Popular Culture Imaginings of the Mulatta: Constructing Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Nation in the United States and Brazil

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Bianet Castellanos, Co-adviser

Erika Lee, Co-adviser

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Dedication

To my grandfather, PopPop, James Reeder, the most intelligent man I have ever known,

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Chapter One: Constructions of Racial Mixture in the United States and Brazil 36

Chapter Two: Starring the Biracial, Black, *Negra* Actress: Mixed-Race Star Texts 104

Chapter Three: The *Morena* and the *Mulata* in Brazilian Telenovelas 162

Chapter Four: Reinventing the Mulatta in the United States 227

Chapter Five: U.S. Media Imaginings of Brazil and Brazil's Self-Projection 278

Epilogue 351

Bibliography 355

Introduction

"Strange to wake up and realize you are suddenly in style. That's what happened to me just the other morning. It was the first day of the millennium and I woke to find that mulattos had taken over," writes the American novelist, Danzy Senna in her essay, "The "Mulatto Millenium."[1] Danzy Senna chronicles the rise of "multiracial chic", the growing interest in multiraciality, and the visibility of celebrities such as Lenny Kravitz and Mariah Carey in the United States. The advent of a multiracial chic aesthetic in the United States points to a renewed fascination with multiracial figures. In 2003, a *New York Times* article, "Generation E.A.: Ethnically Ambiguous," explored the new vogue for racially ambiguous actors and models in media, fashion, and advertising.[2] In the United States, the opportunities for multiracial actors and identities are riding a rising wave of fascination with multiracialism, an increased awareness and consciousness of multiracialism, and demographic changes. Meanwhile in Brazil, reputedly a racial democracy, Taís Araújo's casting in *Viver a Vida* (2009-2010) marked the first time an actress of African descent had a protagonist role on primetime television. Recent political and social changes have accompanied new spaces for Afro-Brazilian actresses. Brazilian racial democracy, based on extensive racial mixing, is under question. From the early 1990s onwards, Afro-Brazilian social and political mobilization, the emergence of black race-conscious magazines like *Raça,* and the introduction of affirmative action and racial quotas have heightened discussions of race in the Brazilian public sphere.

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[1] Danzy Senna, "The Mulatto Millenium," in *Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural*. ed. Claudine Chiwaei O'Hearn (New York: Pantheon, 1998), 12.
[2] Ruth La Ferla, "Generation E.A.: Ethnically Ambiguous," *The New York Times,* December 28, 2003. http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/28/style/generation-ea-ethnically-ambiguous.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm

Looking at the United States and Brazil together illuminates each nation's distinctive histories, cultures, and politics and exposes the hemispheric dimensions of the mixed-race figure. Both the United States and Brazil have large populations of African descent, legacies of slavery and manumission, histories of large-scale European immigration, large film, television, and music industries, and a widespread indigenous presence that complicates black identities. Brazil and the United States are both undergoing shifts in national discourses as each nation grapples with challenges of racial classification, inequality, and demographic change. Some scholars have asserted that the United States will experience a Latin Americanization of race such that racial boundaries will become more ambiguous while other scholars suggest that the United States will move from a black-white binary to a black-nonblack racial model in a reconfiguration of racial boundaries.[3] Scholars such as Reginald Daniel and Stanley Bailey argue that the United States and Brazil are on converging paths.[4] Whereas the United States racial classification system has relied on hypodescent to set boundaries between blackness and whiteness, the articulation of a multiracial movement, shifts in the racial classification on the 2000 census, and changing demographics point to a move from a binary project of hypodescent to a multiracial framework. Meanwhile, Brazil is moving towards a white-

[3] Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "From bi-racial to tri-racial: Towards a new system of racial stratification in the USA," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27, no. 6 (2004): 931-950; Jennifer Lee and Frank Bean. "Reinventing the Color Line: Immigration and America's New Racial/Ethnic Divide, *Social Forces* 86.2 (2007): 561-586; George A. Yancey, *Who is White?: Latinos, Asians, and the New Black/Nonblack Divide* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003).

[4] Stanley Bailey, *Legacies of Race: Identities, Attitudes, and Politics in Brazil* (Stanford University Press, 2009); G. Reginald Daniel, *Race and Multiraciality in Brazil and the United States: Converging Paths?* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006)

nonwhite model in which brown and black are collapsed into collective blackness.[5] The tension and debates between multiracial and monoracial racial schematics point to questions regarding the meaning of race, access to power and resources, and national identity.

Exploring how cultural representations of mixed-race women function in both countries helps provide a better understanding of the possibilities and limitations of racial convergence between the United States and Brazil. In the United States, the belief in the nation's transcendence of racism relies in part on the use of multiraciality as proof of progress. In Brazil, the rhetoric of a mixed race racial democracy is giving way to an acknowledgement of massive racial inequality and the need for black identification. By looking at how images of mixed-race women of African and European descent in the U.S. and Brazil are being reconfigured, reinforced, or altered nationally and transnationally, this dissertation hopes to illuminate these convergences.

In the United States, the mulatta has functioned as a key popular culture figure for various racial and national discourses. Popular culture representations of the U.S. mulatta prevalently center on racial anxieties concerning racial mixing and racial boundaries. From the tragic mulatta figure of antebellum literature, to the iconic mulatta in Harlem Renaissance literature and passing narratives to the mulatta figure reborn as a figure of multiracial harmony in the U.S. during the 1990s and 2000s, the legacies of the U.S. iconography of the mulatta continue to haunt and inform contemporary representations of mixed-race women of African and European descent in the United States. In Brazil, the

[5] Stanley Bailey and Edward E. Telles, "Multiracial versus Collective Black Categories Examining Census Classification Debates in Brazil," *Ethnicities* 6, no. 1 (2006): 74-101.

iconic image of the *mulata* is embedded in national identity. This iconography is related to the association of the *mulata* with *carnaval* and samba, the exaltation of the *mulata*'s sexual desirability in popular culture, and the *mulata* as the epitome of hybridity and racial democracy. The iconography stems from early twentieth century Brazil's nation-building project and continues to influence the contemporary representation of the *mulata*.[6] Given the importance of popular culture in shaping and reflecting racial ideologies and its role in the negotiation of race, gender, sexuality and nation, popular culture representations of mixed-race women are particularly salient in understanding national and transnational racial dynamics.

In the United States, the 2000 census, which allowed individuals to check more than one racial identification box, represents a significant policy change when considering the history of the "one-drop" rule of black hypodescent. Following the *Loving v. Virginia* (1967) decision that repealed antimiscegenation laws, a "biracial baby boom"[7] brought about an increase in a self-identified multiracial population, a further politicization of mixed-race identities, and a growing prevalence of mixed-race images and figures. With the increase in immigration from Latin America and Asia, in part as a result from the 1965 Hart-Celler Act that removed national origin quotas, the population of recent immigrants is now mostly non-European. This shift from European immigrants

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[6] Similarly to Brazil, Cuban national identity is also invested in the *mulata* figure. From the emphasis on the beauty and desirability of the Cuban *mulata* in literature to the association of the *mulata* with rumba, the *mulata* also became part of Cuban nation-building projects. Hence, the *mulata* functions as an embodying of the "multifarious anxieties, contradictions and imperfections in the Cuban body politics." Vera M. Kutzinski, *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 11.

[7] Maria Root, ed. *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996), xiv.

to non-European immigrants has also changed the demographic landscape of the United States and helped contribute to an increase in the multiracial population.[8] Many multiracial groups have called for recognition of multiracial identities. As a result of this census change, about 6.8 million Americans, or 2.4 percent of the population, identified themselves or members of their households as multiracial. Demographers predict that an official multiracial designation could reach as high as one in five persons by the year 2050. By then, a recent National Academy of Sciences study estimates that the multiracial population could increase to 21 percent when as many as 35 percent of Asians and 45 percent of Hispanics might have multiracial backgrounds.[9] In comparison to other minority groups, the percentage of self-reporting multiracial blacks is relatively low and the rate of intermarriage among African-Americans is significantly smaller.[10] While

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[8] Jennifer Lee and Frank Bean. "Reinventing the Color Line."

[9] James P. Smith and Barry Edmonston, eds. *The New Americans*: *Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Effects of Immigration*. (Washington DC: National Academy Press, 1997), 119-120.

[10] The percentage of self-reporting multiracial blacks is only 4.2 % of the total black population. In contrast, self-reporting multiracial American Indian and Alaska Natives account for 36.4 %of their population and 44.8 % of the Native American and Pacific Islander population. Multiracial Asians account for 12.4 % and Latinos account for 16.4 % percent of their respective populations. While black populations in the United States are majority ancestrally multiracial, self-reporting is low. Speculation to this low percentage range from significant racial boundary constraints, the smaller percentages of interracial marriages among blacks as compared to other minority groups, U.S. histories of black slavery and racial mixing, and divergent understandings of race among Asian and Latino populations. Lee and Bean, "Reinventing the Color Line," 572-574. Furthermore despite the predominance of black-white mixture representations, African-Americans are the least likely of all racial/ ethnic minorities to marry whites. Both blacks and whites primarily overwhelmingly marry within their own group compared to the percentage of Asians, Latinos, American Indians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. Zenchao Qian and Daniel T. Lichter, "Social Boundaries and Marital Assimilation: Interpreting Trends in Racial and Ethnic Intermarriage," *American Sociological Review* 72 (2007): 68–94.

many African-Americans acknowledge racial mixture,[11] mixed-race individuals of black and white descent have continued to garner fascination and anxiety and hold symbolic value under the vision of national identity and race-relations. With the historical specter of the mulatta figure, the legacies of slavery in the United States, the long-standing boundary between blackness and whiteness, and current economic, educational,

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[11] Like Brazil, the increase in individuals claiming indigenous ancestry has significantly grown. From 1970 to 1990, the U.S. census reported a 295 percent growth. This growth is likely due to mixed-race individuals now claiming indigenous ancestry. Norman R. Yetman, *Majority and Minority: The Dynamics of Race and Ethnicity in American Life*, 6th edn. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 88.

Recently, elections and the role of the descendants of freedmen in the Cherokee and Seminole Nations in Oklahoma received prominent media attention and entered into debates over racial identity, historical memory, racial mixing, and sovereignty. Furthermore, the history of indigenous slaveowners of black slaves complicates ideas of power, freedom, kinship norms, racial identification, and racial hierarchies. With the encouragement of Cherokee assimilation to white American cultural and social practices and the banning of Cherokee-black intermarriage by the Cherokee Council in 1824, the ban demonstrates the existence of these marriages as well as increasing race-consciousness. The growing prominence of mixed indigenous and white leaders also transformed Cherokee society. With the relative lack of officially recognized historical records, the intermarriage and racial mixing between black and indigenous groups is up for contention. The documentation of indigenous blood on official rolls is also a particularly controversial issue. The bestowal of indigenous citizenship on mixed-race black and indigenous children was not necessarily a given. Mixed indigenous-black individuals have historically been at a disadvantage compared to white-indigenous individuals in documenting their indigenous blood under the federal government guidelines. Further study, using a transnational analysis of race and nation, is warranted. See "Who Is a Seminole, and Who Gets to Decide?" *New York Times,* January 29, 2001, 1; Chuck Trimble, "The Cherokee Dred Scott Decision," *Indian Country Today*, September 18, 2011, http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/opinion/the-cherokee-dred-scott-decision-54581; Adam Geller, "Past and Future Collide in Fight Over Cherokee Identity," *USA Today*, February 10, 2007, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-02-10-cherokeefight_x.htm;Tiya Miles. "The Narrative of Nancy, A Cherokee Woman." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 29, no. 2-3 (2008): 59-80; Tiya Miles, *Ties that Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); James Brooks, ed. *Confounding the Color Line: the Indian-Black Experience in North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

employment, and health inequalities between African-Americans and whites,[12] this dissertation examines the specific cultural, social, and political function of black-white mixture representations.

Besides the changing demographics of the United States, the recent election of President Barack Obama has often been heralded as a potential start of a post-racial era in the United States. Obama's mixed-race heritage made Obama a symbol of a hypothesized future racial utopia in the United States. The evocations of a post-racial future are imagined as a transformation beyond race in the United States. However, scholars like Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres describe post-race as an arena in which race is imagined to be a past issue rather than a structuring force in the present or future.[13] In the denial of the use of race, the idea of post-race remains implicated in racial ideologies. A dismissal of the ongoing relevance of race and a belief that race will cease to exist if it is no longer discussed relies on a racial ideology of innocence and willful ignorance. This racial ideology underlines the continuing significance of race

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[12] *Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs Between Whites, Blacks and Hispanics* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, July 26, 2011); Lawrence D. Bobo and Victor Thompson, "Racialized Mass Incarceration: Poverty, Prejudice, and Punishment," in *Doing Race: Twenty-One Essays for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Hazel Rose Markus and Paula M. L. Moya (New York, 2010), 322–55; Linda Darling Hammond, "Structured for Failure: Race, Resources, and Student Achievement," in *Doing Race*, ed. Hazel Rose Markus and Paula M. L. Moya (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 295–321.Robert J. Sampson, "Racial Stratification and the Durable Tangle of Neighborhood Inequality," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 621 (2009): 260–80; Thomas Shapiro, *The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004);

[13] See Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists: Colorblind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States* (Lantham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003) and Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres, *The Miner's Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

Indeed, the hopes of a post-racial future are often channeled through the mixed-race body. The 1993 *Time* magazine cover of "the New Eve," a computer-generated image of a woman depicting the future of America through racial mixing fuels the popular imagination of a raceless society through mixing and the role of women as the reproducer and symbol of the nation.[14] Despite the rise of minority populations as the majority by 2050,[15] the image of Eve looks mostly white with a slight tan. Thus, a simultaneous celebration of racial mixing and a management of nonwhiteness occur in this desired image of Eve. Furthermore, this notion of the racial hybrid as the new future erases the extensive history of racial mixing and mixed-race people in the United States. In particular, African-Americans have long been embedded in histories of racial mixing from the beginnings of colonization in the Americas. Ignoring this history of African-American racial hybridity is also a silencing of the histories of slavery and racial oppression in the United States. As the 1990s and the millennium marked a shift from the mulatto as tragic to the deployment of the mulatta as the mass media's and corporate marketing campaigns' epitome of "cool,"[16] the mulatta continues to haunt the United States. As the United States looks to a potential racial future of a browner nation, Brazil has often been used a possible model. Henry Louis Gates states, "No-one is pure in Brazil. That's why the country has the face of the future."[17]

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[14] *Time*, November 18, 1993.
[15] "An Older and More Diverse Nation by Mid-Century," August 14, 2008, United States Census Bureau, http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb08-123.html
[16] Racial mixture in advertisements has been deployed as a way of making profit. See Ruth La Ferla, "Generation E.A.: Ethnically Ambiguous."
[17] As quoted in Silvia Salek, "BBC Delves into Brazilians' Roots, " *BBC News*, July 10, 2007. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6284806.stm

However, recent studies show that Brazil is far from a racial utopia. While racial mixing is widespread in Brazil and has been celebrated through the symbol of the *mulata*, racial inequality and hierarchies are still prevalent.[18] In Brazil, where *mestiçagem* (racial and cultural mixing) is a key defining feature of national identity, the *mulata* has often been thought of as a source of national pride such as the carnaval *mulata* samba queens, whose dancing bodies are emblematic of national culture.[19] Yet, as Joel Zito Araújo notes, *telenovelas* have featured very few visibly mixed or black characters despite the country's large black and mixed-race population.[20] An espousal of racial mixing does not necessarily erase the contradictory nature of national and racial projects.

The 2008 election of Obama especially reverberated in Brazil as many Afro-Brazilian political candidates renamed themselves as "Barack Obama" on official ballots. As well, many Brazilian pundits questioned if a Barack Obama-type candidate was possible in Brazil because of Brazil's racial social structures.[21] Obama's election and controversies over affirmative action in Brazil spurred reanalysis of race and Brazilian national identity. In the academy, there are growing critiques of Gilberto Freyre's theories of the role of *mestiçagem* in Brazil and his use of the *mulata* figure along with an

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[18] For an in-depth study of racial inequalities, see Edward Telles, *Race in Another America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).
[19] Natasha Pravaz, "Imagining Brazil: Seduction, Samba, and the Mulata's Body" *Canadian Women Studies: National Identity and Gender Politics*, 20, no.2 (2000): 48–55.
[20] Joel Zito Araújo, *A negação do Brasil:O negro na telenovela brasileira*, (São Paulo: Senac, 2000).
[21] *Brazil: The Obama Samba.* Produced by Andrés Cediel. Washington D.C.: Frontline PBS, October 27, 2008.

increased awareness of racial inequality.[22] Critical public debates over Monteiro Lobato's racist representations of Afro-Brazilians,[23] Law 10,639, which in 2003 required the inclusion of African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture in public school curriculums,[24] and most polemically, the controversy over affirmative action and racial quotes in public universities, all point to a disruption of Brazil's self-image as a racial democracy. Brazil is now grappling with the realities of racial inequalities and a determination of what kind of role race will have its national identity. These technologies of race shifted the discussion to a possible black/white schema. Even as Brazil looks to the United States, it is important to consider if Brazil can navigate these issues without creating the racial essentialisms of the United States.

Furthermore, the Brazilian tendency to identify as white is changing. The Brazilian census, from the 1990s onwards, has used the categories of *branco* (white), *pardo* (brown), *preto* (black), *amarelo* (yellow) and *indígena* (indigenous).[25] In 1990,

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[22] Numerous examples include Alexandra Isfahani-Hammond, *White Negritude: Race, Writing, and Brazilian Cultural Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Helena Bocayuva, *Erotismo à brasileira: O excesso sexual na obra de Gilberto Freyre* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2001); César Braga-Pinto, "The Sugar Daddy: Gilberto Freyre and the White Man's Love for Blacks" in *The Masters and the Slaves: Plantation Relations and Mestizaje in American Imaginaries*, ed. Alexandra Isfahani-Hammond (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 19-33; Alfredo César Melo, "Os mundos misturados de Gilberto Freyre," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 43, no.2 (2006): 27-44; Joshua Lund and Malcolm McNee, eds., *Gilberto Freyre e os estudos latino- americanos* (Pittsburgh: Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, 2006).

[23] For example, during my time in Brazil, there was much debate in the universities and in the media over Brazil's national literature "Monteiro Lobato era Racista? *Bravo!* May 2011 http://bravonline.abril.com.br/materia/monteiro-lobato-era-racista#image=carta-lobato-extra3-1-p

[24] For more on the implementation of this law, see Alexandre Emboaba da Costa, "Afro-Brazilian Ancestralidade: Critical Perspectives on Knowledge and Development," *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (2010): 655-674.

[25] Edward Telles, *Race in Another America*, 81.

Afro-Brazilian organizations and the nongovernmental organization, Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Ecónomicas (Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analyses) launched a publicity campaign to promote awareness of census categories. The campaign's slogan, "Não deixe sua côr passar em branco. Responda com bom c/senso" (Don't let your color pass off as white. Respond with good sense [census]), encouraged embracing blackness and the selection of a darker rather than lighter color.[26] While Brazilian census uses the notion of *cor* (color) as a category, these color categories are related directly to racial categories. The category *amarelo* corresponds to Asian origins while *preto* and *pardo* correspond to African origins. While since the 1950 census, indigenous Brazilians were classified as *pardo*, the 1990 census linked race and indigeneity under the question.[27] In a Brazilian governmental television campaign for the 2010 census in Brazil, Taís Araújo, a famous *telenovela* actress, announced "Eu sou negra e a côr da minha pele é preta," (I am black and the color of my skin is black).[28] As

[26] Nobles, *Shades of Citizenship*, 146-62.
[27] Ibid, 121. Prior to the 1970 census, when no data on color or race was taken, individuals were only considered indigenous if their primary language was indigenous. In the 1980 census, individuals who self-identified as indigenous and did not have an official FUNAI (National Foundation of the Indian) identity card were classified as *pardo*. Furthermore the ambiguity of the term indígena as a category and in relation to color categories such as *pardo* have led to concerns of undercounting of the indigenous population in Brazil. Nonetheless, a significant increase in the Brazilian indigenous population has been observed. One of the primary reasons for this resurgence of the population is due to shifts in racial identity with individuals who previously did not self-identify as indigenous or whose parents did not identify as indigenous, now identify as indigenous. This shifts marks a break from a tendency to identify as white to the adoption of indigenous subjectivity. Jonathan Warren, *Racial Revolutions: Antiracism and Indian Resurgence in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).
[28] The terms *preto* and *negro* have different meanings based on historical context. *Preto* has usually referred to skin color. In contrast, *negro* usually has a political significance or consciousness. For more on the shifting meanings of these terms see Livio, Sansone.

Araújo affirmed her black identity and her skin color, she encouraged viewers to also claim their identities on the census. With the mobilization of the census, the politics of black consciousness and racial mixture were evident. Aráujo encourages the viewers to best represent themselves for their own well-being and the future of the nation. She proclaims, "Só sabendo quem você é, o Brasil vai pode atender às suas necessidades e ser um país cada vez melhor" (Only by knowing who you are, can Brazil attend to your needs and become a better nation).[29] As one of the few major black female *telenovela* actresses, Taís Araújo uses her celebrity to send a message regarding racial consciousness and personal and national responsibility. As Araújo has coffee-colored skin and phenotypical features similar to white actresses, her claiming of her black identity is radical when put in the context of Brazilian discourses of *branqueamento* and *mestiçagem*. These campaigns discourage Brazilians from whitening themselves and encourage respondents to identify as black. The campaigns mark not the visibility in affirming blackness, but also point to the material stakes in terms of resources. Notably, the census campaigns indicate a move towards hypodescent similar to that of the United States. For the first time in 2010, the population classified as *preto*, *pardo*, *amarelo* or *indígena* was larger than the population classified as *branca*. While the *branca* population was still the largest group overall, it was also the only group to diminish in

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Blackness Without Ethnicity: Constructing Race in Brazil (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

[29] *vimeo.com/24749886*

size in comparison to past years.[30] These social, political, and cultural transformations in both countries render a new lens on national and transnational processes in race-making.

Personal Engagement with the Research Study

My research interests have been directly shaped by my personal experiences as a woman of color. In response to a dismissal of mixed-race identities and mixed-race studies as selling out, I believe that it is crucial to seriously consider the possibilities and limitations of mixed-race in both the United States and Brazil. Growing up working-class in Brooklyn with an African-American mother from Philadelphia and a white father from rural Pennsylvania profoundly shaped my worldview. My parents purposefully selected a diverse neighborhood given their own wariness of being an interracial couple raising mixed-race children. Until high school, the only other mixed-race child I knew was my younger brother. I rarely saw images of interracial families on television or in film. In college, I created Students of Mixed Heritage at Williams College as a space for discussions about race and ethnicity. However, the group was cognizant to work with other groups on campus, such as the Black Student Union. We did not think of ourselves as separatists, but as working in conjunction with other minority groups. However, by the mid-2000s, I was wary of a new emphasis on being "special." Seeing the influx of multiracial images and the rhetoric of mixed-race people as suddenly new, I questioned this emphasis of uniqueness and novelty. With my mother's side of the family running the gamut from light skin to dark skin and an acknowledgement of the racial mixture

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[30] Alessanda Duarte, "Censo 2010: população do Brasil deixa de ser predominantemente branca," *O Globo,* April 29, 2011, http://oglobo.globo.com/politica/censo-2010-populacao-do-brasil-deixa-de-ser-predominantemente-branca-2789597

within our family tree, I became skeptical as to what the political stakes were of the "discovery" of mixed-race people as new phenomena. Increasingly, I was concerned about how African-American diversity was silenced from this conversation.

At the same time, I became interested in how race is read. Having been mistaken for being everything from Moroccan to Colombian to Filipina, I have had race and ethnicity mapped onto me. As I have been interpellated differently in various locations. I have also realized this interpellation often relates to a popular culture image. When individuals have tried to interpret my race and nationality, I have often been compared to popular culture celebrities. I have learned that this negotiation with popular culture profoundly influences worldviews, but that the context also determines its meaning. For example, in Cuba, I was referred to as Jackie Chan's daughter, in Argentina, as Jessica Alba, and in Brazil as Jennifer Lopez. However, these identifications were not just racialized, but also deeply gendered and sexualized. As such, I was expected to "perform" or ascribe to a certain kind of identity and certain kinds of behavior, especially that of being sexually available.

My travels to Latin America have had an especially strong effect on my own ideas about race and forced me to think outside of U.S. racial frameworks. On my first visit to Brazil, I truly did think of Brazil as a racial paradise where race had no meaning. However, later experiences working at the American School in São Paulo showed me that Brazil was not free of racial issues. As one of the first two African-Americans hired at the school, I was mistaken for cleaning staff on my first day of work despite being dressed in professional attire. During my time in São Paulo, I was often told that I was not black but *morena* due to my lighter skin tone. This difference in racial classification based on skin

tone has continued to intrigue me. Year later, while staying with a host family in Rio de Janeiro, my host's cousin made disparaging remarks about having blacks in her house. Uncomfortably, I mentioned that my own mother was black. In response, she commented that African-Americans were different than Afro-Brazilians because blacks from the United States were cleaner, better looking, and smarter. Yet, when going to hip-hop clubs in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, I also befriended Brazilians who chose to identity as black and expressed solidarity with African-Americans. These contradictions exposed me to how race operates both nationally and transnationally. This personal landscape of negotiating race, gender, sexuality, class, and nationality and hope for further solidarity between the United States in Brazil in struggles for social justice has inspired this work.

Engagement with Interdisciplinary Fields and Methodology

This dissertation is a hemispheric project within American Studies that places the United States and Brazil in conversation with one another. While the histories and experiences of mixed-race people of African and European descent in the United States and Brazil are distinctive and historically specific, overlapping histories and experiences rooted in slavery, emancipation, and debates over the incorporation and/or erasure of mixed-race people, point to anxieties over the place of mixed-race people within and beyond the nation. A hemispheric approach contributes to an understanding of the nation and deconstructs national racial ideologies and narratives. Furthermore, a hemispheric approach reveals that discussions and anxieties over the management of blackness are not just a national discourse, but are part of a hemispheric dialogue. A hemispheric approach reveals national narratives around race and how both Brazil and the United States

imagine themselves while demonstrating the transnational ways in which Brazil and the United States relate to one another and imagine each other. This dissertation uses this approach to elucidate shared historical experiences and legacies of the Americas and transnational flows and identities based on these experiences.

While the hemispheric approach is only one of many paradigms, hemispheric studies encourages seeking the "interdependencies between nations and communities throughout the Americas."[31] For American Studies, hemispheric studies alters an exclusive and privileged focus on the United States, with another epistemology and approaches thinking about the Americas in terms of relationships. Hence, a hemispheric approach opens up the field of American Studies. Hemispheric studies also has deep implications for Latin American Studies as well as other fields by breaking away from the exclusivity of a national framework.[32] Heidi Tinsman and Sandhya Shukla write, "The Americas as an interdisciplinary inquiry is at once integrated and made up of deeply dissonant parts and as such can be understood only through a theory that takes the constructed imaginary of a transnational space, and its national components, seriously." A hemispheric approach does not jettison dissonance and untranslatability, but rather holds them in fruitful tension.

With a hemispheric approach, this dissertation contributes to understandings of representations of mixed-race women and how these representations function and shift in national and transnational contexts. Racial formations engage with popular culture in the Americas. A hemispheric lens highlights different tropes, genealogies, identity

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[31] Caroline Levander and Robert Levine, *Hemispheric American Studies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 6.

formations, and cultural productions of the mixed- race figure that are shaped by historical experiences and legacies of colonialism, slavery, and nation-state formation. Hemispheric study of the mixed-race female figure illuminates connected practices of the management of blackness. Framing the management and containment of blackness in a hemispheric context allows for an identification of the specificity of race in the United States and Brazil while also exploring the transnational dimensions of race-making and whitening projects. The management of blackness and whitening is not just a national project, but rather transcends the national limits of the United States and Brazil. Rather than reproducing a north-south binary, this dissertation attempts to places Brazil and the United States in conversation together.

Recent American Studies scholarship has emphasized the need for transnational perspectives, which requires an interdisciplinary analysis that takes into account multiple exchanges and intersections that flow across nation-state borders. Accounting for issues of empire, power, capital, immigration, and the concept of race demands transnational, comparative, and hemispheric approaches. Janice Radway, Shelley Fisher-Fishkin, Carolyn Porter, Caroline Levander and Robert Levine, and Sandhya Shukla and Heidi Tinsman have stressed the need for alternate or new methodologies, archives, and approaches in American Studies.[33] Radway's address, "What's in a Name?" disrupted

[33] Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine, eds. *Hemispheric American Studies: Essays Beyond the Nation* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2007); Carolyn Porter, "What We Know That We Don't Know: Remapping American Literary History," *American Literary History* 6.3 (Autumn 1994): 5211; Caroline Field Levander and Robert Levine, eds., *Hemispheric American Studies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Sandhya Shukla and Heidi Tinsman, eds., *Imagining Our Americas: Toward a Transnational Frame* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Shelley Fisher Fishkin, "Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American

exceptionalist narratives of American Studies and pointed out that she was addressing "an association whose very name still so powerfully evokes the ghostly presence of a fantasmatic, intensely longed-for, unitary American culture."[34] Radway urged scholars to stop using America as a default for the United States and noted the erasure that the use of the term does for other countries in the Americas.[35] Fishkin challenged the academy to investigate how scholarly production and ideas actually creates these national boundaries and rejects the use of the United States as a contained theoretical model. In response to Gloria Anzaldúa's theorizations and experiences as embodying the crossroads,[36] Fishkin argued for an American Studies situated at the "crossroads of cultures."[37]

This dissertation seeks not just to use Brazil as an additive model, but places the United States and Brazil together as crucial for understanding national and transnational processes of racialization, gendering, and sexualization. Scholars, such as Micol Seigel

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Studies. Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, November 12, 2004," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 1(March 2005): 17-57.
[34] Janice Radway, "What's in a Name? Presidential Address to the American Studies Association," *American Quarterly* 51, no.1 (1999): 8.
[35] Sophie McClennan points out that Radway's address is not the first address that calls for inter-American studies. Referencing Bolton's 1932 address, McClennan reminds scholars that such calls also coincided with historical moments in which inter-American cooperation was needed for United States advancement. McClennan cites the Good Neighbor Policy, and NAFTA as examples of this tendency to use inter-American approaches to benefit United States supremacy. See Sophia McClennan," Inter-American Studies or Imperial American Studies?,"*Comparative American Studies* 3, no. 4: 401-404
[36] Gloria Anzaldúa's writing articulates her social location as a *mestiza* and the knowledge and state of being from her crossroads experiences as a place of constant flux. Anzaldúa explores borderland identities and experiences. While she has been critiqued for her use of *mestizaje*, Anzaldúa reimagines *mestizaje* as a potential site of empowerment. This plurality of her sense of self is the basis for her "mestiza consciousness." This embodied mestiza consciousness is used as a site of resistance to colonial practices and legacies. See Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 2d ed. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999).
[37] Fisher-Fishkin, "Crossroads of Cultures," 17.

have increasingly placed racial and national identity formation in Brazil and the U.S. in a transnational context and through the circulation of popular culture. Seigel debunks the perceived exceptionalism of both Brazil as a racial democracy and the United States as a segregated society by exposing the connections and movements between the two countries and the mutual visions that fueled the creation of Brazil and the United States imagery.[38] Examining the interrelationships between the United States and Brazil and transnational processes of racialization, colonialism, imperialism, and neoliberalism are important for furthering understandings of how operations of power are manifested. As such, this study holds on to the importance of the nation-state in the processes of racialization and the management of blackness and how these processes are woven into national narratives while also exploring the transnational context of race-making. A hemispheric framework allows for both comparative and transnational methods not to work against each other, but in tandem with each other in this dissertation.

By using comparative and transnational methods, this dissertation provides perspectives on U.S. and Brazilian histories, discourses, narratives, and images of mixed-race women of African descent and explores how the symbol of the mixed-race female figure is used within and across, and through national borders. A comparative method enables a viewing of the common ground and dissonances of the management of blackness in the United States and Brazil. Comparing the racialization and sexualization of the mixed-race female figure requires an engagement with colonial, imperial, and neoliberal legacies and practices. Transnational processes shape racial projects.

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[38] Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

Therefore, comparison helps to see the transnational processes of race-making. The last chapter utilizes a transnational method, allowing for centering processes of colonialism, racial formations, imperialism, as well as struggles over race, gender, sexuality, and class that are not entirely bound to the nation-state.

Mary Helen Washington's 1997 American Studies Association presidential address, "Disturbing the Peace: What Happens to American Studies If you Put African American Studies at the Center?,"[39] encourages new ways of formulating research questions and new methods for inquiry. This dissertation similarly explores what happens if we put critical mixed race studies at the center and disturbs and goes beyond celebrating diversity or a recognition of multiraciality. Scholarship on mixed-race has grown exponentially recently. Reginald Daniels's *Converging Paths* overviews the histories of racial formations in the United States and Brazil and contrasts what he terms a binary project in the United States with a ternary racial project in Brazil. Daniels shows that rather than completely divergent paths, the racial classification systems and racial hierarchies in both Brazil and the United States are from a Eurocentric stance. As U.S. multiracial activists call for the recognition of a multiracial category, Afro-Brazilian activists have shifted towards a binary project. Daniels demonstrates that both movements are formed in resistance to dominant racial ideologies, but also potentially rely on exclusion.[40] Suzanne Bost's, *Mulattas and Mestizas: Representing Mixed Identities in the Americas, 1850–2000* surveys the relationship between racial mixture

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[39] Mary Helen Washington, "Disturbing the Peace: What Happens to American Studies If You Put African American Studies at the Center?": Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, October 29, 1997." *American Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (1998): 1-23.
[40] Daniels, *Converging Paths.*

and literature in the Americas and compares the discourses of mixed-race and racial mixing. Bost shows how the mixed-race female figure has functioned as part of nation-building projects.[41] Recent academic work has explored film and television representations of mixed-race characters and celebrities in the U.S. in the edited collection, *Mixed Race Hollywood* and thereby, takes up the intersection of media culture and mixed-race studies.[42] Most recently, Michele Elam's *Souls of Mixed Folk* and Ralina Joseph's *Transcending Blackness* specifically explore contemporary literary and popular culture representations of mixed-race blackness, particularly black and white mixture.[43] Yet, academic scholarship has not focused on media representations of mixed-race women of European and African descent in Brazil and the U.S. in a transnational or comparative context.

This dissertation is situated within the emerging field of critical mixed race studies. As described by the Critical Mixed Race Studies Association, "Critical Mixed Race Studies is the transracial, transdisciplinary, and transnational critical analysis of the institutionalization of social, cultural, and political orders based on dominant conceptions of race. Critical Mixed Race Studies emphasizes the mutability of race and the porosity of racial boundaries in order to critique processes of racialization and social stratification based on race. Critical Mixed Race Studies addresses local and global systemic injustices

[41] Suzanne Bost, *Mulattas and Mestizas: Representing Mixed Identities in the Americas, 1850-2000* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2003).
[42] Mary Beltrán and Camila Fojas, ed. *Mixed Race Hollywood* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).
[43] Michele Elam, *The Souls of Mixed Folk*: *Race, Politics, and Aesthetics in the New Millennium* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); Ralina Joseph, *Transcending Blackness: From the New Millenium Mulatta to the Exceptional Multiracial* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

rooted in systems of racialization."[44] This dissertation illuminates contradictions of how images, narratives, and discourses of mixed-race peoples function in the two nations as well as across and interaction with Brazil and the United States. Theories of *mestizaje* and hybridity are also part of an engagement with Critical Mixed Race Studies. While rooted in a specific geography and history in the borderlands of the United States, Gloria Anzaldúa analyzes how racial formations emerge from national borders and racial boundaries. Anzaldúa reinterprets *mestizaje* from an idea of racial biology to a practice of consciousness. Anzaldúa's analysis of mixed-race identity accounts for historical colonial legacies of violence and inequalities based on racialization. Her formulation of *mestizaje* takes into account these tensions, with special attention to gender and sexuality and relationships of power. This plurality of her sense of self is the basis for her "mestiza consciousness." This embodied mestiza consciousness, is used as a site of resistance and empowerment.[45] Writing about the United States, Tavia Nyong'o argues, "Hybridity has been repeatedly enlisted in envisioning utopian and dystopian scenarios. This persistent projection of hybridity into a temporal and spatial elsewhere is itself a mechanism for resisting an awareness of the actual and ongoing mongrel past, a history which is neither a moral scandal nor a transcendental panacea, but an uneasy terrain of ordinary and difficult antagonism and conviviality."[46] This dissertation looks at discourses of mixed-race, mixed-race bodies, especially women's bodies, and images of mixed-race women, to examine the anxieties and desires projected on mixed-race people and as manifestation

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[44] Critical Mixed Race Studies, www.critical mixedracestudies.org
[45] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera:The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987).
[46] Tavia Nyong'o, *The Amalgamation Waltz: Race, Performance, and the Ruses of American Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 175.

of these contradictions. Thereby, this dissertation does not suggest that mixture is the solution to racial problems, but rather points to the limits and the possibilities of hybridity, racial mixing and, *mestiçagem*. Mixture is used in this inquiry as a way to understand racial tensions. This study seeks to go beyond the use of mixed-race as an eventual raceless and colorblindness and the dismissal of mixed-race identities as regressive or as a way to whiten. This research moves beyond describing positive or negative images of mixed-race people to understanding what the representations of mixed-race figures and characters tell us about national identities and racial ideologies.

While engaging with Critical Mixed Race Studies, this dissertation also necessarily is in dialogue with African American Studies and African Diaspora Studies. This research does not presume that mixed-race women of African and European descent are an entirely separate group than that of African-Americans and Afro-Brazilians. Some of the academic scholarship on the diaspora favors hybridity over stability and continuance as a useful way of understanding this engagement. While the term diaspora has generally referred to a qualifier of a scattering of people, scholars such as Paul Gilroy see a multivalent diaspora as also providing a means of creating unity through difference and diversity. Paul Gilroy in *The Black Atlantic* critiques the homogenization of difference and "ethnic absolutism" that has characterized some descriptions of diaspora. Thus, diaspora critiques binaries within colonial and some postcolonial discourse such as colonizer/colonized and black/white as well as polarizations between Africa and Europe or Africa and the Americas.[47] Brent Edwards proposes that diaspora is fluid and not

[47] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993

static. He uses the idea of the translation of décalage—a discontinuity of space and time, yet also a relationship of similarity and difference—as an important tool for articulating diaspora. Diaspora then becomes a relational process. Edwards suggests that décalage resists translation and a unified definition and formation of diaspora is also not fully communicable.[48] The concept of décalage offers the opportunity to see unity through difference and provides the elasticity to tolerate fissures, the malleability to incorporate reconstructions of practices and identities of diaspora. Décalage allows for the concept of diaspora to be applied to African-Americans and Afro-Brazilians, and other varied and diverse groups of the African diaspora. While race is not biological, a shared diasporic history and a concept of "blacks dispersed within the structures of feeling, producing, communicating, and remembering" support resistance to dominant racial narratives and racial ideologies that uphold white supremacy. This study also then follows how certain mixed-race subjects use blackness as an oppositional subjectivity to the racial ideologies of the nation-state.

The discourses and representations surrounding mixed-race women of African and European descent demonstrate how race, gender, sexuality, and nation are interlocking. While Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality," the term was a restatement and articulation of what had already been voiced by Sojourner Truth and contemporary black feminist scholars such as Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, and Patricia Hill Collins.[49] These scholars along with other woman of color feminists contended that

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[48] Brent Edwards, "The Uses of Diaspora," *Social Text* 19, no. 1(2001): 65-67.
[49] See Angela Davis, *Women Race and Class* (New York: Random House, 1981); Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (Trumansburg, NY: The Crossing Press, 1984); Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

not only were systems of oppression connected, but that marginalized groups such as black women had been further marginalized through the use of black men and white, middle-class women as the quintessential victims of racism and sexism, respectively. The intersectional model allowed for a more complete understanding of the roots of oppression. In "Mapping the Margins," Crenshaw demonstrates how women of color's experiences cannot be adequately apprehended through a singular analytic of race or gender and demonstrates the particular ways in which racism and sexism intersect in the lives of women of color. Detailing these intersections on a systemic, political, and cultural level, Crenshaw argues that by focusing on one mode of oppression over all others, both antiracist and feminist strategies privilege certain subject positions, i.e. black men and white women, and thus are incapable of "articulating the full dimensions of racism and sexism."[50]

However, Jennifer Nash calls for a re-thinking of intersectionality, questions the use of black women as a unitary entity, and asks if intersectionality necessarily presupposes categories.[51] Many mixed-race bodies, particularly that of popular culture celebrities or characters represented in film and television, are shown to be fluid, transitory, and hence, marketable to different audiences. This functions as a challenge to the kind of blackness that is seen as static or knowable. The reading of race and gender through phenotype, mannerisms, racialized corporal cues, and intertextual references create a kind of sticking of race onto the body. Identity then is necessarily fluid. However, as the visuality of the mixed-race body is so essential to these racial codes,

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[50] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43 (1991): 1252.
[51] Jennifer C. Nash, "Re-Thinking Intersectionality," *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 1-15.

switching between certain options can often occur. For example, Halle Berry is most frequently coded as African-American, but at other times is coded as mixed-race. While the visual gaze reinscribes race onto the body and is well informed by other discourses around race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation, as Jasbir Puar points out, using categories as analytical devices must entail a reflection of the naturalizing tendencies in these categorizations.[52] The usage of mixed-race representations in popular culture, particularly through devices such as narrative, character, and celebrity persona, does not always assume discrete analytical categories. With mixed-race figures, racialization is not always consistent and Jasbir Puar argues that intersectionality cannot account for certain bodies because it is sutured to identity and requires coherent contained bodies as well as stable named identities.[53]

As women are employed as symbols and reproducers of the nation,[54] mixed-race female figures are key to the national imagination, embody erotic, racial, and sexual desires and tensions, and demonstrate how race, gender, sexuality, and nation are mutually constituted. Positioned as a sexually available and mediating figure, the mulatta is imbricated within patriarchal structures and masculinist and nationalist desires. In the United States, feminist scholars have explored why the mixed-figure in literature and film is most often female, and is more aptly a mulatta. With the newer exceptions of

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[52] Jasbir Puar, "Queer Times, Queer Assemblages," *Social Text* 23, no.3 (2005): 127-128.
[53] Jasbir K.Puar, "Queer Times, Queer Assemblages," *Social Text* 84/85 (2005):121-139.
[54] Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval outline five ways in which women are linked to national and ethnic discourses: (1) as biological reproducers of a collective group (2) as boundary markers of this group (i.e anti-miscegenation codes), (3) as transmitters of culture, (4) as symbols of the nation, and (5) as participants in political and economic practices. See the introduction to their edited volume Floyal Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, *Woman, Nation, State* (New York: St. Martin, 1989), 7-10.

important figures like Barack Obama and Tiger Woods, the signifiers of mixed-race have often been female. The mulatta functions as a site of mediation in the models of white female sexuality and black female sexuality.[55] The Brazilian saying, "branca pra casar, negra pra trabalhar, mulata pra fornicar" (White women for marriage, black women for work, mulata women for fornication) intertwines power relationships concerning race, gender, sexuality, and class with an association of white female respectability, black women's labor, and an intermediary category as sexual fantasy. While this saying is from Brazil, the use of mulatta hypersexuality and white female virtue are also applicable to the United States.

Contemporary popular culture images of the mulatta and *mulata* figures demonstrate this intertwinement of the politics of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation. This dissertation favors a textual analysis of media to demonstrate how discourses of mixed-race function to mollify racialized differences and how the mulatta embodies erotic, racial, and sexual desires and tensions in both countries. Cultural representations create and replicate "myths" that shape the structure of our lives.[56] These representations form ideologies and knowledge bases that influence social and political relations. Media is a key site in which current societal debates and representations are played out. Therefore, popular culture representations are inseparable from issues of power and

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[55] Examples of the exploration of the U.S. mulatta include Judith R. Berzon. *Neither White or Black: The Mulatto Character in American Fiction.* (New York: New York University Press, 1978; Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Eva Allegra Raimon, *The "Tragic Mulatta" Revisited. Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Antislavery Fiction* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004)

[56] Stuart Hall, "Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-Structuralist Debates," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 2, no. 2 (1985): 91-114.

inequality. A cultural studies approach understands that popular culture is a site of struggle over meanings. Stuart Hall posits that the popular culture is the "arena of consent and resistance" to hegemony. As such, popular culture is where dominant ideologies can be articulated or disarticulated, but also "the ground on which the transformations are worked."[57] This dissertation, therefore, locates popular culture within historical context and understands that film and television enters into an ongoing dialogue on race, gender, sexuality, and nation. This dissertation understands texts as cultural practices and objects that can be read. A textual analysis of film, television, newspapers, and magazines allows for a discernment of latent meanings, assumptions, and omissions within a text. In this way, a textual analysis also reveals contradictions and ambiguities, especially in regards to the desires and anxieties towards mixed-race women.

These contemporary texts are part of ongoing negotiations and struggles over meaning and common sense. Stuart Hall describes texts as a momentarily fixed form of an ongoing negotiation or struggle over meaning and common sense. Images and ideas of race are embedded within this common sense that informs everyday practices. Media texts then function as "representations of the social world, images, descriptions, explanations and frames for understanding how the world is and why it works as it is said and shown to work."[58] Popular culture plays a significant role in circulating and reproducing ideologies of race, gender, sexuality, and class. This study shows how

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[57] Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the 'Popular'" (1981) in *Cultural Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Imre Szeman and Timothy Kaposy (West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, 2011), 73.
[58] Stuart Hall, "The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media" in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*, ed. Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 90.

Brazilian and U.S. cultural texts help shape racial ideologies and national identities. Images, narratives, and rhetoric concerning mixed-race women often operate in tandem with desires to nullify racialized differences and contain blackness. A textual analysis furthermore enables a reading of spaces in which these dominant metanarratives of the containment of blackness are countered with blackness as a site of resistance.

Chapters

Chapters One through Four compare U.S. and Brazilian histories, tropes, star texts, and cultural productions concerning mixed-race women of African descent. Chapter Five uses a transnational approach to consider the mixed-race figure. The dissertation uses both comparative and transnational methodologies to engage with a hemispheric framework. Through a hemispheric approach, this dissertation attempts to elucidate intersections and tensions of national, gender, sexual, class and racial formations and to uncover the very assumptions that construct these formations.

Chapter One outlines the historical parameters of constructions of mixed-race in the United States and Brazil. Chapter One overviews the important role of the mulatta and *mulata* as constitutive of nation-building projects in the United States and Brazil and the role of the mixed-race figure in national discourses of race in the U.S. and Brazil. The mixed-race female figure demonstrates the containment and management of blackness in both the United States and Brazil. Through the consideration of legal structures, censuses, scientific and academic writing, and cultural productions, the chapter provides the historical context in which the mulatta and *mulata* figures emerged and considers the ways in which discourses surrounding mixed-race have been used to uphold as well as resist dominant Eurocentric racial ideologies of white supremacy. The textual analysis in

the following chapters demonstrates how representations of mixed-race women reverberate with these historical discourses and how the specter of the hypersexual mulata/mulatta and the U.S. tragic mulatta are echoed in contemporary popular culture.

Chapter Two utilizes a textual analysis of newspaper and magazines by examining the media depictions of Jennifer Beals and Halle Berry in the United States, and of Camila Pitanga in Brazil. Chapter Two begins with laying out the national policy debates in the 1990s and 2000s in order to relate how the media framing of these celebrities reflect and engage with changing ideas of race. A comparison of celebrity star texts attempt to reveal an understanding of the differences and similarities of national identities, racial identities, and discourses of mixed-race people in Brazil and the United States without flattening the differences between the two countries. Chapter Two relies on mixed-race actresses' own self-representation in conjunction with how the mainstream press and the black press represent their racial identities. The chapter relies on close textual readings to decipher how celebrity texts function as a national and racial phenomenon. Looking at the how the public persona intersects with cultural productions provides a means to explore how racial formations are practiced and in flux. Furthermore, examining Brazilian celebrities and U.S. celebrities together demonstrates that blackness and mixedness are unfixed concepts, that blackness and mixedness often work in conjunction with each other, and, most importantly, that black and mixed-race identities hold different meanings depending on national, political, social, and cultural contexts.

Like mixed-race celebrities, film and television characters function as important representations of mixed-race women and are often key sites of social, political, and cultural debates, anxieties, and desires regarding mixed-race people and race-relations in

Brazil and the United States. Chapters Three and Four use case studies from Brazilian *telenovelas* and U.S. film and television to compare mixed-race figures as a way to find differentiation and common ground between the two countries. Chapter Three examines the Brazilian telenovelas, *Belíssima* (Very Beautiful, 2005) and *Paraíso Tropical* (Tropical Paradise, 2007) as representing the dominant metanarratives of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation in Brazil that mandate compulsory heterosexuality. As visual representations are not the sole source of racialization, the same actress can be racialized differently based on how her sexuality is framed. Mixed-race women of African descent, can gradually be uplifted and hence, whitened if they adhere to expectations of purity, respectability, and reproductive labor. In contrast, the hypersexual mixed-race figure can also occupy the role of excessive sexuality and sensual pleasure in the national imagination. Sexual activity and marriage, therefore, also become racial projects with a containment of blackness. *Porto dos Milagres* (Port of Miracles, 2000)*,* and *Duas Caras* (Two Faces, 2007-2008) are presented as possible alternatives to these narratives. As Globo TV is the dominant channel in Brazil, much more than any one media production source in the United States, the chapter solely looks at Globo produced *telenovelas*.

Chapter Four uses the case studies of the U.S. film *Monster's Ball* (2001) and the U.S. television series *The L Word* (2004-2009) for a discussion of U.S. national identity and as a comparison point to Brazilian *telenovelas* and the mediation of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation. The idea of the mixed-race figure of European and African descent then is hemispherically circulated such that similar indicators of sexual availability are signified in both countries. In the U.S., the mulatta figure in these cultural productions occupies the role of excessive sexuality and sensual pleasure in the national

imagination. In a post-civil rights context, these texts show the discordance and overlapping nature of multiculturalism, neoliberalism, the eradication of race, and abject blackness. These cultural productions demonstrate that race cannot always be read off the body and that the meaning of phenotype becomes negotiable because of how subjects are moralized, pathologized, or eroticized. The historical representations of the mulatta figure comes into play in this chapter, but are reconfigured to represent contemporary anxieties and desires.

Departing from the comparative method used in Chapters One through Four, Chapter Five explores the transnational dimensions of racial imaginings. Chapter Five shows how Brazil is represented in U.S. productions to mediate contemporary U.S. anxieties and desires surrounding mixed-race women and a mixed-race future in the U.S. Chapter Five examines U.S. cultural productions that serve as vehicles to imagine Brazil and as a way to address domestic ideas about race and national identity. This chapter examines contemporary hip-hop music videos and Hollywood films that are produced in the U.S., but set in Brazil. Such pieces include Snoop Dogg and Pharrell's "Beautiful" (2003), will.i.am's "I Got It from My Mama" (2007), and the film, *Fast Five* (2011). Recent U.S. media imaginings of Brazil envision Brazil as a racial and sexual tropical paradise. In particular, the idea of Brazil as a multiracial nation without the racial conflict of the U.S. is key to this imagery. Like Brazil itself, the *mulata* figure, becomes reconfigured in U.S. imaginings of Brazil as a site of racialized sexual pleasure and freedom, and symbolically mediates between the exotic and the familiar. This chapter then moves to how the Brazilian press utilized the image of President Obama within the racial politics of Brazil. To end the chapter, an examination of the Brazilian presentation

of the upcoming 2016 Rio Olympic Games will be conducted through looking at the promotional bid materials for the Olympic Games and the 2012 handoff ceremony in London. Brazil's reputation as a multiracial nation as well as the first nation with a majority black population to host the Olympics will be on display. This ending points to future directions in how Brazil might represent itself. While the relationship between Brazil and the U.S. is one of unequal power dynamics, a hemispheric lens on this relationship through an analysis of popular culture illuminates understandings of interdependent constructions of race, nation, gender, and sexuality.

Notes on Language for Describing and Theorizing Mixed-Race Women

There are significant challenges to describing and theorizing mixed-race women because of the tensions of translation between the national and the transnational. In some cases, there appears to be an incommensurability or impossibility in translating racial terms. There is divergence between classifications and understandings of race marked by familial origins and those contexts marked by physical appearance. In other instances, terms such as "black" or "negro" are used strategically in cultural productions, such as the designators for hip-hop and soul music and particular niche markets, for political and cultural agendas that speak to both transnational and local contexts. When specifically using the United States context, I will often use African-American as a description. As noted, the multiple color categories in Brazil such as *morena*, *mulata*, and *negra* are quite different than the United States rules of hypo-descent. Furthermore, as Patricia Pinho points out, there are a variety of *mestiço* phenotypes in Brazil that all hold different meanings. According to Pinho, the larger parameters of *morenidade* do not hold different

phenotypes, such as skin or features that are "deemed black" with the same value.[59] Therefore, there is a great deal of racial ambiguity that is further shaped by expectations of gender and class. I am cognizant of how these color categories complicate self-identification and how an individual can be viewed in different color categories depending on the viewer and context. I am also aware of how United States and Brazilian understandings of race have different approaches, and therefore, I am conscious of trying not to impose a United States point of view. I realize that these racial and color categories are highly contested.

For the immediate purposes of this dissertation, I am theorizing the term mulatta in the United States to encapsulate other racialized permutations, such as quadroon. As the political, social, and cultural meanings of *mulata*, *morena*, and *negra* differ in Brazil, I also differentiate between these terms. However, for both the United States and Brazil, I most often use the terms mulatta and *mulata* as these terms usually best encapsulate the type of sexualized figure explored in this work. I also use these terms in order to evoke the historical images of the mulatta and *mulata* figure in the United States and Brazil. As explained in Chapter Three, I use the term *morena* in a very specific way to differentiate the meaning of *mulata*. However, when specified in a cultural text, I will leave this incommensurability of other terms as a sign of the multiple ways of understanding and representing race. I also use the terms mixed-race and multiracial interchangeably. Part of the challenge in conducing hemispheric work in Critical Mixed-Race Studies is developing a vocabulary that can convey these racialized forms of ambiguity and to find

[59] Patricia de Santana Pinho, "White but Not Quite White: Tones and Overtones of Whiteness in Brazil," *small axe* 29 (2009): 40.

ways of discussing mixed-race people without reifying the idea of race as biological in itself.

Chapter One: Constructions of Racial Mixture in the United States and Brazil

The images of the mulatta in the United States and the *mulata* in Brazil are shaped by coexisting celebration, denial and ambivalence towards racial mixing. The invention of race justified asymmetrical power relations corresponding to colonial practices and slavery. The idea of "mixed-race" itself has its roots in socio-political and legal constructions of racial categories and hierarchies. The mixed-race body presents a problem to the idea of rigidly bounded racial categories. Brazil and the United States have had different ways of negotiating mixed-race bodies in relation to national identity and the nation-state. The two countries are both in tension between an incorporation of the mixed-race population into the body politic or an anxious denial of the mixed-race population. Many of the strategies used by nation-states to grapple with a racially mixed population have changed over time. However the figure of the mulatta/mulata has remained a central site of these historical, social, political, and cultural forces. The emergence and utilization of the mulatta/mulata figure can be seen in national, transnational, and comparative contexts spurred by the national and transnational development and construction of race.

The justifications for black slavery and the oppression of indigenous people required a belief in essential racial differentiations. As a system of classifying and segregating bodies, the concept of race not only marked difference, but relied on "scientific," religious, philosophical, and moral justification. With race as a means of social and organizational management, invented racial categories were imposed upon bodies based on phenotype. Therefore, while the ideas of race and mixed-race are different in the United States and Brazil, these concepts share a common Eurocentric

vision of racial hierarchies that privileges whiteness. The very etymology of "mulatto" and "*mulato"* reveals the racist premise upon which the terms rest. The terms are derived from the fifteenth century Portuguese and Spanish word *mula* for mule and eventually were adopted into English translation as mulatto by the sixteenth century.[60] This derogatory comparison to a mule--the barren offspring of a horse and a donkey--portrays the view of nonwhites as animalistic and the mulatto as barren. The term mulatto therefore highlights abnormality because of the presumed unnatural crossbreeding between races. If following the negative connotations of the etymology, the emphasis on hybridity as degenerative and sterility-inducing points to the negative connotations of the term mulatto and highlights the highly sexualized nature of race. However, in Brazil, the term *mulato* became neutralized despite its origin and did not gain the level of perjorativeness as the term did in the United States. Nonetheless, the need to name persons of mixed African and European descent also points to the system of categorizing by race as hierarchal in design. Thus, the mixture of African blood with European blood creates a new being that is less than white. However, the term is used in this chapter to highlight the historicity of the term and to point to the ways in which the mulatto figure has been used in both the United States and Brazil. This use of the mulatto as a figure, therefore, is different than a mixed-race black/white subjectivity, as mixed-race black/white subjectivity subsumes processes of agency and identity formation. Importantly, the ideas of mixed-raceness in both countries often centers on the sexuality of mixed-race women. Whereas white women are the ideal of purity, the mixed-race

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[60] Werner Sollors, *Neither White Nor Black but Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 128.

woman becomes the Other, allowing white women to be held up as models of morality. The hypersexuality of the mulatta/mulata figure is used as a justification for colonial racialized sexual violence. Protecting or sexually engaging with women's bodies, and the race of such bodies, is central to constructing the nation.

While both the United States and Brazil underwent processes of European colonialism, national independence, slavery, and manumission, the responses to mixed-race bodies and racial mixing radically differed. However, with Brazil's growing economic and political influence and the United States' shifting system of racial categorization and race-relations, the importance of traditionally "Brazilian" ideas of race are likely to gain traction in the United States. As interracial marriage and the multiracial population increase and migration from predominantly nonwhite countries continues to rise, just as race-based policies relying on a stable racial categories like affirmative action are dismantled, the counterexample of Brazil will likely continue to be significant. Demographic changes in the United States present a challenge to binary views of race as well as white supremacy as the actual national body politic shifts. Brazil's history of racial mixing- but still present racism- presents an alternate narrative of race and national identity that nonetheless relies on white supremacy.

<u>Legacies of Slavery in the United States and Brazil</u>

In the United States, the construction of the mulatta as an embodied marker of racial and sexual frontiers has its roots in the historical questions of "who is black?" and "who is white?" The mulatta figure in the United States has historical roots in slavery and emerges from the need to establish racial boundaries between the free and unfree. In the United States, the boundary between freedom and slavery was marked by racial

distinctions relying on a black-white dichotomy. The United States has relied on a vision of the nation that is white and exclusive of African-Americans. While the United States and Brazil were the two biggest slaveholding societies in the Americas, Brazil imported more slaves during the Atlantic slave trade than any other country in the Americas. Brazil's population of African descent is much larger than that of the United States.[61] Whereas African-Americans in the United States have composed an excluded minority of the population, Brazil's demographic composition is mostly of Afro-Brazilian descent, yet, even so, the population marked as *pardo* (brown) or *preto* (black) remain a marginalized majority. Like the United States, the construction of the Brazilian mulata figure relies on the legacies and national memory of slavery.

In the United States, the definitions and boundaries of race have been under constant negotiation since British colonialism. The use of indentured and slave labor did not formally distinguish racial categories. However, European indentured servants had a barrier to their continued enslavement that was not available to Africans, as Africans "had not taken part in the long history of negotiation and contest in which the English lower classes had worked out the relationship between themselves and their superiors."[62] The racialization of blacks emerged as a way to distinguish free subjects and slaves, necessitating the establishment of racial boundaries. Legal statutes prohibiting interracial sexual acts and interracial marriage emerged in Virginia in the late seventeenth century and by the middle of the eighteenth century, six of the thirteen colonies had laws

[61] Edward Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 14-15.
[62] Barbara Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review* 181 (1990): 104.

forbidding the intermarriage of blacks and whites.[63]

Breaking from a traditional British patrilineal system to a matrilineal system of descent signified an opportunistic shift to uphold white patriarchy and racialized capitalism in the United States. With a child's servitude status following the condition of the mother, slaveholders were benefited as white men could have sexual contact with black women to produce a mixed-race child without the need for manumission.[64] In 1662, Virginia decreed that the mulatto child of a slave woman was a slave.[65] Legally, the mulatto's source of blackness came from the mother. The laws thus, defined race through women's bodies and recognized black women's reproductive labor as significant to slavery's expansion.

However, status of the mother legal restrictions did not permit white women to give their free status to their mixed-race children. White women who attempted to pass on their status were faced with harsh penalties.[66] For example, in 1664, Maryland ruled that white women, who bore the children of slaves must serve "the masters of their husbands during the lifetime of the husband, and that the 'Issue of such freeborne

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[63] George M. Frederickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 99–108.
[64] Martha Hodes dispels assumptions that interracial sex was always prohibited. Hodes shows how sex was tolerated unless it became socially problematic through pregnancy and childbirth. Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).
[65] Jane Purcell Guild, *Black Laws of Virginia,* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 23-24.
[66] Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 132-135, 196.

wommen soe marryed shall be Slaues as their fathers were."[67] Slavery's contradictions are evident in the racial and gender dynamics that "that considers a white woman capable of giving birth to a black child but denies that a black woman can give birth to a white child."[68] The potentiality of a mixed-race population threatened the racial order and the preservation of whiteness. After the Civil War, black freedom catalyzed tensions, violence, and fear concerning racial mixing between white women and black men.[69]

While many white slaveholding fathers gave provisions for their children or later emancipated their children, many fathers did not and regarded their mixed-race children as slaves. Therefore, what few paternal privileges mixed-race children had were predominantly based on written records of emancipation or paternal wills, not birthright. Free black communities such as in Charleston and New Orleans were overwhelmingly mixed-race and the continued existence of mixed-race elites in these as well as in Northern cities after Reconstruction has contributed to tensions in the color spectrum of African-American communities.[70] While relatively privileged free mulattoes did exist, most were poor with limited social mobility. For example, Williams maintains that "until the 1850s, South Carolinians maintained a striking tolerance of free mulattoes and an amazing resistance to the outright outlawing of interracial marriage"[71] and free mulattoes

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[67] Joel Williamson, *New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States* (New York, 1984), 10.
[68] Barbara Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," in *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 149.
[69] See Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South*.
[70] Judith Berzon, *Neither White Nor Black*, 164-187.
[71] Williamson, *New People*, 17.

were regarded as "allies in the struggle to control the slave mass."[72]

However, these freedoms were not absolute and many mixed-race black women were severely limited in terms of sexual agency. For example, the quadroon balls of antebellum and postbellum New Orleans relied on sexual objectification under the guise of choice. Higher prices for mulatto slaves were the result of the belief that mulatto women were sexually voracious. "It was thought that a rather large proportion of the free colored females, particularly free mulattos, were unchaste."[73] "Fancy" girls, light-skinned slave women, were often taught to read and sew and were considered to be desirable mistresses in Lower South cities.[74] The mulatto's sexuality became itself a very valuable commodity. However, as white skin was attached to notions of purity, the mulatto represented a contradiction of ideas of sexuality. With light skin that marked purity and vulnerability, the mulatto was also imbued with the notion of black blood that carried lascivious sexuality. The mulatto then emerges as a desired object of sexual availability with a skin color that supposedly represents chastity.

While comparisons to Brazil and the United States have often noted the relative benign system of slavery in Brazil, much of this discourse attempts to promote the idea of Brazil as a racial democracy, free of the race-based discrimination prevalent in the United States. Brazil had the longest-lasting slave system in the Americas from the fifteenth century to abolition in 1888. Even early academic study in the United States reinforced

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[72] Ibid 18.
[73] Eugene Genovese documents in Louisiana "girls, young, shapely, and usually light in color, went as house servants with special services required. First-class blacksmiths were being sold for $2,500 and prime field hands for about $1,800, but a particularly beautiful girl or young woman might bring $5,000." Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1972), 416.
[74] Williamson, *New People,* 23.

the belief of a more humane form of slavery in Brazil, based on its Portuguese heritage, and utilized the racially mixed population as proof of a more benign system of slavery.[75] This historical interpretation of slavery in Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre's work *Casa grande e senzala* (1933) contributed to the idea of Brazil as relatively racially harmonious. With an emphasis on domestic ties and intimacy such as children playing together, interracial sex, and the watchful affectionate gaze of black servants, Gilberto Freyre suggested that slavery brought different races together. Historian Lilia Schwarcz argues that Freyre, through highlighting the intimate spaces of the home, claimed that slavery in Brazil was much more benevolent than the slavery experienced in the United States.[76] Contrary to images of a benign slavery, however, conditions of slavery in Brazil were often brutally harsh.[77]

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[75] For example, Frank Tannenbaum's influential *Slave and Citizen* (1946) argued that different slave systems in the United States and Brazil generated contrasting results. Tannenbaum claimed that a benign system of slavery with high rates of miscegenation and greater levels of mulatto manumission and the absence of a violent abolition indicated the absence of prejudice, and hence, the easier integration of Afro-Brazilians as citizens in post-Emancipation Brazil. For Tannenbaum, the large mixed-race population in Brazil was an indicator of the less harsh conditions of slavery in comparison to the United States. See Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (New York: Knopf, 1946).

[76] Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, "Gilberto Freyre: adaptação, mestiçagem, trópicos e privacidade em *Novo Mundos nos trópicos*" in *Gilberto Freyre e os estudos latinoamericanos,*ed. Joshua Lund and Malcom McNee (Pittsburgh: Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, 2006), 305-334.

[77] For example, male slaves who worked in the mines had very short life expectancies due to exhaustion and disease, but the recurrent importation of slaves quickly replaced dying slaves Júnia Ferreira Furtado, *Chica da Silva: A Brazilian Slave in the Eighteenth Century (*New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 152; Mariana Dantas, "Royal Slaves and Humble Vassals" in *Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America,* eds. Andrew B. Fisher and Matthew D. O'Hara, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 118. Later research in the 1950s and 1960s disputed the myth that Brazil's slavery system was more benign, in fact revealing that the physical treatment of slaves might have been more violent in Brazil, and that this perceived benignity of Brazilian slavery was built on a lack of primary data. Carl Degler, *Neither Black Nor White*, 67-75.

The image of Brazil as racially more tolerant compared to the United States also depends on the erasure of mixed-race people in the United States and does not consider how hypodescent rules hide the actual frequency of interracial sexual contact in the United States. Furthermore, the discourse about slavery in Brazil also revolves around the sexual availability of women of African descent, which has become integral to the national imaginary of a multiracial Brazilian family. The perceived sexuality of women of African descent is key to the image of the multiracial nation and it is here that the *mulata* figure emerges as a symbol of Brazil's past and its unique national identity. Like the United States, Brazil, as part of the Portuguese empire, adopted slave codes that determined that the children of enslaved women were to be slaves.[78] Like the United States, there were significant regional differences in Brazil and customs regarding miscegenation, the status of mixed-race peoples, and freedom. Gender and sexuality play major roles in how race relations under slavery and post-abolition were understood.

Compared to the Unites States, where many male British colonists brought white wives, there was a shortage of white women in Brazil compared to the number of single white men or men who had left their wives in Portugal. This demographic difference also encouraged single white men to have sexual relations with black, indigenous, and mixed-race women. Whether through coercion or consent, both church and state denounced interracial sex throughout much of the colonial period.[79] In the early colonial period, interracial marriage was illegal and both civic and ecclesiastical authorities ordered that

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[78] Brazil, like other slave colonies in the America, maintained that children follow the condition of the mother. See David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 277.
[79] Furtado, *Chica da Silva,* 65-68.

when possible Portuguese and Brazilian-born white men should marry within their own status group determined by race and class.[80] Relationships with partners of unequal status were relegated to concubinage. Even with these official policies, the high number of interracial relationships of concubinage and relatively high rate of consensual unions suggests that the Church largely turned a blind eye to the frequency of these relationships.[81] Furthermore, due to the expense of legal marriage in Brazil, there was a significant disincentive for proceeding with legal marriage across the racial spectrum.[82] Forms of concubinage, extra-marital relationships, and both short-term and long-term relationship between white men and black and mixed women in Brazil were common despite the legal barriers.[83]

Of the slaves whom slaveowners chose to emancipate, there is a strong linkage between gender, birthplace, and skin color. The majority of manumissions were female, *mulato* and *pardo*, and Brazilian-born. For enslaved women, upward mobility was possible through small trade, prostitution, or concubinage. Chica da Silva, a famous former slave who became one of the wealthiest slaveholders in Brazil through her

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[80] Dantas, "Royal Slaves and Humble Vassals," 207.

[81] In particularly remote regions such as Minas Gerais, there was less church and governmental control over interracial relationships. Furtado, *Chica da Silva*, 68; Muriel Nazzari, "Concubinage in Colonial Brazil: the Inequalities of Race, Class, and Gender," *Journal of Family History* 21, no.2 (1996): 107-124.

[82] Numerous fees often had to be paid before marriage In order to marry, bans had to be read in every parish where the bride and groom had lived for more than six months. With many men having lived in multiple locations in both Portugal and Brazil, such a procedure was quite expensive. If a baptism certificate was not available, witnesses had to be called upon and interrogated by the ecclesiastical court, and hence resulting, in further fees. Proof of consanguinity, especially in small towns where many people were related to one another, was another expense. Nazzarri, "Concubinage in Colonial Brazil," 110.

[83] Mary Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 294.

relationship with her white slavemaster, demonstrates this practice. The place of the paternity of white male slaveholders and the role of the slave mother in the manumission of mulattos is also potentially important.[84] Although some slave women benefited from practices of miscegenation, it does not deny both their sexual exploitation and labor. Like the United States, sexual and racial commodification are inherent in the relationship between miscegenation and the *mulata* figure.

