13] education, 'seriousness' and Europe (ibid.: 334). Adhering to this discourse many *porteños* believe that whiteness and Argentineness have become irreconcilable, and that Argentina cannot be truly white as it is neither civilised, nor educated, nor serious. To be white *and* Argentine becomes an oxymoron, and because they rank whiteness as a transnational identity category above their national identity they come to identify themselves as white, rather than Argentine. Ethnicity becomes more valuable than nationality, and is less negotiable (ibid.: 335). They use their ancestry in order to identify as European and transcend the perceived shortcomings of their country and align themselves with an imagined Europe that is civilised, educated and serious, and therefore within their terms self-evidently white (ibid.: 352). Within this formulation 'Europe' becomes used contextually as a synonym for whiteness and those compatriots whom they consider as less, or not at all, white/European become the Other, with the self constructed as part of a transnational (imaginary) white class (ibid.: 336).

This reflects the recognition of the Argentine elite that although they are in a privileged position within their own country they also occupy a marginal position within the world by virtue of being geographically placed within Latin America. This creates tension between being, simultaneously, both national master and global subaltern. Historically the Argentine elites overcame this through use of a

---

[13] Stoler has found that such an insistence on civilisation was also common in colonial settings in Asia, where bourgeois officials relied on a discourse of civility to distinguish the European coloniser from the native, creating a synonymity between whiteness and civilisation (1995: 8).

myth of the European origins of the Argentine population [which] is linked to 19th Century elite efforts to think of Argentina as different from the rest of Latin America, which according to the ideological tropes of the time, did not fit within the category of 'civilised societies' (Garguin, 2007: 165).

Contemporary Argentines are however only too aware that Europe views them as unambiguously Latin American, a problem exacerbated by their perception of their own country as a Latin Americanised mess that stands at odds with their view of themselves as cultured Europeans (Joseph, 2000: 340). Within a world that is dominated by Euro-American cultural standards this fuels self-loathing, and as a consequence many attempt to claim the legalised European identity and passport to which their ancestry entitles them (ibid.: 350-352). For *porteños* this also manifests itself in the claim that Buenos Aires is not really 'of' Latin America, but is instead an outpost of transnational whiteness, a European city stranded in a Latin American country. Taken together this all steers us towards a view of whiteness in Argentina as being not merely a racial phenotype but also the product of a search for and negotiation with whiteness elsewhere, an imagined transnational whiteness that operates a global hierarchy of whiteness that is topped by Europe (Joseph, 2000: 361; Wade, 2001: 849).

This detailed analysis, although undoubtedly contextual to the Argentine milieu, could have the potential to offer much to an analysis of how whiteness is constructed in other parts of the world. Steyn (2001: 92), for example, found evidence that English-speaking white South Africans also felt an attachment to a transnational whiteness, saying that

[t]he fact of the matter is that identification with a world beyond the boundaries of South Africa enables English-speaking South Africans to engage in a different kind of psychological withdrawal [from the land to which they feel only a weak attachment].

The question then becomes whether there is any evidence of a similar kind of alienation from the national and concomitant transnational identification in Brazil, and perhaps particularly so in the South, where immigration patterns have had so much in common with Argentina. Sovik (2004: 323) certainly suggests that the same difficulties encountered by Argentine whites are present for white Brazilians who attempt to make such a perceptive linkage because

> [o]utside of Brazil, Brazilian whites are not necessarily considered white. When foreigners find it odd that Brazilians identify themselves as white, because they are of mixed genetic heritage, they are referring to an international pecking order and perhaps even pulling rank on Brazilian whites.[14]

There are also some hints within the literature towards the continued presence of a transnational appreciation of whiteness from Brazil. Maia (2009: 773), for example, speculates about a possible identification with a transnational white elite amongst middle-class white Brazilians and, more concretely, Sheriff (2001: 157-158) found in Rio de Janeiro that white Brazilians often viewed themselves as being members of a kind of global 'white club' in which they shared ethnic ties to whites in other countries. In adhering to this imagined transnational standard they separated themselves from the non-white population of Brazil and buttressed global structures of racialised power that serve to privilege the EuroAmerican, and to rank white over black.

This all led me to question repeatedly during my fieldwork whether this foregrounding of European ancestry seen in Argentina was also expressed in Florianópolis. Was there an ethnic understanding of whiteness, as I had expected that there might be? The answer was simply, and surprisingly, no. This is not however to

---

[14] She also stresses that as early as 1957 similar impulses had been observed by the sociologist Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, who postulated "that the pathology of Brazilian whites – who are not white according to European criteria – is that they must affirm whiteness in two ways: anxiously recalling their European ancestry and studying blacks, besides whom their whiteness stands out" (Sovik, 2004: 316).

argue that Europe, imagined or otherwise, is absent. It is obvious that a history of Portuguese colonisation means that many features of Brazilian society and culture are influenced by Europe, and more specifically in the South many people's family histories made it possible for them to claim European identities. What was surprising therefore is that I found neither rejection of a Brazilian, nor any claims of a European, identity, indeed only one person, Elise, both of whose parents were from Europe, claimed an identity at all related to Europe. She had spent quite considerable periods of her life in Europe and had recently returned to Brazil having lived in Italy for a number of years, but whilst she recognised that this made Europe a fundamental part of who she 'was,' even she had no desire to do so, despite being able to claim a European identity or nationality without fear of contradiction. She had no doubts or regrets about her Brazilian nationality and identity, seeing her Dutch passport as a useful tool rather than a statement of belonging.

Gabriela was similarly keen to actively avoid any association to a European identity, even when offered the opportunity. She told me that

> eu, eu, olha. Eu me vejo como branca, mas não me sinto branca como Europeia assim, entendeu? Tipo, a Bea acha que branca *é* europeia, sabe? Eu não me sinto assim, sabe? Então, quando eu tava com as ideias, quando eu tinha a ideia de ir pra Europa, ficar um tempo, eu comecei a ficar preocupada com ser, tipo, estrangeira, que não sou europeia.

> I, I, look here. I see myself as white, but I don't feel white as in European, you know? Its like [our mutual friend] Bea thinks that white *is* European, you know? I don't feel like that, you know? So when I had ideas, when I had the idea to go to Europe, to live for a while, I began to worry about, sort of, being a foreigner, because I'm not European.

I will go into far greater depth in the later chapters about white women's accommodations with whiteness and Brazilianness, but for now the important point is that even when offered by Bea the opportunity to claim a European whiteness she resisted. Despite her German ancestry, and the German passport this entitled her to,

she feared that she would feel foreign in Europe, and could not contemplate the possibility that she was in any way European. Many people with whom I spoke, including those with grandparents born in Europe, went further still and were as quick to point out their negative perceptions of Europe as they were any positives. The first act of my landlord after handing me the keys to my flat was to tease me by offering to show me how the shower worked, based on the stereotype that Brazilians have that Europeans do not wash very often. He joked that although his grandparents had been Italian he was a proper Brazilian and washed regularly, in so doing distancing himself from the European forebears who were to him unwashed barbarians. This Europe was certainly not the cradle of civilisation, it was a part of their family histories, but not of their contemporary lives, a fact of history, but not the location of a hoped-for future. Unlike Joseph's *porteños* I found that people in Florianópolis did not align themselves with Europe, nor with a transnational whiteness, or indeed with anything other than Brazil. They saw no need to seek refuge from Brazil in European or transnational identities or whitenesses.

There was in fact only one occasion that I heard anything even remotely akin to the attitudes described by Joseph in Buenos Aires. I was with my friend Mônica in an art gallery enjoying an exhibition by a local artist who was heavily influenced by a traditional Azorean artistic style, when we became aware of an elderly woman, expensively dressed and with make-up that instantly brought to my mind images of the English author Barbara Cartland. We had been discussing my research, and particularly the fact that no-one had ever expressed to me a preference for the 'European' over and above the 'Brazilian,' and it was therefore all we could do to suppress our laughter when we heard the elderly woman announce loudly to her friend that this "Brazilian" art was vulgar and ugly. Apparently the German

influence in her home city of Blumenau meant that the art there was much better, proper European art, and because Brazilians do not really like or have any interest in art, this Brazilian trash was worthless. She did like art, real art, and this was because she was of German stock herself! We somehow managed to wait until she had moved out of earshot before we dissolved into giggles, and when I had recovered enough to speak I turned to Mônica and said that the woman was a gift from the gods, and a starring role in my thesis would certainly be hers, as it now is. This was an amusing moment for us, but it is also important as an example of what Katz (2002: 65-68) terms "revealing phenomena." These are the moments when contrasting the behaviour of one person that is at odds with the norm reveals the regularity of the norm, and in distancing herself from Brazil, both the people and supposed lack of culture, and claiming instead an ethnically-tinged connection to Europe, she revealed the rarity of such attitudes in my experiences in Florianópolis.

Beyond this solitary incident it was always the 'Brazilian' that exerted the strongest pull, even, as I will describe in the next chapter, to the exclusion of historical/ethnic background of the individual. It is this realisation, more than any other, which leads me to argue that whiteness as race, as phenotype, was deployed far more than in an ethnic sense of heritage or ancestry. Not forgetting that as with all racial categories it is both cultural and corporeal (Garner, 2007: 6), and about more than simply skin colour (Pinho, 2009: 43), the whiteness that I encountered was constructed mainly from phenotype, racially rather than ethnically. It is because, as Telles (2004: 1) succinctly puts it, "[u]nlike in the United States, race in Brazil refers mostly to skin colour or physical appearance rather than ancestry," that the term 'race' is used most consistently in the literature, and that I therefore intend to

follow suit and focus on the term 'race.' I do so with the explicit recognition of its arbitrary nature and of the seepages between phenotype and culture that we see in both academic and popular discourse. I do this in the belief that so long as 'race' and connected terms are recognised as emic categories lacking in scientific veracity, then their use can be productive (Guimarães, 2002: 53). As Pinho (2009: 53) argues, "[t]he importance of studying whiteness is to overcome the power of whiteness but also to undo the power of race."

Guimarães (2002: 50, my translation) argues that

"race" is not only a necessary political category in the organisation of resistance to racism in Brazil, but it is also an indispensible analytical category: the only one that reveals that the discriminations and inequalities that the Brazilian notion of "colour" provides for are effectively racial, and not only due to "class"

and I am therefore convinced that if whiteness is not interrogated the certain result will be the unchecked continuation of racism and white racial domination. This means its investigation, even where there exists the possibility of its reification, is necessary in order that racial domination cannot 'hide' behind, for example, class domination (Nascimento, 2007: 18-19). In this spirit I hope to show that focusing on whiteness as race will help to reveal more clearly its weaknesses and the lack of any basis for its privileged position within a discriminatory and unequal society. Whilst I suspect that reification is impossible to avoid completely, I will heed Pinho's (2009: 44) warning to not examine whiteness in a way that reifies or reproduces dualisms, but rather to deconstruct them, and I will therefore endeavour to prevent 'white' from settling as the dominant pole of an essentialised binary. The dominance of whiteness is however already constructed and operating, and to combat this I will follow Steyn's (2001: xxviii) strategy, driven by the recognition that

[i]f colonial narratives provided the social identity of whiteness, postcolonial narratives must help to redefine and complicate identities for those

70

interpellated by discourses of whiteness, by bringing them into dialogue with "other" identities.

It is precisely these colonial narratives that I will now move on to examine in the next chapter, and in so doing I hope that even as I may reify whiteness through reiteration I also deconstruct and disempower it through my focus upon its arbitrary and contradictory usage.

3. The elusive nature of whiteness in Brazil.

Having concluded that the whiteness I encountered in Brazil is best understood as a racial rather than an ethnic category I will dedicate this chapter to demonstrating how the Brazilian racial discourse has contributed to whiteness being obscured as a racial category and allowed it to be ignored in popular considerations of 'race.' In so doing I will argue that this racial discourse has shaped the ways in which whiteness and white people are both understood and understand themselves and been nurtured and sustained by seemingly contradictory ideologies that support both white supremacy and racial mixture. By unpacking the history the construction of a particularly Brazilian *branquitude* I demonstrate how the space for whiteness that has been constructed has ensured for white Brazilians a position as the most powerful and dominant of the putative races, but has also led to considerable doubts over their belonging within the nation. I argue that as an unintended consequence of elite desires to preserve white supremacy whiteness has in some ways been cast outside popular understandings of 'the Brazilian.' This has led to a lack of discussion, in both academic and popular milieus, of whiteness in Brazil, and is also one of the reasons why there was both surprise that I was researching whiteness in Brazil, and often hesitation in even discussing it. To understand my ethnographic experiences we have to understand the context, and therefore it is necessary to examine the historical development of racial discourse in Brazil.

A 'white' beginning

Radcliffe & Westwood (1996) argue that across Latin America national identities have been constructed through historical processes that have roots in pre-

Columbian cultures, European colonisation, slavery, and migration. Following from the seminal work of Benedict Anderson (1991) they argue that the resulting 'imagined communities' of nationhood were constructed by competing state, popular and global forces, part of a global process of the formation of nation states over the past half millennium. States, driven by national elites, used their power advantage to discursively etch a national subjecthood, a common national identity, onto the bodies of the people, tying the people to the nation regardless of their ethnicity, gender, class, or personal history (Radcliffe & Westwood, 1996: 13-14). One obstacle which made it difficult to form completely unitary national subjects was the diversity of the populations involved. Nations across Latin America had to be able to subsume and accommodate three broad racial groupings, the Indigenous, the African, and the European, without resulting in fractured and contradictory national subjects. States therefore had to promote a sense of commonality amongst these diverse subjects, a problem often tackled through the use of exclusions and a system of Othering based upon race and sexuality (Wade, 2001: 846-847). The national identities that developed did so imbricated with discourses of race/racism and sexuality, often leading to complex constructions that were simultaneously inclusive/universalist and exclusionary/particularist (ibid.: 848).

From the beginning of the colonial era Brazil was a country dominated by a traditional Portuguese white elite which faced no serious internal challenge to its dominance. There was no sizable white working or middle-class and the black population was kept down by the mechanisms of slavery. The national identity that the elite sought to promote therefore mirrored themselves, and as the elite was small there were few people that they were concerned with making into 'Brazilians.' The elite had no reason to doubt that Brazil was a white country, and the *brasilidade*

(Brazilianness) that they constructed was therefore unambiguously 'white' (Davis, 2000: 188). Their idea of whiteness was explicitly linked to the continent of which they believed themselves to be a part, Europe, and the notions of 'civilisation' that were attached to it. This was expressed in 1879 by federal deputy Joaquim Nabuco, who stated that

> We Brazilians...belong to the New World as a new, buoyant settlement, and we belong to Europe, at least in our upper strata. For any of us who has the least culture, the European influence predominates over the American. Our immigration cannot but be European, that is, human. It did not cease when Brazil held its first mass but went on, reforming the traditions of the savages who filled our shores at the time of the Discovery. It continued influenced by all the civilisations of humanity, like that of the Europeans, with whom we share the same basis of language, religion, art, law, and poetry, the same centuries of accumulated civilisation and, thus, as long as there is any ray of culture, the same historical imagination (cited in dos Santos, 2002: 67-68).

This was the same Joaquim Nabuco that Rogers (2010: 47) describes as "the most visible leader of the abolitionist movement in Brazil" and therefore he was not, at least by the standards of his day, a white supremacist, but even he was certain that all that was good in Brazil was European, was white. Whilst slavery made it possible for such elites to ignore the masses of black slaves and convince themselves that the country was 'white,' the advent of abolition in 1888 and the increase in European immigration in the late Nineteenth Century challenged these certainties, and doubts were raised in elite minds over the racial identity of Brazil.

This doubt was also fuelled by the opinions of the European elites that the Brazilian elites sought to emulate. The head of the French diplomatic mission to Brazil in 1869-70, Joseph Arthur Gobineau,[1] observed large numbers of mixed-race Brazilians in Rio and concluded that the population was ugly, deformed, idle and stupid, tainted by primitive black blood (dos Santos, 2002: 73). He was not alone,

---

[1] It is crucial to recognise that this man was no impartial observer, indeed he would go on to become what Moutinho (2004: 52, my translation) calls the "father of scientific racism." For an excellent discussion of his beliefs and role in later Brazilian scholarship see Chapter Two of Moutinho's (2004) book *Razão, "Cor" e Desejo*, particularly pages 56-65.

the European perception of the inhabitants of the tropics was of degenerate dark-skinned populations incapable of development and civilisation, leading to the conclusion that white people were unsuited to a tropical climate and meaning that those white people who did live there could not properly be 'white'[2] (Stepan, 1991: 89, 137). Lent legitimacy by a cloak of science these ideas led Brazilians to question their whiteness, with the result that "[t]o a large extent the educated classes of Latin America shared the misgivings of the Europeans. They wished to be white and feared they were not" (ibid.: 45). The chance to remedy this perceived national shortcoming came with the boom in Brazilian agricultural commodities that coincided with the loss of the slave workforce following the 1888 abolition of slavery. The agricultural sector required waged labour, but it was believed that the black former slaves were inherently lazy and would not work without coercion and therefore that some other group was needed to fill the labour deficit (dos Santos, 2002: 63).

Economic and ideological factors combined and prompted a series of drives to promote a white European immigration that would both meet labour demands *and* develop what was deemed to be a progressive (white) workforce. Other options were considered and there was, for example, some East Asian immigration,[3] but it was widely feared that Asians would contaminate the population with their supposed femininity and immorality (dos Santos, 2002: 65). That the immigrants should be European and white was not seriously doubted, and most in the elite agreed that as the nation 'whitened' modernity and development would come ever closer and transform Brazil "from a colonial backwater into a 'tropical *belle époque*', a

---

[2] Europeans viewed the colonies in the tropics as having generally deleterious effects on the civility of whites, effects so strong that "even for the European-born, the [East] Indies was transformative of cultural essence, social disposition, and personhood itself" (Stoler, 1995: 104).
[3]For deeper discussion of Asian, and particularly Japanese, migration to Brazil see Lesser (1999.a; 1999.b).

European society transplanted to the tropics" (Andrews, 1992: 155). The seriousness with which this perceived predicament was considered by the authorities, both at federal and state levels, is indicated by the active role of the Brazilian federal government and state legislatures. With its burgeoning coffee industry and labour shortfall São Paulo state was particularly active in encouraging and funding passage from Europe, explicitly for white European migrants (dos Santos, 2002: 62; Andrews, 1992: 156). The net result of this was that the proportional size of the white population in Brazil rose from 38.1% in 1872 to 62.5% in 1950, and in São Paulo the percentage of the population born in Europe rose from 51.8% in 1872 to 88% in 1940 (dos Santos, 2002: 69).

In São Paulo European immigration had been deemed necessary due to the lack of trust vested in the former slaves, but in Santa Catarina, at the time a province, there were only 10,821 slaves in 1881, 0.9% of the total slave population of 1,200,000 in the country (Leal Caruso & Caruso, 2007: 104). In 1872 the population of 'whites' was 125,942 compared to 30,968 "coloured" (both slaves and free), the highest proportion of whites for any of the Brazilian provinces of the time, and the lowest overall number of total *negro* and *mulato* populations of any province, except Amazonas (Klein & Vidal Luna, 2010: 78). The European migrants were required less to replace slaves than to generally increase population density in a province that had fertile farmland and not enough people. They settled across the province in new settlements known as *colónias*, many of which have become the largest towns and cities in the present day state.[4] These migrants were part of a vast movement of

---

[4] Migrants from different countries settled in different places, leading most notably to the formation of the German *colónias* of Joinville and Blumenau in 1860 (Seyferth, 1994: 17; Mulhall, 1873: 187), and Italian *colónias* of Criciúma and Chapecó in 1880 and 1917 respectively (Leal Caruso & Caruso, 2007: 138; Cabral, 1970: 368).

Europeans who crossed the Atlantic Ocean in the mid-19th Century and migrated to the Americas, totalling

> more than 40,000,000 starving landless people, hundreds of thousands of families of the recently created proletariat, exploited and unhappy, innumerable ruined sharecroppers and small business owners, and uncountable numbers of down-and-out artisans with no other alternative than unemployment, disease and misfortune (Leal Caruso & Caruso, 2007: 128, my translation).

Exploited, poor, desperate, and lacking land of their own in Europe many of these 40,000,000 found available land and opportunity in abundance in Brazil. They also found an almost complete absence of competition, being hugely advantaged compared to the soon-to-be manumitted slaves, and a great many migrants therefore settled and thrived in Santa Catarina.[5]

The construction of a national/racial discourse

For the Brazilian state the perceived benefits of European migration and the subsequent agricultural and industrial development therefore dovetailed with the desires to whiten the country and counter the racist European views of the tropics. These efforts to whiten (and, synonymously, develop) the country through immigration had from the outset been given 'scientific' legitimacy by a key global development, the rise in popularity of eugenics.[6] Stepan (1991) examines in detail the history of the eugenic movement in Latin America and highlights that whilst eugenics would reach its apogee in Europe in the era of fascist racism there is no

---

[5] For example, probably the most famous of the German *colónias* in Santa Catarina, Blumenau, was founded in 1860 by Dr Hermann Blumenau, who acted as an agent for the Brazilian state in the German city of Hamburg, selecting suitable emigrants to be sent to Brazil. They were given subsidised passage to Brazil, with in 1868 nine vessels with a total of 1097 adults and 489 children being sent (Mulhall, 1873: pp.187-189).

[6] Although now correctly derided as a pseudo-science it must be remembered that in this period eugenics was viewed as a very serious, and relatively uncontroversial, scientific means by which to understand and manage populations.

evidence of this extreme in Brazil.[7] Instead by the time President Getúlio Vargas came to power in 1930 a particularly Brazilian view of eugenics had developed which would heavily influence the development of racial discourse in Brazil. The belief in the superiority of European whiteness weakened due to fears that the immigrant population may have weak ties and loyalty to Brazil, leading Vargas to construct an expanded and inclusive *brasilidade* (Brazilianness) aimed at fostering national unity and homogeneity, and coercing immigrants into integrating (ibid.: 164-5). Popular culture was co-opted to promote this official state policy, showing the foreign-born population that *brasilidade* was open to them by using, for example, Portuguese-born Carmen Miranda's promotion of her own *brasilidade* (Davis, 2000: 191-192). The desire to associate with Europe and North America weakened, and was replaced by an increased will to celebrate the uniquely 'Brazilian' in culture (Ulhôa Carvalho, 1995: 163).

In the *colónias* of the South, in Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul, the effects of this were felt strongly, and perhaps particularly so by German migrants and their descendents. Following the constitution of the Brazilian Republic in 1889 there had initially been a forty year period of *laissez-faire* state attitudes towards the public sector and the Germans were left to create what Dreher (2005: 168) calls "a German cultural ghetto" with German-speaking schools. During the First World War their marginalisation from the rest of Brazil had sparked doubts over their loyalties and fears of their potential as fifth columnists. These fears were unrealised and receded after the war, but would return with a vengeance as Germany again grew strong during the 1930s, coinciding with Vargas' presidency and his push

---

[7] Although such practices as forced sterilisation, segregation and euthanasia were promoted by some, their uptake in Latin America was negligible, and the only example she found in Brazil was the requirement in the 1934 constitution for pre-nuptual examinations before marriage licenses were permitted. In practice this was not implemented due to the lack of medical facilities and official will (Stepan, 1991: 102+126).

to foster a coherent national identity from Brazil's heterogeneous population (ibid.: 170). When the German Nazi government began to target Brazil's German communities for support the response of Vargas was draconian, as

> [t]he publication of German newspapers was prohibited. It was forbidden to speak German in public. German books and documents were confiscated from the homes of Brazilian Germans. German libraries were destroyed, weapons were confiscated from shooting societies, and Germans were imprisoned and put in confinement (ibid.: 171).

The cultural repression of German communities, as with the Japanese, was particularly strong, but Vargas' policies also stretched beyond geopolitical considerations to a generalised coercion of immigrant communities into integration, Brazilianisation, and the distancing of themselves from their countries of origin.

Ethnographic interlude: The 'Encontro das Nações'

I came to see at first hand the evidence of Vargas' efforts when in September 2008 I made my way to the centre of Florianópolis to visit the tenth annual 'Encontro das Nações – Brasil de todos os tons' (Meeting of the Nations – Brazil of all colours). It was billed as a celebration of the ethnic diversity and multinational history of Brazil, and I had no idea of what to expect. As I entered the cavernous hall I was assailed by a barrage of sights, sounds and smells emanating from the stalls, performances and food that represented Brazil's various communities.[8] All were proudly presenting cuisine, music, and art from their cultures, and it struck me as I watched a performance of traditional Ukrainian dance that this was precisely the kind of event that Vargas would have hated, would have wanted to ban. These proud and open displays of national and ethnic specificity that celebrated not the Brazilian whole but its constituent parts were the kind of reference to a sense of belonging

---

[8] I saw representatives of indigenous, *sertanejo* (backlands), Japanese, Polish, Japanese, Afro-Brazilian, Ukrainian, German, and Italian communities, and there may have been more still.

beyond Brazil's borders that Vargas' attempts to forge a modern and unitary Brazilian identity attempted to overcome. Ten minutes later as I sat and watched a Japanese drumming performance whilst eating German sausages it seemed as though Vargas had not had any effect at all. Before an hour had passed however two things would come to convince me otherwise.

One stall that had instantly caught my eye was that representing the 'Associação Cultural Deutche Welt,' a German cultural association linked to the first German *colónia* in Brazil, the nearby São Pedro de Alcântara. In truth it was not the stall itself that caught my eye, but the people, all of whom were dressed in what I took to be traditional German clothing, clothing which stood in stark contrast to the 'modern' clothing of the crowds. My curiosity piqued and ethnographic antennae twitching I walked over to speak to one of the women and ask her about the organisation and the history of the local German community. She told me with great pride about the role of the organisation in keeping the history alive, but when I began to ask questions about the original migrants to São Pedro de Alcântara she became embarrassed and told me she did not know very much. She explained that the older members of the community, those in their eighties and nineties, were the real font of knowledge. Her generation, I estimated that she was in her early fifties, had lost much of the knowledge and it was only in the past twenty years that the community had really begun to value their German roots, and try to pass them on to the new generation. She, for example, spoke only hesitant German, whereas her grandparents had been fluent, having received all of their schooling in German. This has been lost, maybe partly due simply to the passage of time, but no doubt also due to the efforts of Vargas.

It struck me that they were trying to recapture something that had been lost, not traditions that have continued through the generations, but rather new constructions built on an imagined past. As I talked to more people and watched more performances the whole event took on a feeling of theatre, of costume rather than custom, it just did not feel 'authentic.' Sahlins (1999) discusses at length the notion that all cultures are constructed from invented traditions and mythologies, and bearing this in mind my claims that the traditions I saw did not strike me as authentic should be viewed with suspicion, and the reminder that no cultural manifestation is ever an 'authentic' representation.[9] I accept and agree with this point, and ask only that I be permitted to claim that what I saw that day seemed to be constructed from *particularly* unfaithful memories and *particularly* stereotypical national types. This feeling was reinforced later in the afternoon when I bumped into my friends Luciana and Michelle. They told me that they were enjoying the performances and the food, but when I mentioned that I did not know very much about the different *colónias* in the region, that I had never visited them, and that it was nice to see a side of Brazil that I had never seen before, Luciana, who had grown up in an Italian *colónia* in Rio Grande do Sul, just laughed. She said that this was not really Brazil, even in the *colónias* this was not normal, these were performances, a bit of fun, but certainly not everyday life. It seems that Vargas was remarkably successful in his attempts to homogenise the country, so much so that the expressions of diasporic pride seen at the Encontro das Nações just seemed anachronistic and amusing, having nothing at all to do with life in contemporary Brazil. The migrants who came from Europe, initially valued for their whiteness and Europeanness, were quickly corralled into his

---

[9] See also DaMatta (1991: 20; 1995: 271-272) and Wade (2001: 857-858).

new vision of Brazil and *brasilidade*, losing the everyday elements of their cultures for which they had previously been valued and sought out.

The construction of a racial discourse...Racial Democracy

If the insults from Europe about the black population of Brazil had previously hurt those in the elite who chose to see themselves as white and European, the Vargas era was a time of radical change. The new state discourse was both influenced and promoted by the anthropologist Gilberto Freyre, whose writings were at the time revolutionary and inclusive, even whilst they can appear distinctly racist by today's standards (Stepan, 1991: 167). The discourse of 'racial democracy' that he developed saw slavery in Brazil as having been more benign than in the USA or Caribbean, and the cruelty and violence that he did recognise he blamed not on the perpetrators themselves, but on the abstract system of slavery (Moutinho, 2004: 89). He argued that miscegenation had been approved and tolerated throughout slavery, presenting it as a love fable within which framework

> the cultural and racial mixing prevalent throughout Brazilian history and the celebration of "mixed-race" women known as "mulatas" became "evidence" of the so-called racially democratic nature of Brazilian society (Pravaz, 2008: 90).

This allowed the belief to develop that the mixed nature of the majority of Brazil's population should be heralded, rather than seen as shameful. The state then attempted to construct a national identity based on a mixed race ideal, through claims that the best road to modernity would be paved by hybridity, as opposed to the seemingly mono-racial European states and segregated bipolar USA (Wade, 1997: 32-34).

There was to be no more preservation of a white race, and no more agonising over the racial profile of the population. Instead mixture would be celebrated as

Vargas attempted to 'Brazilianise' the nation by binding a *povo* (people) together under one overarching racial category of *mestiçagem* (racial mixture) (Guimarães, 2002: 117; Stepan, 1991: 105-107). A form of 'constructive miscegenation' was the tool promoted through an official discursive valuation of hybridity whereby national identity was decoupled from any individual race and all became simply 'Brazilian' (Radcliffe & Westwood, 1996: 31; Stepan, 1991: 138). In effect races were no longer to be seen either officially or popularly as oppositional, but instead as constituting a continuum, with a multitude of equally valued 'mixed' categories such as *moreno, mulato*, and *pardo* between the poles of *negro* and *branco*. The negative EuroAmerican views of racial hybridity were countered by a rhetoric of its positive effects. The discrimination and segregation seen in the USA were officially and popularly declared to be absent, and any inequality in Brazil was officially attributed to economic factors rather than race or racism (Stepan, 1991: 154-155; Wade, 1997: 49-50). Brazil was now, officially, a Racial Democracy.

The reality however was one of compromise on the part of the state. Afro-Brazilians continued to be denied social or political power, but in return for the removal of any discussion of race from the Brazilian discourse they were incorporated into the labour market and exalted as the cultural 'essence' of Brazil (Guimarães, 2002: 95; 109-110). Racial democracy insisted that inequalities were purely class-based and the possibility of racism was removed from discourse, being seen at most as a legacy of slavery. The Brazilian nation was officially constructed as one big happy racial family (Rosa-Ribeiro, 2000: 227; Wade, 1997: 53-54). It is no surprise that this thin veneer of equality was easily penetrated when research showed again and again that black Brazilians were consistently poorer than their white contemporaries. Gradually the realisation dawned that racial democracy was

83

not working, beneath the surface it was clearly a 'myth' (Cambraia Windsor, 2007: 498; Winant, 1992: 179). The discourse had succeeded for a time through the nullification and denial of racism, but being itself founded on racism and the genealogy of racialised discourse and practice in Brazil its contradictions were soon laid bare (Radcliffe & Westwood, 1996: 31). The discourse 'racial democracy' then did not result in racial equality and the abolition of racial hierarchies as it purported to, this much is clear. Less clear is the question of what effects it did have. [10]

Although some piecemeal attempts were made to positively value blackness within the rhetoric of racial democracy the clear motivation was a desire to civilise and integrate the black population (Wade, 1997: 33). The elite viewed black Brazilians as a blank slate onto which a new *brasilidade* could be etched, the legacy of slavery being such that black people were seen as little more than bodies, physical presences with no mental or cultural capacity (Radcliffe & Westwood, 1996: 32). Rather than an attempt to positively value blackness the driving principle of racial democracy was therefore to overcome the perceived negatives of blackness by diluting it with positively-valued whiteness. One motive for the encouragement and active facilitation of white immigration was therefore the belief that this perceived black cultural vacuum could be filled by lightening the population with the 'white blood' that was considered under eugenics to be dominant, enough superior white blood being sufficient to drown out the negative, inferior black blood (dos Santos, 2002: 74-75; Wade, 1997: 32). Lest there be any doubt about either the seriousness

---

[10] Calling it a myth is not to say that it is without nuance. Owensby (2005), whilst conceding that racial democracy may be a myth and that racism certainly exists in Brazil, argues that racial democracy 'fits' within a Brazilian view of identity that is more accommodating of fluidity and multiplicity than, for example, that of the United States. I can see some merit in this argument, and particularly in his claims that the democratic ideals expressed through it may live on in popular culture in Brazil, but I am compelled to argue that what we see in Brazil is more of a racial monopoly, a white monopoly, than a democracy.

with which this endeavour was considered or the almost universally agreed upon solution it becomes evident when we consider the figures. Not only did 4.5 million immigrants enter Brazil between 1882 and 1934, but over two-thirds of them were white (Pinho, 2009: 42). There can be little doubt that an increased white population was seen as the tool by which a project of *branqueamento* (whitening) of the population could be achieved, and by which the perceived problems of the black population could be 'cured.'

The supposed innate superiority of the 'white race' was challenged in the rhetoric of racial democracy, but in practice it was a different story. Blackness would be erased by breeding in more whiteness until a stage was reached where there was no more black population left (Stepan, 1991: 156). Even Freyre, revolutionary at the time in his thinking on race, was not innocent in this respect. Close analysis of his work shows that his promotion of miscegenation was also based upon the belief that the black population needed assimilation and enculturation, they needed 'some whiteness in them,' both physically and figuratively (Wade, 1997: 34). The operation of a discourse of racial democracy therefore demanded that there be the possibility of escaping blackness and forced the internalisation of a belief in the superiority of whiteness (ibid.: 50, 56). Vargas therefore did not broaden the scope of the Brazilian national identity so much as make it possible for more Brazilians to fit into it. The one condition was that they became more 'cultured' (whiter) and moved along the continuum 'upwards' towards the white ideal (Radcliffe & Westwood, 1996: 31, 34). This was no inclusive nationalism that expanded to encompass Brazilian diversity, instead it was one that exclusively favoured one end of the spectrum, to which the whole population was expected to move (Wade, 2001: 849). Discourse constructed *brasilidade* as mixed, but beneath the surface the superiority of whiteness was

retained and white immigrants were particularly welcomed and privileged, so long as they adhered to the wording, if not the spirit, of the discourse. When Vargas and other members of the (white) Brazilian elite talked about an idealised hybridity for the Brazilian national identity they intended it as a *brasilidade* for 'the people', for 'them' and not for 'us' (Stepan, 1991: 159).

Both Wade (1997: 70) and Winant (1992: 177) stress that blackness remained something to be ashamed of, to remedy which the 'rational choice' was to whiten, and recent research has found that this has changed little. Twine (2000), a mixed-race American who self-identifies as black, encountered considerable negativity towards blackness in Brazil from people who she would have considered black, and Warren (2000: 160) also found that whiteness still carried with it huge advantages and privileges that are largely guilt-free and unquestioned for white Brazilians. Sheriff (2001) certainly found this to be the case in her research into poor black *cariocas'* (inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro) experiences of racism when she asked middle-class white *cariocas* for their opinions. She found that they were either bored or dismissive of the issue, arguing that racism was an American problem, not Brazilian (ibid.: 152-153). This seemed at first to be evasive, but,

> [i]t was only after I left the field that I came to recognise the fact that it was the very flatness, awkwardness, boredom, evasion, and vagueness that characterised so many of my interviews with middle-class whites that constituted, if incompletely, the very ethnography that I had despaired of grasping and describing (ibid.: 153).

The important factor is the ambivalence, demonstrating that it simply was not in their frame of reference. The privileged position of whiteness was so internalised, and the white middle-classes had so little interaction with black Brazilians, that they gave the question of racial equality very little thought. The inequality that they did talk about

was expressed very much in line with the discourse of racial democracy, it was still seen as a question of class rather than race (ibid.: 179).

This brings to my mind Connell's (1995) concept of a 'masculine dividend,' those benefits accruing to all men from the operation of patriarchy simply by virtue of their being men, regardless of their personal views, opinions, or actions. I argue that in Brazil we can observe what I would call a 'white dividend,' whereby within this discourse that not only fails to counter white supremacy, but also masks it, all white people benefit, *whether or not these benefits are sought or recognised*. In Brazil, as elsewhere, whiteness is available as a resource for white people in a way that is denied to racial Others (Garner, 2007: 4; Steyn, 2001: 167). It may be the case, as Owensby (2005: 328) suggests, that in his constructions of a discourse of racial democracy Gilberto Freyre was doing nothing more than trying to imagine a nation of flexible and fluid identities, but this has led neither to equality nor to challenges to the privileging of whiteness. The white dividend has continued to operate unchallenged beneath the surface of the discourse. This is why when I went to Brazil after having read repeatedly that whiteness is privileged and valued, I arrived fully expecting that whiteness would be held in high esteem, spoken about with pride, or at the very least be present. Why then did I find the seemingly contradictory evidence that whiteness was both the most absent and the most valued racial category? How can we explain the lack of explicit attachment to a whiteness that is recognised as being beneficial to people? Why was there an intransigent reluctance to even discuss this?

I think that all three questions can be answered with reference to the discourse of racial democracy. Despite failing to deliver on its promise of racial equality it did succeed in changing the racial discourse through which Brazilians

understand themselves through the belief in a mixed, racially equal, national identity. The result is that, as Owensby (2005: 341) puts it, "admitting prejudice denies Brazilianness, an identity defined by an integratory ideal that reaches across racial divides." This leads the Brazilians questioned in a nationwide survey to rank the good relationship between black and white as one of the strongest motives for pride in the nation (Souza & Lamounier, 2010: 155), and it forces a certain ambivalence towards race, and particularly its discussion. I found that this was most marked when it came to issues surrounding whiteness, and those areas that are related to the white dividend, racial discrimination, and inequality. Through being socialised into believing the mantra that in Brazil there is no racial inequality whites are not only permitted to not think about it, but made to feel unpatriotic if they do. This was both one of the overriding difficulties that I encountered, and the reason why it is therefore crucial that we interrogate whiteness further to attempt to uncover how and why it can operate so surreptitiously.

How whiteness 'disappeared' in Brazil

As I discussed in the previous chapter I would tend to ask what race people believed themselves to be, rather than trusting my assumptions, and although the answers I received usually matched expectations there were times when these expectations were confounded. One such occasion was the first opportunity that I had to describe to my friends Francesca and Angela exactly what I was researching. I began to tell them that I was interested in whiteness, and, assuming that they were both *branca* and would self-identify as such, I added that I would like to talk to them about the subject. It came as a surprise to me that they both looked disappointed and Angela said that she would have liked to be involved, but it did not apply to her. I

asked her what she meant and she replied, pointing to Francesca, that they are *brasileiras mestiças* (mixed-race Brazilians). The surprise and confusion must have been written all over my face, and would only grow as the weeks progressed and I heard both describe themselves on different occasions as *brancas*. It seemed to make no sense, knowing that whiteness was valued in Brazil and that people were, according to the literature, happy to claim it, why would people who could and did claim whiteness without controversy in general conversation, then reject it outright when I had asked them?

The answer would become clearer as on two separate occasions in the days that followed I was discussing race with women I knew. I would have expected both to describe themselves as *brancas* when I asked them about their racial identities, but instead they vacillated, clearly unprepared to claim a white identity, and simply called themselves *brasileiras*, Brazilian women. I was ready for this and I specifically asked on both occasions what they meant by this, what did it mean to call themselves Brazilian? They both replied that they were Brazilian, and as the 'Brazilian' is constructed from a mixture of races they could not identify as both Brazilian and white. As with both Francesca and Angela what is interesting is that at other junctures both did refer to themselves as white, and in describing their family histories stressed that their ancestry was European, in one case a mixture of German and Czech, and in the other Italian. I think that this insistence on claiming a mixed racial identity was motivated by two factors. The first of these was a fear that if they claimed a white identity I would think them to be racist, a view reinforced by the repeated sense I felt that people were, to my surprise, far more comfortable and open in talking about sexuality and sexual experience than they were when it came to race.

Time and again it was noticeable that talking about race made my white[11] interlocutors uncomfortable, desperate that they not be construed as racist. The fear that they or their relatives might be seen as racist, and it being used against them, also served to hold back the participants in Moutinho's (2004: 277, 287) research in Rio de Janeiro. This in isolation merits examination but it is the second factor that I find even more interesting, the factor related to the kind of national identity that is constructed by the discourse of racial democracy.

I have discussed already how the academic consensus holds that racial democracy is a myth which in practice never truly valued anything other than whiteness. What is less recognised however is that it has had other effects, and not least on the racial identities of the white population. I quickly realised, as did Baran (2007: 384), that the discourse of racial democracy is taught in schools, and so many people I spoke to had learnt through Freyre that the Brazilian people are a product of the mixture of the three races. The accepted and approved racial and culture identity of Brazil is based upon the mixture of these three races/cultures, and is reiterated so frequently that it becomes a truism, learnt in school and repeated unthinkingly as 'truth.' One evening I went to meet Mária and Graciella, relatively new friends at the time, for a drink. As part of the getting-to-know-you process we began to chat about family, giving me the opportunity to test my early hypothesis that an ethnic whiteness based on European immigrant history would be a factor in the South. I asked them about their family histories and Mária told me that she has Italian and German roots, and said that this means that she is not very Brazilian because 'real' Brazilians have Portuguese, Indian and black roots. Graciella then said that she is more Brazilian, having Italian and Portuguese heritage, and she thought maybe *índio*

---

[11] This is not a case of me etching whiteness onto unwilling bodies, even those who were not so keen to claim whiteness were aware that society considered them to be white.

too, going back a few generations. I joked that she was only lacking *negro* roots to be the 'real' Brazilian described by Mária, and she laughed, agreeing that the trinity was nearly complete and saying that probably if you went back far enough there would be some *negro*, as that is how Brazil is.

