MEDIATING AUTHENTICITY:

GENDER, RACE, AND REPRESENTATION IN THE CAREERS OF
CLEMENTINA DE JESUS AND CAROLINA MARIA DE JESUS

AN ABSTRACT

SUBMITTED ON THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF MAY 2014
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
OF THE SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS
OF TULANE UNIVERSITY
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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This dissertation explores representations of race and gender embodied by Clementina de Jesus (1901-1987), samba singer, and Carolina de Jesus (1915-1977), author of the autobiographical memoir *Quarto de Despejo* (1960). Both women were “discovered” by middle class intellectual men from outside of their communities. Once they achieved renown, they were promoted as symbols of Brazil’s social reality by cultural mediators of a different class and race, representing the commonly gendered and racialized archetypes of the *mãe preta* and the discriminated favelada.

Through analysis of literary, musical, journalistic, and photographic portrayals of both women, I explore the role of cultural mediation in the construction of Brazilian identity in the 1960s and 70s, a time of intense social debate over race, poverty, and national identity. Both women achieved recognition shortly before the military coup d’etat and subsequent dictatorship (1964-1985), a time when the Brazilian middle class was engaged in a constant search for the “roots” of national identity within popular cultural forms.

The cultural mediators examined in this project formed bridges between creators and audiences from radically different backgrounds, smoothing the transition between groups and framing the cultural production of others in specific ways. By eventually acting as cultural mediators themselves, Carolina and Clementina prove that the process of cultural mediation is dynamic instead of static, shifting over time and relationships of power. This study demonstrates that both the process of cultural mediation and the quest for authenticity were inherently linked to relations of class, race, and gender, affirming instead of transcending the social divisions between groups in twentieth century Brazil.
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For “Lady Pickles” Dietrich Howarth,

who provided the ultimate deadline.
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Introduction

In a São Paulo theater in April 1961, Carolina Maria de Jesus watched a portrayal of her own life unfold onstage and was unhappy with what she saw. In an attempt to recreate Carolina’s previous life as a black single mother of three from the favela of Canindé, scavenging for paper in the city, the show’s producers had cast the rising black actress Ruth de Souza in the central role of Carolina. They had furnished the set with cast off furniture and old household goods donated by local citizens, solicited through a series of newspaper articles. But Carolina was noticeably upset by this representation of the drama of her life and its distance from her own experience. Accustomed to revealing herself through her writing on her own terms, the voice that came alive onstage was no longer exclusively her own. As her daughter Vera Eunice would recall years later, Carolina shouted indignantly from the audience, “Não é nada disso! Está errado!”

Several years later in Rio de Janeiro on a rainy night in March 1965, sixty-four year old Clementina de Jesus nervously appeared on a different stage during the opening night performance of *Rosa de Ouro*, a musical review show that focused on samba traditions. With the spotlight emphasizing the contrast between her white lace dress and her dark brown skin, she belted out the words to the ancient Afro-Brazilian song *Benguelê* in a deep and emotional voice. The intellectual middle-class audience
applauded furiously, and a reviewing journalist would label her “a force of nature.”¹

Years later, individuals who witnessed this performance would remember it as a transformative experience that was at once foreign and familiar, representing an unknown world that at once recalled a nostalgia for the past.

Each woman’s relationship with self-representation is revealed through these experiences of performance. Carolina had a history of telling her individual story of struggle through her own words, and tried to prevent others from changing it. She reacted to the portrayal of her life with anger and indignance. Clementina used words she herself had not written to express the struggles of a downtrodden community to outsiders. She was apprehensive about how she would be received, but was ultimately embraced by the audience. Both scenes elicited powerful reactions, Carolina’s of resistance and Clementina’s of acceptance.

Carolina Maria de Jesus (1915-1977) recorded her hardscrabble life in a makeshift diary and became an international phenomenon when her writings were “discovered” and published under the title Quarto de Despejo (1960) by a young white journalist. Audálio Dantas presented her story as a call for social equality in Brazil at a time of political, social, and cultural transition. Clementina de Jesus (1901-1987), an older black maid for an elite Rio de Janeiro family, was years later heard singing sambas in a neighborhood bar by a young white intellectual. Her encounter with Hermínio Bello de Carvalho led to a successful musical career in which her idiosyncratic style was promoted as a reflection of Brazil’s tradition and African ancestry. Each woman was born poor and black in early twentieth-century Brazil, received little education, was

¹ Lena Frias (quoted in Pavan 21).
“discovered” late in life by white middle class intellectual men from outside of her community, experienced a level of success, and yet died impoverished and neglected. Today, Clementina is a figure of black female authenticity mostly recognized by individuals who are familiar with the overlapping universes of samba music and Afro-Brazilian political identity. Carolina is recognized internationally as an important voice in marginal and testimonial literature, but is largely unknown to many Brazilians outside of the academy. Given their similar paths, why are they viewed so differently today?

Since its European conquest and settlement, Brazil has been marked by racial, gender, and class inequality. Given that the majority of the New World passed through similar processes of manipulation, enslavement, and colonial domination, it hardly stands alone in this predicament, sharing some historical and contemporary similarities with the United States, the Caribbean, and parts of Central and South America whose colonization and development also relied on slave labor. During the colonial period in Brazil, wealthy white men dominated all others in economic, social, and cultural arenas, building a hegemonic system of power over the centuries through slavery and patriarchal tradition that benefitted some to the disadvantage of many others. Although slavery was abolished in Brazil in 1888 and men and women today constitutionally hold the same rights and privileges, the legacy of this earlier injustice is still present in the marked predominance of darker-skinned individuals at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder.

Structures of race, gender, and class that originated during the colonial period persist. The twentieth century examples provided by Carolina and Clementina reveal that poor black women at this time often faced difficulties in reaching an audience outside of
their specific demographic cohort on their own. Instead, they relied on cultural mediators, privileged individuals who used their cultural capital and contacts to help them to make connections to other social groups. Both women’s dependence on middlemen that benefitted from the racialized, gendered, and class-based cultural hierarchy indicates the continued dominance of white over black, male over female, and rich over poor.

The process of cultural mediation is linked to relations of class, race, and gender in that it is dominated by access to resources—cultural mediators like Hermínio Bello de Carvalho and Audálio Dantas possess access to knowledge, funds, and contacts that lead to an audience, while those in need of mediation do not. In order to achieve the audience, those who lack resources are reliant on those who do possess them, restricting their individual creative autonomy and capacity for self-representation. In relying on cultural mediators to be heard, individuals like Carolina and Clementina sacrificed autonomous control over their own public portrayal. The ways in which others portrayed them were in turn colored by the historical imbalance of race, class, and gender—they were portrayed in ways that advantageously reinforced the hegemonic power structure. By depicting Clementina as an authentic mãe preta, her mediators simultaneously emphasized the “positive” aspects of the colonial system of slavery that allowed intimate familiar relationships to develop alongside violence and brutality. When Carolina did not follow similar expectations, she upset the idea of racial democracy as a boon for all. Her mediators’ criticism was a thinly veiled attempt to maintain control over the views of race. Poor black women were supposed to accept their station in life, not protest, upset, or rise above it. The fact that poor black women could gain recognition on a national and international scale is held up as an indication of Brazil’s movement away from these old
power structures, yet closer examination reveals that poor black women continue to be dominated by privileged white men in more subtle and nuanced ways.

After eventually achieving recognition, Carolina and Clementina came to act as cultural mediators themselves as formal and informal representatives at home and abroad, proving that the process of cultural mediation is dynamic instead of static, shifting over time and relationships of power. This project demonstrates that both the process of cultural mediation and the quest for authenticity were inherently influenced by class, race, and gender relations, affirming instead of transcending the social divisions between groups in twentieth-century Brazil. Both women’s later work as mediators in their own right shifted relations of power by troubling the dominant racialized and gendered hegemony without fully doing away with it. In using their subaltern voices to crack the power structure, they called attention to its continued existence, a significant feat in a period in which racial democracy was the widely accepted ideology. Both Carolina and Clementina provide important role models for marginalized artists today, regardless of their race, gender, class, or nationality.

This project contributes to the understanding of racialist and gendered ideologies in Brazil by expanding the discussion of the role of cultural mediation and media representation of Afro-Brazilian women. In the late 1950s and 60s, Brazil underwent a significant period of social transformation marked by tensions of race, class, and gender. The ideology of “racial democracy,” as described by the sociologist Gilberto Freyre in the 1930s, dominated the Brazilian imaginary with its benevolent description of the master/slave relationship. This benign view of race relations was meant to unify Brazilians across color lines, and used to justify authoritarian rule under Getúlio Vargas’
The idea of racial equality was formally disputed in the 1950s and 60s by scholars from the Universidade de São Paulo like Florestan Fernandes and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who argued that the “myth” was used to pacify Afro-Brazilians and prevent them constructing a race-based identity or mobilizing in protest. Despite this research, many Brazilians continued to subscribe to their nation’s unique position as a place of racial harmony and mixture in which discrimination did not exist. In 1964, shortly following the period when both Carolina and Clementina were respectively “discovered” and became recognized by the media, Brazilian president João Goulart was overthrown by a military coup d’etat that limited the political and creative freedoms of citizens through an authoritarian dictatorship that lasted until 1985. Like Vargas, leaders of the dictatorship embraced “racial democracy” as the official national ideology on race relations, with the intent of controlling the population and preventing social protest. Fernandes and his scholarly colleagues were forced into exile during this period for questioning the consensus on race (Telles 42). The military dictatorship relied upon the hegemonic structure that privileged white elite and middle class men in order to maintain control over Brazil’s diverse population, facilitating the continued domination of subaltern groups.

Although it would seem that controversy over the theory of racial democracy would have been put to rest over the passage of time, Brazil’s contemporary national identity continues to be closely linked to the idea of racial harmony as demonstrated through miscegenation. Nevertheless, the continued exclusion of darker-skinned individuals from many sectors of society is immediately apparent in daily life and the
media, confirming the reality of race-based discriminatory practices. The contentious nature of the debate was recently demonstrated in April 2014 through a Twitter campaign known as “Somos Todos Macacos,” initiated by the soccer player Neymar after Brazilian soccer player Daniel Alves ate a banana thrown at him from the crowd during a match in Spain. The campaign, which the press later revealed was organized by a public relations firm (“Somos todos macacos”), encouraged individuals to submit photos of themselves posing with bananas in demonstration of solidarity with Alves. This digital movement incited strong reactions from the Brazilian public, especially as the number of privileged white celebrities posting photos grew to include the television presenter Luciano Huck and President Dilma Rousseff. Those in support believed that the images demonstrated racial solidarity by drawing attention to the common evolutionary origin of humanity, while those against were deeply offended by any connection between Afro-Brazilians and monkeys, seen as reinforcing old stereotypes that the Brazilian black movement has been fighting for decades. Those who embraced the trend were confirming the idea of Brazil as a “racial paradise” in which skin color doesn’t limit access to resources, while those who railed against it refused to gloss over the race-based exclusion and discrimination that continues to be experienced by many Afro-Brazilians. This contemporary controversy demonstrates that disparate views on race in Brazil are indeed alive and well and continue to merit further investigation.

In addition to these conflicting views on the role of race, the Brazilian middle class during the military dictatorship was also engaged in a constant search for the “roots” of national identity within popular cultural forms, looking for guidance as well as a sense of comfort and nostalgia in the face of a grim daily reality. This movement
valorized frequent interaction between members of different racial and economic backgrounds and emphasized the role of the cultural mediators who would constantly engage with social groups that were not their own. At this time, middle class intellectuals began to see individuals marginalized by the hegemonic structure as the bearers of true cultural tradition, producing and cultivating representations of Brazilian identity. Through the process of cultural mediation, poor black women like Carolina and Clementina became the prophets of the “true nature” of Brazilianness, altering the significance of race, gender, and class as social markers. While possessing and producing cultural knowledge did not ultimately transform either woman’s social standing or access to resources, the attention of the middle class individuals who made up their new audience did call attention to the daily reality of those who were slighted by Brazil’s dominant hegemonic structure.

Carolina Maria de Jesus’ autobiographical writing and dramatic life story are well known within the international Latin American studies tradition, and have been frequently discussed in the context of *testimonio* literature.² In contrast, Clementina de Jesus’ work and career are familiar mostly to Brazilian music specialists and aficionados, but the significance of her music and image have yet to be explored in scholarly literature. Despite their common surname, Carolina and Clementina never knew or interacted with one another. They lived in different cities at different times, and worked

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² *Testimonio* literature is defined as first-person narrative that is told from the perspective of an ordinary individual in order to express the experiences (usually of oppression, revolution, or suffering) of a community. It is often produced with the assistance of an outside interviewer or editor from outside of this community.
creatively in the separate realms of literature and popular music. Their connection lies in the common experiences of “discovery,” celebrity, and cultural mediation as seen through the lens of Brazilian ideologies of race, gender, and class.

Born the granddaughter of slaves in a rural community in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Clementina de Jesus’s musical style did not appeal to conventional tastes, and she was not a commercial success during her lifetime. Her voice was deep and rough; her skin was much darker than that of other women who were successful singers at the time. Nevertheless, critics identified her as a significant contributor to Brazilian popular music through her recordings of traditional Afro-Brazilian musical styles. Her public image emphasizes her connections to an African past, her advanced age, and her maternal qualities, recalling the figure of the mãe preta, or black mammy, that has been used to promote “racial democracy” in twentieth century Brazil. While Clementina frequently embraced this public image, the individuals around her who possessed greater access to sociocultural resources often manipulated her position. Nevertheless, she exercised a limited form of agency in her own role as a cultural mediator and ambassador over the length of her career.

Carolina Maria de Jesus hailed from the backlands of the state of Minas Gerais, where she received little formal education, and migrated to Sao Paulo as a young woman. She supported herself and her small children by selling scraps of paper and cardboard that she picked from the trash, some of which she used to write a diary about her daily experiences. After meeting journalist Audalio Dantas, she gained national and then international notoriety in 1960 with the publication of her diary under the title Quarto de Despejo, which was eventually published in forty countries and translated into thirteen
different languages. Acquiring success at a time in which the Brazilian public was eager for social change, Carolina’s experience of poverty demonstrated the existence of racial and class-based discrimination as described by the aforementioned São Paulo School. Her daily struggle was inherently linked to her race, her gender, and her socioeconomic class, attesting to the mythic status of Brazil’s racial democracy.

The Brazilian scholar Hermano Vianna has explored the role of cultural mediation in relation to race and cultural studies. In *The Mystery of Samba: Popular Music and National Identity in Brazil*, Vianna argues that white intellectuals were almost solely responsible for the acceptance of samba music as a national symbol of Brazil. Despite the importance Vianna places upon a specific 1926 meeting of poor black musicians with the elite, his analysis neglects the lives and work of Donga, Pixinguinha, and Patrício, the “real Brazilians” who provided such critical figures in the construction of Brazil’s “myth of democracy” as the sociologist Gilberto Freyre and the historian Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda with a night of “bohemian fun” (5). My dissertation addresses the lack of attention paid to the lives of the marginalized figures that are essential to this narrative by exploring the role of cultural mediation with an emphasis on the story’s “real Brazilians,” providing new perspectives on contemporary Brazilian cultural studies, as well as engaging with scholars in the fields of subaltern and identity studies.

Examination of the “real” lives and performance of identity by Carolina and Clementina reveals the complexities of race and gender on multiple levels—and the frequency with which their lives departed from these representations. Both Carolina de Jesus’ simultaneous success and criticism and Clementina’s role as an international cultural ambassador defy easy categorization. In this project, I use a semiotic approach to
explore the meanings constructed by both primary sources—namely Carolina Maria de Jesus’ published writings, and Clementina de Jesus’ musical recordings and recorded interviews—and secondary sources such as newspaper articles and photographs of both women, with the objective of understanding how each woman made sense of who she was, as well as how each was received by others. This variety of sources provides a rich base of material to support the argument that Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus ultimately represent conflicting viewpoints on the roles and norms of black femininity in Brazilian culture.

This dissertation consists of four chapters that trace different aspects of each woman’s career, representation, and legacy, presenting both stories in a continuous, side-by-side comparison. Given that Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus worked in different creative fields, I continuously contrast the significance of autobiographical literature with the field of popular music. By weaving together the stories of both women, this project provides a multi-faceted view of the role of race and gender in cultural production through the lens of twentieth century Brazilian culture.

The first chapter argues that not only was cultural mediation critical to the development of each woman’s career, but that it fundamentally determined the way that each woman’s work was presented and received. Both Carolina and Clementina were “discovered” by men from the white intellectual middle class, and their relationships with these mediators were essential for their musical and literary output to reach an audience beyond their communities during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Here I review existing theories of cultural mediation, focusing first internationally on a body of work strongly
influenced by Pierre Bourdieu, then more specifically on mediators in the realm of music. Gilberto Velho provides key insight into the role of cultural mediation in the Brazilian context, defining cultural mediators as individuals who move between different social domains, translating and interpreting the aspirations, desires, and values that are inherent in distinct areas (*Projeto e metamorfose* 81), encouraging and contributing to new cultural forms.

In this chapter, I explore how different racial and gendered identities complicate this process and its cultural outcome by focusing on several episodes in the lives of Carolina and Clementina. I first discuss Clementina and Hermínio’s legendary initial encounter at a Rio de Janeiro bar, the Taberna da Glória, and then turn attention to Zicartola, the bar that served as a space for encounter between the working class musicians and middle class intellectuals. This leads to an analysis of musical theater productions *Opinião* (1964) and *Rosa de Ouro* (1965), each linked to political transformation. Next I consider Carolina’s initial encounter with Audálio Dantas, which occurred when he visited Canindé as a newspaper reporter, then the consequent publication of his article in the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper, in which he introduced her to the reading public. By exploring the specific details of each woman’s moment of “discovery,” I reveal the transformative nature of the cultural mediations with which they were involved.

Chapter 2 focuses on the way that both Carolina and Clementina were portrayed in the media, and explores how they were portrayed as representations of authenticity. Through a close reading of a variety of newspaper and magazine articles, I examine each woman’s star text for examples of agency, their own and others. I focus on which aspects
of their careers and public personas were emphasized to the neglect of others, showing them to be simultaneously ordinary and extraordinary. Clear narratives emerge about both women over years of media portrayals, contributing to the construction of two different archetypes that are inherently tied to understandings of race, gender, and class in Brazil. These archetypes strongly influenced the way that the public received each woman, but also permitted their own contributions to the construction of these images of black femininity from within. In addition to fitting into the aforementioned archetypes of the mãe preta and the discriminated favelada, Clementina is celebrated for her seemingly unchanging persona and her connection to Afro-Brazilian traditions, while Carolina is criticized for her transformation after acquiring fame and some financial stability and portrayed as a uniquely peculiar figure, disconnected from any broader customs.

Chapter 3 demonstrates how Carolina’s and Clementina’s roles as official cultural representatives contributed to the image of race and gender in Brazil. Each woman was selected by an official or government body to stand for a specific element of “Brazilianess”, either on a local or international level. I argue that their selection as cultural representatives demonstrates the importance of certain aspects of black femininity to the formation of Brazilian national identity, despite the fact that these aspects (poverty, “primitive” styling) might not always have been flattering. It also put each woman in the position of cultural mediator themselves, lifting them out of the social sphere that they typically inhabited and allowing them to circulate amongst other groups, interpreting parts of culture that were specific to the context in which they grew up and became cultural producers in their own right.
I first focus on Clementina’s experiences as a representative of the ideology of racial and cultural mixture when she was sent to perform as part of the Brazilian delegation to the Festival of Black Arts in Dakar, Senegal in 1966. The choice of Clementina and other artists who demonstrated racial and cultural mixture as representatives illustrated the military dictatorship’s official promotion of the ideology of racial democracy at the time. This journey was followed shortly thereafter by a subsequent government-sponsored trip to the Cannes film festival in France, during which Clementina not only represented Brazil, but also participated and contributed to an ongoing tradition of Franco-Brazilian cultural exchange.

Carolina’s position in relation to cultural mediation also shifted after she gained notoriety, when was invited to speak at a variety of gatherings, serving as a representative of the poor while also being celebrated as a unique figure who was able to rise above the tragedy of her circumstances. I examine her relationship with the São Paulo black literary elite, a group that celebrated Carolina’s success, attempting to embrace her as one of their own, despite the chasm of disparity that stretched between them. Finally, I look closely at Carolina’s experiences as a mediator in the Southern Cone when she traveled to Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay on a publicity tour for the Spanish translation of her book. During this journey she served as a representative of both the Brazilian and worldwide poor, and was often expected to speak for others in similar situations to the one that she had experienced over her years in Canindé. This chapter demonstrates that dynamic relationships of cultural mediation move and change over time, showing that the mediated can indeed become mediators themselves.
In the fourth and final chapter, I look at the development of each woman’s legacy, examining how their work has inspired others. Clementina has become a symbol of legitimacy and authenticity that are specifically tied to Afro-Brazilian culture and the world of samba, and using her as a reference increases the status of those musicians and artists who reference her. Mentioning her or revering her in their own songs allows a little of her legitimacy to rub off on artists who celebrate her. This legacy was deepened through cultural projects such as *Seis e Meia* and *Projeto Pixinguinha*, government initiatives designed to bring “música de boa qualidade” to the masses, revealing overarching views about the relationship between culture and social class. By looking at recent rereleases of her work, I address questions of accessibility and elite status in the culture of production.

Carolina’s life and work also inspired others in many ways. Here I take a close look at the theatrical adaptation of *Quarto de Despejo* in the year following its publication, focusing particularly on the portrayal of poverty through performance and returning once again to the idea of authenticity. I close the chapter with a comparison of the different understandings of Carolina’s work and significance between Brazilian and international audiences, showing that while Brazilian audiences are primarily preoccupied with the classification of the genre of her work, international readers and critics instead appreciate her for her symbolism of the struggles of poverty and social injustice. In this final chapter, I demonstrate that the lives and work of Carolina and Clementina reaches beyond their own production, continuing to acquire significance long after their deaths.

Both Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus ultimately passed away in economic poverty, which demonstrates the continued marginalization of Afro-Brazilian
women within the rigid social hierarchy of twentieth century Brazil. Their discovery and time in the spotlight closely coincided with Brazil’s most recent period of military dictatorship, which occurred between 1964 and 1985. Many of the ideas that were conveyed about their value and significance were inherently linked to trends in social thinking from the time, particularly ideas about interracial mixture and interaction, the relationship between the working class and the intellectual middle class, and the connection between perceptions of change and authenticity. Contemporary society continues to grapple with these concepts despite the passage of time, meriting the examination I conduct in the following pages.
Chapter 1
Cultural Discovery, Influence, and Acts of Mediation

In Art Worlds (1982), Howard Becker shows that works of art are not created in a vacuum, but are the result of collaboration and cooperation between several people. Artistic work relies on the joint activity of many different people in multiple capacities, from the formulation of the original idea of the creative work, the manufacture and distribution of the necessary materials, “support” activities, response to the work, creating and maintaining the rationale that legitimizes the work as something that is worth doing. The acts of creating artwork and releasing the work into the broader world where others can experience it are different aspects of cultural production. For almost all who create cultural work, it is impossible to accomplish both of these aspects without the help of others. This is almost guaranteed to be the case for artists, musicians, and writers who belong to marginalized social groups. In order to record a piece of music or publish a book, the artist must have contacts within the cultural institutions, such as publishing houses and record companies, that can make this happen.

This project focuses on the cultural production of Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus, two Afro-Brazilian women who followed similar trajectories in their lives and work. Carolina was a poor woman who lived in the São Paulo favela of Canindé and gained national recognition with the publication of her personal diary.
Clementina was a singer with a distinct voice who achieved a significant audience after her “discovery” at the age of sixty-four.

Both women were active in late twentieth century Brazil, a time and place that were marked by a high level of social stratification. Racial and economic hierarchies produced a dramatically unequal society, in which the majority of the population was poor, uneducated, and lacked many basic resources. Most of the disenfranchised were of mixed racial heritage that was the product of Brazil’s colonial history of slavery. This group was dominated by a privileged group of white elites, who held the majority of the country’s wealth. Both Brazilians and foreigners celebrated Brazil for many years as a “racial democracy,” or a society without racial divisions, but the majority of its poor have always been of African descent. Members of the white Brazilian middle class and elite have held positions in institutions that have the capacity to distribute cultural products, serving as “gatekeepers” that decide what writing, music, or performance is worthy of distribution. In order to gain recognition as members of an underprivileged majority, marginalized Brazilian artists must conform to notions of acceptability and value that have been established by members of the white middle class and elite who hold powerful positions in the industry of cultural production and distribution.

In the broadest sense, artists depend on others who can connect them to an audience that will appreciate their work in order to be successful. Those who make this connection are cultural mediators: individuals who move between distinct social and cultural spaces, interacting with individuals in each space and sharing aspects of each domain with the new physical space they inhabit. The lack of a mediating figure does not eliminate the possibility of a work’s existence, but it does change its significance and reach. Carolina
Maria de Jesus wrote her first diary as a personal project, a way to maintain her sanity while living in the inhumane conditions of a São Paulo favela in the 1950s. The moment that she met and began to work with Audálio Dantas, her writing began to change shape and meaning—no longer for her own purposes, once it was published and met with unprecedented success, her work became a symbol of poverty and inequality on a grand scale.

Clementina de Jesus grew up singing traditional songs at home and in the samba community in Rio de Janeiro, but until she became acquainted with the poet and intellectual Hermínio Bello de Carvalho, she was just an old black woman singing while she worked as a domestic in the home of a white family. Each woman’s work was transformed through an interaction with someone from a different social group, with more access to formal creative resources. While each of them certainly would have existed and sung or written in some capacity, their work would not have developed as it did, and they certainly would not be remembered as they are today. In exploring the role of cultural mediation in the lives of Clementina de Jesus and Carolina Maria de Jesus in this chapter, I seek to understand the full context of the system that surrounded them and allowed them to reach a public audience.

Two aspects that tie Carolina and Clementina together are their “discovery,” and the way they interacted with their “discoverers.” I base my research in this chapter on the following questions: What did their discoverers see in them that they had not seen elsewhere? How was power expressed in these relationships, and how was it influenced by the dynamics of race and gender?
Prior to discovery, both Carolina and Clementina worked creatively in isolation. Apart from the people who were directly a part of their lives, no one knew about Carolina’s writing or Clementina’s singing, primarily because it was not distributed to a wider group of people. In order for their work to reach an audience, they had to be "discovered" by someone who had resources to divulge their work to a group outside of the people that they already knew. The person who filled this role can be classified as a cultural intermediary, a mediator, a gatekeeper, or a go-between, terms that I will describe in this section.

With increasing frequency, scholars have adopted the term “cultural intermediary” in the fields of cultural studies, sociology, and anthropology to describe individuals positioned between disparate domains. In addition to bridging different cultural realities, cultural intermediaries are often engaged in reproducing the cultural aspects of social class (Wright 105). Pierre Bourdieu first introduced the idea of the cultural intermediary in *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1984) in the following frequently cited passage:
The new petite bourgeoisie comes into its own in all the occupations involving presentation and representation (sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, fashion, decoration, and so forth) and in all the institutions providing symbolic goods and services. These include the various jobs in medical and social assistance (marriage guidance, sex therapy, dietetics, vocational guidance, pediatric advice etc) and in cultural production and organization (youth leaders, play leaders, tutors and monitors, radio and TV producers and presenters, magazine journalists), which have expanded considerably in recent years. (359)¹

Bourdieu’s “new cultural intermediaries” were a product of the growing middle class in 1960s France, and were in part distinguished by their role in the production of symbolic, as opposed to utilitarian and functional, goods. Part way between the working class and the elite, the bourgeoisie was busy inventing a variety of industries and occupations that bridged more traditional occupations, connecting the producer to the consumer in industry, the artist to the audience in the realm of the media and the arts, and the individual to their desired physical or mental state in the medical and social fields. Although Bourdieu’s description of new cultural intermediaries was based on France’s cultural reality in the 1960s, I argue that it can be applied to a variety of contexts, including Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s.

Bourdieu believed that the new petite bourgeoisie, or rising middle class, had a low level of educational capital, but compensated for this with “a great cultural capital of familiarity and a social capital of ‘connections’” (360). Their positions as cultural intermediaries developed from their ability to cross boundaries and recognize trends in taste and fashion. In the process, the cultural intermediaries that Bourdieu identified as the producers of television and radio cultural programs, together with journalists and

¹*Distinction* was based upon the studies conducted between 1963-68, published in France in 1979, and translated into English in 1984.
writers, invented “a whole series of genres halfway between legitimate culture and mass production” (323), hybrid genres that also “intermediated” between the traditionally separated domains of literature, news media, visual arts, and classical and popular musical styles, such as eyewitness news accounts, new musical styles that combined folk with classical music, and essays on the state of the world. Bourdieu proposes that many of these new forms emerged out of a desire on the part of the petite bourgeoisie to canonize the not-yet-legitimate arts, or the minor, marginal forms of legitimate art by approaching them with an academic sensibility, approaching them in an erudite manner in a form of “symbolic defiance” (360). Bourdieu implies that these new cultural intermediaries were largely concerned with creating a place in the world for themselves out of what was available to them at the time. Particularly, the new cultural intermediaries were “inventing an art of living which provides them with the gratifications and prestige of the individual at the least cost” (370). By blurring the conventional distinctions between old and new, high art and pop culture, and leisure and work, the new middle class constituted a meeting point between the striving working class and the disaffected educated middle class (Negus 503).

Although they were active in Brazil and not France, Hermínio Bello de Carvalho and Audálio Dantas closely resembled Bourdieu’s description of cultural mediators. Each came from a marginalized area in Brazil: Audálio was born in the impoverished sertão of Alagoas, Herminio’s family resided in Olaria, a working class neighborhood in the Zona Norte of Rio de Janeiro. Neither attended university, which gave them low levels of educational capital. They compensated for these disadvantages with high levels of cultural and social capital that were achieved through multiple personal and professional
connections. They recognized new trends in their respective areas of popular music and journalism, and created new forms of expression within them by combining disparate elements.

In *Distinction*, Bourdieu discussed the emergence of new cultural intermediaries as a generalized phenomenon, pointing out their existence in the broader scheme of the development of taste as it related to social class, but did little to explore their social significance on an individual level. The term *new cultural intermediary* has since been adopted in a very broad sense in cultural and sociological research, often in the discussion of cultural production, which has helped to augment its usefulness in the discussion of cultural phenomena. Paul Du Gay argues that while the work provides an account of the preferences of cultural intermediaries in the context of class, that it does not provide a sufficient picture (219). The picture Bourdieu paints of this social and economic group tends to avoid its internal differences, with little discussion of how its members’ gender, race, or ethnic identities might shape their influence and relationships with others. Keith Negus points out that Bourdieu’s focus on certain (particularly creative) occupations that can be classified as intermediary neglect others that are equally worthy of study, such as factory workers who stand between “creatives” and consumers, or the business managers of record companies, who control the financial resources that sign off on the financial flow that regulate certain aspects of the creative process (503). Wright emphasizes that Bourdieu’s focus on new cultural intermediaries in contrast to the centrality of the “individual creative genius” in cultural production denies the underlying system of systemic, organizational, and class relations that ultimately shapes both cultural production and consumption (109).
Bourdieu’s initial mention of new cultural intermediaries was the springboard for much consequent theoretical discussion on these in-between positions, but other European and North American scholars have approached the concept of cultural mediation through different vocabulary. In 1972, several years prior to the publication of *Distinction*, Paul Hirsch wrote about cultural production, describing the intermediary roles of gatekeepers (643), as contact men, or boundary-spanning units (649). For Hirsch, the media was “the primary institutional regulator of innovation,” that would either block or facilitate the distribution of a particular creative product through the amount of attention it shower upon it. Gatekeepers, such as disc jockeys, film critics, and book reviewers, are employed by the media industry to serve as style authorities and taste makers, yet maintain the image of autonomy. Through their position, they often determine how a particular cultural product will be received, and whether or not it will make it to the popular market. They mediate on behalf of the audience, or the consumer. Contact men, on the other hand, are the intermediaries that operate more closely to the cultural producer, or creator. Promoters, talent scouts, and press coordinators link the cultural organization (such as the record company or publishing house) to the artist community by contracting for new material, negotiating terms, and supervising production (649).

By defining and labeling each of these cultural intermediary positions, Hirsch attempted to break down the process of filtering new ideas and products in the flow from creative personnel to the managerial, institutional, and societal levels of cultural production (642). Nevertheless, this organizational breakdown of the process has been criticized for oversimplifying the method in which cultural products reach the market.
Negus argues that while Hirsch’s approach can provide insight into the habits and routines within media and culture organizations, it is also “limited by the assumption that cultural items simply appear at the ‘gates’ of the media or culture producing corporation, where they are either admitted or excluded” (510). In fact, cultural content is often specifically sought out with certain motives, such as perceived trends, underlying messages, or sales predictions in mind.