While the Portuguese crown encouraged racial mixing between white colonists and indigenous women in order to claim greater control over land, the Portuguese crown did not encourage racial mixing between white men and the black and mulatto population. In the early colonial period, miscegenation between white men and women of African descent was strongly discouraged by limiting opportunities and privileges to men of color and to men who were married to nonwhite women. For example, in 1725, the Overseas Council, directly connected to the Capitania, administrative division of the Portuguese empire in Minas Gerais, prohibited men of color to occupy positions on Municipal Councils. This was an attempt to stop miscegenation by discouraging unions

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[84] There are demographic and regional differences in the manumission of slaves. However, most studies agree that slave women were almost twice as likely to be emancipated over slave men.**,** As most manumissions occurred in urban areas-men were more likely to have to buy their freedom and African-born slaves were also more likely to purchase their freedom from income generated from trade and skilled labor. Stuart Schwartz's examination of manumission letters determined that there was a ratio of roughly 2:1 for manumitted females versus manumitted males. See Stuart B. Schwartz, "Patterns of Slaveholding in the Americas: New Evidence from Brazil," *The American Historical Review* 87, no.1 1982: 55-86; Kathleen J. Higgins, "Gender and the Manumission of Slaves in Colonial Brazil: The Prospects for Freedom in Sabará, Minas Gerais, 1710-1809, *Slavery and Abolition* 18, no.2: 1-29; James Patrick Kiernan, "Baptism and Manumission in Brazil: Paraty, 1789-1822," *Social Science History* 3.1 1978: 56-71; Rafael de Bivar Marquese, "A dinâmica da escravidão no Brasil: Resistência, tráfico negreiro e alforrias, séculos XVII a XIX" *Novos estud. - CEBRAP* 74 (2006): 107-123.

between white men and black and mulatto concubines and to encourage white men to marry only white women.[85] Disturbed by the number of mixed-race men with local government positions, the Overseas Council ordered that no position of the Capitania could be assigned to a man who was *mulato* to the fourth degree. The concern over this matter indicates the large presence of free subjects of African descent in colonial Brazil.[86]

Like parts of the United States, concubinage was a common phenomenon with limited sexual agency for black women. Yet free classes of women of color did emerge and the children of these women also entered into a separate free class. Given the larger number of free *mulatos*, this group had greater potential mobility compared to blacks in Brazil.[87] However, the mulato category did not necessarily equal freedom nor did a black category equal slave status. Furtado argues that in eighteenth century Minas Gerais, status was more significant than skin color given the existence of enslaved *mulatos*, manumitted *mulatos*, and *mulatos* of free birth.[88] Yet, skin color emerged as a tie to slavery versus the perceived purity of whites. The sexualized bodies of women of color and the privileged position of white men served as the gateway to a whitened body politic while still relying on unfree black labor.

The mythic role that Chica da Silva has played in Brazil's memory of slavery and subsequent national identity demonstrates the link of gender, sexuality, and race. As a

[85] Nazzari, "Concubinage in Colonial Brazil," 109
[86] A.J.R. Russell-Wood, "Ambivalent Authorities: the African and Afro-Brazilian Contribution to Local Governance in Colonial Brazil', *The Americas* 57, no.1 (2000):17.
[87] Following the end of the legal African slave trade in 1850, manumission led to rapid growth among the free population of color. By abolition in 1888, the number of mulattos to blacks in skilled crafts and trades was around four to one. Others advanced into areas such as medicine, engineering, and law. See Herbert Klein, *Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 227-230.
[88] Furtado, *Chica da Silva,* xxii

free woman of mixed African and European descent, the symbol of Chica has been imbued with a variety of meanings. Born into slavery, Francisa "Chica" da Silva was the daughter of a black slave woman and a white man.[89] Her parentage demonstrates the sexual exploitation of women of color under slavery. Chica was the slave and mistress of João Fernandes de Oliveira, a diamond contractor from Portugal, who purchased Chica in 1753.[90] Through her relationship with her master, Chica eventually gained her freedom and became a wealthy slaveowner herself. Chica da Silva has inspired numerous literary, theater, television, and film works. As Furtado outlines, the "stereotypes commonly attributed to [Chica], be it the notion that she was an exception or that she was an example of the sensuality of the Brazilian *mulata* or even of cordial conviviality between the races in Brazil."[91] Chica's dramatic depictions have varied from representations of her as a manipulative greedy woman in contrast to white moral women to her use as proof of racial democracy and the potential for upward mobility for women of color and the benign nature of slavery and as proof of hypersexuality of mixed women. Each representational use demonstrates the anxieties of remembering Brazil's colonial past and the role of the mulata figure. In the 1970s and 1990s, she has been represented onscreen as a seductive mulata, who used her African sexuality[92] to bewitch and manipulate her

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[89] Ibid, 47.
[90] Ibid, 103.
[91] Ibid, 19.
[92] Africa represented a concept that was closer to nature, barbaric, and primitive, and thereby justifiably enslaveable. See Bettina Ng'weno, "This Land That Diaspora: Indigeneity, Nation-States, and Afro-Latin America, " in *Comparative Indigeneities of the Américas: Towards a Hemispheric Approach*, ed. M. Bianet Castellanos, Lourdes Gutiérrez Najera, and Arturo J. Aldama (Tuscon: The University of Arizona Press, 2012), 207-208.

white lover. [93] Like the representation of *A escrava Isaura* in a *telenovela* in 1976, the fascination with Chica da Silva reveals an obsession with the memory of slavery, mixed-race figures, and miscegenation. Therefore, the importance of Chica as a figure is also indicative of the ambivalence towards racial equality, the investment in the idea of a racial democracy, and the reliance on women's bodies to construct the narrative of the nation.

In both the United States and Brazil, interracial sex during the period of slavery evidenced the extremely uneven relations of power. For Hartman, the discourse of seduction evidenced in U.S. slave law "makes recourse to the idea of reciprocal and collusive relations and engenders a precipitating construction of black female sexuality in which rape is unimaginable."[94] However, as Donna Goldstein notes, while in the United States miscegenation during slavery has been examined through coercion, the dominant understanding of histories of miscegenation in Brazil are interpreted through constructions of cordiality.[95] This vision of interracial sex during slavery and the fantasy of master-slave relations romanticize sexual violence and exploitation against women and informs contemporary commodifications of mulata sexuality.[96] For the *mulata*/mulatta figure in both Brazil and the United States, rationalization of gender and racial exploitation relies on notions of hypersexuality.

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[93] See Carlos Diegues' film, *Xica da Silva* (1976). The film satirizes the colonial social order while still representing Xica as hypersexual. The *telenovela, Xica de Silva* (Manchete, 1990) also reinforces the sensuality and sexual power of Chica da Silva.
[94] Saidiya V. Hartman, "Seduction and the Ruses of Power," *Callaloo* 19, no. 2 (1996): 538-9.
[95] Donna M. Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 115-119.
[96] Angela Gilliam,"The Brazilian Mulata: Images in the Global Economy," *Race and Class* 40, no.1 (1998):63-65.

Whereas slavery in Brazil was part of a national culture in the nineteenth century, in the United States there were deep divides between the North and the South.[97] While the United States went through a long and bloody Civil War from 1861 to 1865, Brazil had a gradual abolition of slavery.[98] With the abolition of slavery in the United States and France's colonies and with Spain freeing children born to enslaved women in Cuba and Puerto Rico in 1871, Brazil eventually passed the Law of the Free Womb, which granted freedom to children born to slaves, thus changing the relationship between slave mothers and their children.[99] By 1888, Brazil abolished slavery. For both the United States and Brazil, the question of how to develop a national society post-slavery and how to engage the black and mulatto population generated different responses.

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[97] Sectionalism, political crisis, and violence increased as the United States expanded as evidenced by the Missouri Compromise of 1820, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. In the wake of Abraham Lincoln's election in 1860, South Carolina led southern states in secession. The divergent political, economic, and moral interests of an agrarian South and an increasingly industrialized North led to secession and the Civil War.The academic scholarship on national divisions, economic, social, and political conflicts, abolitionism, and the eventual U.S. Civil War are numerous. There is a large diversity of interpretations of the Civil War, see among many other, David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Eric Foner, *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002); Bruce Levine, *Half Slave & Half Free: The Roots of Civil War* (2nd edition) (New York: Hill & Wang, 2005).

[98] By 1850, British pressure helped bring about an end to the importation of slaves into Brazil, but a major internal slave trade expanded While the British had already banned slave trade, treaties signed with the British were largely ignored. See Robert E. Conrad, *World of Sorrow: The African Slave Trade to Brazil* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 1–3.

[99] See Martha Abreu, "Slave Mothers and Freed Children: Emancipation and Female Space in Debates on the 'Free Womb' Law, Rio de Janeiro, 1871," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 3 (1996): 567-580. Camillia Cowling, "Negotiating Freedom: Women of Colour and the Transition to Free Labour in Cuba, 1870–1886," *Slavery and Abolition* 26 (2005): 377–391;

<u>The Mulatta, Slavery, and Literature in the United States and Brazil</u>

In the United States and Brazil, the figure of the tragic mulatto appeared most prominently in the nineteenth century in order to discuss the evils of slavery. The tragic mulatto novels, influenced by Romanticism and sentimentalism, allow for the victimization of the figure amidst a corrupt slave society. The tragic mulatta figure in nineteenth-century literature is most often fair-skinned and possesses the supposedly civilized traits of European women, but is abused and victimized due to their slave status. However, due to her beauty and sexuality, she also often becomes the object of desire for white masters.

In the United States, the "tragic mulatto," is a symbol of racialized sexual transgression and emerges within the incoherence of the reality of inter-racial sex and the hypodescent rule. In the nineteenth century, white authors such as Lydia Maria Child, Dion Boucicault, and Harriet Beecher Stowe used the idea of the "tragic mulatto" as a literary trope to problematize racial hierarchies and the subordinate position of women as well as to appeal to abolitionist sympathies through sentimentalism. As the trope of "woman as slave" became more prevalent from the 1820s to the 1860s, white female abolitionists often used the tragic mulatta as a proxy for articulating the oppression of white women especially.[100] As Eva Raimon points out, "the trope of the 'tragic mulatto' embodies and dramatizes profound tensions and paradoxes of race and nation. At the same time as these seemingly contradictory currents were manifesting themselves in the

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[100] Karen Sánchez-Eppler, "Bodily Bonds The Intersecting Rhetorics of Feminism and Abolitionism," *Representations* 24 (1998): 28-59.

social order, the literary mulatto emerged as a favorite theme of anti-slavery fiction."[101]

The tragic mulatto is usually a woman, and thus, more aptly described as a tragic mulatta. The tragic mulatta is usually beautiful and white-looking, but is cursed by her small amount of black blood. As a consequence of her black blood, the tragic mulatta, despite her beauty and goodness, can never know domesticity and marriage and therefore fails to be a true woman. Despite her desire to be an upstanding moral and pure woman, her historical corporal ties to blackness and slavery prohibit her from becoming a respectable woman worthy of protection. Dion Boucicault's 1859 play, *The Octoroon,* was staged in New York City and put into performance the representation of the tragic mulatto. With her pale skin, the tragic mulatto was nonetheless constrained by her black ancestry and died in sacrifice to prevent her white lover from a mixed union that was predestined for tragedy. She is doomed and by her hopeless fate, dies.[102] While female purity is exalted, black women, including those of mixed descent, are incapable of reaching this ideal as it is a racialized ideal available solely for white women. Mixed blood is represented as a curse and as an inhibitor to happiness. The suffering of mixed women, who are light-skinned and thus closer to white, was presented as more tragic and more identifiable to white audiences. However, as the character is never fully white, it does not infringe upon the status of white women. Caught between the ideals of American democracy and the corruption of slavery and subsequent social death based on black ancestry, the mulatta was often used to represent the failure of United States

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[101] Eva Allegra Raimon, *The "Tragic Mulatta" Revisited. Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Antislavery Fiction* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 93.
[102] Jean Yellin, *Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 72.

egalitarianism.[103]

In Brazil, the influence of sentimentalist literature is also evident in Bernando Guimarães, *A escrava Isaura* (1875). With a similar plotline to *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* which was translated into French in the Paris edition, into Portuguese in the 1856 second edition in Lisbon, and later widely read in Brazil, *A escrava Isaura* began the Brazilian antislavery novel tradition of depicting cruel masters and virtuous slaves.[104] The novel garners sympathy for the slave, Isaura, who is the educated daughter of a Portuguese man and mulatto slave woman. Isaura possesses exquisite beauty, modesty, and virtue. She is represented as superior to her fellow darker slaves. Leôncio, her new corrupt master, lustfully desires Isaura and relentlessly pursues her. Isaura, virtuous and obedient, follows all of her master's orders except for his sexual advances. As a result, she is forced to run away. Her savior comes in the form of Álvaro, a rich white abolitionist, who buys Isaura, frees her, and marries her. Isaura's superiority, like mulatta heroines in the United States, is likely connected to her whiteness. However, unlike the U.S. tragic mulatta, Isaura survives. Isaura's survival and marriage suggest a possible incorporation into the Brazilian national body rather than the U.S.'s refusal of mulatta national incorporation.

Upholding White Superiority: Constructing Racial Categories and Hierarchies in the United States and Brazil

[103] Judith R. Berzon, *Neither White or Black: The Mulatto Character in American Fiction.* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), 51-54.
[104] Alfredo Bosi, *História concisa da literatura brasileira* (São Paulo: Cultrix, 1998), 143-144.

The mulatto category first appeared on the United States census in 1850. This category appeared on seven later censuses for purposes of racial science and to rationalize racial policies, such as segregation. However, the official mulatto racial designation of the census does not foreclose the fact that a significant mulatto population existed before 1850. Rather than accounting for a demographic shift, the 1850 census mulatto category was part of a larger discourse of racial science coinciding with a significant expansion of census-taking and procedures. First, Congress designated a Census Board to discuss census-taking design, procedures, and how this information would be collected and interpreted.[105] Second, Congress approved a Census Board recommendation to expand the census range to include more information on individuals to include statistics regarding industry, religion, crime, etc. Debates over slavery and racial science were situated within this context.

The emergence of the 1850 "mulatto" category occurred through the lobbying of racial scientists and legislators who were sympathetic to racial science purposes and who could use the findings of racial science to justify slavery and racial policies.[106] Joseph Nott, an influential polygenist, wanted to use statistical information derived from the census to prove that mulattoes were less fertile than members of pure races and had a

[105] Margo Anderson, *The American Census: A Social History* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1988), 36-37.
[106] In the nineteenth century, polygeneism and monogenesism were the two major strands of racial science. Polygenist thinkers argued that there were different origins for the races and therefore racial differences were unchangeable. Polygenists also believed that racial mixing could alter a race and lead to infertility. In the decades before the Civil War, polygenesis advocates justified slavery and cautioned against racial mixing. Monogenists did not necessarily believe that all races were equal, but refuted polygenist ideas of separate origins. The 1850 mulatto category emerged from polygenist advocacy. Melissa Nobles, *Shades of Citizenship: Race and the Census in Modern Politics*. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2000) 36.

shorter life span.[107] These statistics were also deemed to demonstrate black inferiority and the dangers of racial mixing. In the context of slavery debates, the collection of more information about slaves, including discussion of the inclusion of a question regarding the degree of removal from being pure white or pure black, provoked a heated debate in Congress. In the end, the mulatto category gained a place on the census while the question regarding a respondent's removal from pure races was dropped.[108] Census enumerators were instructed "in all cases where the person is white, leave the space blank; in all cases where the person is black, insert the letter B; if mulatto, insert M. It is very desirable that these particulars be carefully regarded."[109] These instructions emphasized racial distinctions, but did not explain why these particulars should be carefully regarded. The category of mulatto brought theories of racial mixture and degeneracy into the center of debates concerning racial science and statistics. The inclusion of the category further legitimized racial hierarchies through the guise of racial science and ideology.

In spite of changes in United States political, racial, and social organization from 1850 to 1880, subsequent censuses did not modify the mulatto category. While the 1850 census influenced debates about slavery, the 1860 census[110] was used to influence

[107] Ibid, 37.

[108] Some southern senators insisted on erasing the question about degree of removal as well as other questions, such as name, number of children, and place of birth, that acknowledged slaves as individuals. For many southern slavery advocates, the less information available about slaves was often better for their purposes. Other senators wanted statistical information to prove the racial degeneracy of blacks. Meanwhile, some northerners wanted statistical information to fuel anti-slavery motives. Ibid, 39-42

[109] U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Twenty Censuses: Population and Housing Questions 1790–1980*, 14, *www.census.gov/history/pdf/20censuses.pdf.*

[110] The 1860 census form also added the categories of Chinese and Indian.

arguments about abolition during the Civil War. The Union sought to end slavery, but did not necessarily plan to integrate freed slaves as full citizens. Therefore, statistics concerning the fitness and conditions of blacks and the probability of a growth in the black population, was important to the future of the United States. Census Superintendant Joseph Kennedy predicted the gradual disappearance of the "colored" population due to physical and moral degeneracy attributed to racial mixing and to a high mortality rate caused by harsh conditions associated with belonging to a lower racial order.[111] However, as the census had only twice included a mulatto category, Kennedy also included a qualification to his prediction that "it is not yet easy to determine how far the admixture of races affects their vital power."[112] Thus, the reasoning for the continuation of the mulatto category centered around the need to measure data on the "vital power" of blacks and mulattoes over time to better predict the impact of freed slaves, to justify black inferiority and to manage the political, economic, and social conditions of blacks. The subsequent passing of state anti-miscegenation laws following the Civil War further cemented racial ideology asserting the purity of whiteness and segregation by preventing further racial mixing and the related growth of a mulatto population.

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[111] Nobles, *Shades of Citizenship*, 46.
[112] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census.* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864, xi. *Population of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census.* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office. http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1860.htm

In 1870, changes to the census included the elimination of the slave schedule, but continued to distinguish between black and mulatto.[113] Against the backdrop of Reconstruction, fears of miscegenation and political redistricting, enumerators for the 1870 census were instructed as follows: "Be particularly careful in reporting the class Mulatto. The word is here generic, and includes quadroons, octoroons, and all persons having any perceptible trace of African blood. Important scientific results depend upon the correct determination of this class in schedules 1 and 2."[114] It is unclear what "important scientific results" were to be determined from the census schedule. However, the pervasiveness of scientific racism in this period likely influenced the desire to gather racial information.

By 1890, the census radically restructured itself again by employing social scientists in order to improve its scientific legitimacy. As in 1850, the expansion of the 1890 census included more information on racial mixture. Such information was needed to determine if blacks were becoming purer, to determine the "colored" growth rate in relation to white population growth and to further measure the birth and death rates of racially mixed people.[115] The 1890 census mandated that "quadroons" and "octoroons" be counted in distinction to mulattoes and blacks. Enumerator instructions indicated:

> Be particularly careful to distinguish between blacks, mulattoes, quadroons, and octoroons. The word "black" should be used to describe those persons who have three-fourths or more black blood; "mulatto,"

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[113] Reflecting concerns over Asian immigration, the category of Japanese was added to the census in 1870.
[114] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twenty Censuses: Population and Housing Questions 1790–1980,* 18.
[115] Nobles, *Shades of Citizenship*, 55-56.

> those persons who have from three-eighths to five-eighths black blood; "quadroon," those persons who have one-fourth black blood; and "octoroon," those persons who have one-eighth or any trace of black blood.[116]

Further details on racial mixture were used to buttress racial ideology concerning the inferiority of racially mixed persons. Additionally, measurement of racial mixture demonstrated the growth rate of persons of African descent versus that of those deemed to be pure white. Furthermore, the increasing popularity of eugenics, which emphasized the inheritance of physical and mental traits, encouraged the measurement of miscegenation in order to preserve the Anglo-American "racial stock." While scientists and policymakers requested more details on racial mixture, the Census Bureau considered this information to be useless. The 1890 census was the only census that included the "quadroon" and "octoroon" categories. The mulatto category remained on the 1910 and 1920 censuses, but would later be phased out.[117] Despite a sizeable mixed-race population, the Census Bureau did not find this information to be pertinent to its purposes. The Eleventh Census Report maintained:

> The persons of negro descent are further classified under the law, as follows: negroes, 6,337,980; mulattoes, 956,989; quadroons, 105,135; and octoroons, 69,936. These figures are of little value. Indeed, as an

[116] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Measuring America: The Decennial Censuses From 1790 to 2000* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), 27.
[117] While the categories to distinguish racially mixed blacks were left out in 1900, in the same census schedule enumerators were instructed to record the tribe and the fraction of white blood from each American Indian. Therefore, the obsession with blood quantum did not disappear in 1900. Claudette Bennett, "Racial Categories Used in the Decennial Censuses, 1790 to the Present," *Government Information Quarterly* 17 no. 2 (2000): 168.

indication of the extent to which the races have mingled, they are misleading.[118]

Despite the mission of precise statistical data, the enumeration instructions did not include information on how to measure and determine blood quantum fractions. This lack of specific information can be interpreted as a presumption on the Census Bureau's part that common sense enabled the detection of black blood as well as the presumption that black blood was somehow visibly available to any evaluator. The categories of mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon were dropped in 1900 and later the mulatto category was reintroduced for the 1910 and 1920 censuses.[119] While African-Americans were subjected to rules of hypodescent, the later institutionalization of hyperdescent rules for American Indians would determine who could legally claim to be American Indian. The different treatments and definitions of American Indians with white ancestry and mixed-race African-Americans demonstrates that race was not solely used for purposes of genealogy or science, but rather to political ends and access to resources.

After 1920, the mulatto category was dropped from the census. Methods relying on visible subjectivity generated unreliable results. The differences between black and mulatto populations were considered to be increasingly difficult to distinguish and the reporting of black and mulatto populations was heavily influenced by the capabilities and experiences of the enumerator. A 1918 report from the U.S. Census Bureau determined that "The perceptibility of a trace of Negro or of white blood probably does not correspond uniformly to the physiological proportion of Negro and white blood in the

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[118] U.S. Bureau of the Census, Report on Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890, xcii, http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1890.htm

individuals enumerated. Moreover, perceptibility is dependent upon the ability of the enumerator to perceive, and this ability varies from enumerator to enumerator…. The census classification is necessarily based upon perceptibility."[120] As this dissertation posits, the tension between visibility and context are clearly seen not just in the census and public policy, but in popular culture and the representation of mixed-race characters and actresses.

Furthermore, the Census Bureau also had other major concerns, most notably how to classify the large waves of European immigrants. During the 1920s, whiteness absorbed immigrant groups that were previously considered racially distinct and thereby, made Irish, Italians, and Jews white while reinforcing the line between colored and white. However, regional differences and a disjuncture between who should be granted citizenship and who should be allowed to further immigrate created an unevenness in the concept of whiteness at various time periods.[121] Various European immigrant groups did not become white all at the same time, and not without significant struggle. Notably, eugenicists were often concerned with the racial stock of the United States.[122] As African-Americans migrated to Northern cities from 1900 to 1930, the whitening of

[120] US Bureau of the Census. *Negro Population 1790–1915.* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1918), 207. www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/00480330ch03.pdf

[121] As Mathew Frye Jacobson notes, "Thus in this period of volatile racial meanings, peoples such as Celts, Hebrews, Italians, and Slavs were becoming less and less white in debates over who should be allowed to disembark on American shores, and yet were becoming whiter and whiter in debates over who should be granted the full rights of citizenship." Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 75.

[122] See Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. (New York: Verso, 1999).

groups such as the Irish, constructed a harsh divide between white and colored in the 1920s. Matthew Jacobson argues, "A complex system of races had given way to a strict scheme of black and white, which itself implied an absence of race on the white side and a presence of race on the black."[123] A monolithic blackness in contrast to a gradation of blackness emerged along with an opening of the boundaries of whiteness for European immigrants.

In Brazil, after the abolition of slavery, eugenicist policies were pursued in an attempt to better the Brazilian nation. Many of these policies were imported from abroad and later Brazilianized to fit the demographic realities and political needs. In the late nineteenth century, the link between science and race played a large role in ideas of progress. Yet, biological determinism and the environment influenced progress. A country such as Brazil could not enter into the modern world due to its mixed population in the tropics. Prior to abolition, Count Arthur de Gobineau, a leading proponent of biological determinism, published a short essay titled L'Emigratión au Brasil [Emigration to Brazil], based on his observations and experiences as a French diplomat in Rio de Janeiro from 1869 to 1870. He viewed the Brazilian population as degraded due to the great extent of miscegenation.[124] In this 1874 essay, Gobineau condemned racial miscegenation in Brazil and predicted the eradication of Brazilian society due to the degenerative effects of miscegenation. Gobineau described Brazilians as, "a completely

[123] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 110-111.
[124] See George Raeders, *O inimigo cordial do Brasil:O conde de Gobineau no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Paze Terra, 1988), 240-243. Raeders's book also contains excerpts of Gobineau's correspondence during his stay in Brazil.

mulatto population, polluted in the blood and the spirit, and frighteningly ugly."[125] He argued that the only possible solution to avoiding self-destruction would be to isolate Brazil most "damaging" racial elements and promote European immigration. With Brazil's growing nationalism in the wake of independence, this relegation incited fear among Brazilian white elites. By the mid-nineteenth century, the majority of Brazil's population was of African descent. Gobineau's writings also demonstrate the transnational dimensions of race-making. Gobineau's claims reaffirmed fears that the non-white majority would condemn the entire nation and prevent it from joining Europe and North America.

In response, the Brazilian intelligentsia focused on challenging Gobineau's prediction. Therefore, Brazilian racial formation and national identity was constructed very much in relation to the observations of transnational actors and in relation to Europe and North America. Brazilian intellectuals of the early twentieth century constructed a contradictory theory whereby they could argue for a hopeful national project based on the miscegenated Brazilian population, while simultaneously reinforcing racial hierarchies through concepts of racial difference.[126] Intellectuals and political leaders believed that through the encouragement of European immigration, Brazil could undergo a process of whitening and thereby, claim a place as a modern nation. For example, the Brazilian lawyer and historian, J. F. Oliveira Vianna wrote the introduction for the 1920 census and

[125] Arthur de Gobineau, quoted in Kim Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*: *Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 34.
[126] For more on the national project of Brazilian intellectuals, see Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, *O Espactáculo das Raças: Cientistas, Instituições e Questão Racial no Brasil, 1870-1930* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1993).

explicated his optimistic view of whitening and Brazil's racial future.[127] Although many Brazilian intellectuals from the elite celebrated miscegenation as a solution rather than a problem for the emerging Brazilian nation, the Brazilian elite shared many racist ideas with Gobineau in regards to white superiority. Scholars such as Oliveira Vianna accepted dominant scientific racism, but believed that whitening would occur from the inherent weakness of blacks and mulattoes, European immigration, and the sexual preferences of white men. In Vianna's *As Populações Meridionais do Brasil* (The Southern Populations of Brazil), published in 1920, he explicated many of his ideas about whitening. Thus, Vianna, like most Brazilian intellectuals at the time, accepted that the majority of the Brazilian population was of African descent. Like scientists and policymakers in the United States, Vianna and others believed in the physical and mental weaknesses of the mulatto population. Vianna proposed that only the mulattoes with European leaning traits would survive. Vianna believed that European immigration and high mortality rates for blacks would "Aryanise" the country, particularly as he observed in Southern Brazil. Vianna noted, "This admirable flow of immigration not only helps to raise quickly the coefficient of the pure Aryan group in our country but also by mixing and re-mixing with the mixed-blood (mestiço) population it helps, with equal speed, to raise the Aryan content of our blood."[128]

Like other Latin American countries and the rhetoric of *blanqueamiento* with European immigration as a key tool for the whitening project, Brazil participated in a

[127] Skidmore, *Black into White*, 200.
[128] Oliveira Vianna, quoted in Skidmore, *Black into White*, 201-202.

whitening ideology for modernizing the nation.[129] This process of whitening is known popularly as *branqueamento* in Brazil. The encouragement of whitening was part of a larger Latin American intellectual response to eugenicist thought. Despite the emphasis on whitening through European immigration, Japanese immigration increased dramatically in the mid 1920s to 1930s based on a reconfiguration of Japanese as superior to Afro-Brazilians and in the alignment of Japanese with whiteness from both the Japanese and Brazilians.[130] Middle Eastern and Jewish immigrants also challenged

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[129] Argentina had perhaps one of the most quintessential whitening projects under Domingo Sarmiento, political theorist, politician, and eventual President of Argentina (1868-1874). His seminal influential work, *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie* (1845) extolled the civilizing and modernizing project of whitening with European immigration as key to nation-building. The Argentine aggressively pushed European immigration in the late nineteenth-century. For more on Argentina, blanqueamiento, and the erasure of Afro-Argentines, see George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980). Other Latin American countries used European theories of eugenics to justify racial hierarchies and state-sponsored racial policies. See, Aline Helg, "Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930: Theory, Policies, and Popular Reaction" in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, ed. Richard Graham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 37-70.

[130] In the nineteenth century, immigration policy encouraged German, Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian workers for both eugenic projects and agricultural labor. Brazilian immigration laws in 1890 blocked the migration of Africans and Asians in order to pursue a whitening project. However, by the early twentieth century, Brazilian elites began to have concerns regarding the social activism, labor, and assimilation of these European immigrant groups, some elites believed that Japanese immigrants would be able to adapt to Brazil due to their hardworking and docile character. After the United States exclusion of Japanese immigrants in 1917, the Japanese government searched for other nations to send its agricultural workers. The Brazilian government did not subsidize Japanese immigration like it did with European immigration. Rather, the Japanese government invested in transportation expenses to Brazil. With a need for laborers on coffee plantations, Brazil sought workers to maintain this economic interest. With a reputation as hard-working and superior to Afro-Brazilians, Brazilian politicians characterized the Japanese as ideal migrants. Furthermore, Japanese intellectuals and politicians often labeled themselves as a white nation. This notion of whiteness resonated with the Brazilian elite's whitening project. While Japanese immigration dramatically increased from 1925 to 1935, there were numerous debates over Japanese immigration. Some elites hypothesized that Brazilian indigenous groups and Japanese immigrants had

notions of whiteness while maintaining the desired physical appearance of whiteness in Brazil.[131] Like the elites, eugenicists, and politicians of the United States, the Brazilian elite were concerned with the racial makeup of immigrant groups while at the same time expressing anxiety over African-descendants. Rather than merely an imitation of European eugenics, Latin American eugenics developed through an adaptation to political, cultural, and national dynamics. As Nancy Stepan argues, this use of eugenics would eventually morph into *mestiçagem* and *mestizaje*.[132] The blackness present in Brazil was regarded as an obstacle to Brazil's modernity, and thus, this element of blackness would be eventually purged through whitening. It is also of note that this process of whitening relies not just on immigration, but the reproductive capabilities of women to whiten the nation through white male partners. In contrast to the United States, Brazil's racial theorization relied on the idea of whiteness overcoming blackness whereas in the United States blackness overwhelms whiteness to form a "black" rather than "closer to white child" and hence antimiscegenation laws were necessary in the

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the same biological origins, and thus, this common biological stock would ensure Japanese assimilation into Brazil. While some elites endorsed the whiteness of the Japanese, other elites feared biological pollution from the Japanese and worried that Japan's military would eventually colonize Brazil. See Jeffrey Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 16-18, 61, 152-154, 161-162, 163-164.

[131] Middle Eastern and Jewish immigrants were often discussed in tandem with each other. Most Middle Eastern immigrants were Christians and thus, conformed to Brazil's understanding of itself as a Christian nation. Many of these immigrants concentrated in urban areas and were able to become quite economically successful. Much of the Brazilian elite approved of the white appearance of these immigrants while at the same time admonishing a lack of assimilation to Euro-Brazilian culture. Many debates surrounding the racial place of Jewish and Middle Eastern immigrants occurred from the 1920s to the 1940s. Ibid, 118-145.

[132] For more on the use of eugenics in Latin America, see Nancy Stepan, "The Hour of Eugenics": *Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Cornell University Press, 1991).

United States to maintain this white purity.

From Mulatto to Black: Establishing Racial Boundaries in the United States versus *Mestiçagem* as National Identity in Brazil

After the United States Civil War, the social hierarchies of race were in a period of transition. As race was no longer an indicator of bondage, the potential for racial mixing to occur and usurp white supremacy prompted strategies to keep blacks in a position of lower status. As Joel Williamson argues, "The simple existence of mulattoes after the war militated against the white man's sense of identity…the white sense of self depended in part upon maintaining that separateness."[133] The passage of multiple anti-miscegenation laws evidence these preocuppations.[134] As whiteness was in part founded on an opposition to blackness, the end of slavery thereby challenged a sense of identity and definitions of whiteness and freedom. Legal cases such as that of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 demonstrate this anxiety over racial mixing. While the case is often talked about in the context of the legalization of "separate but equal," Homer Plessy's mixed-race body was central to the case and to establishing racial boundaries. Plessy's ability to pass for white called for a demarcation of racial ambiguity. Yet, his refusal to pass for white prompted an understanding of the legal processes of racial organization and management to produce and maintain discrete racial groups. The case then reveals the anxiety that ambiguous mixed-race bodies signify for the nation-state and its upholding of white supremacy.

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[133] Williamson, *New People*, 95.

[134] See Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

The Plessy case cemented legal segregation as well as the idea of distinct races despite Plessy's racially ambiguous appearance. The Plessy decision demonstrated the arbitrariness of racial categories. Homer Plessy, an "octoroon" and light-skinned enough to go unnoticed, sat in a whites-only railroad car and announced to the conductor, "I have to tell you that according to Louisiana law, I am a colored man."[135] Plessy's announcement refutes the state's imposition of racial categories and segregation. Plessy wanted to contest racial segregation, but also the state's authority to designate individuals into racial categories without consideration of their preferences.[136] This challenge to the state's right to assign individuals to racial categories despite mixed-race ancestry or an individual's preference would later be contested again with the 2000 census. However, the U.S. Supreme Court's 1896 ruling against Plessy not only sustained segregation, but also authorized the one-drop rule. Plessy's appearance and challenge to the one-drop rule appeared to defy the visual evidence of race and racial exclusion. Yet, the 1890 census relied on the physical appearance of race and the common sense notion that race was knowable.

The dropping of the mulatto category in 1930 brought racial ideologies in line with the Plessy decision by upholding a black/white divide.[137] The Plessy decision and

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[135] Harvey Fireside, *Separate and Unequal: Homer Plessy and the Supreme Court Decision that Legalized Racism.* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2004), 1.

[136] Randall Kennedy, *Interracial Intimacies: Sex, Love, Marriage, and Adoption* (New York: Pantheon, 2003), 323-324

[137] However, racial mixture itself was not the sole criteria for citizenship and legal rights linked to whiteness. In 1930, the US Census added Mexican to the list of racial categories. Mexican Americans, who were often of racially mixed ancestry (European, indigenous, or African), found themselves in an ambiguous category between the "white" and "negro" races. For practical reasons related to citizenship status and often because it was consistent with their own self-identification, Mexican Americans in the United States

further Jim Crow legislation enforced the "one-drop" so as to make distinctions between mulattoes and blacks unnecessary.[138] While previously mulatto, octoroon, and quadroon were considered to be subcategories of black, the removal of the mulatto category on the census collapsed mixed-race ancestry distinctions into the larger all-encompassing category of black. Although the tragic mulatto theme continued in popular culture past the 1920 census, legally and politically mixed-race individuals of African descent could only be considered black.

In contrast to the deepening racial boundary-making of the United States, Brazil took a different path towards its racially mixed population. In the 1930s, the depiction of the mulatto population as a problem shifted to a celebration of the mulatto as representative of Brazil's physical and cultural mixture and the *mulata* became emblematic of *mestiçagem*. In contrast to the United States, Brazil developed a national identity based on racial mixing. The narratives of Gilberto Freyre have shaped much of Brazilian national identity and are still widely read today. In a radical departure from most of his predecessors such as the influential Oliviera Vianna, who promoted policies of scientific racism in Brazil in the 1920s, Gilberto Freyre attempted to discredit prevalent ideas of scientific racism proclaiming white superiority, the dangers of racial mixing and the degeneracy of mixed-race people in the 1930s. Freyre put forward the

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acted with the federal government of the United States and Mexico to have their whiteness, and the apparent privileges that come with having whiteness, recognized. For the 1940 census and subsequent censuses, enumerators were instructed to list Mexican Americans as white. The Mexican case demonstrates how actual origins and genealogy are not the sole criteria for racial categorization, but rather what these categorizations will accomplish for political, economic, and social ends. Nobles, *Shades of Citizenship*, 72-74.

[138] See Davis, *Who is Black?*

idea that racial mixing created a hybrid vigor suitable for the tropics and this new population would pave the way for a modernized prosperous future rather than previous assertions of a backwards condemned nation.

Gilberto Freyre is regarded as the one of the greatest scholars in Brazilian history and his ideas have been taught for generations in schools as part of a national representation and national narrative of Brazil. Therefore, racial coalitions, political movements, and contemporary scholarship, must engage with Freyre's work in order to challenge the prevailing ideas of race in Brazilian society. Freyre's narrative of the mixed-race Brazilian nation uses a discourse of exceptionalism to explain Brazilian national identity. From Freyre's narrative, racial mixing was the driving force behind race relations and racial democracy in Brazil. Freyre used the institutional racial segregation of the United States as a counterpoint to Brazil. It is notable that Freyre studied at Baylor University in Texas at the age of eighteen and then studied under Franz Boas (who attempted to discredit Social Darwinism) at Columbia University.[139] Gilberto Freyre's intellectual and educational formations point to processes of transnational race-making between the United States and Brazil. As Micol Seigel observes, the very concept of "racial democracy" was constructed in a transnational and comparative context, because Brazil was contrasted with the racial segregation of the United States. [140]

At the time, Freyre's valuing of the Afro-Brazilian could be seen as a radical progressive shift towards anti-racist rhetoric, but such a conception also helped create a myth of racial democracy that was based on deeply gendered and sexualized

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[139] Thomas Skidmore, "Raízes de Gilbero Freyre," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34, no. 1 (2002): 6.
[140] Seigel, "Beyond Compare," 76.

relationships. Freyre's espousal of the benefits of *mestiçagem,* or racial mixing, carried forth into national lore the idea that because of historical mixture, there were no racial difference and all Brazilians could claim African, European, and indigenous ancestry.[141] In *Casa grande e senzala* (1933), Freyre also laid out the basis for later ideas of racial democracy[142] where the sexual and cultural mixing and integration of African, Portuguese, and indigenous elements converged to form Brazilian national identity and a new hybrid tropical race.[143]

The memory of slavery represented in *Casa Grande e Senzala*, like that of the legends of Chica da Silva, relied on eroticizing narratives of gendered and sexualized race relations. The constellation of race, gender, and sexuality is also crucial when considering how the *mulata* became a symbol of Brazilian racial democracy. As Abdias do Nascimento observes, "the stereotype of sexual abandon is one of the most pernicious and pervasive in the literature, since the sexual appeal of the mulatto woman to the white man is held up as one of the 'proofs' of Brazilian racial democracy."[144] Freyre proposes that the type of structure in the *casa grande* (the plantation house) and s*enzala* (slave quarters) permitted miscegenation under the rural patriarchal family. Freyre proposes that

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[141] Denise Ferreira da Silva, "Facts of Blackness: Brazil Is Not (Quite) the United States. ... And Racial Politics in Brazil?" *Social Identities* 4 (1998): 201-234.
[142] It is unclear as to if Gilberto Freye actually ever coined the term. However, his theories of the Brazilian nation are considered fundamental to the idea of racial democracy in Brazil. See Antônio Sérgio Guimarães, *Classes, raças e democracia* (São Paulo: Editora 34; Fundação de Apoio à Universidade de São Paulo, 2002).
[143] Gilberto Freyre. *Casa Grande & Senzala.* 19th Portuguese-Language Ed. (Rio de Janeiro: José Olimpo, 1978); *The Masters and The Slaves* [Casa Grande e senzala]: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization. [1933] (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986).
[144]Abdias do Nascimento, *Brazil, Mixture, or Massacre?" Essays in the Genocide of a Black People*, 2nd edition (Dover MA: Majority Press, 1989), 124.

the relative shortage of white women and the natural attraction of Portuguese men for *mulata* and black women were essential to processes of Brazilian colonization and the Brazilian nation. For Freyre, the *casa grande's* family structures shaped Brazilian society from the colonial period well into the nineteenth century. With pictorial and sensual detail, Freyre writes about the colonial plantation and the sexual desire resulting in miscegenation from the perspective of a white male. It is important to note that the emphasis on Freyre's constructions of inter-racial sexual unions are predominantly of white male masters with black and *mulata* slave women. This erotic narrative produces the racial figure of the *mulata,* who has been celebrated as the unifying symbol of *brasilidade.*[145]

Freyre's vision of slavery and *mestiçagem* is dependent on black female slaves fulfilling white male desire either through a black maternal figure or sexual object. As Saidiya Hartman notes, "The discourse of seduction obfuscates the primacy and extremity of violence in master slave relations ... as the enslaved is legally unable to give consent or offer resistance, she is presumed to be always willing."[146] Freyre describes black women as those "who rocked us to sleep. Who suckled us. Who fed us... and…the mulatta girl… who initiated us into physical love and, to the creaking of a canvas cot, gave us our first complete sensation of being a man."[147] For Freyre, the body of the *mulata* initiates white men into the nation. The white male is positioned as innocent and

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[145] By *brasilidade,* I am referring to the notion of an essence of Brazilianness that defines Brazilian national character.
[146] Hartman, "Seduction and the Ruses of Power," 538.
[147] Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and The Slaves*,[*Casa Grande e senzala]: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization.* [1933] (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 279.

inexperienced, but is seduced by the *mulata* and thereby, gains the corporal knowledge of *brasilidade*. This framework functions in part because inter-racial sexual relations are constructed as a love allegory without noting colonial and sexual violence and the exalted sexuality of the *mulata* is used to justify sexual exploitation.[148]

Freyre's ideas have been highly influential in public discourses of race in Brazil and have shaped governmental policies since the 1930s. After the publication of *Casa Grande e Senzala*, Freyre's work has been published not only in academic presses, but also in popular Brazilian magazines such as *Playboy*, in which he explains the nation's obsession with buttocks as part of the legacies of colonial interactions with women of African descent that ended in the miscegenated production of aesthetically pleasing buttocks.[149] Getúlio Vargas, Brazil's President from 1930 to 1945 and between 1950 and 1954, quickly adopted Freyre's national narrative of *mesticagem.* Freyre's publication of *Casa Grande* in 1933 occurred between the political strands of eugenics and nationalism, both of which were significant ideologies during World War II. Getúlio Vargas constructed the *Estado Novo* with the goal of industrialization and modernization projects.[150] Vargas, wishing to forge a modern nation, also relied on racialized concepts for the national project. As an alternative to the ideas of European superiority and purity, Vargas found *mestiçagem* as useful to national unity and Brazilian nationalism. Furthermore, the use of *mestiçagem* and racial democracy in Brazil served as a source of national pride and identity in contrast to the Jim Crow segregation and racial binaries of

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[148] Sonia Maria Giacomini. *Mulher e escrava: uma introdução histórica ao estudo de mulher negra no Brasil*;. (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1988),66.
[149] Gilberto, Freyre, "Bunda: Paixão Nacional." *Playboy,* no. 113. December 1984.
[150] John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire* (New York: Norton, 2001), 229-230, 324-325.

the United States.

Vargas's regime had explicit nationalist ambitions and used the concepts of *mestiçagem* and racial democracy to achieve these goals. While the previous Brazilian government had encouraged immigration in the late nineteenth century, Vargas's regime decreased immigration quotas and openly critiqued foreign influences in Brazil.[151] In order to attain national unity, Vargas's authoritarian government opposed any organizations or movements that could potentially jeopardize the nationalist project.[152] Afro-Brazilian organizations or political parties such as the radical Frente Negra Brasileira (Black Brazilian Front), while at first backing Vargas, were outlawed in 1937 in order to remove possible sources of discord and opposition to Vargas's policies.[153] Asserting blackness or challenging racial inequalities was considered to be antipatriotic and a threat to the state. Attempts to create racial solidarity among Afro-Brazilians were quickly thwarted by Vargas's dictatorship.

However, an espousal of *branqueamento* presented a challenge to Vargas's populist nationalist project. Unlike his predecessors, Vargas used Afro-Brazilian culture

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[151] Andrews, *Black and White in São Paulo*, 147.
[152] Influenced by fascism, Getúlio Vargas justified the *Estado Novo* regime in part as a response to the fears of immigration and foreign influence overtaking Brazil. Jews, Arabs, and Japanese became targeted groups that were deemed unassimilable. By 1938, *brasilidade* campaigns aimed at Japanese, German, Jewish, and Arab immigrants, sought to eradicate immigrant culture in favor of a national culture. Decrees were instituted in the late 1930s and 1940s to eradicate foreign influences. All school instruction had to be in Portuguese with native-born Brazilians. Speaking foreign languages in public and international travel for Brazilian children of foreign residents were forbidden. Foreign-language newspapers were closed. Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil*, 165-167.
[153] Kim Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, 127-130; Michael Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo*, *Brazil, 1945-1988* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994), 105.

as a positive quality in Brazil rather than as an undesirable threat. Vargas appropriated Afro-Brazilian culture as part of a populist national project. Rather than repress Afro-Brazilian cultural expression, Vargas sought to validate these cultural forms as part of a uniquely Brazilian national identity. Under the Vargas government, certain cultural elements influenced by Afro-Brazilians, such as samba, became national symbols representative of a racially mixed Brazilian identity.[154] However, even with the valorization and co-optation of Afro-Brazilian culture, a racist patriarchal structure still prevailed. Vargas's appropriation did not convert into better living conditions for Afro-Brazilians. Unlike governmental leaders that sought European immigration as a solution to Brazil's race problem, Vargas used Freyre's ideas of an inclusive Brazilian narrative of national identity to validate the potential of Brazil as an emerging nation-state and world power.[155]

Post-Slavery and Celebration and Fear of Mixed-Race Bodies in Popular Culture

While the mulatta was often portrayed in abolitionist literature as an object of sympathy in the antebellum United States, she was also a manifestation of the fear of racial mixing. Particularly in the post-Emancipation period, when the connection between status and race became more tenuous, the image of the U.S. mulatta woman needed to be presented as more negative, devious, and sexual in opposition to white women. The presence of the mulatta was blamed on the hypersexuality of black women and the mulatta's role as a seductress. As Evelyn Hammonds notes, "Racial difference was linked

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[154] See Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2004), 60-76.
[155] Howard Winant, *The World is a Ghetto: Race and Democracy since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 226.

to sexual difference in order to maintain white male supremacy."[156] As a cinematic presence, the mulatta also first appeared with the first film in D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) as Lydia (played by white actress Mary Alden), a manipulative, sexually aggressive, and potentially dangerous woman. Lydia is consumed by sexual desire and a drive for power and often appears hysterical and mentally unstable. In contrast to the ideal white female characters in the film, Lydia appears as grotesque, perverse, and a representation of the abjectness of blackness in the film.[157]

The idea of racial contamination is evidenced in *Birth of a Nation* when the fiancée of the mulatto figure commits suicide rather than polluting and tainting the whiteness of his family. The fear of miscegenation manifests itself in the very existence of the mulatta as her presence has the power to subvert racial binaries. As the product of sexual taboo, the mulatta is represented as hypersexual. This sexualization emerges from the historical context of race-based chattel slavery. If death or deportation were not options as in *The Octoroons* or *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the mulatto of popular culture could be portrayed as sexually uninhibited, and thus unsuitable as a proper marriage partner. This image of the Jezebel was further intensified by the image of the mulatta. The hidden blackness of the mulatta makes her both sexually available and attractive.[158]

In Brazil, the figure of the *mulata* has also had continued resonance in popular

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[156] Evelyn M. Hammonds, "Toward a Genealogy of Black Female Sexuality: The Problematic of Silence" in *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, ed. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (New York: Routledge, 1997), 173.
[157] Tom Gunning, "A Little Light on a Dark Subject," *Critical Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (2003): 58–59.
[158] Lisa Anderson, *Mammies No More: The Changing Image of Black Women on Stage and Screen*. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 1997), 89.

culture as a way of grappling with national identity and race. Like the United States, after the abolition of slavery, the question of the national racial future was hotly debated. After the abolition of slavery, the mulatto population did not instantly disappear and, therefore, the mixed Afro-Brazilian population was presented in a negative tone in order to preserve racial hierarchies. For example, In *O cortiço* (1890)*,* Aluísio Azevedo represents the *mulata* character Rita Baiana as a corrupting influence on white immigrants. The *mulata*'s sexuality is used as a way of shifting attention away from colonial legacies of racial and gender domination and directing blame on black and mixed women themselves. Rita Baiana's sexuality is represented as animalistic, unrestrained, and sinful in contrast to the chaste sexuality of white women. Meanwhile, white men are portrayed as victim to the *mulata*'s seduction and hypersexuality. Jerônimo, a white Portuguese man, becomes Brazilianized due to his sexual relationship with Rita, but the mulata's seduction is also his downfall. As an allegory of the nation, the *mulata* figure and racial mixture is the demise of Brazil.

In the United States, the obsession with racial boundary making and "knowing" race continued. The public spectacle of the sensationalized 1925 *Rhinelander v. Rhinelander* case in demonstrates the obsession with racial boundary making and interracial sexual contact. The annulment suit on behalf of Leonard Rhinelander, a white man from a wealthy family, was based on the assumption that Alice Rhinelander, a working-class mixed-race woman had fraudulently hidden her blackness. Although Alice Rhinelander won the case even while admitting her blackness, the case relied on the idea that Leonard Rhinelander must have known she was black all along due to Alice's sexuality. The defense for Alice attempted to show that Alice had sexual relations with

Leonard prior to marriage. This defense relied on the racialization of sexuality so that premarital sex was in line with assumptions of black promiscuity and hypersexuality.[159] Through a disrobing of Alice with her naked body on display, the idea that race was evident on her body further served as proof that Leonard must have known about her racial mixture. Although New York did not have antimiscegenation laws, the idea of respectable women entering into society relied on a purity of whiteness and the Rhinelander case exemplified these sexualized and gendered hierarchies of race. Therefore, the mulatta presented a danger because of her potential ability to pass into white society, and thus produce visually white children, who are unknowingly black. The obsession with discerning and regulating race is evidenced by legislation such as Virginia's 1924 Racial Integrity Act. The Racial Integrity Act determines as white anyone who does not have any other blood besides Caucasian blood and therefore, establishes subsequent polarization of racial categories between white and colored.[160] The 1924 Act forbid a white person from marrying a nonwhite person. This fear of miscegenation coincided with scientific racism and xenophobia. In the same year, Congress passed the Immigration Act, a set of anti-immigration laws restricting immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe and Asia (with the exception of the Philippines) with the rationalization that these groups were inferior and might degrade the

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[159] Angela Onwuachi-Willig, "A Beautiful Lie: Exploring *Rhinelander v. Rhinelander* as a Formative Lesson on Race, Identity, Marriage and Family," *California Law Review* 95 (2007): 7-27.

[160] It is worth mentioning that although the act purported to preserve the integrity of all races, it only delimited whiteness and had no further regulation for intermarriage between African Americans, Native Americans, or Asian Americans. Therefore, the idea of purity was only referred to for establishing white privilege in the United States. See Lisa Lindquist Dorr, "Arm in arm: Gender, Eugenics, and Virginia's Racial Integrity Acts of the 1920s," J*ournal of Women's History* 11 (1999): 143.

American population.[161] Like Brazil, much of U.S. nationhood was based on the idea of a national racial stock. The linkage between reproduction and the desire for whiteness can be seen through these immigration laws and ideas of miscegenation. The extent to which U.S. policies have attempted to prevent miscegenation up until the seminal 1967 *Loving v. Virginia* case is a demonstration of the fear of the corruption of racial purity in the United States.

The characterization of the mulatta in U.S. popular culture also depends on the purposes of her representation. The use of the mulatta for abolitionist sympathies, as a warning against miscegenation, and as a sign of racial progress all have quite different intentions. During Post-Reconstruction, Frances Harper's *Iola Leroy* (1892) and Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces* (1899) used mulatta heroines as modes of African-American self-representation. Contesting white stereotypes of blackness, these novels evince an honorable black womanhood in response to the exclusion of black woman from true womanhood.[162] In the 1920s, Oscar Micheaux, a black director, presented his films an alternative to the racist imagery of films like *Birth of a Nation* through the use of black casts and explored issues of passing and color tensions within African-American communities. Hazel Carby theorizes the mulatta character as "a vehicle for an exploration of the relationship between the races and, at the same time, an expression of the relationship between the races."[163] Many mixed-race Harlem Renaissance and New Negro writers and leaders, such as Langston Hughes, W.E.B Du Bois, Alain Locke, and

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[161] Davis, *Who is Black?*, 13.
[162]See Claudia Tate, *Allegories of Political Desire: The Black Heroine's Text at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992)
[163] Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 89.

James Weldon Johnson, acknowledged their racial mixture, but identified as black rather than mulatto. A black identity rather than a separate mixed-race identity helped solidify black racial unity and intellectual thought. However, many African-American artists used the mixed-race female character for a critique of racism and a way to refute notions of black inferiority. Nella Larsen, the mixed-race Harlem Renaissance author of *Quicksand* (1928) and *Passing* (1929), depicted mulatta characters gaining upward mobility and possibly escaping the stigmas of blackness through racial passing. In particular, Nella Larsen's works challenge not only the construction of race through passing and white notions of black female sexuality, but also speak to notions of acceptable sexuality and femininity espoused by the black bourgeoisie. Valerie Smith asserts that these narratives "are productive sites for considering how the intersectionality of race, class, and gender ideologies are constituted and denied; not only do these bodies function as markers of racial and sexual transgression, but they signal as well the inescapable class implications of crossing these boundaries."[164]

Hollywood also showed its obsession with mixed-race bodies in the Motion Picture Producers and Distributers of America's "Don'ts and Be Carefuls" guide and the official Production Code of 1934. These codes prohibited the showing of sexual relationships between whites and blacks and thereby, also demonstrated this fear of racial mixing. With this code in place, Hollywood expunged interracial sexual relationships from the imagined vision of the nation and reinforced the established antimiscegenation

[164] Valerie Smith,"Reading the Intersection of Race and Gender in Narratives of Passing," *Diacritic*s, 24, no.2 (1994): 57.

laws.[165] These codes also instructed audiences on how to interpret and decipher race. In the 1933 version of *Imitation of Life*, the light-skinned black actress Fredi Washington's portrayal of Peola prompted concerns regarding miscegenation as Peola is thought of to have distant white ancestry and thus be the product of miscegenation.[166] In the context of Hollywood's production codes, Washington's ability to pass for white was problematic. However, the film was permitted due to the lack of actual racial sexual contact in the film and Peola's later acceptance of her position as a black woman. Although Washington had the ability to pass for white, she refused to do so and this refusal only increased her popularity with African-Americans.[167] *Imitation of Life* explicitly deals with themes of passing. Peola, refusing to accept her position or be satisfied with the upward mobility such as her placement in a colored teachers college, directs her anger at her suffering black mother, Delilah. Despite the mulatta's threat of questioning racial boundaries, ultimately the containment of blackness through the mulatta figure is achieved through punishment or tragedy.

In contrast to the United States, Brazilian popular culture, especially music, celebrated racial mixture. 1920s and 1930s modernist writers such as Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade exalted cultural and racial hybridity as the basis for national

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[165] For a discussion of how early Hollywood did occasionally represent relationships across the color line and evade the racial censorship of the Hays Code (193-1968), see Susan Courtney, *Hollywood Fantasies of Miscegenation: Spectacular Narratives of Gender and Race* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).
[166] Alicia I. Rodriguez-Estrada, "From Peola to Carmen: Fredi Washington, Dorothy Dandridge, and Hollywood's Portrayal of the Tragic Mulatto," in *African American Women Confront the West: 1600-2000*, ed. Quintard Taylor, Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 236.
[167] Anna Everett, *Returning the Gaze: A Genealogy of Black Film Criticism, 1909-1949* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 221-223.

identity. Starting in the 1930s, the *mulata* figure and samba became signifiers of Brazilian national identity.[168] The role of the *mulata* in popular music and literature is primarily highlighted through an emphasis on sexuality and sensuality. This exaltation of the *mulata* is especially prevalent in samba songs from the 1930s and has continued through the use of the Carnival *mulata* today. The connection between samba, carnival and urban lower-class was already well-established by the 1930s when Vargas adopted samba as part of the official national culture. As Vargas's authoritarian government attempted to use a populist agenda as a way of connecting to the masses, samba became a tool for nationalization. The lyrics of some 1930s samba songs demonstrate the ambivalent attitude towards the *mulata* figure, but are unified in the expression of the *mulata*'s sexual availability. The entrance of white musicians and performers into the samba scene and the use of these performers as representing *brasilidade* in a cultural expression that had previously been most associated with Afro-Brazilian are also notable. Ary Barroso and Noel Rosa are key examples of this relationship of white male musicians with Afro-Brazilian musicians. Works such as Ary Barroso's "É Luxo Só" (Pure Luxury) from the 1930s celebrate the sensuality and movement of the mulata while expressing sexual desire. Other songs such as the 1932 song "Teu Cabelo Não Nega" (Your Hair Gives You Away) demonstrate the dual emotions of repulsion and desire. The lyrics present the *mulata* figure as the epitome of Brazil, but also emphasize her hair as a trait that gives her away. In other words, the lyrics point to her hair as a marker of racial difference and a vestige of her African descent. However, the singer also comments

[168] Natasha Pravaz, "Imagining Brazil: Seduction, Samba, and the Mulata's Body," *Canadian Women Studies: National Identity and Gender Politics*, 20, no.2 (2000): 48–55.

that because her skin color doesn't rub off, he can love her. Yet, sexual intercourse is acceptable as it would not contaminate whiteness, but would rather end in a process of whitening.[169] Unlike the United States, association with women of African descent does not result in an association with blackness as the dominant force but whiteness overtaking blackness.

Like the U.S. mulatta, the use of the Brazilian *mulata* in popular culture is also based on the meaning attached to the *mulata* in different racialized contexts. Afro-Brazilian musicians, such as Ataulfo Alves, often used the *mulata* figure as a way to enter into a masculinist interracial brotherhood with white men.[170] United by their desire for the *mulata* and her sexual availability, Afro-Brazilian and white Brazilian men held common affinities for the *mulata* as a source of sexual pleasure. The *mulata* as a national symbol is simultaneously a sexual symbol.

World War II and Civil Rights in the United States

The Great Migration of African-Americans to the North after World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II fundamentally impacted the political, cultural, and social consciousness of African-Americans. Facing racial discrimination, such as racial housing covenants in the North, while Jim Crow reigned in the South, African-Americans continued to live in a climate of racial fear and exclusion. The Great Depression only further caused distress in an already marginalized community. World War II was a watershed event in racial exclusion as the civil rights movement challenged racial discrimination and stratification. During World War II, African-Americans challenged

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[169] Kia Caldwell, *Negras in Brazil: Re-envisioning Black Women, Citizenship, and the Politics of Identity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 82-90.
[170] Pravaz, "Imagining Brazil," 50.

the American metanarrative of freedom and democracy by emphasizing the contradiction of fighting a war for freedom while facing segregation and racial discrimination at home. Ronald Takaki argues that World War II "became for [African Americans and people of color] what black intellectual leader W.E.B. Du Bois called the 'War for Racial Equality."[171] With German POWs being served in luncheonettes and other commercial establishments in which blacks were excluded, the resentment and awareness of African-American second-class citizenship grew. Black organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the black press encouraged the continuance of civil rights demands and black protest while supporting the war. For example, civil rights activist A. Philip Randolph proposed a March on Washington in 1941 for better job opportunities, fair treatment, and freedom. Randolph called upon African-Americans to direct their protests at the federal government for the demise of legal segregation and a broader vision of racial and economic equality.[172] The Pittsburgh Courier and other black press outlets repeatedly used the rhetoric of "Double Victory" for victory over fascism abroad and over racism at home.[173]

Anticolonial movements around the globe during after World War II galvanized African-American solidarity with other people of color and influenced the struggle for freedom at home. Walter White, the secretary of the NAACP, commented in 1945 that "World War II has given to the Negro a sense of kinship with other colored—and also

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[171] Ronald Takaki, *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2000), 7.
[172] Eric Arneren, "A. Philip Randolph: Labor and the New Black Politics" in *The Human Tradition in the Civil Rights Movement. The Human Tradition in America,* ed. Susan Glisson (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 79-95.
[173] Takaki, *Double Victory,* 33-43.

oppressed—peoples of the world."[174] Returning to the U.S., African-American veterans sought to exercise the freedom and civil rights for which they fought abroad. The heightened political assertiveness of African-Americans and other groups of color laid the foundation for a mass civil rights movement. Through lawsuits and public demonstrations, activists demanded the dismantling of Jim Crow segregation.

The upholding of white supremacy, while maintaining an anticommunist stance, presented a political problem for the U.S. federal government. Foreign press outlets frequently reported on U.S. racism including coverage of racial violence, such as lynchings to the racialized disgraces experienced by foreign diplomats from Africa, Latin America, and Asia. With the United States proclaiming the superiority of democracy and capitalism while attempting to gain the favor of newly independent nations across the world, U.S. racism became an international liability during the Cold War. Cold War liberals supported civil rights as a national security issue. In 1948, President Harry Truman ordered the desegregation of the U.S. armed forces and in the late 1940s, the federal government began to file briefs supporting lawsuits against school segregation.[175] During the 1950s, the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) attempted to project images of domestic racial harmony to the rest of the world with a narrative of "a particular story about race and American democracy: a story of progress, a story of the triumph of good

[174] Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 7.
[175] On the linkage between race, civil rights, and the Cold War, see Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009) and Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000)

over evil, a story of U.S. moral superiority."[176] The State Department recruited African-American jazz musicians, such as Dizzy Gillespie and Louis Armstrong, to tour the world as cultural ambassadors.[177] While celebrating African-American cultural contributions for foreign audiences abroad, the containment of racism at home became a paramount issue.

The white fear of miscegenation continued to loom over civil rights gains. In 1954, in its historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the Supreme Court overturned the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision and declared that separate was inherently unequal. However, implementation of the opinion was challenged with protests over school desegregation indicating an upholding of white supremacy and continued racial inequality. In the wake of the Brown decision, segregationists sexualized school desegregation with the fearful prediction that mixed schools would lead to interracial sex and racial corruption. Capitalizing on the myth of black men lusting after vulnerable white women and the rhetoric of antimiscegenation, campaigns protesting desegregation used the idea of white purity and white female victimization as a rationale for violent opposition to black civil rights.[178] In 1957, President Eisenhower failed to convince the Arkansas governor to follow through with desegregation at Little Rock's Central High School and federal troops were brought in to accompany the nine African-American children to school amongst white protesters. The photographic and television images of the Little Rock crisis appeared across the United States and the world.[179] Brazilian

[176] Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 13.
[177] Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
[178] James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 86-117.
[179] Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 115-136.

politicians called out the hypocrisy of American democracy as the ideal for the rest of the world as the U.S. maintained racial discrimination.[180]

The media images of Emmett Till's murder also laid bare the continuing racial strife in the United States. In 1955, Emmett Till, a fourteen-year old boy from Chicago visiting his family in Mississippi, was viciously beaten and lynched for whistling at a white woman. Till's murder illustrated the justifications used for violence again black males. With the myth of the black rapist seeking to violate white women, white men created a sense of honor by protecting white women's purity. Till's murder shows the intersection of racial and gender oppression and white male patriarchal privilege to discipline both white female sexuality and black male sexuality. Till's mother's choice to show her son's mutilated body with an open casket and the subsequent media images helped visualize racial violence and incited outrage.

In the 1960s, women's right advocacy groups drew parallels between their gender status and marginalized groups. Feminist activists associated women's rights with that of the civil rights movement and worked to be included in anti-discrimination legislation such as Title VII under the Civil Rights Act and affirmative action for federal contracting.[181] By the early 1970s, black feminist leaders Shirley Chisholm and Eleanor Holmes Norton attempted to mobilize civil rights, women's and labor movements to improve domestic service conditions. In the 1970s and 1980s, "women of color of feminism" was formed as a response to the limitations within both white-middle class

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[180] Ibid, 125.
[181] For an analysis of convergences, alliances, and co-optations, see John Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

feminism and heteropatriarchal black nationalist movements.[182]

With the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, and the Los Angeles Watts riots in 1965 the civil rights project of integration appeared to splinter. Despite significant civil rights gains such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act,[183] the large-scale problems of "black urbanity" including "residential segregation, chronic black underemployment, and scathing ghetto resentment"[184] were paramount. The emergence of the Black Panther Party in 1966 transitioned a civil rights project of integration and the removal of obstacles to equal participation in civil society to a black power project, emphasizing black self-sufficiency. The Black Panther Party believed that "the United States was not a nation into which black people could successfully integrate, but an empire they needed to oppose."[185] This political and economic empowerment functioned alongside the celebration of blackness. The slogans, "Black is Beautiful" and the aesthetic adoption of Afro hairstyles worked as an oppositional alternative to white beauty standards. While women such as Angela Davis and Katherine Cleaver became popular symbols of black nationalism and resistance, the black nationalist movements often emphasized a recouping of black masculinity at the expense of black women. Black nationalism as a response to the nonviolent civil

[182] See The Combahee River Collective, a coalition The Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement," in *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave,* ed. Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith (New York: The Feminist Press at The City University of New York, 1982), 13-22.
[183] Further dismantling Jim Crow, the 1964 Civil Rights Act banned discrimination in public accommodations, services, and labor markets. The Voting Rights Act in 1965 allowed the federal government to supervise elections in the South and areas where blacks were underrepresented.
[184] Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 5.
[185] Ibid, 197.

disobedience integrationist strategies of the civil rights movement showcased the political, cultural, and social divergences within the black community.

Amidst these civil rights gains and growing disillusionment with civil rights integration, the 1967 *Loving v. Virginia* case struck down the last of the Jim Crow laws. The *Loving v. Virginia* case centers on the marriage of Mildred Jeter, a black woman and Richard Loving, a white man in 1958 in the District of Columbia. Upon return to their residence in Virginia, the Lovings were arrested and prosecuted for a violation of Virginia's anti-miscegenation law. After pleading guilty, the Lovings were sentenced to one year in jail or a conditional suspension if they agreed to leave Virginia for twenty-five years. After moving, the couple decided to challenge the constitutionality of Virginia's law in 1963. In 1967, The U.S. Supreme Court decided that the antimiscegenation laws violated both the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment. The *Loving* case overturned Virginia's 1924 Racial Integrity Act, prohibiting interracial marriage between a white person and a nonwhite person. Chief Justice Earl Warren's decision argued, "The fact that Virginia prohibits only interracial marriages involving white persons demonstrates that the racial classifications must stand on their own justification, as measures determined to maintain White Supremacy. We have consistently denied the constitutionality of measures which restrict the rights of citizens on account of race."[186] The *Loving* case decision forbids governmental interference in the choice of a marriage partner from a different race. Siobhan Somerville argues, "By establishing a fundamental right to marriage regardless

[186] Chief Justice Warren, *Loving v. Virginia,* 388 U.S. 1 (1967), http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0388_0001_ZO.html

of race, the federal state in effect shored up the privileges of heterosexuality through a logic that was on the surface antiracist and anti-white supremacist."[187] This link between race and sexuality uses a color-blind discourse to further legitimate heterosexual families, which were questioned during the late 1960s.[188] The *Loving* case then became a site for the legal legitimacy of interracial marriage and multiracial families. The subsequent "biracial baby boom" following *Loving v. Virginia* in a U.S. post-civil rights era would later test the boundaries of racial categories and national identity.

U.S. Popular Culture During World War II and the Civil Rights Movement

After World War II, many films used mixed-race characters to highlight issues of racial integration. During the war, the U.S. government and the NAACP encouraged Hollywood filmmakers to produce films that would assuage racial and ethnic tensions and garner African-American support for the war.[189] Hollywood "message films" experimented with a vision of tolerance and relatively more progressive race relations. Films such as *Home of the Brave* (1949) highlighted the contributions of black soldiers.[190] Following World War II, the prevalence of "message films" or "social problem films" continued.[191]

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[187] Siobhan Somerville, "Queer Loving," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 11 (2005): 357.
[188] Ibid.
[189] 1943 war films such as *Bataan*, *Crash Drive*, *Sahara*, and *Lifeboat* all included small roles featuring black soldiers.Thomas Cripps, *Making Movies Black: The Hollywood Message Movie from World War II to the Civil Rights Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 35-80.
[190] Ibid, 215-249.
[191] Donald Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mulattos, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*, 2d ed. (New York: Continuum, 1991), 143-58.

In a contrast to the tragic death of mulatto characters, *Pinky* (1949) has a happy ending on the condition that the light-skinned character, Pinky accepts her place as African-American. *Pinky*, like the film, *Lost Boundaries* (1949) grapples with issues of passing. Gayle Wald argues that these films prodded “their audiences to see 'crossing the line' not as a mere flight from black identity, but as a way of circumventing the limitations imposed upon African Americans' social, economic, and geographical mobility.”[192] *Pinky* used a white actress (Jeanette Crain) to represent a light-skinned black character and an interracial romance between Pinky and a white man occurs off-screen. Pinky passes as white while studying nursing in the North. However, concerned that her true racial identity will be discovered, Pinky returns to Mississippi, where she helps her grandmother take care of Miss Em, a white employer. Pinky must choose if she wants to remain in the South or marry her white fiancée, who wishes her to continue passing in the North. Pinky responds, “I'm a Negro. I can't pretend to be anything else. I don't want to be anything else.” Upon her death, Miss Em leaves her estate to Pinky. The flaw preventing Pinky from full assimilation into white civil society is her inherent blackness as “the ineffaceable curse of Cain.”[193] However, Pinky uses her money from Miss Em’s estate to open a hospital for black children. Like *Lost Boundaries*, featuring a black doctor passing for white and his middle class family, Pinky displays bourgeois respectability and values that separate her and place her as an exceptional black. Furthermore, sympathetic white characters, notably Miss Em, help Pinky to reach her

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[192] Gayle Wald, *Crossing the Line: Racial Passing in Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000), 90.
[193] Elspeth Kydd. “The Ineffaceable Curse of Cain: Racial Markings and Embodiment in Pinky”. *Camera Obscura* 15 no.1 (2000): 94.

potential as a role model for African-Americans. While Pinky grappled with racial segregation, ultimately black female respectability depended on knowing and respecting one's racialized social position. The film presented a limited vision of democratic inclusion and citizenship by reinforcing racial boundaries and evading the possibilities of mixed-race identity and interracial intimacies.