They both adhered to what struck me as an orthodox view, and when I mentioned this Graciella said that it was something that she had learnt at school, that this is the common vision of what constitutes the Brazilian 'self.' She knew that she definitely has two of the three races in her family history, and assumes that the third is probably there somewhere too. Mária however lacked all three, so what does that say about her? Where does she fit? She calls herself Brazilian without hesitation, but then says that 'real' Brazilians have an ethnic background that she doesn't share. When they described themselves as not being 'real' or genuine Brazilians it was couched in terms of a personal loss, a lack of national authenticity, rather than viewing this positively, in the way Joseph's (2000) *porteños* would. Mária stressed that she lacked all three of the necessary components to qualify as the 'genuine' Brazilian, the type they learned about in school, and Graciella did something completely unexpected and raised the possibility that she may have *negra* ancestry. This is such a surprise because blackness is so negatively viewed and valued in Brazil that she really 'should' avoid any association with it. I have already mentioned that Vargas and the white elite favoured the discourse of racial democracy as a means of pulling the *povo* (the masses) together, but that this was without investing in an imagery of mixture for themselves. The privilege of being able to distance oneself from the *povo* in this way has clearly not persisted amongst all white Brazilians. This was demonstrated to me on another occasion by Tânia, who acknowledged that her ancestry is one hundred percent Italian, but would not claim

whiteness. She stressed to me that all Brazilians, in order to truly 'be' Brazilian, must acknowledge the miscegenation in Brazil's history, and accept that they themselves, as Brazilians, are also products of *mestiçagem*.

This can be explained by another, perhaps unintended, consequence of the discourse of racial democracy and miscegenation. The complexity within the construction of Latin American discourses and lived experiences of racial hybridity has been theorised by Peter Wade (2005). He describes how the scholarly tendency has been to view *mestizaje*[12] as a national identity promoted by the state in order to promote the vision of a homogeneous racially mixed future, but with the implicit valuing of the white over black and indigenous. He argues that whilst this is true, it is not totalising. Space is left for blackness and indigenousness within discourse as it pushes for a sameness that the racially diverse context dictates can only be constructed from difference. The homogenising force of whitening imperative is not powerful enough to erase the black and indigenous, they persist within the construction as foundational elements that inform its iterative powers (ibid.: 240-245). This point is supported by DaMatta's (1995: 273) assertion that rather than a simple process of whitening that excludes all others, the Brazilian racial discourse is constructed around a particular "logic of inclusion that is articulated on planes of complementary opposition." Black and indigenous never 'disappear,' they are in fact foundational elements. In Brazil the EuroAmerican phenomenon of those with mixed race claiming (and being pushed to) a black identity therefore makes no sense, but not due solely to the power of a discourse of whitening pulling people away from blackness. There is also by necessity space created for mixture, the coexistence of

---

[12] He uses the Spanish *mestizaje*, equivalent to the Portuguese *mestiçagem*, in reference to the ideological equivalent to racial democracy applied in much of the Spanish-speaking Americas.

white and black creating another third, mixed, space that encompasses both (Wade, 2005: 253).

Based on his research into the history of Japanese migration to Brazil Lesser (1999.b: 5) argues that in reality there was a process of 'joining' rather than mixture, that instead of a single *mestiço* position being formed there was instead the space created for "hyphenated" Brazilian ethnicities. He stresses that they were not recognised by discourse, the hyphen is invisible and unspoken, but that they were tolerated under the rubric of *brasilidade*. I would agree with this to an extent, but I cannot help but feel that in the case of the South of Brazil this view rather underestimates the importance of racial discourse. Rosa-Ribeiro (2000: 232) describes the racial discourse in Brazil as "a discourse of remarkable fluidity – and remarkable duplicity and ambiguity as well...it searches and destroys/dilutes any invading rhetorical otherness in the body of the nation." It is this discursive distaste for anything that lies outside *mestiçagem* that leads me to go even further than Wade does, and to argue that space is not merely created for the categories of mixture, but that these categories have come to dominate the racial discourse that forms the Brazilian national identity. Blackness is more closely associated with mixture than is whiteness and therefore survives within discourse to a greater extent. Whiteness is associated with a (non-existent) racial purity, let us not forget that mixture is constructed as the Other to the white self, and this pushes whiteness outside the discourse of *mestiçagem* (but clearly not outside the fields of power).

To explain why there was such reluctance to claim whiteness in even Santa Catarina in the South of Brazil, which as we have seen already is the whitest of Brazilian states, we must remember that part of the challenge when constructing any

national identity is to construct it in such a way that it be so overarching as to subsume all the regions under a national umbrella. In the Brazil of the 1930s the rebellions in the name of Southern independence in the latter half of the 1800s were still fresh in the memory, and with the country actively expanding towards its borders it was necessary to bind the nation under a single federal identity (Guimarães, 2002: 88; Oliven, 2006: 303-304). The discursive paradigm of racial democracy was a tool in this effort, a way in which the disparate racial identities could be subsumed under one meta-identity. This identity had to be built on something, and by someone, and, as I have already stressed, Gilberto Freyre was one of the key architects. He came from a family rooted in the semi-feudal aristocracy of the Northeast and this history and experiences fed into his ideas of racial democracy as

> [i]n his theories, the north-eastern regional reality acquires universal status, appearing as the basic matrix of Brazilian social organisation, underpinned by the mestiçagem that occurred during colonial times (Pravaz, 2009: 85).

Regional differences were subsumed within the imagery he created as "[t]he mestizo body became an image of Brazil" (ibid.: 88). The incongruity of the population of the South with this imagery had to be ignored, to 'be' Brazilian all regions had to adhere to the reality of the Northeast, a reality that expanded through discourse to consume the whole nation, a mixed nation.[13]

This nation was constructed from the imaginary of the Northeast, an area itself inside the tropics, and therefore becomes a tropical nation in its entirety. I remember clearly one evening in May, the beginning of the winter, sitting in a small bar that was completely open to the elements, lovely in the summer but in the winter something of an ordeal. I was with a group of friends and we were all dressed in

---

[13] For more on the importance of the Northeast and the history of plantation slavery in the development of the views of Freyre see Rogers (2010: 45-69).

heavy winter clothing and hats and scarves and were shivering and feeling sorry for ourselves. The television had been tuned to the final of the Campeonato Catarinense, the state football championship, which due to the presence of local favourites Avaí had meant that the bar was packed, and the cold was not an issue. After the final whistle however it emptied, leaving only a few small groups, including us, and it was then that the cold struck. It therefore felt like a kick in the teeth when an advert came on the television whose soundtrack was the Brazilian classic País Tropical (Tropical Country) by Jorge Ben Jor, the first line of which, "Moro num país tropical" (I live in a tropical country) made me laugh out loud through my chattering teeth. Antônio, who was sitting next to me, asked me what I was laughing at, and I simply inclined my head towards the television and said to him that I wished that I lived in a tropical country too! Antônio, instantly recognising the music, laughed and said to me, winking, that I did live in a tropical country, had I not realised?

Even the non-tropical parts of Brazil become tropical because the majority of Brazil does sit between the tropics, including Jorge Ben Jor's hometown of Rio de Janeiro. Culturally speaking the tropics expand to consume the whole country and render it tropical. This had become apparent to me very early on in my time in Florianópolis, when Lucia said to me that "aqui não é Brasil de verdade, tipo o nordeste, ou Bahia, ou Rio de Janeiro, aqui é diferente!" (here isn't the true Brazil, like the Northeast, or Bahia, or Rio de Janeiro, here is different!). The 'authentic' Brazil is the Brazil of the Northeast, or of Rio de Janeiro, of the tropics, and it is this 'País Tropical' that I was often to hear described as "um país diferente,' a different country by virtue of being a more Brazilian country. Less authentically Brazilian within this formulation are the South and its people, being respectively subtropical

and less likely to be racially mixed. Read against the discourse of racial democracy this casts both the region and the majority of its people outside 'the Brazilian.'[14]

I am not, it is important to stress, arguing that white people are disadvantaged by this, and certainly not in the realms of economics, politics, and society. I point instead to a situation whereby white people are aware that despite their position of power they are simultaneously denied authentic Brazilianness. The sense that this creates, for Graciella for example, is not one of desire to actually be black, but rather a sense of loss which although it is amply compensated for by the benefits of whiteness remains, nonetheless, a loss. Therefore the racial centre ground, away from either pole, where the discourse dictates that 'the true Brazilian' will be found, holds great discursive, if not 'real,' power. As we have seen the strongest pull is of people from the black pole towards the white, the whitening effect, but it can also pull, albeit more weakly, in the other direction. If this true Brazilian is held to be mixed, to whatever degree, then claiming a position at either pole can seem to reduce one's Brazilianness. This fuels the uncertainty about *claiming* whiteness, since to do so apparently distances the self from authentic Brazilianness, and this is a tension I will explore later in Chapter Five as I discuss the experiences of white, and particularly blonde, Brazilian women. Here we can also see why Joseph's (2000) findings that white middle-class *porteños* rejected Argentina and embraced their whiteness and the transnational white club that it allowed them to access are not readily applicable in Brazil. The Brazilian white middle-classes I researched would

---

[14] Not once did I encounter the opposite situation, as described by Guimarães (2002: 96), whereby *negros* and *mulatos* are assumed to be migrants from Bahia and the Northeast, and as such are seen as migrants, or even in some way as foreigners when in the South. Neither reaction was common in Florianópolis, no-one was assumed to be from the Northeast or Bahia based on their appearance, racialised or otherwise. Those that were known to be were certainly not seen as foreigners, but instead as Brazilians in the most authentic sense possible.

never have done so, they universally embraced Brazil, subordinating their whiteness to their nationality, and not vice versa.

A word from the President

The various races in Brazil were discursively bound together from the time of Vargas, and were prohibited from standing alone – to be Brazilian one had to commit to the trope of *mestiçagem* (Guimarães, 2002: 121). When Lesser (1999.b: 3) says that "Brazil remains a country where hyphenated ethnicity is predominant yet unacknowledged" he is, I believe, correct to a point. The historical processes of conquest, slavery, migration, and colonisation have undoubtedly brought together previously distinct races and ethnicities, but the key word is 'unacknowledged,' to the extent that discourse prevents acknowledgement of difference within the nation. Regional differences have been pushed to the fringes by the nation-building discourse, and in Brazil the national identity is stronger and more overarching than the Argentinian example described by Joseph (2000). I therefore argue that the discourse of national identity in Brazil makes whiteness and Brazilianness almost impossible to put together, and that this incompatibility of Brazilianness and whiteness becomes entrenched, leading to "the rejection of "pure" forms of whiteness, and the feeling of obligation by many white Brazilians to stress that they have black or indigenous ancestors" (Pinho, 2009: 46).

The discourse that underpins this was made clear by no less a figure than the then Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, universally known as Lula, during the visit of British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to Brazil on Thursday 26th March 2009. Lula was asked by journalists for his take on the global financial crisis, and his reply was that,

> [w]e do not have the right to allow the poor, who travel the world looking for opportunity, to be the first to have to pay the bill made by the rich. No *índio* or black person (triggered the crisis). This is a crisis caused and driven by the irrational behaviour of white people with blue eyes who, before the crisis, appeared to know everything and are now showing that they knew nothing (terra.com.br, 2009, my translation).

Lula was clearly, and accurately, pointing out that the roots of the economic crisis lay in the 'developed' world, in the USA and Western Europe, but rather than the substance of his comments it is the style, and particularly the use of imagery that interests me. He clearly used "white people with blue eyes" as a metaphor for Europe and North America, and his apportioning of blame on this national level seems reasonable. Why, however, did he express this through the use of racial terminology?

I argue that it is because his audience was the Brazilian people, for whom the notion that "white people with blue eyes" be foreigners is obvious. Due to the racial discourse that constructs the Brazilian subject, his style made perfect sense. He absolves black and indigenous peoples and explicitly blames white people, and he can do this because he is talking about national racial types rather than existent people. He is talking about a white, blue eyed, rich world, and a poor, black, and indigenous developing world, and he knows that the Brazilian people will understand this instinctively. As his predecessor Fernando Henrique Cardoso recognised when he was asked after the event,

> President Lula says that white people with blue eyes are to blame. Well in the United States there are lots of black economists, and China is full of bankers too. He says this to make the population feel close to him, and stay with him...He is always on the campaign trail (terra.co.br, 2009, my translation).

Lula is an astute populist, a man who knows instinctively how to talk to the Brazilian population, both what to say and how to say it. This all makes sense, this is how politics work, to Other those who you blame and keep your own people close to you.

Former President Cardoso recognised that the characterisation of Americans as all being white and blue-eyed is only that, a cheap characterisation. This was also recognised by several people with whom I discussed it in the days that followed it in the days that followed.

It was not until three days later when I was talking to Francesca that someone commented on the other point raised by Lula's comments, namely that as well as constructing the developed world as white and blue eyed it simultaneously excludes "white people with blue eyes" from Brazilianness. We were sitting in a busy bar at the end of a hot afternoon and were surrounded by white working class Brazilians and as we discussed it she became visibly annoyed, gesturing around the bar and saying

> e a gente daqui, do sul? Tem muita gente aqui com pele branca e olhos azuis, ele esqueceu isso? Gente sempre esquece do sul, como se não existisse...Como ele vai falar mal da gente branca com olhos azuis? Como não somos parte do Brasil?

> and us from here, from the South? There are loads of people here with white skin and blue eyes, did he forget this? People always forget the South, as if it didn't exist...How can he insult white blue eyed people? As if we aren't part of Brazil?

Lula constructed Brazil as not having white blue eyed people, yet here I was surrounded by them. He blamed white blue eyed people, yet those here bore no responsibility for the global economic problems. Francesca felt threatened and victimised by Lula´s stance, it forced her to doubt, and therefore actively to claim, her Brazilianness, to assert that she was not one of these foreigners that had brought crisis to the world.

Lula would confirm his adherence to the discourse of racial democracy and the desirability of racial mixture the following year in the April of 2010 when he said to an audience of Latin American and African dignitaries that

> [w]e [Brazilians] are the result of a triple mixture, or rather, a genetics purified in three continents that resulted in the people we are today. I do not know if there is a people equal, there isn't better, there is none more purified (Azevedo, 2010, my translation).

The word 'purity' when applied to race in any way is for me, as the product of a European history that shames the continent and of which we are rightly aware to this day, a very troubling turn of phrase, one that sets alarm bells ringing. In Brazil however the discourse that privileges mixture is so ingrained that even the Brazilian President will stand before an audience that he knows to contain African dignitaries and talk to them of the racial 'purity' of his people. That this purity is perceived to spring from mixture, and that this implicitly excludes those without this mixture, may seem uncontroversial in Brazil, is even self-evident, is a mark of the enduring power of this discourse. The fact is that Lula was not inventing a racialised discourse in which either whiteness stands outside Brazilianness, or 'purity' springs from mixture, but articulating one that is so entrenched that it operates in a way that is close to being universally understood and unquestioned. I believe that this explains the frequent hesitation that I encountered amongst people to declare themselves white, the surprise that I was researching whiteness in Brazil, and also, I argue, underscores the importance of doing this research.

A heterogeneous whiteness, or *branquitudes*

People may, with justification, be annoyed with being denied Brazilianness by their president on account of their race, but it is not this elision of whiteness that should trouble us the most, but rather that which allows white privilege to continue to operate largely unchallenged. To do this we simply must understand whiteness better than we do now, and the next step towards doing so is to engage with its

diversity. To this point I have talked about whiteness and white people in Brazil in a very homogenising fashion, as though 'they' are a group that can be put together and talked of as one. The world is not homogeneous however, and one interesting by-product of the racial discourse in Brazil is the possibility that it opens up for diversity within whiteness(es). If a polarised black/white dichotomy makes no discursive sense, and the discursive field of racial identity positions is wide, then 'white' itself has discursive space to be less homogeneous than is usually portrayed. If, as Wade (2005: 255) argues, *mestizaje* is not simply concerned with the exclusion of black/indigenous, but is rather a space of contest and struggle, inclusion and exclusion, and homo and heterogeneity, then any simple reading of whiteness that ignores the variety and the lived experiences of people also appears less persuasive. I believe that this means that 'white' and whiteness need a far deeper critical analysis than they are usually subjected to, and than I have subjected them to up to this point. The usually unmarked 'white' needs to be unpacked and interrogated, it needs context. Hartigan (1999: 6-7) makes just such an argument in his study of whiteness in Detroit, USA, saying that

> [i]n Detroit, white racialness is constituted, evaluated, and revised in numerous disparate settings. Its structure and content are shaped by the centuries-long history of race in the United States, but its contours and quirks, which spring from the local versions and effects of that history, delineate a certain distance or remove from the shape of whiteness nationally.

Whitenesses also need to be contextualised both geographically and historically in Brazil, and in the case we are considering here we will see that through being located in the South of Brazil, and more particularly in Florianópolis, the whiteness I encountered has a location, a history, and a present that must all be considered.

Such factors, surely present in Brazil as they are anywhere, tend seldom to be recognised however, due to factors

101

directly related to extremely pervasive assumptions about the nature of ethnicity and the exercise of racialised power...[W]hites who are members of the modern middle-class have been implicitly treated as a kind of "default" category. Whiteness is rarely problematised. Whites have been figured as a norm, as representatives of the mainstream, as a people devoid of the invented traditions, strategies, and self-conscious cultural embodiments that the term ethnicity has come to connote for a variety of disciplines. (Sheriff, 2001: 155-156)

Although, as I have argued, I do not believe that whiteness constitutes the norm in the racial discourse, I am in no doubt that in social, economic, and political fields white Brazilians constitute an unmarked normative category of privilege. This hampers attempts to understand their privileged position, and is why I believe that whiteness must be displaced from its homogenised and immobile position. To approach an understanding of the lived experiences of white Brazilians we need to move beyond examining whiteness as a monolithic construction that causes us to overlook the dynamics *within* it. European heritage was largely occluded by the overarching discourse of the 'Brazilian' and was not a foundational element of the identity of anyone I encountered in the middle-classes, but class certainly was. In the next chapter I will move towards an understanding of whiteness as articulated through class as I examine the features and composition of this middle-class. I also found that the identities of the middle-classes were constructed with reference to differently classed whitenesses, and in the second half of Chapter Four I will introduce the community known as *manezinhos* that is one such example, as a lower class group that is considered white, but differently so.

4. The middle-class in Florianópolis.

In the previous chapter I introduced the idea that white people do not constitute a homogeneous group, and that whiteness is experienced, lived, and expressed in diverse ways. White people and whiteness are heterogeneous, and one of the ways that this heterogeneity is most visibly manifest in Florianópolis is in the realm of social class. The women I worked with were all middle-class, and I will open this chapter by examining what we could be said to 'know' about the Brazilian middle-class and why I define them as such. I will discuss factors relating to education and professional careers that are fundamental not only in their middle-class status, but which are also pivotal in the construction of their sexual and gendered identities, as we will see in Chapters Six and Seven. Following this I will move on to examine a community that occupies another social class in Florianópolis, the *manezinhos da ilha*. I demonstrate that although they are also considered to be white their whiteness manifests itself in ways that are more frequently linked to Othered racial groups in Brazil, particularly the Afro-Brazilian population of the state of Bahia, the *baianos*. Through this I will demonstrate that whiteness does not stand alone as a unitary racial hegemon, but is instead articulated through class, geography, and, crucially, through the echoes of a colonial history that reverberate in contemporary Brazil.

When Telles (2004: 221) informs us that an "almost entirely white middle-class uses race and class to reduce competition for middle-class status" and that "[w]hite privilege is thus advanced through a defence of class interests" we learn both that the middle-classes in Brazil are white, and that their racial privilege is

sustained through their class status. This makes it clear that any examination of whiteness in Brazil has no option but to be linked to an analysis of the Brazilian middle-class. It would be reasonable to expect that this has already been done, but in truth although there has been much written about class in Brazil very little attention has been paid to the racial lives of the middle-classes. Even talking to the middle-classes seems to have been rare, and one of the few anthropologists to have done so is Maureen O'Dougherty (2002). She stresses that the middle-class is

> a social category that has been central to twentieth-century development, yet seldom studied outside the so-called First World or Global North...[m]uch of what is said or understood about the concept of middle class refers to Europe, and the United States, whose hegemony makes their middle classes the international standard (ibid.: 3-4).

Not wanting to fall into this trap myself I will now discuss the particular and practical constitution of the middle-class in Brazil and in Florianópolis. I will not devote time to the sociological detail of class identity, and instead I will focus more on those elements that link to the fundamental role played by class in the constructions of racial, gendered, and sexual identities.

I also stress once more that what value there is in this work is found in the ways in which it can contribute to the critique of, and challenges to, the dominance and supremacy of whiteness. I therefore follow the example of Hartigan (2005: 198) and state that

> [m]y purpose here is not to insist blithely that acknowledgements of the "diversity" of whites need always qualify analyses of whiteness, nor am I attempting to simply complicate the cultural critique of whiteness by stressing the conflation of racial and class identities according to place-specific dynamics.

We will see in the following chapters that whiteness is absolutely expressed from a classed position, and for the white middle-class women I worked with class privilege was a major factor in their understandings of their whiteness. This will be developed

further in later chapters however, and for now my task is to more simple, to place the middle-classes within Brazil's fields of class.

Class by numbers?

The question of the placement of the middle-class can be approached in the most simple and obvious of terms and treat the middle-class as just that, the group of the population that sits in the middle. Where this instantly becomes complicated is in the means of definition of this middle, but the assumption that the middle-classes are neither the richest nor the poorest in any given society is perhaps the obvious starting point. Souza & Lamounier (2010: 2) analysed the statistical research conducted by the IBOPE (Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics) and suggest that in terms of income the monthly salary range of R$1115-4807 that accounts for 52% of Brazilians is a good measure of middle-ness. They stress however that the main problem with taking this in isolation is that income held on its own is a poor indicator of class. They argue instead to view it as being one of many indicators related to earnings, education, and occupation that are objectively and statistically measurable, and which they consider to be factors contributing to a Weberian understanding of class. They place this in opposition to a Marxist understanding of classes as being segments of society that are united by a common consciousness, lifestyle, and life projects, and conclude that to analyse the middle-class in early Twenty-First Century Brazil a Weberian approach is more fruitful (ibid.: 13-14).

This leads me then to wonder whether this approach describes the women in Florianópolis who self-identified to me as middle-class. In relation to the first means of assessment, that of income, be it individual or household, I would have to

conclude that most probably did fit within that bracket of R$1115-4807.[1] For those that did not, particularly those younger women still studying and university graduates at the beginnings of their careers, there was an expectation of finding themselves within this bracket in the coming years. This income-based definition of social class is therefore useful to a degree, but I found that it cannot take us much further, and for two important reasons. The first of these is that not once did anyone talk about themselves as being middle-class based on their income. For the wealthier amongst them this is perhaps no surprise, those who have money have little reason to talk about it, but for even those who struggled to make ends meet it was not advanced as an important factor in the construction of class identity. The second reason, one that will become increasingly apparent as the thesis progresses, is that those described as lower class by my informants were often people wealthier than they were, or, to put it another way, wealth was not seen as a guarantor of class. For these two reasons I prefer to look beyond numbers for my understanding of social class.

Souza & Lamounier (2010: 16, my translation) are also not satisfied by statistics alone, stating that "[w]ithout attributing to it the rigor of the [Marxist] idea of "class consciousness" we can also consider that the concept of class involves an idea of values, attitudes, beliefs and lifestyles." They argue that whilst economic definitions move with time these moral and cultural values are more stable, and the key factor that they attribute to the development and transmission of such cultural factors is education. They give particular weight to higher education, which they consider to be *the* marker of middle-class identity, noting that 49% of the self-declared middle-classes studied at university (ibid.: 54). As I mentioned in the

---

[1] This 'probably' stems from the fact that I was never so impolitic as to ask people what they earned. Knowing their occupations and doing some brief and unscientific googling confirms my suspicions.

introduction, of my nineteen interviewees thirteen held Bachelor's degrees, four were studying towards Bachelor's degrees at the time of the interviews, and one was preparing to take the *vestibular* entrance exam in order to qualify for study at the local federal university.[2] Only one had not undertaken a university education and had no desire to do so, but this is not to suggest that she did not consider it to be important. She was absolutely determined that her teenage son would go to university. It was very clear that across the board higher education was a very important factor in the construction and maintenance of middle-class identities.

This is also not limited to Bachelor's level, and in his study of the professional classes in Florianópolis Golgher (2008: 115) states that the city is second only to Viçosa in Minas Gerais in terms of the percentage of the population with a post graduate qualification. He calculates that 4.66% of adults in Florianópolis hold such a qualification, and among their number were the three of my interviewees who held doctorates and the four who either held, or were studying towards, Master's degrees. It is clear that this is a group of people for whom education is very important, and I would argue that on their educational records alone all would have to be placed within any conceptualisation of a Brazilian middle-class. Only two described themselves as having grown up in the lower classes, but both were studying at university at the time we spoke, and lived in the same middle-class neighbourhood next to the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC). Both considered themselves to be the first members of the middle-class in their families and explicitly attributed this to their educational status rather than their potential for high earnings. I am not suggesting that a university education is a prerequisite for a middle-class status, but I would argue that it is as close to a guarantee of such a

---

[2] I am using here the understanding of Bachelor's degrees that is common in the United Kingdom, as undergraduate qualifications. This is known as *Graduação* in Brazil and should not be confused with *Bacharelado*.

status as exists. It is also one of the factors that most unites my respondents, and, as we will see in far greater detail in Chapter Seven, *the* defining element in their constructions of their gendered identities.

Whilst I therefore agree with Souza & Lamounier (2010) that higher education is the most important single element in the construction of middle-class identities I also differ in that I found that a form of class consciousness, although not necessarily in a strictly Marxist sense, is a stronger element than they believe it to be. I found that middle-class women constructed their class identities around what O'Dougherty (2002: 9) characterises in her ethnography of the São Paulo middle-classes as a "state of mind." In both her findings and mine this state of mind was often expressed in opposition to a conceptualisation of vulgarity as the middle-class

> critically appraise – and identify – other Brazilians essentially through their (vulgar, materialist) consumption practices in contradistinction to one's own honourable investments in housing, education, and enlightened consumption: in culture (ibid.: 44).

I will discuss the particular role of vulgarity in great detail in Chapters Five and Six, but I would like now to quickly highlight the influence of the work of Pierre Bourdieu, and particularly his famous description of middle-class tastes as the

> denial of lower, coarse, vulgar, venal, servile – in a word, natural – enjoyment, which constitutes the sacred sphere of culture, implies an affirmation of the superiority of those who can be satisfied with the sublimated, refined, disinterested, gratuitous, distinguished pleasures forever closed to the profane (Bourdieu, 1984: 7).

What I found in Florianópolis was a middle-class identity in some ways similar to that of the French middle-class Bourdieu describes, *but* also unable and unwilling to distance itself completely from the profane. This struggle will form the basis of Chapters Five and Six as I discuss the profane roots of the Brazilian female sexual subject, but for now I ask merely that it be borne in mind that a belief in the

importance of taste and the aesthetic was at the centre of the construction of these middle-class identities.

The whiteness of the middle-classes

I opened this chapter with Telles' (2004: 221) observation that Brazil has an "almost entirely white middle-class" and this leads me now to discuss the links between the middle-class and whiteness in both Brazil in general and Florianópolis in particular. These links are certainly strong and, whilst it is wrong to believe that all white Brazilians are middle-class, it is unquestionably the case that the middle-class in Brazil is overwhelmingly white, and is associated with whiteness. There is an assumption of wealth etched onto white skin, and an examination of the history of connections between whiteness and the middle-class can help us to understand why the links between the two persist to this day. A good starting point is with the early 20th Century development of Brazil that was driven by the boom in agricultural commodities. This prompted the drives for European immigration that I discussed in the previous chapter, and led the Brazilian elite at the time to conclude that the key to the continued economic development of the country was the kind of individualism, meritocracy and progressiveness that a European-style middle-class was held to exemplify and engender (Owensby, 1999: 3). This became possible with the rapid urbanisation that was sparked by the European migrants moving in increasing numbers from the fields to the cities of those states where export-driven agriculture was based, most obviously São Paulo. This created the conditions for the development of a burgeoning middle-class of literate non-manual workers who were, and remained, overwhelmingly white due to the failures of the mythical 'racial democracy' to counter racial discrimination.

The persistence of this racially-based discrimination meant that for even educated *mulatos*,

> [e]ven when they possessed the requisite skills, employers in the collar-and-tie sector remained reluctant to hire them. They were thought unfit to deal with the public as clerks, not responsible and honest enough to work as commercial employees, and insufficiently orderly in their thinking to perform office work...white skin or something close to it was a *sub rosa* requisite of most white-collar employment. Dark-skinned applicants were rarely turned away explicitly because of race. Instead, a black or dark-hued mulatto candidate for a job might show up for an interview and be told that the spot had just been filled (Owensby, 1999: 96-97).

This racism persisted well into the 1980s through the use of the term "*boa aparência*" (good appearance) as a euphemism for "whites only" in employment adverts, and certainly persists to this day in the attitudes of employers, albeit in a more surreptitious form (Telles, 2004: 160-161). From its inception the middle-class was therefore a closed shop that was reserved for, and associated with, the white population. Racial Others were firmly excluded by an implicit colour bar. Black Brazilians were instead expected to fulfil the manual roles which carried low status, and which white Brazilians were loath to perform for fear of being seen as working-class and thereby losing the 'whiteness' that was accrued through work deemed to be cerebral (Owensby, 1999: 177). The middle-class in Brazil thereby developed as a transitory category for white Brazilians to escape the poverty of the (black) working-class and pursue the traditional privilege of the (white) elite (ibid.: 222-223). This was no meritocracy, at least if one's skin colour did not match that of prospective employers.

If we consider again the example of the Argentine middle-class we find that strong links to whiteness are woven into its construction through the valuation of civilisation and education that I discussed in the previous chapter (Joseph, 2000: 337-338). Garguin (2007: 162) argues that in Argentina the middle-class only

emerged through a racist and racialising discourse that attempted to render the white Argentine as *the* Argentine. They were differentiated from the poor *mestizo* masses as the discourses of race and class became synonymous, a process that Stoler (1995: 127) argues was common in colonial settings, and Ortner (2003: 28) argues is the case in the USA today. The middle-classes in Argentina were white both empirically and discursively, occupying

> a heterogeneous assortment [of] occupational and social positions [which] were unified into the notion of an Argentine middle class; a middle class that inherited the cultural and racial features that were previously viewed as characterising the entire Argentine nation (Garguin, 2007: 179).

They bridged the gap between the perennial bipolar classes of 'the people' and the oligarchy, and thereby became both the standard-bearers of civilisation in Argentina, and its racial representation.

The Brazilian example is similar to this in that the middle-classes became associated with whiteness, but differed in that they did not come to represent the nation. I have already suggested that President Vargas and the Brazilian elites did not consider the racial mixture that they were actively promoting to apply to them, and given that the middle-class at the time was small in size I would go on to suggest that the elite remained unconcerned that it developed as an overwhelmingly white group. Their overriding concern was in creating a racially inclusive *brasilidade* for the masses, the *povo*, and the middle-class and elite could stand outside this. Whereas Argentina had designs on becoming a European-style country, and was therefore content to represent 'the Argentine' in the image of the white middle-classes, we have already seen that the Brazilian elite had already chosen to reject this approach. In Brazil the middle-class could therefore be ceded to whites whilst the national image was simultaneously one of mixture. As long as the middle-class was small there was no obvious contradiction, and those who held the economic, social and

political power left them to their own devices. This facilitated the construction of a middle-class that was open for whites but remained closed to their non-white compatriots through racist mechanisms such as the demand for *boa aparência*. For as long as the middle-class remained small this was less obvious, but with Brazil's economic explosion of the past fifteen years and the growth in the middle-class that it has propelled it has increasingly noticeable just how racially segregated and anachronistic this is.

The classed geography of whiteness

A very visible sign of this kind of segregation can be seen in the kind of racial geography that was observed by Hartigan (1999: 14) in Detroit, where space, and particularly residential space, was frequently linked to race, which was in its turn linked to class. The middle-classes tended to be whiter, and therefore middle-class areas were also whiter. The poor were disproportionately black and occupied separate spaces. Just as I discovered in Salvador when these black spaces were entered by whites the situation becomes explicitly racial, they were moments in which race was placed at the centre of the identity (ibid.: 281). We perhaps expect this with a sense of weary inevitability in the United States, but Sheriff (2001: 150) also found that the vast majority of her middle-class informants in Rio de Janeiro were white and had very little social contact with non-white Brazilians, other than in hierarchical employment relationships. When they found themselves 'out of place' in black neighbourhoods they were also very aware of their whiteness, describing these neighbourhoods as like being another country, one that they described with the language of exoticism, tropicalism, poverty and danger (ibid.: 165). This was never going to be a factor in the same way in Florianópolis because unlike in Rio de

Janeiro or São Paulo there simply are not areas of the city that are heavily black or *mulato*. In Florianópolis what happens instead is that the national space becomes highly raced and classed.

Most people described the comparatively white and wealthy South as a very different Brazil to that which they saw on the television, a mixed-race, exotic, poor, and dangerous country, a space not unlike the poor neighbourhoods of Rio de Janeiro as viewed through middle-class eyes. At the moments when the Brazil presented to them on television seemed to be another country, and their position as white and middle-class within a poor and discursively mixed-race country felt incongruous, they did not seek solace in a transnational whiteness, but instead turned to a belief that there are two Brazils. It was said to me many times of the North and Northeast that "lá é um país diferente" (up there is a different country), but this was never once voiced as a desire to separate the South from the Brazilian whole. What I found instead was a visceral desire to reiterate that their Brazil, a Brazil they knew to have a more tenuous grip on 'authentic' Brazilianness, was, and wanted to be seen as, a part of Brazil just as much as the other regions. Where in Argentina people imagined Buenos Aires as a middle-class white city distanced from the Latinised nation, people in the South of Brazil constructed multiple Brazils that allowed them a place without them abandoning the nation itself. I will return to this desire to claim and maintain a place within the nation many times in the coming chapters as I deconstruct the identities constructed by the white, educated, middle-class women who formed the basis of my research, but for now I want to quickly raise the observation that although space in Florianópolis is not raced to the extent that it is in Rio de Janeiro it is segregated by class.

A street can be a place of work, a place of leisure, or a home, and this home can be a house or an apartment, or the street itself, but in Florianópolis, as with everywhere else, the poor tend to live with the poor, the middle-classes with the middle-classes, and the wealthy out of sight and reach of everyone else. The majority of my interlocutors and I lived in neighbourhoods that were predominantly middle-class, and this has effects in terms of the appearance, the businesses, the leisure and cultural opportunities, and the general usage of space. These were spaces constructed both by and for middle-class people and they were tailored to their desires, often to the exclusion, whether intentionally or not, of the less affluent.[3] What I found more interesting even than this however is that middle-class space was policed not only to exclude the poor, but to serve the interests of particular 'types' within the middle-class. This cannot be reduced to the empirical repercussions of class, most particularly wealth and spending power, and is instead concerned with an aesthetically and ideologically motivated sense of the appropriate kind of person for the particular place. This could work in any number of ways, from when I was denied entry to a restaurant for not being attired to a sufficiently expensive standard to the numerous occasions that I sat in a café favoured by people who consider themselves to be cultured and heard people ridicule those wealthy people they considered nouveaux riche and lacking in 'class.' A particular type of middle-class people who consider themselves to be 'modern' occupy space in a particular way that marks them out from their middle-class Others, and themselves feel out of place in middle-class space that they feel if 'not for them.'

---

[3] An example of this exclusion is found in terms of the cost of living, the elevated level of which in Lagoa da Conceição led many people I knew to avoid shopping there as prices for even the most basic foodstuffs were significantly higher than in other less affluent neighbourhoods.

Gendered geographies

Just as space can raced and classed it can also be gendered, and even classed, raced and gendered simultaneously. There is a specific cultural explanation that has been developed to account for the gendering of space in Brazil, the understanding of which also helps to explain the lack of information that my research generated about women's domestic lives, at least when compared to most studies of women's gendered lives. To do so it is necessary to examine one of the many contributions, and most abiding insights, offered to our understandings of Brazilian culture by the Brazilian anthropologist Roberto daMatta (1985). He analyses the empirical and philosophical separation of space in Brazil into two distinct realms, the *rua* (street) and the *casa* (house). The street, and by extension the public world, is constructed as a masculine space of freedom and equality, a place where one can be an individual. The house and the domestic world stand in contrast to the street and public world, being space associated with women and coded as female. It is still however dominated by the rigid hierarchies of patriarchy, and although it is the space most associated with women it is not they who control it, as Sarti (1995: 124-125) puts it

> [t]he woman is considered the "head of the household," whereas the man is considered the "head of the family." That order implies a hierarchical difference: the man retains authority at a higher level, following the precedence of the family over the household in their hierarchy of values.

This cultural division of space means that although women, and particularly those from the poorest sectors of society, have always worked, and therefore always been involved in the public world of the *rua*, this space has always been associated overwhelmingly with men.

What is therefore striking about my experience of fieldwork is that very little of my interaction with Brazilian middle-class women took place in a domestic

setting, and there are many possible explanations for this. One of these is related to the *machismo* that is common in Brazil and the possibility that they did not want jealous husbands or partners knowing that they were speaking to a single *gringo*. This, thankfully, only happened once and was related to the boyfriend of my friend Larissa. We already knew each other quite well and had talked on many occasions about my research before I asked her if she would like to do a recorded interview. She agreed enthusiastically and told me that we should do it at her apartment in the centre of the city the following Monday evening, and that I should call her the day before to confirm and get directions. On the Sunday evening I called, we confirmed, and I took her address, before going to the internet to find a map. Just thirty minutes later she sent me an e-mail in which she cancelled the interview, telling me that she could not do it any longer because when she told her partner he had become jealous at the thought that she would be alone with a man in her apartment talking about, amongst other things, sex and sexuality. In my naivety the thought that this could happen had never occurred to me, and, horrified, I replied straight away to tell her that it was fine and that I was sorry for having caused any problems.[4]

This highlighted how something that was for me as putatively simple and innocent as an interview could have negative consequences beyond my control. After this I was always very careful, and I hope subtle, in trying to ascertain why women who wanted to do interviews often did not wish to do so in their homes. I need not have worried because it quickly became clear that it was often an opportunity to

---

[4] I assured her in the e-mail I sent in response that I would not use this in my thesis, but she responded and told me "pro ciumento não adianta explicação, porque ele cria na cabeça toda uma situação que não existe na vida real...Pode escrever...quem sabe esse pode ser uma informação interessante para teus estudos: é uma das faces do comportamento humano" (for jealous men it doesn't help to explain because he creates in his head a situation that doesn't exist in the real world...You can write about it...who knows, the information could be useful for your studies; it is one of the faces of human behaviour). I wrestled with whether to do so or not, but decided that this situation, which had angered her quite a lot, is one she genuinely wanted to be recorded because it is so revealing about *machismo* in Brazil.

leave the house and family and go out to drink a coffee, to have lunch, or to go for a walk beside the lake. These were not women trapped in their houses by an onerous domestic workload or by jealous husbands. They were not dependent on men for the money to enjoy leisure time in the public sphere, and nor did they seek or require permission to do so. Those that lived with men also worked freely in the public sphere, in the *rua*, and considered it to be their space every bit as much as it was men's. That this was consistent across generations is striking, as were their perceptions as to how age may come into it. Those in their twenties and thirties tended to believe that it was women of their generation who were the first to enjoy such freedom over their use of, and movement through, the public sphere. Many told me that their mothers would not have had such freedom, so it was interesting to note that those in their fifties and sixties, a generation of mothers (although not the mothers of the younger women), were every bit as convinced that theirs was the first generation to have freely occupied the public world.

There was divergence in the perception of women's freedoms across generations, but there was no such divergence in their perception of poorer women as being excluding from the public spaces, at least as far as leisure time was concerned. The belief that poor women tend to have no leisure time and do not work outside the domestic sphere was common, but we know from the research of Sarti (1995) that this is simply not the case. She reminds us that poor women cannot be slotted neatly into a 'domestic' stereotype, and they are, and always have been, active in the public sphere. Where there is a difference it is in terms of which space was occupied and utilised. The middle-class women that I knew believed they had the time, the means, and the freedom to occupy middle-class public space on equal

terms with men, and in this sense the kind of access that they have to it is both classed and gendered. Middle-class women occupied a particular kind of middle-class space that was less accessible for poor women, who due to the prohibitive costs were often excluded as consumers, and were at best the largely unnoticed employees of the cafés and shops of middle-class neighbourhoods. They were largely excluded from occupying the *same* public areas, but this is not to say that they were excluded from *all* public space. In Florianópolis one particular group of these poor women is the *manezinhas*, women from a particular community who occupy a central role as an Other to middle-class selves.

Os Manezinhos da Ilha

I first heard the words *manezinho da ilha* on my second day in Florianópolis, and when I asked what it meant I was told that the *manezinhos* are the *nativos*, the natives, of the island. Embedded as I cannot help but be in a British discourse that was constructed through a colonialist history I made two assumptions, the first of which being that *nativos* referred to the *índios*, the indigenous peoples of Brazil. This assumption was completely wrong. The *manezinhos* are not *índios*, they are instead native in the sense that their ancestors were the original colonial inhabitants of the island.[5] The island had been settled haphazardly by various Europeans since the 17th Century but the formal settlement began in 1748. It was in this year that the Portuguese Crown initiated eight years of large scale transportation of couples from the Azores islands and Madeira to permanently inhabitant strategically important land that was at the time threatened by the Spanish. They settled all along the coast

---

[5] The island was already inhabited before the Portuguese arrived, and it speaks volumes about the treatment of Brazil's indigenous peoples that they are largely ignored, both in considerations of history and, more worryingly, in their contemporary existences.

of Santa Catarina, but were particularly focused in the town of Desterro, which would later become Florianópolis (Kuhnen, 2002, pp.22-24). These settlers were "simple, adventurous and brave folk" (Pereira da Silva Nunes, 2002: 74, my translation) who brought with them their traditional Azorean lifestyle of fishing and small-scale subsistence agriculture and lived largely untroubled by the outside world until the late 1950s (Flores, 1995: 131). This decade saw the growth in Brazil of a domestic tourism that led to the migration of many middle-class *gaúchos* who decided to settle permanently in Florianópolis after having visited as tourists. This is when, anecdotally at least, they gained the soubriquet '*manezinhos da ilha.*'

This brings me to my second assumption, also filtered through the discourse of British colonialism, that the word *nativo* would have at best a patronising and paternalistic tone, and at worst would be offensive and derogatory. I am sad to say that as regards this second assumption I was correct, albeit for the wrong reasons. The word *nativo* in and of itself is not a problem, indeed it is the word used unproblematically by the *manezinhos* to describe themselves (Kuhnen, 2002: 19). The problem lies more in the appellation *manezinho da ilha* itself, in the etymology of the word. Although it took me a long time to get to the bottom of this it was clear from the outset that '*manezinho*' tended to be used in a derogatory way, as a synonym for primitive, simple, uneducated, cultureless, and backwards, the 'qualities' many people ascribed to the *manezinhos* themselves. When I eventually did discover the etymology of the word it was from Juliana, who was herself born in Florianópolis, but of German and Italian, as opposed to Azorean, extraction and who did not consider herself to be *manezinha*. It came as no great surprise to me that the word itself has negative roots in the Brazilian view of the former colonial power. The Portuguese are derided in Brazil and this manifests itself in jokes of the

'Englishman, Irishman, Scotsman' type that are common in England. In these jokes the Irishman is portrayed as backwards and stupid, and is given the stereotypically Irish name Paddy. In the Brazilian jokes it is the Portuguese man who is assigned the role of fool, and he is given the stereotypically Portuguese name Manuel, shortened to *Mané*. *Mané* then became an adjective used to name the stupid, the backward, and the primitive, and, as Juliana told me, it is worsened by the suffix *-zinho*, the diminutive form, to create the *manezinho*, a stupid little person.