Other scholars have more critical views of the cultural intermediary position. Mike Featherstone writes of the growing demand for cultural intermediaries who have “the capacity to ransack various traditions and cultures in order to produce new symbolic goods, and in addition provide the necessary interpretations on their use” (19). While Featherstone’s interpretation is in line with Bourdieu’s writings, focusing on the intermediary’s in-between class position, he also emphasizes the contradictions that are inherent in their tastes and lifestyles, pointing out that “they identify with artists and intellectuals, yet … they have the apparent contradictory interests of sustaining the prestige and cultural capital of [cultural] enclaves, while at the same time popularizing and making them more accessible to wider audiences”.

Keith Negus approaches the term with a similar level of caution, pointing out that just as new cultural intermediaries help to create and circulate ideas and symbolic products, they also manipulate and conceal information through the same process (508) through the decision to promote certain aspects of an artist’s life or creative work. In order to approach the study of cultural intermediaries from a mindful standpoint, he emphasizes the need to focus on these figures’ “deliberate attempts to distort and conceal information, or circulate false ideas.” Negus also calls for more examination of the
strategies of inclusion and exclusion that are employed by intermediaries--while the cultural intermediary position may seem particularly fluid and open, it is only open to those with access to particular cultural, social, and financial resources that are often distributed along race and class lines. These figures then make decisions about the promotion of cultural products--often choosing to represent creative products produced by others with similar social backgrounds, as Negus cites, but sometimes deliberately seeking out “the other” as an exotic form. Hermínio’s and Audálio’s mediations reflect the latter in that they both promoted the work of individuals very different from themselves and their peers. In either scenario, these workers often use their access to cultural industries to maintain traditional or preexisting social boundaries and hierarchies (513). Negus supports this argument by describing the social background of key decision makers within the British music industry in the 1990s, almost all of whom were middle class white males with relatively elite educational backgrounds.

Other scholars agree that cultural mediation can reaffirm an imbalance of power and the unequal distribution of cultural resources. As Wright points out, “as the making of things is replaced with the making of meaning about things in late modernity, the cultural intermediary is a pivotal generator of meaning, not just about art and literature, but about ways of being” (110). While cultural intermediaries are capable of producing social change, they are also the reflections of other societal transformations, such as the expansion of higher education, and the development of an audience with sophisticated cultural tastes (119).

This discussion of the phenomenon of cultural mediation in the European and North American academic world is for the most part separate from a similar dialogue that has
developed in Brazilian cultural studies in recent decades. The anthropologist Gilberto Velho has frequently touched upon this theme, and many of his followers have similarly worked on the topic. Despite its importance in the previously mentioned literature, Velho engages minimally (if at all) with Bourdieu’s work on cultural intermediaries, but similarly identifies this position and its commonality without delving in to more profound research on the individuals who fill this role. Nonetheless, his discussion of cultural mediation in a Brazilian context is key for understanding the way that relationships form and develop in that particular culture, especially relating to Brazil’s colonial past and history of slavery.

Velho classifies the cultural intermediary (mediador cultural) as the role of those individuals who are interpreters and circulate between different social domains (Projeto e metamorfose 81). They are the opposite of marginalized in that instead of belonging to no particular group, or a group on the fringe, they claim association with two or more groups, being instead specialists in the integration of different lifestyles and world visions. In this process, they translate and interpret aspirations, desires, and values of different groups. Velho cites several cultural intermediary positions that are common in Brazilian society, such as pais and mães de santo, doctors, popular artists, and politicians (82). These figures are not unrooted or marginal beings, but instead people who have developed a capacity to deal with two or more social codes. Their professional and personal success depends upon their performance as intermediaries, and their ability to move freely between different groups.

Velho’s initial mention of cultural intermediaries is divorced from the previous English and French language discussion of the term based upon Bourdieu’s definition.
While Velho employs the work of many international scholars (most notably Howard Becker), he does not cite Bourdieu. His work inspired a number of younger Brazilian scholars whose work is compiled in the 2001 volume *Mediação Cultura e Política*, which takes on the important task of exploring the actual work of specific cultural intermediaries. In this publication, Velho himself expands upon his idea, citing two examples of cultural intermediaries who are central and specific to the Brazilian context, and are inextricably tied to power imbalances based upon race and social class. Maids, or *empregadas domésticas*, who often live with their employers during the workweek, are a model of transit between different social worlds given their unrestricted access to the world of their usually upper- and middle-class employers. It is important to remember, however, that the mediation in this context is unidirectional--while the maids are embedded in the lives of their employers, their employers frequently know little to nothing about their employees lives outside of work. Domestic workers do not necessarily want to mediate between two groups, but it comes with the territory regardless of both parties’ intentions. In contrast, capoeira mestres engage in a deliberate and intentional mediation project, forming connections with their (often white and middle class) students that they use to promote a clear discourse of the valorization of Afro-Brazilian culture (Velho *Mediação* 23). Central to this pattern is its inversion of the traditional mediated relationship, which often involves someone with greater social capital (more educational, cultural, and economic resources, and often of lighter skin) reaching out to and assisting someone who is lower on the totem pole.

Perhaps the most interesting point that Velho makes in his introduction is that there are two varieties of intermediary relationships, traditional and contemporary. Lawyers,
priests, managers, foremen, and even butlers hold traditional intermediary roles. While
they move through different social arenas, these intermediaries sustain the imbalance of
power and economic inequality. On the other hand, intermediaries that Velho considers to
be more contemporary and “dynamic” do indeed allow for social transformation and
crossover. Further exploration of the scenarios that allow for the circulation of these more
dynamic types is essential to understand how they contribute to positive social change.

One of Velho’s students, Hermano Vianna, has produced particularly interesting
work on the role of cultural mediation in different contexts in Rio de Janeiro. Vianna
approaches cultural mediation in _The Mystery of Samba_, in which he explores how
encounters between Brazilian intellectuals and working class musicians in 1920s Rio de
Janeiro helped to shape and consolidate the samba into a musical genre, and later as a
symbol of Brazil as a nation. Although Vianna is just as apt to label the meetings between
different social and cultural groups as evidence of transculturation as cultural mediation,
the process he details nevertheless relied heavily upon the relationships between
individuals who bridged cultures that were normally divided.

In a text published in Velho’s aforementioned edited volume, Vianna approaches
cultural mediation from a different angle by describing the intermediary role adopted by
the visual artist Hélio Oiticica in his regular interactions with the residents of the
Mangueira favela in Rio de Janeiro, who he regularly interacted with through the
neighborhood’s samba school. Basing his conclusions on Oiticica’s writings, Vianna
emphasizes that artists are particularly well suited to the role of cultural intermediary
because they occupy a “special position” in society, one that is less susceptible to social
conditioning and expectations (41). Because they are less bound by what society expects of them, they have greater freedom to move between different social domains.

Other Brazilian scholars have approached the notion of mediation beyond the realm of contemporary cultural production, particularly from a historical standpoint. Sonia Giacomini describes the central role of the black female slave in colonial Brazil as a bridge between two races, white and black, referring to her as an “embaixadora da senzala na casa-grande, e vice-versa” (19), a position that has both benefits and drawbacks. While slave women in Brazil as a social group are distant from other scholars’ conceptions of cultural intermediaries, they did nonetheless hold central roles that bridged the gap between slave and slaveholding cultures, spending many hours in the *casa grande*, or master’s house.

Regardless of the terminology used to describe them, cultural mediators function in the in-between spaces, bridging disparate cultural groups and social classes. Their role can be positive, creating new creative forms and establishing connections between otherwise separate social worlds. They can also use their connections to maintain the dominant social order, manipulating or concealing information to support circumstances that favor certain groups. Nevertheless, cultural mediators function as generators of meaning, presenting new material to audiences that are unfamiliar with it in a way that ascribes significance. In the rest of this chapter, I will explore of Clementina de Jesus and Carolina Maria de Jesus experienced the process of cultural mediation and how it affected their work.
Clementina de Jesus: *A Taberna da Glória as a Site of Cultural Discovery*

Prior to her initial encounter with Hermínio Bello de Carvalho, Clementina de Jesus lived most of her life anonymously, in the same manner as other working class Afro-Brazilian women living in Rio de Janeiro in the late twentieth century. She was born the granddaughter of slaves in the small town of Valença in 1900 or 1901, around 150 kilometers from the state and then national capital of Rio de Janeiro. For Clementina, music was part of a greater oral tradition: as a child, she spent many hours alongside her mother Amélia, a laundress who would sing while she washed clothes in the brook behind their small house. Through these interactions, Clementina’s mother introduced her to a wealth of songs that had been passed down through the generations of their family, serving as a link between Clementina and her family’s expressive past.

As a teenager, she moved to the capital, where she would spend the rest of her life in working class neighborhoods such as Jacarepaguá, Mangueira, and Engenho Novo, always participating in traditional samba culture and becoming a fixture at popular religious festivals. After many years of anonymity, Clementina came to represent this group, symbolizing their attributes, characteristics, and connections to a long cultural history. This metamorphosis occurred thanks to her “discovery” by a member of the *carioca* intellectual middle class, a young poet named Hermínio Bello de Carvalho, and took place over a period of time in several locations that Clementina would frequent at the time.

Hermínio’s first reported glimpse of Clementina was particularly significant because it served as an example of the intersection of two very different lives in a large
city between members of social groups that didn’t often interact. Hermínio was a young intellectual who lived in the Zona Sul neighborhood of Glória, and at the time he was attempting to launch a new cultural movement called Movimento Menestrel, “apresentado como um movimento de vanguard e consistia efetivamente em uma panfletagem literária” (Pavan 73). Hermínio would select poems by both recognized and unknown poets, print them on cheap paper, and distribute them at movie theaters, bars, and clubs around the city. His intention was to bring together popular and erudite cultural forms and audiences, a concept he would later extend to the realm of musical performance.⁴

Born in 1935 in Olaria in the Zona Norte to a black mother and a white father, Hermínio grew up as the youngest of thirteen children in modest surroundings.⁵

After a mass in honor of Nossa Senhora da Glória in August of 1963, Clementina was singing and improvising sambas with a group of friends in the restaurant Taberna da Glória when Hermínio Bello de Carvalho happened to pass by on the street on his return from the beach. In his bathing suit and without the identification documents Brazilian citizens are required to carry at all times, he didn’t dare enter the bar to inquire about the woman who had attracted his attention from street outside. Clementina, a working class black woman of sixty-three, lived far from the wealthy and sophisticated Zona Sul where she had come to worship a Catholic symbol. Although Hermínio, a young man of twenty-eight, had been born to a humble family, he had joined the intellectual middle class. Together with other young people from this demographic, Hermínio spent time relaxing

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⁴ Menestrel translates as minstrel, poet, or bard.
⁵ Hermínio identified as mulatto in a 1995 interview at the Museu da Imagem e do Som in Rio de Janeiro: “Papai era louro de olho azul, mamãe era parda… então nasceu aqui esse mulato de vez, lindo de morrer.”
and socializing on Rio de Janeiro’s beaches. He lived in an apartment on the steep hill behind the Taberna da Glória, and that night he walked by still dressed for the beach. There he encountered a woman who lived a very different, but equally Brazilian and carioca, reality. Clementina’s deep and rough voice, her unmistakably black features, and her repertoire of traditional songs represented everything that was marginalized in the mainstream culture of Rio de Janeiro in the early 1960s.

Clementina did not frequent the beach, but spent instead much of her social life amongst sambistas, who would gather together in the city’s many botequins, around small tables stocked with beer and snacks, or in each others’ homes to play samba music and improvise its verses in the partido alto style. Partido alto is a musical tradition that had been developing since the early twentieth century in the homes of the illustrious tias baianas.6 Clementina also attended many of the city’s popular religious festivals. She was a religious woman who frequently attended Catholic mass, and who was a constant presence at the popular festivals of São Jorge, Nossa Senhora da Penha, and Nossa Senhora da Glória. These festivals would begin with mass but also include musical performances, and Clementina found many opportunities to improvise in verse at such events.

Hermínio knew many musicians, but he was essentially a timid man. When he first glimpsed Clementina from the street on that night in August, asked that his friend Leonardo Castilho invite Clementina and Pé Grande to come to Hermínio’s house. After

6 Partido alto differs from other forms of samba in that it is sung by multiple individuals who take turns improvising verses. João da Baiana described it as such: “No partido alto cantava-se em dupla, trio ou quarteto, nós tirávamos um verso e o pessoal cantava um de cada vez” (qtd. in Moura 93).
several drinks in the Glória apartment, Clementina recorded several songs on a small tape recorder that she had learned during her childhood in Valença. In a later interview, Leonardo Castilho remembered Clementina’s amazement at the sound of her own voice coming out of the machine, yelling “Pé, é a minha voz! É a minha voz, Pé!” (qtd. in Bevilaqua 67)

Clementina’s unfamiliarity with recording technology was undoubtedly part of her appeal for both Hermínio and the audience that he hoped to introduce her to. She represented Brazil’s African past with her knowledge of songs passed down to her through the generations, but were increasingly less familiar in the modernizing urban landscape to the general population. Clementina was a member of a social group that frequently interacted with the middle class, not through social events and musical performances, but through services performed in middle class homes. Velho and Kuschnir emphasize that while empregadas domésticas ”tem acesso ao mundo dos patrões que lhes faz conviver com eles, o inverso não é verdadeiro” (21). The relationship between these two groups is one of economic necessity and the luxury of middle class living, but not one of cultural interaction. In this context, Clementina’s outgoing personality, endearing nature, and maternal characteristics made her an access point, or intermediary, through which Hermínio and others could enter into contact with the black lower classes that were the creators of “authentic” musical culture. In turn, Hermínio functioned as an intermediary that allowed Clementina to reach an audience that saw her as an “other” who signified positive notions of Brazil’s past. Apart from owning a tape recorder, he knew other musicians, as well as cultural producers, theater directors, journalists, and record label owners. Demonstrating Bourdieu’s notion that
cultural intermediaries rely on the “social capital of ‘connections’” (Distinction 360), Hermínio’s wealth was in contacts, not in financial resources. He used these contacts to promote Clementina as an artist and as a symbol laden with significance about the “roots” of Brazilian culture. 

As is often the case, this mediated relationship worked both ways. Each individual took elements of their own social domain and used them to interact with people from another. Hermínio gave Clementina access to the world of mass media, allowing her voice to be heard by others outside of the small world of working class black sambistas in Rio. Clementina, meanwhile, provided Hermínio’s (and by extension her audience’s) access to a past that was previously restricted to others with similar experiences. Traditional songs learned in a rural environment at the turn of the twentieth century were brought to life once again, appreciated by people who were previously unaware of their existence, their beauty, and their symbolic connection to the lives of slaves. 

Hermínio’s first formal intervention in Clementina’s artistic career was by organization of her first official public performance. As part of Movimento Menestrel and with the help of his friend Kleber Santos, director of a small performance space in the Botafogo neighborhood called the Teatro Jovem, Hermínio organized a concert that presented both erudite, or classical, and popular music on stage to the same audience. The well-known guitarist Turíbio Santos performed classical compositions by Villa-Lobos, Gaspar Saez, and Fernando Sor during the first half of the show, and Clementina followed him, accompanied by the guitarist César Faria, his son Paulinho da Viola, and Elton Medeiros (Bevilaqua 68). Clementina told of her anxiety around performing as follows:

According to this story, Hermínio and Clementina’s husband, Albino Pé Grande, wielded sizable influence over Clementina’s debut. Hermínio decided on a specific repertoire for her musical introduction, picking certain songs that she had sung for him and leaving others out. Pé Grande, in contrast, stood in the wings offering her sips of “liquid courage” in order to help her take the stage for the first time. In order to arrive onstage, Clementina refused her husband’s offer of more liquor to face the unfamiliar and perform in front of others. When she eventually overcame her fear, it was replaced by strong emotion. The song mentioned above would become one of the mainstays of her repertoire over the next twenty years.

Benguelê-ê, Benguelê-ê
Benguelê-ê ó mamãe Zimba, Benguelê
Tracatraca eu vi Nanã tatarecou
Tracatraca eu vi Nanã tatarecou
Ô kizumba, kizumba, kizumba
Vamos saravá
Quem tá no reino
Vamos saravá
Mamãe Zimba chegou no terreiro
Cafioti pediu pra falar
Mamãe Zimba mandou me chamar
Vamos saravá, vamos saravá
Benguelê is a traditional Afro-Brazilian song frequently performed by Pixinguinha, a musician who was central to the development of samba and who occasionally performed and recorded with Clementina. Recorded by Pixinguinha in 1946, Benguelê fit into a part of Pixinguinha’s repertoire that he called “cenas africanas”—songs that had a particularly rural character to them, regardless of their actual origins (Lopes 19).

Clementina’s and Turíbio’s successful Movimento Menestrel performance inspired Hermínio to create others like it that also featured pairings of classical and popular musicians. This event confirmed Hermínio’s status as a cultural mediator and as the force that brought popular and elite genres together, the unifying concept behind Movimento Menestrel. The following year, he returned to the Teatro Jovem to present Rosa de Ouro, a musical show that emphasized the popular in a very particular way. The following section explores the spaces and interactions that led to its creation.

Zicartola: Cultural Mediation Between Morro and Asfalto

In circles of cultural production, like-minded artists and fans frequently congregate in certain areas to socialize, network, and collaborate with others, creating “hot spots” for artistic movements. These spaces function as physical manifestations of the process of cultural mediation. In 1960s Rio de Janeiro, the bar and restaurant Zicartola—a musical venue in the city center that would become known in carioca culture as a meeting place for individuals from disparate social backgrounds who were interested in musical expression—was one such locale. Zicartola opened on an upper floor of an old colonial
building at Rua da Carioca, 53, in 1963. The venue was inspired by social and musical gatherings held at the home of Cartola and his common law wife Dona Zica.

Cartola (born Agenor de Oliveira, 1908 −1980) was a pivotal figure in the musical world of Rio de Janeiro, composing many poetic sambas that were sold to and recorded by well-known singers such as Mário Reis for radio airplay. He grew up in the middle-class South Zone neighborhood of Catete, living for a time in nearby Laranjeiras, but his family moved to Mangueira when he was eleven years old after falling on hard times. He spent most of his life in the favela, beginning to compose sambas at the age of sixteen (Oliveira 1967). Despite his renown as a composer, Cartola did not succeed in crossing over as a singer himself, and only recorded his first album in 1974, at the age of sixty-six.

As an adult, Cartola spent several years away from Mangueira in the late 1940s and early 1950s after suffering a series of illnesses and personal difficulties, during which time his whereabouts were largely unknown and he did not participate in the Mangueira samba school or divulge his musical compositions (Castro Zicartola 43). In the early 1950s, the writer Sérgio Porto, who published under the name of Stanislaw Ponte Preta, “rediscovered” Cartola at an Ipanema bar while he was on a break from his job washing cars in a parking garage. Upon returning to Mangueira, he found that the traditional

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7 Soon after, Porto wrote the following in his daily newspaper column: “Vocês sabem por que o genial Cartola –Agenor de Oliveira–, tantas vezes citado nos sambas de outros compositores, fundador da Estação Primeira de Mangueira, responsável pelos melhores sambas do repertório do outrora grande Francisco Alves, passou a acordar às 4 da manhã? Para pegar o biscate de lavador de carros numa garagem de Copacabana, pois a velhice já não lhe permite prosseguir na profissão de pedreiro. E, todavia, Cartola continua a fazer sambas com a mesma genialidade de outros tempos, apenas não encontra cantores ou fábricas de discos que se interessem por eles.” (undated, qtd. in Silva and Oliveira Filho 165) Cartola worked at the Garagem Oceânica on Rua Visconde de Pirajá in Ipanema.
samba that he had always written and played was no longer in vogue, having been replaced by the slower *samba-canção* and *bolero* styles. By the early 60s, however, demand was growing for the roots styles that he was known for, and he frequently entertained others in his home.

On returning to Mangueira, Cartola reconnected to his childhood acquaintance Dona Zica (Euzébia Silva de Oliveira, 1913 – 2003) and they moved together to the city center, at Rua das Andradas, 81. Their home soon became a meeting ground where several other samba musicians, such as Nelson Cavaquinho, Zé Keti, Elton Medeiros, Carlos Cachaça, and Nelson Sargento (Silva and Oliveira Filho 179), gathered to eat and drink, talk, and play music.

Ernesto Agostini was a friend of a friend of Cartola’s, a young middle class businessman and samba fan who had grown tired of the Zona Sul bars’ strict policies against samba and impromptu drum circles, and began to fantasize about “um botequim ao contrário. Onde o errado seja não cantar samba e não poder batucar” (181). With the administrative and financial assistance of Ernesto and several of his cousins, the gatherings in Cartola’s home soon took on a commercial dimension when they opened Zicartola, a bar and restaurant intended to function as a public space where similar meetings could take place and be accessible to others outside of the small group of friends. Dona Zica, who already prepared food for the gatherings at home, had harbored a dream of opening a small restaurant for years, so the venture was a convergence of both of their interests.

Zicartola opened in 1962 and became a successful space for encounters between intellectuals, left-wing activists, university students, and bossa nova musicians with
working class sambistas. The bar’s downtown location between the Zona Norte and the Zona Sul encouraged residents from different parts of the city to come together around music, allowing for the development of new cultural forms through the interaction between people who generally tended to stick to their own parts of town.

Zicartola was hardly the first space in which this exchange had or would occur in the city of Rio de Janeiro, a rapidly growing metropolis that was marked by extreme economic and cultural differences amongst its residents. Mônica Velloso describes how Rio cafés at the turn of the twentieth century became “animados núcleos da vida pública urbana” where intellectuals would meet and discuss not only intellectual trends, but also burgeoning republican and abolitionist ideas (231). In the 1930s and 40s, the area around the Teatro Municipal and Cinelândia in the city center was peppered with small cafés and bars, each the meeting ground of a different social tribe, made up of individuals bound together by similar creative occupations. These cafes and bars became grounds of interaction, in which like-minded individuals would socialize and relax together, introducing common acquaintances to one another and discussing projects and potential gigs.8 The Rio de Janeiro music world was also strongly influenced by infamous parties

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8 Café Nice, located at Avenida Rio Branco, 274, was particularly important to Rio’s musical culture, according to Nestor de Holanda: “Ninguém negociava música fora do Nice. Compositor dificilmente colocava produções, se não comparecesse à famosa esquina e lá se plantasse para fazer amizades e esperar sua vez. Cantor que não passasse pelo café tinha dificuldades de renovar o repertório. Era o Nice, talvez, o maior mercado (do mundo) de música popular. Porque não temos notícia de outro local, na época, tão movimentado, tão procurado, e onde canções de todos os gêneros tenham sido tão vultuosamente transacionados. A qualquer hora, pois o café abria cedo e só fechava à meia-noite, ali se encontrava gente ligada à música popular, em função. Quadro comum era cantor cercado de 2 ou 3 compositores, todos batendo o ritmo na mesa ou na caixade-fósforos, preparando gravações. Frequentes, igualmente, os músicos se escreviam as melodias dos que compunham de ouvido” (121).
held in the homes of the *tias baianas* in the area around the city’s port, which are remembered for their social mixture and for their highly hybridized musical output.9

Zicartola functioned in a similar fashion. Frequented by both older and younger generations as well as people from different economic backgrounds and cultural influences, it became a space in which to negotiate the shifts in the significance and style of Brazilian music. What further distinguished Zicartola from comparable spaces of interaction that had been celebrated in the past, however, was its relationship to political issues and figures during a time that was fraught with many changes on a national scale.

In Brazil in the early sixties, the União dos Estudantes (UNE) and its cultural division, the Centro Popular de Cultura (CPC), actively created connections between elite culture and the working classes, attempting to combine the two in a way that the authoritarian dictatorship that took power in April of 1964 saw as highly problematic. According to Carlos Lyra, a well-known bossa nova singer and composer as well as the musical director of the CPC, “Zicartola é uma consequencia de tudo que aconteceu antes” (qtd. in Castro *Zicartola* 48). Along with Lyra, many artists who frequented Zicartola had previously worked together through the CPC, creating significant overlap between the artistic and political motives between the two. The CPC promoted popular culture as an instrument for raising consciousness in the fight against perceived cultural imperialism.

Zicartola grew out of a particularly romanticized view of the people, or “o povo” as an expression of authentic Brazilianness that was largely promoted by the CPC in the years leading up to the coup. The concept of *revolutionary romanticism* as introduced by

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*See further discussion of the *tias baianas* and their social context in Chapter 2.*
Marcelo Ridenti is useful to approach not only the context from which Zicartola emerged, but also other cultural manifestations of the 1960s and 70s.

The new authoritarian regime saw this idealization of the common man as dangerous, and closed down the CPC and the UNE, but not before supporters of the April 1 1964 coup set fire to the UNE’s physical headquarters in Rio’s Praia do Flamengo neighborhood. Zicartola then became an alternate meeting space for political activists who were running out of places in which to encounter. According to Sérgio Cabral, “… veio o golpe, o CPC foi fechado, a UNE foi fechada e sobrou Zicartola, fomos todos para o Zicartola, lá era o nosso reduto” (87). Victoria Langland writes that, “the nature of student mobilizing in these postcoup years was incompatible with the maintenance of a stationary location” (224), leading to the adoption of unconventional spaces of encounter like Zicartola.

Zicartola was highly influential in Rio de Janeiro music scene. Samba de raiz soon began to catch on amongst the youth of the Zona Sul, who had not previously been exposed to the tradition, given that it originated (and mostly stayed) in the poorer parts of the city. With the help of certain artists from the Zona Sul, old-style samba gained popularity by acquiring an aura of authenticity and purity that was largely absent from the popular music on the radio at the time. In early 1960s Brazil, both bossa nova musicians

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10 The term samba-de-raiz, or “roots samba” refers to a traditional form of samba. Trotta and Castro emphasize that instead of specifying a particular style, this term is characterized by its opposition to other more commercial forms of samba (64).
and intellectual researchers were on a search for the origins of Brazilian culture. Ridenti emphasizes that this tendency to search for the roots of Brazilian culture was not merely a return to the past, but instead a quest for social and cultural elements that could be used to construct a future utopia (25). Since popular cultural manifestations were widely believed to be more pure, samba was seen as a raw material in the formation of a Brazilian musical identity (Bevilaqua et. al. 66). For this audience, Zicartola was a key locale for the performance of this authenticity, allowing them to connect to the samba that they thought of as a pure cultural manifestation. Nara Leão was central in this shift in samba’s perception, given her exalted role in the bossa nova movement.

As a pretty young white woman from Copacabana who personified the cool and stylish attitude of the bossa novistas, Nara recorded compositions such as *O Sol Nascerá* (Cartola and Elton Medeiros), *Diz Que Foi Por Aí* (Zé Keti and Hortênsio Rocha), and *Luz Negra* (Nélson Cavaquinho and Amâncio Cardoso) on her first album *Nara* (1964). She introduced a new sound to her established audience through her trademark singing style, serving as the intermediary between the two groups and later allowing them to bridge their formerly isolated styles. Nara created a bridge between bossa nova fans, most of whom were middle-class *Zona Sul* residents, and the working class composers from the favelas and the *Zona Norte* whom she met at Zicartola. However, she needed a cultural intermediary of her own in order to access types of music that were geographically and stylistically distant. Carlos Lyra reports that he had to convince Nara to record unfamiliar songs by altering them.
While Nara’s recordings introduced her middle-class fans to the “new” sound of traditional samba, she in turn needed someone to ease the transition between sharply divergent styles—to help her to understand sounds that had originated from an unfamiliar, yet physically proximate place. Not only were the songs’ composers of a different economic class, but the songs were written and played by men, which further increased the distance between their original renditions and how Nara was able to perform them. Carlos Lyra was a male musician who was from the Zona Sul, yet the time he had spent with musicians like Cartola enabled him to “translate” the songs into a language that Nara could understand, and then interpret in her own way.

In addition to creating a space for interaction between musicians of different backgrounds, Zicartola also functioned as a site for the debut of new artists, such as Paulo Cesar Batista de Faria (b. 1942), who would adopt the artistic name of Paulinho da Viola. Paulo César was the son of César Faria, a well-known guitarist and musician, and had grown up around musicians, spending many hours with his father at the home of the choro musician Jacob do Bandolim. In 1963 he was working as a bank teller when he crossed paths with Hermínio Bello de Carvalho and Elton Medeiros, who encouraged him to perform at Zicartola. Eventually he would receive his first payment for performance from Cartola himself, a fact that has become the stuff of legend for many in the samba world (Oliveira 1993).
Paulinho composed and played sambas, which by all accounts included him in the *sambista* group that frequented Zicartola, but his family was middle class and he had grown up in the *Zona Sul* neighborhood of Botafogo. Paulinho had no connections to the favelas of Rio, but his participation in a musical form that was synonymous with the city’s poor neighborhoods lumped him into the generalized category of “*sambista do morro*.” Castro points out that this term is frequently used to identify musicians’ status “numa vivência nas encostas do Rio de Janeiro, onde, muitas vezes, não estão localizados os sambistas ou as escolas. Mesmo que se encontre no ‘asfalto’, a escola simbolicamente remete aos sambistas fundadores, profundamente marcados pela experiência de viver nos morros da cidade” (20). The experience of poverty and marginalization that surrounded the emergence of samba as a musical form is inherent to the type of music being played, regardless of the social class or economic background of its composer or performer. The connection to samba’s marginalized roots was further affirmed by the constant presence and approval of older sambistas in addition to Cartola, who were the bar’s mainstays.

Nelson Cavaquinho was born in the *Zona Norte* neighborhood of Tijuca, but spent much of his life in Mangueira. Ismael Silva’s home was at the base of the Morro do Estácio de Sá. Zé Keti grew up in the *Zona Norte* neighborhoods of Inhaúma and Bras de Pina. In addition to their age, each musician’s neighborhood of origin conferred a level of working class legitimacy to both their music and the places where they spent time.

Clementina de Jesus was a common fixture at many of the popular samba-based events in Rio de Janeiro, so her presence at Zicartola was to be expected. When Hermínio arrived at Zicartola’s opening party, he reconnected with Clementina, who was drinking beer in the kitchen. Although Clementina had frequented samba events throughout her
life, from this moment onward her attendance at most of these events was tied to Hermínio’s influence and mediation. The following exchange about Clementina was recorded during a 1995 interview between Sérgio Cabral and Herminio Bello de Carvalho staged by the Museu da Imagem e do Som:

Sergio Cabral: Mais antes disso, você levou-a [Clementina] a cantar no Zicartola. Foi numa festa, numa reunião de imprensa. Você levou, e ela cantou. E eu me lembro do espanto das pessoas, ficaram impressionadas com aquela senhora, aquela musa, aquela voz! E eu me lembro que alguém, alguém falou assim — É a nossa Bessie Smith!

Hermínio Bello de Carvalho: Nossa Ma Rainey!

SC: Aí eu, o Lúcio Rangel que conhecia a música americana profundamente também, falou assim, não, é a nossa Ma Rainey.

During earlier encounters with Clementina, Hermínio had assumed the role of informal researcher and fan, marveling at the power of Clementina’s voice and presence and recording it for future reference. From this meeting at Zicartola onward, he became instead her producer and friend, arranging for her to sing in specific contexts, channeling her talents into specific circumstances, and helping her to reach new audiences.

This quotation also reveals Clementina’s reception amongst a particular audience at Zicartola, an audience that was made up of employees of a company— not just any company, but a company that chose to hold a meeting at the most popular music spot in the city. It reveals how this audience--who were clearly educated Brazilians with regular jobs, who were cultured and had an awareness of international music trends, particularly the black music “discoveries” that were taking place outside of Brazil--saw Clementina. In Clementina’s voice and appearance, intellectuals found something that they were searching for, as expressed by Sérgio Cabral: “Ela era um símbolo do mundo que a gente
gostava, convivia, mas que ela tinha mais conhecimentos desse mundo, porque ela conviveu e guardou” (Bevilaqua et. al. 66). This world had its roots in the past, much as was the case with both Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith.

Zicartola was an important context for the creation and discovery of both new and old kinds of Brazilian music in the context of early 1960s Rio de Janeiro. But its importance as a center for cultural mediation is augmented by its role in the production of new ideas and new cultural events that would become significant in their own right. In interviews and in his own writings, Hermínio Bello de Carvalho cites Zicartola as a “ponto de encontro das esquerdas,” (Carvalho interview) “mais de um restaurante, foi realmente um centro… um pólo de concentração de artistas, intelectuais” (Oliveira 1993).

