MODEL FAVELA: YOUTH AND SECOND NATURE IN RIO DE JANEIRO

by

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Abstract

MODEL FAVELA: YOUTH AND SECOND NATURE IN RIO DE JANEIRO

by

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This ethnographic study of the conflicting social lives of representations of the city centers around the creators of a 4,000-square-foot three-dimensional mockup of Rio constructed with painted bricks, mortar, and detritus. For over fifteen years, teenage boys have enacted a role-playing game within this miniature urban world known as Morrinho, or "Little Hill," on the forested edge of their hillside squatter settlement, or favela. By manipulating and ventriloquizing thousands of inch-tall figurines representing residents, drug lords, police, DJs, politicians, prostitutes—a panoply of social figures—they produce a subversive and ludic perspective on urban reality. The game occupies the same physical ground as competing models: since Morrinho's inception, Rio's elite military police battalion have used the community that gave rise to Morrinho as a "live" training ground, and the municipal urban development agencies have implemented a patchwork of engineering projects and social programs aimed at incorporating this favela into formal property markets. These state initiatives hinge on rendering space and people legible to modes of rule through the use of maps, statistics, and tactical knowledge. Amid these changes in infrastructure and security, Morrinho has become valorized as an alternative form of knowing the city. Its creators have traveled internationally as artists, building replicas of their model in collaboration with youth in new urban contexts. Participants define Morrinho as a

space of autonomous reflection on the city, and the mimetic relationship of their form of play to systems of power and the production of space does not reproduce these processes as a copy, but rather stages it on its own terms. This dissertation thus argues that maps, models, and narratives do not simply describe an external reality but actively participate in remaking the spaces of the city.

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This dissertation is a work of deepest care and patience, not all of it my own. Without the encouragement and support of colleagues, mentors, and friends, this work would not have taken the form it did. While any misrepresentations are my sole responsibility, the merits of this work are in large part reflections of ongoing relationships and conversations.

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This dissertation was completed in memory of Fernando Coronil and Neil Smith. Although Fernando and Neil could not see this work in its final form, every page bears the imprint of their ideas, their convictions, and their absence. I still sorely miss Fernando's witty yet piercing

questions and Neil's growling sense of absurdity and outrage, and I hope that readers who knew and admired them as I did will see "Model Favela" as, in no small part, a tribute to them.

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It is difficult to explain the process by which I dedicated years to such a project, yet my family never questioned that commitment to knowledge production. The patient belief of my father Paolo, mother Surpik, and brother Giorgio buttressed this work in innumerable

imperceptible ways that only now I am able to imagine.

Finally, it is impossible to measure how the moral boosts, meticulous attention, and irrepressible optimism of my loving partner Nicole Labruto have shaped this work, and brought it to completion. We struggle and learn from each other, and I channel her sense of wonder throughout this work. This work was largely written in long commutes to and from our home, but along with geographic oscillations also came sways in creative conviction. In moments when I became stuck in writing, she moved me. When I wandered far afield, she pointed homeward.

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Introduction

As coisas têm peso, massa, volume, tamanho, tempo, forma, cor, posição, textura, duração, densidade, cheiro, valor, consistência, profundidade, contorno, temperatura, função, aparência, preço, destino, idade, sentido. As coisas não têm paz.

Things have weight, mass, volume, size, time, form, color, position, texture, duration, density, smell, value, consistency, depth, contour, temperature, function, appearance, price, destiny, age, meaning. Things do not have peace.

-Arnaldo Antunes, "as coisas"

On May 29, 2011, the squatter settlement of Morro do Saqualé[1] became an *ex-favela*. Two municipal agencies in Rio de Janeiro, the Pereira Passos Institute and the Housing Secretariat, had reclassified Saqualé and 43 other communities with the curious designation. I had left Saqualé the year before following two years of residence and fieldwork there. By all appearances, the locality conformed to the dominant image of what people from Rio, or Cariocas, had become accustomed to calling a *favela*. That is to say, Saqualé was a chaotic agglomeration of small constructions, predominantly made of exposed terra-cotta brick and mortar with concrete slab or corrugated asbestos roofs, extending from an affluent district up a forested hillside. Men and women would descend the hill at the crack of dawn to work as doormen, builders, housekeepers, nannies, and myriad other menial jobs serving the upper classes and tourists. Old women would haul aluminum cans in enormous sacks for recycling, or

[1] I have changed the name of the community, as well as its residents, out of consideration for confidentiality. It is also an ironic gesture and signals how assumptions about place and identity will be problematized and subverted later in this essay. To explain, the moniker *Saqualé* is a linguistic contraction of an expression "Sabe qual é," or "You know the one," which young inhabitants in particular would insert regularly into conversation. Their interjection of the phrase in speech was a part of a linguistic repertoire in the art of knowing and not knowing, divulging and dissimulating, and joking and silence (or not *snitching*) practiced in everyday interactions with peers, neighbors, tourists, and social scientists, including me. When the municipal state introduced the infrastructure-upgrading projects to Morro do Saqualé ("You know which hill") it also changed the official name of the community to the more sanitized Vila Saqualé.

they would sit on a stoop looking after the young ones, their own grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well as their neighbor's kids. Whenever the wind from the Atlantic picked up, young boys would fly dueling kites from atop the slab roofs. Girls sprinted up and down twisting stairways in games they re-invented almost daily. Almost all houses had running water, sewage services, and electricity. The walking paths were set in concrete, the stairs had handrails, and there were public lampposts, albeit several bulbs needed replacement. All this had been declared an ex-favela.

Where, after all, did Saqualé residents locate themselves within the city? For favela dwellers, to be defined by one's own surroundings corresponds to lifelong struggles against both subtle and overt discrimination, shame, and mortal danger. But to be "of the favela" can also be a source of pride, identity, and cultural power. This dissertation is about the social lives of conflicting representations of the city of Rio de Janeiro. This can been seen acutely through the history of representations of and interventions in Rio's favelas. While images of Rio's favelas abound, and have a long and vexed history, favela dwellers' own representations of the city are rare and often undervalued by official organizations. Residents of favelas have been defined by and discriminated against precisely because they are identified with and by the spaces they build and inhabit.

Social scientists have widely refuted the identification of favela dwellers with their environment by emphasizing the social relations undergirding their communities. Underplaying the role of their material surroundings has thus represented an important political claim against the ideology of spatial determinism that has marked squatters as illegal, unhygienic, dangerous, and exotic. However, this dissertation investigates favela dwellers' own relationship to the material environment, and asks ethnographically how they understand, navigate, and produce

urban space. By following how favela dwellers themselves traverse, build, and represent their city, I argue that dismissing their geographic, cartographic, spatial, and material-historic sensibility also dismisses residents' own claims to being more than *da favela*, or "from the favela," defined by their spatial surroundings. Following their constructions, maps, and movements allows an understanding of the claims they make about and *to* the city, which differ from forms of representation produced by government officials, NGO coordinators, art curators, academics, and the police even as they mimic, parody, and play off of them.

"What we want is to promote a reflection on the concept of favela," declared Ricardo Henriques, president of the Pereira Passos Institute (IPP-RIO), explaining the rationale behind the ex-favela classification. IPP-RIO is an urban planning agency responsible for the production and diffusion of statistics and cartographic information in the management of strategic urban development programs.[2] This was a moment where municipal government itself was reflecting on the efforts it has made to "urbanize" Rio's favelas. These interventions included infrastructural upgrades, public housing programs, new day-care centers and public spaces, and other initiatives. IPP-RIO and the Municipal Housing Secretariat (SMH) had collected data on social indicators and come to the conclusion that certain communities no longer fit the statistical criteria for *subnormal agglomerations*. Henriques and his SMH counterpart Jorge Bittar conceded that some of the so-named ex-favelas still had problems to be resolved, such as in security and land titling, but that these areas now received public services identical to the formal city(Daflon 2011). They were henceforth to be classified as "*comunidades urbanizadas* [urbanized communities]."

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[2] IPP-RIO is in fact an *autarquia*, or autonomous organization, created by the Rio de Janeiro Prefeitura, or municipal government, launched in 1999. It replaced the Empresa Municipal de Informática e Planejamento [Municipal Company of Information Technology and Planning], or IPLANRIO, originally the Fundação RioPlan, created in 1979. Henriques's quote in *O Globo* newspaper in the original Portuguese: "O que nós queremos é promover uma reflexão sobre o conceito de favela" (Daflon 2011).

Immediate outrage erupted over the list and especially the notion of ex-favela itself, primarily among academics and favela community organizations. As a matter of public policy, the state appeared to be congratulating itself on a job well done in those 44 communities and absolving itself from further responsibility. The influential NGO Observatório de Favelas, based in the Complexo da Maré compound of several neighborhoods listed as ex-favelas, noted that the connivance that could make 44 favelas disappear from the official record was part of a larger metric that magically shrunk the total number of favelas from 1,020 to 583 in merely 10 months (Ansel 2011). Maré resident and photographer Francisco Valdean launched a humorous protest blog called "*O diário de um ex-favelado* [Diary of an ex-favelado]" chronicling what had not changed in his neighborhood. "The favela is a category full of stigmas. Thus, some think that changing the name will also bring positive value to the place. But it is not simply by changing the category that reality will change" (*ibid*. 2011). Another blog dedicated to commenting on Rio's "urban disorder" denounced the ex-favela concept as "*maquiagem semântica* [semantic makeup]" obscuring the need for "serious policy" (Kruger 2011). Indeed, the valence of a neologism like ex-favela highlighted the ambiguous relationship between a changing urban reality and the ways Cariocas inhabited, experienced, talked and thought about their city. Critiques blasted the municipal government's reclassification as a cosmetic exercise, a discursive façade. These claims were based on the assumption that reality lay behind the physical landscape, and that history itself cannot be erased through language. What binds together these relations and debates, however, is a correspondence between urban space and urban identity. Degraded conditions bred degraded people, goes the logic, so to improve a built environment is to improve its inhabitants. It is in this way that mundane physical features of the city such as

water taps, sewage ducts, electrical lines, and pavement become politicized, as well as markers of history.

In Saqualé, I found nobody commented on their new ex-favela status. But, long before the official decree, I had already engaged with a serious and sustained reflection on the concept of favela and the city at large. A male youth collective had, for over 15 years, built a miniature model of Rio out of the same materials that defined their surroundings: terra-cotta bricks, mortar, assembled detritus, and repurposed objects. They populated this city with thousands of inch-tall figurines, each with its own name, identity, and life history, and played a role-playing game by manipulating and ventriloquizing these avatars. They came to call this space Morrinho, or "Little Hill."

Figure 1 Compound photo of Morrinho site.

But, to borrow a question posed by the same Observátorio de Favelas: what, after all, is a favela (Souza e Silva 2009)? This question has intensified in an early 21st-century Rio that has witnessed a credit-fueled boom in property values, rising working-class fortunes, and will soon host the World Cup finals in 2014 and Olympic Games in 2016. When I started research in 2007,

few people outside of Brazil were familiar with the term. In the intervening years, favela as a concept has entered international parlance to stand for informal squatter settlements or slums. Film, television, and other channels of mass media have largely contributed to the amplification of the term (Jaguaribe 2007). This phenomenon has helped me recognize "favela" as a moving object over time, onto which people have imposed different meanings, with different moral and political valences. In a word, the favela as a category is overdetermined. It is thus inextricably entangled in desires, projections, and judgments of what it should be, what it lacks, or what should be eradicated from it. The will to know one favela has often been caught up in the will to understand favelas in general. And the will to know favelas has often been caught up in the will to change favelas, to improve them, to control them.

The problem of nomenclature is not one to be set aside. Rather, what is deemed a favela, and indeed what is marked as its opposite, whether the normative “city” or *asfalto* (asphalt), are integral to the ways the urban bureaucratic machine operates, the ways social justice movements mobilize, the ways artists, tourists, and development agencies recognize (or ignore) cultural value. In these senses, representations of all kinds figure large in the history of knowledge of the favela and its relationship to the city. Crucially, the analysis presented here follows the ethnographic, historical, and philosophical arguments that define how representations work in social milieus. First, it is vital to this study to consider how representations are a part of and participate in the world to which they refer (Daniel 1984; Parmentier 1987; Peirce 1998). In other words, representations do not stand outside the social, pointing to it from a place of privileged ontological status. It is remarkable, however, how often maps, photographs, models, films, and other signs are treated as if they did. Second, representations are always embedded within, are subject to, and may exert influence over relations of social power. They become

integral parts of political projects, aesthetic appraisals, and moral judgments (Mitchell 1988; Apter and Pietz 1993). Third, representations possess their own materiality (Keane 2005; 2007). Representations have social lives, institutional lives, cultural lives, with historical endurance of their own.[3]

With planning maps and architectural maquettes especially, it is possible to discern a dialectical relationship between what they represent and what work they do as objects. On the one hand, a map may depict the city as a geographical arrangement of streets, buildings, bodies of water, forests, and so on. On the other hand, the same map may be used as a tool to change the city. This opposition is built into the notion of a model itself:

model (*n.*): something which accurately resembles or represents something else, esp. on a small scale; a person or thing that is the likeness of another; copy; exemplar.[4]

Model is a contranym, a word with contradictory meanings: copy and exemplar. It is a relation based on resemblance and, sometimes, scale. Crucially, the relation between a model and a thing modeled is uncertain. Sometimes the model comes "before" the thing it models, like a prototype; and sometimes the model "follows" the thing, as imitation. The contemporary world is awash in models: originals, designs, mock-ups, replicas, duplicates, maquettes, molds, toys, replicas, miniatures, facsimiles, archetypes, templates, best practices, computer simulations, benchmarks, dietary regimens, beauty pageants, legal precedents, Constitutions, financial algorithms, role models, pioneers, model citizens, model students. And consider how much

[3] It would seem we could even dispense with the entire notion of representation, since the emphasis appears to be on what work images and the like do in the social world, rather than what they mean or what they communicate. However, this argument stops short of asserting that objects possess agency of their own (cf. Russell 2007).
[4] Definitions are from the Oxford English Dictionary (2013).

hinges on the certainty of the relation between models and their purported referents: intellectual property, culturally held notions of beauty, market valuation, educational ideals, perhaps knowledge itself. A model may point both to a virtual set of relations behind an object and to a material thing itself, even simultaneously. In other words, no thing is inherently a model of or for anything, and no model is necessarily a concrete thing. The ambiguity of models and model-making animates this investigation into the question of what Rio favelas were, are, and will be.

This study focuses on material environments, how they become represented (as models and maps), and how those representations in turn participate in various kinds of future-oriented projects and projections. Using experiences alongside Saqualé residents—on walking paths, in the midst of constructing a new house, through playing games—I discern the intimate connections between landscapes and practices that go unnoticed in official records but that are, I argue, representations nonetheless. In attending to these relationships to surroundings, this dissertation attunes itself to the cultural poetics and politics of the everyday (Lefebvre 2008; Stewart 1996). I cast this ethnographic knowledge about the city in relief against other forms of knowing in order to consider how they interact and where the gaps may lie. While much of the research rests on the play that I observed and participated in at Morrinho, it is also about the porosity of that space, which intersects with municipal government designations, policing practices, tourist gazes, filmmakers' visions, and social scientists' evaluations. Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong (2011), in the context of recent research on Asian cities, term these "worlding practices": "constitutive, spatializing, and signifying gestures that variously conjure up worlds beyond current conditions of urban living. They articulate disparate elements from near and far; and symbolically re-situate the city in the world" (*ibid.*: 13). This approach casts special attention on how thinking and working with models of various sorts conditions the both planning

imagination and the built form of the city. The resulting picture that emerges is not of one real Rio and multiple representations, but rather one of many Rios existing within those representations themselves, which take on trajectories that overlap, collide, and resist each other.

A (semi-official) history of Morro do Saqualé

Before Morro do Saqualé became an ex-favela, it was an *Área Especial de Interesse Social* [Special Area of Social Interest, or AEIS] in the technocratic jargon of the SMH and IPP-RIO. These agencies managed the territory under this legal instrument, which the municipality, or *Prefeitura*, created in 1990, to permit the state to "urbanize" favelas, irregular settlements, and low-income agglomerations.

Upper- and middle-class condominiums built illegally could not receive AEIS status. The classification did not merely allow but in fact mandated the Prefeitura to intervene through the installation of infrastructure and public services, which included water provision, trash collection, drainage and sewage systems, public lighting, road and sidewalk systems, and reforestation (see Chapter 3). Along with these municipal efforts to introduce urban services and infrastructure to favelas and other so-called "subnormal" settlements, there occurred an explosion in the production of maps, statistics, and other data. A history of Saqualé itself appeared in a "diagnostic" dossier, produced by an architecture firm called CoOperAtiva de Profissionais do Habitat do Rio de Janeiro[5] that was granted the bid to implement. I paraphrase the account here, supplemented by additional historical sources:

[5] "CoOperActive of Habitat Professionals of Rio de Janeiro"

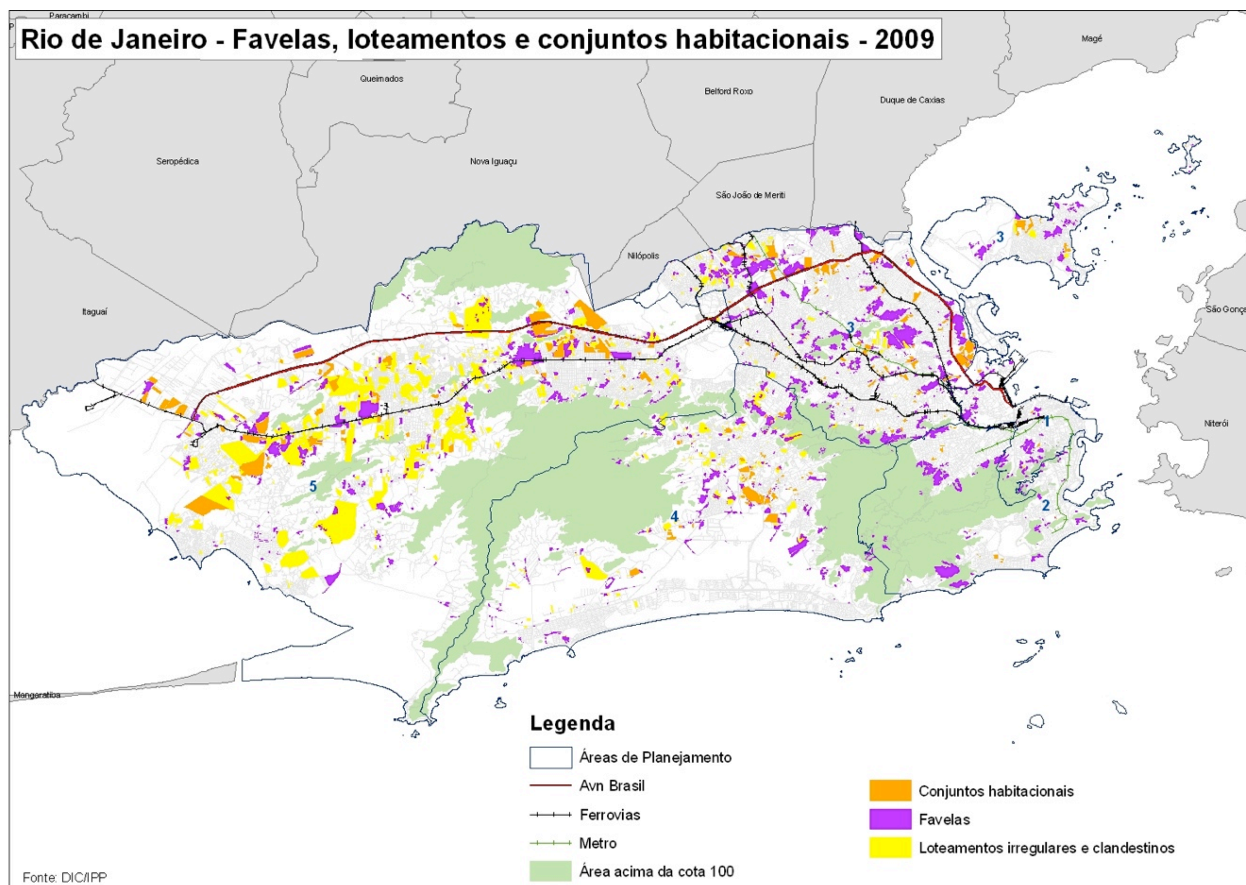

Figure 2 *IPP-RIO map of favelas, conjuntos habitacionais, (housing complexes), and loteamentos irregulares e clandestinos (illegal and clandestine subdivisions) coded purple, orange, and yellow, respectively. Source: DIC/IPP.*

Not long after the Portuguese settlement of Rio de Janeiro at the start of the 16th century, the fertile region of the Laranjeiras [Orange Orchard] valley began to be developed for agriculture. The Carioca River—the waterway after which gives Rio inhabitants their nickname—is central to the history of the urban development of Rio de Janeiro, and today it flows almost entirely hidden beneath the city streets. The first colonists built small farmsteads and ranches (*chácaras* and *sítios*) as a weekend or summer retreat from the hot, bustling center in this area. This suburban expansion displaced and eradicated indigenous Tamoio settlements.[6]

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[6] According to one account, the term Carioca, or *akari oka*, derived from the Tamoio, for whom the river was sacred. It meant "house of the catfish," referring to the resemblance of Portuguese armor to the hard-scaled *acari* fish (*Loricaria plestcostamus*) found along the streambed (Schlee 2002). Another version attributes the origins of Carioca to a Tupinambá town by the same name, *Karîoka*, meaning "house of the carijó," a native bird species. The

In 1839, animal-powered "bus" service was introduced, connecting the valley to the city center. These transportation lines made the area more accessible, and landowners began subdividing properties in pursuit of speculative profits. A decade later, the street that today leads up to the community of Morro do Saqualé was constructed.

The coffee plant arrived in Rio through the Catholic order of the *Barbadinhos*, that began cultivating the shrub in its convent in the city center between 1760 and 1762. Soon after, coffee plantations emerged on the steep hillsides of the Tijuca Massif, on which Morro do Saqualé sits. This industry initiated a process of ecological change in the rainforest. By 1779, Rio was exporting coffee, and the economic boom gave rise to widespread deforestation across southeastern Brazil. A century later, the Atlantic neotropical forests were almost completely supplanted by coffee plantations (Schlee 2002; Abreu 1992). Global demand for sugar, then coffee, spurred the rise of plantations using African slave labor. These industries drained the Carioca River dry before shrinking international demand and competition from the Caribbean destroyed the market for agricultural production (Vianna 1993). The monocultures of those commodities and water consumption devastated the Atlantic forest, leaving behind practically none of the original vegetation (Dean 1995). By the end of the 19th century, two stables, two schools, a brewery, and a textile factory were constructed in the Laranjeiras valley, serviced by an electric trolley (*bonde*).

Until the 1940s, only a few dispersed houses existed on the hillside of Saqualé, inhabited by four families of fishers. A larger compound of unverified origin, known as the *casarão*, was also inhabited continuously since at least the 19th century. The community began to expand after the *Santa Casa da Misericóridia* [Holy House of Mercy], a Catholic charity offering medical

town is mentioned in Jean de Léry's travel narrative, perhaps the first ethnographic account of New World societies, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise Called America* (1990 [1578]).

assistance to the sick and poor, decided to begin renting, at low cost, part of its land holdings in Saqualé. Many civil construction workers and their families settled there to work as builders of the rapidly developing Laranjeiras district. Many women found work as maids (*empregados domésticos*) in the new middle- and upper-class households. Saqualé offered a possibility for working families to afford to live nearby the workplace. Progressive urbanization and deforestation, as well as the channeling of the Carioca River, contributed to chronic flooding in the area, which resulted in catastrophic landslides that destroyed homes and lives in Morro do Saqualé in 1967 and again in 1988. After the latter disaster, the Prefeitura moved all residents to temporary shelters in a nearby public school.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the criminal group Comando Vermelho (Red Command, or CV) established control of the community, setting up a drug sales point, or *boca de fumo*, near the bottom of the hill where the favela met the formal city. For almost two decades, gang members supplied narcotics, mainly marijuana and cocaine, to Cariocas and foreigners living in the affluent South Zone. The economic power accrued through drug sales allowed the CV to manage corrupt police through bribes and intimidation.

In late 1998, military police (PM) invaded and occupied Saqualé, displacing CV dominance there. The selling of drugs in the community nevertheless persisted in more subdued and discreet forms. Ecstasy and crack cocaine became available for purchase in the mid-2000s. Still, the police maintained a trailer outpost at the bottom entrance of the community for nearly eight years, to survey those who descended and ascended the hill crossing the boundary between favela and *asfalto*, or formal city. In 2000, the Special Operations Police Battalion, or BOPE, was installed in a new headquarters perched over a neighboring favela only 500 yards from Saqualé. The elite brigade began to use the community as a tactical “live” training ground. Most

residents were leery of PM officers and preferred the presence of BOPE to the CV gang. But everyone knew to avoid any situation in which the two might cross paths.

Around the same time, the Prefeitura launched the first phase of the Favela-Bairro program, a $1 billion Inter-American Development Bank-sponsored infrastructure-upgrading scheme. Morro do Saqualé was one of 56 locales targeted for a sub-program of Favela-Bairro called Bairrinho, designated for smaller communities comprising 100 to 500 households.

The original cohort of the Morrinho collective was born during this period and this social milieu profoundly shaped their childhoods. One of the social initiatives that dovetailed with the Bairrinho interventions was titled *Vida Nova*, or New Life, launched in 2000. It targeted youth in particular, offering them a minimum monthly salary to attend courses in environmental education, gardening, health, and sports. The objective was to transform young favela dwellers into community agents.

It was a moment of rare optimism. Community organizer Sérgio Corrêa explained that Saqualé "had begun to be a model community." Journalist Zuenir Ventura, author of the influential book of reportage *Cidade Partida* (1994) that fixed into Cariocas' minds the image of a Rio de Janeiro divided into two classes, two spaces, two cultures and whose title became elevated to sociological concept, saw the changes afoot in Saqualé and declared: "That experience… could be made in other places." Documentarian João Salles, director of *News from a Personal War* (Lund and Salles 1999), a scathing indictment of the intractable conflict between police and drug traffickers and the perpetuation of social apartheid in Rio, opined that Saqualé "was the first successful case that I have known" (all citations from Soares 2001). This moment clearly elicited model-thinking among these social actors. Here was talk of exemplariness, of the

possibility of replication in other places, of capturing an image that could be transported and transposed, of a correspondence between a reality and an ideal.

This dissertation follows these instances of model-thinking and model-making as a mode through which the city is imagined and, at times, remade. In a corner of this so-called model community, a group of boys were also contemplating their city through models. But years would pass before correspondences between their model and other representations of the city would come into contact.

Rio through the looking glass

What is the proper representation of a favela? The archive of social scientific knowledge about Rio favelas is vast and complex enough that scholars have produced reviews, guides, and databases of sources, publications, and reports. Julio Cesar Pino (1997) created a useful summary of archives and library collections in Rio, including addresses and hours of operation, that includes state, religious, and humanitarian institutions. Lícia do Prado Valladares and Lídia Medeiros (Valladares and Medeiros 2003) catalogued a comprehensive annotated bibliography of scholarly and official publications, including Master's theses and Ph.D. dissertations, intended for use as a reference guide for researchers.[7]

For the purposes of the present exposition, I present here two heuristic frameworks. One, which we may call the *outside-in* paradigm, may be deployed by state agencies, militaries, police forces, NGOs, journalists, filmmakers, novelists, tourists, and academics. This approach is visible in the politics of assistance, humanitarianism, the exoticism, and eroticism of "entering

[7] The information is also accessible in the URBANDATA-Brasil digital database, hosted first at the erstwhile University Research Institute of Rio de Janeiro (IUPERJ) and later moved to the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). It is fully searchable by author, title, date, place of publication, publisher, document type, research type (case study, secondary source analysis, evaluation, comparative study, historical study), discipline, and locations studied. Works are organized into 26 thematic areas, with full abstracts. (URL: http://urbandata.iesp.uerj.br/)

the favela." It is premised on an asymmetrical relationship, sometimes of dependency, but always of power differentials and unequal privilege. One might detect this perspective in the language of (re)discovery, (re)conquest, and integration. In focusing on the otherness of the favela, its unmarked category indeed remains the outside from which it embarks: the formal city, with its rule of law, contractual arrangements, welfare guarantees, rational order, and ideology of progress. The outside-in paradigm finds spatial and social segregation a moral and humanitarian problem to be overcome. It also possesses a repertoire of instruments for the endeavor of social inclusion: cadastral maps, surveillance technologies, community policing tactics, photographs of atrocity and disorder. These practices effectively produce objects and landscapes to assemble a version of reality convincing enough to be able to make moral and political claims, and to act on those claims. These actions may come in the form of public policy, grants, clientelist institutional forms, poignant films and magazine articles, or collective social action. They smooth over and make the textures of social relations in the favela commensurate with the workings of the outside system.

The other paradigm, the *inside-out*, may be performed by many of the same actors as the first, with the exception of various state apparatuses. Here representations claim to carry the voices and outlooks from inside the favela to a world outside. These accounts may romanticize and use tropes of distinctiveness or authenticity by asserting cultural worth or political autonomy or "alternative" lifeways by whatever measure. In anthropology particularly, the inside-out paradigm maps neatly onto the clichéd dichotomy of local cultures and global systems. Culture then becomes something multiple but generally encompassed by the space of the global. Speaking on behalf of local culture becomes a matter of upholding "diversity" in a world paradoxically taken as singular, even as some radical cultures may contest and shift the global.

I am loosely lumping together a vast range of disparate practices, in part to make strange what I perceive as meta-codes that feed a liturgy of just-so stories. New knowledge is difficult to communicate without offering a topology, however crude, of the political, aesthetic, and moral terrain out of which knowledge emerges and circulates. Both these paradigms, inside-out and outside-in, might find interest in, for instance, the same social phenomenon, but using different agendas. What both agree on, moreover, is that there is a world "out there," singular, definite, independent, and existing prior to description. Disagreements, then, are merely contestations over this reality.

Through a variety of artifacts, including surveys, reports, maps, and films, these paradigms make claims to a version of reality that is understood by default as being external to the social. These representations produce a politics of scale as an effect: what is represented as happening in one place, termed *favela*, is representative of a larger category, *favela*. There is constant slippage between one favela and all *favelas*. Synecdoche is the operative trope: the part is made to represent the whole, and vice-versa. As a category, "favela" is particularly unstable and inconsistent across contexts. It means one thing to police, another thing to the municipal housing authority, yet another thing to politicians, and yet another thing to residents, the young, the elderly, the working class, entrepreneurs, and drug factions. In sum, the favela means many things to many actors, including the people who live there. Why, then, the commitment to the metaphysics of singularity? What work, in other words, does a term like favela do when it is pulled in distinct directions?

Crucially, the point does not rest on complexity itself. Anything can be claimed to be complex, so this in itself bears little analytic power. The argument is not for ontological multiplicity either, with the resulting ethical and political imbroglios that such a position might

entail. I suggest rather a more nuanced approach to the problem of heterogeneity that attends to the ways that differences are regulated (Law 2004:60). This is a theoretical and methodological stance that emphasizes a focus on practices, that are not consistent, but which overlap and hang together in uneven ways. The emphasis on the social life of categories should also not be conflated with social constructivist arguments based on dynamic nominalism or, in other words, performative and reflexive effects of language (Hacking 1999; Austin 1975). This analytic rather attempts to bring to the fore the political contours of practices that do not trouble the North Atlantic modernist paradigm of a single, knowable, reality. In the case centrally analyzed in this work, a role-playing game played by young men, this perception or mode of understanding would elicit questions such as: “Is what they play with here from their real life?” or “Are they depicting their own reality?” or “Is this how they escape their difficult conditions?” or “Is there a revolutionary consciousness in their mode of play?” or “Is it a therapeutic activity for coping with traumatic experiences?” In this single-model paradigm, imagination must have revolutionary potential because it is conceived as standing outside the social; it is an inherent faculty belonging to the human psyche. Likewise, the world of experience itself is assumed to be wholly distinguishable from the world of representation, even though experience is never directly accessible.

Urban natures

How many ways are there to see a favela, or a city, for that matter? How are the practical problems of social inequality and fragmentation to be addressed by calls to rethink reality? To propose such questions is to raise deep skepticism about not just a political order, but an ontological one as well. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s classic ethnography of Araweté

cosmology, *From the Enemy's Point of View*, describes a "society without an interior… the construct[ion] of the person through a process of continuous topological deformation, where ego and enemy, living and dead, man and god, are interwoven, before or beyond representation, metaphorical substitution, and complementary opposition" (Viveiros de Castro 1992:4). The book's intervention into structuralist anthropology challenged the assumption of universal categories across societies. Viveiros de Castro has more recently pushed the way anthropologists have generally conceptualized otherness as a matter of cultural difference. Rather than a single world variegated by multiple human cultures, he has proposed mapping the world as composed of different natures, an alternative ontology to that of one-world/multicultures (2012; cf. Latour 2009). Viveiros de Castro puts the argument most succinctly in this way:

> (Multi)cultural relativism supposes a diversity of subjective and partial representations, each striving to grasp an external and unified nature, which remains perfectly indifferent to those representations. Amerindian thought proposes the opposite: a representational or phenomenological unity which is purely pronominal or deictic, indifferently applied to a radically objective diversity. One single "culture," multiple "natures" - one epistemology, multiple ontologies. Perspectivism implies multinaturalism, for *a perspective is not a representation*. (2012:112; my emphasis)

Bounded within the same space of the Brazilian nation-state, Rio de Janeiro may represent a vastly different context from that of Amazonian tribal life, but the language of favela improvement and integration is loaded with the presuppositions of colonial thought. Ventura's (1994) image of a divided city implicitly made a single, united urban society the normative ideal: a city with two classes inhabiting distinct territories with distinct cultural universes. The "cidade partida" was always a polemical postulate that elided the spaces of contact, mixing, and promiscuity between favela and asfalto, such as workplaces, domestic spheres, and leisure spaces. But the resonance of this trope, the unease it produces, has everything to do with a discomfort with what John Law (2004; see also, Mol 2002) has called multiple ontologies. The

logic of scientific rationality, of liberal governance, of Western metaphysics says: no, we demand that reality be singular; alternate universes may be the stuff of quantum physics, but ordinary folks necessarily share one reality. Political struggle consists in disputes *over* that one, shared reality. Multiplicity can only be conceivable as a question of *ideas about*, or *viewpoints on* the world, but the world itself is a stable, knowable totality.

As a basis for calling for a social science that allows for unpredictability and is more attuned to incoherence, Law outlines five common sense assumptions about reality. The first is that reality is *out there*, beyond ourselves. A second is that this external reality is *independent of our actions and of our perceptions*. The third assumption is that this external reality *precedes* us. The fourth holds that external reality possesses, or is made of, *definite forms or relations*. The final notion maintains that reality is shared, common, and the *same everywhere* (Law 2004: 23-25). Law goes on to suggest that social science seek out and develop a sensibility toward bundles of objects and practices that do not conform to these tenets of commonsense reality. These are things and spaces that inscribe realities and enact possibilities, impossibilities, and probabilities. Law calls these *hinterlands*, and this concept captures a sense of Morrinho.

Curiously, the notion of multi-natures, if not perspectivism, itself has an alternative history that derives not from ethnographic research in the Amerindian Amazon, but is located firmly within the Euro-American metropole. I specify, in fact, *a* notion of multiple natures. This tradition traces back at least as far as Cicero, who posited second nature as what is socially produced out of first nature, which is the world outside of human activity (Smith 2008:66). Cronon's history of Chicago's development, the relationship between the city and its hinterlands, is a paradigmatic study, showing how the transformation of physical and abstract space produced a second nature on top of the first, which through successive interventions blurred the distinction

and marked the scalar expansion from the local to regional and global economy. Neil Smith elaborates this relationship under the historical development of capitalism, which "is not merely a linear expansion of human control over nature, an enlargement of the domain of second nature at the expense of the first. With the production of nature at a world scale, nature is progressively produced from within and as part of the so-called second nature" (Smith 2008: 77).

Infrastructure and financialization

The integration of Rio's informal settlements into the formal economy hinges on transformations, on the one hand, in their infrastructure and, on the other, in their security profile. Projects aimed at the former are broadly termed the *urbanização* of favelas. In the vast majority of localities where such schemes have been implemented the projects consist in retrofitting already existing water, sewage, drainage, electric, roads, and other systems. Thus, urbanization seems a misnomer that reinforces the normative notion of the city. We might rather describe a state-led re-urbanization of the periphery, and the displacement of one rentier class by another.

What, after all, is infrastructure? This question has been taken up with increasing interest in social scientific debates. Many anthropologists have begun focusing on infrastructure as a key site of contestation and production of political subjectivity. For Holston (2007), self-help construction on the periphery of São Paulo became a method to turn material needs into rights claims. Community-building initiatives confronted the *de facto* legalization of social inequality with alternative forms of citizenship such that squatters not only build the city but also new forms of belonging. If citizenship is enshrined in liberal political theory as a universal right ascribed to the individual and differentiated only by its distribution across actually existing

society, Holston suggests that the "insurgent citizenship" he chronicles in the São Paulo periphery reveals how alarmist discourses on global slumification are too often reductive, overdetermined, and dismissive of the agency of squatters themselves.

Beyond instruments for broader claims to political inclusion, infrastructures are also artifacts of material culture. In a compelling discussion hosted by the journal *Cultural Anthropology* (Anand et al. 2012), anthropologists Nikhil Anand, Jonathan Bach, Julia Elyachar, and Daniel Mains envision what an anthropology of infrastructure would look like. They highlight how infrastructures are the physical articulations of the social imaginary, ideology, and social life, and play key roles as technologies of biopolitical rule. The turn toward this object of inquiry pulls in strands of thought from longer traditions in the anthropology of modernity, urban geography, political ecology, and science and technology studies to bring closer ethnographic attention to the interactions between human and non-human actors (Gandy 2005; McFarlane and Rutherford 2008; Farias and Bender 2010). Infrastructures, in effect, "make things move" across distances and scales, and thereby amplify the circulation of resources and inequalities over geographical space. While urban installations such as ports, highways, pipelines, reservoirs, and waste treatment plants are sometimes contested for how they articulate the politics of place and property, as in NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) opposition to new development (Lyon-Callo 2001), infrastructures are distinctly about the metabolism of the city and trans-local material connections. Their role in regulating the circulatory flows of resources, wastes, commodities, data, and peoples contributes to a revised theory of the city that in fact problematizes not only the classical urban anthropological paradigm of bounded enclaves within the metropolis but also the very notion of the urban as a spatially definite entity (Graham and Marvin 2001; Amin and Thrift 2002). Historically, and at a global scale, infrastructure investment has been a key strategy

through which capitalism has reinvented itself, and reshaped cities in the process. Periodic cycles of capital overaccumulation have led into financial collapse, and debt-financed infrastructure projects, reaching not only far and wide on mass metropolitan and regional scales but also into the intimate spheres of domestic and private life, have represented a primary way by which capitalist crises have been overcome, as in Harvey's paradigmatic study of the confluence of emergent financier class power and urban regeneration in Second Empire Paris (2003). Put simply, new infrastructures—and new infrastructural projects—are sites where we may see idle capital seeking new places to go. And wherever capital lands, it remakes space.

With so much of infrastructural systems hidden away from view or ignored by their sheer taken-for-grantedness, a closer examination of their everyday workings promises to reveal the "exponential complexity and vulnerability of structures on which livelihoods, security, and identities rest" (Anand, et al. 2012). Indeed, infrastructures are most acutely visible when they fail or are interrupted or sabotaged (Graham 2010). The politics of infrastructure may transcend normative debates over privatization and ultimately entail the urban re-making of nature (Gandy 2002; Swyngedouw 2006). This nature is not only manifested as ecology but also as affect, as in the production of abjection through the denial of infrastructural provision (Anand 2012; Rodgers 2012). Such struggles often pit technocratic expertise against the practical knowledge of ordinary residents. Infrastructural investments often involve calculations of risk that combine evaluations of the economic and moral worth of territories and their inhabitants. What to destroy and what to construct—and where—becomes a metric of property struggles among actors, who become "stakeholders" in the negotiation. These projects possess a temporality and scale (the long-term, the metropolitan, the regional) that grates against the exigencies of capital return cycles, and thus are often "delegated" as state-level concerns that private capitalists do not have the capacity or

interest to pursue. They are, however, vitally important as "spatial fixes" that annihilate spatial barriers to capital accumulation (Harvey 2007). Once put in place, the materiality of infrastructure makes it resistant to change from "above" and is thus a way to observe planning, its effects and unanticipated consequences.

In other favelas I visited in Rio, community leaders often framed a politics of infrastructure around a temporality of before-and-after intervention that underscored a lack of reciprocity. One resident association president showed me a bulletin board of photographs taken on the day of inauguration of various works in the favela: a new public space, a new staircase with handrails, and a sewage ditch restored to a mountain stream. We then toured the same sites so that he could exhibit, by contrast, their current state of disrepair and disorder. This kind of performance provided a common idiom for claiming that the community was only of political value when infrastructure could be turned into a symbol of state beneficence and personalist patronage (Gay 1999; Auyero 1999). In Rio, this moral economy has a long history and a name—*a política da bica d'agua* [the politics of the water tap]—most closely identified with the electoral machine of politician Antônio de Pádua Chagas Freitas.[8]

Public discourses tend to either portray favela dwellers as parasites on urban infrastructure or romanticize them as unwitting builders of an organic, sustainable kind of urbanism. Both sides express an intense concern with the ecological impact of the favela, and both presume uncritically that the favela is a collective choice of the impoverished masses. The former perspective inevitably generates desires for solutions to the favela-as-problem. Displacement and removal, and more recently, enclosure walls and the enforcement of building

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[8] Chagas Freitas was Guanabara state governor from 1971 to 1975 and Rio de Janeiro state governor from 1979 to 1983. Critics and opponents accused him of a specific brand of clientelism, indeed *chaguismo*, which delivered infrastructure projects to favela residents in exchange for votes while also using the state to promote financial and real estate interests through the construction of large public works (Machado da Silva 2002).

codes, have followed from this narrative. Favela removals, historically associated with the draconian rule of military authoritarianism (1964-1985), has resurfaced in the wake of destructive landslides. In 2010, at the conclusion of fieldwork for this project, the Prefeitura began designating certain portions of favelas as "risk areas." This state of emergency saw a confluence of ecological and security discourses that gave the state new political leverage to eradicate settlements and relocate residents deprived not only of their home but also a means of negotiation. In 2011 and 2012, fierce protests of favela communities against displacement raised animated the politics of mega-event urban development ahead of the World Cup and Olympics, and foreshadowed the broader social manifestations of 2013 that swept across Brazil's urban centers.

The latter perspective, which champions the favela *as* a solution and ready-made alternative to the brutal rationality of modernist architecture and planning, recognizes a lack of amenities, services, and spaces construed as "basic needs" and sets agendas for overcoming these deficiencies. From this approach, the recognized problems to be attended to are related to social and spatial segregation, and the formalization and regulation of informal economies, including housing markets and illicit commerce. This type of enterprise has become the calling of architects and urbanists (Hernández, Kellett, and Allen 2009; Jáuregui 2011; Fabricius 2011), as well as economists (de Soto 2002).

Virtualization and its discontents

There must be alternative ways to ask questions of infrastructure that do not silence the desires of residents nor obscure the contours of political rule across broader society, that furthermore treat infrastructures as spatial products that mediate social processes (and as spatial

processes that mediate social ends). One such question is to investigate how aspiration or, more formally, utopia attaches itself to the world. To whom does the aspiration to remake the city belong, and how do such desires shape political identities and institutional life?