The 1959 version of *Imitation of Life* used the ostensibly white Susan Kohner, who was actually Mexican and Jewish, in an ironic demonstration of brown passing for white passing for brown. In the film, the light-skinned daughter, Sarah Jane, consistently rejects her blackness and directs her anger at her mother. In the film, Sarah Jane's desire to assimilate and participate in a society where whiteness is privileged consumes her actions and relationships. Like other narratives of the tragic mulatta, Sarah Jane is excluded from entering the white world on account of her black blood. However, punishment is still meted out for any attempt to cross racial and sexual boundaries. For example, when Sarah Jane is caught trying to pass by her white boyfriend, she becomes the object of aggression and abuse. The discovery of her blackness marks the loss of her privileges as a white woman and she becomes subject to violence directed against her body. The trauma of race relies on the body of the black mother and, thereby, directly descends from colonial matrilineal slave status. Sarah Jane's racially ambiguous body is often presented without familial ties or without the presence of the father. The presence of the black mother and the light-skinned mulatto daughter evokes the haunting of miscegenation, sexual coercion, and concubinage.

When Sarah Jane runs away from home to become a nightclub dancer, she chooses to pass as white. However, the use of sexuality as a commodity and the

hypersexual connotations of her profession play into the tropes of the sexually excessive mulatta. At the end of the film, her mother has died of a broken heart. Sarah Jane returns home in time for the funeral and blames herself for her mother's death. The punishment for the tragic mulatta is not her own death, but the sacrificial death of her black mother. Like the 1934 *Imitation of Life* and the 1949 *Pinky,* the film manipulates audiences to critique the light-skinned daughters rejection of their dark-skinned mothers. Sarah Jane and other literary mulattas fall into a revised category of the tragic mulatta because of their misguided belief that they could fully participate in white civil society. Therefore, the movie as a "social problem" film offers a critique of racial segregation through the eyes of Sarah Jane, while simultaneously containing blackness.

In 1968, a year after the *Loving v. Virginia* decision, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, debuted in movie theaters. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* refuted the taboo of interracial marriage by exposing liberal white American prejudices. However, the black doctor, John Prentice (played by Sidney Poitier) is exceptional in terms of his education and professional opportunities. He is about to take a job with the World Health Organization in Geneva. Prior to his leaving with Johanna, his white fiancée, John gives her parents one night to give their blessing. Without their blessing, John promises that he will call the wedding off. This arrangement is unbeknownst to Johanna. With John's education, charm, and career, the only objection would be to his race. However, the film still reinforces white patriarchal authority by having Johanna's white father have the final say in the arrangement. Like the *Loving v. Virginia* case, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* challenged legal, cultural, and social bans on racial mixing, but maintained gender and sexual conventions in order to do so. While the subject of mixed-race children comes up

in the film as an area of concern and as a potential problem, the couple's move to Europe helps allay fears of an actual mixed-race population on U.S. soil.

The civil rights movement and the emergence of the Black Power movement brought along a questioning of racial representations and a critique of light-skinned characters. As Claudia Tate observes, the Blacks Arts movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s did not question "whether, for example, the preponderance of light-skinned characters in the late-nineteenth century domestic novels signaled a meaning other than racial ambivalence and/or intraracial privilege of light skin color."[194] The opening of space for new representations eventually led to 1970s blaxploitation films as well as black independent films in the 1980s and 1990s. 1970s blaxploitation films exhibited a hyper awareness of black pride and authenticity. Such films often focused on black men. In the wake of 1970s feminism and Black Power, Pam Grier and her black superwoman roles in films such as *Coffy* (1973) and *Foxy Brown* (1974) also offered an image of a black woman in charge. However, her roles were highly sexualized resulting in a containment of black women. The tragic mulatta theme persisted in films such as *Sparkle* (1976), which featured mixed-race actress Lonette McKee as the beautiful and promiscuous Sister, who defies familial mores, descends into drugs, and eventually dies. The ideological function of mass popular culture continued to work within a management and containment of black women.

Maintenance of the Hegemony of *Mestiçagem* in Brazil

While Brazil joined the Allied Forces in World War II, the predominance of white superiority in dominant Brazilian racial thought did not waiver. Brazil framed

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[194] Claudia Tate, *Domestic Allegories of Political Desire*, 80.

mestiçagem as an egalitarian solution to racial problems.[195] In terms of actual racial demographics, Brazil did not collect data on color between 1900 and 1930, but the 1940 census used the categories of *branco*, *preto*, *pardo*, and *amarelo* (for recent Japanese immigrants). From the census data, the *pardo* category decreased from 41.4 to 21.2 percent from 1890 to 1940 while the white population increased from 44 to 63.5 percent.[196] By 1950, the Brazilian census methodology shifted from using human enumerators to designate color categories to self-classification. Given the ideology of whitening and the notions of black inferiority, it is probable that Brazilians of African descent would more likely identify as white. In the 1950 census, there was a 3.6 percent decrease in the number of black from 1940 and a 5.3 percent increase in the *pardo* population.[197] The census data evidenced that the whitening project of European immigration and miscegenation appeared to be working.

While Brazil promoted the idealized image of a racial democracy domestically and abroad, racial discrimination continued. In order to present itself as a beacon compared to the defeated racist Third Reich and Jim Crow United States, Brazil distributed a pamphlet, published in English, with a foreword from Gilberto Freyre, which exalted the benign race relations of Brazil with a contrast to the racist practices of the United States.[198] In the same year, the Brazilian legislature was forced to respond to its racist practices due to an international public relations fiasco. The African-American dancer, Katherine Graham, was barred from a high-priced Brazilian hotel supposedly

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[195] Skidmore, *Black into White*, 207-210.
[196] Melissa Nobles, *Shades of Citizenship: Race and the Census in Modern Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 98-101.
[197] Ibid, 105.
[198] Skidmore, *Black into White*, 209.

because of the racist influences of U.S. capitalism in Brazil and not due to Brazil's own racism.[199] While Afro-Brazilian had tried to enact an antidiscrimination bill in 1946, it was not until the international dimensions of Brazil's racial discrimination became public did an antidiscrimination civil rights statue materialize. Lei Afonso Arinos, enacted in 1951, became the first modern civil rights legislation in Brazil.[200] Up until 1951, the use of racial selection in hiring practices and discrimination in both public and private accommodations was legal. However, the statute was more symbolic than substantive and no substantive investigations into racial discriminations practices followed. Employment criteria such as "boa aparência" (good looks) used racially coded language that allowed discrimination.[201] During Brazil's military dictatorship from 1964-1986, antidiscrimination laws were largely unenforced and inequalities were framed through class rather than race.[202] The celebration of racial democracy and the persistent denial of racial discrimination worked in tandem with each other.

Meanwhile, academic and UNESCO studies of Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s found pervasive racial inequalities, contradicting the notions of racial democracy. Initially formulated to understand Brazil's racial democracy and tolerance, the UNESCO study employed both Brazilian and foreign scholars to conduct research in Brazil. Prominent Brazilian scholars, such as Florestan Fernandes, who would eventually found a school of social science research at the Universidade de São Paulo, were involved in the

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[199] Telles, *Race in Another America*, 38.
[200] Anthony Marx, *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States and Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 258.
[201] Lourdes Bandeira and Analía Soria Batista. "Preconceito e discriminação como reconceito e discriminação como expressões de violência." *Estudos Feministas* 119 (2002): 127-128.
[202] Telles, *Race in Another America*, 38.

project. Fernandes's students and fellow researchers included Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who would later become President of Brazil and was instrumental in the development of Brazilian affirmative action. Fernandes determined that Brazil had "the prejudice of having no prejudice."[203] However, along with other Marxist colleagues and scholars located at the Universidade de Bahia, Fernandes believed that with greater industrialization and economic growth, racial inequalities would cease to be an issue for Afro-Brazilians.[204] Differing from Freyre, Fernandes emphasized the persistence of racism. For Fernandes and other Marxist scholars, the myth of racial democracy had facilitated the relative racial harmony in Brazil, but had masked deep racial inequalities and furthered racial hierarchies.

Yet, significant social change and transformation did not occur directly after these challenges to racial democracy. By the time of João Goulart's presidency (1961-1964), various academic studies pointed to racial inequalities. However, in 1964, the military seized power in a coup. The ideology of racial democracy became even more integral to national consolidation. Studies on racial discrimination were designated as part of a list of subversive topics by the military regime.[205] After publishing a number of works attacking racial democracy, Fernandes was forced to leave Brazil. As the military dictatorship, with the support of Gilberto Freyre, determined that any challenge to racial democracy should be considered subversive, anti-Brazilian, and communist, Fernandes

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[203] Florestan Fernandes, *The Negro in Brazilian Society* [1965], translated by Jacquline Skiles, A. Brunel, and Arthur Rothwell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969)
[204] Charles Wood and José Alberto Magno de Carvalho, *The Demography of Inequality in Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 135-153.
[205] James Kennedy, "Political Liberalization, Black Consciousness, and Recent Afro-Brazilian Literature" *Phylon* 47, no.3 (1986): 203.

left his professorship at the Universidade de São Paulo and taught in Canada and the United States only to return in the late 1970s during the transition to democracy.[206] Other scholars such as Cardoso were also exiled.[207] The formation of black-identified organizations was prohibited as racist. While the 1960 census had never been released, by 1970, the military government decided to omit racial or color categories on the census. The lack of data ensured that researchers would find difficulty in correlating educational, income, professional, and health disparities to race. The military feared that the inclusion of color categories would import social activism, such as that of the U.S. civil rights movement.[208] The military dictatorship extinguished the potential ruptures of racial hegemony through repression, violence, and censorship.

By the 1970s, growing political black consciousness in Brazil emerged with the formation of the O Movimento Negro Unificado (MNU). As the first national Afro-Brazilian organization to form since the 1937 ban of the Frente Negra, the MNU demanded recognition of the pervasiveness of racism in Brazil and subsequent social, economic, and political reforms.[209] In the late 1970s with the gradual opening of democracy, social scientists and black activist pressure to include a color category eventually succeeded in the restoration of a color category on the 1980 census. Freyre publicly opposed the inclusion of the color category in the press, stressing his position

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[206] George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil: 1888-1988* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 7.
[207] Telles, *Race in Another America*, 43.
[208] Nobles, *Shades of Citizenship*, 117.
[209] For more on the formation of the MNU, and the linkages between black soul music, black political activism in the United States and Brazil, see Michael Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo*, *Brazil, 1945-1988* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994).

that Brazilians were just Brazilians rather than belonging to a racial category or color category.[210] By the late 1980s, organizations such as Criola in Rio de Janeiro and Geledés emerged to address Afro-Brazilian women's issues. Like the United States, few feminist organizations took on issues of racial inequality as part of their own agenda as the Brazilian women's movement focused largely on the concerns of white middle-class women. [211] In Brazil, hegemonic feminism and black movements were largely on separate tracks. Like the United States, many men in the male-dominated Afro-Brazilian movement objectified Afro-Brazilian women and many white women in the feminist movement ignored Afro-Brazilian women's concerns.[212] Such growing black consciousness and activism would lay the foundation for Brazilian affirmative action advocacy in the 1990s and 2000s.

While black activism was never completely absent in Brazil, the hegemonic myth of racial democracy remained largely unchallenged from the 1930s onwards. From Freyre's narrative, racial mixing became the driving force behind race relations and racial democracy in Brazil. Through the extensiveness of racial mixing, racial group boundaries were rendered ambiguous and, therefore, racist practices and policies such as segregation in the United States were deemed to not be applicable to Brazil. Brazilian racial discourse has generally seen the nation through a lens of "antiracialism" distinct

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[210] Nobles, Shades of Citizenship, 117-118.
[211]Luiza Bairros, " Nossos feminismos revisitado," *Revista Estudos Feministas,* 3, no. 2 (1995): 458-463.
[212] Sueli Carneiro, "Black Women's Identity in Brazil" in *Race Relations in Contemporary Brazil: From Indifference to Inequality*, ed. Rebecca Reichmann, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 217-238.

from the "racialism" in the United States. [213] Race-relations in Brazil are often structured as "cordial racism," in which prejudice is denounced and prohibited, but nonetheless present though disguised as an issue of socioeconomic gaps rather than of racism.[214] The adoption of the myth of racial democracy by the state and major periods of authoritarian state rule (1937-1945 and 1964-1985) hindered the ability for Afro-Brazilian to challenge the state and to organize movements for recognition and equality. In cultural and social terms, many Brazilians of African descent were and continue to hesitate to identify with blackness as a primary racial identity. The state co-optation of the rhetoric of *mestiçagem*, the negative connotation that terms like *negro* and *preto* still carry, [215] differentiation by color rather than family genealogy, and the tendency to identify with whiteness rather than blackness, hindered the creation of collective racial coalitions. Hasenbalg and Silva point out that as a result of these factors, and in contrast to civil rights and affirmative action policies in the United States, "indexes of inequality began to decline in the U.S., while in Brazil, they remained stable and in some areas worsened and by 1980, the US had become more racially equitable than Brazil."[216] In contrast to the United States, Brazil enacted no programs to facilitate equal opportunities and racial

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[213] Antonio Sergio Guimarães. *Racismo e Anti-Racismo no Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora 34,1999).
[214] Cleusa Turra, and Gustavo Venturi, *Racismo cordial: A mais completa análise sobre preconceito de cor no Brasil* (São Paulo: Ática, 1995).
[215] The terms *preto* and *negro* have different meanings based on historical context and context. *Preto* has usually referred to skin color. In contrast, *negro* usually has a political significance or consciousness. For more on the shifting meanings of these terms see Livio, Sansone. *Blackness Without Ethnicity: Constructing Race in Brazil*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
[216] Carlos A. Hasenbalg, and Nelson do Valle Silva, "Notes on Racial and Political Inequality in Brazil," in *Racial Politics in Contemporary Brazil*, ed. Michael George Hanchard. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999), 160.

integration. While it can be argued that U.S. affirmative action has not addressed structural racial inequalities and redistribution, the Johnson and Nixon administrations enacted affirmative action programs in the late 1960s and 1970s as a way to remedy racial inequalities. The implementation of affirmative action has led to an increase in the black middle-class and the affluence of African-Americans.[217] Therefore, for a multitude of political, social, and cultural reasons, a race-conscious movement such as the civil rights movement in the United States never coalesced in Brazil and racial inequality remained hidden under the cloak of class until the 2000s.

Continuance of the Sensual Mulata in Brazilian Popular Culture

The celebration of the *mulata* figure is also prevalent in popular Brazilian literature. Jorge Amado's novels, translated into various languages, celebrated *mestiçagem* by focusing on the mulata figure. Amado writes, "It's enough to see a mulatta walk along the beach or down the street to understand the mysteries of *mestiçagem,* cultural syncretism, and a certain national specificity."[218] Amado's novels allegorize and further mythologize *mestiçagem* with white men and mulata women in a relationship of dominance of white over nonwhite and man over woman. *Gabriela, Cravo e Canela* (Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon), was published in Brazil in 1958 and later translated and published in the United States in 1962. The novel, a bestseller in both countries, depicts Gabriela as hypersexual, exotic, and sensual and, thereby, reinforces this portrayal of the *mulata* or *morena* (ambiguous term for darker features) in national

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[217]Charles T. Banner-Haley *The Fruits of Integration: Black Middle-class Ideology and Culture, 1960-1990* (University Press of Mississippi, 2010), 50-56

[218] Sergio Marras, *América Latina, marca registrada* (Barcelona: Grupo Editorial Zeta, 1992), 168.

discourse. Like Freyre's narratives, this representation of women of African descent also naturalizes colonial practices of racialized, gendered, and sexualized domination. In terms of the emphasis on sensuality and overt sexuality, Gabriela is a continuation of Azevedo's Rita Baiana in *O cortiço*. The character of Gabriela is eroticized as an exotic and primitive figure with a lack of control over her raw sexual impulses. Economically and socially subservient to her white lover, Gabriela conforms to racialized and gendered norms. Unlike prior novels such as that of Azevedo's *O cortiço*, Amado's novels represent the *mulata* characters as an asset due to the sexual pleasure they provide for white men.

In the late twentieth century, Brazilian mass media continued to perpetuate the image of the sensual *mulata*. Amado's novels, as well as the adaptations of his novels such as the 1975 telenovela, *Gabriela* and the 1983 film, *Gabriela, Cravo, e Canela*, sexually objectify the *mulata* characters with a focus on their physical beauty and sensuality, yet do not represent the *mulata* as respectable or potentially marriageable. However, the popular media vision, even while celebrating *mestiçagem*, has been largely white. "Adaptions of novels often cast white actresses for what in the source novels were mulatta roles: Bete Faria and Rita Bahiana in *O Cortiço* (The Tenement, 1974) and Sônia Braga as Gabriela in *Gabriela.*"[219] In the *telenovela* adaption of *A escrava Isaura* (1977), a white actress was also used for the protagonist role. In Joel Zito Araújo's documentary, *A negação do Brasil* (2000), Walter Avancini, the director of *A escrava Isaura* and *Gabriela* (1975), claimed that there were no suitable actresses of African descent for the

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[219] Robert Stam, *Tropical Multiculturalism: A Comparative History of Race in Brazilian Cinema and Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 342.

roles and that he would have had to find an inexperienced actresses without talent to fill the parts, and finally that black and poor characters do not hold much interest in *telenovelas* and are not good for marketing.[220] The absence of actresses of African descent in protagonist roles reiterates that people of color cannot be representative of the nation at the same time as the figure of the *mulata* is used as evidence of racial democracy. Until the 1990s, most *telenovelas* only featured black actors in slave-period productions or in very minor stereotypical roles such as maids and prostitutes.[221] Not until 2009 would a black actress have a protagonist role on primetime television.[222]

<u>Conclusion</u>

An engagement with the mixed-race body has been critical to the construction of national identity in both countries. Contemporary media representations of mixed-race women cannot be divorced from historical racial legacies. These depictions of mixed race women have most often been constructed and utilized to advance white patriarchal privilege. The cases of the United States and Brazil demonstrate that some racialized bodies are valued more than others not only for the national body politic, but for a hemispheric body politic. The following chapters engage with cultural, social, and polticial shifts in 1990s and 2000s and media constructions of mixed-race women. By exploring the media treatment of Brazilian and U.S. mixed race actresses and characters,

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[220] Joel Zito Araújo, producer and director, *A negação do Brasil* (2000).
[221] Ibid.
[222] Taís Araújo played the character of Helena in *Viver a Vida*. Helena is a top international model involved in a relationship with Marcos, the white father of one of her rival models. Prior to *Viver a Vida*, Taís Araújo played Xica in *Xica da Silva* (1996), a poor black woman from the Northeast who falls in love with a wealthy white man in *Da Cor de Pecado* (2004), and a wealthy spoiled daughter of a corrupt black senator in *A Favorita* (2008).

this dissertation shows the emerging convergence of national racial projects and hemispheric attempts to contain blackness and nullify racialized differences as well as the ruptures in this containment. Chapter Two builds on the historical legacies described in Chapter One and contextualizes the political and social climate of the 1990s and 2000s and media representations of mixed-race actresses.

Chapter Two: Starring the Biracial, Black, *Negra* Actress?: Mixed-Race Star Texts

Drawing upon historical constructions and experiences of mixed-race women within the racial hierarchies of the United States and Brazil and the tropes of mixed-race female figures in both countries discussed in the previous chapter, this chapter explores the racial anxieties surrounding star texts of mixed-race actresses. Understanding popular culture imagery of mixed-race women is crucial for grasping contemporary social, cultural, and political changes regarding race in both countries. This chapter examines how mixed-race actresses have been used to uphold or resist dominant racial ideologies. The historical legacies framing the representation of mixed-race women have not wholly disappeared, but rather have been rearticulated in the contemporary period. The United States and Brazil grappled with racial anxieties and changing public policies surrounding racial classification and affirmative action in the 1990s and 2000s. By comparing and contrasting the mixed-race American actresses, Jennifer Beals and Halle Berry and the Brazilian actress, Camila Pitanga, this chapter demonstrates how racial anxieties are displayed through the public personas and media depictions of mixed-race celebrity women. The personas of Beals, Berry, and Pitanga each demonstrate a different negotiation of racial identity related to national racial projects. Yet, each national racial project engages with a transnational management of blackness.

In order to comprehend how mixed-race actresses have evoked, redefined, and resisted national racial ideologies, it is imperative to consider the policy settings of the 1990s and 2000s. The place of mixed-race actresses in national and transnational dialogues around race reflects and engages with public policy changes. Therefore, media representations of mixed-race actresses are a crucial component of debates over the role

of race in the nation and the national and transnational addressing of racial inequalities. Therefore, celebrity personas of mixed-race actresses both reflect and trigger racial anxieties. Mixed-race celebrity public images are embedded within these racial dilemmas and function as symbols of competing racial narratives. Discussions of the controversial 2000 U.S. census and Brazilian affirmative action provide the backdrop for media treatment of these mixed-race actresses.

Policy Background: The 2000 U.S. Census and Affirmative Action in Brazil

To understand the role of mixed race female celebrities in the national racial project, it is important to understand what policy debates are occurring in the temporal and national backgrounds of which each actress rose to prominence. The 2000 United States census marked a breakthrough change in the way the census measures race by acknowledging the reality of racial mixing and no longer requiring Americans to claim one race exclusive of all others – a significant shift considering the historical legal invocation of the "one-drop: rule of hypodescent constraining racial identity options for multiracial blacks. Controversies over the proposal to include a multiracial category on the 2000 census involved multiracial advocacy organizations, civil rights organizations, politicians, and media outlets. As Michael Omi and Howard Winant explain, "Any change in the system of racial meanings will affect all groups. Challenging the dominant racial ideology inherently involves not only reconceptualizing one's own racial identity, but a reformulation of the meaning of race in general."[223] Racial categories are not inchoate, but rather can be self-consciously formed through community formation and

[223] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge, 1986), 86.

group-making.[224] However, racial communities are not immune from historical legacies and memories nor are communities or individuals divorced from larger social, political, and cultural investments in race. While some multiracial organizations advocated for recognition of multiracial identity and a stand-alone multiracial category, other civil rights groups became concerned about the undercounting of minorities. In the context of the 1990s and 2000s, neoliberal and conservative rhetoric offered utopic national narratives devoid of race, and hence, racism. The dismantling of affirmative action and race-based policies coincided with the increasing use of multiracial people to challenge the viability of race as a meaningful category.

The debates in the late 1990s over racial categorization for the 2000 U.S. census demonstrates racial anxieties and competing narratives of racial and national identities. With the turning of the OMB (Office of Management and Budget) use of census racial classification as imbued with scientific meaning to its 1977 proclamation that "these classifications should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature,"[225] it became clear what racial classification was not, but ambiguous as to what the foundation or criteria for racial classification would be instead. The implementation of self-identification in the census rather than interviewer-based classification conveys

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[224] Kimberly McClain DaCosta documents how multiracials emerged as a self-conscious interest group and how they came to resuscitate the issue of racial categorizations and identification as topic of public discussion. See Kimberly McClain DaCosta, *Making Multiracials: State, Family, and Market in the Redrawingof the Color Line* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

[225]Office of Management and Budget. *Directive Number 15: Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting* (1997), http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_notice_15/

the idea that people are racially what they say they are.[226] However, race-targeted policies, such as the Voting Rights Act and affirmative action, utilize discrete categories as opposed to ambiguous or multiple categories.[227]

Many multiracial advocacy organizations, such as AMEA (Association of Multiethnic Americans) used the language of civil rights and an argument for personal identity to be recognized publicly as key issues in the debate.[228] AMEA, primarily composed of minorities, wanted a new "multiracial" group as a way to get into the ranks of protected racial groups. AMEA brought together individual and collective identities around a construction of race in order to make an argument for equal rights.[229] In contrast, Project RACE, a multiracial advocacy group led primarily by white mothers, saw the Census as a way to enable self-identification primarily as an individual identity

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[226] Joel Perlmann and Mary C. Waters, Introduction in *The New Race Question: How the Census Counts Multiracial Individuals*, ed. Joel Perlmann and Mary C. Waters (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002), 10-12.
[227] Nathaniel Persily, "The Legal Implications of a Multiracial Census" in *The New Race Question: How the Census Counts Multiracial Individuals*, ed. Joel Perlmann and Mary C. Waters (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002), 161-165.
[228] See Kim Williams' framing of how multiracial organizations used the language of civil rights for mobilization around census categories. Kim Williams, *Mark One or More*.
[229] In her congressional testimony, Ramona Douglas, President of AMEA, cited that legal cases of hate crimes or specific racial discrimination against multiracial people are not recognized or tracked. She used the example of Revonda Bowen, who was told by her principal in Arkansas after he prohibited inter-racial couples from attending prom so that he could prevent "mistakes like you from happening. Medical issues, such as bone marrow transmissions, in the multiracial community would also be ignored without a mechanism to track these cases. See Ramona Douglass, *Federal Measures of Race and Ethnicity and the Implications for the 2000 Census, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, House of Representatives*, 105th Congress, Washington, DC : US Government Printing Office (1997) (Testimony of Ramona Douglass, President of AMEA), 384-388.

issue.[230] However, through the process of organizing and activism, AMEA and Project RACE participate in racial group-making and identity formation.[231]

In the 1990s, civil rights groups were very concerned with the potential for the multiracial category census to blur documentation and evidence of patterns of racial inequality and discrimination. The detachment between official census racial classifications and the race-based legislation resulting disconnect between official census classification and race-targeted legislation that would "undercut existing civil rights safeguards"[232] potentially threatened programs designed to ensure racial equality. According to Jesse Jackson, the multiracial movement was a "diversion, designed to undermine affirmative action."[233] *Ebony* magazine proposed the idea that the movement was a "plot to create a 'colored' buffer race in America."[234] Many black leaders and black press sources implied that individuals, who wished to identify as multiracial were racial traitors wanting to escape blackness. Civil rights leader and former Executive Director of the United Negro College Fund, Arthur A. Fletcher testified before a House subcommittee that a "whole host of light-skinned Black Americans [will run] for the door the minute they have another choice. And it won't necessarily be because their immediate parents are Black, White, or whatever, but all of a sudden they have a way of saying, 'I am something other than Black.' … I am ready to bet that if that category were added you

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[230] Williams, *Mark One or More*, 87.

[231] See Kimberly McClain DaCosta, *Making Multiracials: State, Family, and Market in the Redrawing of the Color Line* (Stanford University Press, 2007).

[232] Williams, *Mark One or More*, 5.

[233] Jerelyn Eddings and Kenneth T. Walsh. "Counting a 'New' Type of American, " *U.S. News and World Repor*t, July 14, 1997,
A22 http://www.usnews.com/usnews/issue/970714/14cens.htm

[234] Lynn Noment "Am I Black, White, or in Between?" *Ebony*, August 1995, 108-12.

would see a significant diminution in the number of Black Americans who under the present set of circumstances are identified as Black."[235] However, such an attitude places limitations on what it means to be black. Fletcher's perspective also assumes that the assertion of multiple races is a form of passing, concealment, or opportunism rather than an assertion of pride or empowerment in acknowledging one's identity and family. Other black leaders such as Ralph Abernathy III, John Conyers, and Carol Mosely-Braun indicated that blacks could simultaneously maintain a multiracial identity.[236] Two years before the beginning of the congressional controversies, Carl Fernandez, leader of AMEA, asserted, "It's wrong, destructive and very negative to think that those of mixed race are setting themselves apart from any of their ancestral groups, particularly blacks."[237] AMEA envisioned solidarity rather than animosity towards minority groups. Seeking alliances within a civil rights framework rather than a dismantling of civil rights, AMEA emphasized a multiracial category as a continuation of social justice. Yet, the eventual conservative co-opting of the multiracial movement demonstrated how the creation of racial categories could serve as a justification for ignoring racialized differences. Fermenting fears of furthering racial hierarchies, Florida Representative Carrie Meek and Eleanor Holmes Norton, a delegate from the District of Columbia, explicitly used the politics of comparison with Brazil for the argument against a multiracial category to evoke the racial stratification of Brazil and to argue in favor of

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[235] *Committee on Post Office and Civil Service. "Testimony before House Subcommittee on Census, Statistics and Postal Personnel." Hearings on the Review of Federal Measurements of Race and Ethnicity*. 103d Cong., 1st session. Washington, Government Printing Office, (1993) 273 (Testimony of Arthur Fletcher).
[236] Williams, *Mark One or More*, 128.
[237] Lena Williams, "In a 90's Quest for Black Identity, Intense Doubts and Disagreement," *New York Times*, November 30 1991.

maintaining officially recognized U.S. racial categories to ensure the legacy of the civil rights movement.[238]

Conservatives used the multiracial movement's seeking of the multiracial category as a way to promote nationalism and obscure racial inequalities. Aligned with Project RACE, Newt Gingrich, Speaker for the U.S. House of Representatives, supported the bill for a multiracial category. He personally attended the 1997 hearings on the census and began his testimony with an account of America as a nation of immigrants. Notably, African-Americans were absent from his national narrative. He testified, "Millions of Americans like Tiger Woods or my constituent, Ryan Graham, who testified before you earlier this year, have moved beyond the Census Bureau's divisive and inaccurate labels. We live in a Technicolor world where the government continues to view us as only black and white." By using the popular culture sports figure of Tiger Woods and Ryan Graham, the young child of Susan Graham, as his models for a new racial category that defies racial divisions, Gingrich actually evoked race-making. Gingrich argued, "Ideally, I believe we should have one box on federal forms that simply reads 'American'…We should…stop forcing Americans into inaccurate categories aimed at building divisive subgroups and allow them the option of selecting the category "multiracial," which I believe will be an important first step toward transcending racial division and reflecting

[238] Carrie Meek stated, "The experience of other nations with multiracial categories, such as Brazil and South Africa, has been that such categories increase rather than decrease social stratification and stigmatization on the basis of race. *Federal Measures of Race and Ethnicity and the Implications for the 2000 Census, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, House of Representatives*, 105th Congress, Washington , DC : US Government Printing Office (1997) (Testimony of Carrie Meek), 515.

the melting pot which is America."[239] Newt Gingrich's testimony previewed a postracial social order in which race would no longer need to be discussed and national identity would render racial identity obsolete. Conservatives in the 1990s and 2000s often employed the rhetoric of colorblindness and diversity to dismantle civil rights programs.[240] The deployment of multiraciality helped blur racial distinctions and posited racial classification as a state intrusion on individual rights. While Brazil's nation-building projects beginning in the 1930s emphasized a Brazilian identity over any kind of racial identity, the rhetoric of using American as the only identity signifier combined with a fear of racial identity as racial division point to potential parallels in the containment of blackness. Like Brazilian national rhetoric, the basis of this U.S. racial harmony rests on mixing and the absence of conversations on racial inequalities and identities.

Ultimately, the OMB reached a compromise with AMEA, the Hapa Issues Forum (HIF) and civil rights groups such as the NAACP to have a multiple check box option on the census. The mark one or more option (MOOM) appeared to not significantly affect civil rights groups as the decision determined that when a response checked one minority race and white, the respondent would be assigned to the minority group for civil rights purposes.[241] This system of reallocation protected race-based legislation while allowing for multiple racial identifications.

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[239] *Federal Measures of Race and Ethnicity and the Implications for the 2000 Census, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, House of Representatives*,
105th Congress, (Washington, DC : US Government Printing Office, 1997) (Testimony of Newt Gingrich, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives) 662.
[240] For more on conservative political groups' use of multiracial categories, see Kim Williams, *Mark One or More*.
[241] Ibid.

While the United States moved towards less race-conscious policies at the same time as multiracial collectives, identities, and politics reemerged on the national scene, Brazil began to shift towards explicitly race-conscious public policies that challenged the myth of a *mestiço* racial democracy. In the 1980s and 1990s, the end of the Brazilian dictatorship and military rule catalyzed activity in the Afro-Brazilian movement and enabled the creation of various NGOs and social organizations, such as Movimento Negro Unificado (Unified Black Movement in 1978), Olodum (created in 1979), CEAP (Center for Marginalized Populations founded in 1989) and Geledés-The Institute for Black Brazilian Women (founded in 1990). These and other activists converged at the Third World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa in 2001. With a vocal delegation of Afro-Brazilian activists, the conference marked a turning point in terms of national and global recognition of racism in Brazil and Afro-Brazilian activists' demands for implementation of race-conscious policies. Brazilian media coverage of the conference spurred intense dialogue about race. This dialogue coincided with a one of the first Brazilian presidents that publicly talked about racism. President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994–2002), a former sociologist who conducted research on race in Brazil, publicly admitted to the existence of racism in Brazil and recognized the Afro-Brazilian movement.[242] Cardoso also created special official governmental positions to address racial inequality and discrimination and sponsored the seminar "Multiculturalism and Racism: The Role of Affirmative Action in Contemporary Democratic States," which gathered Brazilian and

[242] Maia Htun. "From 'Racial Democracy' to Affirmative Action: Changing State Policy on Race in Brazil," *Latin American Research Review* 39 (2004): 69–89.

American thinkers to evaluate, based on the U.S. experience, the implementation of such policies in Brazil.[243] As a result of Afro-Brazilian activism, international pressure from the conference, media coverage of the conference, and President Cardoso's openness to discussion, racism and ways to address it became part of the national agenda. This confluence of events resulted in official policy measures that would have been considered previously inconceivable, most notably the Rio de Janeiro state legislature approval of a bill establishing racial quotas for *negros* and *pardos* for admission to public universities in Rio de Janeiro in 2001.[244] Other states followed suit in establishing racial quota programs. After the policy implementation, there was a surge of court challenges to the quota system primarily from white applicants rejected from universities after the highly competitive entrance exams known as the *vestibular*.[245] The highly controversial issue of quotas brought issues of race, national identity, and racism to the forefront of public discourse. The racial quota system challenged the foundation of Brazilian national identity that posited that Brazil is a racially mixed country in which all races have contributed to the formation of the country and are unified under the Brazilian nation.

Such debates over understandings of race are present in the various debates around

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[243] Jessé Souza, *Multiculturalismo e racismo: Uma comparação Brasil–Estados Unidos* (Brasília: Paralelo 15, 1997), 15.
[244] *Folha de São Paulo*, October 10, 2001; Sérgio da Silva Martins, Carlos Alberto Medeiros, and Elisa Larkin Nascimento, "Paving Paradise: The Road from 'Racial Democracy' to Affirmative Action in Brazil," *Journal of Black Studies* 34, 2004:787-816.
[245] The *vestibular* is a college exam for admission to Brazilian public universities. The exam is the sole qualifier that determines acceptance into the universities. While many argue that the *vestibular* attempts to be a meritocratic exam, but there has been much criticism that the *vestibular* exacerbates class and race discrimination as many white upper-class students attend private schools with better training and are also able to afford expensive *vestibular* preparatory courses. A variety of private initiatives are now attempting to provide courses to disadvantaged students and *negros*. For information on private initiatives, see Edward Telles, *Race in Another America*, 59.

affirmative action and tensions over racial categorization, racial fluidity, phenotype, ancestry, and self-identity. The news media and popular culture play important roles in the positioning, construction, and negotiation of these racial meanings. In 2001, the state legislature of Rio de Janeiro instated quotas of forty percent for *negro* and *pardo* students for state public universities, the Universidade Estadual do Río de Janeiro (UERJ) and the Universidade Estadual do Norte Fluminense (UENF).[246] With the strong possibility of having the quota laws challenged before the Federal Supreme Court of Brazil, the state legislature avoided this immediate challenge by revising the laws.[247] In 2003, the Rio de Janeiro state legislature modified the quotas policy with a twenty percent quota for self-declared *negros*, twenty percent for public school students, and five percent for disabled and indigenous students.[248] Notably, the law eliminated the category pardo. Part of this rationale can be justified with the subsuming of *pardo* under *negro.* However, in Rio de Janeiro, this misuse of the quota system by white students was apparently part of the reasoning for eliminating *pardo* as it was presumed that white students were less likely to apply as *negro* than *pardo*.[249] The Universidade do Estado da Bahia (Uneb) established that forty percent of the admissions slots should be reserved for self-declared *afro-descendentes* (afro-descendents) who attended public school.[250] This variation implies an

[246] Lei Estadual (Public State Law) 3708, November 9, 2011, http://alerjln1.alerj.rj.gov.br/contlei.nsf/f25edae7e64db53b032564fe005262ef/827dde52958a6dd203256b030063db70?OpenDocument
[247] Martins, Medeiros, and Nascimento, "Paving Paradise," 806-811.
[248] Lei Estadual (State Law) 4151, 2003, http://alerjln1.alerj.rj.gov.br/contlei.nsf/b24a2da5a077847c032564f4005d4bf2/e50b5bf653e6040983256d9c00606969?OpenDocument
[249] Ediane Merola. "Não Haverá Distorções," *O Globo*, September 9, 2003, 3.
[250]Universidade de Brasília. *Edital de abertura*. Internal university policy statement. (2004). http://www.uneb.br/atos/atos_consu_196_25-07-02.pdf

attribution of race to genealogy and a self-conscious affiliation with the African diaspora rather than to skin color. The criterion of self-declaration to define quota applicants is pertinent for looking at the potential significance of racial formation. Such a policy relies on an applicants' self-perception rather than how society might view the individual. If the legitimacy of racial identification resides in individual determination, such a quota program relies less on the essentialism of race based on color or biology and yields perhaps more inclusiveness on the boundaries of blackness.

In a very different construction of racial formation, classification, and identity, the Universidade de Brasília (UnB) uses a unique system of racial self-declaration along with race based on phenotype and outsider perceptions of race. In 2004, a committee was established to evaluate applicant photographs of self-declared *negros* attempting to gain admission to the university through racial quotas. An anthropologist, a sociologist, a student representative, and three black movement activists constitute the committee.[251] The committee then determines if an applicant is considered *negro* and can be considered a candidate through the racial quota system. Influenced by UnB, other federal and state universities implemented similar affirmative action policy measures. The Universidade Estadual de Matto Grosso de Sul followed suit and used photographic evaluation of applicants as determined by a committee constituted of two university representatives and three black movement activists.[252] While not using photographic evidence, the

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[251] Marcos Chor Maio and Ricardo Ventura Santos, "Política de cotas raciais, os 'olhos da sociedade' e os usos da antropologia: O caso de vestibular da Universidade de Brasília (UNB)," *Horizontes antropológicos* 11 (2005): 181–214.
[252] Hudson Corrêa. "Em MS, foto diz quem entra por cotas para negros," *Folha de São Paulo*, December 15, 2003,
http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/educacao/ult305u14591.shtml

Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR) implemented a quota admissions system that required an interview and approval from a commission for racial verification. UFPR's criteria noted that applicants attempting to be admitted under the *preto* or *pardo* group should have phenotypical traits societally identified as *negro.*[253] While these racial quota implementation systems specifically engage and collaborate with the black movement in Brazil, there are significant challenges in the verification of race based on phenotypical evaluation from an outside party.

Such essentialism based on phenotype and the committee's own biases have great potential to disadvantage mixed-race individuals. In a much publicized case from 2007, Brazilian media reported that two identical twin brothers, sons of a black father and a white mother, both self-declared as *negros* for admission under the quota system at the Universidade de Brasília (UnB), but only one brother was admitted under quotas.[254] The brother denied admission appealed his case to the admissions committee and was later verified as *negro*.[255] This particular case showcasing the unreliability and inconsistency of a racial classification system based on third party perceptions and phenotype had transnational reverberations in the United States, as the case was documented in "Brazil

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[253] Edital 001, 2004, Normas do Processo Seletivo UFPR 2005 Ministério da Educação. The edict states that, "declaração de próprio punho, perante autoridade constituída da UFPR, segundo modelo obtido no NAA [Núcleo de Assuntos Acadêmicos, órgão da Pró-Reitoria de Graduação], de que o candidato pertence ao grupo preto ou pardo, constantes no Censo Oficial do IBGE, de que é assim reconhecido na sociedade e de que possui traços fenotípicos que o identificam com o tipo negro," http://www.nc.ufpr.br/
[254] Fernanda Bassetes, "Cotas na UnB: gêmeo idêntico é barrado," *O Globo*, May 29, 2007, G1.
[255] Fernanda Bassetes, "UnB volta atrás e aceita gêmeo barrado em cotas," *O Globo*, June 6, 2007, G1.

in Black and White," a PBS *Wide Angle* series.[256] Like controversies over the 2000 U.S. census, the affirmative action policies in Brazil reveal the slipperiness of racial terminology and racial identity in a multiracial society.

Using the discourse of *mestiçagem*, affirmative action opponents argued that Brazil's racial fluidity rendered race-based policies obsolete and that altering this racial flexibility based on *mestiçagem* would fundamentally alter Brazilian national identity for the worse. Pointing to the importation of a U.S. racial binary in Brazil and claiming that Brazilian affirmation action policies were a copy of U.S. affirmative action policies, academic critics took to the media, academic journals, and eventually were at the forefront in a Supreme Court challenge to affirmative action.[257] In 2012, the Federal Supreme Court ruled that the affirmative action policy of UnB is constitutionally valid. Unanimously, the court declared that for the state to effectively promote equality,

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[256] *Brazil in Black and White,* produced by Adam Stepan, (Washington D.C., PBS, 2007).
[257] See for example, Yvonne Maggie, "Em breve, um país divido," *O Globo,* December 27, 2004; Yvonne Maggie, "Política de cotas e o vestibular da UnB ou a marca que cria sociedades divididas," *Horizontes Antropólogicos* 11, no. 23 (2005): 286-291.
In 2008, various academic scholars presented the manifesto, *Carta Pública ao Congresso Nacional: Todos têm direitos iguais na República Democrática* (Public Letter to National Congress: All have equal rights in a Democratic Republic) and a second manifesto (One Hundred and Thirteen Anti-Racist Citizens Against the Racial Laws) to the Supreme Court. In 2009, the challenge brought to the Federal Supreme Court alleged that the affirmative action quota system violated constitutional principles of equality. It is notable that the legal brief included references to the United States in order to claim that the implementation of affirmative action in Brazil would also be an implementation of racism.
The brief challenged, "se a implementação de um Estado Racializado, ou, em outras palavras, se o Racismo Institucionalizado, nos moldes em que praticado nos Estados Unidos, em Ruanda e na África do Sul, será a medida mais adequada, conveniente, exigível e ponderada, no Brasil, para a finalidade à que se propõe: a construção de uma sociedade mais justa, igual e solidária." [whether the implementation of a racialized state or in other words, of institutionalized racism, as practiced in the United States, South Africa, or Rwanda, would be suitable for Brazil]
ADPF 186, Petição Inicial, July 20, 2009.

affirmative action was the social responsibility for the States as the Brazilian Constitution necessitates reparations of past losses for Afro-Brazilians.[258] The determination of inclusion or exclusion in racial groups through color and phenotype using a white versus nonwhite approach might conflict with how many Brazilians see themselves. A reliance on either ancestry or phenotype does not provide easy solutions to the complexities of policy implementation based on race. Such a schematic bodes that while racial identity in the United States is becoming more like Brazil, Brazil is becoming closer to the United States.[259]

Celebrity Public Personas

Examining public personas and acting roles of actresses such as Jennifer Beals and Halle Berry in the United States and Camila Pitanga in Brazil demonstrates the instability of identity categories. National and transnational racial and color categories complicate self-identification. While this chapter emphasizes the national context of these actresses, racial formations cross national borders. Solely looking at the United States or Brazil in isolation obscures the transnational processes of race-making. A concern with the management of blackness and notions of race, sexuality, and gender circulate within and across nation-states. While racial formations traverse national borders, national racial labels and categories are specific to the national contexts of Brazil and the United States. How an individual is interpellated depends on the viewer, media framing, and context. While the United States' understanding of race relies on genealogy and Brazil's

[258] ADPF 186 (Arguição de Descumprimento de Preceito Fundamental n. 186), Federal Supreme Court of Brazil, www.stf.jus.br/arquivo/cms/.../ADPF186RL.pdf.
[259] See Melissa Nobles, *Shades of Citizenship*; Reginald Daniel, *Race and Multiraciality in Brazil and the United States.*

understanding of race relies on phenotype, racial and color categories are highly contested in both countries. Beals, Berry, and Pitanga have been described as black, African-American, biracial, *negra*, *morena*, and *mulata*. The various connotations attached to these terms point to the lack of an equivalent lexicon in Brazil and the United States. Nonetheless, these terms all point to the anxiety of labeling, managing, and containing blackness.

Building upon Richard Dyer's *Stars* and *Heavenly Bodies*,[260] this chapter examines the media coverage of these actresses. Dyer's work demonstrates how social, historical, and political contexts are crucial for understanding the ideological discourses attached to celebrities. This chapter illuminates how celebrities are racially coded differently depending on context. The dramatic roles that these actresses play can also contradict the frames that marketing and media coverage attempt to construct. Dyer writes, "Stars are, like characters in stories, representations of people. Thus they relate to ideas about what people are (or are supposed to be) like."[261] Dyer argues that stars can be understood as part of contemporary desires and anxieties. As such, celebrities are highly symbolic and powerful role models for showing what is beautiful, desirable, and feminine. Dyer writes, "Stars are embodiments of the social categories in which people are placed and through which we make sense of our lives."[262] Thus, these actresses embody differing ideas of blackness and mixedness in the U.S. and Brazilian

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[260] Dyer's *Stars* and *Heavenly Bodies* were among the first works to study stardom as social and cultural phenomena and to specifically look at African-American celebrity. Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1979); Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (*Hampshire, UK: MacMillan, 1986).*
[261] Dyer, *Stars*, 22.
[262] Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies, 18.*

imaginations. Referring to the United States, Dyer argues that hegemonic representations of nonwhite celebrities are characterized by strategies of containment and deactivation that allow for the consumption of difference without a threat to racial hegemonies of whiteness.[263] As audiences are often assumed to be white in the United States, stars are marketed to deactivate threatening racial elements. While Dyer and bell hooks argue that the commodification of non-white celebrity images often reinforce racial hierarchies of whiteness in the United States through the containment, neutralization, or deactivation of race,[264] there is also a space for resistance to these racial hierarchies with the subversive presence of nonwhite stardom and actresses' own negotiation of their racial identities in reaction to hegemonic racial schemas. As celebrities, Beals, Berry, and Pitanga participate in and shape discourses regarding race. However, while Beals, Berry, and Pitanga might demonstrate some agency over their representations, interviews, publicity, and public reception all play a role in the construction of their celebrity images and there are also numerous limitations according to gender, sexuality, and the historical legacies of the mixed-race figure in both countries.

The careers and public images of these actresses present a rich source of analysis for how discourses of mixed-race and black identities are disseminated in the mass media. This chapter understands celebrity actresses as entrenched in cultural and racial politics. Pitanga's, Berry's, and Beals's presence in the media brings about a questioning

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[263] Dyer's analysis of Paul Robeson from the 1920s to the 1940s shows how white ideas of blackness were imposed upon Robeson. Therefore, Robeson's crossover appeal to white audiences relied on a deactivation of potentially transgressive racial elements. Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies,* 110.

[264] bell hooks, "Eating the Other" in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1992), 21-41; Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies,* 70-71, 115-116, 138-139.

of who is black. In the United States, legal definitions of blackness have historically functioned to maintain boundaries between blackness and whiteness, despite the significant presence of mixed-race peoples. In Brazil, the lack of de jure segregation and legal definitions of blackness and whiteness have left the parameters of who is black ambiguous. Yet, nonetheless, racial hierarchies based on phenotypical appearances have emerged. In terms of physical appearance, whiteness has been the media's hegemonic norm of beauty. According to media depictions, Beals, Berry, and Pitanga conform to dominant white standards of beauty, but with a hint of difference that harkens back to mulatta and *mulata* narratives with the highlighting of sexual desirability and beauty.

Although Beals, Berry, and Pitanga are located in different countries and their celebrity personas emerged at different time periods, comparisons between the actresses engage and challenge discourses of blackness and mixedness. The examples of Beals, Berry, and Pitanga lay bare what is at stake in defining or claiming blackness for a celebrity. The way in which these three celebrities attempt to represent themselves can be understood as a form of disidentification. For José Muñoz, disidentification is a strategy of survival that minority subjects utilize to "perform the self" in a manner that neither conforms with dominant ideologies that pathologizes minority subjects nor completely discards it. The subject thereby "tactically and simultaneously works on, with, and against" ideology. Identity is thereby formed in negotiation with the "cultural logics of heteronormativity, white supremacy, and misogyny" so as to counter them from within this model "envision[s] and activate[s] new social relations."[265]

[265] Jóse Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 5.

Jennifer Beals and Racial Controversies

The media framing of Jennifer Beals focuses on racial ambiguity and tensions regarding claiming or not claiming racial identities. The climate of the early 1980s, the 1990s and the early 2000s all illustrate different depictions of Beals's mixed racial heritage displaying the dominant racial discourse in each period. While the context of a black-white binary is largely present in the 1980s, the development of a biracial identity and consciousness emerges in the 1990s and 2000s. Additionally, the mediated depictions of Beals in mainstream newspapers and magazines such as *The Los Angeles Times* and *People* contrasts with black press sources such as *Ebony* and *Jet*. While Beals does not recoil from her African-American heritage, her phenotypical features and light skin tone have allowed her to be cast as other ethnicities or in racially ambiguous roles that have often been assumed to be white. This racial ambiguity has been a key part of Beals's career and her casting.

While Beals has often played characters coded with no racial markings,[266] there has often been an awareness of her racial ambiguity. For example, in the 1982 film, *Flashdance,* Beals was eventually cast despite Paramount's concerns about her racial background because men found her physically attractive and women found her more appealing than "suburban-looking" actresses who were also tested for the role.[267] In other roles, she has explicitly played a mulatta archetype set in the antebellum and postbellum

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[266] In addition to the press, academic studies have also described Beals's characters as having no racial markings. See Donald Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies and Bucks: An Interpretative History of Blacks in American Film* (New York: Continuum Books, 2001), 291.
[267] See Rachel Abramowitz, *Is That a Gun in Your Pocket?: Women's Experience of Power in Hollywood* (New York: Random House, 2000), 245.

periods. In the television movie, *A House Divided* (2000), she played a mulatta, who was raised to be a white Southern belle. Upon returning home after the Civil War, she later discovers that her mother was a black slave. In the cable television miniseries, *The Feast of All Saints* (2001), Beals played a quadroon brothel proprietress, who arranges octoroon balls. Many of Beals's characters have explicit or subtle references to notions of black mixedness.

The idea of the mixed hybrid body relies not just on visual gazes, but also on other forms of sensation. For example, Beals's character, Daphne, has a penchant for soul food and jazz clubs that suggest racial difference and undermine her passing for white in the 1995 film noir, *Devil in a Blue Dress.*[268] Beals's character has a supposed natural ability to pick up breakdancing in *Flashdance*. In *Flashdance*, Beals's dance sequences highlight her corporality and are constructed to suggest that she possesses natural talent and improvisational skills. Such talent is implied to be derived from her racial origins and her racially authentic self. Furthermore, Beals has represented characters with hypersexual images that derive from mulatta stereotypes. In *Flashdance*, her character's body is consistently represented as sexually available through her dancing in erotic nightclubs and the camera's focus on her dancing body.[269] Beals's character also relies on her white boss turned lover to achieve success. After watching her perform in a strip club, he becomes captivated by her body and later uses his connections to help

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[268] See Aisha D. Bastiaans, "Detecting Difference in *Devil in a Blue Dress: The Mulatta Figure, Film Noir, and Cinematic Reification of Race,"* in *Mixed Race Hollywood,* ed. Mary Beltrán and Camila Fojas (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 235.
[269] See Melissa Blanco-Borelli for an assessment of Beals as a mulatta related to her dancing, Melissa Blanco-Borelli, "A Taste of Honey: Choreographing Mulatta in the Hollywood Dance Film." *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media* 5, no. 2-3 (2009):148.

land her an audition at a dance conservatory. This storyline plays into narratives and histories of mulatta concubinage and relationship of socio-economic ascendancy evoked in images such as the New Orleans quadroon balls.[270] Even in *The L Word* (2004-2009), Bette, a character specifically requested by Beals to be written as biracial, is unable to control her sexual impulses and cannot remain faithful to her partner. Traces of mulatta narratives creep into the text and hence use Beals's mixedness as part of the text itself.

Before *The L Word* and its coinciding with the burgeoning multiracial movement and the marketing of multiraciality as "cool," media framing of Jennifer Beals often slid among a focus on her mixed heritage, surprise at her African-American heritage or a deriding of her lack of affiliation with African-Americans. While Jennifer Beals has often been accused of hiding or downplaying her black parentage, many early articles following *Flashdance* mention the interracial marriage of her black father and white mother. With audiences potentially able to see Beals as white and the controversy regarding her heritage, racial identity and allegiances, the vision of Beals passing into white has continued to haunt her image. For example, a 1995 *Vibe* magazine article titled "Regarding Jennifer: Mystery and Mistaken Identity Follow Beals Everywhere. The Star of the Upcoming Thriller, *Devil in a Blue Dress* Sets the Record Straight" plays into an aura of mystery around Beals that is directly tied to her biracial identity.[271] Despite public confirmation of her black heritage, Beals has often been subject to questions regarding

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[270] For more on quadroon balls and the practice of plaçage, see Monique Guillory, "Under One Roof: The Sins and Sanctity of the New Orleans Quadroon Balls" in *Race Consciousness: African American Studies for the New Century*, ed. Judith Jackson Fossett and Jeffrey Tucker (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 67-92.
[271] "Joan Morgan, "Regarding Jennifer: Mystery and Mistaken Identity Follow Beals Everywhere. The Star of the Upcoming Thriller, *Devil in a Blue Dress* Sets the Record Straight," *Vibe,* August 1995, 52-60.

her racial identity. Even though many mainstream media sources such as *The Los Angeles Times*, *US Weekly*, and *People* magazine specifically noted her mixed racial heritage and the June 6, 1983 edition of *Jet* magazine featured her on the cover, the specter of passing and suspicion as to Beals's allegiances remained.[272]

Magazines such as *People* and the *Los Angeles Times* focused on Beals's alluring looks and olive or caramel skin in conjunction with discussions of her mixed racial heritage.[273] Thus, a fetishizing of her skin color functioned to mark Beals as a familiar and accessible yet exotic beauty. Beals, herself, plays into this fetishization. For example, in a feature in *The Los Angeles Times*, Beals explained that she felt like a mongrel for a long time, but then found another alternative identification. She is quoted as saying, "Then someone told me that there's a breed called the Black Irish that was born when the Moors invaded Southern Ireland a long time ago. It's a lot more exotic than saying I'm a mutt."[274] The association with the Black Irish allowed another deviation from the norm that signals Beals's perceived outsider status and removed her from a history of black slavery in the United States. These imaginings relied on ambiguous whiteness rather than an ambiguous blackness. It also captured the idea of racial mixing as an acceptable image that recenters whiteness and places mixing safely outside of the United States and in the past.

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[272] Mark Morrison, "The Two Faces of Jennifer," *US Weekly*, September 9 1985, 26; "Jennifer Beals: Dazzling Looks and a Ripped Wardrobe Turn a Dancing Yalie into a Flashy Star," *People,* December 26, 1983, http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20086767,00.html
[273] Ibid.
[274] "Michael London, "Flashdance Star Taps Her Own Beat," *Los Angeles Times,* May 8, 1983, U21.

The way that the media interpreted Beals self-representation is part of a negotiation of Beals's identity as mixed-race. Preceding her quote on the Black Irish, *The Los Angeles Times* article described Beals's college admissions essay that described a fairytale of a heroine living among the princes and princesses of Chicago's Gold Coast only to discover that she didn't really belong. The article then mentioned her education in elite private schools but again highlighted her outsider status. Immediately following the discussion of this outsider status, the article stated that her mother was an Irish public school teacher and her father was a black grocery store owner. The article presented Beals as yearning for a fairytale that could not be fulfilled, but later finding her place through an alternate identification outside of the presumed white upper-class groups of Chicago. Other mainstream newspapers stressed her struggle to ascend into elite schools and find success. Her biracial heritage and childhood in the Southside are often cited as part of this struggle.[275] Thus, the press implied that her rise to success could have been hampered by her black heritage and upbringing. The frequent allusions to the death of her African-American father also allowed the mainstream media to downplay her black heritage as symbolized by her father. By citing her absent black father,[276] the centrality of her white mother, her attendance at predominantly white schools, and her family's

[275] Ibid.

[276] Like Jennifer Beals, Barack Obama was frequently discussed in relation to the absence of a black father. Bill O'Reilly, "What President Obama Can Teach America's Kids," *Parade Magazine*, August 9 2009, http://www.parade.com/news/2009/08/09-what-obama-can-teach-americas-kids.html; David Maraniss, "Though Obama had to leave to find himself, it is Hawaii that made his rise possible," *The Washington Post*, August 21, 2008, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2008-08-21/politics/36783984_1_barack-obama-hawaii-barry-obama; Julie Bosman, "Obama Sharply Assails Absent Fathers," *The New York Times*, June 16, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/16/us/politics/15cnd-obama.html?_r=0

move from the black South Side to a whiter neighborhood, the articles implied that she has escaped the socioeconomic barriers and stigmas associated with blackness.

Beals's biracial identity and upbringing were made exotic by characterizing her experiences as unique. Thus, while Beals herself played into the idea that light-skinned African-Americans are somehow exotic, despite histories of mixed-race black communities, the press also reinforces this exoticism by emphasizing and coding the South Side as an authentic monoracial black space. Furthermore, as the South Side was associated with the black working-class, her attendance at an elite private school in Chicago and Yale University was used to emphasize the divide between a black working-class world and a privileged upper-class white world. These experiences were hinted at when mainstream media discussed her ability to play a working-class welder and aspiring dancer. When magazines such as *US Weekly* wrote that Beals did not lead a sheltered life immediately after a description of her biracial heritage and upbringing on the South Side, the magazine insinuates that a Yale student with a private school background can still portray a working-class identity because of her experiences in a black working-class neighborhood.[277]

From the black press, Jennifer Beals was not derided for playing multiple ethnicities or racially ambiguous characters on screen. In one 1985 letter on the *Los Angeles Sentinel*'s "Celebrity Lookout" column, a reader identitified Jennifer Beals as black and asked why she was always cast with white actors even in her role as

[277] Mark Morrison, "The Two Faces of Jennifer."

Cinderella.[278] In response, the columnist for "Celebrity Lookout," wrote, "Jennifer Beals is a great actress and she is an American. Isn't it great that an actress in American can play any part she is lucky to win and qualify for? You are as bad as many white Americans who deny opportunities to black people, not because of their talent but because of the color of their skin. You are a bigot."[279] The columnist highlighted the American identity of Beals and uses her as an example of racial progress and equality. Another *Jet* magazine article on black actresses starring in non-racialized movie roles praised the inclusion of Beals in *The Bride*.[280] The article also situated Beals mixed heritage as part of her image as the ideal heroine. The article states, "For director Frank Rodman, Jennifer Beals was ideal for the part. The young actress, whose father is Black and mother is Irish, 'is the perfect Eva, a character who embraces the ideals of freedom, independence, and intelligence,' he said."[281] Therefore, the image of Beals as a mixed-race black woman was used as a way to critique racism and to affirm inclusion in the United States.

However, when Beals failed to meet expectations and publicly assert her blackness off-screen, the black press retreated from its former position of inclusion. Articles in *Ebony* and *Jet* such as "Who's Black and Who's Not: New Ethnicity Raises Provocative Questions About Racial Identity" and "Are the Children of Mixed Marriage Black or White?" placed her alongside other celebrities alleged to have denied their

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[278] In 1985, as part of the *Faerie Tale Theater* television series, Jennifer Beals played opposite Matthew Broderick "Cinderella."

[279] "Celebrity Lookout," *Los Angeles Sentinel* November 21, 1985, 4.

[280] "Rae Dawn Chong: Black Actresses Star in Non-racial Movie Roles, " *Jet*, September 9, 1985, 26.

[281] Ibid.

blackness.[282] Her potential to be read as white and her racial ambiguity only further heightened the stakes of asserting a black identity. While this passing might not be an active passing, Beals was seen as not offering a resistance to a white identification. Beals was not actually passing at all given the descriptions of her black father and white mother, but rather offering an alternative racial identity in which a black-white dichotomy does not exist. Thus, while Beals might have mentioned her black and white heritage, the de-emphasis on her blackness was seen to be an invalidation of her black identity. Through this passing for white then, she deprived the black community of a black celebrity, a black success story, and a black role model. The controversy over Beals's lack of identification points to the saliency of race and the social, economic, and political stakes involved in being able to claim Beals and other mixed-race celebrities as black. Furthermore, the disapproval of Beals demonstrates how racial identity is not just an individual choice that can be thrown off or traded depending on the individual's personal experiences. Rather, racial identity is negotiated and constructed with communities.

In addition, the disapproval of Beals calls into question the gender dynamics in the "outing" of black mixed race women, especially those women whose physical features allow for a potential reading as white. Beals, like Mariah Carey in the 1990s, was admonished for not declaring herself as black.[283] For example, *Ebony* magazine's

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[282] Lynn Norment, "Who's Black and Who's Not: New Ethnicity Raises Provocative Questions About Racial Identity," *Ebony*, March 1990, 136 and "Are the Children of Mixed Marriage Black or White?," *Jet*, May 21 1990, 53.

[283] For an account of Mariah Carey's "outing" and the interpellation of her racial identity and racial authenticity, see Caroline Streeter, "Faking the Funk?: Mariah Carey, Alicia Keys, and (Hybrid) Black Celebrity" in *Black Cultural Traffic: Crossroads in Global*

1990 article, “Who’s Black and Who’s Not: New Ethnicity Raises Provocative Questions About Racial Identity”[284] highly criticized Paula Abdul and Jennifer Beals for not publicly identifying with the black community. The article noted that the majority of celebrities who were referring to themselves as other than black were young women. While Prince was also charged with downplaying his blackness by citing his Italian heritage among other things, Prince’s inclusion as black is one of the key examples also potentially point to the anxiety of his crossings of race, gender, and sexuality. Often read as queer,[285] Prince, like other artists, potentially provokes anxieties over his racial, sexual, and gender ambiguities. Prince’s nonconformity to notions of a masculinist heteronormative blackness then also includes him among mixed-race women, who do not actively seek to be read as black. When the mainstream media can read mixed-race women, such as Mariah Carey and Beals as white, the framing of a tragic mulatta and fears of passing are applied. Thus, women of mixed-race African descent already on the borders of blackness are even more tightly bound to racial communities as both the reproducers and caretakers of these communities. Mixed-race women like Beals are

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Performance and Popular Culture, ed. Harry J. Elam Jr. and Kennell Kackson, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 185-207.

[284] It should also be noted that there were numerous letters written to the editor with a critique of the article. Many of the letters objected to skin color as a barometer for racial identification. Ramona E. Douglass, Vice-President of the Biracial Family Network of Chicago, specifically noted that identification as biracial does not mean being ashamed of one’s African-American heritage, but rather is an acknowledgement of one’s full heritage. It is also notable that Ramona Douglass was also a co-founder of the Association of MultiEthnic Americans (AMEA) and served in various capacities as Vice President (1988-1994) and President (1994-1999). Ramona was key to the check one or more option on the 2000 census. See Letters, “Who’s Black and Who’s Not,” *Ebony*, July 1990, 140-141.

[285] Robert Walser,“Prince as Queer Post-Structuralist,” *Popular Music and Society*, 18, no.2: 79–90.

deemed as biologically bound to race. Carrying the physical marker of racial and sexual transgressions, women representing these racial boundaries must be reclaimed back into blackness. Furthermore, a refusal to be claimed racially with either blackness or whiteness within this contextual memory of mulatta narratives is linked to a refusal to be claimed as a feminine sexualized object of desire.

In order to be perceived as mixed-race as opposed to the default of whiteness, Beals must continually participate in a racial outing of herself. Therefore, by revealing herself as black, she is encouraged to consider herself as a racialized subject. While Beals has often failed to affirm her blackness, she has not tried to hide her black parentage. Yet, the theme of a strained identification with blackness has been applied frequently to Beals in black magazines such as *Ebony* and *Vibe*. *Ebony* magazine's 1990 article, "Who's Black and Who's Not: New Ethnicity Raises Provocative Questions About Racial Identity" and *Jet* magazine's 1990 article, "Are the Children of Mixed Marriage Black or White?" point to the anxiety over the blurring of racial categories with racially ambiguous celebrities who were not actively vocalizing their black heritage. While actresses such as Jasmine Guy are praised for identifying firmly as black in the article, Jennifer Beals is highly criticized for ducking the issue of her racial heritage. The controversies surrounding Beals and other multiracial celebrities reflect discourses around race, especially as applied to celebrities who in previous generations would be considered black. These controversies also demonstrate struggles over the meaning of blackness, the measurement of blackness, and ideas of black authenticity. With Beals's ambiguous looks, her racial identity is not taken for a given in contrast to other multiracial celebrities whose phenotypical appearance minimizes white ancestry unless

brought up in discussion. Since Beals can pass for white, it is even more imperative that she embodies blackness. The trope of the tragic mulatta and the disavowal of the passing mulatto deny the possibility of a mixed-race subjectivity despite the dismantling of legal segregation. As Caroline Streeter claims, many mixed race individuals of the post-civil rights generation have "not experienced the historical imperative to identify as black."[286] Without this historical imperative, Beals's position as a racially liminal figure becomes even more significant for an investment in black community, politics, and identity. Beals's case indicates an unstable blackness that cannot be limited to ancestry alone. Rather appearance and racial and cultural identification come into play.

In order to make their case regarding Beals's lack of a black identity, both *Jet* and *Ebony* articles repeated an earlier quote from Beals, "I thought I would never get in. I thought they only took geniuses. But, I was lucky because I'm a minority. I'm not Black and I'm not White, so I could 'mark' other on my application, and I guess it's hard for them to fill that quota."[287] Both articles imply that those celebrities who identify other than black wanted to escape blackness. In the *Jet* magazine article, Beals is reported to have sidestepped the race questioning compared to other multiracial celebrities such as Jasmine Guy who assert a black identity. *Jet* Magazine reports, "But there are others who are not so sure about their racial identity. Jennifer Beals…has yet to acknowledge her

[286] Caroline Streeter, "Ambiguous Bodies: Locating Black/White Women in Cultural Representations" in *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier,* ed. Maria Root (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996), 317.
[287]Lynn Norment, "Who's Black and Who's Not: New Ethnicity Raises Provocative Questions About Racial Identity," *Ebony*, March 1990, 136 and "Are the Children of Mixed Marriage Black or White?," *Jet*, May 21 1990, 53.

Black heritage publicly."[288] Beals's comparison to other multiracial celebrities who identify singularly as black also helped to legitimize this exclusively black identity. At issue in both articles is the idea of an undermining of black solidarity. Blacks, who are capable of passing, are expected to express their racial identity to other blacks. As the one-drop rule dictates blackness regardless of appearance, not publicly declaring one's blackness is a form of denying the mutual recognition of blackness and racial identity among African-Americans. Both articles also anticipated the 1990s controversy over a movement to include a multiracial category on the 2000 census. With racial classification as potentially unstable and the assertion of a more fluid ambiguous racial identification, fears of a diminishment of the black population and obstacles in supporting black politics circulated around multiracial identification. The refusal of proclaiming a black identity is viewed as complicity in racial passing.

By the 2000s, many multiracial celebrities and public figures self-identified as biracial and were depicted as biracial or multiracial in mainstream popular media. The language of mixed-race, biracial, and multiracial became used more widely. With the emergence of the multiracial movement, debates over the 2000 census, and the increased visibility of multiracial celebrities, discourses around mixed-race changed from the period of Beals's early *Flashdance* fame. Therefore, her early press representations from *Flashdance* in the early 1980s differed considerably from the 2000s as the term biracial was not an accessible circulating part of the racial vocabulary in the 1980s. Many of the articles after 2004's *The L Word* premiere specifically cite Beals' biracial heritage and

[288] "Are the Children of Mixed Marriage Black or White?," *Jet*, May 21 1990, 53.

use the exact term biracial to describe Beals' identity. This emphasis on Beals' biracial identity suggests an opening for discussing multiracialism and biracial identities.

However, as Beals earlier pointed out in her critique of casting, there are very few roles for mixed-race characters.[289] The absence of specifically mixed-race roles rather than racially unmarked roles points to a void in envisioning multiraciality and black mixedness as part of contemporary identity politics. Most of the biracial roles that Beals played were set in the past such as the 1800s settings of *A House Divided* and *The Feast of All Saint*s or *Devil in a Blue Dress* in which she attempts to pass as white in the 1940s. By Beals asking for specifically biracial characters in *The L Word* and *Chicago Code* (2012), she is acknowledging potential images for younger generations, but also that race-neutral roles will not suffice. Beals' request comes at the same time as an increased recognition of multiracial identities. However, her request and subsequent portrayals can be read as not just a marketing ploy. For example, in *The L Word*, the biraciality of Beals' character, Bette Porter is a major theme. Her relationships with her African-American sister and father, accusations of passing, and her partner, Tina's hesitation in using a black sperm donor, utilize Bette's biraciality to talk about race. Beals' character serves as a way to represent biracial identity not as an attempt at racelessness or a tragic metaphor of racial divisions, but rather as a way of grappling with the social meaning of race.