And perhaps most notably:

“...Eu credito ao Zicartola a existência tanto do Show Opinião quanto do Rosa de Ouro, porque ali se trazia, se discutia nossas inquietações, botava para fora tudo que estava acontecendo e era aquela expectativa sempre do que ia acontecer, aquela coisa que estava no ar, uma efervescência muito grande, uma inquietação. Então acho que o Zicartola tem essa importância como aglutinador de idéias e como concentrador.” (qtd. in Castro 80)

For Hermínio, Zicartola was ground zero for political and cultural agitation during a period that was marked by significant political change. In April of 1964, the Brazilian military staged a coup that resulted in an authoritarian dictatorship that lasted for over twenty years. Against the backdrop of the Cold War and the Cuban Revolution, the coup was a response to the left-leaning, populist government of João Goulart (September 1961 – April 1964). Among intellectuals and cultural figures, these years were a time of protest and criticism, first in relation to many of the political changes that were occurring, and then in response to the (comparatively light) restrictions that were enforced by the new authoritarian power. In the first four years of dictatorship between 1964 and 1968,
musicians and artists were treated with a light hand in comparison with the punishments they would receive after the implementation of Ato Institucional 5 (AI-5). Social and political commentary and criticism were common in the artistic production of this period, and its creators were rarely punished. In fact, according to Roberto Schwarz writing in 1969, “the cultural presence of the left was not suppressed during this period, rather it has continued to flourish and grow to this day” (127). At Zicartola, the previously mentioned political discussions that were often led by members of the CPC and the UNE soon laid the groundwork for two new musical theater shows with very different approaches, *Opinião* and *Rosa de Ouro*.

**Music And Politics On Stage: *Opinião* And *Rosa De Ouro**

The staged musical show *Opinião* opened in the Teatro Super Shopping Center in Copacabana on the night of December 11 1964, only eight months after the military coup.11 Directed by Augusto Boal, the show combined popular music performances with a dramatic, yet fragmented, narrative that strove to portray different versions of Brazilian life at the time. The cast consisted of three musical performers meant to represent three different segments of Brazilian society: the aforementioned Nara Leão, “a musa da bossa nova que personalizava a classe média” (Paranhos 76) yet also assumed a political position in her performance, an as yet unknown singer from the Brazilian northeast named João do Valle, and Zé Keti, who hailed from the *Zona Norte* of Rio. The stage was

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11 This theater space was later renamed the *Teatro Opinião* in recognition of the success of the performance.
simple, dark, and unadorned, and the performers dressed in everyday clothing instead of elaborate costumes. The production was designed to focus attention on the tragedy of daily life in both the Northeast of Brazil and Rio’s favelas, in addition to the repression of communist ideology among the Brazilian middle class. Through testimonies, popular music, audience participation, and the presentation of historical references, the cast members and creators had assembled a political theater experience that was unfamiliar yet exciting to audiences during a time of mounting authoritarian oppression.

Intellectuals like Oduvaldo Vianna Filho (also known as Vianinha, who wrote the show’s script), Paulo Pontes, Armando Costa, João das Neves, Ferreira Gullar, Thereza Aragão, Denoy de Oliveira and Pichin Plá initially discussed the concepts expressed in *Opinião* in *teatro de revista* style at Zicartola. All of the members had held key roles in the CPC, and found in Zicartola a new place to meet and discuss their political and creative ideas. Apart from a mission to connect to the working classes through expressions of popular culture, *Opinião* emphasized an alliance between the Zona Sul and “o povo” (Vianna “Oiticica” 49), a connection that the middle class originally experienced at Zicartola, socializing and participating in creative expression with members of less privileged social classes. The show was immensely popular, and attracted an audience that was mostly made up of students, artists, and intellectuals who left the theater after the performances feeling that they too had in a way “participated” in anti-government protest, simply by attending a theater performance (Paranhos 79). *Opinião* called attention to the plight of those marginalized by Brazilian society in addition to paving the way for later musical

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12 *Teatro de revista* was a form of popular theater in twentieth century Brazil, known for its musical acts, emphasis on sensual female dancers, and comedy routines.
productions would powerfully influence popular opinion about the treatment of the working class.

Clementina’s earlier performance with Turibio Santos at the Teatro Jovem paved the way for a later show that had also had roots at Zicartola, but instead emphasized the musical culture of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, called Rosa de Ouro. Although directed by Kleber Santos, today Hermínio Bello de Carvalho receives the bulk of the public praise directed towards Rosa de Ouro, despite the fact that he frequently attributes the inspiration for the show’s main themes to the other musicians who were involved in its production and performance. “Dizer que o Rosa de Ouro foi só um show elaborado por mim não é a verdade, que na verdade foi no convívio com o Paulinho, com Elton, isso tudo no início da coisa, que a gente começou até fazendo samba” (Carvalho interview).

Like Opinião, Rosa de Ouro combined the live performance of popular music, in this case samba, with other theatrical elements, such as testimonies, the projection of still images, and monologues that related to life in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Political themes were present, but this production was focused more on the cultural and economic marginalization of Rio’s poor than on the struggle against an authoritarian dictatorship. The show’s cultural significance lay in its ability to share parts of working class carioca culture with those who were unfamiliar with them, due to the cultural and social divisions that are ingrained in the metropolis. More specifically, it allowed a whole generation of privileged cariocas to “discover” roots samba from the favelas for themselves through a two-hour performance in a Zona Sul theater. It brought carefully selected positive
elements of *favela* culture down to the legitimate space of the *asfalto*, presenting it as the authentic roots that many of the audience’s generation were searching for.

*Rosa de Ouro* profoundly affected many young Brazilian musicians at the time, and many who went on to build successful careers in the music world now cite this experience as formative. Beth Carvalho, who was performing as a singer in the recently-established musical category of MPB (*Música Popular Brasileira*) at the time and would later embrace roots style samba in the 1970s and 80s, is one of *Rosa de Ouro*’s most ardent fans: “Assisti a esse espectáculo treze vezes. Acho que não preciso dizer mais nada” (FUNARTE 14).

The MPB singer Joyce emphasized the importance that *Rosa de Ouro*, and consequently Hermínio, had played in her musical formation as such:

[A *Rosa de Ouro*] foi o primeiro trabalho que você fez que realmente deu um susto, assim. Porque, quer dizer, tinha vindo de toda aquela adolescência com a bossa nova e tal, e aí a descoberta por causa da Nara, que levou o show *Opinião*, o João do Valle, Zé Keti, essa coisa toda. E aí de repente pintou o *Rosa de Ouro*, que além de tudo trazia a Clementina, que era uma coisa que ninguém tinha visto um negócio daquele na vida, na planeta, âquele ser. E uns compositores novos, quer dizer, um gente diferente fazendo samba que a gente não conhecia. Que tinha Nelson Sargento, tinha o Elton, tinha o Paulinho — era um negócio incrível, que deu um susto também, de pô, peraí — quem são essas pessoas? Que já não era o Zé Keti, não era o Nelson Cavaquinho, era uma outra geração já, né? De compositores de samba. (Carvalho interview)

Joyce was part of the generation of middle class youth from the *Zona Sul* who had come of age to the sounds of bossa nova. Exposure to *samba-de-raiz*, a style that preceded and directly inspired bossa nova, a return to a previous era that was both familiar and unknown. The audience members could recognize elements of the music that was familiar to them in roots samba, only it was being played in an entirely different way,
by people whose daily reality was so far removed from their own that they seemed practically alien.

Particularly intriguing in this commentary is the fact that Joyce identified Clementina as “something that no one had ever seen before” while much of Clementina’s success was due to the fact that her image was directly in line with a particular Brazilian archetype, the mãe preta. Other voices from the same time period related Clementina explicitly to this archetype, identifying her as part of a very racially and culturally specific tribe that emerged out of many years of slavery and interracial relationships since the colonial period. Ary Vasconcelos wrote:

A descoberta de Clementina de Jesus teve para a musica popular brasileira uma importância que presumo corresponder na antropologia à do achado de um elo perdido... O choque produzido por Clementina foi exatamente este: em pleno fastígio da voz européia, o espaço artístico brasileiro foi cortado pelo próprio grito ancestral da África, no que ela tem de mais puro, isto é, negro e selvagem. Em nossos ouvidos acostumados pela seda e pelo veludo produzidos pelos cantores da época, a voz de Clementina penetrou como navalha. (qtd. in Pavan 76)

According to Vasconcelos, Clementina provided the musical “missing link” between Brazil’s past and present through an opposition to the period’s musical norms. For him, she was the bridge that connected the African past to the European present, linking two seemingly disconnected worlds. Because her voice was rough and unpolished in comparison to other singers who were popular at the time, Vasconcelos ascribed to her a list of characteristics (puro, negro, selvagem) that emphasize her “primitive” African nature. In English, references to the “missing link” in anthropology often refer to the search for a fossil that would prove humans’ evolutionary connection to apes. While Vasconcelos’ analogy could certainly function as a thinly veiled barb aimed at
Clementina’s racial identity, I believe that he was instead trying to communicate the enormous importance of her “discovery” to the realm of Brazilian music.

This passage also emphasizes that the same characteristics collected in Clementina’s public image that made her seem strange or primitive to popular and working class audiences also attracted the attention of the intellectual middle class. These listeners and cultural critics attributed Clementina’s appeal to an ancestral connection that stood in direct contrast to the dominant pattern of the production of popular music during the same period. Her voice, her appearance, and her presentation didn’t only bring to mind an African past that “all Brazilians” should associate with, but also presented this past in a violent and shocking way. Despite decades of intellectual critique of European cultural models that began with modernism in the 1920s, most Brazilian popular music in 1964 was heavily influenced by polished European styles and sung by white or light-skinned artists. Much of the power of Clementina’s work resided in the rupture with other popular musical forms, and the aesthetics that set her apart from other singers of the period. Per Vasconcellos, to accept the black, the “savage” and the “primitive” side of Brazil was to find a connection that had been lost over years of racial discrimination and inequality.

The introduction and re-presentation of older artists was an important part of Rosa de Ouro, who through their age were seen as more “authentic” than younger up and coming artists. Clementina was introduced in the second half of the show, while the beginning featured Aracy Cortes (Zilda de Carvalho Espíndola, 1904-1985), who at the age of 61 had spent many years on stage as a star of Rio de Janeiro’s teatro de revista but had since
retired and was living at the Retiro dos Artistas. Her voice was exaggerated and high pitched, bringing to mind a different time in the past from that represented by Clementina.

The stage was designed to represent a typical samba venue, featuring “aquela mesinha característica dos botequins do Rio de Janeiro, onde os sambistas passavam horas e horas compondo, cantando, falando da vida” (Bevilaqua et al 71). While this was a common sight for the show’s creators, who were deeply involved in Rio’s lower class black cultural traditions, it was an unfamiliar scenario for most of the audience members, given the dangers implicit in crossing class lines. Presenting this scene on stage allowed the audience members to engage in a kind of voyeurism, affording them the ability to watch the production of this culture without having to involve themselves personally in unfamiliar physical spaces.

Aracy and Clementina were featured at different times during the show, but a group that called themselves Os Quatro Crioulos performed the majority of the show’s music. Each member was connected to a specific neighborhood in Rio that in turn had its own musical style and identity, conferring a sense of samba “authenticity” upon both the performers themselves and the show as a whole. Elton Medeiros represented the Unidos de Lucas samba school, Jair do Cavaquinho from Portela, Anescar do Salgueiro, and Paulinho da Viola, also from Portela. The musicians’ varied origins also emphasized the unity of the samba genre, apart from geographical and neighborhood feuds and separations. Os Quatro Crioulos represented samba as a unified genre, without ceding to petty differences between schools and neighborhoods.
Introducing multimedia aspects that were novel at the time, *Rosa de Ouro* featured slide presentations with voice-overs of “pessoas importantes para ligadas à música popular” (Bevilaqua et al 72), including Almirante, Cartola, Carlos Cachaça, Donga, Ismael Silva and Pixinguinha interspersed between the musical performances. These presentations also featured younger journalists and cultural mediators of samba who were not born on the *morro* in poverty, but instead had access to familial connections and education such as Sérgio Porto, Mário Cabral, Sérgio Cabral, Lúcio Rangel, and Jota Efegê.

The show’s costumes were designed to reflect certain traditions from the Afro-Brazilian working class in Rio, namely the tradition of elegant dressing amongst sambistas and importance of clothing in the practice of Afro-Brazilian religions such as candomblé. The *Quatro Crioulos* were all dressed in elegant white suits, Clementina wore a dress of fine white lace, and Aracy Cortes was dressed as a *baiana* with a golden rose in her hair.\(^{13}\) Apart from their symbolic meaning, the contrast between these clothes and the dark background of the set created a powerful and striking image onstage.

There was a great outpouring of responses to the show in both the local and national print media, revealing its reception amongst a significant audience, journalists. Many of the responses to the show revolved around the ideas of authenticity and purity—according to the reviews, many audience members felt that they were watching a

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\(^{13}\) Robert Stam describes *baianas* as “the female figures dressed in white who sell ritual foods like *acaraje* (bean fritters with shrimp fried in palm oil) in the streets of Salvador, who became absorbed into Rio’s carnival and into carioca burlesque theater in the early [twentieth] century” (*Tropical Multiculturalism* 85). The typical *baiana* costume includes a turban, a shawl, and a wide tiered skirt often in white lace, in addition to lots of jewelry.
spectacle that had been directly imported from neighborhoods that they had never visited, one that had not been altered or mediated in any way.

O Teatro Jovem é uma sala modesta, de paredes cobertas de cartazes e o que é bom já nasce feito, e Rosa de Ouro já entrou dando o que falar. Sem artificialismo de show business e sem literatices cheirando a diletantismo político. (Revista Visão April 4 1965)

Clementina de Jesus é uma autêntica estrela (...): (...) uma força primitiva, o dinamismo e a majestade de uma raça, o ritmo e a música que estão no sangue. (Yan Michalski, Jornal do Brasil, March 30 1965)

Responses like these make clear that at the time, this audience was in search unadulterated popular culture, in the way that members of the carioca working classes had created it, far from outside influence. They wanted a show without the show business, and a politically significant performance that didn’t feel politically manipulated. They wanted a show that transcended the fact that they were part of an audience watching a staged performance, yet they still expected to be privy to the intimate traditions of a social group that they knew nothing about. As such, the light touch of the cultural intermediaries who organized the performances was essential to their success. Mediators like Herminio Bello de Carvalho and Kleber Santos had put together shows that didn’t seem put together. However, this approach to popular culture is an illusion. The performers were manipulated in their very interactions with both cultural mediators and this new audience, much as they were when said cultural mediators initially went to visit them in their homes and social spaces as part of the process of “discovery”.

In this sense, Clementina is a particularly fascinating subject of cultural mediation because by many accounts, her essential character and self-presentation did not change through the process of mediation. In this sense, she was an authentic-culture-seeker’s
fantasy, possessing the same affectations and style despite her increased recognition and popularity. This continuity, however, most likely contributed to the fact that she was unable to move beyond the audience that so appreciated aspects of her person that others may have considered unattractive or unsophisticated. Both Zicartola and the Rosa de Ouro were key sites of cultural mediation in which Clementina and others would meet and participate in encounters that would blur the geographic, cultural, and economic lines that otherwise separated them.

**Carolina Maria de Jesus: Encounter on a Favela Playground**

The processes of cultural mediation also affected Carolina Maria de Jesus in her literary career, although similar interactions and relationships had a very different outcome on her life and her work. Much like Clementina, Carolina privately practiced the skills that she would be later be recognized for in public, sometimes ridiculed but largely unacknowledged by the Brazilian public due to her physical appearance and social standing. Her access to the public was essentially linked to the process of cultural mediation that was first initiated by a Brazilian journalist from São Paulo, Audálio Dantas.

Audálio was a young reporter working at the local newspaper *Diário de São Paulo* who visited the favela of Canindé on assignment in April 1958. A children’s playground had recently been inaugurated near the favela, but had been taken over as the
hangout of several local men. Audálio introduced himself to Carolina after she famously threatened the men that she would put them “in her book”. After many pilgrimages to both newspaper offices and publishing houses, Carolina was well aware that she needed people on her side to help her reach the audience that she so desired for her writing. Audálio described her initial attempts at publication in poetic fashion in the first newspaper article that he published after this initial encounter:

Peregrinação através das redações: olhavam-na de alto a baixo, a pele escura coberta de andrajos. Uns sorriam, outros tinham pena, diziam-lhe palavras de formais de incentivo. Uma vez um jornal publicou a sua fotografia com uma pequena legenda ‘curiosa’, e só. Dos jornais passou a percorrer as editoras, pois alguém dissera que ela era uma autêntica escritora. Quando era recebida, o máximo que acontecia era diziam-lhe, por piedade, que não podiam publicar as suas histórias porque ‘está faltando papel’. Desistiu, mas continuou a escrever. E até hoje escreve, mas não visando a uma publicação por necessidade que sente de escrever, simplesmente pôr no papel o que ela quer dizer no mundo e o mundo não quer ouvir. (Dantas 1958)

Per Audálio, at the point that they met Carolina had essentially given up on her hopes to become a published and recognized writer. Yet she still had enough awareness of the workings of the world around her to realize that a reporter could perhaps help her move further along on her desired path. Audálio too had his own opinions about how he could help Carolina. When he was invited back to her small shack in the Canindé slum, he found that it was filled with notebooks in which Carolina wrote two kinds of text: personal diary entries, and short stories and poems. Audálio dismissed the short stories as “childish fantasies”, but took the diaries with him out of the favela and back to his newspaper office (Bueno 260).

This dismissal of her fictional writing reflects Audálio’s interest in a very specific side of Carolina’s story. According to Levine and Meihy, “as a progressive reform-
minded journalist, he saw in her writing what he considered to be the unvarnished voice of the socially downtrodden” (*Life and Death* 45), and emphasized this aspect of her work in the way he portrayed her publicly. Audálio became Carolina’s unofficial agent and mentor, first publishing excerpts from the diary that he had first encountered in articles in the *Folha da Noite*, and eventually finding a publishing house to publish the diary under the name *Quarto de Despejo* in 1959. Audálio’s initial presentation of her work in the press was in the form of a newspaper article entitled “O drama da favela escrita por uma favelada: Carolina Maria de Jesus faz um retrato sem retoque do mundo sórdido em que vive,” and it was in this article that he began to make small adjustments that would later become a significant source of controversy. “Dele transcreveremos alguns trechos, conservando a forma, as frases curtas que muito dizem. Apenas a grafia de uma ou outra palavra será corrigida aqui” (Dantas 1958). In the later publication of *Quarto de Despejo*, Audálio removed controversial passages of the diary, censoring her (Levine Afterword 159) in a way that he thought to be “for her own good”. Levine and Meihy’s examination of Carolina’s archives in comparison with her published work did reveal that Audálio often cut out sections of repetitive text and continued to correct orthographic errors, but that he never added anything to her writings (Jesus *Little House* preface xiii): her occasional use of big words was indeed her own.

Given the treatment that Carolina received from the publishers she had previously visited, it is unlikely that her work would have ever reached a wider audience if not for the interventions of this young white journalist with connections in the publishing world. Carolina’s published work is her own writing, but Audálio’s editing complicates the
autobiographical nature of her texts, allowing only part of the story to be revealed, an image of Carolina that Audálio approved of and then passed along.

“O Mundo Sórdido” de Carolina, Revelado por Audálio

Dantas first formally exercised his role as Carolina’s cultural mediator in the publication of the previously mentioned newspaper article in the *Folha da Noite* on May 9, 1958. Through this text he introduced her to the paper’s audience, people from an economic and educational background that had more in common with Dantas than with Carolina. This article describes Carolina’s life as it relates to other favela residents around her, using her to illustrate the plight of São Paulo’s inner city poor as such: “Sua vida não é nem melhor nem pior do que a dos demais favelados: levanta-se muito cedo, vai para a fila da água e volta com uma lata na cabeça, como fazem milhares de Marias em todas as favelas deste país.” This was the predicament of thousands of other poor women in Brazil, but newspaper readers were likely unfamiliar with this reality given their own social class. Using this highly visual image to represent a group of women from a similar economic, racial, and cultural background, Dantas frames Carolina’s story as a representation of an entire sector of Brazilian society. Yet despite these immediate similarities to the millions of other *favelados* around her, Carolina stands apart as someone who regularly expressed herself through the written word regardless of audience, and who had achieved a national audience through her connection with Dantas.
Throughout this initial article, Dantas uses quotation marks around several common words, giving a patronizing and condescending tone to a text that is meant to report facts about Carolina. When Dantas writes “Ela sabe ‘ver’ além da lama do terreiro, da nudez das crianças, da sordidez da vida”, his use of quotations implies that Carolina is not seeing in the way that others may do, but is instead playing at seeing. In placing his descriptions of her “diário”, her “contos”, her “poesias” in quotations, he sends the message that these written works are not serious, but are charming yet childish imitations of real literary forms. Regardless of whether or not this portrayal was intentional, Dantas began to frame and influence Carolina’s work from the very beginning, while simultaneously denying any such intervention. When Carolina’s story first appeared in the newspaper presented as a “retrato sem retoque”, it had in fact been retouched by Dantas, who had carefully selected the dramatic elements he wished to portray. In this article, Dantas inserted himself into Carolina’s text as a mediator through his usage of quotes. Simultaneously, he drew attention to his superiority over Carolina and to his ability to portray her reality as if it were an inferior imitation of middle-class life that both he and his readers knew so well.

The two never developed a romantic relationship, but the professional involvement between Carolina and Audálio was intense and dramatic. Carolina viewed him alternately as her savior, her controller, and her benefactor, often presenting him in her own writings as if he were her dominant husband (Levine Afterword 159). She held a deep appreciation for the role that he played in her success, yet would at times turn on him and blame him for many of her problems. These feelings were recorded in her second published diary, *Casa de Alvenaria* (1961), which traced her rise to fame and
frustrations with her new life. She openly attributed the dramatic changes to him as follows: “the reporter, the man who allied himself with me at the most critical time in my life. Now I speak and am listened to. I’m no longer that dirty black woman from the favela” (Jesus Little House 6). In Carolina’s mind, it was Dantas that allowed her circumstances to change so dramatically. Yet this did not keep her from attributing many of the problems she continued to face to Dantas, sometimes to an unreasonable degree. In line with Dantas’ vision of Carolina’s social importance, he tried to dissuade her from branching out into other forms of expression outside of her diaries. Carolina was always fascinated by the world of radio drama and music, dreaming of a singing career. This was something Dantas highly discouraged, frustrating Carolina: “I wanted to turn to radio, as a singer. I became furious with Audálio’s authority, rejecting everything, canceling my projects, as if I were his slave. There are days in which I adore Audálio, there are days in which I curse him for everything. Hangman, executioner, controller, and so on… I cursed Audálio. He doesn’t give me the freedom to do anything. I can sing! I can be on the radio as a dramatic actress and he doesn’t let me…” (14, diary entry dated June 28 1960).

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14 This quotation comes from the English translation of Carolina’s second diary, I’m Going to Have a Little House (trans. 1997).
Despite his discouragement, Carolina did indeed record an LP of songs that she had written herself in 1961, also titled Quarto de Despejo (RCA Victor), which met with little commercial success. Artistically directed by Júlio Nagib with arrangements by Francisco Moraes, the album featured Carolina’s own sambas, marchinhas, xotes, and even a valsinha. Many of the tracks reference favela life, poverty, and class differences (“Vedete da Favela,” “O Pobre e o Rico”, “Moamba”) but the overall tone of the album is upbeat. Although Audálio disapproved of this project, he nevertheless contributed a text for the album cover that spoke to the favelas of São Paulo’s perceived lack of musical connection.

Difícil imaginar a música na favela do Canindê. Quando a gente fala em favela de morro carioca—a miséria mais “arejada”—logo imagina dengosas mulatas em requebros, em terreiro de barraco enfeitado de cuícas e tamborins; e no samba que nasce, bonito de autêntico, e depois desce o morro e ganha o asfalto. Mas, que melodias poderia produzir esta infeliz (mais do que as outras) favela do Canindê, atolada na lama de beira-Tietê; este “Quarto de Despejo” abafado pela opulência da cidade grande de São Paulo? Acontece que houve um milagre no Canindê—um milagre chamado Carolina Maria de Jesus.
While Audálio disparaged Carolina’s musical side project, he continued to serve as her mediator in introducing it, concluding by calling the album “boa e autêntica, com gosto de povo”.

In a diary entry from January 9 1961, she blamed Audálio for the difficulties she confronted when she moved into her famous “casa de alvenaria” in 1961: “I cursed the reporter. That dog could have gotten me a clean house (…) I didn’t want this house, but the reporter had his way. He overrules everything that I want to do. But I have to put up with it. He was the one who helped me out, so for that reason he prevails” (99). Carolina nevertheless felt interminably indebted to Dantas, connected to him and his approval because of the role he had played in her initial media success. She acknowledged her dramatic emotional shifts, writing of Dantas on March 18 1961: “Today I’m upset with him. There is no special reason for it. He still helps me with everything I need. Thank God my life was improved because of this dignified man. He tolerates all my caprices with complete patience. Some days I am insolent. But it is not my fault” (127). She was reportedly “insolent” towards Dantas in much the same way that a rebellious teenager behaves towards a strict parent.

Dantas’ position as a reporter afforded him few chances to express himself as openly about his relationship with Carolina, and when other reporters have questioned him about it, he has chosen his words carefully, attributing many of Carolina’s outbursts to her mercurial moods. As the journalist Regina Penteado wrote about his relationship with Carolina in 1976:

Audálio diz que não se perturba com as súbitas mudanças de opinião de Carolina. Usando muito cuidado para escolher as palavras, ele começa
dizendo Carolina ‘é mesmo uma pessoa de altos e baixos’, para depois acabar concluindo ter percebido sempre estas oscilações resultam de ‘um processo de loucura, de exacerbação mental, ocasionado por toda a miséria que ela passou’.

Regardless of her actual character, Dantas saw Carolina as someone who was extremely fragile given the circumstances she had lived through, resulting in her extreme reactions and responses to him.

Despite what Carolina perceived to be Dantas’ extreme control over her life and finances, she was able to make some of her own decisions that Audálio would later see as foolish. Levine writes that in later years, ‘Dantas accused her of having spent her money foolishly and blamed her for selling her house in Santana and taking an unnecessary loss. He added that much of Carolina’s money had been squandered on unscrupulous lovers” (“Cautionary Tale” 77). The fact that Carolina paid with her own money for the publication of two books of proverbs was a prime example for Dantas of her financial irresponsibility (Penteado).

While Dantas was Carolina’s chief mediator in terms of leading her to initial media attention, a role that he continued to hold as her informal agent and mentor, the assistance of and connection to other individuals was key in her trajectory. The North American journalist David St. Clair played a central role in Carolina’s climb to recognition in the English-speaking world, first writing an article about her in *Time* magazine, then translating *Quarto de Despejo* into English (published as *Child of the Dark: The Diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus*, 1962) and writing a preface to the text for North American audiences. Through this preface, he mediates between non-Brazilian
readers and Carolina’s Brazilian text that follows, explaining its context and significance and highlighting particular aspects. St. Clair’s preface begins with a brief summary of the history of Brazilian inequality, starting with a mention of the king of Portugal at the time of Brazil’s “discovery”, “who promptly started taking things out of it rather than putting things in” (7), and concluding with the growth of favelas in Brazil. By emphasizing Brazil’s history of social disparity, St. Clair frames Carolina’s story as symbolic of broader issues that move beyond her individual struggles. He drives the universal nature of Carolina’s diary home in the following passage:

Carolina is not really the main personage in her diary. It is a bigger character—Hunger. From the first to the last page he appears with an unnerving consistency. The other characters are consequences of this Hunger: alcoholism, prostitution, violence, and murder. The human beings who walk through these pages are real, with their real names, but with slight variations they could be other men who live with hunger in New York, Buenos Aires, Rome, Calcutta, and elsewhere (14).

Portraying hunger as a character extends the reach and importance of Carolina’s text beyond its specifically Brazilian context, allowing foreign readers to approach her diary in a way that is relevant to their own experiences. St. Clair’s mediation demonstrates the North American attitude towards Carolina that is still widely accepted today: abroad, Carolina symbolizes social injustice on a global scale, whereas in Brazil she is represents a particular national reality.

While stressing her story’s universality, St. Clair also mirrors aspects of others’ portrayals of Carolina. He describes her notebooks as “crude, childlike works, much like a primitive painting done in words” (12), preparing the foreign reader for an unsophisticated text. He consistently stresses Audálio’s role as an editor of Carolina’s
diary, not a censor or co-author, writing that he would “[extract] the best of each day,” and “cut savagely until he got the diary down to it’s present size” (13). St. Clair highlights the authenticity of the text, its author, and its translator in stating, “None of [her writing] has been altered in the translation, for to do it would be to alter the woman herself. She writes directly, roughly, and without artifice. She recorded what she saw in such a way that she makes the reader feel it too” (15). Here he acknowledges, yet also downplays his mediation as the text’s translator.

In *Casa de Alvenaria*, Carolina referred to St. Clair as her “protector” (*Little House* 73). His mediations were essential to her international success, framing them in a way that would influence the way that these new audiences would approach her, and marking what they would expect from her diary. His role takes on particular significance in light of Carolina’s previously unsuccessful November 1958 attempt to contact North American publishers, in which she mailed a package of her original stories and poems in Portuguese to *Reader’s Digest* in the United States, only to have it sent back to her home in the São Paulo *favela* several years later.15

Carolina later established relationships and connections to several important figures of the period in politics and the arts that also served as her occasional mediators. She established connections with local politicians, who in turn viewed her as a kind of spokesperson for the *favelados* given her outspoken views, even prior to the publication

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15 In her diary at the time, Carolina justified mailing her diaries to the US in writing, “the publishers in Brazil don’t publish what I write because I am poor and have nothing to pay them with so I am sending my book to the United States… I told [the postal clerk] that I was sending the originals to the United States because the publishers in Brazil didn’t help poor writers. An embryo that doesn’t evolve. An atrophied embryo” (*Unedited Diaries* 33).
of *Quarto de Despejo*. Jânio Quadros, who was later elected Brazil’s president in 1961, paid for her medical bills when she was stabbed trying to protect her son from an attack long before her diary’s success, and later her dentures (Levine and Meihy *Life and Death* 53). In the arts, she made a connection with Ruth de Souza, one of Brazil’s leading black actresses of the period, who was so inspired by her story that she wanted to make a film about *Quarto de Despejo*. Ruth went on to portray Carolina in a theatrical adaptation of the famous diary, the representation of which will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

Carolina depended on the mediations of others in order to achieve a national, and later international, audience. The relationships she developed with her mediators were complex and unique, and the way that they portrayed her unquestionably influenced how she was received. Dantas saw social relevance in aspects of Carolina’s story, and carefully emphasized the parts he thought were most important while neglecting others. This initial mediation oriented others that would follow, creating a narrative of social injustice that framed the reception of Carolina’s writing and shifted according to the context in which it was presented.

**Conclusion**

Carolina and Audálio had a very different relationship from Clementina and Herminio. Carolina left a significant number of unedited texts behind, clearly stating her

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16 Expectations that Carolina could represent *favelados* as a homogenous social group were unfounded yet hardly surprising, given that she was usually the only one willing to take on this role. This responsibility reflects the *burden of representation* that Carolina often faced, further explored in Chapter 2.
feelings about the relationship she held with her mentor. Clementina’s reality is more difficult to decipher, given that she produced no written texts of her own and the majority of her perceptions were recorded in interviews published by the media. Yet it is clear that the connection between Carolina and Audálio was much more volatile, contributing to Carolina’s irascible public image as a difficult and complicated person, an image that conflicts with Clementina’s portrayal as an agreeable maternal figure. Carolina was also solely responsible for her and her children’s lives, never having married, while Clementina’s husband Pé Grande actively supported her career and helped to manage her affairs while he was alive.

