Estud. fem. vol.1 no.se Florianópolis 2006

Ethnographies of the *Brau*: Body, Masculinity and Race in the Reafricanization in Salvador[1]

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Abstract*: In this article, the author aims to explore the developments in the process known as "cultural and political reafricanization in Salvador," embodied in the transitory crystallization of a specific social figure known as the* brau*. This refers to an inflection of masculinity informed by the racial and gender tensions in Salvador, as well as a local re-appropriation of cultural themes in the African diaspora. The* Braus *were (are) Negro youths, in the periphery, who re-invent a Negro visualness/bodiliness from re-readings of the North American* soul *'culture' and are at the same time stigmatized by the middle class as violent, of "bad taste" and hyper-sexualized, that is, excessively 'Negro' and excessively 'masculinized,' in a hyperbolization, which, in a sense, contradicts the stigmatization.*
Key Words*: masculinity, race, Salvador-Ba, body.*

1. Introduction: the *Brau* and the Reafricanizing[2] War Machine

In this article, I attempt to discuss the consolidation of a social figure that inhabits the map of identity representations in reafricanized Salvador. This figure is the *brau*, incorporated as a frontier between imposed and self-attributed meanings, in a struggle at an intersection with historically determined meanings of Negro identity and culture. This reafricanization is understood as a new inflection given to the social, political and cultural afrodescendant agency in Salvador, marked by the use of symbols linked to Africanness and by a determined interaction with Brazilian selective modernization, characterized at the same time by a deterritorialized connection with world and diasporic symbolic flows.

These deterritorializing aspects are associated with the globalizing process, understood as the destruction of traditional forms of space-time in social relations, new structures for associations, belonging, loyalty, exchanges and flows which take place in increasingly complex and accelerated forms, creating new parameters for interaction in contexts that are no longer easily described as simply local or global.[3]

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[1] A previous version of this paper was presented in the coordinate session "Race and Ethnicity," in the 2nd International Seminar, 1st North-Northeast Seminar "Men, Sexuality and Reproduction: Times, Practices and Voices," which took place in Recife in June, 2003, and was organized by PAPAI Institute, Fages-UFPE, Nepo-UNICAMP, and the Pegapacapá group. [The acronym PAPAI forms the Portuguese word for "daddy"; the name "Pegapacapá" is a popular expression for "pega pra capar", literally "catch the pig for castration" and colloquially used to express "when the moment of truth comes" or "the moment in which one is under pressure and must take action." Nota da Tradutora] I would like to thank Angela Sacchi (PPGA/UFPE) and Cavalcanti (PPGS/UFPE) for the opportunity to present my work. I also wish to thank the GRAL (Gender, Reproduction, Action, Leadership) program at the Carlos Chagas Foundation/John D. Catherine and T. MacArthur Foundation for allowing me to participate in the event.

[2] I would like to thank the anonymous appraisers of the Revista Estudos Feministas (Feminist Studies Magazine) for their constructive comments.

[3] Arjum APPADURAI, 1997; Sivio SANSONE, 2000; Antonio RISÉRIO, 1981; Anamaria MORALES, 1991; and Jessé SOUZA, 2000.

The *brau* is inscribed within these complex articulations, as a form of representation disputed among the vernacular, popular-urban, identity-reinvention initiative, and other forms of heteroclite representation for the Negro and for 'Negro culture,' including ethnographic forms.

Reafricanization, as a sedimented social-discursive context, is the open and polycentric reference mark for these political representation struggles that surround the Negro, the Negro body, and the local shaping of world trends in the afrodescendant identitarian reconfiguration. Such reafricanization can be considered as a war machine which institutes its own theater of operations for discursive and social operations. The notion of 'war' is, henceforth, an internal nuclear component for the interpretation I wish to arrive at.

In Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari the war machine is a nomadic invention, belonging to nomads, which opposes the state apparatus in being exterior to it. In the dialectic between interiority and exteriority, the war machine is the permanent 'outer,' the deterritorialization[4] which prevents planification, centralization and the closing of subjectivities as well as of becoming, under the principle of arborescent (in opposition to rhizome)[5] reproduction, the principle of the state.[6] The war machine is nomadic because it devastates, much like a disorganized crowd or horde, the centralized structures of the state, which, for these authors, takes on the role of the truly political-territorial centralizing apparatus, authorizing the division between dominant and dominated populations. Thus, the emergence of the state is the dominant class assaulting or reducing societies by centralizing them in an act of perfect violence, like a crime.

The war machine is, in addition, a projection beyond the obstacles, overcoming and transcending them by rhizomic disorganization and multiplication of reterritorialized development lines. In this manner it invents an affective cartography, which is a productive map, much like a decal. Being 'outer,' being an exteriority, the war machine deterritorializes points of view and languages, reinvents a world and launches it out and away from itself:

> And the meaning of Earth completely changes: with the legal model, one is constantly reterritorializing around a point of view, on a domain, according to a set of constant relations; but with the ambulant model, the process of deterritorialization constitutes and extends the territory itself.[7]

The logic of discursivities, as Michel Foucault[8] adverts, is not the logic of meaning, but that of war in that "un frente de batalla atraviesa toda la sociedad."[9] From what can be described as the adventure of the afrodescendant tradition in Salvador,

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[4] In this case, deterritorialization does not carry the social-cultural meaning associated with modernization or globalization; rather, it refers to the concept, used in the works of Deleuze and Guattari, akin to the idea of ever-changing cognitive maps. For example, the latter states: "A territory may deterritorialize itself, that is, open itself and engage in lines of flight and even forgo its course and destroy itself. The human species is surrounded by an intense deterritorializing movement, in that its original territories uninterruptedly undo themselves by means of the social division of labor, the universal gods who surpass the ethnic and tribal limits with machinic systems which allow humans to cross, increasingly faster, the mental and material stratifications" (Felix GUATTARI and Suely ROLNIK, 1986, p. 186).