Manezinho was originally exclusively used to negatively label people from the traditional fishing communities of the island, who were particularly marked by their distinctive local accent. Its usage has however come to expand within what Juliana described to me as a recent trend for claiming *manezinho* identities in a revalued fashion. She told me that this was not the case when she was growing up in the 1970s, it is a more recent phenomenon that is often attributed to the tennis player and local hero Guga Kuerton, who famously and influentially claimed a *manezinho* identity when ranked as the world's best tennis player in the late 1990s. He did this despite being of German heritage and middle-class, and was therefore not from the traditionally derided community of simple Azorean *manezinho* fisherman. Juliana went on to say that Guga was not really the first to do this, and that it was started much earlier by the influential local journalist Cacau Menezes, but regardless of whoever really started it what is clear is that a shift occurred and some people without Azorean heritage began to proudly claim *manezinho* identities. It became for some a way to claim an identity related to Florianópolis, but whilst I found some evidence of this expanded usage it was still most strongly linked to the Azorean-descended community. The word *manezinho* was still most often used in the context of describing those local people who were seen as poor, simple, and backwards, and

who therefore constituted a kind of abjected class of white trash in the eyes of the middle-classes.

This construction is not straightforward though, and just as Hartigan (2005) describes in relation to 'white trash' in the USA, the position of the *manezinhos* in the minds of many of the other residents of the island is confused and contradictory and they are both valued and maligned. On the positive side they are valued as being authentic, as bearers of proud traditions in artisanal craftwork and fishing that make a valuable contribution to the culture and identity of the island (Pereira da Silva Nunes, 2002: 73). The traditional Azorean culture that the *manezinhos* are associated with is generally viewed as a valuable cultural heritage that benefits the island. This is particularly the case in those places on the island to which the *manezinhos* are most closely associated, neighbourhoods such as Sambaqui, Ingleses, Lagoa da Conceição, and Riberão da Ilha, all of which have a strong fishing tradition (Kuhnen, 2002: 107). It was to Riberão da Ilha that my friend Maurício most closely tied the *manezinho* tradition, talking glowingly about the colonial architecture, the sleepy charm, the wonderful seafood, and the air of tranquillity which places it at odds with the bustling centre of the city. He is from the centre himself, born there in the late 1960s and had lived on the island his whole life, but he would never describe himself as *manezinho*. He explained that when he was growing up the label *manezinho* was only ever attached to those communities seen as traditional fishing communities, places described as being '*interior*.' I will discuss in much greater detail the imagery attached to the *interior* in Chapter Seven, but for now it is sufficient to know that the word carries connotations of rural simplicity and backwardness (ibid.: 107).

When attached to a place these features could represent a break from hectic middle-class lives, and this was exactly what attracted middle-class tourists in large numbers from the late 1950s onwards. This ran alongside the sweeping political and social changes in Brazil during the presidency of Juscelino Kubitschek, as exemplified by the construction of Brazil's grand modernist capital Brasília. This great push to become a 'modern' nation was not evenly distributed and

> the idea of backwardness in this period was one of the most important inventions and one of the concepts frequently employed to distinguish one part of the country, which was advancing on the road to progress, from another Brazil, trapped in a socio-economic configuration considered to be traditional. Following these principles Florianópolis was identified with backwardness, and this would only be overcome with its entry into the industrial world, transforming itself into a large urban centre (Lohn, 2007: 310, my translation).

The lack of industrialisation and urbanisation previously is easily explained by the wide dispersion of settlements across the island, making transport infrastructure difficult and expensive to develop, and forcing upon the island a slow and localised pace of life (ibid.: 311). As this infrastructure was developed and industrialisation and urbanisation gathered pace the *manezinhos* increasingly came to be seen as an anachronism, associated with this kind of backwardness that was so despised and feared by the urban middle classes. They represented an unwelcome manifestation of the *interior* within the city.

When put into this context Maurício's reluctance to identify himself as a *manezinho* was therefore unsurprisingly. This was mirrored in the attitudes of Letícia and Fernanda, who were both also from Florianópolis and were always at pains to distance themselves from the *manezinho* identity. The problem was that the positives that were associated with places and cultural artefacts were abstracted from the people themselves, who were instead imbued with all the negatives that could be

associated with the word *manezinho*. The positives and negatives were often based on very similar traits and qualities, but which were perceived differently at different times. A tranquil and relaxed place, ideal when one wants a relaxing holiday, would become filled with lazy and indolent people. A close and hospitable community would become made up of narrow-minded people who were hostile to outsiders, and the quaintness of architecture could transform into the backwardness of those who lived in it in the space of just a few minutes. Very often it would be the negatives that jumped into the foreground, and they were invariably grouped around the association of *manezinhos* with being simple (in terms of being both unsophisticated and stupid), lazy and backwards. These negative attitudes were highlighted by Kuhnen (2002: 114), who found that *manezinhos* were viewed as primitive, archaic and lazy, stuck in time, and happy in their poverty whilst making no effort to extract themselves from it. [6]

The negative perception was most often focused on the people themselves, but this criticism could also be extended to places that are deemed to be heavily *manezinho* in their demography, one example being the neighbourhood of Barra da Lagoa, close to Lagoa da Conceição. Where Lagoa is nowadays seen as a diverse and vibrant community mainly comprising of middle-class people from outside Florianópolis, Barra is still very much associated with its *manezinho* roots and fishing community. Unlike such places as Riberão and Sambaqui it lacks the attractive Azorean/colonial architecture that is maybe the most valued element of *manezinho* culture, and instead attracts tourists with its safe, sheltered, family-

---

[6] It is necessary to stress, as does Kuhnen (2002: 111-112), that such feelings of antipathy and negativity are not limited to the non-*manezinhos*. The *manezinhos* themselves are often less than enthusiastic about their neighbours, and I was told that they are "taking over the island," causing prices to rise beyond the reach of many *nativos*, and, most gallingly, are responsible for the ongoing environmental degradation of the island. *Manezinhos* are certainly not passive victims, they also have 'bite.'

friendly beach. Their contemporaries in Riberão and Sambaqui are afforded protection from derision by their association with the artistic and aesthetic aspects of *manezinho* culture, but this protection is largely absent for the inhabitants of Barra. As a consequence they were frequently described as typically, and negatively, *manezinho* in terms that are related to their supposed obstinacy, rudeness and parochial attitudes. On one memorable occasion I was in Barra with Elise and Renata and we were spoken to very abruptly by the waiter in a small restaurant. After he walked away Renata blurted out that she was sick of these "*caiçaras*," after saying which she quickly clapped her hand to her mouth. It was clear to me that she had said something rude that she did not want anyone to overhear and take offence to, but having never heard the word before I was unaware of why. It was only later when out of the earshot of anyone else that they explained to me that *caiçara* is a pejorative term used to refer disparagingly to fishing communities, particularly in São Paulo and Rio states (both women are *paulistas*), and that it unambiguously refers to backwardness and stupidity.

The negative view of *manezinhos* as a backwards people, seemingly stuck in time, is similar to Guimarães' (2002: 131) descriptions of the stereotypes attached to *baianos* (people from the state of Bahia). He claims that many people view them as a Luso-Baroque remnant from colonial times, an embarrassing reminder of Brazil's colonial past. I heard on numerous occasions explicit parallels drawn between *manezinhos* and the people most often held up as being the archetypal Brazilians, *nordestinos* in general, and *baianos* in particular. O'Dougherty (2002: 175) argues that the "stereotypical Bahiano is a carefree black, always ready for the beach and Carnaval, but never for work," and both the *baianos* and *manezinhos* are commonly

described as laid back, to the extent of being lazy and simple. The obvious difference is that *baianos* are explicitly understood as being black, whilst those pejoratively labelled as *manezinhos* are white. The first time that this perceived similarity was pointed out to me by Bruna I commented that it was interesting that two polar opposite groups, racially speaking, are considered to be so similar. She disabused me of the notion that they both be opposites racially, and in so doing reminded me that discourse in Brazil operates in unexpected ways, by saying simply that

> são brasileiros, ou negro, ou branco, não é importante. As duas comunidades são simples, são pobres, são preguiçosas, são tranquilas. Raça não tem nada a ver. Sou negra, mas não sou como uma baiana, nem como uma manezinha, sou gaúcha, sulista. São eles o estereótipo do Brasil.

> they're Brazilians, either black or white, it isn't important. The two communities are simple, poor, lazy and laid back. Race is nothing to do with it. I'm black but I'm not like a *baiana*, nor a *manezinha*, I'm *gaúcha*, a southerner. They are the stereotype of Brazil.

I do not necessarily agree with Bruna because I do believe that race is absolutely a factor in the construction of the image of both Brazil and Bahia. In both cases it is heavily linked to blackness, but this does not necessarily exclude other racial groups from being subsumed within these constructions. What it does demonstrate is that an understanding of history, in this case that of colonialism, is always present, and that this means that 'different' races are sometimes recognised as heterogeneous.

What I am arguing is that the *manezinhos* are seen by other Southerners as being quintessentially Brazilian based on the discourse of racial democracy, and more particularly to the imagery of colonisation and slavery. Whereas the black population of Bahia is ascribed a Luso-Baroque identity based on the imagery of the African slave, the *manezinhos*, with their enduring association to the Azores and Portuguese colonisation, are ascribed a Luso-Baroque identity as the Portuguese third of the triad. In both cases this association with a colonial Brazil carries with it a

history perceived to be tainted and primitive. I am not claiming here that the oppression and abjection of the Afro-Brazilian population is a simple consequence of history and not based on racism. Instead I am returning to the fact that discourses of race developed both historically and with an understanding of history, and therefore that which is lived, experienced and perceived as race/racial in contemporary Brazil, *including racism*, is a function of history and how it is deployed. There are therefore historical links between what causes Brazilians to view black *baianos* as lazy and simple and that which constructs white *manezinhos* in the same manner. I will return to this point in greater depth, and with far more details related to constructions of Brazilian femininities, in the coming chapters. For now however I will leave hanging the idea that the discourse of race that is rooted in a colonial history of slavery does not construct a homogeneous whiteness.

The roles assigned to both the *baiana* and the *manezinha* are therefore intimately tied into the construction of the white middle-women with whom I researched, and it is on these women that I will now focus more specifically. I will show in the coming chapters that there are not only differences between white and black, and between the white middle-class and a white lower class (in the form of the *manezinhas*), but also that there is also a very clear division between different kinds of middle-class. Particularly important will be the distinction drawn between those middle-class women who describe themselves as 'modern' and their middle-class peers who they describe, disparagingly, as *patricinhas*. They manifest their whitenesses, Braziliannesses, and class identities in very different ways and in all of these ways we can trace links to the discourse of race that developed in Brazil both during and with reference to colonial history. I will begin this gendered examination of race and class in the next chapter with an explanation of how the various

discourses of race, gender and sexuality interact to construct '*a brasileira*', the archetypal Brazilian woman.

5. The beauty and (a)sexuality of *brancas*.

> While none of the women I interviewed felt that they were *not* white, whiteness seemed to be neither a clearly definable cultural terrain nor, for many of them, a desirable one. (Frankenberg, 1993: 205, emphasis in original)

It was the 21st December 2008, nearly Christmas, and in Florianópolis it was hot. That familiar feeling associated with the arrival of Christmas in Britain was absent, but there was no yearning for wintery weather on my part. Coming after what everyone had assured me was a particularly cold and wet spring, which in November had brought catastrophic floods to Santa Catarina that had killed over 50 people, the heat was very welcome indeed. It just felt right, it may not have felt like Christmas, but it did feel 'Brazilian' in a way that I did not want to admit to myself at the time. My problem was that I went to Brazil determined to find and chronicle a 'different' Brazil, a Brazil that is located south of the Tropics, a Brazil that is racially and culturally at odds with the popular imaginings the rest of the world has of the country. Yet there I found myself that evening enjoying the heat and commenting to my friend Mônica that this was exactly how I had imagined Brazil to be. This feeling of congruence between the imagined and real Brazils was only strengthened further by our location, dancing and sweating at the edge of the *barracão*[1] of the newest samba school in the city. Newly promoted from *bloco* to *escola* status the Grêmio Recreativo Cultural Escola de Samba União da Ilha da Magia had earned the right to compete in the city's centrepiece *carnaval*[2] parade on the 21st February 2009, the preparations were in full swing, and I was right in the middle of it.

---

[1] Literally translated as 'big tent' this is the name given to the rehearsal spaces of samba schools. For a very evocative description of the *barracão* of one of Rio de Janeiro's biggest schools see Pravaz (2008: 80-81).

[2] Throughout I will use the Portuguese *carnaval* rather than the English carnival, in order that the specificity of the Brazilian pre-lenten celebration be stressed.

That the school was both based and rehearsed in my neighbourhood meant that as an anthropologist I could not ignore it, I simply had to be interested in it, but as interested as I was? The problem was that in my quest to find this 'different Brazil' I had blithely discounted the idea of researching *carnaval*, of researching samba, of researching anything that I considered to be stereotypically Brazilian. The irony is not lost on me now that in rejecting what I considered to be an imagined Brazil I had engaged in a process of imagining my own Brazil, but at the time of arriving in Florianópolis some eight months previously these thoughts had not yet crossed my mind. As spring had damply and coldly trundled on towards what seemed at the time to be a summer that would never come I had batted away invitations to get involved in the new school. I was determined instead to focus on those for whom *carnaval* was an unwelcome distraction, a time of lunacy and chaos in which they had no interest, people that I knew to exist, and with whom I had already planned to pass the five February nights of *carnaval* in relative seclusion. Mônica then went and invited me to one of the thrice-weekly rehearsals that took place in the little square, the *praçinha*, just 200 metres from my home. These rehearsals were in preparation for the *carnaval desfiles*, the processions of Florianópolis' five samba schools at the custom-built *sambôdromo*[3] in the centre of the city, and at which the União da Ilha da Magia was to make its debut. So I figured why not, I had already developed a love of samba music, so I might even enjoy myself!

I need not have worried, because I did thoroughly enjoy myself, and I would go on to enjoy myself not only three times a week for the next two months at the rehearsals, but also in the *sambôdromo*, where I, resplendent in the costume of a

---

[3] The 'Passarela Nego Quirido' *sambôdromo* in Florianópolis is modelled on the much larger Oscar Niemeyer-designed original in Rio de Janeiro as a long parade ground flanked by spectator seating. It becomes the focal point of the local *carnaval* celebrations, and is the source of some pride in the city.

futuristic fisherman, joined the more than 2000 other members parading with the União da Ilha da Magia. The most revealing of all these wonderful times was perhaps this first night when I found myself so quickly intoxicated by the 'Brazilianness' of the occasion and the pleasure of seeing what felt like the whole neighbourhood together. Just as quickly intoxicated by the cheap cans of Antarctica beer, I danced with Mônica and we took in the sights around us. The band on the stage and the members of the general public gleefully dancing and laughing all around us undoubtedly drew our attention, but the scene was stolen by the young women dancing furiously in the centre of tent. Mônica pointed one of the dancers out to me and told me with a look of scepticism on her face that this blonde young woman was the *Rainha da Bateria*, the *carnaval* queen and the public face of the União da Ilha da Magia. I instantly shared her scepticism, and when she said to me "ela é nossa rainha? Aquela loirinha, baixinha, não sabe dançar? Não pode ser!" (she is our queen? That little blonde girl who doesn't know how to dance? She can't be!) I could not help but agree. It may, and indeed by now I hope that it does, seem strange that I would have reacted this way, but within this most 'Brazilian' of settings a blonde *carnaval* queen did somehow feel wrong. That she was blonde and Brazilian, or blonde in Brazil, was not an issue, but that she be the queen of our samba school just did not seem right. This most highly valued and sexualised role within *carnaval* simply had to be taken by a voluptuous *negra* or *mulata*, not by some little blonde girl. As Marcinha succinctly put it the following week, "a rainha tem que ser ou negra, ou mulata!" (the queen has to be either *negra* or *mulata*!).

Santa Catarina is a very blonde state, a consequence largely of the German migration that I have already mentioned, and this blondeness does not in any way appear incongruous, in fact the cultural and phenotypical results of this are part of

what makes Santa Catarina the place it is. The German-descended participants at the Encontro das Nações that I discussed in the previous chapter seemed exotic and different because of their clothing, but not due to their physical appearance. People from the other regions of Brazil did frequently mention to me that there were more blondes, particularly blonde women, than they had ever seen before, but not once in a context that rendered them foreign. There was sometimes even an expectation of blondeness, such as when Natalia showed me photos of her family and explained that even though her father was dark haired he was actually from a German family. Beyond Santa Catarina and into the parts of Brazil where blondeness is far less common there is no doubt that for all *brancos* there are definite advantages to being white, that it is a privileged identity position, and that no-one ever expressed to me any desire to be anything but white. Taking at face value the fact that people seemed perfectly happy to be white, and white women in particular did not consider themselves to suffer for their whiteness, it could appear redundant to ask why it would really matter that Mônica and I thought it strange that the role of queen be taken by a blonde woman. This chapter will therefore be dedicated to explaining how, whilst there are undoubted advantages, and overwhelming social privileges, attached to whiteness, there are also uncertainties attached that have particular ramifications in the project of constructing Brazilian identities and Brazilianness.

'Gentlemen' prefer blondes..............

I was never keen on the shopping centres in Florianópolis. Known by the English-derived word *shoppings* they seemed to me to be even more soulless and depressing than those in England, being sterile, air-conditioned, white-tiled, temples to consumerism. They were however useful places to conduct research, very popular

with the middle-classes and often selected by my interlocutors as places to meet. I discovered early that the entrances were often interesting places, there were always other people milling around by the doors, and this often provided me with the opportunity to chat, or more often to simply observe. One particular day it was pushing 35 degrees and humid and I was uncomfortable. I could feel that I was sweating and burning in the strength of the early afternoon sun as I waited for a friend to arrive, and it was one of the few occasions that I was actually looking forward to entering the air-conditioned sanctuary of the *shopping*. As I did not have the number of my friend I had no option but to wait at the entrance as we had arranged. Having nothing else to do I soon found myself transfixed by the comings and goings around me, and from my vantage point opposite the entrance, my attention was drawn to two separate pairs of women who stood to the right of the door. I was less interested, in truth, in the women themselves than in the reactions of the men who walked past them, and in particular in the fact that the vast majority of the men seemed to glance or stare far more at one of the pairs, the two young blonde women dressed in the uniforms of one of the shops inside the *shopping*, no doubt on a richly deserved cigarette break. These two young women received an inordinate amount of attention from the majority of the passing men, whilst the other two women, *mulatas*, to my mind more attractive and 'better' dressed, were subject to barely a glance.

This apparent preference for blondes would carry through to many of my conversations with men, as they often expressed a preference for either *gaúchas* or *catarinenses*. This was explained with reference to the blondeness associated with many women from these two most southerly states with their German, and to a lesser degree northern Italian, histories of migration. The simple fact is that in most of

Brazil blondes are a rarity, and are seen as exotic, and it is no surprise that they catch the eye. This could give them an advantage over other women when it came to attracting men, as my *morena* friend who recounted to me the rhyme "as loiras chamam atenção, mas as morenas conquistam coração" (blondes draw attention, but *morenas* steal hearts) was clearly indicating.[4] Novelty value may well be a factor, but it is insufficient to explain the bountiful evidence I found of a deep running connection between specifically blonde, and more generally white, women and beauty. White skin operates as what Pinho (2009: 47) describes as "a cipher of beauty" that runs deeply through Brazilian society. For anyone who goes to Brazil it is inescapable on the streets and in the media that the images of women that are used to advertise a wide range of products are those of white, young, women, whose bodies, in terms of colour and shape are simply unobtainable for the majority of women (Beleli, 2007: 201-202). More broadly on the television in Brazil, and particularly in the ubiquitous *novelas*, the Brazilian subject is overwhelmingly cast as being white, as "white persons and white families are cast as the symbols of beauty, happiness, and middle-class success" (Telles, 2004: 155). Perhaps the best exemplar of this connection between beauty and whiteness is the woman described to me many times as the most famous in Brazil, the blonde former model and star of music and television Xuxa.

I discussed in Chapter Three how whiteness in Brazil has tended not to be regarded as an object of investigation in its own right, and how, as expressed by President Lula, it can come to considered in terms of what I call a 'totemic

---

[4] An implicitly negative view of blonde women is clear here, and would be confirmed to me by Clara, a blonde *gaúcha*. She told me about a party she had been to at which she was the centre of attention. When I said to her that it must be great to be *gaúcha*, it seems that everyone likes them, she laughed, and replied that the other Brazilian women, those that aren't blonde, are not so keen.

whiteness.' This whiteness is often attached to a figure like that of the "white man" in the USA that Hartigan (2005: 199) discusses, saying that such totems must

> be recognised as cultural objects, that is, as multivalent, nontransparent forms of signification...[and] as with any cultural object, they play any number of roles in local efforts to sort out matters of belonging and difference or as a means of interpreting and negotiating proximate, personal relations of power and position.

One such totem in Brazil is Xuxa, who Radcliffe & Westwood (1996: 139) argue came to be taken as the yardstick of beauty within Brazil, her blondness being unattainable for the majority of Brazilians, whilst being viewed as superior and more beautiful. Xuxa is a useful medium through which to conceptualise whiteness in Brazil because she

> functions as an agent of transcendence, who performs a magic healing of fissures in Brazilian culture by reinforcing a variety of conflicting views of the dominant society, especially those regarding gender and race (Simpson, 1993: 6).

It is for this reason that I argue that Xuxa can be seen as embodying a totemic whiteness, she is cast as a vehicle for transmitting a particular racialised ideology of white superiority and desirability to the nation via the medium of television.

Through the course of her incredibly successful career the whiteness that Xuxa embodies was unchallenged on the screen. The majority of the guests who appeared on her show were also white, and the music featured was a pop music influenced by America, and almost exclusively performed by white people, with very little traditionally Brazilian music, which is often associated with black Brazil, being featured (Simpson, 1993: 84). Xuxa surrounded herself with the *paquitas*, a group of blonde adolescent assistants who functioned as junior clones of Xuxa herself, and as she was the most famous celebrity in the country, becoming a *paquita* was the dream of many young girls in Brazil (ibid.: 138). Some of my blonde friends told me that they were nicknamed '*paquita*' as children, but this most valued of roles

was a job with an effective colour bar, the majority of Brazilian girls could never hope to realise their dream because they were simply not white enough. Beauty and success came to be represented in the media as attributes of the blonde, leading to something Simpson (1993: 164) describes as the "tyranny of the blonde."[5] I think that it is an accurate reflection of the place of whiteness and blondeness in the construction of female beauty in Brazil when Wade (2009: 186) argues that

> [t]he success of the Brazilian model and TV presenter Xuxa shows the striking dominance of whiteness as the norm of female beauty. Xuxa's Aryan blonde looks and her manipulation of her sexual image converted her into a Marilyn Monroe-style sex symbol who, through her pervasive media promotion, both reflected and strongly reinforced the value attached to whiteness.

That the promotion of Xuxa was, and continues to be, a sign of the racist etching of beauty onto blonde hair and white skin within Brazil is, in my opinion, beyond doubt, but where I disagree however is in Wade's formulation of Xuxa as a sex symbol.

The "tyranny of the blonde" that Simpson describes operates in particular ways, and this does not necessarily mean that being beautiful translates into being a sex symbol. Instead blondeness being tied to beauty in Brazil creates a paradox, and just as Wade (2009: 184) argues that "blackness in both men and women is often associated with sexual desirability...but the erotically desirable is not always the same as the aesthetically beautiful," so too is the aesthetically beautiful not always the same as the erotically desirable. Although a valued beauty is clearly attached to blondeness, this also leads to it being pushed into a kind of phantasmal sphere of Otherness where blonde beauty is an ideal from another place, a foreign import not 'of' Brazil, and therefore untouchable, something to be gazed upon but not touched, beautiful but not sexual. This means that whiteness, for women, is inscribed with a

---

[5] This manifested itself, for example, in the phenomenon wherein following her success all similar television roles were occupied by young, beautiful blonde women (Simpson: 1993: 162).

very positive beauty, but is also denied an earthly, physical, sexuality. The price to be paid for the perceived beauty of the *branca*, and particularly the blonde, is that it makes them some*thing* to be admired, not some*one* who has sex. This problem is well expressed by Teresa, an erotic dancer in Maia's (2009: 781) study of Brazilian erotic dancers in New York, when she says that while beauty in Brazil may be blue-eyed and white, this is not sufficient for one to be sexy. To be sexy, she explains, it is better to be a *mulata*, with all of the imagery of voluptuous sexuality and *carnaval* that this brings with it. This is why I would agree with Pravaz (2009: 80) that "[t]he lighter the skin, the greater the social value. To a point, that is." I argue that the location of this point in the construction of the Brazilian female sexual subject is a crucial, and as yet unexamined, space in the Brazilian racial and gendered firmament.

The Colour of Brazilian Sexuality

At first I assumed that being seen as beautiful, rather than sexual, was not necessarily such a bad thing, after all surely it is better to be beautiful than to be objectified as purely sexual? This was before I realised just how important, for better or for worse, sexuality is in the construction of Brazilian subjects. Heilborn (2006: 44) argues that both nationally and internationally Brazilian sexuality feeds into the construction of, and is viewed in the same way as, Brazilian culture, namely that both are seen as open, expansive and hot. The national identity is eroticised, and this is positively valued by Brazilians themselves as "it is impossible...to ignore the extent to which a notion of sexuality, or perhaps better, sensuality, plays a role in their own understanding of themselves" (Parker, 1991: 7-8). It should perhaps be no surprise then that the Brazilian women interviewed by Piscitelli (2004: 17-18) took

great pride in their ability to seduce foreign men, reasoning that their sensuality and sexuality is a reason why these men prefer them to the women in their own countries. Brazil then becomes known for its sexuality, and knows itself through its sexuality, as is succinctly expressed by Maia (2009: 769, my translation, emphasis in original) when she says "*Welcome to Brasil, land of Carnaval, beautiful women and exuberant beaches*. Internet sites that promote tourism in Brazil present the nation through the bodies of its women."

Such imagery references the body of not just any Brazilian woman, it is particularly the case that the "sensual mulatto woman is one of the images most commonly used to sell the country to foreign tourists" (Ferreira-Pinto, 2004: 19). This is race articulated with gender and sexuality through the inscription of race into valuations of sexual attractiveness, an articulation this is central to the construction of Brazilian female subjects (Goldstein, 1999: 564). For it to become clear why the female body represented is that of the *mulata* we need only think back to Freyre, for whom the *negra* was the woman with whom the white Portuguese man copulated in the original colonial encounter, leading to the construction of the *mulata* woman as the representation of the nation[6] (Ferreira-Pinto, 2004: 25; Rezende & Lima, 2004: 758). The *mulata* and the white man became the Brazilian archetypes, playing a fundamental role in the creation of the miscegenised nation that Brazil was constructed as being through the discourse of racial democracy (Maia, 2009: 771). In keeping with her colonial roots this *mulata* sexual subject is

---

[6] A point that needs making, and which deserves more space than I have to give it, is that the imagery of the *mulata* excludes also the *negra*, and continues "to feed the incitement towards whitening, by constituting mulatice as the epitome of beauty" (Pravaz, 2009: 88). This means, clearly, that it is not just the white that is excluded, and also that the most violent exclusion is that of the black. These two exclusions spring from the same font, but operate very differently, and have very different effects. I will be concentrating on the effects on the white, not because I think it is more important, but because it is less interrogated.

attributed with voluptuousness and sensuality as frequent stereotypes. She embodies the sexual fantasies of the white man: she is lascivious, insolent, and ready and willing to have sex (Baptista da Silva & Rosemberg, 2009: 68).

Brazil became what Norvell (2002: 248, my translation, emphasis in original) calls "a nation literally *made in the bed,"* and constructed in the discourse that constructs Brazil itself, in the coital crucible of the bed of the Portuguese man, the *mulata* then becomes "defined by sex, by sensuality and by unrestrained desire" (Moutinho, 2004: 345, my translation).

This may well lead to her being exalted as the essence of Brazilian sexuality, but not all, myself included, view this sexualisation as a good thing. Any reduction of women to the position of sexual objects troubles me deeply, as it did many of the *negras* and *mulatas* that Moutinho (2004: 348) spoke to. Therefore when I say that the *mulata* becomes the image of the nation and plays a fundamental role I absolutely do not mean to imply that this must be a good thing. The sexualisation of black women was a common result of the European colonial project, and lest anyone think of this in positive terms it only bears stating that through this colonial system there was created an "imagery constructing black women's sexuality as overactive, deviant, excessive, closer to nature, not in control, and animal-like" (Wekker, 2006: 226).[7] This dehumanising view of black women was constructed within the discourse that enabled the history of racism to develop, fed by the imagery of female slaves as having been the hypersexual and perverse African corrupters of a pure European sexuality, the supposed initiators of sex, rather than victims of sexual violence within the structures of slavery[8] (Rezende & Lima, 2004: 760). Through these constructions the impression is unavoidable that the *mulata* is linked to

---

[7] Skeggs (1994: 109-110) also reminds us of the wider constructions of black women as constructed as a dangerous and profane Other.
[8] This was certainly not an isolated Portuguese/Brazilian phenomenon, speaking of the Dutch Caribbean colonies Wekker (2006: 163) describes how "[s]lave women were depicted as sexually interested, excessive, insatiable, and always available."

sexuality through being cast in the role of the insatiable and dangerous whore, a whore whose only purpose is to minister to the sexual desires of white men (Góis, 2009: 750; Moutinho, 2004: 346).

All this considered it had seemed obvious to me that the place of the Othered African in Brazilian sexual discourse, the construction of 'the African' as purely sexual, a body with no mind, results in a negative objectification. When I expressed this view to people I was often rebuked, being told that in Brazil, unlike most other white-dominated countries, the black population is viewed as sexually desirable. My point however had been that this is as far as it goes, that desirability is not necessary a positive thing, unless it comes with some measure of respect, that the valuing of blackness on purely sexual terms is not much of a valuation at all (Wade, 2009: 189). Evidence of the negatives that accrue to *mulatas* through this sexualisation is not difficult to find, not least in the attitudes of white men in Brazil, who very often look on *negras* and *mulatas* purely sexually, with no consideration for the possibility of relationships (Cambraia Windsor, 2007: 508-509; Telles, 2004: 191). The only way for a *mulata* to achieve the 'best of both worlds' is to access the whitened ideal of beauty, but without losing the innate sexuality. This is possible for those who approach whiteness in their physical appearance, particularly skin colour and those facial features that are described as *traços finos*, 'fine features' that are associated with whiteness.

This means that "[b]lack is made beautiful in this context by the addition of white features" (Goldstein, 1999: 571), as was described to me in a samba club one night by Luisa. She told me of one such example relating to her brother's friend Naldo, a white middle-class *mineiro* who came to study in Florianópolis and ended up staying, largely due to meeting his girlfriend. To stay in a city because of a

woman is a big deal, Luisa explained, and in this case she reasoned that it was because the girlfriend is so beautiful, 'despite' being a *mulata*. She instantly realised that it was necessary to qualify this statement, and added

> ela é alta e bonita, linda mesmo, e seria linda em lugar qualquer, sabe? Não só na comunidade. Todo mundo acha linda. É que a mina tem um rosto muito lindo, tá ligado? Com traços, sabe, mais, como, como nós. E é gostosa, tem corpaço de mulata!

> she is tall and pretty, really beautiful, and she would be beautiful anywhere, you know? Not just in her [poor/black] community. Everyone thinks she's beautiful. It's because the girl has a really beautiful face, you know? With features, you know, more like, like, ours. And she is sexy, she's got that incredible voluptuous *mulata*'s body!

As she said this touched her own face with her left hand, and pointed to mine with her right hand, making it perfectly clear that these features she was referring to were those of white people, fine features that are the key to beauty. It is due to these 'white' features that the woman could be, and is, considered beautiful by everyone, because this standard of beauty is constructed as universal, and universally linked to whiteness. This clearly shows that whilst she would be sexy almost by default, through being a *mulata*, she is 'privileged' to have a face that can be read as white, and therefore beautiful, a rare combination. To be more beautiful than a white woman a *mulata* must therefore not only conform to white beauty standards, but exceed them (Moutinho, 2004: 309).

The desexualised *branca*

Not only is the notion that the *mulata* is highly sexualised and sexually attractive traceable to colonial times, but this was also an era in which women of all races had their sexualities and gender roles constructed in relation to white men (Wade, 2009: 57). It is here we see the roots of the construction of white women,

however beautiful they may be considered, as desexualised. Most European colonial powers believed it necessary to protect the chastity and purity of white women in the face of the possible corruptions of the tropics, whilst simultaneously constructing the non-white Other as sexual.[9] Moutinho (2004: 93) argues that the protection of the chastity and virtue of the white woman in colonial Brazil led to the sexualisation of *negras* and *mulatas*, it was necessary that they be available to white men if these men were to accept that white women be sexually unavailable to them. This left white women with only two roles through their lives, as simple, delicate flowers 'protected' from of their own sexuality in their youth as

> [d]uring the day the white girl or young woman was subject to the gaze of her elders or of the trusted black maid. At night the vigilance grew. Sleep became a spontaneous prison, in the bedroom, at the centre of the house, under the guard of the adults (Quintas, 2007: 51, my translation).

This was deemed necessary to ensure that the virginity of the girl was intact, in order that she was 'suitable' for marriage, a marriage which marked the start of the second role she was expected to fulfil, that of a wife.

The colonial era saw the birth of the discourse of *mestiçagem*, and "in this narrative "white" women occupy the almost asexual role of the loyal wife" (Fry, 2004: 13, my translation). She was "almost asexual" because she did still have a sexual role to fulfil, that of a reproductive machine, fulfilling the reproductive needs of her husband. Her pleasure was not a factor, this was sex on the white man's terms, and wives were still closely watched, meaning that "[f]ew white women had the opportunity to slip away to acts of amorous adventure" (Quintas, 2007: 52, my translation). It becomes clear then that

> [t]he erotic desire of the 'colour white' appears only in the masculine pole, which is completed by the lubrication of the 'mulata.' The 'white' woman

---

[9] See Mayer (2000: 10), Moutinho (2004: 425), Skeggs (1994: 109-110), and Steyn (2001: 20) for discussions of the need to control the sexuality of white women in various colonial contexts.

appears always de-eroticised in this relationship" (Moutinho, 2004: 169, my translation).

The white man, the *branco*, is the only real sexual subject in this formulation, because the "realisation of desire, constituted and controlled by the colonial (and also national) machine, constituted itself on the path that articulated the white man" (ibid.: 423, my translation). Sex was something that happened between white men and *mulatas*, whilst what happened between white men and white women was simply reproduction. All that mattered was the sexual gratification of the white man, and the *mulata* and the *branca* fulfilled different sexual roles in this service.[10]

When talking one day to Angela in her kitchen I asked her about the image of the *mulata* in Brazil. She laughed, and told me she could still remember what she learnt as a child, saying

> Eu acho que essa imagem, ela vem da época da escravidão. Ela tem um, um, ela tem uma base histórica, aquela mulata, aquela escrava que tá nua, peitos a mostra. E a portuguesa, que fazia sexo com uma daquelas coisas, tipo lençol com um buraco, pra não ver nada, entendeu? É completamente diferente, tem uma que tá nua e a outra que tu não vê nada! Vai gerar, né? É claro que gerava essa coisa da mulata, né? E acho que continua hoje.

> I think that this image comes from the era of slavery. It's got a, a, it's got a historical base, that *mulata*, that female slave who's naked, her breasts on show. And the Portuguese woman, who had sex with one of those things, like a sheet with a hole, so you can't see anything, you understand? It's totally different, there's one that's naked and the other that you can't see anything! It's going to generate it, isn't it? It's obvious that it generated this image of the *mulata*, isn't it? And I reckon that it continues today.

The imagery of the chaste white woman and the naked 'savage' black woman is clearly linked by Angela back to the colonial era, with one woman naked and available, and the other only having sex through a sheet with a hole in it – the *mulata* sexual, and the *branca* sexless, or separated from the sexual act by a sheet. She believes that the ideologies related to these images continue to this day, and although

---

[10] For an interesting discussion of this dynamic in Manuel Antônio de Almeida's novel *Memórias de um sargento de milícias* see Ferreira-Pinto (2004: 16-18).

she went on to stress that it was mainly the image of the *mulata* that she was referring to, the image of a white woman as separated from sexual intercourse, the down and dirty sweaty business of sexual pleasure, still persists to some degree, to her regret!

It is crucial to remember that this imagery does not carry over seamlessly into the ontological world, as Pinho (2009) reminds us

> *some* mestiço types have been preferred as "the most beautiful" (e.g., cinnamon-coloured morenas), others as "the most sexualised" (e.g., samba-dancing mulatas)...and yet others as "the most ugly" and undesirable (e.g., those with very dark skin or light-skinned mestiços with "black features").

The *mulata* about whom I am talking specifically is the one who looms largest in discourse and the sexual imagination, the woman described by Giacomini (2006: 89-90) as being sensual and seductive to a level that she becomes an image of perhaps a hypernatural sexuality. In this sense I link her to the imagery surrounding Xuxa, because just as Xuxa/blondes act as decorporealised totems for notions of beauty, so too does the discursively rendered *mulata* and her ontological offspring, the *mulatas* that live in contemporary Brazil, act as a symbol of Brazilian female sexuality. The imagery of *carnaval* constructed in the first half of the 20th Century is imbricated deeply in this process, as

> it was in this period of the formation of the Brazilian national identity that Carnaval and the image of the mulata, as symbols of a miscegenised and sexualised nation, became symbols of the festive essence of the Brazilian (Maia, 2009: 772, my translation).

This process is ongoing, and to this day

> the figure of the sexy mulata, in particular, is celebrated as the one who knows how to dance the samba...Metonymically linked, mulatas, samba, and carnival become here interchangeable images that stand for national and, more specifically, Carioca identity (Pravaz, 2009: 89).

Both *carnaval* and the *mulata* have come to symbolise Brazil, and its connections to a rhythmic and passionate sexuality (Parker, 1991: 150).

It should now become clear why the sight of a blonde *Carnaval* queen was so strange, and why, despite the economic and political privileges conferred upon white *brasileiras*, the archetypal *brasileira* remains cast in the image of the *mulata*, the symbol of the nation and the carrier of Brazilian notions of female sexuality, and male sexual pleasure (Maia, 2009: 772; Telles, 2004: 190). With its roots in the work of Freyre and the discourse of racial democracy this image has lost none of its force in contemporary Brazil, indeed as Pravaz (2009: 84) found

> Contemporary iconographic, literary, and popular representations that shape current discourses of Brazilianness at both the national and international levels stereotypically present an image of the mulata's body as the height of female attractiveness, as the perfect embodiment of the heat and sensuality of the tropics, and as a representation of Brazil itself.

As Brazil is represented by the *mulata*, despite the negatives that this sexualisation entails, this means that the *branca* remains outside the symbolic construction of the *brasileira*, and is indeed cast as a foreigner within the nation, just as Xuxa, who although in some ways is quintessentially Brazilian, is in others cast outside the 'Brazilian.' If we return to *carnaval* we can see this very clearly. The blonde queen of my school seemed out of place and inauthentic, and that she went on to receive a favourable reaction both within the school and also at the *sambôdromo* during *carnaval*-proper is due to her success in the process that Pravaz (2009: 92) describes whereby those white women who participate in the parades in *destaque* roles (literally 'highlight' roles, referring to those who dance alone and are a focus of attention) modify their bodies through tanning to appear darker, and emphasise those parts of the body that are associated with African bodies, particularly the *bunda* (bottom). In so doing they can ameliorate their whiteness by taking on elements of

blackness and embodying them, and not only on the skin but also underneath it in order that they approach the state of the genuine and authentic symbol of the nation, the *mulata* (Maia, 2009: 778).

A fragile embodiment of a *negritude*

This internal embodiment and appropriation of blackness (*negritude*) was expressed to me in a wider sense within samba music generally, not just that associated specifically with Carnaval, the *samba enredo*, but also that seen as the most authentic and traditional, *samba de raíz*, 'roots' samba. This became evident one afternoon in a setting not exactly conducive to samba, a large soulless middle-class condominium on the equally uninspiring Rua Delminda Silveira, whose most remarkable feature is the state prison, a structure that appears incongruous in the otherwise lower middle-class setting. The weather was also not particularly conducive, too warm for jeans, but not yet warm enough to be totally comfortable in shorts. It was nonetheless a barbeque, there was beer, and several people had brought instruments and their singing voices, which was good enough for me. At this stage, only six months into my time in Florianópolis, I could hardly have been described as a samba aficionado, but I knew enough to be less than excited by the prospect of it being played by a group of middle-class white kids. I knew (or thought I knew) enough by then to know that good samba was the preserve of elderly *negros* in dapper hats, the likes of Cartola, Nelson Cavaquinho, and Bezerra da Silva, legends of the genre. It turned out however that my white friends did a decent enough job, not on Cartola's level obviously, but not bad at all. After they had played a couple of songs Gu turned to me and asked me what I thought. I responded truthfully, that they were pretty good, but that a bit more practice would not hurt. He nodded, and,

grinning widely, replied that "só faltamos ser negros, nós, brancos, faltamos rítimo" (the only thing we're lacking is blackness, we whites lack rhythm). At this Simone, having overheard him, shouted across the table "não, é no sangue negro, no sangue brasileiro da gente" (no, it's in black blood, in our Brazilian blood). Although both were grinning and joking, their comments betrayed, I believe, a deeper truth, the belief that samba and its distinctive rhythms have their roots in African bodies, in *negro* blood. That white people can access this is a question of having *negro* blood inside them and, despite the fact that all people present were white, Simone believed they all did, simply by virtue of being Brazilian.