Both Audálio and Hermínio can be categorized as “new cultural intermediaries” that were discussed at the beginning of the chapter. Each occupied an intermediary position between the artists that they would represent and their potential audiences, smoothing the transition between the radically different social realities between the women they “discovered” and their prospective public, framing how they should be received. The distance between Clementina and her erudite listeners was simply too far without an intermediary to connect them and orient their perception of her. The same can be said for Carolina and Audálio. She could only reach an educated audience through the help of an intrepid reporter, someone who sought out this strange and unusual woman who lived on the underside of the Brazilian metropolis and reported his findings back to the media, allowing readers to draw their own conclusions on her life and how society had created a space for it to develop in this way, all from the distance that newspaper readership allows.
Neither Audálio nor Herminio were members of the middle class by birth, but each possessed high levels of social and cultural capital, along with an ability to predict the tastes of those who were more privileged. As such, they fall into place around Bourdieu’s theory of the “new cultural intermediary”, serving as stepping stones between the two classes, and using their specialization, good taste and judgment to further their own social standing to those above them, functioning as go-betweens between separate entities that were actively, yet unknowingly seeking each other out.
Chapter 2

Constructing Legitimacy in Print: Media Texts and the Authentic

Print media representations of Carolina and Clementina allowed members of the public to learn about them as both artists and public figures. Apart from Clementina’s performances and recordings and Carolina’s published writing, little would have been known about each woman without media coverage. Each came from a marginalized position marked by a lack of power, which made them unusual figures in the media. In this chapter, I focus on the relationship of Carolina de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus with the media and discuss the control each woman exercised in the construction of her public image. I examine their representations in the media in order to gain insight into notions about race, gender, and class in Brazil. Each woman had an active relationship with journalists and frequently appeared in newspapers and magazines and occasionally on television. The way that they saw and presented themselves both effected and was effected by what the way they were represented. In this chapter, I focus on the changes in representation over the length of each woman’s career, and explore their portrayal as “authentic” cultural figures through both the primary sources of media texts. How was each woman portrayed through the media and why? Were they able to exert any control or agency over the way they were represented, and if so, how did they do so? Why did
Carolina, a woman from the same time period who, like Clementina, was born in a rural area and achieved fame in a similar way, come to symbolize such different ideas about race, gender, and class?

Media representations of Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus focus on certain aspects of their lives and histories, emphasizing particular stories and themes and leaving others out. Through their choice of language, images, and narratives, the media texts that surround each woman position them in ways that fit within certain ideas about race and gender in Brazil. Through their emphasis on race, gender, work, and family, these themes contribute to the construction of images that correspond with two particular Brazilian archetypes of black women: the mãe preta and the discriminated favelada.

In *Newsmaking*, Bernard Roshco emphasized that individuals considered newsworthy are those who hold a high social rank, who are both highly visible and highly influential to those below them. But in the burgeoning trend of socially minded journalism that was emerging in early 1960s Brazil, Clementina and Carolina received media attention and appeared in the news precisely because they were *un*influential individuals. News media texts that interact with marginalized individuals usually do so under the guise of “taking it to the streets,” with the goal of unsettling their socially and economically comfortable readers (99). Journalists were interested in their stories not in spite of, but *because* of their low social status.

The media texts that portray both women reveal them to be simultaneously ordinary and extraordinary, while also constructing archetypal images around each woman that affirm and perpetuate their roles in Brazilian society. When I began to explore media
representations for this chapter, I hypothesized that the print media would emphasize aspects of their public images that fit the two contrasting images of black femininity in Brazil, creating representations that had little to do with each woman’s lived reality. I imagined that articles about Clementina would highlight both her African past and her maternal demeanor, linking her public image with that of the mãe preta. In contrast, I thought that print representations of Carolina would portray her as an angry and wronged victim of a Brazilian social hierarchy that was inherently linked to skin color. The articles I examined sent messages about race, gender, class and age in Brazil while simultaneously purporting to promote the career of each woman, providing information about each of their careers and activities to their readers. These messages are at times covert, and at other times obvious. I initially believed that each woman was a victim of her own media representation, but I discovered both in fact exerted a limited amount of control and agency over the stories that were told about them throughout their lives.

I begin this chapter by exploring theories about celebrities and the star phenomenon, in order to provide a framework within which to examine the public representations of each woman. After delineating which sources are used, I describe the media image of each woman, discussing both the trajectory and the central concepts of their representations. Through textual analysis of a series of Brazilian newspaper articles, I discuss the principle themes that are emphasized in each woman’s media portrayal, particularly as they relate to the idea of authenticity and categories of race, gender, and social class. I then focus on nuclear episodes—stories that are continuously repeated in media texts—from each woman’s life. In the final section of the chapter, I examine how Clementina was compared with others around her, and conduct a close reading of three
articles that portrayed Carolina at the end of her life. Throughout this process, I emphasize the level of agency exercised by each woman in the formation of her media image.

**Star Texts: Simultaneously Ordinary and Extraordinary**

Celebrities, or stars, are key figures in popular culture: they entertain and captivate us, while simultaneously revealing our own values and expectations for others within society. Stars are central to our own understanding of the division between the public and private self, and the acts of consuming and producing. Much of the media construction of stars, or the “star image,” is focused on providing an image of what the star is “really” like, backstage or at home. Newspaper and magazine articles and biographies actively promote the private image of stars, purporting to give the audience something more of the celebrity than what is offered in official publications, albums, or films. The print articles that I examine in this chapter are all actively constructed using what Dyer calls “a rhetoric of sincerity or authenticity, two qualities greatly prized in stars because they guarantee, respectively, that the star really means what he or she says, and that the star really is what she or he appears to be” (10). By providing this glimpse into the star’s “true self,” the media bridges the gap between the individual and society, connecting the celebrity individual to the consumer individual, despite the fact that the multiplicity of consuming individuals is what makes up society.

Here is where the true paradox of celebrity emerges: stars are simultaneously ordinary and extraordinary (Holmes 184). They are “just like us,” yet so different from us that they have been selected to perform and appear for others, and are usually paid to do
it. Using this framework in relation to an examination of Clementina and Carolina is particularly interesting because unlike film stars, their intrigue resides in the fact that they are indeed very ordinary, representing a group that instead of standing in the spotlight is most often in the shadows.

I approach this chapter on the media representations of Carolina and Clementina from the perspective of the star phenomenon. I have borrowed this framework from film studies in order to discuss the whole media image of a celebrity. The star phenomenon that surrounds film stars includes the films that feature the star, as well as all promotional material that surrounds the films and their media coverage, from photos to interviews to critical commentary on the star’s performance and their personal lives. Indeed, “the intertextual construction of celebrities can offer the illusion of a more ‘unmediated’ access to their off-screen persona” (Holmes 168).

Although this project does not focus on film stars, many of the issues that arose throughout the careers of Clementina and Carolina were rooted in their discovery and consequent notoriety and celebrity. Each built up “star texts” around their primary creative production through their coverage in the print media, their presence in the work of cultural critics and commentators, and the images that promoted them.¹ Through these texts, ideas about the role of black women in twentieth century Brazil were constantly constructed and re-affirmed through a multiplicity of words and images. In this chapter, I

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¹ In this chapter I use the term “star text” as employed by Shari Roberts in her analysis of Carmen Miranda, which she describes as “comprised of many smaller, individual texts, including films, radio shows, concerts, publicity photos, and records, as well as interviews, articles, and reviews. These individual texts combine to constitute the star through work that entails an integration and reading across possible elements -- work that involves both chance and choice”(4).
explore aspects of the ideology that the star texts of Clementina and Carolina helped to build and consolidate through their representations in the print media.

More than for other stars, the media texts that surrounded Clementina and Carolina emphasized their ordinariness. Although I borrow from film theory to analyze how each woman was portrayed in the media, both women became famous in a very different way from film celebrities. Neither fit the conventional mold of the film actress. Indeed, when each rose to fame, there were very few black actresses who had achieved national success or recognition on the screen or on the stage. The lack of images of women of color in the Brazilian media made the media attention that Carolina and Clementina received all the more unusual and remarkable—but their celebrity status was undeniable, and they were stars nonetheless.

While Clementina became famous for the power of her performance and the way that she sang, Carolina became famous for something that she did very much in private. And indeed it showed in the way that each woman carried herself. Clementina was used to being around people, to putting on a show, to being watched, whereas Carolina was unaccustomed to the spotlight, living her life on the margins. Although Clementina’s talent was expressed publicly and Carolina’s was expressed privately, both women lived life on the margins prior to being discovered by the mainstream. The sudden exposure to a public however was a far more dramatic change for Carolina, and her awkwardness was seized upon and emphasized by the press.

Dyer points out that “being interested in the stars is being interested in how we are humans now” (15): focusing on how public celebrities are constructed and on the context in which they are created not only reveals more about who they are themselves,
but also the values of the society that celebrates and pays attention to them. They embody the separation of the individual and society. While their fame is built on their individual traits and accomplishments, they are ultimately appreciated for what they stand for to a particular group. Therefore, while stars may seem to represent a minority group (such as women, or blacks), their rise to public attention has been built entirely on their own achievements, and they are celebrated for their individual characteristics.

In this chapter, I employ textual analysis to explore the star texts of both Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus. Given the depth and complexity of sources, I focus specifically on how each woman was portrayed in the Brazilian print media and attempt to reveal the main concepts emphasized in the media texts. From a collection of approximately twenty print articles on each woman, I first isolate the main themes that they emphasize, and then figure out how those themes are being expressed. Are they portrayed as positive or negative aspects of the person, or do they go beyond the individual to a broader reflection of society? While this collection of sources is by no means exhaustive, it reveals the variety of representations of each woman that emerged within the context of the print media. The range of articles that are available on each woman and their distribution over time also reveal the arc of their careers and the media attention that they received.

For Clementina, I began with the Maria Luiza Kfouri collection, housed at the Instituto Moreira Salles in Rio de Janeiro. Kfouri is a São Paulo-based musicologist and journalist who collected a significant number of documents relating to Brazilian music. The file on Clementina at the IMS contained many newspaper articles clipped from papers such as the *Folha de São Paulo*, *Jornal o Globo*, and the *Jornal da Tarde*. The
majority of these articles were from the late 70s and early 80s. I supplemented these sources with articles drawn from the online archives from the newspapers *Jornal do Brasil* and the *Estado de São Paulo*, as well as the weekly Brazilian news magazine *Veja*, in order to provide a more complete analysis of her public life from her “discovery” in the early 60s to the present day.

Collecting media sources on Carolina Maria de Jesus naturally required a different approach. One of the best archival sources on Carolina’s life is the collection of Audálio Dantas’ personal papers held on microfilm at the Biblioteca Nacional in Rio de Janeiro. This collection was created through the initiative of Robert Levine, one Carolina’s greatest scholarly champions and author of several key texts on her life and work, in collaboration with the US Library of Congress and the Biblioteca Nacional. Audálio kept a collection of newspaper clippings that related details of Carolina’s life and work, which I also supplemented with articles from the online archives mentioned above, as well as with other news sources available on microfilm in the Biblioteca Nacional.\(^2\) Adding to the depth of Carolina’s media representations is an issue of the magazine *Revista Museu Afro-Brasil* from 2005, dedicated to Carolina on the occasion of an exhibit on her life and work at the São Paulo museum. In the analysis of Carolina’s media representations, it is difficult to determine how much of a curatorial role he played in the selection of these articles—perhaps he collected the ones he knew about, or the ones he was able to get copies of, and made few deliberate choices in the matter. This collection also includes some other important documents related to Carolina; particularly her acceptance speech from when she received was officially named a “Cidadã Paulistana” by São Paulo Academy of Letters in 1960.

\(^2\) Many from newspapers that are no longer in publication, such as *Folhas da Noite, da Tarde,* and *da Manhã* that are now part of the *Folha de São Paulo; Última Hora, Correio da Manhã, Diário de São Paulo, Cruzeiro do Sul* and *Tribuna da Imprensa.* Audálio’s collection is particularly intriguing because it reveals which aspects he thought to be most relevant and important in Carolina’s career and the way that she was covered in the press. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine how much of a curatorial role he played in the selection of these articles—perhaps he collected the ones he knew about, or the ones he was able to get copies of, and made few deliberate choices in the matter. This collection also includes some other important documents related to Carolina; particularly her acceptance speech from when she received was officially named a “Cidadã Paulistana” by São Paulo Academy of Letters in 1960.
representation, I also include three articles about her in the US press, two from the *New York Times* (a book review of *Child of the Dark* from 1962, and her obituary from 1977) and a short article in *Time* magazine.³

For the sake of clarity, I divide my analysis of the star text of each woman into different life phases and the media articles that covered them. Clementina’s texts can be divided chronologically, beginning with articles that reviewed her early performances and discussed her “discovery” and the way that early audiences received her. Beyond this early phase, articles usually fell into the often-overlapping categories of “appreciation” and “publicity.” The appreciation articles linguistically traced the arc of her life, touching on key events and stories and usually linking her to both an African and a Brazilian past. They commonly end lamenting the difficulties that Clementina faced as she grew older, and protested the injustices that she came to symbolize given her race, gender, and class. The publicity articles were based around particular events (such as a performance or the release of a new album), and then built outwards to include biographical details and descriptions of Clementina’s musical style, day-to-day life, and her important role in Brazilian musical history. Towards the end of her life another group of articles began to appear, focusing particularly on new problems that further complicated Clementina’s life, such as health issues, changes in mood and outlook, and the effects of poverty. These were followed first by obituaries that followed her death in 1987, then periodic articles

³ In contrast, Clementina received no US media coverage, at least during her lifetime. While this indicates both the breadth and the scope of each woman’s audience, it also may indicate the specificity of Clementina’s representations as confined to her particular representation of race and gender in Brazil, which did not translate as easily to international contexts as Carolina’s story of poverty and struggle may have. Carolina’s story is portrayed as universal, while Clementina’s is much more about the specifics of the history of race and gender in Brazil.
that tried to revive her posthumous presence in the Brazilian music scene, either as a role
model and archetype of Afro-Brazilian traditions that are seen as forgotten or almost
forgotten, or as a way to sell more records and compilations released after her death.

According to their media portrayal, both Carolina and Clementina saw the print
media and the reporters and photographers that produce it as positive forces in their
careers. They both opened themselves to media coverage, approaching attention from
reporters and journalists as a benign and friendly force that was designed to help them get
ahead.

**Consistency and Change in the Production of Authenticity**

Both women and their work are consistently described as “authentic”— a word
that is most used to describe the intrinsic cultural value and importance of both women.
Something about the way that they emerged onto the national stage made them seem
unmediated, fresh, and unchanged from their “real” selves. On her debut in the national
media during the signing of her book contract at the Livraria Francisco Alves, Carolina
was described as “uma mulher de cor, vestida com simplicidade e trazendo à cabeça um
torso de lavadeira” (“Revelação”). Through this description of her appearance, we are
prepared to think of Carolina as a simple and humble woman, a type rarely featured in the
media. Clementina’s humble origins were also emphasized from her first entries in her
star text, such as the following written by José Ramos Tinhó: “Era mesmo uma rainha
negra, vindo de bairros humildes e das favelas do Rio de Janeiro, que surpreendia aqueles
que assistiam” (qtd. in Bevilaqua 73). Each woman was portrayed from the beginning as
a humble and simple being, but the “real self” meant something very different for both of them.

Carolina’s voice was described as “authentic” because it appeared unpolished. It was portrayed as an unadulterated perspective into the “real” world of São Paulo favelados. Part of this idea of authenticity came from her unusual grammar and spelling— given Carolina had only two years of schooling, she was often referred to as a “semi-alfabeta” by journalists (Penteado, Martins). While she loved reading and writing, her unfamiliarity with the norma culta, erudite use of Portuguese grammar and vocabulary, gave away her lack of formal education. This was seen as a novelty, but also as something more “real”—Carolina had not been processed by the Brazilian educational system, which made her seem like a truer version of herself. It was also what set her apart from essentially all other published writers. Early in her media text, Carolina was also portrayed as unchanged, as in description of an early book-signing event:

Carolina falou pouco. Não estava nervosa, nem alegre, nem radiante. Era a mesma Carolina de olhos abertos, gestos vivos, voz calma, a mesma que durante doze anos catou papel pelas ruas e leu, nas horas de folga, os livros encontrados no lixo, e escreveu, quando tinha fome, nas páginas encontradas em branco. (“Carolina na tarde de autógrafos”)

Upon her public debut and the improvement of her financial situation, however, Carolina was criticized for changing her ways—particularly for the change in her wardrobe. In March 1961, several months after her “discovery,” a reporter from the Tribuna de Imprensa wrote:
She lives in a government-financed house in industrial Santo André [Santana], she spends her days in the city, sometimes at the Fasano tea parlor frequented by the elegant people of Avenida Paulista... with mascara-painted eyelashes and wearing high-heeled shoes, dressed in silk and elegant accessories from the best downtown shops, Carolina, accompanied by her three children, strolls twice weekly on Avenida Itapetininga, where Paulistas descended from the colonial elite also walk. (qtd. in Levine “Cautionary Tale” 62)

Much as she was celebrated for her original authenticity, the press later condemned Carolina for changing her dress and lifestyle. Her newfound ability to make changes in her life stood in direct opposition to her past and the way that she was initially presented to the public.

In contrast, the media seized upon the invariability of Clementina’s persona given that her motivations and desires appeared never to change. Although she was eventually portrayed as a victim of a society that gave little value to the elderly or to its own African history, her portrayal was largely consistent throughout her career, and this consistency was a significant part of her appeal. Over approximately twenty-five years in the national spotlight, Clementina never transformed her tastes or her way of being due to the expansion of her audience. This stability translated directly to an authenticity that was very appealing to the Brazilian middle class and elite during the 1970s and 80s, a time of rapid modernization and urbanization when other parts of society were rigidly controlled by a repressive military dictatorship.

Clementina explicitly described herself as unchanged by the experience of her “discovery” and subsequent fame, affirming the idea of her “authentic” self. In her interview with the magazine O Pasquim, she proudly stated: “Eu sou a mesma Clementina, moro na mesma casa que sempre morei e sou felicíssima, está bem? Sucesso pra mim só trouxe coisas boas. Inclusive amigos. Muitos amigos bons mesmos, amigos
memo [sic] da fé” (M. Fernandes 9). Although her physical surroundings and her world view may not have changed, Clementina saw herself to be better off socially as a result of her discovery and the recognition she then received. This viewpoint directly contrasts with the benefits that Carolina perceived to be a result of her emergence onto the public stage, revealing nuance and difference in how each woman approached fame and success.

Over time, Clementina would come to use the term “authenticity” herself, embracing and employing the word to classify different kinds of samba and the individuals who would perform it:

“O samba de hoje é bonito porque estão voltando às coisas antigas. Mas as escolas perderam muito do samba autêntico. Agora é desfile para turistas. Já não saio há 3 anos e acho que deveriam dar mais valor ao pessoal da escola mesmo. Para mim, samba autêntico hoje não se escuta mais, em lugar nenhum, está acabando. Hoje não se faz mais nem blocos de sujo, que era uma maravilha.” (qtd. in “Setenta anos”)

In her use of the word, Clementina used the concept of “authenticity” to refer to age and to objects and styles from the past, as well as to separate performances that were produced with commercial intent from those that spontaneously emerged from local communities. For Clementina, samba autêntico honored its roots in the form of appreciation for older members of these communities, as well as through impromptu events that were organized informally, such as the blocos de sujo whose absence she lamented. From the moment of her “discovery,” Clementina was surrounded by the use of this term, so it is likely that she adopted it as she best saw fit. She uses the term “autêntico” here to describe something that she herself was associated with. For Clementina, old style samba was no longer appreciated in the 1970s, much as she herself was often forgotten about by a popular music culture that was far more enamored with disco and other foreign musical styles. By adopting the term herself, she implicitly
embraced her portrayal in the media, claiming it and using it to exercise agency over her public image.

In his book *Culture and Authenticity*, Charles Lindholm parses out the deeper significance of this term that is so often used to describe the appeal of both Carolina and Clementina. According to Lindholm, authentic people are those who are true to their roots: their lives are a direct and immediate expression of their inner personal essence. Their essence and appearance are one and the same, with no interference or deliberate adjustments made in the self that they show to the outside world. The importance of people’s authentic selves, which is often traced back to Rousseau and his search for one’s essential nature (see Lindholm 8, Berman 75), stems from the modern belief that cultural and social forces that are present on the surface of reality repress the expression of this desired authentic natural self (Lindholm 8). This is particularly important to the stories that are told by and about Carolina and Clementina, especially given that the greater polluting influence is thought to be commercialization, or the changing of appearances in order to sell goods and services. Given that neither woman appears on the surface to have changed herself, or been changed by others, in order to turn a profit or be more attractive to a potential audience, their professed authenticity moves from a simple way of being to an entire ideology representing the traditions of the past, and a “pureness” that comes from a lack of education.

The use of the term “authenticity” also introduces an element of paradox into the representations of both women (Berman xvi), however— if authenticity is another word for being oneself, why does one version of the self take precedence over another as more real? A commercially driven expression does not cease to be an expression— there are
many different ways of being real, not only those that reference the historic past. Clementina and Caroloina were measured against a notion of authenticity that was specific to the period in which they lived and worked, however. Journalists who wrote about them at this time belonged to the intellectual middle class, a group that ascribed greater value and legitimacy to the humble and uneducated poor as symbols of Brazilian national identity. From this perspective, the social and cultural forces that inhibit the true self are in fact resources that potentially allow individuals to improve the quality of their lives, such as education, mobility and capitalist consumption.

“Authenticity” is slippery by nature. Is there a way to appear in the national media without being changed and shaped by those forces? In Clementina’s and Carolina’s star texts, someone had to choose exactly which elements to repeat, to tell about, to frame, and to commend—at the expense of other elements that were discarded, sometimes deliberately and sometimes unintentionally. Much like a photograph, in which one moment in time is chosen from countless others, these star texts are perhaps just as revealing for what they show as for what they do not.

Both Carolina and Clementina were held to the ideal of authenticity throughout their public lives, and were either celebrated or criticized for revealing their “real” selves to the press. Journalists admired Clementina’s consistency of style and interaction as a reflection of her personal reality. Carolina’s fashion choices and way of writing were initially appreciated as direct expressions of her “true” self, unchanged by other individuals or by social norms. While Clementina identified with the autêntico, journalists mocked the transformed Carolina for putting on airs, apparently covering up her “real” nature.
Portraying Clementina: the Private Becomes Public

Clementina’s public image was strongly rooted in the private sphere, focusing on her spirituality, domesticity, and her maternal nature. The emphasis on her status as a mother was expressed in almost every one of her media representations, through constant repetition of the word *mãe* and frequent discussion of her biological *netos* and *filhos* in addition her habit of calling everyone, including the reporters who wrote about her, “meu filho” or “minha filha”. She was portrayed as a happy person, described as *contente, eufórica, alegre,* and *radiante,* but journalists also highlighted her humble nature.

For the first few years after her “discovery” in the 1960s, articles published about Clementina were mostly reviews of her performances, especially of the various incarnations of the *Rosa de Ouro* show, or her performances in Cannes and Dakar. In the 1970s and 1980s however, the focus shifted instead to personality pieces that sought to tie Clementina to broader understandings of Brazilian culture, as well as the process of aging. Over time, the texts emphasized the injustices she suffered, such as her ongoing poverty and lack of financial and cultural recognition, were emphasized. During this period, journalists began to portray Clementina as a victim who suffered at the hands of greedy record companies, selfish celebrity friends, manipulative producers and managers, and a forgetful public who was most interested in the newest fads over nostalgic representations of the past. Portrayals like these created a dramatic storyline that was more likely to engage readers’ attention.

In her representations by the Brazilian print media after her “discovery,” Clementina de Jesus was frequently portrayed as a spiritual person who was
fundamentally connected to Afro-Brazilian religions. This representation has little to do with her lived reality. As a teenager, long before becoming a recognized artist, “ela não era muito interessada na macumba, mas frequentava os pagodes e as festas—como a de São Cosme e Damião e a das comilanças em homenagem aos orixás — de olho na música e nas oportunidades para cantar” (Pavan 71). The media’s tendency to constantly connect Clementina to spirituality can be seen as an association between blackness and an innate spirituality, connected to Afro-Brazilians’ supposed proximity to a “pure” and “authentic” nature.

Over the years, Clementina’s print media profiles alternately portrayed her either faithful to Catholicism or to Afro-Brazilian traditions, two different portrayals that she was well aware of. Jornal o Globo published the following on October 17 1979: “Muita religiosa, a cantora se diz católica apostólica romana. ‘Mas respeito qualquer religião que apareça. Não sou macumbeira, como andaram espalhando por aí’” (“Clementina depois da doença”). Clementina’s rumored connections with Candomblé were further perpetuated by the journalist Jary Cardoso, who wrote of witnessing a scene after one of her performances in which Clementina not only spoke to one of her fans in Nagô, but caused him to enter into a spiritual trance:

Os dois trocam beijos na face e o cumprimento típico de religiões afro-brasileiras termina com um toque misterioso na testa de Quelé. O mulato [Clementina’s fan] começa a entrar em transe e sai depressa. Clementina deixa cair a cabeça sobre os braços em cima da mesa, fatigada, fazendo drama. ‘Mãe, não esquenta a cabeça’— diz a assistente de produção. Do lado de fora e atrás do palco, o mulato é quase montado pelo santo, resiste e se esforça para não cair cavalgado. (Cardoso)

Whether or not this is a truthful representation of the encounter between Clementina and her fan is of little importance. In publishing this story about Clementina, especially from
the point of view of a spectator who was watching from the sidelines without directly speaking with her about her religious practices, Cardoso contributed to the part of Clementina’s star text that affiliated her with Afro-Brazilian religion, most likely because of her appearance and background as opposed to her actual beliefs. It further enforced her mysterious appeal and power, linking it directly to her African heritage and traditional knowledge.

Clementina claimed no link to Candomblé, but many aspects of her personal style nevertheless reinforced her connection to it. Throughout her career, Clementina often wore turbans or head wraps, and dressed in white or light colors, traditions usually associated with adherents of Afro-Brazilian religion. The *jongo* style that she was known for performing has an inherent connection to the religion as well, and traditionally many members of the *jongo* community would gather barefoot and dressed in white to sing together in *terreiros*, or Afro-Brazilian religious temples (Bevilaqua 24). Clementina performed and recorded *jongos* and *pontos*, styles associated with Candomblé. Several of the songs she recorded contained explicit references to the orixás, such as “Beira mar” (*Clementina, cadê você?* 1970) and “Cinco cantos religiosos” (*Marinheiro só* 1973). These elements of her persona unite to form the image of someone affiliated with Afro-Brazilian religion, regardless of Clementina’s actual religious beliefs. In choosing to dress and comport herself in a way that caused journalists to assign her to the Candomblé tradition, Clementina continuously exerted her free will and choice through her personal style, exercising her agency by refusing to alter her aesthetics in response to media rumors.
The themes in Clementina’s star text focus on the private realm, and even as she acted in the public world, most of these events were specifically framed within the personal sphere. Many of the articles focus on her domestic life, describing her house, her activities, her daily schedule, and her attributes as a hostess. She is interviewed sitting in a rocking chair on the front porch of her house in Inhaúma (“Clementina…83 anos” 2). She emphasized her affinity for journalists, often treating them as guests in her home, as follows:

Pra lhe ser sincera, até hoje, eu tenho uma coisa, que qualquer repórter… que vai na minha casa, eu recebo assim. É difícil eu não ter um doce, um pedacinho de queijo com pão, uma cervejinha, para oferecer a ele. …Duvido o repórter que vai na minha casa que não encontra, duvido que eles digam isso. Eu tenho uma coisa pela reportagem, um respeito sincero, porque me fazem de mim feito que sou um ídolo. (Jesus 1967)

Similarly, her family life and connections were key themes for reporters, who first focused on her husband Albino Pé Grande, then expanded (particularly after his 1977 death) to include her daughter Olga Correia da Silva and her many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Journalists also emphasized Clementina’s connection to food and drink — both on the preparation, cooking and serving, as well as her own culinary preferences. The foods that are usually linked to Clementina, such as empadas, angu, feijoada, “quiabinho com carne moída” (Feijó 23) often have a connection with the simplicity of rural life, Brazil’s history of slavery, or with the past. The first part of a 1983 article in the Folha de São Paulo revolves around Clementina’s desire to drink some caldo de cana, or sugarcane juice, a sweet drink that is seen as rustic and unsophisticated, and is most often sold at pastelarias and street markets in the city (Sanches 27).
Clementina’s consumption of alcoholic beverages is also an important part of her public representation, and her interviews and articles are peppered with references to drinks such as beer, cognac, and Cinzano. Whether or not alcohol played a significant part in Clementina’s life is in itself irrelevant, what is interesting is how drinking has become a key signifier in Clementina’s media representation. Clementina often told of her use of alcohol to calm her nerves on the occasion of her first stage performance:


Other themes in Clementina’s media text are less positive, particularly poverty and the process of aging. Clementina’s poverty is often portrayed as having rural roots, beginning with her enslaved ancestors and the meager opportunities that were available to their descendants. She and her family belonged to the realm of service labor, working as lavadeiras, empregadas, and cozineiras. Ultimately, Clementina was able to break somewhat from this domestic realm upon her “discovery,” yet she never loses the image of the domestic servant who spent her whole life washing, cleaning, and cooking for others. Ateneia Feijó emphasizes Clementina’s consistency and continued connection to the domestic sphere as such: “…Clementina não mudou, continua dedicada em seus afazeres domésticos, de chinelos e pano na cabeça, sempre ajudada por seu marido” (23).4 Clementina’s husband, Albino Pé Grande, worked as a stevedore. This was perhaps the quintessential form of employment for physically fit Afro-Brazilian men in

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4 The reference to the pano na cabeça is directly correlated to the popular image of the mãe preta in Brazilian culture.
Rio de Janeiro during the early- to mid-twentieth century, and many of the men who worked as stevedores were also involved in the samba community (Moura 102).

Clementina’s media representation fits neatly within an archetype of working-class black female Rio de Janeiro. During most of Clementina’s life, being a dark-skinned black working-class woman in Rio meant not only being involved in samba music and dance, but also occupying a specific social sphere. Roberto Moura writes that following Abolition, “as negras achavam alternativas no trabalho doméstico ou seriam pequenas empresárias com suas habilidades de forno e fogão, procurando sustento através de pequenos ofícios ligados ao artesanato e à venda ambulante” (63). Clementina followed this tradition, working as a domestic servant and also as a banqueteira.\(^5\)

She lived these experiences as her own, but when she was portrayed in the media she came to represent not only herself, but solidified and confirmed a particular archetype that symbolized a certain place and time and way of life. Much of the media coverage of her life and work fits smoothly into the typical “star text,” focusing on her performances and recordings, but her close adherence to this archetype sets her apart from other stars. She became a star because she seemed to fulfill this archetype with the very essence of her life experience, and she did it in a particularly picturesque and striking way. Aspects of maternity, regality, domesticity, and connections to folkloric traditions of the past that come together to form her public image unite in a particularly stunning portrayal of the archetype, tying together aspects of blackness, African and enslaved ancestry, maternity, and musical style. During the 1970s, a period in which the cultural effects of the African

\(^5\) “Fazia salgadinhos pra fora, jantares para casamentos, aniversários” (M. Fernandes 10).
diaspora were becoming increasingly dominant, Clementina instead represented the hyper-local and the pre-modern.

Clementina’s connection to tradition, however, carried with it the difficulties of aging in a society that largely focused on the young. Her increasing age brought further recognition and connections to the past that increased her legitimacy, but also her financial and physical difficulties. This aspect of Clementina’s life was the particular focus of several of the aforementioned personality pieces. In *O Globo*, Jorge Segundo represented Clementina as a pitiable figure despite the public respect she had earned over her short career:

> Vinha anos de sucesso, principalmente junto à elite da MPB. Viagens ao exterior, gravações na TV francesa. Agora, o 11º disco, shows nos palcos da Zona Sul, e a velha partideira Clementina de Jesus, doente e sem condições de pagar uma prestação de ‘quinhentos e poucos contos’ ou comprar a sonhada casa por Cr$ 9 mil, não perde a esperança: um dia, quem sabe, meu glorioso São Jorge me ajuda? (23)

The star text that journalists constructed around Clementina was inherently linked to several aspects of private life, such as domesticity, family, and spirituality. Her appeal lay in making these private aspects public through the print media, providing readers and fans with a sense of transcendence that was unusual in celebrity representations. Clementina was at once familiar and mysterious, “simultaneously ordinary and extraordinary.” She recalled the familiar tendencies of the domestically minded, the maternal, and the elderly, yet possessed an appeal and charisma that elevated her far above the norm.
Portraying Carolina: Personality and Poverty

The print media contributed to the change in Carolina Maria de Jesus’ station in life, for better or for worse. The words that journalists used to describe Carolina were, as would be expected, entirely different from those used for Clementina. Like Clementina, Carolina was also described as *preta, negra*, and *humilde*, but there is little to no discussion in the print media of Carolina’s connection to Africa, or description of her as a symbol of Afro-Brazilian roots and heritage, despite the fact that much like Clementina, her ancestors were also recent slaves. There was no mention of negritude, or ancestors, or “roots” in reference to Carolina. Instead the emphasis in her star text was placed on poverty, hunger, and the drama and intensity of her story.