[5] Distinguishing the arborescent or axial assemblage from the rhizome assemblage, Deleuze and Guattari say: "Any point on a rhizome can and should be connected to any other. It is very different from the tree or the root which fix a point, an order" (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1996, p. 15).

[6] DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1986 and 1996.

[7] DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1986, p. 37.

[8] FOUCAULT, 1972

[9] FOUCAULT, 1992, p. 59.

which has rediscovered itself and has repeatedly reshaped performances, identities, subject positions, landscapes, subjectivities and discourses under a number of denominations, can be inferred the accuracy of this presupposition, mainly if we consider this tradition's field of action, which is but what constitutes the arena of racialized contentions. A field not predominantly racialized by Negro agents, who have often preferred to define themselves as Africans rather than as Negros, but rather by instances of political hegemony that has installed itself as a white power and as a local, colonial 'universal white' representative, harbored by a hovering Europe.[10]

By establishing rhizomic nexus with Jamaica, the *Black Panthers Party*, the Ethiopian royal house, pharaonic Eygpt, Orun, Liberty and revolutionary Cuba, [11] reafricanization has opened shortcuts and floodgates; where there was once a codified space, it has fashioned pathways and sowed micro-truths in the oases conquered for white hegemony. The movement sways, however, between its own nomadic multiplicity and its stiffening centralization. If diffusing identities is a fractal and inconclusive adventure, there is a great deal of interest in converting it to an order interiorized by the state, and so "conscious activity"[12] appears to be much required lest centralizing forces that operate through folklorization, marketization, and mummification of tradition should prevail sinisterly in the end.

We may, finally, interpret the reafricanizing process, its identitarian aspects, in particular, as a nomadic swarm of identities and becomings, rhizomically articulated around the sign-Africa, deterritorializing hegemonic maps of race and gender and often being captured or abducted by the state apparatus in that it sees its seminal capability of producing other worlds and new, unexpected connections reduced. As a nomadic enterprise, reafricanization reinvents the territory for Negro affectivities and identities, founding and destroying worlds.[13]

In the afrodescendant carnival, the extension of the Negro territory oversteps the boundaries of the city's avenues and invades the Negro body, subverting the meanings normally attributed to it by the stereotyping and the racializing biopolitics. Meanwhile, it is like an exteriority that the afrodescendant tradition invades, in a struggle for recognition and autonomy, the representations and hegemonic plateaus of white or europeanized discursive instances in Salvador. With *casas de santo*[14] and *egbés*[15] being reterritorialized African worlds, nomadic Negro agents deterritorialize the city to such an extent that the elites and the white public opinion cease to recognize themselves in it, given the war for the Europeanization of the city and of the culture in Salvador, which unfolded throughout the first half of the 20th century, thoroughly documented.[16]

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[10] Wlamira ALBUQUERQUE, 1996, 1999 and 2002.

[11] These themes are present in a number of songs by Afro blocks (Afro carnival 'groups'), voices that enact the Bahian reafricanization. Cf. for example Milton MOURA, 2001.

[12] I freely incorporate Mao's expression "conscious activity," discussed in the context of the debate regarding the role of the colonial liberation war. To Mao, war is political, if anything, because it is a means of political education, in a rather mystical and quite fascist version: " 'La guerra es la continuacion da la politica'. En este sentido, la Guerra es politica, y es en si misma una accion politica" (Mão Tse TUNG, 1972 (1938), p. 50). Indeed, war is political and it is a result of "conscious activity," a verily human faculty which, according to Mao, is the concert of planification, prediction and will for transformative and conscious action applied to a determined end, which, in this case, is the national revolutionary liberation, which, in turn, is like "una antitoxina, que no solo destruirá el veneno del enemigo, sino que tambiém nois depurarra de toda inmundicia" (TUNG, 1972 (1938), p. 27).

[13] PINHO, 2003.

[14] Another term for 'terreiro de candomblé,' where candomblé rituals take place.

[15] Collective dwelling places where dwellers share the home with gods, making it both home and temple.

[16] Cf. for example Raphael VIEIRA FILHO, 1995 and 1998.

The invention of the *brau*, as an autonomous character-personality of reafricanization witnesses a reconversion of signifieds associated with the Negro and the Negro body, a historical instance re-placed as the installation site of an irreducible Negritude. A *brau* which not only challenges the aesthetic norm, but also the canon of traditional Negro culture, calls into play new race and gender contradictions incorporated into the discomfort that its presence triggers for the hegemonic norm buttressed by the white middle classes. Reafricanization, in this sense, deterritorializes the city and the Negro body, reterritorialized through the incorporation of the *brau* as a race and gender figure. Thus, the brau performance appears to be a transitory materialization incarnated in this process.

2. Representing the *Brau*

The *brau* character (or the performance),[17] partly fictional, partly sociological, is well known in Salvador: a male youth, most often Negro, 'aberrantly' dressed, of ill manner and aggressive gesture, not easily classified into the traditional standards of racial etiquette in Bahia. This ambiguous identity formation has inhabited the common, quotidian representations of races and gender in a rather offhand way.