White Brazilians may believe that they have the capacity to tap into an internal blackness, but samba played badly could still be blamed on the whiteness of the performers. This is what happened at one of the rehearsals of the samba school when the drummers of the *bateria*[11] were having a particularly bad night. Mônica turned to me and said with clear exasperation that "essa tem que ser a única bateria no Brasil que tem mais brancos que negros!" (this has to be the only *bateria* in Brazil that has more whites than blacks!). She did not link the failures of the band to a lack of practice, or to simply having a bad night, she linked them directly to the race of the participants. Better nights were attributed to the skills of the band leader, a *negro* who managed to teach and direct the white members how to play and give them their rhythm, his authentic blackness injecting it into their bodies.[12] For some people however, the very idea of an *escola de samba* based in a predominantly middle-class neighbourhood was risible, it was, as Fernanda said, "uma escola de burgueses" (a bourgeois school), and therefore "eu preferiria desfilar numa escola mais antiga, da comunidade" (I would prefer to parade in an older school, from the

---

[11] The massed drum band that most defines the sound and rhythm of *carnaval*.
[12] I am not aware of the views of the members of the band or of the directors of the school as regards this point.

community). I had never seen our neighbourhood display such a sense of community as at the rehearsals of the União da Ilha da Magia, but she used the word *comunidade* (community) in another sense, as a synonym for poor communities and *favelas,* and therefore *negros* and *mulatas*.[13] The authentic samba school is based in just such a poor community, and therefore the União da Ilha da Magia was a fraud, a group of bourgeois white people playing at *carnaval* with a blonde queen and an overwhelmingly white *bateria.*

On another occasion Mônica and I were listening to our friend Luciana sing some samba standards and after she had finished Mônica told her that "você tem a voz duma negona, de cabelo black power, e com o jeito do samba até os osos!" (you have the voice of a big black woman, with an Afro haircut, and with the spirit of samba in your bones!). Once more samba was linked to an essence of blackness that is located within the body, and which a white Brazilian could also access, even a slim, young, white woman from Rio Grande do Sul. This was not necessarily always perceived to be the case however, and women from the South, particularly *gaúchas*, were many times described to me, even by themselves, as lacking the natural rhythm and aptitude to dance to samba, lacking the movement of the hips and *bunda* that so epitomise the sexuality of the *brasileira*. The first time I heard this view expressed was by Marcinha the day after we had been to a samba bar. She asked me if I had enjoyed the previous night and I told her I had, but that I had had great difficulty dancing, the steps required for samba being difficult for a novice to master. She laughed and said that it is hard for everyone at first, and that I should not worry, "não é problema, tu tava com duas gaúchas e também não sabemos sambar!" (it isn't a

---

[13] This is a very common formulation and from what I could gather this was in part to avoid the stigma attached to the word *favela*, itself often synonymous with violence and criminality. It was also a reflection of the sense that such neighbourhoods are perceived to make up for what they lack in money and status with a genuine sense of community, free from the fences and compartmentalisation of middle-class areas.

problem, you were with two *gaúchas* and we don't know how to dance samba either!).[14] Each time an authentic Brazilianness was linked to perceived corporeal aspects of blackness which it was possible, but not guaranteed, that a white Brazilian could also access. Appropriating this blackness was also the route by which white women could access sexual desirability, but again success was not guaranteed.

An alien whiteness in a miscegenised nation

It is beyond question that the external view of Brazil, of a tropical country of *carnaval*, *mulatas*, and palm trees, is an imagined Brazil, and it is also clear that it is based particularly on the imagery of Rio de Janeiro, and to a lesser degree Bahia. This imagery is very obviously racialised, gendered and sexualised, and white Brazilian women are more than aware of the fact. Paula told me of her time living in the USA that

> Acho que lá de fora o imaginário duma mulher brasileira é uma mulata. Quando eu tava nos Estados Unidos as pessoas perguntavam de onde eu era, e eu falava "advinha," nunca ningúem falava que eu era brasileira, geralmente eu 'era' italiana, polonesa, sei lá, tudo menos brasileira!

> I think that abroad the imagination of a Brazilian woman is a *mulata*. When I was in the United States people asked where I was from, and I said to guess, nobody ever said that I was Brazilian, usually I 'was' Italian, Polish, I don't know, everything except Brazilian!

Not only is the image racialised, but as we have seen it also becomes inherently sexualised. Many women expressed to me that they found it disgusting that foreign men seemed to view all Brazilian women as sexual objects, as Angela had found whilst holidaying in Europe some years ago,

---

[14] This sentiment was echoed on a separate occasion by Elise when she talked about joining me in the *carnaval* procession in the *sambôdromo*. She vacillated, first saying that she really could not dance to samba, but then that as a *gaúcha* that was hardly unexpected. As I tried to persuade her to join us she finally relented, saying that it is something a *brasileira* really should do at least once in her life.

Uma vez foi quando eu fui pra Espanha, e quando disse que eu era brasileira, e queria um quarto, pedi pra ver o quarto…e daí ele foi no quarto e perguntou se eu ficasse com ele essa noite, e o quarto seria de graça, que foi uma coisa que jamais me passou pela cabeça…e tava frio, eu tava de calça jeans e blusão, e nem olhei pro homem, nem ele pra mim, antés, entendeste?

One time was when I went to Spain, and when I told [the receptionist at the hotel] that I was Brazilian, and wanted a room, I asked to see the room...and with that he went in the room and said that if I slept with him that night the room would be free, which was something that had never crossed my mind...and it was cold, I was wearing jeans and a big jacket, and I didn't even look at him, nor him at me before [I had told him I was Brazilian], do you understand?

The anger that she felt was visible in her face as she told the story, the anger that he had only thought that she would sleep with him when he discovered she was Brazilian. They had not really looked at each other beforehand, and it was therefore the fact of her Brazilianness that made him jump to the conclusion that she might. These stories, however unpleasant they may be to those concerned, did not come as much of a surprise to either myself or the women concerned. As Angela went on to add, the notion that "tudo que é brasileira é mulher fácil...é isso aí que irrita a gente" (all Brazilian women are easy...it's that which irritates us) is both common and irritating, but it is not particularly surprising.

That this kind of racialised and sexualised imagery of the *brasileira* should also hold sway within Brazil is more of a surprise. I was frequently told by Brazilians, including those from the South, that when they think of 'Brazil' they also think of a tropical Brazil. So when Bruna, herself born and raised in Florianópolis, told me that when she thinks of the typical *brasileira* it is the image of the *baiana* or the *carioca* that comes to her mind, she was expressing a commonly held view. The *carioca* in the form of the samba-dancing *mulata* with her voluptuous body and gyrating hips is the most powerful image of Brazil according to Bruna, and this is

not just an imagery imposed from abroad, because as Fabiana was only too ready to point out

> temos responsibilidade pra essa imagen também...mas não somente porque o governo vende o país assim, é também a imagen de cómo uma brasileira deve ser, tipo a verdadeira brasileira.

> we are responsible for this as well...not only because the government sells [advertises] the country like this, it is also the image of how a *brasileira* must be, sort of the true *brasileira*.

This racialised and sexualised image of the *brasileira* occupies such a powerful position in the Brazilian imaginary and discourse that she becomes the true, the authentic, and, after a fashion, the only Brazilian woman. The *mulata* is without doubt the most 'authentic' *brasileira*, and her sexuality is at the centre of this construction (Maia, 2009: 774). This necessarily places the *branca* beyond authenticity, and denies her this Brazilian sexuality.

We can now begin to understand better the perception that Xuxa and blondes are imported, that blondeness is not 'of' Brazil. Simpson (1993: 15) argues that Xuxa was continually at pains to stress her Brazilianness, her roots as a *gaúcha* (native of the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul), and that this need to affirm Brazilianness came despite embodying a blondness that is a coveted Other for the majority of Brazilians. She argues that because Xuxa is so different from most Brazilians it was necessary for her to continually assert that she was 'one of them,' and that,

> she asserts the superiority of whiteness...Blondness is a norm of attractiveness that is inaccessible to most people in Brazil...Yet Xuxa's representation of an all-white aesthetic is symptomatic, not prescriptive. The star's promotion of the white ideal functions only with the complicity of an audience eager to view blond beauty. Xuxa helps Brazilians resolve the conflicting feelings that are naturally aroused by this predilection by continually asserting her Brazilian identity as she celebrates the blond ideal of beauty (ibid.: 7-8).

I agree that this does usefully explain what Xuxa's whiteness and blondness 'mean' in terms of the racial hierarchy that privileges the 'white,' and also the role that all

Brazilians play in accepting, and often celebrating, an unequal racial phenotypal ranking of the population. I also believe however that it reduces Xuxa, and by extension all white *brasileiras*, to a hermeneutic script, being read very much from an American angle of polarised races but, perhaps more importantly, demonstrating how the gaze of the western academic occludes the existence of the 'white' in Brazil. This results in a neo-colonial exoticisation of a country in which blondes are not the most common phenotyped category, but they are also not so rare as to be shocking. I am not arguing that white Brazilians particularly suffer as a result of this, but when, by Simpson's (1993: 148) own reckoning, the category 'white' forms roughly 50% of the population, we are forced to wonder how accurate analyses of race in Brazil can be when they seem to cast whiteness outside of, and needing to grasp for, Brazilianness.

This tendency is marked in academic treatments of race in Brazil but it is also present in Brazilian imaginings of themselves. This was made clear to me many times when I explained to those I met what I was doing in Brazil, such as the time I agreed to give an interview to a journalist friend about my reasons for living in Florianópolis. We arranged to meet in my favourite café in Lagoa da Conceição, overlooking the lake itself and just around the corner from my flat. This was a place where I always felt at ease, maybe as close to 'home turf' that an anthropologist could hope to find whilst in the field. I was however a bit nervous about the idea of giving an interview, despite having interviewed people in a previous job as a trainee journalist, and being, as an anthropologist, in many ways a professional interviewer.[15] Whilst he went to order the coffee I began chatting to the photographer who had accompanied him, and when she asked, by way of conversation, what I was

---

[15] It would later transpire that my nervousness about giving a newspaper interview was well placed, but that is a story I will save for later publications about the dangers of the anthropologist becoming the story!

researching, I explained that I was interested in the place of whiteness in Brazilian culture. Her response stopped me in my tracks, as she asked me who in their right mind would call themselves white? Does everyone not consider themselves Brazilian? I explained that most people seemed to have difficulties accommodating the two, but did not see them as mutually exclusive, no-one I had spoken to considered themselves to be anything other than Brazilian.

It seemed strange that her first instinct had appeared to be to separate the two as though they were mutually exclusive, and that Brazilianness held primacy, swallowing the whiteness that people might have claimed. She then went on to tell me that the only people that she had ever heard claim whiteness were those who lived in the Italian or German *colónias* in the interior of the state, and that they would claim a Europeanness that allowed, indeed is founded upon, a sense of whiteness. Even these were, by her reckoning, a tiny minority, and the rest claimed only Brazilianness, thereby leaving no space for whiteness. A visit to a bookshop in search of books about whiteness in Brazil would also lead to similar confusion. Coming as it did in the last week I spent in Brazil this search was more in hope than expectation, I was wise enough by now to doubt that there would be anything there (as indeed there was not), but nonetheless it seemed to be worth a try. After browsing for a minute on my own, unsuccessfully, I asked the sales assistant if there was a section about race in the shop, and before I could continue explaining he led me straight to a small section which he explained had everything about *negritude*, blackness. When I eventually managed to explain to him, after he had shown me the top rated books, that I was interested in books about the *branquitude* he did a double take, looked very confused, and then said that he did not think they had anything on that, and in fact no-one had ever asked him. Did I mean the section on European

history? When I told my friend Nelson about this later that afternoon he told that he was not surprised, because the authentic *povo brasileiro*, the Brazilian people, is *negro/mulato*, and even in the South where they are a minority in numbers they are the *brasileiros de verdade*, the real Brazilians.[16]

This is interesting in terms of the effects that it has on white Brazilians, and particularly white Brazilian women. The above are all examples of the discourse of Brazilianness expressed by President Lula when he spoke unproblematically of white, blue-eyed people as foreign to Brazil. It is this discourse that made Rosa, herself blonde and blue-eyed, look at me blankly when I recounted Lula's comments to her. It did not even cross her mind that in locating a foreign problem racially he was also unintentionally talking about her own racial positioning within Brazilian discourse. This is the same process, the same 'common sense' habitus notion of Brazilianness that causes blonde-haired Claudia from Salvador and red-haired Luisa from Belo Horizonte to be commonly mistaken for foreigners in their cities of birth. Luisa particularly finds this uncomfortable, especially as she is a lover of *samba de raís*, the traditional style of samba, the best of which tends to be found in the poorer, and therefore often *negro*, neighbourhoods of Brazil's cities. She loves the music, but always feels that she is being stared at, as though she is out-of-place. She told me that Deise, the *negra* cleaner at her parent's house, could not understand why Luisa had a problem with being stared at. As far as she was concerned being the centre of attention was surely a good thing, and Luisa must surely have felt special? Luisa told me that she felt guilty, from her privileged middle-class white position, about complaining about being noticed to a *negra* cleaner who spent most of her life being ignored. But despite knowing that she was noticed in large part due to her position of

---

[16] I should stress at this point that I see nothing wrong in this, indeed it is probably a much needed rebalancing of power. If anything it is too little, and maybe only acts as a cover to allow ongoing inequalities to continue.

privilege, it still discomforted her to be seen as different, a discomfort she had carried with her since she was a child and other kids had called her hair *vermelho*, literally red, rather than *ruiva*, the Portuguese word specifically for red/ginger hair. They did not do this to bully her, she assured me, they did it because they simply did not know the word *ruiva*, she was the only *ruiva* they had ever met. She was so different that people did not know the correct word for her and in a sense this made her feel that within Brazil she did not exist.

When asked about her race Clara, one of the erotic dancers interviewed by Maia (2009: 775, my translation), replied "white, but what I really am is *morena*, Brazilian, *morena*." She could not reconcile her self-identified whiteness with her Brazilianness, and chose to leave the whiteness and move towards 'Brazil.' This was a sentiment I also heard expressed many times, for example by Francesca, who when I asked her about her race replied "não sou nem loira, nem morena, então não existo!" (I'm not blonde, nor *morena*, so I don't exist). As a fair-haired woman who did not want to describe herself as being white, as being anything other than *brasileira*, she encountered difficulties, as to be *brasileira* links so 'obviously' to being racially mixed. This forces us to return to the question of why people whose racial position in a society is so privileged would so often feel so hesitant to claim, or even talk about whiteness? The answer lies squarely in the discourse that constructs the Brazilian, and particularly, I would argue, the *brasileira*, whereby this

> rejection of whiteness, albeit on a rhetorical level, is also, I would add, a means of affirming one's belonging to the nation and an expression of the belief that being "too white" challenges one's Brazilianness (Pinho, 2009: 46).

To deny to oneself a racial identification that confers power and dominance, and we must never forget that white Brazilians are dominant, becomes understandable only within the discourse founded within racial democracy. This constructs the Brazilian

people as racially mixed, and so by claiming mixture white Brazilians can actually strengthen themselves by accessing an authenticity and legitimacy. This is also a largely risk-free endeavour, as when Daniela told me about an occasion in São Paulo when a police officer had classified her as *parda*, a category synonymous with *mulata*. She thought this was funny because she had never been considered as anything but white before, and due to the lack of negative consequences she could laugh it off as an amusing anecdote about how constructions of race in Brazil are complex. In so doing she lost none of the privileges attached to being white, and in fact gained a sense of being more Brazilian. In a sense it is a no-lose scenario, because when it matters white Brazilians remain white to the gaze of others, they do not lose power (Rosa-Ribeiro, 2000: 232).

That white Brazilians have the best of both worlds is beyond doubt, but I would however argue that this works only up to a point, and more specifically that there is a gendered element to the process. Here I am specifically referring to the fact that white Brazilian men can make their claim to membership of the racial democracy from the position of the active Portuguese colonist, as within the sexual imagery of Brazil the male sexual subject is white. White women, on the other hand, have only the image of the *mulata* to call upon, as the Portuguese woman never appears in the story, other than, perhaps, hidden behind a sheet with a hole cut in it. When discussing the upcoming *carnaval* Mônica told me that her usual preparation requires her to

> ficar bem pretinha,[17] geralmente quando voltar pra minha cidade pra passar natal já tô preta, mas este ano, por causa da chuva, tava bem branquinha. Não é problema pro meu pai, ele tem pele branca, bem branca, como gringo, viu? E

---

[17] Although the word preto, meaning literally the colour black, is often used pejoratively in Brazil to refer to the black population, being somewhat similar to the English 'nigger,' in the sense she used it she was referring to having a darker skin tone through tanning, and in a positive sense.

não se importa com isso. Mas eu, e minha mãe, a gente gosta de ficar preta pra carnaval…é que minha pele é branca, meu sangue é negro.

be really tanned, usually when I go back to my home town at Christmas I'm already tanned, but this year, because of the rain, I was really white. It's not a problem for my dad, he's got white skin, really white, like a *gringo*, you see? And he isn't bothered by this. But I, and my mum, we like to be tanned for Carnaval...it's that my skin is white, but my blood is black.

Sheriff (2001: 151, 158, 163) found in Rio de Janeiro that many people she would have thought to be unambiguously white were concerned that they were not white enough, and that if they were too suntanned their work colleagues would tease them for not being truly white.[18]

I found no such doubt amongst my friends, instead tanning tended to be valued and considered attractive. For Mônica and her mother it was essential to not be too white for c*arnaval*, to be the dark-skinned and sensual 'authentic' *brasileira*. The importance for women to be tanned was something I heard expressed many times, to be too pale during the summer when more time was spent on the beach was undesirable, and particularly so during *carnaval*. It is this tanning that Maia (2009: 778) argues allows *brancas* to access the *morenidade* that in turn allows them to access the *brasilidade* associated with racial mixture, the tan brings white women closer to the sensuality associated with the *mulata*.[19] What we can see from Mônica's final words is that she believes that the surface of her body is at odds with the interior, that her skin may be white, but her blood is black. When I asked if she meant that she had *negro* ancestry she replied that as far as she knows she does not, but that she must have, because she is Brazilian. All in all the sense was that a white *brasileira* is an incomplete *brasileira*. These tendencies were not however so evident

---

[18] This is a clear example of the racist belief that the non-white is inferior, and it is not my intention to underplay the importance and significance of this.
[19] This particular association is 'safe' because *morenidade* carries no explicit link to racial mixture, it is instead an inferred possibility, as opposed to *mulatice*, which has to link to blackness to exist (Pravaz, 2009: 90).

amongst the men I spoke to because although both make claims to the nation, to a legitimate Brazilianness, for white women this was more problematic, more of a source of worry. White men fit within the discourse as inheritors of the role of the Portuguese coloniser, and Mônica's father could therefore be less concerned about tanning than her and her mother.

The need for whites to claim belonging to the nation may be a common feature in former European colonies due to the need to "establish a credible sense of entitlement" to nationhood (McDermott Hughes, 2010: 1). This will manifest itself in different ways in different settings, meaning not only different nations, but also different regions within nations. I would therefore speculate that this affects the South of Brazil more than other regions, it being seen as whiter, more European, and markedly 'different.' Whilst very few people in Florianópolis saw themselves as European in any way, as I have already discussed, they are aware of such opinions and doubts that others hold regarding their legitimate membership of the Brazilian nation. As Angela told me whilst we discussed the image of the Brazilian people as racially mixed, and particularly as the product of black, indigenous and Portuguese miscegenation,

> Não tenho nenhum pingo de sangue negro, nem índio, nem português. Minha família toda veio pra cá da Europa, principalmente da Italia, mas tem também alemães. Então minha familia não cabe nessa imagem, nem essas dos meus amigos de lá [Rio Grande do Sul]. Mas somos brasileiros, sou brasileira, sem dúvida. Quando fui pra Europa ningúem achou que sou brasileira, porque sou como eles são, com os mesmos traços. E até aqui muita gente não me acha brasileira. É que somos um povo miscegenado, misturado, viu? Mas algumas pessoas não têm mistura suficiente.

> I don't have even a drop of black blood, nor *índio*, nor Portuguese. My whole family came here from Europe, mainly from Italy, but also some Germans. So my family doesn't fit into this image, nor do those of my friends there [in Rio Grande do Sul]. But we are Brazilians, I'm Brazilian, no doubt. When I went to Europe no-one thought that I'm Brazilian, because I look like they do, with the same features. And even here [in Brazil generally] lots of people don't

think I'm Brazilian. It's that we are a miscegenised people, you see? But some people aren't mixed enough.

This is also what led Luciana, when at a reggae concert with me, to become somewhat offended at being asked if she was a *gringa*, and to respond by telling the questioner "I'm *gaúcha*," closely followed by "I'm *brasileira.*" When I asked her later why she had been so obviously put out by the question she told me that while she rationalised that the guy in question had probably asked her if she was a *gringa* because she was with me, she felt that she had to assert her Brazilianness, because for many people being *gaúcha* is not enough, that *gaúch<u>as</u>* (and I stress the feminine here) are not seen as *brasileiras* by everyone.

We have seen then that the Brazilian sexual subject is a *mulata*, and that due to the importance of sexuality both within the Brazilian national imagery and self image this vision of a sexualised *mulata* becomes also that of the *brasileira*. White, and particularly blonde, *brasileiras* are granted a beauty, and a highly valued beauty at that, and this should be neither overlooked nor underplayed. The problem is that this beauty seems to float above Brazil, never managing to touch its feet on Brazilian soil, and so the *brasileira branca* becomes disconnected from Brazil, and separated from Brazilian identity and nationhood. Despite their readily acknowledged advantaged position within Brazilian society (and no-one I asked thought that being white was a detriment) this feeling of separation from the national imagery was an issue for most in this country where patriotism felt to me so much more powerful, so much more visceral, than what I am accustomed to in the UK. This is the case for all white Brazilians perhaps, but I am in no doubt that it is particularly keenly felt by white Brazilian women, who seemingly have no place within the imagery relating to sexuality, that most important element in the construction of the nation. This is

therefore bound to initiate some form of a reaction, be it bemusement, lamentation, or, frequently, efforts to tie oneself to the *mulata* image, to claim mixedness for oneself in order that this identity becomes, in some way, available to you. This, as I have described from my experiences and through the research of others, is common, and within the strictures of the discourse that governs Brazilianness it is a logical course of action. There is however another option, the option of radically rejecting the discourse and imagery of the female Brazilian sexual subject, and claiming instead an alternative sexual identity that casts the *mulata* as vulgar and traditional, and sees itself as modern, Southern, middle-class, and urban. It is this identity, and the ways in which it can be claimed without necessarily operating and moving outside the 'Brazilian' and its associated discourses, which I will now describe and discuss in the next chapter.

6. The very model of a modern sexuality.

Maia (2009: 771, my translation) has contributed one of the most thoughtful insights into the interplay of sexuality, race, and Brazilian nationhood by productively complicating the picture in her observation that

> [i]dentifications with the nation do not only occur in public spaces and conscious levels, but are intimately connected to structures of sentiments and behaviours, aesthetic perceptions, ideas of femininity, masculinity, and beauty, together defining the possibilities of erotic interest.

She goes on to argue that national identities are not constructed only in simple stereotypes, but in the intersections of many different identity axes. Varied fields of identification, most notably gender, race, class, and sexuality, create the possibility for a Brazilian female sexual subject which is different to the objectifying and racialising stereotype of the *mulata*, but which is neither forced nor chooses to sit outside the 'Brazilian.' Such a construction requires that that which is generally cast outside the 'Brazilian' be brought within the understanding of what Brazilian 'is' and can be, and it was just such a movement that I observed, and will now explain in this chapter. The most common way in which this was expressed to me by middle-class women was in the rejection of the traditional *brasileira/mulata* image of sexuality, and by their promotion of their own sexualities as modern and progressive. They achieve this by constructing these sexualities as being no less Brazilian, just differently so. There is, as is so often the case when it comes to Brazil, no better place to start this examination than with *carnaval*.

Carnaval is very popular in Brazil and the overwhelming majority of people I spoke to looked forward to it, and were sad to see it pass by, with a year to wait until it came around once more. This love of *carnaval* was not without its

reservations however, everybody had particular favourite elements, even loving certain things whilst simultaneously hating others. Angela, for example, relished having time off work, finishing at midday on Friday and not returning until the afternoon of the following Wednesday. She preferred to spend those days at home relaxing, rather than on the streets partying, something she disliked about Carnaval, it being too chaotic for her. Juliana on the other hand loved the parades and the focus on the street. We were all friends and these differences were not an issue, nor for our group of mutual friends who nodded in agreement as we discussed them over coffee in the weeks running up to the start of the holiday. *Carnaval* is, in a sense, all things to all people, and people 'do' *carnaval* in their own way. What must not be forgotten however is that the use of the street during *carnaval* is itself racialised, it is traditionally the time that the street is reclaimed by the poor and dispossessed, the Afro-Brazilian population (Parker, 2003: 223). This includes the *negra* and the *mulata*, who are never cast more in the role of the licentious *puta* than at this moment. I have discussed already that these white middle-class women considered themselves to be equal partners with men on the streets, the public world of the *rua* was where most of my ethnography was carried out. *Carnaval* was one time however that to be a woman on the street could be perceived by them as not an act of agency, but of objectification.

The 'vulgarisation' of *carnaval*

One thing that everyone agreed on was that the defining image of *carnaval* is that of the scantily clad *rainha*, and that this is the defining stereotype of the Brazilian woman, *bunda pra fora* (bottom on show) and sexually available. Marcinha found this particularly objectionable, exasperatedly telling me that

O Brasil, ele vende essa imagem, ele ganha dinheiro com isso, mas não é bem a imagem <u>da</u> brasileira [real]. Mas infelizmente é sua imagem da brasileira, o que sai pra fora, pra uma pessoa que não conhece uma brasileira, ou que veio pra carnaval e viu ela pelada…acho que é uma mulher vulgar.

Brazil sells this image, makes money with it, but it isn't the image of <u>the</u> [real] *brasileira*. But unfortunately its your image of the *brasileira*, the one that goes abroad, for someone who doesn't know a *brasileira*, and who came for *carnaval* and saw her naked...I think that this is a vulgar woman.

On the Monday of *carnaval* I went to my friend Mônica's house to watch the second night of the parades in the *sambôdromo* in Rio de Janeiro, the oldest, largest, and most important of their type in Brazil. In all honesty I had not expected to enjoy an evening of watching parades on television, but only two days after having myself paraded in the Florianópolis, and with a greater understanding of the complexity and competitive nature of the parades, I was keen to see how it was done in Rio, in a *sambôdromo* twice as large as that in Florianópolis. Despite my interest, and the impressive scale of the spectacle, I confess that several hours of coverage took its toll on me, particularly after three consecutive nights of activity. It was only when my eyes grew tired of staring at a television screen that my other senses seemed to kick in, and I began to really listen to what Mônica and her friends were saying. This was to prove to be a felicitous turn of events, as their commentary was far more interesting, to an anthropologist at least, than that supplied by the professionals on the television.

Particularly illuminating were the comments made about the various *rainhas*, whose bodies, caught in the objectifying gaze of the television cameras which focused inordinately on their dancing forms, were rarely far from the screen. There was a loud and impassioned analysis of the costumes, whose very form is an exercise in the art of drawing attention, but the eyes were inevitably, and not accidentally, drawn not only to the costumes themselves but to the excesses beyond the reach of

the costumes, the skin of the wearer. Anyone who has seen the Rio de Janeiro *carnaval* parades will know what I mean when I say that it is remarkable how such extravagant and large costumes can somehow manage to leave so much exposed flesh, it truly is an art on the part of the costume designer. This art was, to my friends, a delicate and tricky one to master, as what was perceived to be an excessive volume of flesh could be used as a means with which to criticise the *rainha*, and by extension the school as a whole. The images of *carnaval* that we are familiar with are so often those of semi-naked women that I had assumed that liking *carnaval*, as they all did, would mean that one also had no problem with displays of bare flesh. When I expressed surprise about their objections they responded that *carnaval* need not be this way, that in the past the focus had been on the costume of the *rainha* and the way she danced, which whilst obviously related to a sexuality and sensuality was not so gratuitous.[1] They were very critical of what they saw as the tendency of some schools to favour more revealing costumes to gain attention, and compensate for their shortcomings in other areas. These were the schools they criticised the most, describing them as *vulgar* (vulgar) and decrying the place of such *vulgaridade* (vulgarity) in *carnaval*.

This was not an expression of prudishness, exuberant sexuality is a part of *carnaval* that they embraced. It was a slippage into what they perceived to be a vulgar form of pornography to which they objected, and could no longer identify with. This was not related solely to the televised and organised competitions and parades, but also to the more participatory side, the often impromptu and fluid *carnaval de rua* (street *carnaval*) in which anyone can become involved, with or

---

[1] They told me that there had been a trend for a few years in the 1990s for *rainhas* to have naked breasts, but that this slipped out of fashion under the weight of public objections and the focus had returned once more to the costume itself, rather than what it left uncovered.

without costumes and membership. The smaller sibling of the *escola* is the *bloco* (literally 'block'), generally a more fluid and informal neighbourhood-based group which parades in the streets rather than the *sambôdromo*. Anyone can participate in a *bloco*, and they often form the focus of the street *carnaval*, if for no other reason than they provide the soundtrack which facilitates the dancing. Mônica is a great lover of *carnaval* and of the tradition of the *blocos*, but was less keen on the modern *carnaval de rua* because

> Todo mundo acha que vale tudo, mas sem se ligar, sem consideração do desejo da outra pessoa, viu? E com a mulherada semi-nua os homens acham que podem tocar em qualquer uma. Um homem bebadaço te tateando, entendeu? É nojento.

> Everyone thinks that anything goes, but without considering what other people want, you see? And with all the women half naked the men think that they can touch anyone they want. A really drunk guy groping you, understand? It's disgusting.

She always feels that she cannot complain because in *carnaval* an expectation of unconstrained sexuality reigns. This leaves her feeling that she has no choice but to either participate and accept whatever may happen, or to participate in such a circumspect fashion that her enjoyment is curtailed.

Carnaval is, famously, a time of inversions and freedoms that are specifically permitted during these four days which Parker (1991: 139) describes as

> the clearest example in contemporary Brazilian life of those peculiar moments when a hidden tradition comes out of hiding and an entire society discovers and reinvents itself – when for a brief few days, myths of origin take shape in cultural performance, the past invades the present, and the sensuality of the body defies sin. It is a time when everything is permitted, when anything is possible.

I take issue with the assertion that these are 'peculiar moments' and with the common description, most famously by Roberto DaMatta (1991), of *carnaval* as a ritualised inversion. These descriptions are accurate to an extent, but they also serve to imply that what happens during *carnaval* is the exception rather than the rule. In

contrast I believe that although the *rainha* exists as *rainha* for only one night in the year, she reflects a wider sense of what constitutes the Brazilian female sexual subject that stretches beyond the 'peculiar moment' of *carnaval*, and is not an inversion so much as a continuation of the representation of a masculinist vision of female sexuality. It is this representation that I repeatedly heard described as vulgar by women who were unprepared to accept that their sexualities must be viewed through a male lens. To best explain how this idea of *vulgaridade* is configured I will first attempt to explain the twin concepts of *ficar* and *namorar*. They are far from fixed and agreed upon concepts and this is not an easy task, but the effort is rewarded by the opening they offer in understanding what *vulgaridade* is, and why it is best avoided.

Ficar and *Namorar*

I had been in Brazil for just over two months, and on this particular day, a Sunday at the end of the summer, my friends Marco and Zé took me to the house of one of their friends, Ana Laura, where a small group was already gathered. It quickly turned into an impromptu little party, but at this early stage my Portuguese was poor and my self-confidence low, and I hid myself away on the fringes, watching and doing my best to follow the conversations flying around the room, but at best catching only words and phrases, which in their isolation told me little. Luckily my plight did not go unnoticed and Letícia, who I had never met before, came over to talk to me. She would go on to become one of my closest friends, but on the first night she took on a sainted position within my heart. The fact that someone made the effort to talk to me, and that we were talking one-to-one, far easier than within a group, meant that my confidence rose and conversation became possible. When I

explained that I was researching sexuality her first question was to ask whether I had heard of *ficar e namorar*? I had heard the words, and had some idea of what they meant, and I encouraged her to tell me more. She gave a lengthy explanation and although my Portuguese was too poor at that stage to comprehend any real complexity I was confident that *ficar* referred to the practice of a fleeting relationship, certainly involving kissing, and maybe extending to sexual intercourse. She told me that it was common in a bar or club to *ficar* with someone, or even several people, and that it did not really have any meaning beyond being 'a bit of fun' with no emotional attachment involved or required. It was not a fixed, stable, and faithful relationship, such as would fall under *namorar*, a far more serious and long term proposition.

This seemed simple enough, and I went home that night eager to write my fieldnotes, feeling for the first time like a real anthropologist, and proud to write that I now understood *ficar/namorar*. Such naivety makes me both cringe and chuckle as I read back now over these notes because *ficar/namorar* would prove to be one of the trickiest concepts to understand. Its meanings seemed to change depending on the situation and the person, and I soon realised that there is no easy, concise, and undisputable definition. My complacency was first shattered three weeks later when I went to a local live music venue with the same group. As the night drew on more and more people joined us, one of whom Letícia pointed out to me and asked me if I knew him. When I said no she explained that he and our friend Michelle had recently got to know each other, and had not stopped kissing since. This sounded to me to be an ongoing situation, and therefore I assumed it had moved from *ficar* to *namorar*, so when myself and Michelle were talking later I asked her what the name of her *namorado* (boyfriend) was. She looked at me as though I were crazy, saying that that

guy was not her boyfriend, just some guy, it was just *ficar*. Now I was confused again, my initial certainty shattered – did I really understand anything?

As time passed I became rather obsessed with understanding what this was all about. I asked virtually everyone I knew at one point or another to explain this *ficar* thing to me, and to report all of their answers would take more space than is available to me here. There were however two general themes amongst the most commonly expressed understandings given to me by middle-class women in Florianópolis.[2] Ana, realising how important it had become to me, thought hard about it before explaining the first theme, *ficar* as a 'thing' in its own right. To *ficar* can mean to kiss someone purely for the pleasure of kissing, or it can lead to the bedroom, and to sex, but with no desire or expectation that it should go any further. Most women I spoke to said they were more likely to just kiss than to continue onwards to sexual intercourse, but in either case *ficar* was an isolated event. The second broad understanding is that *ficar* is a period of courtship premised on the prospect of a stable and faithful *namorar* relationship developing. Marcinha described it as "a possibilidade de ficar pra namorar" (the possibility of *ficar* in order to later *namorar*), but although they can be linked she explained that the two are distinct, telling me that

> Namorar tem compromisso de fidelidade, e tem compromisso de querer um futuro com a pessoa. Ficar, tu só tiver que pensar no presente...Ficar não tem responsibilidade, a não ser que vocês chegem a um acordó…as regras são 'casuais,' tem pessoas que aceitam coisas e outras que não.

> *Namorar* has the promise of faithfulness, and has the promise of wanting a future with the person. *Ficar*, you only have to think about the present...*Ficar* doesn't have responsibility, unless you both come to an agreement...the rules are 'casual,' there are people that accept things and others that don't.

---

[2] I would stress here that these were the commonest understandings that I encountered amongst middle-class women in Florianópolis. In searching for alternative understandings from different places, age groups, social classes, I found very little literature. Perhaps tellingly much of what I did find focused on adolescents and adults younger than my participants – see Silva (2006), and Sterza Justo (2005) for example.

This form of *ficar* was expanded upon for me at length by Gabriella as she explained that even though in this form of *ficar* there is at least the reasonable expectation of *namorar* developing, it is still *ficar*, not yet *namorar*. *Ficar* exists in its own right, and although it is a possible precursor to *namorar*, it is not necessarily so.

One can certainly hope that the other person has no desire to *ficar* with anyone else, but there is no expectation of fidelity and one cannot complain about having been cheated on. Infidelity is therefore impossible within *ficar*, and having very little by way of obligation and responsibility can make this a very uncertain time.[3] Until and unless the relationship becomes a 'relationship' by moving into the territory of *namorar* there always exists the possibility that you could be left disappointed, and without the cathartic release of complaining that you have been cheated on. I said to her that this sounds strange to me, and asked why it would be like this, when it seems on the face of it that it can only lead to heartache? Her answer was both short and not altogether unexpected - it is better for men this way. They can avoid commitment, but still have regular sex. There are many other, and more complex, understandings of *ficar/namorar*, but these two broad conceptions, of *ficar* as either a thing in its own right involving a standalone kiss or sex (or anything in between), or as a stage that can lead to a stable relationship, are the two understandings that I encountered most frequently.

Of these two broad understandings of *ficar* it was the first, the casual concept, that was the most frequently deployed, and often in relation to a nightclub

---

[3] This does not however mean that it has to be uncertain. After I had asked whether she found it hard to be in such a *ficar* relationship when her not-yet-boyfriend had licence, within the logic of *ficar*, to also *ficar* with other women, Luciana explained to me that she trusted him, and he trusted her, and to continue in a state *ficar* allowed them to relax without the pressure that comes with the far more serious status of a *namorar* relationship.

or bar setting, where the culture of the *pegada* ruled. Luciana explained that this consisted of people trying to kiss as many people as they possibly could, often in the form of a competition with friends. She described it as being very Brazilian, and particularly prevalent during Carnaval, and thought it vulgar, distasteful and pointless. More importantly she described it as being something that men like, and that women go along with because they feel that it is something that a *brasileira* should do. This is not to say that she would never kiss someone whilst on a night out, but rather that to do so in a fashion that she perceived to be vulgar held no attraction to her. The competitive element was something that she saw as divisive, something that sets women against each other. Her experience in a previous relationship of *ficar* that had been ongoing for a few weeks was that other women in clubs and bars had made it too easy for the man to find alternatives to her, killing the chances of a progression to *namorar*. In her conceptualisation of the situation it had been the fault of these other, vulgar, women, rather than that of the man in question. The women who would go to a bar and *ficar* with all and sundry were the people that sustain such a Brazilian sexuality that disadvantages *brasileiras* like her, who do not see themselves as prudish, but are explicitly not vulgar.

Lia also described the culture of *ficar* in these terms, as being vulgar and demeaning to women, and also introduced another interesting element, geography. A *paulista* by birth she had then lived for some months in both Rio de Janeiro and Fortaleza, in the Northeast of Brazil, before coming to Florianópolis two years ago. She had therefore had experience of *ficar* in a number of different places, and told me that she particularly disliked going out in Rio de Janeiro because of the behaviour of the men. She had found that they were particularly likely to grope and grab women, and she found this very uncomfortable. Even worse than this was her

perception that *carioca* women seemed to go out of their way to encourage this. She stressed that she was not averse to casual sex, but that the way the women seemed to be was completely without discernment. It was with considerable sadness in her eyes that she described the women as living up to the hated stereotype of *brasileiras* as *putas* (whores). This word was for her difficult to say, and more difficult still to use to describe women, but she felt both sorry for the women in these 'other' parts of the country, and let down by them for perpetuating these stereotypes.

Juliana also linked vulgar sexuality to Rio de Janeiro, but not only to its inhabitants. She told me that just 20 years ago it had been the common view in Florianópolis that *vulgaridade* is so pungent in the air in Rio de Janeiro that it could contaminate even visitors, and that therefore,

> Rio era considerado o lugar das mulheres mais vagabundas…se tu fosse pro Rio e voltava pra cá seria dificil se casar, de tanta discriminação que não existia carioca virgim...dificilmente um pai deixaria filha morar no Rio, não deixaria...e se tivesse filho, não deixaria namorar uma carioca, que ela já era vagabunda.

> Rio was considered the place with the most slutty women...if you went to Rio and returned here it would be difficult to get married, there was so much discrimination based on the idea that there was no such thing as a virgin in Rio...it was difficult for a father to allow his daughter to live in Rio, he wouldn't allow it...and if he had a son he wouldn't let him have a *carioca* girlfriend, because she must be a slut.

The conceptualisation of this particularly Brazilian form of female sexuality was also lamented by Francesca. She also tied it geographically to Rio de Janeiro and the Northeast, and discursively/historically to the imagery of the *brasileira* constructed by the discourse discussed in the previous chapter, the *brasileira* of *carnaval*, of aggressive sexuality, and of easy virtue. It is this *brasileira* that she believed fosters a lack of sorority amongst women, setting them instead against each other in the pursuit of men, becoming the willing *putas* in a game which is inevitably won by men, who by virtue of divide-and-conquer always manage to get what they want.

Competing over men, fashion, and appearance seemed to her to take precedence over all other things, and this means that women's life projects become dedicated only to seeking the approval of men.

Judging (vulgarity) by appearances

If the act of *ficar* is the stage on which such vulgarity is performed there are also various props used to facilitate this performance, and not least among these is the costume. I was with Mário and Letícia in the centre of Florianópolis one night in late November, and given the dogged persistence of winter the temperature was still down in single digits, and we remained well wrapped-up against the chilly *vento sul* (south wind). When the heavens then opened and it began to rain we sought shelter in a bus-stop and waited dejectedly, in near silence, for the downpour to abate. My mind drifted, and was only jerked back to consciousness by the sound of Mário and Letícia giggling. I looked at them quizzically, unsure as to what had tickled them, and Letícia nodded in the direction of a couple who had walked past. The man was dressed in jeans, a t-shirt, and trainers, and his shoulders were hunched up and head bowed down. He was clearly not relishing the bracing night air, but the woman looked even more uncomfortable. She was wearing a tiny top, a skirt that stretched the definition of 'mini' to breaking point, and prodigiously high heels which forced her to totter in a dangerous fashion. Her ensemble was probably about as inappropriate for the weather conditions as was possible, and just the sight of her made me feel warmer. Letícia then turned to me shaking her head ruefully and said "alguém dá pra ela mais tecido, pelo amor de deus" (someone give her more material, for the love of god!). Deeming it necessary to confirm to me that the familiar image of *brasileiras* as sluts was not universal she then added "tu sabe já

que não somos todas assim como ela, né? Vagabundas? (you do know we aren't all like her, don't you? Sluts?).