Other words that are unique to Carolina’s star text are *miséria, fome, revolta, protesto, luta* and *política*. These concepts were essential to the period between 1950 and 1970, when the Brazilian population transitioned from predominantly rural to urban, directly contributing to the growth of favelas like Canindé. Ridenti emphasizes that one of the reactions to this societal transformation was the intellectual and middle class’ identification with the working poor (35). The military success of movements like the anticolonial struggles in Africa and the Cuban revolution inspired Brazilians, and gave them hope that change rooted in working class struggle was possible.

Clementina was also poor, but she never worked as a *catadora de lixo*, and was rarely cited as a symbol of *miséria*. Like Carolina, she lived in poor neighborhoods and favelas throughout her life, but she seemed to represent a “happier” side of poverty— one in which even the poor were essentially satisfied with life, especially because they had music and dancing to keep them happy. Carolina’s favela, meanwhile, did not have a
samba school or famous samba composers who brought creative notoriety and pride to the neighborhood, perhaps as a result of the very different history of Afro-Brazilians in the cities of Rio and São Paulo. Writing in 1965, Florestan Fernandes described the specifics of the development of the Afro-Brazilian population in São Paulo post-Abolition. The rapid transformation of São Paulo into an industrial metropolis at the turn of the twentieth century meant that many rural cultural traditions were disrupted or discouraged, particularly the loud ones like music and dance. “Measures were even taken by the police to prevent the nocturnal revival of old customs which might disturb the sleep, and perhaps the decorum, of the white population. The cultural losses resulting from this were not compensated for by acquisition of alternate cultural values” (33).

Furthermore, Canindé was a recent favela that developed because of urgent need, unlike the morros in Rio de Janeiro that had gradually grown and become established over a long period of time, largely because they were unsafe for more permanent development. In this context, Carolina was cut off from any sort of long-term cultural development that could have built over time. Her cultural contribution was based on her own individual accomplishments, her search for paper on her daily scavenging missions, and then her own drive and discipline to write about her life in a place where writing was not something that people did. While Clementina emerged from a tradition, Carolina broke the mold. As such, Carolina was largely portrayed as a curiosity, while Clementina was celebrated for her charisma and connection to a recognizable past.

Audálio Dantas, who Carolina often referred to as simply “o repórter” in her diary, was in a position of power precisely because of his role in the media and the access
to different parts of Brazilian society that it granted him. The surge of media publicity that surrounded Carolina’s book was largely responsible for her overnight success, and when the media attention withdrew, she quickly found herself once again outside of the spotlight. The combination of images and words that was used to portray her to broader society helped her to achieve fame and recognition outside of her immediate social sphere. The way that the media represented her set the stage from the very beginning, strongly influencing how she would be perceived and received by the reading public.

Carolina’s media representations reflect a different trajectory than Clementina’s, one that was almost entirely concentrated in the first year that she appeared on the national and international literary scene that lead up to and followed the publication of *Quarto de Despejo*. The majority of the articles within Audálio’s collection are from 1960, many detailing her appearances and visits in Brazil during the publicity campaign for her first book, and some picking up on scandalous elements or events that arose during this period. Beyond this first year, Carolina’s media coverage drops off dramatically, dwindling to a handful of pieces on her then-current (miserable) status and also attempting to tie her to the broader societal struggles in Brazil. Several of these later articles openly ridicule or criticize Carolina, sometimes blaming her for her own fall from grace. Her failure to maintain her newfound social status was often attributed to her difficult personality and numerous awkward social interactions in which she was seen as stepping outside of her well-defined place in Brazilian society. At other times, journalists would blame the social inequality and marginalization that continued to build in Brazilian in the 1960s and 1970s. This media coverage reflects her financial and critical success as well. Carolina became an overnight star in the Brazilian media—her discovery made the
public think that perhaps they were moving towards a Brazil in which the poor could become rich overnight due to merits such as writing ability. Ultimately, however, she was seen as a novelty, and once the novelty wore off she was mostly forgotten about, except for the entertainment value of reading about a formerly successful person who had returned to the hard life from which she had arisen.

Carolina’s first mention in the media was through Audálio’s pen, in an article from May 1958 titled “O drama da favela escrito por uma favelada: Carolina Maria de Jesus faz um retrato sem retoque do mundo sôrdido em que vive” in the São Paulo newspaper Folha da Noite. Before the reader was at all familiar with Carolina, this text gave them certain linguistic cues that set the tone of the report that followed. They were literally told to expect a sordid drama, told by an insider, a raw story that had not been touched up (sem retoque) by the author or by the newspaper. From the very beginning, Carolina was portrayed as the messenger who painted a picture of a dramatic world of poverty, and whose authenticity lay in the fact that her text hadn’t been polished for the press or for those who were unaccustomed to the favela’s squalor and drama.

In this first print representation of Carolina, Audálio used quotation marks throughout the text, which gave the impression that Carolina’s reflections were not to be taken seriously. While Audálio’s actual motives for the usage of this punctuation were questionable, to today’s reader he comes off with a patronizing and condescending tone:

É apanhadora de papel, passa fome com os filhos pequenos, mora num barracão infecto, mas sabe ‘ver’ além da lama do terreiro e do zinco da favela.

Só por isso ela é diferente dos outros favelados: vive integralmente a miséria da favela, mas tem o seu ‘mundo interior’, às vezes feliz, outras vezes profundamente angustiado. E quando entra no seu ‘mundinho’ não esquece a gente que a cerca, miserável, cruel, sôrdida, que é por ela ‘biografado.’
In setting Carolina apart, Audálio also revealed his opinion of other favelados. If Carolina had a nuanced and complex “mundo interior” that was worthy of mention, it was in contrast to the presumed simplicity of her neighbors, and their very lack of “interior worlds”.

This article is key to Carolina’s star text in that it set the tone for all of the media coverage of her life and writing that would follow. From the very beginning, Audálio emphasized Carolina’s role as an observer, stressing the “authenticity” or reality with which she approached the subjects she wrote about:

Ela é dotada de agudo senso de observação e talvez por isso retrata tão bem o meio em que vive. Dentro dos seus escritos, o mais surpreendente é um ‘diário’ em que ela descreve a vida no seu barraco e, talvez sem o querer, faz uma autêntica reportagem da favela, que define como sendo o ‘quarto de despejo de São Paulo.’ (4)

Despite the appeal of the sense of authenticity in Carolina’s work, it is essential to keep in mind that Audálio’s representation of her was sensationalized, marking its opposition to the authentic and real. The article was composed with the ulterior motives that are necessary in the production of print journalism. Due to the nature of the medium, Audálio wrote to sell papers, which readers would buy with the expectation of excitement and news, not the idea that they would glimpse anyone’s “real” self. Nevertheless, this portrayal was essential to create an audience and an appeal for Carolina’s publications. For Audálio, the authentic portrayal that Carolina created in her diaries was authentic precisely because she constructed it unselfconsciously, without thinking about how it would be received or who would read it. He seized upon this raw perspective in
Carolina’s first media representation, and this characteristic became an essential part of her appeal to first her Brazilian, then her international audience.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, several articles appeared in the Brazilian press that sought to follow up on Carolina’s well-known success. Journalists would seek Carolina out and describe her life and her perspective, often portraying her as a sad relic of a previous era, but also as someone who didn’t necessarily deserve the recognition that she had achieved. When Carolina was initially “discovered” and her first diary was published, Brazil was going through several societal changes that allowed for her success. Juscelino Kubitschek’s presidency (1956-1961) brought economic prosperity and stability. Brasilia, the nation’s futuristic new capital, was completed in 1960. These national changes, together with the inspiration provided by international movements such as the 1959 Cuban Revolution meant that “many Brazilians believed it was possible to bring about genuine social change. *Quarto de Despejo* and *Casa de Alvenaria* became powerful symbols of the belief that with help, people could rise out of poverty and transform themselves” (Levine and Meihy *Life and Death* 137-38). By the mid-70s, much of this earlier promise had disappeared over years of military dictatorship, yet the mood of outright oppression had diminished, allowing for limited discussion of contentious issues such as poverty and race that would have been censored in previous years (Levine “Cautionary Tale” 73). In these articles, which I explore at length later in the chapter, Carolina was described as a victim of racial discrimination and economic poverty, but her oddities were also magnified. These publications portrayed her as a pitiable curiosity, someone who had brought her own problems down on herself.
Carolina’s star text focuses on the tragedy of her circumstances, but also on her peculiarities as an individual. While poverty and hunger were emphasized in her media portrayals, ultimately her difficult personality dominated all published texts to the neglect of the broader social issues that she represented. Much of this approach can be traced back to Audálio’s original article about her, in which the drama of her story was sensationalized and trivialized. This portrayal set a precedent of discussion of Carolina as an individual whose idiosyncrasies spoke far louder than the issues she grappled with.

**Personal Myths and Star Texts: How Nuclear Episodes Inform Celebrity**

Both Clementina and Carolina’s star texts focus upon particular episodes and stories from their lives, repeating and reiterating them until they take on a greater significance. While the media’s repetition of these stories occurs in a very public space, the construction of these personal myths is something that all individuals do throughout our lives in order to give them meaning and purpose. Dan McAdams explores the creation of a personal myth as a way to “articulate a meaningful niche in the psychosocial world” (5) by constructing a cohesive narrative of the self. While all individuals begin the process of personal myth making in early adolescence, it continues throughout adult life as a way of defining oneself and one’s values. Certain events take on greater meaning than others (and are thus more frequently repeated) become “climaxes of different acts of the life story,” or “nuclear episodes” (295), revealing key themes in an individual’s identity. This is a valuable perspective to employ when considering how Clementina and Carolina’s public identities were constructed and developed through the print media.
The nuclear episodes in each woman’s star text— and indeed, in most star texts—ultimately serve as clues to which parts of their lives were seen as especially poignant, symbolic, or unique. With each retelling of these foundational stories, Carolina and Clementina’s life narratives evolve and shift, placing greater importance upon one story over others. In this part of the chapter, I will explore some of these frequently told (and retold) stories, and attempt to figure out why they have emerged as nuclear episodes while other parts of both women’s star texts have been excluded from memory.

Some of the most retold stories about Clementina emerged from her childhood. Given that she was born in such a different time and place from that in which she became publicly known and recognized, these episodes specifically tie her to a rural past. She was born only a little more than a decade after the abolition of slavery in Brazil, in a rural part of the state of Rio de Janeiro, an area that was strongly influenced by the coffee economy that was largely worked by slaves. Clementina often spoke of her memories of the côrrego, or small stream, behind her house in the small town of Carambita, near Valença, where her mother would wash clothes and sing while she worked. It was there Clementina purported to have learned most of the folkloric songs that she would later become known for— through word of mouth from her mother, who sang in order to pass the time as she labored. Clementina’s mother would say, “‘Tina, vai incendiar esse cachimbo’ e eu incendia o cachimbo para ela. Botava fumo, incendia para ela, e trazia para ela, e ela estava cantando. Assim que aprendia umas coisas gostosas que ela estava cantando” (Jesus 1967). This story was later collapsed into a single nuclear episode in which Clementina’s mother’s request for her daughter to light her pipe stood in for the cue to sing along (Santos 64). This nuclear episode’s significance lies in a certain
aesthetic appeal related to the idea of oral transmission, a notion that is often emphasized in Clementina’s work and career. It is easy to imagine Clementina as a girl, participating in labor that was traditionally both Afro-Brazilian and female, and simultaneously acquiring cultural knowledge from her own mother.

The next oft-repeated scene in Clementina’s life took place in a locale between the rural and the urban, in the Rio de Janeiro suburb of Jacarepaguá where her family moved when she was eight years old. This story symbolizes Clementina’s entree into performance and public exposure as she began to participate in the pastorinhas, a local folkloric manifestation that took place at Christmastime. She was recruited by João Cartolinha, a local cultural performer and organizer, and performed the role of a peixeira, or fishwife. As she prepared to take the stage years later during performances of Rosa de Ouro, her fellow cast members would introduce Clementina with a partido alto that referenced her early role as a peixeira, further cementing this story within her personal myth:

Clementina, cadê você?
Cadê você, cadê você?
Foi peixeira lá na roda
Do famoso Cartolinha
Já brilhou nos caxambus
E hoje aqui ela é rainha (Elton Medeiros)

Within the song, Clementina’s childhood role as a peixeira served as a training ground that would lead to her future successful performances both in Afro-Brazilian folk traditions and in more commercialized celebrations of samba like Rosa de Ouro.6 This

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6 Experiences with traditional cultural forms as a child were essential to her future public image, and would be cited as key elements of her musical and performative style. This
root in popular celebration further continues to legitimize her position half a century later, a past that contributes to her regality. By referencing this role in the song, Medeiros ensured that it would become a part of Clementina’s personal myth, one of the nuclear episodes in her life that would contribute to her queenly image half a century later.

Another frequently repeated story from Clementina’s childhood tells of her experience with a ritual that was thought to “fechar o corpo,” or spiritually protect one’s body from disease and harm. Clementina recalled her mother taking her to the neighborhood of Oswaldo Cruz, to a place where she was wounded on her chest as part of a scarring ritual. Clementina’s “peito lanhado” is a central point in her public persona because it ties her to a particular Afro-Brazilian mysticism and spirituality that is evidenced in her body, despite the fact that she largely rejected Afro-Brazilian religion in the name of Catholicism. This experience is often cited as an example of Clementina’s Africaneity and connection to religions such as Candomblé (Santos 62, Bevilaqua 9).

Clementina spoke of this spiritual mark in her 1967 interview at the Museu da Imagem e do Som, acknowledging its existence in saying, “tai bem visivel para quem quiser ver.” Along the way, journalists began to refer again and again to the mark on her chest as part of a “misticismo estranho,” a religious practice that simultaneously involved fervent Catholicism and touches of Afro-Brazilian spiritual traditions.

Cresceu em meio a um misticismo estranho: estudava num colégio de religiosos, o Orfanato Santo Antônio, e em casa teve o peito lanhado a fogo num ritual com preces nagô (conserva a marca até hoje), porque a mãe acreditava que assim ficaria com o corpo fechado. (Santos 62)

view is apparent in her obituary in Veja: “tudo o que cantava se transformava na musica pura e primitiva que aprendeu na mocidade” (“Negra majestade”).
Hermínio Bello de Carvalho paraphrased the same sentiment in his 1986 publication *Mudando de Conversa*, writing that Clementina “cresceu assim, num misticismo estranho: ouvindo a mãe rezar em jejê nagô e cantar num dialeto provavelmente iorubano, e ao mesmo tempo apegada à crença católica”.\(^7\) Clementina’s religious practices, however, may have been unusual to these intellectuals, but they were not necessarily unique amongst the Afro-Brazilian population.

As would be expected, another collection of oft-repeated stories evolved around the period leading up to and including her infamous “discovery” in the early 1960s. One of these illustrates Clementina’s status as a hidden gem, a diamond in the rough that could only be appreciated by certain people. Clementina worked for many years as a maid in the home of a white middle class family in Grajaú, where she had a somewhat contentious relationship with the female head of household. When Clementina would sing to herself as she worked in the kitchen or over the family’s laundry, her female boss would ask whether she was “cantando ou miando?” (M. Fernandes, Kubrusly) This story is often repeated because it throws Clementina’s place in Brazilian society into high relief, revealing how she can just as easily be portrayed as a wild animal as a stately African queen who embodies the essence of Brazilian music. While the media does not represent Clementina in this way, this story was often reprinted as a counterpoint to the generally positive image that the media constructed of her, magnifying their celebration of her. Particularly in the story’s constant repetition after Clementina was discovered and “consecrated” as an important figure in the Afro-Brazilian musical tradition, it

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\(^7\) Hermínio later published this text in an article on the occasion of Clementina’s death in the *Folha de São Paulo* on July 20, 1987.
symbolized the general lack of appreciation for older styles of music that sounded primitive and unpolished to contemporary ears. This story is particularly significant as well because of its implication of the underdog, laborer, domestic who proved her supervisor and oppressor wrong, going on to be appreciated for the same thing she was formerly criticized for.

Many different stories around the actual moment of her discovery continue to reside at the heart of Clementina’s star text, several of which include some combination of the elements of the Dia de Nossa Senhora da Glória (August 15), singing and drinking in the Taberna da Glória down the hill from the church, and Herminio Bello de Carvalho passing by on the street, being stopped in his tracks by the unusual sound and power of Clementina’s voice. In 2001, Hermínio himself acknowledged the transformations in this nuclear episode while at the same time highlighting his own connections with well-known figures from Brazilian popular music: “Existem tantas versões que eu mesmo me confundo. Foi na Taberna da Glória, que Mário de Andrade frequentava e onde também, antes de Clementina, bebi com Ismael Silva e Aracy de Almeida. Acho que isso diz tudo” (Sanches 2001). In an interview for Jornal o Globo in 1973, Clementina told the story as follows:

Era de de festa na Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Glória, e eu estava sentada na Taberna da Glória, bebendo cerveja e cantando. Aí aparece um rapazinho com uma rosa numa caixinha e disse: ‘foi o poeta Hermínio Bello de Carvalho quem mandou. Ele manda convidar a senhora para gravar este samba que a senhora está cantando, lá na casa dele. (“Setenta anos”)

Following her “discovery,” many media texts portrayed her success as instantaneous and complete:
Foi, cantou, fez um sucesso instantâneo como nos filmes de Hollywood. Uma mulher de 48 anos, que nunca tinha pisado num palco na vida, pouco tempo depois era consagrada como estrela absoluta de *Rosa de Ouro*, o primeiro grande espetáculo da revalorização do samba tradicional após alguns equívocos e abusos de uma Bossa Nova mal compreendida…

(Motta)

As she aged, the stories that were repeated in Clementina’s star text reflected less of her exoticism and Africaneity, and more representations of old age and poverty. Jorge Segundo published the following quotation from Clementina in 1976: “Estou quase boa. Veja—já mexo toda a mão; somente o danado desse dedo ainda está encravado; a perna esquerda também está ruim, não tenho forças para carregá-la. Tudo bem, meu filho. Se Deus quiser, vou ficar logo curada e voltar a fazer meus shows.”

A continuing theme in the newspaper articles about Clementina as she aged was her desire to buy a house of her own, something that she was never able to do on her modest salary despite the notoriety she accrued over the years. “O sonho da casa própria,” or the purchase of a home, is of course a key marker on the path to middle class status, something that many members of the working class dream of. It represents Clementina’s desire for stability, for a physical place to call her own, while simultaneously confirming her connection to the domestic sphere. Clementina mentions this aspiration as early as 1966:

“Meu sonho é de ter uma casinha. Por isso, estou juntando dinheiro até poder comprar uma. Por enquanto vou ficando por aqui mesmo, na Rua Acaú, pagando meu aluguelzinho, devagar até as coisas melhorarem mais um pouco.” (qtd. in Feijó 23)

In his article, Segundo recounts three different opportunities for home ownership, or “realizações de um grande sonho,” that Clementina missed out on due to a lack of
available funds. When a house went up for sale on Rua Acaú, where she had lived for
years, for nine thousand cruzeiros, she said, “Apenas 9 mil contos e eu não tinha essa
grana. Podia ter pedido à Odeon ou ao Hermínio, mas não tive coragem. E pagava. Podia
cantar e pagar tudo com shows.” Hermínio and Sérgio Binelli eventually bought her a
house in 1980. She described the experience saying: “Eu não sabia de nada. Um dia eles
chegaram com um caminhão e nos mudamos. Assim, de surpresa. Agora precisa de boas
reformas, vamos ver como será” (Sanches 27). Nevertheless, this charitable gift hardly
represented the economic success and stability that she was striving for, given that she
lived on a pension of two salários mínimos throughout her old age (“Tristeza”).

Together with representations of multiple illnesses and physical problems, the
media picture created around her becomes dismal indeed in the last decade of
Clementina’s life. Nevertheless, many of these later articles continue to reference the
same stories that make up Clementina’s star text, sometimes rearranging them to create
new meanings and significations.

At first glance, most of the nuclear episodes that feature prominently in
Clementina’s star text appear to have been selected and promoted by the journalists who
wrote about her. Referencing Clementina’s involvement in picturesque folk traditions
confirmed her image as an individual with strong ties to the past, while stressing the story
of her “discovery” reinforces her image as a well-preserved witness to authentic musical
and cultural forms. Episodes that referred to her declining health and financial situation
positioned her simultaneously as a symbol of both the positive and negative aspects of
aging in Brazilian culture— while she was revered for a long and engaged life, she was
also pitied for being forgotten.
Upon further examination of these repeated stories, however, it becomes clear that Clementina herself was often responsible for claiming them as key episodes in her life, acting as a direct agent in the construction of her public image. Many of the stories that she told during her 1967 interview at the Museu da Imagem e do Som were repeated again and again throughout her life and even after her death. It was she who first told the story of lighting her mother’s pipe by the stream (both literally and figuratively), of her turn as a *peixeira*, of her encounter with Hermínio at the Taberna da Glória, and of her desire to buy her own home. Those who listened to her and read about her took those episodes and ran with them, but it was Clementina who initially selected the stories that best resonated with how she perceived her own life. While her personal myth was expanded and occasionally stretched by her star text, she continued to be primary architect of her public portrayal, exercising agency in the foundation of her media representation.

Carolina’s media text also focuses on specific stories, repeated by both herself and by the reporters who wrote about her, although these tales weren’t as clearly defined as the stories that were told about Clementina. Many of the repeated stories were images that either cast the misery of Carolina’s life into high relief, or emphasized the difference of the new world she was thrust into from that which she had previously known.

*Quarto de Despejo* begins with Carolina’s desperate attempt to find some shoes for Vera Eunice’s birthday, and this story was often singled out by journalists and republished in newspaper stories about Carolina throughout her life (“Brazil: Life”). Vera Eunice’s dislike of going barefoot and her desire for a new pair of shoes symbolized
larger themes in Carolina’s life and story, both as a mother and a marginalized *favela* resident. In repeating the story of Vera Eunice’s coveted shoes, journalists who shaped Carolina’s star text focused on her maternal desire to provide for her children despite the circumstance, even if it meant pulling shoes from the garbage to clean before giving them to her daughter as a birthday gift. The shoes are also a symbol of protection from the outside world and the ground of the favela, surely littered with objects and fragments that were potentially dangerous to a child’s feet, particularly a child that follows their mother around on daily trash-picking rounds.

Like Clementina’s media portrayal, another oft-repeated moment in Carolina’s star text is that of her discovery. The moment of discovery is one of division, an episode that draws a sharp line between a previously anonymous and a now recognized public life. Not only the way that the discovery occurred, but also the way that it was described (both initially, and over time) came to symbolize the person before and after they were known to the public. Carolina was “discovered” by Audálio when he was sent to Canindé by the *Folha da Noite* to report on the state of the city’s favelas. In Dantas’ words,

*Quando a vimos pela primeira vez ela protestava contra um grupo de marmanjos que se apossara de um parque infantil instalado para as crianças da favela do Canindé. Reclamava contra os brutos e se queixava da favela: — ‘Aqui é assim. Não há ricos; só pobres, uns prejudicando os outros.’*

This story portrays Carolina as the defender of the marginalized within an already marginalized urban space—shaming some adult men who have taken over a newly opened children’s playground as their own. In this retelling, Carolina stands out and makes herself known not only by scolding the men, but threatening to “put them in her
book.” This story’s significance lies in not only in its representation of the moment of discovery, but also in Carolina’s own attempt to reach the outside world.

Other key nuclear stories in Carolina’s star text include the book launching party at the Livraria Francisco Alves, and the day that she moved away from Canindé, packing all of her things into the back of a truck and driving to Osasco. The book launch party was significant in that it was an event organized not only as a celebration of Carolina’s work, but also as a complex media experience that gave a glimpse of the publicity sensation that Carolina was about to become. Far from holding a typical small event for intellectuals, the bookstore instead invested in creating a physical stage for Carolina’s public debut, bringing in “artifacts” from the favela, installing wall-sized illustrations and quotes from the book, and inviting favela residents to participate:

À entrada da livraria, fotografias de barracos e habitantes da favela; panelas, caçarolas, canecos, talheres de Carolina; desenhos de Ciro Del Nero. No interior da livraria, ao alto, faixas circundavam as paredes. Neles se liam, escritas a carvão, trechos de observações da favelada. (“Carolina na ‘Tarde’”)

Through this display, the bookstore created a spectacle that combined two worlds, the favela that Carolina would presumably leave behind, and the commercial space of the bookstore that was normally off-limits to favelados.

Carolina’s departure from Canindé was also turned into a media event, with reporters and photographers present to document the moment of transition and incorporate it as one of the key images in her star text. The move was indeed very dramatic and “newsworthy”: many of the favelados reacted to her departure with anger and resentment, some even throwing stones and cursing at her. Carolina’s son was even wounded by one of the stones thrown by a neighbor while standing in the back of the flat
bed truck, the carriage that would whisk them away from the marginal territory of the favela (“Mudou-se”, “Um barraco,” “Brazil: Life”). Like her “discovery,” the moment in which Carolina physically departed from Canindé created a line that divided her life in two, separating the favela (which gave her fame and notoriety for how she was able to portray it) from what came next, which was presumably something better, or at least less miserable. Carolina’s departure from the favela was the ultimate expression of her free will—once she acquired the financial and personal resources to leave the favela, she was able to exercise agency over her living conditions.

Prior to her media discovery, Carolina attended so many public political rallies in São Paulo during Kubitschek’s presidency (1956-61) that she came to be recognized as an important local figure, and would often be called up on stage to participate in debates (Levine & Meihy Life and Death 52). She engaged with politicians from early on, and seemed to enjoy making friends with those she agreed with and antagonizing others whom she did not. Jânio Quadros, the populist leader who was first the mayor of São Paulo and later the president of Brazil for a brief time, was photographed embracing Carolina and paid her medical bills on several instances (Levine “Cautionary Tale” 66,
Levine & Meihy *Life and Death* 53).  

She was portrayed as a revolutionary and a crusader for social justice from the very beginning— one of the first print media articles about *Quarto de Despejo* announced, “Revelação nasceu no mundo do lixo: Catadora de Papel Publicará Diário!” The media picked up on this tendency and ran with it, publishing phrases such as “isso não é um lançamento, é uma revolução!” This phrase is often attributed to Paulo Dantas, a novelist who worked as the publications director at the Editora Francisco Alves, who apparently uttered it during one of Carolina’s earliest book-signing events (“Carolina na ‘Tarde’”). The phrase shifted and twisted in various ways throughout Carolina’s media coverage over the years, sometimes attributed to Audálio Dantas. (“Eu não trago uma reportagem, mas uma revolução” from the cover of her later novel *Pedaços da Fome.*)

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8 In the appendix to the Spanish-language edition of *Casa de Alvenaria,* Carolina wrote out a specific answer to journalist’s questions about Jânio Quadros, who renounced his brief presidency after only seven months, in August 1961: “Pregunta: ¿Cuál es su opinión sobre la renuncia de Janio Quadros? Respuesta: Yo preveía que el señor Janio Quadros, no iba a terminar su mandato. Conocí a Janio en 1952, cuando era intendente. Fue un intendente eficiente. Era un filántropo. Obligó a las personas que vivían en las favelas, a consultar médicos e pagaba las operaciones. Hasta yo misma fui operada y quien pagó el hospital fue Janio Quadros. Mientras permanecí en el hospital él cuidó a mis hijos. Por deber moral, debo estarle agradecida a Janio Quadros. Pero como político iba a fallar. El señor Janio Quadros debe ingresar en el cine, y será nuestro Carlitos brasileño. Es un actor. Quiere quedar en la historia. Porque el político debe ser un intelectual, que luche con ardor para dar impulso al país y mejorar las condiciones de vida del pueblo. Lamentablemente, nuestros políticos son vanidosos, quieren recibir homenajes y aparecer en las columnas sociales. Cuando llegan al poder, dicen que encontraron los cofres vacíos y el país endeudado.” (Jesus Apéndice 134)

9 Paulo Dantas was of no relation to Audálio Dantas.

10 Editora Francisco Alves was the publishing house that first launched *Quarto de Despejo.*
Carolina was initially portrayed in the media as a crusader who struggled for all of the poor and the downtrodden. A newspaper in Sorocaba, São Paulo, described her message as “seu grito de revolta e de protesto contra a existência da favela e da miséria” ("Carolina entende"). She was described as a symbol of the Brazilian struggle in all of its geographic diversity, such as by Audálio Dantas himself: “Ela é um pouco de você todos, na revelação. É até um pouco muito do Brasil, que muitos são os quartos de despejo, sul-norte-leste-oeste beira de rio, beira de mar, morro e planalto” (Dantas “Recado”). And indeed, at times she seemed to identify with this new sense of responsibility, speaking of her own aspirations to solve the problems of Brazilian favelas with the royalties of future books she planned to publish. Unfortunately, these dreams of helping others were contingent on a continued financial success that did not come to pass. In order for Carolina to help others, she needed first to help herself, something that became increasingly difficult after the first spark of success that emerged on the publication of *Quarto de Despejo*.

Nuclear episodes, or personally significant stories that acquire meaning through frequent repetition, are essential to the formation of an individual’s identity. A major difference between Carolina and Clementina in these nuclear episodes is that while Clementina was frequently compared to others as a way to both legitimize her and those she was compared to, Carolina more often than not stood, and continues to stand, alone. She did not have a group of peers that she joined in her quest to reveal her inner

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11 “Com o dinheiro da Antologia eu pretendo comprar terrenos para os favelados. Porque eu não acredito que os políticos vão melhorar as condições dos favelados no Brasil… de modo que, por uma ação direta eu quero ver se ilimino a favela antes das enchentes, porque as águas lá são horrorosas” (“Carolina era favelada”).
sufferings and thoughts while living miserably in the favela. While Carolina is sometimes compared to other Brazilian writers who have penned testimonies, such Francisca Souza da Silva, those writers themselves are unknown. Tying them together does not benefit anyone, which is clearly not the case with Clementina and the “galeria de figuras notáveis” that she stands next to.

**Clementina: Uma Galeria de Figuras Notáveis**

Comparing objects or people to one another is a way of creating meaning through relationships. Clementina was poor precisely because she was economically subservient to others who were rich, just as she was black in comparison to others who were white. This difference is what continues to instill meaning in Clementina’s star text. Yet several of the stories that are repeated about Clementina relate her to others in a way that does not always contrast, but instead complements her public image. Instead of setting her apart, comparing her to other musicians and artists aligns her with them, putting them all on the same plain, elevated above others.

According to Jacques Klein, Clementina “faz parte, incontestável, da galeria de figuras notáveis, como foi Pixinquinha entre nós, e Louis Armstrong e Bessie Smith no jazz” (Coelho 71). By placing her within this hallowed gallery of the cultural African diaspora, Clementina’s important role is confirmed at the same time that if reaffirms the roles of those she is placed next to and compared to. These comparisons and connections make it easier to isolate the symbolic codes that are included in Clementina’s star text.

Clementina is frequently compared to the *tias baianas*, such as Tia Ciata. Born Hilária Batista de Almeida (1854-1924), Tia Ciata was one of the most influential *tias*
baianas in early twentieth century Rio de Janeiro. The tias baianas were Afro-Brazilian women with Bahian roots who were essential supporting figures in the local Bahian community, assisting the carioca children of Bahian parents in finding employment and social and religious guidance, particularly in association with Afro-Brazilian traditions like Candomblé. Tias baianas were particularly known for their hospitality, throwing legendary parties featuring Bahian food and samba music. Tia Ciata’s fame is linked to the samba composition “Pelo Telefone,” written in collaboration by several individuals at one of the gatherings in her home, and registered as the first samba by Donga.

Clementina’s attendance at several parties at Tia Ciata’s house is frequently held up as a credential of her authenticity in the Afro-Brazilian community of the early twentieth century in which samba was “born”. Roberto Moura writes that “se torna folclórico para alguns assistir a um pagode na casa da [Tia Ciata], onde só se entrava através de algum conhecimento” (145). By being able to tell the story of Tia Ciata’s party, she became a witness to a particular time and place in Brazilian culture that has since become part of national myth (Vianna 79). As Clementina recounted in 1973,

Tia Ciata era uma senhora maravilhosa. Recebia todo mundo com carinho: ‘entra meu filho, que tem feijoada, angu, rabada’ e ia descrevendo tudo o que tinha para se comer. Eu ia para lá e ficava, sambando muito e cantando. Igual a Tia Ciata, só conheci uma, agora quando fui à Bahia com Dorival Caymmi e Estela: Menininha de Cantois [sic]. (qtd. in “Setenta anos”)

Clementina also spoke of Tia Ciata in her interview at the Museu de Imagem e Som, in which her perspective on the food prepared and served in her home was not presented in nearly as positive a light. In confirming the ideas about Tia Ciata as a supreme hostess
who would cook and host the best parties, Clementina affirmed her connection to this
tradition and further imbued it with ideas of “authenticity”.