In Rio, the re-urbanization process purports to undo two centuries of social exclusion that has inscribed itself into the landscape, even as it does not address the mechanisms that reproduce these divisions nor the wealth that accumulates as a result of them. Indeed, within the logic undergirding so-called favela consolidation, there is no direct conflict or tension between unregulated urban growth and capitalist accumulation strategies. Many scholars have recognized that the proliferation of favelas, and "slums" more globally, represents an externality or subsidy to capitalist accumulation (Perlman 1976; Davis 2006). Residents of informal settlements and actors in informal economies, these observers argue, perform a vital role in the circulation of capital, and in doing so reveal its dependency on labor reserves. A vast literature on social exclusion points to legal, cultural and physical forms of discrimination that deny favela dwellers access to full citizenship rights and material resources.

What has developed over the past two decades turns that resource question inside out: new (but not really new) forms of lending practices in North America and in the global South point to an aggressive turn in capitalist accumulation strategies that hinge on the perception of poverty itself as a resource. The invention of an entire architecture of sophisticated financial instruments has introduced to the public the rarified argot of credit default swaps and mortgage-backed securities (LiPuma and Lee 2004) as well as micro-lending schemes promoting entrepreneurialism among impoverished urban dwellers. Furthermore, these have led to large-scale dispossession in suburbs of US cities as well as less perceptible forms of micro-exploitation of the poor in the global South (Roy 2010; Aalbers 2012; Elyachar 2005; Harvey 2003)(Roy

2010; Aalbers 2012; Elyachar 2005; Harvey 2003). We find one of the new frontiers of capitalist expansion in the so-called reconquest of peri-urban environments. Like previous waves of accumulation by dispossession, this civilizing mission hinges on the exercise of mass violence, the disruption if not destruction of indigenous livelihoods, and modes of exoticization that provide ideological and ethical support for imperialist projects.

However, precisely how surplus value is extracted and appropriated from Rio's favelas is both a reprise of civilizing missions of the past and something new and emergent. In *The Urban Revolution*, Henri Lefebvre (2003 [1970]) envisioned what urbanization on a planetary scale could mean. In his formulation, state power and capitalist accumulation fragments space and renders them homogeneous, creating separate "habitats" of politically passive consumers. He called this abstract space. Against abstract space of the industrial city Lefebvre posited the possibility of urban society, which produces and thrives in differentiated space. What gives rise to urban society is the vast repertoire of emerging but scattered practices already taking place. These spaces are characterized by encounter, play, *jouissance*, and free activity as opposed to alienated labor. Lefebvre considered urban society neither something fully formed nor a utopian idealism, but rather a "virtual object," the idea of a possible urban world.

Etymologically, virtual refers to something "as good as" another. It is a word that describes a relation of equivalence. We might say all exchange, whether of symbols or of money (in the end a symbolic form of value), contains a virtual dimension in that signs mediate social relations. This is another way of saying that political economy has always had to reckon with the social life of signs in order to understand how value is produced, circulates, and is consumed. In this sense, capitalism has always been virtual. Marx was dedicated to revealing how the power of money was mystified through its appearance as things (coins, commodities, machines) rather

than as relations among humans. Some have argued that capitalism has entered a stage of its development dominated by virtualization (Carrier and Miller 1998; Hart 2001). These accounts emphasize the shift from material production to information services and the detachment of the circulation of money from production and trade. They essentially point to the rise of money being made with money.

Marx called finance "fictitious capital" and described it as a radical form of commodity fetishism. Financial speculators treat credit papers as equivalent to capital. That is, the anticipated growth of money is objectified in credit paper, which itself acts as a motor for growing value. Marx contrasts fictitious capital with "real capital" (invested in the means of production and labor) and "money capital" (held funds). He correctly claims that it is incorrect to take fictitious capital as a false appearance because this misapprehension has concrete effects in the world. The 2008 collapse of global financial markets demonstrated, as many before it had, that finance was not an extension of the so-called real economy but its overlord. There erupted widespread confusion and anger in the US over the implosion of commodity values, primarily housing. The value of a house not only had become wildly detached from its use value, its ability to provide shelter and a sense of belonging, but also, it should be noted, entangled in all sorts of new expectations related to its anticipated return on investment. This disjuncture was (and still is) an economic as well as a cultural one. The bundled securities scheme fed upon and was fed by a domestic ideology of homeownership as a vehicle for citizenship and social uplift, as well as a blind faith that new financial instruments had devised a non-zero-sum game in which all—residents, investors, creditors, banks—would benefit. The breakdown of the financial system was also the breakdown of the fiction capital was telling about itself and the world it would create. The narrative that immense wealth was being created from nothing was obliterated by an

economic reality that revealed immense wealth being appropriated, while leaving many with next to nothing.

Historical perspectivism on the favela

It is from this departure point that we may begin examining the nature(s) of the favela. Several commentators have expressed perspectival approaches to the matter. Holston, in a historically and ethnographically informed study of the development of citizen rights among São Paulo's urban squatters, observes:

> Most Brazilians who live in the peripheries understand them as a process of transformation because they have built them, turning their hinterlands into urbanized neighborhoods. But most who do not reside there have only a presentist view of their formation and significance. They do not consider them a work in the making… Instead, they think of the peripheries as something to be acted upon *from the outside*. As they look down on them from airplanes, view them on television, and drive past them on highways, they may see them as targets of assorted political and economic proposals for a different future in Brazil. This bird's-eye-view of history is, paradoxically, dehistoricizing because it works backward from an imagined future to a proposal for the present as its precondition... It does not recognize the peripheries as a place where Brazil's past and present disrupt each other, much less does it consider this disruption an important agent in constructing a different future. (Holston 2007: 34; my emphasis)

Holston here references the politics of perspective, which are not so much about representation as positionality—from the airplane, the television, the car. These social vantage points themselves are embedded in the presuppositions attached to the favela "from outside."

The answer to these questions is addressed masterfully by Valladares's historiographical *A invenção da favela* (2005).[9] A study not only of the development of thought about favelas, but

[9] This indispensible work is often out of print in the original Portuguese and was recently published in a French edition. Given the importance of Valladares's contribution to favela studies and its relative obscurity to Anglophone researchers, a full review of the book's argument is presented below.

a "sociology of the sociology," the book intervened at a moment when the rise of data-driven research had begun to produce an intellectual amnesia about previous research, with scarce reflection on the social conditions of its own knowledge production. In essence, its publication promised to frame the "rediscovery" of the favela at the end of the 20th century within a longer trajectory of ideas in public health arenas, media accounts, and the social sciences. The objectivism of new mapping and statistical data appeared to uncover the presence of favelas in the midst of the city, as if they had never been noticed or written about before. Valladares deconstructs the prevalence of these "objective" indicators, as if they were not themselves social products of a historical context. Her point of departure is to approach the favela as a hypothesis, not an assumption.

To summarize a long and thoroughly documented account of the changing discourses on favelas, Valladares argues that the favela needed to be invented to be understood. In fact, she details how the favela had been re-invented continually over time. It was not social scientists who initially "discovered" poverty but rather the lettered professionals in journalism, literature, engineering, medicine, law, and philanthropy with reformist agendas (see also, Rama 1996). Their knowledge of the favela was practical and prescriptive: the favela was defined by unhygienic conditions and morally repellant behavior, including debauchery, promiscuity, leisure, and anomie.

In the years following the 1889 collapse of the Brazilian monarchy, republican elites' designs on a new social order were shadowed by a disquiet over what they perceived as the nation's backwardness. This dualism is by no means unique to Brazilian history. Post-independence Latin American nationalism is bound intimately to, on the one hand, an "anxiety of influence" vis-à-vis imported universalist values of European liberalism and, on the other, the

question of the nation's internal Others (Rama 1996; Skurski 1994; Paz 1961; Bartra 1992). This dichotomy presented social policy with the problem of how to reconcile ideals of freedom and equality with the economic requirements of forced labor. Throughout Latin America this governmental dilemma became articulated through a regime of spatial and racial ideologies that inflected the instruments of state power. Immigration policy, urban planning, and public health became critical arenas for the disciplining, surveillance, and administration of populations. In Brazil, as in every postcolonial case, this complex of policies and institutions became configured in particular ways. Rio de Janeiro, as federal capital, served as a prime laboratory and barometer of the Brazilian modernist project, but it was in the backlands of the northeastern state of Bahia where the legitimacy of rule came under its first definitive challenge.

For all their self-assured pragmatics, the first observers of favelas in Rio were enormously influenced by a former soldier, engineer, and frontlines correspondent for the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* named Euclides da Cunha. This intricate and dramatic episode in Brazilian history became monumentalized in da Cunha's *Os Sertões* (1902), translated into English as *Rebellion in the Backlands* (1944). Canudos was a religious community founded by preacher and mystic Antônio Mendes Macial, known to his followers as Antônio Conselheiro ("the Counselor"), on the site of an abandoned ranch in the interior of the state of Bahia. The message Conselheiro professed attracted tens of thousands to the settlement at its height, a population consisting predominantly of freed slaves, landless farmers, peasant families, indigenous groups, and some "'white women from 'good families'" (Levine 1992:132). The growth of the community at Canudos sapped landowners of their labor force and presented the Catholic Church with a struggle against what it perceived as heterodoxy and millenarian mysticism.

Slavery had been abolished in 1888, and the monarchy was overthrown the following year. The Republican state introduced a series of measures in the interest of modernizing Brazil, including decrees proclaiming Portuguese the official language and standardizing a system of weights and measures nationwide. To urban Republican elites, Canudos represented a defiance of this modernist project and a shameful blight of backwardness on the national landscape. It also represented the growing threat of residual monarchist sympathies, as the press falsely portrayed Conselheiro as a supporter of crown rule. "Canudos was a war with two fronts. One happened in the village itself; the other almost 2000 kilometers away, in the Federal Capital, since the mobilization around military action had solid bases in explicitly insurrectionist motives… Opponents to state power disseminated, in the guise of fragile arguments, the idea that this faraway village was a stronghold of monarchist resistance" (Almeida 1997:13). Thus, articles circulated in Rio about how "arms would be transported in the dead of night to Canudos, where a powerful army would be prepared to destroy the Republic" (*ibid*.: 13-14).

"*Que nos ficará depois da vitória da lei*? [What will be left of us after the triumph of the law?]" wrote the great Brazilian literary writer Machado de Assis in a published article for *A Semana* on January 31, 1897 (cited in Almeida 1997: 11), in anticipation of the fourth and final campaign against Canudos. During the conflict, De Cunha frequently reported from the army base camp overlooking the Canudos settlement, a site soldiers had began calling Mount Favella, after the resiliant plant that survived the harsh conditions of the sertão. From this strategic location military forces bombarded enemy *jagunços* ("thugs") with heavy artillery. The diary of Major A. Constantino Nery, published as a facsimile a century later, refers to the *Alto da Favella* as a base of operations and locus of relative security on the Canudos campaign (1997). Mount Favella became a critical foothold for the Brazilian army, which otherwise had been

extraordinarily susceptible to attacks from *jagunços* who, da Cunha emphasized, were able to trump the technological superiority of their adversaries with a profound geographic knowledge of the *sertões*.

In the final offensive, Republican soldiers executed every last male, most with extreme cruelty, and razed every last building to the ground. It was a campaign of eradication of bodies and built environment, as well as a staged spectacle: the body of Conselheiro himself was exhumed and decapitated, the head transported as a trophy for public display. Da Cunha concluded his account in *Os Sertões*, "After that they took it [Conselheiro's head] to the seaboard, where it was greeted by delirious multitudes with carnival joy. Let science have the last word. Standing out in bold relief from all the significant circumvolutions were the essential outlines of crime and madness" (1944: 476).

During the Canudos campaign, da Cunha characterized the conflict as an expression of a fundamental antagonism between the forward-looking, modern urban society of Brazil's litoral region and the primitive, superstitious, sensuous fanaticism of backlands. Importantly, as three initial assaults on Canudos failed to capture Conselheiro, the bellicose zeal of the press began to engender panic in coastal cities. Da Cunha observed the dangerous porosity of this dualism while reporting on a mob riot at the editorial offices of monarchist journals in Rio:

> Backlands lawlessness was precipitately making its entrance into history; and the Canudos revolt, when all is said, was little more than a symptomatic malady which, by no means confined to a corner of Baía, was spreading to the capitals of the seaboard. The man of the backlands, that rude, leather-clad figure, had partners in crime who were, possibly, even more dangerous… Here, as in all places and in all ages, the portentous force of heredity, out of the most advanced environment, was producing—gloved though they might be and with a veneer of culture—thoroughgoing troglodytes. Civilization in general, in its normal course, condemns such beings; it dominates and manacles them, rendering them useless and gradually destroying them by driving them back to the darkness of a meaningless existence, from which they are rescued only now and again through the curiosity of some fanciful sociologist… But it invariably happens that a

> profound shock will bring them into conflict with the law, and they then arise and invade history and a scandal ensues. (*ibid*.: 279-80)

Several points emerge out of this bombastic passage. First is a blurring of the metaphorical landscape of civilization and barbarism that maps the former onto the space of the city and latter onto the backlands. Urban riots in *fin-de-siècle* Rio de Janeiro (Meade 1997; Carvalho 2006; Sevcenko 1993) exemplified for da Cunha how disorder from the margins may, as he puts it, "invade history," of which the city is its central agent and bastion.

Robert Levine's revisionist account, *Vale of Tears: Revisiting the Canudos Massacre in Northeastern Brazil, 1893-1897* (1992), takes up da Cunha's conflicted scientific racism and Comptean Positivism. On the role of the news media, Levine remarks that "the Canudos conflict flooded the press, invading not only editorials, columns, and news dispatches, but even feature stories and humor" (*ibid.*: 24). The choice of the word "invading" here appears especially remarkable, for da Cunha in the previously cited passage couches this notion in the language of contagion.

Much of da Cunha's account is dedicated to dispassionate descriptions of the indigenous flora of the region. This is no accident. References to *favella* refers to the indigenous plant that thrives in the arid climate and inhospitable soil of the Bahian backlands. Following a Lamarckian evolutionary theory that posited that individual organisms pass on characteristics adapted from their environment to their offspring, da Cunha portrayed the sertão as a barren, empty inland expanse. Da Cunha worked through a racial scientific ideology that tied people to their geography. Thus, the people of the backlands were devoid of culture and civilization. *Os Sertões* indeed opens with an extended naturalist survey of the region. In his description of the thorny plant that bears the name *favella*, he wrote remarkably little: "The *favellas*, nameless still to science—unknown to the learned, although the unlearned are well acquainted with them—…

possess leaves which… are a remarkable means of condensation, absorption, and defense" (Cunha 1944: 32-33).

Veterans, both male soldiers and women who had supplied foodstuffs at the frontlines, returned to Rio with grievances regarding the overdue payment of their pensions, and many built ramshackle dwellings on Morro da Providência, the hillside overlooking the War Ministry. Sonia Zylberberg recounts how Providência became renamed Morro da Favela. She comments that "it is important to understand not only when and why the word *favela* is born and spreads. It is important to observe the diverse 'meanings' attributed to it since its appearance. Such meanings vary in accordance with the epoch and with social group that create them" (Zylberberg 1992:57).

The origin story of the favela obscures as it renders visible the presence of a new housing type on the peripheries of Rio. Other settlements had been built in other parts of the city since at least the end of the Paraguayan War in 1879. Anti-vaccination riots in the Centro met with violent repression and the destruction of *cortiços* (tenements). Most infamously, mayor Barata Ribeiro ordered the demolition of Rio's largest cortiço, known as Cabeça de Porco, which housed over four thousand dwellers and had inspired Aluísio Azevedo's classic novel, *O Cortiço* [*The Slum*] (2005 [1890]). The rapid expansion of favelas at the turn of the century is attributed to this mass eviction of the impoverished classes from the city center. "With no other alternative, the evicted masses collected the wood from discarded boxes at the port and used it to begin constructing crude shacks on the steep sides of the hills which surrounded the city… This was the origin of the favelas" (Sevcenko 2000:87).

Two legacies of the Canudos war stand out: the migration and transmutation of the term favela from the backlands to the center of the capital, and the transformation of the soldiers themselves from instruments of state terror to victims of state neglect. This particular aspect of

the history of favelas has gone unaddressed in the literature, even though it directly informs re-evaluations of the relationship between the state and the dispossessed. Who these returning soldiers *were* thus becomes a critical question addressed by Peter Beattie in *The Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nation in Brazil, 1864-1945* (2001; Smallman 2002; Kraay 1997; Hahner 1969). He examines the impressments and enlistment systems from the colonial period to the early 20th century, as well as reform efforts to convert the army from Brazil's central penal institution to one of rehabilitation and discipline associated with national honor and the familial domicile. He argues that the army became a key institution in the construction and maintenance of a class of "honorable poor," as well as notions of family, sexuality, and honor. In focusing on how men entered and left the military, Beattie reports that:

> Some veterans did become vagabonds. Many thronged with mendicants in church entrances, and some sought refuge in overcrowded poor houses. The unique Brazilian term for urban slum, *favela*, derived from the makeshift community built on Providence Hill near the War Ministry in Rio by veterans of the Canudos campaign who awaited their mustering out pay. This association of squalor and enlisted army service must have pained and amused many men who had camped near Mount Favela at Canudos. Praças [noncommissioned soldiers] thus indelibly marked Brazil's urban landscape and vocabulary with their architecture and ironic word play. (Beattie 2001: 173)

The invention of the favela at its first instance is then intimately bound up with the contradiction between the honor of national service and the social ranks out of which soldiers are enlisted and into which they are discharged from duty.

Valladares underplays the interrelations between militarism and class inequality at this historical juncture. It was rather da Cunha's account of the siege of Canudos itself that influenced Rio's urban reformer elites of the era. The widely-read *Os Sertões* depicted rapid, disordered, precarious urban growth; a defensive stronghold topography; collective rather than private land property relations; an absence of State control; a political order under a charismatic leader (Conselheiro) preaching open insurrection against the law; a space that conditioned

collective identity (*comunidade*); immoral behaviors; a risk of contagion; and a sense of unboundedness from the exigencies of labor (Valladares 2005: 33-34). The specter of Canudos haunted elites who perceived the favelas as a threat, above all, to moral order and public hygiene.

Tellingly, from 1890 until 1959, the only men elected mayor in Rio were engineers and physicians. They expressed a deep belief in the power of technocracy. They held environment as a direct source of physical and moral evils. These men applied themselves to finding precise causes and technical solutions. They imagined the city as a machine, a visible manifestation of a social totality. Favelas, by contrast, represented the antithesis to technical rationality and the proper regulation of the city. Valladares identifies a key underexamined pioneer in favela interventionism, Augusto de Mattos Pimenta, Rotary Club member and founder of the Rio Real Estate Brokers Syndicate. Mattos Pimenta transformed the favela into a medical hygiene-urbanistic problem and projected reformist and sanitary concerns onto it. His Programa de Casas Populares, a private-public housing initiative financed by Banco do Brasil that called for the construction of 720 modern apartments in a rent-to-own scheme. Favela dwellers, paying one month of salary, could own the property in 15 years. Valladares characterizes Mattos Pimenta as the figurehead in the rise of rentier class power in Rio and describes the Programa as "the first anti-favela campaign" in the city's history (Valladares 2005: 44).

The 1930 Revolution that brought Getúlio Vargas into power for the next 15 years introduced populist rule and the rise of clientelist politics in Rio. There was a shift in policy, from favela eradication to improvement. The state built hospitals and schools, mediated property conflicts, and subsidized Carnival samba schools. The aim of aiding the poor was to cultivate public responsibility and reduce the stigma of dependency. The 1937 Codigo de Obras [Code of Works] was a municipal law in effect until 1970 that inaugurated a period of favela

administration. As Valladares notes, “with the concern to administer comes the concern to know” (2005: 54). Administration amounted to a need to classify, measure, and quantify an object. The Codigo introduced the first official definition of a favela as two or more shacks of disordered, precarious construction, built without legal contracts. Favelas grew via a process of extension or densification, and they had functioning real-estate markets. They appeared not only in “empty lands” but also in built areas, through the occupation of interstices, patios, and gardens of existing buildings (Leeds and Leeds 1978). Although statistics had been collected since the first census in 1872, the Codigo corresponded to a decisive shift in the representation of favelas from impressionistic to quantitative form. The criteria of the statistical studies executed under the Codigo included: number of rooms, construction type, density, number of inhabitants, specific character of rooms, urbanistic character of occupied land, employment of men and women, number of school-aged children, general sanitary conditions, total occupied area, a photo dossier, the names of owners of occupied lands, and the possibility of urbanizing the locality.

During this period, a few studies utilized different research methods to produce more nuanced accounts of favela life. Medical doctor Victor Tavares de Moura’s (1943) report on 14 communities, titled *Favelas do Distrito Federal* [Favelas of the Federal District] constituted an early attempt to show complexity within and diversity between favelas. Maria Hortencia do Nacimento e Silva’s (1942) conducted research for a social worker training course in Favela Largo da Memória in Leblon that was based on daily observation but was nonetheless marked by a moral vision and eugenicist prescriptions for black favelados, blaming their inferior racial profile for the abject conditions they inhabited.

The creation of the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estadística [Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, or IBGE] in 1938 marked the emergence of a new type of knowledge

based on data collection. The IBGE became the organization responsible for producing official maps and census data. The first census of Rio favelas by the IBGE was commissioned in 1948 by the Prefeitura of the Federal District (1949) with the intention of promoting a policy of eradication. The report was the first to include a map showing the distribution of favelas across the metropolitan area. A gaping contrast between information and commentary in the document revealed certain ideological prejudices: "Favelados neglect basic necessities and spend high sums on honky-tonk and carnival parties" (Valladares 2005: 65). Much like how Beattie argues that the army is an instrument for the conditioning and maintenance of a category of the "honorable poor" in Brazil, Valladares notes that the authors of the 1948 Census also constructed a separation between deserving and non-deserving favela residents.

Both the mayor of the Federal District (encompassing Rio) and director of the IBGE were military officials, and anti-poor political discourse at the municipal scale was at odds with the populism of Vargas at the federal level. This shifted with the appointment of Antônio Passos Guimarães to IBGE leadership for the General Census of 1950. A member of the Brazilian Communist Party from the Northeast, Guimarães (1953) argued that favela residents were workers integrated into diverse sectors of the urban economy, not *marginais*. He opened the question of whether favelas should be urbanized or eradicated. Extinction would require affordable housing and new transport solutions, but urbanization was not necessarily less costly. And who could assure that after improvements favelas would belong to existing residents?

The 1950 General Census was the first to outline a definition of favelas versus non-favelas. Geographic location (such as "situated on hillsides") was no longer a valid criterion, nor was the type of construction in itself definitive. The five measures introduced then are still definitive more than 60 years later. A favela was denoted by: (1) having a minimum settlement

of 50 residences; (2) consisting of "shacks or sheds [*casebres ou barracões*] of a typical rustic appearance, constructed principally with corrugated tin, zinc plates, wooden boards or similar materials;" (3) lacking documentation for land ownership; (4) an absence of public infrastucture including sanitation, light, telephone, and water services; and (5) lacking official street names, numbering system, or signage. The 1950 Census registered 58 favelas by the above criteria, as opposed to 105 in 1948 Prefeitura-commissioned Census. Among the listed favelas was Parque Proletário da Gávea, a housing project built in 1942 as solution to favelas. Just eight years later it became one itself.

Other important developments augured the development of a social sciences valorization of favelas. This production of knowledge was characterized by treatment of the favela as "community" and the deployment of fieldwork methods. Sociologist Costa Pinto (1953) published *O negro no Rio de Janeiro* [Blacks in Rio de Janeiro], a chapter of which titled "Ecologia" analyzed ethnic differences in favelas. UNESCO had commissioned the book as part of study of Brazil race relations. The Catholic Church created the Fundação Leão XIII in 1947 and the Cruzada São Sebastião in 1955 to defend favelas and their residents. And newspaper *Estado de S. Paulo* published a long study in 1960 headed by French Dominican Father Louis-Joseph Lebret and Bishop Dom Helder, titled "Aspectos humanos da favela carioca [Human Aspects of the Rio Favela]" (SAGMACS 1960) as a special supplemental series. The researchers, organized under the Society of Graphical and Mechanographical Analyses Applied to Social Complexes, or SAGMACS, belonged to a progressive religious movement known as *Économie et Humanisme*. They advocated for favela dwellers to have right to political representation, and no longer be simply a space for administrative interventions, to transform themselves into communities in themselves, in which the family would form the fundamental

unit, and neighbors (*vizinhança*) a guarantee of social cohesion. The movement also sought to remake communities as an intermediary of collective representation between the bureaucratic state and local population.

The report became immensely influential on a generation of researchers. It made extensive use of maps, plans, and aerial photos. It was organized into sections covering the urbanization process on a national scale; urban transformations in Rio, especially the capitalist appropriation of land; and the development of the urban labor market, absorption of labor power, cost of living, salaries, and housing market prices. Never re-published as a book, the SAGMACS study was cited widely for 20 years then was virtually forgotten in scholarship.

An internationally best selling book, the diary of Carolina Maria de Jesús, *Quarto de Despejo* (1960), published in English as *Child of the Dark* (1963), provided a first-hand account of an impoverished mother living in a São Paulo favela. The book was required reading for cohorts of U.S. Peace Corps volunteers sent to Rio favelas as part of a Kennedy administration initiative to improve the nation's image in the Third World under humanitarian ideals. De Jesús's depiction of a world of misery and subsistence without infrastructure or social organization, of abandonment and fragile social relations, greatly shaped the assumptions of the Peace Corps volunteers in Rio. They found "difficulties in integrating themselves, in justifying their presence and usefulness in space where majority of Brazilians did not dare or desire to go," explains Valladares (2005: 109). "Enchanted that a family would invite them to share some moments of everyday life, like a Sunday lunch chicken meal, astounded to hear them talk of their problems and fascinated by the conversations among men in the *biroscas* of the favela, they did not question the nature of the relations thus established," she contends (*ibid.*). The North Americans implicated themselves in community power dynamics they had little sense of because their

imagination of the favela was that of anomie and disorganization. When they did engage in collectively organized action, or *mutirão*, they aligned themselves unwittingly with families or neighbors to the detriment of larger-based mobilizations. "Peace Corps volunteers, to make themselves accepted or find collaborators, tried many times to participate in *mutirão*. But unaware of internal conflicts and competition, they inadvertently identified with the small groups they had integrated themselves with and defended their interests. Helping some to the detriment of others, more or less consciously, they… made broader community action more difficult" (*ibid.*: 110). Without ethnographic training or technical expertise, nor a sense of how to negotiate Brazilian bureaucracy, nor an awareness of the intimidating effects of violent political repression from the authoritarian military regime that seized state power in a 1964 coup, the impact of the Peace Corps was compromised.

Nevertheless, anthropologist Anthony Leeds guided many volunteers and other researchers and collected their study data as part of a project to explain the phenomenon of favelas in its totality. Leeds, with his partner Elizabeth, Luiz Antonio Machado da Silva, Diana Brown, Lawrence Salmen, Janice Perlman, and others, conducted seminars in a Copacabana apartment in 1967-68 that pushed social scientific research into stronger links with public policy concerns. These scholars were interested in framing the favela within a process of urban growth and transformation. They considered different scales of analysis, from the domestic and community level to the national and global. They rejected predominant ideas of favelas and their residents as marginal while valorizing processes internal to favelas, such as family strategies, local support networks, and internal economies. Machado in particular noted that the internal politics of favelas meant that we must recognize the emergence of a favela bourgeoisie with distinct class interests.

The final stage that Valladares traces in her history of representations of favelas is the maturation of the social sciences. Postgraduate programs in anthropology and other disciplines in Brazil were founded in the 1970s. Legislative landmarks such as the 1988 Constitution, which guaranteed the right to land tenure, and the City Statute (Rolnik and Saule Jr. 2001), which regulated land use against speculation, as well as government programs such as Favela-Bairro attracted scholars interested in social and spatial inequality, urban politics, and expressive culture in favelas.

Orthodoxies in favela research

In a working paper titled "Three Dogmas of Academic Thinking on the Subject of Favelas" (2008), Valladares elaborates that the history of favelas must also be historiographical, in order to track how the production of knowledge about them changes over time and across institutions, disciplines, and ideological positions. Why are some favelas studied over others? Her hypotheses are blunt and point directly back at the social and political conditions of research: so-called favored favelas may be situated in close proximity to a university; may have been targeted by public policies that call for evaluation; may have been made visible by violence; may have active political mobilizations that produce symbols of resistance and struggle; and finally, they may have a resonant cultural profile (*ibid.*: 16-17). The academic dogmas she identifies relate to: (1) the uniqueness or exceptionality of a particular favela; (2) the favela as locus of poverty and social marginality; and (3) the assumption of sociological uniformity across favelas, which contributes to the production of favela as a seemingly stable category. These are discourses that function as meta-narratives, as otherwise unmarked models followed unconsciously by individual researchers and institutions.

The first dogma, Valladares notes, serves to mark differences in the history of settlement and land use in a particular favela as an identifier of exceptionality. This emphasis on the ecological specificity of the favela may help certain studies attract attention in the marketplace of ideas, and Valladares argues that a kind of spatial or ecological determinism predominates. Musical styles become known as favela music, economies become favela economies, religious rituals become favela practices, grassroots neighborhood associations become favela politics. Across the second and third discourses Valladares identifies, she points out the aspects of heterogeneity that often get written out. Inequality within favelas is obscured, as is poverty *not* in favelas. Not all of Brazil's poor live in favelas, and not all favela dwellers are poor. This fact has taken on recent media attention as, in the wake of sustained national and metropolitan economic growth fueled in part by a credit boom, the proportion of favela residents with incomes classified as "upper class" increased from 1% to 11% from 2002 to 2012.[10]

The third dogma, Valladares states, is particularly deleterious. The assumption of a single category of favela frames comparative knowledge always in a relationship of synecdoche, the case measured against the ideal type. "A favela is seen as being necessarily a hillside settlement (*morro*), illegally occupied, outside the law, under-serviced, a concentration of urban poor. The single generic denomination unifies situations that often vary in terms of geography, population, social composition and urban form" (*ibid*.: 21). As a result, differences within *and* between favelas remain obscured. Social exclusion appears concentrated in the favelas, when in fact it is the wealthiest neighborhoods that have deviated upward from the average (*ibid*.: 22). Valladares is astute in bringing rigorous critique to bear upon the blindspots and self-propelled habits of urban research in Rio.

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[10] "Brazil: Income of favela residents rising." <URL: http://infosurhoy.com/cocoon/saii/xhtml/en_GB/features/saii/features/main/2013/01/04 /feature-01> Accessed: 20 April 2013.

At the same time, in insisting on more accurate rubrics and more uniform distribution of the research gaze across urban space, she appears committed to the chimera of the favela category. Since we cannot do away with it, it can be improved, she seems to suggest, through more conscientious sampling methods and comparative analyses.

Notes on methodology: Models of knowledge

A certain inversion of the central research question of my project happened through fieldwork itself. I had proposed to study the production of knowledges about favelas to investigate the urban periphery of Rio as an interface of expert and everyday forms of knowing. I framed this endeavor as an ethnographic corollary to what Valladares had achieved through historical inquiry. It was a successful proposal in the eyes of both my dissertation committee and granting agencies.

The inversion that occurred, and which has been outlined above as a theoretical argument, is that knowledge of the everyday seldom came packaged in expository form. This was a methodological choice based on a theoretical intuition. In fact, I largely avoided sitting down for formal interviews with residents in the community I came to study. I distrusted my own presence as researcher and the uncertain effects it may cause with interlocutors who may simply want to tell me what they think I want to hear. This methodological ventriloquism threatened to lock the questions I pursued within an echo chamber. Other outsiders were constantly arriving to visit the community, and thus these kinds of conversations were happening anyway on a regular basis. Tourists, journalists, filmmakers, social workers, architects, and other social scientists came by, bringing their interests. And local residents would receive them and accommodate their interests with stories, some told dozens of times before, some told spontaneously and

extemporaneously. These repetitions came to matter greatly to me as I spent time in Saqualé, living there for nearly 18 months continuously and revisiting on two later trips, as well as traveling *with* interlocutors to London. I became as interested in the content of these myriad dialogues as in their staged performativity and conditions of social asymmetry they enacted.

Around eight months into my main research stay, another researcher, upon completing interviews I had listened in on about volunteer tourism in the community, asked if I had met the sociology doctoral student who had just defended her dissertation at IUPERJ, because her study was also on Saqualé. A mild panic struck me, a mixture of futility and bewilderment. What had she worked on? Saqualé was a quite small community of approximately 2,500 inhabitants. There seemed only so many issues one could research in such an intimate setting. And why had none of my interlocutors, which by this point had become people I considered friends, never mentioned this other researcher who preceded me, this fieldwork doppelgänger? Would I be similarly never mentioned once I left Saqualé? I was not sure why this last question bothered me at all. Visitors of all stripes came and went from Saqualé. A few foreigners had found rentals in the community, as I had. One German national was even building a permanent home here. My status as researcher (*pesquisador*) was perhaps a negligible detail for many residents who came to know me as Alex.

This revelation challenged a notion that I had until then considered settled: that research, especially in Rio's favelas, as a "discovery" enterprise is a conceit and illusion. Knowledge had already been produced about the spaces one occupied and had in fact contributed to shaping them. My task, I had thought, was to find out which knowledges were actively shaping the way people lived and spoke about their community and city, and which knowledges lay outside those lifeways, or remained silenced. The existence of a dissertation just recently completed provoked

a pang of worry that this work had been done. Worse still, I had to reckon with that desire to be a discoverer, after all, with that *jouissance* from reading the travelogues of Jean de Léry (1990 [1578]) or Claude Lévi-Strauss (2012 [1955]) in spite, or perhaps because of the exoticized and imperialist knowledge they conveyed.

The sociologist, Lia de Mattos Rocha, was very generous and gracious in sharing her newly completed dissertation with me and meeting me over coffee to exchange notes on Saqualé. Her work was furthermore a fine case study on the code of silence regarding violence and the drug trade in a favela that was one of the first in Rio to be occupied by police. With the relative absence of armed non-state actors in Saqualé and the coercive "violent sociability" (Machado da Silva 2008) they are understood as imposing, Rocha observed the prevalence of a community discourse of "tranquility" that fed the insistence that Saqualé was a "quiet favela… different from the others" (Rocha 2009). This kind of talk produced a moral cleansing and distancing, she argues, for residents. At the same time, the presence of a local NGO provided a space for articulating youth vulnerability in the face of violent criminality, even though this voice is framed within the discourse of the favela as a "social problem."

My anxieties about the immediate precedent Rocha had established began to subside when I recognized that her dissertation was useful to think with alongside my own fieldwork. It was a model, of sorts. Her methods entailed visiting the community almost daily for a defined period, following the residents association president around, and collecting data in one-on-one interviews and focus groups. These were methodological choices informed by and which informed the theoretical conclusions on which Rocha laid her claims. I perceived a tautology, however, between the conceptual apparatus (namely, the notion of a code of silence in communities ruled or traumatized by violence) and the methods employed. Still, the presence of

the NGO allowed her to argue that some voices spoke out about such themes. It is implicit in her argument that it was largely the institution of the NGO that provided a platform for these voices to express themselves. However, the voices *I* heard on a daily basis were not institutional ones, even as they emerged from the same space.

The first chapter of this work introduces the reader to Morro do Saqualé largely through the experience of walking and traveling alongside residents. We find here that the relationship to the built environment gives access to the community's remote past and offers a way of linking the present to histories of slavery, land ownership, and city development. The narrative attends to accumulated residues, ruins, and remnants in the midst of economic turns and infrastructural changes. There is a partiality of the account itself: indeed, part of the argument is about how knowledges intersect and collide. While the sequence of vignettes do not correspond to a linear chronology, they do reveal moments of learning and reflection in the ethnographic research process. We find that travel outside of community often invokes talking about past and themes otherwise silenced. In everyday language, the meanings of *comunidade* shifts in subtle but meaningful ways as residents defend, sidestep, and undermine the duties and rights of belonging. This chapter also presents different social spaces of *morro*: spaces of labor, leisure, intimacy, and danger. The narrative offers no privileged vantage point from which to know the community as a totality. The favela comes together by walking it.

Chapter 2 addresses the reflexivity of building. If, as urban sociologist Robert Park (1925) noted, "in making the city man has remade himself," this chapter looks squarely at the material practices, tacit knowledge, and micro-politics of that relationship through the activities of homebuilding alongside Toca, a master mason of Saqualé. Tensions over the value of new constructions emerge between Toca and his friend, neighbor, and employer Henrique. The

entrepreneurial rationality of financing new constructions to secure future rental profits comes into direct conflict with the moral economy of community.

Based on archival sources from the SMH, IPP-RIO, and Municipal Secretariat for Urbanism (SMU), Chapter 3 details the production of official knowledge about Saqualé conducted through the Bairrinho program. It analyzes how municipal state agencies and its private architectural partner constructed Saqualé through mapping techniques and statistics, compartmentalized and operationalized that knowledge for intervention. Following from this discussion, Chapter 4 addresses the experience of police occupation in Saqualé, particularly from the perspective of Morrinho participant Bruno and other youth who become involved in the local gang. Used as a BOPE training ground, Saqualé is distinct, and perhaps unique, as a favela where police know the physical terrain as well or better than traffickers. Bruno

The construction and maintainance of the Morrinho site, in Chapter 5, presents a reappropriation of physical materials that define the favela and, by extension, its residents. This activity, referred to as *arrumando a maquete*, forms the material basis for a reflection on spatial practice and ways of knowing the city. To participate in Morrinho, one must construct a new portion of the model, name this segment after a real-life favela, populate it with colorful figurines (*bonecos*), and, importantly, determine the political hierarchy of the local drug gang who will defend the space from invaders. This is to take ownership, to be boss, or *dono*, of one's own miniature *morro*. It provides a view on how the city of Rio is territorially organized from the perspective of favela male youth who experienced infrastructural and security interventions in their own community.

Chapter 6 introduces the rules and phenomenon of the Morrinho role-playing game, colloquially known as *brincadeira*. Unlike the normative notion of a game with specific

objectives and defined beginnings and ends or winners and losers, Morrinho operates as a virtual world, albeit without computers. The chapter recounts how play erupts spontaneously out of mundane conversations among Morrinho players and provides a composite account of a police operation to invade a favela and wrest territorial control from the local drug gang. The deadpan seriousness, even cruelty and sorrow, which *brincadeira* reaches in moments belies assumptions about the ironic or parodic nature of the activity. Players imbue their *bonecos*' lives and deaths with affective value that challenges what we may mean by play itself.

Chapter 7 follows Morrinho as a traveling art exhibition in other cities, specifically to the 2007 Venice Biennale and 2010 Southbank Centre Festival Brazil in London. These itineraries stage further reflections on the cultural valorization of Morrinho and provoke new iterations of the model. The chapter argues that the process through which Morrinho becomes artwork is not about producing pale facsimiles of an original uprooted from a purportedly genuine context. Rather, building Morrinho art installations involves mixing materials and icons of both Rio de Janeiro and new urban contexts. The replica thus points both to Rio and to its Venetian or Londoner surroundings while standing for a representational space *in between* these contexts. As a result, Morrinho as art is a relational translation that engages new settings and spectatorships, and prompts new reflections on the convergences of urban imaginaries. This is seen most acutely through the participation of youth from Stockwell, a district in south London, in the construction of the Southbank Centre installation. Their own appropriation of Morrinho as a tool for representing a city otherwise marginalized and banished from the centers of cultural and political power exhibited a power to lay claims to the city through art.

The conclusion to this study, "Carioca Counterpoint," reflects on the historical formation of the favela and returns to the themes presented in this introduction through the accounts

presented in the chapters that follow. I rewrite the opening passage of a classic yet undervalued anthropological work that similarly took materiality as a point of departure for social analysis. This game of reworking literary material through copying and reappropriation is an attempt to situate the ethnographic argument of this work within a broader analytical frame. Morrinho youth, through craft and play, seem to be asking, *What counts as our city? What are its conditions of possibility?* The concluding thoughts in this study wish to append another pair of questions to their own ludic experiments in geographic knowledge: *Where did this imagination come from? How might it be made different?*

CHAPTER 1

PATHS: EVERYDAY ITINERARIES IN AND OUT OF A RIO FAVELA

É um caminho de cabras. Não se anda, gravita-se. Os pés perdem a função normal de andar, transformam-se em garras. Falavam-me sempre no perigo de subir a Favella. O maior perigo que eu encontrei na Favella foi o risco, a cada passo, de despencar-me de lá de cima pela pedreira ou pelo morro abaixo.

It's a path for goats. One does not walk, one clings. The feet lose their normal function of walking and transform into claws. They spoke to me always of the danger of climbing the Favela. The biggest danger that I found in the Favela was the risk, at every step, of plummeting from up there into the quarry or down the hill.

- Benjamin Costallat, "A favela que eu vi [The Favela I saw]" (1924; cited in Valladares 2005: 31)

With a wave of the security guard from behind a barred window, a flatbed truck passed through the front gate of the Catholic school. It ascended the steep incline of the driveway, its motor whining ever louder under the strain of its cargo. After some forty feet another gate opened, leading out of the compound again. Here the uneven cobblestones gave way to concrete and then quickly to dirt. The road narrowed dramatically into a passageway, barely wide enough for the truck to pass. On one side, the high wall of the school still showed a mostly faded children's mural. On the other, damp moss covered the excavated mountainside. Three men emerged from the cab of the truck, which bore a multicolored company logo *Bom e Barato*,[11] they and deposited construction materials on the ground: by shovel, they unloaded a mound of sand and another of small pebbles. By hand, they stacked hundreds of bricks—or more precisely,

[11] "Good and Cheap."

structural hollow clay tile units made of terra cotta—along with dozens of ten-kilo plastic pouches of cement mix. These were all against the mountain wall.

Figure 3 O túnel, *upper entrance to Morro do Saqualé.*

The delivery truck needed only to come up along the road that runs along the upper ridge, enter through the Catholic school entrance and park at the summit, in the narrow passageway that residents of Morro do Saqualé refer to as *o túnel* (figure 3). This corridor cut through the mountain next to the fortress wall of the school and provided the only access point to the community from the top of the hill, where one could get a bus or, less frequently, a trolley, or at off-hours and with some luck, a *kombi* (private minivan) to the city center. The view to the north offered Rio de Janeiro's expanse of working-class neighborhoods and favelas sprawling up the rolling hills, punctuated at dusk by the gleaming white disc of the Maracanã stadium roof.

After working the night shift as a security guard at a condominium down the hill in the affluent South Zone of Rio, Joaquim awoke in the late morning to receive the building materials at the upper entrance to the community, invoice in hand. Three teenage boys arrived, after the

squeal of the truck's brakes had faded, with a wheelbarrow and several large empty sacks labeled for 25 kilograms of French bread flour or of onions. Gago, Shrek, and Ruan were all sixteen years old and neighbors of Joaquim. He had contracted them for the important work of bringing the materials to the side of his house. These materials were vulnerable if left unattended too long at the point of deposit. Rain could wash away the mounds of sand and stone if they were not covered with a tarp, and bricks could be swiped undetected by any passerby. In busier times of the year, such as December and January, when residents may have extra capital to invest in their homes due to a Christmas bonus (*décimo terceiro salário*) from formal and, more rarely, informal employment. Thus, the task of moving the materials was always labor-intensive and time-sensitive. Joaquim was constructing a new room extension to his home, a *puxadinho*, as it is commonly called, and he agreed to pay each of the young men 30 Reais for the labor.[12] It was not great money, but the materials had been deposited at the top of the hill and needed to be carried down, rather than at the bottom to be carried up. Plus, much of the path down to Joaquim's was a smooth ramp of corrugated cement, allowing the use of the wheelbarrow. So this was a relatively tolerable day of manual labor. They loaded bricks onto the wheelbarrow until it began to tip over, and rolled down past a row of three-story houses atop the *morro*. There was Seu Martinho's carpentry workshop, Next door, Seu Aurelino, a jolly, round old man from the distant northern state of Pernambuco sold candy, ice cream, and savory pastries out of his front door but mostly dozed to the sound of the radio. Further down, at the first corner where the path split in two, a *botequim*, or small store, where the owner Lígia, or sometimes her teenage

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[12] A clarifying note on money: the Brazilian currency is called the *real* (*reais* in the plural). To avoid reader confusion with the English word "real," the term is capitalized when it appears in ethnographic contexts. Elsewhere, the currency notation used is: R$. While the exchange rate has fluctuated in recent years between R$1.50 and R$2.50 to the US dollar, the mean valorization of R$2 to the dollar is maintained throughout this text. In this instance, therefore, R$30 is approximately equal to US$15.

daughter, stood behind the counter surrounded on all sides by household goods and snacks in vivid packaging and block lettering.