Beals's request for biracial characters on *The L Word* and *Chicago Code* presents a more inclusive vision of the United States and an onscreen expansion of black

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[289] Joan Morgan, "Regarding Jennifer: Mystery and Mistaken Identity Follow Beals Everywhere," 52.

experiences. However Beals has also emphasized outsider status such as in a 2011 Tavis Smiley interview when she states, “Well, with “The L Word,” when I first met with Ilene Chaiken about the role, I asked her to consider making the character biracial because I thought it would be an interesting way to talk about race and quite frankly, when I was a child, there was nobody on television who looked like me. I had Spock. That was kind of it. I was hoping to give somebody some other kind of representation, maybe with different ears.”[290] This emphasis on an outsider status emphasizes the exclusion of Beals as outside of black communities, but also fetishizes this outsider status and reads into narratives of mixed-race people as abnormal. Yet, the very ability to be outside of prescribed racial categories is also a privilege based on skin color.

While it is admirable for Beals to put a positive light on biracial identity and to acknowledge mixed-race experiences, this focus on difference also functions to “other” biracial people in relationship to both blacks and whites through an emphasis on being special and unique. However, an increase in mixed-race images, voices, and character representations in popular culture can weaken this focus on exclusion and exceptionality. In a POWER UP 2004 speech, Beals states, “And as I got a little older, and I was more aware of television and magazines, I searched for images of girls that looked like me. As a biracial girl growing up in Chicago there wasn't a lot there, positive or otherwise…. Somehow my story just wasn't there. I was too young to start reading Faulkner; I hadn't seen Imitation of Life and so I wasn't aware that I was supposed to be the insane, oversexed tragic Mulatto gal. Certainly my otherness was sometimes so palpable it was a

[290] Jennifer Beals, interview by Tavis Smiley, *The Tavis Smiley Show,* PBS, February 7, 2011.

wonder that anyone could see me. I was that invisible. And certainly when society fails to write your story there is an unspoken message that the story is not worth telling."[291] Beals's speech points towards a desire to see positive visible images of multiraciality on screen and expresses a need for recognition of multiracial individuals and communities. However, Beals's focus on finding similar imagery centers on appearance. Therefore, this emphasis on racial ambiguity as equal to multiraciality again focuses on visual appearances. The idea of social progress and inclusion builds upon visual images and appearances considered to be racially ambiguous.

However, Beals also attempts to articulate biracial identities as part of specific social locations that can be diverse and varied. Regarding her role on *The L Word*, Beals also states, "I wanted to explore what it means to be bi-racial in a larger cultural context and what it means within the gay community."[292] Beals's denial of a public claiming of a black identity and later her assertion of a biracial identity demonstrates a reconfiguration of positions regarding racial identity in a post-civil rights context. The very reconfiguration of her role as Bette to be specifically biracial and the use of biraciality as a key part of the narrative demonstrate an attempt to mark a racialized positionality as a way to critique white privilege and the complicity of racial invisibility. Beals's assertion of multiraciality evokes the process of disidentification that Jose Muñoz illustrates. Muñoz writes, "Instead of buckling under the pressures of dominant ideology (identification, assimilation) or attempting to break free of its inescapable sphere

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[291] Jennifer Beals, POWER UP Gala, November 7, 2004, http://www.power-up.net/pages/news_events2.html, www.youtube.com/watch?v=nD3FTUsTBPM
[292] Adam Sternbergh, "Black in a Flash, " *New York Magazine*, May 21 2005, http://nymag.com/nymetro/arts/tv/11057/

(counteridentification, utopianism), this 'working on and against' is a strategy that tries to transform cultural logic from within."[293] Beals does not identify as black or white in a black-white binary system, but she also does not identify as raceless and thereby, does not disregard the historical and material weight of race. Rather, Beals attempts to reshape the way of talking about race in the United States.

Furthermore, her biracial celebrity persona and request to increase biracial characters opens up the potential to shape cultural imaginaries of the nation that can precede political action and social justice. With a greater number of mixed-race public voices and characters onscreen, a wider spectrum of experiences and questions about identity can also be engaged. Therefore, at issue is not just to have mixed-race role models, but to understand how mixed-race voices and cultural representations of mixed-race can work towards abolishing oppression. However, Beals's public persona of a biracial identity has yet to demonstrate how biraciality will not be co-opted towards a raceless politics in which race still has meaning but cannot be articulated as having social, economic, or political weight. Furthermore, the establishment of mixed-race identities in Brazil has not necessarily led to greater social justice. Beals, then contrasts with the Brazilian actress, Camila Pitanga who identifies as black in favor of a racialization rearticulated in discourses of power.

<u>Halle Berry as Heir to Tragic Mulatta Icon</u>

When Halle Berry won the Oscar for Best Actress in 2002, she was applauded not just for her performance, but also for winning an Oscar as a black actress. Berry's speech demonstrates that she was highly aware of her positioning as a black figure rather than

[293] Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 11

specifically a mixed-race figure. Her speech articulated her place among other path-breaking black actresses, "The moment is so much bigger than me. This moment is for Dorothy Dandridge, Lena Horne, Diahann Carroll. It's for the women that stand beside me - Jada Pinkett, Angela Bassett and it's for every nameless, faceless woman of color that now has a chance because this door tonight has been opened."[294] Berry places herself as part of a pantheon of black talented female actresses such as Dorothy Dandridge who were limited in opportunities for recognition and advancement due to racial barriers. Berry's speech also recognizes herself as part of contemporary black actresses who are derived from this legacy. Berry cites earlier black actresses engaged in the struggle over representation and discrimination and sought to reclaim their denied recognition by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. Later the black press celebrated Berry as a trailblazer along with other Oscar-winning black actors on the cover of the November 2005 *Ebony* with the heading, "Denzel, Halle, and Jamie: Celebrating 60 Historic Years of Civil Rights, Movies, Sports, Politics, Music, Religion, TV, Fashion, Black Arts, and More!" The magazine cited the three actors coming together for a photo shoot as a historic gathering. Therefore, the Oscar win placed Berry along a pantheon of U.S. black heroes.

However, in Berry's speech, she does not name other previous actresses who won for Best Supporting Actress, such as Whoopi Goldberg nor does she name other well-known black actresses such as Hattie McDaniel. Rather, Berry positions herself among

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[294] Halle Berry, "Acceptance Speech." March 24, 2002. *Academy Awards Acceptance Speech Database.* http://aaspeechesdb.oscars.org/ics-wpd/exec/icswppro.dll?AC=qbe_query&TN=AAtrans&RF=WebReportPermaLink&MF=oscarsmsg.ini&NP=255&BU=http://aaspeechesdb.oscars.org/index.htm&QY=find+acceptorlink+%3d074-3.

other past black actresses recognized as beautiful. The actresses such as Dandridge and Horne are also well-known light-skinned actresses who fit in closer to Eurocentric Hollywood beauty standards than actresses such as McDaniel. Berry places herself as part of a legacy of black actresses, who were celebrated and recognized as beautiful, yet given limited roles and opportunities due to their race. Actresses such as Dandridge were promoted as exotic yet familiar to white audiences due to their skin color and phenotypical features. Therefore, actresses who do not fit into beauty norms due to body size, skin color, and less European phenotypical features serve as counterpoints to feminine beauty ideals. Halle Berry's arrival into Hollywood, like Vanessa Williams's,[295] entrance into film and television, was initially through beauty pageants and modeling.

While Berry's speech specifically names black female actresses, her speech also attempts to speak for other women of color. Berry's choice of women of color rather than black leaves open the space for women of color who are not black to identify with Berry. Therefore, Berry puts her struggle and her achievement as representative of women of color. Berry's "nameless and faceless" description of women of color serves to highlight the invisibility of women of color in Hollywood. As the Oscars serve as an awards event and a celebrity spectacle, it is highly symbolic of popular culture relationships with race, gender, and class. Therefore, the Oscars awards are often charged as shifting to political needs, and many celebrities have used the Oscars to articulate political and social

[295] Vanessa Williams, while identifying as black, is also notable as following along with certain beauty standards as both her parents are of mixed-race black and white descent.

advocacy.[296] Berry's speech works against the reduction of women of color to faceless masses and points out the underrepresentation and exclusion of women of color on the silver screen. While Berry claims that her award is for women of color, the actresses she cites are all black.

During Berry's speech proclaiming the symbol of her Oscar win for women of color, the camera cut to Berry's white mother, Judith Ann Hawkins seated in the audience and Berry's black husband, Eric Benet. The juxtaposition of Berry's articulation of the Oscar's symbolism and her part in a legacy of black actresses alongside images of Judith Ann Hawkins and Berry's husband, Eric Benet illuminates constructions of blackness and mixedness. The camera's flashing of Berry's white mother potentially undermines Berry's assertion of her Oscar win as an important moment in African-American history by questioning Berry's black identity and her capacity to speak on behalf of other black actresses with a contrasting image of her white mother. However, this moment points more closely to the construction of mixed-race as inclusive within a black identity. Therefore, Berry's choice to identify as black does not necessarily correlate with a disidentification with her white mother. While many multiracial activists have argued that choosing a monoracial category such as black makes multiracial children choose a parent or disidentify with a parent, Berry's appearance at the Oscars with her mother demonstrates the capacity to inhabit a space of black mixedness. The image of Berry's mother alongside Berry counters ideas of an authentic blackness. Berry's positioning of herself among other black actresses points to an intersectional and strategic approach to

[296] For example, Marlon Brando sent Sacheen Littlefeather in his place for the 1973 Oscars in order to talk about Hollywood's treatment of American Indians. In 1977, Vanessa Redgrave critiqued Zionist radicalism in her speech.

racial identity that reinforces how racialized interpellation, national historical context, and self-identity are intertwined. The visual understanding of Berry as black is complicated by the image of Berry's white mother, yet the political understanding of Berry as black is reinforced by her strategic alignment with black actresses and the understanding of the historical significance of her Oscar awards show moment.

Berry's reference to Dorothy Dandridge in her speech also serves to highlight the link between Berry and Dandridge's legacy. Berry's Oscar win functions to fulfill Dandridge's legacy. The relationship between Dorothy Dandridge and Halle Berry serves to narrate a progression from a tragic mulatto figure born prior to a civil rights era United States to the mulatta figure in a multicultural liberal United States. This narrative is particularly telling in Berry's representation of Dorothy Dandridge, another mulatta screen siren figure.

Dandridge's roles in films like *Carmen Jones* (1954), *Island in the Sun* (1957), and *Tamango* (1957) fit into narratives of the tragic sexual mulatta. While in *Bright Road* (1953), Dandridge played a teacher in a representation of black upward mobility. In *Bright Road*, Dandridge's costume and her character's self-sufficiency do not relate to the symbol of the mulatto or black victim, but rather as part of black bourgeois womanhood.[297] In *Bright Road*, the setting is in a segregated remote area of the South and Dandridge is represented as prim and gentle.[298] The film's makeup supervisor created a special pancake base to make Dandridge's skin look darker for the role.[299] Carmen

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[297] Mia Mask, *Divas on Screen: Black Women in American Film* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 50.
[298] Ibid, 49.
[299] Bogle, *Tom, Coons, Mulattos, and Bucks*, 227.

Jones initiated Dandridge's diva stardom and crossover appeal. In the all-black musical, *Carmen Jones*, Dandridge plays an overtly sexual fallen woman who is eventually punished with death. Through marketing and narrative strategies, Hollywood constructed Dandridge as a beauty, yet dangerously erotic and exotic. Dandridge claimed, "America was not geared to make me into a Liz Taylor, Monroe, or a Gardner. My sex symbolism was as a wanton, a prostitute, not as a woman seeking love and a husband, like other women."[300] Following *Carmen Jones*, Dandridge mostly played seductresses roles. Positioned as "Hollywood's first love goddess of color,"[301] Dandridge's roles did not allow her to escape this category. Film scholar, Donald Bogle argues that Dandridge typifies the tragic mulatta stereotype of a beautiful, promiscuous, discontent and confused woman with the merging of her screen image, publicity, and lifestyle.[302]

Although Dandridge became the first African-American woman to receive an Oscar nomination for Best Actress in 1955, her career was limited due to Hollywood's lack of options. While her physical appearance suggested glamorous roles, her race excluded her from having a career akin to white starlets. She died of an overdose at the age of 42. Despite these hardship and limitations, Dandridge, like Berry occupied a relatively privileged position within Hollywood in comparison to other black actresses as both Berry and Dandridge have been constructed as desirable, beautiful, and sexy. Hollywood and the black press created an image of Dandridge as desirable and beautiful and Dandridge, herself worked to maintain this image as part of her public persona. Like

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[300] Bogle, *Dorothy Dandridge*, 400.
[301] Karen Alexander, "Fatal Beauties: Black Women in Hollywood," in *Stardom: Industry of Desire,* ed. Christine Gledhill (London: Routledge, 1991), 52.
[302] Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mulattos and Bucks*, 175.

Lena Horne, Dorothy Dandridge followed a list of black glamour girls with very light skin. For example, in the 1954 *Ebony* article, "New Beauties versus Old," Dorothy Dandridge and Lena Horne were compared with previous light-skinned actresses, such as Fredi Washington, famous for her role as a passing figure in *Imitation of Life* (1934).[303] The fascination with light-skinned women as mulatta figures has continued in Berry's stardom. While Berry's mixed-race heritage, light skin, and European features have granted her privileges, celebrity access, and crossover appeal, Berry cannot pass for white. Berry, unlike Beals, does not have the option nor the specter of the mulatta passing narrative. While Beals might be able to play or be accused of playing "raceless" characters, Berry's looks do not permit her to play various ethnicities. Like Dandridge, Berry negotiates shifting standards of American beauty, femininity, and sexuality within the Hollywood industry.

While Berry's career has been more successful than that of Dandridge, the link between Dandridge and Berry was already in the public mindset given Berry's representation of Dandridge in the 1999 HBO film, *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge*. In Berry's Oscar speech, she further established linkages between herself and Dorothy Dandridge. It is notable that the careers of both Halle Berry and Dorothy Dandridge have often relied on films where their light skin color and phenotypical features are significant for the racial and sexual matter of the film. In a blatant exemplification of the tragic mulatta theme that capitalizes on Berry's mixed-race background, Halle Berry played Alex Haley's paternal grandmother, a daughter of a black slave and a white slaveowner, in the television miniseries *Queen* (1993). Cultural critic, Lisa Jones described *Queen* as

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[303] "New Beauties versus Old," *Ebon*y, March 1954, 54.

a “tragic mulatress text: Not only does Queen drag out mulatto clichés from every B movie and paperback, it luxuriates in them with eerie aplomb.”[304] In the miniseries, Queen attempts to pass as white. However, by casting the light-skinned Berry, who is still recognizably black, the miniseries assumes a resonance that blackness must still be visually evident.

In the 1990s, Berry appeared in numerous films as the young urban black professional and desirable girlfriend such as *Boomerang* (1992) and *B.A.P.S.* (1997) or as major characters in social problem films, such as *Losing Isaiah* (1995) and *Bulworth* (1998). In these films, Berry is unambiguously black. However, the press consistently cited Berry’s biracial heritage. Competing discourses of biraciality and blackness are part of Berry’s star text. While Berry claimed, “I never once announced that I am interracial. I was never the one to bring it up. I've
always said, ‘I'm Black, I'm African-American.’ But reports constantly ask what childhood was like for an interracial person. And believe me, being interracial wasn't as big an issue as these articles might lead you to believe. Sure, there were problems, but there were other things in my childhood that caused me more pain than being interracial.”[305] Berry’s own racial identity is often at odds with how the media constructs Berry’s persona. Berry’s star text is embedded within legacies and contemporary desires of the mulatta.

In contrast to previous 1990s films with Berry reading as a black character, *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge* reinscribed Berry as a mulatta and positioned Berry as

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[304] Lisa Jones, *Bulletproof Diva: Tales of Race, Sex, and Hair* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 50.
[305] Lisa Jones, “The Blacker the Berry.” *Essence,* June 1994, 60.

heir to Dandridge's stardom and legacy. By associating the legendary Dandridge and Berry together, audiences and producers viewed Berry as a star. The marketing for *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge* showed Berry in a glamorous low-cut dress above images of the Hollywood sign and a mansion with the text, "Right Woman, Right Place, Wrong Time." With audiences able to see Berry as already inhabiting Dandridge's charisma and as the right woman, the text prods viewers to think of Berry as now being in the right place and the right time. Thereby, the idea is that Berry lives in an age of multiculturalism rather than an age of segregation.

In the *Ebony* March 1999 article, "Halle Berry: On How She Found Dorothy Dandridge's Spirit and Healed Her Own," Berry is represented as a re-embodiment of Dandridge.[306] Magazines reify the idea of the Berry as the tragic mulatta while simultaneously denying this association of Berry as tragic mulatta. The association of Dandridge as tragic mulatta with a doomed fate haunts Berry's film image and her public persona. In the *Ebony* August 1997 article, "Who Should Play the Tragic Star?," Berry states, "For me, the paradox that makes Dorothy such a fascinating character is that she was a pioneer who possessed incredible inner strength to achieve…but ultimately the industry did not know what to do with her. I see many parallels in my life today. It is tough to get good roles, and personal tragedies can often overshadow professional triumphs."[307]

Berry's multiple divorces and history of domestic abuse in relationships have been fodder for media that has represented Berry as a tragic figure. In a 2010 interview

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[306] Laura Randolph, "Halle Berry: On How She Found Dorothy Dandridge's Spirit and Healed Her Own," *Ebony*, August 1999, 90-98.
[307] "Who Should Play the Tragic Star?," *Ebony* August 1997, 66.

with CNN, she talked about witnessing the domestic abuse of her mother and how this experience framed much of her low self-esteem.[308] Furthermore, she has recurrently acknowledged that the deafness in her left ear was caused by abuse from a previous boyfriend and recently linked her mother's history of domestic abuse with her own, "I devalued myself and thought I wasn't worth it. I chose partners that mimicked my father. It was only when I was in an abusive relationship and blood squirted on the ceiling of my apartment and I lost 80% of my hearing in my ear that I realized, I have to break the cycle."[309] Berry's series of failed relationships further solidifies her as a tragic figure. The 1994 *Redbook* article, "Beauty and the Brave" situates Berry's obstacles such as the abandonment of her father and multiple relationships of domestic abuse. The article presents major league baseball player, David Justice, as the solution to restoring Berry's trust in men. However, after Berry's divorce from Justice, the media focused on her violent relationship with Justice.[310] Berry's later marriage with singer Eric Bonet became well-known in the media due to Bonet's infidelity.[311] The media depictions of these relationships serve to present Berry as vulnerable and thus, similar to Dandridge.

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[308] Halle Berry, interview by Alina Choa, *American Morning*, "Big Stars, Big Giving," *CNN* December 14, 2010

[309] Michael Arceneaux, "Halle Berry on Breaking Cycle of Violence
The Oscar winner talks history of domestic abuse at fundraiser," *BET*, June 20, 2011, http://www.bet.com/news/celebrities/2011/06/21/halle-berry-on-breaking-cycle-of-violence.html

[310] "Justice is Served, " *People*, October 21, 1996, www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20142560,00.html

[311] Karen S. Schneider, "Enough is Enough: After Struggling to Rebuild Her Marriage, Halle Berry Leaves Her Cheating Husband, Eric Benét—the Latest in a Line of Men Who've Failed Her. So Why Can't One of the World's Most Beautiful Women Find a Half-Decent Guy?" *People*, October 20, 2003, 64-66.

Many articles also reference Dandridge's tragic relationships as parallel to that of Berry. The 1999 *Washington Post* article, "Halle Berry, in Character: For the Actress, Dorothy Dandridge Is a Star Worth Shooting For," cemented this image of Berry as Dandridge. Drawing parallels between Dandridge and Berry, Parker ties together the two stars with an image of Berry and the title, "Introducing Halle Berry" and thereby, suggests that Berry is in fact another reincarnation of Dandridge. Parker cites Berry's vulnerability as a key commonality to Dandridge and notes Berry's nearly attempted suicide after her divorce from David Justice. Parker further notes that like Dandridge, Berry has faced major difficulties in finding suitable roles. Despite her beauty and exotic sexual appeal, another significant quality in the rhetoric used to describe Berry is the emphasis on her vulnerability, which recalls nineteenth-century models of the idealized tragic mulatta. Very few articles mention Berry's acting skills, but rather there is a focus on her personal life and tribulations. The end of Parker's article hints at Berry's embodiment of Dandridge's tragic personal life, but also opens a glimmer of hope in an age of multiculturalism that Berry will not be destined to the same fate. Parker writes, "Everybody is waiting to see whether this actress will reprise her character role as a tragic beauty, or take her turn at star."[312] Other titles of articles on Berry imply Berry's tragic mulatta status such as "The Beautiful and the Damned,"[313] and a biography titled,

[312] Lonnae O'Neal Parker, "Halle Berry, in Character: For the Actress, Dorothy Dandridge Is a Star Worth Shooting For," *Washington Post*, August 20 1999, C8.
[313] Lynn Hirschberg, "The Beautiful and Damned," *The New York Times Magazine,* December 23, 2001, 26.

Halle Berry: A Stormy Life.[314] Like Dandridge and other tragic mulatta figures, Berry is seen as possessing an indescribable beauty, but is hampered by tragic misfortunes.

Berry's sexual desirability and availability are tied to the legacies of the mulatta figure. Much of this sexual desirability relies on a sense of white male entitlement for the bodies of women of color and specifically, the mulatta body. For example, when Halle Berry announced Adrian Brody as Best Actor at the 2003 Academy Awards, he takes hold of her and kisses her as she appears surprised. If placed within narratives of mulatta sexuality, Berry is presumed to have already consented. Furthermore, Berry is represented as so sexually irresistible that it is not Brody's fault for giving in to temptation. Adrian Brody later explained his kiss, "If you ever have an excuse to do something like that, that was it."[315] By showcasing his privilege and using the mulatta body, Brody became even more desirable himself. A *USA Today* article proclaims, "With an impromptu kiss, a sex symbol was born." The article continues, "If all the underdog nominee from *The Pianist* had done while accepting his best-actor statuette was to put the smackdown on presenter Halle Berry — and a swooningly smooth scoop-and-dip it was, too — many female TV watchers would still be fanning themselves over the impulsive act."[316] Therefore, white male sexuality is intertwined with mulatta sexuality so that Brody's demonstration of power makes him more masculine.

[314] Frank Senello, *Halle Berry: A Stormy Life* (London: Virgin Books, 2003).
[315] Leo Ebersole and Curt Wasgner, "Sealed with a Kiss", *Chicago Tribune*, March 25, 2003, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2003-03-25/news/0303250408_1_michael-moore-red-carpet-trend-analyst
[316] Robert Hanashiro, "A kiss isn't just a kiss," *USA Today,* March 30, 2003, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/2003-03-30-adrien-brody_x.htm

The representation of Halle Berry's turbulent relationship with white Canadian model, Gabriel Aubry also demonstrates the tension between the hope for interracial relationships and mixed-race children to dissipate race and the reality of racial conflicts within many of these relationships. As Warren Beatty's character in *Bulworth* (in which Berry played his love interest) proclaims, "All we need is a voluntary, free-spirited, open-ended program of procreative racial deconstruction." Interracial relationships do not necessarily erase racial and gender hierarchies and multiraciality does not necessarily directly translate to a predetermined identity or racial utopia. For example, the debates over the multiracial category demonstrate competing political and social interests. The idea that multiraciality will automatically lead to increased racial tolerance and harmony provides a false hope. Yet, prominent scholars such as Orlando Patterson still speculate that, "mixing is the best thing that could happen because by means of such a middle group people feel an investment on both sides."[317] After Berry and Aubry's breakup, various gossip media sources discussed the racial and gender dynamics of their custody battle with headlines such as "Halle Berry's Daddy Hurled 'N' Word at Her."[318] The ensuing controversy over the truthfulness of Berry's allegations and the idea that Berry must be crazy feeds into stereotypes of the unstable tragic mulatta and negates the vision of a postracial society generated by interracial relationships and mixed-race children.

The racial makeup and identity of Berry and Aubry's daughter, mixed-race daughter Nahla has also generated much media discussion. When Halle Berry announced

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[317] As quoted in J. Gross "Diversity: Growing Mixed Race Population Seeks Recognition and a More Inclusive Way to Define Ourselves." *Los Angeles Times*. January 14, 1996.
[318] "Halle Berry's Baby Daddy Hurled 'N' Word at Her," February 2, 2011 http://www.tmz.com/2011/02/02/halle-berry-gabriel-aubrey-nahla-custody-daughter-expletive-n-word-bitch-expletives/

that she sees her daughter as black, Berry evoked a tension between race as biological and race as a political, cultural and social identity. In a March 2011 issue of *Ebony*, Berry states her identity and how she sees her daughter, " I had to decide for myself and that's what she's going to have to decide-how she identifies in the world. And I think, largely that will based on how the world identifies her. That's how I identify myself. But I feel like she's Black. I'm black and I'm her mother, and I believe in the one-drop theory."[319] While the multiracial movement, the 2000 census, growing awareness of multiracial populations, and the increasing popularity of multiracial celebrities has decreased a rigid one-drop rule, Berry's comments conjured up images of Jim Crow laws and a U.S. history of racial segregation. Berry bluntly rejects a postracial vision of racelessness and the absence of racism. While Berry might not have declared a desire for the racism embedded in the one-drop rule, she does point out how racial identity is often constructed in relation to how others interpellate one's identity. Therefore, Berry does not proclaim an optimistic utopist vision of a mixed-race society. Rather she observes a society in which racial differences still do matter and racial identity is a combination of self-definition and the definition that others designate.

Berry's invocation of the one-drop rule reflects an awareness of race rather than a disavowal of race. Berry's essentialism is not a call for authenticity, but an acknowledgement of the linkage between racial identities and racialized bodies. Berry also notes that she sees Nahla as black, but she does not dictate for the future that Nahla will always see herself that way. Berry does emphasize that Nahla, like Berry will

[319] Amy DuBois Barnett, "On the Very Solid, Fantastically Full Life of Halle Berry," *Ebony*, March 2011, 78.

eventually make a decision. Berry simultaneously refutes racial identity as genetic and ancestral at the same time that Berry reveals her own notions of racial identity following the one-drop rule. Berry has set the parameters of blackness for herself, but does not determine that Nahla will choose to do so in the same way.

Camila Pitanga's Public Persona within Brazilian Racial Structures

An examination of mixed-race celebrity star texts demonstrates processes by which racialized bodies are invested with social meaning, illustrates the performativity of race, and shows the transnational dimensions of race, gender, and sexuality in Brazil and the United States. The media framing around Brazilian actress Camila Pitanga oscillates between typical Brazilian media themes of beauty and glamour and her black racial self-identification. While media descriptions of her body are often not coded in black physical terms, her self-identity in interviews is emphasized as black. Celebrations of *mestiçagem* and the idealization of the *mulata* as desire have historically circulated in Brazil. However, alternate paradigms of race can emerge based on how race is performed and interpellated. When looking at Pitanga together with Beals and Berry, it is evident that racial ambiguity needs to be understood in terms of historical and national contexts. Beals's stardom began in the 1980s U.S. postcivil rights era in which a black-white binary was still dominant. By the 2000s, the burgeoning multiracial movement, the growing consciousness of mixed-race identities, and the sharp increase in multiracial stars, provided a context in which Beals could claim a biracial identity. Berry, in contrast, claims a black identity, but acknowledges her mixed-race heritage. Dorothy Dandridge's celebrity, a continuing fascination with racially mixed actresses, and the allure of Berry's mulatta sexuality, have facilitated Berry's stardom. Berry, Beals, and

Pitanga all negotiate the politics of inclusion of women of African and European descent and tensions over the management of blackness in the Americas.

Pitanga's self-identification as *negra* (black) is a refutation of a hegemonic Brazilian national identity that privileges mixed identity. This self-identification then can be read as part of an oppositional response to the dominant national identity, constructed in large part by Gilberto Freyre. In Freyre's framework, the racial mixing prevalent throughout Brazilian history and the celebration of the *mulata* became proof of a racially harmonious Brazilian society. Therefore, actresses such as Camila Pitanga fit into a physical realization of *mestiçagem* as demonstrated by descriptions in magazines such as a 2005 *RG Vog*ue cover proclaiming her as "A síntese do Brasil" (The synthesis of Brazil).[320] As mixed-race female figures are offered as the epitome of racial democracy and thereby, function to limit discussions of racism and racial identity, Pitanga's identification as black is especially salient in this discussion over the political stakes of claiming a black identity.

Brazilian scholars have noted that characters and actors of African descent are absent or relegated to minor stereotypical roles, such as maids in Brazilian film and television.[321] However, this climate is changing. Recently, there have been more characters and actors of African descent on television. In 2009, Globo TV's *Viver a Vida* featured Taís Araújo playing the first black female protagonist in a primetime *telenovela*. This historical moment in Brazilian mass media is related to other recent developments, such as the growth of the black movement, quotas for non-white fashion models and

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[320] *RG Vogue Brazil*, no.42, 2005

[321] For a more in-depth study, see Joel Zito Araújo, A *Negação do Brasil* : *O negro na telenovela brasileira* (São Paulo: Senac, 2000).

affirmative action in universities. In the Brazilian media world, which favors whiteness, Pitanga is an exception in that she has modeled in advertising campaigns and regularly has starred in *telenovela*s. However, the majority of Pitanga's roles play into tropes and stereotypes of women of African descent. In the *telenovelas, Belíssim*a (2005) and *Cama de Gato* (2009), Pitanga's characters are able to ascend from poor maids to the wives of financially well-off white men through their humbleness and moral decency. This ascendance depends on white men and plays into tropes of *branqueamento*. Pitanga's light skin color and appearance have allowed her to enter into *telenovela*s, but within restricted roles and terms. Pitanga's casting in *telenovelas* masks the limits of the myth of racial democracy. This masking is a crucial comparison for the United States in light of post-racial rhetoric and the use of mixed-race people to promote a post-racial agenda.

In Brazil, while whiteness is aspired to, desirable women are often considered *mulata* or *morena.* The inclusive term *morena* can be used in various linguistic contexts to refer to almost any combination of darker physical features. Therefore, *morena* is the polite way to refer to a woman with darker skin or to a brunette. The very ambiguity of this term allows for a contextual relationship in which racial signifiers are constantly shifting. Many magazines, articles, and *morena* publicity materials use the term *morena* to describe Pitanga. The descriptions of Pitanga as *morena* in the media highlight her ambiguous racial looks. In contrast, most magazines rarely point out an actress as white. When asked in interviews about the presence of Taís Araújo and herself as black actresses in protagonist roles on *telenovelas*, Pitanga has remarked that it will be true progress when actresses do not need to be pointed out as a black actress.[322] To be a

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[322] Vera Gudin, "Pitanga em Flor," *Claudia,* April 2010, 34.

woman of African descent then in Brazil is to occupy a low rank in Brazilian social hierarchies. Therefore, many women of African descent hesitate to admit their own blackness. To call someone a "*negra*" or "*preta*" within this racial democracy ideology is to separate the woman from the ideal mixed Brazilian imaginary and denigrate them as a separate category associated with ugliness and slavery. For example in a 1998 *Veja* article, Pitanga commented that many people have told her that she is *morena* because she is too pretty to be *negra*.[323]

However, when *Folha de São Paulo*, a major national newspaper, surveyed people regarding the racial makeup of various celebrities and politicians, only 27 percent saw Camila as *negra* while 36 percent her as *parda* (a census category meaning brown or mixed). Therefore, 36 percent see Camila Pitanga as *parda* despite her close associations with her famous Afro-Brazilian actor father, Antonio Pitanga. Additionally, Camila is also associated with her darker skinned actor brother, Rocco Pitanga and her stepmother, Benedita Silva, a well-known Afro-Brazilian senator. Camila Pitanga and her father, Antonio have also played daughter and father characters in *A Próxima Vítima* (1995) and *Cama de Gato.* Given the visibility of her family in the public eye, Pitanga's familial relationships would seem to suffice as a legitimizing of her black identity. However, these familial relationships do not always trump over visual appearance. Therefore, Pitanga's self-identification as *negra* when she has the option to identify as *mulata, morena*, or *parda* or even *branca* is politically strategic.

Pitanga's identification as *negra* also coincides with a push to group Brazilians of

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[323] Rodrigo Cardoso and Laura Capriglione, "Da cor de sucesso: Ídolos negros contam como estão ajudando a romper a barreira do preconceito," *Veja*, June 24, 1998, http://veja.abril.com.br/240698/p_098.html

African descent as *negro* rather than maintaining multiple gradated color categories. The Afro-Brazilian movement in Brazil has increasingly pressured the state to include the term *negro* as part of the legislation.[324] Although *negro* has never been an official census category, *negro* has been used historically by race-conscious Afro-Brazilian organizations such as the Frente Negra Brasileira in the 1930s, the Teatro Experimental do Negro in the 1940s, and the Movimento Negro Unificado Contra Discriminação Racial (MNU) in the 1970s and 1980s.[325] This term *negro*, which is still not officially on the census, potentially rearticulates Afro-Brazilian identity as the Brazilian state has long used a tertiary system of *branco* (white)*, pardo* (brown), and *preto* (black) in a raced and color black white spectrum. The *negro* category subsumes *preto* and *pardo* classifications. While differing from the United States context and the multiracial census category controversy, the suggestion for a *negro* category self-consciously rearticulates race-making for specific political purposes and reopens the issues of racial identification in pubic discussion.

By aligning herself publicly with the black movement and the need to open up space for more Afro-Brazilian actors, Camila Pitanga defies stereotypical assumptions of the *morena*, who aspires to enter into whiteness by rejecting associations with blackness.

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[324] Dora De Lima Bertulio, "Enfrentamento do Racismo em um Projeto Democrático." in *Multiculturalismo e Racismo: Uma Comparação Brasil-Estados Unidos,* ed. Jesse Souza (Brasilia: Paralelo 15, 1996),189-208

[325] See Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998). Michael Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power: The "Movimento Negro" of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil, 1945-1988* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Abdias do Nascimento, "Teatro experimental do negro: trajetória e reflexões," *Estudos Avançados* 18, no.50 (2004): 209-224, http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0103-40142004000100019&lng=en&tlng=pt. 10.1590/S0103-40142004000100019.

She also inserts herself into a legacy of other Afro-Brazilian actors and activists. Furthermore, Pitanga arrives in a time when claiming a black identity can be read as a symbol of black resistance to racism. Pitanga's claim to a black identity includes mixed-race Brazilians and works beyond the erotic symbol of the *mulata* in a white patriarchal framework. Therefore, Pitanga's use of a black identity as subject moves from the *mulata* symbol as object. By its very existence, the emergence of the black movement challenges the myth of racial democracy, and by seeking to define an oppositional black identity, works against the dominance of *mestiçagem*.

While both Halle Berry and Camila Pitanga identify as black in their respective national landscapes, Berry evokes the historical one-drop rule and her negotiation of how people in the United States see her. Pitanga, in contrast, works against historical paradigms of mestiçagem and how many Brazilians see her. Race, for Pitanga then, is not a function of color or biology, but of political commitment. In an interview with *Raca*, a black Brazilian magazine, Pitanga stated, "Eu me considero ativa no movimento pró-negro. Repudio qualquer forma de preconceito, discriminação e agressão, não só contra o negro, mas contra a mulher, as crianças, o trabalho escravo, etc. Acredito que exercer a função social é uma escolha de cidadania, independentemente da profissão que a pessoa ocupa. Entendo que a minha profissão cria um foco a mais de atenção e é bom poder ter a visibilidade que tenho para defender as causas em que acredito."[326] [I consider myself active in the pro-black movement. I repudiate any form of prejudice, discrimination, and aggression, not just against blacks, but also against women, children, slave labor, etc. I believe that to exercise this social function is a choice of citizenship, independently of the

[326] Eliane Martins, " Mulher, Mãe, e Militante," *Raça,* 138 (2009), 62.

profession that someone occupies. I understand that my profession increases this focused attention and it is a good form of power to have this visibility that I have to defend causes that I believe in.][327]

In this way, Jennifer Beals and Camila Pitanga resist the way in which the nation has ascribed racial identities, respectively in the United States and Brazil. While the press and Beals emphasized her place as an outsider, Pitanga's identification places her within an Afro-Brazilian collective. The media depiction of Beals frames her alterity rather than as part of a multiracial and/or black community. In contrast, Pitanga inserts herself as an insider rather than an outsider even when responding to comments that she does not look black. In Pitanga's case, she enacts what Muñoz would term, "disidentificatory practices" that rely on a strategy of resistance and survival. With Pitanga's phenotypical features that would typically not be labeled as *negra*, she enters " a disempowered politics or positionality that has been rendered unthinkable by the dominant culture."[328] For Pitanga, the tension of disidentification depends on a questioning of the national racial ideology of *mestiçagem* and racialized categories, such as *morena*, with which Pitanga disidentifies. By disidentifying as *morena*, Pitanga also resists a gendered and sexualized notion of beauty and desirability resting outside of blackness. Pitanga connects her role as a public black figure to other struggles against forms of oppression. She performs and asserts her identity in opposition to the expected norm of *morenidade* (brownness), that has been associated as more desirable and beautiful than blackness. In this sense, Pitanga's identity is not a black nationalist response nor a reenactment of racial binaries, but rather an

[327] All quote translations in this dissertation are mine, unless otherwise noted.
[328] Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 31.

example of how to use black identity as part of larger social justice issues. Pitanga's identification as *negra* does not imply a black homogeneity, but rather accounts for variance and diversity. However, the politics of individual racial identity does not take place in isolation, but rather are part of larger community and national attitudes around race. The naming, meaning, and physical markers of racial terms and categories are part of significant national debates with real material effects as evidenced by the affirmative action and racial quotas controversies.

In a less publicized case than the twins' fight for inclusion under racial quotas at the Universidade de Brasília, the figure of Camila Pitanga became key as a means to argue for inclusion under racial quotas in another case in 2007. A mixed-race Brazilian student, with a black father and a white mother, was denied university admission under the racial quota system. In her defense, the student's lawyer said that she was Camila Pitanga's color and therefore, should be allowed to enter under racial quotas because the client, Ana Gabriela Clemente de Silva corresponded to the racial criteria of *parda.*[329] The lawyer described Ana as the daughter of a black father, who defines himself as *moreno escuro* and is the same color as the black fashion model, Naomi Campbell. The lawyer argues that despite Ana's *parda* coloring, she did not possess his racial traits as she has a "*rostro afilado*" (sharp face).[330] The lawyer pointed to discrepancies between ancestry, phenotype, self-identification, and the commission's interpretation. The student

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329 Luísa Brito, " UFPR vai recorrer da decisão judicial que obrigou matrícula de aluna cotista," *O Globo*, March 3, 2007, G1.
330 Luísa Brito, "'Ela é a cor de Camila Pitanga,' diz advogado de aluna cotista" *O Globo*, March 7, 2007, G1, http://g1.globo.com/Noticias/Vestibular/0,,MUL9708-5604,00-ELA+E+DA+COR+DA+CAMILA+PITANGA+DIZ+ADVOGADO+DE+ALUNA+COTISTA.html

eventually won her case. This case points to the use of popular culture to make political and social meanings that have on the ground effects. Furthermore, the case demonstrates a gap between self-identity and social interpellation. The visualization of race is again privileged and carries profound material effects. In this case, women who look like Pitanga are considered to be passing for black. Passing for black then can be interpreted as racial opportunism in attempting to qualify for racial quotas when one is not deemed to be black enough to suffer discrimination. This limited view prescribes rigid definitions of blackness and precludes possible racial coalitions that go beyond skin color. Nonetheless, the ambiguous body that is passing for black is even more threatening under the Brazilian racial system because in short it puts the entire racial system of *branqueamento* or aspirations into whiteness under question. The potential for racially ambiguous people to identify as black potentially undermines linked ideas of *mesticagem* and racial democracy.

Under these terms, passing for black is also a radical resistance to this same basis of racism and oppression. However, this denial of racial identity does not preclude a possible future in which the visual fetishization of race trumps racial identity when used as a way to fight racism. When an interviewer in *Raca* commented that many people do not consider Pitanga to be black, Pitanga responded, "Já ouvi e muitas vezes e acho que isso é mais uma demonstração do quanto o preconceito racial pode ser escamoteado, ainda que não se tenha consciência disso."[331] [I have heard that many times and I think that this is another demonstration of the amount of racial prejudice that can be hidden even if there is not consciousness of this.] The slippage between the terms *morena* and

[331] Martins, "Mulher, Mãe, Militante," 63.

negra used to describe Pitanga destabilizes phenotypic visuality as the primary witness for understanding race in Brazil by undercutting the reliability of the viewer. These discrepancies in how blackness is defined in Brazil and the United States calls for new lenses in the construction, meaning, and utility of blackness.

The divergent ways in which Jennifer Beals, Halle Berry and Camila Pitanga position themselves and are constructed through media highlights the way interpellation calls on historical discourses and social and political motivations. For example, in Beals' case, the conventions of the *mulata* and themes of passing intersected with the ways in which she is represented in the 1980s and early 1990s. Yet, the time period of the 2000s allowed a space in which to assert a biracial identity. Mediated images can capture historical memories, yet can also attempt to contest them. Berry's star persona can be understood in relationship to the icon Dorothy Dandridge and therefore, her celebrity image either rewrites Berry as symbolic of other tragic mulattas or presents her as surpassing this image in an age of multiculturalism. Camila Pitanga's public affirmation of herself as *negra* does not necessarily correlate with how she is represented or interpellated in the public sphere and in films and *telenovelas*. Yet, her identity as *negra* also coincides with a rearticulating of understandings of blackness in Brazil and the material stakes involved in claiming a black identity. Looking at the how the public persona intersects with cultural productions provides a way to show how racial formations are not necessarily static, but rather practiced and in flux. Furthermore, these actresses function as threat to the racialized national imaginary--Beals and Berry in the binary racial divisions of the United States and Pitanga in the celebratory rhetoric of *mestiçagem*. Their self-labeling repudiate national racial topographies. In examining

how Beals, Berry, and Pitanga assert their racial identities in the United States and Brazil, it is possible to see how José Muñoz argues that identity practices are "not a priori sites of contestation but instead spaces of productivity where identity's fragmentary nature is accepted and negotiated."[332]

Yet, these actresses are often tamed and reinscribed back into racial, gender, and sexual orderings through the tropes of mixed-race women of African and European descent in film, *telenovelas,* and U.S. television. The tensions between self-labeling, the media depiction of these actresses, and roles in television and film show the constructed nature of race. The star texts of these actresses, films, and television programs demonstrate competing national and racial narratives and articulations of racial identity that are debated and performed within the public sphere. The following chapters will examine some of the roles that Pitanga, Berry, and Beals have played in relation to a negotiation of racial identities and national identities. The star texts and images of these actresses help operationalize the narratives at work in these cultural productions so as to contain and nullify blackness through a focus on the sexual regulation or sexual deviance of the characters. Yet, many of these same cultural productions do allow a potential small space for seeking a mixed-race or black female agency. While Pitanga's star persona often resists dominant national racializations, the following chapter will focus on the *telenovelas* of Camila Pitanga to explore how these cultural productions work within the Brazilian national racial landscape.

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[332] Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 79.

Chapter Three: The *Morena and* the *Mulata* in Brazilian Telenovelas

Building upon the discussion of social, political, and cultural discourses of racial identity, blackness, and mixedness in the previous chapters of this dissertation, this chapter considers how racial ambiguity, blackness, and mixedness are staged in Brazil. By focusing on *telenovelas*, this chapter examines how cultural productions envision the mixed-race female figure in the Brazilian national order. The combination of Camila Pitanga's star text and her dramatic roles inform understandings of race, gender, and sexuality in the Brazilian *telenovela.* While Camila Pitanga asserts a *negra* identity in opposition to the dominant discourse of *mestiçagem* and *branqueamento*, the dramatic roles that she plays do not always align with her self-identity. Pitanga's identity relates to her self-identification and her family's fame and works to inform the reading of Pitanga's characters as having black heritage. In *telenovelas*, her star text, her racially ambiguous body, and popular tropes and performances of mixedness, combine to reveal a containment of blackness. The lessons gained from examining Pitanga's celebrity persona in terms of the management of blackness, whitening, and resistance can be applied to understanding cultural productions writ large and processes of identity formation in Brazil.

In Brazil, like other societies such as the United States with a shared history of colonial sexual violence and slave trade economies, the objectification and commodification of women of color is reworked into contemporary systems of power. Nineteenth and twentieth century cultural productions of mixed-race women of African and European descent demonstrate Eurocentric heteropatriarcal perspectives and the linkages of this system of dominance to *mestiçagem*, *branqueamento*, and blackness.

These legacies of colonialism and nation-building have endured in *telenovelas* while morphing to adapt to contemporary conditions. Observing these legacies and the re-inscription of the mixed-race female body along with limited displays of social agency or resistance to *branqueamento* allows for an understanding of national and racial identities as a process of negotiation.

<u>*Telenovelas* and Mass Culture</u>

The Brazilian *telenovela* is a powerful conduit for the national imaginary. This chapter explores how *telenovelas* frame racially ambiguous women of African descent within national narratives in Brazil. As other scholars have noted, cultural artifacts, such as print and mass media, help form national identity.[333] Following Benedict Anderson's ideas of how print-languages laid out a foundation for national consciousness,[334] *telenovelas* function as integral national projects. The *telenovela* is a significant cultural form for its wide reach and influence in Brazil in terms of its viewing audiences, domestic and foreign consumption, and established presence as an industry. With an average of 45 million viewers and a 58 percent share of the television viewing audience, Globo TV, as the primary television network, is a protagonist in what Maria Immacolata Vasollo Lopes names a "national teledramaturgy." [335] Brazilian *telenovelas* are a significant site for national identity formation and serve as a platform for nation-building

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[333] For example of how imagined communities are constructed through film in Latin America, see Ana Lopez, "Early Cinema and Modernity in Latin America," *Cinema Journal* 40, no. 1(2000): 48–78.; Lisa Shaw and Stephanie Dennison, "Introduction" in *Latin American Cinema: Essays on Modernity, Gender, and National Identity,* Lisa Shaw and Stephanie Dennison, eds.(Jefferson, NC: McFarland, & Company, 2005).
[334] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991).
[335] Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes, "Telenovela como recurso comunicativo," *Matrizes* 3, no. 1 (2010): 4.

and disseminating ideologies of nation, race, sexuality, gender and class through a narrative form. This chapter discusses why television is the main medium for national narratives and why *telenovelas* are the dominant genre for constructing a national imaginary and are a key site for the mediation of race, gender, sexuality, and class formations. *Telenovelas* form narratives that produce and reproduce linkages between national identities and racial formations. In particular, Brazilian *telenovelas* are a rich site of analysis for understanding the function and representation of racially ambiguous female figures in Brazil.

Telenovelas in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have carried on the nation-building work that Latin American novels did in the nineteenth century. As Adriana Estill argues, *telenovelas* have replaced the "foundational fictions" of nineteenth-century romance novels in terms of nation-building, but are still influenced by these newspaper serials, *radionovelas*, and melodrama fictions.[336] With foundational fictions, Latin American nineteenth-century novels served the function of creating a unified national identity.[337] Doris Sommer defined these fictions as "almost inevitably stories of starcrossed lovers who represent particular regions, races, parties, economic interests, and the like. Their passion for conjugal and sexual union spills over to a sentimental readership in a move that hopes to win partisan minds along with hearts."[338] Through romantic narratives, different or conflicting segments of the nation could be conjoined

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[336] See Adriana Estill, "The Mexican *Telenovela* and its Foundational Fictions," in *Latin American Literature and Mass Media*, ed. Deborah Castillo and Edmundo Paz Soldán (New York: Garland, 1991), 169-171.
[337] See Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
[338] Ibid, 5.

through marriage. Sommer's work intends to "locate an erotics of politics, to show how a variety of novel national ideals are ostensibly grounded in 'natural' heterosexual love and in the marriages that provided a figure for apparently nonviolent consolidation.[339]

Like nineteenth-century romance novels, Brazilian *telenovelas* follow the narrative modes of these "foundational fictions" and use melodrama and sentiment to fulfill a project of modernity and nation-building. *Telenovelas* rely on heteronormative and patriarchal models of national identity in the form of romance narratives. However, unlike nineteenth-century novels that featured lovers of different races, Brazilian *telenovelas* have mostly had white main characters with Afro-Brazilian characters in the background. This chapter explores what the presence of racially ambiguous female characters as primary love interests signifies for nation-building project in Brazil. The use of racially ambiguous mixed-race female figures in *telenovelas* presents a possible departure from the racial national imaginary in Brazil.

While the romance narrative is an important structure in the *telenovela,* the melodramatic nature of the genre is key to the affective relationship that viewing audiences have with the *telenovela*. Brazilian *telenovelas* often focus on narratives in which individuals attempt to maintain or obtain social status against obstacles. The *telenovela* then allows for viewers to have an affective mode of pleasure by identifying with the *telenovela* characters. The use of melodrama provides a means of identification with the *telenovela* characters, and hence the imagined national community. *Telenovelas* then are a continuation of other cultural artifacts. Like other historical predecessors of *telenovelas* such as *feuilletons* (melodramas printed in installments by nineteenth-century

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[339] Ibid, 6.

French newspapers and later instituted in Latin America) and *radionovelas* (serialized radio dramas) —*telenovelas* function as complex public mediums.[340]

Cultural forms, such as *telenovelas*, are instruments of national consolidation and modernization. *Telenovelas* function to create modern citizens and subjects. Therefore, *telenovelas* can be thought of as not merely a genre, but as a cultural practice. Martín-Barbero proposes that media should be thought of as "cultural mediations" in which media texts are considered within the incorporation of media content in the creation and re-creation of cultural identities. He argues that a "cultural matrix" links viewers and media texts through popular narratives and histories. Therefore, *telenovelas* mediate meanings that people identify with as part of a greater set of values within the nation.[341] The popularity of *telenovelas* depends on narrative forms that articulate the cultural imagination of Latin America.[342] *Telenovelas* are integrated as part of everyday lives and influence and articulate identity formations.

The leading Brazilian *telenovelas* are shown on primetime television. With new episodes six days a week during an average duration of nine months, *telenovelas* are often thought to be a kind of open serial or more specifically, an "open text."[343] The script is written at the same time that the episodes are shown on television and therefore writers can quickly change the script based on public sentiment and audience reaction in

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[340] Cacilda M. Rêgo and Antonio La Pastina, "Brazil and the globalization of telenovelas," in *Media on the Move: Global Flow and Contra-Flow*, ed. Daya Kishan Thussu (New York: Routledge, 2007), 89-103.
[341] Jesús Martín-Barbero, "Matrices culturales de la telenovela," *Estudios sobre las culturas contemporáneas* 2, no. 5 (1988): 137-164.
[342] Jesus Martin-Barbero, *Communication, Culture, and Hegemony: From the Media to Mediations* (London: Sage Publications, 1993).
[343] Samantha Nogueira Joyce, *Brazilian Telenovelas and the Myth of Racial Democracy* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2012), 9.

order to maintain a high viewership rate. Unlike U.S. soap operas, *telenovelas* have closure and audiences expect an ending that weaves different elements of the narrative together. As the script is usually not completed prior to airing, writers can adapt the script to adapt to public reactions for future episodes. This feedback process is integral to the production of *telenovelas*. Scriptwriters try to take into account popular values and opinions.[344] In this sense, the "open text" format of the *telenovela* is more of a national form than a novel or film because audiences can respond to the text. While some scholars have argued that *telenovelas* merely reflect certain values and viewpoints,[345] the promotion of social merchandising, such as AIDS education, also demonstrate how *telenovelas* also influence public opinion. *Telenovelas* are integral to the public sphere as it is a means in which people can engage in a dialogue about the nation and its future.[346] *Telenovelas*, with the participation of writers, directors, producers, actors, audiences, and external institutions, are a site of negotiation of social issues and meanings attached to gender, sexuality, class, and race.[347]

Telenovelas developed quickly with the advent of television in Brazil. Television

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[344] Renato Ortiz, Sílvia Helena Simões Borelli, and José Mário Ortiz Ramos, *Telenovela: História e Produção* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1989).
[345] Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva, "The Brazilian Case: Manipulation by the Media?" in *Television, Politics, and the Transition to Democracy in Latin America*, ed. Thomas Skidmore, (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press), 137–44.
[346] Thomas Tufte, *Living with the Rubbish Queen: Telenovelas, Culture and Modernity in Brazil* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 2000), 227–31.
[347] For arguments on gender, production, reception, and consumption, see Carolina Acosta-Alzuru, "I am not a feminist ... I only defend women as human beings": The production, representation, and consumption of feminism in a telenovela," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20, no. 3 (2003): 269-294 and Heloisa Buarque Almeida, *Telenovela, consumo e gênero: "muitas mais coisas,"* (Bauru, SP: Anpocs/EDUSC, 2003). For arguments concerning race, see Samantha Joyce Nogueira *Brazilian Telenovelas and the Myth of Racial Democracy* and Joel Zito Araújo, *A negação do Brasil*.

as a medium was introduced to Brazil in 1950 during the Kubitschek government (1955-1961). The Kubitschek government aimed to move Brazil towards modernity through industrialization and regional development. With the high rate of illiteracy in Brazil and the vast distances between different regions, television functioned as a way to provide information to the population. The ties between national integration and *telenovelas* were further forged during the military dictatorship (1964-1988). The military government viewed television as an effective way to create and foster a national identity and to link various disparate far-flung regions across Brazil.[348] The military government imposed strict limits on the number of foreign television programming that could be broadcast in Brazil and severely censored criticism while simultaneously attempting to project a unified national identity. [349] Although TV Globo was created as a private venture, government investments and political favoring facilitated the company's rise as the dominant media force.[350] When Globo TV was instituted with the backing of the military dictatorship, the network delineated its programming goals as "presenting an image of a populace moving together toward modernity, glamour, and a materially enriched, upwardly mobile lifestyle."[351] Furthermore, the military government limited the number

[348] Joseph Straubhaar, "The Development of the *Telenovela* as the Paramount Form of Popular culture in Brazil," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 1 (1982):138-150.
[349] Esther Hamburger, *O Brasil Antenado: a sociedade da novela* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2005).
[350] Roberto Amaral and Cesar Guimarães, "Media Monopoly in Brazil," *Journal of Communication* 44, no. 4 (1994): 26–38; Roberto Amaral and Cesar Guimarães, "Brazilian Television: a Rapid Conversion to the New Order" in *Media and Politics in Latin America: the Struggle for Democracy*. ed. Elizabeth Fox (London: Sage, 1988), 125-137.
[351] Conrad Phillip Kottak, *Prime Time Society: An Anthropological Analysis of Television and*
Culture (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1990), 37

of channels available and strongly favored TV Globo, which allied itself with military interests. Scriptwriters and TV Globo worked within the restraints of the military regime to further the goals of creating a national culture.[352] TV Globo was able to take advantage of its position during the dictatorship.

Through *telenovelas*, TV Globo held an important role in conducting ideological work of national identity formation by bringing the country together onscreen. Nonetheless, the monopolistic legacy of TV Globo still prevails as it remains the dominant television channel in Brazil and is one of the largest networks in the world. TV Globo has been fundamental in the development of the *telenovela* genre into a contemporary medium distinguishable from other Latin American *telenovelas* for their high production value and realistic style.[353] With the success of Tupi network's *Beto Rockfeller* in 1968, Globo adopted conventions that maintained melodramatic structures, but were set in contemporary times with more realistic representations and hence, became

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[352] Sheila Mattos *História da Televisão Brasileira: Uma Visão Econômica, Social e Política* (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 2000).

[353] Ana López contends that while there are different national manifestations of the *telenovela* in Latin America. Brazilian *telenovelas* are known for their cinematic quality high production values and costs. Brazilian *telenovelas* are also considered to be more realistic than other Latin American *telenovelas* and will often feature ambiguous or morally divided characters. In contrast, Mexican *telenovelas* are often weepy, ahistorical, and have clear hero and villain characters. Venezuelan and Colombian *telenovelas* are in between the Brazilian and Mexican style characteristics. Venezuelan *telenovelas* often privilige emotional content over social or historical context, but do not contain the baroque qualities of Mexican *telenovelas*. Colombian *telenovelas* have more concern for historical and social context and are more comedic. While Brazilian *telenovela*s are imported all over the world, recently the SBT network have begun to import more Mexican telenovelas along with producing their own telenovelas. Thereby, SBT has also started to disrupt Globo's dominance. Ana López, "Our Welcomed Guests: Telenovelas in Latin America," in *To be Continued: Soap Operas Around the World,* ed. Robert Clyde Allen (London: Routledge, 1995), 260-262.

a space for broadcasting national identity.[354] Part of this move was due to Brazil's desire to project a modern identity with its rapidly growing economy, urbanization, and the rise of the middle class to affluence. Shooting on location as well as in studios, using colloquial language and everyday fashion, and referencing social and political events, Brazilian *telenovelas* held on to the melodramatic narrative structures but within contemporary time and specific local environments, such as Rio de Janeiro.[355] The high production values and costs are indicative not only of the high quality of productions, but also of the immensity of the *telenovela* industry.

In Brazil, to be cast in a major *telenovela* is of major professional significance and allows for the actor to gain visibility in various media, such as commercials and print campaign ads. The Brazilian *telenovela* model has some similarities to 1930s and 1940s Hollywood production models. TV Globo both produces and broadcasts *telenovelas*. Like the Hollywood star system, Brazilian television stations employ the "star system" that binds actors to networks with permanent contracts. Given Globo's current prominence, there are only a few major actresses at any given moment. With the lack of major Afro-Brazilian actresses onscreen, this limitation is manifold. Therefore, this study on Brazil primarily focuses on one actress-Camilla Pitanga. Such a star system also allows for an intensification of identification with both characters and actors.

Dominant political and economic interests mediate the discourses of

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[354] Hamburger, *O Brasil antenado*, 131; Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart, *The Carnival of Images: Brazilian Television Fiction* (New York: Bergin and Garvey, 1990), 15.

[355] Marcos Napolitano, *Cultura Brasileira: Utopia e Massificação (1950–1980)* (São Paulo: Contexto, 2001), 75-81.

telenovelas.[356] While *telenovelas,* like *Beto Rockefeller* as early on as 1968, included representations of everyday urban life through colloquial language, the absence of struggles against political and social oppression and widespread racism and inequality is notable. Hence, issues of racial discrimination have rarely been present in narratives. While Afro-Brazilians were onscreen in the 1960s and 1970s, their roles were mostly relegated to maids or in service positions, such as bodyguards or butlers to the elite.[357] Even during the early 1990s when some middle-class Afro-Brazilians were displayed one-dimensionally onscreen, these characters, like many of their U.S. counterparts, were portrayed without familial or social networks with other Afro-Brazilians.[358] As Joel Zito Araújo argues, Afro-Brazilians have largely been invisible onscreen due to their social invisibility and marginalization in the narrative.

Popular culture representations are contested terrains of national identity and contradictory sites where meaning is negotiated.[359] Basing his ideas on Benedict Anderson's imagined communities, Mauro Porto describes *telenovelas* as a "mass ceremony" in which images of national identity are negotiated in Brazil.[360] This same concept of a "mass ceremony" can be used to understand how national identity and representations of race, gender, and sexuality are imagined through *telenovelas*. Porto asserts that due to the development and expansion of democracy and a more politically active civil society, *telenovelas* have gradually incorporated new themes and demands

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[356] Thomas Tufte, *Living with the Rubbish Queen*, 5.
[357] Joel Zito Araújo, *A negação do Brasil: O negro na telenovela brasileira*.
[358] Ibid.
[359] Mattelart and Mattelart, *The Carnival of Images*, 149.
[360] Mauro Porto, "Telenovelas and Representations of National Identity in Brazil," *Media, Culture & Society* 33 (2011): 55.

while giving visibility to emergent actors and social issues.[361] With the decline of the military dictatorship and censorship in the mid 1980s, *telenovelas* began to address social and political issues more openly.[362] Globo *telenovelas* shifted "from entertainment containing limited, and sometimes censored, socioeducational material to entertainment with a strong social agenda."[363] Without the military dictatorship, Globo scriptwriters were able to more openly represent social and political concerns, such as strikes and corruption.[364]

With the rise of Afro-Brazilian political and social mobilization, *telenovelas* from the late 1990s and early 2000s suggest a complex negotiation of racial inclusion and citizenship. The introduction of racial quotas in universities and later, in fashion and media industries, will likely deepen the incorporation of social issues and Afro-Brazilian actors into principal roles.[365] The Brazilian government, since Cardoso's presidency, has focused on racial equality with the implementation of public policies, such as quotas and legislation such as Estatuto da Igualdade Racial (Racial Equality Statute) and the creation

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[361] Ibid, 60-64.
[362] Ibid, 58-60.
[363] Antonio La Pastina, Dhavel Patel, and Marcio Schiavo, "Social Merchandizing in Brazilian *Telenovelas*" in *Entertainment-Education and Social Change: History, Research, and Practice*, ed. Michael Cody, Everett Rogers, Miguel Sabido, Arvind Singhal, (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2004), 265.
[364] Porto, "Telenovelas and Representations of National Identity in Brazil," 65.
[365] Paulo Sampaio, "Promotora quer cota para negros em desfile," *Folha de São Paulo*, April 12, 2009, http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/cotidian/ff1204200909.htm; Quotas have not yet officially been implemented in the media. However, the Estatuto da Igualdade Racial strongly encourages the valroization of black participating and heritage in the media and the promotion of black actors, production staff, and black cultural themes in the media arena. See Lei (Public Law) 12.228, July 20, 2010; http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2007-2010/2010/Lei/L12288.htm

of the Special Ministry for the Promotion of Racial Equality (SEPPIR).[366] Despite the Brazilian state's encouragement of public policies to further racial equality and the acknowledgement that Brazil is not a racial democracy, resistance to affirmative action from education to fashion shows demonstrates the disjuncture between various public arenas and the state. From Brazilian fashion designers' complaints that the mandating of black models inhibits creativity and the blatant ignoring of the ten percent black model quota for São Paulo Fashion Week[367] to the large number of academic scholars and journalists that have vehemently opposed university racial quotas, numerous recent debates have revolved around the role of race in national identity and national politics.

The iconic figure of the mixed-race woman in Brazil is embedded within these complex negotiations of national identity and constructions of race, gender, and sexuality. As Esther Hamburger argues, *telenovelas* are so important within the Brazilian public sphere because they represent national concerns in the form of family dramas, blurring the distinction between the public and the private, the intimate and the political, as well as fiction and non-fiction genres.[368] With media stigmatization of Afro-Brazilians as inferior combined with the relative absence of Afro-Brazilian actors in principal roles, Afro-Brazilians then have been marginalized in the public sphere. Therefore, visibility in *telenovelas* is an important facet in struggles over power. As *telenovelas* hold a significant presence in the everyday lives of Brazilian audiences, these *telenovelas* also have important potential in the promotion of public discussions and the articulation of

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[366] http://www.presidencia.gov.br/seppir/
[367] "Marcas ignoram cota de modelos negros na SPFW," *Folha de São Paulo,* June 15, 2011, http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrada/929994-marcas-ignoraram-cota-de-modelos-negros-na-spfw.shtml
[368] Hamburger, *A sociedade atenado*.

citizen identities.[369] With the increasing presence of Afro-Brazilian actors from the late 1990s onwards and sociopolitical conversations about race and national identity, as shown in public policy debates surrounding affirmative action and racism, are beginning to bring Afro-Brazilians into the public sphere. Given the *telenovela*'s potential for a public forum regarding the articulation of citizenship and political emancipation,[370] what is the function of the mixed-race female figure in Brazilian *telenovelas* for discussions of national identity and cultural citizenship?

The *Mulata* and the *Morena*

Telenovelas show colonial ideological legacies of race, gender, and sexuality, but also shows these constructions can be reformulated. As Kia Caldwell demonstrates, from colonial times to contemporary settings, women of African descent in Brazil have systematically been consigned into a social structure in which their positions are often in service to white elites, whether sexually or economically.[371] Therefore, I argue that racialization is not always contingent on actual phenotype, but also by notions of sexuality and labor. While there are no clear racial definitions in Brazil based on ancestry or phenotype, the use of euphemisms to denote race blurs clear racial markings and also allows for a degree of flexibility that allows other formations such as sexuality to factor into racialization. For example, *mulatas* (women of African and European descent) are characterized by hypersexuality, promiscuousness, desirability, and the ability to dance samba. Thus, it is desirable to be brown as long as it fits into parameters that still favor

[369] Tufte, *Living with the Rubbish Queen*, 228
[370] Porto, "*Telenovelas* and Representations of National Identity in Brazil," 64-65.
[371] Kia Caldwell, *Negras in Brazil*: *Re-envisioning Black Women, Citizenship, and the Politics of Identity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 55.

less Africanized features or conveys sexual availability. The term *morena* can signify an olive skinned brunette to a dark-skinned woman and is considered to be a polite way to refer to someone with darker features. Contrary to the term *mulata,* the term *morena* is not always associated with African descent and therefore, is not always highly sexualized.[372] As the term *morena* is not rigidly defined by racial origin and refers to a

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[372] In southeastern Brazil, certain kinds of mixture are considered more beautiful than others. While the African-European mixture is thought to produce a beautiful *mulata,* indigenous-white mixture is thought to produce an ugly body. Such prejudice and preferences for specific types of mixture also reflect discrimination against northeastern migrants. Meanwhile, a relative whiteness emerges. White cariocas (Rio de Janeiro residents) are considered implicitly mixed often as a result of Iberian heritage or slight African ancestry and in contrast to the white descendants of Polish and German immigrants in Southern Brazil. Alexander Edmonds, *Pretty Modern: Beauty, Sex and Plastic Surgery in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 141-143.
The hardy uncivilized image of the *caboclo* (indigenous and white mixture) from the Brazilian Northeast might also contrast with the idea of a mythologized or distant past of indigeneity. "The indigenous activist Eliane Potiguara points out that the romanticized representation of the indigenous woman is central to the sexualized construction of the *mulata*. The fixation on long, straight hair was popularized by novels such as Jose de Alencar's Iracema." Angela Gilliam and Onik'a Gilliam, "Odyssey. Negotiating the Subjectivity of Mulata Identity in Brazil," *Latin American Perspectives* 26, no.3 (1999): 70.

In Jose de Alencar's *Iracema* (1865), a young indigenous woman with long black hair falls in love with a Portuguese colonist. *Iracema* is representative of the Brazilian literary movement, Indianism that sought to distinguish Brazilians from the Portuguese. By imagining and glorifying national origins with indigenous and white *mestiçagem*, Indianist writers participated in nation-building. These novels did not mention Afro-Brazilians due to the more troubling nature of their inclusion in the national narrative due to slavery. Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions*, 154-55. As Alcida Ramos notes, miscegenation was only imagined between indigenous women and white men. Indigenous men, represented as wild or noble savages, are not permitted to be part of the national narrative of *mestiçagem*. Therefore, white women, their purity intact, are not responsible for a generation of *mestiços*. While indigenous groups in Brazil are considered wards of the state and are not full citizens, the symbolism of indigenous people is crucial for the mythic national narrative of *mestiçagem* and the Brazilian people as a combination of indigenous, African, and European blood. Alcida Rita Ramos*, Indigenism: Ethnic Politics in Brazil* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 64-68, 164-165.

range of brown from indigenous to European brunette to black, the word illustrates Gilberto Freyre's egalitarian idea of Brazilian hybridity. Furthermore, there are numerous variations of *morena* from *morena clara* (light morena) to *morena escura* (dark morena) that describe skin color and indicate an implied racial continium. *Preta* (meaning dark black), as a result of historical conditions, is associated with labor and is often used in a derogatory manner. *Negra* (also meaning black), is less derogatory than preta and is often associated with race-consciousness. This follows the popular Brazilian saying of "Black women for work, *mulata* women for sex, white women for marriage." The legacies of African slavery and European colonization that prescribed racial, gender, and sexual norms, continue to be perpetuated. Therefore, on a spectrum of sexuality, white women represent ideals of beauty and chastity, the *mulata* woman represents sensuality and sexual desire, and black women represent manual labor. Racially ambiguous multiracial characters can occupy several roles within *telenovelas* and their inclusion or exclusion from the nation and cultural citizenship is often based on how close to heteronormativity and respectability the character's gender and sexuality are presented.

Telenovelas, despite the visuality at play, demonstrate that race cannot always be read off the body and that the meaning of phenotype becomes negotiable because of how subjects are moralized, pathologized, or eroticized. Visual representations are not the sole source of racialization, but rather notions of sexuality are key to the racialization of women in Brazil. Proximity to respectable heteronormativity is central to racialization and to the inclusion or exclusion of citizenship is bestowed. Race, therefore is unstable and shifts depending on the manifestations and variabilities of other shifting categories

such as sexuality and class. Dominant modes of sexuality then dictate that respectable moral women, represented through the *morena* figure, participate in the nation through *branqueamento* (whitening) and thereby, help facilitate national myths of Brazil gradually becoming a less black nation. The sphere of morality lies with the *morena* figure. In contrast, when sexuality is deemed to be hypersexual or excessive, the *mulata* figure is used to help justify her own exploitation as this hypersexuality is naturalized as needing to be sated. The *mulata* figure is often a manipulative temptress and does not possess the same moral compass as the *morena* figure. The *mulata* figure is associated with a lascivious nature and the inability to possess decency. Accordingly, the *mulata* occupies the role of sensual pleasure in the Brazilian imagination.

Women's bodies are controlled for the sake of the family and the nation. Sexual activity and marriage, therefore, also become racial projects. *Telenovelas* show how women of color are regulated in terms of representing the nation. The sexuality and reproductive labor of women in Brazil are tied to the fate of the nation and are therefore, politicized. The ideal woman represents values of female chastity and motherhood. However, black sexuality, as represented by the *mulata* figure, precluded her as a candidate for national motherhood. The *morena* figure in contrast, can be redeemed from black ancestry and phenotypes through the eventual capacity to be whitened and serve as a mother of Brazil.