Other members of the gallery of notable figures confirm Clementina’s importance
and presence in different ways. Her experience riding in a convertible during carnival
with Noel Rosa fixed her in a moment of time that is particularly relevant in Brazilian
music, particularly given that Rosa died in 1937 and would come to be seen as one of the
key figures in the development of the genre of samba. This carnival experience was a
very different from that experienced on the morros, and her connection to it increased
Clementina’s own legitimacy and crossover appeal to those outside of her own
community. It also showed that she figuratively “touched” a celebrity long before her
own discovery, confirming that her importance was innate and simply overlooked.
Although she wouldn’t be “discovered” for another thirty years, she was there all along,
appreciated by extension, by others who were already appreciated by society as a whole.

Clementina was compared both to figures whom she knew personally and spent
time with, but also to artists who evoke similar thoughts and feelings in different cultures.
She was often compared to popular figures in traditional North American jazz,
particularly Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey, and later Mahalia Jackson. According to Jornal
o Globo, “sua voz grave que já foi comparada à de Mahalia Jackson, a cantora de
‘spirituals’, à de Bessie Smith, a grande intérprete de ‘blues’, ou ainda à de Billie
Holiday, a dama do ‘jazz’” (“Setenta anos”). Drawing the comparison between different
black female singers of the twentieth century tied them together through their racial
experience, regardless of the geographical locations in which they lived and worked. It
also signified that those who were familiar enough with foreign music to recognize these
singers were also sympathetic to the new world African experience and appreciated its traits and features.

When Clementina was compared to other well-known figures in popular culture, she acquired aspects of their public legitimacy and prestige through association. When she reminded journalists of other recognized individuals, this in turn increased her cachet. By comparing her to Tia Ciata and other legendary *baianas* from the early twentieth century, those who wrote about Clementina in the print media reinforced her connection to the local tradition of strong black women who operated within the domestic sphere, in addition to augmenting her connection to the “roots” of the samba genre. Her acquaintance with Noel Rosa, one of the most celebrated figures in early samba, reinforced the notion that she was present in the music’s development during one of its most fleeting moments. In associating her with African-American female singers from the early days of jazz, journalists not only added to Clementina’s cultural capital, but also to their own, demonstrating their level of worldly sophistication through their ability to make such connections.

**Carolina: “Nem tudo está nos livros”**

In contrast to Clementina’s star text, the bulk of Carolina’s media representation was produced in the year that her first book was published and she was “discovered” by the Brazilian public. Most of the articles I analyze in this chapter were published during this period. There were also a handful of other articles published in the 1970s by journalists who sought Carolina out in the interest of doing a type of media “exposé” on a novelty from the past. The remaining articles are her obituaries (she even had a short one
published in the *New York Times*) and posthumous articles discussing her international appreciation and her authenticity. Carolina’s star text differs widely from Clementina’s in that it was highly concentrated at the beginning of her career, and then only included sporadic coverage until her death almost two decades after her initial “discovery”, while Clementina’s was more evenly distributed throughout her life.

Towards the end of her life, two particularly interesting articles were published about Carolina in the *Folha de São Paulo*, each of which dug up tales of both the past and the present in order to show how much she had fallen from public view and her former success. In “Após a glória, solidão e felicidade,” Carlos Rangel set the scene for his contemporary portrayal of Carolina by describing her early success in the following graphic and visceral terms: “O livro foi como um chute na boca do estômago de Paris ou Nova York, obrigados a comentar *Quarto de Despejo*, um sucesso de livraria no Brasil que nem Jorge Amado conheceria na década de 50”. Framing *Quarto de Despejo*’s success as a humiliation to North American and European literary types is peculiar--it was precisely these readers who most embraced the publication. If *Quarto de Despejo* was a humiliation to anyone, it was to Brazilian writers and literary types who were embarrassed to see the poverty and misery of their country portrayed in writing that reached an international audience.

Rangel’s article was an exposé on Carolina’s life fifteen years after her initial discovery and flurry of publicity. Rangel went to visit Carolina and her family in Parelheiros, where they owned a little bar that had since closed down. His primary goal in the article and in his visit to see her was to show exactly how far she had fallen from the height of her previous success. In much of the dialogue that he appears to have directly
transcribed, he emphasized Carolina’s lack of focus on past events and her bizarre perspectives on topics both present and past. She stressed her self-sufficiency, saying:

“quando percebi que morando dentro da cidade eu ia sofrer muito mais, vim pra cá, para o campo. Como verdura, mato um frango e faço uma sopa.” She spoke of visions of her mother, who had died thirty years earlier. She presented a clear vision of the way that society saw her at the moment, saying:

“poderia estar trabalhando de doméstica. Mas ninguém me aceita. ‘Olha lá, a Carolina, a escritora que ficou rica, ela está de vestido rasgado.’ Eu tenho vergonha, repito. O meu sonho era ter o meu nome na capa de um livro. Quando vi, gostei. Pura ilusão, repito. Nem tudo está nos livros.”

It seems that this admission of embarrassment and regret was what Rangel was looking for, and did in the end receive. Through this statement, Carolina summarized her changing values and perspective on her life. Once she achieved her goal of publishing her work after years of focus and drive, she discovered that there were other aspects of her life that had perhaps been neglected. Her fame was fleeting, and once her work was published, it remained static, offering no guarantees for the future.

The following year, another reporter from the Folha went out to Parelheiros to follow up on Rangel’s story. Regina Penteado’s resulting article portrayed Carolina in an even less flattering light, setting up a polemic representation of the author already in its title, “Carolina, vítima ou louca?” Penteado framed Carolina’s approach to the outside world at that moment as follows:

Estrada de Parelheiros, km 34, ao entardecer. Uma preta velha e humilde vem trazendo uma mulatinha clara de uns quatro anos pela mão. Quando o carro da reportagem para, ela também para e fica olhando. ‘Carolina, precisamos falar com você, pode ser?’ Ela diz que sim com um grunhido e
um aceno de cabeça e continua a caminhar. ‘Não quer que a gente leva você?’ Não. Não quer. Vai andando. (31)

Penteado carefully constructed the scene for maximum impact, emphasizing the difference between that day and sixteen years earlier, reminding us that “há 16 anos atrás, Carolina convivia com intelectuais.” She also reported on the different ways in which Carolina was still relevant to Brazilian culture in 1976: *Quarto de Despejo* was about to be republished in a pocket edition through the São Paulo publisher Edibolso, and it was about be made into a movie by a group of North Americans who were unknown by both Carolina and the journalist.12

In her text, Penteado portrayed Carolina from the start as a stubborn old woman who didn’t respond to common social cues, refusing to speak clearly to outsiders or accept rides in their cars. Like in her earliest media representations, she was always accompanied by the child (or children) she was responsible for. The constant presence of children in her life attested to her maternal role, despite the fact that her social demeanor was considered far from motherly to outsiders. Instead of warm and affectionate, Carolina was ornery and awkward.

These personality traits were easily stretched and exaggerated into claims of *loucura*, then used to blame Carolina for her own unfortunate circumstances. In many ways, labeling Carolina *louca* was a simple way to rationalize behavior that didn’t fit the period’s social expectations. Journalists like Penteado expected Carolina to respond favorably to their interest in her, and when she didn’t, it served as proof that she was less

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12 This biographical film was never completed.
than sane. Her abnormal comportment could be easily justified by further rationalizing
her as a crazy person.

Penteado was one of the main journalists to emphasize Carolina’s authenticity,
citing it as the main reason for *Quarto de Despejo*’s success:

*O que teria afinal este livro para causar tal impacto? Primeiro, a
autenticidade. Era o livro de uma catadora de papel que narrava o seu dia-a-
dia num inferno chamado Favela do Canindé. Segundo, teve todo o apoio da imprensa.*

The press that supported Carolina’s book was the same press that Penteado was part of,
and that continued to represent Carolina as an example of authenticity. Penteado’s article
added interesting elements to the conversation about Carolina almost two decades after
her initial discovery, particularly in including some revealing comments from Audálio
Dantas himself:

*Agora, depois de tanto tempo, eu vejo que ela começou a gritar aquilo justamente porque eu cheguei lá. Descobri que ela estava tentando publicar o seu livro desde 1948— diz Audálio quando se lembra hoje daquele episódio.*

In revealing this insight, Penteado framed Carolina as a striver who was all along
carefully calculating how to allow her voice to be heard. Curiously, this information
clashed with the idea of Carolina as an authentic figure, whose inner desires and her
outward behavior were one and the same. Nevertheless, it simultaneously reveals the
level of agency Carolina exercised from early on in the formation of her career as a writer. She was well aware that a connection with a reporter like Audálio had the
potential to provide her with expanded opportunities for publication, and took action to
ensure his attention. In this version of her story, Carolina was no longer an uneducated
favelada going about her daily business, just waiting to be “discovered” by an outsider, but instead an active agent in her connection to the outside world.

Upon Carolina’s death, a new type of text was necessarily incorporated into her media image--that of the obituary. In their very nature, obituaries look back and condense, picking out aspects of individuals’ lives that are deemed important or newsworthy. They affirm and perpetuate the centrality of the key stories and life experiences of the individual. They summarize lives, focusing on particular achievements and the overall vision of a person at the point at which they are unable to add to the list of accomplishments or the way that they are seen. Given that they are written after their subject has left the living world, they provide little space for the voice of the individual they portray, recounting their accomplishments after the fact.

Carolina’s obituaries focused on her poverty, the publication of *Quarto de Despejo*, and the fact that she was forgotten soon afterwards. Some mention that this “forgetting” was selective, emphasizing that while she was largely ignored in Brazil, she developed a significant international importance, particularly in academic circles. These obituaries gave way to other articles that revisited Carolina and the way she was portrayed and received over the years that usually appeared in conjunction with the republication of new editions or her books, or scholarly works about her. Almost forty years after her 1977 death, a polemic has emerged around the figure of Carolina—around her literary production, questions about her relationships with Audálio and others, and about the persistent “forgetting” that she is subject to in Brazil in contrast to abroad. I will further explore this controversy in Chapter 4.
The Brazilian literary critic Wilson Martins wrote one of the most controversial articles about Carolina, titled “Mistificação Literária,” in commemoration of another new edition of *Quarto de Despejo* published by Editora Ática in 1993. Martins made bold claims, suggesting that *Quarto de Despejo* be reattributed not to Carolina, but to Audálio Dantas, due to the significant level of changes that were made to the grammar, the vocabulary, and the structure of her manuscript. Much of Martins’ argument is a surprisingly direct criticism not of Carolina, but of Audálio. He shamed the journalists and publishers who profited from Carolina’s awkward success, questioning why she was never paid for the early articles that featured her. This is a curious approach—when do journalists pay the people they write articles about, and where does that money come from? Martins implied that Carolina should have received food and shelter, or at least some financial compensation, for allowing newspapers to publish articles about her. But what most bothered Martins was what he called Carolina’s “precious” language—wording and grammatical structures that he said must have been changed by Audálio to a more “journalistic” tone. Martins’ suspicions were disproven once both Audálio and Carolina’s daughter Vera Eunice released her papers, showing the original text to be written in Carolina’s carefully rounded yet childlike script.

Martins’ attack on Carolina’s legitimacy harks back to much of the controversy that surrounded her during her lifetime, during which much attention was paid to her personal character at the expense of the issues that she wrote about. Above all, Martins portrays Carolina as a naïve figure who was vulnerable to Audálio’s whims. This representation stands in contrast to the Carolina who acted on the opportunity of an outsider’s visit to Canindé to further her own interests.
Although the majority of Carolina’s star text was produced in the year after her “discovery,” her agency in the formation of her media portrayal was both reinforced and negated in later texts produced at the end of her life and after her death. In the exposé pieces published by the *Folha de São Paulo*, Carolina was portrayed as a pitiable cartoon of her former self who had fallen far from her initial success, but nevertheless a figure who took an active and reflective role in her own life. This representation contrasts with how she was portrayed after her death, wherein she was described as a vulnerable figure unable to make decisions for herself. As Carolina herself reflected, “*nem tudo está nos livros*.” Her media text continued to evolve and influence her public image long after the publication of her last book.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have explored the representations of Clementina de Jesus and Carolina Maria de Jesus in the Brazilian print media. I began this research with the expectation that each woman exercised little control over her media portrayal, but I discovered that while the media manipulated both Clementina and Carolina, they also played small roles as authors of their own media texts, providing the basic framework of their personal myths to the journalists who would write about them. The nuclear episodes that were most often repeated about these women grew from the seeds that they themselves had planted. Although the stories stretched and grew through their very public retellings, increasing in size and importance, they were initially chosen by Carolina and Clementina themselves. While their star texts emphasized particular aspects of their lives
that were related to race, gender, and social class, Clementina and Carolina were not victims of media representation, but instead active creators.

Clementina was portrayed in the print media as a spiritual and maternal figure with roots that lay deep in Brazilian history, worthy of honor and reverence. In contrast, Carolina was ridiculed for her personal idiosyncrasies at the expense of the issues that she tried to address in her work. Why did Carolina, a woman from the same time period who was born in a similarly rural area and achieved fame in a similar way as Clementina, come to symbolize such different ideas about race, gender, and class? Clementina’s broad acceptance in Brazilian society was embedded within the familiarity of her character—she was the elderly grandmother, the samba singer, the willing cook and hostess, whom everyone knew and loved, only celebrated in a national context. In contrast, Carolina was unique, unlike anyone else around her. She did not fit into a familiar archetype, and her case was unprecedented. Instead of associating with a group of like-minded individuals like Clementina, she stood alone.

Their star texts continuously held both Clementina and Carolina to the idea of authenticity that was particularly central during the period in which they were active. In a time of social transformation that was marked by shifts from rural to urban life and military authoritarianism, Brazilians looked for constancy and representations of the “real” as an example that they could follow in the construction of an imagined future. While members of the intellectual middle class were looking for political revolution and societal transformation, they wanted to found these changes on an idealized representation of o povo that was supposedly free from contamination by modern urban capitalism (Ridenti 24). Clementina was praised for appearing unchanged by celebrity,
maintaining her rural roots and her humble ways, while Carolina was sharply criticized by journalists for her adaptation to privilege and her newfound ability to consume. Through their portrayals in the print media, the work and life of Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus took on multiple layers of complexity and nuance that point to broader themes of agency, acceptance, and authenticity.
Chapter 3

*Embaixadoras de Negritude Brasileira: the Mediated Become Intermediaries*

In this chapter, I examine how after achieving recognition, Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus transitioned from relying on the mediations of others in order to reach a reading and listening public to becoming intermediaries themselves. Clementina was sent to Senegal and France by the Brazilian government, while Carolina visited first institutions in São Paulo and other parts of Brazil, then the Southern Cone. In the process, each woman served as a cultural ambassador who represented specific cultural ideas to the international world. Clementina and her musical performances embodied Brazil’s complicated relationship with slavery, while Carolina and her published writings stood for the plight of the poor.

The most fascinating forms of these new mediations were those sponsored and coordinated by organized groups, from local professional organizations to branches of government. During their lives, each woman went from depending on the informal assistance of well-connected individuals to serving as ambassadors, or official representatives, of larger organizations. These organizations specifically chose each of them for their creative work and the way they represented certain aspects of the Brazilian experience that they deemed worthy of attention.
In 1966, the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations, or Itamaraty, sent Clementina to Africa and then to Europe to perform and represent specific aspects of Afro-Brazilian culture. Carolina was invited to visit and then represent several organizations and institutions in São Paulo and in other parts of Brazil, and later the Southern Cone, in promotion of *Quarto de Despejo*, coming to symbolize the plight of the poor on a national and universal level. When Carolina and Clementina were deemed official representatives, each came to stand in for certain ideas about black women in Brazil. In this new role, each revealed the underlying agenda of the groups that invited them as ambassadors, but also introduced new ideas and styles to audiences that were previously unfamiliar with them.

Exploring the details of how to each woman stood for a particular social, cultural, or political group highlights the discrepancies between how groups want to be seen, and how they are actually perceived. An organization’s values, priorities, and expectations of one another are performed on a public stage through carefully organized and curated events. The selection of specific individual representatives further complicates these official interactions, given that individuals often have different ideas about what they represent than the groups that invite their participation. As black Brazilian women of humble backgrounds, the cultural ambassadorships of Carolina and Clementina drew attention to how organizations regarded race, gender, and social class in relation to their group’s image.

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1 The Ministro de Relações Exteriores (MRE) is often referred to as Itamaraty, after the palace where it was based in the capital, first in Rio de Janeiro and later in Brasilia.
The First World Festival of Black Arts, the brainchild of Leopold Senghor, was held in Dakar Senegal from March 30 to April 24, 1966. Senghor was the president of Senegal as well as a poet and one of the intellectuals behind the concept of Negritude, which emphasized and celebrated the contributions of black Africans and their descendants. In line with the ideology of Negritude, the festival was designed to demonstrate the cultural importance of blacks in the development of civilization and tradition, not only in Africa, but all of the countries where African descendants currently reside (“Duke Ellington no festival de arte negra”). The first ten days of the festival were devoted to a conference entitled “The Negro Arts in the Life of the People,” during which critics, writers, and artists from Africa, the Americas, and Europe debated the role of the arts in international black culture (Cassirer 181). This event was followed by a celebration of black cultural forms, from the visual arts, to theater, dance, and musical performances.

Around twenty countries were invited to participate in the Festival by sending delegations of approximately fifty people, including scholars, artists, musicians, and dancers that were to represent their nation’s cultural achievements. As it remains today, Brazil in 1966 was home to one of the world’s largest populations of people of African descent, so its participation in the Festival was essential. Itamaraty established a special commission to select the representatives of Afro-Brazilian culture to be sent to Dakar. The official commission that coordinated the Brazilian delegation was a veritable who’s who of Brazilian intellectuals who worked on Afro-Brazilian culture at the time. Led by
Professor Waldir Freitas Oliveira, from the Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais in Bahia, it also included Cândido Mendes de Almeida, at the time the director of the Instituto Brasileiro de Estudos Afro-Asiáticos; ethnologist Édison Carneiro; Estácio de Lima from the Universidade Federal da Bahia; the art critic and curator Clarival do Prado Valladares; Raimundo de Souza Dantas, the former ambassador of Brazil to Ghana; and Henri Senghor, Leopold’s nephew, who had been named Senegalese ambassador to Brazil in 1963. The painters Rubem Valentim and Heitor dos Prazeres were also invited to participate in the selection of the other delegates (Oliveira “Informações”). The individuals who selected the representatives of African culture in Brazil were highly respected as intellectuals, diplomats, and artists.

Nevertheless, the committee was fraught with disagreement among its members, largely due to the struggles over the racial composition of the future delegation. The principle division was along national lines: the Brazilian members of the committee wanted to portray the mixture that they thought to be inherent in Brazilian culture, while Henri Senghor viewed Brazil’s participation in the Festival as a chance to encourage the growth of the country’s black activism (Dávila 131). Senghor argued for the complete exclusion of whites from both the delegation and the organizing committee, an idea that the Brazilian members (all of whom, apart from Souza Dantas, were of mixed race) found to be highly prejudiced. Oliveira identified this “négritude atávica” as an divisive ideology that was particularly popular in newly independent African countries, such as Senegal, but one that did not fit with the Afro-Brazilian culture he strove to promote (“Édison Carneiro” 5), which was more aligned with the ideology of racial democracy. The commission specifically excluded any cultural manifestations that had resisted
assimilation and integration into the broader generalized Brazilian culture, instead attempting to portray how Brazilian manifestations had drawn on a wealth of influences to produce something new.²

The group’s aim was to strategically select Brazilian artists who best portrayed the culture of *mestiçagem*, as opposed to those who were working more directly with African traditions, as revealed by Oliveira himself in an article on the Festival in *Afro-Ásia*, a journal that he edited as part of his role at the CEAO: “Pretendeu-se, assim, dar uma ideia de como o Brasil, a partir das raízes africanas da sua cultura, pôde criar uma maneira própria de expressar-se, sem desmentir ou negar as suas origens, mas sem com elas confundir-se” (“Informações” 179). The committee’s goal in this respect was to acknowledge the African roots of Brazilian culture without giving the international audience the impression that Brazil was simply a repository for preserved African traditions that had been brought over by the slaves of the past. The delegation, as such, was selected in order to portray these ideas, whether or not they represented all Afro-Brazilian artists who were active at the time.

Clementina received a call from Hermínio Bello de Carvalho in early 1966, who told her that she had been invited by Itamaraty to be one of the representatives of Brazilian popular music at the Festival in Senegal. Clementina was sixty-six years old at the time, and had very little experience with government business and bureaucracy.

² Oliveira wrote that the committee had decided to “demonstrar em Dacar a sobrevivência da cultura africana no Brasil e a sua transformação dentro do novo context. Foram excluídas, deliberadamente, as manifestações artísticas e as danças rituais que, transplantadas da África para o Brasil, guardam ainda hoje fortes características africanas e resistem, de algum modo, à assimilação e à integração” (5). Oliveira does not specify what artistic manifestations he is referring to.
Carvalho, as her cultural intermediary, was the obvious point person for government officials to contact, given that he arranged the majority of her appearances and had a wealth of government contacts.

Clementina responded to the invitation to travel overseas with the following questions: “Mas, como é que eu vou meu filho? De ônibus ou de trem?” (Carvalho, qtd. in Bevilaqua 81). This remark, and particularly Carvalho’s memory and reiteration of it, emphasizes Clementina’s previous lack of contact with an international audience, simultaneously revealing her level of understanding of world geography. Almost refusing the invitation when she learned that she would have to travel by airplane, Clementina reportedly visited the airport several times before her transatlantic journey to catch a glimpse of the unfamiliar form of transport for herself (81). This reaction would be repeated for years to come in stories that were published about Clementina. Her response to the invitation emphasizes the limits of her worldview in a time in which international travel was becoming increasingly popular, and its frequent retelling portrayed her as a being from another time period in which airplanes did not exist, or at least did not exist for working class Afro-Brazilian women. In an article in the *Jornal do Brasil* from September 14, 1966, journalist Ateneia Feijó expanded on the story to emphasize the role of food in Clementina’s day-to-day life in the following way: “A primeira vez que Clementina dispensou o farnel foi quando deixou o ‘avião dos covardes’— o ônibus— para viajar num ‘avião de verdade’ para Porto Alegre e depois Dakar, porque soube que a bordo serviam ‘uma comidinha muito gostosa’.” Feijó’s use of direct quotes from Clementina strives to express her subject’s way of speaking, distancing the author from Clementina’s folksy phrasing.
Despite Carvalho’s role as intermediary in the invitation from Itamaraty, he did not accompany her to Dakar, having been removed from the list of travelers at the last minute to make room for the son of a diplomat (Pavan 91). Clementina traveled with her husband, Albino Pé Grande, and the musicians Elton Medeiros and Paulinho da Viola who would accompany her during her performances. Clementina was one of three musicians who were invited to represent the African influence in Brazilian music, each of whom was connected with samba. Following a capoeira demonstration put on by Mestre Pastinha and his students, Clementina was the first of the musical performers to take the stage. She sang *sambas de roda, partido altos, lundus*, and songs in the “beira-mar” rhythm such as *Benguelê* and *Maparaima* (Oliveira “Informações” 177), representing the most “primitive” form of samba. She was immediately followed by the “classic” samba of Ataúlfo Alves and his *pastoras*, together with three *passistas* from the Mangueira samba school. The show ended with a performance from Elizeth Cardoso, who was meant to represent the musical form’s “modern” turn (Bevilaqua 81).

Haroldo Costa directed the Brazilian musical performance, after being initially contacted by Itamaraty and invited to suggest potential members for the Brazilian delegation that would travel to Senegal. While Clementina, Ataúlfo Alves, and Elizeth Cardoso had all developed their musical careers in the Rio de Janeiro scene, Costa also made an effort to include artists and cultural figures from Bahia as well, inviting Camafeu de Oxossi and Olga de Alaketu, both of whom he had met on a previous trip to Bahia.

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3 This was unusual for her, as she was normally assigned to perform last in group shows (Jesus interview).
In a personal interview granted in 2012, Costa emphasized the fact that while he was the delegation’s “orientador”, many of the artistic and logistical decisions were made by the whole group of artists, or as a “comitê”, stressing that “eu não era tipo ditador, mas organizador, que interpretaba o que os outros falaram e queriam”. Costa was invited based on his successful history as a producer of theatrical and cultural events that represented Brazilian culture, the most successful of which was with the Companhia de Dança Brasiliana, a music and theater troupe that toured globally for five years in the early 1960s, visiting twenty six countries. As demonstrated in his previous work, his general approach to events was to demonstrate the progression and development of Brazilian culture over time through dramatic performance. Costa cites the musicologist Mozart de Araújo, as well as Vasco Martins from the Rádio MEC, the radio station affiliated with the Ministro de Educação e Cultura, as additional participants in the planning and administration of the performance in Senegal.

The organizing committee originally planned for one musical show to take place in the Théatre Daniel Soriano in downtown Dakar, a small space that required audience members to purchase tickets ahead of time, significantly restricting the size and financial means of the audience that would attend. Due to the great success of this first “official” performance, however, another show was later added that took place in a stadium in Dakar. The Stade de l’Amité was physically larger and the performance was longer, which increased the reach of the Brazilian artists to a greater segment of the Festival’s audience (Costa interview). Given the increase in size and length of the second show, the presentations themselves were lengthened and new performances were added,

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* The Stade de l’Amité was later renamed Stade Leopold Sédar Senghor.
although Costa stressed that no elements of the “official” performance were left out, only added to. In the stadium, Olga de Alaketu, the mãe de santo from Bahia who had been called upon to prepare a Bahian feast for members of the Festival delegations to be held in the Brazilian embassy in Dakar, was invited to sing pontos de candomblé on stage. Raúl de Barros performed several marchinhas de carnaval on the trombone at the end of the show, introducing an element of public festivities at the closing of the performance that “acabou em festa, tipo carnaval” (Costa interview), moving the audience to sing and dance around the stadium.

According to Bevilaqua, the “official” performance was carefully organized to represent different aspects of samba music in Brazil that emerged in chronological order, from the “primitive” (Clementina) to the “classical” (Ataúlfo), then finishing with the “modern” (Elizeth) (81). As director of the performance however, Costa only agreed with the use of the term “modern” to describe Elizeth, saying that Clementina was instead there to represent the ancestral, authentic, roots, and “de origem” music, while Ataúlfo portrayed a more urbanized samba, marked by the transition from the rural to the metropolitan that was so influential on samba composition during the twentieth century. As such, Costa’s desire to portray samba’s evolution is a clear line that stretches from the rural past of Afro-Brazilian culture to the increasingly modern and urbanized contemporary reality. Clementina stands in for the past that needs to be remembered as part of the “roots” of the musical form, but is far away from the contemporary and modern forms, strongly influenced by global musical styles that became increasingly present over time, in part due to Brazil’s growing contact with the international world.
In Haroldo Costa’s account of the Festival, he fondly recalled attending other events and presentations that were held in Dakar, particularly remembering a performance of Alvin Ailey’s *Revelations*, a modern dance piece that was brand new at the time, but would go on to become a classic in the company’s repertoire. He also remembered the musical and dance performances from Mali, Guinea Bissau, and Dahomey. According to other accounts of the festival, Mali’s performance was one of the most successful and popular of all, perhaps because it fell best in line with the continuously constructed idea of what Africa was *supposed* to look like, as an “espectáculo vigoroso e movimentado, onde a música de percussão, as máscaras rituais, a dança e os instrumentos fizeram sentir a mensagem da África.” (Oliveira “Informações” 179) This message of Africa was likely so well received because it fit best with how Africa had previously presented to an international, and non-African audience. Ritual masks, intense drumming, and frenzied dancing were all integral to this image.

Following the initial performance, the Brazilian embassy held a dinner that was prepared by the ialorixá Olga de Alaketo (Olga Francisca Regis, 1925-2005), who was dressed as a *baiana*, and “despertou a atenção popular na cidade de Dacar” (179). This dinner was carefully planned and orchestrated in advance by members of Itamaraty, as demonstrated by a series of telegrams kept in the government archives in Brasilia today.5

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5 The Brazilian ambassador to Senegal, Frederico Chermont Lisboa, sent telegrams requesting that specific ingredients be sent to the Festival along with the musicians, particularly Brazilian coffee, beans, *farinha*, *rapadura*, and okra. Olga de Alaketu later reported to the newspaper *Tribuna da Imprensa* that her luggage for the Senegal trip included “dois mil quiabos; trezentas rapaduras; vinte quilos de camarão; vinte latas de azeite de dendê; d’ez quilos de peixe vermelho; vinte galinhas; vinte quilos de feijão fradinho; trinta cocos da Bahia, além de batida de limão.” (qtd. in Bevilaqua 81)
The setting for the “official” performance at the Théâtre Daniel Sorano must have been familiar to Clementina, with no props to speak of and only a simple dark background. Clementina and her accompanists were dressed all in white, which had become her aesthetic signature during her performances. Despite the fact that some of her accompanists were accomplished musicians used to playing harmonic instruments, they were explicitly advised, presumably by producers such as Costa, to stick to simple percussion.


The hand clapping was one of the key elements that allowed the African audience to identify with the show, understanding that it was a return to African culture (82). Clementina’s role at the Festival was to represent the most “primitive” form of African-influenced Brazilian music, and this sparse accompaniment emphasized the distance between her musical tradition and that of the other musicians who followed her onstage.

Clementina’s performance was a resounding success, with the audience calling her back to the stage three times after the end of the initial performance. The experience was powerful in Clementina’s mind, and she later told a journalist that the experience was so emotional, “não quer nem lembrar” how everyone in the audience was crying. Sérgio Cabral remembered the performance as such in 1987 interview:

Perhaps one of the most interesting elements of this experience is Clementina’s own reaction to Africans and African culture. She was specifically invited to participate in the festival due to her public image as a performer who represented Brazil’s African ties from the past, a time when much of the Afro-Brazilian population lived and worked in rural environments and developed specific musical forms to accompany a very specific daily reality. The fact that Clementina had not resided in such a context since her early childhood was of little relevance to the construction of this image. For urban Brazilians, Clementina evoked nostalgia for a time and place that they had not experienced for themselves, but that was nevertheless seen as part of their collective history. This African experience in Brazil had developed very differently over the centuries of distance from that experienced by people living on the African continent. While Clementina embraced her fans and audience members as children who were in need of the blessing of a Catholic protector, she was simultaneously very separate from them.

In one of Clementina’s only recorded interviews, she narrated a story that emphasized the distance she perceived between herself and Africans on this trip. At some point during the Festival de Artes Negras, Sérgio Cabral took Clementina and Elizeth Cardoso with him to an outdoor informal gathering of what Clementina described as “crioulos de todos os lugares da África!” (Jesus interview) In her account, Clementina
was frightened of them, many of whom had “uns argolas no nariz,” and urged her friends
to keep their distance. Nevertheless, Clementina and Elizeth approached a man selling
koras to have their photos taken with the musical instruments, which led to a
miscommunication with their seller, who demanded to be paid.

The women ran away out of fear, only to encounter a primitive caricature that she
described as “um crioulo em uma camisola de linho branco até embaixo, com a barba até
aqui, branca, uns bigodes faziam assim ô. Quando nos encontrava, fazia assim: blop blop
blop blop blop blop!” Clementina later reported that she was afraid of being eaten by these
“crioulos.” This experience marked her to such an extent that she reported that on the
trip, “nunca mais sai na rua, eu tinha medo.” She and Elizeth were frightened of the
unfamiliar Africans who surrounded them in Africa.  

The most striking aspect of this story is the visceral apprehension and fear that
Clementina expressed towards the Africans around her. The impressive “roda” where this
encounter took place was made up of individuals that represented a variety of different
forms of blackness that were clearly unfamiliar and frightening to her. She reacted
negatively to this unfamiliarity, particularly to their body piercings and their way of
dressing, which she viewed as strange, mysterious, and worthy of caution. Her discomfort

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6 The importance of this experience was very different for Clementina and Elizeth. Elizeth was a popular singer whose career spanned fifty years, bridging several styles of popular music in Brazil. She was remarkably influential, and made innumerable contacts and connections with other artists, of whom Clementina was only a small part. In my archival research in Brazil, I only found one small mention of Clementina in Elizeth’s Depoimento para Posteridade recorded at the Museu da Imagem e do Som in Rio de Janeiro, which was rather unsentimental. Clementina, in contrast, whose career was short due to its late start, a limited repertoire and very specific audience who found it appealing, frequently spoke of her friendship with Elizeth in interviews. The length and detail of this story of their African adventure further reflects the deep significance that Elizeth held for her, a meaning that was not reciprocated.
amidst so many diverse and unfamiliar representations of “Africa” caused her to maintain physical distance between herself and the group, gravitating instead towards a man selling traditional instruments, whom she and Elizeth were later frightened of.