Ana Laura was also embarrassed, but in her case it was a childhood friend of hers in São Paulo who was the source of the embarrassment, for always wearing "uma mini-saia com bunda pra fora, barriga pra fora, peitos à mostra" (a mini-skirt with her arse out, stomach out, breasts on show). Women dressed in a way perceived to be too revealing were castigated, but much depended on the situation, and the perceived 'taste' of the outfit. Therefore women on the beach dressed in *fio dental* (dental floss) bikinis were dressed appropriately for the context,[4] and women dressed in revealing but classy dresses were also free from negative commentary. The woman on a cold winter's night in a tiny top and shorts, or the woman dressed revealingly and without class were, on the other hand, vulgar. Often this seemed arbitrary, two women wearing what appeared to my untrained eye to be the same outfit could provoke directly contrasting responses, one deemed appropriately dressed and complimented, and the other deemed vulgar and ridiculed. Quintas (2007: 96, my translation) describes that in colonial times the belief was that "fashion portrays the dominant aesthetic...reproduces the interior of the person," and this seems to be a judgement that persists. To dress in a manner deemed sexy was not a problem, the problem came at a perceived tipping point from sexy-to-slutty, and how this reflects a supposed inner nature of the woman. The *rainha de carnaval* wearing a desirably revealing and classy outfit can very easily become whorishly

---

[4] The bikini could move from being perfectly acceptable attire on the beach to being, on one memorable occasion, the cause for Laura to nearly choke on her salad when she saw a woman enter a restaurant wearing only a bikini. Such things, she said, may be acceptable in Rio de Janeiro, but could she not at least put a t-shirt on here? The usage of bikinis by female foreigners, *gringas* is also interesting. They are known to wear 'large' bikini bottoms that do not conform to the 'dental floss' aesthetic, and are seen as conservative. But g*ringas* are also known for a desire to go topless on the beach, something considered taboo and scandalous in Brazil. A *gringa* could therefore presumably be simultaneously a virgin from the waist down, and a whore from the navel upwards.

trashy. This delicate line was the one that the women I knew tried so hard to straddle, and maybe it was that one inch less of heel that prevented them tottering precariously over the line?

Patricinhas

The imagery of Brazil as not just sexual but also as a sexually permissive country is something that I found that women were consistently at pains to distance themselves from. Almost daily I encountered the need and desire to stress that Brazil in general, and 'we' (women) in particular, are not really like 'that.' One way in which this was frequently done was through an active othering of those women that could be seen as perpetuating the stereotype of *brasileira*-as-whore, and one of the women that sought to do this the most was Marcinha. She was hugely exasperated by the way *brasileiras* are represented, and was particularly keen to distance herself from women with fake breasts, short skirts, and excessive make-up. Many women reserved a particular hatred for surgically altered bodies, and often the women judged to have undergone surgery were despised with an intensity that made me uncomfortable. On the occasions I tried to suggest that maybe sympathy would be a more appropriate response, that it is society's disciplining of the female body that drives women to surgery, I was met with scorn.[5] The tendency was to view the women as completely aware, and of sculpting and enhancing their bodies cynically in order to attract men. The trashy surgical alterations of the body were indicative of the trashy vulgarity of the women associated with them. Worse still, these were the vulgar women who attracted and encouraged the kind of men that made certain bars

---

[5] One such pair of gigantic fake breasts once caused Laura to nearly spark a fight on the beach, when she said, a little too loudly, of a woman near us that she and her breasts were ugly and a disgrace. The breasts presumably led Laura to forget that attached to them was a woman with perfectly functioning ears, a woman who did not take too kindly to being described in such a way!

and clubs, and, during *carnaval*, the streets, unbearable for women who disliked being groped and fondled.

In Latin America, as elsewhere, the elites have long linked vulgarity to the poor (Wade, 2009: 117), but this should not lead to the assumption that the dividing line between taste and vulgarity is always located between classes. Lawler (2008: 125-135), using Bourdieu's (1984) theories of taste and class, argues that the middle-class in Britain uses a perceived lack of taste in the working classes in order to bolster its own sense of being cultured and refined, but whilst this undoubtedly happens in Brazil it was even more common for me to hear Other middle-class women being accused of a lack of taste. A general case in point was provided for me by Karla and Celira, both of whom work for a famous chain of clothing stores in the South of Brazil. Working in fashion was a dream for them, but they were becoming a bored with working for their employer because the clothes they were selling were not to their taste. I asked them why this was and Karla explained to me that "aquelas patricinhas que assistem as novelas são as mesmas que compram nossa roupa, infelizmente" (those patricinhas that watch soap operas are those that also buy our clothes, unfortunately). They were working in a sector that sold clothes to people that they considered to not be possessed of good taste or refinement, and this meant that the fashion they had to work with was also, in their eyes, not as tasteful and refined as they would have liked.

I found then that the main fissure was located within the middle-class, and the women described as lacking in taste, as being vulgar, and as dressed in the ways that the tacky *telenovelas* promoted were almost universally the dreaded *patricinhas*, the *fútil* (vacuous) middle-class girls who were seen as sexually available, and all too keen to advertise their availability. This category of women may belong to the

174

middle-class, but it was specifically viewed as occupying a particular nouveaux riche position. They were also overwhelmingly white, and very often in Florianópolis this also means blonde. The imagery of a vulgar female sexuality of promiscuity and loose sexual morals is, as I have discussed, closely tied to the body of a *mulata*, as it is more generally to black women's sexualities across the world (Wekker, 2006: 249). We would expect that the women most likely to be castigated as vulgar in Brazil would therefore be *negras* and *mulatas,* but in Florianópolis itself such accusations of vulgarity were almost universally made against white middle-class women, against the *patricinhas*.

A hotspot for such women was Jurerê Internacional, an expensive and desirable neighbourhood-cum-resort in the far north of the island that is known as the playground of the rich and famous and is often described as Brazil's Ibiza or Miami. It is therefore something of a mystery to me how I came to end up there with Ana and her friends, because although all were middle-class, none was rich, unlike the upper middle-classes and elites for whom Jurerê is home-turf. It may have been an unusual destination for us, but it made for a pleasant enough change, and we spent the afternoon swimming, chatting, and generally just 'being' on the beach. It was busy on the beach and all that one could see were people, meaning that there was no real option other than to people-watch, and the reactions of my friends to two particular women would prove to be illuminating. First a young *mulata* passed by arm in arm with a much older white man, and then a middle aged *branca* who was clearly both wealthy and well acquainted with the surgeon's scalpel. One might imagine that the young woman with the older, presumably wealthier, man would have been commented upon, but she was allowed to pass without comment. Instead it was the older, richer, and more revealingly dressed blonde that was the target, and

was labelled as a *perua*. This means literally a female turkey, and is a slang word for a wealthy middle-aged woman whose perceived *vaidade* (vanity) and *futilidade* (vacuousness) leads her to expensive and tasteless clothing, plastic surgery, and an association of being the 'kept' women of wealthy men. It was explicitly this woman who was the target of the disapproval of my friends.[6]

One of the most extreme reactions of disgust directed at the behaviour of women considered to be vulgar came one day after the samba school rehearsal when after thoroughly enjoying ourselves dancing to the rapidly improving *bateria*, my friend Francesca and I sat with her friend Talita in the square chatting. They had not seen each other for a while and Francesca was telling Talita about her recent activities, and in particular a party that she had been to the previous weekend. It had been held at the house of an Italian with whom she is acquainted professionally, and was full of rich male *gringos* and local *patricinhas*. She had gone straight from the office and was dressed professionally, and straight away felt overdressed. All the other women were "aquela loirinha da ilha" (that type of little blonde from the island), displaying acres of flesh and swooning over the men, competing to draw their attention. She screwed up her face in disgust as she uttered the words, and Talita joined her, mirroring her expression perfectly. They both turned to me and said almost in unison that it was *nojento* (disgusting), and that this is the kind of behaviour that gives Brazilian women such a bad name. I thought at the time that they seemed to be letting the *gringos* off the hook somewhat, only later realising that the behaviour of these men has no impact on them, whereas fellow *brasileiras*

---

[6] It is possible to be a *perua* without drawing insults if it is done with self-awareness, as was apparently the case with Carolina's friend. So dripping in jewellery is she that Carolina described her as "minha amiga dourada" (my golden friend) and joked that it was difficult to look directly at her without being dazzled and blinded by her jewelry. That this friend does this very openly, and even describes herself as a *perua*, means she can 'get away with it' in the eyes of her friends.

behaving in this way gives all *brasileiras*, themselves included, a reputation for behaving, as they saw it, like *putas*.[7]

A few days later Francesca and I were eating lunch in the same restaurant as a woman in her late 30s who is apparently somewhat famous around the neighbourhood for dating older, richer, *gringos*. Francesca made a comment about her but in her efforts to be discreet I did not catch it, although I could tell by the expression on her face that it was negative. I asked her later, and out of earshot of anyone else, what she had said, and she told me that the woman was a dancer, and has an absolutely fantastic body for someone of her age. She lets herself down however in the clothes she wears, which are far too 'young' for her, and the excess of make-up that she uses, which Francesca says make 'everyone' think she looks ridiculous. Even more ridiculous is the fact that she apparently has a different elderly *gringo* on her arm every week. This prompted me to ask, in reference to her previous story,

J – "É uma delas? Que foram naquela festa? Tipo, prostituta? Não, não quero dizer isso….."
    (She is one of those women? That went to that party? Like a prostitute? No, no, I don't mean that........)

F – "........não, concordo contigo, concordo mesmo, é tipo putaria!"
    (………..no, I agree with you, really agree, it is like prostitution!)

J – "Mas, tipo, sem pagamento, né? Não é prostituta mesmo, mas ele paga tudo, né?"
    (But, sort of, without payment, right? She isn't a 'real' prostitute, but he pays for everything, right?)

F – "Não sei as detalhes, sabe? Mas não é normal ficar em volta de gringos velhos, é nojento!"
    (I don't know the details, you know? But it isn't normal to always hang around with old *gringos*, its disgusting!)

---

[7] I often could not prevent myself from pointing out that men seemed to escape largely guilt-free from these discussions, but as Lu explained there was little point in women in blaming men. Opinions of most men are so low that there is almost no expectation that they be any different. Women do however have higher expectations of other women, a desire that they be, and a belief that they can be, better than this.

Even though such women are recognised as not being prostitutes in the literal sense, in terms of accepting money for sex, they are likened to prostitutes, and it is this that sees them become part of the traditional stereotype of *brasileiras*, vulgar by being sexually available to men, and on men's terms.

That vulgarity was more often attributed to white women of the middle-classes than to racial Others is clearly a very interesting and important point, and one which took me somewhat by surprise in its frequency and vociferousness. I would not however like to risk creating the impression that race is not a factor. It absolutely must not be forgotten that even though vulgarity in Florianópolis is linked to white people, these *brancas* were considered to be adhering to a sexuality that was discursively, but not physically, linked to the body of the *mulata*. An example of this broader discrimination was provided by Rita, who had lived and worked for a number of months in Italy. She said that many *brasileiras* who lived there, particularly the *nordestinas*, acted like *putas*. I thought initially that she had said that they all actually were prostitutes and said, incredulously, that they cannot possibly all have been. She laughed and explained that she had not said they all literally were prostitutes, but the vast majority may as well have been, claiming they were looking for Italian husbands and would throw themselves at the men. She felt that *nordestinas* created the impression in Italy that all *brasileiras* were whores, that everyone was guilty by association. Within Florianópolis it was absolutely my experience that white women were more often judged this way, but this does not mean that racially othered women beyond the city were spared.

Sexual modernity

Most women I knew displayed a genuine desire to convince me that the stereotyped *brasileira* did not represent all *brasileiras* and convince me that "we are not all like that." It was perhaps Angela who put it most succinctly when she told me about the stereotyped Brazilian sexuality that

> eu não vejo muita diferença entre a sexualidade brasileira e as outras, viu? O mundo occidental, por exemplo. É uma imagem que eu não acho é verdadiera, eu não vejo muito, assim como, existe uma imagen, que eu acho que o Brasil vende, tá? Do, até o ponto de ter o turismo sexual, que é muito fácil, é fácil 'comprar' uma pessoa que não tem nada pra comer, né?...Quem vende essa imagen da mulher como objeto, é o próprio Brasil, e eu acho isso aí é um absurdo, sabe? Tem essas mulher lá, lá do Carnaval, essas mulher vulgares, de roupinha, isso é um absurdo, gente. Não digo que não existe, mas por que não manda as outras mulher, que também existem! Não é verdade?

> I don't see much difference between Brazilian sexuality and the others, see? The western world, for example. It's an image that I don't think is true, that I don't see much, it's like, there is an image that I think Brazil sells, right? From the, to the extent that there is sex tourism, that it is really easy, it's easy to 'buy' a person who doesn't have anything to eat, you see?...It's Brazil itself that sells this image, and I think that it's absurd, you understand? You've got these women there, there at *carnaval*, these vulgar women, wearing skimpy clothes, this is absurd folks! I'm not saying that it doesn't exist, but why not promote the other women, who exist as well! That's right isn't it?

Throughout my discussions with Brazilian women about the stereotypes and realities of *brasileira* sexuality this one word appeared more than any other - *vulgar*. It was used to describe the culture, the women perceived to feed and sustain the culture, and the resulting imagery of the *brasileira*. Discomfort and a lack of 'fit' with the overtly sexualised image of Brazil, and particularly its women, has also been reported by Heilborn (2006: 56), who found particularly that there was less adherence to unrestrained sexuality than Brazil's stereotyped image would suggest. There is definitely discord between the image of a permissive sexual paradise and the actual exercise of sexuality in Brazil.

Skeggs (1994: 111) argues that generally the 'modern' subject which is rooted in European colonial history cannot be both civilised and sexually vulgar, so vulgarity is something that must be avoided. For middle-class women in Brazil this dichotomy also holds sway, and creates difficulties for those who want simultaneously to be Brazilian and modern. If the discourse of the *brasileira* is constructed on an image of vulgarity, then how can they abandon vulgarity without abandoning the nation? No-one disapproved of or was prepared to forego sex itself, so a way had to be found to differentiate between vulgar and active sexualities. The approach taken by 25 year old Giovana was to limit sex to stable relationships, saying

> Acho que sexo é uma necessidade, uma coisa biológica, mas pra mim tem que acontecer dentro dum relacionamento, sabe? Pra ser uma relação 'completa,' assim. Não consigo conhecer uma pessoa numa noite, e daí transar, tipo sexo casual. Acho que sou bem quadrada nesse sentido, mas pra mim é muito importante a questão de sentimento, eu preciso muito saber o que a outra pessoa tá querendo comigo, o que ele quer.

> I think that sex is a necessity, a biological thing, but for me it has to happen in a relationship, right? For it to be a 'complete' relationship. I can't just meet someone one night and have sex, like casual sex. I think I'm really square in this way, but for me feelings are very important, I really need to know what the other person wants with me, what he wants.

She went on to tell the tale of a particular year in her life that she had been very promiscuous, and how this had left her feeling empty and negative. This experience had maybe tainted her view of casual sex particularly negatively, but had not turned her away from sex. Now it simply had to be sex on her terms and in a way she felt comfortable.

This is one way to counter vulgarity, but it was not the most common attitude that I encountered. For most women it would be somewhat too conservative, limiting and constraining, and no-one wanted to return to the constraints of previous

generations. Juliana, 55 years old, explained to me what things were like thirty years earlier, saying

> Na minha epoca era galinhaça, a gente chamava, era considerada puta, né? A mulher que namorasse muitos homens, que saisse com muitos homens, era galinha, era puta mesmo...Eram mulheres marcadas, que "ela é uma mulher que faz, que faz, chegar no sexo, que faz uma monte de coisa." Então, era marcada. Dificilmente ela casava, ela já tinha rodada dos homens marcados...[Eu - "Reputação?"]...reputação, isso...muito discriminadas, eram mal tratadas mesmo, e hoje? É normal!

> In my era she was a complete slut, that's what we said, she was considered to be a whore, right? The woman that had lots of boyfriends, who went out with lots of men, was a slut, was actually a whore...They were marked women, like "she's a woman that does, that does, to have sex she does lots of things." So she was marked. It was difficult for her to get married, she already had that type of men around her...[me – "Reputation?"]...reputation, that's it...really discriminated against, they were badly treated, and today? She is normal!

30 years ago any woman who had had an active sex life would have been marked and stigmatised, and not a single woman I spoke to would have agreed with this way of judging women. They now considered sex outside of a stable relationship as perfectly acceptable and without stigma, so long as it did not purely serve the interests of men. The vulgarity that they rejected was therefore linked to men's desires, and they instead were constructing a sexual identity and practices that were aimed at serving their own desires.

This is the cornerstone of what they considered to be a 'modern' *brasileira* sexuality, neither chaste nor promiscuous, neither overtly demonstrative nor averse to 'showing a bit of leg,' both literally and metaphorically. One of the first times that I noticed this, needing Rosa to bring it to my attention, was after I had been in Florianópolis for four months. We were in a part of Lagoa da Conceição that has the main concentration of bars and restaurants, and which is also, as Rosa told me,

"cheio de patricinha e mauricinho" (full of *patricinhas* and *mauricinhos*[8]). This made it the kind of place that my friends tended to avoid, a place where *mauricinhos* stand around in groups and *patricinhas* attempt to attract them, in the 'vulgar' fashion that annoyed the women I knew. On this occasion however I had managed to persuade her that we should go there to a new bar, a place called 'Ganesh' that was modelled on a vision of India (probably unrecognisable to an Indian), and which seemed to be an agreeably relaxed venue. The games of attraction and seduction that were dominating our view out of the bar led us to discuss my research and how it was progressing (I felt not too well at that moment). I mentioned that I should probably try to talk to the big groups of *patricinhas* and *mauricinhos* when she suddenly, after offering her opinion about the *patricinhas* that we could see milling around on the road outside the bar, encircled by staring men, drew my attention to a woman sitting behind me. After counselling me to not make it too obvious she told me to discreetly take a look.

When I turned I saw a bored looking young blonde woman, who appeared to be gazing around the bar without saying anything to the young man with her. I turned back to Rosa, and simultaneously frowned and shrugged my shoulders, "so what?" She told me to keep watching, so I, unsure as to what I was supposed to see, turned back around and watched for a minute or so. Bored of this little game, and none the wiser as to what was so interesting about this unhappy looking couple, I was about to turn back to Rosa when it hit me. The penny dropped and it became clear exactly what the woman was doing. She was looking for alternatives to the man she was with, the man whose attempts at engaging her she was rebuffing with little

---

[8] In Florianópolis the terms *mauricinho* and *playboy* were generally used interchangeably, and referred to the male equivalent of the *patricinha*, an empty-headed young middle-class man. The term *playboy*, common in all of Brazil, can take on different meanings in different places and times. For a discussion of the figure of the *playboy* in Rio de Janeiro see Roth-Gordon (2007).

attempt at subtlety. She was observing the other men in the bar, smiling at some and passing straight over others. In contrast with the *patricinhas* outside whose focus was on being seen, she was the one doing the looking. She was the gazing subject, not the object of the male gaze. When I turned round to face Rosa it was with a broad grin. I inclined my head slightly towards the women outside, and then towards the woman that we had been observing, or in all honesty probably staring at, and raised my eyebrows. Rosa nodded theatrically, frustrated that it had taken this supposedly professional observer so long to see what had been instantly obvious to her. The bored woman was playing a dangerous game, for had she been too open or brazen in her observations of other men she could have run the risk of being branded *vagabunda* or *puta*, but she was not letting this hold her back.

To mediate between the desire for sex and the desire not to be labelled as a *puta* one tactic used by women is to allow men to believe that they have seduced them, when really the opposite is true. The first time I met Marcelo and Daniela I asked them how they had first met, and Marcelo, a born storyteller, narrated a long and elaborate tale of how he had seen Daniela at *carnaval*, and being the *malandro carioca* (charming rogue from Rio de Janeiro) that he is had whispered the right words in her ear, at which she was helpless to resist his considerable charms. Daniela collapsed in laughter, and once she had picked herself up from the metaphorical floor said that things had not been exactly as he seemed to remember them. Her take on events was that she had seen him first, and, impressed by his dancing, had made a beeline to him and seduced him. With the potential blow to his ego softened by the praise for his dancing and general attractiveness he was forced to accept that maybe things had not happened exactly as he had remembered. Daniela turned to me and

winked. At other times the most illuminating conversations were those when I was in the company of groups of women who, assuming that they knew me well enough, would treat me as 'one of the girls' as they talked openly about men and sex. One such occasion was with Gabriela and her friends when we all went out to dinner together and they talked about men. They discussed men who are attractive but boring, men who are rich but ugly, men who are too good for one particular woman or another, and men who are not good enough for anyone, all manner of men and situations were discussed, but one conversation in particular about a woman's tale of revenge, and of the power that modern women can hold, stands out in the memory.

Adriana told us that as a young woman, between 16-20 years of age, she had been considered attractive, but not beautiful, and as a consequence although she had had many boyfriends they had always left her when they saw someone who was, in their eyes, more attractive. She had spent her twenties believing herself to be ugly and worthless, and grateful for any attention that she received from men, attention that she had encouraged with the kind of overt displays of sexual availability that were so criticised, and had made her feel ever more worthless. She had accepted *machista* behaviour from men because she was scared of being left alone and discarded, and habitually behaved in a way that she did not believe reflected her 'true' self, and which consequently made her hate and regret that particular period of her life. She was now a 35 year old financially independent woman and explained that as she had moved into her thirties things had improved. Her career was going well, she was happy, and she finally felt resolved and comfortable in her own skin. Many former boyfriends saw this and found it attractive, maybe because they had tired of chasing ever younger women around nightclubs or maybe because they had simply grown up, but whatever the reason she now found that they were increasingly

contacting her to ask if she wanted to give it another go. The 21 year old Adriana would have said yes without hesitation, but now she did not need or want to, took great pleasure in turning these men down. This she did only after making them grovel a little, opening the door slightly before slamming it shut in their faces, as they had once done to her. Her approach met with universal approval around the table as she told us with an ever growing smile on her face about her many moments of revenge, all the while accompanied by our raucous laughter.

One day over coffee Fernanda explained to me that negotiating this tightrope between a vulgar sexuality and a conservative sexuality is the greatest difficulty for *a mulher moderna* (the modern woman). The eroticism that cuts through Brazilian culture is, in her estimations, a 'good thing,' but the place of the woman within this is fraught with danger. You are damned as a *puta* if you do, and damned as a *virgem* if you do not, and she had no desire to be either. Finding the middle road between these two poles is no path of least resistance, but in her opinion finding this space between virgin and whore, saint and sinner, was difficult, but worth the effort, not least in terms of sexual pleasure. She believed that traditionally few Brazilian women experienced sexual pleasure because Brazilian men are not raised to believe that they even feel it. She thought that historically this led to the idea that those women who do feel pleasure must be *putas*, and she was not prepared to accept this. Sexual pleasure was extremely important for her, it was something she linked to being an independent and fulfilled woman. As a woman who enjoys sex, and has no need of money from men (the importance of which we will see in the next chapter), she can break free from the traditional, be it as *puta* or *virgem*, to claim a modern identity.

The importance of women's pleasure was also foregrounded by Francesca when she asked me why sex even has to be related to relationships?[9] Why does love even have to enter into the equation? She felt no shame in telling me that she had had casual sex with men she met in bars and clubs, simply because they were attractive and she wanted to. In these moments she claimed to want anything but romance, and that she and her friends had often complained to each other about the insistence of some men to engage in pillow talk and the slow, measured, approach to sex that she thought men believed women wanted. She was the first to criticise *machista* behaviours and abuses by men, but she saw no harm, and a lot of good, in the procurement of sexual pleasure by two people. She ended her critique of the perception that sex must always be linked to romance by saying that

> Por que é que homens sempre acham que queremos mais que sexo, que temos um sentimento bem emocional do começo? Que sexo é uma coisa do coração e não do corpo mesmo?...[o que queremos] não é aquela coisa de cuidar a mulherzinha na cama, bem romantico. É sexo mesmo...eu tô falando de pôr o fio no buraco!

> Why do men always think that we want more than sex, that we have an emotional feeling right from the start? That sex is a thing of the heart and not of the body?...[What we want] isn't that thing of taking care of the little lady in the bed, really romantic. Its real sex...I'm talking about just sticking it in the hole!

With this deliciously crude comment she made the point she wanted to. Sometimes sex is just sex, and it does not need to be accompanied by displays of romance that are usually, she thought, an artifice that men feel they should engage in. What was important to her was only that two people do what both want and desire.

This is reflective of the sense that I developed whilst in Florianópolis that not only are women less likely to be judged negatively for having active sexualities than

---

[9] Sexual pleasure need not, of course, even involve men, as Denise gleefully told me as she recounted the story of an Ann Summers-style party she had been to. She and her friends thought that the saleswoman presented her products purely with the idea that they could give pleasure to a couple, or enhance the pleasure of husbands. They did not hesitate to inform her that their husbands were the last people on their minds at that moment.

previously was the case, as described above by Juliana, but also that they are less likely to give a damn if they are. Lu told me stories of having hitched rides with her friends on cargo ships on trips up the Brazilian coast. The sailors had always been on strict instructions not to pester the women, but she and her friends were under no such restrictions, telling me, with the sleaziest of grins on face, that they had their pick of the men if they so desired, but were protected from harassment by those that they did not interest them. It was her and her friends that were in charge, they had the power and they were the ones who pursued and seduced the men. They cared little for reputation and what men might think. Paula also thinks that it is positive that nowadays women initiate relationships with and seduce men. She said that women know what they want and go and get it, and whilst aware of the danger that they be viewed as *vagabundas* they are less inclined to care, secure in the knowledge that reputation matters less than once it did.

Brazilianising sexual modernity

That there is space created for infidelity within the discourse of traditional Brazilian sexuality, specifically where it relates to male sexuality and *machismo*, was no great surprise for me. What was unexpected was the suggestion, made relatively frequently, that women could also be unfaithful, similarly as free from feelings of guilt as the men were presumed to be. Francesca was one woman who expressed this sentiment, telling me of opportunities she had in the past to be unfaithful, but which she did not take, feeling that it was the wrong thing to do. With hindsight she regretted this, particularly when related to those relationships that had ended due to the infidelity of the man, and felt that if he was going to do it without being judged too severely by society, why not her? Vanessa and Luisa both also talked about

infidelity as being an integral part of Brazilian sexuality, and whilst decrying it in men they both claimed a role for women within this. Vanessa was particularly strident in this respect, arguing that the importance of sex and passion in Brazil explains what she considered to be the high incidence of infidelity, because when the passion dies in a relationship any Brazilian, female as well as male, will be tempted to seek it elsewhere. She conceptualised this as being different to the vulgar promiscuity of stereotype, which is about pleasing men, and instead understood it as being fuelled by her very Brazilian need for passion and pleasure *for herself*. This allowed her to be sexually active within a framework of Brazilian sexuality, but in such a way that she could separate herself from the stereotypes that she looked upon as negative and vulgar. Hers then became a modern middle-class sexuality which was constructed within framework of Brazilian sexuality.

Male infidelity was often linked explicitly to the South, and most particularly to Rio Grande do Sul, the state often described to me as the most *machista* of them all. For a long while I had puzzled over how a region described by so many people as the most modern and liberal in Brazil could be gripped by the paradox whereby the gendered and sexual culture is gripped by such a conservative cultural discourse as *machismo*. I never did quite get to the bottom of this, but what was clear was that women were using elements of *machismo* and turning them to their advantage, and that this was based on the understanding of modernity being developed by, and for, women. Francesca explained to me once that Brazilian, and particularly *gaúcho*, masculinity was based on the paradox that men relied on women to be sexually available, but that women also must remain chaste, as no man wants to have sex with a woman that has already slept with another man. She laughed at this contradictory expectation that women be both virgins and whores, and the result that men were

destined to be unable to achieve the masculinity they crave due to the impossibility of the system. It is maybe the greatest of contradictions that in being 'modern,' sexually active but not to the point of vulgarity, women like her were in a sense making this Brazilian culture of sexuality work by making it possible.

We have seen that there were two female positions available within the discourse of sexuality, the archetypes of the brazen and sexually available *mulata*, the whore, and the conservative and religious white Portuguese woman, the virgin. Because she only has sex with her husband, and then through a hole cut in a sheet, her role in the sexual discourse was therefore removed from sexuality to a large degree. It was solely a reproductive role that was heavily policed to prevent sex with non-white men, and ensure she act as the protector, the guarantor, of whiteness (Nascimento, 2007: 52). These modern women refused to follow this preordained path that their whiteness demanded, but despite this they managed to construct an identity that could fit within this discourse. Combining in their bodies the decorum of the *branca* and the sexuality of the *brasileira* (*mulata*) allowed them to be both Brazilian and white, without contradictions. In understanding how men 'work' and what makes them tick they are able to both avoid the worst excesses of Brazilian male sexuality and claim those elements that they want. This then enables them to construct a female sexuality that is distinct from the historically constructed female sexualities whilst retaining enough elements to remain within the understandings of the 'Brazilian.' By taking on the role more commonly understood as pertaining to the man they can subvert the system of Brazilian *machismo* whilst remaining within it, and thereby access the national legitimacy it confers. Instead of viewing sexuality as a game between two opposing teams they see it as more fluid, as more of a free-for-

all in which they, as privileged women in terms of race and class, are able to avoid occupying a particular role at one of the poles.

The rural persistence of a colonial conservatism

In her discussion of female sexuality in the Netherlands Wekker (2006: 249) also suggests that white women are afforded agency through their privileged racial positions, and are therefore able to construct black women's sexuality as excessive and inferior compared to their own, that "an implicit self-image of white women is constructed: she is free to take decisions, in control of her own sexuality and her own body." In the construction of the modern sexual subjectivities that I am discussing in Florianópolis race is also undoubtedly a factor, but not purely through the rejection of a stereotype of the black woman. What I argue is that whilst a similar construction of subjectively experienced freedom and control is made, its more direct Others are the stereotypes of white women. These are both the vulgar white *patricinha*, who we have seen already being promiscuous in the service of men, and also the conservatism assumed of the white woman living in the *interior* (the countryside), who stands in as the figure of the Luso-Baroque colonial *branca*. Marcinha told me that

M – "Eu acho que fazer sexo é uma coisa como tomar banho, que todo mundo faz, é necessário, todo mundo deveria fazer, faça com corpo, e esqueça do coração!"
(I think that having sex is just like having a shower, that everyone does, its necessary, everyone should do it, do it with the body and forget the heart!)

J – "Tu acha que essa visão do sexo é comum?"
(Do you think that this vision of sex is common?)

M – "Acho que é, porque, sabe, os pais deixam as filhas terem namorados em casa, e elas entendem que é uma coisa normal, não é suja, nem feia. Quem é duma familia rígida, que não deixa isso, não vai achar que é uma coisa natural, boa.

(I think that it is, because, you know, parents allow their daughters to have boyfriends in the house, and they [the daughters] understand that it is normal, it's not dirty or ugly. Someone from a strict family, which doesn't allow it, isn't going to think that it is natural, or good.)

When I then asked what she meant by a strict family she explained that she was referring to conservative and traditional families, particularly in the *interior*. They are the opposite of the cosmopolitan, liberal, educated, middle-classes families in which she and her friends had been raised.

Angela also discussed the place of an urban lifestyle and education in the formation of sexual identities, and explicitly tied this to the South of Brazil, saying that

> Eu sempre noto que as pessoas são muito abertas em Porto Alegre...quando eu tinha quinze anos meu objetivo era, 'aos 25 vou ter formada, vou morar na minha casa, e não vou ser virgem,' é assim que foi na minha cabeça. E não tinha essa merda da guriazinha, aquela moçinha, sabe?

> I always notice that people are very open in Porto Alegre...when I was fifteen my plan was 'by 25 I will have graduated, live in my own house, and not be a virgin,' it was like that in my head. And I didn't have that thing of the little girl, that little darling, you see?

She said that she may not have been typical but that her contemporaries from the educated middle-classes were similar, and that in Porto Alegre in the early 1970s these attitudes were not wholly unusual. She then picked up the story again, saying

> Quando eu tinha 27 anos, e ainda tava virgem…e eu tava "porra!" Tô dois anos atrasada no meu cronograma! E aí começei a namorar o cara que arrumou meu carro, e daí…[Eu –"Só por isso?"]…[nós dois rindo] só por isso sim, objetivamente!"

> When I was 27, and was still a virgin...and I was "shit!" I'm two year behind on my timetable! So from there I began to date the guy that fixed my car, and from there...[Me – "Just because of that?"]...[both laughing] just because of that, objectively!

She was adamant that this kind of very modern outlook, which was driven by her desires rather than societal expectations, was only possibly then, nearly 40 years ago, due to her social position, as an educated, urban, middle-class woman.

She impressed upon me that even today in the *interior* this is not possible, and illustrated this with the following story that follows on from her describing the *interior* as a particularly traditional place, where men still have control over women.

> E isso se reflete na sexualidade também. Por exemplo, uma, aconteceu uma coisa no interior, um tempo atrás, que tinha uma festinha e uma guria desmaiou, seja ou que for, não se bebeu ou usou drogas, e ela desmaiou no banheiro e dois guri pegaram ela, pra ter relações sexuais, e um terceiro filmou, até tava na internet, tá? E uma mulher de lá disse, na televisão, disse assim, ô, "mas a guria também não era nenhuma flor." Tu imagina? Que foi culpa dela, culpa dela, sabe? É o fim do pecado isso, né?...E eu acho que essas coisas continuam mais no interior, e menos nas grandes cidades!

> And this is reflected in sexuality as well. For example, something, something happened in the countryside, a while ago, there was a little party and a girl fainted, I don't know why, she didn't drink or take drugs, and she fainted in the toilet, and two boys grabbed her, to have sex with her, and a third one filmed it, it was even on the internet, right? And this woman from there said, on the television, she said "but the girl wasn't exactly an angel." Can you imagine? That it was her fault, her fault, you know? It's the pits, isn't it?...And I reckon that these things keep on happening more in the countryside, and less in the big cities!

In the *interior*, the 'sticks,' women are still blamed for being raped, a conservatism that she does not think exists to such a degree in the city. The city, and particularly the Southern city, becomes the place where modernity can flourish, and she believes that a woman like her can have control of her sexuality.

Regionalised identities and the *sulista* woman

What we therefore see developing is a both regionalised and urbanised variant on Brazilian femininity, or rather a variant of Brazilian femininity believed by its proponents to be regionalised and found in the cities of the South. Oliven (2006: 303), talking specifically about Rio Grande do Sul, argues that people have often found it difficult to portray their regions as distinct at the same time as tying them to a national whole, not least due to an internal heterogeneity which means that

"regionalism has many facets, articulating the positions of very different groups and encompassing the claims and interests of elites and the masses." This is combined with the efforts, particularly under President Vargas, to construct the overarching discourse of Brazilian national identity that politically, discursively and culturally tied the nation together, in part by reducing the potency of regional identifications. Unchanged through successive governments and military dictatorships it was only with the return to democracy in the mid-1980s that Rio Grande do Sul - rich, productive, and with high indices of health and education – came to the forefront of a reasserted regionalism (ibid.: 307). I argue that this can be extended to the South as a region, and that it is this regional association with modernity and the clear Southern links to whiteness that together enable white middle-class women to construct a sexual identity built around their own specific location, but without losing sight of the national whole, of Brazil.

The red-haired *gaúcha* who told me confidently that she is both Brazilian and *gaúcha* was finding ways in which to assert belonging both to Brazil, and to a specific part of Brazil which may not fit the metanarratives of Brazilianness, but which is indisputably part of the national whole. President Vargas had brought various racial and regional identities together under the rubric of the Brazilian whole, but omitted to do so with regionalised whitenesses (Guimarães, 2002: 88). These women seem to me to be engaged in doing just this, and therefore no-one I spoke to was claiming a *gaúcha* or *sulista* identity in a way that diminished their claims to Brazilian identity, nor in the sense Joseph (2000) noted regarding *porteños* that they were using a regionalised identity to flee from a national identity. Quite the opposite in fact, they were desperate to assert that the regionalised identity, one which

193

accommodated their race and histories, was part of the national whole, a Brazilianness that was always placed atop the regional.

This meant that when I asked Marcinha whether she considered herself to be more *gaúcha* than *brasileira* she replied that

> claro, tem efeito na identidade, onde tu cresce. Mas não é tudo, sabe? Não é possivel que todo mundo dum lugar é igual. Então acho que não sou gaúcha como todas as outras. Mas sou brasileira.

> clearly where you grow up has an effect on your identity. But it isn't everything, you know? It's not possible for everyone to be the same. So I don't think that I'm a *gaúcha* like all the others. But I am Brazilian.

She was stressing to me that the Brazilian was the most important element, and certainly less negotiable than her *gaúcha* identity. Whenever European heritage was raised it was not to draw them closer to Europe, nor to distance from either Brazil of Latin America generally. It was instead a historical fact that was incorporated into the Brazilian story. European immigration as just another part of the Brazilian narrative. It makes the South 'different' to other regions, but it was never used to place the South outside of a Brazilian whole, nor to suggest that it is different because of race, indeed any suggestion on my part that it might be was met with hostility. [10] What they were doing, on the contrary, was allowing for the placement of whiteness within Brazil, and this could be achieved by stressing the regional. It was just as O'Dougherty (2002: 170) argues, that whereas "[i]n the United States ethnicity is a common idiom for identifications, among Brazilians the analog would be region."

---

[10] Only very occasionally was the South described to me as 'better' than the rest of the country. This argument was most frequently deployed defensively, in response to the suggestion that white Brazilians are not 'real' Brazilians. For example, in the aftermath of Lula's comments suggesting the impossibility of whiteness in Brazil, as Marcinha said to me, "como ele vai dizer que não sou brasileira, quando eu pago muito de impostos pro Brasil?" (how can he say I'm not Brazilian, when I pay so much in taxes to Brazil?).

Different values can be attached to different elements perceived to be 'of' different regions in Brazil, and can be differently valued at different times. For white *sulista* women the lack of congruence between the national image of the *brasileira* sexual subject and their own appearances can be mediated by the construction of a particular *sulista* (but still Brazilian) sexual subject and its insertion into a national discourse. Perhaps the most globally recognisable face of the Brazilian woman in 2009 was that of the *gaúcha* model Gisele Bündchen. It is undeniable that in large measure her success is due to the globalised Eurocentric preference for blondeness as a beauty ideal, but as a woman who does not conform to the stereotypical image of the *brasileira*, namely the *mulata* carnaval queen, white women in the South can also see something of themselves reflected in her. This is what led Francesca to say

> Eu acho que é assim, tá, que a Gisele Bündchen, uma loira, branquela, claro, acho que ela mostrou, sem saber, sem querer, como uma brasileira que nunca foi pelada, talvez mudou essa imagem, de ser uma brasileira que é sexy, e que não é vulgar.

> I think it's like this, right, that Gisele Bündchen, blonde and really white, sure, I think that she showed, without knowing or wanting to, as a Brazilian woman that never got naked, she maybe changed that image, by being a Brazilian woman who is sexy, and that isn't vulgar.

She went on to say that this is not due to her being white or blonde, and that *mulatas* are not vulgar by nature, stressing that the newsstands of Brazil are full of pornographic magazines which display prominently on their covers women who are certainly in the category considered vulgar, and who as often as not are blonde. It is rather that in contrast to the imagery by which the world understands Brazilian women as sexually available and vulgar, there is a woman, Gisele Bündchen, who shows it is possible to be a sexy woman without being vulgar. This, in a fellow *sulista* woman, was the image that they had of themselves.

Even for those not from the South, for whom a *sulista* identity is therefore not immediately claimable, there was a sense that their whiteness and their attitudes to sexuality had found a place in the South. Luisa, the red-haired (*ruiva*) woman from Minas Gerais, who had never completely felt at home in her home state, or rather had never felt accepted as either a *mineira* or a *brasileira* there, felt that in the South, where she was less 'different' and her hair did not immediately mark her as 'Other,' she had found a place of belonging, she had found a Brazil where she was allowed to be *brasileira*. This is not just racial though, it is also a place where her determination that her own sexuality be controlled by her, and not a man, also found acceptance within a sizable group of women of shared outlooks. The key then for these women is to counter a discourse that structures Brazilian femininity and sexual identity as being tied either to the body of the *mulata* or to the white Portuguese woman, and to instead find space for white *Brazilian* women. Xuxa may, as Simpson (1993) argued, have felt it necessary to stress her *brasileira* identity, but she *is* Brazilian, a *gaúcha* from a place where whiteness and blondness are far from rare. 'Whiteness' in Brazil must therefore be recognised as far more nuanced than Simpson and most other scholars who examine Brazil seem to credit. The notion that Xuxa would feel it necessary to claim a Brazilian identity would seem absurd to most women I met in the South of the country. They see their whiteness as a constitutive element of Brazil, just as *negra*, *mulata*, and *índia* are, because in their part of Brazil it unambiguously is. The academic tendency to homogenise whiteness or read it purely hermeneutically therefore actually makes any understanding of race in Brazil even more difficult to grasp, and fails completely to account for at least one whole region. The denial of whiteness in Brazil seems to me less a contribution to antiracism struggles than a result of the persistence within the academy of the

colonialist tropicalising discourse which can be traced back to European beliefs regarding the impossibility of whiteness in the tropics. What is needed instead is a greater engagement with whiteness, and a good deal less oversimplification.