However, there is another aspect concerning the *brau* that is gradually being identified. It is the contemporary history of the invention of a social character that accumulates contradictory meanings and that takes root in the global-local articulation. This is also the history of a marginal and careless representation of the *brau* in ethnographic writings which have been dedicated to other parallel themes, but which seep into view. These ethnographic writings of the *brau* have so far been as *peripheral* and *precarious* as its own social existence despite the enormous prevalence of the factors that have conditioned its emergence amidst the poor and Negro youth in Salvador.

In this section, then, I aim to discuss some of the fugacious representations of the *brau* in these ethnographic writings, highlighting that it would be important and desirable to have a detailed and focused empirical investigation of this figure, scarcely considered in social-anthropological terms, but that, by what can be gathered, would be relevant for the race and gender dynamics in Salvador, as I aim to do based on the available material.

By searching for the 'origins' of the *brau*, we will see that, in the process referred to as reafricanization, Salvador's Negro youth, yearning for cultural assertion and modernity, has come into contact with the worldwide diffusion of North American Negro music. James Brown and funk music has become, as of the 1970's, an additional element of the Bahian Negro culture, with one difference: now the Bahian Negro culture, too, would see itself as international, English-speaking, youthful, corporeal, articulated within the relation with consumer goods and the media.[18] North American Negro music composed the plot of diasporic counter-discourses discussed by Paul Gilroy in *The Black Atlantic.*[19] In Salvador, these discourses landed upon fertile soil, with the moisture of local traditions intermingling whites and Negros, and of traditional forms of African resistance in the city.

[17] There are both "the brau" and "brau performances," so that any person may be accused of dressing or acting like a *brau*.
[18] SANSONE, 1998 and 2000; RISÉRIO, 1981.
[19] GILROY, 1993

The *brau* is depicted in some contemporary ethnographies which look to their new context of cultural redefinitions, with new social auditions of diasporic Negro music. Livio Sansone describes this emergence as that of a:

> (Negro) lower class youth engaged in experimenting with the soul brother style in Bahia […], wearing clothes and accessories attributed to North American Negros in order to differ from the traditional Afro-Bahian look, that is, so as not to take on, directly, a look that is considered white.[20]

Henceforth, it has constituted a 'fracture' or 'opening' in the field of meanings for race and gender by way of a re-reading of the elements of the cultural industry. The positioning of this figure has necessarily interacted with the world of objects, of goods or consumption, in what is both a vernacular practice as well as an exercise of economic power (non-power).[21]

Ari Lima, another *brau* ethnographer, reproduces a passage of an interview with Carlinhos Brown, a self-proclaimed product of Salvador's soul music experience, in which he describes how youths in the district of Liberdade, a symbol of Bahian negritude, have interacted with James Brown's music and image:

> I didn't understand anything he was singing, but I understood how he acted, and everyone understood that, because his dancing, the way he danced, dragging himself along, you know, was like a dribble, like a dribble around social things, going down to the floor, using his whole body like a movement. When you came to Liberdade, some guy would always challenge you: Draw a line! And he'd dance a circle. So if you danced cool, if did a novel step it was all right. If not, everyone messed you and stuff—'You aren't a brau, man!" (Lima, 2001: 262). [22]

Both Lima and Sansone did ethnographic research in the lower class districts in Salvador. Lima in Candeal, home of Timbalada, and Sansone in Caminho de Areia, in Cidade Baixa, neighboring the traditional area of Bonfim. Both point out that the shaping of the youths' self-identity is structured in a pair-like relation, and that it is shaped by redefining the relation with the dominant white society, which is now interpellated critically in the everyday lives of these youths, in James Brown's identity mirror. What is curious is that, while this *funkified*[23] image was positively incorporated by Negro youths in the periphery, it was despised and stigmatized by the middle class that transformed the word *brau* into an unequivocal swear word, revealing the configuration's disputed aspects. It is paradoxical and curious that *brau* is not an identitarian category, but one of accusation; in other words, the *brau* category/performance has put itself up for dispute in the history of racial representations.

In two other moments we can grasp brief ethnographic appearances of these figures. First, in a 1993 undergraduate social sciences study, in Massaranduba, a former urbanized 'favela,'(urban slum area) near Caminho de Areia in the Cidade Baixa, in Salvador. Next, in a master's degree dissertation on Pelourinho – Salvador's historical center, whose field survey took place in 1995. In the first case, the *braus* were some of the youths living in Travessa da Esperança (the survey site).

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[20] SANSONE, 1998, p. 225.
[21] APPADURAI, 1994.
[22] LIMA, 2001, p. 262.
[23] I copy the neologism from George YÚDICE, 1997.

Associated with the world of petty crime and engaged in masculinity, displaying aggressive and hyper-sexualized behavior, wearing colorful clothes and chains around their necks, they were stigmatized by neighbors, who yearned to approach the middle class standards. The informers at Travessa would not miss a chance to disqualify these youths, in an attempt to assert the ethnographer that they had set themselves off from those youths, who, according to them, were of questionable taste. In the second case, in a comparative study on two spaces of sociability in Pelourinho, the territory-events,[24] we can see how one of these, the pagode at the "Espaço Cultural É Proibido Proibir" (It Is Forbidden to Forbid Cultural Space), was described as replete with *braus* in opposition to another event-territory, the 'Bar Cultural' (Cultural Bar), a refuge for a part of the middle class white youth, self-identified as 'alternative' and attempting to hide behind the avalanche of Pelourinho's popular and Negro cultural life.