Clementina, who had been sent to Senegal as an official representative of Brazil’s African heritage, viewed those who embodied the idea of “Africa” in an unfamiliar, un-Brazilian way with much suspicion and fear, bringing up a series of tropes of the primitive and even cannibalistic nature of the place that they represented. The clothing and behavior of the others was strange to her, and even the language was unintelligible and frightening.

Clementina’s fear was directly related to her status as a woman, as well as her relationship with her husband Pé Grande, whom she clearly viewed as her protector as well as her punisher. Pé Grande was not along on this excursion; in her telling she revealed that he had stayed home with all of their money. Clementina knew that he would be angry with her when he heard the stories, and she said that perhaps he would even give her a beating. At the same time, she also saw him as her savior, a Brazilian black man who had the power not only to protect her, but to literally eat the savages himself: “Se ele estivesse aqui comigo ia comer tudo aquele gente lá, ia comer todo mundo para ninguém saber nem é que foi comido.”

Clementina was so frightened that she reported that following this encounter she remained isolated inside for the rest of the trip, refusing to go out in the street for fear of the Africans. The image of the African from Brazil at this time was very different from the African from Africa, who was represented as a savage capable of acting upon primal urges. Clementina’s descriptions of those around her recall negative images of savages
that were very different from her own experience of Africaneity in Brazil, which was built upon Afro-descendants long broken by slavery, and who themselves also came to view blackness as a kind of savagery that needed to be acculturated and moderated by the general, Europeanized culture. Clementina perceived the Africans in Senegal to be fierce and unbroken, making her feel like some sort of prey that had to use her wiles to escape without them noticing her and putting her in a giant stone cauldron to be cooked up for dinner. She and Elizeth had to be silent and crafty to avoid what she saw as this certain fate.

Nevertheless, she left with some positive impressions of the place that mostly revolved around the aesthetics of African dress and style, later telling a reporter, “O Senegal é uma beleza, os homens todos de bubu e as mulheres se apresentam maravilhosamente lindas, enroladas naqueles panos coloridos” (“Setenta anos”). Her memories of her performance and reception were also positive, particularly as time took its toll on her health and ability to travel: “No Senegal também fiz muito sucesso. Cantei partido alto e jongos. Os crioulos de lá ficaram amarrados. Quero muito ficar boa e cantar de novo na África” (Segundo 23).

The role that Sérgio Cabral played in Dakar remains somewhat of a mystery. By 1966, Cabral had established a reputation in Rio de Janeiro as a cultural producer, similar to Hermínio Bello de Carvalho. He frequently produced albums and organized performances, and was a fixture at first Cartola’s home, then at Zicartola. Clementina’s description above gives the impression that Cabral was somehow familiar with Dakar, to the point that he was able to lead the two singers to places of interest, but this may be more indicative of Clementina’s view of his role than his actual position. A telegram
dated March 24 1966 sent from Itamaraty to the Brazilian embassy in Dakar shows that a formal request was made for financial support for his journey, but this request appeared only a week before the Festival began. Elton Medeiros, who traveled to Dakar as one of Clementina’s accompanists, denied the official nature of Cabral’s presence in Senegal, saying that he was most likely present as a journalist and nothing more, but not part of Brazil’s delegation for the Festival. Regardless of his formal role at the Festival, Cabral functioned in the context of this story as a cultural mediator, physically leading Clementina and Elizeth into an unofficial space that was outside of the boundaries of the Festival, yet seemed somehow connected to it in its cultural diversity.

While most of the accounts of the musical performances in Dakar were overwhelmingly positive, one of the most official descriptions of the events offered harsh criticism. In a telegram sent to Itamaraty on April 28 1966, Brazilian ambassador to Senegal Frederico Chermont de Lisboa described Brazil’s participation in the Festival as a whole. He particularly emphasized Brazil’s disadvantage in communications with the international community that attended the Festival, since (in line with international communications at the time) the Festival’s official languages were French and English, which many of the academics, yet few of the artists, were able to speak. He also stressed his frustration with the lack of follow-through on the part of the Brazilian academics that participated in the conference at the Brazilian government’s expense, particularly the well-known Bahian anthropologist Edison Carneiro. Waldir Freitas de Oliveira, also from
Bahia, remained in the ambassador’s good graces in comparison.\(^7\)

Ambassador Lisboa described the “official” performance at the Théâtre Daniel Sorano in less flattering terms, both in the media and in his personal accounts. His disappointment in the Brazilian musical presentation seems to have been fueled in part by the Dakar audience’s high expectations, which had been exaggerated by the high level of publicity of Brazilian culture promoted by the Brazilian embassy itself in the Senegalese media. Tickets for the three hundred seat theater where the performance was to be held sold out in only three days, but per Lisboa, the featured capoeiristas “passaram mais tempo a fazer malabarismos inúteis que a lutar: pergunto-me, mesmo, se os espectadores se terão convencido de que a capoeira é uma luta.” According to this comment, the most important element of capoeira to Lisboa was its status as a fight, which is a peculiar emphasis in a cultural show that was clearly meant to entertain through movement, not necessarily to represent the capacity of a unique martial arts/dance combination to truly function as a means of defense. He described Clementina de Jesus’ performance with disdain, using only the world “velha” to describe her, emphasizing that “ao ensaiar passos de dança, despertou no público somente compaixão ou hilaridade.” It is unlikely that there was anything inherently different in Clementina’s performance in Dakar from others that she had given in Brazil, and criticizing her for her old age would be possible at any of them. The success of Clementina’s performances often depends more upon the

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\(^7\) In the telegram, Lisboa wrote that “o Senhor Édison Carneiro deixou Dacar furtivamente, sem ter preparado o que lhe pedira e sem ter-se mesmo despedido de mim, apesar de ele e demais membros da delegação terem recebido toda a assistência desta Embaixada e eu lhes ter oferecido um almoço. Ainda para que o Senhor Édison Carneiro gozasse de certos privilégios durante o Festival, eu tinha declinado em seu favor minha posição de chefe da delegação brasileira perante as autoridades senegalesas.” (Telegram dated April 28 1966)
reception of the audience than upon any manipulations or changes on her part. She tended
to put forth very similar musical and performative elements that would evoke particular
symbolism for those who watched her on stage, and if the audience saw the ideas she
evoked on stage as being meaningful and valuable, they would respond favorably.
Likewise, if they decided that a representation of an old black woman who stood for
images and traditions of the past was something to laugh at, the show would prove to be a
failure.

Lisboa further criticized Ataúlfo Alves and his pastoras as poorly dressed and
unattractive, and pointed out that much of the charm and subtlety of the *malandragem*
present in Alves’ lyrics was lost on an audience that did not speak Portuguese. Elizeth, in
turn, was portrayed as out of place in the small theater and the larger stadium where the
following performances would be held, with Lisboa stating that her music was better
suited to performing in nightclubs and on television.

Ambassador Lisboa’s reaction to the performance is very much influenced by the
foreigner’s perception of Brazil, something that he undoubtedly honed while living
abroad for years in Africa:

É minha opinião que, apresentando-se no exterior, os grupos artísticos
brasileiros devem dar mais relevo à dança que ao canto: sobretudo devem
apresentar números de grande movimento no palco, pois que o público
estrangeiro já fixou a ideia da alegria carnavalesca caracterizar os nossos
conjuntos, sendo isto, pois, o que pode causar sucesso mais facilmente.
(Telegram from Lisboa to Itamaraty, April 28 1966)

Per Lisboa, the goal of the festival was not necessarily to expand the audience’s
perspective of Brazil or to educate them by introducing new and unknown aspects of the
culture, but instead to give them what they expect and what they, in a sense, came for,
which was the festive Brazil of many carnival traditions. Given his account of the festival
as “demasiado ambicioso”, one that was extremely complex and demanded considerable funds and energy on the part of the organizers and the participants (surely including the Brazilian Embassy in Senegal), it makes sense that Lisboa would strive to simplify instead of complicate the production, aiming for audience satisfaction by feeding into their pre-established view of Brazil’s cultural strengths.

As an ambassador, Lisboa’s ultimate interest did not lie in the diversification of international perceptions of Brazil, but in the smooth flow of diplomatic relations and the general popularity of the country that he represents. While he attended the performance at the National Theater in the company of other foreign representatives and dignitaries, he did not himself witness the following night’s expanded spectacle, which was held in the much larger Stade de l’Amité, yet wrote that “membros desta Missão Diplomática assim como outras pessoas que lá estiveram disseram-me, no entanto, que os nossos artistas causaram melhor impressão a esse outro público, mais numeroso, mais simples, e certamente, menos exigente.” In this closing phrase, Lisboa implies that the audience that will truly appreciate Brazilian culture, at least as it is represented by the Festival’s Brazilian delegation, is a popular, large, and undemanding one, one that is happy simply to be watching music and dance being performed before them, and that is unlikely to have been exposed to other performances to which they can compare what they see. This is indeed the opposite of the sophisticated heads of state and diplomats, who had undoubtedly seen many official representations of culture. According to Lisboa, the Brazilian musical performance at the First World Festival of Black Arts was a success for the masses, but not for the sophisticated diplomats.
The 1966 Festival of Black Arts in Dakar, Senegal was an event at which conflicting ideas about race, national identity, and the significance of cultural performance were on display. Clementina was sent to the festival by the Brazilian government as a member of a delegation assembled to portray Brazil’s official ideology of racial democracy, representing the “primitive” form of samba, but her local interactions revealed that her notions of the primitive were entirely different from those of Itamaraty and the festival’s producers. A close reading of the Brazilian ambassador to Senegal’s reports on the event further confirmed to discrepancies between the participants’ perceived goals for the event, highlighting the importance of the expectations of different groups involved. Official international events like the Festival of Black Arts provide rich examples of the production of national identity and cultural significance.

La Marseillaise em Português: Clementina Goes to Cannes

Only weeks after Clementina returned from Dakar, she was sent on another transatlantic journey, this time to France. She was invited, along with other Brazilian musicians, to perform at the XX Cannes Film Festival, and only had time to repack her bags and “fazer vestidos ‘mais sofisticados’” in which she would perform in Europe (“Setenta anos”). Clementina had positive memories of this performance as well: “No dia em que cantei, no Palácio dos Festivais, onde, tenho o orgulho de dizer, o Brasil teve prioridade para se apresentar, a casa estava superlotada de gente. E tudo rabudo, de vestido comprido e fraque. E aconteceu uma grande coincidência: eu usava uma baiana
verde e rosa da Mangueira e o palco estava todo enfeitado de hortênsias cor-de-rosa, com folhas verdes enormes.”

The Brazilian delegation that visited Cannes in 1966 was led by Luís Amado, and included several musicians who had also been in Dakar, with Elton Medeiros and Paulinho da Viola together with Haroldo Costa as her accompanists. Elizeth Cardoso was present as well, this time accompanied by the Zimbo Trio instead of Som Três, the trio who had accompanied her in Dakar. Also in the group were Wilson Simonal and the Irmãs Marinho, one of whom, Mary, was Haroldo Costa’s wife. This delegation performed as part of the presentation of Brazil’s cinematic entry in the festival, *A Hora e Vez de Augusto Matraga*, a film directed by Roberto Santos that was associated with the Cinema Novo movement. The presentation took place in the Palais du Festival de Cannes, which held great symbolic meaning for Clementina, given that the majority of her other presentations were held in nightclubs and small theaters (Jesus interview). By being invited to perform in the Palace, Clementina felt that she had been accepted as an artist who deserved official recognition. She was impressed by what she saw as highly sophisticated treatment, something she had never received in Brazil before, from the “carro grande com chófer de luvas” to the “rua tapetada” that would await her in Cannes.

Several of the events that occurred during the Cannes visit have become key references for those who speak and write about Clementina today. While it is difficult to parse out the differences between the actual events and the exaggerations over the span of fifty years, the stories that are constantly repeated clearly reflect the way that those who experienced them continue to remember Clementina and construct her image for others. One of these events was an encounter with Michel Simon, a French journalist and music
researcher who had a Brazilian music program on Radio France ("Elizete") and became quite enamored of Clementina. Per Elton Medeiros, they were recording an interview for the French radio in a bar in Paris when Clementina spontaneously began to sing the French national anthem, La Marseillaise, in Portuguese, in her distinctive deep and gravelly voice. The media and other interested individuals quickly picked up the key elements of France, Clementina de Jesus, and La Marseillaise (A Marselesa in Portuguese) and combined into a variety of different stories and scenarios. What was it that resonated so with these elements, and inspired others to repeat them over and over? Perhaps it was the contrast between the two, Clementina’s style recalling a rural blackness linked strongly to the period of Brazilian slavery, in contrast to the red-carpeted streets of Cannes and its Palais du Festival. How had Clementina, who appeared trapped in time and space, learned to sing the French national anthem, and how did she have it memorized well enough to improvise it as such? These disparate elements came together to create a novelty story, the story of the woman from the past launched into the very modern present as a representation of a very particular aspect of Brazilian culture. She functioned as a mediator for her French and international audience’s exploration of Brazilian culture, representing it as something so exotic, yet somehow close to home given that she could recite a national anthem that everyone knew by heart. For the French, this interaction likely affirmed the universalism of their own culture, an ideology that placed the imaginary French citizen “somehow ‘above’ and ‘beyond’ race and gender” (Shohat and Stam 144). Even as a black Brazilian woman, Clementina could still represent and embrace French universalism through her familiarity with its national anthem. By appearing physically in Europe, she provided a more accessible introduction
to Brazilian culture, at once incorporating its expected elements and new and unfamiliar aspects.

This interaction echoes the mutual admiration that developed between France and Brazil over time beginning as early as the sixteenth century. Stam and Shohat write that Brazil’s fascination with France was initiated precisely because of France’s unsuccessful attempts to colonize Brazil, establishing the European country in the Brazilian imaginary as “the revolutionary homeland of liberty rather than as an imperial power” like Portugal (31). In turn, France saw Brazil as a festive and exotic tropical other that was worthy of study. French standards and frameworks dominated Brazilian trade and professional life from the arrival of the Portuguese court and the opening of the port in 1808 all the way up to World War II, influencing medicine, law, diplomacy, and education in immeasurable ways (Riedinger 377). Much of the Franco-Brazilian relationship was based upon Brazil’s adaptation of French ideas, but Brazilians also had a long history of charming the French, particularly through cultural performance. French composers who had traveled to Brazil in the early twentieth century returned with renditions of songs they had heard, introducing France to Brazilian music (Araujo 31). Four decades prior to Clementina’s appearance at Cannes, the Brazilian *choro* band Os Oito Batutas, who counted Pixinguinha and Donga among its members, toured Paris on a mission to represent Brazil to the “civilized” world in 1922 (Hertzman 106). The film *Black Orpheus* (1959), directed by Frenchman Marcel Camus, depicted an idealized representation of Rio de Janeiro favela life during carnival less than a decade prior to Clementina’s visit. These events contributed to a significant process of cultural exchange,

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8 Jean de Léry published *Histoire d’un Voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* in 1580.
contributing to the complex and lively relationship between Brazil and France that Clementina herself added to.

The other story that is often repeated in the media about this trip to Cannes is that of the street carnival. According to an article in the *Jornal do Brasil*:

os artistas brasileiros, ao se dirigirem para o ensaio, improvisaram nas ruas de Canes um pequeno show, o que deu motivo à intervenção de um policial francês. Mas graças aos pedidos da televisão italiana, o policial terminou por permitir a manifestação, que se transformou num verdadeiro carnaval, chamando a atenção de centenas de pessoas. (“Elizete”)

This story reinforces the image of Brazilians as festive, musical people, who bring the party to wherever they may be, even if they are on their way to work. It confirms the international image of Brazil, and continues to resonate with foreign audiences because it affirms their understanding of Brazil. While this impromptu street celebration was at first impeded by French officials, other members of the audience who held some authority in the context, as part of the European media, were able to intervene on behalf of Brazil’s celebratory nature. This article describes this potentially negative encounter as a resounding success due to the audience support of Brazil’s festive tendency.

Nevertheless, Elton Medeiros’ account of the same event (“Nova moda”) was less positive:

disse Elton que o único caso desagradável foi quando ele e seus companheiros voltava pela praia, de um ensaio no Cassino, e resolveram fazer um carnaval na rua que agentes da polícia proibiram, ameaçando prendê-los. Quando a polícia foi embora, deles se acercaram cinegrafistas de uma televisão italiana (eles estavam sendo filmados sem saber) e pediram que o carnaval continuasse para que pudessem filmar outras cenas.

The recounting of these events adds rich material to ongoing Franco-Brazilian cultural exchange, in which France is an intellectual and sophisticated locale that
appreciates Brazil and its people for their playfulness and exoticism without attempting to control them. Clementina brought an image of simple rural Afro-Brazilian life with her on her visit, and in return received official affirmation and a sense that she had succeeded in an unfamiliar realm. Encounters such as these confirm both sides’ previously held notions of the other, reinforcing France’s role as a sympathetic legitimizer of foreign culture and Brazil’s as its festive friend.

These narratives reveal some of the ways in which Clementina went from relying on the mediations of others to representing particular aspects of Brazilian culture to an international audience. Her selection as an official representative of Afro-Brazilian culture at the 1966 Festival of Black Arts in Senegal attested to both the recognition she had acquired, and to the value that was ascribed to the culture she represented. Her actual experience there, however, revealed her complicated relationship with the primitive and her own African identity. On her subsequent trip to represent Brazilian culture at the Cannes Film Festival, Clementina’s presence reflected the complex exchange between France and Brazil that has developed over many years. Over a short period of two years, Clementina went from a complete lack of public recognition to representing her culture to those who were unfamiliar with it, serving as a true ambassador of Afro-Brazilian culture.

Carolina, Official Representative of the Urban Poor

While Clementina de Jesus came to represent Brazil’s African roots through her music and performance, Carolina Maria de Jesus stood foremost for poverty, not only in
Brazil, but also on a universal level. The dramatic response to the publication of *Quarto de Despejo* thrust her into the spotlight, first in Brazil, and then in the other countries where her book would be subsequently translated and published. Her newfound fame led certain groups to invite her to serve as their representative in the belief that it would strengthen their causes and increase their visibility. These groups’ agendas were implicit in their invitations, revealing not only how they saw Carolina as a writer and a celebrity, but also how they thought that her image could reinforce their causes.

Following the publication of *Quarto de Despejo* in August of 1960, Carolina was invited to attend many local and then international events in a formal capacity. She was invited due to her newfound success, or as a representative of any one of the marginalized groups she belonged to, standing for women, blacks, the poor, or sometimes all three at once. By attending these events, she moved from relying on the assistance of cultural intermediaries like Audálio Dantas to functioning as a representative of the marginalization she had known for most of her life. In her new position, she reversed her previous role as an individual who relied on the mediation of others to serve as an intermediary herself between the groups she visited as a guest. While she was still a black Brazilian woman of the humblest origins, she was no longer ignored. At these events, she had become the center of attention.

Carolina wrote about many of these events and experiences in *Casa de Alvenaria: Diário de uma Ex-Favelada* (1961), her second published diary, also edited by Audálio
Dantas. Although Dantas edited the diary in much the same way that he had Quarto de Despejo, Carolina’s accounts are valuable as firsthand portrayals of her experiences in the world that she discovered beyond the favela. Her writing in Casa de Alvenaria portrays simultaneous feelings of joy, thankfulness, frustration, and confusion that she experienced as a result of her newfound fame and the changes that it introduced into her life.

For Carolina, the month of September of 1960 was filled to capacity with public events that she was invited to attend, and her mentions of them in her diary are often brief. On September 6, she was rewarded an honorary degree by the Academy of Letters at the São Paulo Faculdade de Direito. This degree was originally destined for the French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre, who was apparently too busy to travel to São Paulo to accept the award. This honor came paired with humiliation as well:

When she arrived early at the Academy building for the ceremony, she was turned away at the door by the black porter because he did not believe that a black woman had business there, even though she was wearing fashionable clothing that she had purchased on the elite Rua Augusta. (Levine and Meihy Introduction 8)

The confusion over her role and place in society demonstrated above was glaringly obvious to Carolina, and it became something she frequently wrote about. In an entry dated September 17 1960, she recounted a long list of different events that she had

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9 Translated and published 1997 in the US in under the title I’m Going to Have a Little House: The Second Diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus, with an afterword by Robert M. Levine.

10 In her second diary, Carolina wrote: “Sr. Valdir, the president of the university’s Academy of Letters, presented me to the audience and said that I would be awarded an honorary degree. This diploma was reserved for the French writer Jean Paul Sartre. But, since the French author was very busy and couldn’t come, they decided to give it to me. And he said, ‘France has Sartre, and we have Carolina!’” (Little House 38)
attended, including the Spring Dance at the Fasano Party Room.\textsuperscript{11} She was astonished at the luxury of the club, and wrote of the lavish decorations and the size of the club’s elevator (“it was larger than my former shack” \cite{littlehouse}). She was charged with the responsibility of crowning the queen, Miss Ester Brasil, officially granting her the prize of beauty. While her unfamiliarity with such elegant surroundings showed in her person, Carolina wrote, “I was the object of attention for all eyes because of my book.” Any attention that may have begun with the book was augmented by the fact that she was so starkly out of place, a fish out of water as a former \textit{favelada} at an elegant society dance and beauty pageant.

Carolina herself had some ambivalence about being held up to society as a symbol. She often resisted, denied, or was blatantly unaware of how she was represented to other groups--she had lived as an individual in the favela, and continued to approach her life in the same way now that she had moved away from it, so in a way she was an incongruous choice as a representative. Nevertheless, she did her best to fulfill these expectations, often expressing her ideas on the state of the world to those who would ask her about them and listen to her answers. In an entry dated December 3 1960, Carolina was at a restaurant in Rio de Janeiro, when “several women came over to talk to me about poverty, telling me I ought to resolve the problem of the inhumane conditions in which the country’s slum dwellers live” \cite{carolina}. The women expected her to solve these problems,

\textsuperscript{11} According to their website, the Fasano family has a long history of hospitality in Brazil beginning with the family patriarch’s arrival in São Paulo from Italy in 1902. In the 1960s, the family opened a tea room and dance hall in the Conjunto Nacional on Avenida Paulista “que para muita gente da cidade, evoca uma gostosa nostalgia.” \url{http://www.fasano.com.br/gastronomia/institucional}
but Carolina would have none of this responsibility, instead presenting what she saw as “the facts,” writing, “the task of solving the problem falls to those in the middle class and above, the ones who dominate the country…”

Simultaneously admired and scorned by those around her, her newfound success brought a bittersweet mixture of happiness and a new kind of suffering that she had not experienced in the poverty of her life in the favela. She was now expected to stand for certain ideas about the role of women, the role of blacks, and the position of the poor in Brazilian society, expectations that were nearly impossible for anyone to meet, let alone a woman who had faced so many challenges in her life. She was now saddled with the burden of representation, a term that refers to the obligation felt by individuals to create a positive image of the marginalized group with which they identify.

Writing specifically about black representations in film, Isaac Julien and Kobena Mercer describe this phenomenon as one “where access and opportunities are rationed, so that black films tend to get made only one-at-a-time, each film text is burdened with an inordinate pressure to be ‘representative’ and to act, like a delegate does, as a statement that ‘speaks’ for the black communities as a whole” (455). Operating within the realm of literature, Carolina experienced a similar pressure several times over in that she stood for multiple marginalized groups: she represented not only Afro-Brazilian women at a time when their voices were exceedingly rare in the public sphere, but also for the poor, and even more specifically, for favelados.

The Brazilian media treated her as if they expected her to fail at her new social position, a point of view that was innately linked to social expectations for disadvantaged black women in Brazil. Shohat and Stam write that this mainstream attitude leads to a
situation in which “any negative behavior by any member of the oppressed community is instantly generalized as typical, as pointing to a perpetual backsliding toward some presumed negative essence” (Unthinking 183). The representations of the marginalized have an allegorical nature that places undue pressure on the small number of minorities who are able to speak publicly, whereas diverse representations of the dominant group are simply varied, thought to demonstrate the many ways to live within that group.

The press portrayed Carolina’s rags to riches story in a polarizing manner, turning many people against her. The poor resented her perceived success, criticizing her for climbing on their backs to pull herself out of squalor, or expecting a piece of the pie. The very fact that she, an uneducated black woman of humble origins, was able to rise from the favela through literature of all means, the province of the privileged, was an affront to the elite who benefitted from the sharp social divisions in Brazilian society. Consequently, they mocked her attempts at sophistication, as if she were a child playing dress-up. Carolina had never fit in particularly well in the favela, and now that she had left it, she continued to stick out in the broader world, making awkward and unsuccessful attempts at blending in to society as a whole.

**Carolina and the São Paulo Literary Black Elite**

One group that did embrace Carolina, however, was a small group of intellectual middle class blacks in São Paulo. Carolina’s interactions with a group with whom she shared her racial identity, but little else, emphasize the significance and consequences of both social class and educational access in *paulistano* society. Her newly acquired place
in the spotlight attracted the attention of individuals who were physically similar to her, yet experienced the social reality of São Paulo life in a radically different way.

The black middle class first emerged in São Paulo around World War I with the growth of industrialization and urbanization, creating new access to education and opportunities for Afro-Brazilians in bureaucracy, white-collar employment, and the professions. According to George Reid Andrews, to qualify for membership in the black middle class, “one didn’t have to have a college degree. It was enough to be a public functionary or have some other relatively stable job” (128). In the early twentieth century, Afro-Brazilians made up a comparatively smaller group in São Paulo than they did in other Brazilian cities, such as Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. Black paulistanos were significantly outnumbered by European immigrants, and were at a significant disadvantage for jobs and other resources. Afro-Brazilians in São Paulo were passed over in favor of the new immigrants due to multiple factors inherited from slavery, such as widespread racism, illiteracy, and a lack of marketable skills, but George Reid Andrews points out that these disadvantages do not justify the resulting inequality in employment, as blacks in other parts of Brazil also struggled with them. The particular circumstances of black paulistanos are instead best explained by several state policies that encouraged European immigration and disfavored black Brazilians (88). The blacks that succeeded in São Paulo’s new urban context were often those who maintained connections with traditional white families in the region, given that other former slaves had few of the skills necessary to survive in the city independently.

In the 1920s, the black population began to organize politically as a response to the disillusionment, struggling against the poverty, discrimination, and isolation that
many Afro-Brazilians suffered. The resulting social movements were essentially integrationalist, in that they did not seek to transform the existing social order, but instead to equalize blacks and whites within it (Fernandes 189). With the goals of improving the standard of living, reeducating, and the upward social mobilization of blacks within mainstream Brazilian society, members of the black movement tried to change themselves in order to better fit in.

One of the ways that they communicated and circulated ideas on how to implement these changes was through newspapers and literary journals, which became a space in which they could define what it meant to be a black Brazilian in São Paulo at the time. Members of this burgeoning middle class began to publish small newspapers and magazines that were not produced by professional publishers or journalists, but instead by small groups of individuals from the Afro-Brazilian bourgeoisie (Butler 90). The early establishment of a network of publications produced and read by the community laid the groundwork for the development of an intellectual group within the middle class. These early newspapers followed the model of those published by European immigrant communities in São Paulo, per José Correia Leite:

> a comunidade negra tinha necessidade dessa imprensa alternativa. Não se tinha outro meio a não ser copiar o que as colônias estrangeiras faziam. O negro, de certa forma, era também uma minoria, como os italianos, os alemães, os espanhóis. E todos eles tinham jornais e sociedades. As publicações negras davam aquelas informações que não se obtinha em outra parte. (33)

Early in the trajectory of the black press, educated black *paulistanos* turned to the established patterns of classical European literature and music instead of looking to their own cultural traditions for models and inspiration. Equality and similarity with whites
were the ultimate goals behind this tendency, best illustrated by the aspiration of a 1924 contributor to the Afro-Brazilian magazine *Elite*:

> We shall increase our efforts one hundred-fold, we will educate our children, we will sacrifice everything to raise them to the status of the perfect citizen, and the day will come when it will be loudly proclaimed to the whole universe that they are Brazilians as worthy as any other. (qtd. in Butler 93)

In later years, many politically active Afro-Brazilians would embrace Pan-Africanism, but during this early period, the emphasis was on Afro-Brazilian role models such as the poets Luís Gama and João da Cruz e Sousa, or militia leader Henrique Dias, rather than on heroes from elsewhere in the African diaspora like Marcus Garvey. In his early study, Roger Bastide wrote of the journalists of the black press:

> Dir-se-la que esses jornalistas têm medo de lembrar sua origem, de evocar uma África, bárbara em seus pensamentos, um país que é imaginado quase como um país de selvagens… Querem permanecer brasileiros, e é preciso sub-entender: membros de uma nação civilizada. (70)

Butler emphasizes that prior to 1938, the black press went through three fundamental stages in the development of Afro-Brazilian consciousness. Initially, the newspapers and journals prioritized the gathering and strengthening of popular ideas about the group’s collective identity by emphasizing the positive traits and deeds of Afro-Brazilians. Next, the press began to function as a tool to communicate specific political ideologies, namely the desire for full racial integration and equality with whites. In the final phase, the black press was dominated by the publication *A Voz da Raça*, the newspaper put out by the newly formed Frente Negra Brasileira political organization, which proposed explicit forms of social protest that could be carried out by its readership, and soon became the largest black paper (89-92). The black press’ heyday came to an abrupt end in 1937 with
President Getúlio Vargas’ ruling to shut down all political parties as part of the Estado Novo (Bastide 53). Without the FNB to support it, *A Voz da Raça* soon shut down, and others followed soon after. The tradition of the black press in São Paulo was not extinguished, but it was significantly diminished. This early period nevertheless contributed to the development of an intellectual and literary tradition among *afro-paulistanos* that continued to resonate decades later when Carolina and her diary attracted national attention.

One of the most influential black journals of the 1920s was *O Clarim da Alvorada*, founded in 1924. Under the direction of Jayme Aguilar and José Correia Leite, *O Clarim* emphasized blacks’ role in Brazilian history, and focused on self-improvement and criticism instead of blaming white society for its problems (Butler 98). Correia Leite also participated in the Afro-Brazilian political organization Centro Cívico Palmares (founded 1926) along with other important figures from the black press, such as Arlindo Veiga dos Santos. Interactions through the Centro Cívico Palmares soon led to the formation of the Frente Negra Brasileira (Black Brazilian Front), a social protest organization that advocated for civil rights and assistance of the Brazilian black community. The Frente began to publish their own newspaper, *A Voz da Raça*, in 1933, as a way to help attract new members and extend the organizations’ reach to a national scale (Butler 117).

Soon after the publication of *Quarto de Despejo*, Carolina was honored at José Correia Leite’s sixtieth birthday party. Leite (1900-1989) was a Afro-Brazilian intellectual, poet, and leader in São Paulo. He began his career as a journalist and activist in São Paulo in the 1920s. The child of a black domestic worker and a white father who
did not acknowledge his paternity, Leite received no formal education and lacked social connections to white families, something that offered protection and opportunities for advancement to other Afro-Brazilians at the time (Butler 102). Leite is perhaps best known as the co-founder of the aforementioned newspaper *O Clarim*. When he met Carolina in 1960, Correia Leite was affiliated with another black journal called *Revista Niger* that grew out of the Associação Cultural do Negro. *Revista Niger* called itself a “publicação a serviço da coletividade negra,” and showed its support for Carolina by publishing a photo of her posing with her book on the cover of its September 1960 issue.
Printing such an image on the cover of a literary journal was not only a recognition of and homage to her newfound success, but also evidence that *paulistano* black artists and intellectuals wanted to count Carolina as an ally in their anti-racist struggles (Silva 75).

In September 1960, Carolina was invited by the Associação da Cultura Negra (Association of Black Culture) to their offices in the Martinelli Building on the day of the Mãe Preta, where members of the Teatro Experimental do Negro (TEN, or Black Experimental Theater) sang a samba for her (*Little House* 44). In revering Carolina, these groups were recognizing her background and the fact that she had done the impossible as a black woman who moved out of the favela because of her published writing. By inviting her to appear before audiences, these groups placed Carolina in the position of intermediary, physically standing between the official and the marginalized, and bestowing recognition and respect upon these groups with her presence.