Complicating whiteness

Whilst not denying for an instant the presence, and great power, of white supremacy and racism in Brazil I have shown in this chapter that whiteness in Florianópolis is constructed in opposition to other whitenesses as much as it is against blackness. There are other examples that also show that whiteness, and race in general, should not be oversimplified, and one such is Davis' (2000) historical examination of Carmen Miranda's role within the development of samba music in Brazil. The potential parallels between Carmen Miranda and Xuxa, as white women who may seem to be 'out of place' in Brazilian popular culture, are avoided by Davis as he negotiates the relations between black and white in early 20th Century Brazil. He argues that a major part of Vargas' attempts to forge a Brazilian national identity was the commoditisation of popular culture, an attempt to subsume it into the officially prescribed *brasilidade* (ibid.: 183). In this state appropriation of samba it was whitened, and moved from its roots as a black working-class art form, as white performers, composers and sponsors came to the centre stage, and of these Carmen Miranda was the most popular public (white) face that emerged (ibid.: 184). Vargas wanted European immigrants to Brazil to adopt an outlook and identity of *brasilidade*, and Miranda becoming the public face of a musical form that acted as a cipher for the nation was an effective tool in the promotion of this. She appropriated the style and (stereotyped) imagery of Afro-Brazilian culture, most famously as the

heavily stylised *baiana*,[11] and spoke to the popular urban classes in their shared experiences of a country riven by intersecting inequalities. In so doing she worked in the interests of the white elite, and the considerable inequalities and power relationships they sought to preserve, but also crucially played a part in forming a bridge between white and black in the construction of a unified *brasilidade* which is a complex and nuanced construction (ibid.: 189).

It is this recognition that *brasilidade* has not been so heavily dichotomised between black and white that Simpson (1993) appears to miss. Those who construct whiteness as foreign in Brazil homogenise and construct white totems, creating a free-floating whiteness 'above' Brazil that never seems to be rooted on the ground, and which is divorced from either the social or corporeal experiences of white people. There is, however, no danger that the white women with whom I conducted my research would make such a mistake themselves. Not only are they rooted to the ground, but from the perspective that being on the ground in the South, and more particularly in Florianópolis, offers, there is no doubt that whiteness comes in many different forms. I have described the construction of a sexual identity which rejects the *mulata* image of the Brazilian female sexual subject, the construction of which is tied to the South, to a *sulista* identity which is without doubt racialised as white. I therefore could not, and would not, argue that race is not a factor, for clearly the imagery that is rejected, that of the vulgar woman who serves men's sexual desires, is inscribed on black bodies. I seek instead to stress that the heterogeneity of whiteness is impossible to ignore in Florianópolis, and the rejection of both the virgin and the whore in the construction of this identity is based, in a practical sense,

---

[11] A woman from the state of Bahia whose inhabitants are assumed to be black.

on the women who are considered to display such features. Within Santa Catarina, if not Brazil taken as a whole, far more frequently these are other[ed] white women.

This tendency is even more marked in the case of gendered identities than those specifically tied to sexuality. In a sense the process is the same, in both cases there is a reaction against tradition and a favouring of modernity, but whereas the whore is located discursively in the body of the *mulata*, and practically in the white *patricinha*, when it comes to gender there is less ambiguity. In terms of gender the reaction is against a woman cast in the role of the saint, and this woman is both practically and discursively rendered as white. She takes three main forms, the figures of the *patricinha*, the *manezinha*, and the woman from the *interior*, all three of whom are, in slightly different ways, constructed as conservative, traditional, and subservient to men. When it comes to gender these are the features that women pursuing modernity most need to reject. All three of these figures explode the myth that white Brazilians are homogeneous, all middle-class, and tend only to construct their selves against a non-white Other. The next chapter will therefore describe the positions that these women occupy in the discourse and imagination, and through this will demonstrate how modernity is claimed not only through control of one's sexuality, but also through education, career, and non-patriarchal gender relations.

7. The gendered heterogeneity of whiteness.

Whilst chatting to Francesca in a café one day I took her description of a woman she vaguely knew as a *patricinha* as an opportunity to ask her what kind of man this woman would be interested in. She laughed, and told me it certainly was not me. I asked her why not, and she replied "tu teria que ser mais alto, mais bonito, bem vestido, e mais 'mainstream,' e teria que ter uma carreira boa, não rico, mas, não, na real tu teria que ser rico" (you would have to be taller, better looking, well-dressed, and more 'mainstream,' and you would have to have a good career, not rich, but, no, in truth you would have to be rich). Seeing the mock offence written across my face she laughed again, and assured me that this was a good thing, if I were like that we would not be friends. At the time made me feel better, but, thinking back over it now, she did say better looking.............. (from my fieldnotes, Friday 3rd July, 2009).

We have already seen that some white women in Florianópolis have constructed identities that value an ideal of modernity which stands in opposition to the traditional forms of (racialised) sexual roles in Brazil. These white women construct their sexual identities in opposition to both the images of the *mulata* and the white Portuguese colonial woman, respectively the sexualised and asexual property of the slave-owning Portuguese man. In middle-class Florianópolis the *mulata* remains more in the sphere of the imagined, and white women instead are taken as the corporealised representations of both vulgarity and tradition, and both the traditional *mulata* and *branca* stereotypes that were attached to them were rejected. The question now is whether this evidence of white heterogeneity in the formation of sexual identities can also be applied to considerations of gender. Taking Brazil as a whole Guimarães (2002: 69) informs us that middle/upper-class women have benefitted disproportionately from advances in gender equality, and as we know that the white population is statistically wealthier than the various Other racial categories this leads logically to the conclusion that in Brazil white women are *as-a-group* better off in terms of gender equality than their sisters of colour.

This conclusion may apply when we take Brazil as a nation, but when we examine Florianópolis as a city, or the South of Brazil as a region, it is clear that the heterogeneous nature of whiteness means that we must complicate this conclusion. The empirical dominance of whites within the middle-class in Brazil tends to confer a sense of homogeneous middle-classness onto white people, but this does not mean that it goes unrecognised that white people can be, and often are, poor. This observation is most often used to highlight that *negros* are still almost always poorer (Telles, 2004: 110), and it is absolutely necessary that this not be forgotten in a country where *negro* poverty is far deeper and more wide-spread. When I stress then that Florianópolis has not only a white elite and middle-class, but also a white working-class and white poverty, I therefore do so not to redress a perceived imbalance, but rather to highlight that this makes it impossible to consider whiteness in the city as homogeneous. White women do not form a homogeneous group, and I will now demonstrate how social class has an important bearing on the gender identities that they were constructing. With gender, as with sexuality, a desire for modernity is at the centre of these identities, and the working classes and the poor were often used as a repository for those elements of tradition and backwardness that they rejected. This does not mean however that even the middle-class is homogeneous, in fact the middle-class *patricinha* with whom we became acquainted in the previous chapter is again a very important Other, and is considered to embody a gender identity that is not 'modern.'

Patricinhas as carriers of tradition

There is a particular type of voice associated with *patricinhas*, and although this is not a foolproof, advisable, or fair way to judge people, such judgement

occurred frequently. The voice is child-like, high in pitch and unthreatening, the kind of voice that some men find attractive in its supposed femininity and submissiveness. For a different kind of man, Danilo for example, it is grating and irritating, and he in fact went so far as to describe someone we met who spoke in this fashion as "chata, bem patricinha, a voz dela me irrita pra caramba!" (irritating, really *patricinha*, her voice irritates the hell out of me!). For some men raised in the culture of *machismo* however it speaks directly to them of the way a woman 'should' sound, and it is in this sense that it appears to exist solely for the benefit of men. This perceived focus on the attraction and retention of men is perhaps the single defining criticism of the *patricinha* by 'modern' woman. We have seen already how such women were believed to have sexual identities that were focused on men's pleasure and were thought to exemplify a traditional sexuality that supports and enables *machismo* by emphasising what is construed as a vulgar promiscuity that serves men's interests and desires. So, as I will now go on to argue, are they perceived to have gender identities that support *machismo* and a traditional gender regime that stands at odds against the modernity that their middle-class sisters seek.

This middle-class of *patricinhas* (and their male counterparts, the *mauricinhos*) was, blessedly for most people I knew, distanced not only culturally, but also geographically. Constructed as being more present amongst the *classe média nativa* (local middle-class) they were imagined to live, work and play in the centre of the city, rather than the neighbourhood I lived in, Lagoa da Conceição, found in the west of the island. It quickly became clear to me that in the journey taken from the centre to Lagoa da Conceição one moves not only through space and time, but also culture and ways of living. Lagoa da Conceição is undoubtedly comfortably middle-class and was frequently praised for its natural beauty and its artistic and cultural air,

and although I would stop short of calling it bohemian there is a tendency to value art and education over wealth and acquisition. It is also widely considered to be the neighbourhood with the greatest proportion of *gente de fora* (outsiders), mainly *gaúchos* and *paulistas*, but also foreigners, and if there is one thing that united these disparate groups it was disdain for the *classe média nativa*. Just as O'Dougherty (2002: 47) found in São Paulo that "most often the nouveaux riches were the favourite target for ridicule" so too did I find that the target of most opprobrium was the kind of middle-class deemed to be vulgar, and perceived to be turning middle-class space into a cultureless vacuum. This influences, for example, the preference amongst many people I knew for socialising more in places coded as lower class, in the small bars with their plastic tables and chairs covered in promotional material for the popular beer brands, rather than the fancier bars that are deemed to lack character, and also characters.

When it was unavoidable for people I knew to mix socially with the *patricinhas* or nouveaux riche it could be an uncomfortable experience, as Luisa expressed when she told me of just such an occasion. It was the birthday of her colleague and a large group from work had gone to an expensive and exclusive bar, not a place she would normally go to. Everyone else spent their time flirting and scouring the room, seeking to be seen, as she, bored, sat in a corner alone missing the conversation that she is used to during her usual nights out in simple bars with friends who are 'more like her.' It is inevitable that sometimes *patricinhas* and *mauricinhos* do mix in the same places as the 'modern' middle-classes, but the difference lies in the ways in which they use spaces and their motivations for doing so. Let us consider the example of the launch of a new book as was given to me one day by Lu after she had attended just such an event the previous night. These events

are the natural habitat of the 'modern' middle-classes, moments when art, intellectuality, and high culture come to the forefront, but they are also events that attract the press and photographers, and therefore those who are interested in being seen. Lu is a very sociable woman who is certainly not averse to champagne, canapés, and networking, but told me that the event had been ruined for her by the short-skirted, made-up, high-heeled, and surgically-'augmented' *patricinhas* who were, by her account, vacuous and *fútil* and disinterested in the art and the book. "A maioria foi pra ver e ser visto" (the majority went to see and be seen) she told me, lamenting that even a cultural event could be ruined by the *patricinhas* and their desire to place themselves on show for men.

In keeping with what Bourdieu (1984) described among the French middle-classes the severest judgements were made by those people I knew who were in some way involved with what Golgher (2008: 111) calls the 'creative sector,' those involved in the industry of cultural production, be it artistic, literary, or intellectual. These were reserved for those of the Other middle-classes who were perceived to be philistines, and not those of the lower classes. That some in the lower classes might lack culture could be excused and understood by their poverty, and much of lower class, and particularly Afro-Brazilian, culture was in fact lauded, particularly in terms of music, art, and folklore. That there could be uncultured nouveaux riche people whose middle-class positions could and should enable them to be cultured, as those in the creative sector considered themselves to be, was therefore baffling and disappointing. As a consequence of their perceived failure they were therefore far more harshly judged than their poorer compatriots. There was no sense in which either the middle-class or white people were believed to be more cultured, and nor was a European heritage seen as bequeathing culture. The *nativo* middle-class in

Florianópolis is comprised primarily of the descendents of Italian and German immigrants, but unlike the tendency Joseph (2000) found amongst middle-class *porteños* to tie their self-ascribed cultured nature to their European heritage, many were assumed instead to be *fútil* and nouveaux riche. They were the foremost Other in the constructions of self made by those believing in their own modernity, and for women this meant that an imagined *patricinha* was constructed as all that they did not wish to be.

The importance of education

I stressed in Chapter Four that education is an important factor in the construction of general middle-class identities, and if anything I would argue that it assumes an even greater importance when considering 'modern' gender identities. Access to higher education opened up considerably for women during the course of the 20th Century, to the extent that now the average Brazilian woman remains in education for longer than the average man, and there are more women registered on the most highly valued courses, such as medicine and law (Góis, 2009: 745, 747). You will remember that Angela talked of being urban and educated as the two factors that facilitated her ability to form her own plan of how her sexual identity would come into being, but actually urbanity and education are not sufficient in and of themselves to guarantee a suitably 'modern' result, it is at least in part a question of the motivation behind the educational achievement. Souza & Lamounier (2010: 63) are right to stress that higher education is seen as a practical investment that can guarantee a middle-class income, but this primarily financial view is tempered by O'Dougherty's (2002: 44) observation that

Having or not having *cultura* (i.e., education and a fine upbringing) functions as a stark division in the social hierarchy...In reference to the nouveaux riches, a lack of interest in education is added to the familiar view of unrefined spending and style.

Taking these two views of what an education might mean to the middle-classes, that it could be viewed either as an investment in a career, or in terms of culture, and working between and across them we see that it is less a matter of the education itself than what one does with it that is important.

A university education is the norm for the middle-class as a whole (Góis, 2009: 755; Maia, 2009: 777), and the *patricinha*, as she was generally constructed for me, is no exception. Summarising the many descriptions that I was given we can construct the archetypal *patricinha* as having been to a good private school, which her parents had no trouble paying for, but generally she will have been too busy with fashion and boys to be suitably prepared for the entrance exams to the Federal and State universities, which she therefore failed. For this composite *patricinha* failing was not a problem because her parents could easily afford to send her to a private university, of which there are many in Florianópolis. It was this kind of young women that Lu, who had worked in a private university, and Alice, who was herself studying at one, described to me. They both painted the same picture of spoilt young women who had not studied hard enough to get into either of the highly regarded public universities in the state, the UFSC or the UDESC, and were instead in the private system, focused more on partying than study. In Florianópolis these private universities were described to me by those who knew them as being comprised by roughly equal quantities of rich kids who had failed the entrance exams for the public universities due to a lack of application, rather than opportunities, and poor kids from the public education system who had very little chance of passing, in their

case a lack of opportunity being the key.[1] As someone once put it to me, the private universities are where one finds the rich and stupid and the poor and determined, and these poorer students that had to work to support themselves through university certainly do not take the opportunity for granted (Góis, 2009: 751; 762). For our *patricinha* however such motivation is believed to be lacking, and who can blame her when she is supposed to not even consider a career as being desirable afterwards?

As she was conceptualised for me she regarded university as a means in which to 'become' a woman, but without the expectation of needing a career afterwards. Instead she will find a man who is financially able to provide for her, and get married to him and start a family. Let us move back to the colonial era and consider briefly what Quintas (2007: 61, my translation) tells us about the raising of white girls,

> The ceremony of the First Communion ensured the sweet, pure girls were launched towards a marriage in grace. The young women were cleansed by the sacrament and hatched. Ready. The magic wand transformed them into women richly prepared to receive the next consecration: marriage.

The girls, ritually cleansed, were ready to become women, by which it was understood that they would marry. The practical considerations going into marriage were of great importance, as Quintas (2007: 62, my translation) goes on to explain,

> The First Communion had already stamped the passport towards adulthood. Now everything would depend on their physical and economic gifts.[2] Maybe more the economic than the physical.

---

[1] Because so many students who have passed through the public school system fail the entrance exams for public universities due to poor preparation within the public system, rather than idleness, there are far more white students, generally middle-class, and far fewer from the lower classes, in which the non-white population is concentrated (Telles, 2004: 124). This further results in the advances made by women generally being concentrated to a far higher degree amongst white women, who outnumber their *negra* and *mulata* counterparts by a ratio of two-to-one (Góis, 2009: 745).

[2] Note on translation – the Portuguese *dotes* was used in the original, a word that means both gifts in general and dowry, a neat double meaning in the Portuguese that sadly does not translate into the English. To use 'dowry' would have been more confusing than to use 'gifts,' so sadly some of the subtlety and poetry of the original is lost in my translation.

In a contemporary middle-class Brazil that is ruled far more by secular forces than was the case two hundred years ago a university education then becomes for many young women what the First Communion was previously. It is a culturally approved rite of passage whose purpose is to ritually prepare middle-class women for adulthood, and therefore marriage, displaying to potential suitors a degree of social and economic standing and persuading them of her suitability as a wife. It then becomes the role of the woman to become a mother, who in her turn has responsibility for raising the next educated generation (Ferreira-Pinto, 2004: 29).

For the woman who has been raised to have no interest in her own career, the career and wealth of a potential husband becomes more important. This clearly then becomes an important consideration when selecting an 'appropriate' man, something that I, as the opening to this chapter reveals, was not deemed rich enough to be. This trajectory is well established, as Gabriela (25), who grew up in a middle-class environment that she considered to 'breed' *patricinhas*, explained,

> A classe média é tradicional, segue uma certa linha de vida, em vez de buscar suas próprias, sabe? Então é meio que todo mundo tem aquela ideia que tu tem que estudar no melhor colegio da cidade, e fazer uma universidade…e casar, e ter filhos…isso é meio a classe média, a que eu conheço…existe um caminho, e isso é o caminho certo…Não tem espaço pra 'cê ser diferente…[e minhas amigas do colegio] são todas loucas pra casar, tipo as que não têm namorado super se sentem solteirona, porque não foram meninas que tinham uma perspetiva além dessa, outra…o mais importante é casar, é isso que dá o sentido à vida.

> The middle-class is traditional, it follows a particular path in life, instead of finding its own way, you know? So it's kind of like everyone has that notion that you have to study in the best school in town, and go to university...and get married, and have kids...that is the middle-class that I know... there's a path, and it's the right path...there's no space for you to be different...[and my old school friends] are all desperate to get married, it's like those that haven't got boyfriends feel really single, because they weren't girls that had any other perspective beyond the standard...the most important thing is to get married, it's this that gives their lives meaning.

She absolutely rejected this path, had no desire to marry early, even though, as she told me, in this particular world a woman who is unmarried by 30 is unusual, and by 35 is seen as a failure. She was also unprepared to study for so long and so hard and then not build a career afterwards. As she saw it, falling into marriage and being supported by a man whilst she is expected to produce children simply does not cut it. A useful education really was the key for Gabriela, but unlike the *patricinhas*, whose number she determined not to join, to actually make something out of it, to build a rewarding career.

Women like Gabriela, those who achieved a high degree of success in education which they then translate into success in the labour market, are those credited by Machado & Barros (2009: 370) with leading revisions in female identities. Although marriage and children might for many of them be desirable, this would not come at the expense of a career, and the financial independence this brings. I would not describe any of them as radical in terms of completely rejecting all elements of tradition, but instead they were demanding the right to choose which elements of tradition they wanted to retain, and to 'modernise' away from those they did not like. Many talked of marriages coming later than in previous generations, and of less family pressure to marry, whilst stressing that for middle-class acquaintances living in their home towns or cities this was not necessarily the case. Marriage for these acquaintances would also tend to be earlier, and to the 'right kind' of man. Women like Gabriela who would traditionally have been expected to accept just such a submissive position comparative to men are refusing to do so, and the overriding sentiment amongst women in their twenties and thirties was that things were changing for them, and changing fast.

Letícia was just such a young woman who saw herself as at the forefront of a gender revolution, telling me how disappointed and embarrassed she was that her mother was so traditional and conservative, even though she had been to university. It was what she perceived as her mother's traditional attitudes towards sex and gender roles that most irked her, particularly the issue of living with a man before marriage, something that her mother would consider scandalous. Surely, Letícia reasoned, such things should have been modernised out of her by university? Very often the younger women did tend to view their mothers' generation as being passive victims of machismo and patriarchal domination, but having spent equal time with their mothers' generation I can assert with confidence that this was not the case, at least not always. Ferreira-Pinto (2004: 2) reminds us that in the 1960s there began a "Cultural Revolution that brought new lifestyles, drug experimentation, the pill, and the sexual revolution to Brazil" and many women in their fifties and sixties told me with pride how it had been their generation that first overcame patriarchy. In fact it struck me how much more revolutionary this older generation could be, perhaps forced by the far stronger machismo that they grew up with to be more daring, more courageous. A lack of understanding, and indeed dialogue, between generations is nothing new, and whilst the differences in perceptions are interesting, here is not the place to discuss it in detail. What is of more interest to us here is instead the fact that middle-class women of all generations valued this particular brand of modernity in gender relations, and were proud of their educations, careers, and independence from men.[3]

---

[3] Gabriela also told me of another friend of hers who seemed to follow the *patricinha* path, seeking a rich man to marry, and eventually marrying a man she was not really attracted to, apparently taking great pride in having moulded and shaped him into the husband that she decided he should be. This does not match my idea of gender equality, and falls short of the ideals of the other women I spoke to, but it does offer a reminder that situations are seldom so simple as they may appear, and different people view and deploy power in different ways.

Time and again I heard from women of all generations how they were unprepared to accept the jealousies and insecurities of men, and how in their own relationships it had been the man that had had to change to accommodate them and their desires, dreams, and plans. Witnessing other women standing up for themselves would be met with a sense of glee, even if it came at the 'expense' of a male friend.[4] Myself, Antônio, and four of our female friends met for a quick drink and before too long Antônio began to receive text messages from his partner, initially simply asking where he was, but quickly changing to demands that he return home. Antônio is far from *macho*, and his discomfort grew as he was torn between staying with us and returning home. He finally announced that he would have to leave, and our friends began to tease him mercilessly. By coincidence we had earlier been discussing the balance of power in their various marriages and relationships, and had concluded that to a (wo)man it was they who 'wore the trousers.' No-one knew Antônio's partner personally, but her interventions were a confirmation that the shift in power was not just something that could be witnessed around our small table. She became something of a hero, giving them the opportunity to revel in the sense of sororal power. As Fernanda put it at the end of the evening, "muitos relacionamentos são mais modernos hoje em dia, é a mulher que tem o poder" (many relationships are more modern nowadays, it's the woman that has the power). But, she was quick to add, it is not the case for every woman, and was never the case amongst her *manezinha* neighbours.

---

[4] Standing up for oneself can sometimes take on a much more serious aspect, and thankfully for me the only time anyone mentioned domestic violence was when Rita spoke hypothetically about women in 'the past' as having been completely subordinate to men, accepting domestic violence as part of life. She was adamant that she would not, telling me that "se um homem batasse em mim uma vez, eu bataria nele três vezes. Se ele colocasse dois dedos em mim eu colocaria cinco de volta!" (if a man beat me once I'd beat him three times. If he laid two fingers on me I'd give him five back!). I only hope that she is never put to the test.

The legacy of colonial gender relations

Pinho (2009: 49) argues that as Brazil's economy moved from a base in agriculture to one of industry regional struggles began between São Paulo and the Northeast, and as a result blackness and racial mixture came to be associated with tradition (Northeast), and whiteness with modernity (São Paulo). In a national context then *branqueamento* (whitening) was linked to modernity, and the need to drag the country out of a primitive colonialism. Guimarães (2002: 126-131) uses this concept when he argues that part of the reason for the contempt in which *baianos* are often held is rooted in their construction as a mixture of a positively valued authenticity and purity, and a negative view of them as primitive, overly religious, and traditional. In both senses, positive and negative, he links this to their perceived roots in the colonial era. He then goes on to argue that the persistence of the view of them as colonial is due to them having been 'frozen in time' since the colonial era, in terms of lacking the injection of white blood from European immigration, such as occurred (discursively at least) further south. I would argue however that this view is not always tied to blackness, and that in Florianópolis the *manezinhos* are viewed in exactly the same way, as hangovers from a Luso-Baroque colonial imaginary that is similarly riven by religion and tradition. They therefore become the ultimate anti-modern symbol in Florianópolis.

Guimarães (2002: 133, my translation) goes on to argue that migrants from the Northeast of Brazil were viewed negatively in the South and Southeast as reminders of dark colonial days, which "was also the Brazil that the South would hate to be in the future: mixed race, poor, and migrant." He may very well be correct, but the *manezinhos*, and other similar coastal Azorean communities in Santa Catarina were also viewed as such remnants of the colonial era, and a Brazil that

people did not want to live in today. Whilst this group was poor it was not seen as mixed, but instead as white, and not as migrants, but instead as the *nativo* inhabitants of the island. I would therefore argue that whilst the *negro baiano* can be seen as a remnant of the colonial past, and be subject to cruel abjection on this basis, so too can the *manezinho* who reminds people of Portuguese colonisation. Although the *manezinhos* have in reality never been completely cut off from the rest of Brazil and have never been isolated from miscegenation, they are nonetheless constructed as white. They are assigned the space of the Portuguese in the racial discourse in the time before they 'became' Brazilian through miscegenation, and as such are seen as stuck in a colonial rut. Modernity is not always linked to whiteness, and nor is tradition always tied to blackness, and this is certainly the case in the opinions of women I spoke to when specifically related to gender relations.

Marcinha explicitly recognised the social impediments faced by many *nordestinas* (who were racialised by her, and most others, as *negras* and *mulatas*) when she told me that

> acho que a mulher do nordestino, que passa fome, ela tem menos possibilidade de se libertar disso [machismo], e uma da classe média tem, que fez faculdade, tem dinheiro dela, que casou mais tarde.

> I think that the wife of the *nordestino* man, who is hungry, she has less chance of liberating herself from it [machismo], and a woman from the middle-class has the possibility, someone that went to university, has her own source of income, married later.

She recognises that 'modern' gender relations are contingent on the advantages of education, money, and greater choice over marriage that the middle-class woman has, and the starving *nordestinas* may lack. The poor *manezinha* was never afforded such recognition, and indeed on the one memorable occasion that I did hear of a woman who had managed to 'modernise' her traditional *manezinho* man, the woman

in question was a *negra*. She had married a local *manezinho* man, and Lu told me about how she had rescued his failing business, saying

> Parece que ela tem uma visão bem mais aberta, uma mente mais aberta que esse manezinho dela. Ela é gaúcha, mas é simples, é uma negra, negona, parece baiana, sabe? Mas tem aquela coisa ser mais aberto. Então, foi ele que mudou, porque se fosse deixado pra ele decidir provavelmente seria aquela coisa do manezinho ainda, entendeu?

> It appears that she has more vision than him, she is more open-minded than this *manezinho* of hers. She is a *gaúcha*, but she is humble, she's a *negra*, a big *negra*, like a *baiana*, you know? But she has that thing of being more open. So it was him that changed, if it was left to him to decide [the business] would probably be the same old *manezinho* thing still, do you get me?

The woman, likened to a *baiana*, managed to make her husband change, to abandon the old *manezinho* ways, and modernise the business and make it successful. The idea of a *manezinha* managing to change her husband would have been treated with derision, but a *negra* was seen as capable, and there was no suggestion that she was surprised as she told me this.

The *interior*

Within the general construction of *manezinhos* as traditional (/colonial /primitive) the *manezinha* becomes a repository for traditional gender relations, bolstering the sense of modernity the middle-class sees in its own gendered position. The *manezinhos*, despite living in the city, are linked directly to the *interior*, the rural hinterland whose inhabitants are seen as conservative, traditional, and backwards, as *caipiras* (rednecks). When talking in broader terms of Brazil the *interior* was often invoked to convey this sense of Brazil's past, but when talking of Florianópolis specifically the *manezinhos* became the symbolically 'backwards.' It is worth therefore considering briefly the construction of the *interior* and how it interacts with gender, before we move specifically to the *manezinhas*. Both carry the sense of

being rural, or better yet, not-urban, and in terms of women and gender these differences are held to be particularly marked. As Angela explained to me,

> o comportamento duma pessoa urbana é diferente, entende? É diferente. E o fato de ser mulher, de ser mulher é pior, né? No rural. No rural é complicado.

> the behaviour of an urban person is different, you understand? It's different. And the fact of being a woman, of being a woman is worse, isn't it? In rural areas. In rural areas it's worse.

In this one very clear sense the South cannot be homogeneous. It is made up, at the least, of the urban and the rural, and as Angela went on to succinctly argue - "Tem Porto Alegre, ou Florianópolis, e tem o *interior*, sabe? O sul não é homogêneu!" (There's Porto Alegre, or Florianópolis, and then there's the *interior*, you know? The South is not homogeneous!).

My first contact with the notion of the *interior* came at a *festa junina* held, ironically, in the city. These parties are held in Brazil in the month of June, and had a feel similar to English harvest festivals, celebrations of the countryside and a bucolic imagining of rural folk. I was invited to four in total, two in each of the two months of June that I passed in Florianópolis, and they were in part genuine and heartfelt celebrations of the Brazilian countryside and agricultural traditions, but were also, similar to rural English traditions like Morris Dancing and maypoles, subject to mockery. Different parties could be directed in different ways, but the first one, a large party, definitely felt to me to be more concerned with mockery than homage. The theme in fancy dress and play-acting was definitely on the side of the ridicule of simple and stupid rural folk, whose supposed primitive ways were openly teased and enacted through costume, song, and dance. They were gap-toothed, uneducated, and uncivilised rednecks, similar in spirit and appearance to those described by Hartigan (1999; 2005) in the context of the USA. The traditions and imagery of the *festa junina* having been developed, I was told, in the Northeast, I initially took such

mockery to be evidence of Southern contempt for the North, with the racial element that that must entail. With the passage of time I came instead to see that in the way they were enacted in Florianópolis they were more of an expression of urban contempt for the rural, the *interior*, no matter where it was located.

Often the most negative views of the *interior* came from those who had 'escaped' it to the city, the women who had made this move being the most scathing in their rejections of the places they were born and raised, stressing that they never again wanted to live there. One of the most vociferous in this sense was Luciana, born and raised in a small town in rural Rio Grande do Sul. Despite having lived in Florianópolis for two years by the time I first met her she remained at times embarrassed about being, in her own estimations, a provincial ingénue who was at times intimidated by the still unfamiliar 'modernity' of the city. She described the *interior* as a limiting and repressive *mundinho* (little world) where her old friends now seemed to her to be conservative and closed to new ideas, and was happy that the city offered her the modernity that she had always craved, but had previously been unable to access. The conservatism of the *interior* was amplified by it being the *interior* of that most macho of states, Rio Grande do Sul. This was reflected in the kind of gender relations that she was accustomed to, being raised in a traditional *gaúcho* household where whilst she had been made to help with the housework, her brother had not. She told me that when she complained to her mother that this was unfair,

> Ela dizia que eu tinha que ajudar porque "tu é guria, e teu irmão é guri, é diferente." Eu não achava justo, que só por ser guria eu tinha que ajudar em casa, mas meu irmão não. Se eu tiver filhos não vou fazer isso!

> She used to tell me that I had to help because "you are a girl, and your brother is a boy, it's different." I didn't think it was fair, that just because I was a girl I had to help with housework, but my brother didn't. If I have kids I won't do this!

216

In such traditional rural households the gender roles were rigidly structured by patriarchal tradition, but being away from the *interior* she saw the possibility to change this.

Juliana was born into the Florianópolis middle-class but her parents were originally from the *interior*, and she believed that this made a difference to their outlook. She compared them to the parents of her best childhood friend, who both came from the city, telling me that they

> já não importavam que ela tava aí conversando com os meninos, achavam normal, mas os meus pais não. Por que? Porque vêm duma região do interiorzinho, que acho que já te falei, são mais fechados, mais rigorosos, e os país dela sempre foram mais urbanos assim, e isso faz uma diferença

> didn't mind that she was there talking to boys, they thought it was normal, but my parents didn't. Why? Because they come from a little place in the *interior*, I think I already told you, they are more reserved, more strict, and her parents were always more urban, and this makes a difference.

She went on to describe the culture in the *interior* as being *uma cultura atrasada*, a backwards culture, compared to that of urban people. Despite the influence of her parents' conservatism she had been determined to ensure that she was more urban, more modern, than they had been. Anelise was originally from a town in the *interior* of Santa Catarina and went even further than Luciana and Juliana. She found even Florianópolis to be a bit too much of a 'small-town' for her and wanted to go somewhere bigger and even more modern, such as São Paulo, where she imagined there would be no limits to the kind of life she could have. This was tied in part to her belief that the people, and in particular the men, in São Paulo would have a more modern attitude, and she could finally meet a man that more closely matched her gender ideals. She had met no such man in Florianópolis due, she thought, to the local middle-classes having an *interior* mentality, a small-town mentality which made people generally closed to new ideas and the obvious, in her eyes, benefits of

modernity. At least they were better than the men in her hometown though, men who she swore all treated women terribly, as sexual objects in the realm of *ficar* and as virtual servants in the realm of *namorar* and marriage. The *interior* becomes an imagined place that is a repository for all that the modern, urban, middle-classes reject, it becomes a part of Brazil infused with the imagery of the mythical continuation of colonial traditions.

The *manezinha*

Despite being part of the city the communities associated with *manezinhos* were often described to me in terms of being *interior*, and it was therefore no stretch to cast the *manezinha* in the role of the woman of the *interior* in Florianópolis itself. The insights of Juliana, born and raised in the Florianópolis middle-class, and certainly not self-identifying as *manezinha*, are illuminating in this respect. She testified to the broad reach of conservatism within *manezinho* culture, and how *manezinhas* are 'taught' subservience from a very early age. She told me of how when she was a teenager her family, who lived in the bustling, modern centre of the city, would go to visit family in the traditional *manezinho* fishing communities of the island. On the beaches of the urban centre in the 1960s the fashion for bikinis had already taken hold, but on the beaches of the *manezinho* communities they were still considered scandalous. The close-knit nature of these communities meant that

> se tu tomou banho de bikini todo mundo ficava sabendo, pela, pela, como se diz? Tipo pelo 'journal falado,' sabe? E virava polémica! E a notícia chegava tão rápido, que tu saía do mar e já tua mãe sabia! As guria não podiam fazer nada.

> if you went swimming in the sea wearing a bikini everyone knew about it, through the, through the, what do you call it? Like through the 'grapevine' [word of mouth], you know? And it became a scandal! And the news spread so

quickly that when you left the sea your mother already knew! The girls couldn't do anything!

She went on to tell me that the surveillance and control in these small communities meant that girls had little freedom sexually, or even for teenage kisses.

Her cleaner, a *manezinha* woman called Maria, overheard us and agreed, but added that it is still like that to this day. Juliana then explained that even though Maria is, at 31 years old, 20 years her junior, she had still had a more conservative upbringing in the 1980s/90s than Juliana had had in the 1960s/70s, explaining that

> Ela é duma região literânea, tá vendo a diferença? E eu era da região urbana. Então já existia, mesmo com todo controle, uma certa liberalidade, vamos dizer assim. Na comunidade dela ainda é mais rigoroso…Eu sou mais urbana, ela já é mais tradicional.

> She is from a seaside area, you see the difference? And I was from an urban area. So there was already, even with the control, a certain liberal aspect, let's say. In her community it is still stricter...I am more urban, and she is more traditional.

Maria agreed, appearing neither to view this as positive or negative, but laughing nervously as she simply added that "eu tinha vinte anos quando poderia sair com namorado sozinha" (I was twenty before I was allowed to go out with a boyfriend without a chaperone). After Maria had moved off out of earshot Juliana told me she really felt sorry for women like her, by now married and with several children, for never having had the freedom that she, even 20 years earlier, had taken for granted. This obviously only tells us anything about the view of what constitutes 'freedom' from the perspective of the 'modern' woman. Juliana assumed that Maria experiences had been negative, and this is very revealing about the 'modern' woman, particularly how she relies upon the *manezinha* to occupy a position of cultural anachronism and confirm her own modernity and freedom.

Marcinha was speaking in general terms of the contrasts between middle-class and poor women's lives when she told me that,

> A mulher que já leva dinheiro pra casa, não é uma 'mulher,' assim, vítima. Eu acho que quanto mais pobre uma pessoa é, menos educação, mais isso acontece…Uma mulher que tem que ser sustentado por um homem vai sofrer numa certa forma, que o homem tem mais poder.

> The women who has an income isn't a 'woman,' in terms of being a victim. I think that the poorer someone is, the less educated, the more this happens...A woman that has to be sustained by a man is going to suffer in some way, because the man has more power.

I believe that this statement encapsulates the most common view that women had of *manezinhas*, as dependent on men economically, and as suffering as a result. Fernanda was particularly well placed to comment on *manezinhos* in general, as although born in the state of Minas Gerais she had moved to Florianópolis as a four year old child, and had never, even now at the age of 40, felt that she truly belonged in Florianópolis.[5] In large measure this was due to having always lived in neighbourhoods that were majority *manezinho*, places where she had always felt different, and as a result had always socialised and identified far more with the *gaúcho* and *paulista* migrants to the island. The main source of discomfort for Fernanda now, over 35 years after coming to Florianópolis, is that she feels that the explanation for her continued estrangement from her neighbours is her very modernity. She feels as though she is surveilled by her neighbours, and considered to be scandalous, as an unmarried woman who has an active 'modern' sex life, the archetype of that described in the previous chapter.

Francesca also told me that she thought she was the only single woman in her thirties living alone in her majority *manezinho* neighbourhood. All the other women had married early and before marriage had lived with their families, and she too had a sense that she was watched and judged by her neighbours. For both Fernanda and Francesca there was a feeling of being judged, which although not taken as far as

---

[5] Angela was also an outsider with a similar feeling. She grew up in Rio Grande do Sul but had lived on the island for over 30 years without ever identifying with the *nativo* community or culture, and expressly without feeling any sense of commonality with *manezinha* women and their lifestyles.

hostility was experienced as general disapproval that that they were single women living alone. Both felt that the *manezinhas*, driven by a sense of moral superiority, considered them and their behaviour not to be fitting of respectable women. We can see how these attitudes link directly back to the colonial era when we consider that the

> life of the Portuguese woman, in the colonial days of yore, hid itself under the tunic of modesty and subjection to a social order that imposed on it concepts of passivity, withdrawal and reserve (Quintas, 2007: 51, my translation).

The perception that outsiders have of *manezinhas* has long been that they are isolated in the house and subject to the division between the public/street and private/domestic spheres that I discussed in Chapter Four (Flores, 1995: 118; Maluf, 1992: 99-100). Flores (1995: 139, my translation) stresses that it was actually never this simple, and that "all these women were...in the fluid frontiers between the world of the house and the world of the street." Such perceptions, however distorted, do take on a reality of their own for outside observers, and therefore for middle-class women concerned with ideals of modernity and personal freedom the lives of *manezinhas*, which they judged to be backwards and colonial, could only be a negative thing. They did not believe that the *manezinhas* could actually enjoy their positions, and Fernanda was convinced that this air of moral superiority was a means by which the *manezinhas* hid from themselves the fact that they were jealous.

As she saw it they felt less satisfaction in their moral propriety than they did jealousy of her freedom, and her feeling of freedom was explicitly based on her lack of marriage or children. Returning again to the story of the colonial white (Portuguese) woman and the focus on her preparation for the marriage 'market' it is easy to see how reproduction came to be seen as her only real function, and it is clear that

> [t]his mentality persisted in Brazil for a long time: the mentality of daughters to be wives, and to view marriage as the only possible path for the woman; the mentality of believing piously in the nuptial relationship as the solution for female problems...marriage became the most envied of professions...and yes, some of these stereotypes remain. Principally in rural and "rurban" areas (Quintas, 2007: 63, my translation).

Observing the tendency to marry young and reproduce prolifically amongst *manezinhas* Fernanda could see only the continuation of a colonial pre-modern limiting of women's options that ran counter to her way of viewing her own life, and her beliefs in what constitutes a positive and worthwhile life for a woman. She may be right, but more interesting is the assumption on her part that it must be jealousy on their part, that her freedom and independent lifestyle is automatically superior and more desirable. She did not look down on them so much as pity them for their traditional conservative ways, and the lack of options that she assumed they had compared to a modern woman such as herself.

The *manezinha* then becomes cast in the role of the Luso-Baroque colonial remnant against which a positive modernity can be measured. Quintas (2007: 63) argues that this role is most often filled by differently raced Others, particularly women from the rural Northeast, but in Florianópolis the Other was raced in the same way, as white, and othered in terms of her perceived acquiescence to a traditional and patriarchally-driven gender conservatism. It can scarcely come as a surprise that those women I spoke to who were born or raised in Florianópolis never once identified themselves as *manezinhas*. I mentioned in Chapter Four that there has been a positive revaluing of the *manezinho* identity, for example through the claims to such an identity by tennis player and local hero Gustavo Kuerten, but in my experience this did not expand to encompass a *manezinha* identity. Time and again women told me that they were proud of being from Florianópolis, but went to great lengths to distance themselves from the female identity historically associated

with it. These were instead some of the few occasions that German or Italian heritage were valued, as coming from demonstrably non-Azorean families insulated them from the potential of being taken for a genuine *manezinha*. Whilst someone with a German name, such as Gustavo Kuerten, could claim a *manezinho* identity if they wanted to, a Schwartz or a Molinari (or, this being Santa Catarina, a Schwartz-Molinari) could just as easily reject one. People could, and often did, take pride in the positively valued elements of *manezinho* culture, but whilst the culture is positively valued as traditional and authentic, the people are negatively valued as backwards and primitive. Tradition being in the same breath both celebrated and demeaned, and never more demeaned when deemed to constitute a gendered prison for the *manezinha*.

The value of a career

Fernanda told me of one neighbour in particular, a woman that she likes and often talks to, but who sums up what for her are the negatives of the life of the *manezinha*. This woman stays at home all day looking after the children and taking care of the house, whilst her taciturn husband works as a mechanic. He returns from work each evening to a meal cooked by her and then goes out to drink with his friends in a neighbourhood bar. Fernanda, in a rare conversation with the man, asked him why his wife never goes out, and he admitted that he is jealous and that he does not trust her. Instead of feeling guilty about this he simply said that he bought the house, pays the bills, puts food on the table and so on, and if his wife does not like it she is welcome to find someone else to care for her. Fernanda described how he uses his role as breadwinner to control his wife and, shaking her head sadly, said that she and her middle-class friends would never accept this, but then they would never have

to. They all have careers and are not financially dependent on men, and those that are married would not be bossed about and bullied as much as her neighbour. This was not to argue that middle-class men were better than the *manezinhos*, far from it, and indeed on my final day in Florianópolis as I was enjoying the last of many coffees with her in our favourite café she asked me what the main conclusions were that I could draw from the fieldwork. I told her that I had noticed the strength of this idea of sexual and gendered modernity amongst women, and asked her what she thought, was I on the right track? She thought about it for a minute, before replying that I was, but I must not forget that although women have changed a lot that did not mean that the men have also changed.

She told me that within her circle of friends, all middle-class, intellectual, arty, media types, men and women sit in the café together as equals discussing culture, poetry, art, and music. However, the moment that an attractive young woman passes by the men all revert to macho type and make '*olha a bunda dela*' (look at the arse on her) style comments. This annoys her because it is as though all of a sudden the women are not there, the inner macho comes out in the men, and she knows that despite the changes there is a long way to go. So, to a large extent, men were men, and being lower or middle-class made little difference to her. Her observation was instead that it was *manezinha* and 'modern' middle-class women who were different. She stressed that she did not blame the woman, did not think her stupid or weak for being in this position, but that instead it was clear to her that the woman had little option. Without a source of income of her own she was dependent on the man. It is perhaps small wonder that she told me one day that

> eu poderia me chamar de manezinha, mas não me chamo. Não faria sentido fazer isso porque simplismente não sou. Não faço parte daquele mundo deles, não sou aceitada naquele mundo, nem se quisesse. Não é a minha cultura!