Outside the *botequim* three sullen young men, the same age as Gago, Shrek, and Ruan, sat close together eyeing passersby askance. One flashed his 9-mm pistol and barked at me, “Hey, you a gringo? Alright,” answering his own question. To placate him further, I responded in an intentionally thick accent, fibbing that I was staying at the nearby hostel within the community. European and North American backpacking tourists had become a common sight, and it was important to be categorizable, even inaccurately, in the eyes of others. These gang lookouts grew quickly nervous and agitated if they could not account for everyone who they could see, and who could see them.

Figure 4 *View from top of Morro do Saqualé to Sugarloaf Mountain, Guanabara Bay, and South Zone of Rio.*

Moving the materials took well over a dozen round-trips, and at times a breeze provided brief respite. The direction of the wind also dictated the flight path of the airplanes passing overhead on their approach to the Santos Dumont regional airport, so close one can almost see the passengers peering through the windows. The view out from the hill also drew the boys’ attentions out toward the iconic Sugarloaf Mountain, cable cars strung between the barefaced peaks, and the mouth of Guanabara Bay where the Portuguese and French encountered the Tupi

in the 16th century (see figure 4). To the left, sharing the same hillside as Morro do Saqualé, one could see Palácio Laranjeiras, the Rio de Janeiro state governor's residence. And perched above it, almost cantilevered over the slope, stood the headquarters of BOPE, the Special Operations Battalion of the Rio de Janeiro state Military Police. Facing right, the community was bounded by a three-meter high concrete wall, beyond which a yellow mansion, rumored to belong to the descendants of a count, stands shrouded in the thick surrounding forest. Surrounded by landmarks of political power present and bygone, mythic and material, and buffered only by a few acres of the Atlantic Forest, one gets the sense that Saqualé is not so much a peripheral space as an interstitial one. Both the city and its hinterlands are everywhere colliding, intermingling, and ignoring one another.

The boys shoveled the sand and stones into the flour sacks, tied them shut and loading them onto the wheelbarrow. They swapped tasks after every trip, but getting a turn to push the wheelbarrow was preferable, if only because it seemed to convey authority. To pass the time they joked with each other, made up songs, chatted up the people who passed. The thin soles of their sandals clapped against the concrete.

Ruan, lankiest of the three, was also the most outgoing and smiled broadly. He asked me, "Do they have favelas in your country?" I say no, not like in Rio. "Oh, so that's why you're here." I try to clarify that there are more than a billion people living in favelas around the world, but Ruan has already grabbed the wheelbarrow and started heading down the hill.

The sun dipped behind the hill, casting long shadows. Gago, Ruan, and Shrek all lived in separate units of the housing complex built by the state less than a decade before. These homes, known locally as the *casinhas*, or little houses (figure 5), appeared different from other

constructions. They were uniform, each three stories tall with a staircase in front leading up to a small balcony on the second floor shared by the two upper units. They were constructed of a type

Figure 5 As casinhas*, built by the Municipal Housing Secretariat under the Favela-Bairro infrastructure upgrading program from 1999 to 2001.*

of brick larger and thicker that that delivered by *Bom e Barato* and carried by the boys to Joaquim's house. Most notably, the roofs of the *casinhas* were slanted, not flat, and finished with shingles. This meant that it was practically impossible for residents to build another story. However, at least two households in the bottom units had begun *puxadinhos* in the back area between the units and the wall of the Catholic school. It was the school that originally owned this land and sold it to the municipal government under the Favela-Bairro program, which brought not only the housing complex to Morro do Saqualé but also concrete pathways and stairs with

handrails, lampposts, and sewage and drainage ducts. The story of how the municipal government of Rio, in partnership with private architects and contractors, approached Saqualé as an object of expertise and intervention is outlined in Chapter 3.

After returning the wheelbarrow and shovel, the three boys went into their homes and after 20 minutes, emerged having showered and changed clothes. Many children were returning from school at this hour.[13] Shrek, so nicknamed because of his hulking shoulders and gentle demeanor, wore a polo shirt buttoned to the top, a clean pair of jeans, and bright sneakers. Ruan's outfit sported a t-shirt emblazoned with the prominent designer logo of a rhinoceros. Shrek went up the hill to attend an evening worship service (*culto*) at a nearby evangelical church, joining a group of peers waiting for him on the walking path. Ruan headed down the hill to meet his friends in the soccer court (*quadra*) at the bottom of the hill. It was Thursday evening, and they were going out to a *baile funk* dance party in North Zone favela.

Gago came to me and asked for money to buy rice and beans for dinner. "Seu Joaquim isn't around to pay us for the work today, and my mother was counting on me to bring groceries," he explained. At this point in my time in Saqualé I was not yet residing in the community, and on occasion people would solicit me for small but not inconsequential amounts of money. The ask was usually framed as a loan, and always as a question of essential need.

Gago explained that his mother, who was working as a coconut water vendor at a boardwalk stand in Copacabana, had sent him to get cash from his father, who operates a kombi for moving large appliances and furniture. Gago went, but his father had no money for him. I suggested that we would go down to the big supermarket in Largo do Machado, a major plaza roughly 20 minutes away on foot. Saqualé does not have roads wide enough to accommodate car

[13] As a solution for classroom and facility shortage, students in the Rio primary and secondary education system attend school for a half-day, randomly assigned to either a morning or afternoon schedule.

traffic; a cobblestone street reaches its bottom entrance but goes no further uphill (figure 6). "I need to go to the supermarket, too. So why don't we go together, and I'll pay for your rice and beans?" I said. He beamed and asked me if he could have a minute to change clothes.

Figure 6 *Bottom entrance of Morro do Saqualé.*

Gago emerged five minutes later, and we started heading down the hill. He had changed from a t-shirt to a light-blue polo shirt, which he had buttoned all the way up, and had thrown on a white baseball cap. He stepped not once, but twice, in dog excrement, which he took in good stride, explaining to mean that it is a good omen, that one is about to come into some money. It was not lost on either of us that it could very well mean me financing this supermarket run. I joked that he was purposely stepping in every turd in our path.

Along our winding descent, he asked me if I was looking to rent a room in the community. I pondered aloud to him that I would like to build a room or a new floor to a family house because I wanted to learn how that works, how to procure the materials, how to get people to help build it, or how to contract a mason (*pedreiro*). Gago told me how he and his family, five siblings and their mother, moved into the apartment in the *casinhas* complex from the "risk area" on the edge of the community where Morrinho was now located. As we pass a large, bare concrete foundation next to the hostel with a For Sale sign posted on a nearby tree, Gago explains it is available *sem garantia* (without guarantee) for R$20,000, since it extends beyond the limits of the community demarcated by the municipal government.

He was eager to help plan the construction project out, showing me an empty space behind the *casinhas* against the high back wall of the Catholic school. "It takes about a month and a half with a professional *pedreiro* to finish the house. You can get one from here or outside (*daqui ou da fora*). He has to be good. The one here is good." Gago pointed out the houses he has helped build. Toca, his neighbor and local *pedreiro*, had shown him techniques of building. Gago passes his hand along a bare column made of concrete and re-bar. "You have to put this in first. Then the roof." He also explained that summer, roughly from December through February, is the time most construction happens. Prices for materials are highest at the end of the year, then in the early months you can get the best deals, he says.

We walked all the way down to Largo do Machado along leafy, residential street. "A shortcut," Gago said, an alternative route to the bustling commercial avenue. We pass an intersection where a black sign was posted indicating BOPE and an arrow pointing up a curving street. Gago stopped to show me the view of Morro do Saqualé from the street. He pointed out the house where a radio announcer lived and recounted that he once opened his house only to

Saqualé residents and gave everyone sweets. The announcer became familiar with local residents mainly because a woman from Saqualé worked for him as a housekeeper.

Gago pointed out an extensive variety of fruit trees along our way: tangerine, guava, mango, acerola, pitanga, and jackfruit. The latter, an enormous, spiky rival of the watermelon in size, inside contained a fibrous, waxy flesh. We passed many jackfruits split open over the street curb. Their rot emitted a putrid stench that thickened the already stifling summer air. I admitted I had never tried fresh jackfruit. “You can pick them out by their smell,” he said, but one could also judge them by their color. He mentioned that residents regularly ask him to climb trees to remove the ponderous fruit that threatens to drop on their homes. When we stopped to sample a few pitangas, I told him I was looking for a pitanga sapling (*muda*) as a gift for a Rio-based professor who had mentioned a fondness for the fruit, a cousin of the cherry with a tarter flavor. He said they grow near the *quadra* in Saqualé, and he could dig one out and put it in a small pot for me, no problem.

Near the governor’s palace, Gago ogled a young woman across the street but simultaneously spotted BOPE cadets approaching in double file and chanting “*Homem de preto, qual é sua missão? Entrar pela favela e deixar corpo no chão!* [Man in black, what is your mission? To enter the favela and leave bodies on the ground!]” They pause as they jog by us. “Are they looking at us?” I ask. “No, they were checking out the girl,” Gago replied.

At the supermarket, we picked up a five-kilo bag of yellow rice, a two-kilo bag of black beans, soy oil, and salt. He was very conscientious about getting the lowest-priced products, even though I insisted he get whatever he wants, or at least whatever his mother was used to having in the kitchen. After check out, we stopped for a soda from a food stand at the corner of the plaza, who also gave Gago a free sample of *acarajé* so he could try it out for the first time. Gago

looked on with an air of circumspection as the vendor assembled Bahian speciality, a black-eyed pea fritter stuffed with two kinds of paste and fried shrimp, but once it was in his hands he offered me a bite then devoured it. It was late, well past dark, so I gave him 2 Reais for the minibus ride back up to the bottom entrance of Saqualé.

A week later Gago found me near the *casinhas* with the sapling he promised. When I pointed out that it simply looked like a branch he had torn from the tree and that the plastic bag wrapped around the base smelled awful, he insisted that the plant would regrow its roots. The dog excrement he mixed in with the soil in the bag, he added, would help it along, as fertilizer. Taking him at his word, I potted the stem and delivered it to the professor's beachfront apartment. It was only when she later reported that it had died on her terrace that I realized I had expressed my gratitude to her in the form of a twig in a pot of shit. It is sometimes along such contingent and accidental paths that the favela materially and symbolically enters the penthouses of Ipanema.

Like a rat

Antônia co-owns the small hostel near the top of the hill with her ex-husband, a German national who comes to visit once or twice a year. The building stands two floors tall, plus a terrace facing the iconic Sugarloaf Mountain. Its five guestrooms generally host clientele from Europe and the U.S. "Brazil's first favela hostel!" their website boasts, selling the establishment on its central location, the "opportunity to discover what life is like for a great majority of Rio's inhabitants," and the stunning views. Most tourists would leave to explore the city, leaving the hostel behind to Antônia; her staff of two, a receptionist and housekeeper; several local children who enjoyed hanging out there; and two dogs, a languid pug and a temperamental Rottweiler.

Antônia's mood would swing with the barometer, and on gray, chilly days, she sulked. Whenever a buoyant spirit seized her, she spoke boisterously and at length. Personal stories were often also political rants, and her brazen exclamations might lend themselves easily, perhaps too easily, to hallmark concepts of social science: community, race, gender, sexuality, inequality, religion, nationality.

In the first days and weeks I spent visiting Saqualé daily, Antônia and her hostel was a primary entry point. The majority of ethnographic and sociological favela studies proceed by establishing a rapport with the president of the local residents association (AM), who typically introduces the researcher to potential interlocutors. That methodological approach hinges on the historical formation of favela residents' associations as democratic institutions of both internal and external political representation of the community.[14] Even in fieldwork-based investigations that scrutinize the co-optation and manipulation of these local organizations by the official state political machine or by trafficker gangs (cf. Arias 2006), the normative assumption is that AMs represent the interests of the "community" as a homogeneous whole. Talking with Antônia, a small entrepreneur and only a resident for seven years in Saqualé, in the common area of the hostel frequented by her friends and neighbors and by international tourists, made me aware not only of her position and partiality, but also of everyone else's situatedness within the favela and its networks of friends, enemies, families, neighbors, patrons, clients, customers, and guests.

During the daytime hours when the tourists were out, residents would spend time at the hostel chatting with Antônia. Sitting around the kitchen table of the hostel one sweltering afternoon, Antônia was in the midst of an hours-long monologue. I pulled my notebook out onto

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[14] A 1961 decree from Guanabara state governor Carlos Lacerda mandated the creation of *associações de moradores* (residents' associations, or AMs) in favelas in order to undo the politics of patronage with local officials. But Lacerda would then divide the city of Rio into 23 administrative regions, turning favelas into fields of electoral clientelism. See Introduction for historical context of favela community development and politics.

the table and started jotting down things she was saying. Three youth, including Shrek and a brother and sister named Estopim and Selma, respectively, were hanging out in the hostel kitchen with us, as well. The siblings' verve in conversation belied their gangly frames and sunken eyes. (Whenever the hostel threw a party, Estopim in particular would regularly appear to dazzle everyone with an astonishing repertoire of dance moves.) They had joined in a discussion of BOPE's use of the community as a training ground due to its proximity to their headquarters. In spite of this, *bandidos* from neighboring favelas were a persistent presence in Saqualé because narcotics continued to be sold at the bottom of the hill, where the community connected to the affluent South Zone districts. Unlike others favelas, Saqualé was unique because BOPE wielded the tactical advantage of intimate knowledge of the geographical layout of the community, of its alleyways, dead-ends, nooks, crannies, and vantage points. With unannounced irregularity, they would conduct raids and patrols there. In any other locale, the traffickers have the advantage. Upon detecting police entering the favela at night, for example, they regularly shot out the light bulbs and abscond with the aid of darkness. Antônia explained, "Here, BOPE comes at night. The dogs don't even start barking. Not like the Military Police or Civil Police, the dogs go crazy when they're around, and everybody knows it. When BOPE arrives at the *boca de fumo*, they shoot out the lights first, and the traffickers start scrambling like headless chickens." Antônia, Selma, and Estopim start laughing their own heads off, hysterically. Shrek remained more circumspect, as he tended to be, and contained himself to a chuckle. This black humor struck me as tragic. It was very likely the gang members were young guys probably stationed as lookouts (*vigias*) against their will by a superior in the hierarchy, as a rite of passage, a test of loyalty. They might consider it an unglamorous trial, but from this account, in this community, it is also a doomed mission. So every month or so, BOPE will ensnare these young men to imprison them,

if they do not kill them first. Her account of BOPE operations and hapless gang lookouts was, in the end, a story that did not belong to her alone, but people nonetheless become attached to the narratives they tell, if not as authors then as witnesses or bystanders or gossipers. To inform someone of something may simultaneously be to inform *on someone else*, to snitch.

Other narratives often recounted in Saqualé served to establish moral proximity or distance, whether between oneself and others or one's community and other parts of the city, or of the world. I listened to Antônia, a dark-skinned 30-year-old woman from Curitiba, describe being discriminated in Europe while married to a white German man, and then again on a trip to the Gambia with him. There a tribal matriarch called her "impure" because of her Portuguese, indigenous American, and African blood, as well as *vagabunda* (tramp) for spending time with her own husband and other local men rather than with the village women. When she cooked a Brazilian meal using three chickens for their host family, they invited the entire village. To her surprise, the family considered such a quantity of meat as grounds for a potlatch feast. Antônia also recounted going to a discotheque in the Gambia, which was renowned locally for its tiled walls. "*Azulejos*! [Tiles!]" Antônia cackled. The relative poverty of Africans seemed an endless stock of humor. But she went on to rail against the spectacular shame—"*que vergonha*!"— of Brazil's social inequality, citing a recent news story of French tourists who chartered a bus to take children from the Cantagalo favela, which overlooks Copacabana beach, swimming for the first time because they had never left the hillside community. Antônia added that it is a further *vergonha* that in Brasil the poor do not know how to swim or go to the beach. "The favela kids go to the beach and get pounded by the waves—*poom poom*! Meanwhile, the rich kids get swimming lessons from when they're still toddlers. The poor folks go to their beach in Flamengo, and wade in among the plastic bottles and coconuts."

After the brother and sister, Estopim and Selma, left the hostel, Antônia also informed me, in hushed tones, that they, whom I had taken to be around ages twelve and ten, respectively, were actually 16 and 14. Their mother, she explained, had attempted to abort both of them using Cytotec, an over-the-counter stomach ulcer remedy commonly used to induce miscarriage. Both of them had survived, but were born premature. "*Foi como um rato!* (He was like a rat!)," a wide-eyed Antônia exclaimed, simulating holding the newborn boy in her cupped hands.

She also mentioned having watched a television program showing children playing with a miniature model of a favela, but which was not the project of the local Morrinho boys located just down the hill from the hostel. After several inquiries at the TV station, I was never able to track down this feature segment and remained instead with the impression that there may in fact have been parallel cultural projects in other parts of Rio, that Morrinho was just one of many artistic practices that the press gives sporadic attention as bits of vibrant, local culture—but that it was not unique. There was an growing favela industry comprising journalists, curators, cultural brokers, community organizers, so-called social entrepreneurs, the Brazilian Ministries of Culture and Tourism, and international organizations seeking to identify certain practices and ascribe to them the status of authentic local culture or heritage. Antônia was very critical of how the Morrinho boys (*meninos*) were outgrowing their own creation and sapping it for money and trips to Europe. "It's more than a little strange when they're already in their twenties, and they show off their *maquete* (model) to tourists and journalists. They need to move on, get training in some real skills, because Morrinho is unsustainable to them." In this language of sustainability, what then was this mysterious resource being capitalized upon and depleted?

About her own enterprise, Antônia was often circumspect about the social good the hostel had brought—or should have brought—to Morro do Saqualé. She and her erstwhile husband did

seek permission from (and pay a fee to) the drug lord based in the favela "*lá do outro lado do morro* [over the other side of the hill]" in order to claim the plot of land on which they built the hostel, because this was how ownership of all new properties was arranged. When I had asked residents what it would take to build a house of my own in the community, the answer usually involved soliciting the authority of the gang leader, who controlled Saqualé remotely from the neighboring favela. Morro do Saqualé had in fact started as two separate settlements. The top part was linked economically to Santa Teresa, the hilltop neighborhood of old mansions and artist studios, and politically to the Comando Vermelho (Red Command) gang entrenched in favelas of Rio Comprido, the valley to the north. The lower part of the hill was attached to the affluent neighborhoods of the South Zone. Many residents worked as housekeepers, nannies, and doormen in condominiums, others as clerks in retail stores in the South Zone. It was the concession of land from the Catholic Church and the construction of the *casinhas* that consolidated Saqualé as a single community, although residents who lived nearer to the top still considered themselves part of Santa Teresa and rarely descended the hill.

Antônia also maintained an icy relationship with the president of the AM of Saqualé, Denise. A few years prior, two men came knocking on the door of the hostel asking to speak to the owner. It was the middle of the day, the tourists had all left, and Antônia was alone. The men asked her to step outside to speak with them because there was a dispute to settle. Their superior, the *dono* [boss] from over the other side of the hill, had been informed that Antônia had pocketed for herself a charitable monetary gift of US$20,000 from a guest of the hostel intended for the community at large. Antônia noticed the men were armed, and, after a pang of sudden alarm, she insisted that if they came to talk to her, that they come inside "like civilized people." They did not enter. At the doorway Antônia said that she would not be intimidated like this, and that if

someone had a claim against her, that person could come address her directly. Perceiving that the allegation involved rumored money destined to the local AM, Antônia inferred that the accuser was Denise, its president. She thus dared the men to take her into the woods and execute her, as they were probably instructed, because they would find no such large sum of money and would only draw attention from far and wide. They desisted and left the hostel, but Denise herself would eventually appear at her door with other contentions. She claimed that the hostel did nothing to contribute to the community and was simply capitalizing on its location, that Antônia did not hire local residents to work in the hostel. The rebuttal was that no one in Saqualé would accept a job at the hostel because nobody wants to work *in the favela*, and that the hostel, consisting of only five rooms, could not sustain more than one cleaning position. And, argued Antônia, no local resident, had the hospitality skills or fluency in English or German to fulfill the duties required of the receptionist.

The mutual suspicion between these two women exemplified broader tensions about Morro do Saqualé as a social, political, and economic space. Antônia feels her hostel was sometimes a great burden to her life, which she has marked out in seven-year stages. When she turned 35, she swore she would turn over a new chapter and move away to restart once again. While the hostel held its doors open to neighbors, especially young ones, Antônia also never felt that it should perform any kind of charitable or developmentalist function to the wider community. As a business it owed nothing of the sort, and in fact, she contended, contributed to destigmatizing and raising the profile of this favela, and favelas more generally, in the eyes of international travelers. The tensions between Antônia and Denise arose within a broader historical conjuncture in which community and individual interests were becoming defined by an

emergent favela bourgeoisie at the same moment as organizations such as AMs took shape as political representation of favela residents' collective interests (Machado da Silva 1967).

An artful dodger

A skinny 17-year-old boy slinked by a gathering at a botequim without socializing with anyone. An older man named Luiz spotted him and warned that he saw BOPE coming. The youth darted off, to Luiz's delight. But soon the same teenager returned and asked me if I wanted to go down the hill with him. Others were already dispersing, so I followed him. We had barely turned the first corner before he asked if I wanted some *pô* (cocaine). I turned gruff with him, asking if he thought all gringos were in the community only to buy drugs and flatly stating that I was not going to the *boca de fumo* ("mouth of smoke," or drug sales point) with him. The teen, named Djou, took me an alternate route down the hill to bypass the *boca*, passing a graffiti inscription (figure 7) that read:

POR MAIS Q ROUBAMOS MATAMOS OU TRAFICAMOS JAMAIS RESISTIREMOS A UM SORRISO DE UMA CRIANÇA. *FÉ EM DEUS!*	As much as we steal, kill or deal drugs, we will never resist a child's smile. Faith in God!

We stopped at one of the three small bars at the bottom of the hill where the cobblestone road ends, or begins, depending on one's orientation (see figure 6). The old men at the beaten-up billiards table greeted me, but they seemed puzzled by the sight of the two of us together. In fact, I was still unsure about pretext of Djou leading me to the bar. We sat across a table from each other, which suddenly turned our conversation more akin to an interview. Djou must have sensed this too, as he divulged about his life: he was turning 18 in a week. He never knew his father. His mother was now married to a man he called

his *tio*[15] and had three more children by him. Djou had been part of the narcotrafficking gang Comando Vermelho (CV) until just over a year prior when he was arrested by

Figure 7 *Comando Vermelho grafitti*

BOPE officers and incarcerated for 15 months. Perhaps Luiz's earlier joking was cruelly targeted at Djou's experiences with the police and criminal justice system. In juvenile detention he took computer courses. His mother visited him three times a week. He had also been part of the Morrinho group but had disengaged from his peers before his arrest.

Djou corroborated the rumor circulating that the previous Saturday night BOPE crashed the dance party in the *quadra* and forced the traffickers they entrapped there to urinate into beer cups and drink. Like many accounts of BOPE, the repulsive details conform to an ongoing legend of righteous cruelty the battalion itself promulgates about itself and which popular media

[15] Uncle, or generic term for an older man, typically a term by which children refer to a schoolteacher.

amplifies. BOPE is primarily utilized as a shock troop for invading favelas controlled by traffickers or militias run by ex-police, for capturing high-profile criminals such as gang bosses, as well as for hostage and hijacking scenarios. Even drug gang members express respect and admiration for BOPE because it operates outside the law it purportedly upholds. The image of incorruptible soldiers unswayed by venal political and economic interests has become a very powerful expression of Brazilian society's relationship to law, criminality, and class power. After all, BOPE does not arrest or assassinate state officials or corporate executives, no matter how much they may have embezzled from the public coffers. The mythic appeal of BOPE is of a violent force operating not so much to enforce criminal law, which is seen as insufficient or perverse, but rather to create a new form of power from outside the legal order (see Chapter 4).

Figure 8 *Paula Trope pin-hole camera photo series exhibition, in collaboration with Morrinho youth. (Photo courtesy: http://universes-in-universe.de/car/ venezia/eng/2007/tour/int-exhib/img-10.htm)*

Djou added that BOPE only decide to stop a party when *baile funk* music comes on because it is "illegal." Only *bandidos* sing funk songs, according to BOPE, so they rush in as soon as they hear the distinctive funk beat. The DJ can play other genres—pagode, samba—all

he wants, just not funk. Djou vowed not to go back to Comando Vermelho again, but he still held deep resentment towards the police. "*Só amor e paz agora...* [Just love and peace now…]" He mentioned working with Paula Trope, a photographer who had conducted a collaborative pin-hole camera project with Morrinho youth in 2007 (figure 8). I told him I had seen the exhibit in New York last year, and Djou beamed. We slap hands across the table, and I joke, "You're very famous in New York." After we finished the bottle of beer and I paid, Djou showed me his sandals, the heels of which were worn away. He asked me for R$20 to get new ones. I handed him a banknote across the table, feeling, however, that I was making a mistake. I said, "Alright, I don't want you to be stepping in dog shit. But if I see that you didn't buy the sandals, I'm going to be very annoyed." At this transaction I sensed his life story was a calculated ploy to soften me up for a donation. At the same time I felt like it was a token for his time and sincerity, no matter what he was going to do with the money.

I later stopped by the hostel to say hello to Antônia. She filled me in on Djou's story and admonished me for giving him money. "He's already bought drugs with it," she asserted. Then Djou himself came into the hostel, wanting to sell Antônia something which eluded me. She became incensed at him like a stern mother. "Give him back his money. Oh, you already spent it, *hein*? He gave that to you to spend on new sandals because he wants to be your friend. And now you've blown that away. People trust you to do productive things and you blow it on drugs. What is that, man?" Djou, stung by the moralizing barrage, headed out the door.

"That hell"

The general account told about the growth of Rio's favelas is as part of a broader story of mass rural-to-urban migration in the postwar global South, of millions of impoverished peasants

flocking to industrializing metropolises, which, at best, could not accommodate them and, at worst, repressed and criminalized them. The movement of favela dwellers within Rio is a more nuanced and complex subject. Because of its location and recent state-led infrastructural and security interventions, the housing market in Morro do Saqualé was extremely limited. There were rarely any posted announcements for houses for sale, and none for rentals. The latter were in such demand that owners could quickly find potential tenants through word of mouth. I learned of the paths residents took to move into and out of Saqualé, with different motives and rationales.

Daniel, a man in his early 40s, invariably approached me to gush enthusiastically about a new videogame he had purchased, but whose English text he could not understand. He wanted my help to translate the game's instructions for him. Apparently, playing these games was a secret indulgence that his spouse Renata prohibited because he only suggested I come by the house while she was away. As a result of this fear of his wife's condemnation, I never did this favor for Daniel, but our interactions always had to proceed from the same premise—that I should help him learn to play a new videogame—before discussion of anything else.

His previous employment was as a cameraman for a sensationalist program that broadcast armed shootouts in favelas. At that time, the couple lived in a small rented apartment in the middle-class neighborhood of Laranjeiras with their two young daughters. From the images of favelas he helped disseminate and from the gunfire he often heard originating from nearby Saqualé, Daniel swore he "would never live in that hell." But in 2002 he decided his job was getting too dangerous, and he quit. "I had been paying over almost all my paycheck to cover rent while I worked for the TV station, so I sold my car to a *creente* (evangelical) for R$2,000 (US$1,000), bought a house here in Saqualé, and moved with my wife and daughters." Daniel

and Renata's new livelihood was hotdogs and soft drinks out of the back of an unmarked van at lunchtime in Largo do Machado, a major plaza in Rio. Relocating up the hill into the favela was a nominal step down into a lower class, but the move was a deliberate tactic to improve their quality of life. Most interestingly, for Daniel this change involved leaving not only a job that had locked him into a middle-class bind of high costs of living and low pay, but also disavowing that labor itself: the production of lurid, violent images of favelas.

Just a few years later, police and food inspectors operating under the Choque de Ordem [Shock of Order] campaign of mayor Eduardo Paes apprehended Daniel and Renata's van and foodstuffs. The controversial drive to regulate street vending affected many other residents of Saqualé, as well.[16] One vendor of açaí, a frozen Amazonian berry treat, after his cart had been confiscated, openly declared he would enter the *movimento*, or drug gang, because he had no other options. "Vou traficar, é isso mesmo," he professed in desperation one evening. Another mother of three who sold homemade lunch staples out of plastic containers to working-class customers faced exorbitant fines when officials arrived to inspect (*fiscalizar*) her wares on the street. Daniel and Renata, shortly after losing this business, then separated. Renata moved out of Saqualé with the daughters, while Daniel remained and seek out a new livelhood.

Down a long staircase from Daniel and Renata's home was a landing of sorts, a relatively flat area wide enough to park a small car, although no vehicle could ascend the narrow paths up the hill. Open on one side with a view out over the city, the spot served as a resting place for those needing to catch their breath, and to summon a bit of willpower, before heading up the

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[16] See Collins (2010) and Jones and Varley (1994) present cases from, Salvador, Brazil, and Puebla, Mexico, respectively, where state initiatives to reclaim city centers for heritage projects involved "cleansing" the streets of informal economy vendors and other figures deemed dangerous or unsavory. While these studies hinge on tensions over an image of a national past being refashioned for urban regeneration, Paes pushed the anti-vendor campaign in Rio as a matter of combating urban "disorder." The first operation under the Choque de Ordem program was on the city's famous beaches, where new, uniform colored tents were ordered to replace those of the umbrella vendors.

daunting next set of stairs. The doors of several houses opened, more or less, onto this space. One of the last houses not built entirely of brick and mortar belonged to a 75-year-old woman known as Dona Fátima. It was a cacophony of materials. The side of her home facing the landing was made of stucco. The other half was seemingly cobbled together out of old advertising and political placards, planks of wood, corrugated aluminum and asbestos plates, bamboo stalks, plumbing pipes, a bird cage, a plastic tarp, an empty refrigerator. Plastic power cords from old appliances bound together these materials in seeming haphazard manner. One could see inside the home, but it was not apparent which pieces of the construction were structural and which were ornamental. No bed, no stove, and no refrigerator were visible. The front door was not of a single piece, but a bundle of wood, wire, and protruding nails.

Fátima herself spent most of her time outside the house, leaning on the handrail that led up from the landing. One morning I saw Fátima urgently summoning me to come up the stairs to speak with her. As I walked up the stairs, she descended a few steps, away from the others sitting nearby. “Can you lend me some money? Twenty reals. I can repay it at the end of next month,” Fátima whispered.

“I usually don’t lend money,” I replied. “What is it for, may I ask?”

“It’s to pay some bills.”

“I understand you’re not the kind of person who finds it easy to ask. So is it to pay the light bill?”

“No, my son Paulo needs money to pay the rent. His wife snorts [cocaine], so I usually have to go to help him out. His rent is 150 per month. I usually give 20 to cover him. I put it directly in the landlady’s hand. I don’t trust my daughter-in-law because she’s *viciada* [addicted]. They have a 15-year-old son…”

"I try not to lend to people in situations like that because it doesn't do anything to change the situation, only extends it. But I am going to give you twenty not because I support your son and daughter-in-law but because I trust you." Early in my time living in Saqualé, a few people had solicited me for money. Djou, as recounted previously, cultivated a sense of indebtedness (for telling me his life story) before requesting a donation toward a new pair of sandals. Another young man tried persistently to sell me broken or spoiled goods, such as a propane gas valve and a moldy mattress. These experiences had somewhat hardened me to such solicitations, but my response to Fátima did not put her off.

She continued: "You see, I'm broke this month. I get just 400 Reais per month as retirement money [*aposentaria*], on account of my age. I don't receive a *decimoterceiro* ["thirteenth" month of salary end-of-year bonus] because I never had a work identity card [*carteira de trabalho*] in all my jobs when I worked as a domestic worker."

"I have some bottles and cans to recycle, would that help?"

"I take cans and pull-tabs [*tampinhas de latinha*] to the recycling center [*loja*] down there on the *rua* ["street" or formal city], but they steal from me. They give me 11 reals for a kilo of aluminum cans, so I need to come with a guy to help me. He gets the right amount from them and takes 3.50, so I keep about 15 reals for every kilo. I don't like the bottles because plastic doesn't pay much. You fill up a sack this high"—she raised her hand to chest height—"and barely get 50 cents."

"You know, Dona Fátima, I've been your neighbor for months, and I don't even know the inside of your house."

"Well, I'm fixing it up. I'm trying to renovate [*reformar*] my house, so I got a bank loan of 1,700 reals. They take 140 out of my retirement check every month. Next month we're going

to get started. So whenever I can, I'm going to give Toca 40 Reais to build, like the wall in the back, or the bathroom. He'll work from eight, eight-thirty, until one or two in the afternoon."

"I can lend a hand if you want some help."

"Oh, that's okay. My son will come to help. Not Paulo, though. Another one."

"Where does Paulo live? Near your other children?"

"No, he's in Realengo, it's more than an hour by bus from central Rio. I go there every other week. And then I see Gerson and Liliane in Saracuruna. That's another suburb over an hour-long bus ride away. Have you ever been?"

"No, but *poxa* [gosh], Fátima, you travel so much for your children!"

"Well, I had nine. They all live elsewhere now. The ones still living."

A silence dropped over us, and we cast our gazes out over the city toward Sugarloaf Mountain. But I knew Dona Fátima was, in spite of her reserved character, not a woman who wished to conceal or be ashamed of the travails of her life. She divulged them, in fragmented bits.

"Paulo's father drank *cachaça*. He came home late and would beat the children. Beat me, too. He had three children with a woman down in the *rua*. Paulo was eight years old. He escaped through the window one night when his father came home. He spent time on the *rua*, had dinner at other people's homes, lived out in the *mato* [forest]. When he came back he said he wanted to go into the *tráfico* [drug gang] to kill his father…"

Twice in this account, Fátima identified the *rua* as a space where men cheated (on) her. First, the men of the recycling center denied her a fair price for the materials she would bring, and Fátima would rely on a middleman to gain the market rate, albeit deducted for a "commission fee." And second, her husband left her to start a family with another woman in the

rua. Economically and romantically, the formal city represented a space where Fátima was disrespected and dispossessed. A third invocation of the *rua* comes with her son who ran away from home and lived on the street, in others' houses, and in the forest to escape the violence of his father. The trajectories of these lives resonate with Lauderdale Graham's (1988) history of women working as domestic servants in 19th-century Rio, as well as with Goldstein's (2003) ethnography of intersecting hierarchies of power in a Rio favela and Hecht's (1998) ethnography of street children in Northeast Brazil, among other works. These studies elucidate the forms of violence and domination that run through the domestic space of the home and the public space of the street, and connect them to the legacies of the Brazilian slavery complex. Following social historian Gilberto Freyre as a common point of reference, home and street have been primary sites, both symbolic and actual, through which to observe and analyze the construction of race, gender, sexuality, and class in Brazilian society. For Freyre (1986 [1936]), the colonial *casa grande* (big house) and *senzala* (slave quarters) corresponded to two social categories pertaining, respectively, to masters and slaves. This is to note, as well, that the construction of Brazilian society has long been understood as intertwined with *spatial* categories.

A third space also appeared in Fátima's account of her son Paulo's life. Six months after she borrowed money to help him, Paulo died. We talked about him again on the steps. "Paulo's was in many prisons: Bangu, Campos, Agua Santa, Niterói, Santos… To get to Campos, I would get the bus at 8 A.M. with my young daughter and get there around noon. I'd buy him some things at the market there because it was too much to take stuff from here with the girl in my arms. We'd stand in line on the street, and around 2pm we could go in to see him. They'd frisk us. I'd stay until 5pm and get back home almost at midnight. I'd do that once a month.

"He was imprisoned at 18 years old, almost 19, and he was in there 20 years and eight months. And he was out for nine years before he died of a heart attack. You know, he smoked a lot, snorted a lot too. And he was a big, strong guy. But all that went along gradually building up."

"And in these last years was he working?"

"No, he would collect cardboard from houses, and he would make around 70 Reais a week from that. And his wife would bring in around 100. She's fat but not healthy. You know, he would scrounge together to put up a fruit stand. He'd sell bananas, coconuts, tomatoes, vegetables. And she grew jealous of his women customers, and forbade him from selling anymore. But Paulo was the most polite [*educado*] child I had. He adored me, he'd hold my hand…"

We're interrupted by a little girl's shout. "I'm looking after them today. Hey! Go call your sister. She's inside. Oh, I'll do it. Verônica! Ve-ro-nica!" Shouting for people from in front of their house was a reliable way to find them. If the person sought after was not home, a relative would usually appear at the window to provide information.

"Someone told me you also had a son who was killed carrying building materials."

"He was my youngest. Albertinho. He was shot right here." She looks down at the empty step in between us. He was 18 years old. Another died in an accident, run over by a car while on his bicycle. I lost three small children within one month. Two from an "attack of worms" [*ataque de vermes*, perhaps dysentery]. They were four and two years old. And the other was eight months old. He died suddenly from a heart condition. Back then, we lived in the community up over the hill 'on the other side.' And before that, we were in Santo Antônio."

Morro do Santo Antônio was the name of one of the first favelas to appear in Rio. The community shared the eponymous hill with a monastery and a police precinct. The hill was almost entirely razed to the ground, with the exception of the monastery, in the 1950s, and the earth was used to create the land infill that would become the Aterro do Flamengo [Flamengo Embankment], a public waterfront park.

Figure 9 *Razing of Morro do Santo Antônio. Aerial photograph without date, authored by IBGE and Tibor Jablonsky. "*Desmonte do morro de Santo Antônio, atual Avenida Chile (RJ*)." From: IBGE online library. <URL: http://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/d_detalhes.php?id=417747> Accessed: 3 September 2013.*

Fátima recounted her early life. “I was born in Bahia. But my parents brought me here when I was 15 days old, so I was raised Carioca. I’m not sure, but I think we came by ship. In those days that was the way most people traveled from Bahia. I never went back there, and I don’t know any of my relatives there. I do have a brother, I think he’s 79 now, who was a professional soccer player. He lives in Minas Gerais in a house the soccer club bought for him.

Figure 10 *Archival photo from Morro do Santo Antônio, dated 1914. <URL: http://www.flickr.com/photos/carioca_da_gema/151236145/> Accessed: 16 March 2013.*

"In Morro do Santo Antônio I didn't really grow up in the same house as my siblings, though. My mother killed herself. She covered herself in alcohol and set herself on fire. She was completely burned, but she lasted another 15 days. My father found her in bed with his friend. He started to curse her, laying into her [*meter o pau*], and she went and burned herself. She wasn't thinking of us, she's wasn't. My youngest sister was just eight months old. There were five of us. I was two years old. The others were seven, nine, and ten. The seven-year-old was the one my mother sent to go get the alcohol. It all happened in one day.

"After my mother died, my father stayed separated from us kids for awhile. He was an investigator with the Polícia Central. He would take us over to different neighbors' houses and

tell each family, 'Here, please take care of my daughter. Here, please take care of this one...' At seven, I already knew how to cook, how to wash clothes… Yeah, I've been working since I was a child. My father, later on, started drinking. An old city minister friend of his gave him a boat, and he spent his days there.

"Ah, I suffered a lot in my life. But I'm still here. I don't know how to read, how to write. They sent me to school when I was older, but the kids would throw balls at me, wadded pieces of paper, Easter eggs, calling me illiterate [*analfabeta*]. In the classes that had illiterate children they would do that. So I stayed just one month. I already had my own daughter by then. I didn't even want to learn when I was young. I would get jobs answering the telephone to serve people. I even worked in a hotel in Copacabana at 15 years old as a housekeeper [*faxineira*]. Airline flight attendants would come, stay 3 or 4 days. When they left, they would leave me tips. I stayed there a year then took a job as cook at a hostel, making rice and beans in huge pots. But for as much as I worked I never got a worker's card [*nunca assinei carteira*]. I was retired by the government, by account of my age. I don't even have a right to a *décimo terceiro*. But thank God I get that 400 a month for retirement."

These final comments about the welfare state point to contradictions in the Brazilian state vis-à-vis the working poor. For all the labor Fátima has performed over her lifetime, she never received a *carteira*, or worker's identification card, which would have made her eligible for a full pension. In the 1970s and 1980s, the image of the poor as workers, especially through the mobilization of trade unions such as the Workers Party (PT) and religious movements such as liberation theology, won a certain measure of political legitimacy. But, argues anthropologist Gabriel Feltran (2010), workers movements themselves contributed to the production of a counter image of the poor as *marginais*, *assessinos*, and *vagabundos* [marginals, murderers, and

bums]. A distinction emerged between the worthy and unworthy poor. Workers successfully claimed rights by virtue of their status as workers, but those who did not or could not work lost that pathway to legitimacy and became marked as criminal. Compare this development with the so-called neoliberal shift in the US and UK from welfare to workfare, wherein low-paying job programs were branded as bringing the added benefits of building self-esteem among recipients while undercutting their supposed dependency on the State (Goode and Maskovsky 2001). In these countries, this political turn came from the rise of a resurgent Right wing that professed free-market ideology as a solution to bloated and faceless governmental paternalism. Curiously, Brazil (and France since Mitterand, to suggest a parallel case) experienced a similar construction of "noble" and "dangerous" underclasses, but this shift derived from Left movements, policies, and parties in power. While we see similar processes, including mass incarceration especially for many racialized male youth who fall into the "dangerous" category, labeling all these national developments part of one monolithic "neoliberal" turn obscures their quite different political histories and trajectories.[17] Dona Fátima's life of tragedies and multiform discrimination traverses these social shifts and gives them actual consequence. Her politics reside in a resilience that casts what has been taken from her—materially, psychologically—in stark relief.

When traveling, home is in the past

Much of what I learned about Saqualé's past was articulated during moments outside the community itself, on excursions with residents. In these tellings, paradoxically, the state of being away from home elicited narratives of home, and the place where we were situated, as visitors, seemed to fade away. Perhaps because of a shared longing for Saqualé provoked by travel, and perhaps because being away unlocked certain imposed silences everyone felt, the distance

[17] See Harvey (2005) for a variegated history and theorization

seemed to call forth histories of "the early days" in the community. Across Rio's favelas there is a certain sense of nostalgia for an era before the rupture, above all else, presented by the rise of narcotraffic gangs.

I visited Fátima's son and daughter twice in Saracuruna, a suburb in the flats north of Rio de Janeiro. On the first trip, I accompanied a group of neighbors and relatives going to attend the first birthday party of Fátima's great-granddaughter and stay for the weekend. I sat next to Fátima on the bus. She was pensive, looking out the window. I asked what she thought about on these long bus rides, which she made almost weekly. "I just watch outside." She cast an eye on the people filling the bus. She told me about her (living) children and pointed out the hospital where little Betânia was born a year previous. She had dyed her hair a lavender hue for this weekend's festivities.