Through this control over women's bodies, the nation as whitening can be achieved through the containment of blackness. While some bodies of African descent, such as the *morena* figure, can be disciplined, the *mulata* figure is contained. Brazil's national imaginary creates a duality of the *morena* as pure and moral or the *mulata* as

hypersexual and deviant. When the character is a heroine and possesses an ideal goodness, she becomes a *morena*. When the character is desirable and overtly sexual rather than beautiful, she becomes a *mulata*. Like the hypersexual mulatta figure in the United States, the *mulata* figure in Brazil represents racial, sexual, and gender excesses. The *mulata* is not marriageable, but is available for sexual pleasure and exploitation. When looking at the *mulata* figure, Brazil and the U.S. have similar relationships in this construction of race and sexuality. Therefore, the *mulata* figure is not represented as a mother of the nation. She can potentially give birth, but she is not a maternal figure. The *mulata* figure stands in for libidinal excesses that are supposedly part of her innate primitive sexuality. While the *morena* can potentially become a productive citizen, the *mulata* figure is celebrated yet not included as part of the nation in its aim of progress.

As a result of colonial legacies, the sexual and economic exploitation of Afro-Brazilian women has been naturalized and legitimized.[373] Thus, if *telenovelas* both reflect and mediate the Brazilian imaginary, it is not surprising that characters of African descent are also sexually and economically exploited, but without any major social critique as their positions have also been naturalized for the viewer. Just as sexuality can blacken or whiten in Brazil, money can whiten while poverty can darken.[374] Rather than focusing on the lack of opportunities for women of African descent, Brazilian metanarratives focus on the opportunity for economic and social ascent through an

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[373] Caldwell, *Negras in Brazil*, 55
[374] See Luisa Farah Schwartzman, "Does Money Whiten? Intergenerational Changes in Racial
Classification in Brazil," *American Sociological Review* 72 (2007): 940-963 and Antônio Sérgio Guimarães, *Racismo e Anti-Racismo no Brasil(* São Paulo, Brazil: Editora 34, 1999)

emphasis on whitening. As white Brazilian men are elevated to supreme social status, liaisons with white men downplay structural racism through celebration of whitening ideologies. As Diony Soares notes, Afro-Brazilian women in *telenovelas* are often represented as domestic servants, slaves or morally corrupted sexually desirable characters, who are intensely attracted to white men.[375]

The story of young beautiful women of African descent falling for a white, rich man is deeply embedded as part of the national romance narrative. This narrative of young beautiful mixed-race women falling for white male romantic partners is part of larger hemispheric *mestizaje* narratives in which whitening is a key part of the nation's future.[376] Therefore, these Brazilian *telenovelas,* like that of Latin American telenovelas, are rooted in these foundational fictions and carry with it a whitening ideology. These stories of upward mobility are represented in several *telenovelas* such as *Xica da Silva* (1996), *Da Cor do Pecado* (2004), *Paraíso Tropical* (2007), *Belíssima (2005)*, and *Cama de Gato* (2010) among others. In *telenovelas*, the *mulata* figure primarily serves the sexual pleasures of white men. Just as In Gilberto Freyre's narratives of *mestiçagem* and

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[375] Diony Maria Oliveira Soares, "*Síndrome de Zilda*: Propondo uma ferramenta para análise da representação de mulheres negras pela mídia brasileira" (Paper presented at Fazendo Gênero: Corpo, Violência e Poder, Florianópolis, August 25-28 2008).

[376] For example, Beatriz Reyes Foster writes, "It is a common trope in Mexican *telenovelas* (avidly consumed in Yucatan), in which the motif of a beautiful, poor girl who falls in love with a wealthy, handsome man frequently recurs. The young man's family and friends humiliate her for her poverty and sabotage the relationship, which at the end always prevails. While she is never attacked for being an *india*, the heroine of the soap opera is referred to by her enemies as a *pobre diabla* (poor devil, a common derogatory term for the poor), *salvage* (savage), *mosca muerta* (dead fly, another derogatory term that carries similar meaning to the English 'gold-digger') and *verdulera* (literally, 'vegetable seller', referring to the occupation of selling vegetables at a local market)." Beatriz Reyes-Foster, "Grieving for mestizaje, Alternative Approaches to Mayan Identity in Yucatan, Mexico," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 19, no.6 (2012):666.

national identity in *Casa-Grande e Senzala*, *mulata* women are sexual objects who desire white men and hence, white men fall to her sexual allure. Meanwhile, black men are largely absent. The *mulata* figure in Brazilian *telenovelas* is a continuation of these narratives and myths of the nation.[377]

In the Brazilian national imaginary, interracial romance is the sole path for black women's mobility. In *Paraíso Tropical*, the character, Bebel is sexually exploited. In *Belíssima*, Mônica works as a domestic servant within white homes and institutions, but is able to socially move only through sexual relationships with white men. The *telenovelas* individualize inequalities and thus, deny the underlying social structures that place these women in positions as prostitutes or domestics. For the *mulata* figure, the narrative emphasizes their eroticized and racialized physical attractiveness and also shows the possibility of economic gain through liaisons with white men. For the *morena* figure, the narrative follows a racial self-transformation through *branqueamento* and marriage to white men. These narratives serve the social and political function of communicating hope of upward mobility to the vast majority of low-income women in Brazil. Therefore, *telenovelas* function as a technology of citizenship that creates a vision of proper citizenship according to racial, gender, and sexual norms.

Belíssima

The *telenovela*, *Belíssima* narrates various romances and betrayasl. Mônica, as represented by Camila Pitanga works as a domestic servant in the home of Mary Montilla. Mônica is caught in a love triangle between Cemil, a middle-class head of

[377] A notable exception is *Duas Caras* (2007-2008). This *telenovela* was written about extensively in the press concerning the interracial relationship between a black man from a *favela* and white wealthy woman from Rio de Janeiro.

factory workers in the Belísimma lingerie factory, and Alberto Sabatini, a wealthy member of the executive board at Belíssima. Alberto is the father of Toninho, but he does not wish to have contact with his son until he meets Mônica. Mônica takes care of Toninho after his mother, Valdete died. Alberto relentlessly pursues Mônica to the point of purposefully tricking Mônica on her wedding day so that she leaves Cemil at the altar. After much persuasion, Mônica marries Alberto. However, Alberto repeatedly cheats on her and she later marries Cemil.

The character, Mônica represents a Cinderella fairytale of upward mobility. Mônica's purity and beauty initially attracts Cemil, a middle-class worker and Alberto, his supervisor. However, what is notable about Mônica, is that unlike most *telenovela* characters, she is not white but *morena*. In Brazil, and many other Latin American countries, the narrative of the *boa* (moral and obedient) *mocinha* (good girl), who obtains good fortune, happiness, and love despite various hindrances, is quite commonplace.[378] This narrative coincides with legacies of foundational fictions and Cinderella motifs. Often the *mocinha* comes from a modest or poor household. However, the *mocinha*'s natural beauty attracts the attention of a wealthy man, who in Prince Charming-like fashion takes the *mocinha* away and presents her with a better life. The primacy of heterosexual romance in the *telenovela* offers the potential for social ascension. This is a highly gendered narrative as the feminine beauty of the *mocinha* is what brings her into a higher social class. This physical beauty of the *mocinha* is also associated with virtue.

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[378] Silvia Helena Simões Borelli, "Telenovelas brasileiras: territórios de ficcionalidade, universalidades, segmentação," in *Desafios da comunicação,* ed. Octávio Ianni, Paulo-Edgar A. Resende and Hélio Silva. (Petrópolis, Vozes, 2001), 131-132.

Therefore, while there can be other physically beautiful female villains, the virginal morality of the *mocinha* usually triumphs. This beauty is only accessible to female characters. Thus, while other male characters in Brazilian *telenovelas* have also had the opportunity for upward mobility, it is usually through their intelligence or manipulation that they achieve mobility. Often, this upward mobility is only temporary. However, the *mocinha* might suffer, she is rewarded for her morality and virtue with a *final feliz* (happy ending). Therefore, this narrative of the *mocinha* reinforces normative views of femininity by compensating morality and punishing women who use their sexuality for manipulation or display loose sexual morals. The Cinderella narrative of the *mocinha* allows viewers, especially working-class women of color, to have hope that they too might have their own Cinderella tale and be able to transcend their social position. These narratives normalize romance as a vehicle for social mobility, reinforces the family as the primary unit of social relations, and places consumerism, through upward mobility, as central to national belonging and citizenship

Beauty, Erasure of Racialized Difference and Constructions of Race, Class, and Gender

In *Belíssima* (translating as "very beautiful"), the title of the *telenovela* itself, allows for an exploration of expectations of beauty and how race, gender, and class define these standards of beauty. Reflecting Brazil's obsession with beauty, the *telenovela* indirectly delves into what comprises beauty. In the opening credits of *Belíssima*, the perception of beauty is already built in with a race and class bias. Appearing in the opening, after every commercial, and in the finale, a young thin woman with straight blond hair appears. While she dances, Caetono's Veloso's song, "Você é

Linda" is played. The repeating lyrics, "Você é linda, mais que demais, você é linda sim" (You are beautiful, so much so, you are beautiful yes) reinforces the idea of beauty with this figure. The lyrics combined with the images take up the idea that this blonde white woman, demographically in the minority in Brazil, is more beautiful than most of Brazil's population. Additionally, all of the models for the Belíssima lingerie company campaigns are white women with light eyes. Therefore, the ideal of beauty also resides in whiteness.

The Cinderella narrative of upward mobility through romance relies on the initial attraction to the *mocinha*'s beauty. Therefore, taking into account, the meaning of beauty in Brazil is important for considering who might be able to have access to opportunities of social mobility. *Telenovelas*, along with fashion magazines, primarily feature white Brazilian women or women with light skin and light eyes. Conformation to Eurocentric standards of beauty is necessary to be able to be recognized as beautiful and transcend social classes. While there are many working-class women in Brazilian *telenovelas*, many of these women are virtually absent in the plot and are usually black domestic servants. It is quite rare that a black maid is able to ascend socially because she is already not recognized as beautiful. In contrast, a white woman with a menial job is more frequently able to have this Cinderella role because she has the potential to be beautiful. In *Belíssima*, the rags to riches narratives mostly revolves around Vitória, a white homeless orphan who ascends from selling candy on the streets to living in Greece as the wife of a wealthy Brazilian man, who rescues her from the streets. It is later uncovered that Vitoria was abandoned at birth, but is the heiress to a great Brazilian family fortune. However, the narrative of Mônica, who moves less dramatically from

domestic servant to upper-class wife and then to middle-class wife, is also notable for reformulating the Cinderella plot with codes of whitening.

Mônica, played by Camila Pitanga, represents an aesthetic of virtuous virginal beauty. While Camila Pitanga is darker-skinned than most *telenovela* actresses, she does not have the dark skin that might generate a clearly racialized name like Preta (played by Taís Araújo in 2004's *Da Cor do Pecado*) or cause controversy or discussion. Therefore, Mônica, recognized as beautiful by her white suitors, also fits into a natural recognition of beauty that is not entirely dissimilar to aesthetics of beauty shown in magazines across the country. Yet, her darker skin and features also make her identifiable and believable as a domestic servant. Mônica is usually presented with straight hair that is pulled back into a bun. On her days off work, she sometimes wears her hair in loose waves. With Camila Pitanga's representation, Mônica has less Africanized features not only from her skin color, but also from her straight nose and straight hair that allow for an inclusion into beauty.

Mônica then stands in as the beautiful *morena* that official popular claims of *brasilidad*e assert as representing typical beauty. While her skin color is darker than any of the other characters, her phenotypical characteristics resemble that of other white female characters. Therefore, Mônica does not present a radical departure from conventional standards of beauty in Brazilian media. As white women are presented as the standard to which all other women are held up against, Mônica's skin color allows for literally another shade of beauty to be seen on television while reinforcing dominant notions of desirable phenotypical characteristics.

Mônica's father and brother are played by white actors in the *telenovela*. Like

Rose, also played by Camila Pitanga, in *Cama de Gato* (2010), Mônica is a heroine figure that is more closely associated with whiteness rather than blackness. In *Cama de Gato*, Rose has a black ex-husband who lies, cheats, and manipulates. Her father, played by Afro-Brazilian actor, Antonio Pitanga (who is also Camila Pitanga's father) is a similar *malandro* (hustler) type character. Later, Rose discovers that her actual biological father is white. By having these heroines associated with whiteness, Rose and Mônica are able to be uplifted. In *Belíssima*, Mônica and her brother, André have different mothers. The different biological mothers help explain the different physical characteristics between them. All that is known about Mônica's mother is that she was black. The absence of relatives of African descent despite Mônica's skin color allows for audiences to see Mônica as already nearly white. However, her relative racial ambiguity also allows for an identification of *mestiçagem* and *branqueamento* in the *telenovela*. Notions of beauty are not necessarily deeply challenged by Mônica's presence in the *telenovela*.

Although the mixed-race female body is celebrated, the semiotics of appearance favors whiteness, which becomes a form of social capital.[379] As previously noted, Brazilian ideals of whitening are associated with European and American scientific racism and eugenics. Brazilian scientists adopted these ideas but also created their own racial theories that shaped public policies related to immigration, reproductive health, housing, and education.[380] Lilia Moritz Schwarcz observes that early twentieth century Brazilian intellectuals outlined a racialized national agenda in which they argued for the

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[379] France Windance Twine, *Racism in a Racial Democracy: The Maintenance of White Supremacy in Brazil* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 89-93.
[380] Nancy Leys Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991)

hopeful national project of potentially perfectible Brazilian populations while simultaneously reinforcing Darwinist racial hierarchies.[381] The white female physical beauty present in the opening credits and overwhelming in the popular media is reminiscent of the ideal type proposed in Brazilian eugenics circles in the twentieth century. White women as reproductive vessels were key to this Brazilian national project. The emphasis on white beauty and consumption in the *telenovela*, *Belíssima* suggests that beauty is also a national project.

While Gilberto Freyre's visions of a *morenidade* (brownness) as the epitome of Brazilian physical beauty still holds weight in Brazilian society, the ideologies of *branqueamento* are also present. This paucity of women of color in Brazilian media differs substantially from the national image of brown mixture that Brazil espouses. Although recently around the time of the *telenovela*, women of color did begin to appear in magazines and other media texts, the privileging of European features is also evident. Therefore, *mestiçagem* works to beautify other nonwhite bodies. Mônica, then as a *morena* with European features, is not the epitome of physical beauty for the elite. However, she is white enough to be considered physically desirable and with white male romantic interests, represents a whitening aesthetic through *mesticagem*.

Consumerism and Constructions of Class and Mobility

Brazil, as a nation that seeks to presents itself as modern, grounds much of this modernization in consumerism. Therefore, a glamorous white universe is the primary onscreen representation. Brazilian *telenovela*s convey the desirability of capitalist

[381] Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, *O Espetáculo das Raças – cientistas, instituições e questão racial no Brasil 1870-1930* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1993).

culture, and hence the need for consumerism. *Telenovelas,* through advertisements, product placement, and programming, structure consumer desire. Some scholars have emphasized considering the commercial character of the *telenovela*, *telenovelas* can only function towards the reproduction of consumerism and dominant ideologies.[382] As *telenovelas* launch fashion trends and provide instruction on the use of new products, *telenovelas* also help construct an active consumer market. Through the interpellation of consumer products and *telenovelas*, some ethnographic studies suggest that consumption produces "a feeling of belonging, a feeling of collective participation in national rituals and national passions."[383] *Telenovelas* transmit ideas of modernity, new forms of expression, language, style, and significantly, new habits of consumerism.[384]

After the military dictatorship in Brazil, television stations, such as Globo, placed more emphasis on the market and the influence of opinion and audience research of IBOPE (Instituto Brasileiro de Pesquisas e Estatística) Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics). Through IBOPE, marketing teams, advertisers, and television producers construct images of the audience. Television networks, such as Globo, then sell their audiences. Television is viewed as a vehichle for publicity and advertising. To attract clients, networks attempt to attract and keep a broad audience base while appealing to an audience with high potential for consumption.[385]

Through the *telenovela* market, audience viewers are developed as consumers

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[382] Renato Ortiz, *A Moderna Tradição Brasileira*. (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1998).
[383] Thaïs Machado-Borges, *Only for You!: Brazilians and the Telenovela Flow* (Stockholm: Dept. of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, 2003, 203-204
[384] Esther Hamburger, *A Sociedade Antenando*.
[385] Heloisa Buarque Almeida, "Consumidoras e heroínas: gênero na telenovela," *Revista Estudos Feministas* 15, no.1 (2007): 180-181.

before they are formed as citizens. As Nestor García Canclini observes, consumers are not merely passive targets of capitalist message, but rather are citizens in formation such that participation in society is shown through the consumption of goods, especially cultural goods. As citizenship is defined through consumer culture, he argues that in Latin America consumption is a central practice of citizenship and class relationships.[386] *Telenovelas* are a way for audience members to mobilize identities as consumers, citizens, and as members of certain gender and class categories.

Nonetheless, these media outlets primarily instill a particular sense of beauty grounded in whiteness. If poor people of color are considered to lack beauty, working towards beauty asserts the desire for inclusion and dignity in Brazilian society. Symbols of consumption, while out of reach for many Brazilians, are important for maintaining these classist narratives. While most telenovelas represent the upper-classes who have the largest amount of disposable income, the lower and middle classes compose the majority of viewers. Nonetheless, the allusion to a certain product being used by members of the upper-classes gives the consumer product a certain amount of prestige, luxury, sophistication, and desirability.[387] As *Belíssima* is actually the name of a lingerie company in the *telenovela*, beauty is considered consumable. With Belíssima lingerie as a physical retail product, the *telenovela* insinuates that beauty can be bought and sold. Therefore, beauty is something to be worked on, aspired to, and consumed. As beauty is

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[386] Néstor García Canclini, *Consumidores y Ciudadanos: Conflictos Multiculturales de la Globalización* (México D.F.: Grijalbo, 1995).

[387] Brazilians are typically divided into five social classes with classe A as having the highest amount of consumer potential and classe B and C comprising the middle and lower-middle classes. Almeida shows that classe C and D actually are the highest audience members. See Almeida, "Consumidoras e heroínas," 180-184.

linked to whiteness, the consuming of beauty is also working towards whitening.

The process of whitening Mônica also relies on markers of social class and goes along with the Brazilian saying that money whitens. After leaving Cemil at the altar due to a perceived but falsified betrayal, Mônica marries Alberto. Mônica was also persuaded to marry Alberto Sabatini by her employer, Mary and various social pressures to marry a wealthy man. Mary calls Mônica a *burra* (fool or silly, translated literally as donkey) and protests that Mônica only likes Cemil because she has never experienced the weight of precious jewels on her fingers or the warmth of a fur coat. Therefore, love is calculated in terms of materials goods and consumption. Mônica's friend, Dagmar says that Mônica will learn to love Alberto in the same way she loves Cemil after she is living with Toninho in a mansion, and living the life of a "madame" (in Brazil, this terms denotes a women of high social class and refinement). Therefore, wealth is determined to also create respectability. When Mary is planning Mônica's wedding to Alberto, Mônica says that many of the wedding venues seem too luxurious. Mary contests that Mônica has to stop thinking with the head of a small-minded person or that of the poor, now that she will become a Sabatini. Mônica's transformation into a "madame" (women of class, grace, and status) also relies on the assumption that she will no longer work as a maid and conversely, might have a maid of her own. Therefore, part of Mônica's class and racial whitening is related to her capacity to choose not to do physical labor.

The relationship of Mônica to her employer Mary is an amicable friendship that characterizes the *bo*a (good) relationship that many *telenovelas* attempt to evoke between the *patroa* (female household employer) and her maid. Mônica's physical labor that enables Mary to shop, socialize, and pursue business ventures is obscured by the

emphasis on friendship. Later, when Mônica leaves to marry Alberto, Mary had not thought of having to live without Mônica and asks Mônica to find another maid to replace her role. The idealization of white upper-class womanhood is only made possible by the invisibility of black domestic labor. [388] The extensive use of cheap domestic labor in Brazil buttresses the link between whiteness and power and naturalizes black women's subservient position Mônica's marriage to Alberto changes not only her labor status, but places her within a narrative of *branqueamento* and upward mobility.

Sexuality and White Womanhood

The whitening of Mônica occurs not just through aesthetic stylistic choices, but also by assigning Mônica some of the tropes of white womanhood. As a virgin, Mônica represents the Madonna. Yet, Mônica is also a mother due to her surrogate status following her friend's death. After Valdete dies, Mônica takes on the maternal role for Toninho. Therefore, Mônica is already the mother of a white son without losing her virginity. Thus, her virginity and moral virtue function to bring Mônica into ideals of white womanhood.

After meeting Mônica, Alberto takes a newfound interest in his son because he wants to spend more time with Mônica. Alberto's interest becomes almost obsessive after learning that Mônica is a virgin. Therefore, Mônica's purity drives Alberto's interest in the hopes that can conquer her. Alberto uses his son to trick Mônica into seeing him and takes advantage of the maternal love and affection that Mônica feels for Toninho. Alberto, while the biological father, does not take a sense of responsibility nor does he

[388] Patricia Pinho and Elizabeth Silva, "Domestic Relations in Brazil: Legacies and Horizons," *Latin American Research Review* 45, no.2 (2010): 90-113.

have an emotional link to his son until he becomes involved with Mônica. In this way, Mônica, Alberto, and Toninho become a family through affective rather than biological means with Mônica as the primary link. The whiteness of future progeny, as represented by Toninho, remains intact. Mônica can be a maternal figure and therefore represents the cultural and emotional miscegenation without biological racial mixing. Furthermore, Mônica acts a surrogate mother for the Brazilian nation. Through her labor as a mother for Toninho, Mônica fulfills the task of reproduction for the Brazilian nation without having physically reproduced herself.

Mônica's symbolic virginity in the beginning of the *telenovela* has similarities to the Virgin de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida, the patroness of Brazil. The racial anxieties of Brazilian national identity are evident in the doubts as to Nossa Senhora Aparecida's racial origins and appearance. With Nossa Senhora de Aparecida as the patroness of Brazil, understanding her representing her as a figure of idealized white purity, Brazilian racial mixture, or Afro-Brazilian point to different visions of the nation. Similarly, the controversies over Nossa Senhora de Aparecida also relate to questions as to who can represent Brazil on screen and in what capacity. According to many Catholics, including the Pope and the Archbishop of Aparecida, Nossa Senhora is not black. Archbishop Raymundo Damasceno maintains, "Nossa Senhora Aparecida é um fator de integração racial, reunindo devotos de todas as cores e condições sociais"[389] [Nossa Senhora Aparecida is a factor of racial integration, gathering devotees of all colors and social conditions.] Countering this interpretation, Emanoel Araújo, director of the Museu Afro

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[389] Morris Kachani, "A santa mais brasileira, Branca ou negra? Festa de Nossa Senhora Aparecida, Padroeira do Brasil, traz de volta debate sobre sua cor," *Folha de São Paulo*, October 12, 2011, http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/poder/po1210201112.htm

Brasil, contests, “diferentemente do brasileiro, que quer ser branco, a santa foi ficando negra. Para um país mestiço como o nosso, a Padroeira nacional tinha mesmo que ser negra”[390] [differently than the Brazilian that wants to be white, the saint remained black. For a mixed country like ours, the national patroness had similarly to be black]. Nonetheless, Nossa Senhora has a significant national function as a spiritual symbol of the struggle against slavery and the redemption of the nation. The selection of a black or nearly black Virgin Mary as the national Patroness of Brazil and her subsequent reformation into a hybrid figure of the nation or as the black mother of a hybrid nation helps strengthen the idea of racial democracy in Brazil. The interpretational possibilities of Nossa Senhora demonstrate both fluid identities and significations and racial anxieties in Brazil. Mônica, as a virginal *morena* figure, represents this dual notion of motherhood and chastity. Her ambiguous features allow for the signification of Virgin as symbolic of racial hybridity in Brazil. Yet, as she is the mother of a white son, the nation is also allowed to further whiten rather than retain racial hybridity for the future. The *telenovela* idealizes this virgin mother image. Mônica is the virginal mother, loving and understanding without ever having given birth.

While Mônica’s virginity is related to the purity of white womanhood, Alberto’s fetishization of her virginity and his manipulative seduction are constructed as white masculine conquest and domination. After marriage, Alberto repeatedly cheats on Mônica after supposedly having her virginity. The tolerance and socio-cultural legitimization of male infidelity is evident in the *telenovela* from the mere shaking of heads at Alberto’s actions to the light-hearted music when he is engaging in extramarital

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[390] Ibid.

sex. After a separation, Alberto admits that he misses Mônica because she irons and makes snacks. Therefore, while Mônica has a more upscale lifestyle with Alberto, she is still expected to work without pay. Ideals of domesticity and femininity are intertwined so that women are expected to be wives and mothers whose identities rely on their management of the household. Mônica's life centers on taking care of others from Mary, her former employer to Toninho to her elderly father to Alberto. It is this selfless nurturing that defines Mônica's feminine virtue in the *telenovela*. Mônica's distress over Alberto's extramarital relationships demonstrates her pain and suffering. Her concern for Toninho also puts her own suffering second to the needs of her family. At first, the *telenovela*'s message appears to be one of sacrifice and not necessarily women's empowerment.

Yet, later as Mônica grows increasingly dissatisfied with her situation with Alberto, Mônica leaves Alberto for Cemil. At first Cemil does not think that he would still have a chance with Mônica because as Cemil notes to his father that Mônica is now sophisticated, well-dressed and now she is madam whereas when he met her, she was a maid whereas he is still just a factory worker. The *final feliz* (happy ending) of the *telenovela* is not with wealthy Alberto, but with the faithful Cemil. Nonetheless, her suitor is white and does not belong to lower economic classes. The *telenovela* nonetheless allows for a discourse of whitening through *mestiçagem*. Yet, potentially as Mônica is a nonwhite *mocinha*, her *final feliz* does not finish with exceptional wealth as it does for many *mocinha*s in other *telenovelas*, but rather entry into the middle-classes and the ability to escape work as a domestic servant. Therefore, her skin color might be a barrier for inclusion into the white elite, but allows for a gradual *branqueamento* and

class mobility. Alberto and Mônica did not have their own biological children, and therefore, Alberto, as representing the upper-class, does not have children that are less white than he is. With Cemil, Mônica receives entrance into the white middle classes in exchange for her reproductive labor and the whitening of future progeny.

When Mônica was a *morena* domestic worker, she was expected to meet productive demands of physical labor. When she marries Cemil, her body is placed with reproductive demands in order to fulfill her citizenship to the Brazilian nation through the gradual whitening of her children. Mônica's function as a virtuous *morena* rather than a hypersexual *mulata* relies on the idea of sexuality for the reproduction of whitened Brazilians rather than sexuality as merely for pleasure. Therefore, the *morena* figure has access to uplift in a way that the *mulata* figure does not, precisely because the *morena* figure is presented as virtuous.

Presenting a Multiracial Brazil

This process of sexualized and gendered racializations through the *morena* figure functions precisely because of the lack of direct attention to Mônica's race in the *telenovela*. In contrast, Mônica's black friend, Dagmar stands in as a figure of racialized difference. The *telenovela* attempts to deal with overt racism while leaving out subtle forms of racism or structural racism. Mônica as a light-skinned *morena* does not fit as obviously into the *telenovela*'s social merchandising agenda. Instead, the *telenovela* turns to Dagmar and Tosca, the racist mother of her white boyfriend. Tosca repeatedly engages in racial insults with Dagmar and disapproves on the interracial relationship. In one scene, Tosca insults a number of guests by saying that she is surrounded by a

sleeping *turco* (Turk)[391] and two *neguinhos* (this term has multiple connotation depending on context and can be used as a sweet term of endearment or as in this case, used as a derogatory term for Afro-Brazilians). Tosca's vitriol places Afro-Brazilians at the bottom of the social hierarchy, but also expresses disdain for Arab immigrants. Here, the notion of ethnicity enters into the Brazilian telenovela with Tosca differentiating *turcos* as a separate category. While Arab immigrants and their descendants in Brazil have generally been incorporated into the Brazilian national politic as white, there is still uneasiness as to their differences. The negative connotations of a strange backwards mentality and a greedy manipulative nature derived from the peddler and merchant occupation of many former immigrants still persists.[392] Thus, while Middle Eastern immigrants might be phenotypically white, the notion of cultural difference at times marks this group. Meanwhile, the insults directed at Dagmar and her father are explicitly forms of racialized difference and mark them as excluded from the public space. Overhearing the conversation, the police arrest Tosca for racism. After the arrest, the community members talk about the arrest in terms of its official recognition and punishment as a crime. This form of social merchandising directly attempts to teach audience members about the legal punishments for racism, but does not deal with the process and effects of racism itself. Later, Tosca's son visits his mother in prison and tells her that she needs to learn that black, Japanese, white, and indigenous are all equal.

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[391] Many Middle Eastern immigrants, whether Muslim, Jewish, or Christian, often came to Brazil under the category of *turco* with reference to the travel documents issued by the Ottoman Empire. Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil*, 119.

[392] Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 63-65.

Tosca serves as a direct contrast to *Belíssima*'s image of tolerance and harmony in São Paulo.

Later in the same episode, Nikos, a Greek immigrant, recounts his time in Brazil to his fellow countrymen in Greece in terms of harmonious diversity. Speaking in Greek, he states, "Brasil is a very good country. São Paulo is a very large city. It has people from all over the world. Greeks, Italians, Japanese, Arabs, Jews, all live in harmony even Turkish. It's like an octopus. Lots of arms, each one comes from one part, but they all end together." This vision of São Paulo presents a harmonious view of multiculturalism in various ethnic components rather than the racial mixing and merging of *mestiçagem*. Especially salient in São Paulo, the Brazilian state's attempts to whiten the Brazilian population produced a multicultural society. While the United States often uses hyphenated terms to describe the linkage between national origin and ethnicity, Brazil does not employ a hyphenated terminology. Rather, these hyphenated terms are present in Brazil, but unacknowledged.[393] As Jeffrey Lesser notes, "In a land that is multicultural but hyphenless, negotiations over national identity continue."[394] *Belíssima*'s engagement with immigration and cultural difference as major themes demonstrates this evolving sense of national identity.

However, it is Mônica's function as the *morena* to give the *telenovela* a vision of *mestiçagem* through her physical appearance and her marriage to Cemil. At the end of the same episode, Mônica celebrates Cemil's parents' fortieth wedding anniversary.

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[393] Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity.*
[394] Ibid, 173.

With a large extended family consisting of Arab, Greek, and Jewish relatives,[395] the family gathering reflects a multiracial picture of Brazil. Contrasting with Alberto's family, Mônica's inclusion into this large multigenerational family presents an image of diversity, tolerance, and acceptance.[396] As Jeffrey Lesser argues, immigrant groups, such as Arab and Jewish immigrants had to negotiate to be in the "desirable" white category and thus these immigrant groups also challenged the notions of *brasilidade* and whiteness.[397] In particular, as São Paulo was the main destination of European immigration, Afro-Brazilians compose part of a stigmatized minority.[398] While these multiethnic whites still have the mark of foreigner due to their national origins, these same groups in Cemil's larger family are not considered black and are therefore not part of the blackness that the Brazilian state had hoped to ameliorate. Although Jewish and

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[395] Arabs and Jews were often linked and thought of as one group from the late nineteenth-century to the 1940s. Both Arab and Jewish immigrants were at different points of Brazilian history, banned from entering Brazil. Through manipulating ideas of race through tactics such as changing names, becoming economically successful, and passing, Arab and Jewish immigrants eventually became part of Brazil's dominant classes. Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil*, 116-142.

[396] The national framework for who could be considered white changed over time. The encouragement and development of immigration in the early to mid-twentieth century constantly shifted along notions of ethnicity, race, and religion. Most Arab immigrants were Christian. Therefore, Arabs were both insiders and outsiders in Brazil due to the majority Christian population, but also outside of the nation as a result of not fitting into a white, black, or yellow continuum despite physically resembling many Brazilians. The economic success of many Arab and Jewish immigrant groups facilitated placement into a broader white category. Yet at the same time, the label of foreigner is continually applied to Arab and Japanese Brazilians even with fourth generation children. However, unlike the United States, the notion of a hyphenated ethnic identity is rare. Brazil's early whitening project through immigration led to a negotiation of citizenship, ethnicity, and national identity in the creation of a multicultural society. See Jeffrey Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 89-150.

[397] Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity,* 46-68.

[398] Kim Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*.

Middle Eastern immigrants had to navigate their whiteness in Brazil,[399] the Afro-Brazilian population's only option is to incorporate *branqueamento* through *mestiçagem*. Thus, while Afro-Brazilians are not considered foreigners, their blackness must be contained and eventually diluted. Furthermore, as Cemil had already previously discovered that his biological father is Greek, not Turkish, Cemil's whiteness is not under as much question.

With a pregnant Mônica rubbing her stomach in the background, it is clear that Mônica's role is to be incorporated into the Brazilian national body politic through marriage and whitening. Mônica and Cemil and their expected offspring are represented as a celebration of racial mixing, but also of a privileging of whitening. *Belíssima*'s focus on first and second-generation immigrants in Sao Paulo also harkens back to early twentieth century ideas that encouraged European immigration to remake Brazil as a whiter nation. The hopes that these European immigrants would intermarry with Brazil's racially mixed and black population is signified in Mônica's role in the *telenovela* with her marriage to Cemil and to her presumably whiter child.

Paraíso Tropical

The *telenovela*, *Paraíso Tropical* narrates the romances and competing rivalries of Ovalo and Daniel. Ovalo and Daniel are both vying to succeed Antenor Cavalcanti, the childless owner of a vast hotel business. Ovalo, unscrupulous and ruthless, maneuvers various plots against Daniel and is involved with Bebel, a prostitute from Bahia. Bebel is also ambitious and strives to leave her life under Jader, a pimp and her work on the streets, through her romance with Olavo. Daniel, known for his strong

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[399] Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity,* 46-68.

character, is married to Paula. Antenor, later decides to try to have an heir with his new love interest, Lúcia. However, Antenor erroneously believes that he has fathered a child with Bebel. While the true father is Olavo, Olavo and Bebel conspired to make Antenor believe that he has fathered a child in order to gain power.

The *mulata* figure, as represented by Bebel, is an ambivalent figure-desired and dangerous, proof of racial democracy and a threat to a further whitening of the nation. From Xica da Silva, an iconic historical figure famous for rising from slave status to slave owner and immortalized in literature, film, and a 1996 *telenovela,* to Bebel, the colonial and postcolonial narratives of the *mulata* rely on the use of sexual relationships between *mulata* mistresses and white wealthy men. While there are few roles for women of African descent in *telenovelas*, the figure of the *mulata* as a beautiful sensual seductress, who often breaks up households and marriages, sometimes enters onscreen. The *mulata* figure can be ambitious through her sexual relationships with white men or can merely be a seeker of sexual pleasure due to her insatiability. Whereas white women are the ideal of purity, the *mulata* figure becomes the other sexual being which allows for white women to be held up as models of morality in *telenovelas*. The character of Bebel provides insight into ideas of agency and individualism in a heterosexual patriarchal structure, the link between consumerism and mobility, and the use of sexuality for mobility and non-reproductive labor.

Constructions of Brazil as a Paradise of *Mulatas*

Long represented abroad as a tropical paradise of *mulatas*, Brazil has also invested itself in promoting this image. The idea of a sexual paradise associates with sensual and sexually available women, the idea of the natural paradise of wild beauty,

and the idea of a uniquely Brazilian paradise of music, happiness, exoticism, and racial mixing, are all present in *Paraíso Tropical*.[400] Bebel, as a *mulata* figure, acts as a symbolic role for Brazil as the exploitable sexual paradise. *Paraíso Tropical* reinforces the idea of Brazil as a tropical paradise while simultaneously demystifying this tropical paradise by displaying sex tourism and middle and upper class discontent. The series opening pans over an image of Rio de Janeiro and a lush green landscape and thus, suggests that Brazil is indeed a tropical paradise. Meanwhile, the *telenovela*'s opening episodes center upon sex tourism in Bahia to show how Brazil is seen as a sexual paradise for foreign and domestic visitors. By playing with the trope of tropical paradise, *Paraíso Tropical* allows for the constellation of Brazil as paradise with racial mixing, sexual availability, and lush bountiful landscapes, but also as a paradise that can be exploited.

Paraíso Tropical reinforces images of Brazil that are promoted not only abroad, but internally to Brazilians. Brazilian tourism materials rely on an understanding of *mestiçagem* as essential to Brazilian national identity.[401] As the Brazilian government began to advertise tourism abroad through Embratur in the 1960s and 1970s, the sexually

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[400] See Rosana Bignami, *A Imagem do Brasil no Turismo: Construção, Desafios e Vantagem Competitiva* (São Paulo: Aleph, 2002). Bignami outlines five different ways that Brazil is represented abroad: Brazil as A Natural Paradise, Brazil as A Place of Easy Sex, the Country of Carnaval, an Exotic and Mystical Place, and Brasil Brasileiro (the idea of who are the Brazilian people in terms of characteristics).

[401] Rafael José dos Santos and Priscilia Gayer, "Imagens de um País: da Mestiçagem à "Marca Brasil," Paper presented at Intercom – Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Interdisciplinares da Comunicação 29th Congresso Brasileiro de Ciências da Comunicação, Universidade de Brasília, September 6-9 2006, http://www.portcom.intercom.org.br/navegacaoDetalhe.php?option=trabalho&id=44722

available *mulata* was used as a national product.[402] The use of the *mulata* figure thereby became exploited not only for domestic purposes, but also for the marketing and image-making of Brazil abroad.[403] Beginning in the 1990s, governmental tourism agencies responded to criticism regarding sex tourism promotions and subsequent advertisements have focused on the natural beauty and landscape of Brazil rather than on the sexual availability of women.[404] *Paraíso Tropical* is part of a discussion that questions Brazil's image abroad and its image of itself.[405] The *telenovela*'s focus on domestic sex tourism

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[402] Jaqueline de Souza Leite, "A exploração das mulheres na dinâmica do turismo sexual," in *Dimensões da desigualdade no desenvolvimento do turismo no Nordeste,* ed.Elizabeth Mafra Cabral Nasser and Sílvia Camurça (Recife: SOS Corpo Gênero e Cidadania Edições, 2003), 66.

[403] Starting in the 1970s up to the end of the 1990s, EMBRATUR distributed images of almost naked women on Brazilian beaches in tourism brochures, Rio de Janiero, as the pinnacle of the tourist center, became represented by the symbol of the *mulata*, Carnaval, beaches and samba. Sex work, therefore is heightened through the government's promotion of Brazil's women as a natural asset for international tourism. In the late 1980s, Embratur began to feature different regions of Brazil and the Northeast region came into view as beach tourist destination with beautiful sexually available women. See Louise Prado Alfonso, "Embratur: Formadora de imagens da nação brasileira" (MA Thesis Universidade Estadual de Campinas, São Paulo, 2005).

[404] With the recent flurry of attention to the problems of sex tourism in Brazil in the 1990s, Embratur's advertisements were heavily criticized for facilitating sex tourism with degrading images of women and of Brazil. Consequently, Embratur presented an awareness campaign *Beware. Brazil is watching you* while also dropping sexually suggestive promotional materials. See Louise Prado Alfonso, "Embratur: Formadora de imagens da nação brasileira" (MA Thesis
Universidade Estadual de Campinas, São Paulo, 2005), 106-110. In 2003, President Lula da Silva reduced the role of Embratur with the creation of the Ministry of Tourism with the aim to "reposition Brazil as a product on the international market." See Ana Paula Felizardo and Vitória Vergas Andrade, *Compatilhando experiências: O progresso das iniciativas brasileiras – equilibrando a responsabilidade social no enfrentamento à exploração sexual de crianças e adolescentes no turismo* (Natal: Resposta, 2005).

[405] Earlier *telenovelas*, such as *Belíssima* (2001), brought attention to the sex trafficking of Brazilian women abroad. In *Paraíso Tropical*, the landscape of the Bahian coast instead of the Greek isles serves as the focal point of an exploration of sex tourism. It is also in Bahia that the forces of global capital, centralized in Rio de Janeiro, as represented by the Grupo Cavalcanti also comes into conflict with rural Northeastern

offered a darker internal vision of Brazil while simultaneously reinforcing stereotypical hypersexual images of women of color through the role of Bebel.

Paraíso Tropical starts in Marapuã, a fictional tourist town in Bahia and later moves to Rio de Janeiro. While most *telenovelas* are set in Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo, this initial setting provides an exotic domestic locale. Furthermore, Bahia's colonial origins are compounded with internal imperialism from within Brazil. Bahia is often celebrated as the site of Brazil's African origins and is revered as part of its African past.[406] Therefore, Bahia is often used for nationalist purposes for delineating tradition, cultivating the idea of authentic black origins, and presenting a picture of racial harmony and racial mixing. By using Bahia in the beginning of the *telenovela*, *Paraíso Tropical* bolsters nation-building narratives.

Thus, the image of Bebel as the sexual *mulata* is tightly linked to the idea of Brazil, and to Bahia as a sexual tropical paradise that can be enjoyed and consumed. Consequently, Bebel's body is offered as part of the natural pleasures from Brazil and harkens back to colonial imaginaries of Brazil as a sexual paradise of beautiful *mulatas*. While the *telenovela* exposes sex tourism, it does not reveal Bebel's history or delve into the colonial legacies and structural racism that leave women like Bebel with few options.

Bahia. As the Grupo Cavalcanti wants to take over a resort in the area, Daniel, an employee of Grupo Cavalcanti, also has a vested interest in restraining brothel activities. While brothels are illegal in Brazil, the political and cultural climate of the region allows for the sustainment of the brothel with the cooperation of the police and local government. In contrast, Daniel, representing Grupo Cavalcanti, demonstrates the more current social and political discussions against sex tourism in Brazil.

[406] Anadelia A. Romo, *Brazil's Living Museum: Race, Reform, and Tradition in Bahia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010). Romo discusses how Brazilian and foreign academics, government officials, Afro-Brazilian leaders, and organizations such as UNESCO helped craft Bahia as the birthplace of Brazil and a locus of tradition, particular Afro-Brazilian traditions.

Instead, Bebel is considered a product of this tropical paradise. Kia Caldwell notes that, "Recent decades have witnessed the *mulata*'s transformation from being a source of national pride to being both an export item and source of tourist revenue...the term *mulata* has become synonymous with prostitute for many European men who travel to Brazil for the purposes of sexual tourism".[407] Therefore, national narratives of the eroticized *mulata* also influence transnational narratives and imaginations of the Brazilian *mulata*. The *mulata* has often functioned as the mythic proof of racial harmony for both internal and external consumption. Hence, Bebel as the epitome of the *mulata* reinforces nationalist and transnational image of Brazil as a racial democracy and racial sexual paradise.

Performing Race through Sound and Sexuality

Like other mixed-race actresses in the United States, Pitanga's characters are not raceless, but are marked as mixed-race black with subtle cues and markers that draw from narrative tropes, and sensibilities such as performance, sound, and corporality. The idea of the racially ambiguous *mulata* then is hemispherically circulated such that similar indicators of sexual availability, desire, and exoticness are signified. Furthermore, audience knowledge of Camila Pitanga's paternal background through Antonio Pitanga, a famous Afro-Brazilian actor, informs the text. Pitanga is not separated from her black origins. While in *Belíssima*, she plays a *morena*, in *Paraíso Tropical,* Camila Pitanga plays the role of the hypersexual mulata. In both cases, blackness and mixedness are tropes. E. Patrick Johnson argues for understanding blackness as "contingent, malleable,

[407] Caldwell, *Negras in Brazil*, 60.

performative," rather than a biological fact.[408] Therefore, codes of blackness and tropes of the mulata are performed relative to histories of social relations The denotations of race and colonial history are present on the body even when race is not explicitly marked. Although Bebel was not specifically written as a *mulata* nor was Camila Pitanga the first choice for the role,[409] the traces of African descent are subtly named in the *telenovela* through performance, narrative tropes, and sound. In *Paraíso Tropical*, hemispheric ideas of blackness and mixedness are put on display through Bebel's body such that even when blackness is not overtly claimed, the performance of race is manifested.

When the viewer first encounters Bebel, she is working as a prostitute in a brothel in Bahia. The brothel caters to many Brazilian and foreign tourists. She is seen performing a striptease in front of male clients and dancing to vaguely Arabic music with a beaded fringe skirt. This use of Arab music and notions of sensual Middle Eastern bellydancing further exoticizes Bebel as part of a sexual otherness.[410] The *telenovela* uses

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[408] E. Patrick Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 29.
[409] The role of Bebel was not written for Camila Pitanga, but for the white blonde actress, Mariana Ximenes. See "'Paraíso Tropical' chega ao fim e Bebel entra para história da TV," September 22, 2007, http://noticiasco.terra.com.co/tecnologia/interna/0,,OI1928199-EI7811,00.html As scripts are written during the airing of the telenovela, the writers would be able to adapt the script to include Pitanga as a *mulata* type. The soundtrack, the corporality, and the narrative tropes would not be able to be read the same way as with Mariana Ximenes.
[410] Orientalist ideas frame the construction of belly dance in Brazil. Bellydancing in Brazil was popularized by another telenovela, *O Clone* (2001). Karman argues that bellydancing and the notion of the female seductress are based on a male gaze of desire in both Orientalism and Brazilian nationalism. Karam argues that after the success of The Clone, bellydancing in Brazil became imbued with a universalizing rhetoric for non-Arab dancers. However, this universality included Arab men and excluded Arab women. While Karman explores how non-Middle Eastern women of primarily European descent appropriate bellydancing, I would still argue that in Bebel's performance the exotic brown body still serves as a rendering of otherness that emphasizes sensuality and desire.

a colonizing male gaze and deploys exotic imagery in order to market Bebel as a sexual object of desire to the audience. The space of the brothel reinforces colonial racialized and gendered hierarchies in which the buyer is white and male and Bebel, a woman of color is put on display and is to be sold to the highest bidder. As feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey writes, "women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness."[411] Bebel's body is objectified not only as a sexual object, but also as an exotic object of racial difference. With the vaguely Middle Eastern music and her dancing on stage, Bebel stands as a gendered brown body that is both different and familiar and with her sexualization, evokes the *mulata* figure.

In *Paraíso Tropical*, Camila Pitanga's character *Bebel* has two songs designated for her. The first is *Vatapá* (vatapá is a popular Afro-Brazilian dish from Bahia made from shrimp, coconut milk, bread, nuts, and a variety of other ingredients) by Danilo Caymmi and the second is *Não Enche* (Brazilian slang meaning leave me alone or don't bother me) Caetano Veloso. Both of these songs are upbeat and have a pronounced Brazilian rhythm as opposed to the more subdued melodies associated with white characters in the *telenovela*. The songs associated with Bebel are part of historical renditions of Brazilian national identity. Samba songs that exalt the sensuality of the *mulata* are common in Brazil and stem from the growing nationalization of samba in the

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Furthermore, Bebel's dancing is not for her own personal pleasure, but is based on seduction and capturing the male gaze of potential clients. See John Tofik Karam, "Bellydancing and the (En)Gendering of Ethnic Sexuality in the 'Mixed' Brazilian Nation," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 6, no.2 (2010): 86-114.

[411] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975): 11

1930s.[412] In particular, the song *Vatapá* also helps place Bahia and Bebel's body as an exotic backdrop for the *telenovela*. As Bahia is often celebrated as the site of Brazil's African heritage, the specific citing of Bahia in the song along with the fictional tropical town setting serves to reinforce the mythologizing of blackness and racial democracy in Brazil. The Brazilian state has attempted to market *brasilidade* both abroad and internally as racial mixture. With Bahia occupying primary importance in Brazil's colonial origins, it is also regarded as one of the birthplaces of racial mixing. The song *Vatapá* dictates, "Quem quiser vatapá/Que procure fazer/Primeiro o fubá/Depois o dendê/ Procure uma nêga baiana/ Que saiba mexer" [Whoever wants vatapá/ First the fubá (cassava flour) /After the dendê (palm oil)/Look for a black Bahian woman/Who knows how to stir.] Caymmi names the ingredients for making *vatapá,* but also specifically states that a *nêga baiana* is necessary for the recipe. The word *nêga* is a colloquial variation of *negra* and is often used affectionately. *Vatapá* is a specific local dish from Bahia and the image of a Bahian woman in a white dress selling *acarajé* (a popular Afro-Brazilian street food item from Bahia made from black-eyed peas, shrimp, and other ingredients that are fried into a fritter) and *vatapá* has become ubiquitous in tourist brochures and popular imagery. As a result of the image of the *vatapá* or *acarajé* vendor, Brazilians presume that if a Bahian woman cooks food it acquires authenticity. Thus, this idea of the *baiana* is a symbol of what is specifically Bahian and well as a link to the past. The African roots of *vatapá* are evident from the ingredients such as *fubá* and *dendê* oil. The preoccupation with roots and the necessary naming of Bahia and *nêga* emphasize Bebel's *brasilidade* by way of Bahia. Bebel's body stands in for the lack of mobility in

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[412] Pravaz, "Brazilian Mulatice."

favor of an emphasis on her body as the holder of Brazilian tradition as demonstrated by race. Therefore, Bebel allows for an authentic "Otherness" that is noted in this song, but also marked by her famously colorful costuming and her playful vocabulary. By having Bebel associated with *Vatapá*, the *telenovela* implies that Bebel is of African descent.

Bebel's African origins haunt the *telenovela* with a hypersexuality mapped onto the black and/or mixed-race body. In particular, there are multiple meaning associated with the song's line "Que sabe mexer." *Mexer* is also associated with the bodily movement of dancing and swaying. When this song is played for Bebel, the camera often focuses on her swaying hips either from dancing or walking. Bebel, herself, also performs this sense of sensuality for her male admirers. For example, when *Vatapá* is played in the fifth episode, Bebel is seen on a beach in Bahia walking towards the ocean, swaying her hips, repeatedly touching her hair, and looking back at her prospective client, Jader. While Jader would be considered *pardo* (ambiguous term for brown/mixed), many men of African descent also participate in the hypersexualization of the *mulata* figure. Bebel evokes the myth of the racialized sexualized *mulata* who expresses her power through corporeal performance. The soundtrack makes Bebel appear as if her hip movements are responding to the Brazilian rhythms and therefore, further naturalizes Bebel as part of Brazil's tropical nature, landscapes, and Afro-Brazilian influenced music. As the camera traces Bebel's hips and buttocks, the audience sees Bebel from Jader's point of view. The focus on Bebel's hips and buttocks eroticizes these body parts and thereby, transforms Bebel from a subject into an object of desire. Laura Mulvey argues that the female body is fragmented into eroticized parts in order to transform it from a subject into an object of desire. By emphasizing only body part or certain

perception of that part, the body becomes dehumanized.[413] The word *mexer* also conveys blending. Therefore, *mexer* is linked to the mythologized sexual pleasures of miscegenation that have constituted the Brazilian nation.

This process of nation-building is assisted by the literal and figurative incorporation of darker bodies into the dominant Brazilian lighter body and puts in a motion a process that is modeled symbolically through sex and eating as seen through the song *Vatapá*. Women's bodies are used to sell access to pleasure and to the idea of the Brazilian nation that is associated with memories of miscegenation. bell hooks argues, "When race and ethnicity become commodified as resources for pleasure the culture of specific groups, as well as the bodies of individuals, can be seen as constituting an alternative playground where members of dominating races, genders, sexual practices affirm their power-over in intimate relation with the Other."[414] While Brazil promotes the idea of a united multiracial body as nation, the idea of otherness still remains. The othering of the black body occurs through the exotification of the black body in Bahia, known as the blackest region in Brazil. Thus, the signs of Bebel's differentiation from the other white characters are linked to the song, her body, her sensual movement, and her racial origins.

Caetano Veloso's *Não Enche* is the second song associated with Bebel. In the lyrics, various words such as *perua, piranha, harpia*, *aranha*, *pirata*, *malandra*, *vagaba*, and *vampira* (slang denoting gaudy woman who thinks she is elegenat and beautiful,

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[413] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure."
[414] bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1992), 55.

whore, hooker, goldigger, harpy, vagina, freebooter, hustler, vagabond, vampire). The song uses terms that are associated with prostitution, gold diggers, and loose and untrustworthy women. The upbeat and highly rhythmic nature of the song masks the strong gendered language. With Caetano Veloso singing, his male voice addresses the female subject in a denigrating manner and also warns others of the dangers associated with involvement with a woman like Bebel. While there are other female villains in the *telenovela*, none of these characters have songs with such negative imagery associated with them. This is due, in part, because it is acceptable to use denigrating gendered language in a sexist misogynoistic economy. The terms are futher normalized for women of African descent. When this song is played, Bebel is often engaging in sexual activities, dancing, or attempting to attract male attention. The camera's focus on Bebel's body and the song's lyrics relegate Bebel's body to a commodity with the mythologized traits of her racialized sexualized *mulata* archetype.

<u>Consumerism and Becoming a "Mulher de Categoria"</u>

Although Olavo falls for Bebel, their relationship still falls into a pattern of concubinage. Bebel is still not Olavo's equal as he can call her for sex on demand. Through Olavo, Bebel experiences a sliver of an upper-class lifestyle and becomes even more desirous of entering this world. In order to assimilate, she attempts to dress, behave, and talk like women of the elite class. Yet, despite her efforts, she is not accepted and her lack of knowledge of mannerisms and social cues as well as her incorrect grammar give her away. For example, Bebel often asserts that she wants to be a "*mulher de categoria*" (high class woman) but mispronounces the term as "*mulher de catiguria"*

and thereby, further gives away the obvious that she was not born into high social standing.

Bebel's desire to be a "madame" (lady) or a "mulher de categoria" intersects with ideologies of class and race. While Bebel is considered sensual and sexually desirable, she is not often labelled as beautiful in the *telenovela*. Beauty is often shaped by ideas of proper white femininity and upper-class conduct in Brazil while sensuality is shaped by ideas of black sexuality. While lower-class women can still be considered physically beautiful, their ability to adhere to or have the potential to conform to upper-class ideas of elegance inform the *telenovela*'s construction of beauty. In order for Bebel to move from *gostosa* (literally translating as tasty, but often means sexually desirable) to a woman who is *linda* (pretty) like Vivian (Olavo's fiancée), Bebel must demonstrate that she can acquire the customs and taste of the upper-class. Unlike the *morena* figure of Mônica in *Belíssima*, Bebel struggles to conform to these standards. Although Mônica had to learn these upper-class customs, the *telenovela* showed that she gradually and naturally could fit into a higher economic class. For Bebel to become a beautiful madame, she also must assimilate to upper class customs. The excessive *mulata* body and sexuality need to be repressed in order to become palatable in an upper class white world.

As Brazilian *telenovelas* play an important role in creating the idea of consumer-citizens, Bebel's role as a consumer is important for the *telenovela*'s social function. As Heloísa Buarque de Almeida has argued, the *telenovela* serves the important purpose of promoting not only consumption, but also the desire for consumption. Thereby, the desire to consume certain goods matched with the economic ability to do so is a central part of

participating in Brazilian society as a consumer.[415] Therefore, consumption plays a significant role in Bebel's attempt to demonstrate that she has enough potential and knowledge to enter into a higher class and to surmount racialized and gendered class based discrimination. Armed with Olavo's authorization to spend money on goods in the shopping mall, Bebel taps into Brazil's consumerist desires and the idea that money whitens in Brazil.

However, entering into the store dressed in a denim miniskirt and midriff-baring top, Bebel is treated with disrespect. Thereby, her wishes to be considered part of Brazilian society are denied by the saleswoman who tells Bebel that she must have entered the wrong store. As indicated by Nestor García Canclini, the contemporary subject utilizes the rituals of consumption to enact citizenship.[416] However, the consumption of luxury goods by the lower and working-classes is seen as abhorrent because it threatens the boundaries between social classes.[417] Therefore Bebel is denied the satisfaction of citizenship through consumption. After finding out about Bebel's treatment, Olavo demands that Bebel return to the story with him. As Bebel is wearing similar clothing, it is not the attire that marks her isolation, but rather the unwelcome space for women of color in these exclusive consumerist settings such as the shopping mall. Olavo asks which saleswoman helped her yesterday and then he demands that Bebel be treated with respect. After having the saleswoman bring out many items, Bebel

[415] Heloisa Buarque Almeida, *Telenovela, consumo e gênero: "muitas mais coisas"*(Bauru, SP: Anpocs/EDUSC, 2003).
[416] Néstor García Canclini, *Consumidores y ciudadanos. conflictos multiculturales de la globalización* (México. Editorial Grijalbo).
[417] Teresa Pires do Rio Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregration, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 70-72.

decides that she does not want to purchase any of the goods and thereby, asserts her position of choice and of power. However, she is only able to gain this position with the presence of Olavo.

Determined to acquire "*categoria*", Bebel hires Virgínia to giver her etiquette lessons. In humorous scenes, Bebel learns which silverware to use, how to hold her dining utensils, and how to chew properly in a formal dinner. These scenes not only help the viewer sympathize with Bebel as she strives to assimilate to upper-class manners, but the scenes also serve to educate the viewers themselves in social conduct. As *telenovelas* also function to create codes of behavior,[418] the *telenovela* also helps bring in the Brazilian masses to upper-class etiquette and into the matrix of Brazilian society. Therefore, these scenes also serve as an educational tool on how to behave for viewers themselves to gain "*categoria*," Bebel's efforts to gain *categoria* and ascend socially then can also be imitated by the viewers themselves. Like *Pretty Woman* (1990) where Julia Roberts accompanies Richard Gere to the horse races, Bebel is the sensation of the party. The *telenovela* alludes to a Pygmalion type idea that if Bebel dresses in designer clothes and takes etiquette classes, she will exude beauty and class and therefore, will be presentable to high society. At the party, she attracts the attention of Urbano, a wealthy businessman and through this rival love interest, she is able to ignite Olavo's jealousy. Therefore, the *telenovela* suggests that beauty and "*categoria*" can perhaps be learned if a woman is able to fit into the tastes of the upper classes.[419]

<u>Audience Affect</u>

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[418] Almeida, *Telenovela, consumo e gênero.*
[419] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

Bebel's wide popularity evidences the affective implications of Bebel for *telenovela* identification. Therefore, the potential for subaltern spectatorship demonstrates the value of affective experience and identification with characters such as Bebel. Bebel's character popularity soared way beyond Globo TV's expectations as audiences called for further development of Bebel in the script. Since IBOPE and Globo research, polls, and audience feedback are highly influential, writers have been known to "give a leading role to a secondary character because of the public reaction."[420] Initially, Bebel was written as a villain, but many viewers sympathized with the character. As a *garota de programa* (an indirect term for prostitute or literally translated as a date girl), Bebel was viewed with relative sympathy by audiences. Her low economic status, vulnerability, ambition to climb out of her economic situation, and the hope that one can meet a wealthy man to reach financial security are all possible reasons to identify with Bebel's character. Donna Goldstein finds that lower-class women of African descent internalize these narratives. This fantasy, according to her, "plays with the ideology of whitening [and] illustrates a perfectly ambiguous romantic relationship in which women expect to gain materially while they play out the sexualized role of *mulata.*"[421]

However, perhaps most importantly, Camila Pitanga, unlike the famous actress Mariana Ximenes who was originally supposed to play Bebel, is more recognizable to Brazilian audiences on the basis of her skin color. Globo's official *Paraíso Tropical* website stated, "Dentro e fora dos estúdios, dentro e fora do país, Camila Pitanga é adorada por todos, de todas as idades, todas as classes e níveis culturais….Da cor do

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[420] Machado-Borges, *Only for You!,* 50.
[421] Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place*, 124.

nosso povo, da cor do nosso querido país. Virou mania nacional, referência pra mulher brasileira. Aliás, para o autor Ricardo Linhares, o sucesso de Bebel se deve justamente a isso – "Ela é a cara do Brasil."[422] [Camila Pitanga is adored by everyone, all ages, all classes and social levels….The color of our people, the color of our beloved country. She became a national sensation, reference for the Brazilian woman. For the scriptwriter, Ricardo Linhares, the success of Bebel is due precisely to this-"She is the face of Brazil."] Bebel then emerges as the literal representation of Brazilian identity and *mestiçagem*. The desire to see an actress like Camila Pitanga and a character like Bebel onscreen can be read as part of a desire for social and cultural citizenship through visibility on television.

Bebel's style of dress and her colloquial linguistic mode became not only popular with viewers, but also imitated by them. *Telenovelas* often popularize fashion across Brazil funneling from the elite classes to cheaper imitations for the lower-classes.[423] In contrast, the fashion popularized by Bebel comes not from an imitation of the upper-clases, but through an imitation of marginalized sexualized women. As an *O Globo* article noted, "Numa trama cheia de gente muito chique, é a prostituta que está ditando moda[424] (In a story full of very chic people, it is a prostitute that is dictating fashion). The distinctive fashion that Bebel uses is also a mark of a small amount of agency. However, as Bebel tries to become part of Rio de Janeiro's high society through Olavo and her other wealthy boyfriends, she also becomes effectively whitened through her straight hair

[422] Bebel, a queridinha do Brasil",
http://paraisotropical.globo.com/Novela/Paraisotropical/0,,AA1642119-8295,00.html

[423] Almeida, *Telenovelas, consumo*, 168-169.
[424] Cláudia Sarmento, "Bebel não veste Prada*," O Globo,* May 20, 2007, 12-13.

and her use of designer fashion that does not use any local Brazilian elements associated with Afro-Brazilian culture or the lower-classes.

Sexuality and Non-Reproductive Labor

Bebel's attempts to use her body for male sexual pleasure in the hopes of financial gain links her with the history of *mulata* sexuality for social and economic mobility. In *Paraíso Tropical*, Bebel relies on mostly white patrons to sustain herself financially. When she leaves Bahia in hope of a better life in Rio de Janeiro, she is able to leave with the help of one of her clients, Jader. However, when she arrives in Rio, she is relegated to again work as a prostitute under her client turned into pimp. In exchange for housing, Bebel is forced to work in the "*asfalto*" (concrete) and takes to the streets instead of the more glamorous life she envisioned. In addition, Bebel is expected to pay her end of expenses for food, transportation, and clothing out of her earnings. Bebel, at times locked in Jader's apartment, lives in a state of indentured servitude. To better her situation, Bebel attempts to convince Jader to include her as one of his "*garotas para executivos*" (girls for executives), which resembles more of a high-end escort service. However, Jader comments that "top de linha são universitárias…educadas e não uma quenga vindo do interior, que tem cheiro de rua, não sabe falar, nem pegar num talher... tem que ter categoria." [The top of the line are university students, educated and not a worthless prostitute from the interior who has the odor from the street, and doesn't know how to speak properly]. Undeterred, Bebel tricks Jader and replaces one of the women to be sent to Olavo. Upon discovering Bebel's trick, Jader verbally and physically abuses her. He slaps her, twists her arm, and hangs her torso out of the window despite Bebel's crying protests. He later locks the door and Bebel is kept prisoner.

Bebel is highly aware of her differentiated racial and class status. Bebel is certainly dissimilar from the white blonde escorts that Olavo has had in the past or his white blonde fiancée, Vivian. Olavo often calls Bebel "*cachorra*" (hot and sexy bitch). This idea of the hot bitch may also be performed to Bebel's own advantage as she strategically uses her exoticized status in terms of class and race in the deployment of her sexuality. Race is implicitly eroticized in the relationship between Bebel and Olavo, as he is more attracted to Bebel, a *mulata* prostitute than to his white fiancée, Vivian. The comparisons between the hypersexuality of Bebel and the refinement and upper-class status of Vivian serves to desexualize Vivian. Bebel is aware of this preference for her and often assumes a position of superiority to Vivian, sometimes even in racial terms. For example, Bebel says to Olavo "Ah, bem que dizem, né, que branca azeda pega ruga cedo. Falta de melancolia" [They say that bitter white women get wrinkles early. A lack of melancholy.] Olavo corrects her and says it is *melanina* (melatonin) not *melancoli*a (melancholy), and thereby points to her misinformation. Bebel responds, "Ah! Ôô, tanto faz, tá? Quem vai ter que aguentar a pele seca, encarquilhada toda noite é você, não sou eu." [Whatever ok? The person who will have endure that dry wrinkled skin every night is you not me.]

Upon learning that he will marry Vivian and Bebel will remain his mistress, Bebel sets up a plan to sabotage the wedding. She hires her white friend, Betina to seduce Olavo and arranges for Vivian to find Olavo with Betina. As Bebel begs for forgiveness and offers herself to Olavo, she is holding onto the desire of becoming a madame. Meanwhile, Urbano, Bebel's other lover, finds out about Bebel's plan and falls for Betina instead. Urbano and Betina leave for New York together while Bebel is forced to go back

to the street. While Bebel is punished, Betina's Cinderella fairytale comes true with Urbano. Furthermore, the morality of white female characters, such as Paula and Ana Luísa contrast to Bebel's sexual promiscuity. Whereas Paula moves to Rio de Janeiro from Bahia for love, Bebel moves for money through deceit and manipulation. Even when Paula engages in sex outside of marriage, her whiteness and goodness are eventually rewarded with marriage whereas Bebel is outside the realm of marriageability. Unlike the *morena* figure such as Mônica, the *mulata* does not fit into ideas of mobility through marriage. Bebel recognizes and acquiesces to the limits of her identity and the boundaries of whiteness. She knows her place in society and while that place may be to serve, comfort, guide, or entice white men, it is never to occupy the space of a wife.

When Bebel finds out she is pregnant from Olavo, Olavo does not rejoice but rather schemes on how to use this to his advantage. Olavo sets up Bebel to seduce his boss, Antenor and to have sex with him and later contend that she is carrying Antenor's baby. As Antenor desperately wants a male heir, Olavo believes that the baby will be taken care of regardless of the circumstances. Olavo falsifies the DNA reports so that Antenor will believe Bebel. Antenor treats Bebel with disrespect and orders her to live inside the house because he does not trust that she will know how to properly take care of his future heir during her pregnancy.

While Bebel is given a small degree of agency for her manipulations and trickery, her mobility to a higher economic status is reliant on her physical capacities to sexually please white men. When Olavo dies, Bebel is put in jail for helping Olavo with illegal activities. Pregnant with Olavo's child, Bebel baby is accidently miscarried when she attempts to escape. When Bebel is caught, the police officer, says to her, "Perdeu,

piranha." [You lost piranha (a derogatory term for a dishonest, greedy, scheming, pushy golddigger)]. This way of addressing Bebel in such an insulting manner combined with the lack of sensitivity that the *telenovela* treated her miscarriage points to the general worthlessness in which *mulata* women are regarded. While Bebel loses her baby, Antenor's white wife, Lúcia has a baby even though their previous attempts had failed. This narrative containing miscarriage and birth allows for the *telenovela* to differentiate women fit to be mothers of the Brazilian nation and women who are excluded from the white moral ideal. Bebel, as the hypersexual *mulata* who does not ultimately reproduce, represents the conclusion of fertile relationships between white men and women of African descent in the *telenovela*. In *telenovelas* the pinnacle of respectability comes with motherhood, but Bebel is denied this opportunity. While white men still lay claim to women's bodies, there is no construction of a family, as representing the Brazilian nation.

Furthermore, the blame is put on Bebel for Antenor's seduction rather than Antenor's drunken but willing earnestness to have sex with Bebel. As punishment for not adhering to codes of morality and for exerting her sexual power, Bebel is not allowed into the narrative of whitening. Bebel's racialized sexual difference becomes an unredeemable difference that positions her outside of the white upper or middles class standards. Her miscarriage and fall from grace in jail is violent yet, justified because of this racialized sexual difference. The aborted child and death of Olavo can be read as punishment for believing that through manipulation, trickery, and ambition, a *mulata* could achieve a higher status. Unlike Mônica in *Belíssima*, Bebel does not have future biological progeny. Therefore, the future of the mixed race nation does not lie in the womb of the *mulata* figure.

Despite representing the opposite of the virtuous *mocinha*, viewers demanded that Bebel be rewarded a happy ending, which she finds after embezzling millions from a corrupt politician, and becoming a national celebrity. The narrative again asserts that it is necessary to use sexual desirability to attain economic and social status. She is portrayed as an independent woman able to deploy her wily femininity to take advantage of men. When the audience last sees Bebel, she is now Sra. Francisbel dos Santos Batista. While dressed in a large white fur trimmed suit with her hair straightened into a bun evocative of Evita,[425] Bebel appears testifying in court against corruption charges. As Bebel calls out to her photographer friends and smiles for the camera, Caetono Veloso's song, *Não Enche* plays in the background. Thus, the *telenovela* suggests that she is still a gold digger regardless of her status. The charges against the senator and Bebel suggest that Bebel is still of low moral value. However, the *telenovela*'s satirical scenes of Bebel in court present a critique of the Brazilian judicial and political systems. Bebel is no worse than many members of the elite occupying political office.

At the end of the court session, Bebel announces that she will pose nude in *Playboy*. Thus, Bebel shows that her body and sexuality are still paramount to her success. However, Bebel chooses to exercise her sexuality as power rather than being exploited by others. Furthermore, by telling the judge that it will be an artistic nude, Bebel distances herself from vulgarity in lieu of a desire to be presented as glamorous. While the *telenovela* reinforces Bebel as overtly sexual, the ending also possibly gives a new opening where it is not only the *mocinha*, a white good girl like Paula, who can

[425] In a conflation of fiction and reality, Bebel's character is reminiscent of the journalist, Mônica Veloso who was the mistress of Senator Renan Calheiros.

achieve happiness. Rather, Bebel through her own manipulation and scheming uses her femininity and sexuality to gain upward mobility. Audiences, already rooting for Bebel, then might find pleasure in subverting hierarchal class, race, and gender structures and therefore, Bebel's rise is one of liberation. The rags to riches narrative of Bebel is based on a neoliberal rhetoric of individualism as the telenovela does not present the racial, class, and gender barriers to mobility. Nonetheless, the *mulata* figure is still almost always imagined through as the agent of pleasure while social status is only gained through liaisons with white men.