I could call myself a *manezinha*, but I don't. It wouldn't make sense to do that because I'm quite simply not. I'm not part of that world of theirs, I'm not accepted in that world, not even if I wanted to be. It's not my culture!

She has the option not to identify as *manezinha*, but the women that she considers as victims of 'that world' and its repressive gender order do not. The men around her may be similar in ways, but she believes that she has more freedom and is adamant that she will not suffer for their attitudes. She is not the victim she believes her *manezinha* neighbour to be.

Without a doubt then the commonest reason given for pitying *manezinhas* was the perception that they were dependent financially on men, and therefore subordinated to them. The career as a means by which independence from men could be attained was therefore probably the most important element for those women who were striving for and claiming modernity. This links very clearly to education, as was eloquently expressed by Marcinha when she told me that

> Todas as minhas amigas são formadas, trabalham em empresas. Tem varias amigas minhas em cargos de chefia, em cargos legais. Então não acho que profissionalmente esse machismo aparece, e nos relacionamentos acho que tu pode fazer o que quiser.

> All my [female] friends have degrees, work in companies. Various of them have management positions, great positions. So I don't think that professionally this machismo crops up, and in relationships I reckon you can do whatever you want.

Her friends have used their university educations to forge careers and have been successful. This enables them to avoid the worst of machismo both in the professional sphere, and in their relationships. This is certainly not the case for every woman, nor in the whole of the country, because as Paula explains

> Acho que Brasil é bastante machista, dos homens terem o controle, mas estão meio assustados hoje em dia com essa superação da mulher, é uma nova época. Mas mesmo assim, se a gente pega uma familia tradicional, é machista, é o homem que tem a última palavra...mas tá mudando, com a mulher trabalhando, ganhando mais que o homem...eu não quero ser dona de casa, cuidando do maridinho, nossa geração não é assim.

> I think that Brazil is machista, through men having control, but they're pretty scared nowadays because of the advances for women, it's a new era. But even so, if we take a traditional family, it's machista, it's the man that has the last word...but it is changing, with women working, earning more than men...I don't want to be a housewife, looking after hubby, our generation isn't like that.

The advances are uneven, and she sees herself and her peers at the vanguard of changes that have not reached most families, those she describes as being traditional. This, she explained, did not necessarily equate with being poor, it was every bit as much her experience with the kind of middle-class families perceived to produce *patricinhas*.[6]

Machado & Barros (2009: 379) also found in their cross-generational study in Rio de Janeiro that middle-class women valued financial independence very highly as it was the key to their personal independence. They found that the women they researched, who they divided into generations of 'mothers' and 'daughters,' had different views of how a career should be structured. The mothers valued stability and the daughters flexibility and enjoyment, but on the importance of career, however it may manifest itself, they were agreed (ibid.: 380-383). The ages of these women, between 20 and 65, reflect the ages of the women I researched with, and my findings were broadly congruent. Beginning in at least the 1960s a career became the key for a middle-class Brazilian woman striving for modernity in her gendered life, and in more recent generations this vision remained. The older generation often told me with pride that they had broken the barriers down in the 1960s and 1970s, and Grazia, for example, spoke with great pride of having been the first female manager

---

[6] These middle-class women did often express the belief that all poor women are dependent on men, but only some of their middle-class contemporaries. In reality it is often a question of survival for poor women to have sources of income, and poverty does not equate to helplessness. For examples that better reflect the realities of working class and poor women in Brazil see Caldwell (2007), Scheper-Hughes (1992), and Sheriff (2001).

of the company she worked for in the late 1970s. She had faced difficulties in asserting her authority over her male employees, unaccustomed as they were to having a female boss, but she had successfully overcome them. It was with visible relish that she told me "eu tinha que ter o pensamento sempre que era eu que era gerente, eu que mandava, e quem não gostava disso pudia se foder!" (I always had to think that it was me that was boss, me that gave the orders, and anyone that didn't like it could go fuck themselves!). The specifics of different women's situations also obviously differed, so a young woman like Paula could talk of being able to delay marriage, or maybe forgoing it altogether, whereas Natalia, in her mid-forties, was able to divorce without having to worry about supporting herself. She was particularly grateful for the independence that her career gave her, recognising that had she not had her own income she could have been forced either to remain in an unhappy marriage or to marry again quickly, both options leaving her dependent on men for her financial survival.

The practical considerations of income aside there is also the question of self-esteem, of the pride that a successful career or independence can bring. Natalia told me with pride that she had been the regional salesperson of the year the previous year, and on another occasion Francesca talked with equal pride of being able to live unmarried and without family support, just like her brothers did. She had gained for herself the middle-class status that a successful career can bring, and which had long been reserved for men. Careers were therefore not just a practical means to an end, but were also a vital component in the modern middle-class identities that were being constructed. Whether measured against the *patricinhas* who are judged to be too lazy or vacuous to use their education to build careers, or against the *manezinhas* who are judged to be too poor and disadvantaged to have the option, the women who

strive for independence and modernity held their careers as a valued point around which they could construct their gender and sexual identities. These are identities that they choose and earn for themselves, rather than being conferred upon them by their husbands. Relationships and marriage were not out of the question, but none would have sacrificed their career for a man.

The onus was placed on men to accommodate and adjust, and this was the only way they would accept - these are not the women of Brazilian stereotype, passive victims of machismo. Any traditional elements in the gender regime that they either accepted, or actively desired, came on their terms. It is maybe the independence that education and career can give to the women that they understand as making their lives 'modern' and desirable. Poverty plays a key part in this, but poverty comes in different forms. The financial poverty of the *manezinha* woman is perceived to deny her independence from men, whereas it is the cultural and intellectual poverty assigned to the *patricinha* that prevents her independence. Both of these groups, and the imagined *interior*, remain tied to a tradition that ties them to reliance upon, and subservience to, men and the operations of *machismo*. The modernity that the women claim comes in a great many different forms, but sexual freedom from men and the financial freedom that comes through education and careers were those referred to most. In all cases the modernity that they strove for came by distancing from tradition, and this allows them to construct a 'new' subjecthood that makes it possible for them to live the lives they want to live, rather than lives that revolve around the needs and desires of men, be they sexual, domestic, or gendered.

Although men may not always appear to these women to be terribly interested in the kind of 'modern' gender and sexual relations that they seek, the women continue nonetheless to push for these changes. As I alluded to in the previous chapter the potential price of this project of claiming modernity is that with rejecting so much of the tradition, they could also be considered to be rejecting the 'Brazilian' essence that is also deeply important to them. In rejecting the *mulata* sexual imagery the risk looms that they could be seen to be rejecting a Brazilian sexual identity, and similarly in rejecting the traditionally Brazilian elements of the gender identities of the *patricinhas* and the *manezinhas* they could again be perceived to be rejecting 'Brazil.' As white women in a country that is neither seen, nor sees itself, as white, the risk is greatly increased that they be considered to be claiming something other than Brazilianness. It would not take much for them to emulate the *porteños* of Joseph's (2000) Buenos Aires, whiteness is never, after all, more than a step away from Europe. This constitutes a risk, as opposed to an opportunity, for the women of this 'modern' middle-class. Their project is concerned with incorporating their views and desires, *and* their whiteness, into the 'Brazilian.' I have begun already in the previous chapter to develop the argument that they conceptualise their sexual identities as Brazilian, but not necessary following the female traditions, and in the next, and final, chapter I will develop these arguments with what we have now learnt about gender roles and identities to demonstrate that whiteness, Brazilianness, and female-ness all are mutable and can be inserted within fluid and multiple constructions of a Brazilian, white, female, subjecthood.

8. Conclusions.

"I'm playing all the right notes – but not necessarily in the right order"
Eric Morecambe

It is not generally the done thing to end a piece of academic work with a quote from an English comedian, but this particular quote has become lodged in my mind as I have considered my research and the ways in which the women I met were making sense of the particular world in which they lived. The comedians Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise were a constant presence throughout my childhood, their shows were repeated ad nauseum on the BBC and their most famous sketches and jokes were inserted forcefully into the British psyche. This particular example, one of the most famous and beloved, came during a sketch in which a guest on the show, the famous conductor André Previn, attempted to conduct an orchestra as Eric Morecambe played the piano. Previn grew increasingly annoyed as Morecambe repeatedly got the piece wrong, eventually confronting him and telling him that he is playing "all the wrong notes." Morecambe, with mock anger, grabs him by the lapels and informs him that "I'm playing all the right notes – but not necessarily in the right order." This drew gales of laughter from the studio audience, prompted perhaps by the petulant refusal to abide by the rules, but also by the pedantic insistence that the criticism had been framed incorrectly, and that in fact all of the correct elements for the piece of music were present, just not necessarily in the order that the composer intended them to be heard.

This sketch has always struck a chord with me as I have attempted to negotiate the seemingly meaningless rules and regulations that dominate one's life and conduct. If you are playing all of the notes that are expected of you, why is it a problem if they are not played in the order that the score of society demands? Why

can we not take these notes and play them in whichever order we so desire? At the end of the sketch Previn submits and begins to play the notes in the 'wrong' order, smiling broadly and showing that it can be every bit as satisfying as adhering to the score. This concluding chapter therefore is dedicated to the examination of how and why some women do not accept social orders that are characterised by domination and injustice but which are rarely challenged, that which Bourdieu (2001: 1) calls the "paradox of doxa." They live instead by a Morecambesque refusal, which I will now theorise as I analyse the ways in which the women who shared their time with me were able to play all the 'right' notes demanded of Brazilian women, white Brazilians, and Brazilian sexual subjects, whilst refusing to play them in the order demanded specifically of white Brazilian women. This approved order would not have enabled them to construct the identities that satisfy their vision of femininity, so they re-scored it, and in so doing they re-scored Brazilianness, whiteness, femininity, and what constitutes the 'modern.' This does not chime perfectly with the rest of the orchestra, but it allows them to play enough of the right notes that they are able to at least maintain the Brazilian melodies whilst reformulating them to suit their own tastes.

The gender of whiteness in Brazil

The power of discourse means that we cannot understand identities to be formed purely subjectively or as the product of completely free will, but this does not mean that there are not options. McCallum (2005: 111) argues that there is a dialogue between people and culture, a negotiation in which whilst the available options are largely proscribed there is room left for modification and choice. There is also space for intersubjective constructions between individuals and groups, and this

means that little remains fixed. The resulting fluidity and mutability mean that seemingly unitary identity categories can fracture, divide and evolve, meaning in turn that no field is never settled. There are continual ruptures and clashes as time moves forwards and people and cultural objects move across and between countries. The result of all this is that "racialisation is enacted within social practice" and the re/deconstruction of racial identities occurs constantly (ibid.: 113). When careful attention is paid to this process of negotiation it becomes highly visible in Brazil, and, as I have shown in the case of whiteness, it is not an easy or seamless process that arrives at a mutually accepted conclusion.

This lack of a predictable outcome leads to many misunderstandings of how whiteness operates in Brazil, and I would like to consider by way of example what Beserra (2005: 62) describes in her study of Brazilians in Los Angeles, and particularly her assertion that in order to avoid the negativity that can be attached to perceived Latinness in the USA it is

> very likely that some Brazilians might deliberately try to pass as white and benefit more constantly from that privilege, but most of those whom I met were most engaged in affirming some kind of Brazilianness (or Latinidad) than they were trying to pass as white.

I think that what she and many others fail to grasp is that the nature of whiteness in Brazil makes it more likely that affirmations of Brazilianness occur precisely because they do not doubt their whiteness or their ability to 'pass' as white. It is their very whiteness that leads to doubts or questions from other people, both national and foreign, about their Brazilianness. Through the discourse of *mestiçagem* and the sexual identities that this creates whiteness is simultaneously hypervalued and discursively rejected within Brazil (Maia, 2009: 773-774; Pinho, 2009: 49). This is what leads Pinho (2009: 52) to argue that being white and Brazilian necessitates a split identity, and very often the white identity tends to be less problematic. The

national identity then becomes the one that must be claimed, the one that is tenuous, and the one in whose lack white Brazilians can feel what Steyn (2001: 155) calls a "subjective experience of dispossession."

If we follow Bourdieu's (1984) formulation of 'capital' it is clear that whiteness should be taken as a signifier of class privilege, and tied to cultural and symbolic sources of capital that reward their holders. This clearly raises the question that if white Brazilians benefit in these ways then how can they be considered to be dispossessed? The answer lies in the fact that there are also other sources of capital, not least the particular cultural capital that is tied to the nation, and whose effect is that

> national belonging *tends* to be proportional to accumulated national capital. That is, there is a tendency for a national subject to be perceived as just as much as a national as the amount of national capital he or she has accumulated (Hage, 2000: 53, emphasis in original).

The other forms of capital from which they benefit have certainly given the white middle-classes a secure place *in* the nation, but, I argue, less of a sense of being *of* the nation. Mixedness is the key to this national capital, and white Brazilians are well aware that they lack in this particular field. It is essential to stress once more that it may be only in this particular field that a sense of lack is experienced and that my intention is not foster pity or sympathy for white middle-class Brazilians. What I focus on instead is understanding better how whiteness is limited in its dominance, and that these limits may possibly lead to productive ways in which to challenge the dominance. This dominance is, for example, articulated with gender, and white men have less of a problem because the figure of the *branco* occupies a dominant and foundational position within the racial discourse that does confer national capital to them. The *branca* on the other hand is cast outside the 'Brazilian,' not only by

233

omission but also by being explicitly constructed as foreign, as we saw in Chapter Five. National capital is therefore more difficult for the *branca* to access, as she is deemed to be outside the nation.

For those looking to overcome this lack of national capital I believe that there are three broad options available, of which the first is to give up on the nation and live with their white privilege whilst looking beyond their borders, and through their history, to their European roots. This is the option I discussed in Chapter Two in relation to the emphasis placed on European heritage by the Buenos Aires middle-class who were described by Joseph (2000). I concluded that this is an option for which I found no evidence in Florianópolis, where even the suggestion of doing so was considered preposterous. The second option would be the project of whitening that had once been believed capable of remaking the Brazilian population as white. Had this approach, which is obviously impossible and highly racist, been successful then perhaps national capital would have been attached to whiteness, but despite attempts this approach was abandoned, at least discursively.[1] This leaves only one further option, to accept the discourse of *mestiçagem* rather than challenging it, and to attempt to make space within it for whiteness. This requires that whiteness exist within the field of national capital constructed within *mestiçagem*, whiteness being made to fit within *mestiçagem* and not vice versa, and this is the option that I found was taken up. This was possible within the specific context of the South because "[c]itizenship [of the nation, of a social group, of a sexuality] and marginality

---

[1] This is not to argue that the notion of whitening has lost its grip practically, as the ongoing racism and white supremacy demonstrates, only that it is neither officially promoted nor popularly propagated. As a corollary to this is the suggestion by Radcliffe & Westwood (1996: 161) that white Brazilians may try to Africanise, and thereby de-Brazilianise, the black population. This would serve to whiten Brazilianness by stripping it of its blackness and placing this blackness within the imaginary of the foreign. The effect of this would be to reimagine the national identity as white, but again I found no evidence in Florianópolis that might support this.

emerge as fluctuating concepts that vary according to social and cultural circumstances" (Lugarinho, 2002: 283). One of these fluctuations is the possibility created by regional variation, and this allows access to Brazilianness for white people through their emphasis of their Southernness.

This works because, unlike the *porteños* mentioned above, they are not attempting to divorce themselves from the national, and are instead committed to stressing the Brazilianness of the South, a region where their whiteness is racially inconspicuous and their Brazilianness is unquestioned. Women like Luisa who come from parts of Brazil where their whiteness has led to the assumption they are foreign can find a sense of belonging in the South. From previously being read as foreign they move into a space at the margins of Brazilianness where whiteness is neither at the core of the self nor a signifier of national Otherness. Whiteness is then a liminal location that oscillates between two poles of racial and national belonging, and within this oscillation it becomes hybrid and loses its seemingly 'pure' and unitary place within the discourse of race in Brazil. In becoming hybrid it then fits within a discourse whose notes are written in a language of hybridity. Put simply, it is easier to insert the (already-perceived-to-be-white) South into Brazil than it is to attempt to insert whiteness into the heart of the 'Brazilian,' and in asserting the Brazilianness of the South it is possible to simultaneously assert the Brazilianness of whiteness.

This is not simply a hermeneutic exercise, they are operating practically in order to fill the final 'gap' in white privilege, and this allows them to have, in a sense, the best of both worlds. They benefit from the cultural capital attached to being middle-class whilst circumventing the potential deficit in national capital by claiming a regional capital that is inserted within the grammar of the national. The

South of Brazil is by definition part of Brazil, and by deploying this largely white region within a national understanding they are stressing its, and by association their, belonging within the nation. This must lead us to consider that it may be a conscious, and therefore racist, attempt to further subordinate the non-white population, but I would tend to follow Hage (2000: 30-35) here and emphasise that it has a practical, rather than an ideological, motivation. It is a practical attempt to fit themselves into the space of the Brazilian, and not to explicitly push others out. They are not trying to assert dominance over, so much as to find a place in a system that is already ruled by a logic and ideology of dominance. I would therefore argue that they are more motivated by weakness than a desire for dominance. This clearly demonstrates the limits to to the power of whiteness and the potential for movement and agency within the racial discourse. That this discourse allows for the operation of racism and oppression is beyond doubt, but it also has hybridity at its heart. Pravaz (2009: 90-94) and Wade (2005) have shown that this hybridity within the Brazilian racial discourse can, if used strategically, serve to allow for the privileging and celebration of blackness and indigenousness in Brazil. I argue that it also gives space for Southern women to construct their identities as both white and Brazilian, as when they claim this *sulista* identity they have no option but to recognise the heterogeneity of Brazil and stress that Brazil is a hybrid and miscegenised country that features both the mixedness of much of the population, and also the component parts that make up that mixture.

Braidotti (2002: 2) views subject positions as not solid, unitary and completed entities but as a process that is characterised by fluidity, metamorphoses, flows and interconnections. They are always a work in progress, a "hybrid mix" in which experience and practice are ongoing features, and the hybridity already written

into the racial discourse in Brazil merely provides a cultural grammar that readily accommodates such a 'hybrid mix.' DaMatta (1995: 281-283), talking generally of mixture within Brazil, argues that the product of a mixture, the intermediate creation, will become something in itself, take a life of its own and resist attempts to stifle it. I believe that this is what we are seeing as at least some middle-class, white, heterosexual women in the South of Brazil engage in what Pravaz (2008: 92) calls "a form of strategic hybridity" whereby they do not challenge the national discourse of *mestiçagem* but instead deploy a *sulista* identity which is identified with whiteness, at least implicitly, *within* this discourse. Through this "grammar of synthesis" (ibid.: 93) they can move to accommodate the seemingly disparate whiteness and *mestiçagem* within an overarching *brasilidade*.[2] This is how they can stress their national belonging and also access the national capital that it confers. That they do this with reference to gender shows the gendered nature of both national capital and national identities, and also the limits to white dominance when articulated with gender.

Sexual Identity

This is the means by which I found that white *sulista* Brazilians can and do work within the existing racial discourse to construct and claim a Brazilianness that coexists with, but is ranked above, their whiteness. This is complicated, as we have seen, by the articulation of fields of gender and sexuality with those of race and national identity, and the complexity does not end with securing a place within the national imaginary. Gender and female heterosexuality were articulated with a vision of modernity by the women I researched in Florianópolis and this modernity could

---

[2] Moutinho (2004: 55) cautions us that within any mixture the elements that go into it will remain ranked in some way, shape, or form, with some still being seen as positive and others as negative.

itself threaten their belonging to the nation, particularly when taken in conjunction with their whiteness. I found that they overcome these threats by using various elements of different discourses to construct their identities, and although they diverge from these discourses the identities they construct can be made understandable within them. One other group that has been shown to do just this are male homosexuals, who Arenas (2002: 237) argues overcome, to some extent, their liminal position within Brazil by using the hybridity and liminality inherent to the construction of Brazil itself. I believe that a similar use of this hybridity and liminality is made by 'modern' heterosexual women in order to ground their identities within a Brazilian logic.

Lugarinho (2002: 286) and Braga-Pinto (2002: 201-202) both demonstrate that Brazilian sexuality is exemplified by a long-running impasse between rigid categorisation and a regime of non-definition, within which cultural creativity and hybridity have long been accommodated. This creates a hinterland where things can never 'be,' they can only either almost be or attempt to claim a unitary status that will always elude them. This lack of absolutes allows male homosexuality to find space for its many and varied expressions, and I argue that the same terrain also makes it possible for heterosexual women to reject the traditional imagery of the whore and the Virgin and claim the modernity I described in Chapters Six and Seven. This claim of modernity initially led me to draw on scholarship concerned with the particular trope which holds that the internationalisation of gay identities and the proliferation of western discourses of sexuality seems inevitable in 'modernising' societies during an epoch of Globalisation (Altman, 2001; Binnie, 2004). This is particularly concerned with the notion that gay men across the world will seek to identify with an Americanised 'modern' gay identity in order that they

can escape the traditional and repressive conditions in their own countries and instead find positive identifications within a globalised community of gay men that is associated with modernity and progress. Implicit within this formulation is a rejection of the 'local' and a yearning for the 'global', where global is read as EuroAmerican.[3] Such a location, I initially thought, could be where ideas of modernity are grounded for heterosexual women trying to combat tradition and patriarchy, but this would prove not to be the case.

In Chapter Two I discussed Joseph's (2000) argument that in Buenos Aires the middle-classes link themselves to modernity by reaching beyond the borders of Argentina, and have already stressed that I found no evidence of this in Florianópolis. The modern sexuality that was championed was always explicitly tied to Brazil and never once with reference to a foreign or globalised modernity. This raises the question of how this can be possible when all the available (racialised) subject positions of a Brazilian female sexuality were so tied to tradition, and so completely rejected. How could these women claim a sexual identity that they tied unambiguously to Brazil after they had rejected all the options that Brazil had to offer? The key, as I discussed in Chapter Three with reference to the 'Encontro das Nacões,' is that traditions are the remembered results of agentic choices made from infinite social possibilities and historical experiences, logical selections out of competitive milieus and are not pure and authentic forms (DaMatta, 1995: 271-272; Sahlins, 1999; Wade, 2001: 857-858). Just as Butler's (1991) iterations are copies without originals, so there is no 'original' and pure tradition, 'originals' themselves are constructed from a variety of sources. Hess & DaMatta (1995: 8-14) argue that Brazil is a nation on the borderlands between the 'modern' and 'traditional' worlds,

---

[3] Altman (2001), Binnie (2004) and Hoad (2000) all stress that this is not to be viewed in absolute terms, that the process is reciprocal, with movement from the periphery to the centre, as well as vice versa, and that it should be understood as a tendency rather than a hegemony.

there are not two Brazils that are either/or, but one Brazil which is both/and.[4] Brazil is neither modern(western) nor traditional(non-western) but is emphatically both, and modernity and tradition cannot be seen as part of a dichotomy. Brazilian sexualities cannot possibly be either the result of the continuation of a tradition or the replacement of tradition by a form of modernity that is divorced from history.

This necessary amalgamation of tradition and modernity manifests itself in the case of the white middle-class heterosexual women I researched in a very interesting way. They rejected the traditional imagery of both the *branca*, as the chaste, reproductive vessel who served the reproductive interests of men, and the vulgar and sexually available imagery of the *mulata*, also clearly constructed to service the sexual desires of men. Female sexuality then becomes for them something to be rescued and set free from the control of men (Ferreira-Pinto, 2004: 63). In the rejection of traditional roles they highlighted instead their modernity, but a modernity that they anchored in ideas of Brazilianness. They achieved this by referencing the traditional Brazilian sexual outlook and practice of white men, and framed it in terms of the recognition that white men have sexual freedom and pleasure, and so must they. These 'modern' women then expect, as white men always have, to enjoy sex and seduction on their terms. As Ferreira-Pinto (2004: 64, my emphasis) put it in her discussion of Brazilian women's literature, "the female character will step in her newly invented independence, and taking on the demeanour of a sensual, provocative, and seducing woman, will seek *her own pleasure* in intercourse with different men."

---

[4]More broadly there has never been a pure, uncontaminated Latin American culture or tradition, instead they have always been provisional, fluid and in the (unending) process of 'becoming' (Arenas, 2002: 237).

This is not to say that it is an easy process, not least due to what Ferreira-Pinto (2004: 65, emphasis in original) calls "*the sign of sexual-cultural ambiguity.*" She goes on to explain that

> [t]his ambiguity stems from the conflicts faced by Brazilian women, particularly those who lived through the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s or grew up in its aftermath, torn between the traditions of patriarchal ideology and the new lifestyles and forms of behaviour disseminated by the mass media in an ever shrinking world (ibid.: 65).

The bridging of tradition and modernity for Brazilian women is therefore difficult, fraught with the potential for disaster if you fall off the tightrope.[5] Francesca made very clear that for her it was crucial to avoid becoming the frigid *branca* of tradition because an active and fulfilling sex life was both desirable and her right, but that it was at times difficult to maintain the balancing act of also avoiding being judged as a vulgar *puta*, in the image of the hyper-sexual *mulata*. Grazie explained that she and her friends managed this by using *jeitinhos* (tricks) to ensure that they retained a sexual freedom that always served their own interests, and not those of men, whilst never risking being seen as vulgar or as sluts. They understood the tricks and tactics of machismo and how men employed them, thereby helping to avoid becoming victims, and at the same time used these same tricks and justifications to ensure they had an active sex life that was structured around their own desires. In using elements of male sexuality they remained within a framework of Brazilianness, albeit a male framework, so although they rejected traditional female roles their modernity was grounded within the particular Brazilian sexual discourse through the appropriation of the traditional male privileges that it confers.

---

[5] This is somewhat similar to the experience of Mexican men struggling between a tradition of *machismo* and a modernity that does not guarantee them being seen as masculine, described by Gutmann (1996: 242-243) as leading them to a confusing and difficult "contradictory consciousness," and a similar process for *chicano* men in the USA, who Mirandé (1998: 146) described as being caught on the "horns of a dilemma."

Just as claiming a *sulista* identity enables them to enjoy the benefits of Brazilianness without experiencing all the negatives, they can recognise and avoid the worst parts, the negatives, of male behaviour, and also use some of them in their favour. The perceived negatives of traditional femininity can be avoided with recourse to a sense of modernity that is still anchored in Brazil, but the positively viewed elements of tradition, most notably marriage, could also still be accessed, but at a time of their choosing. Perhaps the most important development that this demonstrates is the control that the women feel themselves to hold over their sexualities. The closely controlled and surveilled *branca* of the colonial period and her Luso-Baroque descendent the *manezinha* are perceived to lack any sexual freedom, whilst the stereotyped *mulata* and the modern *patricinha* are seen to be sexually active, but only in the service of male desires, and are therefore controlled by men as much as their chaste counterparts. These are all racially stereotyped views and representations that are divorced from lived realities of the women placed in all of these putatively meaningful categories, but in a sense this is beside the point. These Other women are necessary elements in the construction of a modern identity that is free from male control if it is to be constructed as a meaningful self. This self that treads a fine line between virgin and whore, simultaneously rejecting and incorporating them both, is engaged in what DaMatta (1995: 284) calls the essence of Brazilian culture, namely "an ongoing negotiation of the two, mutually contradictory systems." In operating within this cultural logic the modern white, middle-class woman differentiates herself from both poles by her ability and willingness to understand *machismo* and to play men at their own game, and in so doing wresting control over female sexuality for women themselves.

Precedent for this hybrid mix of the 'modern' and the 'Brazilian' is found in the concept of *antropofagia* (cultural cannibalism) that was promoted in Brazil by the Modernist artistic movement in the 1920s. This concept was developed by Oswald de Andrade as he attempted to incorporate into the Brazilian arts those foreign elements that had a 'Brazilian ethos' and could be incorporated and absorbed, effectively Brazilianised[6] (Ulhôa Carvalho, 1995: 159-161). This resulted in the intentional "cannibalisation of European culture and its reinvention within the Brazilian context" (Green, 1999: 69). Whilst the women I researched with were not explicitly looking abroad they were working with a 'modern' notion of the liberation of women from the control and desires of men that is 'foreign' to a Brazilian discourse of sexuality. In the idealised vision of de Andrade the imagined Self of the Brazilian 'we' absorbs and mixes with the imagined Other of the foreign 'they' and changes and develops by creating space for cohabitation, but all the while retaining its *brasilidade* (Ulhôa Carvalho, 1995: 165). The task for the middle-class women was therefore to ensure that their sexualities and gendered identities that contained the 'foreign' element of modernity were similarly able to retain their *brasilidade*.

My contention is that the variously gendered and sexualised Brazilian selves (the dominant *branco*, the submissive *branca*, the lascivious and sensual *mulata*) that are found within the Brazilian sexual body were combined with the Other of the 'modern' woman. She is 'foreign' due to not existing within the Brazilian sexual discourse as a unitary identity, but all the constituent parts that go towards her construction can be found within the various selves of Brazilian sexuality. These elements are taken and digested alongside the 'foreign' modern woman, and they

---

[6] A good example of this is Brazilian music, which, for example, absorbed foreign music styles, revitalising itself and ensuring its perpetuation, but without losing its *brasilidade*. The desirable and perceived-to-be Brazilian-friendly elements of jazz (foreign/modern) were absorbed and combined with samba (local/traditional) to create Bossa Nova, a new form that was modern and traditional, foreign-influenced but undeniably Brazilian (Ulhôa Carvalho, 1995: 164).

believe that the resulting hybrid mixture of those elements they choose does retain its *brasilidade*. Sahlins (1999: 410-412) reminds us that 'modernity' has always been realised as local through the "indigenization of modernity," but nevertheless the possibility always remains within *antropofagia* that the outcome will not be seen as Brazilian by others (Ulhôa Carvalho, 1995: 175). This was a danger that was certainly present in the minds of the women as they continually reiterated and reaffirmed their Brazilianness. This need to continually claim a Brazilianness that could at any moment be denied by others is undoubtedly a weakness of this modern identity, but by working within Brazilian discourses and playing all of its notes, just not necessarily in the right order, they do enough to feel themselves to be Brazilian and not see themselves as reaching beyond its borders.

Brasileiras brancas modernas: queering sexuality and race

It is at this point that the women with whom I researched would leave the story, with a successfully claimed modern identity that is firmly anchored within a reconfigured notion of the Brazilian female sexual subject. I wish to take them further than that however, arguing that this rejection of the culturally approved categories of female sexual and gender roles means that these women, with their construction of a 'modern' identity that oscillates between traditional archetypes without ever settling at either pole, are engaged in nothing less than a queering of both Brazilian sexuality and racial identities. Queer theory, with its powerful urges to reject dichotomous thinking and binaristic constructions, views subject positions in a fluid and nuanced fashion, and is concerned not only with marginalised non-normative sexual subjectivities but more broadly with a way of 'being' in the world which, through difference, allows for a critical stance in relation to mainstream

cultures (Lugarinho, 2002: 276). Although they are heterosexual my argument is that the women I have introduced here are actively constructing a non-normative (in the Brazilian milieu) heterosexual female identity that sits outside a mainstream Brazilian sexual culture that is tied to the sexualised and objectified *mulata*, the largely absent and abjected *negra*, and the unsexed and pious *branca*.[7]

It seems to me that they therefore fit perfectly within Ferreira-Pinto's (2002: 144) formulation whereby

> [w]omen who engage in heterosexual relationships may also assume a queer stance if they continually reject fixed categories of identity and the ideology of dominance that is part of patriarchal heterosexuality...[where a woman has a] strategy for living her identity as a process, as movement and change – and challenge – consequently undermining the dominant gender system.

In taking on roles and assuming behaviours traditionally ascribed to men, women are claiming the ability and right to seek sexual satisfaction. That this sexual satisfaction refuses the supposed natural inclination to monogamy is a deep challenge to Brazilian heteronormativity (Ferreira-Pinto, 2004: 154), as is the refusal to abdicate control of their sexualities to the whims of men. Their particular brand of modernity highlights the possibility for flexibility and mutability, and it queers heteronormative gender relations in an insidious and powerful way by showing the options that women have for manoeuvre within apparently monolithic structures. It allows women in Brazil to access a vision of modernity *on their own terms* for maybe the first time, rather than the emphasis being on men as embodying modernity. Modernity in women has always been a challenge to patriarchy and was never seen as suitable for women, so in the opening decades of the Twentieth Century in Rio de Janeiro

---

[7] There have always been inversions, perhaps in the form of the dominant woman and the henpecked man who could be seen as a direct inversion of the traditional gender paradigm. I would argue however that this is no real challenge and that the tradition needs such inversions to sustain itself, as the 'weak' man provides an abhorrent Other for the 'real' man to be measured against.

> 'modernity', European and US-style, was feared as a descent into moral chaos, symbolised most clearly by the independent, 'modern' woman who was thought to defy sexual and gender norms (Wade, 2009: 124).

The very basis of the type of modernity that I have described, although not conceived of as European or US-style, is embodied by just such independent women whose identities and practices defy these ongoing gender and sexual norms.

The *branca*, within discourse if not necessarily practice, has always been securely subordinated and denied sexuality, except in a strictly reproductive sense. One of the foundational elements of whiteness in Brazil is that the white male is the only desiring and active white actor, and this constructs whiteness in Brazil as orbiting around, and centred upon, the man, a man who then is cast as *the* authentic bearer of whiteness and the benefits of the dividend that this confers. If, as Moutinho (2004: 169) argues, the control of white female sexuality has long been a fundamental cornerstone of the Brazilian class and social structure, 'uncontrolled' it therefore has potential to disrupt these structures. This disruption need only be expressed in the refusal of male-controlled and dictated monogamy and matrimony for the previously solid centre of the whole system to be shaken.[8] Lesbians clearly do this,[9] and I firmly believe that female heterosexuality, when wrested from the control of men and when constructive uses are made of elements of white male sexuality (particularly control over the sexual encounter, the determinative power over the use of the body, and the refusal to submit to the whim of the Other) that these women in

---

[8] Wekker (2006: 249) reminds us that more broadly in the European postcolonial setting, both on metropole and periphery, white sexuality is constructed around monogamy, and forms the normative expression. There is a racist understanding that black and Other sexualities are excessive and 'out of control,' but this can be sustained within the heteronormative system so long as white monogamy underpins it.

[9] More research into the lives and identities of lesbians in Brazil desperately needs to be undertaken. One of my great regrets regarding my fieldwork, having previously, as part of the MSc that preceded this PhD, conducted just such a research project in the UK, is that I have not, as yet, been able to gather enough data to meaningfully contribute to this endeavour in a Brazilian context.

a sense mimic and challenge the authenticity of the Brazilian white (male) subject. Following Bhahba's (1994: 122, emphasis in original) argument that "the discourse of mimicry is construction around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference," I would like to argue that in taking on elements of traditionally constituted white male sexual privilege and control these white women are not only undermining the authenticity of patriarchal dominance, but also the white dominance that is built on the sexual control of Other bodies. I claim it as mimicry because the white female subject that is constructed is sufficiently close to the male figure within discourse that the proximity allows for her to claim 'authentic' Brazilianness, but far enough away that she cannot be mistaken for being the 'same,' and that she therefore challenges him and his authenticity rather than reinforcing them.

During the colonial era sexual freedom for the *branca* was unthinkable because she had to be the unimpeachable vector for the generational transmission of not only the family genes but also whiteness. In her contemporary demands for sexual freedom, just as the white man has always enjoyed his, she mimics his naturalised role and challenges the basis of whiteness as the 'pure' and unmiscegenised component of the racial landscape. She also shakes the certainty in its future as a 'pure' racial form because by denying white men sexual control she also potentially proclaims the end to whiteness. Moutinho (2004: 169) argues that there is no greater challenge to the racial and class structures in Brazil than the *branca/negro* coupling because both of the couple claim the sexual freedom that different oppressive mechanisms denied them during slavery.[10] If the *branca* makes her claims to sexual freedom by basing them on the long-naturalised claims of white

---

[10] The *negro* was understood as being natural promiscuous, a function of his 'savagery', and was therefore tightly controlled.

247

men, as I found they were, then this might challenge the whole system of racial privileging that is constructed on the control of sexuality. Bhabha (1994: 126, emphasis in original) goes on to argue that "[t]he *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority." The figure in the Brazilian colonial discourse that is most menaced by this particular mimicry is the white man, since when women seek authenticity (as Brazilians) through mimicking elements of his sexual prerogative they demonstrate how his racial dominance, based on his sexual control of women, it not essential and everlasting. In rendering as partial the representation of the *branco* as authentically Brazilian and dominant this "rearticulates the whole notion of *identity* and alienates it from essence" (ibid.: 127, emphasis in original). The identity of the Luso-Brazilian *branco* that was fixed through colonial discourse is then alienated from the artifice of essence and shown to be a construct whose racial dominance is inauthentic. If the *branca* can mimic him in his sexual freedom then the racial power that he has wielded through his control of sexuality is shown to be transparently unjustifiable and inviable.

Bruxaria moderna?

The women's claims to sexual freedom were made through an appeal to modernity, and it is therefore surprising that a comparable archetype can be found in the traditions of the *manezinho*/Azorean culture. As discussed in Chapter Seven it is the *manezinha* who was most considered to occupy the position of the traditional and powerless woman, and it was her perceived fate that was to be avoided at all costs. There is however a *manezinha* figure, the *bruxa* (witch), who although rooted in tradition offered just such a challenge to male privilege and dominance, and who just

as powerfully queered the gendered and sexual norms of Florianópolis. Maluf (1992: 99) studied the cultural resonances of a history of witchcraft in Lagoa da Conceição and found that rather than the traditional *manezinha* described to me by middle-class women, the mother and dutiful wife who was tied to the domestic sphere and seemingly denied agency and desire, *manezinhas* have actually always been active in the public sphere, not least because the fishing industry would often keep the men away from home for long periods of time. Patriarchal society imposed a repressive counterbalance to this limited freedom by constructing the maligned and abjected figure of the 'witch,' the symbol of an unacceptably autonomous femininity. European, and particularly Azorean, traditions of controlling women through accusations of witchcraft stayed alive in Florianópolis and these supposed witches were deeply oppressed, motivated largely by the patriarchal fear that they would

> invade the territories that are considered masculine, and within them assume the behaviour of control, of power, even in those spaces considered to be prohibited to women...the witches invert the moral rules of society: they occupy the territory of the men, they assume an attitude seen as masculine (ibid.: 103-104, my translation).

If we consider sexual freedom to be one such masculine territory then the women I have been discussing throughout this thesis have also challenged patriarchy through just such an occupation of male space, and the inversion of the control of this territory.

In both cases, the historical and the contemporary, this does not only affect the lives of the women concerned, it also directly challenges the society within which these rules hold sway. As Maluf (1992: 104-105, my translation) goes on to argue

> the mythology around the presence of witches brings with it an inversion of the rules of the social system. The women leave the domestic sphere and come to assume behaviours that at root appear to be opposite to the expectations of the collective.

I would argue that foremost amongst the expectations of the 'collective' are those of patriarchy, which is also the main 'victim' of the power to unsettle and bring ill that the witches were considered to hold. It is this same effect that I believe that the women of my research bring to bear. These seemingly disparate queer figures are both connected to Lagoa da Conceição and challenge the control of men over women's bodies and actions as they both unsettle systems of control and oppression. This image I am painting of the women I know as 'modern' witches appeals to me on many levels, but perhaps the most productive is that it gives hope of rapprochement between the putatively traditional and modern, and may, in some sense, have the potential to draw the women of Florianópolis together against the common enemy of patriarchy. This is an enemy that they have both been confronting for many years separately, and with the limited success that the isolation resulting from such separation brings.

We obviously already know from Maluf (1993) that the stereotypes of the *manezinhas* are deeply limited, from Sheriff (2001) that the lived experiences of the women of the *favelas* of Rio defy stereotype, and from Scheper-Hughes (1992) that the lived realities of *nordestinas* cannot be encapsulated by the stereotypes that are commonly held of the *nordeste*. The list of further examples could go on and on, but the point is that despite all the evidence to the contrary the divisive stereotypes held of and by women still seem to hold remarkable sway. Imagine if instead of these stereotypes and the mutual distrust that they engender the women of Lagoa da Conceição better understood each other and were able to move beyond stereotypes and towards a unified front, based on notions of both tradition *and* modernity. Imagine then if the city, the state, the region, and the country as whole did so.

Lest I become too enthusiastic.....

As a necessary corrective to the rather rosy picture I fear I may have painted so far I feel I must add some words of caution. Whilst I remain positive about the *potential* effects of the identities I witnessed in construction, I cannot claim on their behalf a certain destiny to change either racial or sexual/gendered power structures in Brazil. It cannot, and should not, be ignored that oppressed by patriarchy as they are, these women are also both middle-class and white, and are as such privileged. Furthermore, bearing in mind that a major motivation behind the construction of the 'modern' identity I have examined is the rejection, and at times abjection, of Other racially and classed women, we must not forget that "one should not be blind to the issue of women as oppressors of other women" (Ferreira-Pinto, 2004: 25). Perhaps even more important for me personally, as a (hopefully) responsible anthropologist is the warning of Sahlins (1999: 406) that

> [t]hese people have not organised their existence in answer to what has been troubling us lately. They do not live either for us or as us. And the main anthropological drawback of making them such moral objects is just that it makes their own cultural logics disappear.

Quiroga (2000: 207) also argues that "the politics of identity cannot address all the issues that pertain to an understanding of how people may classify themselves," and, to put it simply, there is always a danger that we focus on aspects of identity that may suit our interpretations and reduce people to the kinds of hermeneutic scripts that I earlier criticised in the considerations of Xuxa. I am aware that I have to some extent done just that, that for many of the women whose voices are being heard, filtered through me, any project to remake racial or gendered relations through their actions could not be further from their minds. Even more than this the notion that I compare them to *manezinha* witches would at best make many of them laugh. Too

much has been written about anthropological representation, the most influential examples for me personally being those collected by Clifford & Marcus (1986), for me not to at least acknowledge that my own representations here are just that. However well-intentioned they may be they are partial, personal, and fundamentally flawed, as indeed must all representations be.