We arrived in the evening for the birthday party held in a high modernist, Oscar Niemeyer-designed public school (CIEP), popularly referred to as *brizolão*, after the governor Brizola who had them built across Rio de Janeiro in the post-dictatorship 1980s. Cartoon images of a blonde, fair-skinned princess covered the cake and decorations. The contingent from Saqualé included Toca, a skilled mason, and his son Kamal. Also accompanying us were Dona Aparecida, a frail but sharp-witted octogenarian; her two sons Cota and Edmilson; and grandsons Giovanni and Lúcio. Both these families maintained long friendships with Fátima's son Gerson, who helped them settle in Saqualé almost fifteen years earlier. On the way there Toca joked about going to "Iraq" for the weekend.

Gerson had lived in Saqualé and was godfather to Lúcio. Gerson moved with his wife to Saracuruna, ten years before. His single-story house with small gated garden in front and patio in the back, lay across the street from a vast marshland. A towering Petrobrás refinery glowed a few

miles away. Gerson worked as a security guard at the facility for 2.5 times the minimum wage and, he claimed, he expected to receive a promotion.

Giovanni shuttled us in groups with his car from the birthday party at the public school to Gerson's house. It was quite a long ride, and took three round trips. The car would scrape its bottom on the speed bumps that intermittently appeared on the dark road. Giovanni switched on the blinking hazard lights, following Gerson's instructions, upon entering his neighborhood: this was a signal to traffickers that we were not police. In the house, which was outfitted with new appliances and furniture, we heard fireworks being launched into the sky overhead. It repeated every 15 or 20 minutes. Gerson explained that these were trafficker signals as well: 12 bangs in quick succession meant police were entering. Three meant they had left. Aparecida grew frightened. This mood of unease moved her to tell about when her eldest son, Ademir, moved to a favela named Anchieta in the flatlands of the West Zone of Rio. "I went to visit him once and got completely lost. No one knew who Ademir was since he was new there. When I finally found the house, I realized that the alley [*beco*] I had just entered to get there was a firing zone for a shootout between *bandidos*! At one point a *bandido* ran through the house! I pleaded to Ademir to sell the house at any price and move to Saqualé. It turns out it was Gerson who helped my son and his family, facilitating his settlement there. I am so grateful to you, Gerson, for what you were able to do then!" Gerson was enjoying being his guests' company and their exhortations of his past and present largesse.

Aparecida compared Gerson's generosity to her current neighbor Henrique, who was currently rebuilding her house at his own expense in exchange for the right to build on top of her soon-to-be new concrete slab roof. As a result of this agreement, Aparecida, Cota, Edmilson, and Giovanni were temporarily displaced. Giovanni was very close to Aparecida—more so than to

his mother—but both were sleeping in cramped quarters at his mother's home, a long flight of stairs further up Saqualé. Aparecida's misgivings about Henrique did not concern so much the current arrangement as the way he and his family moved next door in the first place some 15 years prior. Henrique had bought a plot of land next to her house from a man to whom she had *given* the space freely. He had left behind a small shack and bar [*botequim*] for Heraldo, and Aparecida always felt she was owed a certain debt out of this exchange. At that time, Saqualé was merely a loose set of houses made of wood and stucco connected by a path in the woods, she reminded us.

The next day Gerson fed us from the grill and took us on a horse-drawn cart ride up and down his street. By the early evening, I sensed an urge on behalf of all to return to Saqualé. All, that is, except Kamal who had grown quickly irritated with those of us who wanted to leave or ensure we caught the bus. "I haven't been here in 11 years, and who knows if this place will be here the next time we come. It will be all industrialized." He pointed at the enormous refinery across the grasses. "I want to stay here and fight for this place as a Leftist fighter [*guerreiro da izquerda*] to save this from becoming industry everywhere." Kamal's sentiments seemed to coincide with his new affection for Gerson's neighbor, a young woman with 3 children—her first at age 13—with whom he had had a "great chat [*papo maravilhoso*]" and a kiss on the cheek. Kamal strong-willed character oscillated constantly between a self-image as lover and another as militant.

Over a year later, I would be on another bus with Kamal. The Morrinho Project had become an artwork constructed in replica and exhibited worldwide, and in 2010, its creators were invited artists in London (see Chapter 7). Occupying the front two rows of an otherwise quite red double-decker bus number 176 grumbling through London's West End, the words started to zip

between Kamal and his Morrinho peer Bruno. The latter, having spent the past few days admiring Kamal's recently-acquired sterling pendant etched with an icon of Saint George impaling the dragon, wanted one from the same Picadilly Circus engraver, only with an image of his toddler son instead. They had insisted I accompany them to help translate their preferences to the vendor. On the way, their chatter on the bus, in heavy Carioca slang, became interjected with loud mimicry of gunfire: *brrrrrrr blau blau blau*… Bruno and Kamal were far from home but recounting stories from 'early days' when they were briefly stationed in the drug gang of a neighboring favela. They were talking *over* each other more than to each other. The three of us looked out over the afternoon bustle of London streets passing by, without really looking. The windshield of the lurching double-decker framed the city out in front and below us. We shared that feeling of floating over the city that the front rows of the double-decker affords. We surveyed in a detached way the scene outside, yet it also felt as if with a sudden hard brake from the driver's foot we might tumble into it. It was unclear whether our surroundings had anything to do with the conversation about a faraway place and time. Bruno and Kamal were collaborating with and against each other, as they often did, co-producing a jangled retelling of their stint in the drug gang, as lookouts in a neighboring community. Their narratives seemed to come from all sides at once, like the action they describe.

Kamal: "Then he said, 'Calm down, calm down,' he said, 'you're going to choke.' and *BLAU!* …then you could hear the sirens *wiuuu wiuuu wiuuu* More than five Blazers [police vehicles]!"

Bruno: "It's always like that. But remember Cadeira? He would lie down in the woods with a FAP [large-caliber rifle] and just start wrecking them… *blaublaublaublaublau*…They

were everywhere. And he had them in his sights. I got out of there. He was lying down there and started coming at them from inside the woods."

" 'Get out of there! Get out!' "

"He passed real close to him, in his scope. It was an eye for an eye, man. They said he didn't lie down, no, he slipped and on the ground shots going by *biungbiungshiungtiung* I said, 'never again.' Man, I was angry as hell. Every time I was there, there was a kid who didn't let us sleep. When he stepped out we'd all fall asleep, Pac, Pipa, everyone. 'Hey, you from Saqualé, keep on the lookout.' They'd come up, ask for a fiver, and Pac would have them lift up their shirt, 'All due respect…' and they'd put the stuff in his hand while checking his jacket, back pocket, everything…"

The bus passes Trafalgar Square, and I mention that the obelisk commemorates the defeat of Napoleon.[18]

Bruno: "*Bona-part-chee*… So they defeated him."

Kamal: "The British were also pretty mean, huh? They'd cross the continent to fight—Whoa! Is that tree branch going to hit us? It just barely passed over…"

I looked over my shoulder and saw that the few other passengers on the bus are sitting several rows back, their glances darting with apprehension. Much like on bus rides in Rio, Kamal

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[18] This encounter with the monument to early 19th-century imperial power recalls the first episode of the brilliant television series *City of Men*, about two teenage boys from a Rio favela. The inaugural show centers around a school field trip to Petrópolis to see the royal Portuguese crown on display there. A teacher is trying to present a slideshow on the history of how Rio became the seat of the Portuguese empire when Napoleon's invasion of Lisbon forced João VI to relocate his entire imperial court across the Atlantic. It was the only moment in history when the capital of a European empire was located in the New World. Frustrated with the rambunctious classroom excited only by the fieldtrip itself, the teacher threatens to cancel the excursion if no one can retell this history. One student, Acerola, a co-protagonist of the show, had been daydreaming but stands up to present the account in an inspired re-interpretation that transforms European nations into rival favela factions (a pun on *alemão*, meaning both German and, in favela slang, "enemy"), and the crown into a old grandmother (another pun on the word *coroa*) who must be safely transferred to a new home in another favela, perilously traversing warring gang territory. Exasperated, the teacher concedes that this re-imagining perhaps communicated world history in more effective, relatable terms than she herself had, and Acerola is lauded as a hero for saving the fieldtrip. Acerola's weaving together of modern Atlantic history with the contemporary realities of favelas is a theme taken up again in the Conclusion of this work.

sometimes started talking to me about the latest goings-on in Morrinho, loudly enough that the entire bus can hear: "…And so they came in shooting, but my soldiers fought them off! We picked off a few of those guys coming up the hill not expecting anything. Then with the machine gun, *brrrrrrrrrraaaaahhh*, it was beautiful, they couldn't touch my hill, my fortress…" This kind of talk always seemed calculated in its situatedness and theatricality, and it made Carioca bus riders visibly nervous to see my dark-skinned, heavily bejeweled, tattooed, and muscled companion spouting brash stories of violence and sexual conquest. *Is he a bandido?*, their squirms seemed to communicate back to us. What pleasure Kamal derives from these stunts remains unclear, but the subtext was quite evident in its public effects: *you don't know me, and if you think you do, you'd best not mess with me*. My complicity as interlocutor—although I was caught between being scandalized and sharing in the mischief—had some role in making possible these spontaneous chronicles from the miniature city, or at least a role in avoiding possible consequences. Kamal's intent in these bus semi-pranks appears couched in a consciousness that outside the community he is seen as a *favelado*, that this social difference comes circumscribed with subtle, everyday forms of discrimination, so his best tactic is to assume the identity of a notorious gangster from Morrinho.

On the London bus, this was a different kind of storytelling. It appeared to be another moment when the dislocation of travel inspired stories about home, especially the ones one best not told at home. It also seemed to be another moment when a conversation sprang up spontaneously, and in the moment I was never very sure I was the audience.

In Rio, Bruno returns continually to dwell on memories of violence. When he witnessed his father beating his mother, he slipped out of the house to Morrinho. He arrived shaking with rage, swearing to enter the drug gang with the sole intention of acquiring a gun to kill his father.

There Claudio and Kamal embraced him, dissuaded and assured him that, whatever transpires at home, Morrinho was his family.

Baile funk: pleasures and terrors

Bruno was quick to malign and tease. He showed respect and affection with irony. His regular greeting to me—"What's up, freak [*Qual é, safado*]?"—was always accompanied by a handshake and embrace. We walked together, one New Year's Eve, to a nearby favela over the North Zone boundary from Saqualé where there was a *baile*, a dance party of mass proportions financed by the local drug gang patron, or *dono*. Bruno assured me the baile would be fine as long as the rival gang on the neighboring hill or the police didn't cause problems. A long, unlit paved pathway led to a covered gymnasium complex, or *quadra*, with basketball nets and balconies flanking each side. The beat could be heard from miles away, repeating the signature rhythm *BOOM-tcha-tcha BOOM-BOOM-tcha, BOOM-tcha-tcha BOOM-BOOM-tcha*… The density of people gradually intensified as we approached. Most were milling about, buying beer and snacks from nearby vendors. Motorcyclists weaved through the bodies. Inside the quadra young people were packed in. There was no stage or visible DJ booth toward which one could orient ones attention. A wall of speakers (*equipe de som*) occupied an entire side of the quadra and pumped out a deafening volume of sound. We arrived around 2:30 A.M., but the dance floor seemed to be still amassing bodies and energy. Over the crowd of a few thousand I could see firearms pointed upward. At different moments "conga lines" would form with young men hoisting their 9mm pistols, .762 rifles and, in one case, a rocket-propelled grenade launcher as they paraded through the crowd, snaking their way around the dance floor. Many Saqualé folks were standing alongside the equipe de som. I was without money, identification, or phone. When

Bruno and I stepped out to get a drink, we were accompanied by Túlio, a stocky member of the CV gang from Saqualé who somehow knew me already. A CV soldier greeted Túlio for a moment after which he turned back and exclaimed to us, "I don't know how people know who I am when I don't know who they are. I'm not even the mosquito of the year." I found that an odd confession, and odd way to express it. The hierarchy of the CV mimicks corporate and military organization structures. Túlio's position was that of the relatively low-ranking soldier (*soldado*), and furthermore, Saqualé's status was subordinate to rule from the dono of this neighboring favela. Túlio's "mosquito of the year" remark seemed to be self-deprecating hyperbole, playing on "employee of the month" awards in corporate business culture. It revealed the desires for recognition and status among males within the drug gang organization (Penglase 2010).

In the middle of the baile, the DJ called for a 2-minute silence for *o Espanhol*, "the Spaniard." The silence was respected with total solemnity. No one whispered, and the only sound heard was that of plastic cups being kicked along the floor as people waded through the throng. I stayed until 4:30 and returned with neighbors of mine.

Two nights later I went to two different favelas with Kamal, his new girlfriend Soraya, and two younger Morrinho players, Eric, 16, and Dudu, 15. The baile in the first was "weak" [*fraquinho*], so we marched for almost an hour to another community. Both places abounded with male adolescents toting rifles and pistols. The baile in the second locale was in a small open-air quadra. An adjacent house had posted a FOR SALE sign. The place was not as heavily armed as the New Year's baile had been, but at one point several rounds were fired into the air. No one scattered or displayed alarm. The volume was so high that I could feel, with every bass note, the heat getting stripped off my body while that of the person in front of me getting blown onto me. Despite the raw energy of pulsing rhythm and the usual vulgar lyrics, most of the

socializing was intra-gender. The scene reminded me of junior prom dances in the US, with the boys and girls huddled in their respective areas. Except perhaps here the fear of approaching someone may have brought violent reprisal, not potential embarassment. This tension pervaded throughout the night. A troupe of young men performed a synchronized dance, and young women moved seductively for each other. In fact, I scanned the quadra and found Kamal and Soraya were the only sign of heterosexual romance in the baile.

We sauntered back to Saqualé around 5:30, and I was exhausted and half-deaf. My hearing was so compromised that high-pitched sounds seemed to "splinter" in my ear drums as if passing through a harmonica. This condition lasted two days, but I feared permanent damage. When Kamal asked if I wanted to attend another baile the following weekend, I feigned total deafness.

A saint's betrayal

A phone call, from Kamal. I answered to a long high-pitched tone and automated operator's voice, "You are receiving a collect call. To accept charges, please wait for the signal" He hung up before the beep, as he always does. It was his way, free of charge, to get my attention. I called back. Kamal invited me to go with Rodolfo and him to the city center. It was not actually an invitation, but more of an order: "Come up to the Morrinho right now. We're going to the church in Campo de Santana, and we're waiting for you." Today is the day of São Jorge, the unofficial patron saint of the city. His status in Rio de Janeiro is enormous but ambiguous since, after all, the city was founded by the Portuguese in 1565 as *São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro*.

I perceive that São Jorge—an image, a story, a feeling—moves people, somehow. Today he, for reasons still undisclosed to me, is moving Kamal, Rodolfo, and me to Campo de Santana. I meet them at Morrinho, a slightly out-of-the-way place. But we are here not for its convenience as a rendezvous point. Kamal is there to pick up some things—or more precisely, some*ones*. He has plucked three *bonecos* out of Morrinho, out of the sections he maintains.

"Who are they?" I ask.

"This is Maiquinho, here's Iti, and this is Zezinho. They're all from Morro do Fogueteiro[19] and are stationed as guards at the 'front,'" Kamal explains as he examines each boneco. "They are going to pray to São Jorge today as well. They are the ones who most need his protection."

As we began walking, Kamal said he had been in Morrinho all day. "When I am there I am in another world. I disappear." He often spent hours there alone. I would find him late at night, still painting parts of the model, printing out a new text on a wooden sign, reassembling areas toppled over in the last rain, or arranging his bonecos in such a way to fortify "his" favelas (see Chapter 5). Every participant builds and maintains his own favela, names it after a real-life one, and in the course of play, must defend it against incursions from rival gangs or police. The most efficient way is to position heavily armed bonecos in partially hidden spots with good sightlines. Sometimes all that is visible to the intruder is the barrel of a rifle from a crack between bricks (buildings). Territoriality, identity, and optics govern much of the logic of the Morrinho game, at least when it comes to waging violence: who sees, who is seen, who crosses the line of control, who defends that line (see Chapter 5).

[19] *Fogueteiro* is one who manufactures, sells, or launches rockets. Figuratively, it means liar. All the favelas in Morrinho are named after real-life communities in Rio.

On the long walk to the center, we joined up with Ricardo, a 30-year-old middle-class Brazilian who had collaborated for the past 3 years with Morrinho in film production and grant writing. Campo de Santana, also known as Plaza of the Republic, is a large green square where in 1822 Dom Pedro I was anointed Brazil's first emperor after he announced its separation from Portugal. Since his father João VI had moved the imperial capital to Rio de Janeiro to escape the Napoleonic occupation in 1808, Pedro's refusal to return to Lisbon was equivalent to a declaration of independence. Along the fence of the park, which contained a wandering menagerie of swans, ducks, stray cats, and *agoutis*,[20] there was a long row of vendors all under red tents offering grilled foods, candles, an array of São Jorge merchandise. The icon of the saint on horseback impaling a dragon was everywhere around us: on t-shirts, on bare tattooed shoulders, in miniature statuettes, key chains, and myriad other trinkets. Nearer to the large white church we saw large pits for prayer candles, with people leaning over them. We got in line to enter for the scheduled *oração* ceremony.

The church was packed. The illuminated interior shows off the sky blue and gold accents of the baroque apse. At the altar was not an image of Jesus Christ, but a statue of a man in a dark robe holding a golden staff. Most of the attention, however, falls to the right side where a life-size statue of São Jorge holding a silver shield and white flag, both bearing the signature red cross, and a silver helmet with large red and white feathers of the sort seen on Carnival costumes. He was mounted on a white horse but was confined behind an eight-foot tall white railing (see figure 11).

A booming public announcement hushed the din of the crowd: in honor of the 200-year anniversary of the Military Police (PM), the Police marching band entered the procession. The ensemble of brass instruments and drums played the national anthem at the church door while

[20] Large, tailless rodents.

the standing public sang. They marched into the church up to the altar, to wide and sustained applause. I looked at Kamal and Rodolfo, who stood with stern faces, not clapping. Ricardo, also unmoved by the spectacle, returned a shrug to me.

Figure 11 *São Jorge ceremony, 2009.*

We exited through the gift shop to a candle pit in front of the church. Here Kamal prayed solemnly with eyes closed then joined the red and white candles he held in each hand, then knelt in silence for a minute. Once outside Kamal and Rodolfo commented on the ceremony. They did not support the entrance of the PM during the *oração*. To them São Jorge was a "policeman in the Roman army," but that did not correspond to the PM who represent repression and injustice, not the *guerreiro,* or warrior image. The PM was indeed founded by João VI in 1809 as the Military Division of the Royal Guard with its primary duty to repress slave insurrections. While

slavery as an institution was abolished in 1888,[21] state violence against the descendants of slaves continued under different guises yet always related to the legacies of class and racial inequalities. The PM occupies a special institutional place, in this regard. When Rodolfo later joined the army, he and his peers considered this call to service an honor rather than a betrayal.

Kamal recounted the feeling of being close to São Jorge and the sensation of being around others in prayer. He described how the red candle—passion, force, blood—burned first and how it took the red one to light the white—peace, tranquility. "São Jorge implores me," he intoned, this solemnity also serving to mask a disgust with the scene that had unfolded in the church.

At this point it is worth pausing to note how this narrative raises notions of protection and concealment. The bonecos—Maiquinho, Iti, and Zezinho—remained inside Kamal's knapsack for the entire excursion to the church of Campo de Santana. He had brought them, these miniature warriors, to obtain spiritual protection for them. The entrance of the PM marching band and the public applause had sorely grated against Kamal and Rodolfo's image of São Jorge. But their tacit protest did not run against the model of São Jorge, who upholds idealist principles but also knows when not to fight. We had witnessed a transparent attempt by the state to overlay its image over that of São Jorge, and the dissonance this spectacle produced.

That evening I was with Kamal again, and we were debating 'consciousness.' I offered, "There are people for whom social change means you must go to the street to protest."

Kamal objected: "No, that does not change anything. Before the street one must change oneself. First the person must change." He cited Mandela and Obama as "black leaders." "Look now, has anything changed in Africa? You think something will change in the US? There is always something on top" he argued, without specifying what that something might be. He

[21] Coincidentally on the same day of the year, May 13, as the founding of the PM.

mentioned Bob Marley, someone who "lit the darkness. Anyone who ever really effects change is killed, but they leave behind an impression in the minds of millions." Kamal then adopted the voice of a powerful figure, or perhaps power itself, or perhaps that *something on top*: "That crazy guy (*maluco*) is bothering me, kill him. Resolve the problem. He's disturbing things. He's speaking a lot, his voice is being listened to, and he's provoking society, so…" Kamal made a chopping motion with his hand. He continued, "Because society begins to lift itself up and express itself. When that happens, my brother, it disrupts, it jeopardizes the government. It's bizarre, really strange. You remember that book I showed you about the guy who lives up in the Northeast, I forget his name, who fought for Black consciousness, struggled for human rights? And at the end the guy died. He died fighting. Martin Luther King, he died fighting. 2Pac, he died fighting. It's always like that, Alex, it's always like that. Everyone who wants to show reality for what it is, in the end, my friend, if they get there, they all get cut down." Kamal slapped one hand down onto the other. "I keep going still today. I get by with some trickster stuff (*malandragem*). But if I open my mouth and say what I really know, I don't have security. The guys in Morrinho don't go around armed to protect me." He shrugged. "Am I going to go down to that son-of-a-, that governor Sérgio Cabral and say to him, 'The actions you're taking are only making things worse'? I won't go. Who's going to even listen to me? 'How can you come here and speak like that to the Governor?' You understand? I'm just one more who is struggling to show reality to all of you. Neither you nor the Governor can see the reality you are living. They gain power in order to trample over others. They step on ever more of us. I want to see the moment you are stepped on. I want to know how you feel."

"Are you afraid for the future? For your personal future, or for the future of the community?" I asked.

"Yeah, I'm afraid for my future, the future of the community, the future of my family," he snapped back. "Who is going to protect my family? I would speak some truth to President Lula. Who is going to protect my family? The guy puts the army in my family's face, man. The guy sends the army to invade favelas…"

Kamal often embarked upon a rant if given the chance, and even when not. These were usually self-propelled torrents of words, at once invigorating and exhausting. Ricardo had called him a narcissist—without malice, simply as a matter of fact. Kamal's physical repertoire included diamond stud earrings, a silver chain with gleaming St. George pendant, a gold bracelet, tattoos, an indigenous Amazonian beaded anklet, two cell phones snapped into his belt, muscles conditioned by synthetic protein supplements and a daily weight-lifting routine. He maintained a social-networking profile page with thousands of photos, most of them self-portraits in various poses—with ever-changing hair styles, in bathing suits, peering through blue-colored contact lenses, in front of various picturesque icons of Rio. Kamal was a being caught in a field of resemblances. The language of identity and difference does not conform to the way he talked and performed himself. His invocation of Black cultural and political figures lay in tension with a profound anxiety about the possibility of participating in, much less leading, social change. His imagined encounter with the governor was a fantasy of speaking truth to power, only to be stonewalled by the epistemological privilege of power itself. Power does not see anything but itself. Power wants to reproduce nothing but itself, and it calls this progress. The "march" forward, Kamal observes, is experienced not as a force carrying society but rather as a threat of being trampled. What he does to evade this fate is cultivate a repertoire of likenesses: garbs, idioms, technologies, and connections. Morrinho is perhaps part of this practice in producing doubles, alter-egos.

In 1997, Kamal and his younger brother Marcelinho moved to Morro do Saqualé with their parents from a small municipality in the interior of Rio de Janeiro state. Nearby their shack on the forested edge of the community, they passed time by tinkering with their father's masonry tools and with bricks, tiles and other materials leftover from nearby housing construction sites. "My father wanted to put down tiles for the bathroom floor. We ended up taking the tiles and making little houses," recounts Marcelinho.[22] "The neighbors' chickens kept tearing down our tile houses, so we started building with bricks (*tijolos*), to break up some bricks and see how it looked. It was alright. We'd have to go down at one o'clock at night and take some up through the middle of the community. Sometimes people would hear and start shouting at us. 'Hey, those bricks are mine!' Well, they were, but they were broken, so…" Alienated by the sprawling metropolis and social discrimination between the favela and the formal city, the brothers began reproducing their new reality in miniature, fashioning bricks to resemble hillside shanties and populating the model with avatars made of bottle caps and batteries. This play-site captured the attention of other boys, and soon it expanded into a simulated version of Rio itself.

Attitudes from nearby observers ranged from bewilderment to disapproval. No one could understand what these young men[23] were up to, often deep into the middle of the night, yelling, playing music, and scampering around hunched over on the edge of the forest. "They'd think it was ugly and distasteful, call it outlaw play (*brincadeira de marginal*). 'What are these boys doing, playing out the lives of bandits?'" Kamal remembers. Douglas recalls a different treatment: "'What is this, playing with dolls, this playing house? You are all practically grown men. You should be out getting a girlfriend for yourself." These recollections seem to suggest

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[22] These statements are excerpted from an early documentary on Morrinho, "O pequeno e o grande [The Small and the Large]," directed by Fábio Gavião and Markão Oliveira. See Chapter 5 recounts the filmmakers' involvement with the Morrinho group from 2001-2008.
[23] Except for Marcelinho who started at age eight, the original group were in their early to mid-teens.

that their play did not fit social categories for age or gender. In Kamal's account he and his peers were infantilized by others' perception of play.

Returning to our dialogue over consciousness, Kamal himself recalled how Morrinho was in charge. It makes demands of him. He spoke as if he were powerless before Morrinho, that it exerted influence over his life. In moments like this he seemed most like an artist and yet least like one. I recalled to him how when I arrived for the first time Morrinho was in disrepair, but I was still agape at it. I reminded him that he put me to work, and I had done it happily: painting, rebuilding, cleaning out leaves and moss. Even though I missed out on what I thought I had come to see—the play—I am grateful to be able to contribute and appreciate the work and time that goes into it. Kamal smiles, in an almost paternalistic way. He dreams aloud his desire to one day be able to leave Morrinho to others like Rodolfo, because nowadays if he does not go, it begins to die. He mentions that he would like to have children, and I reply that his own father awaits that from him, as well. Another smile, as if I had said something too intimate for a father to tell a son directly.

CHAPTER 2

SELF-BUILDING: MATERIALS AND SOCIAL TIES

Certo, eu sei o que é a antropologia! São aqueles que futucam na história, se mexem nele, a estudam profundamente.

Oh sure, I know what anthropology is! They're the ones who poke around in history, mix themselves up in it, study it deeply.

- Soraya, Morro do Saqualé resident

Despite a vast social scientific literature on Rio's favelas, I have not encountered a first-hand ethnographic account of housing construction. The building of favelas is simply taken as a given condition. Infrastructure, when attention is paid to it, is largely a matter of technical expertise and planning. This chapter attempts to demonstrate how infrastructures are social things, and not just in the metaphorical sense that social relations may mimic the organization structure of electric grids or data cables. The material object world of bricks, mortar, wiring, sewage ducts, and stairways is itself a complex medium of the social, the things through which kinship, community, and owner-tenant relations are negotiated.

Deals with neighbors

Giovanni has a way with languages. When he traveled with Morrinho to Paris, Munich, Vienna, Oslo, and Venice, he picked up bits of English, French, German, and Italian, which he would interject into conversations with foreigners in Rio, as a friendly gesture and perhaps a sign of worldliness. But today he had fallen silent. We were standing in front of the skeletal remains

of the house where he had grown up with his grandmother Aparecida and two uncles Cota and Edmilson. I am beside him, looking back and forth between him and the dismantled jumble of wooden planks. His house was one of the last in Saqualé still built out of wood. Its entrance was unusual; since the structure sat on stilts, one entered by way of a staircase, also wooden, that led up from below into the house. The stairs had been scavenged from an old mansion nearby, torn down in the 1980s. The carved and stylized staircase, unmoored and simply wedged into the hillside enough to be stable, seemed now more incongruous than before, even forlorn, leading up to where the rest of the house used to be.

Giovanni remains silent for an entire minute, maybe two. He appears to be going through an entire lifetime of memories as he surveys the remains of his house. His neighbor, a middle-aged man hobbling on a bandaged ankle, approaches us cheerfully. “Giovanni, it’s going to be fantastic. And you’ll be back in there in no time.” Giovanni introduces me to Henrique, who had offered to pay for the entire reconstruction of Giovanni and his grandmother’s house. Why would he do this? Giovanni mentions that I am looking to rent a place, and Henrique’s eyes light up.

“You’re lucky, this house just became available because the woman moved out.” Henrique is nodding at a house across from his own. He opens the door to show the empty rooms inside, slate floors, stucco walls, electric showerhead for hot water, working plumbing. “And, because I’m not *olho grande* [big eye],” he shuts one eye and widens the other while holding his hand to it, as if he were peering through a telescope. “Because I’m not *olho grande*, I will give you the same price as the previous tenant. Look, I am only renting to save up to put my son through college, if he makes it, God willing.” Henrique explains that the house we are standing in is actually the third story of a structure. The entrances to the houses below are accessible

further down the hill. He had proposed for the family below to vacate their home while he rebuilt it, at his expense. He housed them in his family's residence for five months while he contracted Kamal's father Toca to build the floor above.

Of pools and property

Another sweltering summer day, and Peri has shoveled out the last bit of dirt of a large basin next to his home. He wipes his brow and sighs, "Pff, this was hard work. I hope I can swim tomorrow…"

This is the opening scene of a short film TV Morrinho produced as part of a program series for the children's network Nickelodeon Brasil in 2006. The camera is pulled in close to the protagonist, Peri, and the dirt that surrounds him. Peri is, of course, a *boneco* made of green, black, and red Lego blocks and speaks in a high-pitched falsetto. A human hand manipulates the figurine and pinches the shovel, a matchstick, on Peri's side. Sound effects enhance every scoop of dirt he chucks into a bin amid a din of cicadas. A title sequence intervenes, introducing Peri and the other main character, Dicró, twirling for the camera in vignetted starring-role close-ups. These shots simultaneously wink at glamorous portrayals of television star actors as well as allow the uninitiated viewer to familiarize herself with Morrinho's visual grammar: one is being asked to accept these multicolored plastic blocks covered in hieroglyphs as persons.

In the following scene, water is pouring out of a straw into a repurposed plastic butter tub, which now occupies the hole Peri has excavated. At the nearby bar, neighbors are spreading the word: Peri has a new swimming pool. Everyone heads there, and the first to arrive finds Peri relaxing in the water. "Hey, Peri, do you mind if I take a dip?" he asks. Peri assents, and instantly, dozens of *bonecos* jump in from all angles—off of rooftops, out of bushes—until the

pool is brimming with bodies. The next morning, a rooster crows, and Peri has erected a fence and posted a sign: "POOL: 1 REAL/15 MINUTES[24] –PERI." Dozens of neighbors are lined up outside, and the same friend who had asked to use the pool is now asking for a discount. Peri denies him. "Man, I can't do that. Everybody would want one. I have to charge. If you want to swim, it's one real."

Observing this scene from off to the side, an idea occurs to Dicró. We see him digging under the cover of night. In the morning there is a long line of anxious *bonecos* outside the wall of his home. At the front door is posted: "POOL: R$0.50/1 HOUR –DICRÓ." The pool is filled beyond capacity, with *bonecos* piling on top of each other. Dicró chuckles as he collects coins from each guest and eventually leaves. "Make yourselves at home!" he exclaims as he walks out the door toward Peri's house next door. Peri's pool is now empty, and Dicró asks for a swim as he approaches the fence. The fee is still one real, which Dicró happily pays. Peri is curious, "You have your own pool. Why spend money here?"

"Oh, Peri, a crowded pool is no fun, is it?" Dicró answers while luxuriating in the water alone. They agree on this point as the camera pans over to Dicró's swimming pool teeming with frolicking bodies. The final shot, with the camera placed below the pool facing up through its transparent bottom, shows dozens of *bonecos* underwater, jumbled around by unseen human hands amid the sounds of mirthful hollering.

"Peri's Swimming Pool" presents an amusing allegory on class formation through the appropriation of private property for the extraction of monopoly rents. We also see competitive advantage among entrepreneurs. In the space of four minutes, the miniature favela social world of the film has been definitively split into two classes: the owners of the swimming pools and the users. Once they put a price on swimming, Peri and Dicró do not swim in their own respective

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[24] Or approximately US$0.50.

pools. That is to say, the two groups, owners and users, are mutually exclusive from the moment private property is asserted through the authority of documentation (the posting of signs, each notably endorsed with the owner's name) and through the physical enclosure of the site behind a fence or wall. The dialectic folds in on itself at the conclusion when the owner, Dicró, becomes a consumer at Peri's more expensive pool. However, Dicró is not merely buying 15 minutes of swimming time; rather, the commodity he is exchanging his one real for is exclusivity. "Oh, Peri, a crowded pool is no fun, isn't it?" he jests.

It is at this point, in the final panning shot to the romping throng in Dicró's swimming pool, that we may catch an ironic critique of entrepreneurship. To be sure, one way of interpreting the film's ending is to observe how Dicró and Peri enjoy the quiet privilege of pool ownership. This might suggest that the teeming masses who invade first Peri's pool free of charge and later enter Dicró's pool for a fee have acquiesced in the face of the enclosure of a commons. Nonetheless, Peri, who started with the intention of building a pool for his own enjoyment, does not join even Dicró in the water. He has become estranged from the fruit of his own labor. He sees his pool as a source of revenue or, in blunt Marxian terms, for its exchange value over its use value.

However, what if we are to take seriously that the final scene is an expression of fun crowded pool, in contradistinction to Dicró's declaration? The throng of neighbors have produced a space of conviviality in the pool Dicró has built expressly for private gain. There is a contradiction here replete with meaning. One that is difficult to ignore is the notion of a pool itself, at least in its English connotations, of something combined and shared. The conviviality of community ties have converged on the space of the swimming pool, making it essentially a pool

in a social as well as aquatic sense. Meanwhile, the eponymous Peri's swimming pool has been evacuated of all sociality except for isolated banter between proprietors.

I had viewed "Peri's Swimming Pool" dozens of times, and Cilan, Giovanni, and Claudio possibly hundreds, given that they often played it for tourists and other visitors to Morrinho as well as in film festivals and other engagements. The title character is the same Peri whom Kamal controlled in the play episode involving my *boneco* Alex and the case of the stolen motorcycle (see Chapter 6). Peri is the *dono* of the Querosene favela, but he is able to step out of that identity by going incognito, first as concerned citizen upset with police ineptitude and then as film star. The actor role may not be too much a stretch from his everyday activities as head of the local ADA faction if one interprets the film as a narrative about the creation of urban services and struggles to establish control over monopoly rents.

In this account of the film I stay close to the materiality of the production itself. The story is told with material objects, and those objects play important roles in the unfolding of the drama as well as index how materiality figures into everyday struggle. Besides Peri and Dicró, the other evident protagonists are the pools, fences, walls, and ground itself. The pool become the physical medium through which the social is transformed by its commodification and, literally, the visual medium through which we see the community: when the two entrepreneurs are relaxing at the end on their own, the camera floats above, framing them, the pool, and the fence. When the final shot shows bodies at play in the water, the camera is peering through the bottom of the butter tub itself, making the transparency of the plastic container the physical lens through which we see the Dionysian promiscuity churning the murky water above. The reality of a rational-minded, calculating bourgeois sensibility, which prefers the sovereignty of individual bodies and private property, co-exists alongside that of the sensual and ludic.

Another actor moves the action of the film, but it remains mostly invisible: money. Peri resorts to charging his friends and neighbors an admission fee for pool access after being overwhelmed by their numbers. Money structures time—one Real per 15 minutes. Indeed, money remakes time in its own image: into divisible, quantifiable units of economic value.[25] Before the introduction of the fee, time was represented only by the passing of days and nights, the hot sun leading *bonecos*, including Peri, to yearn for relief. Peri's tariff is ultimately too expensive and excludes everyone else in the community, yet he himself does not spend this solitude bathing. Dicró, both Peri's only competitor and only client, appears to live out no such contradiction because he constructed his own pool with the sole deliberate intention of disrupting the monopoly his neighbor controlled. By offering his pool at a cut rate, Dicró in effect creates a market for recreational bathing. The viewer can imagine possibilities of this scenario extending beyond the final shot. Could Peri adjust his prices to draw customers back to his pool? Could Dicró profit from his pool to the extent that he buys out Peri to control both, thus allowing him to extract monopoly rents again? Could the throngs of neighbors at the crowded pool organize to collectivize it, establishing it as a community resource to which all should have access and over which all must have responsibility?

The *laje*

I arrived in Rio for the main period of this research in the wake of the global financial collapse of late 2008. The process of favela consolidation, already well underway for a decade

[25] Marx introduces the distinction between concrete labor and abstract labor in the first chapter of *Capital, Volume 1* (1977). The latter concept describes the capacity to think of human work as something separate from the particular worker performing it. On that basis, it becomes possible to conceive of distinct quantities and types of labor, such as work hours, specific tasks, or unit labor costs. According to Marx, abstract labor, and its quantification, are related to the historical formation of the commodity form in economic exchange. Abstract labor represents the basis on which it becomes possible to compare things, not only by their physical characteristics, but also by time—that is, by the labor-time expended to produce goods.

and half, was attuned to the importance of aligning subjectivities and objects. Some of these objects are seemingly new replacements for old ones: in 2010, a large truck from the electricity provider Light arrived at the entrance at the bottom of the hillside community that is home to the Morrinho miniature model. Dozens of brand-new, gleaming white energy-efficient refrigerators were unloaded from the vehicle. Residents had brought down their old, rusting fridges and exchanged them for gleaming white new ones. Light had designed a refrigerator swap with favela residents who had recently had the company's technicians install electric meter boxes on their houses. Many residents had received these apparatuses years before, but they had cut the wiring almost immediately, leaving the reading at '00001' kilowatt hours (see figure 12). The refrigerator "giveaway" was part of a cost-benefit analysis Light devised which determined that the lower consumption rate of the new appliances would convince favela residents that they could afford to pay their monthly electric bill.[26] The side of the delivery truck bore a message of reciprocal interdependence: "Refrigerator

Figure 12 *An electric meter disconnected as soon as it was installed became a subtle yet publicly visible protest of formal service provision in Saqualé.*

[26] From my experience as a resident in the community, the electric bill would typically cost US$30-50 a month based on estimated usage. A great uproar among residents erupted after Light inspectors recorded readings of meter boxes for the first time and these were reflected in the new bill, often triple the expected total. Several families began negotiating financed payment plans with Light to meet these exorbitant fees. Many furniture pieces and appliances in favela households were acquired through monthly financing provided by retailers such as Casas Bahia, a "success story" case extolled at length by Prahalad (2006).

Substitution Program: Light is doing its part. Do yours. This is a commitment with two sides" (see figure 13).[27]

Other objects of financialization are new and illustrate some of the ways the state is experimenting with integrating financial thinking into everyday forms of practical knowledge. Bolsa Família [Family Purse] is the world's largest conditional cash transfer program for poverty alleviation, reaching 12.7 million Brazilians. Participants in the initiative use a yellow debit card in order to withdraw monthly stipends to supplement their household income.

Figure 13 *Refrigerator exchange by Light utility company in Saqualé, 26 October 2010. Photo by Kelly Martins.*

[27] In Portuguese: "*Programa de Substituição de Refrigeradores: O Light está fazendo a parte dela. Faça a sua. Este é um compromisso de dois lados.*"

Figure 14 *From left, Rio mayor Eduardo Paes, Rio state governor Sérgio Cabral, and President Luiz Ignácio (Lula) da Silva present a mock-up of the Carioca Family Card to Vera Lucia do N. Ramos, a beneficiary of the program. Photo from Brazilian state website Blog do Planalto.* <URL: http://blog.planalto.gov.br/cartao-familia-carioca-e-boa-inspiracao-para-prefeitos-de-todo-o-pais/> Accessed: 5 September 2013.

To remain in the program, beneficiaries must meet certain conditions, such as ensuring that children attend school and get vaccinated. Every month the Brazilian federal government dispenses almost US$700 million in Bolsa Família social assistance. The card is manufactured by multinational financial services corporation Visa and fosters a familiarity with automatic-telling machines. Visa has recently announced plans to negotiate with Brazilian officials over the introduction of pre-paid debit cards to the Bolsa Família consumer base. A company executive estimates the global market in pre-paid cards at approximately US$3 trillion, a significant boost to the annual transaction volume ($4.4 trillion in 2010) of their global network.[28] The Rio

[28] "Visa negocia cartão pré-pago para programas do governo." *Carta Capital*. 14 Sept 2010. <URL: http://www.cartacapital.com.br/economia/visa-negocia-cartao-pre-pago-para-programas-do-governo/> Accessed on: 14 April 2012. Gross transaction volume figure from Visa Inc. Quarterly Earnings Report FY2010 Q1.

Prefeitura introduced in 2010 its own debit card-based social assistance program, Família Carioca, to complement Bolsa Família for households earning less than R$108 per month (see Figure 14). Recipients can see a boost in assistance of R$25 per month if students meet certain scholastic benchmarks.

A third object of financialization is, in a sense, the favela itself as a built environment. Infrastructure upgrading brings the rational order of the state to hitherto anarchic spaces. In doing so there is the creation of private property in the form of housing deeds. The land which Morro do Saqualé occupies, deemed an illegal appropriation, is itself not officially available for ownership (*posse de terreno*), even though residents can negotiate, buy and sell, property. This legal arrangement is codified at different scales and in different institutional sites, including the municipal government and public notary archives (see Chapter 3). Housing does not become a financial object solely through legal titles, however.

Heraldo's family used my monthly rental payments to finance new constructions, which in turn would finance their older son's anticipated college education. There was a constant tension between the father of the family, Henrique, and the mason, Toca, he hired to build for him. To take ownership of the house I ultimately rented from him, Henrique had offered to build a new concrete slab roof, or *laje*, free of charge, for a neighboring family in exchange for the right to build a new unit on that roof. Toca erected this new house atop the one below, and by the time I was renting it, Henrique was employing Toca for an identical job on the house adjacent to his own, where Morrinho player Giovanni, his grandmother Dona Aparecida, and two uncles lived. Again, the offer was to completely refurbish his neighbors' home in exchange for the right to build and own the floor above it.

Dona Aparecida's house, one of the last remaining still built out of wood, was demolished within a week. For the six months that followed, she and Giovanni lived with her daughter Ariana, granddaughter and two young great-grandsons in a one-bedroom house one long staircase further up the hill. The cramped quarters put increased strain on the entire family, and Aparecida, a chain-smoking octogenarian, felt isolated in Ariana's home, which was not as frequented by passersby as the home she had lived in continuously for almost three decades.

On the first day after construction of the Aparecida's new concrete house foundation, I joined Henrique and Toca to help and learn homebuilding methods. Materials were arrayed around the laje, which stood on reinforced concrete stilts nearly six feet above the walking path. The back of the house foundation now extended to reach a large retaining wall built by the municipal government to prevent landslides. One side cantilevered over a small ravine, rendered into a cement ramp of trickling water. The other side abutted the taller house of Henrique's family, and a black diagonal streak marking the slant of Aparecida's former asbestos roof tiles stained the stucco wall. On this new laje lay: a stack of bricks approximately the size of a small car; separate meter-high mounds of small gray stones, cinnamon-colored silt, and dry cement mix; a rake; two shovels; a large blue plastic barrel with a garden hose filling it with water; plastic buckets and repurposed rectangular paint cans to be used as buckets; and a round mesh sieve for granulating the sand. Rust-colored re-bar prongs protruded vertically at intervals from the edges of the foundation. The only remnant of the former house was the curved wooden staircase still being used, temporarily at least, for access to the platform from below. The wobbly staircase had clearly belonged to a more affluent household in a larger home, but it served its function.