Considering the history of overwhelming Afro-Brazilian invisibility and marginalization in t*elenovelas*, *telenovela* romance narratives have only recently begun to include Afro-Brazilian women.[426] However, these romance narratives rely on foundational fictions of star-crossed lovers along with ideologies of social whitening and tropes of black female sexuality. Gender and racial inequalities are naturalized while the *telenovelas* focus on the individual paths to mobility for these characters. Thus, for the *mulata* figure, the narrative emphasizes their eroticized and racialized physical attractiveness and also shows the possibility of economic gain through liaisons with white men. For the *morena* figure, the narrative follows a racial self-transformation through *branqueamento* and marriage to white men. Therefore, *telenovelas* also function as technologies of citizenship, which create a vision of proper citizenship according to racial, gender, and sexual norms.

Possible Alternatives

Porto dos Milagres (Port of Miracles, 2001) and *Duas Caras* (Two Faces, 2007*),*

[426] Araújo, *A negacão do Brasil*, 2000.

present a politics of renegotiation of black pride rather than a whitening of the characters or a hypersexualization of the *mulata* figure. In contrast to *Paraíso Tropical*'s oversexed and desirable *mulata,* the *telenovelas, Porto dos Milagres* and *Duas Caras* 's *mulata* figures, Andréia and Esmeralda are transformed into *mãe de santos*. A *mãe de santo* is the spiritual and community leader of a *terreiro de candomblé* (an Afro-Brazilian religious house of worship). The *mãe de santo* is out of the context of heteropatriarchy as there is no sex and marriage conjunction or sex and mistress linkage in the *mãe de santo* representation. *Candomblé,* derived from West African polytheistic beliefs, is an Afro-Brazilian religion that also syncretizes Catholic elements into its practice. While followers of *candomblé* cross various racial spectrums in Brazil, the religion is generally associated with Afro-Brazilian populations. Thus, their transformation from sexualized figures into spiritual figures helps strip the *mulata* from hypersexualization, further associating her with Afro-Brazilian culture while turning her into a leader.

This transformation also further associates the *mulata* with Afro-Brazilian roots, particularly as both *Porto dos Milagres* and *Duas Caras* were criticized for the lack of black characters represented in settings where the majority of the population is of African descent. In *Porto dos Milagres*, the setting is in a small town in Bahia, a region with the largest population of African descent in Brazil. As *Porto dos Milagres* was based on a Jorge Amado novel with numerous characters of African descent, many of the roles that could have easily been cast with black actors were instead cast overwhelmingly with white actors. In *Duas Caras*, the setting is in Portelinha, a *favela* (shantytown), where most residents are of African descent. While both of these *telenovelas* had more actors of African descent than usual based on the norm of whiteness in *telenovelas*, the image

represented by these *telenovelas* presents Brazil as a largely white nation. In reaction to such low numbers of black cast members, Paulo Paim, one year before *Porto dos Milagres,* had previously proposed a law that would require a minimum twenty-five percent quota of Afro-Brazilian actors on television and forty-percent in commercials. However, Aguinaldo Silva, the screenwriter for both *Porto dos Milagres* and *Duas Caras*, protested that these quotas would limit creativity and that whites were practically non-existent since most Brazilians were really *mestiço* (mixed).[427] Like the protest of fashion designers with the proposal of quotas for fashion shows, Silva used the guise of creativity as an excuse to exclude a vision of blackness in Brazil. While both *telenovelas* incorporate Afro-Brazilian cultural elements, the *telenovelas* ultimately privilege whiteness while using discourses and practices of *mestiçagem* to obscure this very privilege. The use of the *mulata* figure in these *telenovelas* allows for the *mulata* to be more firmly affiliated with Afro-Brazilian culture and thus, she is prevented from being a possible sexual threat.

In both *telenovelas*, the *mulata* figure is tempted by other desires and is distracted from her practice of *candomblé*. In *Duas Caras*, Andréia, played by Deborah Nascimento, is chosen as the samba queen for the upcoming *carnaval* procession. As samba is very much associated with the *mulata* figure, it can be inferred that Andréia represents a *mulata*. Andréia is desired by various men in the *telenovela* and her body is often put on display. To be a samba queen is considered the pinnacle of *brasilidad*e,

[427] Liv Sovik, "We Are Family: Whiteness in the Brazilian Media," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 13, no.3 (2004): 318.

sensuality, and desirability.[428] Mãe Setimbra, a *candomblé* priestess, repeatedly tells Andréia that her destiny is in the *terreiro* rather than the Sambódromo (the Sambadrome is an exhibition parade space for samba schools during Rio de Janeiro Carnival). Andréia resists, but when Mãe Setimbra dies and Andréia breaks her leg right before her performance, she complies. Her transformation into a *mãe de santo* is considered to be destiny chosen by the *orixás* (deities).

In *Porto dos Milagres,* Esmeralda, played by Camila Pitanga, relentlessly pursues the white fisherman, Guma even to the point of breaking up his friendships and his relationship with his white love interest, the wealthy Lívia. She continuously rejects the advances of Guma's black friend, Foninho unless she is using him to buy material goods and dresses in hopes of attracting Guma. Esmeralda asserts that Guma has nothing in common with that *branquela* (slang for female "whitey"), Lívia as she did not grow up in Porto dos Milagres. However, she vows that if Guma wants a princess, she will transform into one by using Foninho to buy items for her. Like Bebel, Esmeralda attempts to fashion herself after a white woman in hopes of gaining her love interest's favor.

While Foninho and Guma vow never to have a woman come between them, the triangle with Esmeralda, the *mulata* figure, is part of the idea of a racial brotherhood that is linked through the sexuality of the *mulata* figure. Esmeralda represents the stereotypical manipulative *mulata* seductress. She eventually causes Guma and Lívia to break up temporarily after Guma cheats on Lívia while Esmeralda alleges that she is carrying Guma's baby. While Esmeralda's father is white in the *telenovela*, her mother is

[428] Natasha Pravaz, "Where Is the Carnivalesque in Rio's Carnaval? Samba, Mulatas, and Modernity," *Visual Anthropology* 21, no.2 (2008): 95-111.

not seen. Esmeralda's father often comments that he has suffered and that Esmeralda is like her mother and attracts too much attention from men. With the mother physically absent in the *telenovela*, audiences can infer that Esmeralda's mother is black and that her passion, desire, and manipulation follow that of her mother. At the end of the *telenovela*, Guma suffers from a terrible accident and Esmeralda promises that she will return to the *terreiro* if only the deity, Imenjá (goddess of the sea) allows Guma to live. As promised, Esmeralda devotes herself to *candomblé* and eventually becomes a *mãe de santo*. Like Andreía's replacement of Mãe Setimbra, Esmerelda then replaces Mãe Ricardina (played by famed Afro-Brazilian actress, Zezé Motta). With the *mulata* figure replacing a very dark-skinned *mãe de santo*, she then becomes blacker while the face of Afro-Brazilian culture becomes whiter.

The characters of Andréia and Esmeralda begin as typical *mulata* characters, but end the *telenovelas* as *mãe de santos*. As *mãe de santos*, both characters are no longer a sexual threat to white men, white women and the sanctity of the nation. As such, these characters are not part of the whitening project through motherhood. This immersion into *candomblé* implicitly prevents Andréia and Esmeralda from participation as mothers of future whiter children and contains the idea of unbridled sexuality as danger. Yet, this transformation into *mãe de santos* perhaps offers an alternative path for the *mulata* figure as part of a politics of Afro-Brazilian affirmation. These *mulata* characters become spiritual leaders of importance to the community. Furthermore, *mãe de santo*, literally translated as "mothers-of-saints," perhaps suggests procreation. However, this idea of procreation is not rigidly heterosexual and does not adhere to a patriarchal model. Procreation here might mean the procreation and further dissemination of Afro-Brazilian

culture. This idea of spiritual mothers then actually might leave a potential opening for the *mulata* to form oppositional subjectivities in relation to the nation. Thus, rather than represent racial democracy, the *mulata* as *mãe de santo*, is a figure of Afro-Brazilian pride and *mesticagem*, unrelated to racial democracy. Furthermore, the *mulata* as *mãe de sant*o points to a possible source of feminist agency. The *mulata* figure is no longer an object of desire, but a subject. While in *Belíssima* and *Paraíso Tropical*, agency is prescribed through heteropatriarchal structures such as the role of the wife or the role of the mistress, in *Porto dos Milagres* and *Duas Caras*, the mixed-race figure is not a vehicle of the nation. Through transformation into *mãe de santos*, these figures become bodies outside of the nation-state.

Conclusion

The narrative and performances of the Brazilian mixed-race figure in *telenovelas* demonstrate how racial histories, tropes, gendered and sexualized racial performances and conventions, and contemporary cultural and political dynamics play out in the negotiation of *branqueamento*, *mestiçagem*, and the management of blackness. The mixed-race figure is placed within these historical dimensions of race and nation, yet the fate of the figure is not necessarily pre-determined as demonstrated by the resistant endings in *Paraíso Tropical*, *Duas Caras*, and *Porto dos Milagres*. Despite the high symbolic value of the mixed-race female figure of African descent in national discourse, the exclusion of women of African descent in *telenovelas* has also excluded these same women as participatory citizens of the modern nation. Racial representations in the *telenovela* realm have tangible implications for the everyday experiences of women of

color. Furthermore, as the purchasing power of Afro-Brazilians increases from various economic, political, and social policies, the desire to attract and retain these audiences might garner a wider diversity of viewpoints and representations. These *telenovelas*, whether explicitly or implicitly, engage with the debates of racial inclusion, racial identity, racial democracy, and the place of Afro-Brazilian culture and identity within the nation. Competing ideologies of racial democracy, *branqueamento*, *mestiçagem*, and Afro-Brazilian oppositional identities are inscribed onto the mixed-race female figure. Therefore, the mixed-race figure in Brazil is located within historical frames and social and cultural practices, but can also be rearticulated to fit contemporary pressures and resist dominant national racial paradigms.

<u>Chapter Four: Reinventing the Mulatta in the United States</u>

Like Brazilian *telenovelas*, U.S. cultural productions function as a management of blackness. Simarily to Chapter Three's use of *telenovelas*, this chapter uses U.S. cultural productions to show how the historical spectre of the mixed-race figure comes to bear on contemporary cultural productions, how understandings of mixed-race sexuality function as part of national racial narratives, and how concern over the place of blackness is inscribed on mixed-race characters. Like the mixed-race figures in Brazilian *telenovelas*, the U.S. mulatta figure works within racial and sexual histories, but is not necessarily beholden to these histories. Contradictory desires and attempts to incorporate and contain blackness within narratives of *mestiçagem*, multiculturalism, and whitening demonstrate a management of blackness at work beyond the confines of the nation-state. These strategies of controlling racial difference and blackness are part of hemispheric logics of racial management. *Telenovelas* and U.S film and television depict a containment of blackness, but occasionally spaces of resistance and agency prevent a full containment. With an understanding of how the mixed-race female figure functions in Brazilian *telenovelas*, this chapter focuses on the U.S. mulatta in cultural productions to further comprehension of the logics of racial management and containment.

Popular media is a contested space in the public sphere and mass media representations negotiate between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses about blackness. This chapter attempts to go beyond simply pointing out positive or negative imagery of mixed-race women in popular media and instead asks what possibilities and

limitations these images hold.[429] As Douglass Kellner argues, "Media culture also provides the materials out of which many people construct their sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality, of 'us' and 'them.' Media culture helps shape the prevalent view of the world and deepest values."[430] This chapter recognizes that popular culture is both a site of identity production and struggle. Film and television are spaces of negotiation, resistance, and rearticulation of identities and national narratives of race, gender, sexuality, and class. Therefore, this chapter explores how race, gender, sexuality, and class are bound together in these narratives within a changing national landscape. In a post-civil rights national context, media images of women of color operate in a shifting terrain. These images are contextualized with an upwardly mobile black middle class and an uneven distribution of capital, education, and opportunities for many other black populations in the United States.

Despite the rise of independent cinema and cable television in the 1990s, the practices and ideologies of dominant Hollywood cinema and mainstream network television still have great influence. Backdropped by the increasing conglomeration of media companies, the inclusion of black, female, and queer directors, producers, and writers, and the growth of female celebrities of color in both film and television, this chapter examines *Monster's Ball* (2001) and *The L Word* (2004-2009) to navigate this terrain. From the 1970s to the 1990s, a shift from dominant mass productions and

[429] See Herman Gray, *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for Blackness*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1995; bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End, 1992); Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 1994).
[430] Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 1.

consumption of Hollywood production opened up a model of specialization and niche group focused films.[431] Beginning in the late 1980s to early 1990s, independent cinema was no longer limited to low budget experimental cinema.[432] The blurring of Hollywood and independent sectors, known as indiewood[433] started in 1993 with Disney's purchase of Miramax.[434] Indiewood can be characterized as a hybrid form that combines Hollywood and independent film.[435] The increasingly institutionalized context of independent cinema has made it more similar to mainstream Hollywood.[436]

By 2000, most of the major studios had subsidiaries, such as Sony Pictures

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[431] From the 1970s to 1990s, low-budget productions centering on character-driven films targeted to African-Americans, gays and lesbians, and arthouse fans contrasted with the big studio blockbuster type productions. Furthermore, the opportunities for distribution in foreign markets also provided another outlet for an alternative model of filmmaking. The niche-targeted films also were afforded another potential outlet through cable networks. For black independent cinema, filmmakers such as Charles Burnett and Julie Dash have often remained distant from Hollywood and have found alternative film and video distribution. See Emanuel Levy, *Cinema of Outsiders: The Rise of American Independent Film* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Manthia Diawara, ed. *Black American Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
[432] Many film scholars attest that 1989 was a turning point in the film industry with the breakthrough of Steven Soderbergh's *sex, lies, and videotape.* Miramax bought the rights to the film after its screening at the Sundance Film Festival, an established venue for independent films. Miramax proved both the financial and creative potential of lower-budget high quality films. Miramax became a leader in independent film production and solidified this place with 1992's *The Crying Game*. Many of these film had small, but not incredibly low budgets, generated sizeable revenue, and garnered nominations and prizes at notable film festivals and thus, increased the prestige of the studio, directors, actors, and producers involved. See Alisa Perren "Sex, Lies and Marketing : Miramax and the Development of the Quality Indie Blockbuster," *Film Quarterly*, 55, no.2: 30-39.
[433] Peter Biskind, *Down and Dirty Pictures: Miramax, Sundance, and the Rise of Independent Film* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004)
[434] Miramax, then became an indie subsidiary under Disney, and had greater financial resources that Disney offered while Disney received another source of creative and economic revenue potential. See Alisa Perren "Sex, Lies and Marketing : Miramax and the Development of the Quality Indie Blockbuster." *Film Quarterly*, 55, no.2: 30-39.
[435] See Geoff King, *Indiewood USA…where Hollywood Meets Independent Cinema* (London : I.B. Tauris, 2009).
[436] Biskind, *Down and Dirty Pictures,* 194

Classics. While Lions Gate (formerly Lionsgate), which produced *Monster's Ball,* does not have a conglomerate backing, the structure of Lions Gate is different from previous independent film productions in the 1970s or 1980s. Lions Gate might be referred to as what Wasko calls a "major minor" in that the studio is not connected to major media conglomerates, but is still very competitive in the market.[437] Lions Gate also produces and distributes films.[438] However, its lack of connection to a major conglomerate has also allowed the company to pursue films that might still be too controversial for studio-backed subsidiaries. The prestige that Lions Gate has garnered is evidenced by its numerous Oscars nominations on films grappling with racial issues such as *Monster's Ball* (2001), *Crash* (2004), and *Precious* (2009).[439] While, Chris Holmlund contends, "historically independent films have offered a 'safe haven' for those ignored or neglected

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[437] Janet Wasko, "Show Me the Money. Challenging Hollywood Economics" in *Towards a Political Economy of Culture: Capitalism and Communication in the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Andrew Calabrese and Colin Starks (Boulder, Co: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 144.

[438] Lions Gate emphasized that it would be a North American rather than a Canadian company and would produce and acquire a variety of films without constraint of national specificity. Ken Eisner, "Lions Gate Opens New Doors," *Variety*, December 8, 1997: 107.

[439] This history of racial and social issues with the Oscars harkens back to *Carmen Jones*. Otto Preminger's all-black Carmen Jones evidenced that an all-black film could attract a large audience and generate considerable profits. Preminger, a lifetime member of the NAACP, believed films should address social issues and wished to use Carmen Jones to that effect while proving the commercial potential of using black casts. See Donald Bogle, *Dorothy Dandrige: A Biography* (New York: Amistad Press, 1997), 265-268. Harry Belafonte noted *Carmen Jones'* historical significance, "It was the first all-Negro film that became a great box-office success. It established the fact that pictures with Negro artists, pictures dealing with the folklore of Negro life, were commercially feasible. This was a sign of growth that had occurred in the United States and throughout the world." See Arnold Shaw, *Belafonte: an Unauthorized Biography* (Philadelphia: Chilton, 1960), 140-141.

by the major studios, among them ethnic, racial, sexual, and political 'minorities,'"[440] independent film can also be understood as not necessarily removed from the mainstream Hollywood film industry. While contemporary independent cinema may have adopted the textual and aesthetic practices of prior independent and experimental film, it does not necessarily challenge national racial narratives. Even films that attempt to represent racial sensitivity can reinforce conservative ideologies of race, gender, and sexuality. As bells hooks observes, "Whether we like it or not, cinema assumes a pedagogical role in the lives of many people. It may not be the intent of a filmmaker to teach audiences anything, but that does not mean that lessons are not learned."[441]

Similarly to the role of independent film, cable television offers another outlet from network television, but it is not immune from dominant industry production forces nor does it necessarily provide a platform for marginalized voices. From 1994 to 2004, the U.S. media industry consolidated into six major transnational conglomerates: Viacom (which owns Showtime's *The L Word*), Time Warner Inc., General Electric, The Walt Disney Company, CBS Corporation and News Corporation.[442] These companies are significant media producers and like Globo in Brazil, can be considered part of hegemonic cultural production.

With cable television's growing popularity, the targeting of niche audiences increased. As Torres notes the upsurge of "gay-themed programming" such as *Queer Eye*

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[440] Chris Holmlund and Justin Wyatt, ed, *Contemporary American Independent Film* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 13.
[441] bell hooks, *Reel to Real: Race, Sex, and Class at the Movies* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 2.
[442] William Kunz, *Culture Conglomerates: Consolidation in the Motion Picture and Television Industries* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 8.

for the Straight Guy, the television industry has come to “understand that minortitarian audiences, identities, and subjectivities have now becomes commodities to trade among programmers.”[443] While the increased visibility of minority groups in media culture is significant, this visibility also indicates a commodification to fit economic and political needs. Viacom, which owns both Showtime and Black Entertainment Television, can profit from the marketing of these identities. Due to the needs of marketers, television networks tend to target groups with relative privilege and, thereby, do not necessarily promote the radical reordering of representations. As Arthurs observes, cable channels, such as Showtime bring “the audience into a different economic relation to the product, where the tastes of audience-as-market, as direct purchasers of the channel, are not as obscured by the normalizing processes of the mass market. This segmentation allows for a pluralism that recognises previously marginalized cultures, albeit by their ability to pay.”[444] The relation to class privilege is significant because this niche marketing is also geared towards normalization and assimilation. With the dominance of media conglomerates, “more numerical abundance, however, does not guarantee a diversification of voices.”[445]

Although there is more media visibility for women of color, their inclusion does not necessarily change racial and gender hierarchies. As Herman Gray contends, the incorporation of people of color is often assimilationist and “the privileged subject is necessarily that of the white middle-class; whiteness is the privileged yet unnamed place

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[443] Sasha Torres, “Television and Race” in *A Companion to Television,* ed. Janet Wasko (Malden, MA:Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 399.
[444] Jane Arthurs, “*Sex and the City* and Consumer Culture: Remediating Postfeminist Drama,” *Feminist Media Studies*, 3, no. 1 (2003): 83.
[445] Ibid.

from which to see and make sense of the world."[446] Kimberly Springer argues that representations of black women usually conform to normative ideas of race, gender, sexuality, and class.[447] She claims that "for African American women, the post feminist message is that black women need to know their place within the racial and gender hierarchy even if they are permitted, in small numbers, to assume places in the middle class."[448] The rise of cable networks and programs such as *The L Word* requires attention to both the potential of new programs to reorder and critique privilege and to ways in which theses programs may reinscribe hierarchies. This chapter attempts to examine contradicting narratives of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation and to utilize the potential of this contradictions to engage with both the pleasure and power embedded in these representations

The Mulatta Figure in Contemporary Popular Culture

Race, sexual desire, and gender are key to the configurations of national identity in the United States and Brazil. Any discussion of mixed-race women must also engage with sexuality and linkages to histories of slavery and racial subjugation. The anxiety over the mixed-race figure as representative of racial mixing is key not only to the past, but also to the vision of the nation's future. As such, the competing representations of the mixed-race figure say as much about a nation's legacy as it does about its desired future. While the examples below focus on the United States, the argument concerning the use of

[446] Herman Gray, *Watching Race*, 86.
[447] Kimberly Springer, "Divas, Evil Black Bitches, and Bitter Black Women: African American Women in Postfeminist and Post-Civil-Rights Popular Culture" in *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*, ed. Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 266.
[448] Ibid, 272.

the mixed-race figure as part of racial management is transnational.

Contemporary representations of mixed-race women in U.S. media demonstrate that the mulatta figure has not been dislodged from the U.S. understanding of race, bur rather that the figure has been transformed to fit new social, cultural, and political conditions in a post-civil rights era. The mulattas in *Monster's Ball* and *The L Word* demonstrate contrasting images of the mulatta figure, but maintain certain ideas of racialization through sexuality. From the very first U.S. film, *Birth of a Nation* (1915) to iconic melodrama films such as *Imitation of Life* (1959), the mulatta figure represented a threat to family and nation through her hypersexuality and mental instability. White female sexuality, defined against the image of hypersexual black women, functioned to further pathologize black sexuality and uphold white sexuality as ideal. As the mulatta figure possesses the blood and, thereby, the traits of black female sexuality, she is also assumed to display promiscuity and sexual availability while simultaneously showcasing exotic beauty through her physical features.

In a post-civil rights context, the mulatta figure is dependent on the function of her evocation. Racial ambiguity allows for different forms of identification, especially in terms of class and sexuality. The mulatta body functions as a shifting signifier of race, gender, sexuality, and national belonging. The mulatta as represented by Leticia in *Monster's Ball*, can be brought out of cinematic images of black pathology, but is still prone to tragedy. While the educated upwardly mobile mulatta as characterized by Bette Porter in *The L Word* allows for class mobility, the resignification of the mulatta also allows for blackness as a form of disruption into white normativity. Film and television allow for adjustments of phenotypical meaning based on how race is read either on or off

the body. The mulatta then is raced differently based on how subjects are moralized or pathologized. Absolute claims about the meaning of the mulatta are not valid because the mulatta is used in different ways to make statements about blackness, multiculturalism, and postracial aspirations.

The mulatta figure represents a simultaneous disavowal and desiring of blackness. The mulatta's sexual desirability is evidence of her lack of virtue. Mulatta sexuality comes into the text as enticing and titillating, but needing to be disciplined. Therefore, mixed-race blackness is only acceptable within a contained space that maintains concepts and desires of eroticism. The mixed-race mulatta body then is managed. While neither Leticia in *Monster's Ball* or Bette in *The L Word* claim whiteness, both represent the anxieties and desires of an acceptable blackness that can be brought into civil society or if not ready for civil society, can at least be contained. Therefore, the roles of Leticia and Bette as mulatta figures allow for a liberal cultural interest in race without actually addressing racial inequalities. The fascination with the light-skinned mulatta then reproduces an abjection of blackness or an acceptance of blackness under the terms of assimilation and the maintenance of an exotic, but safe sexual desirability. Ultimately, white redemption is mediated through the mulatta figure. The mulatta body then is inscribed within the politics of multiculturalism while simultaneously revealing anxieties surrounding racial differences.

Monster's Ball

Monster's Ball exposes how contemporary film falls back on historical memories of miscegenation with the mulatta figure as representative of this interracial sexuality. Hazel Carby argues that the narrative figure of the mulatta is "a vehicle for an exploration

of the relationship between the races and, at the same time, an expression of the relationship between the races."[449] However, as these relationships are unstable, contending representations and ideologies of race can occur at the same time or within the same film. *Monster's Ball*, like *The L Word*, uses the mulatta figure to express race relations. Like the Brazilian *mulata* figure, the U.S. mulatta as represented in *Monster's Ball*, represents a form of sexual deviance and occupies a state of relative stasis, rather than mobility when connected to blackness. In *Monster's Ball*, the specter of the mulatta figure lingers over the film.

Although Halle Berry, as an actress, and Leticia, as a character cannot be completely conflated together, the casting of Halle Berry influences the reading of the film. Although the character of Leticia is not explicitly written as mixed-race, viewer knowledge of Halle Berry's mixed heritage, Berry's racial identity, and tropes of hypersexuality all come into play to produce an image of the mulatta figure as a form of sexually deviant multiracial blackness.[450] Based on Halle Berry's star text, the tropes of hypersexuality, and the histories of racial mixing, the mulatta figure and African-American representation are not opposites, but really one in the same. The character of Leticia follows from a historical memory of representations of mulatta and Jezebel archetypes. The mulatta is oversexed and in Leticia's case, her sexuality is pathological. In order to uphold racial and gendered hierarchies, this mulatta body must be disciplined and contained through a simultaneous presence and disavowal of blackness.

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[449]Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 89.
[450] As demonstrated in Chapter Two, Halle Berry has generally acknowledged her mixed-race heritage, but has usually chosen to identify as African-American. Although Berry may identify as black, the media often mentions her multiracial heritage.

Monster's Ball relates the narrative of the relationship between Hank (played by Billy Bob Thornton), a white correctional officer and Leticia, an African-American woman who is widowed after the execution of her husband in prison. The film's setting is in the post-civil rights South. At the beginning of the film, Hank, a widower, follows the racist attitudes of his father, Buck. Hank's son, Sonny does not have these attitudes and is often chastised for his relative empathy and openness. The narrative begins when Hank, a correctional officer, presides over the execution of Lawrence, a black prisoner, who is also Leticia's husband and the father of her son. Later, Sonny, also a correctional officer, commits suicide. Leticia's son, Tyrell is hit by a car and killed. The relationship between Hank and Leticia commences with a very graphic sex scene that Leticia initiates. The relationship is set within multiple deaths, poverty, family disintegration, and deception, as Leticia does not know that Hank was the executioner of her husband.

The Suffering and Tragedy of the Mulatta

Unlike the tragic mulatta figure, who must accept her fate as black or accept death, Leticia's tragedy does not come from passing. Leticia's tragedy stems not from being in between two worlds, but rather from having already been immersed in the black world. Leticia's tragic side-her husband's execution, her son's death, her abuse of alcohol, and her poverty-are derived from her blackness. Leticia is a tragic sympathetic character for white audiences as she appears to be a victim of the circumstances of her birth. Leticia's palpable suffering is implied to be derived from the presence of the black men in her life-her criminal husband and her obese son. The black male characters are coded as symbols of pathology in spheres of criminality, violence, and degeneracy. As Patricia Hill Collins notes, "African American men live with the ideological legacy

that constructs Black-male heterosexuality through the images of wild beasts, criminals, and rapists."[451] These black male bodies threaten Leticia's potential for happiness.

However the suffering of her black husband and her son remain unseen and unsympathetic. The day before Lawrence's execution, Leticia tells Lawrence that she is only in the visiting room because she wanted Tyrell to be able to say goodbye. Later, Leticia beats her son, Tyrell for stealing candy and forces him to step on the scale after eating too much. Tyrell's body is literally a representation of excessive blackness as his surplus of black skin and body mass seems to envelope Leticia. His excess blackness appears as a grotesque materialization of black pathologies. Tyrell's dark black heaviness runs counter to Leticia's slim caramel beauty. With Lawrence as a criminal figure put to death by the electric chair and Tyrell's body stigmatized by his weight and his dark skin, *Monster's Ball* mediates what bodies must remain excluded from national belonging. While Leticia's light-skinned slender desirable body does not mean that she will necessarily belong as an equal citizen, she is able to survive in the nation rather than being put to death like Tyrell and Lawrence.

These corporeal readings rely on markers of race, gender, sexuality, and class. *Monster's Ball* posits that only some bodies, and certainly not the dark black abject bodies of Lawrence and Tyrell, can be part of national belonging. However, Hank's white body does belong, and in fact, represents the state through his role as a prison guard and executioner. Leticia's body is on the margins of national belonging, but can only

[451] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Sexual Politics: African-Americans, Gender, Race, and the New Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 102

potentially be incorporated with the death of abject blackness. Leticia's suffering comes in part from her detachment from civil society and her tethering to blackness. After the deaths of her husband and son, Leticia does not appear to have any other connection to the black community through neighbors, family, or friends. Through Leticia's isolation and grief, the figure of the tragic mulatta is presented.

Hypersexuality and Excess in the Mulatta Figure

Leticia's solution to her suffering is found through Hank. After Leticia is crying about the loss of Tyrell and how she knew that Tyrell could not be fat as a black man in America, Hank says, "I'm not sure what you want me to do." Quickly unclothing herself, Leticia replies, "I want you to make me feel good." Hank willingly reciprocates. With the camera focus on Leticia's naked body, Leticia's body also becomes available to viewers. Berry's naked body prompts the memory of mulatta women as erotic objects of pleasure. The beauty of the mulatta, supposedly derived from the prior taboo of miscegenation, serves as proof of her sexual availability. The exotic and erotic allure of the mulatta stems from representations of her body as the source and product of taboo interracial desire. The mulatta's racially mixed body, signifying the transgression that produced it, invites future reenactment of this taboo. Furthermore, her sexual availability, as opposed to white women, serves to racialize her as black. This scene suggests that centuries of white supremacist culture can be undone through miscegenation. The scene's graphic nature also renders Leticia's sexuality as primitive. Leticia, as a mulatta Jezebel figure, displays dangerous oversexed behavior that marks her as deviant. Leticia's undisciplined and unruly sexuality diverges from normative white female sexuality.

As black female bodies have been represented as sexually available and complicit in their own sexual exploitation, *Monster's Ball* follows a pattern of slavery-based memories of the tragic mulatta and Jezebel. The relationship between Leticia and Hank cannot be read complete outside of these historical memories and narratives. The historical specter of the mulatta figure looms large. Leticia does initiate sex, but the uneven relationships of power are obscured through the film's representation of the initiation. By showing Leticia as the seductress and initiator, the film makes it appear as if Leticia has power over Hank. However, the sexual relationship between Hank and Leticia does not undo the social, political, and cultural inequalities. Like the *mulata* figure in Brazil, the mulatta figure in the United States is historically rooted in the perpetuation of interracial sexual exploitation and abuse. As Saidiya Hartman argues that slave women were depicted not as victims, but as responsible for their own sexual exploitation through the "discourse of seduction" such that slavery becomes a relationship of mutual desire and slave women are agents in their own culpability for sexual violence. The discourse of seduction eradicates relations of dominance by representing women as the seductresses who possess excessive sexual power and will initiate sexual encounter. [452] In the scene's climatic moment, Leticia moves from victim, subjected to poverty, the death of her family, and racial and gender inequalities, to seductress. Hank, arguably the very agent of her oppression through his role in the execution of her husband, becomes her savior.

[452] Sadiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in 19th Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 88-89.

Furthermore, Leticia's sexuality is represented as excessive and grotesque and thereby, reproduces the notion of the hypersexual mulatta figure. The image of racial and sexual degeneracy in the mulatta figure are linked in this scene. The mulatta is also evoked through the scene's use of excess and hysteria. As historically the mulatta figure has often been considered to be hysterical, mentally unstable, and sexually lascivious, [453] the sex scene in *Monster's Ball* depicts interracial sex as frenzied. Leticia, as represented by Halle Berry and linked to Berry's racialized star persona, symbolizes miscegenation while she simultaneously participates in interracial sex with Hank. The scene with Hank and Leticia's body together puts Leticia in a state of near hysteria.

I read Leticia's hysteria not so much as a form of repression, but as a form of recognition. The mulatta heroines of American literature often displayed hysteria due to their mixed blood, internalized racial conflict, and their splitting of conscience. As Elin Diamond notes, "hysteria in feminist discourses has become meaningful precisely as a disruption of traditional epistemological methods of seeing/knowing."[454] The moments following Leticia's screams of "Make me feel good" that transform into near hysteria destabilizes the idea of stable homogenous and separate racial communities. The notion of a fixed racial identity or community disintegrates as the cognizance of the racial mixing that produced Leticia's physical features and the interracial sex that Leticia and Hank are performing become blurred. This awareness later in the film moves from

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[453] For a description of "scientific" mulatto traits, see Edward Bryon Reuter, *The Mulatto in the United States: Including a Study of the Role of Mixed-blood races Throughout the World* (Boston: Badger, 1918), 87-91.
[454] Elin Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 5.

hysteria to resignation and stupor after Leticia realizes that Hank is also Lawrence's executioner.

The trope of depravity from the unnatural mixing of the races manifests itself in Leticia's body and in her sexual relations with Hank. The racial carnal spectacle involved evokes notions of familiarity and difference at once. However, it is the excessive nature of black female sexuality that grabs the viewer. The scene positions Leticia as tragic, desperate, dangerous, and sexually alluring all at once. With Leticia's sexuality now exposed to Hank, Leticia is positioned as in excess to the nation and as a threat that needed to be controlled. This threat can only be restricted through the disciplining of the black body.

Although Leticia does not necessarily become whiter through becoming closer to Hank, her cutting off of blackness, especially the criminal grotesque blackness as represented by Lawrence and Tyrell, distances her from the margins of society. Like the excess of Tyrell's body mass due to his lack of control to moderate his eating and Leticia's inability to manage Tyrell, Leticia's excessive sexuality are also tied to the decadence and absence of restraint in the black body. As Leticia appears out of control sexually, financially, and familially, Hank is the only one who can potentially regulate her. The ability to control Leticia is aided by Hank's financial power over Leticia. With her status contingent on Hank, Leticia's economic dependency on Hank precludes her from independence. Her sexual relationship with Hank also simultaneously becomes a financial relationship.

The Mulatta as a Commodity

Leticia's dire financial straits are evidenced by her eviction from her home.

Later, Hank gives Leticia Sonny's car and invites her to live with him. As Hank desires Leticia, he shows that he is able and willing to financially care for her. Leticia's financial situation does not put her in a position to refuse. The conflation of the financial and sexual relationship between Leticia and Hank evokes historical cultural memories of plaçage, in which relationships, often lifelong, were established between white men and mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon concubines. For example, the infamous quadroon balls of antebellum New Orleans were sites of negotiation between white men and octoroon women. Only white men were permitted to attend the ball, and after selecting their woman, settled on a contract that were "formal, businesslike, and as openly conducted as other business transactions, with stipulated residences and incomes."[455] Like Bebel in *Paraíso Tropical*, Leticia is desired and provided for financially, but she is not an equal to Hank. However, Leticia and Hank's relationship evidences that these relationships of uneven power cannot be reduced to polarities of coercion and consent or love and lust. While the film does not prescribe marriage as a heteronormative form of national belonging, Leticia's role as a mistress does not give her much agency. Without recourse to legal protections, Leticia's arrangement with Hank is precarious. The economic benefits from being attached to Hank are based on his willingness to continue to financially support her. Leticia's position then further locates her in this practice of plaçage with the privilege of white men to buy female bodies of color. In both the United States and Brazil, mixed-race women are tied to white patriarchal figures and colonial constructions of female sexuality. However, unlike in

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[455] Beth Day, *Sexual Life Between Blacks and Whites: The Roots of Racism* (New York: World Publishing, 1972), 50-51.

Brazilian *telenovelas* in which white men are positioned as male neocolonial figures as saviors, Hank has already openly revealed his racial prejudices. This evidence of racial prejudice makes Hank's redemption even more compelling for a liberal multicultural project.

Leticia's body is rendered not only sexually available, but also as a commodity that can be bought. Interracial heterosexual desire is framed as a materialist mode of exchange. This is literally evidenced when Hank buys a gas station and names it after Leticia. The value of the name, as a sign of Hank's ownership of Leticia, is more important than Hank's wealth. The association with Leticia and a gas station allow Leticia to be even further valued as a sexual commodity for heterosexual male desire in the film. Similarly to Bebel in *Paraíso Tropical*, Leticia's racialized, gendered, and sexualized body is deemed to be a commodity and thereby, exploitable. Cheryl Harris argues that white privilege demands the subordination of non-whites. Harris maintains that colorblindness, which denies or ignores historical contexts of racial subjugation and exclusion, confirms "white privilege as a legitimate and natural baseline."[456] This privilege is manifested in the representation of Hank and Leticia's relationship in the film. Leticia's race, gender, and sexuality are not valued as part of her self-identity, but are valued as an article of trade. Like gas as a commodity, Leticia's body then becomes an item of exchange in a capitalist market. While Leticia's sexuality offers an initial interest, the excessive sexuality, like the surplus of a commodity, also decreases her value. This excess, linked to a failed femininity, is

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[456] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993): 1714.

defined against respectability.

Leticia's rendering into a commodity also evokes the familial separation needed to cement her relationship with Hank. As Claudia Tate has pointed out, "Black women were public commodities of exchange whose market value was exclusively indexed as the production of material wealth, whereas white women were private individuals who circulated in patriarchal society for producing heirs and regulating moral, spiritual, and emotional values."[457] By severing bonds between Tyrell and Lawrence, it is easier for Leticia to be marked solely as a commodity. The decimation of these familial bonds then also blunts the lines of affect between Leticia and her biological family. The interminable loss of Tyrell and Lawrence sever her ties to blackness. Like the Brazilian *mulata*, the hypersexuality of the U.S. mulatta figure creates the spectacle of an interracial erotic love narrative. However, in order for this erotic narrative to take place, black men must be displaced. The transformation of Leticia, from tied to abject blackness to solely an erotic mixed black commodity, characterizes a hope for U.S. multiculturalism through interracial sex.

The consumption of blackness is significant for the formation of Hank as a white male subject. Blackness, however, must be contained and literally imprisoned in Lawrence's case or eventually extinguished. As Hank tells Sonny that he will be a man after assisting with the execution of another man, masculinity is associated with dominance and the witnessing and consumption of the black body's death. Leticia, as a mulatta figure, is a potential mediation point. For example, during Lawrence's

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[457] Claudia Tate, *Domestic Allegories of Political Desire*, 25.

execution, the film sets ups a mise-en-scéne between Hank and Lawrence and Leticia at home with Tyrell. Yet, Leticia, as a specter of the mulatta object of exchange, can only be fully transferred over with the death of Lawrence and Tyrell. Lawrence's blackness and his own admission that "He's a bad man" leave him out of civil society. Tyrell's obesity also renders him as socially abject. Both men were already sentenced to a form of social death.[458] However, Leticia, as a mulatta, is not condemned to social death and Hank's white male subjectivity is reorganized in part because of the social death of black masculinity.

The consumption of black female sexuality is also linked to the formation of white masculinity. When Leticia pawns her wedding ring to buy a white cowboy hat for Hank to replace the hat stained from Tyrell's blood, she stops by Hank's house and encounters his father, Buck. Buck remarks, "Yep, I had a taste for nigger juice when I was Hank's age. He's just like his Daddy. You ain't a man till you split black coal." Buck's comment reveals a mixture of sexual desire and antipathy for African-Americans. Furthermore, calling Leticia juice as if black bodies were literally consumable also denotes a theme of sexual and racial consumption. Black coal, like Leticia's correlation with gas, is a staple fuel and a vital commodity. With the insult to Leticia, Buck degrades her as a mere object of consumption and highlights the sexual precarious status of black women. The sexualized black woman is key to Buck's sense of masculinity and to white male supremacy.

[458] I use "social death" here as a metaphorical condition deriving from the legacies of slavery and contemporary racial oppression. Orlando Patterson characterizes slavery as "the permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons." Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,1982), 13.

Leticia's presence evokes the lust and desire of Buck, who while simultaneously insulting her hints that she is also sexually desirable. This scene implies that interracial sex is not always the answer to racism because of the context in which it took place. Leticia, as a mulatta figure, represents the legacies of the type of interracial sex that Buck is describing in this scene. Leticia is the materialization of Buck's desires and dominance and Leticia's relationship with Hank call into question whether Hank is merely reproducing this type of arrangement. When Buck says, "You ain't a man till you split dark coal," he relates that miscegenation is crucial to white masculinity. Earlier while watching two young black boys play by his house, Buck says to Hank, "There was a time when they knew their place. There wasn't none of this mixing going on." Clearly, Buck's anxiety, fear, and repulsion is not from interracial sex between white men and black women as long as it reinforces white domination, but from the affective relationships that might be created through black-white relationships and friendships. Buck's indirect reference to Leticia as "nigger juice" places her within the frame of the black body rather than in an idealized in-between liminal space. However, rather than having a dark-skinned woman as part of Hank's interracial sexual relationship, the presence of Leticia as a mulatta figure is a way to access not only interracial sex, but prohibited intimacies and alliances. Leticia's light skin and phenotypical features allows for the inscription of interracial desires onto her body. Buck's denigration of Leticia codes Leticia's relationship with Hank as merely sexual rather than affective.

Leticia's attempt to assert her own agency by way of consumption is usurped by Buck's racist language. When Leticia pawns her wedding ring for a white cowboy hat, she is trading out her past with Lawrence for a new future with Hank. The symbolism of

the white cowboy hat, with its association with white masculinity and the regulation and conquest of the American frontier, reinserts Hank in a position of authority and places him in the position as a white savior and conqueror for Leticia. Given Leticia's lack of money, she uses the resources that she does have to demonstrate some independence and power. As she chooses to give Hank a gift, it is one of the few financial transactions that does not depend on Hank. It is also a transaction that does not rely on Leticia's body as part of the exchange. Yet, Leticia is not allowed this one moment in the film due to Buck's behavior. When Leticia enters the house to find Hank, she only meets Buck, who tries on the hat intended for Hank and later says that he will see that Hank gets it. Consumption here is not a form of empowerment and does not displace racial, gender, and sexual hierarchies. As a result of this denial to physically give Hank the gift, Leticia is not able to have Hank see her as giving away anything other than her body. Thus, Leticia, as a mulatta figure, is still a commodity rather than a consumer. Instead, Leticia is a name for the gas station and remains in a subservient position due to her financial dependence on Hank. Leticia lives on the margins of civil society and is refused the social equality of whites. Whereas in Brazilian *telenovelas*, the path towards mobility and citizenship comes through consumption, the U.S. mulatta here in *Monster's Ball* is denied an avenue towards independence through the buying of goods.

Rather than Leticia consuming the idea of Hank through the white cowboy hat, Hank consumes Leticia. This consumption is associated with both sex and eating. After a sex scene with Hank in which he performs oral sex on Leticia, Hank says that he is going out to pick up some chocolate ice cream because "it just feels right." Chocolate is often a metaphor for blackness with sexual innuendo. By correlating Leticia's darker body as

edible, the film places Leticia as another and reconfirms a separate racial identity between Hank and Leticia. As Mia Mask notes, *Monster's Ball*, with Hank as the chocolate ice cream eating sugar daddy epitomizes bell hooks's description of "eating the other."[459] The blackness of Leticia is fetishized and exoticized. hooks explores how race is commodified in a "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" so that the other is eaten and the white self is satisfied with the consumption of the other through food, music, tourism, or in Leticia's case, literally her body. hooks maintains that when race and ethnicity are commodified as sources of pleasure, the culture of specific groups, as well as the bodies of individuals in these groups, become an alternative playground where dominant members of society affirm their power in intimate relations with the Other.[460] Hank, as a white heterosexual male, is not exceptional in this power dynamic. The commodification of Leticia's body as associated with chocolate ice cream does not change the structures of power and Hank's white male privilege. This delving into the other as an alternate playground as a reaffirmation of domination is also evidenced in Buck's reference to his past penchant for "nigger juice."

Purging Abject Blackness

However, in the first sex scene between Hank and Leticia, Hank wakes up and sees Lawrence's picture in the background and immediately vomits. Just like Sonny vomited at Lawrence's execution, the internalization of racial difference, as represented by Lawrence's black masculinity, is a form of consuming and rejecting the abject

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[459] See Mia's Mask's review of *Monster's Ball.* Mia Mask, "Monster's Ball" *Film Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2004): 54.
[460] bell hooks, "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance" in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 23.

blackness. Therefore, the reminder of Lawrence is a symbol of the undesirable parts of Leticia's blackness. Once Leticia is dependent on Hank, this abject blackness is diluted through her mulatta symbolism. By "eating the other" and killing the abject, Hank is left with the mulatta. The mulatta here does not move into whiteness, but is vacated of abject blackness and left instead with erotic appeal.

While the "tragic mulatta" often ends with the mulatta committing suicide or succumbing to death, Leticia chooses survival over death. After Hank goes out to buy ice cream, Leticia discovers one of Lawrence's drawings of Hank in Hank's house. Realizing that Hank played a part in the execution of her husband, Leticia gasps, cries, and pounds a pillow. Horror evaporates into resignation. With Leticia discovering Hank's role as an executioner, *Monster's Ball* solidifies Hank's identity as a dominant white male. The film does not complicate this relationship with confrontation or a discussion of the uneven power dynamics between the two of them. Instead, the film relies on a notion that interracial intimacy through the mulatta, can serve as racial reconciliation and solve racial, gender, and sexual domination.

Accepting what the relationships can financially provide for her and the precariousness of her circumstances, Leticia comes into a state of stupor. Rather than displaying expressions of emotion or repressing her knowledge, Leticia resigns herself to her position. Sitting outside with Hank as he feeds her chocolate ice cream on a white spoon, she eats not the other, but herself or rather the Leticia that Hank imagines. As Leticia looks into the distance, the viewer sees her vision of Sonny's tombstone and Hank's wife's tombstone in the backyard. Therefore, like Lawrence and Tyrell and two black deaths, the two white deaths of Sonny and Hank's wife are required for Hank and

Leticia's relationship to form. The film then suggests that since both have suffered loss, Leticia and Hank "are going to be alright" as Hank says in the film' last lines. Yet, the interlocution of the mulatta figure relies both on Hank's redemption from his racist past and parenting failures to become a better more palpable kind of whiteness for civil society and on Leticia being vacated of her blackness to a state of numbness. Therefore, the redemption of civil society depends on the use of the mulatta figure, as a haunting object of blackness. Like Brazil's discourse of *mestiçagem* and racial democracy that rely on the *mulata,* the U.S. hope for multiculturalism here depends on the mulatta figure and interracial sex.

The L Word

In *The L Word*, a serial drama depicting a group of lesbians in Los Angeles, the mulatta figure, as represented by biracial actress Jennifer Beals, acts as a site of desire and anxiety surrounding racial mixing and racial identities in a post civil rights era. While Bette represents an upwardly mobile educated black elite and appears as a contemporary materialization of a "talented tenth,"[461] she, unlike Leticia in *Monster's Ball*, appears at first as an acceptable superior blackness. After civil rights, women's, and gay rights social movements, Leticia and Bette represent the asymmetrical class axes of power that upholds racial, gender, and sexual difference while at the same time

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[461] Talented tenth is the term that W.E.B. Du Bois referred to the select group of college-educated African-Americans with whom he believed would provide leadership for African-Americans during the post-Reconstruction era. See W.E.B., Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, introduced by Donald B. Gibson, and with notes by Monica M. Elbert (New York: Penguin, 1991 [1903]. While the "talented tenth" represents the black masses, it is implicit that this elite group is also superior to these masses. As a modern talented tenth, Bette also feeds into a white liberal management of race that simultaneously counters white supremacy while excluding most of the African-American population.

marginalizing racialized and sexualized deviant populations in their inability to assimilate and accumulate capital. While Bette potentially has a claim to citizenship, Leticia's abject sexualized blackness does not have a place without the purging of this abjection.

As Bette is the series' main character, who has most earned her class status with her education, ambition, and potential, she stands as a potential model of upward mobility and advancement in a post civil-rights era and demonstrates the possibility of and success for queer individuals. Bette is successfully integrated into a consumer citizenship and national identity. However, Bette's role in sexual reproduction and her identity as a lesbian complicate narratives of the mulatta figure. Through her assertion of her blackness, Bette possibly represents the survival of blackness, rather than the erasure of blackness, in a seemingly postracial world as depicted on *The L Word*. Bette, often misrecognized or read as white, unsettles normative ideas of racial identity. Yet, the show's focus on her hypersexuality also reinscribes Bette into ideas of mulatta sexual deviance. While *The L Word* does not overtly ignore race, and in fact, sometimes puts race to the forefront, the show moves beyond the frame of mixed-race women as tragic victims. Thus, the show revises a tragic mulatta trope and replaces it with the contemporary flourishing independent mulatta flawed by her hypersexuality. Bette is a combination of the successful uplifted "New Negro,"[462] who is very comfortable

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[462] The New Negro Movement, the New Negro Renaissance, and the Harlem Renaissance all describe a period from 1919-1929. The idea of the New Negro, including extraordinary writers, musicians, artists, and actors, hope to channel the use of art as a way to combat racism, breaking racial barriers, and removing obstacles for the success of the black intelligenstia. Alain Locke's anthology, *The New Negro* (1925), offers a variety of scholarly and creative work that brings a perspective on the contours of the movement. See Alain Locke, *The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Albert &Charles Boni, 1925).

materially, but also flawed by her hypersexual mulatta deviance and must be punished socially according to her faults. Bette's character allows for an exploration of national identity and anxieties and desires concerning race, gender, sexuality, reproduction, and alternative forms of kinship.

Like Halle Berry and her role as Leticia in *Monster's Ball*, the relationship between Jennifer Beals and her role as Bette informs the reading of her character. Jennifer Beals is known for her early *Flashdance* fame in which not all viewers recognize her as nonwhite as well as her role as a passing mulatta figure in *Devil in a Blue Dress* (1995). The idea of a blackness hidden by a visible whiteness also influences how Bette is read on *The L Word*. Unlike Leticia in *Monster's Ball*, Bette is written explicitly as a mixed-race character at the request of Jennifer Beals. Bette's hypersexuality and her inability to restrain herself sexually despite being in a monogamous relationship position Bette not as a tragic mulatta, who has no agency or is already sexually acted upon. Rather, Bette is in the vein of the mulatta seductress, who brings disorder until she can be tamed.

In a serial melodrama format*, The L Word* centers on a group of queer friends in Los Angeles. Bette and Tina, a white blonde woman, are long-term partners who act as the nexus for the group. In the first season, Bette is an art curator at a museum and Tina has just left her job to prepare her body for pregnancy. Later, Tina miscarries and Bette cheats on her. Eventually, Bette and Tina have a child together and choose a black sperm donor so that their daughter, Angelica can reflect their relationship. Bette and Tina continue to have an on again off again relationship. Tina dates Helena, a wealthy British

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heiress and a white man. Bette dates Jodi, a lesbian sculptor in the art department, and sleeps with various women. At the end of the series, Bette and Tina are back together again. Kit, Bette's black half- sister (played by Pam Grier) is the only self-identified straight woman on the show. Although there are a few other interracial relationships on the show, the crux of the series revolves around Bette's and Tina's relationship.

Upward Mobility, Consumer Citizenship, and the Mulatta

Bette, unlike Leticia, can be considered part of consumer citizenship. The relationship between television representation of gay men, consumerism, and neoliberalism[463] and the relationship between African-American, consumerism, and citizenship are both present in Bette. Bette represents a merging of these two ideals of consumer citizenship with her biracial lesbian identity and cosmopolitanism. Much of her belonging depends on her elite educational background at Yale University, her prestigious positions as a curator at the California Arts Center and Dean of the California University of the Arts, her wealth, and her light skin. Bette, like many of the characters on the show, belong in part because they are consumers. Like Brazilian *telenovelas*' linkage between consumption and citizenship, *The L Word* ties together citizenship and consumerism together to paint an image of acceptance and advancement.   Bette's beautiful home, prominent and expensive art collection, designer clothes, and luxury

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[463] Katherine Sender, "Queens for a Day: *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and the Neoliberal Project," *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 23, no. 2 (2006): 131-151. Also, Danae Clark's essay, "Commodity Lesbianism" claims that the increased marketing of lesbian images is less evidence of acceptance than of a capitalist appropriation of lesbian styles or "gay window advertising" for mainstream heterosexual audiences. See Danae Clark, "Commodity Lesbianism,"in *The Gay and Lesbian Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michele A. Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 186-201.

goods all showcase an educated upper-class lifestyle. Bette then demonstrates black and queer consumerism through her acquiring of goods and domesticity as represented by the emphasis on her home and her relationship with Tina and their daughter, Angelica.

Bette then becomes a model citizen and proof of racial progress by her very existence and her many accomplishments. Bette, like most of her friends despite their disparate occupations, educations, and family backgrounds, never seems to worry too much about money. In this way, Bette and her friends represent homonormative lesbian identities marked by consumerism and class.[464] With the exception of Tasha, Alice's black partner, who often expresses her discomfort at their different incomes and propensities for spending and luxury goods, none of the main characters seem to struggle substantially. Helena, a wealthy British heiress, temporarily loses her fortune, but quickly recuperates and Jenny, initially an aspiring writer, finds quick success. Papi, a working-class Latina character on the show, makes fun of the group of friends and their consumerist lifestyle by telling them to go shopping. However, class differences are generally not present in the narrative.

Bette, as a light-skinned educated mulatta, can be thought of as presented within the scope of a throwback to the "New Negro" identity and racial uplift. As many of the members of the historically black elite have been light-skinned, Bette enters into this context of the light-skinned educated bourgeoisie. Yet, here the focus is on individual accomplishment rather than an uplifting of the black community. Bette's success then revolves around the contexts of the black intelligentsia and the hopes of a neoliberal

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[464] For more on homonormativity, class, and neoliberalism, see Martin Manalansan IV, "Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City," *Social Text*, nos. 84-85 (2005): 141-55.

postracial context that emphasizes the needlessness of race. Various scholars have argued that the black elite has historically come together around ideological concerns with racial uplift and the performance of a bourgeois lifestyle.[465] For the black elite, uplift stressed the performance of respectability and a distinguishing of themselves as "as bourgeois agents of civilization, from the presumably undeveloped black majority."[466] Respectability here refers to standards of morality, dress, hygiene, behavior, and sexuality that can highlight the bourgeois' difference from working-class blacks.

Therefore, Bette contrasts sharply with Leticia in *Monster's Ball,* in the image of an upwardly mobile mulatta figure with an upper-class status, education, and consumerist lifestyle. While *Monster's Ball* does not highlight how Leticia is mired within structural forms of racism and poverty, *The L Word* also never explicitly turns attention to the intersection of race and class in Bette's elite status. *The L Word* suggests that Bette can be refashioned from a "New Negro" ideal to a postracial model through her elite education, career success, and consumerist lifestyle. In contrast to the glamorous Bette, Kit, her black half-sister, is presented as an alcoholic in the first episode. She is a talented, but failed singer, and is financially very unstable. She potentially represents the abject blackness that Leticia confronts in *Monster's Ball*. However, Kit is able to be uplifted with the purchase of The Planet, the lesbian-friendly café and nightclub. Until Kit acquires The Planet, she is completely left out of the consumer citizenship model. Kit

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[465] See Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 70; Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996), 2-3.
[466] Gaines, *Uplifting the Race,* 1-2.

is able to buy The Planet with the help of Bette's support, Bette's help with a business plan, and the convincing of Ivan, a white transgender love interest of Kit's, who puts up part of the financing. Kit, therefore, is saved from her potential abject blackness with the help of Bette, her mulatta half-sister, and Ivan, who due to his transgender status complicates the idea of a white male rescuer in a heteronormative context. Bette's contrast with Leticia and Kit and the concerns over Bette's racial status later in the series demonstrate how "authentic" blackness is often tied in with class tensions. Authentic blackness is connected with working-class blacks and the black bourgeois are represented as inauthentic.

Bette stands in as a potential marker of an acceptable mixed blackness based on her class standing, yet she is not completely respectable due to her hypersexual behavior. Bette's mobility at first appears to align her with the uplift of the *morena*, Mônica of *Belíssima*, but Bette's lesbian identity and hypersexuality complicate the notion of a national uplift narrative. Bette is a self-sufficient woman in affluent Los Angeles. In these ways, Bette has socioeconomic resources and a claim to citizenship that are in stark contrast with Leticia, who is isolated in her community and depends on Hank. Even when she finds herself temporarily unemployed, Bette always bounces back to find opportunities that are even better than her previous professional positions. Although Bette does not suffer the injustice of bearing derogatory labels like "nigger juice" and benefits from upper-class standing, Bette's sexuality remains in the discourses of hypersexuality. Bette's lesbian identity also complicates the tragic mulatta figure by placing her outside of patriarchal heteronormative standards. Bette's lesbian identity troubles a narrative of interracial sexual pairings with white men as part of racial erotic narratives and ideas of

whitening and uplift. Therefore, Bette challenges the tragic mulatta trope that works within a white heterosexual framework. Yet, Bette and Leticia are two different kinds of mulatta figures who are nonetheless connected by their hypersexuality. Bette, as a non-tragic mulatta, also allows for a consumption of differences along lines of race and sexuality.

Allure of Racial and Sexual Difference

The L Word opens with Bette and Tina discovering that Tina is ovulating. Bette says to Tina, "Let's make a baby" as she kisses her. Tina occupies the role of the maternal figure while Bette represents as the sexual initiator. This very first reading contests white patriarchal visions of family formation. Racial mixing, reproduction, and queer relationships are all present. Queer racial mixing here, undermines the idea of a pure white female sexuality that must be protected by white men. Rather than evoking the fear of an aggressive hypersexual black male, *The L Word* contests the protection of white female sexuality with Bette, as the racially mixed sexual initiator. The subsequent scenes involve Bette pleasuring Tina before insemination at the doctor's suggestion that it will make Tina's body more viable for insemination. Lesbian interracial sex is therefore, rendered as reproductive and Bette and Tina are placed within an alternative to a normative family unit involving heterosexual sex. Race and reproduction here and elsewhere in *The L Word* present a complicating of the mulatta figure as Bette is not the physical childbearer, who produces the future progeny of the nation nor is she the physical threat of contamination. Unlike the Brazilian *morena* in *Belíssima*, Bette is not a reproducer for the uplift of the nation.

The themes of sex, race, and reproduction are brought into *The L Word* within the

first few minutes of the series. After the first two scenes suggesting procreative lesbian sex, the subsequent scene involves a pairing of sexual and racial voyeurism. Jenny Scheter, a Jewish neighbor who has just moved to Los Angeles with her fiancée Tim, watches a couple having sex and assumes that they are Bette and Tina. With curiosity, Jenny asks Tim if he knows their neighbors. Jenny describes a dark-haired woman with a blond-haired woman in the pool. Jenny, as voyeur of both interracial and queer sex, finds the image of the women in the pool to be titillating and proceeds to have sex with Tim. With Tim, Jenny replays what she saw in the pool. Jenny is the observer and therefore, it is her gaze, rather than a male gaze that interpellates the scene. However, as Tim is a participant, his perspective is also present. The readings of a queer and heterosexual appropriation of this scene are both plausible. While the idea of queer sex as desirous in part because it is taboo, interracial sex is also constructed as enticing. Although the scene actually has Shane and another blonde woman together, Jenny confuses Bette and Tina for another couple. While it is not entirely clear if the couple is aware of Bette's racial mixture, the audience awareness allows for these readings. With the representation of interracial sex, and the mulatta as the product of interracial sex, Bette and Tina then represent forbidden sexual desire fantasy. The scene rewrites white heteronormative pleasures of spectacle between a male viewer and a female subject by making Jenny the voyeur and initiator. Furthermore, the slippage between racial and sexual misrecognition, appropriation, and desire are highlighted. By placing these scenes close to one another, the scenes evoke the taboos and desires for interracial and queer sex.

The correlation between queer desire and interracial desire are also implanted with the figure of Bette. As Bette has been stamped with a level of hypersexual deviance,

there is also a desire for Bette that also relies on an exotic allure. The idea of the first queer encounter and the first lesbian lover are often repeated in the show. At a party at Bette and Tina's house albeit already coded as a sexual and racial space of permissiveness, Jenny finds herself attracted to Marina, a European heiress and owner of The Planet coffeeshop. Marina (played by the actress Karina Lombard of American Indian and European descent), with her accent and her cosmopolitanism, evokes a sexual desire of queer and racial exoticism through the idea of the ambiguously tan foreigner. Marina, like many women of color on the show, is quite sexually aggressive. Jenny's attraction to Marina leads to her eventual breakup with Tim. The show thereby posits both a queer and racial exotic desire from the outset. Marina, as an exotic figure, functions as a femme fatale. Racially ambiguous women often serve as a conduit of escape. For example, when Helena Peabody, the British heiress, finds herself without a fortune, she finds financial pleasure and escape when poker player Catherine (played by Sandrine Holt of French and Chinese descent) seduces here. Later, after stealing Catherine's money and landing in jail, Helena flees prison and her mother's authority with Dusty (played by the boxer, Lucia Rijiker of Creole Surinamese and Dutch descent) to Tahiti.

As racial ambiguity often resonates along with sexual ambiguity,[467] Bette opens up possibilities for various white women, who previously identified as straight. The viewer later learns that Bette has also been the sexual initiator for other white women

[467] For example, the idea of gender inversion is present many literary representations of the mulatto figure, see Siobhan Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000*),* 77-110.

previously solely in heterosexual relationships. Bette then becomes a sensual and exotic mulatta, albeit positioned within a spectrum of whiteness and blackness and thereby, stimulates the desiring gaze of her admirers and the viewers. As the mulatta figure, Bette then appears as both dangerous and alluring. She awakens queer sexual desire and interracial sexual desire. She is appealing because it is her very sexual identity and racial ambiguity that produces her allure and charm. Bette and Tina met at an art gallery when Tina was with her boyfriend. Tina repeatedly admits that Bette was her first lover. Phyllis, Bette's supervisor at the California University School of the Arts, confesses to Bette that she has feelings that she would like to explore and begs Bette to take her to a party at The Planet. Bette thereby, becomes the vehicle for Phyllis's sexual exploration. Later in the series, after Phyllis asks Bette to resign, Phyllis confesses that she has always been attracted to Bette. She gushes, "You've always been a beautiful role model to me…in a special way, and I will always be grateful…if I had svelte young blond co-eds throwing themselves at me, I would too…To tell you the truth, I've had my own struggles with attractions to subordinates…Now that you're no longer my employee, I feel free to make my confession. Bette, I've always found you wildly attractive. From the moment, I saw you, tall, strong, brilliant, erudite, it was so difficult for me not to act on it." Kelly Wentworth, a wealthy white divorcé, appears in the last season as Bette's old crush. Kelly had previously turned down Bette's advances, but now repeatedly flirts with Bette and says that she was the one that got away. Rather then representing white women as sexually vulnerable, these women are sexually independent and actively desire Bette. Bette then acts as a conduit for intensified homoeroticism. Queer desire is not always disconnected from racial fetishization, but queer desire and racial desire can work in

tandem. Bette, with her light skin, is not constructed as white here. Rather, Bette is a sexually desirable exotic nonwhite body.

Bette both sexually pursues and is actively pursued on the series. However, in most cases, her lovers are white. The main exception is Candace, a contractor, who Bette meets through Yolanda, a black woman in Bette and Tina's therapy group. Bette hires Candace to help install Provocations, a controversial exhibition that generated mass protests outside of the California Arts Center. Candace, an Afro-Latina with her dark tan skin, evokes a desire of similarity of race and sex. When Bette cheats on Tina with Candace, the cheating causes controversy in the friendship group. It is perhaps not just because Bette and Tina are in a committed relationship, but rather perhaps that this racialized erotic encounter disrupts the normalized and coded whiteness within the group. The hip-hop artist Slim Daddy (played by Snoop Dogg) is the first to vocalize Bette and Candace's magnetism and actually confuses Candace as Bette's "woman" instead of Tina. It is notable that Candace and Bette first meet in a predominantly black music nightclub. Slim Daddy suggests, "I guess I'll dream about the two of you. Because I have that basic instinct." While Bette's attraction to Candace is first mediated through a male gaze, the mediation also happens through an African-American gaze. Bette's desire is interpellated through this gaze and the gaze reinforces Bette's association with blackness.

Bette's desire for Candice can also be seen as a racialized desire for blackness, for self, and for a reconfiguration of identity. The image of two brown queer bodies together reconfigures queerness outside of a context as solely a white formation. Up to this point in the show, the relative absence of women of color in queer relationships with

each other demonstrates uneven power dynamics between queerness and blackness such that queer identity is most associated with whiteness. Candace and Bette's relationship cannot be read solely as a ploy for authenticity. Rather the two brown bodies together onscreen deconstructs this authenticity as both Candace and Bette are not readily racially identifiable, but contrast with the whiteness of the depicted queer Los Angeles. Furthermore, the brown nonreproductive bodies seeking pleasure contrast with the assumptions or fantasies of mulatta sexuality predicated on sexual availability in a heterosexual frame or the idea of the mulatta as sterile. Here Candace and Bette are objects of each other's desires in mutual recognition. Centering queer desire of color with Bette and Candace challenges dominant media narratives of the objectification of the mulatta figure specifically, and more generally, women of color.

Anxieties of Racial Difference

Although *The L Word* has been critiqued for the lack of women of color in the series, Jóse Muñoz writes, "In *The L Word*, for instance, the racial particularity of Bette and her half-sister Kit seems initially to be light multicultural window dressing, although that proves not to be the case, insofar as the narrative does not try to contain or manage race. The race plots that these characters generate keep *The L Word* from slipping into a mode of neoliberalism in which race is sidelined."[468] *The L Word* specifically uses Bette's biracial character to explore racial differences and tensions. Unlike Halle Berry's Leticia who cannot pass as white, Jennifer Beals's light skin affords a possible passing or misrecognition for Bette's character. The themes of racial passing and sexual passing are

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[468] José Esteban Muñoz, "Queer Minstrels for the Straight Eye: Race as Surplus in Gay TV." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 11, no. 1 (2005): 102.

both present in this scene and suggest slipperiness between the two.

In a group therapy session, Yolanda accuses Bette of trying to pass as white. Yolanda challenges Bette and says, "You talk so proud about being a lesbian but you never once mentioned you're an African American woman." Historically African-Americans have had an awareness of racial ambiguity and the wide variety of phenotypes within African-American communities. However, as Adrian Piper suggests, the common knowledge of someone's black identity is not always evident. Conveying racial identity consists of not just a visual reading of the body, but also of a mutual recognition of a black racial identity. Therefore, African-Americans, who are racially ambiguous or can be read as white, are expected to make their racial identity known. As Adrian Piper observes, for individuals who are racially ambiguous and can potentially pass for white, the trauma of being accused of racial faking, taking advantage, or having one's authenticity questioned, is often a possibility. However, for Piper, the severest trauma is actually passing for white because it requires a rejection of blackness.[469] Unlike the trope of the passing mulatta figure, Bette does not explicitly hide her blackness. Yet, her failure to declare her blackness leaves her suspect as to her opportunism. Furthermore, Bette does not often acknowledge the privileges of her light skin and phenotypical features.

The conflation of Bette and the accusations of Jennifer Beals as refusing rather than affirming her blackness are critical here for how Bette is also interpreted. Yolanda also says to Bette,"You need to reflect on what it is you're saying to the world while hiding so behind the lightness of your skin." Later when Bette is disturbed by Yolanda's attack, Tina responds, "We're going have some fun with her." Bette questions the "we"

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[469]Adrian Piper, "Passing for White, Passing for Black," *Transition* 58 (1992): 6-10.

and Tina says that she was just as upset as Bette. Bette counters, “I don’t think so Tina. It was my whole life that she was attacking. My life.” Bette thereby, suggests that despite Tina’s intentions, her experience and the knowledge from this experience are not fully comprehensible to Tina. Later in the series, Bette is visibly angry that a white actress was cast to play her in Jenny’s adapted film of her novel, *Lez Girls*, which Jenny had based on the group of friends. Similarly, Bette rebukes that a white actress could possibly know how to play her. Mixed black racial identity, while not always visible, is rendered to be incomprehensible to persons who have not embodied it.

After Yolanda’s accusations, Bette outs Yolanda as a lesbian and critiques her for not announcing herself as a lesbian and thereby, draws parallels between racial passing and sexual passing. Bette says to Yolanda, “You’re not exactly readable as a lesbian, and you didn't come out and declare yourself.” Bette implies then that both race and sexuality cannot be readily read off the body. While both Bette and Yolanda accuse each other of privileging one social marker over the other, Bette does not acknowledge that she has the privilege of being able to be racially illegible. This asymmetry insinuates that race and sexuality must be performed and that the performance and behavior must be mutually acknowledged. This scene evokes African-American literature, such as that of Nella Larsen’s *Passing* (1929) in which anxieties over racial and sexual passing converge and racial differences and sexual differences cannot be fully separated.[470] However, when Bette asks “why is it so wrong for me to move more freely in the world just because my

[470] Deborah McDowell interprets Nella Larsen’s *Passing* as having at its real concern lesbian sexuality and sexual passing over the more explicit theme of racial passing. See Deborah McDowell, “The ‘Nameless . . . Shameful Impulse’: Sexuality in Nella Larsen’s *Quicksand* and *Passing*” in *“The Changing Same”: Black Women’s Literature, Criticism, and Theory,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 78-97.

appearance doesn't automatically announce who I am?," the implication is that race constrains more than sexuality. Maurice Wallace suggests while white queer subjects, can pass to a relative degree within heterosexual white culture, they can act in "ways unavailable to racial subjects."[471] However, as Bette's body is not readily legible sexually or racially, Bette points to the mulatta figure as a source of racial and sexual anxieties in a postcivil rights era in which racial identities are contested, reconfigured, and reinforced.