It does however remain my contention that what was articulated within the claims to modernity in the gendered and sexual identities of the women, and in the ingenuity with which they were able to create space for a *sulista* whiteness within a discursive landscape of mixedness, can lead us to a more nuanced understanding of racial discourse in Brazil. Wade (2009: 241) states that race and sex are "discursive processes and the ideological elements deployed in them can be reconfigured in new and sometimes unpredictable ways" and it is just such a reconfiguration that I describe here. When Battaglia (1999: 143) calls upon us to represent people in all their ambiguity, arguing that "a tenacious hold on the notion of an essentialist or natural self is the greatest ethical threat to a project of convergence with the real motivated by *un rapport a soi,*" I can only respond that I have had no choice but to represent middle-class white women in Florianópolis as ambiguous, for ambiguous is what they are. This ambiguity is possibly the only way in which they can navigate through discursive fields in which they are neither self nor Other, but always both. They find ways to configure their identities that can account for both their whiteness and their country's discursive mixedness, and for their 'modernity' in a way that distinguishes them from the traditions they reject, but within which their identities remain anchored, albeit in a queered fashion, within recognisably Brazilian cultural mores. They challenge and overcome the Brazil they reject without seeking refuge beyond its borders, and they deploy a constructive ambiguity that preserves them

with one foot in Brazil and the other in a liminal space that represents 'Brazil reconfigured.'

I am not the first to see reconfigurations in Brazil in such a way, indeed without the work of Ferreira-Pinto (2004) and the essays collected together by Canty Quinlan & Arenas (2002) I would never have been able to analyse those fifteen months of my experience as I have. However, although clearly influenced and informed by discourse, the examples that I give here, as gleaned through ethnographic participant observation, can hopefully serve to avoid the tendency in queer studies to reduce existence and the terms of possibility for material reality to discursive factors. This can tend to overlook the place of practice and the role of "material conditions" in the formation of discourse, and vice versa (Hirschmann, 2004: 324-326). In this way the subject seen as passive and non-agentic can become rendered as purely the construction of discourse, which then becomes a kind of straightjacket which "determines what can be said, perceived, or even imagined" (Sahlins, 1999: 410). It seems clear to me, certainly in the examples laid out in this thesis, and surely also more broadly, that, as McNay (2000: 39) argues, the relationship between the subject and the world is active and creative, with practice both constructed by, and constructive of, discourse and society. It is also possible that within practice we may be able to access the agency that hermeneutic approaches, including much of queer theorising, can deny. We have seen examples of agency within the construction of racial, gendered and sexual subject positions, for example both the mediations between, and the at times near simultaneous deployment of, the Brazilian/traditional and the rendered-as-Brazilian/modern. Through the use of participant observation, and with the mindset of depth that anthropology allows for, I have shown that these uses, and constructive misuses, of

discourse, must be understood in the frame of the lived experiences of those who deploy them.

Michael Herzfeld (2001: 52-54) calls for us to move anthropology from a discursive focus that tends to "view all societies and all cultures…as total systems" and which therefore conveys a sense of being universal and static. He instead argues for an approach that views practice as a medium for the demonstration of agency and transience within a society or culture. Braidotti (2002: 21-22) argues that embodied subjects are constructed by different variables and forces and the subject may be able to transcend individual variables that structure it (for example class, race, sex, or culture) due both to the mediations between the social discourses that structure them, and the cultural representations that cannot be totally subsumed by these discourses. This mediation can be limiting and constraining, or empowering and enabling, but it is always a process of negotiation and competition and it is the interplay between these positive and negative forces that creates the self. Not least through its demonstration that the self is contingent and not pre-determined, the *branca moderna* subject position that I have described here demonstrates that although cultural and discursive forces shape and manipulate the subjectively experienced identity, they are not determinative of its realisation in the practical world (Battaglia, 1999: 115-116). In common with McNay (2000: 31-32) I make no suggestion that there is completely 'free' agency, and instead I recognise both embodied potentialities and discursive constraints are at play. This is a dynamic and mediatory process whereby the body is a point of dialogue and contest between the internal and external, as expressed through Bourdieu's (1992) concept of the habitus.

This dialogue means that whilst discourses of gender and sexuality are powerful and entrenched they are not totally deterministic, being opposed by a sense

of freedom and by partial rejections and reformulations. Following Bourdieu (1992) we can then see the body as an interface between habitus and the social world in a generative rather than deterministic relationship. In the conversation that this generates the space for agency opens up, and even whilst some social norms are reinforced others are challenged. The control of white women's bodies is the cornerstone of white dominance in Brazil, the means by which whiteness has been 'preserved' and its 'purity' guaranteed. Through a bodily practice that refuses to articulate racial, gendered and sexual oppression in the ways that tradition and discourse dictate it should they challenge the habitus that patriarchy and white supremacy construct and demand of their Others, and which "legitimates a relation of domination by embedding it in a biological natural that is itself a naturalised social construction" (Bourdieu, 2001: 23). It is through what people do, where they go, and who they do it with, that race, gender and sexuality are literally articulated, and it is through challenging the oppressive regimes that dictate 'appropriate' outlets for these bodily practices by a refusal to comply that they can perhaps be re-articulated, that the notes can be played in the order that better suits the women.

My overriding hope is that the women who shared so generously with me will be pleased that I listened to them, talked to them, and attempted to understand their lives. I genuinely believe that the identities they are constructing could have a dramatic impact on the sexual culture of Brazil, particularly in terms of offering women greater control over their sexual and gendered lives. I know that at the very least the Brazilian women who have appeared here are sexual actors in their own right. Their sexualities and gender identities are not necessarily tied to men, or understood in relation to men, but they are explicitly and passionately expressions of

Brazilianness. Where there are expressions of whiteness they only come on the condition that this whiteness be understood within the national discourse of racial mixture, and that they are unambiguously Brazilian. I am convinced that a greater understanding of whiteness and its operations and heterogeneity in Brazil can only help in the struggle for greater racial equality, if for no other reason than better understanding invariably lays bare weaknesses and, at least in the case of white middle-class women in Florianópolis, demonstrates how the operations of a system of white supremacy can impact negatively even on whites themselves. Even whilst they may sometimes disregard race from their (comparatively) privileged positions I know that the women who shared with me would support this struggle.

Bibliography

Agar, Michael H. (1996), *The Professional Stranger: An informal introduction to ethnography*, London: Academic Press.

Albuquerque, Severino João (2002), 'Fictions of the impossible: Clarice Lispector, Lúcio Cardoso, and 'impossibilidade'' in Susan Canty Quinlan & Fernando Arenas (eds.), *Lusosex: Gender and sexuality in the Portuguese-speaking world*, London: University of Minnesota Press, pp.84-103.

Ali, Suki (2003), *Mixed-race, post-race: Gender, new ethnicities and cultural practices*, Oxford: Berg.

Altman, Dennis (1996), 'Rupture or continuity? The internationalisation of gay identities' in *Social Text*, v.14: 3, pp.77-94.

        (2001), *Global Sex*, London: University of Chicago Press.

Anderson, Benedict (1991), *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, London: Verso.

Andrews, George Reid (1992), 'Black political protest in Sao Paulo, 1888-1988' in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, v.24: 1, pp.147-171.

Arenas, Fernando (2002), 'Small epiphanies in the night of the world: The writing of Caio Fernando Abreu' in Susan Canty Quinlan & Fernando Arenas (eds.), *Lusosex: Gender and sexuality in the Portuguese-speaking world*, London: University of Minnesota Press, pp.235-257.

Arroyo, Jossianna (2002), 'Brazilian homoerotics: Cultural subjectivity and representation in the fiction of Gilberto Freyre' in Susan Canty Quinlan & Fernando Arenas (eds.), *Lusosex: Gender and sexuality in the Portuguese-speaking world*, London: University of Minnesota Press, pp.57-83.

Asad, Talal (1986), 'The concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology' in James Clifford & George E. Marcus (eds.), *Writing Culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*, London: University of California Press, pp.141-164.

Atkinson, Paul & Coffey, Amanda (2003), 'Revisiting the relationship between participant observation and interviewing' in James A. Holstein & Jaber F. Gubrium (eds.), *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns*, London: Sage, pp.415-428.

Azerêdo, Sandra (1994), 'Teorizando sobre gênero e relações raciais' in *Estudos Feministas*, v.2, pp.203-216.

Azevedo, Reinaldo (2010), 'Lula e a nossa raça superior…' posted on 29/04/2010 @ 'http://veja.abril.com.br/blog/reinaldo/geral/lula-e-a-nossa-raca-superior/' (accessed 24/10/2010).

Baptista da Silva, P.V. & Rosemberg, Fúlvia (2009), 'Black and white people in the Brazilian media: Racist discourse and practices of resistance' in Teun A. Van Dijk (ed.), *Racism and discourse in Latin America*, Plymouth: Lexington Books, pp.57-93.

Baran, Michael D. (2007), '"Girl, you are not *morena*, we are *negras*!": Questioning the concept of "race" in southern Bahia, Brazil' in *Ethos*, v.35: 3, pp.383-409.

Battaglia, Debbora (1999), 'Towards an ethics of the open subject: Writing culture in good conscience' in Henrietta Moore (ed.), *Anthropological theory today*, Oxford: Polity Press, pp.114-150.

Beattie, Peter (1997), 'Conflicting penile codes: Modern masculinity and sodomy in the Brazilian military, 1860-1916' in Daniel Balderston & Donna J. Guy (eds.), *Sex and sexuality in Latin America*, London: New York University Press, pp.65-85.

Beck, Ulrich (2000), *The brave new world of work*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beleli, Iara (2007), 'Corpo e identidade na propaganda' in *Revista Estudos Feministas*, v.15: 1, pp.193-215.

Bell, Stephen (2010), *A life in shadow: Aimé Bonpland in southern South America, 1817-1858*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Berger, Maurice (1999), *White lies: Race and the myths of whiteness*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Beserra, Bernadette (2005), 'From Brazilians to Latinos? Racialisation and Latinidad in the making of Brazilian carnival in Los Angeles' in *Latino Studies*, v.3: 1, pp.53-75.

Besnier, Nico (2002), 'Transgenderism, locality, and the Miss Galaxy Beauty Pageant in Tonga' in *American Ethnologist*, v.29: 3, pp.534-566.

Bhabha, Homi (1994), *The location of culture*, London: Routledge.

Bhavnani, Kum-Kum (1994), 'Tracing the contours: Feminist research and feminist objectivity' in Haleh Afshar & Mary Maynard (eds.), *The dynamics of 'race' and gender: Some feminist interventions*, London: Taylor and Francis Ltd, pp.26-40.

Binnie, Jon (2004), *The globalisation of sexuality*, London: Sage Publications.

Blackwood, Evelyn (1995), 'Falling in love with an-Other lesbian: Reflections on identity in fieldwork' in Don Kulick & Margaret Willson (eds.), *Taboo: Sex, identity and erotic subjectivity in anthropological fieldwork*, London: Routledge, pp.51-75.

Braga-Pinto, César (2002), 'Supermen and Chiquita Bacana's daughters: Transgendered voices in Brazilian Popular Music' in Susan Canty Quinlan & Fernando Arenas (eds.), *Lusosex: Gender and sexuality in the Portuguese-speaking world*, London: University of Minnesota Press, pp.187-207.

Braidotti, Rosi (2002), *Metamorphoses: Towards a materialist theory of becoming*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Boellstorff, Tom (2005), *The gay archipelago: Sexuality and nation in Indonesia*, Oxford: Princeton University Press.

(2007), *A coincidence of desires: Anthropology, Queer Studies, Indonesia*, London: Duke University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1984), *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*, London: Routledge.

(1992), *The logic of practice*, Cambridge: Polity.

(2001), *Masculine domination*, Cambridge: Polity.

Bourdieu, Pierre & Wacquant, Loïc (1992), *An invitation to reflexive sociology*, London: University of Chicago Press.

Butler, Judith (1991), 'Imitation and gender insubordination' in Diana Fuss (ed.), *inside/out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, London: Routledge, pp.13-31.

(1993), *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of "sex"*, London: Routledge.

Cabral, Osvaldo R. (1970), *História de Santa Catarina*, Rio de Janeiro: Editôra Laudes.

Caldwell, Kia Lilly (2007), *Negras in Brazil: Re-envisioning black women, citizenship, and the politics of identity*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Cambraia Windsor, Liliane (2007), 'Deconstructing Racial Democracy: A personal quest to understand social conditioning about race relations in Brazil' in *Social Identities*, v.13: 4, pp.495-520.

Canty Quinlan, Susan (2002), 'Cross-Dressing: Silviano Santiago's fictional performances' in Susan Canty Quinlan & Fernando Arenas (eds.), *Lusosex: Gender and sexuality in the Portuguese-speaking world*, London: University of Minnesota Press, pp.208-232.

Canty Quinlan, Susan & Arenas, Fernando (eds.) (2002), *Lusosex: Gender and sexuality in the Portuguese-speaking world*, London: University of Minnesota Press.

Cardoso, Fernando L. (2005), 'Cultural universals and differences in male homosexuality: The case of a Brazilian fishing village' in *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*, v.35: 1, pp.103-109.

Carrillo, Héctor (2003), 'Neither *machos* nor *maricones*: Masculinity and emerging male homosexual identities in Mexico' in Matthew C. Gutmann (ed.), *Changing men and masculinities in Latin America*, London: Duke University Press, pp.351-369.

Caulfield, SueAnn (1997), 'The birth of Mangue: Race, nation, and the politics of prostitution in Rio de Janeiro, 1850-1942' in Daniel Balderston & Donna J. Guy (eds.), *Sex and Sexuality in Latin America*, London: New York University Press, pp.86-100.

Clifford, James (1986.a), 'Introduction: Partial truths' in James Clifford & George E. Marcus (eds.), *Writing Culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*, London: University of California Press, pp.1-26.

(1986.b), 'On ethnographic allegory' in James Clifford & George E. Marcus (eds.), *Writing Culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*, London: University of California Press, pp.98-121.

(1988), *The predicament of culture: Twentieth-Century ethnography, literature and art*, London: Harvard University Press.

Clifford, James & Marcus, George E. (eds.) (1986), *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*, London: University of California Press.

Connell, Robert W. (1995), *Masculinities*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Coutinho, Ana Lúcia (2002), 'Manifestações da cultura popular na Ilha de Santa Catarina' in Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Santa Catarina, *A Ilha de Santa Catarina: Espaço, tempo, e gente, v.2*, Florianópolis: Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Santa Catarina, pp.88-112.

DaMatta, Roberto (1985), *A casa e a rua: Espaço, cidadania, mulher e morte no Brasil*, São Paulo: Brasiliense.

(1991), *Carnivals, rogues, and heroes: An interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma*, London: University of Notre Dame Press.

(1995), 'For an anthropology of the Brazilian tradition or "A virtude está no meio"' in David J. Hess & Roberto A. DaMatta (eds.), *The Brazilian Puzzle: Culture on the borderlands of the Western World*, Chichester: Columbia University Press, pp.270-291.

Danaher, Geoff; Schirato, Tony, & Webb, Jen (2000), *Understanding Foucault*, London: Sage Publications.

Daniel, G. Reginald (2006), *Race and multiraciality in Brazil and the United States: Converging Paths?*, University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Davis, Darién J. (2000), 'Racial parity and national humor: Exploring Brazilian samba from Noel Rosa to Carmen Miranda' in William H. Beezley & Linda A. Curcio-Nagy (eds.), *Latin American popular culture: An introduction*, Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., pp.183-199.

dos Santos, Sales Augusto (2002), 'Historical Roots of "Whitening" of Brazil' in *Latin American Perspectives*, v.29: 1, pp.61-82.

Dreher, Martin Norberto (2005), 'Brazil' in Thomas Adam (ed.), *Germany and the Americas: Culture, politics and history*, Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO Inc, pp.165-171.

Dunne, Gillian A. (1997), *Lesbian lives: Women's work and the politics of sexuality*, Basingstoke: MacMillan Press.

Ely, Margot (1991), *Doing qualitative research: Circles within circles*, London: The Falmer Press.

Fanon, Frantz (1986), *Black Skin, White Masks*, London: Pluto Press.

Fawcett, Barbara & Hearn, Jeff (2004), 'Researching Others: Epistemology, experience, standpoints and participation' in *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, v.7: 3. pp.201-218.

Fechter, Anne-Meike (2005), 'The 'Other' stares back: Experiencing whiteness in Jakarta' in *Ethnography*, v.6: 1, pp.87-103.

Ferreira da Silva, Denise (2004), 'An introduction: The predicament of Brazilian culture' in *Social Identities*, v.10: 6, pp.719-734.

          (2006), 'À brasileira: racialidade e a escrita de um desejo destrutivo' in *Revista Estudos Feministas*, v.14: 1, pp.61-83.

Ferreira-Pinto, Cristina (2004), *Gender, discourse, and desire in Twentieth-Century Brazilian women's literature*, West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press.

Fish, Jefferson M. (1999), 'Mixed Blood' in Robert M. Levine & John J. Crocitti (eds.), *The Brazil Reader: History, culture, politics*, London: Latin American Bureau, pp.391-397.

Flores, Maria Bernadette Ramos (1995), 'Entre a casa e a rua...: Memória feminina das festas açorianas no sul do Brasil' in *Cadernos Pagu*, v.4, pp.117-142.

Foucault, Michel (1979), *The will to knowledge: The history of sexuality: Volume one*, London: Penguin Books.

(1985), *The use of pleasure: The history of sexuality: Volume two,* London: Penguin Books.

(1986), *The care of the self: The history of sexuality: Volume three*, London: Penguin Books.

Frankenberg, Ruth (1993), *The social construction of whiteness (white women, race matters)*, London: Routledge.

Freyre, Gilberto (1946), *The masters and the slaves: A study in the development of Brazilian civilisation*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Fry, Peter (2004), 'Preface' in Laura Moutinho, *Razão, "cor" e desejo*, São Paulo: Fundação Editora da UNESP, pp.13-17.

Gallagher, Charles A. (2000), 'White like me? Methods, meaning, and manipulation in the field of White Studies' in France Winddance Twine & Jonathan W. Warren (eds.), *Racing research, researching race: Methodological dilemmas in Critical Race Studies*, London: New York University Press, pp.67-91.

Garguin, Enrique (2007), '*Los Argentinos descendemos de los barcos*: The racial articulation of middle-class identity in Argentina' in *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, v.2: 2, pp.161-184.

Garner, Steve (2007), *Whiteness: An introduction*, London: Routledge.

Geertz, Clifford (1993.a), *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, London: Fontana Press.

(1993.b), *Local Knowledge: Further essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, London: Fontana Press.

Giacomini, Sonia Maria (2006), 'Mulatas profissionais: raça, gênero e ocupação' in *Revista Estudos Feministas*, v.14: 1, pp.85-101.

Góis, João B.H. (2008), 'Quando raça conta: Um estudo de diferenças entre mulheres brancas e negras no acesso e permanência no ensino superior' in *Revista Estudos Feministas*, v.16: 3, pp.743-768.

Goldenberg, Mirian (2008), *Coroas: Corpo, envelhecimento, casamento e infidelidade*, Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record.

Goldstein, Donna (1999), '"Interracial" sex and Racial Democracy in Brazil: Twin concepts?' in *American Anthropologist*, v.101: 3, pp.563-578.

Golgher, André B. (2008), 'As cidades e a classe criativa no Brasil: diferenças espaciais na distribuição de indivíduos qualificados nos municípios brasileiros' in *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da População*, v.25: 1, pp.109-129.

Gomes, Rodrigo C.S., Mello, Maria I.C. & Piedade, Acácio T.C. (2008), 'Samba e relações de gênero na Ilha de Santa Catarina' in *DAPesquisa*, v.3, pp.1-14.

Green, Adam I. (2002), 'Gay but not queer: Toward a post-queer study of sexuality' in *Theory and Society*, v.31: 4, pp.521-545.

Green, James N. (1999), *Beyond carnival: Male homosexuality in Twentieth-Century Brazil*, London: University of Chicago Press.

Guimarães, Antonio Sérgio Alfredo (2002), *Classes, raças e democracia*, São Paulo: Editora 34.

Gutmann, Matthew C. (1996), *The meanings of macho: Being a man in Mexico City*, London: University of California Press.

Hage, Ghassan (2000), *White nation: Fantasies of white supremacy in a multicultural society*, New York: Routledge.

Halberstam, Judith (1998), *Female masculinity*, Duke University Press: London.

Hanchard, Michael G. (1994), *Orpheus and power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil, 1945-1988*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

(2000), 'Racism, eroticism, and the paradoxes of a US black researcher in Brazil' in France Winddance Twine & Jonathan W. Warren (eds.), *Racing research, researching race: Methodological dilemmas in Critical Race Studies*, London: New York University Press, pp.165-185.

Harding, Sandra (2004.a), 'Introduction: Standpoint Theory as a site of political, philosophic and scientific debate' in Sandra Harding (ed.), *The Feminist Standpoint Theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies*, London: Routledge, pp.1-15.

(2004.b), 'Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is 'Strong Objectivity'?' in Harding, S. (ed.), *The Feminist Standpoint Theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies*, London: Routledge, pp.127-139.

Hartigan, John (1999), *Racial situations: Class predicaments of whiteness in Detroit*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

(2000), 'Whiteness in the field: Introduction to special issue of Identities' in *Identities*, v.7: 3, pp.269-279.

(2005), *Odd Tribes: Toward a cultural analysis of white people*, London: Duke University Press.

Hartsock, Nancy (2004), 'The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the ground for a specifically feminist historical materialism' in Sandra Harding (ed.), *The Feminist Standpoint Theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies*, London: Routledge, pp.35-53.

Hastrup, Kirsten (1994), 'Anthropological knowledge incorporated: Discussion' in Kirsten Hastrup & Peter Hervik (eds.), *Social experience and anthropological knowledge*, London: Routledge, pp.168-179.

Hawkesworth, Mary E. (1989), 'Knowers, knowing, known: Feminist theory and claims of truth' in *Signs*, v.14: 3, pp.533-557.

Heilborn, Maria Luiza (2006), 'Entre as tramas da sexualidade brasileira' in *Revista Estudos Feministas*, v.14: 1, pp.43-59.

Herzfeld, Michael (2001), *Anthropology: Theoretical practice in culture and society*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Hess, David J. & DaMatta, Roberto A. (1995), 'Introduction' in David J. Hess & Roberto A. DaMatta (eds.), *The Brazilian Puzzle: Culture on the borderlands of the Western World*, Chichester: Columbia University Press, pp.1-27.

Higgs, David (1999.a), 'Lisbon' in David Higgs (ed.), *Queer sites: Gay urban histories since 1600*, London: Routledge, pp.112-137.

(1999.b), 'Rio de Janeiro' in David Higgs (ed.), *Queer sites: Gay urban histories since 1600*, London: Routledge, pp.138-163.

Hirschmann, Nancy J. (2004), 'Feminist Standpoint as Postmodern Theory' in Sandra Harding (ed.), *The Feminist Standpoint Theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies*, London: Routledge, pp.317-332.

Hoad, Neville (2000), 'Arrested development or the queerness of savages: Resisting evolutionary narratives of difference' in *Postcolonial Studies*, v.3: 2, pp.133-158.

Holstein, James A. & Gubrium, Jaber F. (2003), 'Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns' in James A. Holstein & Jaber F. Gubrium (eds.), *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns*, London: Sage, pp.3-32.

Johnson, Mark (1997), *Beauty and power: Transgendering and cultural transformation in the Southern Philippines*, Oxford: Berg.

(1998), 'Global desirings and translocal loves: Transgendering and same-sex sexualities in the Southern Philippines' in *American Ethnologist*, v.25: 4, pp.695-711.

Johnson, Mark & Clisby, Suzanne (2008), 'Both 'One' and 'Other': Environmental cosmopolitanism and the politics of hybridity in Costa Rica' in *Nature and Culture*, v.3: 1, pp.63-81.

Joseph, Galen (2000), 'Taking race seriously: Whiteness in Argentina's national and transnational imaginary,' in *Identities*, v.7: 3, pp.333-371.

Katz, Jack (2001), 'From how to why: On luminous description and causal inference in ethnography (Part 1)' in *Ethnography*, v.2: 4, pp.443-473.

(2002), 'From how to why: On luminous description and causal inference in ethnography (Part 2)' in *Ethnography*, v.3: 1, pp.63-90.

Killick, Andrew (1995), 'The penetrating intellect: On being white, straight and male in Korea' in Don Kulick & Margaret Willson (eds.), *Taboo: Sex, identity and erotic subjectivity in anthropological fieldwork*, London: Routledge, pp.76-107.

Klein, Charles H. (1998), 'From one 'Battle' to another: The making of a travesti political movement in a Brazilian city' in *Sexualities*, v.1: 3, pp.327-342.

(1999), ''The ghetto is over, darling': Emerging gay communities and gender and sexual politics in contemporary Brazil' in *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, v.1: 3, pp.239-260.

(2002), '"Making a Scene": Travestis and the gendered politics of space in Porto Alegre, Brazil' in Rosario Montoya, Lessie Jo Frazier & Janise Hurtig (eds.), *Gender's place: Feminist anthropologies of Latin America*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, pp.217-236.

Klein, Herbert S. & Vidal Luna, Francisco (2010), *Slavery in Brazil*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kuhnen, Ariane (2002), *Lagoa da Conceição: Meio ambiente e modas de vida em transformação*, Florianópolis: Cidade Futura.

Kulick, Don (1998.a), *Travesti: Sex, gender and culture among Brazilian transgendered prostitutes*, London: University of Chicago Press.

(1998.b), 'Fe/Male Trouble: The unsettling place of lesbians in the self-images of Brazilian *travesti* prostitutes' in *Sexualities*, v.1: 3, pp 299-312.

Kvale, Steiner (1996), *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*, London: Sage.

la Pastina, Antonio C. (2006), 'The implications of an ethnographer's sexuality' in *Qualitative Inquiry*, v.12: 4, pp.724-735.

Lancaster, Roger N. (1992), *Life is hard: Machismo, danger and the intimacy of power in Nicaragua*, London: University of California Press.

Larvie, Sean Patrick (1999), 'Queerness and the specter of Brazilian national ruin' in *GLQ*, v.5: 4, pp. 527-558.

Lawler, Steph (2008), *Identity: Sociological perspectives*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Leal Caruso, Mariléa M. & Caruso, Raimundo C. (2007), *Imigrantes 1748-1900: Viagens que descobriram Santa Catarina*, Tubarão, Santa Catarina: Editora Unisul.

Lesser, Jeffrey (1999.a), 'Immigrant ethnicity in Brazil' in Robert M. Levine & John J. Crocitti (eds.), *The Brazil Reader: History, culture, politics*, London: Latin American Bureau, pp.374-378.

(1999.b) *Negotiating national identity: Immigrants, minorities, and the struggle for ethnicity in Brazil*, London: Duke University Press.

Levine, Hal B. (1999), 'Reconstructing ethnicity' in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institution*, v.5, pp.165-180.

Lohn, Reinaldo Lindolfo (2007), 'Limites da utopia: Cidade e modernização no Brasil desenvolvimentista (Florianópolis, década de 1950)' in *Revista Brasileira de História*, v.27: 43, pp.297-322.

Loomba, Ania (1998), *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, London: Routledge.

Lugarinho, Mário César (2002), 'Al Berto, in memoriam: The Luso queer principle' in Susan Canty Quinlan & Fernando Arenas (eds.), *Lusosex: Gender and sexuality in the Portuguese-speaking world*, London: University of Minnesota Press, pp.276-300.

Machado, Maria dos Dores Campos & Barros, Myriam Lins de (2009), 'Gênero, geração e classe: uma discussão sobre as mulheres das camadas médias e populares do Rio de Janeiro' in *Revista Estudos Feministas*, v.17: 2, pp.369-393.

MacRae, Edward (1992), 'Homosexual identities in transitional Brazilian politics' in Sonia Alvarez & Arturo Escobar (eds.), *The making of social movements in Latin America: Identity, strategy and democracy*, Oxford: Westview Press, pp.185-203.

Maia, Suzana (2009), 'Sedução e identidade nacional: Dançarinas eróticas brasileiras no Queens, Nova York' in *Revista Estudos Feministas*, v.17: 3, pp.769-797.

Maluf, Sônia Weidner (1992), 'Bruxas e bruxaria na Lagoa da Conceição: Um estudo sobre representações de poder feminino na Ilha de Santa Catarina' in *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, v.34, pp.99-112.

Marcus, George & Fischer, Michael (1986), *Anthropology as cultural critique: An experimental moment in the Human Sciences*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Marcus, George (1998), *Ethnography through thick and thin*, Chichester: Princeton University Press.

Marrow, Helen (2003), 'To be or not to be (Hispanic or Latino): Brazilian racial and ethnic identity in the United States' in *Ethnicities*, v.3: 4, pp.427-464.

Mayer, Tamar (2000), 'Gender ironies of nationalism: Setting the stage' in Tamar Mayer (ed.), *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*, London: Routledge, pp.1-22.

Maynard, Mary (1994.a), 'Methods, practice and epistemology: The debate about feminism and research' in Mary Maynard & June Purvis (eds.), *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective*, London: Taylor & Francis, pp.27-48.

        (1994.b), ''Race,' gender and the concept of 'difference in feminist thought' in Haleh Afshar & Mary Maynard (eds.), *The dynamics of 'race' and gender: Some feminist interventions*, London: Taylor and Francis Ltd, pp.9-25.

McCallum, Cecilia (2005), 'Racialized bodies, naturalised classes: Moving through the city of Salvador da Bahia' in *American Ethnologist*, v.32: 1, pp.100-117.

McDermott Hughes, David (2010), *Whiteness in Zimbabwe: Race, landscape, and the problem of belonging*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

McNay, Lois (2000), *Gender and agency: Reconfiguring the subject in feminist and social theory*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Melhuus, Marit (1996), 'Power, value, and the ambiguous meanings of gender' in Marit Melhuus & Kristi Ann Stølen (eds.), *Machos, mistresses, madonnas: Contesting the power of Latin American gender imagery*, London: Verso, pp.230-259.

Mirandé, Alfredo (1998), *Hombres y machos: Masculinity and latino culture*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Moutinho, Laura (2004), *Razão, "cor" e desejo*, São Paulo: Fundação Editora da UNESP.

Mulhall, Michael G. (1873, republished 2005), *Rio Grande do Sul and its German colonies*, London: Elibron Classics.

Nascimento, Elisa Larkin (2007), *The sorcery of colour: Identity, race, and gender in Brazil*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Norvell, John M (2002), 'A brancura desconfortável das camadas médias brasileiras' in Yvonne Maggie & Claudia Barcellos Rezende (eds.), *Raça como retórica: a construção da diferença*, Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, pp.245-267.

O'Dougherty, Maureen (2002), *Consumption intensified: The politics of middle-class daily life in Brazil*, Durham + London: Duke University Press.

Okediji, Tade O. (2004), 'The dynamics of race, ethnicity and economic development: the Brazilian experience' in *Journal of Socio-Economics*, v.33: 2, pp.201-215.

Oliven, Ruben George (2006), 'National and regional identities in Brazil: Rio Grande do Sul and its peculiarities' in *Nations and Nationalism*, v.12: 2, pp.303-320.

Ortner, Sherry B. (2003), New *Jersey dreaming: Capital, culture, and the Class of '58*, London: Duke University Press.

Owensby, Brian P. (1999), *Intimate ironies: Modernity and the making of middle-class lives in Brazil*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

(2005), 'Toward a history of Brazil's "Cordial Racism": Race beyond liberalism' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, v.47, pp.318-347.

Parker, David & Song, Miri (2001), 'Introduction: Rethinking 'mixed race'' in David Parker & Miri Song (eds.), *Rethinking 'mixed race'*, London: Pluto Press, pp.1-22.

Parker, Richard G. (1991), *Bodies, pleasures and passions: Sexual culture in contemporary Brazil*, Boston: Beacon Press.

(1999), *Beneath the equator: Cultures of desire, male homosexuality and emerging gay communities in Brazil*, London: Routledge.

(2003), 'The carnivalization of the world' in Matthew C. Gutmann, Feliz V. Matos Rodríguez, Lynn Stephen & Patricia Zavella (eds.), *Perspectives on Las Américas: A reader in culture, history,and representation*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp.213-238.

Pereira Coelho, Maria Claudia (1995), 'Rituals, Scandals, and Sex Crimes: Attempted rape-murders across two generations' in David J. Hess, & Roberto A. DaMatta (eds.), *The Brazilian Puzzle: Culture on the borderlands of the Western World*, Chichester: Columbia University Press, pp.89-113.

Pereira da Silva Nunes, Lélia (2002), 'Sobrevivências culturais açorianas: A identidade da Ilha de Santa Catarina' in Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Santa Catarina, *A Ilha de Santa Catarina: Espaço, tempo, e gente, v.2*, Florianópolis: Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Santa Catarina, pp.71-77.

Pinho, Patricia de Santana (2009), 'White but not quite: Tones and overtones of whiteness in Brazil' in *Small Axe*, Number 29 (v.13: 2), pp.39-56.

Piscitelli, Adriana (2004), 'On "gringos" and "natives": gender and sexuality in the context of international sex tourism in Fortaleza, Brazil' in *Vibrant – Virtual Brazilian Anthropology*, v.1, pp.1-27.

Pravaz, Natasha (2008), 'Hybridity Brazilian style: Samba, carnival, and the myth of "Racial Democracy" in Rio de Janeiro' in *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, v.15: 1, pp.80-102.

(2009), 'The tan from Ipanema: Freyre, *morenidade*, and the cult of the body in Rio de Janeiro' in *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, v.34: 67, pp.79-104.

Prieur, Annick (1998), *Mema's House: On transvestites, queens, and machos*, London: University of Chicago Press.

Quintas, Fátima (2007), *Sexo à moda patriarchal: O feminino e o masculino na obra de Gilberto Freyre*, São Paulo: Global Editora.

Quiroga, José (2000), *Tropics of desire: Interventions from Queer Latino America*, London: New York University Press.

Rabinow, Paul (1986), 'Representations are social facts: Modernity and post-modernity in anthropology' in James Clifford & George E. Marcus (eds.), *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.234-261.

Radcliffe, Sarah & Westwood, Sallie (1996), *Remaking the nation: Place, identity and politics in Latin America*, London: Routledge.

Ramos, Alcida Rita (1998), *Indigenism: Ethnic politics in Brazil*, London: University of Wisconsin Press.

Rezende, Claúdia Barcellos & Lima, Márcia (2004), 'Linking gender, class and race in Brazil' in *Social Identities*, v.10: 6, pp.757-773.

Ribeiro, Darcy (1995), *O povo brasileiro: A formação e o sentido do Brasil*, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.

Robben, Antonius C.G.M. (1995), 'The politics of truth and emotion among victims and perpetrators of violence' in Carolyn Nordstrom & Antonius C.G.M. Robben (eds.), *Fieldwork under fire: Contemporary studies of violence and survival*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.81-103.

Rogers, Thomas D. (2010), *The deepest wounds: A labor and environmental history of sugar in Northeast Brazil*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Rosaldo, Renato (1993), *Culture and Truth: The remaking of social analysis*, London: Routledge.

Roth-Gordon, Jennifer (2007), 'Racing and erasing the *playboy*: Slang, transnational subculture, and racial discourse in Brazil' in *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, v. 17: 2, pp.246-265.

Rosa-Ribeiro, Fernando (2000), 'Racism, mimesis and anthropology in Brazil' in *Critique of Anthropology*, v.20: 3, pp.221-241.

Russell-Wood, A.J.R. (1998), *The Portuguese Empire, 1415-1808: A world on the move*, London: The Johns Hopkins Press Ltd.

Sahlins, Marshall (1999), 'Two or three things I know about culture' in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institution*, v.5, pp.399-421.

Sanjek, Roger (1990), 'On ethnographic validity' in Roger Sanjek (ed.), *Fieldnotes: The makings of anthropology*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp.385-418.

Sarti, Cynthia (1995), 'Morality and transgression among Brazilian poor families: Exploring ambiguities' in David J. Hess & Roberto A. DaMatta (eds.), *The Brazilian Puzzle: Culture on the borderlands of the Western World*, Chichester: Columbia University Press, pp.114-133.

Schacht, Steven P. & Ewing, Doris (1997), 'The many paths of feminism: Can men travel any of them?' in *Journal of Gender Studies*, v.6: 2, pp.159-176.

 (2004), *Feminism with men: Bridging the gender gap*, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc

Scheina, Robert L. (2003), *Latin America's wars: The age of the caudillo, 1791-1899*, Dulles Virginia: Brassey's Inc.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy (1992), *Death without weeping: The violence of everyday life in Brazil*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

 (2007), 'Ire in Ireland' in Antonius C.G.M. Robben & Jeffrey A. Sluka (eds.), *Ethnographic fieldwork: An anthropological reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp.202-216.

Seyferth, Giralda (1994), 'A identidade teuto-brasileira numa perspectiva histórica' in Cláudia Mauch (ed.), *Os alemães no sul do Brasil: Cultura, etnicidade, história*, Canoas: Ed ULBRA, pp.11-28.

Sheriff, Robin E. (2001), *Dreaming equality: Colour, race, and racism in urban Brazil*, London: Rutgers University Press.

Silva, Ailton Amélio da (2006), 'O conteúdo da vida amorosa de estudantes universitários' in *Interação em Psicologia*, v.10: 2, pp.301-312.

Simpson, Amelia (1993), *Xuxa: The mega-marketing of gender, race and modernity*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Skeggs, Beverley (1994), 'Refusing to be civilised: 'Race', sexuality and power' in Haleh Afshar & Mary Maynard (eds.), *The dynamics of 'race' and gender: Some feminist interventions*, London: Taylor and Francis Ltd, pp.106-126.

Sluka, Jeffrey A. & Robben, Antonius C.G.M. (2007), 'Fieldwork in cultural anthropology: An introduction' in Antonius C.G.M. Robben, A. & Jeffrey A. Sluka (eds.), *Ethnographic fieldwork: An anthropological reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp.1-28.

Souza, Amoury & Lamounier, Bolíver (2010), *A classe média brasileira: Ambições, valores e projetos de sociedade*, Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier Editora Ldta.

Sovik, Liv (2004), 'We are family: Whiteness in the Brazilian media' in *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, v.13: 3, pp.315-325.

Stepan, Nancy Leys (1991), *"The hour of eugenics": Race, gender and nation in Latin America*, London: Cornell University Press.

Sterza Justo, José (2005), 'O "ficar" na adolescencia e paradigmas de relacionamento amoroso da contemporaneidade' in *Revista do Departamento de Psicologia – UFF*, v.17: 1, pp.61-77.

Steyn, Melissa E. (2001), *"Whiteness just isn't what it used to be": White identity in a changing South Africa*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Steyn, Melissa E. & Foster, Don (2008), 'Repertoires for talking white: Resistant whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa' in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, v.31: 1, pp.25-51.

Stoler, Ann Laura (1995), *Race and the education of desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the colonial order of things*, London: Duke University Press.

Tedlock, Barbara. (1991), 'From participant observation to the observation of participation: The emergence of narrative ethnography' in *The Journal of Anthropological Research*, v.47: 1, pp.69-94.

Telles, Edward E. (2004), *Race in another America: The significance of skin colour in Brazil*, Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Terra.com.br (2009), posted March 26th 2009, accessed October 17th 2010 @ http://noticias.terra.com.br/interna/0,,OI3662196-EI8177,00.html

Trevisan, João Silvério (1986), *Perverts in paradise*, London: GMP Publishers Ltd.

    (2002), 'Tivira, the man with the broken butt: Same-sex practices among Brazilian Indians' in Susan Canty Quinlan & Fernando Arenas (eds.), *Lusosex: Gender and sexuality in the Portuguese-speaking world*, London: University of Minnesota Press, pp.3-11.

Twine, France Winddance (2000), 'Racial ideologies and racial methodologies' in France Winddance Twine & Jonathan W. Warren (eds.), *Racing research, researching race: Methodological dilemmas in Critical Race Studies*, London: New York University Press, pp.1-34.

Twine, France Winddance, & Gallagher, Charles (2008), 'Introduction, the future of whiteness: a map of the 'third wave'' in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, v.31: 1, pp.4-24

UK Census (2001), accessed October 7th 2010.
http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=3&b=27 6821&c=hull&d=13&e=16&g=389985&i=1001x1003x1004&m=0&r=1&s=126719 5873119&enc=1&dsFamilyId=87

Ulhôa Carvalho, Martha de (1995), 'Tupi or not Tupi MPB: Popular music and identity in Brazil' in David J. Hess & Roberto A. DaMatta (eds.), *The Brazilian Puzzle: Culture on the borderlands of the Western World*, Chichester: Columbia University Press, pp.159-179.

Vianna, Hermano (1999), *The mystery of samba: Popular music and national identity in Brazil*, London: The University of North Carolina Press.

Wade, Peter (1997), *Race and ethnicity in Latin America*, London: Pluto Press.

     (2001), 'Racial identity and nationalism: A theoretical view from Latin America' in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, v.24: 5, pp.845-865.

     (2005), 'Rethinking *mestizaje*: Ideology and lived experience' in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, v.37, pp.239-257.

     (2009), *Race and sex in Latin America*, London: Pluto Press.

Walker, Liz (2005), 'The colour white: Racial and gendered closure in the South African medical profession' in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, v.28: 2, pp.348-375.

Warren, Jonathan W. (2000), 'Masters in the field: White talk, white privileges, white biases' in France Winddance Twine & Jonathan W. Warren (eds.), *Racing research, researching race: Methodological dilemmas in Critical Race Studies*, London: New York University Press, pp.135-164.

Wekker, Gloria (2006), *The politics of passion: Women's sexual culture in the Afro-Surinamese diaspora*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Williams, Judith Michelle (2006), 'Uma mulata sim!: Araci Cortes, 'The Mulatta' of the Teatro de Revista' in *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, v.16: 1, pp.7-26.

Willis, Paul & Trondman, Matts (2000), 'Manifesto for ethnography' in *Ethnography*, v.1: 1, pp.5-16.

Wilton, Tamsin (1995), *Lesbian studies: Setting an agenda*, London: Routledge.

Winant, Howard (1992), 'Rethinking race in Brazil' in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, v.24, pp.173-192.