Within the first fifteen minutes of helping with pouring bucket loads of water into cement and sand, then mixing the mortar with a shovel, I misstepped. The weight of my body punctured the still-wet concrete floor, and one leg fell through the hole, leaving a gash on my knee. I went to my house to clean the wound, and when I returned Henrique was visibly annoyed by my carelessness. The hole I had created had already been patched over with concrete. “He’s just going to make a mess here,” he told Toca, who was more forgiving. As Henrique, agitated, was suggesting that I leave, he stepped on another wet area and fell through the floor, as well. He cursed loudly. The slip hurt his leg much less than it did his ego, and the three of us laughed at our common twist in fortunes.

By midmorning Toca got into a rhythm of work, while Henrique and I supplied him with materials. With trowel in hand, he would slap a measured dollop of fresh mortar on top of a new wall, shape it into a triangular crest, fit a brick snugly into place, and swipe away any excess mortar. He asked me to hand him a hammer and chisel to even out the level of the floor. As he completed every row, he pulled out a nylon string attached to a plumb-bob from his shorts pocket and held it against the bricks to ensure they stood peripendicular to the ground. The entire house would stand on these micro-level decisions Toca made as he continued building. It was a wordless demonstration of immense tacit knowledge (Polanyi 2009), and I sensed that Toca, even as he showed and explained every step, could not transmit the totality of the labor he was conducting. The complexity of the work lay somewhere between the mechanical repetition of each minute task and the overarching vision of a house being realized. He worked methodically, pausing at times to wonder about the height of the window Dona Aparecida would want and other matters of feet and inches. Aparecida and Giovanni had given him a rough account of the room layout they desired, which Toca had marked out by laying a row of bricks to set where he

would erect the walls. He knowingly estimated the size of furniture and appliances—beds, standing closets, tables, chairs, sofa, sink, stove, television—and pretended to be Aparecida walking through the imaginary furnished home. "Do you think she needs a little more space here next to where her bed is? But then this takes away from the shower… I think right here should be alright," Toca debated to Henrique and me.

"[A] bee would put many a human architect to shame in the construction of its honeycomb cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax," famously remarked Marx in a chapter on the labor process in the first volume of *Capital* (1977:284). "The less he is attracted by the nature of the work and the way in which it has to be accomplished, and the less, therefore, he enjoys it as the free play of his own physical and mental powers, the closer his attention is forced to be" (*ibid*.). This statement undergirds a theory of the alienation of labor, and it is a rare moment in modern social thought where play and work are conceived within the same frame, not as opposing modes of action but as inextricably linked.

Toca and I talked about the new mayor's *Choque de Ordem* [Blitz of Order] campaign, which, as mentioned in Chapter 1, ranged from the registration of beach umbrella vendors to food inspections of street carts to the creation of community registries of property owners in favelas. I prodded, "So everyone will get their own title and be responsible for their own house, huh?" Toca nodded, unenthused, mounting another brick. "Yeah, the documents of that house there [where I live], I put it in the name of my sons. I don't own a damn thing. I don't have no house." Henrique chuckled as I noted half-jokingly, "So you're the *pedreiro sem-teto* [homeless mason]. You know how to build, but you have no house of your own."

Toca did not reply but addressed himself back to the matter of home design: "Well, if this is where the living room is, it might be a bit narrow…" Henrique corrected, "Yes, that's where it will be, with a big window." Toca put another gob of mortar on the wall before exclaiming in mock tones, "*Eh, mané, é um Choque de Ordem, o bagulho tá doido, porra!* [Hey, you fool, it's a Blitz of Order! This stuff is crazy, damn it!]" He then sighed, "*É uma putaria, que sacanagem…* [It's a free-for-all, what debauchery...]" These were perhaps the idle thoughts of a man at work, reflecting ambiguously on the broader social forces both driving and restricting his labor.

"And what about when the Prefeitura [City Hall] removed you from that old house, did they call it 'Choque de Ordem' back then?" I asked. Toca replied right away, "Hell no, they just demolished everything!" He stopped to inspect a brick in his hand. "Whoa, these bricks are *podre* [deteriorated], *mané*. This is the second one that's broken in my hand," he shouted down. Henrique who was resting in the shade and snapped back, "Hey, I can't be on top of checking every one."

The notion that Henrique was making these deals in order to extract rent, rather than out of the necessity for shelter, was a point Toca continually raised to me, with increasing aggravation when he was not paid for his labor. "You're paying him every month to live in that place, but he [Henrique] can't find enough to pay what he owes me every month. How do you figure that? He is *olho grande*, I tell you." Toca fumed. He peered at me as if holding an imaginary telescope up to his eye, an accompanying gesture to the expression of "greed" or simply one who only sees the monetary value of things.

In unannounced, irregular visits, an inspector from the Municipal Housing Secretariat (SMH) named Ana Flor would walk through Morro do Saqualé. She worked in this and two

other consolidated favelas in Rio as a lone agent of the city government. Her presence inspired trepidation among residents who were attempting to add *puxadinhos* (extensions), and especially new lajes. As I joined Ana Flor on one of her informal patrols, she explained that the maximum number of stories a structure can extend vertically is two or three, depending on the location. "For example, on the walking path we're on right now, the houses on this lower side can have three stories, and on the other side the limit is two," she said as we passed by Henrique's house and the re-construction of Dona Aparecida's home, already being prepared for the new laje that will constitute both her ceiling and the floor of the house above it that Henrique will own. Ana Flor stops to scrutinize the structure. "This is an interesting case, because the entrance is above," she pointed at the makeshift staircase leading up into the house. Henrique, working inside, poked his head out one of the windows and looks down. Ana Flor goes on, "You have some materials stored here below, so that may count as the first floor. You can build what they have here, but not another house on top. Or else we will have to *embargar* [sanction]." We walked on.

On the path down out of Saqualé, Ana Flor remarked that every time she visited a certain woman, whose house we passed, she had had another child. This became a springboard for her to talk about how people lack values and education, and that building restrictions are just one part of a larger endeavor to shape their behavior. When she departed down the street, I found Toca and Zoraida, mother of Morrinho youth Skunk and one of three community sanitation workers, at the bar. I told them I had just walked around the *morro* with the city inspector, and Zoraida echoed the theme Ana Flor articulated, from a different perspective: "See, this business about limiting constructions, it's about creating real estate speculation to control the population." Toca also blustered about how the arrival of Ana Flor left Henrique *bolado*, aggravated. "I've been building for years without any engineering or architecture degree. Henrique's only paying me

R$1000 (US$500).” He estimated the total cost of materials for Dona Aparecida’s house at R$10,000.

Toca used the presence of Ana Flor and threat she represented of *embargo* on the construction of the house as a way to stage a single-worker strike against Henrique. This was an effective strategy during weeks that he suffered from physical illness and pains because it kept Henrique at bay for short periods and allowed Toca to control how much he would work on the house. At the same time, he knew that delays on its completion were directly impacting Dona Aparecida and her family. For his part, Henrique explained that he worked the nightshift as a security guard at a nearby 24-hour gymnasium, and that, after the cost of the materials, he did not have the means to pay Toca for his labor until the construction was complete.

Once he built up the walls to planned ceiling height and installed the re-bar crossbeams, the house was ready for a *mutirão* to *bater laje* (collective work to pour the concrete roof) the following Sunday morning. The previous evening the water main had been shut off for the entire community, and reportedly for many other favelas in the North Zone tapped into the same pipe system. Most homes had large blue tanks installed on their roof, which provided enough reserve water for regular usage for a day or two. However, the *mutirão* was suspended into the early afternoon when water service was finally restored. By this point Toca had defected to the bar. I asked him if he would come work if we started right away. “I’ll go when there’s an army of 60, not ten. Now it’s already the afternoon. No one will work on the laje…” he surmised, slightly drunk. A crew of nearly 15 boys and men, including Giovanni, an uncle who lived next door to Toca in the *casinhas* (but neither uncle who lived with Aparecida) did assemble and went straight to work.

I was recruited to help out in the line of men passing paint cans full of cement up a ladder to the roof, and empty cans back down to the large pit of concrete in the middle of Aparecida's future living room. Two men were mixing bags of cement, sand, and water below with a shovel and a hoe. Another stood by to fill paint cans with cement. On the roof Aparecida's son, in his 50s, and Henrique's teenage son traversed the platform of rebar and bricks to pour wet cement from the cans and flatten it with a trowel.

Aparecida herself appeared on the staircase overlooking the house to greet everyone and observe the progress. The work was done at high speed, since sundown was not far off. Others were mixing cement and filling cans below. All communication was conducted at yelling volume and mostly to grab attention of those who were distracted. A game between rival Rio soccer clubs came over the radio, which someone had placed nearby. Claudio and his fellow Flamengo fans began howling as their team went ahead 2-0 in the first half. Osmar muttered "I've already seen this film." His team, Botafogo, missed a penalty kick in the 2nd half. More howling from the others.

A paint can I was passing up to Claudio slipped from his hands because the wood handle broke. It fell on my index finger, and I examined the bit of flesh that flayed open, caked with cement. I only noticed then that my hands were wrinkled, far beyond what they would look like after a long bath. I could feel the lye from the cement eroding my skin and the cuts from the jagged aluminum cans and rough grains of sand stinging with each can I grasped. The muscles and tendons in my wrists and elbows were also straining. The jovial banter turned to grunts and complaints to those down the line about the light weight of cans heading up to the laje, meaning that they were carelessly spilling concrete. Spills prolonged the job, and Henrique worried aloud that there might not be enough concrete to cover the laje if they were so wasteful. The ones

below wanted regular updates on the progress. The running joke was that it was "almost a third" done, always "almost a third" even when the roof was well beyond half covered. Henrique estimated the job would take three batches of concrete, but as it became dark outside and the second batch was exhausted, everyone moved into his house for a *feijoada* meal.

A future house pantomime

I met Flávio along the stairs next to the hostel. He was carrying a platter of homemade sweets for sale, as he did every weekday. Flávio explained that he owned the plot immediately adjacent to us. I looked at the space, and it seemed to be a project that had stalled indefinitely. There was a concrete foundation, several rusty reinforcement bars extending vertically, and a balcony half-wall made of brick. A "for sale" sign was nailed to the trunk of the jackfruit tree next to us. Without further ado, Flávio took me on a tour of the house-to-be, really 3 adjacent apartments that had not yet been built, he explained. We "entered" the house through an invisible door. He explained that his daughter would take over his current house down the hill, and he would move here, where it is quieter. He didn't use the word quiet, however. Instead, he pointed in the direction of his current residence and made a gesture of pulling a trigger repeatedly to his head. He took me into the hypothetical first apartment, showed me where the kitchen and bath would be and the layout of the rooms. He stood looking out of where the windows that were to provide the breathtaking view of Sugarloaf Mountain. He vigorously shook the vertical re-bars and touched each of horizontal wire ties in ascending order, explaining that he built this all himself, and that if the *pedreiro* (mason) suggested *this* distance apart (he places his hands at 1.5 the distance between the ties) then he built it *this* way (showing the ties proximity). He recounted how he carried large stones from the *pedreira* (quarry) across the hill to fill in the space under

this empty laje we stood on. “Every time I walked up the hill, I would take a stone,” Flávio claimed, mimicking the toil of hauling a large weight on his back. It was an animated performance, a narrative of personal endeavor. Meanwhile, Shurek and Gago had begun depositing bags of sand on the laje. Flávio explained the materials were for someone else. It seemed strange that he thought I would care.

I asked him about the community AEIS demarcation line set by the Prefeitura, mentioning that someone told me this laje lay outside it. Flávio pointed at two metal signposts beyond the foundation and told me about the visit of “Ana Flora from the Prefeitura” with whom he had negotiated his right to the property. He also told me about going to the Municipal Secretariat of Urbanism, waiting patiently, speaking to an official and getting the same Ana Flor to convince this official to bestow him with the documents. Flávio was out of a job, his kombi stolen, and he would sell this property (for R$18,000) to buy a new van and work again.

I could not decipher whether Flávio’s performance was an animated, embodied expression of hope for a future that was materially invested this (mostly invisible) construction, or a sales pitch. Or both at once. Later, other residents would warn me that Flávio in fact pulled up the steel AEIS boundary posts that bounded the development of the community and moved them several meters out to accommodate his laje. He had no authorization from the Prefeitura to build there, they informed me, and thus the construction was illegal. They assured me that Flávio would never be able build any further there, and that his only recourse was for some dupe to buy it from him, without a legal title. This counternarrative from neighbors re-framed Flávio’s predicament: it was not so much a dream deferred as a risky gamble that he was seeking to offload.

In the final week of my residence in Saqualé, four consecutive days of torrential downpour caused massive damage across Rio's hillside favelas. Saqualé was not spared either, and the stones under Flávio's laje came loose and precipitated a landslide that destroyed the entire bedroom wall of his neighbor Júlio's home some ten yards downhill. Júlio, nicknamed Ser Humano (Human Being) and father of Claudio, one of the Morrinho youths, survived the collapse with his family. "My wife, my daughter, and I were sleeping when the whole wall came tumbling in. I don't doubt this was caused by Flávio's illegal construction up above my house," he surmised. Flávio's own laje did not visibly buckle, but the incident surely compromised the physical structure and whatever future he had invested in it.

Mutirão

A few times a year, always on Sundays, the AM would organize a *mutirão*. These were calls to the community at large to collaborate on a public improvements or maintenance. Signs are posted in advance around the *quadra* (the concrete soccer court and main public space of the community), in the bars and *botequins*, and at the minibus shelter at the bottom of the hill. On the morning of the mutirão, before 7 A.M., a volley of firecrackers would be launched into the sky, and if that failed to rouse enough neighbors, those who arrived on time would knock loudly on doors for others to shake their grogginess and hangovers and join them. I imagined that it is sonic signals like these that prompt concerned citizens from nearby condominiums to write newspaper opinion pieces citing the sound of fireworks as signals for the arrival of a new drug shipment, or as gunfire (*tiroteio*). Either interpretation serves as incontrovertible evidence of narcotraffic gangs embedded in the favela. These media commentaries in the name of property values, veiled in the language of security, then call for iron-fisted police repression.

Mutirões called for by the AM announced clean-ups of public spaces, the beautification of a single elderly woman's home, or a community census by survey conducted door-to-door. Denise had announced the latter on a few occasions, but every time it was canceled. More commonly, it was a household that organized a mutirão to complete a new laje on their home. These summons were a necessary means to organize such labor-intensive tasks, and the division of labor was generally gendered. In the morning and into the afternoon, men would carry out the manual labor, while women prepared a large feast paid for by the host family or by the AM. *Feijoada*, a black bean and pork stew served with rice and collard greens, would be a typical meal offered by the hosting family after the work was completed. The food was accompanied by generous amounts beer and *cachaça* liquor. Since most families cannot not carry out such works on their own, mutirão represents a way to compensate a large labor force not through wages but materially through food and drink and immaterially through the strengthening of kinship and community ties. It is a moment when *comunidade* is produced in practice, but as a ritual of collective labor and leisure mutirão serves to include *and* exclude.

Mutirão, which translates as "mutual help," has historically been an object of interest to anthropologists studying social solidarity among rural peasants in northeast Brazil, and later, the resettlement of peasants in peri-urban areas, many of which would be classified as favelas (Caldeira 1956). The practice has been framed as a vestige of rural tradition and cultural adaptation to urban society (Mangin 1970; Oliven 2007; Maricato 1979; Rolnik and Bonduki 1979; Figueiredo and Valladares 1983). By the end of the 20th century, it developed into an organizing principle of housing rights movements in the periphery of São Paulo and the basis for broader claims to urban citizenship (Rolnik and Cymbalista 2003; Holston 2007). *Mutirão* also became a slogan of government upgrading schemes predicated simultaneously on the

mobilization of residents in "self-help" infrastructure projects and on the production of official cadastral surveys and maps of favelas and other so-called subnormal urban agglomerations. In Rio, the municipal government launched Projeto Mutirão in 1981 as an initial attempt to "urbanize" the city's favelas in the wake of severe political repression and draconian removal policies under authoritarian military rule at the federal level.

Figure 15 *O casarão*, settlement removal site.

The Saqualé AM decided to dedicate one of these Sunday mornings to clearing the garbage accumulation and weed and plant overgrowth in a large clearing in the middle of the community known as the *casarão* (or "big house," see figure 15). As soon as I arrived, Denise's eldest son handed me a rake. Denise, the only woman present, was directing the activities around

her, pointing out where I should start working and instructing people where to haul waste, which included deflated soccer balls, a baby stroller, broken chairs, and many beer cans. Men of all ages were already at work; I did not know them all even by face, much less by name. Everyone stepped awkwardly around the grass that had grown tall and unkempt on the site, which must be accessed by an old stone staircase. It was evident from the measured strides they took across the lot that there were deep pits and divots hidden by the vegetation. The large solid rocks that formed the foundation of the site suggested that something once stood here.

A sudden hullabaloo greeted me, not when I arrived but precisely when I took the tool in my hand and sought out a patch of grass to scrape up. *Good morning, sunshine! Well, look who finally showed up! Someone show this guy how to use that thing!* The assembly of workers flung friendly taunts my way. Others who arrived later got the same treatment, and I would contribute a gentle barb, to the delight of the others. *See, even the gringo made it up here before you!* As the morning sun rose in the sky, the heat intensified and a few men paused to have a drink of cool water offered by adjacent neighbors of the casarão. They were similarly heckled.

By the afternoon, the men with sickles and machetes had completed their chopping, and long green stalks lying on their sides covered the site. Gardening hoes and rakes exposed a concrete retaining wall against the back of the lot, and old moss-tinted stucco walls protruded. The appearance of these ruins felt as if we had conducted a bit of community archaeology. Luiz, a native-born resident of Saqualé in his 60s, led me on an impromptu tour around the casarão. He was light-skinned, wore a long work shirt with the name of an air conditioning repair company printed on the back. Sweat had matted his silver locks to his forehead under a straw fedora. "You see these here stones? They're stuck together with just clay mud [*barro*]." He pointed at the wall with the stairs leading up to the site. "Now this here is from their time [*da época deles*]."

"From the era of the *quilombo*?" I asked. Everyone treated the casarão as a quasi-sacred site, and it had puzzled me why an empty lot of land in the middle of the settlement would remain unoccupied and be referred to as a "big house." As part of the Bairrinho project, the municipal government demolished an existing agglomeration of homes that, residents variously claimed, were built on top of the site of an escaped slave settlement. Such sites are known as quilombos. Denise told me two families of direct descendants from those slaves, or *quilombolas*, still lived in Saqualé, but I never met them. The state had declared the site a "risk area," even though residents remember the old casarão as a beautiful, sturdy building complex. Under Bairrinho, families relocated to newly constructed public housing up the hill, the aforementioned casinhas (figure 5), with the promise that a much-needed *crèche*, or nursery, would be built immediately in the place of the casarão. Although designs for the nursery were drafted and initially approved, officials halted construction before breaking ground (see Chapter 3). They claimed that a nursery required road access.[29] It was an oversight that left many residents irate (*revoltado* was the word often used) for years about the callousness with which the state had destroyed what was, in retrospect, an important site of community patrimony. Talk of the quilombo origins of the casarão, accurate or not, reinforced this claim. Quilombos have become an important means of asserting ethno-racial rights recognized by federal law (Decreto 4887. See Reis 1993; Campos 2005; Sheriff 2001; Leite 2000; Mitchell 2008; French 2006).

"So it's made of *barra*?" I prompted Luiz to go on, mispronouncing the word. *Barra* could mean, variously, any elongated object, fluvial deposit or predicament. "It's made of *barro* [packed mud]," he continued, not correcting my mistake but making sure I heard it again. "And what was that hole?" I gestured toward an indentation in the wall bracketed by two flat stones

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[29] In 2010, the municipal government finally built a soccer court (*quadra*) on the site of the casarão and began construction of a nursery at the headquarters of the residents' association at the bottom of the hill.

angled in a 'V' shape. "That was a *suspiro* each house had to send the sewage down." *Suspiro* means both sigh and, as in this instance, duct—but in both cases, an opening that allows respiration. "This goes back 150 years, at least. Hey, I'm telling Alex here about the era of slavery." Luiz announced to Clóvis, the resident association vice-president, listening nearby.

"Did your mother tell you about this?" I asked, seeking a sense of where his knowledge of the place might originate. "My mother? She was one of the first inhabitants of the *morro*. When she came here, there were just five houses, that one, the other one up above, the house where her grandfather… Just five houses. The rest was all bush [*mato*], this was just a farmhouse [*chácara*]. There was nothing around."

A sudden commotion interrupted our conversation. "Oh! Charope just fell in a hole!" Denise shouted down to us. "Just leave him in there!" came Luiz's reply. Bemused, he continued with the tour walking 20 feet over to show a retaining wall made of different stones and concrete. "See, this one is newer, but still made with stones." I note that the stones in the newer wall, having been cut into more regular shapes, appear to come from a quarry. He agreed on this speculation and led me further down the walking path to a clearing overlooking several houses, some made with materials rarely seen in the rest of the community: stone walls, shingled roofs. Sweeping his hand over the landscape, Luiz explained, "All this here below was theirs, that was the *senzala* [slave quarters]. That's what my mother told me. Over there to the left, the woman who lives there is 98 years old, the oldest person in the community, Dona Beatriz. Ninety-eight years old. She also came here very young… There wasn't anything here. Oh, see that house there, it was also *theirs*. It's intact still today. That roof is French shingle, the old kind. But the house's structure is all stone. It's the oldest house there is. Some relatives of mine live there. It's been passed down from generation to generation." Much of Luiz's narrative turned on the

historicity of materials themselves, on how certain kinds of stones and mortar indexed the slavery era in Brazil and presented connections to a past otherwise silenced. I remarked on how one could see the passage of time in the community through the building materials, and we walked over to where others were convening.

We entered a boisterous gathering around a *botequim* nestled behind a wall. Denise presided over the distribution of beers and cachaça, while Clóvis grilled meats over an improvised pit constructed from a few loose bricks. The charcoal finally caught flame, and the *churrasco* (barbecue) was underway. As the libations poured, old men began to sing samba. The teasing had not ceased, and in fact purported stakes now came attached to the gibes. A few tormentors converged on Charope ("Pesky"), an older man with a white beard who would rarely carry conversations but would instead crash into and detonate them with almost calculated deliberateness. So often the deliverer of punchlines, he had become one himself over the course of the day. His peers, themselves with nicknames like Banana, Pitbull, Paçoca ("Peanut"), Cota ("Quota"), and Ser Humano ("Human Being"), queried each other ironically about how much work Charope had actually done in the morning and whether he deserved any meat on his plate. He offered little retort to the joking, but the chatter served more generally to reinforce to each

Figure 16 *Post-mutirão feast and singing.*

other that the churrasco was a reward earned through collective labor. As food came off the grill, another belabored joke among men was to ask if one would like sausage, if one enjoys sausage, if one cannot get enough sausage, *ad nauseam*, in a game of heteronormative panic "hot potato" (Pascoe 2007). The food and drink was, however, tightly regulated according to who had legitimately contributed labor in the morning. Luana, the *botequim* owner, balked at the sight of her neighbor drinking beer because he had allegedly not helped. Those who organized and felt they contributed most were keeping an eye on suspected free riders.

It was also Palm Sunday, and a group of evangelical Christians walked through the party, which at this point had spilled onto the steps of the walking path. They wore identical t-shirts and held palm fronds. Denise held out a donation hat, but they all refused. Changing tactics, Denise then gave the "straight sell" about the importance of supporting *mutirão*, if not by participating then by giving financial support. As the group passed, some friendly haranguing and appeals ensued: "And where were *you*? C'mon, give just five Reals…" In this passing refusal, the moral economy of community—defined by kinship and resident status but more importantly produced through collective labor and embodied in that moment in the reclined bodies on the steps consuming alcohol and meat—created friction with the moral economy of a different community, that of evangelical Christianity. The procession congregated at the front door of a house 20 feet up the path. The pastor, a balding light-skinned middle-aged man in a polo shirt, began a sermon and asked the worshippers to pray for the young woman who stood at the doorway. The group then entered the house and sang a solemn hymn, titled "Faz um Milagre em Mim [Make a Miracle in Me],"[30] the chorus of which swelled:

Entra na minha casa,	Enter my house
Entra na minha vida	Enter my life
Mexe com minha estrutura	Stir up my structure
Sara todas as feridas	Heal all the wounds
Me ensina a ter santidade	Teach me to be holy
Quero amar somente a ti	I want to love only you
Porque o Senhor é o meu bem maior	Because the Lord is my highest good
Faz o milagre em mim….	Make a miracle in me…

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[30] *Minha Casa, Minha Vida* [My Home, My Life] was also the name of a federal housing subsidy program introduced in 2009 as a supply-side stimulus package as a counter-measure to the global financial fallout from the late-2008 U.S. subprime mortgage crisis, which shrank credit markets and housing sales, thereby exacerbating Brazil's chronic housing deficit. Managed by national bank CAIXA, the Minha Casa, Minha Vida Program encompassed R$34 billion (US$17 billion) in public expenditure with the stated aim of financing the construction and acquisition of 1 million units in 3 years. Almost half (44%) of the fund was directed toward private developers to offer affordable housing targeted to households with incomes below R$1,400 (US$700), or equivalent to three minimum wages, with families paying 10% of their incomes for 10 years (Eloy 2010:19). The program was part of a series of federal anti-poverty initiatives that rely on the extension of credit to the working poor, the most visible of which was the conditional cash transfer program Bolsa Família.

Months earlier, a cultural anthropologist at a local university related a personal anecdote of her family's long-time *faxineira* (housekeeper), to whom she had given money toward a *mutirão* to build a *puxadinho* (extension) to her house in the vast flats of Rio's West Zone, known as the Baixada Fluminense. However, the woman could not procure community support for a *mutirão* because, as an evangelical *creente* (believer), she did not drink. "She cannot offer Coca-Cola and guaraná soft drinks; no one will come!" explained the professor. The comparison is useful for recognizing how practices of community inclusion are not based on the participation of free individuals (Habermas 1989; Fraser 1990). The contours of mutirão as a social practice suggest that the making of a public is a matter of relational politics. That is, inclusion did not entail an *a priori* public sphere, a metaphorical empty plaza purportedly open for anyone and everyone to occupy, but rather participation by moral obligation. This centripetal power marked persons as "in" or "out" of mutirão. Becoming part of the community through mutirão nonetheless was rife with minute and subtle trials of commitment that take the form of jokes and teasing. These performances continually required articulation and re-articulation of one's social being—as a gendered, sexualized, spiritualized being and so on.[31] Repetitious ribbing and ridicule served to test and reaffirm the binding ties of community, but in doing so these actions also avowed that no one belonged to this public as an individual pure and simple.

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[31] See Butler (1990) on the construction of gender identity through repeated, everyday performance.

CHAPTER 3

CREASES: STATE PLANNING DOCUMENTS UNFOLDED

We are all descended from squatters.

- Colin Ward (2002)

In a small archival room of the Municipal Housing Secretariat in Rio City Hall, metal shelves strain under the weight of dozens of thick binders bearing the names of different favelas. Each contains surveys and plans for infrastructure upgrades as part of a city-wide government project to incorporate communities into the fabric of the so-called formal city. This program, the largest in the world of its kind with over $1 billion in financing from the Inter-American Development Bank, is known as Favela-Bairro. In one binder labeled *Vila Saqualé*, a dossier outlined the demographic composition of the neighborhood, transport, sanitation and utility services, topography, and legal status of the land occupation. On one page it mentioned that the area most recently settled by new arrivals to the community is referred to as “Sítio do Picapau Amarelo” (see Chapter 5). Once public works projects were completed, the place-name was due to be officially designated by another title. In the appendix of the dossier, color photographs of Saqualé were pasted onto the pages: dirt staircases carved into the hillside, clusters of brick-and-mortar residences, a lonely wooden shack in a densely forested spot.

One snapshot with the caption, “Boy playing with toy model” (figure 17), shows a leafy area, with a shack in the background. Shirts hang from a clothesline supported by bamboo posts leading into the foreground. A 15-year-old lanky, dark-skinned boy wearing the red-and-black striped soccer jersey looks over his shoulder with a sidelong glance at the camera, as if the

photographer has interrupted him in the midst of a solitary activity. He has one sandaled foot propped on a short ledge on which hollow clay-tile bricks have been deliberately arranged. They resemble a favela in miniature. The assemblage of bricks undulates, following the contour of the earth, with each individual brick sitting level. Their façades are oriented forward, away from the hill slope.

Figure 17 “Boy playing with toy model” from Saqualé Diagnostic dossier.

Twelve years later, on a muggy gray afternoon, Kamal was still there, as was the model city from the photo, which had since become known as Morrinho. All but two of the houses in Sítio do Picapau Amarelo remained from the time of the photograph. The rest had been demolished, the inhabitants relocated. When I showed the photo to Kamal, he gave a bewildered look. “Wait, is that me?!” Much had changed in the intervening decade, both for Kamal and the “toy model.”

As in most megacities of the global South, squatter settlements, or favelas, occupy significant swaths of Rio de Janeiro's cityscape. The status of these territories has recently shifted from spaces of social exclusion to targets of increasing state intervention, police surveillance, and non-governmental organization (NGO) activity. Consequently, the development of so-called urban informal areas has become a subject of intense scrutiny and value to both state apparatuses and ordinary residents. Within this process, the possibilities for political action hinge on struggles over representations of the city, which in turn depend on what counts as knowledge of the urban. But how the city is rendered legible? Who does this work, and toward what purposes? What material practices and modes of seeing are involved in this ordering work? How is representing the city a productive rather than simply interpretive act? Exploring on these questions in the context of a *favela*, or squatter settlement in Rio de Janeiro, this paper presents an inquiry into the politics of imagination.

Imagination has become a critical object of inquiry in the social sciences, something anthropologist Arjun Appadurai claimed, with measured intellectual optimism, "is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order" (1996:31). How urban imaginations collude and collide is evident in many of Rio's favelas where the state-run infrastructure works have been implemented. The intended goals of these projects are ambitious in scope, yet extend an historical legacy within Brazil of using urban planning as a vehicle for social change (Holston 1989). However, the desire to incorporate informal settlements into the urban fabric is bound up in a neoliberal regime of property and rights, as well as in the logic of counterinsurgency.

Rather than construct a comparative analysis between state and "folk" representations of the urban space, we may consider the asymmetries, gaps, and points of contact between forms of

modeling, taking them as practices of an unfolding political economic order. The concluding analysis weighs the implications of what the mutual illegibility of these two representational practices means for planning practice and ethnographic methodology.

Thinking with cities

Recent interdisciplinary dialogues have manifested desires on the part of urban planners to make their practice more culturally attuned, and on the part of anthropologists to incorporate design practice into their methodological and theoretical repertoire (Hernández, Kellett, and Allen 2009; Oliveira 2002). Ethnography is currently enjoying a popularity beyond its origins as the rather specialized and artisanal craft of academic fieldworkers in non-Western cultures. It has become an essential tool in a widening range of applications, exploring such topics as: the deepening affective bonds between consumers and corporate brands (Foster 2007), the transformation of social relationships into an economic resource in microfinance projects (Elyachar 2002), and engineering and software design (Vinck 2009). Researchers find ethnographic methodology attractive because it promises a portrait of the everyday lived experience, generally of 'ordinary people' or 'users' of this or that community, device or building. Investigators embrace it as an open-ended and naturalistic mode of collecting data that allows them to put humans and environments into the same analytical frame. And perhaps there exists a taste for ethnographic research among those seeking a more egalitarian form of social inquiry, a blurring of the boundaries between subject and object, expert and layperson.

These deployments have had the reflexive effect of expanding and displacing the meaning and purpose of ethnographic practice beyond the purview of anthropologists, who have intensely debated these matters among themselves (Clifford and Marcus 1986). More recently,

anthropologists have asked how ethnographic methods themselves could become more design-like, more oriented toward making futures rather than chronicling the present (Rao 2008). This exchange has, however, revealed disjunctures regarding temporal orientation of ethnographic research vis-à-vis planning.

The proliferation of informal settlements across the so-called global South, as well as in the financial fallout of subprime America, appear as symptoms of a global capitalism run rampant over the urban landscape. Where the commonsense of market utopianism does not crowd out or discredit alternative planning practices, it appropriates them, makes urbanism commensurable with the logic of profit and accumulation.[32]

The infrastructural explosion of social and material networks generate and are generated by new assemblages of human, technical and natural objects and forces (Gandy 2005; Swyngedouw 2006). The unanticipated externalities and inner conflicts of urbanization driven by capitalist accumulation are however not reducible to capitalist logic. Everywhere people are being compelled to rethink their cities, not out of professional mandate so much as practical sense.

UN demographers estimate that one billion squatters, shack dwellers, and other dispossessed communities inhabited self-built settlements worldwide at the turn of the 21st century, a number estimated to double by 2030 (United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2003). The crisis of urbanism, or perhaps the crisis of the critique of urbanism, is more than an empirical or epistemological problem; it is also a methodological, ethical, and political one calling forth an imagination of the city. The contemporary urban crisis is not without precedents, however: for instance, Ian Munro's (2005) history of early modern London argues, following

[32] Take, for instance, the history of sustainability, a term that has migrated from the radical environmental social movements into gentrification project brochures and consumer product labels without bringing with it the fundamental upheaval of the material economy it originally stood for.

Lefebvre, that urban growth in the 16th century as a spatial practice changed the experience of the city. This, in turn, produced new representations of the metropolitan area as besieged by "crowds," which shaped new spatial practices and ideologies. "The population crisis is figured not only as crisis of physical space, or of social cohesion, but as a crisis of symbolic space," Munro (ibid.: 19) suggests. Lefebvre himself theorized the symbolic and political tensions between spatial practices and representations of space amid the process of urbanization by distinguishing the "abstract space" of capitalist development and accumulation, from "virtual objects" of differentiated space (Lefebvre 2003 [1970]. See Introduction for fuller discussion).

Today the same processes are at work, but it is difficult to discern what imagination of cities is called for to address the predicaments they face. When Donna Haraway confessed in a public debate with David Harvey that she had all but lost the ability to imagine a world outside capitalism, she articulated precisely the problem with that very desire for the cities—and by extension the world—we want. "I really don't, in any kind of thick way, know how to imagine, at the scale that such imaginations would have to work, both little and big" (Harvey and Haraway 1995:519). I take this statement as not so much an admission of defeat from one of the most creative social thinkers of our era as a challenge to re-examine the obstinacies, contingencies and contradictions of the world. Others have more recently echoed this call. Critical theorist Slavoj Žižek proclaimed grimly, "Utopia is not free imagination. Utopia is a matter of innermost urgency. You are forced to imagine it, as the only way out" (Taylor 2005). The paradoxical suggestion, however, that we can only think our liberation after our utter confinement seems a political and analytical nonstarter. Geographer Nigel Thrift seeks to upend this imaginative blockage by suggesting that "we are living in a time of extraordinary imaginary outbursts if only we have the nous to touch and feel them, imaginary outbursts founded in the

cooperative symbiosis provoked by new situations, imaginary outbursts that force thinking by producing *affective affinities*" (2010:160). Thrift, *contra* Haraway, believes that it is a matter of sensing differently—indeed, of exceeding the regime of visuality. He offers an image (nonetheless) of a world of dispersed unnamed moments of inventiveness—"dances that describe themselves" (ibid: 161)—all of which perform acts of world-making that are not reducible to the capitalist order, even if they are produced by this condition and may not be inherently oppositional to it.

This chapter traces a line of thought concerned with the role of the imagination in spatial practices. How is a space—whether physical, virtual, affective, or most likely all at the same time—made inhabitable? This is a rather urgent question to pursue. Themes of disaster, decay, disorder—in a word, uninhabitability, not just for humans but entire living systems—dominate the contemporary discourse on the urban, especially in the global South (Davis 2006; Parenti 2011). "They transmute the misfortune of their theories into theories of misfortune," explains Michel de Certeau in his influential essay, "Walking in the City" (1984:96). In other words, speaking of catastrophe and dysfunction is a just-so story that turns on the modernist metanarrative of progress, maintaining the privilege of theoretical inviolability. De Certeau offers a focus on "the microbe-like, singular and plural practices which an urbanistic system was supposed to administer or suppress, but which have outlived its decay" (ibid: 96) as an alternative to the optical regime of bird's-eye-view voyeurism, embodied by his experience atop the World Trade Center. The desire to see the city from above is prerequisite to the construction of objective knowledge, "a fiction," he says, "related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more" (ibid: 92). The tower view "created gods" and made the city a legible text open to interpretation, organization and revision.

My point in introducing de Certeau is not to invoke the sizable literature devoted to walking as a politics counter to cartographic power, whether or not this was the intention of his intellectual project (Ingold and Vergunst 2008; Howell 1998; Middleton 2010). Rather, I wish to think about the intersections and translations across multiple modes of spatial practice because they inform different ways of experiencing and knowing the city. It has become commonplace to assume that de Certeau privileged walking as locus of a messy, more authentic truth about the city than the cold, dispassionate realm of maps and perspective drawings. Pedestrians now can consult GPS-enabled smartphones for their real-time location and directions, in effect imagining (and imaging) themselves traversing space from above. So the dichotomy de Certeau draws between walking and seeing from above seems archaic and misleading. The capacity of urban dwellers to imagine their world as seen from above, making gods of themselves, while still inhabiting it as mortals, carries implications for what we mean by imagination. To understand imagination as an activity already embedded in practice, not prior to it, in turn suggests different spaces where utopianism and the planning imagination are to be found today. The following case of a Rio favela targeted for infrastructure upgrading (and police pacification) inflects the provocations of de Certeau toward a reconsideration of the roles of experience and power in shaping what counts as knowledge of the urban.

Imagining like a state

There were several display stands arranged around the elevator lobby of the Municipal Housing Department in Rio de Janeiro's Prefecture. Encased in transparent acrylic boxes were architectural models of projects the state had launched under the aegis of Favela-Bairro, a $1 billion infrastructure-upgrading program co-sponsored since 1994 by the Inter-American

Development Bank (IDB). The replicas were colorful, sterile, and utterly deserted (figure 18). Without inhabitants visible, the mockups depicted pure habitat. Tiny blocks representing buildings indexed social relations: community centers, medical clinics, nurseries, and houses stood in for the various things people do with and for each other. I leaned over the waist-high display and gazed through the clear plastic down over the maquette. Color-coding indicated a temporal ambiguity: drab neutral desert tones denoted present constructions while bright orange—the same hue as the City Hall's own emblem—designated new development plans. Green indicated, naturally, ecological areas to be preserved or recuperated, parks and other leisure areas. The model showed at once a present co-existent with projected futures, and returns to mythic pasts of wild nature outside human society.

Figure 18 *Model in Rio Municipal Housing Secretariat lobby.*

After several minutes waiting in this lobby, I was called in to speak with Reane Vianna, chief architect of the Bairrinho (Small Neighborhood) program, a subset of Favela-Bairro specializing in making improvements in communities of up to 500 households in size. The vast majority of Rio favelas fit within this criterion, but Barrinho is not the primary initiative of the Favela-Bairro scheme. Vianna oversaw projects in Saqualé, including the *casinhas* housing relocation program. She explained that working in small communities made the efficacy of projects more legible. "When you work with small areas, you have a greater chance of completing something more sustainable and resolving problems. In larger favelas you always find more complex problems. Precision is difficult because more houses, more people complicate the project." In our conversation, Vianna evoked this sensibility several times: complexity increases with scale. At the same time, she proceeded to delve into the immense complexities of her own work in small favelas: ascertaining legal titles; negotiating indemnization for families removed from areas deemed high-risk or protected land; access for vehicles carrying building materials, ambulances, or garbage trucks.

Vianna gave an account of a city long identified as not whole, or rather split in two. Rio de Janeiro, by many accounts, is continually—and paradoxically—made a totality by the fundamental division between *asfalto* and *favela* (Ventura 1994). The normative city of capitalist social relations and rule of law—indexed by the term *asfalto*, the asphalt pavement of its streets—comes defined by its counterpart, the favela, as its political exception, cultural other, and economic source of value, historically, in the form of cheap building materials and low-skilled labor. While this binary division is stereotyped and overdetermined, it is nonetheless a marker that defines modes of urban governance in Rio's municipal government, as well as policing and architectural practices (Neri 2010; Jáuregui 2011). In other words, while the

boundary separating favela from asfalto is socially constructed, and perpetuates a "myth of marginality" (Perlman 1976), the fact that different actors—from police, to civil engineers, to drug traffickers, to employers—treat that boundary as something real produces real social effects.

Nevertheless, the category of favela is rife with contradictions and ambiguities that belie a vastly more complex array of legal, socioeconomic and geographical conditions across the cityscape (Valladares 2005). Favela is the generic term in Rio for jerry-rigged self-built settlements, although some low-income housing developments (*conjuntos*) are often conflated with favelas. Many of the constructions are not single-story shacks but rather brick-and-mortar houses several floors high, as well. Some settlements were initiated by illegal land invasions, while others originated in land grants from the state or religious organizations (McCann 2014). (At the same time, many 'formal' urban developments were built through illegal land acquisitions.) Defying assumptions that squatters build only out of a utilitarian rationality, many favelas demonstrate an active, albeit understudied, housing market (see Cavalcanti 2007). The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), which does regular surveys via satellite imagery, counts over 1,000 distinct favela settlements across the greater Rio metropolitan region.[33] Census figures, compiled by the same agency, estimate that nearly one million Rio inhabitants, or Cariocas, live in favelas and other structures the IBGE designates as 'subnormal agglomerations' (2010). However, it should be noted that not all poor people live in favelas, and not all people who live in favelas are poor. Many—but not all—settlements are the product of illegal land invasions. In the last three decades since Brazil's redemocratization, the emergence of drug trafficking gangs and the severe yet uneven military police response has transformed

[33] A settlement of at least 50 households statistically determines a favela, according to IBGE criteria. See census of 'subnormal agglomerations,' IBGE 2010. Also see Valladares (2005) for a history of official and social scientific definitions of favelas.

these territories into spaces of violence suffered largely by residents, especially young, dark-skinned males.

Historically, urban space in Latin America has come to be understood within a dynamic of "civilization and barbarism" through which state attention to the grooming of landscape has become a mode of governance (Coronil 1997; Rama 1996; Meade 1997; Holston 1989). Since the end of military dictatorship in the mid-1980s, the drug trade has introduced a rise in armed violence between traffickers and police in the favelas. Residents caught in this conflict often suffer police abuse and lose faith in the legitimacy of the state (Velho 1996). In 1994, Rio's municipal government launched Favela-Bairro to upgrade favela infrastructure, "integrate" them into the urban fabric (cf. Janice Perlman 2010), and promote the regularization of residents' property rights as a means for extending citizenship rights (Holston 2007). These measures pursue ambitious goals of making new citizens and uniting a divided city. Championed by Rio mayor and former architect Luis Paulo Conde with financing from the IDB, Favela-Bairro is the largest slum-upgrading program in Latin America, and its third phase of expansion was approved in December 2010. According to the mayor's Master Plan, the aim of Favela-Bairro is "to construct or complement the principal urban structure (sanitation and democratization of access-ways) and to offer the environmental conditions for the reading (*leitura*) of the favela as a neighborhood of the city" (cited in Burgos 1998:49, my translation). The Master Plan also mandates the inclusion of favelas in official maps and registries of the municipal government, the participation of residents in the urbanization process, and the maintenance of local features (Silva Junior 2006:52). While not the first scheme of its kind, Favela-Bairro departs from its precursors with a strategy not of removal but rather integration, with the underlying idea that the favelas are valuable urban territory (Caldeira and Holston 2005). How to regularize their

economic value and foster citizens' rights without destroying their cultural value remains the program's key tension. This tension reprises the ideology of a single reality with multiple cultures that was critically examined in the Introduction.