This reconfiguring and questioning of racial identities is especially pertinent in regards to reproduction and Bette and Tina's child. After the failed first insemination from the first male artist, Bette finds another male artist to substitute as a sperm donor. While the other skinny white male artists' sperm was not viable, Marcus, a black male artist here represents an image of black male virility with his tallness and muscular features. However, Bette again reemphasizes that he is an artist in order to highlight the idea of class and taste being somehow connected through genes. When Marcus arrives at the house, Tina answers the door and Bette is not present. Tina quickly excuses herself and becomes upset that Bette did not mention that Marcus was black. Sensing Tina's discomfort, Marcus asks if Bette told her that he was black. Tina responds, "No, not at all. But, she didn't tell not me because it doesn't matter, right?" Refusing to feign that race might not matter to Tina, Marcus responds, "Well, I can't answer that for you." The scene between Marcus and Tina demonstrates assumptions of an investment in whiteness and anxieties of a liberal color-blind attitude. Later, Tina confronts Bette about her

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[471] Maurice O. Wallace, *Constructing the Black Masculine: Identity and Ideality in African American Men's Literature and Culture, 1775–1995* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 153.

omission. Bette becomes upset that Marcus' blackness worried Tina at all and claims that they had previously discussed having an African-American donor to reflect their relationship. Tina pleas, "Look at me, Bette. I don't feel qualified to be the mother of a child who's half African-American. I don't know what it means to be black." Bette counters, "I think I can make a contribution in that department." Tina responds, "And don't you think, on top of everything else, to also have two moms, that is a lot of otherness to put on one child?"

The scene marks Bette as insensitive to Tina's presumed innocent whiteness and marks Tina as not as color-blind as she thought. Tina's liberal front hides conservative underpinnings that often express concerns about the children of both interracial and lesbian parenting. Tina's concern is a mask for her discomfort as her privileged whiteness assumes that her children will suffer. The use of race and sexuality together here also suggests that Bette cannot possibly be part of a national belonging as she is implied to be other. Tina's remarks also insinuate that her interracial queer relationship with Bette is taboo, but also points to a questioning of Bette's visibility as black and Tina's subsequent fear of both a hidden and visible blackness. At stake potentially is also Tina's own whiteness as there is the possibility that she will now be affiliated with a visibly black daughter rather than a partner, who is not visibly black. Thus, Tina's rejection is also an intentional erasure of the reminders of Bette's blackness.

Hurt, Bette goes to her sister, Kit for comfort. However, Kit points out, "When she looks at you she doesn't see a black woman or a white woman. She sees what she wants to see. Maybe she sees what you let her see. Maybe it wasn't that important before. Maybe that's what's worked best for you all these years, you getting all your pretty

things, and you know putting together your pretty life, is that you let people see what you want them to see." Rather than absolve Bette's complicity, Kit points to Bette's light-skin privileges and the racial and class advantages that stem from Bette's willingness to be read as white and like Yolanda's challenging, to not overtly declare herself as black. Adrian Piper writes, "This is not to say that affluent blacks want to be white, but it certainly suggests that they have seen the benefits accorded to lighter-skinned blacks with 'whiter features'- who are hired more often, given better jobs, and perceived as less threatening."[472] From Kit's suggestions and the incidents with Yolanda and Tina, Bette must come to terms with her blackness by confronting her light-skinned privileged status. Returning to Bette's brief relationship with Candace, this bond between Candace and Bette can also be read as Bette seeking refuge and affirmation in not only Candace's skin, but her activism and comfort in her own identity. By choosing to be briefly with Candace instead of Tina, Bette is perhaps rejecting accusations of assimilation.

In the end, the donor insemination is successful. Thus, the use of insemination on *The L Word* destabilizes heterosexual reproduction and patriarchal privilege as continuing racial bloodlines. Rather, it is Bette's desire for a racially mixed child and for the child to reflect Tina and Bette's relationship that predicates this racial mixing. The detachment of procreation from heterosexual sex potentially suggests a shift from a patriarchal heteronormative model of kinship and race. Unlike the Brazilian *morena*, Bette's place in the nation does not rely on her role as a heterosexual reproducer.

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[472] Lawrence Otis Graham, *Our Kind of People: Inside America's Black Upper Class* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1999), 377.

However, Bette's desire for black genes potentially reifies the co-constructions of race and kinship. When the insemination is successful and Tina is pregnant, Bette announces Tina's pregnancy to Bette's father, Melvin (played by Ossie Davis). Melvin is unreceptive to Tina's pregnancy, and Bette attempts to emphasize that the donor is African-American. However, Melvin is not persuaded to accept Tina's pregnancy with the knowledge that the donor is African-American. Melvin responds, "And because of all of this I'm supposed to feel closer to this child? Because all of us blacks are somehow connected? We can be traced back to some tribe in Africa where we were beating drums? That is absurd. You are an Ivy-Leagued woman. How is this logical?" Melvin is angered by the implication that because the sperm donor happens to be black, there is any relation at all between the two men. Melvin thereby rejects an essentialist idea of race that is rooted in biological inheritance and denaturalizes racial identity as biological. Melvin's lack of acceptance also reinforces stereotypes of black male homophobia, but also detaches class privilege and entitlement as protection from discrimination.[473] Liberalism and tolerance are again coded as white. As Bette is in a lesbian relationship and is not a biological mother, Melvin calls the baby "a fiction of [your] Bette's own invention" and he cannot see the baby as carrying on a familial legacy. While Melvin requires similar genetic makeup to see kinship, he also implies that Bette is reifying an archaic idea of race. Melvin's critique points to the precariousness of communities and kinships based

[473] David, Kit's black son also does not accept Bette and Tina's decision to raise a child together. When Bette asks David to play with Angelica in order for her to have more male influence in her life, David later learns that Bette is also putting on a show for a social worker visit. He refuses to comply and cites his disapproval. In season five, Alice, a white blogger, publicly outs a famous black basketball player after he makes homophobic comments on television.

on ideas of biological sameness. As a result, Bette and Tina must also seek out other forms of kinships and communities.

However, *The L Word* also puts into play notions of kinship and identities that might stem from common experiences based on racial heritage and phenotype. When Tina and Bette are separated, Tina begins a relationship with a white straight man. With the fighting between Bette and Tina, Tina threatens to ask for full custody of the child. Frightened that Angelica might be taken away from her, Bette kidnaps Angelica. After Kit pleads for Bette to return, Bette sees a lawyer to try to obtain full custody over Angelica. Bette asserts that Tina will have no idea how to raise a biracial daughter. While Tina is the mother, Bette claims that the ability to successfully parent relies on Bette's knowledge and experience as a biracial woman. Bette explains, "Tina may have given birth to her, but really, Angelica is the mirror of me. I know what she's going to experience as a biracial girl growing up in a divisive world. I'm the one who's going to be able to give her a sense of belonging. I do not want my daughter growing up in a house where she feels like an outsider because everyone else is white. She's going to get that enough as it is in the world at large, and I know -- I know what that feels like." Whereas Leticia in *Monster's Ball* fails as a mother and Tyrell's abject blackness is rendered a liability, Bette attempts to posit why Tina, as a white woman, would fail as a proper mother. Blackness becomes an asset to Bette's parenting rather than a disadvantage. Furthermore, Bette's claim implies that race trumps genetics and in this way, continues to contradict Melvin's previous critique of racial essentialism. In some ways similar to Halle Berry's own custody battle with Gabriel Aubry over her daughter Nahla, both

Berry and the character, Bette evoke a claim over their daughters because of their connection to a racial identity.

The representation of Bette's sexual deviance also points to anxieties of racial difference. Bette is consistently portrayed as hypersexual and untrustworthy. After Bette cheats on Tina, she is shunned by her friends as most side with Tina. Despite Bette's pleas for forgiveness, Bette is labeled as a cheater and even when Bette and Tina get back together. Tina is frequently suspicious of Bette. At the end of the series, Kelly runs into Bette and the two begin an art gallery together, but Tina often questions Bette's intentions and her loyalty. While Kelly often flirts with Bette, Bette rejects these flirtations. When Jenny accuses Bette of cheating on Tina again with Kelly, the burden of proving that she did not actually cheat falls on Bette. The implication is that Bette does not have the ability to be monogamous. While white characters on the show have also cheated, the frequency of the mentioning of their cheating is much lower. Different dynamics are shown when Bette cheats because hypersexuality is regarded as essential to Bette's identity. Furthermore, while Shane, a white lesbian, has multiple different partners and also does not remain monogamous, her friends do not punish her with exclusion. Shane is also presented as merely reacting to other women's attraction to her. For Bette, and the character of Papi, a Latina limo driver, who is infamous for her sexual conquests, proactive sexual aggression is key to their characterizations. Thus, Bette, like Papi, constantly needs to sexually control and consume. Bette's friends eventually include her again because Bette's inability to resist sex is represented as intrinsic. As Alice says how Bette "just couldn't keep it in her pants" and is a "sex addict," Bette's cheating is regarded as a lack of ability rather than choice. Bette is thereby, pathologized,

but is not rendered abject based on her other markers of belonging such as her class.

Characterized as sexually dominant and aggressive, Bette's sexuality is also represented as potentially dangerous. After Tina discovers that Bette has cheated on her with Candace, Tina uncharacteristically screams at Bette. Bette then forces Tina to have sex with her. Tina resists and then pleasures herself. While Bette represents the sensual and beautiful mulatta, she also represents the mulatta counterpart of danger and aggression. The scene marries presentations of the mulatta Bette as a hypersexual Jezebel with that of the feared hypersexual mulatto male. Bette enacts a sexual coercion that perhaps echoes a trauma of miscegenation from earlier colonial histories of sexual and racial exploitation that produced mulatta bodies such as Bette. However, this violence is now displaced on the white female body of Tina. The scene's violence and coercion combined with Tina's pleasuring herself thereby, also possibly evokes a seduction narrative in which sexual violence is justified because Tina also pleasures herself. While Bette functions here as the sexually devious temptress, her use of violence against Tina also evokes the fears of black and mulatto men raping white women. Like correlations between sexual desire, hysteria, and the mulatto, Bette brings about these fears of a dangerous degenerate potential mulatto blackness that has risen out of control. In *Birth of a Nation* (1915), Silas, the mulatto leader, masturbates in anticipation of his sexual assault of Elsie Stoneman, a white woman whom he had professed the desire to marry.[474] Thereby, Bette is rendered with an excessive hypersexual corporality that is unrestrained while Tina is put within narratives of white womanhood.

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[474] Linda Williams, *Playing the Race Card*: *Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O. J. Simpson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 123-125.

The position of the mulatta has likenesses to the sexual deviant as formulated in sexological texts in the beginning of the twentieth century. Siobhan Somerville documents that, "The figure of the mulatto was often seen, explicitly or implicitly, as analogous to the invert: the mixed-race body evoked the mixed-gender body."[475] Eugenic sexologists associated non-white bodies with sexual abnormalities. As both lesbians and darker races were supposedly sexually differentiated from the white norm, sexologists connected both groups together. Racialized bodies were linked with sexual abnormalities. In the 1920s, sexologists observed that clitoral enlargement, supposedly an indication of female homosexuality, was especially common in black women. Sexologists labeled mixed-race people as "sexual half-breeds."[476] While Bette is firm in her identity as a lesbian, this association between sexual and racial degeneracy points to Bette's body as flawed because of the combination of her lesbian and mulatta figure.

However, Bette can find redemption through Tina. While Bette is powerful, but deviant, Tina represents white female purity and virtue and most of the friendship group sides with Tina. In the beginning of the series, Bette and Tina's relationship is within a heteronormative model with fixed roles of wage-earner and mother. When Tina goes back to work while pregnant, she starts at a non-profit organization serving underprivileged children. With Tina's passion for children and talent as a development writer, she wins a major grant from the Peabody Foundation over Bette's grant application for the museum. Moved by Tina's grant proposal, Helena Peabody comes to visit the non-profit and becomes smitten by Tina and her pregnant body. Tina is again

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[475] Somerville, *Queering the Color Line*, 80.
[476] Ibid, 25-33.

idealized as honorable and virtuous. Noting the contrasts between Tina and Bette, Rebecca Beirne writes that the two are "portrayed as being structured by visual and narrative gendered and racial differences" such that while Bette often wears business suits Tina is dressed in "peasant clothes" and that on rare occasions when both are wearing suits, one is in white and the other is in black.[477] Most importantly, Tina's image as a mother places her on a pedestal of purity and virtue associated with femininity and whiteness.

Despite numerous opportunities for relationships with other women, Bette continuously desires Tina. While in season four, Bette falls for Jodi, a deaf lesbian artist, Bette consistently questions if she and Jodi have the same values. With Jodi as an independent outspoken free-spirited character, Jodi consistently challenges Bette's need for control and compliance to authority. Bette learns to sign, but often attempts to overcompensate for Jodi's hearing impairment by seeking control over social situations. Jodi's deafness also forces Bette to confront her own privileges rather than focusing on her exclusions. Jodi, while white, contrasts with the blonde virtuous docile Tina, who represents white womanhood. When Tina and Bette get back together, they start renovating the house and begin steps to adopt another child. Ultimately, *The L Word* suggests that a successful lesbian relationship is based on reproduction and kinship. At the end of the series, Tina and Bette are back together with the possibility of moving to New York because of a career opportunity that Tina has. Bette says that if they move to New York, they should get married and Bette will be happy to stay with Angelica while

[477] Rebecca Beirne, "Fashioning The L Word," *Nebula* 3, no. 4 (2006): 17.

Tina works. Through Tina, Bette finds a sense of calm and her hypersexuality is tamed so that she herself can be in a domestic space.

Alternate Forms of Kinship

While *The L Word* ascribes to normative ideas of the nuclear family with Bette and Tina as the two parents of Angelica, the series also potentially points to alternate forms of kinship. The containment of kinship within a citizenship that is based on a nuclear family model is often reinforced with an emphasis on the class privilege associated with Tina's insemination and Angelica's schooling. Therefore, Bette and Tina's relationship often conforms to an assimilationist politics rather than a restructuring of citizenship and kinship. Reproduction and childrearing are central to this affirmation of lesbian relationships,[478] subject formation and citizen. It is Tina's forgiveness, the presence of Angelica, and the hope for a new child that helps purge Bette's abject hypersexual blackness to become a suitable citizen. The family formation through Tina and Angelica allows Bette to be represented as responsible, moral, and deserving of her citizenship. David Eng, while discussing transnational adoption, aptly explains the linkage between parenting and normative citizenship. He states, "I would suggest that the possession of a child, whether biological or adopted, has today become the sign of guarantee not only for family but also for full and robust citizenship — for being a fully

[478] Even the trans character, Max, who unexpectedly becomes pregnant, starts to wistfully tallk about feeling the baby kicking in the last episode of *The L Word*. While Max at first rejected his pregnancy and begged Tina and Bette to adopt his child, Bette and Tina and the rest of their group of friends attested that Max did not know what he was doing and would gradually become a wonderful father.

realized political, economic, and social subject."[479] However, various sections of *The L Word* attempt to disrupt this dominant narrative of citizenship and points to possible ways to "detach political belonging from (hetero)sexual reproduction."[480] Through this detachment, white heterosexual privilege is potentially undermined. Tina and Bette, through their tight-knit group of friends and Kit, suggest an interracial kinship structured based on alliances rather than blood. Yet, the importance of race as biology remains open as even in the last episode of the series, Angelica calls Kit's black male boyfriend, who often performs in drag, "daddy." Thereby, Angelica still sees a reflection of her own racial makeup, but also chooses to designate multiple parental figures.

The L Word reimagines the mulatta character by explicitly grappling with sexual agency, desire, class, and reproduction. Rather than the compulsory heterosexuality of mulatta figures such as Leticia and mixed-race figures in Brazilian *telenovelas*, *The L Word* subverts the joining of mulatta sexuality with white male sexuality. While *The L Word* plays with the idea of the sterile mulatto, who cannot physically reproduce their own form, Bette essentially does just that but without her own body. With Tina as Angelica's birth mother, the mulatta is not tied with sexuality for reproduction. Rather Bette's sexuality is for pleasure and Tina's body is for reproduction. With narratives and discourses of reproduction are often tied to which kinds of bodies deserve to reproduce, Tina still remains as the white female vessel of reproduction. However, rather than

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[479] David Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and The Racialization of Intimacy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 101.
[480] Siobhan Somerville, "Notes Toward a Queer History of Naturalization," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2005): 672.

continuing a gradual whitening project, Bette encourages a blackening rather than a whitening of their future children. While Bette's wish points to a reification of race as biology, Bette's desire also points to a desire for the survival of blackness rather than the erasure of blackness. Angelica as a new mulatta, growing up with a community of lesbian and straight women with multiple racial identities, suggest even more potential for the mulatta figure to break free from heteronormative racial norms. Angelica represents a future trajectory, but without conditions or guarantees.

Conclusion

Using U.S. cultural productions and Brazilian *telenovelas* as case studies, contradictions of racialized erotics, celebratory multiculturalism and racial mixing, and a containment of blackness emerge beyond the confines of the nation-state in Brazil and the United States. The mixed-race figure is at the nexus of racial histories, contemporary racial politics, and future racial visions. Within these Brazilian *telenovelas* and U.S. cultural productions, narratives of black containment are present along with spaces of resistance and agency. The following chapter examines how the idea of Brazil and the idea of the Brazilian *mulata* are represented in U.S. media. Like Brazilian *telenovelas*, U.S. film and television programs show how historical specters of the mixed-race figure comes to bear on contemporary cultural productions, how understandings of mixed-race sexuality function as part of national racial narratives, and how a concern over the place of blackness is inscribed on the mixed-race characters. This U.S. media revisits notions of mulatta and *mulata* sexual desirability and displaces U.S. desires and anxieties surrounding mixed-race onto the idea of Brazil. Brazil's image projection also relies on revisiting discourses of the place of blackness and racial mixing in a transnational frame.

Chapter Five: U.S. Media Imaginings of Brazil and Brazil's Self-Projection

The mixed-race female figure serves as the site for the evocation of social, cultural, and political practices and histories related to the management of blackness in Brazil and the United States. Chapters One, Two, Three, and Four took a comparative approach to elucidate how racial anxieties and the management of blackness operate in the United States and Brazil. Chapter One explored major tropes about mixed-race female figures in various historical, political, legal, and cultural contexts and contextualized recent debates surrounding multiraciality and blackness for public policy implementation in the United States and Brazil. Chapters Two, Three, and Four demonstrated the management and containment of blackness as well as the emerging ruptures in this racial management. The comparative work in these chapters emphasized how the United States and Brazil are not polar opposites, but rather are linked by transnational connections of a common whitening project and a management of blackness. In particular, the mixed-race female figure in Brazil and the United States is part of transnational imagery and concepts of blackness and mixedness. This chapter takes a transnational angle on blackness and mixedness in Brazil and the United States. Examining how the United States imagines Brazil and how Brazil imagines itself and presents itself to the world demonstrates a powerful transnational dialogical process. This chapter then shifts from using a comparative method to a transnational inquiry on racial representations.

The U.S. image of Brazil acts as a site of mediation between the exotic and the familiar. In U.S. media images, Brazil represents a reincorporation of the United States'

exotic other and an idea and image onto which anxieties and desires are projected.[481] National identity is not fixed, but rather produced, reproduced, and contested in a dynamic network of relations. The formation of national identities, are hence interconnected. Brazil is used not just to produce an idea of the abject Other, but rather to produce a distorted mirror of familiarity and the exotic. Robert Stam states, "Brazil and the United States are deeply interconnected in a spectacular play of sameness and difference, identity and alterity."[482] This chapter examines how the United States has used Brazil in popular media and ends with how Brazil is representing itself to the world for the 2016 Summer Olympics, which will likely be a critical event in Brazilian history.

Brazil is a way for the United States to project an idea of otherness that also encompasses sameness. Using cultural productions as a means to understand representations of Brazil, I borrow from Amy Kaminsky's ideas of how the nation is a metaphor. This mode of cultural representation does not merely reflect U.S. desires and anxieties, but rather Brazil also participates in this image-making. Brazil's self-understanding as a nation is connected to how other nations imagine Brazil. Brazil's own involvement with cultivating an exotic image of itself demonstrates that Brazil is not necessarily passive, but rather a participant in this production of self across borders.[483]

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[481]For more on the relationships between the domestic and the transnational in Brazil and Argentina, respectively, see Micole Seigel, *Uneven Encounters* and Amy Kaminsky, *Argentina: Stories for a Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
[482] Stam, *Tropical Multiculturalism,* 1
[483]Amy Kaminsky writes on the relationship of Argentina to Europe and comparatively discusses the "auto-exotification" of Brazil during the modernization process of both nation-states. Whereas Argentina viewed itself as an extension of Europe, Brazil "seems content to reincorporate itself as Europe's exotic other, becoming exotic to itself." Kaminksy, *Argentina: Stories for a Nation*, 28.

Therefore, the relationship between the national and the transnational is key in the production of an imaginary of Brazil.

Recent U.S. media imaginings envision Brazil as a racial and sexual tropical paradise. Brazil is visualized as a sexual paradise of libidinal opportunities in part because of the trope of sexually desirable and available *mulata*s. In contrast to the United States, Brazil is imagined as a racial paradise because of its reputation as a racial democracy with a large mixed-race population and its historical absence of legal segregation. In recent U.S. music videos such as Snoop Dogg and Pharrell's "Beautiful" (2003), will.i.am's "I Got It From My Mama" (2007), and the film *Fast Five* (2011), Brazil facilitates black male independence. Brazil is not depicted as the abject Other but rather these cultural productions show Brazil as a distorted mirror image of the United States—exotic but also familiar.

With a legacy of slavery, a large population of African descent, and a history of large-scale European immigration, Brazil appears as similar to the United States, but in an exoticized tropical landscape. Like Brazil itself, the *mulata* figure in "Beautiful" and "I Got It From My Mama," becomes reconfigured in U.S. imaginings of Brazil as a site of racialized sexual paradise and freedom, and symbolically mediates between the exotic and the familiar. By evoking the *mulata* figure visually and lyrically in these videos, Snoop Dogg, Pharrell, and will.i.am engage with themes of sexual availability, beauty, and sensuality derived from black mixedness. Moreover, U.S. cultural productions capitalize on Brazil's own celebration of the Brazilian *mulata* figure as a symbol representing sexual desire, racial mixing, and racial democracy. This chapter examines the idea of Brazil as a racial and sexual paradise and the role of Brazil, and coordinately,

the symbol of the *mulata*, in the U.S. national imaginary. In contrast to the use of the *mulata* figure, the film *Fast Five* also invokes exotic tropical imagery, but focuses attention on a U.S. mulatto figure. *Fast Five* relies on images of Brazil as a tropical, racially harmonious, sexualized, exotic paradise, but inserts a hypermasculine, multiracial hero to mediate between the United States and Brazil. While the hip-hop music videos emphasize multiracial blackness, *Fast Five* uses an idea of racelessness and ultimately, recenters multiracial aesthetics as a process of becoming an ambiguous brown that is closer to white than to black.

The U.S. contemporary use of Brazil has its roots in previous cultural discourses stemming from the Good Neighbor Policy Hollywood films of the 1940s. The use of Brazil in millennial hip-hop videos and film also must be understood in the context of changing U.S. racial demographics, particularly an impending U.S. nonwhite majority. Recently, visual and narrative rhetoric of the U.S. as a future postracial nation have circulated along with the use of U.S. mixed-race and/or racially ambiguous actors to mobilize ideas that race will soon become meaningless in the United States. Like the Brazilian *mulata*, these mixed-race actors then serve as proof of racial diversity and a path towards racelessness. Brazil stands in as a symbolic example of an already racially mixed and racially ambiguous nation. However, it is imperative to consider gender and sexuality along with race and nation in this image-making. With the *mulata* body used in transnational discourse as a signifier of sexual desire, the hypersexualization of Brazilian female bodies posits womanhood as in service to U.S. empire. Thus, women of color function largely as objects, rather than as subjects in this hemispheric imaginary. Brazil's national mythmaking projects the idea of a unified racially mixed nation that is on its way

to gradual whiteness. Given the United States' own racial mixture, however contextualized with a distinct system of classification by race rather than color and a history of legal segregation and antimiscegenation laws, Brazil provides a familiar yet alien racialized national vision.

Genealogies of Tropicalization and Carmen Miranda as Cultural Intermediary

This juxtaposition of the exotic and the familiar using Brazilian women can be seen in many early Hollywood films. Within the tropes of tropicalization, Brazilian women are represented as sexual and consumable. As an emblem of tropicalization tropes, Carmen Miranda functioned to allay white anxieties about ethnic and racial differences and their potential threat of these differences to U.S. national identity and citizenship.[484] As part of a strategic effort to advocate for Pan-American cooperation during World War II, the Good Neighbor Policy (1933-1945) used propaganda campaigns and economic incentives to promote good will throughout the Americas. Hollywood was also a key player in the implementation of the Good Neighbor Policy. Between 1939 and 1945, Hollywood produced eighty-four films with Latin American themes.[485] In order to garner the sympathies of U.S. audiences, Hollywood presented an image of Latin Americans as jovial, friendly, exotic, and unthreatening.[486] The Brazilian

[484] See Ana López, "Are All Latins from Manhattan? Hollywood, Ethnography and Cultural Colonialism," in *Mediating Two World: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas,* ed. John King, Ana M. López, Manual Alvarado (London: British Film Institute, 1993), 78; and Shari Roberts, "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat: Carmen Miranda, a Spectacle of Ethnicity" *Cinema Journal* 32, no. 3(1993): 3–23.
[485] Lisa Shaw and Stephanie Dennison, *Pop Culture Latin America! Media, Arts, and Lifestyle* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 183
[486] The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA) within the U.S. State Department commissioned films from Walt Disney as part of the Good Neighbor Policy. The CIAA sponsored a two-month tour of Latin America for Disney artists and

government was also aware of its image in Hollywood cinema. In films such as Walt Disney's *Saludos Amigos* (1943), the Brazilian government saw the films as a positive representation of Brazil because of the lack of black actors in the film.[487] Nelson Rockefeller, head of the Office of the Coordinator for Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA), appointed Addison Durland to manage the representation of Latin Americans at the Hays Office. Durland's idea of desirable representation of Latin America was "light-skinned, modern and civilized," reflecting the inclinations of the Latin American elites that he had contact with at the time.[488] As these Latin American elites controlled the movie theaters in South America, Hollywood conformed to their ideological sway.[489]

Flying Down to Rio (1933), a precursor of these Good Neighbor Policy films, represented a potential vision of an inter-American utopia.[490] The film promoted the proximity and attractiveness of Brazil as a tourist destination and foreshadowed the link between Hollywood and United States foreign policy interests in Latin America. In *Flying Down to Rio*, Dolores del Río, a Mexican actress, plays Belinha, a Brazilian

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cinematographers. The film *Saludos Amigos* (*Alô, amigos*) combined live action and animation. In *Saludos Amigos* (1943), the parrot, Joe (Zé or José) Carioca, is a *malandro* (hustler) type character. Popular among both U.S. and Brazilian audiences, Zé Carioca gets Donald Duck drunk on *cachaça* and teaches him how to dance samba. Alfred Charles Richard, Jr., *Censorship and Hollywood's Hispanic Image: An Interpretive Filmography, 1936–1955* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood, 1993), 273-274.

[487] Ana Rita Mendonça, *Carmen Miranda foi a Washington* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record, 1999), 33.

[488] Brian O'Neil, "The Demands of Authenticity: Addison Durland and Hollywood's Latin Images during World War II," in *Classic Hollywood, Classic Whiteness*, ed. Daniel Bernardi (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2001), 360.

[489] Dale Adams, "*Saludos Amigos*: Hollywood and FDR's Good Neighbor Policy," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 24, no. 3 (2007): 293.

[490] See Adrían Pérez Melgosa, "Opening the Cabaret American Allegory: Hemispheric Politics, Performance, and Utopia in *Flying Down to Rio,*" *American Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2012): 249-275.

woman who possesses an irresistible allure for the white protagonist, Raymond. The playing of a Brazilian woman by a Mexican actress conflates Latin America into a land of passionate darker Others, who are not idealized fair blondes, but can still be seen as white enough to be palatable to U.S. audiences. The placement of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire in the film allows for a glamorized idea of travel in which Brazil is a sexy but safe tourist playground. The film is a precursor of the contemporary notion of Brazil as a pleasurable escape for Americans.

The film tells more about how the U.S. imagines Brazil than Brazil itself and reveals U.S. racial hopes and anxieties. The film attempts to represent a multiracial image of Brazil through the staging of the "Carioca" dance. In a conflated and distorted image of African-Americans and Afro-Brazilians, African-American performers such as Etta Moten Barnett played a *baiana* type role complete with a heaping basket of fruit on her head.[491] As Adrián Pérez Melgosa notes, the film's representation of Brazilian diversity reflects not an accurate portrayal of Brazil, but rather reflects an image of the United States' racial segregation. Furthermore, he argues that the film shows racial mixing as originating from Latin America while racial partitioning remains mostly intact in the film. With the allusion of racial mixing and tolerance, different racial groups are located in discrete areas on screen with the exception of the dancing Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.[492] The film presents a multicultural vision of Brazil, and a displacement of the United States without actual racial mixing. Many of the later "Good Neighbor"

[491] Seigel, *Uneven Encounters*, 93, 112.
[492] Melgosa, "Opening the Cabaret American Allegory," 269.

films in the 1940s placed Americans in an exotic locale where they could have adventures but retain a sense of familiarity.

Yet, the strongest and most lasting symbol of Pan-Americanism and hemispheric solidarity would come through a feminine figure. In order to be represented as the "South American Girl" under Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, Carmen Miranda first had to fashion herself as an authentic Brazilian. The Portuguese-born Miranda shaped her star persona as an emblem of *brasilidade.* This fashioning occurred first through samba and through an appropriation of the *baiana* figure via her costumes and musical and dance performance. Singing on the radio and on records, Miranda incorporated samba and black popular music into her musical and performative identity. Many of her songs displayed patriotic sentiments, exalted the city of Rio de Janeiro and the region of Bahia, and touched on racial themes. Attempting to garner nationalist sentiments, Getúlio Vargas co-opted samba as a national symbol. Recounting life among blacks and mulatos, Miranda appropriated a black and mulato voice.[493] In the 1930s, Getúlio Vargas highly valued the unifying concept of *brasilidade* across racial and class lines. Incorporating popular culture into the image of *brasilidade*, Vargas emphasized samba as a potentially cohesive cultural product. Samba was considered low-class, associated with blackness, and unacceptable to middle class and elite families. Darien Davis contends that Miranda "served as a middle class vehicle between the mostly black and mulatto favelados and the nation."[494] As it was not until the 1930s that samba became a national

[493] Darién Davis, "Racial Parity and National Humor: Exploring Brazilian Samba from Noel Rosa to Carmen Miranda" in *Latin American Popular Culture*: *An Introduction*, 188.
[494] Ibid, 189.

symbol,[495] Miranda's career coincided perfectly with the new status of samba and the growing popularity of film in Brazil.

With the support of Getúlio Vargas, who saw film as a potential tool of national consolidation and development of *brasilidade*, the nascent Brazilian film industry began to look to foreign industries for both models and competitors. Since the Hollywood musical was popular with Brazilian audiences, the format of the Hollywood model along with the Brazilian precursor *teatro de revista* (revue theater), influenced the *chanchada*, Brazilian musical comedies often revolving around a backstage plot. Carmen Miranda was featured in *chanchada* films, such as *Alô Alô Brasil* (1935) and *Alô Alô Carnaval* (1936).[496] The *chanchada*, Brazilian musical format, incorporated the growing popularity of *carnaval* and samba and, at times, parodied Hollywood stereotypes of Brazil. The *chanchada* coincided with the state's interest in establishing samba as a national emblem while simultaneously de-emphasizing its Afro-Brazilian roots. Nonetheless, the kitsch and absurdist aesthetics of Hollywood musicals influenced how Brazil saw itself. Brazil, thus, participated in a mode of self-exotification.

The film, *Banana-da-terra* (1939) solidified Miranda's fame and her performative appropriation of the *baiana* figure. The *chanchada, Banana-da-terra* (1939) takes place on the fictional tropical island of Bananolândia, and features Carmen Miranda dressed as a *baiana*.[497] In the film's song by Dorival Caymmi, "O que é que a baiana tem?," she

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[495] Hermano Vianna, O *misterio do samba* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 1995), 111.
[496] Lisa Shaw, "The *Chanchada* and Celluloid Visions of Brazilian Identity in the Vargas Era (1930–45)," *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 6, no. 1 (2000): 64.
[497]Lisa Shaw, "The *Chanchada* and Celluloid Visions of Brazilian Identity in the Vargas Era (1930–45)," *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 6, no. 1 (2000): 69-70.

gives credit to the *baiana* as the originator of her costume. The performance piece lauds the *baiana*'s beauty, dress, and sensual presence. As Miranda sings, her male entourage gazes at her from a sitting position. The pleasured male gaze provides Miranda with an image of sexual desirability. Miranda participated in the invention of a *brasilidade* that relied on a celebration of samba and *carnaval*. With Getúlio Vargas's *Estado Novo* attempt to represent a unified Brazil that transcended racial and class lines and tied the masses to the state, Miranda was well-positioned for this objective. As a radio and film performer, Miranda had the capacity to bring in the masses to an ideal of unified Brazilian harmony.

However, as Robert Stam argues, Afro-Brazilians were grossly underrepresented in *chanchadas* despite the Afro-Brazilian origins of samba. The female protagonists were often quite fair-skinned.[498] In *Carnaval Atlântida* (1952), a black stagehand (played by Grande Otelo) mentions that he knows a *mulata* named Helen (Elena) who would make a superb Helen of Troy. The director responds that he is seeking a universal beauty and the role of Helen has nothing in common with a *mulata* from a *favela*.[499] The legacies of the disjunction between the incorporation of Afro-Brazilian culture and the idealization of white beauty standards are apparent in the *chanchada* genre and in the presentation of *brasiliadade*.

Although light-skinned and born in Portugal, Carmen Miranda stylized herself as an Afro- Brazilian *baiana* figure from Northeast Brazil. With costuming and performance, Miranda became associated with the *baiana* symbol. Miranda re-created

[498] Robert Stam, *Tropical Multiculturalism*, 102-103.
[499] Ibid, 98.

her own stylized version of a traditional *baiana* outfit with her white long round skirt, white blouse, bangles, and her blue, white, and red beads representing Afro-Brazilian candomblé deities. Miranda transformed the *baiana* from a specifically regional and Afro-Brazilian symbol into a national emblem of authentic *brasilidade*. Miranda's *baiana*, rather than representing cultural divisions in Brazil, became a symbol of harmony. Miranda thereby played a role in furthering the exotification of the black Other within Brazil.

The Portuguese-born Miranda represented a kind of *mestiçagem* in her role as an intermediary and in her appropriation of the *baiana*. While the *mulata* facilitated the softening effect of Freye's tropical *mestiçagem* and thereby moderated the extremes of Afro-Brazilians and white Brazilians, Miranda also had a mediator role. Miranda's use of the *baiana* whitens this figure as part of Brazil's whitening project. By maneuvering between racial tensions and ideologies of *mestiçagem* and *branqueamento*, Miranda symbolized the potential of racial democracy and a whiter nation. This appropriation and performance of the *baiana* figure points to Brazil's ambivalence around race and national identity. As a country that desired to be seen as white, but had a large black population, Miranda showcased the incongruities of black heritage, national identity, *branqueamento*, and *mestiçagem*. Miranda, as a white performer adhering to Afro-Brazilian culture, became a feminized national figure while placing blackness and *mestiçagem* in an acceptable form for the nation. Like the *mulata,* in which symbolic visibility obscured social invisibility, Miranda's performance gave the *baiana* a cultural visibility without unraveling the privileges of whiteness. Miranda, while of Portuguese origin and with a

Portuguese passport for most of her life,[500] divulged an image of *brasilidade* that relied on notions of *mestiçagem* and the incorporation of Afro-Brazilian elements. As a celebrity figure, Miranda herself epitomized the ideologies *mestiçagem* by upholding white beauty standards while stylizing herself as a *baiana*.

Miranda, with her radio music and film fame, eventually stood in as a symbol of the Brazilian state ready for export.[501] Miranda's *baiana* costume and performance brought the idea of an "authentic" Brazil to the United States. With her wide smile and twinkling eyes, Miranda helped propagate an exoticized and idealized image of Brazil's racial democracy. The Vargas regime was directly involved in using Miranda as propaganda for the Estado Novo abroad. The Vargas government financed the travel of Bando da Lua, Miranda's musical group accompaniment, after Miranda was invited to perform in New York at the producer, Lee Shubert's request.[502] As Mendonça writes, "Carmen foi depositária dos sonhos de uma nação" [Carmen was the repository of the dreams of a nation.][503] Miranda's career coincided with the Good Neighbor Policy. Thus, the U.S. public receives an image of a whitened Afro-Brazilian as their cultural mediator between Latin America and the United States.

With Miranda coded as a jubilant and sensual Latina, she represented a still white yet Other representation for the United States. However, while Miranda's characters could sing, dance, and even flirt with other white male characters, Miranda's characters

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[500] Although having previously requested a Brazilian passport in 1948, Carmen Miranda did not receive a Brazilian passport until 1953. Darién J. Davis, "Racial Parity and National Humor," 198.
[501] Vianna, *O misterio do samba,* 90-91.
[502] Mendonça, *Carmen Miranda foi a Washington*, 56.
[503] Ibid, 12.

did not marry. Instead, she lost the competition to win the affections of the white male characters to U.S. white female actresses. As the legitimizing structure of marriage is denied for Miranda's characters, her performance of sexuality then is "diffused, spent in gesture, innuendo, and salacious commentary"[504] and the threat of a foreign or "other" sexuality is dissolved "by its sheer visual and narrative excess."[505] Therefore, Miranda's characters were exotic but ultimately unthreatening to the U.S. racial order. The films then projected an idea of racial harmony without racial mixing. Shari Roberts's analysis of Carmen Miranda's star persona in films, publicity materials, fan magazine articles and newspapers deduced that 20th Century Fox contrasted Miranda with the white actress, Betty Grable so that Grable represented the "all-American" standard and Miranda became "the allowable cultural other."[506] Read against whiteness, Miranda as representing an idea of *latinidad* is excessive. With her bright fruit, hats, bangles, and mid-riff baring tops, Miranda is too sexual, too colorful, and too loud. Although Miranda is still desirable, she stands in contrast to U.S. normative standards of beauty and comportment.

With an overemphasis on her non-American identity, Miranda weakened the threat that she represented and became comically innocuous. As Roberts argues, by parodying and exaggerating signifiers of ethnicity and femininity, Miranda became a spectacle of containment.[507] For example, in *The Gang's All Here*, Miranda emerges as

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[504] Ana Lopez, "Are All Latins from Manhattan? Hollywood, Ethnography, and Cultural Colonialism," 418.
[505] Ibid, 420.
[506] Shari Roberts, "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat: Carmen Miranda, a Spectacle of Ethnicity," *Cinema Journal* 32, no. 3 (1993): 3.
[507] Ibid.

an image of fertility. Young women in banana-motif costumes gather around Miranda as she arrives in an ox-driven wagon full of bananas. As the scene ends, her banana headdress is amplified to appear as if there are countless bananas on her head. Miranda, just like these raw agricultural products, is presented as consumable to U.S. audiences.[508] Roberts notes that Miranda's body was often equated with Latin America itself. Miranda is emblematic of the tropicalized body as she is constructed through the bountifulness of fruit and sexuality. As she teaches American audiences to dance the Uncle Sam-ba, Miranda is depicted as a cultural ambassador and an important link between Latin America and the United States. However, as Lisa Shaw notes, Carmen Miranda's success as the embodiment of *latinidad* relied on her compliance in watering down samba for white American audiences.[509]

As Carmen Miranda was the first major Brazilian celebrity in the United States and the world at large, her influence has continued not only in the United States, but also in Brazil. Positioned as exotic, friendly, and available, her image has shaped notions of Brazil and the exotic tropics in the United States. Carmen Miranda symbolized a feminized and sexualized representation of Latin America. Secondly, her appropriation of Afro-Brazilian culture allowed for an idea of a mixed-race figure through culture, but not through race. As a symbol of a racially mixed-Brazil and a Pan-Latina, she represents the tensions in the desire and fear of *mestiçagem* and racial mixing through her phenotypically white body. Miranda's star persona familiarized and diminished the threat of the ethnic non-American other. Foremostly, the image of Carmen Miranda in

[508] Ibid,13.
[509] Shaw, "The *Chanchada* and Celluloid Visions of Brazilian Identity in the Vargas Era (1930–45)," 67.

both the United States and Brazil presented the image of Brazil as primarily white. By incorporating Afro-Brazilian culture, such as samba and *carnaval* into an idea of Brazilian *mestiçagem* and racial harmony, the images of Brazil did not disrupt the racial order or imply racial mixing.

African-Americans and the Idea of Brazil

Whereas during the Great Depression and World War II, the Hollywood image of Brazil offered the idea of a friendly escape with the potential for sexual seduction, African-Americans often had a differing political purpose and image for Brazil. For many African-Americans, Brazil had long been represented as a beacon of relative freedom during Jim Crow.[510] While the United States has an extensive history of racial mixing, the U.S. classification by racial ancestry and histories of segregation and antimiscegenation laws presented a distinct difference from Brazil's classification by color and absence of legal segregation. David J. Hellwig's compiled volume of essays and articles, *African American Reflections on Brazil's Racial Paradise* (1992) traces African-American viewpoints on race in Brazil from 1905 to 1988. Despite the emphasis on European immigration, *branqueamento*, and Brazil's travel restrictions for U.S. citizens of African descent in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century,[511]

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[510] See Zita Nunes's chapter, "The New Negro and the Turn to South America" for examples of how African-American journalists, scholars such as W.E.B DuBois, and writers such as Nella Larsen in her novel *Passing* (1928) imagine Brazil. Zita Nunes, *Cannibal Democracy: Race and Representation in Literature of the Americas*, 115-144.

[511] While the Brazilian government encouraged European immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, restrictions were placed on nonwhite immigrants. The ban on immigrants from Africa was loosely interpreted to include individuals of African descent despite those individuals never having lived in Africa. This ban then excluded U.S. citizens of African descent. This restriction disregarded the 1828 Peace, Friendship, Trade, and Navigation Agreement between Brazil and the United States.

Brazil still represented a site of potential liberty.

In the early twentieth century, African-Americans traveled to Brazil in the hopes of a racial paradise that offered the possibilities of integration, economic opportunities, and social and political freedom. These primary sources of letters, essays, travel accounts, and newspaper articles from Hellwig's volume demonstrate the inspiring symbol that Brazil held in the minds of many African-Americans as well as the eventual disillusionment that many African-Americans later experienced in Brazil. Explaining the significance of the idea of Brazil in the African-American imagination, Zita Nunes notes, "Brazil had no color line and, furthermore, could provide the United States with a solution to its racial divide. This solution could come either in the form of emigration from the United States to Brazil or in the form of an example of a society in which racial mixture was encouraged and racial discrimination unknown."[512]

For example, in Nella Larsen's novel *Passing*, Brian, an African-American doctor, yearns to leave a racist United States for the imagined better racial and social conditions in Brazil. This juxtaposition of Brazil and the United States serves to offer an idea of a restricted United States in which one must deny black identity or suffer racial indignities and violence in favor of an imagined Brazil of racial freedom. In a later evocation of mixed-race, passing, and the desire for Brazil, Danzy Senna's *Caucasia* (1998) features Deck, an African-American father who moves to Brazil with one of his

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These racial restrictions continued into the Vargas era from 1930-1945. The Brazilian Constitution in 1934 effectively prohibited black and Asian immigration and limited immigration to whites. See Jeffrey Lesser, "Immigration and Shifting Concepts of National Identity in Brazil During the Vargas Era," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 31 (1994): 23-44.

[512] Nunes, *Cannibal Democracy,* 120.

mixed-race daughters in the hope that Brazil as a "mulatto nation" would offer better living conditions than the United States. Meanwhile, his lighter daughter, Birdie is left behind in the United States. When Deck returns to the United States, he reveals his disillusionment with Brazil as it has similar racial inequalities to the United States. Both Brian and Deck are members of black professional classes, and imagine Brazil as better suited to integration and diversity. Brazil then becomes a vision of utopia, where African-American men can have a place in national belonging and possess the black male cultural citizenship that is denied in the United States. It is interesting that both Nella Larsen and Danzy Senna are mixed-race female writers who position Brazil as a hope for black male protagonists, but black and mixed-race women do not have this same yearning for Brazil. The gender dynamics suggest that while black men desire to be diaspora subjects, black and mixed-race women occupy a tension of individual desires between responsibilities to racial communities and the nation. While warranting further consideration and study, it might be possible that American cultural citizenship relies on a denial of diasporic identity for women and reinscribes women as representations of the nation.

African-American fascination with Brazil has more recently transformed Brazil into a tourist commodity. As Patricia de Santana Pinho observes, many African-American tourists have recently begun to participate in "roots" tourism in the state of Bahia (known as the most Afro-Brazilian state in terms of population and preservation of heritage). While this roots tourism is important as a source of black pride and identity, Pinho acknowledges that the very ability to travel also demonstrates that African-Americans have had more access to power and capital than many other diasporic

members.[513] While the cultural productions examined in this chapter are all set in Rio de Janeiro rather than Bahia, this imbalance of power between African-Americans and Afro-Brazilian is evident. Furthermore, these cultural productions all have African-American and/or mixed-race men as the primary subjects with Brazilian women represented mostly as objects. African-American men then are represented as being able to travel to Brazil still in search of relative freedom. It is in Brazil, however, that they might find the sexual and political freedom to have their choice of women of various colors without consequences. Brazil then fulfills a vision of sexual paradise and racial utopia in the same frame.

U.S. Sexual Freedom through the Brazilian *Mulata*

From Gilberto Freyre's formulations of interracial colonial sex as a love story of seduction between white men and *mulata* and black women rather than a narrative of sexual exploitation, the notion of racial mixing in Brazil relies on ideas of white male masculinity and black hypersexuality. Despite being the product of colonial sexual violence, the Brazilian *mulata* has functioned as a figure of racial harmony for both internal and external consumption. Beginning in the 1970s, Brazilian governmental tourism agencies utilized the image of the sexually available *mulata* for the promotion of Brazil as a tourist destination. Brazil, especially Rio de Janeiro, increasingly became associated with beautiful *mulata*s, the beach, and samba.[514] National representations of the eroticized *mulata* also influence transnational imaginings of the Brazilian *mulata*.

[513] Patricia de Santana Pinho, "African-American Roots Tourism in Brazil," *Latin American Perspectives* 35, no.3 (2008): 76

[514] Angela Gilliam, "The Brazilian *Mulata*: Images in the Global Economy," *Race and Class* 40, no. 1 (1998): 66-67.

However, in U.S. media, more recent representations of Brazil highlight not only white American men, but also notably American men of African descent and their sexual interactions with Brazilian women of color. Although Brazilian popular culture has largely presented racial mixing primarily with white men and thereby, leaves out literally indigenous men and Afro-Brazilian men from participation in the nation, recent U.S. cultural productions intervene with African-American men as the main sexual partners of *mulata* women. The pursuit of sexual opportunities in Brazil posits Brazil as a source of erotic sexual freedom. *Mulata* women are assumed to be sexually available and willing. Brazil then, provides a familiar yet alien racialized national vision with the *mulata* figure. The images of black virility are called upon to demonstrate the essential femininity and sensuality of Brazilian women. Simultaneously, these images also imply the essential masculinity and sexual prowess of the United States, and by extension, African-American men.

Since the *mulata* figure is a site of desire and conquest in both U.S. and Brazilian cultural productions, she becomes a particularly interesting object of desire for African-American men, as seen in the videos, Snoop Dogg and Pharrell's "Beautiful" (2003) and will.i.am's "I Got It From My Mama" (2007). Music videos permeate both national and transnational mediascapes through their dissemination through television channels, the Internet, and platform technologies such as Apple iTunes. Appadurai uses the term *mediascape* to refer to "both the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film-production studios), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests

throughout the world, and . . . the images of the world created by these media."[515] These mediascapes then are particularly useful for considering the imagining of identity within and beyond national boundaries. In these U.S. cultural productions, African-American men are entangled with practices and discourses of U.S. masculinity and empire with the *mulata* figure as a site of desire and conquest. In these music videos, Brazil represents a place of sexual freedom and male independence. These African diasporic relationships between African-Americans and Afro-Brazilians then demonstrate not necessarily solidarity, but rather power imbalances and economic privilege that many African-Americans hold in comparison to Brazilian women of color.

Through the visual images in these music videos, Snoop Dogg, Pharrell, and will.i.am continue the descriptive rhetoric of European travel journals and narratives.[516] Similar to Paul Gauguin's paintings and descriptions of Tahitian women or the idea of the Japanese geisha, Snoop Dogg, Pharrell, and will.i.am work within the racialized and sexualized ideologies of exoticism practiced during colonial and imperial periods.[517]

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[515] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 36. I find Arjun Appadurai's concept of "mediascapes" as a useful way to consider these circulating images and narratives. His understandings of cultural flows are helpful for thinking about national and transnational imaginations of race and identity in Brazil and the United States. He terms the five dimensions of global flows as cultural representations (mediascapes), ideas and value systems (ideoscapes), people (ethnoscapes), capital (financescapes), and informational technologies (technoscapes). He considers these irregular and fluid "scapes" to be the materials for "imagined worlds," which refer to "the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe." Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 33.

[516] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 221-224.

[517] For examples, see Patty O'Brien, *The Pacific Muse: Exotic Feminity and the Colonial Pacific* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

These videos then comprise the United States within a heterosexual model of masculinity and constructs Brazil as femininized object of erotic fantasy. Thereby, African-American men in these hip-hop videos constitute themselves similarly to white men in terms of an entitled Western masculine access to women. African-American male bodies and Brazilian female bodies of color are held up as gendered and racialized ideals. However, in these videos, women are denied subjecthood at the expense of the development of black subjects such as that of Snoop Dogg, Pharrell, and will.i.am. From the view of spectatorship, the heterosexual male subject is privileged.[518]

Snoop Dogg and Pharrell are among the most famous hip-hop artists to use Brazil and its women as a setting for their videos and to use the Brazilian *mulata* figure as "the visual representation of the new black feminine ideal in hip hop culture."[519] In Snoop Dog and Pharrell's "Beautiful," the song supposedly celebrates the beauty of black women in Brazil, due to the video's setting, and in the U.S., due to the song's lyrics. Therefore, the song seems to present a diasporic pride and appreciation of black female beauty. Yet, the video's images predominantly do not present dark-skinned women, but rather largely focuses on light-skinned women in Brazil. As Sharply notes, the fetishization of light-skinned women in U.S. hip-hop videos set in the United States points to a fascination with ascriptive mulattas. The "ascriptive mulatta," combines black

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[518] Laura Mulvey has described women's traditional exhibitionist role as "simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Woman displayed as sexual object is the leitmotif of erotic spectacle." Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, " *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1977): 11.
[519] T. Denean Sharpley Whiting, *Pimps Up, Ho's Down: Hip-Hop's Hold on Young Black Women* (New York: New York University Press, 2008, 42.

sexual passion with white physical beauty.[520] Therefore, it is not so much that the *mulata* literally be a mixed-race woman, but that the image of the light-skinned and hypersexual mulatta stands in for erotic desire. As mentioned earlier, Brazilian popular culture, from samba songs to Jorge Amado's novels also celebrate the *mulata* figure. However, in both the U.S. and Brazil, the rhetoric of celebration does not undermine the racial and sexist underpinnings in the *mulata* figure. The idea of celebration is more about men's ability to enjoy the sensual and sexual pleasures of the *mulata*. In Brazil, Pharrell and Snoop Dogg gaze at countless numbers of semi-nude Brazilian women of color. Therefore, while the song proclaims, "See I just want you to know that you are really special," it appears that such *mulata* beauty is actually quite commonplace rather than unique and deserving of individual attention.

The video focuses on hair and body parts, such as buttocks and hips as black signifiers. With lyrics say "Long hair, wit'cha big fat booty" and "Black and beautiful, you the one I'm choosin'/Hair long and black and curly like you're Cuban," Snoop Dogg and Pharrell enter into a pre-existing discourse of the politics of hair in the African diaspora. Hair texture and length are often implicated in racialized constructions of beauty. Like the United States, in Brazil, coarse hair is associated with black phenotypes and therefore, is often considered to be bad hair or "cabelo ruim."[521] Hair functions alongside skin color and phenotypical attributes, such as the nose and lips, to assign racial classification. Therefore, when Snoop Dogg presents long hair or curly hair as beautiful,

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[520] Ibid, 27.

[521] For more on the politics of hair in Brazil, see Kia Lilly Caldwell, "'Look at Her Hair': The Body Politics of Black Womanhood in Brazil," *Transforming Anthropology* 11.2 (2004):18-29.

he is also stating a preference for less Africanized features and working within a racialized and gendered hierarchal system of beauty. When Snoop Dogg references "like you're Cuban," he is also making transnational references to an aesthetic of beauty that is not associated with the blackness of the United States, but an exotic yet familiar Latinidad. Cuba, like Brazil, also holds the *mulata* figure as a central figure of national identity and sensuality.[522] Therefore, Cuba and Brazil become exchangeable symbols of *mulata* beauty within a narrative of hemispheric and diasporic racial mixing. However, the reference to "like you're Cuban" rather than you are Cuban also suggests that U.S. women also have some of these same aesthetic attributes, and thus are also part of these hemispheric histories of racial mixing. Nonetheless, the privileging of hair associated with racial mixture is evident in Snoop Dogg's references. While Snoop Dogg and Pharrell are viewing women in the video through an exoticist heterosexist frame, they still imagine Brazilian women in relational terms to the United States. The song's lyrics referencing the United States and Cuba alongside the visual images of Brazil point to a conflation of national differences, yet also perhaps an understanding of black women as connected through diaspora. Thus, Snoop Dogg and Pharrell rely on notions of a shared blackness with Brazilians while simultaneously casting Brazilian women of African descent as sensual exotic others.

While hair is associated with beauty, body parts such as the buttocks are often associated with sexuality. Hence, Snoop Dogg and Pharrell's emphasis on stereotypical exaggerations of black female buttocks are deemed desirable because they are also highly

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[522] See Vera Kutzinski, *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1993).

sexualized. When Snoop Dogg references "big fat booty" along side "long hair" he suggests, like will.i.am, that a certain combination of hair and body parts are desirable. Only certain stereotypical black physical attributes are desirable and even so, are desirable because they are considered to be sexually pleasurable rather than beautiful. While less Africanized hair is beautiful, large buttocks associated with the black female body are sexually desirable. In other scenes, the camera focuses on the buttocks of women of African descent and in a segment in which samba is performed at a party, the camera zooms in on the hips and buttocks of the women dancing. Afro-Brazilian men only enter the video as samba drummers, performing as part of the *bateria* for the samba dancers and for Snoop Dogg and Pharrell to dance to at the party. Thus, Afro-Brazilian men are present only as backdrops and facilitate a sense of Brazilian authenticity through samba.

In "Beautiful," a young black boy hears a phone ring and runs to find Snoop the phone. Snoop Dogg is seen seated with a Brazilian *morena* braiding his hair and answers the phone with "E, Aí". This blackness is associated with the natural ability to project a rawness or realness derived from urban black culture. Black male authenticity is constructed as relational to street credibility and virility. This reliance on African-American masculinity reinforces ideas of hypersexuality. However, the video also presents an alternate racial narrative to the United States such that African-American male sexuality is not feared or transgressive, but rather is presented as powerful and authoritative in Brazil. In "Beautiful," Snoop Dogg and Pharrell are situated as masculine and virile through the objectification of brown female bodies. These same brown female bodies are imagined as sexual commodities of transnational diasporic

affiliations.

Such an alternative racial narrative to the U.S. with African-American men as the principal actors of power relies on the sexual availability of Brazilian women and the evocation of black heritage. In will.i.am's music video, "I Got It from My Mama," the opening presents images of tourist brochures featuring beautiful bikini-clad Brazilian women of color on the beach. The tourist gaze in the initial part of the video and in the last segment with will.i.am appearing in a postcard reinforces the video's setup of sexual escape. After the opening, will.i.am is alone on the beach surrounded by Brazilian women of varying shades of brown. As much of Brazilian popular culture, from Jorge Amado's novels to *carnaval*, has also celebrated the *mulata* figure, will.i.am extends this fetishization to include himself as part of the patriarchal gaze in the form of a transnational black male figure. Like Snoop Dogg and Pharrell, who also travel to Brazil in search of these brown bodies, will.i.am also imagines Brazil as the land of *mulata*s.

In a musical refrain, he asks, "Where did you get that body from?" A light brown-skinned woman with tight curly hair responds to will.i.am with "I Got It from My Mama." In unison, a number of different women in the video, start singing "I Got It from My Mama." The presence of these racially ambiguous women presents a remaining presence of African descent as their bodies and genealogy are presumed to be from their black mothers. will.i.am incorporates the Brazilian narrative of whitening through racial mixing by presenting light-skinned brown bodies as desirable because of their supposed phenotypical combination of large black buttocks with light-skin and curly or straight hair. While European phenotypical traits, such as straight or wavy hair and lighter skin are presented as beautiful, the black female body is constructed as sensual and sexual.

Brazil itself has often presented itself as beautiful and sexually desirable precisely because of its racial mixing.

When will.i.am asks, "Where did you get that body from?," the camera often zooms in on images of thong-clad black and brown buttocks. However, when the woman answers, "I Got It from My Mama", the majority of women are brown rather than very dark-skinned. The video then implies that the sexually desirable body parts are brought from black female bodies, but are perfected phenotypically in racially mixed brown bodies. As Brazilian woman of color are positioned as sex objects, the oppositional black maternal figure is also evoked. While the black maternal figure is not sexually active or physically present in the video, she is brought in as a reminder of the *mulata* figure's African ancestry and hence her supposed genetic gifts, such as shapely buttocks and a curvaceous figure. However, unlike the United States' hypodescent rule of racial classification, in Brazil, phenotype, rather than ancestry, determines classification. Therefore, the imagined Brazilian black mother is brought in only as the contributor to some of the *mulata* figure's phenotypical traits, but she herself does not determine the *mulata* figure's identity. As will.i.am asks, "Where did you get that body from?," the camera uses the buttocks as racialized biological difference. As in the infamous case of Sara Baartman, known as the Hottentot Venus, the visual emphasis on the buttocks is a substitution for race in the music video.[523] The relational meanings between nation and

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[523] The buttocks of Saartie Baartman, a young Khoikhoi woman, whose body was body exhibited throughout Europe in the early 1800s, has generated much discussion and controversy regarding racial difference. In *Making the Body Beautiful,* Sander Gilman contends, "Beginning with the expansion of European colonial exploration, describing the forms and size of the buttocks became a means of describing and classifying traces. The more prominent, the more primitive ....This is a continuation of the cultural

race vis-à-vis the U.S. and Brazil allow the buttocks to signify difference.

These women, of varying shades of brown, carry their non-whiteness on their buttocks. As a result of this visual idea of blackness, their hypersexuality and availability for will.i.am are also apparent. Since the visual image of the buttocks connects blackness and notions of hypersexuality, the visual focus on the buttocks in the music video connects blackness and sexual pleasures. While U.S. hip-hop music videos such as Sir Mix a Lot's 1992 "Baby Got Back" performance could be read as subversive in the valuation of beauty standards, the emphasis on the buttocks also reduces black women to a single body part and reinforces black female hypersexuality through objectification and links black male "realness."[524] This supposed appreciation of the buttocks, connects ideas of black authenticity and African-American masculinity. As hip-hop culture has often praised the buttocks such as in Sir Mix A Lot's "Baby Got Back," will.i.am's focus on the buttocks also further legitimizes him as racially authentic. Like Snoop Dogg and Pharrell, will.i.am reinforces linkages between virility and racialized masculinity.

The "I Got It From My Mama" video uses the *mulata* figure as a mediation of white hegemonic beauty ideals and the spectacle of black female sexuality. While the light-skinned *mulata* figure in the United States might evoke histories of racialized sexual violence, placing a desire for an aesthetically similar figure outside of United States borders allows for a removal of these reminders of U.S. slavery. Thus, the *mulata* figure

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presupposition that 'primitive' races have a 'primitive' sexuality, which is represented in their bodies by physical signs of their 'true' nature." Sander Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 212.

[524] Janell Hobson, "The 'Batty' Politic: Towards an Aesthetic of the Black Female Body," *Hypatia* 18, no.4 (2003): 96.

in Brazil is presented as an object of sensual bliss whereas the U.S. mulatta figure is a reminder of racial and sexual tensions, desires, and taboos. The histories of U.S. fascination with the beauty of the mulatta figure from antebellum novels to the tragic mulatta cinematic figures of Dorothy Dandridge are also evoked in this search for brown bodies in Brazil. However, the Brazilian *mulata* functions to circumvent U.S. histories of racial and sexual oppression, deriving from legacies of slavery.

However, the erasure of racial and sexual oppression in Brazil and elsewhere stemming from U.S. empire and imperial histories signifies a willful forgetting of these entangled U.S. histories with Latin America or appears as less immediate given the relative lack of prevalent knowledge of these imperial histories in the United States, in contrast to the United States' own history of slavery. The *mulata* figure then is a sign of sensuality relieved of troubled U.S. histories of black slavery and sexual exploitation. The Brazilian *mulata* is thus, removed from African-American cultural memory of the mulatta as proof of racial sexual transgressions, as victim, and/or as conspirator with white male hegemonies. Yet, she remains a specter of hemispheric and diasporic histories. The Brazilian *mulata* is like, but not quite the U.S. mulatta and thereby, devoid of the historical materiality of suffering in the U.S. and instead placed in a tropical landscape of pleasure. The Brazilian *mulata* figure is part of an African-American male cosmopolitan imagination rather than a material reminder of hemispheric patterns of slavery and racialized sexual violence.

As will.i.am is alone on the beach surrounded by these women, these brown female bodies become interchangeable and thus, disposable. *Mulata* sexuality then becomes an eroticized commodity. will.i.am uses the bodies of these women as if they

were wallpaper for his screen set. The commodification of women of color allows for men, like will.i.am to be further recognized as subjects as they are obviously not interchangeable, but rather the stars of these cultural productions. In other words, women of color can be exchanged without consequence, but men are indispensable as subjects. These music videos play into male heterosexual fantasies of multiple sexual partners and male sexual insatiability. Thus, the masculine ideal is a subject, represented by a single black man while the feminine ideal is object, represented by collective images of women that are in service to the individual man. Like the "Beautiful" video, "I Got It From My Mama" reinforces centuries-old myths about *mulata* sensuality and sexual availability while reconfiguring perspectives on hemispheric and diasporic relationship between African-American men and women of color. In these hip-hop videos, Brazil is represented as a relatively uncomplicated paradise without an acknowledgement of the power imbalances between Afro-Brazilians and African-Americans. Sexual pleasure is associated with the leisure of travel. Racialized masculinity and black authenticity are performed through the objectification of the *mulata* figure.

The U.S. Mulatto Hero and Freedom in Brazil

In contrast to ideas of sexual freedom, *Fast Five*'s Dom finds economic and political freedom in Brazil. Dom, played by the racially ambiguous actor Vin Diesel, functions as an outlaw hero who can seamlessly cross national and ethnic boundaries in the United States and Brazil. Dom's ability to cross these borders is facilitated by Vin Diesel's persona. Vin Diesel is supposedly of Italian and African-American or Afro-

Dominican heritage.[525] In films, such as *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), he has played an Italian-American and has played racially ambiguous characters in other films such as *XXX*. Unlike Snoop Dogg, Pharrell, and will.i.am, Vin Diesel can be seen as not just African-American, but as African-American, multiracial, Italian, and Latino all depending on the marketing and context. As Rob Cohen, director of *The Fast and the Furious* (2001) and *XXX* (2002) says, "People can relate to his multiethnicity. Vin represents that big chunk of America that doesn't look at blond-haired, blue-eyed actors and think that could be them."[526] While *Ebony* magazine and *BET* have featured Vin Diesel and he has served as a presenter at the 2002 NAACP Image Awards, he does not outright claim his blackness.[527] However, unlike Jennifer Beals and Mariah Carey, who were earlier vehemently accused of passing, Vin Diesel has not had the same criticism. Rather, as an *Entertainment Weekly* article states, "Diesel isn't being coy, he's being clever…By stripping away all identifying marks, presenting himself as a blank slate-particularly when it comes to his racial background-he's found a way to market himself to the broadest possible audience."[528] Like the personas of Carmen Miranda, Snoop

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[525] Mary Beltrán, "Fast and Bilingual: *Fast & Furious* and the Latinization of 'Racelessness,'" *Cinema Journal 53,* no. 1 (forthcoming).
[526] "Men of Action," *People,* December 12, 2002, 156.
[527] *Ebony* Magazine profiled Vin Diesel as "Is he Black or not? Vin Diesel won't say. And he's playing the race card, all the way to the bank." The same article cites Vin Diesel's description of himself as multicultural "for all of the invisible kids…who don't fit into one ethnic category." *Ebony*, "The 50 Most Intriguing Blacks," November 2002, 63. Notably the same magazine features Halle Berry on the cover and describes her as a black woman.
Jet Magazine featured Vin Diesel along with multiracial actor Dwayne Johnson (The Rock) and Wesley Snipes on the cover of their magazine and with the lead title, "Buffed, Bold and Bad: Hollywood's Black Action Heroes." *Jet*, July 29, 2002.
[528] "Benjamin Svetkey, "Vin at All Costs," *Entertainment Weekly*, August 2, 2002, http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,331535,00.html

Dogg, and Pharrell in earlier cultural productions set in Brazil, Vin Diesel's placement in this cultural text influences audience interpretation and readings of the film. Just as Carmen Miranda came to stand in for all of South America, Vin Diesel stands in for an American everyman.

Like the importance of celebrity for reading the cultural texts of Camila Pitanga, Halle Berry, and Jennifer Beals, Vin Diesel's star text is crucial to understanding his role as Dom and the connections to national identity and race. Vin Diesel's racially ambiguous star image allows for subversive potentialities in *Fast Five*. In contrast to the emphasis on hypersexuality or femininity for racially ambiguous female characters, Dom's exhibits extreme masculinity as evidenced by his large muscles, strength, authority, and women's attraction to him. These contrasting images of multiracial blackness for female and male characters warrants further study, but nonetheless both male and female characters speak to racial anxieties and desires for the nation. However, unlike the *mulata* characters in the U.S. and in Brazil, who must remain stationary in relation to correlations of national identity, status and race, Vin Diesel's characters in the *Fast and the Furious* film series have been allowed to be a hero and transgress the boundaries of race and nation. The slippages and tensions between race and nation are apparent as Dom embodies national and racial hybridity. Through visual representation, the narrative, and the spatial logics of the film, Dom is constructed as a multiracial body that crosses racial and geographical spaces. Furthermore, Dom's dislodgement from the U.S., its legal structures, and citizenship, places him in the role of an outlaw hero.

The "racelessness" of the 2001 *The Fast and the Furious* continues in later films of the series. As Mary Beltrán argues, the *Fast and the Furious* franchise presents an

urban multicultural, and, seemingly, post-racial world in which cultural border crossings are paramount to survival and are conducted by the film's heroes. Beltrán's coinage of "multiculti" refers in part to the casting of mixed-race lead actors with light tan skin hues that suggests a potentially raceless aesthetic, but largely recenters whiteness.[529] While the relative racelessness of Dom offers ambiguous readings, I ask what it means to see Dom not coded as raceless, as shorthand for white, but rather as multiracial black. As Mary Beltrán argues, much of Dom's racial fluidity is highlighted by the gradual Latinization of his character.[530] While Dom and his sister Mia (played by Jordana Brewster of Euro-Brazilian and European American heritage) are supposedly Italian based on their last name, Toretto, the siblings grew up along Latinos in Los Angeles.[531] In other films, the audience learns that Dom has a long-term girlfriend Letty (played by Michelle Rodriguez of Puerto Rican and Dominican heritage), speaks Spanish, and has traveled and lived in Latin America.[532] In other interviews concerning his prequel film *Los Bandoleros* about Dom's life in the Dominican Republic, Vin Diesel said, "Growing up in Manhattan many of the brothers which I grew up with were Dominican. There is something very multicultural of the Dominican Republic and so I identify with…75% of the Dominican population is mulatto, which means, like me, are of European and African

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[529] Mary Beltrán, "The New Hollywood Racelessness: Only the Fast, Furious, (and Multiracial) Will Survive." *Cinema Journal* 44, no. 2 (2005): 50-67.
[530] Beltrán, "Fast and Bilingual." Beltrán notes that the character Dominic, speaks fluent Spanish in the prequel to *Fast & Furious, Los Bandoleros.*
[531] Ibid.
[532] Ibid.

descent."[533] With Vin Diesel's star persona, Dom, then simultaneously represents African-American, Latino, and Latin American border crossings within a hemispheric context.

In the opening of *Fast Five*, Dom is on his way to a maximum-security prison when his sister, Mia and her boyfriend, Brian hijack the prisoner transport van. On the run, they escape southwards to Rio de Janeiro. In Rio de Janeiro, they contact Vince, a white American friend living in Brazil. Uncovering corruption, money laundering, and a massive drug trade, Dom proposes organizing a group of friends to steal a large sum of money from Hernan (played by Portuguese actor Joaquim de Almeida), a dangerous and morally corrupt Brazilian druglord with key political connections. If Dom can accomplish this feat, known as his "last job," Dom will also have enough economic resources to live anywhere he chooses. However, these hopes of economic freedom also coincide with his political freedom after a team of FBI agents, led by Agent Hobbs (played by multiracial actor, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson), travel to Brazil to capture Dom. Therefore, for Dom, political and economic freedoms go hand in hand in Brazil.