While it was possible to witness, at the Bar Cultural, an entire regime of corporeality marked by the identification with values of 'good taste' and bodily self-discipline, the *habitus* that coincides with some models re-presented for Salvador's 'white' middle class youth, at 'Proibido Proibir,' on the other hand, the full exuberant explosion of hyper-masculinized and ritually aggressive *brau* performances did not hesitate in exploiting and exhibiting the body by dancing or partly undressing, often alluding to sex as a means of imprinting their surroundings with the exacerbated sexual rhetoric. Hence the qualification as excessively 'Negro.'

Promoted to the condition of racial and gender updating element, the *brau* body performs a subversive and disruptive corporeality that sallies forth against the pacifying senses for male, Negro, and body. By showing the body, changing the hairstyle,[25] showing off the aggressive color of their clothes in the streets, besides representing aggressive posture as a mimic of violence, the *brau* is more or less overt in challenging moral, good taste and racism. Meanwhile, it is more or less contradictory in reproducing stereotypes of itself and, perhaps, appoints the female, or femininess, as its desired and oppressed Other. It seems that the Pelourinho study was very clear as to the importance of the body and the definition of masculinity for these *brau* youths' identity.[26]

With such approximate ethnographic information as a backdrop, I now intend to follow a provisional strategy of critical reading for the *brau* performance, considering the information from a broader context, as well as some theoretical perspectives.

3. The Funk-Soul Complex and the Reafricanized Setting

What could very roughly be called *funk*, *reggae*, and *soul* 'cultures' have assumed a determining role as co-participants in the broader reafricanizing process. In this section we shall discuss one of these fields, the one that has been appointed as essencial for the modernizing turn of traditional Afro-Bahian culture, the funk-soul cultural complex, fundamental for the *brau* configuration.

Antonio Risério is the author of the canonic version on the process, and is precociously cited by Hermano Vianna in his book on 1980's Carioca (from Rio de

[24] Territory-events are transitory and transitive forms of identity or of the identification of urban-complex territories. Cf. PINHO, 1999.

[25] As an effective image-altering strategy, afrodescendants in Salvador, like elsewhere in the world, change their self-image by experimenting with hairstyles. Likewise, the *braus* discolor their hair and grow it into the Black Power style, as it is known in Bahia. On hair politics, cf. Kobena MERCER, 1997.

[26] PINHO, 1999.

Janeiro) funk.[27] Risério enthusiastically documents the invasion of soul music in the years immediately prior to the first appearance of the Afro block (an Afro carnival group) Ilê Aiyê, and shows the disco music fever arriving first in Liberdade and the districts in the periphery, while only later in the middle class neighborhoods. So intense was the impact that even homes underwent rebuilding in order to allow for more space for practicing the steps. James Brown was the Negro hero of the day, identified with the sound track for the *Black Panthers*, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and the struggle for North American Negro civil rights.

The whole of the setting fashioned by *soul* was environed in the seduction of the style and of the consumption which converged with the traditional historical sediments of Salvador's afrodescendant tradition, and it was this particular rendezvous that allowed a specificity for the process to consolidate. As Jorge Watusi, interviewed by Risério, describes:

> The awareness came in like a fad, of course. It had that sound, those clothes, etc. Later on, we realized that this whole thing about fads wasn't such a big deal. That was when Ilê Aiyê came along. I think it was Ilê Aiyê that brought along the passage, and we went from one thing to another. Because, with Ilê came this thing about a more real, a more Afro-Brazilian expression at Carnival.[28]

It must be said that Watusi is comparing the Bahian with the Carioca process, which, precluded, in thesis, from deep-rooted Afro-descendant bases, would precariously sway between pure fads and unfruitful attempts of politicization. In Bahia's case, and this is an 'emic' argument, the anteriority of the African tradition allowed for an appropriation at the same time more political and more original.

The funk-soul fever did not take over only Salvador, evidently, but also seduced Negro youths in different places in Brazil. In the same year in which Risério published his Carnaval Ijexá,[29] Carlos Benedito Rodrigues da Silva presented a talk on a related theme for the workshop "Topics and Problems of the Negro Population in Brazil" at the 4th Convention of the National Association for Post Graduate Studies and Research in Social Sciences (ANPOCS). In this pioneer address, later published with the title *Black Soul: Spontaneous Agglutination or Ethnic Identity*,[30] Silva analyses the *black soul* movement headed by the group Afro-Soul, which started in 1978 in the city of Campinas, in the state of Sao Paulo. The author anticipates the theory he would posit in his book on reggae in Sao Luis. According to this author, the traditional forms of Negro culture, understood as those of African descent, are not the only ones chosen for the expression or articulation of Negro identity for African descendants. Modern and transnational forms of Negro culture would now operate "as a cultural expression that would somehow identify them (by the style they wear, their dance music, etc)."[31]

For Rio de Janeiro, Vianna's book[32] is unquestionably a fundamental source, notwithstanding its difficulties with regard to the comprehension of the racial problematics, just as evident in the phenomenon as it is jeopardized by the analysis. This is a bias also found, in fact, in Suylan Midlej's analysis of Black Bahia's funk,[33] in which, despite the ball known as Black Bahia, with an immense majority of Negro

[27] VIANNA, 1988. I cannot resist but to remark that a broad monography on the *contemporary* Carioca *funk* is yet to be written.
[28] WATUSI, cited in RISÉRIO, 1981, p. 32.
[29] RISÉRIO, 1981.
[30] SILVA, 1984.
[31] SILVA, 1984, p. 245.
[32] VIANNA, 1988.
[33] MIDLEJ, 1995 and 1998.

goers, held in the city's outskirts and playing Black North American music, the author found nothing that would authorize a racial representation. This 'disappearance' may be due to what Souza calls naturalist scientific approaches, "that is, scientific conceptions that do not adequately examine the assumptions of their reflection and appropriate, in the scientific realm, the objective illusions of common sense."[34] Of course, "objective illusion" here refers to the irrelevance of the racial dimension in the contexts analyzed and to the difficulty in identifying racial factors in the production of inequality and identity.