Another dynamic involves the construction of public projects in favelas dominated by drug gangs. As Cavalcanti argues counterintuitively, the state seeks to intervene precisely in favelas where armed violence threatens: "[it is] a paradoxical situation that traps favela residents in a double bind: the conditions for their political visibility and leverage rest on their constitution as a threat to the city; and yet it is this very perception that has brought them unprecedented political recognition and material improvements" (2007:4–5). The logic of Favela-Bairro is to unify what it frames, as suggested in its own name, as two distinct urban spaces: the formal and informal city. But as some have suggested, the end-effect is to entrench that difference, in spite of the material improvements it executes (Machado da Silva 2002; Acioly 2001).

Within the rubric of Favela-Bairro, favelas are a thing to be transformed, and bairros, or neighborhoods, are the thing they are to be transformed into. According to Vianna, the larger the project, the more difficult this process becomes. Small favelas become attractive for their exemplarity. The results of state intervention in the urban periphery are more legible on the small scale, and this legibility afforded through Favela-Bairro projects serves, by extension, to situate Rio as a model of urban planning and governance. "The ubiquity of urban modeling both in the planning imagination and in the built forms of emergent cities indexes the challenges of these cities not only to catch up with one another, but also to create new conceptions of achievable metropolitan standards for the developing world," argue Roy and Ong (2011:23). Models, in other words, have become a lingua franca of managerial competitiveness among urban development practitioners. They add: "The discourses that sustain this inter-referentiality shape

an intense inter-city consciousness of contrast, comparison, and rivalry, as a well as an idiom that initiates and legitimizes the extravagant claims of mega urban makeovers" (ibid.) It is through models that we are able to perceive how urban experiments such as Favela-Bairro hinge on and perpetuate a "circulation of ideas, objects, codes, and standards" (ibid) of urban modernity.

In our interview, Vianna employed an analogy: "Like restoring an old house, you have to account for what is already there." This statement seems to grind up against her other assertions correlating scale to complexity. In other words, knowledge practices are not so easily replicable because they must 'account for what is already there.' What is already there is not a given, however. In the context of Favela-Bairro, what is there depends on the labor of a wide set of state actors: architects, engineers, social workers, public defenders, technicians, builders. Their labor in turn is shaped by the history of Brazilian nation-state formation and scientific methodology. Indeed, what kind of object of knowledge is a favela? If we examine the material forms that knowledge appears as and is ordered by as a deeply historical matter, they become in a sense artifacts of a certain way of seeing and knowing the city that tells us about Brazilian modernity.

Diagnostics

The archives of Favela-Bairro projects are dispersed among different departments of the municipal government. A small annex room in the Housing Department contains thousands of rolled-up survey maps and plans stuffed into shelves labeled for the communities they depict (figure 19). There are names of well-known and more obscure favelas: Mangueira, Vidigal, Jacarepaguá, Morro dos Macacos, Morro do Dendê, Faz Quem Quer, and so on. The objective of Favela-Bairro is to reach all such communities, with projects defined through 'diagnostic' surveys assembling a geographical and social profile of the locality. This mass of materials, all

produced since 1994, is significant because it represents an unprecedented attempt to systematically map and order the city's favelas. Historically, favelas were not designated on maps; the spaces they occupied were generally shown as green for the Atlantic Forest[34] or left blank.

Figure 19 *Annex room archive of Favela-Bairro projects.*

One such survey was conducted in 1999 in Morro do Saqualé, a community (then split into two settlements) of approximately 1,000 inhabitants [35] straddling a hill rising between Rio's affluent South Zone and the less prestigious North Zone. Since Saqualé consisted of less than the

[34] Dean (1995) provides a definitive monograph chronicling the *longue durée* of resource exploitation in the Atlantic Forest of Brazil. In Rio, public discourse often articulates environmental anxieties over favela encroachment of forest lands as a moral circumvention of class-based resentment toward favela dwellers. The relatively new trope of the poor as an ecological threat has fused with several antecedents: the poor as contagion of disease, as rural migrants socially maladjusted to metropolitan life, as violent and morally corrupt.

[35] The 2010 Census shows 1,245 inhabitants in Saqualé, although official records invariably undercount numbers (IBGE 2010). AM president Denise estimated that some 3,000 people live there. The difficulties in securing reliable quantitative data owe in part to the considerable numbers of people who live temporarily in the locale with family relatives, as well as the suspicion many working-class and poor Brazilians hold toward documentary practices such as census-taking and residential registries that results in under-participation.

threshold 500 households, this project was designated to the Bairrinho sub-program for smaller settlements coordinated by Vianna. CoOperAtiva, a private architectural firm, produced for the SMH a spiral-ringed binder titled “Diagnóstico” which outlined the history, topography and geographical limits, population statistics, social services and civil-society organizations, as well as a series of maps detailing urban features: walking paths, water and sewage conduits, garbage collection systems, the electricity and public-lighting grid, telephone networks, availability of public transport, land use, sport and leisure spaces, real-estate values, vegetation, and high- and low-risk environmental areas (figure 20). A final section of the file displayed on-the-ground photographs of the community. Accompanying records also contained legal property registries and land value calculi for cases of individual household indemnization. Newspaper article clippings mentioning the project were also slotted between pages of the file.

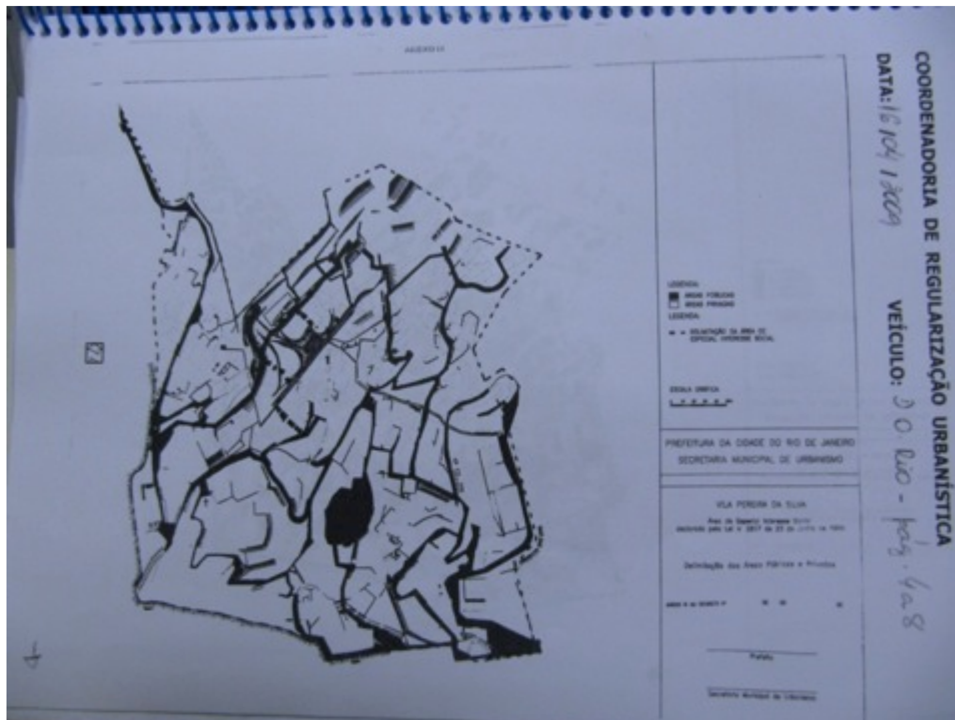

Figure 20 *Diagnostic dossier.*

The documents also showed the existing proprietors of land in Saqualé marked for formal expropriation [*desapropriação*]: Graça Engineering, Santa Casa da Misericórdia [Holy House of Mercy], and a cryptically named company Ytel Aceta. Some years before the launch of the Bairrinho project, the local notary office [*cartório*] burned down, destroying all its records. This event complicated the legal process of transferring land ownership to the Prefeitura. In addition, Graça Engineering appealed in court to reclaim ownership the expropriation of the occupied building in its name.

In effect, the Diagnostic report represented what Vianna described succinctly as "what is already there." It was a depiction of a social and material ground with which planning practice must contend, and all Favela-Bairro projects underwent a similar process of classification and cataloguing. Other binders from the Saqualé records detailed the construction materials, budgets, and building dimensions for all proposed works of housing, public stairway and walkway construction, drainage, sewage, lighting, and sanitation services. Included also were pamphlets distributed to residents explaining projects to come, curricula vitae of personnel involved in data collection and design, and agendas and reports for community participation meetings.

These latter records represented a minuscule portion of the overall volume of documentation, however, and they revealed that resident participation was a stage in the development program that did little to alter, much less shape, the design process. In the meeting, it was clear that engineers and architects had consulted residents seeking nominal approval well after the proposed works had been devised and drafted. Despite the Master Plan's declaration to the contrary, this marginalization of favela dwellers' input was repeated in other communities (Acioly 2001). When I mentioned in conversation that I had examined an official map in the

resident association's office highlighting various works never undertaken, Diana, a local shopkeeper, interjected: "That's all we get—projects! You understand?"

On the edge of Saqualé where Morrinho was situated, sixteen shack homes were removed when the municipal government declared the forested area around Morrinho protected natural land and Morro do Saqualé became incorporated as a territorial entity. The boundary between the settlement, designated an Área Especial de Interesse Social (AEIS, Area of Social Interest) and the Área de Proteção Ambiental (APA, Area of Environmental Protection) of the Atlantic Forest was demarcated by a steel cable circumscribing the former. The Bairrinho program officially amended the name of the community to the more chic Vila Saqualé, performing a kind of linguistic upgrading to accompany the material interventions. The community began to appear on official maps, and its reputation as one of Rio's most violent favelas changed.

Urban legibility

If Favela-Bairro and associated "upgrading" programs rendered the marginal spaces of the city legible to the state apparatuses of urban planning and the law, then we might construe Morrinho as an attempt on the part of favela youth to render that same process legible to themselves. When the SMH archivist generously allowed me to take the Diagnostic binder for a week to have it photocopied, I took it to the office that also served as Morrinho's clubhouse. A few youths were inside, and when I started thumbing through the document Bruno's interest was instantly piqued. "What do you have there?" he inquired.

"This? Oh, it's a dossier made for the Prefeitura almost a decade ago about the community," I replied. Bruno pulled his chair closer, and I handed the binder over. He turned to the appendix pages in the back with glued-on photos. He scrutinized each image in his lap. Many

of the snapshots were of places that had changed dramatically over the intervening years, and Bruno took this as a challenge. Soon Bruno was quizzing the others. Kamal, one of his contemporaries, and a younger trio of Eric, Dudu, and Nereu played along.

"Where is this one?" Bruno asked the others. They recognized most of the photos and talked extensively about the angle of the shot, what geographic features lay nearby, and—crucially—what had changed. Houses had been built, dirt paths cemented over, trees cleared. "See here, this is the gate to the French school down below. And this one is of the dumpsters at the entrance. Look how ugly the houses were back then! Yeah, those stairs aren't like that anymore. The stone steps are gone; it's all concrete now." They identified community landmarks like the chapel, the Catholic school at the top of the hill, the Curve of Death, the creek, Thiago's house, Cota's old house, Rodolfo's house, the hostel, and so on. Bruno praised their correct answers like a schoolteacher. "Shh, let him answer. Right. *Bom, garoto* [Good, son]." He elaborated on a few other photos: "That's the black magic house [*casa da macumba*]. The guy died last year."

Some of the photos stumped the others, and Bruno crowed with delight. "Born and raised! [*Eu sou cria!*]" He thumped his chest. "I know where everyone one of these is!" Bruno was cementing his authority over the others in this photo-identification game he had invented. When he reached the end of the photo section, he grew interested in the maps, which he removed from their plastic sheathes to unfold and examine them.

"Vegetation?" asked Nereu. I explained that the maps showed different aspects of the terrain, including sewage lines, walking paths, topography, and environmental features.

Bruno traced a walking path up the hill with his finger. "You go through the quadra, right? Now, look what they did here. See this staircase that leads up past my grandparents'

house. Okay, now where's the stairs that go up to the Curve. You see, it's not here. They hadn't made it yet. And what's this? It's showing a staircase running behind my house. Totally wrong! What are these clowns doing?" I asked Bruno about a map he himself had made a few years prior. "Oh, that? I drew that from my head in about a half hour. Bruno's map was labeled

Figure 21 *Bruno's hand-drawn map of Morro do Saqualé. Image from Projeto Morrinho.*

throughout with points of local and personal knowledge: his family's and friend's homes, dead-end alleyways, bars, chapels, forests, and Morrinho itself (see figure 21). A red line showed the path to Morrinho from the top of the hill, and a green line traced the path to there from the bottom. Bruno asked me to make an extra copy of the Diagnostic dossier for the AM, and I

assented. Holding the weighty document up and handing it back to me, he added, "You know, I've got a folder at home with old newspaper articles from the era when a lot of stuff was happening here." I told him he should try to dig it up for me, because I was interested in seeing what he had saved for so long. I added, "Yes, Bruno, please find it because you might save me from another trip to the archives."

Illegibilities

In the dozens of maps produced by Bairrinho planners for state projects proposed, if not realized, in Saqualé, Morrinho did not appear. At its location there was blank space—or sometimes lines indicating the outer boundary delimiting community territory or green coloring signaling the canopy of Atlantic Forest trees. Morrinho was an illegible object and thus did not count at all in official maps. Its idiosyncratic history had afforded it a different kind of presence. The disjuncture between these representations of Rio de Janeiro disclosed a disjuncture in the politics of design practice. Planners did not miss designating Morrinho as a special cultural space, nor did they fail to engage with its participants to better comprehend favela youth perspectives on the city. Designers and state technocrats are not without imagination, but the machinery of their institutions came with a set of rules seldom questioned or transgressed. With this bifocal account of two different modes of model-making in Rio, I will suggest in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, that Morrinho performs the city as *relational* space. Bruno's intensive survey of the Diagnostic materials of his community had already suggested that he and his peers exhibited this sensibility even when not playing in Morrinho. Each photograph was a historical artifact for them as well as a storytelling device and a way to compete with each other over who possessed greater knowledge of his environs.

If design practice often manifests a utopian desire, what de Certeau critiqued as “this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more” (1984: 92), then his antidote to this disembodied form of power involves a return to practice: the city is made and re-made everyday through the infinite movements of its inhabitants. He understood this insight as the basis for a counter-knowledge of the city, understanding practice as inventive of space itself, not as merely happening in empty space. “Stories about places are makeshift things,” de Certeau claims. “Things *extra* and *other*… insert themselves into the accepted framework, the imposed order” (ibid.: 107). The exploration of the extraneous, the discarded, the uncanny, can inaugurate a politics and a poetics for re-encountering the familiar and making it knowable.

CHAPTER 4

PACIFICATION: LIFE IN A POLICE TRAINING GROUND

A 2009 classified cable from the US Consulate in Rio de Janeiro, later declassified by the whistleblowing organization WikiLeaks, outlines the scope and ambitions of the counter-insurgency cum development program known as favela "pacification." While drawing comparisons with US geopolitical strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan, the document cites estimates that integrating squatter settlements into mainstream markets and society would contribute 38 billion Brazilian Reals (US$21 billion) to the city's economy through new commerce and jobs. The principal challenge of the project, the report claims, will be "to convince favela populations that the benefits of submitting to state authority (security, legitimate land ownership, access to education) outweigh the costs (taxes, utility fees, civil obedience)" (US Consulate 2009). Recent police occupations of major favelas in Rio have testified to the program's early success while revealing the limits of its conceptualization (Goldstein 2010).

For many young male favela residents especially, police occupation of their community presented a conundrum of how to position themselves as a person worth risking social and economic investment in, and not one who is himself a risk, a threat to social order. This chapter is thus concerned with securitization as a twinned process tying together the militarization and financialization of urban space. In other words, I identify an optical logic of capital and violence driving the future-making project known as the "pacification" of Rio's favelas. As the campaign of police occupation and social uplift hinges on the geography of real-estate speculation, and thus a certain way of visualizing the city, favela residents must position themselves for the broad

changes afoot in their communities. In this chapter, I suggest that this responsiveness generates a desire to manage oneself skillfully amid shifting territory. By recognizing how one Morrinho youth, Bruno, internalizes and reframes this logic of seeing and recognizing danger, I show how political mobilization against this optical regime grounds itself in claims about the past, in forms of melancholia and mourning that enter into mimetic play. If the question of who and what are the subjects and objects of the city is a endemic problem of democratization, then the games of favela youth, military police tactics, and globalized real-estate markets are thus interweaving forms of speculation that manifest implicit claims about political subjectivity and agency.

Bruno worked as a deliveryman until an accident that damaged both his motorcycle and his leg interrupted his livelihood. The 25-year-old resorted to working as an accountant within the small drug gang operating in his home community. A pistol lay on his lap while he counted cash out of a paper bag in the *boca de fumo*, or drug sales point, at the entrance of the hillside squatter settlement Saqualé. His character altered dramatically in a short time, and he stopped playing at Morrinho, or even appearing at the site. He became visibly brasher in demeanor and, although he had become one of my closest interlocutors and friends, I found I could not talk to him, particularly when he was at work, where his colleagues did not appreciate anyone loitering or chatting them up. The *boca* is a nondescript establishment: a landing at the top of the first staircase leading into the settlement where customers conduct hushed transactions and then leave with small plastic bags of narcotics.

Bruno's friends widely disapproved of his move, as if he was now out of reach to them. "He's straying [*Ele está vacilando*]," Lúcio lamented. "But there's nothing you can do. I know he has to go into selling [*entrar na* boca] to support his wife and son, but he has to come to his senses." After two months, Bruno quit the drug gang, but in doing so he also fled from Saqualé

and his family. It was the end of the year and, because he had collected his ‘thirteenth month’ salary just before resigning from his post, Bruno decided to leave the community for another three months, fearing retribution for his actions. During this time family could only see Bruno in the formal city, far from Saqualé and the *boca*.

Figure 3 *BOPE raises the national flag in Rocinha over a flatbed truck loaded with confiscated motorcycles, 13 November 2011. (Photo: http://www.estadao.com.br/)*

In the last two decades, the Rio state government has unrolled an ambitious political project of land recapture by means of military force coupled with social initiatives, branded as “pacification.” This campaign arrived at what the state declared a watershed moment in the predawn of November 13, 2011. Three thousand police and marines backed by armored tanks and helicopters invaded two of Rio de Janeiro’s largest and most prominent favelas, Rocinha and

Vidigal, to liberate them from the drug gang syndicate that had dominated there for the last three decades. Following the capture two days prior of the drug trafficker boss known as Nem, whom police discovered leaving Rocinha in the trunk of a compact sedan driven by men who called themselves Congolese dignitaries, the state forces entered unopposed into the sprawling hillside community of 200,000 inhabitants. No shots were fired. At the end of the operation, government forces raised the Brazilian flag in Rocinha to herald the successful "reconquest." Within a day, major newspaper O Globo ran headlines reporting a fire sale of pirated CDs and DVDs on the streets of Rocinha and calculated that 90% of the 6,500 businesses in the favela were "informal" (Mascarenhas 2011).

Meanwhile, police searched the forests surrounding Vidigal for hidden graves of victims of the drug trade but instead turned up illegal cable TV decoders. A German millionaire entrepreneur who amassed a fortune playing currency markets was leading an investment group to transform this community into a tourist-oriented village with luxury hotels, restaurants, and a heritage museum. And, affirming that the pacification of Rio's favelas is of interest to economic elites, energy mogul, and Brazilian billionaire Eike Batista proposed to lead a group of seven businessmen to contribute R$20 million annually through 2014 toward supporting the police occupation, sanitation works, and the construction of administrative facilities and soccer fields (Aquino 2011).

This mobilization of state military power ties territorial conquest into economic ordering. Certain villains are repeatedly invoked in this highly mediatized terrain: the drug dealer, the pirated goods vendor, and the *gato*, or illegal cable technician/electrician. These figures, seen as outside threats to a civilizing process, are to be distinguished vis-à-vis morally good, hard-working favela residents who toil in low-wage jobs as domestic workers, doormen, custodians,

and retail clerks. I trace this negotiation of war in the name of security and order through Bruno, who has grown up amid the kind of changes currently underway in much larger and more well-known favelas.

Police surveillance in favelas is a mode of seeing that seeks to pervade social life and thus become productive of legible forms of sociability. Allen Feldman has, in the context of political violence in Belfast, has termed this mode of rule a "scopic regime":

> an ensemble of practices and discourses that establish the truth claims, typicality, and credibility of visual acts and objects and politically correct modes of seeing. In Northern Ireland each sectarian assassination victim, each detainee interrogated and tortured, each prisoner incarcerated, each army or police patrol ambushed has been subjected to a ritualized gaze, an exposure that is an endowment of power to the aggressor. The violent imagination in Northern Ireland is a visual imagination that extends from the surveillance and imaging of bodies living and dead to the public imaging of projected yet nonexistent national entities such as a United Ireland or a British Ulster. (Feldman 2000:49–50)

It constructs objects—resident, outlaw [*bandido*], home, drug sale point [*boca de fumo*]—as targets and non-targets, and in doing so, it accompanies late capitalist logic that binds the value of objects to expected return on investment. In effect, Morrinho plays with those objectified notions of the favela that the state and its police apparatus use to render spaces and populations legible to the law and real estate speculation. Because of its proximity to the headquarters of BOPE (Special Operations Police Battalion), Saqualé has become a model community for police training in urban warfare tactics. Officers clad conduct routine—albeit with irregular frequency—exercises in the community. They move in groups of four in all-black fatigues bearing the ominous BOPE insignia, a skull impaled by a dagger over two crossed pistols, on their shoulders. Their large-calibre Belgian-made rifles are pointed at all times up, down, and across the various sightlines presented by the winding staircases and alleyways of the informal settlement.

Upon discovering it, BOPE officers initially suspected Morrinho of being a model for invading other favelas, thus incriminating its young creators. The later valorization of Morrinho

as NGO, cultural project, and tourism site has not won them freedom from harassment, although demonstrating affiliation to the project is a tactic Morrinho youth deploy in order to escape the default category for dark-skinned young male favela residents without worker identification cards: drug trafficker. The entanglement of Morrinho in of culture-for-development networks delivers little of what those schemes offer, but in everyday encounters with police, it offers a way to claim oneself as a (potentially) economically productive, politically compliant citizen without the personal degradation of low-wage employment.

Extending Feldman's insight about the visual imagination of violence in Northern Ireland, Morrinho is intimately concerned with surveillance and territoriality, with seeing bodies and spaces, and how identity is forged in a fluid nexus of the two. It is for this reason that invasion is the definitive transgressive act in Morrinho, usually reinforced with speech threatening bodily penetration. Territories are interwoven with bodies. One's guilt or innocence, life or death, may depend on one's location at a given moment, in a given encounter. Morrinho in effect trains a kind of geographical knowledge, a management of self through highly territorialized space. For Bruno in particular, this training is expressed in Morrinho but informed by experiences marked by loss, which I will recount in two related episodes:

I participated in several *mutirões* for households trying to add an extra story or room to their homes, as recounted in Chapter 2. The concentration of manpower allowed for a labor-intensive task of several days or weeks to be accomplished in hours. By the job's completion in the afternoon participants were rewarded with a feast financed and prepared by the host. One Sunday I was standing on the walking path in front of the house of a neighbor, Thiago, where

friends and family, including Bruno, were relaxing with plastic cups filled with *feijoada*[36] and cans of cold beers after pouring a new laje, effectively adding another floor to his home.

Shuffling past us was Humberto, a muted older man who lived near Morrinho. The cheap bottle of *cachaça* hard liquor was visible through the translucent plastic bag slung over his shoulder. He stopped and gestured gingerly towards a plate of manioc flour [*farofa*]. Bruno asked Thiago, “Can he take it? Let him take it.” Thiago shrugged his assent. Bruno filled a plastic cup with farofa for Humberto, “Here. Take this home with you.” The old man walked on, barely a word uttered. Bruno turned to me, “Mummy [*Múmia*], that’s his nickname. That, or Freak [*Tarado*]. No really.” He erupted in laughter; I was by then used to unflattering if not cruel nicknames, but I was struck by the bad taste of these monikers.

But the humorous jab broke a certain silence about the past (Goldstein 2003). “He’s my uncle,” Bruno added. This disclosure prompted the other five people present to spontaneously produce a composite sketch of Humberto’s life history: He used to look completely different, stood up tall, dressed up each day for his job in the aeronautics industry. His son, Bruno’s first cousin, André died when police shot out the tires on his motorcycle heading down the street leading out of the favela; the young man crashed headfirst into a wall at full speed and died on the spot. The passenger riding behind him was a man nicknamed Portuguese, Saqualé’s drug gang leader. He had forced André to give him a lift and was shot dead, although he was unarmed that day. Soon thereafter Humberto’s griefstricken wife moved out of the community. Humberto began to descend the morro every morning not to go to work but to drink. “He’s destroying himself,” I conclude, aloud. The others returned a collective shrug of part pity, part resignation.

The story opened up my engagement with Morrinho to a deeper understanding of the history of Saqualé and the city of Rio at large. All events, however personally affecting, have a

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[36] A traditional Brazilian dish made of beans and pork.

potential for wider social resonance: indeed, I would later find the story of André's untimely death reproduced by anthropologist Luis Eduardo Soares, in his published memoirs of his stint as special counsel to the Rio de Janeiro state Secretary of Public Security. In an extended passage, he recounts a series of events that would transform the political and experiential terrain of Saqualé. In the final week of that year, upon reports that police officers were extorting Saqualé residents, Portuguese decided to descend the hill to deal with the officers directly. The longstanding pact that held that police would allow the *boca de fumo* to operate without interference as long as they did not shake down *favela* residents was unraveling. Portuguese had obliged André, a 21-year-old former army soldier, to give him a ride on the back of his motorcycle—under what means of persuasion will perhaps never be known. Soon both would be killed by police, and according to Soares's account, they would plant a gun next to André's body to uphold the charge that he was armed and would have resisted arrest (Soares 2000:67–68).

A few days later, traffickers in Saqualé issued the order to managers and owners of shops, restaurants, bakeries, bars, and other businesses in the nearby affluent formal city district to remain closed on following Sunday. The traffickers deployed the threat as a political maneuver to consolidate working-class solidarity among local residents, ordering them to relay the demand to shut down to their employers.[37] Soon afterwards, BOPE, Military Police, and army personnel occupied the community. The Military Police maintained a trailer at the entrance to the community for almost eight years, from 1999 until 2007. The morro soon became a type of live training ground for the BOPE, with trafficker presence never fully eliminated. In 1999,

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[37] Other CV actions have paralyzed Rio in the past. Penglase (2005) describes a 2002 shutdown allegedly ordered by powerful dono Fernandinho Beira-Mar, then detained in a maximum-security prison. Shop owners were threatened to close their doors, and four city buses were set on fire. As a result, bus transport was halted, and schools, shopping centers, banks, restaurants, and medical clinics were closed. McCann (2007) also reports on a 2006 CV-orchestrated assault across Rio that left 19 dead. Both accounts describe these actions as terrorist in nature and motivated by a desire to exercise the coercive dominion of the CV over the urban economy.

under the mandate of a new governor, a Secretary of Public Security pilot program titled *Mutirão pela Paz* ["Working for Peace"] was inaugurated. Conceived by Soares, the initiative intended to bring infrastructure and services by means of a government and civil society blitz, mobilizing among others the Secretariats of Labor, Education, Health, Justice, Environment, and Sport and Leisure. It was, in effect, a "social occupation" of the favela that accompanied the police occupation (Soares 2000: 277-84).

In May of that year Queen of Denmark paid a special visit to Saqualé. There were red and white balloons, children waving little Brazilian flags, fresh paint on the walls, mayor (and trained architect) Luiz Paulo Conde, and behind the small stage where the Queen sat to face the public and cameras, a white placard, inconspicuous except for its placement just behind the platform, with unevenly spaced red block letters announcing: FUTURE SITE OF THE QUEEN MARGARETHE II COMMUNITY CENTER. The bearded and bespectacled Soares was also present, smiling and providing soundbites to reporters, and striding just in front of the Queen during her brief stroll around the community. Residents remember this day well. They recall declarations of a 'model favela' under the rubric of human rights and the creation of new citizens, a new Rio de Janeiro. The social initiatives of the Mutirão pela Paz evaporated when its champion Soares was abruptly dismissed from his position as the governor's advisor in March 2000 and, in the government shake-up, the new Secretary of Security discontinued the program.

Bruno shared with me the personal archive of newspaper clippings of the death of his cousin André, which he had mentioned when looking over the Bairrinho documents (see Chapter 3). The story reached front-page newspaper headlines in Rio in the final week of 1998, although the headlines referred to the 'successful' police operation that removed the drug-gang leader Portuguese from power. He lent me the faded manila envelope, and it occurred to him he had not

opened it since the time of the event itself. He narrated his memories of the events as we looked over the yellowed pages. He admitted he has not taken the papers out since storing them in the envelope. He was not sure why he had kept these records. Bruno cannot quite fathom why he had been able to avoid his cousin's fate.

Since I left Rio, Bruno routinely contacted me via online chat. He would update me on life in Saqualé, and it was clear that pacification did not signify the absence of violence. Seventeen-year-old Rafael, also known as Shurek, frequented Morrinho without ever getting involved in the activities of building and playing there. Nicknamed after the animated ogre from a series of popular children's movies, Rafael had a gentle and quiet demeanor that stood out from his brasher peers. As I introduced him in the first chapter of this work, I had first known him as a devout evangelical youth who often worked for neighbors carrying heavy construction materials up the hill for meager pay.

When he was not pushing a wheelbarrow loaded with bricks, I would usually see Rafael sporting a polo shirt, always with the top button fastened. This ended abruptly when Rafael became addicted to crack and joined the drug gang as a lookout. He was stationed at the *Curva da Morte*, or Curve of Death, a spot where the labyrinth opens up and one can see across the hill—and, importantly, where one can be seen from across the hill. Bruno provided me with a grim account of how he had seen undercover police walk up the hill behind him one evening, scouting their targets. He had been made aware of events before their happening, and could do nothing to alter their unfolding. He wrote to me soon after: "Right now I can even say things are fine. I can even say the morro is calm. But that's fucked up, no? They wait to come, but when they come, my man, they always take one or two. Shurek died there in front of my grandmother's house… She said that the police took him to the corner and shot him in the leg.

Then they began to beat him. After three minutes of beating him one said, ‘I’m not up for taking this one.” And then the other said, ‘Kill him now.’ So they shot him twice in the chest. When they shot him though, he didn’t die right away. So the other officer said like this, ‘let’s go, take him down with you.’ And the first said, ‘Wait, he still alive; I’m waiting for him to die.’ Rafael stayed there some two or three minutes alive. And then he died. That’s how they went down with the body.”

“They really left him still alive, in agony?” I interrupted.

“The boys who were with him, they also told me. They were beaten up [*apanharam*], too… Yeah… I had spoken to him a minute before he died. I hadn’t even gotten home before the shots.”

“You talked to Shurek? How is that, if BOPE was right there?”

“I was walking up, and he was there, in the *boca*. I said to him, ‘hey, watch out because they’re watching down below,’ and went on up. When I got to the stairs of my house, the shots rang out.”

“But you didn’t know that police were on the hill in that moment?”

“No, because when I arrived along with the minibus and started walking up, there were two BOPE in street clothes. They walked up with the residents as if they passed for residents. They walked right through the *boca*. I walked up in front of them. It was there that everything happened. They practically ascended with me, but well behind me. They saw up to the curve who was on duty and descended again. The police from below came in shooting. The cats ran off, and the ones who came from above caught everyone.”

“Were you aware that something was going to happen? So the ones dressed in uniform got him? And how is it that the guys in the *boca* are always alerted?”

"Man, you have to be watching. Rafael died because he missed out [*deu mole*]. He was armed, so he had to be attentive. It's he who has to see and give the signal. But he didn't see. The men passed in front of him and he didn't see… The world of crime is like that. He missed out because he didn't see. He paid with his life. You yourself already saw there the ones who are armed, always stopping people they don't know. They tell you to stop, lift your shirt, turn around. Rafael didn't do that… He died. If he had done that he would have seen that the guy was armed and wouldn't have died. Get it?"

How are the effects of state violence understood and negotiated by those who experience it? "He missed out because he didn't see. He paid with his life." While seemingly placing blame on the victim of powerful violent forces, Bruno is rationalizing those forces and explaining how one might negotiate them through a kind of attentiveness. For him, Rafael, the lookout, failed to see, to look out for himself, even as his failure alerted others to escape.

This exchange, as well as the story of André, underlines the contradictions of so-called pacification in Rio's favelas. Violence in the name of security is part of an ambitious future-making project to remake a city defined by stark contradictions and inequalities, but can it bury its own past? Rafael's death was not publicized anywhere except in hastily printed funeral announcements in the community the following day and in expressions of mourning in online communities made up of his peers. Neighbors washed the blood out of the concrete at the site of his execution, erasing physical remainders as reminders. Unlike the deaths of Bruno's cousin André and the drug boss Portuguese, Rafael's end had no overarching political value; it did not signal the reclamation of people and territory from a regime of terror. It was a game of tactics played by BOPE and the local drug gang, little else. "We already lost many friends. Shurek has to be the last. We will try to do something to end this… For us here life continues. We're already

used to this. Unfortunately, he was not the first, and he won't be the last… The next day another kid took his place." Bruno explained, resetting the game with a new player.

CHAPTER 5

MORRINHO: A LUDIC MAP OF RIO DE JANEIRO

O galo já não canta mais no Cantagalo,	The rooster no longer crows on Cock-a-doodle Hill,
A água não corre mais na Cachoeirinha,	The water no longer runs on Lil' Cascade Hill,
Menino não pega mais manga na Mangueira	The boys no longer find fruit on Mango Tree Hill,
E agora que cidade grande é a Rocinha!	And now the big city is Little Rock!
Ninguém faz mais jura de amor no Juramento,	No one avows their love anymore on the Hill of the Vow,
Ninguém vai-se embora do Morro do Adeus,	No one leaves Goodbye Hill,
Prazer se acabou lá no Morro dos Prazeres,	The pleasures have ended up on Pleasures Hill,
E a vida é um inferno na Cidade de Deus.	And life is hell in City of God.
Não sou do tempo das armas	I'm not from the era of weapons
Por isso ainda prefiro	And that's why I still prefer
Ouvir um verso de samba	To hear a samba verse
Do que escutar som de tiro	Than listen to shots fired.
Pela poesia dos nomes de favela	Through the poetry of the names of favelas
A vida por lá já foi mais bela	Life then was more beautiful.
Já foi bem melhor de se morar	It was much better living
Hoje essa mesma poesia pede ajuda	Today that same poetry can't manage
Ou lá na favela a vida muda	Either in the favela life changes
Ou todos os nomes vão mudar.	Or all the names will change.

- Moyseis Marques, "Nomes de Favela" [Names of Favelas]

Brazil's most popular children's fable is in fact a meta-fable, a story which borrows characters from other beloved tales of world literature. Monteiro Lobato's *Sítio do Picapau Amarelo*, or *Yellow Woodpecker Ranch* (2008 [1939]), recounts the migration en masse of all the characters and places from the World of Make-Believe to the humble farmstead of Dona Benta. The old widow receives a letter from Tom Thumb requesting her aid, claiming, in distress, that "the rest of the world is heading into something of the highest gracelessness."[38] To the delight of her grandchildren Pedrinho and Narizinho and their two talking-doll friends—and to the dismay

[38] "O resto do mundo anda uma coisa das mais sem graça," writes Tom Thumb in Lobato's original text. The book has not yet been translated into English. "Sem graça" could be translated variously as graceless, unfunny, or insipid.

of her black housemaid and cook Tia Nastácia—that live at the Yellow Woodpecker Ranch, Dona Benta assents to the letter's appeal, and after buying neighbors' land with money gained from petroleum extraction on her property, they welcome a parade of fabulistic refugees, including Peter Pan, Snow White, the seven dwarves, Scheherazade, Little Red Riding Hood, La Fontaine, Bluebeard, Baron von Munchhausen, characters from Aesop, Andersen and Grimm tales, Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, Alice, White Rabbit, Tweedledum, Medusa, Perseus, King Midas, and assorted princes, princesses, centaurs, fauns, nymphs, mermaids, and Greek gods and goddesses.

Monteiro Lobato (1882-1948) was Brazil's foremost folklorist in the first half of the 20th century, and his works of fiction were part of a broader project of lettered elites to cultivate national identity and Latin American modernity (Ortiz 1992; see also Rama 1996). The method of incorporating personages from other works into its own narrative anticipates the aesthetic of intertextuality and pastiche associated with postmodernity. The startling opening passage also runs counter to fable convention by bringing the very issue of enchantment to the fore:

> "I only believe what I see with my hands, smell with my nose, hold with my hands or taste with the tip of my tongue," say the adults, but it is not true. They believe in thousands of things that their eyes don't see, nor their noses smell, their ears hear, or hands hold.
>
> "God, for example," says Narizinho. "Everyone believes in God and nobody is able to hold Him, smell Him, feel Him."
>
> "Exactly. And they still believe in Justice, in Civilization, in Kindness—in thousands of things invisible, unsmellable, unholdable, without sound and without taste. So if all the things in the World of Fables do not exist, then also neither God, nor Justice, nor Kindness, nor Civilization exist— nor any abstract thing. (Lobato 2008 [1939]: 12)

It is a curious way to open an ostensibly children's book. It is immediately unclear with whom the fictional girl Narizinho[39] is conversing, if not with the omniscient narrator of the story, or Lobato himself. The conversation reads like a brief polemic on phenomenology and the status of

[39] "Little Nose"

reality disguised as the introduction to a fable. With cheeky style, Lobato seems to be refuting Weber's argument that disenchantment, with rationalization and secularization, constitute the defining characteristics of capitalist modernity (Weber 2001). He calls into question not only the fundamental ideals of the liberal social order—Civilization, Justice, Kindness, God—but also the boundaries distinguishing real from imagined, tangible from abstract, adulthood from childhood.

When Dona Benta decides to buy out her neighbors with her petroleum wealth in order to accommodate the World of Make-Believe refugees—in effect, through ground rent—this act also acknowledges the entanglements of material things and abstractions. Lobato could well have included another line to the passage of dialogue above: "Everyone believes in capital, but nobody is able to hold it, smell it, feel it." But curiously, the author omits market relations as one of the grand mystifications of the world of the "adults." Indeed, in this passing detail, it is the mechanism of the market that saves the panoply of fictional characters in exile and allows a children's utopia to flourish. The characters of Yellow Woodpecker Ranch question the fetishes of modernity, but they nevertheless wield the conjuring powers of capital to accommodate their myriad guests.

Whether this last point naturalizes capitalist social relations or is yet another of Lobato's ironic winks, it is perhaps intellectual overreach to stray from the central theme of the story: A young reader of *Sítio do Picapau Amarelo* could be tickled by the audacious notion that the world of make-believe is every bit as real as the adult world, or the inverse: that adults believe in enchantment, too. Lobato's radical negation of abstract things not only serves to enrich the unfolding of the book's fictional world but also speaks to an enduring problem of modernity amid Latin American underdevelopment—namely, its recognition. How do we know modernity and its principal figures, the State and the Market, when we see them—and for that matter, hear,

smell, taste and grasp them? When invoked, promised or conjured in political discourse or social scientific analysis, what are the physical anchors, the sensory registers that manifest these grand abstractions, make them tangible, sensible and comprehensible?

Several analysts have noted the centrality of literary fiction to the historical formation of national identities in Latin America. Sommer (1991), with Anderson (1991), traces the use of novels in shaping civic education across race, region and class into a national community of coherent personal and public aspirations. In an examination of *Doña Bárbara*, the masterwork of Venezuelan writer (and later president) Rómulo Gallegos, Julie Skurski (1994) demonstrates that the historical context of the novel's production and reception reveals both a resignification and a continuity between elite republican discourse and populist ideology, and contradictory impulses of unity and subordination embodied in iconic figures. Irene Silverblatt's (2004) history of the Spanish Inquisitorial court in the 17th-century Peruvian viceroyalty targets the role of colonial bureaucrats in the establishment of violence and racial subordination that lay at the heart of modern state formation. The co-constitutive relationship between the literary genres of detective fiction and journalism and official systems of crime and punishment reappears in late 19th and early 20th-century Argentina (Ludmer 2004). Written discourse, moreover, would not have acquired power in shaping Latin American societies without an intimate relationship to urbanism as a spatial expression of a rational order of signs (Rama 1996). Roberto González Echevarría (1990) shows the indebtedness of the Latin American literary tradition to legal, scientific and anthropological discourses, observing how the voices of marginalized figures are made evident while codified in systems of power. He argues that, in emulating the rhetoric of state bureaucracy, literature expresses freedom not in opposition to official culture, but via imitation.

The idyllic setting of Dona Benta's Ranch signals how Lobato situates the narrative not only outside history but also, tellingly, outside the city. Still, the tale starts with a mass migration of refugees who flee a vague existential threat and resettle through an informal arrangement with a landowner. In this sense, Lobato anticipates a major upheaval that would shape Brazilian society, and the global South more generally, over the latter half of the 20th century: the movement of millions of rural migrants to the urban periphery. The story of the proliferation of so-called slums has variably turned on tropes of resilience, crisis, and responsibility (Valladares 2005; Janice E. Perlman 2010; Davis 2006; de Soto 2002). In Rio de Janeiro, amid advanced official efforts to reshape the relationship of favelas to the formal city, residents saw the spaces that they appropriated out of necessity enter into new economic and legal regimes of property and exchange.

Morro do Saqualé has its own Sítio do Picapau Amarelo. One side of the morro was settled and developed more recently than the other, and local residents started to refer colloquially to the area occupied by these newer constructions by the famous title of Lobato's fictional world. The inhabitants of this densely forested but gradually cleared section of the hill included many of the youth who started playing there.

"It's nothing, I'm just *desanimado*." Dispirited. Kamal was alone, expressing little else but a desire to detach from the world at large. He brooded in silence while surveying the miniature city around him, like Gulliver towering over a Lilliputian metropolis. It was a living tableau Kamal has worked on and played in for almost fifteen years, shortly after his move to this community. The site of the model abutted the city it depicted. In these moments Kamal's gaze was critical. There were decisions to be made everywhere. He was attuned to the aesthetic

matters of fabricating miniaturized verisimilitude, as well as strategic matters of fortifying defensible spaces. The model was a stage on which he and his peers manipulated thousands of one-inch-tall figurines in an *in situ* multiplayer role-playing game that simulated urban reality.

What kind of play was this? What went into it? What was the experiential basis that shaped the bounds of play? What animated this assemblage, imbued it with a social life more than simply a collection of objects? Today seemed the wrong day to find out as Kamal declared himself *desanimado*. Even today, feeling dis-animated, Kamal had come to work on the model, a product of thousands of hours of labor.

We were alerted to the rattle of gunfire rumbling gently over the top of the valley. The pop of rounds fired was rather routine, coming through the forest from the firing range of BOPE's training ground. But these shots came from elsewhere, and their irregularity signaled that it was not a police exercise. Kamal pricked up his ears. "Guns make a wonderful sound," he said idly, pausing before continuing the thought. "Some guns are even nice to look at, but that sound is really beautiful. Did you hear that? Shots are spreading across the South Zone." We surmised that a police operation had begun in a nearby CV-controlled favela on the other side of the hill located officially in the North Zone.