Dom's freedom relies on his ability to assemble a diverse group, skilled in racing, forgery, etc. The racial diversity of this group, including African-American stars such as Ludacris and Tyrese, Asian-American actors, Latino actors, and white actors, create the idea of a multiracial team that must work in harmony together to achieve success. Dom often calls this team his "family" and thereby, reinforces the idea of a future multiracial nation. However, the organizing leader is Dom, who emerges as the racially ambiguous

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[533] "Vin Diesel 'adores' Dominicans, presents 'Los Bandoleros,'" *Dominican Today*, July 30, 2009. http://www.dominicantoday.com/dr/this-and-that/2009/7/30/32762/Vin-Diesel-adores-Dominicans-presents-Los-Bandoleros

hero without whom the multiracial team would not have been created.[534] Gregory Carter names this aesthetic and practice of casting mixed-race ambiguous actors as mixploitation.[535] *Fast Five* presents an idealized vision of a multiracial United States in which racial differences are nullified. As this team is assembled in Brazil, it reinforces dual images of Brazil as an already racially harmonious site. Hence, Brazil functions as a racial paradise of harmony in which racial structures of inequality are invisible. Just as Gilberto Freyre thought of the Brazilian population as a new hybrid race with vigor for the tropics, the team assembled in Brazil represents a United States that can find success through its racial diversity, and through Dom, its racial mixture. Thus, as Mary Beltran observed, "only the fast, furious, and multiethnic will survive"[536] not just in a U.S. context, but also under increasingly globalized conditions. Dom's ability to assimilate in Brazil also relies on notions of a multiracial blackness that transcend racial and national borders. Dom's supposed natural ability to fit into his new home in the *favela*, navigate scenes from the Brazilian police to underground car gangs, is derived from notions of a masculine multiracial blackness. Dom, like Snoop Dogg, already appears not only comfortable in the *favela*, but already capable of ruling in the *favela*. Like Snoop Dogg and Pharrell's video, "Beautiful," the idea of blackness appears to allow a seamless fluid identity between the U.S. and Brazil such that Dom is already naturalized into the

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[534] For an in-depth analysis of the first *The Fast and the Furious* series film and the representation of multiracial and multicultural aesthetics, see Mary Beltrán, "The New Hollywood Racelessness: Only the Fast, Furious, (and Multiracial) Will Survive" *Cinema Journal* 44, no. 2 (2005): 50-67.
[535] Gregory T. Carter, "From Blaxploitation to Mixploitation: Mixed-race, Male Leads and Changing Black Identities," in *Mixed Race Hollywood*, ed. Mary Beltrán and Camilla Fojas, (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 203–220.
[536] Beltrán, "The New Hollywood Racelessness," 59.

Brazilian landscape.

Furthermore, Dom's hypermasculinity is displayed throughout the film. His unmatched racing skills, physical strength, ability to escape, proficiency in firearms, leadership roles and position as a patriarch within his home and within his assembled "family" of street-racers, and a thumping hip-hop music soundtrack all position Dom as hypermasculine. Like the hyperfeminine and hypersexual mulatta and *mulata* figures, Dom's masculinity is excessive. However, unlike the mulatta, the hypermasculine mulatto figure is rewarded. Dom's scene with Agent Hobbs evokes a homoerotic tension between two multiracial characters rooted in divergent narratives of the mulatto man-representative of the multiracial mulatto figure who is an outlaw and the multiracial figure who can be fully incorporated into civil society, and in fact here represents civil society.[537] Dom, as representing the mulatto defiant rebel of antislavery antebellum literature and slave narratives, is in tension with Hobbs, as representing multiracial assimilation, an end of blackness, and an end of racism. Dom and Hobbs, as represented by Vin Diesel and the Rock provide counterpoints of multiraciality in the Obama era. While the two seem diametrically opposed, Dom and Hobbs both represent a desire to transcend racial structures—one with resistance to the state and the other as a leader and

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[537] As Werner Sollors notes, the mulatto is often a double figure and gendered in representation. "On the one hand is the mulatto as forward looking prophet of the future (often a male rebel, not yet recognized for his promise)…and on the other hand is the Mulatto, as defined by descent, often a woman…and is thus, sad, melancholy, resigned, self-sacrificing, or suicidal." Werner Sollors, *Neither Black nor White yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 240. Examples of the mulatto rebel include Archy Moore in Richard Hildreth's *The Slave* (1836) and *The White Slave* (1852), George Harris in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), and in terms of slave narratives, *The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass* (1845) also epitomizes this ideal of the mulatto rebel.

representative of the state. Dom's mulatto figure, like other literary mulatto heroes of nineteenth century abolitionist literature, resists his place as a prisoner.[538] Unlike the tragic mulatta figure, who is often depicted as a martyr, Dom, carves his own path even if it is in opposition to legal and civil authorities.

The conflicting images of Brazil as a racialized sexual paradise mixed with sensationalized views of violence are apparent in a Brazilian party scene. Dom negotiates with an underground car racer in a party that features scantily clad Brazilian women of color dancing and grinding against cars. This scene showcases the sexual availability of Brazilian women of color. With guns in the background, sexual titillation is mixed with the allure of danger. When Agent Hobbs attempts to apprehend Dom in this setting, Dom asserts, "And your mistake: thinking you're in America. You're a long way from home. This is Brazil!" as the multiracial Brazilian crowd wields their guns. Dom's ability to create an alliance that will protect him demonstrates not only his ability to gather respect, but also that he already naturally fits into this multiracial vision of Brazil. Despite Dom's representation as a U.S. outlaw hero, this escape from the U.S. also possibly alludes to separatist claims like the controversial ending of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* when the mulatto, George Harris writes a letter stating, "I want a country, a nation,

[538] Barbara Christian describes how nineteenth century abolitionist literature mulatto heroes, such as George Harris in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, resisted white dominance often with violent conflict. These mulatto heroes fighting for freedom served as a counterclaim to assumptions that African-Americans were merely passive. Barbara Christian, *Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition, 1892–1976* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 21-22. Nancy Bently notes that while male mulatto figures in antebellum fiction did not often play a martyr role and did not commit suicide like the tragic mulatta figure, the tragic nature of the male mulatto stems from their rebellious and "natural desire for vengeance." Nancy Bentley, "White Slaves: The Mulatto Hero in Antebellum Fiction," *American Literature* 65, no. 2 (1993): 507, 508

of my own."[539] This scene offers two readings that Brazil is like the United States or that the United States is already like Brazil, as represented by Dom's crew. The scene emphasizes the characters' tan off-white hues, the car gathering party, the loud thumping music, and lots of scantily clad women that have already been shown in other *Fast and the Furious* films. However, this time these same elements are placed in Brazil with Portuguese slang and Brazilian funk music. The ensemble of Brazilians with their lightly tan skin tones, are situated as innate players in *Fast Five*'s multicultural aesthetic. The image of a multiracial Brazil hints at where the United States is heading in the future.

The lens of Brazil provides a negotiation of visions of a multiracial United States in which racial ambiguity and whiteness are in tension with each other. As Dom manages to escape from the FBI and gains his hefty monetary prize, he achieves simultaneous political and economic freedom in Brazil. While Dom's hypermasculinist cosmopolitan ambitions are not placed in tension with the daily realities of Brazilians, his success might also be read as part of a subversive pleasure in undermining class and racial barriers. The roles of affect and desire present a potential dismantling of hegemonic black-white binaries in the United States. While Dom can no longer be a citizen of the United States due to his escaped felon status, he is able to craft his own destiny and identity in opposition to the state, and in opposition to Hernan, leader of a morally corrupt drug cartel. Agent Hobbs also temporarily sides with Dom after Hernan's gang attacks his convoy and his men are killed. Dom's team fights against Hernan's gang and Dom carries Agent Hobbs to safety. Hobbs helps Dom steal Hernan's

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[539] Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Minister's Wooing and Old Town Folks*, ed Kathyrn Kish Sklar (New York: Library of America, 1982), 610.

money. At the end of the heist, he tells Dom that he must still arrest him, but will give Dom a twenty-four hour headstart. Unbeknownst to Hobbs, Dom's team had replaced the real bank vault full of cash with an empty bank vault. Therefore, the viewer is able to find pleasure in seeing Dom survive with his trickery and wit and defy those who are in control. Dom is able to have Hobbs become an ally in his ploy. Thereby, Dom overturns the oppression of the state into a victory for his team.

Dom's prize also includes Elena, a white Brazilian police officer, who had previously helped the FBI. When Dom later meets up with his sister and her boyfriend on the beach, Elena is with him. Therefore, finding a woman also becomes part of the package of his independence. Like the Spanish actress Penelope Cruz playing Isabela, a Brazilian woman in *Woman on Top* (2000), Elsa Pataky, a Spanish actress, plays Brazilian agent, Elena Neves.[540] Elena, through Elsa Pataky, then somatically fits into

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[540] The role of Spain in discussions of whiteness is highly contextual on time period and location. While Spanish is subsumed under Hispanic and thus, implicitly othered from normative whiteness in the United States, white privilege is not necessarily dislodged, especially in Latin America. Contemporary usage of the idea of the "Spanish" in the United States and Latin America unevenly equates Spanish with whiteness. Quijano argues that Spain exercised a "coloniality of power" in its ethnic cleansing and certificates of purity of blood. Spain's colonization of Latin America also coincided with the explusion of Muslims and Jews as undesirable foreigners. Therefore, it can also be argued that this ethnic cleansing relied on the idea of purity. Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Nepantla* 1, no.3 (2000): 533-580. However, as various scholars have observed, much of Spain, such as Al Andalus were areas in which wherein Spanish, Moorish, and Jewish populations intermingle to create a syncretic culture and population. Neither Spain nor Latin America are bases of whiteness for the United States, but Spain occupies a place of privileged whiteness in Latin America. *Raza* (race), religion, region, occupation, gender, and transnational racial formations between Spain and Latin American inform racialization See Maria Rose Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*, (Boston: Little Brown, 2009). For more on Afro-Iberian studies and race and ethnicity in Spain see, Isidoro Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los negros de Sevilla: Etnicidad, poder y sociedad en 600 años de historia*

the idea of the new "multiculti" aesthetic as to be nearly white but with a tan hue that appears different.[541] In contrast, Afro-Brazilian women serve merely as the backdrop for the film, often in bikini-clad outfits on top of cars. Elena, like Isabela in *Woman on Top*, is potentially civilizable. When Agent Hobbs specifically asks for Elena to be part of his team, he claims, "She is the one person in this country who cannot be bought." Brazil as corruptible is implicit in this statement, but the potential hope for honestly, justice, law and order, lies with a white woman, who is ethnically different enough to still be read as exotic. Elena, light-skinned and light-haired, symbolically represents a point of purity in the corrupt Brazilian public sphere. The representation of Elena then is as a model of the beautiful Brazilian woman, who is white and not mixed. She appears as superior to her male Brazilian police officers because of this emphasis on her integrity. Yet, she is still an exotic figure on screen. With Dom and Elena against a backdrop of neither blackness nor whiteness as opposite ends of a spectrum, the idea of an interracial relationship is obscured. Elena evokes a position of privilege and the idea of an imaginary purity and stands in distinction from the majority of the scantily clad women in Brazil. While Vince, Dom's American friend in Rio, is in a relationship with Rosa, an Afro-Brazilian

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(Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla and Consejería de Cultura de la Junta de Andalucía, 1997). For more on racial formations in Spain, see George Mariscal, "The Role of Spain in Contemporary Racial Theory." *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 2 (1998): 7-22. From the eighteenth century onwards, Spain, and the concept of whiteness, has been in the position of being dominated by Anglo-Protestant and Calvinist or Latin countries while maintaining symbolic power, and hence whiteness, in Latin America. Therefore, despite national independence in Latin America, the colonial legacies of Spain and connotations with whiteness are still present. Yet, this concept of whiteness is highly dependent on national frames. For example, U.S. justifications for the Spanish-American War demarcated boundaries of whiteness. See Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[541] See Beltrán, "The New Hollywood Racelessness."

woman and has a son, Nico (named after Dominic), the idea of a white man with a black woman is not an interruption to white womanhood. The inclusion and use of a lightly tan cast is palatable to white viewers while also appealing to audiences of color in the United States and outside of the United States.

While still celebrating masculinity and primarily focusing on the culture of male street racers, *Fast Five* does include various female characters, who are key to the operation. Gisele Yashar was formerly a liaison for a Mexican street-racing drug cartel and is one of the best drivers on the team. Mia, Dom's sister, was key to Dom's escape through her driving skills, and plays an important role in the operating the backroom technology for the team's Brazil. Both Gisele and Mia pose a potential threat to racialized and gendered orders. Mia, played by Jordana Brewster of Euro-Brazilian and European-American heritage, and Gisele, played by Gal Gadot of Israeli heritage, still appear as exotic, but are phenotypically white. Furthermore, Mia, once pregnant, does not continue driving, but facilitates intelligence from the operation home base, and also becomes in need of protection in various instances, such as when she was saved from a kidnapping. Gisele, while possessing impressive driving skills, also knowingly uses her body and sexual allure to attract the Brazilian druglord, and have him place his hand on her buttocks in order to secure his handprint for later use in unlocking an important vault. Elena, Mia, and Gisele, all act as links between underground worlds, and all are able to use their femininity and sexuality to give or extract key information. The female characters then are somewhat tamed into the damsel in distress or a femme fatale position.

At the end of the film, Brian and Mia are together with Dom and Elena on an

unknown beach and Gisele and Han (played by Korean-American actor, Sung Kang) are traveling in Europe together. Meanwhile the other darker-skinned characters in the film, such as Tego (Dominican reggaeton artist Tego Calderón) and Rico (played by Dominican reggaeton artist Don Omar) are seen continuing to playfully squabble, and Roman (played by African-American actor/model Tyrese) and Tej (played by African-American actor/rapper Ludacris) continue to compete and bicker but are only seen with dark-skinned black women. *Fast Five* then appears to celebrate the racially ambiguous aesthetic along with interracial alliances, but primarily centers a racial mixing and *mestiçagem* that privileges whiteness. The actresses in the film also adhere to an aesthetic of "brown, but not too brown"[542] and the characters must be heterosexual. However, unlike the *morena* figure in Brazil, upward mobility does not rely on whiteness and unlike the *mulata* figure, these women are not presented as sexually deviant.

With ongoing anxieties about the United States' racial future, Brazil acts as a displacement for the United States in the film. The celebration of racial subversion, racial hybridity, racial flexibility, and whitening are all presented in *Fast Five*. Dom, while racially ambiguous, can be presented with a phenotypically white woman onscreen precisely because this relationship does not occur in the United States. Dom's ambiguity allows for reassurance and subversion. Again, his last name Toretto suggests that Dom is of Italian descent and also assures viewers that an inter-racial relationship is not actually happening, but is really a relationship among ethnic whites. To viewers who see Dom as

[542] Angharad N. Valdivia, "Geographies of Latinidad: Deployments of Racial Hybridity in the Mainstream" in *Race, Identity, and Representation in Education*, ed. Warren Critclow, Greg Dimitriadis, Nadine Dolby, and Cameron McCarthy (New York: Routledge, 2005), 313.

mixed-race black, he is attaining the forbidden white woman unavailable to most African-American characters in Hollywood. Furthermore, Elena's national difference, allows some audiences to see Elena as nonwhite. Elena then functions as a mediation point of transfer just as Dom functions as a racially ambiguous figure. While Elena is not represented as a *mulata*, her Brazilian citizenship and her European features, allow for audiences to see her as ambiguous and exotic, while nominally white. However, unlike the ethnic whiteness of Carmen Miranda, Elena ends up with the male lead.

Dom and Elena together potentially serve to represent postracial visions in which racial ambiguity melds into whiteness. Elena then is a prop for the post-racial male hero. Dom's path from racially ambiguous outlaw to independent cosmopolitan only comes through multiracial Brazil and the attainment of a phenotypically white Elena. The ending with Dom and Elena on a tropical beach also further evokes the idea of Brazil as a tropical racial paradise in the U.S. imagination. As the *Fast and the Furious* films are Vin Diesel's star vehicle, shifting to Brazil in *Fast Five* maintains Dom's hypermasculine power and authority, but at a safe distance. With Elena, standing in as an exotic yet phenotypically close to white figure, and Vin Diesel, as a heroic mulatto everyman who can cross national and racial boundaries, *Fast Five* stages a desire for alternate thinking around race and nation while simultaneously expressing ongoing anxieties of a postracial United States.

With demographic shifts, especially from growing multiracial and Latino (many of whom are multiracial) populations and the belief that the United States has become a post-racial nation, *Fast Five* taps into competing narratives of racial diversity, racelessness as progress, and multiracial or multicultural utopias. These postracial logics

are particularly emblematized through the construction of Brazil as a racial paradise and its reputation as a site of racial mixing and harmony. Brazil's reputation also facilitates the use of the racially ambiguous actors and characters in *Fast Five*. With anxieties over the United States' racial future, *Fast Five* allows audiences to see a reflection of the United States in Brazil or to deflect this racial mixing and ambiguity as contained abroad. At the same time, the potential for utopia associated with multiracial bodies such as Dom, the multiracial spaces of Brazil, and the physical and financial freedom garnered from Dom's escape, depend on a fantasy of new beginnings that are liberated from the racial histories of the United States.

These U.S. representations of Brazil then function as the advancement of African-American manhood through the bodies of Brazilian women. U.S. representations of Brazil have often projected its own racial anxieties onto Brazil. However, as the United States is not just one unified bloc, these racial anxieties depend on the group and on particular racial desires. The idea of Brazil is a way for U.S. cultural productions to project an idea of otherness that also incorporates sameness. Using cultural productions as a means to understand representations of Brazil, I ask how is the idea of Brazil as a metaphor used and what currency does Brazil hold for the United States in this moment. Furthermore, Brazil also participates in this image-making so that it is not necessarily passive, but rather a participant in this production of self across borders. The relationship between cultural productions, national identity, and empire are evident in the use of Brazilian women.

A Nod Towards Brazil's Use of the United States

Barack Obama's 2008 election as President of the United States had transnational

resonations and particular significance for Brazil. The Brazilian media used the symbol of Obama in various ways for political ends. By using Obama to compare race relations and racial equality in Brazil and the United States, the media used comparison as part of the process of transnational race-making. In particular, the use of Obama to formulate arguments around Brazilian affirmative action policy revealed political agendas regarding Brazilian racial politics and ideologies. The idea of the United States was not used as a transposed model of racial ideologies in the Brazilian press, but rather demonstrated the circularity of transnational race-making.

The Afro-Brazilian magazine, *Raça*, clearly identified Obama as a black transnational figure. In the 2007 article, "O que esse candidato tem a ver com os negros" (What this candidate has to do with blacks), Helio Santos wrote,

"Obama, ao falar do Brasil em seu primeiro pronunciamento sobre a América Latina, enfatizou nossas desigualdades sociais. Caso assuma o governo, saberá em detalhes que por essas plagas as desigualdades sociais são, em verdade, raciais. Isso vale não só para o Brasil, mas também para a Colômbia, o Equador, Venezuela e Cuba. E é nesse sentido que Barack Obama será fundamental para os negros em todo o mundo. Sua figura deverá propulsar não só a auto-estima negra das pessoas, como também impactará positivamente na redução do racismo em todo mundo.)"[543] [Obama, speaking of Brazil in his first statement on Latin America, emphasized our social inequalities that are in truth, racial inequalities. This is valid not only for Brazil, but also for Columbia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Cuba. It is in this sense that Barack Obama will be fundamental

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[543] Helio Santos, "Barack Obama, O que esse candidato tem que ver com os negros," *Raça* 123 (2008), http://racabrasil.uol.com.br/edicoes/123/artigo96072-4.asp

for blacks all over the world. His figure should promote not only black pride in people, but also positively impact in the reduction of racism all over the world.]

Rather than transcending race, Obama's election in Brazil evoked race in the Afro-Brazilian magazine, *Raça*. Preceding Santos's statement on the relationship of Obama to Latin America, he explicitly notes that it would be impossible to have the figure of Obama without the prior forty years of affirmative action. He then also observes that the United States is far from a paradise for blacks. By making these comparisons with affirmative action and the presence of racism in both the United States and Brazil, Santos refutes ideas of exceptionalism or the notion that either country has better race relations. Combining the U.S. presidential election with issues of affirmative action, African-American politics, Afro-Brazilian activism, and the existence of racism in both countries, Santos makes a case for a transnational struggle against racial inequalities.

Later, Santos writes, "Obama, negro-mestiço, apelidado no Brasil de pardo, é casado com uma mulher negra e freqüenta uma igreja cristã afro-centrista. Esses dois atributos definem o DNA da negritude dele de forma irretorquível. Essa idéia da mulatice que povoa a cabeça dos intrépidos nacionais e que levou Caetano Veloso a ver Obama como um brasileiro, referindo-se à sua mestiçagem, é uma espécie de álibe para não se fazer nada. Sim, há forte miscigenação no Brasil – isto é um fato. Todavia, os pardos, que seriam os miscigenados, estão, praticamente, na mesma posição que os pretos em termos de renda, escolaridade e desenvolvimento." [Obama, negro-mestiço, named in Brazil as pardo, is married to a black women and attends an Afrocentric Christian church. These two attributes define the DNA of his blackness as irrefutable. This idea of *mulatice* (being mulato) that fills the head of our intrepid national leaders and that brought Caetano

Veloso to see Obama as Brazilian, referring to his mestiçagem, is a type of alibi that justifies doing nothing. Yes, there is much miscegenation in Brazil-this is a fact. Still, pardos, that are mixed, are practically, in the same position as pretos, in terms of income, education, and development] By using the comparison of Obama as pardo and representative of Brazilian *mestiçagem*, Santos dismantles national tropes of *mestiçagem* and *mulatice* with realities of discrimination and racism. Santos acknowledges racial mixing, but instead of just applauding its presence, Santos cites how the mere existence of racial mixing becomes an excuse to ignore racism. Like the United States, the figure of Obama in certain Brazilian contexts spoke more about the desire for colorblindness than colorblindness itself. Santos places Obama as part of a transnational affinity with blackness. Santos's article discusses Obama's mixed-race and his upbringing in Hawaii and Kansas. Therefore, Santos does not ignore Obama's multiraciality, but he specifically places this multiraciality within black political and cultural affiliations. He then uses this same multiraciality and understanding of the predicament of both *pardos* and *pretos* to refer to racial inequalities. Following Obama's winning presidential election, *Raça* features the Obama family on the magazine cover with the slogan, "Nós podemos" (Yes, we can). This notion of a "we" points to the idea of a collective transnational blackness with Obama's win as a victory for blacks, not just in the United States, but also in Brazil. The magazine cover also functions as inspiration for Afro-Brazilians to work towards similar successes.

The newspaper, *O Globo* (part of Globo's media conglomerate), also explicitly used Obama's racial heritage to form arguments concerning Brazilian race-relations and policies. Two articles published in *O Globo* newspaper two days apart in November

2008 illustrate contrasting uses of Obama. In the November 12, 2008 article, "*O negro de lá e os de cá*" ("The black from there and those from here"),[544] Zuenir Ventura, writes, "Nos EUA, o ilustre filho de um cruzamento étnico que mistura sangue africano e americano ora é visto como mestiço ou mulato, exemplo de uma miscigenação que lembra a brasileira, ora como 'o primeiro negro' presidente." (In the United States, the illustrious son of an ethnic cross that mixes African and American blood is sometimes seen as mestiço or mulato, example of a miscegenation that resembles Brazilian miscegenation, or sometimes as 'the first black' president). This reference to the Brazilian prevalence of miscegenation functions in two ways. For one, it takes Obama as an exception to racial demographics in the United States, and thereby contributes to the historical amnesia of histories of racial mixing in the United States. Furthermore, American blood is coded as white. The reference to Brazilian miscegenation also creates an affinity of Obama as similar to many Brazilians. This linkage serves to think of Obama as a way to imagine Brazilian possibilities around race, progress, and national identity.

Ventura begins his article by commenting that the racial question regarding Obama's victory had the greatest impact in Brazil, among "*militantes de causa negra*"(militants of the black cause). Ventura's adept notice of Obama's impact on Brazil's own racial question only further reveals his own biases with the use of the term "*militantes de causa negra*" in order to suggest that many black activists are radical and extremist and therefore, are countering the integration and improvement of Brazilian society. Ventura mentions that the Obama phenomenon has been used by both supporters

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[544] Zuenir Ventura, "O negro de lá e os de cá," *O Globo,* November 12, 2008, Opinião, 6.

and adversaries of racial quotas in Brazil and has thereby, reinforced differing arguments. He postulates that like any ideological polemic, Obama has been used to reaffirm rather than change acquired convictions about race. The use of Obama in Ventura's article demonstrates that as in the United States, the figure of Obama has been used in Brazil for different arguments favoring colorblind or color-conscious policies, attitudes, and ideologies. This difference of attitudes also reflects different desires ranging from a postracial future to a recognizance and attention to racial issues in both Brazil and the United States. Like the Brazilian press, U.S. conservatives and liberals have also used the symbol of Obama to support arguments for a reduction of policies, such as affirmative action, and have used his image with the hope of a postracial future in which the United States ceases to have racial problems.

Like Ventura, Arthur Dapieve a professor at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica and a fiction writer, aligns Obama racially with Brazilians and notes Obama's mixed-race heritage. In an *O Globo* article dated November 14, 2008 following the election of President Obama, Arthur Dapieve began his weekly column for *O Globo* with the leading line, "*Obama lá, Obama cá, Obama em tudo mundo*" ("Obama over there, Obama here, Obama all over the world").[545]. However, Dapieve uses Obama's race to demonstrate not just a likeness with Brazilians, but as a symbol of potential racial justice in Brazil. He writes, "Certo, Obama é percebido como negro, mas por ser filho de negro (muçulmano do Quênia) e de branca (agnóstica do Kansas), enquadra-se no que chamamos de mulato. Os pais de sua mulher, Michelle née Robinson, são ambos negros. Apesar disso, ouvi

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[545] Arthur Dapieve. "Coisas que nunca existiriam," *O Globo*, November 14, 2008, Segundo caderno, 6.

gente, gente que não tenho nenhuma razão para considerar racista, chamá-la de "bela mulata". Peço atenção a essa palavra simpática. Tendemos a usar "mulata" já como sinônimo de "bela negra". Como se se precisasse atribuir alguma branquitude a um ser humano para considerá-lo belo." [Obama is perceived as black, but as the son of a black (Muslim from Kenya) and a white (agnostic from Kansas), he fits into what we call mulato. The parents of his wife, Michelle, the Robinsons, are both black. Despite this, I have heard people, whom I have no reason to consider racist, call her 'beautiful mulata." Pay attention to this nice word. We tend to use 'mulata' as a synonym with 'beautiful black.' As if we need to attribute some whiteness to a human being that can be considered beautiful].

After pointing out that Obama is considered *negro* or black in the United States and *mulato* in Brazil, Dapieve notes that Obama is an indirect beneficiary of affirmative action. (Obama foi beneficiário indireto das ações afirmativas que, a partir dos anos 60, buscaram encurtar a distância entre a maioria branca e a minoria negra numa sociedade até ali explicitamente racista. O presidente eleito é a prova de que tais ações deram certo.) (Obama was the indirect beneficiary of affirmative action…the president elect is proof that affirmative action was successful) The clarification of Obama's racial status in the United States and Brazil helps to establish linkage between different perceptions of racial classification in the United States and Brazil. Dapieve places Obama's mixed-race not as an anomaly because he is mixed, but rather as part of a population that is quite common in Brazil. Such discussion suggests a variety of black subjectivities that does not hinder on imaginings of larger ideas of black unity. At the same time, Dapieve notes that no matter the actual racial background, in the United States Obama is perceived to be a

negro just like Michelle Obama. However Dapieve also points out that Michelle Obama is often referred to as a "beautiful *mulata*" in Brazil not as a result of her actual background but due to unconscious racist tendencies that suggests that in order to be beautiful or valued, one must have white ancestry. Dapieve notes that these psychological tendencies to associate beauty with whiteness hark back to the colonial era. Dapieve cites this Brazilian need to disassociate from blackness as an indicator that Brazil was never a racial paradise and to not see these forms of racism is to continue to live in negation of actual racist conditions and mindsets. While Dapieve acknowledges Barack Obama's mixed-race heritage, he also recognizes how Brazilian racial politics have also tended to value a *mulato* identity over blackness. Therefore, Dapieve's use of both Barack Obama and Michelle Obama demonstrates some of the challenges in establishing a form of black politics in Brazil.

By pointing out that Obama is an indirect beneficiary of affirmative action alongside critiques of racial democracy, Dapieve implies that the success of someone like Obama would not be possible in Brazil.[546] He writes, "O fato de o racismo no Brasil ser de modo geral pessoal e informal, ou seja, de não ter sido fixado na odiosa letra fria da lei, diferentemente dos EUA ou da África do Sul de outrora, costuma ser arrolado como testemunho da sua irrelevância na formação nacional. Só que esse racismo elusivo mostra-se mais eficiente na manutenção das desigualdades sociais entre brancos e negros. Americanos e sul-africanos enfrentaram seus demônios." [The fact that racism in Brazil

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[546] While there has never been a black president in Brazil, it is notable that many Afro-Brazilian political candidates used Obama's name to identify themselves in the 2008 election. See Andés Cediel, *Brazil: The Obama Samba* (Washington D.C.: Frontline PBS, October 27,2008).

generally operates in a personal and informal mode, or rather, of not having had the hateful cold letter of the law, differently than the U.S. or South Africa, usually deployed as testimony to its irrelevance in national formation. Only that this elusive racism manifests itself more efficiently in the maintenance of inequalities between whites and blacks. Americans and South Africans faced their demons]. This contrast with the United States and South Africa suggests that Brazil has not confronted racism and the legacies of race-based slavery. Notably, Dapieve points to two countries that have had formal segregation and race-based policies. Differentiating Brazilian forms of racism from the United States and South Africa, Dapeive nonetheless calls for the recognition of racism in Brazil, rather than a willful colorblindess.

Both Ventura's and Dapieve's articles emphasized the "unique" heritage of Obama, reinforced the dominant history of racial segregation, and promoted the idea that the United States has fixed stable concepts of blackness without acknowledging growing recognition and consciousness of multiraciality in the United States. This focus on the fixed notion of blackness in the United States posits the United States as a locale for racial polarization and, therefore, the potential or eventual election of President Obama is deemed as even more remarkable considering U.S. views of race. In contrast, Brazil is represented as more racially mixed and therefore, either more tolerant due to this fluidity of race or more intolerant due to the large presence of Brazilians with African ancestry without opportunities for advancement. The focus on Obama's race is used as a point of contrast for Brazil. By relating Obama to Brazilian racial inequalities and debates over affirmative action, the Brazilian press utilizes the comparisons between the United States and Brazil to discuss Brazilian national narratives. The transnational figure of Obama

then becomes a weapon in a battlefield over the place of race and national identity in Brazil.

Brazil's Economic and Political Emergence

Power shifts with the emergence of the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, China) and the decline of U.S. economic dominance potentially interrupts the global economic and political order. With a GDP of US $2.4 trillion,[547] Brazil is the largest economy in Latin America and the seventh largest in the world.[548] Following the debt crisis of the 1980s, Brazil was urged to adopt neoliberal policies, such as protective tariff reductions, privatization, and foreign direct investment. Under President Cardoso, the inflation was stabilized and various state sectors were privatized in the 1990s. In the 2000s, anti-neoliberal leaders, such as Brazil's President Lula da Silva, Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, and Bolivia's Evo Morales, were elected across Latin America.[549] President Lula da Silva, elected under the PT (Workers' Party) and his successor, President Dilma Rousseff have exerted significant influence over the region. President Lula da Silva and President Dilma Rouseff have largely followed more conservative neoliberal macroeconomic policies from the 1990s while at the same time implementing significant social reforms. Leading calls for a greater voice for developing countries in the IMF[550] and the

[547] International Monetary Fund (IMF), *World Economic Outlook Database*, October 2012.
[548] "Brazil economy shows signs of life, but markets fall," *Reuters* http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/01/brazil-economy-idUSL1N0BT2PE20130301
[549] John D. French, "Understanding the Politics of Latin America's Plural Lefts (Chávez/Lula): Social Democracy, Populism, and Convergence on the Path to a Post-Neoliberal World," *Third World Quarterly* 30, no.2 (2009): 349-370.
[550] Fabiola Moura, "Brazil's Lula Says World Bank, IMF Both Need Reforms," *Bloomberg*, September 23, 2009, http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=awemHfQATQbY.

reallocation of global economic policy discussions from the G-7 to the G-20, thereby reducing the dominance of the U.S. and the European Union,[551] President Lula's government took an increasingly influential role in international political and economic affairs. At times, the Brazilian government also opposed U.S. foreign policy, exemplified by Brazil's opposition to sanctions against Iran.[552] Brazil's economic growth[553] within a Latin American context also consolidates its position of power and dominance. However, Brazilian officials have rejected claims of a desire for Brazilian hegemony in South America. As Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães, Mercosur General Secretary and former Presidency Strategic Affairs minister and Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil claimed (translated in Spanish),

> "Brasil tiene interés muy fuerte en el desarrollo de toda la región pese a las asimetrías entre los distintos países. No es un imperio, no quiere serlo ni quiere repetir los errores de los imperios. Al contrario. Cree en asociarse, en cooperar, en reformar un sistema internacional que se caracteriza, a mi juicio, por la convivencia de potencias centrales y de ex colonias, como nosotros." [Brazil has a very strong interest in the development of the whole region, despite existing asymmetries between the different countries. Brazil is not an empire; it has no wish to become one and does not want to repeat the errors made by empires. In

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[551] Gary Duffy, "Brazil Pushes for Bigger G20 Role," *BBC News*, March 26, 2009), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7963704.stm.

[552] Alexei Barrionuevo & Ginger Thompson, "Brazil's Iran Diplomacy Worries U.S. Officials," *The New York Times*, May 14, 2010, www.nytimes.com/2010/05/15/world/americas/15lula.html.

[553] The discovery of oil off the coast of Brazil only increases the potential of Brazil's growth. "In deep waters," *The Economist*, February 3, 2011, http://www.economist.com/node/18065645

contrary, it believes in association, in cooperation, in the reformation of an international system which is characterized, in my view, by the coexistence of central powers and former colonies, such as us.][554]

Likewise, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez proclaimed, "Brazil is not an empire. It's a brother."[555] Brazil's leverage in South America potentially outweighs U.S. influence in the region. While Brazil has expanded both its economic and political power, Brazil has also made increased social investments. The reduction of poverty has been a key component of these social expenditures. With the *Bolsa Família* program, poor families receive money each month on the condition that their children attend school and receive regular health checkups. The goal of the program is to break the cycle of poverty so that the children will become healthy, educated citizens who are better integrated into Brazilian society. Over eleven million families benefit from the program with ninety-four percent of the funds allocated to forty-percent of Brazilian society, the majority of whom have not previously benefited from social programs.[556] The Brazilian government has also gradually increased the minimum wage and, thereby, has also contributed to the increased income of many Brazilians.[557] From 2001 to 2008, the

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[554]Martín Granovsky, "Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães, número uno del Mercosur. "Brasil no quiere
repetir los errores de los imperios" *Página 12*, Buenos Aires, May 10, 2011.
http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-167891-2011-05-10.html
[555] "Mercosur is South America's greatest engine, Chavez says," *Agencia Venezolana de Noticias,* July 26th 2012, http://www.avn.info.ve/contenido/mercosur-south-america039s-greatest-engine-chavez-says
[556] "Bolsa Família: Changing the Lives of Millions in Brazil," *World Bank*
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/0,,contentMDK:21447054~m
enuPK:64282137~pagePK:41367~piPK:279616~theSitePK:40941,00.html
[557] Lecio Morais and Alfredo Saad- Filho, "Brazil beyond Lula: Forging ahead or Pausing

inequality gap decreased six percent—the largest improvement in Latin America—and millions of Brazilians have benefited from the reduction of poverty.[558] While still a country with vast inequalities, this inequality is decreasing with a 29.2 percent increase in wealth of the 10 percent earning the lowest income.[559]

Brazil's working-class ascendancy is also beginning to be reflected in new types of *telenovela* programming. For example, *Avenida Brasil* (2012) has primarily characters from classe C (the Brazilian middle-class is known as classe C) and mostly depicts a working-class neighborhood rather than an upper-class area. As Everado Rocha, a professor at PUC-Rio, noted, "A classe C está sendo tratada de forma mais carinhosa na televisão justamente em um momento de ascendência econômica deste grupo. Isso é uma novidade no mercado brasileiro"[560] (The classe C are being well-treated on Brazilian TV because they are getting wealthier. This is news for the Brazilian economy). Avenida Brasil is the most commercially successful *telenovela* in Brazilian history. Many advertisers are trying to reach this particular group of Brazilian consumers and are willing to pay high prices for commercials. Similarly, Heloisa Buarque de Almeida, a professor at Universidade de São Paulo, observes, "This is a section of the population that has ascended economically since the years of the Lula government, and they are

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for Breath?,"*Latin American Perspectives* 38 no. 2 (2011): 35.

[558] Alexei Barrionuevo, *Strong Economy Propels Brazil to World Stage*, *The New York Times*, July 31, 2008, A1.

[559] "PNAD 2011: Bigger Growth Among Lowest Income Ranges," IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística), http://saladeimprensa.ibge.gov.br/en/noticias?view=noticia&id=1&busca=1&idnoticia=2222

[560] Fabio Brisolla, "A vez do suburbia," Folha de São Paulo, August 12, 2012, www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/ilustrada/60250-a-vez-do-suburbio.sthml

consuming much more now."[561] Other series such as *Cheias da Charme* (2012) about a group of maids who form a singing group, included the black actress, Táis Araújo. In the fall of 2012, Globo produced three series all with major black protagonists in *Salve Jorge*, *Suburbia*, and *Lado a Lado.* With classe C, compromised by fifty-three percent of *negros* and *pardos*,[562] the demographic changes are notable along with the rise of affirmative action in universities and public service jobs. As Joel Zito Araújo observes, "É mais do que coincidência. Seguramente a Globo não arriscaria essa mudança se isso representasse um risco de perda de audiência, ou seja, de faturamento."[563] [It is more than coincidence. Surely, Globo would not risk this change if it represented a risk in the loss of audiences or revenue.] The influence of consumer-citizens is gradually making Brazilians of color more visible onscreen.

In contrast, inequality is growing in the United States. In 2010, the top one percent had ninety-three percent of income growth in 2010 while middle-income households have less income, adjusted for inflation that in 1996.[564] To better compete on the global market, President Rouseff introduced the new "Science Without Borders," which will send over 100,000 Brazilians to foreign universities to study areas deems

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[561] Anderson Antunes, "Brazilian Telenovela 'Avenida Brasil' Makes Billions by Advertising its Viewers Lives," Forbes, October 19, 2012, http://www.forbes.com/sites/andersonantunes/2012/10/19/brazilian-telenovela-makes-billions-by-mirroring-its-viewers-lives/

[562] Alberto Pereira Jr, "Acerto de Cotas," *Folha de São Paulo*, October 21, 2012, http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/ilustrada/73055-acerto-de-cotas.shtml

[563] Ibid.

[564] Joseph Stiglitz, "Inequality is Holding Back the Recovery," *The New York Times*, January 19, 2013, http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/19/inequality-is-holding-back-the-recovery/

important for economic growth, such as engineering and the hard sciences.[565] However, questions remaind as to if the elite class, with better access to English training, will benefit more from this program. Nonetheless, Brazil's internationalizing focus, increased attention on affirmative action, and significant investments in education for the creation of opportunities, contrast with the United States, where student debt has increased to one trillion dollars.[566] For Brazil, the 2000s brought about "a search for progressive policy alternatives." While "neoliberal policy has lost its dominance but is not annihilated," the challenge remains of creating a more equitable society within the contradictions of neoliberalism and national development.[567]

The 2016 Rio Olympics and the Presentation of Diversity to the World

Brazil has increasingly become a powerful voice in global affairs and has attempted to position itself as a key spokesperson not only for South America, but also for the Global South. Brazil's winning bids for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games further position Brazil as a leader. Scholars have linked processes of national identity and globalization to both the World Cup and the Olympics.[568] Known as "the country of the future," Brazil can present itself as politically, economically, and

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[565] "Studying the World; Education in Brazil," *The Economist*, March 17, 2012, http://www.economist.com/node/21550306. The Science without Border Program is supposedly President Rouseff's idea. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Brazilian government invested in Brazilians to earn graduate degrees in oil research, agricultural research, and aircraft research. Brazil is now considered a global leader in these sectors.
[566] Stiglitz, "Inequality is Holding Back the Recovery."
[567] Laura Macdonald and Anne Ruckert, eds, *Post-neoliberalism in the Americas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2009), 6-7.
[568] Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young, *National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006); Rory Miller and Liz Crolley, *Football in the Americas: Fútbol, Futebol, Soccer* (London: University of London, 2007)

socially modern through the Olympics and the World Cup. Brazil's reputation as a multiracial nation as well as the first nation with a majority black population to host the Olympics will be on display. Brazil's hosting of these events offers a potential global repositioning that defies histories of colonialism and imperialism. As President Lula da Silva said after winning the bid, "O Brasil sempre foi grande e importante, mas precisava dessas Olimpíadas como uma forma de desafio" [Brazil was always grand and important, but we needed the Olympics as a form of challenge.][569]

The Olympics provide an opportunity to brand Brazil on the global market. The image of a modern and confident Brazil can thereby be projected to the world. Brazil's victory in the Olympic bidding brings South America into the global public eye. The Olympics insert Brazil as a world power, much like China's bid in 2010, and breaks the image of Brazil as a backwards nation with an unstable economy and high levels of violence. Therefore, the marketing of Brazil and how Brazil has been represented in the media attest to the maintenance or disruption of these images. Examining the Olympic bidding process and the televising of the Rio Olympic handover from 2012's London Olympic Games illuminates the image that Brazil desires to project to the world.

Much of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics' marketing materials rely on notions of multiracial diversity. Furthermore, sexualized terms such as embrace and passion are consistently associated with the Rio Olympics and are implicit in the self-exotification of Brazil and its emphasis on racial mixing. Thus far, images of Brazil have largely been presented as white in the Rio Olympics' brochures, except when there is an

[569] Lula da Silva Speech to International Olympic Committee in Copenhagen, *www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3rO8xhHxMs*

image of authentic *brasilidade* (Brazilianess) in a spectacle of mixed-race and blackness or an image of youth. Meanwhile, as Brazil pushes forward with development plans, poor people of color in *favelas* are being evicted. Conflicting ideas then of Brazil as a nation of progress and near whiteness with Brazil as a nation of joy, samba, and Afro-descendants, and Brazil as a country of racial and social inequalities compete.

Brazil's image to the world has been predicated on the racial diversity and racial harmony of Brazil. As previously noted, the ideology of Brazilian racial democracy in which a high level of racial mixing and racial tolerance had created a racial democracy, has long been a myth in Brazil and outside of Brazil. This myth of a racial paradise, dating back to Brazilian colonization, became further propagated with Gilberto Freyre's seminal academic study and during the dictatorship of Getulio Vargas in the late 1930s. Following World War II, Brazil became a possible model for understanding racial harmony and tolerance. However, rather than reinforcing Brazil's reputation as a racial democracy, the study found large-scale racial inequalities.[570] Nonetheless, the image of Brazil as joyful diverse nation has continued and much of Brazil's own tourism marketing in the 1970s and 1980s with an emphasis on beautiful scantily clad *mulatas* helped this image.[571] Many of these controlling images of the *mulata* reinforce the idea of a racial democracy and distort the historical legacies and contemporary practices of racism.

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[570] Howard Winant, *The World is a Ghetto: Race and Democracy since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 226.
[571] Mariana Selister Gomes, "A construção do Brasil como paraíso de *mulata*s: do imaginário colonial ao marketing turístico," *Memorias del XXVII Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Sociología*. 2009.

The diverse inclusive character of Brazil, and rising economic and political power, were key to Brazil's bid for the 2016 Olympics. Brazil's successful hosting bid occurred in the wake of China's affirmation of its international prominence in the 2008 Beijing games. Brazil's winning bid also comes within the context of not just rising economic power, but also during a time of national questioning of the meaning of race in Brazil and *brasilidade*. Brazil's hosting of the 2016 Olympics allows for a negotiation of Brazilian national identity both domestically and in relationship to the outside world. Furthermore, the idea of the "carioca embrace," symbolizing the warm welcome of Brazil, and passion as key defining features of the Rio Olympics positions Brazil as open and inclusive to the world while reincorporating Brazilian history and culture into those two defining features. To understand why the embrace and passion might be primary slogans for Brazil's Olympics, it is useful to look at how Brazil has discussed its own racial diversity as part of the hosting of the games and how this racial diversity and inclusion is directly inline with the spirit of the Olympic Games.

President Lula employs the tropes of passion among the Brazilian population to suggest racial and cultural unity and harmony in the formation of a distinctively Brazilian people. Brazil capitalizes on its reputation as a multiracial mixed society to present itself as already embodying the ethos of the Olympic Games. Brazil's project then is to continue to stress racial harmony and tolerance as part of its innate national identity. After winning the Olympic bid, President Lula clearly aligned Brazilian national identity with the ideals of the Olympic Games,

> Somos um povo apaixonado pelo esporte, apaixonado pela vida... não só somos um povo misturado, mas um povo que gosta muito de ser misturado, é o que faz

nossa identidade... é hora de acender a pira olímpica num país tropical... para o movimento olímpico [será] uma oportunidade sentir o calor do nosso povo, a exuberância da nossa cultura, o sol da nossa alegria... as portas do Brasil estão abertas para a maior festa da
humanidade... os Jogos Olímpicos do Rio serão inesquecíveis, pois estarão cheios da paixão, da alegria e da criatividade do povo brasileiro. [We are a passionate people for sport, passionate for life…we are not only a mixed people, but a people that likes very much to be mixed and this is what makes our identity….it is time to light the Olympic torch for a tropical country…for the Olympics to be an opportunity to feel the heat of our people, the exuberance of our culture, and the sun of our happiness…the gates of Brazil are open for the biggest celebration of humanity…the Rio Olympic Games will be unforgettable , since it will be full of the passion, of the joy, and of the creativity of the Brazilian people].

Brazil's Olympic Committee and President Lula explicitly utilized the rhetoric of passion as both part of Brazilian identity and as theme of the 2016 Olympics. This identity is constructed through the idea of *mestiçagem* and racial tolerance. For example, the video, "A paixão nos une" presented following President Lula's last remarks to the International Olympic Committee in 2010, emphasized this idea of racial and ethnic

comingling and mixing.[572] The short film revolves around the circulation of various different cultural groups, marked by different colored blazers, turbans, and headscarves, which stand in for multiethnic and multinational diversity. As the different groups walked around the city, they were greeted with enthusiastic welcomes from Brazilians in the city and witnessed capoeira and samba along the way. The participants in the film affirmed, "A paixão nos une" in different languages. The participants all gathered on the beach, in their different colored blazers, to form an image of the Olympic rings. The grafting of different colors, through the bodies of the participants, into the Olympic Rings symbolically represents the ideals of the Olympic Games, and metaphorically, characterizes Brazil's rhetoric of passion as similar to Brazilian *mestiçagem*.

Brazil's political discourse of passion intends then to promote international unity through the Olympics, and represents Brazil as already having interracial and interethnic unity. This foundation for interracial and international harmony then complements what Doris Sommer calls, "an erotics of politics."[573] Like other Latin American countries, Brazil's use of passion is an important component of national discourses on national unity. Sommer examines the significance of erotic passion in nineteenth-century national romances to "bind together heterodox constituencies: competing regions, economic

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[572] Rafael Maranhão, "Com reforço de Lula, 'seleção' brasileira usa a emoção na cartada final por 2016**,"** *O Globo***,** February 10, 2009., http://globoesporte.globo.com/Esportes/Noticias/Olimpiadas/0,,MUL1326806-17698,00-COM+REFORCO+DE+LULA+SELECAO+BRASILEIRA+USA+A+EMOCAO+NA+CARTADA+FINAL+POR.html
For the video of the announcement, see http://article.wn.com/view/2012/06/06/IOC_Rio_has_made_great_strides_for_2016_Olympics_but_warns_o/#/video
[573] Sommer*, Foundational Fictions*, 6

interests, races, religions."[574] Brazil then positions itself as having already combined diverse races, ethnicities, and religions into its nation and thereby, is already a materialization of the Olympic ideal.

The opening of the video starts with the sun rising over Brazil and various national and ethnic groups gathering and walking forward past the famous Christ the Redeemer statue. A young boy, who appears as the epitome of the brown curly-haired racially ambiguous Brazilian, speaks to the camera in front of the statue. He states, "They come from countries, large and small, arriving at the promising shore of a new land. They come as Olympians, carrying the dreams of nations, but when they gather in Rio, they unite the world as never before." This opening alludes to Brazil's colonial history as part of the "discovery of the New World" as well as Brazil's place in a new world order, especially as the Olympics as never been set in South America before. While the film does not draw attention to the indigenous and enslaved populations in or brought into Brazil, the film does evoke the encounter between the colonizing nations of Europe with the images of different white Olympic groups coming to Brazil. With the coming together of many different white ethnic groups together, the film also evokes European immigration to Brazil. Furthermore, the inclusion of Africans, marked by their attire, in these same images, also invokes the coming to the New World, but displaces this colonial history with the Olympic ideals of freedom. The film thereby, creates an image of the diversity that created Brazil. The film then capitalizes on the utopian projections of the New World as an earthly paradise with the dreams of a new future. The film also utilizes Brazilian conceptualizations of modernity as a new utopia with the

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[574] Ibid, 14.

desire of Brazil to be included among the economies of the most powerful nations of the West. The images of the Olympians arriving in Brazil encapsulates the idea of former colonizing nations and postcolonial nations brought together to witness the establishment of a new world order with Brazil at its forefront. However, since a young brown boy narrates the video, the video allows for a focus on the future with an erasing and willing forgetting of a painful history marked by colonization in favor of a new beginning. The video merges utopian images of the New World and utopian images of modern progress.

During Brazil's handover during the 2012 London Olympic Games, the emphasis on Brazil's Afro-Brazilian heritage became apparent. From the initial opening, the ceremony featured Renato Sorriso, a streetsweeper for Rio's *Sambódromo* who became an internet sensation after a video appeared of Renato dancing samba after a Rio de Janeiro carnival samba parade procession. The appearance of Renato dressed in his orange uniform, an Afro-Brazilian worker from the lower-classes, presents an inclusive image of Brazil right from the start. A white British security guard dressed in a suit comes on stage and scolds Renato. Renato responds by showing the security guard how to samba. This very first image of Brazil with an Afro-Brazilian worker speaks to populist imagery. However, at the same time, the white security guard, as representing authority, serves to debase Renato, symbolically representing a working-class Afro-Brazilian population. Yet, the idea that Renato's smile and charisma wins over the security guard represents a usurping of colonization from the periphery to former empire.

While Renato is able to teach something to the West, it is in the form of stereotypical notions of black natural rhythm and dance ability. The black male dancer teaching the white security guard how to samba naturalizes black bodies. Therefore,

dance is naturally and authentically black. As Jane Desmond suggests, "Dance, as a discourse of the body, may in fact be especially vulnerable to interpretations in terms of essentialized identities associated with biological difference."[575] Dance ability becomes put in essentialized terms as not only a national cultural ability, but as a biological extension of race. Racial and national differences are grounded in the body through the ability to dance samba. Renato's performance yokes race and nationality together. The dance performance also evokes the Good Neighbor films of the 1940s in which Carmen Miranda teaches the "Uncle Sam-ba."[576] Just as Miranda's films became a mass-mediated entry point for Brazilian music and dance into the U.S. mainstream, Renato functions as a transnational mediation between Brazil and the rest of the world, particularly the West. While entry often happens through a female figure, here Renato functions as a black "buddy."[577] Carmen Miranda, like other Latin American actresses, such as Dolores del Río and Lupe Vélez introduced U.S. audiences to Latin America through a feminine figure. Renato, as the first representation of Brazil onscreen at the handover, is a masculine figure for the marketing of Brazil. Renato, as a buddy who teaches the white security guard how to dance, acts as an agent of multiracial and multicultural harmony. Renato then performs the desired image of the Afro-Brazilian-friendly, docile, and open. However, unlike the stereotypical image of the *mulata* passista

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[575] Jane Desmond, *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), 36.
[576] López, "Are Al Latins from Manhattan?," 208.
[577] U..S. black buddies are generally characterized as friendly, deferential and non-threatening. For more on black buddy films, see Cynthia Fuchs, "The Buddy Politic," in *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema,* Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1993),194-210; Edward Guerrero, "The Black Image in Protective Custody: Hollywood's Biracial Buddy Films of the Eighties," in *Black American Cinema*, ed. Manthia Diawara (New York: Routledge, 1993), 237-46.

(samba dancer) that is presented globally and marketed to tourists in Brazil,[578] Renato takes the stage as a male dancer in his street cleaning uniform. As samba is associated with a national cultural tradition,[579] Renato thereby represents the nation first instead of the *mulata* for a new Brazil that is perhaps responding to criticism of its own self-exotification and external marketing as a sexual paradise of *mulata*s.

Later the ceremony brings a parade of black female samba dancers in Afros. This presentation of samba dancers in this cultural moment revises the use of the *mulata* figure. With the samba dancers in Afros, the *mulata* figure is put within black aesthetics rather than placed as a primarily sexually available figure. This de-emphasis on the *mulata* figure as part of the marketing of Brazil raises new questions on how Brazil sees itself and how Brazil wants to present itself to the world. The samba dancers, as part of acceptable palatable blackness and representing Afro-Brazilian tradition, are a counterpoint to an abject blackness as represented by *favela* inhabitants. Nor do these samba dancers serve as a memory of slavery and inequality. This cultural moment points to a negotiation of national identity, race, class, gender, and sexuality with a look towards new representations of blackness and mixedness. From the time of the *telenovelas* discussed in this dissertation such as *Belíssima* (2005) and *Paraíso Tropical* (2007), there has been an expansion of roles for Afro-Brazilian actresses. In September 2009, *Globo*, Brazil's largest media network launched *Viver a Vida* with Taís Araújo as the first black

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[578]Pravaz argues how the idea of the *mulata* samba dancer denotes cultural authenticity. See Natasha Pravaz, "Performing *Mulata*-ness The Politics of Cultural Authenticity and Sexuality among Carioca Samba Dancers," *Latin American Perspectives* 39, no. 2 (2012): 113-133.
[579] Ibid.

female protagonist on a primetime television program.[580] Taís Araújo played the role of Helena, a black fashion model, and thereby, points to potential changes regarding the idea of beauty and the types of roles that are open to Afro-Brazilian actresses. The Olympics presentation along with newer *telenovelas* disrupts the hegemonic whiteness often broadcast in Brazil. Therefore, the Olympics presentation points to possible new directions for representations of women of color that do not rely on stereotypes of the *mulata*.

Along with the dancers, the presentation also included the rapper, B'Negao. The inclusion of the dancers and of the rapper B'Negao also points to an acknowledgement and celebration of black politics and music stemming from Brazil's black soul movement of the 1970s and Brazil's hip-hop movement beginning in the 1990s. With debates over the place of Afro-Brazilians in Brazil, growing racial consciousness, and the advancement of affirmative action in universities, the inclusion of these black power symbols and hip-hop musicians, who have openly critiqued the racism and classism of the Brazilian state, points to a validation of the black experience in Brazil on national and

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[580] Taís Araújo identifies as *negra.* Although Araújo has darker skin than Camila Pitanga, she still has predominantly European features. Araújo has previously played roles that emphasize her racial difference. For example, in *A Cor do Pecado* (2004), Preta, played by Tais Araujo, is a young Afro-Brazilian woman from the Northeast who falls in love with Paco, a rich white man from Southern Brazil. The very name Preta that literally means black and the title *A Cor de Pecado* (the color of sin) sexualizes black women as taboo. This same actress played Xica da Silva, an infamous historical character for arising from slave status to the richest woman in Minas Gerais and a slaveowner herself. Therefore, the very few opportunities in which Afro-Brazilian women have important roles in *telenovelas*, these actresses generally must have European features and must perform in roles that recenter whitening and upward mobility or relies on ideas of excessive black female sexuality. While in *Viver a Vida,* Helena is still presented with a white man, she is also successful on her own. However, the latest *telenovelas* from Globo such as *Cheias de Charme* (2012) and *Lado a Lado* (2012) might represent a break from this whitening narrative in order to appeal to the classe C consumers.

international levels. While samba has been celebrated as the official national musical form of Brazil, the inclusion of black soul and hip-hop on an international platform presents Brazil within a changing cultural landscape. While the celebration of Afro-Brazilian culture, from samba to capoeira, and the inclusion of black musicians such as Seu Jorge and black athletes such as Pelé, points to a celebration of Afro-Brazilian figures within a pantheon of national heroes, these inclusions are primarily limited to ideas of cultural authenticity ties to music and soccer.

Furthermore, the Olympic bidding portfolio materials feature images of white Brazilians or pictures of the landscape with the exception of a few images of Afro-Brazilian youth. Most of the images of adults are white, especially when linked with the media communications, technology, and the political and economic climate.[581] Thus a vision of race and nation are predicated on an authentic Brazil as black, the future of Brazil as demonstrated by images of youth, as black,[582] and the present industries of progress and development, as white. Thus, while the television images displaying Brazilian culture are primarily Afro-Brazilian, the official marketing images are white. As the bid portfolio discusses Brazil's development, political and economic climate and structure, finance, and marketing strategies for the Games, blackness is all but left out with images of whiteness. Therefore, race is used to promote respective causes of multiculturalism and progress coded differently through images of Afro-Brazilians and white Brazilians.

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[581] Rio de Janeiro Candidature File to became the host city of the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Candidature files, vol. 1, 29, 39, 40, 82, 83

[582] Rio de Janeiro Candidature File to became the host city of the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Candidature files, vol. 1, 14, 15.

Rio 2016 has been positioned as a catalyst for Brazilian development. The obsession with progress and modernization are manifested in the vision for Brazil's Olympics. The vision on rio2016 states, "All Brazilians uniting to deliver the greatest event on earth and proudly advancing through sport our national promise of progress."[583] The official website for Rio 2016, rio2016.com alludes to the potential of modernity and a new Brazil. Describing the winning bid, the website states, "It marked the summit of a path of accomplishments for the bid team, and the beginning of a journey of big opportunities and challenges for Rio, and for Brazil."[584] The Olympic Games are placed within the vision of the Brazilian state with the statement, "All investments will yield substantial, tangible, and meaningful legacies for the people of Rio and Brazil and are consistent with our long-term development plans."[585] With the marketing videos and hosting bid materials, Brazil claims to have social inclusion as part of its identity and that the Olympics will only further this social inclusion with new development projects. According to the candidature file, programs such as sports as tool for social inclusion, community outreach, education, and job development are implanted in the vision of the Rio 2016 Games.[586] However, the question over exactly who will be included in Brazil's development and plans for social inclusion is still present.

Urban renewal for the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games have begun to

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[583] Rio 2016 presents strategic pillars to IOC in Durban: Vision and Mission of Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games were also unveiled , http://www.rio2016.org/en/news/news/rio-2016-presents-strategic-pillars-to-ioc-members-in-durban, updated Jul 22, 2011
[584]Rio 2016: The Event, http://www.rio2016.org/en/the-games/olympic/event
[585] Rio 2016: Live Your Passion,http://www.rio2016.org.br/sumarioexecutivo/default_en.asp.
[586] Rio de Janeiro Candidature File to became the host city of the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Candidature files, vol.

take place in Rio de Janeiro. Along with improvements to transportation and stadiums, the government has also directed attention on *favelas*, inhabited by the poor, who are predominantly people of color. The Olympic Games have a pattern of justifying forced displacement and removal in the name of urban renewal and presenting a favorable image of the country, such as when China razed off areas with poor and unwanted populations for the Beijing Olympic Games with an estimate of over 350,000 of the poor who were evicted.[587] Forced evictions of *favela*s and demolitions of these areas are increasingly commonplace along with the construction of new infrastructure for the Games in already affluent areas. Improving the international image of Brazil also depends on improving the images of *favela*s or eradicating *favela*s and the abject blackness represented by the *favelas*. Two weeks after the announcement of the 2016 Olympic winning bid, a police helicopter was shot down over a *favela*. The international media focused on this event and questioned Brazil's ability to provide security. Subsequently, international media attention focused on the invasion of *favela*s by the police to secure pacification.[588] Rio was then faced with an attempt to present an image of a modern secure city. Through a realignment of urban geography marked by race and class, social segregation and social inequalities are reinforced while citizenship for the poor black underclass are only further restricted.[589] The UPP (Police Pacification Units) provided another model for the image

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[587] Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), 16, 106.
[588] Alexei Barrionuevo, "Violence in the newest Olympic city rattles Brazil," *New York Times*, October 20, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/21/world/americas/21rio.html?ref = olympics_2016, Alexei Barrionuevo, "With World Watching, Rio Focuses on Security," *New York Times*, January 17, 2010, A1.
[589] Rio de Janeiro, like São Paulo, is undergoing physical and social transformations related to ideas of citizenship. In *City of Walls,* Caldeira argues that the fortification and

of the *favela*s with the idea of domestic control over the population, and the problems of violence and drug trafficking. However, international human rights groups and the international media have reported on forced evictions from *favela*s and have expressed concern over the right to housing and the displacement of the poor, mostly people of color.[590] Like the attention on townships in South Africa for the 2010 World Cup, the focus on *favela*s in Brazil is key to the idea of an eventual modernity. The eradication of *favelas* and their abject blackness are part of the requirement for entry into modernity. The Olympics then justifies violent projects in areas inhabited mostly by people of color while at the same time encouraging the consumption of people of color through cultural performances. By June 2013, a year before the commencement of the 2014 World Cup, mass protests emerged in multiple cities in Brazil. These protests, sparked by a bus fare hike that disproportionately affects low-income groups, revolted against corruption and

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building of walls has been in response to Brazil's "disjunctive democracy" following the military dictatorship. Noting the separation of the upper classes into high-walled fortresses with private security guards in areas surrounded by favelas, Caldeira explicates the spatial class and racial geography of the city. With the upper-classes only interacting with each other in these fortress type structures and only leaving these structures by helicopter and bulletproof cars, the poor are left in marginalized areas. However, the physical distance between the two groups is small. Therefore, while physical distance is small, social barriers are high. Space thereby, reinforces racialized class boundaries. See Teresa Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).

[590] Simon Romero, "Slum Dwellers are Defying Brazil's Grand Design for Olympics*,"* *New York Times*, March 4, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/05/world/americas/brazil-faces-obstacles-in-preparations-for-rio-olympics.html?ref=americas&pagewanted=all; "Brazil: Forced evictions must not mar Rio Olympics", Amnesty International News, November 14, 2011, http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/brazil-forced-evictions-must-not-mar-rio-olympics-2011-11-14;"Brazil off course for World Cup and Olympics-Un Housing Expert," United Nations Human Rights , April 26, 2011, http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10960&LangID=E,

the significant use of public funds for stadiums and World Cup infrastructure instead of public services, such as health care and education.[591] These protests point to a frustration with Brazilian inequalities and the unfulfilled promise of Brazilian democracy. Therefore, the latest international images of Brazil have not been utopic inclusion, but rather a revolt against exclusion.

The Olympics are a global stage for Brazil's image of multiculturalism. The Rio Olympic handover marketed Afro-Brazilian culture, but like the United States, a marketing of black culture, does not necessarily correlate to equality or opportunity. Thus, Brazil is in the process of negotiating these contradictions of an embrace of multiculturalism with realities of massive racial and class inequality. These contrasting images of a racially tolerant inclusive Brazil and a Brazil of deprivation and inequalities presents a challenge in presenting a new image to itself and to the rest of the world. Both Brazil and the United States are situated within changing panoramas of national and transnational thought and politics regarding racial discourses of racial harmony, inclusion, and difference. The Olympics, along with the development of affirmative action and *telenovelas*, point to potential transformations in Brazilian ideologies of race and citizenship. Both Brazil and U.S. media demonstrate a negotiation of multiculturalism as racial difference or racelessness. Much of this negotiation of multiculturalism and the limits of citizenship occur not only within the imaginary of the

[591] *O Globo* and *Folha de São Paulo* websites have special dedicated sections of the protests with daily coverage. See http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/especial/2013/paisemprotesto/ and http://g1.globo.com/protestos-no-brasil/2013/cobertura/

nation, but through an imagining of Brazil and the United States as referential counterpoints.

Epilogue

Recently, *African American Lives* (PBS 2006) *African-American Lives* 2 (PBS 2008), *Who Do You Think You Are* (2010), and *Raízes Afro-Brasileiras* (BBC Brasil 2007) all profiled famous people's roots through genetic testing and DNA research. Many of the celebrities profiled were found to have mixed-race ancestry. Many of the programs also featured celebrities, who are known in the public eye for their mixed-race heritage or racially ambiguous features. Examples include Rashida Jones of the United States and Ildi Silva of Brazil. These shows demonstrate a continuing fascination with mixedness and an interest in each country's racial histories. With the rhetoric of the United States in a postracial era and the dismantling of race-conscious programs such as affirmative action, the return to racial science contradicts this vision. In Brazil, the show emerged at the same time as debates of the racelesness of Brazil and the use of racial qualifiers for affirmative action. The resurgent interest in family history and genetic ancestry points to a renewed focus on familial histories of racial mixing and national roots. While in the United States, these television shows revise understandings of racial and national histories and point to potential shifts in national imaginaries and popular culture representations, these programs do not necessarily further social justice merely by acknowledging historical racial mixture. The historical reassesment of whiteness and a subsequent "browning" of the United States through this historical angle on family histories might further justify a postracial ideology alongside the affirmation of an idealized legacy of U.S. multiculturalism. As seen in Brazil, the recognition of racial mixture and the upholding of Eurocentrism can work in tandem with each other.

This dissertation has illustrated the contradictions in these different racial ideologies and debates concerning the role of mixedness in both societies. Brazilian and U.S. popular media negotiate between desires and anxieties concerning the role of blackness and mixedness. Popular media, with a few exceptions, attempts to contain blackness either in the erasure of blackness, the sexual regulation of blackness, and/or the presentation of a palatable acceptable blackness with the potential to whiten. Mixed-race women are particularly crucial for these nation-building projects. The previous chapters showed the representational landscape of mixed-race women embedded within national and transnational racial ideologies. This dissertation illuminates the links between racial formations, national identity, and hemispheric projects of black containment. Examining images, representations, and discourses of mixed-race women of African and European descent in the United States and Brazil highlights relationships of race, gender, and sexuality across and within the two nations.

The last chapter anticipates the future changes that the relationship between Brazil and the United States might experience as a result of Brazil's growing international importance. There are many future directions that hemispheric studies and critical mixed-race studies might take in regards to these new developments. With an eye towards U.S. media representations of the Rio Olympics, research into the representation of the Rio Olympics furthers work on the connections between citizenship, media, and national and transnational race-making. At the time of writing this epilogue, Brazil is experiencing the largest social protests since the end of the military dictatorship. Government spending for stadiums for the World Cup rather than investing in education, health, and public services has sparked widespread discontent. Protests, failures, and

frustrations with the direction of Brazil's future from the perspectives of the public sphere, the state, and international imaginings of Brazil point to competing visions of the nation and citizenship. By examining Brazilian and U.S. media of the Olympics, the interplay between Brazil's racialized national identity and U.S. imaginations of Brazil can illuminate a cross-section of desires, myths, and aspirations from both countries.

After this dissertation's archival research in Brazil was completed, two new Globo *telenovelas* with Camila Pitanga were shown that could offer new rich textual analysis of race in Brazil. Future research could include the *telenovela*, *Insensato Coraçao* (2011). This *telenovela* is notable in Brazil for having a mixed-race female executive (played by Camila Pitanga) romantically involved with a black architect (played by Lázaro Ramos) rather than a white man and for portraying both characters as upwardly mobile professionals. The 2012 *telenovela*, *Lado a Lado*, also features Camila Pitanga and Lázaro Ramos as a romantic couple again. However, this time, Pitanga and Ramos play leaders fighting for black freedom in early twentieth-century Brazil. The pairing of Lázaro Ramos and Camila Pitanga indicates possible new directions in the representation of Afro-Brazilians. Furthermore, rather than consistently inscribing mixed-race women's sexuality with white men, these two new telenovelas counter narratives of the hypersexual *mulata* or upwardly mobile *morena* with white male figures. How might this opening of *telenovelas* with black characters both reflect and produce social forces in relation to affirmative action and racial awareness? With the *telenovela* as a key site of national identity formation, the inclusion of characters and actors of African descent as critical components of the narrative point to a further reconsideration of race and national identity.

Studying contemporary popular culture representations of mixed-race women allows a remapping of relationships between race, gender, media, and social justice with implications for the new millennium. Engaging with mixed-race blackness in the United States and Brazil, this dissertation has explored how mixed-race, racial ambiguity, blackness, nation, gender, sexuality, and class function together. Bringing conversations of racial mixing in Latin America to both American Studies and Critical Mixed Race Studies provides an important lens to understanding the Critical Mixed Race Studies project and offers important lessons for the future. Rather than focusing solely on the United States, this research highlights how ideas of racial mixing are linked in the Americas. Crossing both geographical and disciplinary boundaries, this dissertation explored how mixed-race representations and identities function within national and transnational contexts and thereby, asks how this analysis can be part of dismantling racism, sexism, and other connected forms of oppression.

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