In one way or another, Vianna's book presents a good reconstitution of funk's landing in Brazil. Dom Filó, founder of the Soul Grand Prix company, who attempted to imprint a sense of awareness on youths attracted to *soul*, ended up triggering what would later be called by the press, in 1975, Black Rio, the politicized *soul*. In this context, the polemical question is posed: is *soul* political or not? Does it lead to alienation or does it bring on awareness? Does it colonize or emancipate? It is well worth remembering that this was 1975, before the ebb of the military regime. Carlos Alberto Medeiros, who at that time was member of the Instituto de Pesquisa da Cultura Negra – IPCN (Research Institute for Negro Culture), takes a stand in favor of the funkers and against those who saw funk music as alienation and Americanization:

> It is obvious that dancing soul and wearing its attire, doing the steps and talking the lingo do not resolve, on their own, anyone's basic problem. But it might provide the necessary emulation – by recreating the Negro identity lost in the African diaspora and in the ensuing massacre of slavery and racism – for them to unite and, together, overcome their difficulties.[35]

Along with its dissemination in Brazil, funk also arrived in Salvador. Since 1979, the Black Bahia Funk Ball has taken place at Esporte Clube Periperi (Periperi Sport Club), in the so-called railway suburb of Salvador, one of the city's poorest regions. The Ball incorporates the entire setting, which entails the attire, the slang, the specific way of dancing break, the decoration, the organization of permanent dance groups, such as the "Feras," "Cobras," and "Dragão" ("Beasts," "Cobras," and "Dragons").

The bass in Salvador was organized by Cariocas Mauro Xavier and Petrucio, who had already experienced soul in Rio. Mauro had been working with the companies since 1972. In his statement, the ball draws thousands of people and it was not until 1987 that it "really started to pick up." According to the informants, the ball's main appeal was the sheer pleasure of dancing:

> What makes me want to go to the ball is funk, rap, the pure adrenaline rush in my veins. I'm a funker, I won't lie about it, and what takes me to the ball is this, the style, the funkiness itself […]. Funkers go to the ball with the purpose of dancing funk…[36]

This type of statement is easily found in the literature on juvenile culture associated with music, with the experience of dancing and manipulating the body.[37] The expertise displayed in the belligerent rituals of the boys' dancing movements, the seduction that dancing implies in the affective-sexual market and the link that dancing restores between the Negro body and its history, all of these aspects are recurrent for a number of ethnographic examples and appear to indicate the importance of the

[34] SOUZA, 2000, p. 12.
[35] *Jornal de Música* (*Journal of Music*), n. 33, 1977, cited in VIANNA, 1988, p. 28.
[36] Luís Neves, age 23, cited in Suylan Midlej SILVA, 1996, p. 103.
[37] Cf. for example Carlos Benedito SILVA, 1995.

corporeal culture as a form of reflection on corporeality (historicity incarnated in the body), gender rituals or practices.

Both in Salvador as well as in Rio, funk has instigated "experimentation with visualness, the use of the body and conspicuous consumption (of drinks, attire, music and transportation)."[38] These are the style techniques. When asked "what is a funker" Monica, age 19, replies:

> What the lyrics say: 'I'm a funker, I wear a cap, curly hair, cords and rings' goes for Rio, 'cause they're more used to this style, we adhered to hip hugger pants and shorts; funkers usually wear black. Another real strong feature: you gotta know the music you like, the style that's best for you, and dance, without dance, there's no funker.[39]

Livio Sansone is right to affirm that the spread of Negro music genres does not imply that the meanings these genres assume in different contexts should coincide. Likewise, it appears adequate to emphasize the creative aspects of the relation between youths from peripheral countries such as Brazil with the cultural discourses coming from culture-producing world centers.[40] Meanwhile, it seems to be important to realize exactly how the cultural styles associate with the contingencies of each context in question. I suppose this is where sociological meanings can be extracted, so that it is not enough to examine statements from agents, immersed in their own realities and submerged in the 'intransparency' of social life, mainly if we consider the full ideological weight of Brazilian racialism, which affects agents and analysts.[41] What must be highlighted is how these musical-cultural discourses interact with the structure of power relations and function as instruments that objectify identities and antagonistic positions within a determined field. Precisely what Sansone does when articulating, at one point, the means to transform the metropolitan realities in Brazil, which connect with a world of 'non-guaranteed' workers, globalization and consumer culture with, at another point, the creation of a Negro identity as gateway to political or 'consumer' citizenry.