Kamal's professed sensory pleasure at the sound of gunfire was difficult to gauge. He qualified it by purifying the aural dimension, distilling pure sound from the instrument of violence that produces it. "It's not that I like the idea of bullets flying through the air. Just the sound. If that *clack clack clack* could be separated from the violence… yeah, that's what I like. I love it." Part of the thrill, and the capacity to aestheticize the gunfire, seemed to be rooted in the sense of being at a safe distance, like listening to a thunderstorm from indoors. But another aspect came from the quality of sound itself, its transgression of geographical boundaries: "Shots

are spreading across the South Zone." Morro do Saqualé almost straddles the frontier between two urban regions, North Zone and South Zone, that are defined not only topographically but also designate quite different urban imaginaries. The South Zone comprises the richest areas of the city, its iconic beaches, and tourist economy. The North Zone is sometimes indexed by the sight of a rifle barrel protruding out of the open passenger window of patrol car—a practice, by military police policy, not seen in the South Zone. Different practices and rules apply for different territories of Rio. But the clatter of gunfire traveling over the hillside gave Kamal a sensorial charge and disrupted the tidiness of spatial boundaries. From a certain distance police rifles make a sound akin to a flag rippling in the wind, but no story came attached. In this moment only the bullets were the story.

Partially shielded under a canopy of jackfruit and mango trees, patches of the model had fallen into disrepair after several days of unseasonably hard rains. (In other seasons the main threats were the bulging jackfruit and mangoes overhead. Without warning, a 20-pound jackfruit may have snapped off and careen through the site.) The churning skies still threatened another downpour, and the air was muggy and oppressive despite the breeze. On this grey weekday, no visitors had scheduled to come up the hill, and the junior participants were still at school. Kamal was *arrumando a maquete*, fixing up the model. *Arrumar* is a verb whose variable meanings are broad enough to suggest the multiple meanings of a particular kind of labor: to organize, put things in order, tidy up, prepare, obtain, repair, dress up, provoke, invent, imagine, create, do well for oneself. In practice, *arrumar* entails tools and objects like a rock hammer, trowel, chisel, water-based acrylic paints, medium- and fine-sized paintbrushes, white correction fluid, a cheap broom, large buckets, hollow terra-cotta tile blocks, ceramic floor tiles, cinder blocks, scrap

wood, concrete mix, plastic Lego pieces, snipped tassle fringes of beach sarongs, plastic mold-cast weapons.

Kamal was specifically refurbishing the parts of the model he was responsible for. One becomes *dono*, or boss, of a favela by building one. The construction, maintenance, and naming of an area—always after a real-life favela—is the basis for initiation in Morrinho. The diminutive form of *morro*, Morrinho translates literally as "Little Hill."

Brick work

Almost all miniature buildings are made of hollow terra-cotta tile blocks, colloquially and pejoratively referred to as *tijolos baianos*, Bahian bricks, for their cheap price and shoddy quality. The Bahian nickname alludes also to the regional stereotype of Northeasterners as lazy, expendable workers and represents one of many ways language makes associations between qualities of peoples and materials. As many favela dwellers in Rio have migrated from Bahia and other northeastern states in the past 60 years, to call some *baiano* also points to the intersections of regionalism and class in Brazil. These kinds of casual equivalences extends also to practically any commodity thought to be contraband, counterfeit, or cheap knock-off, which Brazilians refer to as *paraguaio*, Paraguayan.

A tijolo baiano has ten hollow chambers running laterally. Each tijolo makes two Morrinho miniature "houses." One must first chop the tijolo in half with the edge of a trowel. Once the two sides are perforated the two sides come apart rather easily. Each half of the chopped tijolo now has four chambers, and the interior side that has been exposed by the cut is what will become the façade of the house. One then uses the same tool, or a chisel for greater precision, to chip rectangular openings into the façade. This operation is done with almost

mechanical consistency, only varying in the size, placement, and number of 'windows.' Once prepared, the brick is mounted into the model, either wedged into a flattened section of the sloped earth, cantilevered over supporting pieces of wood, or stacked atop another brick.

During my first three months in Saqualé, I came to know Morrinho primarily through working on it, learning like an informal apprentice how to secure *tijolos* in place by hammering wood dowels into the slope of the hill, pruning weeds and small plants from the model, painting the façades of the model buildings. A variety of awkward bodily maneuvers were required to work on particularly dense areas of the model: I leaned on a hand with my body at a diagonal, then crouched deeply on uneven ground, then stretched a leg over already built portions, then tip-toed through alleys barely the width of a sandal. A foot slipped on a slanted patch of bare rock. A knee knocked over a tall stack of bricks. Mosquitos flitted around my ears and ankles. Toads and worms scrambled behind bricks. Leafcutter ants carried impossible loads. Sweat beaded, paint dripped. Dirt lodged itself under my fingernails and in the webs of flesh between my fingers. Music—either hip-hop, *pagode* love ballads, or jarring *baile funk*—pierces the air from the tinny speakers of a cellphone, but it did not disrupt the immersive quality of this solitary work. Like gardening, building one's part of the model, or *arrumando a maquete*, engaged all the senses, but not all of them equally or consistently. Kamal brushed his hands together to clear them of dust, a gesture that intermittently punctuated the continual process of building and surveying, surveying and building. Things must look right, not only aesthetically, resembling the city, but also functionally, with a mind toward the game that requires livable spaces for its diminutive inhabitants, but privileges defensible spaces.

Initiates must build their own part of the *maquete* in order to participate. Approximately 20 youths, all male, have built miniature favelas over the 15 years of the existence of Morrinho,

in a site at the forested edge of the Saqualé community, a boundary defined by the Municipality with a perimeter steel wire. In this area of Saqualé, and in others, the steel wire has disappeared, and all that remains are a series of steel posts every 20 yards.

During the time of my research, a younger cohort had become regular participants in Morrinho. Most lived in Saqualé, although one or two came from nearby communities. All are favela residents; there are no middle- or upper-class youth playing in Morrinho. To become a participant one must build one's own favela and name it after a real-life community, as did their predecessors: Morro São João (St. John Hill), Morro dos Macacos (Monkey Hill), Morro dos Prazeres (Pleasures Hill), Morro de Fogueteiro (Rocket Hill), Morro da Mineira (Mine Hill), Morro do Árvore Seca (Dry Tree Hill). Some of the original group had not maintained their sections for months or years, and their *morros* consequently decayed, crumbled, and even disappeared after many heavy rains. These parcels of land are not touched, in case the dono wants to return and rebuild one day. More recent Morrinho regulars are expected to come at least weekly to work on their morros, as well as help clean the common spaces by sweeping the piles of fallen leaves that accumulate and disposing of refuse. Upkeep is a prerequisite for playing, and demands a heavy enough investment of time and energy, prohibitive for all but a few.

Official recognition

The day after military police forces invaded and occupied Morro do Saqualé in 1999, two officers stumbled onto the model. They immediately took it to be a three-dimensional map used to plan tactical invasions of other favelas, and by extension they took the boys to be linked to the local drug gang. The officers ordered them, at gunpoint, to dismantle the model. But the youths were defiant, claiming that they would just rebuild it the next day. Perplexed, the officers called

upon their superior to adjudicate. Upon arriving, the colonel decided that it was harmless child's play, but he insisted on an explanation of how the simulation worked. He was told that gang members were represented by batteries and police by bottle caps. "Why are we fat and squatty while the criminals are tall and slender?" the colonel fumed. He proceeded to manipulate the police avatars while the boys "let him win" at invading and conquering uncontested. This last detail of the encounter was sometimes deemed apocryphal: the colonel had never insisted on playing the game. I heard this origin story told over and over again, by older Morrinho youth to newer participants, or to visitors from outside the community, sometimes acquiring new elements or dropping others. Sometimes I found myself telling it, to see what any of the boys would add or correct to the account. Those who were present remember the officers returning to take photos of the model, and they claim that pictures of Morrinho are hanging in BOPE headquarters.

These origin stories hinge on recognition. For startled police officers to inquire whether it a map or a children's game set, or for skeptical neighbors to question the gender and age appropriateness of teenage boys playing in this way, their uneasiness and apprehension was not so much about Morrinho as a material object, but rather its relationship with the young men who built and take ownership of it. What the youths were doing with such an assemblage of things was ambiguous to others, and this posed a potential threat to them but revealed an overlapping set of social expectations about age, gender, race, and class. Crucially, interpretation of the meaning (and uses) of Morrinho was also a projection of the observer's desires, hopes, fears, and assumptions. When other outsiders, such as filmmakers and curators, arrived, the projections included plans and aspirations for the group itself and the broader community.

Each of the thousands of plastic figurines, or *bonecos*, inhabiting Morrinho has an individual identity and life history. Boneco anatomy is abstracted from human form: each body consist of three stacked Lego blocks, the bottom two parts narrower than the capping piece, referred to as the head. Adult males are designated by the insertion of an extra flat piece—a neck—between the head and the second block, or face.[40] The bottom block is the body. Women are made without the neck piece but must have hair, made by clipping a few strands of fringe fabric snipped from vibrant sarong wraps (*kangas*) sold on Rio's beaches. Civilian bonecos can be any combination of colors, but military police are generally blue and BOPE officers are black.

In the role-playing game, which participants refer to as *brincadeira*,[41] all morros are dominated by a local drug gang, which must belong to one of two city-wide factions named after real-life organizations: Comando Vermelho (Red Command, or CV) and Amigos dos Amigos (Friends of Friends, or ADA). When not active, many ordinary citizens of Morrinho generally are kept "asleep," lying on their sides inside their miniature houses. Many of the avatars that are visible outside are members of the local gang (figure 22). All of them are accessorized with small plastic weapons tied by string to the side of their bodies. These weapons are often disproportionately outsized, since they were manufactured for larger size military action figures. Morrinho youth make frequent trips to open-air markets and stores in the formal city to purchase these action figures, only to keep the pistols, rifles, knives, radios, and other items sold with the toy. They often give these to younger children, albeit stripped of accessories.

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[40] The incongruity of boneco physiognomy—the "face" located *below* the "neck"—does not pose any issue to Morrinho players.

[41] *Brincadeira* connotes a joking, playful character to the activity that the English "game" does not. Brincadeira is not goal-oriented the way games are normatively structured. The term refers to a more joking, open-ended mode of play, perhaps best translated "toying around." The following chapter recounts the nature of Morrinho brincadeira.

Figure 22 Boneco *members of the Comando Vermelho gang assemble in front of a mural of São Jorge.*

I reproduce below a text Kamal composed for the front page of his online profile. There he identifies himself as Negro Drama, a moniker adopted from a hip-hop music group. My translation attempts to maintain the grammatical style and typographical idiosyncrasies of the original:

> *I WILL FEEEL SO MUCH LOSS*
>
> *Many of the great discoveries of the world were made by tired and dispirited men who continued to work signed Negro Drama*
>
> *Name Kamal Andrade dos Santos alias Lip or Negro Drama I live in a world of evils, treason, betrayals, jealousies, falsities, where the word feeling is the last thing we can listen to and hear where love takes time to speak or touch the heart of someone who still does not know what that is, where the heart of a villain beats in the sole of your own shoe, where a friend is also your worst enemy, where I live I learned to be what I am today rebellious, brash, bold, uneducated, stubborn, cocky, but also I learned that this is how I must go on that I must not bow my head for no son of a bitch to get over me, I learned that I should not change because people want me to change and that I should change for myself and not to please*

anyone because man-the-beast took centuries to change and still today he is changing I learned that we do not change overnight that the change is happening over time from our mistakes defeats our victories passions losses and much more in my life I've gone through everything through a lot of good and bad things also lost friends who were like brothers to me suffered a lot in love I loved without being loved trusted and had disappointments sorrows I fought, struggled, was beaten, but also hit, I destroyed, I charged whom had to be charged, I also made a lot of people suffer by my side hurt many hearts that passed through my life I made a lot of people become what I am I was hated by many was loved by many was envied by many I know I'm not the best man in the world I am just a learner who is trying hard to live between heaven and hell always being criticized for every love that comes into my life I do not want to love I just want to live my life because whoever loves suffers, who suffers feels ,who feels fights ,who fights wins and I know I'm going to win despite being alone I am no better and no worse than anyone I'm just myself and I think nobody has the right to speak or criticize my life or my way of being people have to start looking for their own mistakes instead of speaking of the mistakes of others for my mistakes I do not linger on the mistakes of others sure am not a saint and never will be I will change but not thinking about pleasing someone I will change because my saint is tired and needs a new start I need a new life and stop tripping on my own mistakes and stop living in this world of lies because until now I was like this , but nobody has the right to say things about me each takes care of his own ass ok signed Kamal good think it's over? haaaahahaha it's just the beginning they think I know everything in this life haha they're all wrong because not even God could know everything or about everyone as they say the man-the-beast is irrational this is true because he commits acts and then thinks about them I know that to err is human but to insist in the same error is stupid, I do not want to have the world in my hands because the world is huge and the responsibilities are too great but I also do not want to be small in the world I was born to fly and go farther and farther away as my ability to struggle and fight for my goals are bigger than my own soul it's no use trying to put me down because I'll never stay under the soles of shoes of others I'm black, black for real I don't need to demonstrate this to anyone just for me I'm not ugly and not a clown to be making anyone smile or be amused by me right !!!! I do not care what they think of my approach right if this is good for me the rest be damned you heard? because here in this world to be too honest we trip over the tracks of wickedness here where I live what rules is fucking money that buys everything and everyone, but I think anyone who sells himself has no personal worth because if he had any he would not surrender to that piece of shit paper that is stronger than the word of the lord, was I very clear?

This text, which Kamal later removed from his profile, is hard to ignore. Although the "I" is the semantic subject of most statements contained within the text, they get lost in the flow (more so in the Portuguese original where conjugated verbs do not always require the pronoun). It is a

work of chest-thumping, to be sure, but it is also the work of a melancholic. I am struck by the invocation of the "tired and dispirited" who nonetheless continue to work. Kamal works at Morrinho every day. These are days he generally reserves to working and maintenance, quietly, in solitude. This back-and-forth resounds throughout the text in its reckoning with affect, friendship and antagonism, agency and responsibility, race and authenticity, value, money, defiance, redemption. Much of the text is about finding a place in the world, and I wonder about how he frames this as, among other things, a question of scale rather than, say, location: "*I do not want to have the world in my hands because the world is huge and the responsibilities are too great but I also do not want to be small in the world*." Is he talking about the same world? In one phrase it is something outside of him, an object of management, too often unwieldy. In the other it is something he cannot escape and in fact almost feels himself shrinking into an infinitesimal vanishing point.

Kamal's other textual work can be found in Morrinho itself. Many of the signs posted around the model are his doing. He usually copies found texts and signs them as "Negro Drama." One of these placards seems to speak to the passage cited above:

> *When man explores intensely the tiny atom and the immensity of space and says that he dominates the world, when he masters the most complex technologies and says that he knows everything, then he will have the time to turn back into himself. In that moment he will discover that he committed a great error. What was it?*

Another, painted on the top of a brick, speaks to racial struggle:

> *From early on our mother says it so:*
> *Son, being black, you have to be twice as good.*
> *signed, Black Drama*

And another testifies to a kind of affective regimen against alienation and melancholia:

> *In the world of emotion the keywords are: "training" and "education." You must train your emotions to be happy. You must educate it to overcome the losses and frustrations.*

Kamal lived the following contradiction: In his mid-twenties Kamal, it seems, was infatuated with self-image. But through Morrinho he was also able to morph seamlessly into hundreds of social personas, each with their own voice, own life history. I would suggest that these two are not incommensurable, that he cultivates affective forces for aesthetic and political effects, not unlike Du Bois who opens *The Souls of Black Folks* (2007 [1903]) with an early memory of personal rejection. It was his first experience of racial consciousness, of feeling his blackness, and his narrative strategy is to mine that account to identify social relations that gird racial inequality. But his appeal stands not on intellectual or analytical, but rather on emotional grounds. Here the feeling of childhood rejection stands metonymically for the larger mechanisms of white supremacy in the United States. Kamal and his peers developed an idiom that enables a similar kind of work. And this assemblage of concrete materials, computer networks, digital images, and appropriated texts reflexively produces them as subjects.

Some signs are scrawled in white correction fluid on the façades of the buildings of Morrinho, as if they were miniature grafitti. Other texts are painted onto placards posted to trees and stakes. The authorship and intended audience of statements remain ambiguous: some inform visitors of rules of gameplay or the fee for taking photographs, others designate different districts of the city, while still other signs make menacing claims to territorial dominion. Over time some signs fade or are taken down, others appear, and yet others are repeated. One such slogan posted throughout Morrinho reads:

> *DEUS SABE TUDO MAS NÃO É X-9.*
> [GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING BUT HE'S NO SNITCH]

The signs in Morrinho come and go; the paint tends to fade and the wood tends to deteriorate after long exposure to the elements. One theme recurs, however: the code of silence. "God knows everything but he's no snitch (*X-9*)" was appropriated, I was told, from a billboard for an evangelical church, but its function within Morrinho seems to be to address the god-like position of the visitors and participants whose gazes see the world from above. But god—or gods—do not speak from this position of power, and to do so would constitute a form of *covardia*. This was a word often used by youths, and it does not precisely translate as 'coward.' Rather, a *covarde* refers to one who does not assume the responsibilities of his position and who abuses his power or influence over others; in effect, one with great social strength who uses it weakly and without moral sense.

Before entering the Morrinho site, a spray-painted mural reads in bold letters, in English:

> COME AND SEE THE MORRINHO AN INCREDIBLE MODEL THAT REPLICATES THE REALITY DAILY LIFE OF THE FAVELAS. THE MORRINHO IS MADE OF PIECES OF BRICK AND OCCUPIES 300M^2 [*sic*].

Below this inscription on the same white stucco wall, a single word in red block letters half-obscured by grime and moss reads: *TURISMO*. The mural is divided vertically into two panels by spray-painted images of Morrinho's iconic single brick houses, and to the right, below the large, bright red eponymous "Projeto Morrinho" (see figure 23) is scrawled, in Portuguese:

> DIZEM QUE EU NÃO REZO PELA ALMA DE MEUS AMIGOS / MENTIRA.
> EU REZO P/ QUE ELAS QUEIME NO INFERNO. [*sic*]
> [THEY SAY THAT I DON'T PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF MY ENEMIES.
> THAT'S A LIE—I PRAY THAT THEY BURN IN HELL.]

This welcome sign addressed different audiences. In English, the language of international tourism, it conveyed an appeal to wonder and curiosity at “daily life” in the favela. The message in Portuguese, raised a warning, but for whom exactly? Who is the menacing enemy? Perhaps more ominously, who is the speaking “I”? As welcome sign and warning notice, the wall anticipated the arrival of imagined visitors or, perhaps, invaders. In effect, the wall self-consciously scripts both an object that lies behind it and fashions a relationship to different publics. These publics seem jarringly disjunctive: guest and trespasser, sightseer and adversary.

Figure 23 *Morrinho welcome mural.*

The mural mysteriously presents two ethical stances, that of the host and that of the mortal rival: one wishes the other to live more fully by entering and enriching yourself, while the other desires not merely the other's death but more precisely an eternal life in damnation. But the juxtaposition of the messages suggests they may not be so discrete. After all, the 'daily life' of Rio's favela dwellers have long been structured by narratives of slum violence, promiscuity, moral decay, and romantic rebellion even if new ways of operationalizing and capitalizing on them are emerging in the form of guided tours (Freire-Medeiros 2009) and a particular brand of moralism that gird state- and NGO-led culture-driven development programs (Yúdice 2003), not to mention social-scientific research (Valladares 2005). This sign, in its doubleness, in effect recognizes, conditions, and validates a variety of experiences and projects. From within a hillside informal settlement, the scripts play on the ambiguous history of the social and territorial boundary drawn between favela and asfalto, as well as announce the rules of another space, Morrinho, into which one is about to enter.

The presence of these signs also correspond to the form of play the Morrinho stages. Power and its abuses lie in direct tension with the partial knowledge of situated perspective. The chapter that follows delves into Morrinho as a ludic space of sightlines, territorial strategy, and the differential social power of actors.

CHAPTER 6

BRINCADEIRA: THE SOCIAL WORLD OF MORRINHO

The relation between play and daily life is a conflictual one.

- Henri Lefebvre (2008)

For weeks Alex had been unable to come and go freely from his community, Morro do Andaraí, in the north zone of Rio de Janeiro. Police had invaded and occupied the area to suppress the drug trade. One evening they entered his abode in pursuit of two traffickers who had taken refuge there. Alex narrowly avoided incarceration by pleading his case to the officers, who were to arrest him under the pretext of guilt by association. "I'm an honest, law-abiding resident," Alex contended, as are the majority of his neighbors in this squatter settlement that extends up the side of a steep hill. "We are good people, good people."

Alex presented his worker identification card, which proves more persuasive than words. The officers are members of the BOPE—Special Operations Police Battalion, the elite urban combat division of the Rio de Janeiro state Military Police. Muscular giants, they wear solid black fatigues bearing the sinister insignia of a skull impaled with a dagger, flanked by two pistols. They grip long HK G3 assault rifles mounted with telescopic lenses, and most threatening of all, possess a deadened stare. These are men who represent the rule of law, but who are above it, and thereby command a certain fear and reverence. The traffickers peer up at Alex from his living-room floor, where they are face down and handcuffed. Alex is aware that his

failure to stand up for the two may bring reprisal later, but there has been a regime change. Scrawled in paint on a nearby wall are the words, Who commands is power [Quem manda é o poder]*, a cryptic circular logic. The Military Police stayed several weeks, subjecting residents to checkpoint inspections. It seemed important to them to control the threshold between favela and the so-called asphalt—that is, the boundary between the informal and formal city—at the bottom of the hill. But one day, as suddenly as they had appeared, the officers were gone.*

Alex has a new employment prospect at the television station and manages to convince a neighbor to let him borrow his motorcycle. The job turns out to be a false lead, and on his way out of the station he finds a small commotion: a film crew has recorded a motorcycle theft in the act, em flagrante*, and are buzzing about how their serendipitous footage will make the evening edition. It soon dawns on Alex that his neighbor's motorcycle is not where he parked it. The camera's red light comes on again, and Alex stammers through an impromptu interview as the sad victim of rampant urban crime. He is relieved when the camera pivots to face a passing Military Police colonel. Faced with the potentially negative publicity of an inept response, the officer radios to units to take immediate action.*

Alex enters a nearby cafeteria where he shares a table with Peri, who invites him to split a pizza with him and his companion Mariana. Grateful for the offer but dejected at his misfortune, Alex relates the story of the stolen motorcycle to Peri, who steps out of the cafeteria for a terse word with the police officer. "How can you not be watching out for crime? This city is getting more and more dangerous for us citizens. What are we supposed to do, huh? And when you're not doing your proper job, you're getting rich extorting lowlifes [vagabundos]*..."*

Figure 24 *Alex having pizza with Peri and his companion.*

A round of laughter erupted from the youths watching over my shoulder as I controlled Alex, a *boneco* created for me during my time at Morrinho. I had to learn to refer to Alex in the third person, something other players took as second nature. The exchange between Peri and the police colonel was performed on both sides by Kamal.[42] Peri, the *boneco* who became incensed at the fecklessness of the police, is actually a well-known figure: he is gang boss, a *dono do morro*, of the favela of Querosene. But he is able to converse with police because he arrives unarmed and because no one—at least, no *boneco* knows who he is—that is, outside Querosene,

[42] I identify *bonecos* by their given names and use pseudonyms for human interlocutors. The names of favelas in Morrinho, which correspond to real-life counterparts, are also maintained as such. Peri is also the name of the titular hero of José de Alencar's historical novel *O Guaraní* (1967 [1857]), considered a classic of Brazilian Romanticism. Set in early 17th-century Rio de Janeiro, the narrative turns on how the "noble savage" Peri, in the midst of a rival tribe's raid of a Portuguese pioneer settlement, saves the life of Ceci, the master's daughter. The two flee together and enter into a passionate and tragic love affair. The novel's violence and eroticism dramatizes the notion of a Brazilian national imaginary as founded on an (asymmetrical) melding of European and indigenous traditions.

where he reigns as its most infamous resident. Even though Kamal and his peers all "know" Peri's hidden identity, within the realm of gameplay, or *brincadeira*, it would be a violation of certain unwritten rules to recognize (and target) him as Peri the drug lord at all times, in all places. Peri's striking up a conversation with the officer is a brash but calculated act, premised on the notion that all knowledge of the city is partial, and that this reality affords for some mobility over perilous terrain—if one plays it right.

Stepping back into the subjective position of the teenagers looking over our shoulders,[43] what stands out about this scene, however, is not only the allegorical tale of cunning and audacity. It is also that laughter itself is a form of affective attachment to this drama and these objects, but not laughter as an escape or relief. Everyone is personally invested, but no one reveals how. The drama is not so much autobiographical as, I dare to say, ethnographic—a retelling of a proximate world. Morrinho is suffused with two layers of talk: first, the commentary that *brincadeira* makes about the world, and second, a meta-commentary on the play itself. But there is never closure or finality to either layer; they refer back onto each other.

As in any game worth playing, several possible moves are made available at every juncture. Here I am interested in how language (these layers of commentary), games and models construct a world. And in constructing that world, I do not so much test the veracity of a miniaturized, artisanal virtual reality as explore how world-building is about learning the invisible rules of a world, difficult to negotiate, much less change. Put simply, Morrinho is not just a concrete version of, to put it in classical anthropological terms, a story favela youth tell themselves about themselves (Geertz 1973). It is also an affective cartography of a city

[43] It is worth considering how shoulders are a powerful and embodied figure in conceptualizations of ethnographic methodology. Geertz's maxim to read culture "over the shoulders of natives" (1973) brought critical responses to seek instead to read alongside and in dialogue with one's interlocutors (cf. Crapanzano 1986), or 'shoulder to shoulder,' as it were.

territorialized by violence where a type of empathy is both a prerequisite and product (Bubandt 2009). It tells a story, more precisely, about who belongs where. In the context of massive state projects intended to integrate favelas into the urban fabric of Rio de Janeiro, uniting a divided city, Morrinho is an animated monument to how that boundary becomes reinscribed and the means by which individuals circumvent it.

It was nighttime at Morrinho, and the lights strung around the site illuminated the model. A younger player, Eric, nicknamed Mentirinha ("Fib"), broke from the conversation grabbed a handheld videocamera and absconded up to his favela, Morro da Mineira, where he stayed alone for 15 minutes. He returned and showed a short video clip he had just produced, transcribed below:

We see two traffickers. A human finger jumps from boneco *to* boneco *to signal when each is talking. The first wears a gold chain and speaks in a squeaky falsetto: "So you recording yet, man?"*

The second, standing next to the first with an outsized machine gun, speaks in a grumbling voice: "Yeah, it's recording."

"So as you see here, Morro da Mineira."

"And here's my FAP. It's the shit." He fires off 3 rounds into the air. The boneco *loses balance, falls off screen momentarily, resumes its place. "The FAP is really heavy!"*

"Are you losing it, Rabbit? What's going on, fool? [Pó, tá dando mole aí, Coelho? Qual é, mané?] *Anyway, as you can see, down there is Turano. Gangan is making his presence felt by our side… You saw how Turano fell into our hands, eh? Now he's asking for Borel. Well, I'm going to try to do it for him, our lost friend, yeah?"*

"That's right…" the other adds, with an air of solemnity.

"So, we're going to take over that whole mess. And whoever fancies their chances coming here is going to get shot by a crazy son of a bitch. Whoever succeeds in stepping onto Mineira's main quadra *down below is getting five rifles. But, my brother, if they don't make it… my God, it's going to be painful, man."*

"Me too, man. We took Turano down hard…" The boneco *falls over again. "Ay! Damn, what is this shit?! The enemy* (os alemão) *went running.*"

"We took it down real hard—so who led the gang, man?"

"It was Handsome, dude."

"That stuff is crazy. Turano is going to be all ours (tudo da gente). *Rio is going to belong all to ADA. We're going to go down to make Fogueteiro ours* (pra fazer da gente o Fogueteiro)*, we're going to take the whole fucking thing. Know what I'm sayin'?* (Tá ligado?) *Give 'em a little sniff of it there, Coelhinho* (Little Rabbit).

Coelho fires a few more rounds into the air. "I'm taking off now, see you." He walks off camera.

"So it's just me left, eh? Look who's coming, it's my man, Playboy."

"What's up, man? [Qual é, mané?]*" He stands even closer to the camera and is holding a sniper rifle taller than his body.*

"What's up, Playboy? You aiming at the camera?" The boneco *begins to tip over. "Hey! My bad, my bad." The human finger points the weapon away.*

"So, Playboy is here, Playboy is present. If someone tries to run, if there's an invasion and someone tries to run, Playboy will pick him off (pesca)*." He approaches the camera showing off the rifle in profile. "Look at the huge scope, look at it, look! Damn, I'm crazy* [sou

psico].” *He fires once into the air. This weapon makes a different sound, a boom followed by a fizz. “POOM-shhhhh.” Abruptly, Playboy walks off camera. “See you* [Valeu]*.”*

*“So my man Playboy took off, and as it’s just me… So our message to you is: If Trincado and Neurose come up here, they’re going to get it in the ass. If you try it here in Mineira you’re just going to get pain. You can come with the eagle, three eagles (combat helicopters), five Big Skulls (*caveirões*, armored vehicles), because you’re gonna need them. If you can’t make it more, so sorry… Valeu, valeu, tudo da gente, tudo ADA, tudo ADA, and I’m off!” The one with the gold chain scuttles off camera.*

One evening, military police forces invade the São João favela, and after a prolonged siege on this one of over 1,000 informal settlements in Rio de Janeiro, kill several suspected local drug-gang members, apprehending dozens of others. The captured are ordered to line up and lie face down in the central plaza, or quadra, of the settlement alongside piles of confiscated arms and bags of cocaine and marijuana. Lieutenants Neurose and Zezinho are interrogating two suspects, dragged out in front of the row of prostrate figures. “Where is your boss? [Cadê o seu chefe?]” The young men’s pleas of ignorance and clemency grow into screams of agony as the officers set their bodies alight and execute them at close range with their rifles. The arrival of Colonel Elefante breaks the minute of quiet and distant murmuring that surround the burning corpses. Cackling with glee he approaches the flame and lights a marijuana cigarette dangling from his lips. “Oh ho ho ho, where is Trincado[44] *to see this?” Turning to a video camera filming the scene, Elefante asks, “Are you filming? Exclusive video for the PM (Military Police), eh?”*

Lieutenant Zezinho interrupts, “Look here, this one was shooting at me.”

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[44] Trincado is a Military Police captain of renown in the Morrinho universe. Players explained to me that the name is a slang term for a “jittery, paranoid cocaine user always wiping his nose.”

Colonel Elefante: "He was shooting at you?! Put him in the fire too!"

Lieutenant Zezinho: "No, I want to talk to him first, yes, talk to him first…" repeating the phrase in a hushed tone. Surveying to the burning pulp next to him, he intones, "These guys turned into charcoal, man…"

Colonel Elefante snaps back, "Don't put it out! Let those two burn."

Lieutenant Zezinho reaches into a pile of sundry items, including confiscated pistols, drugs, and binoculars: "You still have his two-way radio [radinho]?"

Elefante: "No, no, no, you're not going to listen to his frequency." He tosses the device into the fire. "Let me grill this one. Quick now: were you shooting that .30 or were you not, goddamn it [porra]?" He holds the adolescent Ubaldo, dressed in red, to the flames, close enough to scorch his skin.

"What? Yes, I was, sir," the youth responds, exasperated.

"You were? Then you're going to burn. If you hadn't, that would've saved you." Colonel Elefante holds the teenager's face closer to the flame until he screams, then pulls it back. "Who is the padrão [boss] here? Who is on the frontlines there? Along with, uh, Armadillo [Tatú] and that fool, uh, what's his name, Fat Ass [Popó]?"

"Thiago. He's there."

"Where's he from? Salgueiro?"

"From Matriz."

"Matriz? What does this Thiago look like?"

Ubaldo pauses to collect himself and buy himself some time, "Well, he's a big black guy [negão]."

Colonel Elefante turns Ubaldo around. "Listen, chill out [sem neurose], you're going to live." Lieutenant Neurose walks the youth a few steps away from the fire and abruptly strikes him in the head with the butt of his rifle. Ubaldo is put face down next to the fire, and Colonel Elefante adds, "Stay right there next to your friends." Neurose then prances around the still-blazing pyre, chanting:

A PM é o caralho	*The PM is the head boss*
A PM é o caralho	*The PM is the head boss*
Pra quem não tá com o nosso bonde	*Whoever's not in our gang*
Tu vai ficar furado	*You're gonna be full of holes.*

The moment dissipated. It was evening at Morrinho, and the only light came from a few dim lightbulbs arrayed around the model as well as, of course, the glow of burning plastic. The favela of São João was a model built and maintained by Dudu, harshly but creatively nicknamed Gambacaco ("Skunk-monkey"), a 15-year-old boy who had been playing in Morrinho for two years. São João was on the periphery of this miniaturized Rio de Janeiro, an assemblage of bricks, mortar and ceramic tiles sprawling around the foot of a tall mango tree. The smoke carried an acrid odor through the air that stings the nostrils, but none of the players involved, nor the observers looking over their shoulders and interjecting comments, were backing off from the scene. Ubaldo was Gambacaco's avatar, and at the time of his torture Skunk was screaming for his life, in a way that pierced any sense of detachment. Some five or six players, including me recording video with a handheld digital camera, were involved in the unfolding sequence of events that had begun hours before, in the light of late afternoon. A coalition of three had marshaled dozens of Military Police (PM) figurines, which were stationed throughout this miniature Rio de Janeiro, as well as toy pick-up trucks and a toy helicopter, and had orchestrated a drug raid of the favela Morro do São João (St. John Hill). Earlier, Kamal, had maneuvered the

large, black police helicopter, nicknamed the Big Beetle (*Besorão*), and hovered close over the model doing surveillance work. In falsetto pitch, he narrated from the perspective of the aircraft's crew: "Oh, so much drugs and money! I wouldn't want to take all that! That there is the drug sales point [*boca de fumo*]. *BRRRRRRRRRRRR*…" Kamal twirled the blades of the aircraft, mimicking the thundering trill of a rotor engine (which in turn resembled the menacing buzz of a large winged insect swooping overhead).

Kamal was joined in this PM offensive by Eric, who chimed in, in his normal voice, "They won't be going out with their family this weekend." Eric and the third player behind the PM offensive, Rodolfo, were poking their fingers into the crannies of the model, prizing out hidden troves of money, represented by one-cent coins, and 'drugs' in small plastic sacks. Pieces of chalk stand for one kilogram of cocaine each, and tiny folded pieces of green paper stand for marijuana 'joints.' Avatars color-coded with the blue of the Military Police and hoisting their plastic-molded rifles stood around these stashes as they were uncovered.

"The police are getting rich!" Kamal exclaimed, then resumed the whirr of the helicopter rotor blades.

"Again! Every day!" Eric continued the banter.

"The police are getting very rich! Look, there's the *dono*…" The helicopter swooped off into the hinterland of the model, beyond the de facto boundary of the mango tree, in pursuit of fugitives. Kamal blared, "*Blat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat!!*" unleashing a volley of imaginary bullets from the Big Beetle's mounted gun.

Despite the air of playfulness, the torture punctuating this evening of play was obscene and disorienting. Colonel Elefante smoked marijuana that his forces had confiscated and which he ignited with flames from the smoldering bodies of his vanquished captors. The actions of

these avatars pointed toward the corruption of a social order, and this notion suggests a theatricality to the conduct of play, a relation between actor and audience, spectacle and spectator. My task as ethnographer in Morrinho is not to find real-life correlates to the content of play, nor to assess the validity of narratives, but to look at the contours of the world play creates as plausible and workable by its own rules and conditions. The lives of bonecos are not isomorphic with those of their stewards. Youth manipulate avatars and speak through them, mimicking the falsetto voices of dubbed television cartoons, but in the performance of another social being, one must inhabit the partial and partisan knowledge of that particular personage. This is perhaps the chief unwritten rule of Morrinho. One may acquire an almost god-like familiarity with the world of Morrinho by surveying its landscape and eavesdropping on faraway conversations, but in assuming the identity of a boneco a player must constrain his words and acts to the imagined subjectivity of the plastic figurine under his finger. The sign "God knows everything, but He's no snitch" posted around the model figures in this sense as a cardinal rule of gameplay.

Much of the dramas enacted in Morrinho are mundane and constructive: commerce, romance, transport, leisure. This sinister episode signals the need to treat fiction and mimesis not just according to the inner logic of its world of meanings and relations but as a mode of representing historically entrenched systems of power. As Taussig reminds us, "just as histories enter into the functioning of the mimetic faculty, so the mimetic faculty enters into those histories" (1993:xiv). Play becomes a form of commentary, a counterknowledge of the city, and functions dually as both a description and a participant in the social world in which it is embedded. The question of what kind of knowledge is embodied in play lies in stark relief to intensifying efforts on the part of governmental institutions and private enterprise to bring a kind

of legibility and order to many of Rio's favelas, long considered beyond the reach and scope of state power, and increasingly subject to the interests of capitalist property regimes.

Henri Lefebvre, theorist of space and the everyday, was fond of paraphrasing an aphorism from Hegel, "The familiar is not necessarily the known." He elaborates, "Let us go farther and say that it is in the most familiar things that the unknown–not the mysterious–is at its richest, and that this rich content of life is still beyond our empty, darkling consciousness, inhabited as it is by impostors, and gorged with the forms of Pure Reason, with myths and their illusory poetry" (Lefebvre 2008: 148). Conceptualizing the relationship between the familiar and the known corresponds to that between lived and representational space, according to Lefebvre (1991). I suggest that Morrinho gameplay enacts a world familiar to its participants. Escapism and fantasy run counter to the game's fundamental mechanics and thus find no place in its world. By returning continually to the "rich content of life" Morrinho youth explore the reality that is all around them and circulates through power relations, ideology, and media representations. As spatial practice Morrinho appears to resonate with the state's production of cartographic knowledge about favelas: maps, surveys, projects. However, these "good kids" also include the symbolic economy of drug trafficking into more complex assemblage of codes and contexts shaping urban territoriality and, by extension, the rules of their game.

In miniature scale, Morrinho also explores the question of what counts as knowledge of the city (Amin and Thrift 2002; Rao 2006; Roy 2011). It works not by making claims to a deeper structure behind the outward appearance of the city, but rather by assembling signs of the city and arranging relationships of spatialized power between them. Bonecos, the diminutive inhabitants of Morrinho, are social beings whose identities and life histories are not wholly ascribed to them a priori by their human creators, but are made through improvised interactive

play. This play is both collaborative and antagonistic. The social world of Morrinho is animated by the actions of allies and enemies, and one's partial knowledge or ignorance of those movements. The model of subjectivity embodied by bonecos is one where personhood is enmeshed in the urban landscape, its topography and assemblages of signs. Put simply, bonecos do not possess an interior life that precedes the social life defined through gameplay. Architecture and social identity are mutually constitutive. Morrinho indeed collapses the dualism of interior and exterior, surface and depth, of both human subject and built environment, separations on which modern institutions of property rights, criminal law, and urban planning are constituted.

CHAPTER 7

ITERATION: MORRINHO TRAVELS

There is nothing in this world so invisible as a monument.

- Robert Musil

This chapter provides an account of what happened when Morrinho began to travel as art object and attract outsiders as a product of authentic favela culture. The aesthetic and moral judgments of artists, curators, social workers, and filmmakers recognized in Morrinho a certain set of qualities. Starting with an exhibit in an upscale Rio shopping mall in 2003, its creators have been invited to create replicas of their *maquete* (model) in other urban contexts across the world. In these engagements, Morrinho youth became known as artists, a label they embraced with some ambivalence. They also began using a term, in Portuguese, to describe a role for themselves necessitated by the new labor of taking stewardship of their project: *monitor*. Looking after Morrinho became a question of managing it as form of corporate property.[45]

Let us consider what it may mean when an autonomously created and managed youth role-playing game becomes an object of popular attention, financial sponsorship, and state recognition. This phenomenon tells us something about shifting symbolic and ideological representations of the urban. Historically maligned, romanticized, pathologized, and rendered invisible, the favela is increasingly included within the visual repertoire of the early 21st-century megacity. The problem is, with its heightened graphic profile, there is heightened ambiguity

[45] Or, as their 'product,' in the vernacular adopted by one youth who pursued a certification course through Rio's municipal tourism licensing agency RioTur, a public-private joint stock company and executive organ of the Special Secretariat of Tourism (www.rio.rj.gov.br/web/riotur/).

about the symbolism of the favela. Indeed, Morrinho's recoding as artwork does not dispel those tropes but rather restages prevailing stereotypes, mixing realist grit with enchantment, violence with community solidarity, poverty with creativity. Morrinho performs the world as exhibition (Mitchell 1989). Observers may take Morrinho as a representation of an external referent, the lived experience of its young creators. The capacity to refer and bring order to a chaotic but undeniable urban reality may turn on a particular fetishism constitutive of the Western imagination, one that construes material objects as the semiotic vehicle between interior representation and objective reality.

However, there is a vital contradiction here. While it produces a reality effect, Morrinho also does not pretend to dupe anyone. It openly demonstrates its status as a world within another world, the virtual within the actual. As such, Morrinho does not conceal its fiction. As an object whose artifice is always evident, it does not insist on referring to what counts as real, in the modernist sense on which scientific and legalistic ways of knowing and ordering the world hinge. Geographical markers do not correspond orthogonally to Rio as it is represented in official maps, as a Euclidean space. *Bonecos*, the diminutive inhabitants of the Morrinho world, acquire characteristics and life histories through episodic gameplay, not by being declared stand-ins for humans. Identity is produced internally and performatively within the ludic realm, not imposed from outside. In Morrinho, what is represented may not be a real place but a set of likenesses, references, rules, and facsimiles.

This chapter outlines four intersecting factors conditioning the symbolic economy of the favela, which Morrinho emblematizes when it enters the mirrored funhouse of art exhibitions, filmic narratives, and tourist curiosity. First, the restaging, or amplification, of Morrinho rests heavily on its iconicity, that is, a resemblance to a version of city-ness that expert outsider gazes

recognize as an expression of favela ‘native’ ingenuity and resourcefulness. This mode of signification hinges on the capacity to produce *illusion*. Second, focusing on the very materiality of terra-cotta bricks, ceramic tiles, cement, and plastic-mold toys suggests that Morrinho also possesses indexicality: it refers to an urban totality partly through the physical qualities of its materials. This, by contrast, concerns the capacity to produce *allusion*. Third, Morrinho is a symbol of Rio’s favelas specifically, and slums more generally, have become refigured in a geopolitics of representation that “fulfills a number of agendas, from critique of neoliberal development to uplifting stories of hope, as well as allowing celebrities, civil society organizations and corporations to ‘position’ themselves against a shared moral register” (Jones 2011:697; see also Roy 2011; Gilbert 2007; Valladares 2005). In other words, Morrinho is also taken as an artifact and example of an unfolding moment in the visual vocabulary of cities, especially those of the so-called global South. In Rio, its patrimonialization as folk art contributes to official efforts on the part of the municipal government to cheerfully yet mysteriously designate certain communities such as Morro do Saqualé ‘ex-favelas.’ Abroad, Morrinho has been juxtaposed alongside other stereotypical markers of traditional Brazilian national culture: samba, capoeira, and now, favela. The way it embodies this juncture of political, moral, and aesthetic currents points to its *historicity*. Finally, while the physical reproduction of the Morrinho model in art exhibitions involves methodical, almost mechanistic, repetition—chipping away at thousands of bricks, painting them, mounting the assemblage—its installation in different urban contexts produces different meanings. Paradoxically, the mechanical reproduction of Morrinho as artwork produces auratic effects. Its replicability produces novel effects as interlocutors adopt Morrinho as an open language for reflecting on forms of representing *their* city. This chapter observes the way Morrinho as traveling art

exhibition has worked like a technology, inviting otherwise marginalized political speech and action.