The Negro identity develops within the movement towards a new citizenry and, in particular, in its most popular forms, or mass forms, it cannot be separated from its desire for consumption and civil fellowship.[42]

4. Racializing Body and Gender

The vernacular installation of the *brau* as an unsettled interface produces its own connection with Salvador's race and gender political economy. The historical underpinning that have produced racial subjects such as these make up a dense network

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[38] SANSONE, 1998, p. 230.
[39] Cited in Suylan Midlej SILVA, 1996, p. 110.
[40] SANSONE, 1998.
[41] Data regarding Brazilian racial inequalities have accummulated *ad nauseam*. At least since the so-called UNESCO cycle of the 1950's and the studies at Escola Sociológica Paulista (Sao Paulo School of Sociology) the race/color bias in the reproduction of social inequalities in Brazil has been unquestionable; on the other hand, the way these inequalities have been interpreted and their interactions in the realm of life have been highly variable (Cf. for example Edward TELLES, 2003; and Marcos MAIO and Ricardo SANTOS, 1996). This feature of the Brazilian social structure also has its ideological connections, mainly with regard to the production of sociological readings on the social/racial settings where the actors – among whom are social scientists – are immersed. This setting is strongly influenced by the Brazilian racial *habitus* and by what is known as the myth of racial democracy. For more on this aspect, cf. PINHO and Ângela FIGUEIREDO, 2002.
[42] SANSONE, 2002, p. 179.

with those other instances that have produced an unsymmetrical society, and reproduced poverty and subordination. The peripheral areas, and the very experience of being peripheral, which is the case of the *braus*, by now thoroughly described,[43] are the token for the shaping of experience and the meaning of the body with its specific performances. Corporeality and subordination regimes, as well as poverty, relative privation, quotidian violence, the patterns of sexual behavior, etc., are intrinsic components of a context which is formed as a setting for social reproduction.[44]

This setting has also redefined Salvador as a re-invention of the image of the city or a reterritorialization that connects the Negro body, re-presented as a re-presentation of the city. Indeed, the social production of the Negro body in Salvador articulates with the social reproduction of a local self-representation of the image of the city, both articulated to the production of racialized gender identities or gender racialized identities.

For the purpose of the debate, I will temporarily assume that the body, as a sociological category, carries the marks of maussian formulation originally present in his paper on "corporeal techniques."[45] To assume this filiation implies leading the discussion towards an understanding of the body's constitution as realized by its relation with the set of techniques that mediate its interaction with nature and with the self. As Alexandre Gofman [46] points out, Mauss pursued totality in his investigations and, concerning the discussions on the body, two tendencies are concealed behind an apparently uninterested tone: 1) the body is a total, social and biological body, not a separate entity where deposits of historicity or culture are converted; 2) a survey of corporeal techniques would allow for an accurate categorization of the cultural abilities in their relation to the body, instead of incomplete or partial classifications. In this case, the sociological task is "to show a social fact."[47]

On this point Mauss does not deny affiliation to Durkheim's approach. In discussing labor division, the latter posits the existence of a collective awareness: "L'ensemble de croyances et des sentiments communs."[48] This awareness is the awareness of a society that "lives restlessly" within us and at times coincides with individual awareness, which is the case of societies based on mechanical or similarity solidarity. In our societies, organized by the division of labor, or based on organic solidarity, individual awareness tends to dissociate itself from collective awareness in an effect of the very shaping of social structure, which makes individual awareness, independent from the structures, a support for social reproduction. Indeed, the shaping of the body or the inculcation of bodily techniques is a part of the individuation process or the shaping of the individual and of the ideal of self. Through this process the shaping of the body is the reproduction of the social body. In this sense, the individual does not exist as an entity prior to society; rather, inversely, it is only made possible as an instance of society, unfolded in the form of individuation.[49] It is only because we elect a concept of society as an autonomous reified reality that we are able to think of the individual as a reality in itself, when actually it is a cultural invention. According to Durkheim, "La vie collective n'est pas née de la vie individuelle, mas c'est, au contraire, la seconde qui est née de la première."[50] In other words, the body is not a

[43] For example, Marieze TORRES, 2002.
[44] Simone MONTEIRO, 2002.
[45] Marcel MAUSS, 1974.
[46] MAUSS, 1974; GOFMAN, 1998; and Fernando BRUMANA, 1983.
[47] Émile DURKHEIM, 1960, p. 46.
[48] Émile DURKHEIM,1960, p. 46.
[49] Marylin STRATHERN, 1996.
[50] DURKHEIM, 1960, p. 264.

natural container for the self, but they both constitute each other in social processes, while constituting the reciprocal relation itself. At the mark of modern capitalist society, the forging of individuals can be thought in terms of an association with social reproduction as replacing relations of production, which are both relations of political domination and economic exploitation:

> The individual is exclusively determined by society, it exists only with social determinations coming from relations of production. There is a theoretical absence of any natural (non-social) determination for the individual […] social relations (society) are not mere social framework with respect to individuals, but they stand as the very structural ensemble which constitutes individuality itself. Individuality is precisely a product of the ensemble of social relations.[51]

The individuation process, on the other hand, can be seen as the personification of social categories or class interests, "embodiment of particular class-relations." [52] In this case it is easy to see that social transformation, that is, transformation of relations of production, which are relations of social reproduction, must be the transformation of the individual, or the transformation that would lead to the individual outgrowing itself. This appears to have been grasped not only by reafricanization's 'organic thinkers' but also by the average individuals who have invested in outgrowing themselves, through the style, with ethnic-political conversion or with consumption.[53] Even this transformation of the individual may be taking place with the pulverization of subject positions and of contingent and partial struggles that make up the new subjects.[54] From this perspective the dissolution of the subject's fixed and stable identity, once represented as the non-mediated incarnation of social values, is the dissolution of society and the frontiers between the subject and its practice.

For Laclau, the very idea of society as a given entity in itself is impossible, given that society would be no more and no less than a system of differences, which, naturally, keeps differing like a recursive or reiterative process. Social conflict or dissension, in this case, is seen as institutor of society, that which moves the machine of differentiation. In fact, the conflict will only gain visibility or enter the game of political struggles metaphorized as an empty sign or discourse, one that has no determined essential referent. Therefore, the political struggle in the era of the decentralization of the subject and the dissolution of society can only be if by representation or fiction, re-presenting something that is absent, like a center that cannot be found.[55] This dissent has also elected the body as the stage for its disputes, as the formation of Negro corporeality seems to show clearly.

We now have the body defined as an instance of social reproduction, operating through the process of transmission of cultural structures for the support of subjectivation by engendering certain practices. These practices can be, and have been in our case, racialized and gendered. Society, however, is not understood as a discreet entity or a fixed set of patterns and norms, observable regularities, but as a field of differentiations that represents itself by means of specific, performative, ideological and critical symbolic practices. The separation between individual and society can henceforth be seen as determined and contingent. Individual and society exist as terms

[51] Victor MOLINA, 1977.
[52] MARX apud MOLINA, 1977.
[53] Olívia CUNHA, 1991 and 1993; LIMA, 1998; and others.
[54] Ernesto LACLAU, 1988.
[55] Andréa CORNWALL and Nancy LINDSFARNE, 1994; and Michael KIMEL, 1998.

in a relation. This relation exposes the constructed character of the idea of society as an absolute exteriority. Body, individual and society are social categories forged in the confluence of discourses and institutions, and their critical dissolution reveals conflicting and antagonistic processes beneath their reified appearance – racialized, gender, class processes, etc. – which constitute social experience.[56]

I will extend the discussion on gender, which has incorporated the debate on the construction of masculinity as a social-sexual category, so as to shed more light on the specific problematics. What is relevant in the debate is to realize that there is no natural form of masculinity, but many occasionally conflicting masculinities. The most significant cleavages seem to be between gays and heterosexuals and between whites and Negros. For every sociocultural context, models of men, both acceptable and virtuous as well as despised, are elected.[57]

Rituals of masculinity have been described, on the other hand, as demonstrations of strength engendering a certain rhetoric of violence and self-determination that places the male in the center of representations of power and dominance. The Negro male, however, is a deficient male because, *vis-a-vis* other males, he is emasculated in the racial subordination to which he is submitted. Moreover, he is that super-sexed, more sexual or more sexually marked than the white man, given his more significant bodiliness and corporeal presence.[58] According to Kobena Mercer and Isaac Julian, "Shaped by this history (of oppression), black masculinity is a highly contradictory formation as it is a subordinated masculinity."[59]

The Negro masculinity would incorporate, in general, the contradictions and the ambivalence typical of race and gender domination structures that are associated and contradictory at the same time. This Negro masculinity is, basically, in-corporated as the ever-conspicuous "Negro body."[60] Even in Salvador, where we are the majority, this body always stands out in the quotidian experience to be symbolized, fetishized and decomposed.

> The black subject is objectified into Otherness as the size of the penis signifies a threat to the secure identity of the white male ego and the position of power which whiteness entails in colonial discourse.[61]

In turn, the masculinities and subject positions themselves are racialized, so that there is not one male, but a Negro or white or gay male, or a male subsumed by a compulsory heterosexuality. Negro men and women, forged by discourses of sex and race, articulatedly interact with the rules of the game, in a context where more power means more masculinity, and its absence means femininess, given that masculinity is a metaphor for power and vice-versa.[62]

Indeed, the sexual morals of different regional/national cultures are highly relevant towards understanding the discursive prevalence and male domination and subalternity, as well as the decomposition of the Negro body. In Salvador, where pleasure is exalted, the Negro body is called on to incarnate the *plus* of sensuality that permeates the city, as a form of stereotyping and submission to the hierarchy of the mind and body

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[56] A recent and very broad debate on the body can be found in Arthur FRANK, 1991; Mike FEATHERSTONE and Bryan TURNER, 1995; and Jean-Michael KIMEL, 1998.
[57] Andréa CORNWALL and Nancy LINDFARNE, 1994; and Michael KIMEL, 1998.
[58] JOHNSON, 1994.
[59] MERCER and JULIAN, 1998.
[60] JOHNSON, 1994.
[61] MERCER and JULIAN, 1988, p. 134.
[62] According to Les Back, "Where men are economically dependent on the sale of their labour, the expression of maleness provides a means to exert power; power is associated with maleness, its absence with femininess."

dichotomy. The aggressive and defying *brau* deconstructs and reconstructs a determined social rhetoric of a sexuality racialized in other terms, oscillating between typical contradictions of masculinized gender performances – fundamentally marked by the exercise of sexuality as a form of construction in itself[63] - and new models for defining negritude or Negro identity.[64]

The Negro body as a cultural object can thus be analyzed as coupled with the general dynamics of discursive struggles only insofar as we are capable of restoring it to its context and historicity.[65] By and large, to read the male body, given the interdiction of its unalienated deconstruction/representation, is a challenge.[66] To read the Negro male body appears to be all the more arduous in that it forces us to consider two dimensions of complexity: on the one hand, the determinations which, from the agent's viewpoint, guide his gender practices as well as his identity performances; on the other hand, from an analytic viewpoint, to read it presupposes replacing the contexts of significant interaction such as contexts of domination and struggle.