The broader questions raised by Morrinho's reproduction in cultural festivals concern appropriation, commodification, and patrimony. If Morrinho *in situ* works as a living model—a *tableau vivant*—of the social world of favela youth in Rio, what second lives does it take on as an installation in cities such as Barcelona, Paris, Venice, Berlin, Vienna, London, Bogotá or Dili? Does it indeed live in the same way? Perceiving a deeply embedded cultural attitude that cross-cuts conversations about place and space, originals and copies, wherein value and meaning derive from localized production, I suggest that, while these dichotomies are central to the operation of a globalized capitalist system, they obscure forms of political agency produced by the very activity of de/re-territorialization. Put more simply, one might assume that Morrinho's travels as artwork constitute merely an act of uprooting or fossilization. However, I demonstrate that the way it evokes an urban world portrays an image of the urban that may be distinctly from Rio but, in its reproduction elsewhere, suddenly becomes any city, anywhere. That transference of meaning is produced by its dislocation in new locales. But reflexively, that estrangement runs in the other direction, as well. Spectators who come across Morrinho installations often ask themselves, each other, or the Morrinho artists, "what is this? Where is this?"

The form of this chapter mimics that of these voyages, tracing departures and returns. Along these itineraries I observe what the work of reframing entails. How does what is defined as "artwork" accumulate meanings and value in different contexts? Does it make sense to speak of context at all? Is context simply an effect of curatorial power? Or, to what extent does the art object speak back in unpredictable ways? Morrinho thus becomes an object-to-be-replicated in a series of exchanges staged as art installations, television and film productions, and tourist and

academic researcher visits. In spite of the common narrative that these encounters entail confronting what we may call "market society," a great deal of ambiguity reigns. These activities represent seeing and treating Morrinho as an economic resource, but without turning it into one—which would paradoxically render it value-less.

Likeness (Illusion)

On a typically sweltering January morning in 2010, a German television crew walked up the hill, accompanied by Kamal; his mentor, an artist named Sérgio Cesar; and his partner Sofia, who also works as his manager. Sérgio Cesar, known as "The Cardboard Architect," also builds miniature cities in his studio in a neighborhood near Saqualé, popular with intellectuals and academics. He and Kamal sat down in two plastic chairs facing the camera to record segment on their respective artworks. Whereas Morrinho is built primarily with bricks, mortar, tiles and other construction materials, Sérgio Cesar's mock-ups are made with waste pieces. As the crew decided where to set up their cameras and boom microphones, Sofia, who is an extroverted middle-aged Carioca, and a German photographer named Mat surveyed the site together and deliberated in hushed tones, pointing toward vantage points from which to snap wide shots of the model.

Mat: "You think from a distance?"

Sofia: "Yeah, with a little distance."

Mat: "Maybe the camera can perform the distance."

Sofia: "Mmm hmm, very good."

Mat: "It's very special."

Sofia [in Portuguese, to me]: “What I find curious, comparing their [Morrinho youth’s] vision with that of Sérgio’s, is that Sérgio doesn’t put characters in his work. He doesn’t have human beings, but he has SOUL. You perceive in Sergio’s work that the humans are there, that they have a message, a passage, but you don’t see [them]. And they don’t, they put beings [*seres*], entities, representing people. Sergio’s work looks like you can escape for a bit [saidinha] and come right back.” She laughs.

Mat: “I met a couple of very interesting Brazilian artists, traditional ones and these artists here. An artist who does performances with candomblé… But it’s an interesting concept to build your reality in a small place, like a toy place, but it’s not a toy at all.”

Sofia: “And with just bricks.”

I add: “They use pieces of the actual community, they use bricks and tiles, anything they find.”

Sofia: “Do you know my husband?”

Mat: “Who is your husband?”

Sofia: “Sérgio Cesar [points], the big black one.”

Mat: “Excuse me, you told me already… Yeah, his work with cardboard is very famous.”

Sofia: “First I fell in love with his work, and then I fell in love with him.”

Mat: “So you are seduced by art?” He laughs at his own joke.

Sofia: “Really, first by his interest with the people, because I worked with the people for many years. And so we’ve known each other since 1990. And I was giving free English classes for the needy people. He invited me to give classes to students of his. Then we started a relationship. And my admiration grew because of this.”

I offer: "Wonderful. In a way, you came to know him more on the inside by what he produced on the outside."

Sofia "Yes, yes. And then 10 years after, we got married!"

In Portuguese, I inquire: "Can I ask you about the mock-up [*maquete*]?"

Sofia puts a finger to her mouth and whispers in Portuguese as Mat walks away: "It's what I was telling you: Here, I think the word '*maquete*' is inappropriate for this type of artistic work. In my conception a model is a mathematical reproduction in small scale of something that exists, did exist, or will exist. This here isn't. This is an artistic conception, an artistic vision by the boys of the reality that surrounds them, of what's around them. They use materials they find around here. Why do they work with brick? Probably because it is an abundant material around here. From the shacks [*barracos*] always being built here, there always was a surplus of bricks, and they went around getting them. And maybe you know this story better than I… So it's not a model. There is no preoccupation with an exact, mathematical reproduction of this vicinity [*entorno*]. It's rather an artistic representation, their vision, the spirit that they absorb from all their reality. That's why it's not a model. And that is why I don't like it when they call this work a model, or for that matter the work of my husband, Sergio Cesar. In the plastic arts, you know, he works with cardboard, by re-using materials, by transforming… That's not a model. You're going find nothing here that will make you say, 'ah, there is that building on that street, and here is this, etc.' No. This here does not exist. It's only in their heads, from their memory, from the things that shock or touch [*choquem, toquem*] them, by destruction, he [Sérgio] is very concerned with destruction, the destruction of buildings, of the architectural memory of the city."

Me: "Really? How does he represent that?"

Sofia: "Well, he sees a cardboard box, and in that cardboard box he sees a building. And that building, that vision, consists of his memories because that building does not exist. Only in his head. It's a window he saw somewhere. It's a door knocker that made an impression. It's a veranda handrail that called his attention. When we went to Cuba, for example, we were invited to participate in the biennial of Cuba, he almost cried when he saw the handrail. He became so sensitized those kinds of constructions, which have very much to do with Rio de Janeiro through the Iberian colonization, the Spanish in Cuba, the Portuguese in Brazil, the architectural conception is the same."

This exchange illustrates several themes that continually arise around Morrinho, whether in its home setting on the edge of the favela community Morro do Saqualé, in video representations, or rebuilt in replica as an art installation in foreign cities. First, Sofia and Mat muse over perspective in a literal sense, over where to place the camera tripod for the best panoramic shot of the *maquete*. Morrinho is indeed difficult to photograph as a whole. It sprawls across 4,000 square feet of forested hillside in such a way that there is no readily available point from which to encompass it all within a camera's viewfinder. Mat mysteriously suggests that "the camera can perform the distance," perhaps a Germanic mistranslation, but nonetheless revealing of the active role of photography in constructing it subject. That desire, to fit the entire *maquete* within a frame, manifests a more basic desire to attribute completeness and finitude to an object that has never possessed these qualities.

Compare these casual remarks to Tim Mitchell's account of the Egyptian exhibit at the 1889 Paris World Exhibition: "The effect of such spectacles was to set the world up as a picture. They arranged it before an audience as an object on display to be viewed, investigated, and

experienced" (1989: 220). The object-world of the exhibition, argues Mitchell, were arranged to convey meaning through things in themselves and take the place of direct experience of the real. These grand exhibitions were frequently staged in the North Atlantic metropolises (as well as drove urban development schemes). They set up the Orient as an external reality to be comprehended through spectacle and were an integral part of how truth and order were experienced in the West.

Framing, or as Mitchell terms it "enframing," is thus not just a question of shifting contextual meanings but is a form of power in itself. As such, it is also a site for struggle. Some months earlier, the Brazilian Ministry of Tourism sent a technician to install a webcam attached to a laptop, which would transmit a live video feed over the Internet from Morrinho to a large trade fair in São Paulo promoting national culture. One of the Morrinho youth was sent to the convention, greeting curious passers-by and smiling for photos with officials. The webcam broadcast only in one direction: conventioneers in São Paulo could see boys playing and building in Morrinho, but nothing from the tourism fair was visible on the technician's machine. The live video feed was turned on for three consecutive days, from morning until evening. Technical difficulties recurred without remedy, since the outer edges of favelas are typically not outfitted with reliable broadband telecommunications infrastructure. (Morrinho rarely had reliable service, even when the NGO could pay the exorbitant monthly fees.)

As a result of repeated dropped connections, the technician would call the coordinator in São Paulo by phone. In addition to "trying the connection again," the coordinator also began to demand certain aesthetic changes. The technician explained that the voice on the other end wanted two plastic chairs, which always sat on a concrete-slab clearing in the middle of the *maquete*, removed from the webcam's view. At this point, Kamal grew irate. "Those chairs are

part of this place. Alex is part of this place, too." I happened to be sitting in one of the chairs in question, and Kamal considered the removal of the interloping anthropologist part of the request coming over the airwaves. "Does he think he can reach through the computer and move these chairs?" Kamal dared the man. "Maybe with an invisible hand," I interjected. Kamal instructed me to stay put and continued, "They think they can control what goes on here from over there? Let them screw themselves." Revealingly, Kamal's aggravation was piqued by the suggestion that the material space be rearranged to make it more picturesque for a remote, unseen spectatorship.

A second theme from Sofia's visit emerged from the comparisons she drew between Morrinho and her husband's work, both representations of the city. She observes the difference that the Morrinho *maquete* includes "beings, entities, representing people" while Sérgio Cesar's bears traces of human inhabitants. In the latter, according to Sofia, the objects themselves represent an interior subjectivity, or "soul." The iconic valence of certain physical features of the city—clotheslines, corrugated roofs, electrical power lines—manifest the presence of a subjectivity. These objects work doubly as stand-ins for the collective subjectivity of city denizens as well as for the individual "vision" of the artist. Sofia recounts their participation in an art exhibition in the Havana Biennial where Sérgio perceived the particular aesthetic and material qualities of minute details of the built environment, such as the size of window panes, the design of a handrail, or the shape of a door knocker. His emotional response drew from a recognition tinged in synecdoche, in connecting small objects not only to whole cities but also to whole colonial systems.

Sofia attributes the ability to make such representational connections to "vision," a perceptive sensibility, and the work of memory. These assessments reprise the Romantic myth of the artist as possessing an interior subjectivity and creative faculty. Romanticism and romance indeed overlap when she confesses, "First I fell in love with his work, and then I fell in love with him." She was able to see what she liked *in* Sérgio by what he put *out* as an artist. These works thus become an outward signal of an inner talent.

The importance of maintaining this schema that divides the interior world of the artist from the exterior world of material objects, is fundamental not only to Sofia's admiration of her partner but also to the value of their careers in the art world. Insofar as agency derives exclusively from the artist's subjectivity, the physical world is inert, a set of objects to be interpreted and reshaped. This positions the artist in a way not altogether different from that of the scientist, or Lévi-Strauss's rational engineer figure in *The Savage Mind* (1966). This is why Sofia is ultimately so insistent on declaring that Morrinho cannot be a model, in spite of the fact that the youth who build and play there call it a *maquete* by default. Models are mathematical constructs that reproduce objective reality as Euclidean orthogonal space. "You're going find nothing here that will make you say, 'ah, there is that building on that street, and here is this, etc.' No. This here does not exist," Sofia argues. "No. This here does not exist. It's only in their heads, from their memory, from the things that shock or touch them." The world Morrinho depicts in miniature is not found in official maps of the city. It constitutes a different kind of archive, a different spatial knowledge. In Lefebvrian terms, the relational spaces of Morrinho are the ones typically bracketed off or marginalized by urban planning practice (see Chapter 5).

Fetish (Allusion)

In her comments, however, Sofia also admits that objects have a way of working on subjectivity. She suggests that the boys work with bricks [*tijolos*] because they are abundant in their community, and they readily appropriate them as surplus construction materials. Morrinho is an assemblage of objects, and to become a plaything, not every type of object receives the same treatment. Some things must be fashioned. Each brick, to become a miniature house, is chopped in two with a trowel, then perforated with a chisel or hammer on its smooth inner side to create "windows" and a "façade" (see Chapter 3). Persons are built out of Lego blocks, chalk pieces are cut into bits to make cocaine. Other objects are directly imported without physical manipulation: diecast scale-model cars and plastic-molded weapons are acquired from street vendors or toy stores. One-cent coins still represent money, but their value is inflated 10,000-fold, for one Real cent coin stands for one hundred Reais in Morrinho.

Youth in Morrinho, as do their counterparts around the world (and of all ages), freely play by imbuing material objects with subjecthood. Within modern societies, adults have cordoned off childhood and adolescence as a social space within which this kind of play is encouraged albeit managed to promote moral and ideological aims (Kozlovsky 2008). Outside the normative bounds of play, to treat things as having agency, much less animate qualities, is often a question of the exotic, or the pathological. Even so, the relationship between people and things has been a foundational insight for modern social theory.

William Pietz (1985) locates this problem in the concept of the fetish. A theory of fetishism can only exist in a society that is concerned with enchantment, that finds reason to doubt and question to the ontological boundary between subject and object, culture and nature. For Pietz, the fetish became an indispensably malleable concept to Western thinkers, from Comte to Marx to Freud, and he traces the history of the term to the cross-cultural spaces of the

West African coastal trading networks of the 16th and 17th centuries. "Whether in Marx's or Freud's terms, whatever else the fetish may be, it is made to perform the work of an epistemological crowbar by means of which the analyst pries apart and unhinges the fictions which direct and channel the circulation of value (or desire) between subjects and objects in the world of the fetishist" (Palmié 2006:853). Fetish criticism does the work of truth-telling, of unveiling realities concealed behind surface appearances. For Marx the commodity fetish is famously the point of departure of a critical inquiry that ends in the overturning of that perspective and the world that upholds it. *Capital* opens by identifying a pervasive misrecognition in capitalist society: relations between people are taken to be relations between things because the market disguises the labor process embedded within commodities.

Stephan Palmié turns critical fetishism discourse on its head "by focusing not on what the fetish obscures, but what it brings to light in regards to certain contradictions in the management of persons and their bodies in early twenty-first-century economics, law, and medicine." Coronil (1997), in a historical ethnography of the Venezuela petro-state, similarly argues that appearance on the part of material social reality is not simply a concealer of an underlying reality but rather requires work to construct and maintain a fetishized appearance. These analyses remind us to look at the masks of ideology, and not merely behind them, because these constitute objects of manifested power themselves.

In 2007, Morrinho was invited to construct an installation at the Venice Biennale. Antonio, one of the ten who traveled to Italy, would later call it "the World Cup of art." The Biennale's American curator, Robert Storr, had visited the original *maquete* in Rio and decided to include the "Morrinho Project" as part of the program. Most of the exhibitions were organized

into national pavilions, permanent structures built to house art representing different countries. Storr designated Morrinho to build a replica of their *maquete* in the Giardini, an open park area in front of the US pavilion (figure 25). In the Biennale catalog, titled *Think with the Senses, Feel with the Mind: Art in the Present Tense*, Project Morrinho appears on a two-page spread with text on the left and image on the right. The upper-right corner of every page shows the world as a simple line-drawing cluster of the world's continents. This design element is utilized to show where each art project comes from, similar to how endangered animal species are mapped on plaques in front of their zoo enclosures. On Project Morrinho's page, South America is colored red.

Figure 25 *Morrinho installation at Venice Biennale, 2007 (Photo courtesy Project Morrinho).*

Storr introduces Morrinho by means of estrangement:

> Ten years ago a group of citizens from Rio de Janeiro banded together to construct a model community. Both the group and their project remain intact today.
>
> These two sentences are true, but read out of context and absent crucial details they conjure up images of an ideal urban neighborhood when the reality—though remarkable in every way—is quite different from anything remotely suggesting Utopia. (2007: 230)

This misdirection plays on the notion of models as representations of reality and instruments for changing it (Geertz 1973; Keller 2000). It also echoes Oscar Wilde's assertion in his classic essay "The Soul of Man Under Socialism" (2001 [1891]): "A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at." Storr spends much of the rest of the text providing more of the context he intentionally withheld at the beginning. He paints the social milieu of the favela out of which Morrinho emerges in grim tones: "boys… from the poorest of families… meagre houses… daily life in the favela which is regularly punctuated by actual violence… spontaneously forming slums that absorb uncontrolled migration… extreme congestion, poverty and lawlessness… a deepening shadow that is cast across the continent and over every city in the world whose economic polarities and anarchic sprawl follow the same pattern of development." The description deploys the ready-made tropes of lack, precarity, and disorder that have historically characterized favelas in particular and informal settlements more generally (Valladares 2005; Gilbert 2007; Roy 2011).

Storr concludes with the redemptive quality of Morrinho's aesthetic vision. "Yet Morrinho is also a paradigm of self-determination and self-transformation, an example—to borrow Joseph Beuys' terms—of social sculpture. One in which the redirected lives of its authors are more than half the work" (Storr 2007:230). Notwithstanding the strong whiff of bootstraps-pulling narrative—including a mention of how Morrinho offers an alternative to a life in drug

gangs—the curator ends on an almost self-reflexive note. It remains unclear who or what has "redirected" the lives of Morrinho's authors since, after all, it was Storr himself, with the institutional resources of the Biennale behind him, which directed them to Venice. This story of "self-determination and self-transformation" appears within the Biennale catalog. This is again a question of recontextualization.

Storr may assume the position of dispassionate commentator over the aesthetic and moral qualities of artistic production, but the story he elides is the one in which he has already participated in. When Morrinho becomes part of the Venice Biennale, the exhibition also becomes part of the artwork and the artists. This is not simply a reflexive effect but reprises Oswald de Andrade's anthropophagic instinct (1991 [1928]) for Brazilian culture to ingest and synthesize elements of foreign culture. This of course may pose vexing problems for projects which aim to stabilize national culture as an authentic or intact repertoire.

In 2010, Morrinho participated in a (Northern hemisphere) summer-long cultural program called Festival Brazil organized by the Southbank Centre in London. Its website claims that "Southbank Centre is the largest single-run arts centre in the world." It is a sprawling complex of cultural institutions along the Thames that includes concert halls, dance auditoriums, gallery spaces, and generally represents London's central hub of high culture. This 'gig' also represented a new form of engagement for the five Morrinho youth who traveled: they were put in contact with the Stockwell Park Community Trust, an organization made up of residents in low-income districts of Lambeth borough in south London. Stockwell in particular is home to a large population of Caribbean and West African immigrants. The neighborhood's Underground station was also the site of an infamous police shooting of unarmed Brazilian electrician Jean

Charles de Menezes on July 2005, as police believed him to be one of the men responsible for the bombing attacks of the previous day. The Trust was formed to take action in addressing urban blight, gang violence and poverty by gaining managing control over estates (public housing) services and budgeting, as well as initiating a range of youth programs.

Several youth from Stockwell and nearby Brixton showed their Morrinho guests around the neighborhood, where the linguistic barrier was breached through references to Brazilian soccer players and the film *City of God*. “Is that a favela?” one of the London hosts asked about the movie.

“Yes,” replied Kamal and pointed at the estate houses around them. “City of God has houses just like these. In Portuguese they are called *conjuntos*.”

“It’s very…” Bruno wanted to add a description of the dense self-built constructions that overran the planned housing project of City of God, but his English failed him. He gestured, holding up a hand in a pinching motion while grimacing, meaning “packed.” His British counterpart misunderstood this as “police.”

There were moments of recognition as young men of color led other young men of color through a skate park and past graffiti murals. They shared hip-hop, dub step, and funk carioca music saved on their mobile phones. Kamal was struck by the prevalence of the image of St. George killing the dragon, an icon he would have a Picadilly Circus jeweler engrave onto a glittery medallion to hang from a gold chain necklace. “My warrior is with me,” he reassured himself.

The Morrinho installation was located in a public space at the foot of the steps leading up to the Hungerford Bridge, between the Royal Festival Hall and the balustrade overlooking the Thames. It was one of the most heavily trafficked pedestrian areas in London, and for the eight

weeks of the model's exhibition organizers estimated two million people would walk past. A simplified map of the Southbank Centre complex functioned as a cipher. Printed in haphazard angles onto the different spaces of the area, like ink stamps, were the names of what counted as Brazilian national culture for the consuming Londoner masses: Music performers Gilberto Gil, Maria Bethânia, and AfroReggae[46] were emblazoned over the Royal Festival Hall. "Capoeira" was in a mysterious void in between the two main concert auditoriums. "Samba," even more dubiously, was found on the sandy banks of the Thames (tide permitting?). Everywhere Brazilian bodies in motion, dancing, flipping. The imperatives "SHOP," "EAT," "DRINK" in large type. And finally, more inconspicuously, "Favela" inscribed over a multicolored blotch representing the Morrinho model.

During the week of mounting the model, the work was carried out behind a temporary fence, and curious onlookers would peer through the steel wires and read the bright yellow banner:

> *PROJECT MORRINHO SOUTHBANK CENTRE FAVELA*: *A miniature city hand-built by young people from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Lambeth, UK*

Another sign explained the origins of Morrinho and "the positive message it conveys about young people in areas normally synonymous with poverty and crime." It also described the collaboration between the Stockwell Park Estate and Morrinho youth as one of "discover[ing] differences and similarities about the environments in which they live, inspiring a joint landscape."

The construction used 4,000 structural terra cotta (or hollow clay tile) units from a building contractor in London, which resembled those used in the Rio original. The layout, two separate kidney-shaped hills, allowed the public to walk between and around the two parts of the

[46] For the story of the influential NGO Grupo Cultural Afro-Reggae and its mobilization of Afro-Brazilian racial consciousness through music, see Neate and Platt (2006).

model. The work followed a basic, repetitive preparation and arrangement of materials: each brick was chopped in half, perforated for windows, then encrusted into 45 tons of packed sand. They also laid down concrete to make roads and stairways.

This Morrinho, as with previous ones constructed in other cities, incorporated iconic elements of its immediate environs. A miniature London Eye Ferris wheel made with a bicycle wheel. A miniature St. Paul's Cathedral. A miniature rail line running around the entire complex. A miniature Thames, filled with water. A fleet of black toy taxis. A miniature Big Ben (the clock tower had a toy airline jet somewhat ominously attached to it). For many visitors, these familiar urban features clashed directly with the foreignness of the materiality of the terra cotta bricks. That it to say, the iconicity and indexicality of the representation of a city appeared at odds with each other, or at least produced an amalgam of referents (figure 26).

Figure 26 Morrinho installation at Southbank Center, London, 2010.

Several Stockwell and Brixton youth learned their methods of building and collaborated in the construction of the exhibition. Crucially, they also adopted the spirit of making the model a reflection of their own urban imaginary. One playfully painted *Bricks Town* on one façade. They populated entire districts of the model with symbols from their lived reality. On the sides of buildings: the postcode *SW9*, *Kabob Shop*, *Halal Meat*, *Chinese food*, *Brixton Fruit & Veg*, tennis shoe and cell phone retailers, the police station and jail (figure 27). These urban fixtures were selective but hardly haphazard. One of the Stockwell youth who came to help build the model at Festival Brazil explained to a journalist: "I was in and out of prison from the age of 14 to about 20 … It got a bit violent – it turned to guns. People were getting killed left, right and centre. I didn't want to end up dead, or end up killing anyone." Another added, "We want Brixton and Stockwell to be shown not as the evil place that it's known as" (Clarke and Simpson 10).

Figure 27 *Close-up of portion of Morrinho installation in London built by Stockwell and Brixton youth.*

Festival Brazil performed mixed messages about politics of space and the representation of urban identity. In one sense, it communicates a sense that a slum is a slum is a slum, that "environments" may be differentiated but share common characteristics ("poverty and violence") that form the basis for translocal cultural exchange. There exists a certain insistence on the soft determinism of concrete space. In another register, simultanously, the exhibition places the favela alongside samba, Gilberto Gil, and capoeira without specifying how they interrelate under the rubric of Brazilian cultural heritage, except as an affective repertoire. This is evidenced by yet another sign that cites the author Patrícia Melo: "Brazil is astonishment, chaos and progress." This would add further weight to the widely held assumption that the spectacle of exhibition flattens history and defuses political agency. And yet, Festival Brazil, in incorporating the favela as a sign of heritage, permitted youth to bring London's impoverished, ignored margins to its center on their own terms, rather than as loiterers, vandals, criminals, or terrorists. These youth were able to deploy the open language of Morrinho as a method for challenging the symbolic order of their city. And in this gesture they are perhaps performing a politics not anticipated by organizers and promoters of exhibitions, by revealing the actual city of the global South already existing within the metropole.

CONCLUSION:

CARIOCA COUNTERPOINT

Decades ago a Cuban ethnologist, a famous scholar of the neocolony, personified tobacco and sugar and made them speak in unforgettable prose, cleverly putting the affirmations and rebuttals of the dialectical contest between them their contrasting ethics and the ill and benefits that each has conferred upon mankind. The allegorical dialogue by Fernando Ortiz, Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, redounded to the glory not only of his name but of the people of Caobana, whose fame rests inextricably upon that genial composer of historical materialism and every manner of ever-different repetitions.*

Perhaps that famous controversy imagined by this great public intellectual of the neocolony might serve as a literary precedent to permit me now to personify favela *and* asfalto*, and let them, in the guise of a fable, uphold their vying merits. But lacking, as I do, authority either as poet or child to conjure up creatures of fantasy and lend them human passions and superhuman significance, all I can do is to set down, in drab prose, the amazing contrasts I have observed in the two urban spaces on which the political, economic and cultural history of Rio de Janeiro rests.*

These contrasts are neither religious nor moral, as were those posed by the lyrical anthropologist between the sinful dissipations of phenomenology and the purifying abstinence of functionalism. Favela and asfalto are opposed to each other in the economic as in the social field, and even strait-laced moralists have taken them under consideration in the course of their history, viewing the one with mistrust and the other with favor. Moreover, the contrasting parallelism between favela and asfalto is so curious, like that between two

characters in a playwright's dialogue, that it goes beyond the limits of a merely social problem and touches on the fringes of poetry. A poet might be able to give us in robust verses a Luta de Dom Asfalto e Dona Favela—*a "Struggle between Dom Asfalto and Dona Favela." This type of dialogic composition which carries the dramatic dialectic of life into the realm of art has always been a favorite of the ingenuous folk muses in anthropology, sociology, political science, architecture, and urbanism. The outstanding examples of this in Rio are the antiphonal debates over racial consciousness, the erotic controversy in dance measures of the samba, and in the versified counterpoint of the unlettered* cearenses *and the great-grandchildren of Afro-Brazilian* mineiros.[47]

A typical samba, or one of those forró *verses in the vernacular of the* cearenses *or* mineiros, *whose disputants were the masculine asfalto and the feminine favela might be of educational value in schools and song festivals, for in the study of economic phenomena and their social effects it would be hard to find more eloquent lessons than those afforded by Rio in the startling counterpoint between favela and asfalto.*

The contrast between asfalto and favela dates from the moment the two came together in the minds of the founders of the Brazilian Republic. At the time of its constitution, at the end of the nineteenth century, by the Positivists who brought the order and progress of civilization to Brazil, the minds of these invaders were strongly pressed into two social orders. The traders arriving from the other side of the ocean had already fixed the greedy eyes of their ambition on one; the other they came to regard as the most unsavory side of the world, a

[47] *Cearense* refers to people of the Northeastern Brazilian state of Ceará and *mineiro* those from Minas Gerais, a state to the immediate north of Rio de Janeiro, who migrated *en masse* to the peripheries of large cities in the south such as Rio and São Paulo. Forró is a musical genre and dance style that originated in the Northeast and is especially popular among rural populations. The music usually features an accordion, triangle, and zabumba bass drum.

powerful snare of the devil, who by the name of an obscure plant stimulated the senses with a new kind of spatiality, the mind with a new mystery, the soul with a new sin.

Out of the architectural and economic development of these amazing structures, named after the thorny plant from the remote Northeast, were to come those interests which governments and industrialists would twist and weave for centuries to form the web of the country's history, the motives of its leaders, and, at one and the same time, the shackles and support of its people. Asfalto and favela are the two of the most important figures in the history of Brazil.

Favela and asfalto are territorial products of the same city and same social climate, but the physical distinction between them is such that it brings about radical economic differences as regards property, labor, and the semiotics of space. And the amazing differences between the two products are reflected in the history of the Brazilian nation from its very ethnological formation to its social structure, its political fortunes, and its international relations.

The outstanding feature of Brazilian economic history is in reality this multiform and persistent contrast between the two spaces that have been and are the most typical of Rio, aside from that brief period at the beginning of the sixteenth century when the conquerors' gold-mining activities and the cultivation of sugarcane and coffee beans took pre-eminence. Thus a study of the history of Rio, both internal and external, is fundamentally a study in the history of favela and asfalto as the essential bases of its economy.

And even in the universal history of economic phenomena and their social repercussions, there are few lessons more instructive than that of favela and asfalto in Rio. By reason of the clarity with which through them the social effects of economic causes can be

seen, and because few other cities besides Rio have presented this amazing concatenation of historical vicissitudes and this radical contrast, this unbroken parallelism between two coexisting orders of economic phenomena, which throughout their entire development display highly antithetical characteristics and effects, it is as though some supernatural teacher had purposely selected Rio as a geographic laboratory in which to give the clearest demonstrations of the supreme importance of the basic economy of a city in its continuous process of development.

The posing and examination of this deep-seated contrast which exists between favela and asfalto, from their very nature to their social derivations, may throw some new light upon the study of Rio de Janeiro and its historical peculiarities. In addition it offers certain curious and original instances of transculturation of the sort that are of great and current interest in contemporary anthropology.

This passage is a rewriting of the opening pages of Fernando Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Ortiz 1995, first published in 1940). I have copied and reappropriated the original text, making it, in effect, a literary experiment in modeling. The gambit turns on the simple substitution of tobacco and sugar for favela and asfalto, terms that have long defined the geographical imaginary of Rio de Janeiro in particular and Brazil more broadly. Favela and asfalto are also practical terms with which residents of Morro do Saqualé, Morrinho participants, and Brazilian state officials imagine the city. Favela and asfalto are vexed categories with historical weight, but they also have everyday utility and valence.

In rewriting Ortiz, I followed an intuition of seeking parallels between, on the one hand, the two commodities of sugar and tobacco and, on the other, the two spaces of favela and asfalto.

It sprouted from a fascination with the poetic way Ortiz draws out and weaves together the biological natures and semantic vagaries of tobacco and sugar, and the point, as we learned in the Introduction, that *favela* is a feminine noun that first designated a kind of plant before it became a place name and later a cultural and urbanistic category.

The dialogue Ortiz staged between the two products spoke to persistent concerns over the boundaries between nature-society, the modern Black Atlantic and histories of imperial formation, and a focus on materiality that North Atlantic social theory tended to dismiss or suspect as prone to fetishism. When "making people matter" becomes the custom, there is danger of separating them from the material world around them.

The comparison is not isomorphic. Where the model fails to translate, the non-alignments are, however, productive. It is at these points that the writing experiment grew from a rather cheap exercise in imitation—or perhaps ironic plagiarism—into a more attentive meditation, not only on the original work but also on a central theme of this dissertation: the politics and poetics of re-creation, in the double sense of both playful leisure and imaginative craft. This dissertation examines representational practices and objects of the city in order to make evident the overlaps, disjunctures, convergences and conflicts among them.

In the Introduction to this work, I presented critiques and alternatives to Western metaphysics, scientific rationality, and the hard dualisms (nature/society, object/subject, external reality/internal conceptions) they sustain. One reason for the inclusion of this weighty debate here is to draw critical attention to the way the favela, with Morro do Saqualé as a case study, becomes an object of knowledge, to remark upon how the favela becomes detached from both the normatively defined "city" and from nature itself. This territorial ordering was explicitly intended to prepare the ground, literally speaking, for capitalist property relations. The City

supposedly supplants Nature. But, this dissertation demonstrates how an object like the Morrinho model disrupts this process. Municipal bureaucracies indeed require the parsing of space to operate, and cadastral maps and other forms of representation are integral to making that a workable reality. Neil Smith laments the cultural power and seeming ubiquity of this dualism with a view back from an imagined future:

> When we eventually look back at the intellectual shibboleths of the high capitalist period—say the last three centuries—few ingrained assumptions will look so wrongheaded or so globally destructive as the common-sense separation of society and nature. Historically and geographically, most societies have avoided such a stark presumption as hubristic folly, but from physicists to sociologists, physicians to poets, the brains of the ascendant capitalist "west" not only embraced but made a virtue of society's separation from nature (and vice versa). (Smith in Heynen, Kaika, and Swyngedouw 2006:xii)

Consciousness of human impact on the earth can be traced as far as ancient philosophy. Out of exchange economies and the development of the state, an awareness of a social world separable from nature emerged. As noted in the Introduction, Cicero first conceptualized the world produced through human activity as "second nature," and cities represented the clearest evidence of that disjuncture. Smith characterizes Cicero's second nature concept as "triumphalist" (*ibid*), but nonetheless reined in by a parallel sense that the social world was still part of nature. By the 19th century, capitalist societies had dispensed with second nature as well.

Morrinho intervenes, in its small way, into this history. The accounts presented here tie the way people make the world inhabitable to the materials with which they do so. Crucially, those concrete things continue to exert influence in an ongoing dialogue. Morrinho players, who learned in childhood and adolescence the means by which they were identified by their environment, remade it collectively as a way to reflect on that relationality. In the Morrinho social world, all bonecos are defined and bounded by the spaces they traverse, the marks and colors they bear on their plastic bodies, and the life histories they carry with them.

Ortiz insists that material things, as soon as they seem tangible and graspable, nonetheless become imbued with meanings, myths, histories and shadows. Uncannily, not long after the original version of the passage above, the text defines "the sugar-producing zone of the world… between 22º North, the position of Havana, and 22º South, that of Rio de Janeiro." It is a passing reference, but a serendipitous counterpoint nevertheless: Havana and Rio as latitudinal bookends of the same Atlantic world of imperial formations, class and racial relations, resource extraction, land settlement patterns.

Ortiz was a trained lawyer and ethnologist. He produced several studies of Afro-Cuban popular culture before the 1940 publication of this masterwork. These early works were influenced by ascendant theories of biological essentialism of its time. The prominent Italian criminologist Cesar Lombroso contributed the preface, in the form of a letter, to Ortiz's first book, *Los Negros Brujos* (Ortiz and Lombroso 1906). This investigation into the conditions of deviant behavior and 'superstition' among practitioners of Afro-Cuban 'sorcery' is illustrated with drawings of musical instruments, costumes and idols. Ortiz shows an analytical concern for the fetishisms of Afro-Cuban culture, how spirits take on the incarnate presence of dolls and figurines. A later portion of the book uses police mug-shot photographs of black Cubans, mostly men, all convicted of crimes attributed to sorcery. But even here Ortiz shows more interest, however objectifying, in ethnological connections to African Gold Coast societies than in identifying physical anomalies as signs of criminal atavism, as Lombrosian evolutionist theories would dictate. The official preoccupation with sorcery, its criminalization and its rendering as an object of anthropological (and anthropometric) inquiry, had to do, in effect, with managing the "problem of heterogeneity" (Bronfman 2004).

I summon Ortiz because I find myself investigating this problem of heterogeneity and its management through concepts similar to those he identified and worked through: fetishism, imperial formation, and transculturation. By problems of heterogeneity, I wish suggest a few things at once: first, while the notion might immediately raise questions of who, or what, might order the world, and according to what vision or criteria, I want to suspend the notion that it resides in a metaphysics outside the social, or emerges deterministically from an economic base.

How this problematic becomes framed in contemporary Rio in a nexus of territorial, legal, moral and economic concerns is the central theme of this dissertation. I take this notion of the distribution of agency as a means through which to understand the politics of knowledge about favelas and the conditions of possibility for social action. This is, at heart, an exploration of rules and rule-making in the social production of space, and its inverse, the spatial production of social relations. *Cuban Counterpoint* itself opens with an eponymous essay in which Ortiz weaves an allegorical dialogue between two substances, two commodities, which he takes as emblems of Cuban history and society. Ortiz proceeds along an unorthodox method for social inquiry at a time when no orthodoxy had yet been established. He wrote out of an intellectual moment where disciplinary conventions and boundaries were more fluid than they are today, despite important and provocative contemporary endeavors to resuscitate transdisciplinary approaches to urgent problems. To be sure, Ortiz is not without immediate influences. His gambit echoes that of Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism in the first chapter of *Capital*. Both begin with the recognition of a misrecognition. For Ortiz, tobacco and sugar, as commodities in a capitalist system, conceal the social relations of their production. Commodities take the form of a relation between things, measured by economic value, that masks the social relations between worker and capitalist. Marx borrows the concept of fetishism from modern

theories of religion (see Pietz 1993) to argue for a certain kind of magical thinking that pervades the logic of capital: “There [in religion] the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands” (Marx 1977:165). Notably, as opposed to Marx, who rhetorically deploys verbs like “seem” or “appear” to signal an analysis that go “behind” the world of surface appearances, Ortiz does not speak the language of concealment to describe the work the fetish performs. Rather, he foregrounds the biological properties of tobacco and sugar—their climates of cultivation, physical characteristics, chemical composition—not to establish the fixed essentialist destinies of these substances but to begin drawing connections to the historical conditions of their appearance as social personages. He maintains a certain fascination with the power wielded by the fetishized object over the imagination rather than dismiss it as a false enchantment, a mystification. Perhaps the most powerful and direct struggle with fetishism in this work comes in Kamal’s self-portrayal statement cited in Chapter 3. The message culminates with a defiant denunciation of the power of “money that buys everything and everyone... that piece of shit paper that is stronger than the word of the lord.”

Tobacco and sugar, for Ortiz, contain within them the traces of a historical process that affords him entry into an investigation of the neocolonial system, national independence and identity, and the both creative and destructive power of money—the universal fetish. His method of inquiry is akin to a historian-detective constructing indirect knowledge through material clues (Ginzburg 1992). It is not about asserting a hidden reality behind the appearance of things. Rather, it is about building a kind of evidence of a reality embodied in things themselves. This move acknowledges the historical agency of commodities as subjects and objects of an unfolding

historical process. Another Fernando, Fernando Coronil, frames it in his introduction to *Cuban Counterpoint*, "as a critique of reification, Ortiz's counterfetishism questions both conservative interpretations that reduce history to the actions of external forces, and humanist and liberal conceptions that ascribe historical agency exclusively to people" (Ortiz 1995: xxx).

Put bluntly, objectification has been living a double life in social research. This dissertation is precisely about objectifications, large and small, and their double lives. There are myriad critiques of forms of inequality wielded through the way processes become rendered as objects, dynamic relations as closed identities, realities concealed as appearances. These may include the sexual objectification of women, the commodification of culture, corporate branding, ethnicity, the West, identity politics. The supposedly disenchanted modern world is awash in apparitions, personified entities of all sorts. Coronil's introduction further outlines how fetishisms figure into the production of an entire global order of production, circulation and consumption:

> Ortiz shows that the constitution of the modern world has entailed the clash and disarticulation of peoples and civilizations together with the production of images of integrated cultures, bounded entities, and inexorable progress. His counterpoint of cultures makes evident that in a world forged by the violence of conquest and colonization, the boundaries defining the West and its Others, white and dark, man and woman, and high and low are always at risk. Formed and transformed through dynamic processes of transculturation, the landscape of the modern world must constantly be stabilized and represented, often violently, in ways that reflect the play of power in society. (ibid.: xiii-xiv)

To emphasize some of the important concepts Coronil identifies in this passage, I am interested in the enduring legacies of imperial formation, in its geopolitics at the urban scale as well as in the politics of knowledge production. Discussions of global urbanization often invoke the dominance of neoliberal capitalism as a political economic ideological juggernaut shaping new landscapes of rampant slum expansion, unbridled ecological devastation, and

deindustrialized ruin and abandonment. These accounts suggest a unilateral trajectory. But, Coronil continues, "through his critical valorization of popular creativity, Ortiz shows how the social spaces where people are coerced to labor and live are also made habitable by them, how in effect power resides not only in the sugar mill, but in the rumba" (ibid.: xv). The transculturation concept, which never quite gained currency despite an endorsement by Malinowski in his own introductory remarks to *Cuban Counterpoint*, goes beyond paying attention to coping strategies of the oppressed, or to the importance of popular culture. It is about thinking contrapuntally about social change, to produce knowledge that does not "complete the scandal of imperialism" (ibid.: xxxix). Malinowski's framework, which became orthodoxy in Anglo-American anthropology, produced a map of the world wherein cultures are static islands of tradition standing in the currents of history. A million objectifications flourished, the most insidious of which was the transformation of the particularity of European history into a universality.

These observations formed, albeit indirectly, the theoretical basis for what became postcolonial critique. Coronil's introduction goes on to outline Ortiz's resonant, if unacknowledged, influence over not only Malinowski but also Lévi-Strauss (see also Coronil in Font and Quiroz 2004). To conclude this dissertation by mimicking Ortiz is a gesture meant not to further silence nor to parody his work, but rather to resuscitate the poetry and playfulness with which he conducted his particular brand of anthropology. I see Ortiz as a reference point in an intellectual "minor literature" that is difficult to delineate because of the hegemonic weight of certain methods and theories of social inquiry, and because he did not develop an alternative model to follow—but created a deep ambivalence about the existing ones. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, it can also be a most unsettling form of satire. This research centers on how mimicry performs a similar kind of doubling. By "remixing" Ortiz I seek to evoke that very

ambivalence about the status of originals and copies. This could perhaps be seen as an act of high piracy, in a historical moment when "intellectual property" is a matter of high political and economic import. The modern world has an ambiguous relationship with copies, fakes, counterfeits, facsimiles, and clones of all kinds (Schwartz 1996; Abbas 2008). We inhabit a culture where originals predominate over copies, which impinges on legal notions of property and economic conceptions of value. And yet, industrialization, the dominance of work by machines over the handicraft of humans, has produced a world built increasingly out of serialization: machines and humans repeating the same task to manufacture identical things (Benjamin 1968).

This is a study located in the hinterlands, and in the hinterlands of those hinterlands. "We have, however, to ask whether there is any reason why we should be terrified by the hinterland, by the imaginative possibility it offers and denies, by (the impossibility of) crossing over? Can we not take pleasure in its irreality, in its possibility, the play it facilitates?" asks Vincent Crapanzano (2004:17). I presented here a partial account of the wide diversity of experiences of and struggles within the distinction between favela and asfalto. A contrapuntal tension runs throughout this work and ties its argument together, in a series of relationships between object and commodity, personhood and social relations, space and place, case study and generalizable knowledge, and models and their purported referents. This binary opposition is not a fundamental one, nor a uniformly conflictual one, but rather it is produced by and productive of social forces. This is to further suggest that spatial categories are themselves historical beings and social actors. Invoked in everyday speech, in youth play, in government policy, urban planning maps, police tactics, film images, music lyrics, tourist photographs, NGO-run development initiatives, social science literature, the favela and its often normatively invoked

other, the asfalto, frames the conditions of possibility for myriad conversations, encounters, financial flows, and aesthetic judgments.

The methodology and writing—in sum, the ethnographic work—on which this study stands followed closely alongside diverse practices of subject- and object-making in the periphery of the city. Walking down the hill across social boundaries produced knowledge of the unevenness and inequalities of the cityscape. Constructing the physical spaces of a renovated home was an act of future-oriented imagination bound up in overlapping and competing interests among neighbors. Acts of building and speculation become interwoven with personal and collective futures in domestic living, economic exchanges, and safety. Morrinho enacts these modes of experiencing and negotiating the city as serious play. My participation in its ludic world as Alex, the boneco, forms part of this practice that works in close proximity to material things to draw out, in the making, the meanings and relations they render possible. This work attempts to speak of material culture without using the worn-out tropes of metaphor, symbolism, and hard-fetched interpretations that create an abstract alternate world of referents constituting the illusion of an omniscient author. Neither god nor snitch, the ethnographic voice walks on uneven ground, speaks in dialogue with others, and builds with fragments.

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