In this sense, to interpret the *brau*, which is also, or perhaps fundamentally, to interpret the possibility of its emergence as an ethnographic figure inscribed in the *corpus* of representations of a reafricanized Bahia, entails reconstructing its bonds, limits or porous frontiers with the social context, setting or historical-cultural landscape where it was formed and which it helped to form. The *brau* would not exist had it not been for a specific variant of political-cultural modernization which reafricanization seems to represent, a modernization which carries all the contradictions of a process at the same time emancipating and subordinating, marked by both proximity between detraditionalization and unequal social reproduction in terms of class, race and gender.[67]

5. Conclusion: Corporeal Landscapes

The installation of the *brau* as a popular urban folkclore figure and as ephemeral presence in the ethnography of reafricanization in Salvador allows us to grasp one specific moment of political struggle for representation of race, gender, body and 'culture' in Salvador. These struggles permeate the historical environment by shaping determined structures located in the interconnection between body and landscape, thereby enabling us to speak of corporeal landscapes, as location and instances of deterritorialization for the body and for the city as inter-related structures. The local construction of the *brau* as a representation for the Negro body in Salvador can be understood, therefore, in remission to hegemonized and counter-hegemonic forms of re-presenting this body. But how can the production of the Negro body and racialized corporeal practices be understood?

The Negro body is an Other for the Negro self, given its constitution as a represented alienation in itself, a perverted reflex of white domination, as in Franz Fanon: "In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating. It is a third-

[63] Por example, Maria Luiza HEILBORN, 1999.
[64] We cannot develop these aspects of the *brau* sexuality any further, due to the limited ethnographic data available, but only infer based on what we know. Certainly, and according to what we know for other contexts, the brau sexuality has determining implications for the identity of these youths. To what extent these implications differ from those for other young, Negro or white lower class males is a question for further ethnographic investigation to answer.
[65] JOHNSON, 1994.
[66] Philip CULBERTSON, 1999; and Susan BORDO, 1994.
[67] On pluralization of modernity, cf. José Maurício DOMINGUES, 1999 and 2000.

person consciousness."[68] Or, perhaps, in Jacques Derrida: "Ever since I have had a body I am not this body, hence I do not possess it. This deprivation institutes and informs my relation to my life. My body has thus always been stolen from me. Who could have stolen it from me, if not an Other (…)?"[69] Regardless of who has done the stealing, it seems we have looked to reafricanization and elsewhere for the effort to reinvent it, substitute it, supplement it, reinscribing in it the signs of historicity and effacing the stigma and the compulsory corporeality attached to the Negro body. But in doing so, will we find a way out? Out of the body? Of society? But, where to?

The last frontier seems to be between body and machine. The *cyborg* has already presented its utopian manifest for the 21st century, a challenge against the radical and feminist politics incorporating the alterations in corporeal and 'natural' ethics of the body, at the turn of the 21st century, as a way of challenging the meanings – the code – in societies with high levels of technological mediation.[70] Such societies, with their high density information and prosthetic (chemical, technological or discursive) saturation, transform the body into an accessory of the dissolution of frontiers and limits. The 'new industrial and technological revolutions' are producing new ethnicities and identities, part hybrid and part machine. An impure field of struggle and of heteroclite fusions. Ours is a world porous at the frontiers and at its re-dislocations and re-positionings:

> Barriers are repositioned as porous and actively configurative, structured through relations both trans-spatial and trans-actional. Lines of sight are transformed from vectors to circulatories trajectories that disrupt polarities and interweave themselves into body, language, and landscape, shifting the nature of performative.[71]

I would like to be able to consider the constitution of the reafricanized landscape in Salvador as a landscape signified and permeated by the construction of the Negro body as element in this landscape. Both the 'cultural' – or the dispersed contents of tradition, of memory and of the Bahian specifics, portrayed in viewpoints – and the landscape of power,[72] in that the Negro body's inscription within the landscape takes place by means of codified routes of visual consumption and stereotype reproduction. The Negro organism-body is a disputed and mediated artifact. So is the organism-city, among discourses, representations and practices. Both constitute a possible nexus of transition between frontiers, dislocation of meaning and route distortions, in capturable contingent contexts.

My argument for this aspect, which must be clearly stated, is that the forms of visual alteration, appearance manipulation and stigma reversion are political inscription forms for the afrodescendant visualness in the city's 'body,' subverting the landscape and reinventing places as public spaces for the incipient Negro counter-public in Salvador.[73] Reafricanized social identities, in this sense, would be formed not against the backdrop of the landscape and urban cultures, but within these complex inter-connective assemblages of landscape, body and discourse. The Negro gesture, fixed as a representation, is a mark of the constitution of the afrodescendant individual under the social constraints that make up the integral setting of racism and of the racial division of labor, repeated as an alienated form of experiencing culture. Reafricanization has given new inflection to the traditional forms of afrodescendant critical intervention, as well as to diasporic contracultural tradition. The Negro gesture as subversive act, incarnated in

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[68] FANON, 1967. p. 110.
[69] DERRIDA, 1980, p. 180.
[70] Donna HARAWAY, 1991.
[71] Jordan CRANDALL, 1999.
[72] Sharon ZUKIN, 1991 and 1988.
[73] APPADURAI, 1994.

the *brau* performance, reveals the Negro body as a non-being, a variable and contentious frontier.[74]

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[74] Judith BUTLER, 1999.

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[Recebido em fevereiro de 2004

e aceito para publicação em outubro de 2004]

Translated by Rita de Souza Ávila
Translation from Estudos Feministas, vol. 13 n. 1, Florianópolis, Abr. 2005 p.127-145