Soon after the publication of *Quarto de Despejo* made her a household name in São Paulo, several members of the *elite negra* began to reach out to Carolina, attempting to tie her newfound recognition and financial success to the black movement at the time. Oswaldo de Camargo (b. 1936) was a young poet who was active in the Associação Cultural do Negro, an institution that strove to fill the gap left by the dissolution of the Frente Negra Brasileira, and sought Carolina’s financial support for a black literary journal by the name of *O Ébano*. Camargo persuaded Carolina to use her public recognition to endorse a brand of soap, aiming to use the profits to help publish the journal. Eduardo Oliveira, a black poet who was also seen as a populist leader and moved

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12 The Martinelli Building is a São Paulo landmark known as the first skyscraper in Brazil, inaugurated in 1929.
in similar circles, wrote the preface to Carolina’s *Pedaços da Fome*, published in 1963 (Silva 73).

Oswaldo was the opposite of Carolina in many ways. He was well educated, had a strong command of the *norma culta*, and was surrounded by a supportive and unified community that was intellectually nurtured by journals similar to the one he was trying to publish. Although he was born to laborers on a coffee plantation in rural São Paulo, he was orphaned as a small child and went to study at seminary where he developed a deep interest in poetry and literature, eventually migrating to the capital and beginning a career as a journalist (“Oswaldo”). Apart from his work with *O Ébano*, he was also involved with the *Revista Niger*, as well as a publication called *Novo Horizonte*. He would go on to become a published poet and prose author, publishing volumes of poetry and short stories. In other words, he had achieved a level of literary legitimacy that Carolina could only dream of.

Carolina wrote about race in a somewhat oblique fashion in *Quarto de Despejo*, yet her criticism of racial inequality grew more pronounced in subsequent publications, perhaps due to the company she kept after acquiring fame. Oswaldo tried to encourage these tendencies, turning his financial need into a question of racial solidarity. As Carolina wrote in her diary on an entry from March 13 1961, “he said that our race needs to be united, that the ones who are at the top have to help the ones at the bottom” (*Little House* 125). Pelé, the legendary soccer player who was at his peak at the time, had recently signed endorsements for a variety of products, and Oswaldo cited these recent

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13 In his later work, Oswaldo would explore themes of racial and ancestral identity, passing through a phase closely aligned with *Négritude* and a spiritual return to Africa (Brookshaw 226).
business deals as an example of how “our race needs to stand together.” According to her diary, Carolina signed a contract that allowed her image and name to be used in newspaper and television ads for one year, and agreed that out of the total earnings of Cr$94,000, Cr$60,000 would be given to Oswaldo for the publication of *O Ébano*, while the remaining Cr$34,000 would be given not to Carolina, but to a coordinating agency.\(^\text{14}\)

Essentially, she was convinced to sell her public image in order to support a fledgling black journal that she had no affiliation with apart from a shared racial heritage with its founders, but was instead exploited as a representative based on her newfound fame and financial resources. Eventually the opportunities fell through for Carolina to endorse the soap and other products when the soap company cancelled the contract without justification. Her support of the black community through the commercialization of her image then became irrelevant, but this interaction nevertheless demonstrates a curious inversion of social positions that is worth further exploration.

In the quote above, Oswaldo is referring to himself when he talks of “the one at the bottom.” After all, he was in need of financial support in order to publish his literary journal that featured the work of black authors. Carolina, as “the one at the top,” however, had only recently achieved this status precisely because she herself was once at the bottom. She was at the top because she had attained fame and notoriety, but these were benefits that she only achieved through her experiences first of destitution, and then of connections with key intermediary figures such as Audálio Dantas.

\(^{14}\) I was unfortunately unable to locate any further information about this agency or its connection with Carolina.
Throughout her portrayal of this episode in her diary, Carolina is wary of Oswaldo and his requests, eventually giving in to his proposals after he convinces her, or wears her down, writing, “I felt as if I were a leaf moving according to the direction of the wind” (*Little House* 125). He played upon her insecurities and desires for an expanded audience, promising both to launch her as a singer and to publish her stories in *O Ébano*, which she agreed to support through potential endorsements. Carolina appears to have recognized that part of Oswaldo’s manipulation of her was through a call for racial unity, as well as the irony that “the ones at the top” did little to help her when she was at the bottom. Nor would they help her in years to come when her money had been spent and she was alone. At the end of the episode, she wrote in her diary, “In the middle of all this ‘let’s sell Carolina,’ I figured out that when I was at the favela I was worth zero. Now I have value…” (127) Oswaldo’s attempt to exploit Carolina was ultimately unsuccessful.

Social class and access to education complicated Carolina’s relationship with the intellectual black middle class, ultimately preventing her from being accepted as part of this group. She shared with them her racial identity, but her daily reality and life experiences could not have been more foreign to a group for whom day to day life was not a constant struggle. During her years in the favela she aspired to be like them, longing for a future in which she was respected for her intellectual achievements and her literary knowledge. Once she left Canindé, however, she was unable to mitigate poverty’s influence on her life despite her improved financial circumstances. What began as a difference in access to resources became a difference in social expectations, marking her as an outsider who was unable to change her station in life to a group middle class journalists and poets who stood to gain from her exploited position in the public eye. As
Representing the Marginal in the Southern Cone

Over a year after the publication of *Quarto de Despejo*, on November 15, 1961, Carolina left her children behind in São Paulo and embarked on a month-long tour of the Southern Cone. She visited Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile as part of a publicity tour to promote the Spanish-language translation of *Quarto de Despejo*, which had been published under the title *El Hambre es Amarillo*. Apart from being free from taking care of her children for the first time in years, Carolina expressed greater freedom the further she traveled from São Paulo and the responsibilities that had weighed on her since achieving public recognition the year before. The Chileans, Argentines, and Uruguayans she encountered in the Southern Cone asked more pointed questions about uncomfortable topics than Brazilians did, asking directly about favelas, poverty, and Brazil’s racial problems, and she in turn answered them with more specific, and more politically charged responses.

Apart from visiting bookstores where she would speak about her work and life, meet fans, and sign copies of the Spanish-language edition of her first diary, Carolina was also formally recognized by numerous organizations and official bodies. No one directly attacked her or mocked her on this trip, which was something that she had grown
accustomed to in her daily life at home in São Paulo. In comparison to the way the public responded to her in Brazil, where she was treated to a mixture of curiosity and derision, in the Southern Cone she was received with open arms. On this visit, she succeeded in reaching larger audiences than she ever had in Brazil, at one point speaking to a ceremony audience of three thousand people (Levine and Meihy Life and Death 61).

In Buenos Aires, she received the “Order of the Knights of the Screw”, a “good humored honor awarded to visiting foreign dignitaries.”\(^{15}\) She took a short break from her travels to return to São Paulo for the publication of Casa de Alvenaria for two weeks on November 27, 1961. On December 12, she resumed her tour when she flew to Uruguay, where president Victor Hampedo received her with an embrace and presided over a feijoada lunch held in her honor (Little House 168). Together they flew to the city of Salto, where they dedicated a monument and spent the day together visiting the city. The Uruguayans clearly thought Carolina worthy of such a reception, and that she deserved the highest honor. Curiously, her international esteem and the events organized to honor her abroad were barely reported on back home in Brazil.

Her experiences in Chile were varied, yet seemed to bring many aspects of her life and her beliefs into sharper focus. While in Chile, Carolina was privy to commentary on the role of race in the country. She was profoundly impacted by a conversation with the nationalist Chilean writer, Benjamin Subercaseaux, in which he told her that she should enjoy spending time in his country as a tourist, but that she shouldn’t consider

\(^{15}\) Levine writes that Carolina’s reception of this award was later wrongly portrayed by the journalist Regina Penteado, who reported the award as the “Order of the Screwdriver”, inscribed with the phrase “falta um parafuso a menos em quem alcança a fama” (only nuts achieve fame). (“Cautionary Tale” 75)
living there, stating, “Our Chileans don’t like blacks, they don’t like Jews, they don’t like Arabs.” In her diary, she wrote the following response:

I was shocked because I was born in Brazil and never had heard a white say the word “black” in such a deprecatory tone. Whites in Brazil want to extinguish racial prejudice; the Arabs are prospering, and the Jews like us because they create factories when they give jobs to Brazilians and foreigners living in Brazil. In my country, one’s skin color is not important. Only attitudes. (qtd. in Levine “Cautionary Tale” 170)

She was so affected by this interaction with Subercaseaux that she left the country the following morning, returning several weeks later for a shorter four-day book tour.

Upon her return, she was invited to appear at a speakers’ forum on international affairs at the University of Concepción, where students and international scholars discussed the need for social revolution in preparation for the Punta del Este hemispheric meeting to be held later that month. She was the only Brazilian in attendance, as well as the only black, yet was invited as a representative of both Brazilians and the poor to speak alongside heavyweight intellectuals from the Americas such as Carlos Fuentes, Alejo Carpentier, and the Columbia professor Frank Tannenbaum (Little House 171). At this forum, she received perhaps the most esteemed recognition of her role as a cultural intermediary that she would receive during her lifetime, speaking for countless members of the marginalized groups that she belonged to. There, she was the bridge between the leftist social activists of the university system and the marginalized poor of the Americas.

On this trip, she also made a connection with the Chilean professor Jorge Mendoza Enríquez, a man who Levine would call “the prince to her Cinderella,” because “For Carolina, Mendoza was a forbidden dream: a polite, cultured man who respected her, a man who dressed elegantly, ‘like an actor’” (Levine “Cautionary Tale” 172).
Although she had many romantic relationships and each of her children was born to a different father, Carolina had always been a pessimist about traditional notions of monogamy between the sexes, frequently criticizing marriage as an institution. In *Quarto do Despejo*, she often criticized her neighbor’s marriages, lamenting the women’s responsibility to care for their drunken husbands. She had never before experienced the kind of treatment that Professor Mendoza offered her, and she seems to have been swept off her feet by the notion of a man who respected her and she thought worthy of her attention.

Through these international experiences, Carolina became the link between the reality of her past and the future she was striving for, connecting what she knew to what she dreamed of. Although she was frequently mocked and scorned in Brazil, on her trip to the Southern Cone, she was admired, revered, and honored, held up as the spokeswoman for a sector of the global population that rarely had a voice. Writing a book about her experience of poverty and destitution translated her struggle into a format that was familiar to the educated middle and upper classes, whether in the United States, Europe, or South America. This intermediary role was further consolidated by the appearances she made in Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, during which she spoke of the issues that she had faced, and spoke for others who continued to face similar situations. By writing about her struggles, she documented the reality of the poor in a way was accessible to those who would never dream of setting foot in a São Paulo favela, yet were able to access her daily reality at a comfortable distance through the printed word.
Conclusion

Once achieving fame and recognition, Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus took on new roles as cultural ambassadors, representing specific ideas about race, gender, and class identity to the outside world. Carolina came to stand for the grim reality of poverty, while Clementina came to stand for an Afro-Brazilian identity that was rooted in the rural past. When Clementina was selected as an official representative of Brazilian culture in Senegal and France, the government was endorsing her version of what it meant to be Afro-Brazilian: “primitive,” positive, and rooted in the past, yet operating in the present. She stood for a mixture of the African and the Brazilian, inherently tying her image to slavery as the force that initially united both cultures. When Carolina was invited to speak or appear at events in Brazil and the Southern Cone following the success of her first published diary, she stood for an entirely different vision of what it meant to be Afro-Brazilian. Carolina represented the poor and the destitute, those who had been abandoned by Brazilian society and left to survive on their own. Yet the very fact that she had reached an audience through her writing despite being almost entirely self-educated meant that she also represented hope for social mobility and change. Her interactions with groups such as the literary black elite in São Paulo demonstrate how deeply rooted her experiences of poverty were, however, ultimately dashing any hope of true social ascendance among the poor. Both women’s encounters as ambassadors of different aspects of the Brazilian experience ultimately point to the discrepancies between how they saw themselves and how the world perceived them, further complicating the relationship between representation and self-image.
Chapter 4

Building a Legacy: Emulating and Confirming Authenticities of Race and Poverty

Problems with authenticity and representation have been present throughout my comparison of Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus, but it is in the exploration of how others have portrayed both women that these issues most demand to be explored. Works that reference Clementina associate her blackness with authenticity, while those that build off of Carolina’s story associate her poverty with authenticity. In this chapter, I explore the following questions: Which aspects of each woman’s work inspired or were emulated by other artists and which were left out or avoided? Both women were of humble origins—how do others’ representations of them deal with issues of accessibility and exclusivity? And finally, what broader truths do their legacies express about Brazilian society, particularly in relation to racial and economic class?

Since her discovery, Clementina has been the subject of or referenced in many popular Brazilian songs and recordings. While this would seem to provide an opportunity for her image to grow and change, her established role is instead reinforced when it is employed again and again in the same way. Referencing her as a mãe preta who symbolizes the African roots of Brazilian culture confers a sense of legitimacy and authenticity upon artists, particularly those who perform within the samba genre or have ties to Afro-Brazilian culture.
Carolina de Jesus has also developed a significant legacy in contemporary culture, given that her story is best known in an international academic context. In this chapter, I examine how Carolina’s life experience was adapted for theatrical performance, and her contemporary representation within and outside of Brazil. To international readers and scholars, she is held up as a symbol of the struggle of the marginalized against urban poverty, while in Brazil she has been largely forgotten and is disregarded as being out of date.

In this chapter, I discuss the legacies of Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus, exploring how other artists and scholars have used their work and representations to legitimize their own cultural production. As each woman was introduced first on a national, and then on an international stage, their public images became cultural references that symbolized specific ideas and concepts. Mentions of Clementina recall images of racial and musical legitimacy, while references to Carolina introduce class struggle and preoccupations with social justice.

The meaning of legacy is twofold, connoting gifts from the past of both a physical and abstract nature. In this chapter, instead of using the term legacy to discuss objects or money that are passed down from one’s ancestors, I use it to refer to ideas and images that are transmitted from the past, and that continue to exist after the person who created them stops working or dies. Artists and musicians who found inspiration in Carolina and Clementina’s work not only affirm the significance of the inspiring work, but also gain artistic credibility and legitimacy through its reference. Throughout this chapter, I will focus on different aspects of each woman’s cultural image and their emphasis through
new uses, showing how these uses carry on their names and careers many years after the women themselves have died, as well as benefitting those who reference them.

Clementina’s legacy was already under construction in the later years of her career, with many artists adopting her musical style as a way to revere her. In contrast, the majority of Carolina’s positive legacy grew after her death. Apart from the brief period prior to and following the publication of *Quarto de Despejo* in 1960, the Brazilian media approached Carolina as a curiosity instead of as someone worthy of reverence and respect. Unlike Clementina, Carolina experienced little celebration and recognition beyond her first publication during her lifetime. Here I will explore not only the nuance of each woman’s legacy, but the timing of its construction in relation to each woman’s life. The continued use of each woman’s life and work is essential to our understanding of their roles as icons of contemporary Brazilian culture.

*Sua Benção, Clementina: Constructing a Musical Legacy Through the Compositions of Others*

Saúdo os deuses negros  
Da serra-mar céu de Quelé  
Pro povo brasileiro  
Rainha Negra da voz  
Mãe de todos nos.

Moacyr Luz & Aldir Blanc, “Rainha Negra” 1995

Songs that other composers and musicians have written and sung about Clementina have been an important part of the establishment of her legacy. Her
introduction to the public in the 1964 *Rosa de Ouro* musical review was heralded by the samba “Clementina cadê você?,” written by Elton Medeiros, a composition that essentially introduced her to a new audience by recounting key moments in her life. As a musician, her legacy was both built and reinforced by other musicians. In this section, I explore the different ways that Clementina was featured in the songs of others, and how these references reinforced ideas about her as an example of authentic black culture in the public imaginary. First I show how referencing her in “roots” samba recordings granted a racialized legitimacy to those who sang about her. Then I examine two *sambas-enredo* that held her up as a model of black femininity, an example that was repeated through popular lyrics that were meant to be repeated incessantly by the public. Finally, I examine how her work has been repackaged and marketed since her death, limiting the size and characteristics of the audience that has access to her work.

In Brazilian popular music beginning in the 1970s, Clementina de Jesus became a basic reference point in roots samba music, and other musicians began to use her image to confirm their own authenticity in the world of samba. Trotta and Castro assert that “autores referenciais” are essential to the construction of the samba tradition, given that references to their repertoire demonstrate the musician’s commitment and affinity with a particular group and their common experiences (63). During this period, samba was at the peak of its commercial popularity. Artists like Martinho da Vila had great success with sambas that were accessible to the mainstream Brazilian public, opening the market for musicians who did not come from traditional samba communities to record and perform within the genre. In order to illustrate how Clementina’s image was used to legitimize the
work of certain musicians who came to samba as outsiders, here I examine two songs that make explicit references to the singer, recorded by Beth Carvalho and Clara Nunes.

Beth Carvalho and Clara Nunes are often cited as rivals in Brazilian popular music in the 70s and 80s, the period during which both were regularly recording and performing. Both women revered the older Clementina, promoting her as a great artist and a “true” sambista in the songs that they recorded. Their public adoration further confirmed Clementina’s legacy of authenticity as a symbol of black tradition.

In *Live Samba: Analysis and Interpretation of Brazilian Pagode*, Luiz Nascimento de Lima explains that one of the things that separates men and women sambistas is the fact that women frequently enter the genre after first reaching a certain level of success as interpreters of other musical styles, while men who are known as sambistas were usually trained within the style (122). Both Clara Nunes and Beth Carvalho began their careers with recordings in the popular genres of MPB and bossa nova, transitioning to roots samba only after they were well known as singers and recording artists. Despite their commercial success within the samba genre, the shift from other genres interferes with the female singers’ perceived legitimacy as “real” sambistas who are genuinely devoted to the musical style.

Beth Carvalho has worked for many years as an interpreter of samba compositions, but her position as a mentor and mediator has augmented her importance in the contemporary samba scene. Over the years, she has established the pattern of searching for unknown samba composers, recording their compositions, and eventually inviting them to participate in her own recordings of the songs, thereby introducing them to her fans. Through her status as a well-established popular singer, Beth creates a space
for the development of the careers of (mostly) male sambistas in the abstract realm of the media. On her recording of the song “Clementina de Jesus” on the LP Canto Para Um Novo Dia (1973, Tapecar), Beth Carvalho uses her influence and popularity to venerate Clementina in the same fashion, singing:

Clementina de Jesus nascida
Obra e graça da raça de cor
Veste branco e sorri pra vida
Que nem sempre lhe sorriu
Nem sempre lhe deu amor…
Deus te criou crioula
Pra provar que a raça é bamba
Sua benção, primeira dama do samba
Que ensina a vida a cantar
Ô Clementina!
Só pedimos pra te amar

This song was written by the female composer Gisa Nogueira, the less-recognized sister of the popular sambista and composer João Nogueira. This recording holds particular significance in that it represents three separate levels of female contributions to samba, something that was practically unheard of in a musical genre in which women were more likely to participate on the margins rather than from the center: Gisa wrote about Clementina, and Beth later recorded the song.

In this composition, Clementina is portrayed as a symbol of the association between blackness and musical skill, and also revered for her positive attitude despite her marginalized position in Brazilian society as a black working class woman. In the song text, Clementina’s work is fundamentally black, and she is represented as the divine emblem that unites the “bamba” to the “raça,” a connection between music and blackness that was specifically created by God to send a cultural message that, we can presume, is directed to the Brazilian people.
A key aspect of the lyrics is the emphasis placed on Clementina’s eternal optimism, despite the many justifications she had for holding a negative outlook. Bevilaqua describes Clementina’s positive image as follows: “uma das características marcantes da personalidade de Clementina era uma espécie de otimismo que a levava a conformar-se com os momentos mais difíceis pelos quais passara durante toda a vida” (88). The granddaughter of slaves, she undoubtedly suffered prejudice throughout her life due to the color of her skin, but as the songs says, always wearing white and smiling at life, she fits into a black image that is inoffensive, agreeable, and easy for a general audience to consume.

Clementina herself denied ever having been treated, humiliated, or suffered violence due to her race (M. Fernandes 10). By projecting this image, Clementina supported the informal ideology of tolerance and racial democracy that continues to hold stake in the contemporary Brazilian imaginary, despite research dispelling it as a myth. Her life in the spotlight coincided with two decades of military dictatorship that officially embraced this line of thinking. During the 1960s and 70s, the military government attempted to suppress any criticisms or examinations of racial democracy, calling them acts of Anti-Brazilian subversion (Andrews Racial Democracy 491).

Clementina’s attitude toward race reflected some of the key elements of the myth, namely that “Afro-Brazilians encounter no racial discrimination in Brazil… are satisfied with their social condition,” and that “there does not exist, there has never existed, and there will never exist any problem of social justice for Afro-Brazilians” (Luiza Bairros, qtd. in Bailey 89). These ideas reinforce the idea of racial harmony in Brazil by downplaying or denying any discrimination experienced by people of color. This attitude
contributed directly to Clementina’s acceptance by the Brazilian middle class and elite. She was an example of Brazilian society’s supposed lack of racial discord, supporting the idea of the racially mixed Brazilian family in which everyone was always happy. Appreciating Clementina and her music served as proof that racism was nonexistent in Brazil.

Being both “crioula” and “da raça bamba,” Clementina represents a legitimate aspect of the world of samba, and her reference adds a certain element of authenticity to those who employ it in their own work, even singers like Beth Carvalho who were not identified as Afro-Brazilian. Beth Carvalho recorded this samba when Clementina was at the end of the first decade of her career as a singer, but it already reveals her position as the venerated “first lady of samba.” As this song demonstrates, she is respected not despite, but because of her triumph in the face of adversity, to the degree that her admirers feel the need to ask her permission to love her. Asking for “sua bênção” and telling Clementina that “so pedimos pra te amar” points to a reverent respect that is generally reserved for older relatives, as in the Brazilian tradition of asking for the blessing of older family members. While there were, and continue to be, millions of other women in Brazil who confront similar struggles, Clementina’s story of success late in life allowed her to become a point of reference in the struggle for the recognition and appreciation of Afro-Brazilian cultural forms.

Clara Nunes was one of the best-known samba interpreters of the 1970s. Her recordings are still very popular today, and her fame was perhaps augmented by her early death at the age of forty in 1983, a result of complications during surgery to treat varicose
veins. Throughout her career, she incorporated references to the Afro-Brazilian religious rituals Umbanda and Candomblé into her music and her dress. Like Beth Carvalho, she began her career as a singer in the Musica Popular Brasileira (MPB) genre in the 1960s.\(^1\) Clara was one of the first female singers to achieve high sales of her recordings of samba compositions, contributing to the development of samba as a commercial product that would propel the genre’s “boom” in the mid seventies (Lima 122-23). Her untimely and unexpected death illuminated the importance of physical appearance and conventional beauty for women in the music industry during the period: the image shown to the public was of utmost importance, a key part of the “women in samba” package that was being sold to the public through the media. In the duet “PCJ (Partido Clementina de Jesus),” composed by Nei Lopes, on the 1977 album *As Forças da Natureza* (EMI/Odeon), Clara sings together with Clementina herself:

Clara Nunes: Não vadeia Clementina  
Clementina de Jesus: Fui feita pra vadiar!  
CN: Não, não vadeia Clementina  
CJ: Fui feita pra vadiar, eu vou! Vou vadiar, vou vadiar, vou vadiar! X 2

CN: Energia nuclear, o homem subiu à lua  
CJ: É o que se ouve falar, mas a fome continua  
CN: É o progresso, Tia Clementina! Trouxe tanta confusão  
CJ: Um litro de gasolina por cem gramas de feijão

CN: Cadê o cantar dos passarinhos, o ar puro não encontro mais não  
CJ: É o preço do progresso, paga com a poluição  
CN: O homem é civilizado, a sociedade é que faz sua imagem  
CJ: Mas tem muito diplomado que é pior do que selvagem

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\(^1\) The label *MPB* emerged in the late 1960s and early 70s, and referred to an eclectic collection of musicians and styles that didn’t fit into standard musical categories. MPB musicians combined national and international styles and references while emphasizing melody, harmony, rhythm, and poetic lyrics (McGowan and Pessanha 79).
In the song, Clementina sings the part of an older and more experienced woman who represents knowledge from the past, the *mãe preta* with her feet firmly on the ground, while Clara sings from a younger woman’s perspective. Both women sing of the negative effects of progress, such as pollution, hunger, and the high cost of living. Clara addresses Clementina de Jesus with the reverence of a niece to an older aunt who can give her the answers to the world’s problems. The recording is marked as a typical *partido-alto* samba from the 1970s, with a simple arrangement of cavaquinho, pandeiro, and guitar as a backdrop to the distinct voices of the two singers, Clara’s voice closer and stronger, and Clementina’s more rough and distant. The song’s call and response structure recalls the folkloric forms that Clementina was best known for performing and recording.

Here, the word “vadiar” is not used here to signify to wander without commitments or responsibilities, but rather to enjoy life in an innocent and almost primitive way, synonymous with a lifestyle of times past without the weight of modern problems that have arisen from progress such as pollution—a lifestyle synonymous with the public image of Clementina de Jesus as a mythical and maternal figure who represented black heritage and ancestrality. In the space that the Brazilian public imagines Clementina to inhabit, there mustn’t be pollution or hunger, but in the words of this song she draws attention to these problems and their dissonance. The song transmits the message that civilization doesn’t always bring about societal improvements, and even education (represented by the *diplomados*, or degree-holders) can actually cause damage to society as a whole.
Apart from positioning Clementina clearly within the old conflict between tradition and progress, this song also confirms Clara Nunes’ credibility within the samba genre, providing a musical vehicle with which she can demonstrate her adoration of the legitimate mãe preta of the samba carioca. As we have already seen in Beth Carvalho’s recording, Clementina de Jesus is used as a reference of authenticity for female singers who come to samba from outside of the genre.

This song was released together in 1977 with a music video, which was a new concept at the time, featuring both Clementina and Clara singing the song together, dressed in flowing white floor-length dresses on a grassy hillside. The footage of the two women singing together is combined with slow motion clips of Clara spinning in place and smiling. Clementina carries a frilly white parasol, gesturing to different symbols in the frame such as a white fusca, or Volkswagen Beetle, symbolizing both progress and pollution, and a woman wandering through the frame carrying a bundle on her head who stands for the old ways. Throughout the video, Clara and Clementina often stand apart from one another on the grass, a woman of indeterminate race wearing a headscarf pretending to wash large colored sheets on the ground between the two of them. The video intersperses clips of Clementina and Clara, singing to each other across the gulf between tradition and progress, and then coming together to stroll down a bucolic tree-lined lane. If in Nei Lopes’ samba, Clementina stands for the wisdom of the ages and

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2 The first Brazilian music video, featuring Ney Matogrosso’s song “América do Sul,” was produced by the Rede Globo program Fantástico in 1975. The Rede Globo network was fully responsible for the production of all Brazilian music videos shown on television until the early 80s, giving rise to a visual style that came to be labeled the “padrão Globo.”
times past, in the video this symbolism is driven into the ground, emphasizing both the differences and the similarities between the two women and what they represent.

It is difficult to ascertain the audience or the reception of this music video, but we do know that this video was played on mainstream Brazilian television and therefore reached a significant audience: in 1970, there were 4.25 million TVs in Brazilian homes, a number that had grown to 14 million by 1980 (Alves 32). The video’s wide reach is further indicated by a subsequent 1978 parody of the video broadcast on the popular television show Os Trapalhões. Opening with the words, “você nunca viu um ‘Clara Nunes’ e um ‘Clementina de Jesus’ tão diferentes…” the video features two of the show’s male cast members dressed as Clara and Clementina, in loose white dresses walking down a country road. While exaggerating the movements, voices, and affects of both women, the two cross-dressers are almost run over by a red fusca speeding by, climb a tree, fight, frolic, and play soccer on the beach, and eventually attempt to participate in an orgy with a bunch of bikini-clad Brazilian women, only to be chased away by their male partners. Apart from the silliness of the video, this satirization of Clara and Clementina’s original video performance and their public personae speaks to the wide reach of the song and of both women as public figures. The macho parody relies on the audience’s familiarity with the original video, and it’s subversive nature lies in taking the familiar figures from the first video and putting them in situations that were inappropriate for women. According to previous video footage, the video was shown to Clementina when she was a guest on the Os Trapalhões television program, during which she laughed at the silly representation that they had made of her. Nevertheless, while the parody makes fun of Clementina’s public image, turning her into somewhat of a cartoon
character of the old black wise woman, it also further contributes to the catalogue of her representations that come together to form one public image.

These popular samba compositions were far from the only musical homages paid to Clementina during her lifetime—she was also featured in many *sambas-enredo*. This form of samba has become a unique Brazilian musical genre over time through which both official and unofficial historical figures and stories are inserted into the common public imaginary and sense of national history (Costa “O Rio negro” 197). By occasionally focusing upon marginalized figures from the Brazilian past, samba schools are uniquely empowered to shift the emphasis of the understanding of Brazilian national identity, often by recalling people who have been forgotten or underappreciated.

*Sambas-enredo* are a product of twentieth-century Rio de Janeiro, the earliest examples composed in the 1920s and 30s to accompany informal carnival parades held by groups such as Deixa Falar in the city center. Initially, composers had free rein over the themes of their compositions, but with the introduction of *carnavalescos* (carnival professionals who were usually visual artists from outside the community with university degrees) in the 1960s, composers were given the school’s yearly theme, or *enredo*, and set to work. This new structure transformed how carnival sambas were envisioned, composed, and performed. *Sambas-enredo* are epic in character, marked by florid description and abundant adjectives that describe a level of splendor that is largely non-existent in the lives of the marginalized members of samba schools (*Dossiê* 55).

*Sambas-enredo* are also frequently used to celebrate and elevate individuals who are thought to represent some greater theme or characteristic in Brazilian society. Given
that they preserve as well as reiterate the values of the individuals and groups that create them, *sambas-enredo* provide important insight into what these values are and how they are received and expressed (Pessanha, n.p.). Every year, a recording of each school’s *samba-enredo* is released several months prior to carnival, and the school’s members and fans dedicate a considerable amount of time to memorizing and singing the *enredo’s* lyrics, repeating its messages over and over. When a cultural figure is mentioned or featured in an *enredo*, individuals repeating the song further confirm their legacy.

A particularly clear example of the contributions of others in the constructions of Clementina’s legacy can be seen in the *samba-enredo* produced by the samba school *Lins Imperial* in 1982, a period during which Clementina received many tributes. *Lins Imperial* was founded in 1963 in the Rio de Janeiro neighborhood of Lins de Vasconcelos, out of the fusion of two previously existing *escolas* in the neighborhood, *Filhos do Deserto* and *Flor do Lins*. “Clementina, uma rainha negra,” composed by Antero, João Banana, and Tibúrcio, clearly positions its subject as the embodiment of the African tradition in Brazil. This composition was sandwiched chronologically between the 1981 *enredo* by the group that featured Padre Cícero, and a subsequent samba that paid homage to the film director and cinema wunderkind Glauber Rocha. The narrative of “Clementina, uma rainha negra” recounts the history of slaves forcibly imported from their native lands and suffering at the hands of their white masters, including references to slave ships, as well as specifically Afro-Brazilian traditions of song, dance, and religion planted like figurative seeds by the enslaved ancestors, marked by a tone of lament. The chorus of the samba emphasizes the international success of samba, and the
national pride that surrounds it. Unfortunately, Lins Imperial only earned seventh place in the “Grupo de Acesso,” the less competitive of the two, for this 1982 performance.

Apart from its emphasis on suffering and then later success, the composition stresses the celebratory nature of these traditions, also employing the term *rainha negra*, or black queen, as a marker of the celebration of nobility.\(^3\) Although the second stanza begins as a general celebration of this black nobility and festivity, it soon narrows down to the focus of the homage. Clementina is portrayed as the ultimate symbol of tradition, one who must be honored, remembered, and conserved. She is simultaneously traditional and youthful, referred to both as an eternal girl as well as someone who needs to be preserved as if in a museum. Timeless, yet set in tradition. The Afro-Brazilian traditions that are being celebrated through the figure of Clementina are simultaneously mournful and celebratory, as much marked by memories of slave ships as they are by the myriad dances and songs that developed out of the tragic circumstances.

This *samba-enredo* fits well within the genre’s tradition of exaltation, specifically using words such as *exaltar, relembrar, homenagear, grandeza*, and *eterno* to emphasize Clementina’s significance. The composition places Clementina on a literal pedestal as the outcome of years of suffering and cultural repression. While she is celebrated for her ability to represent an entire sector of society and their cultural history, she alone is revered as the “black queen.”

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3 This term was frequently used to refer to Clementina de Jesus, most noticeably in the MPB song “Rainha Negra” composed by Moacyr Luz & Aldir Blanc cited at the beginning of this section.
Lins Imperial’s reverence of Clementina as a symbolic individual directly opposes her reference in a *samba-enredo* from the following year that placed Clementina amongst a *galeria de figuras notáveis*, to employ a phrase used in Chapter 2. The Grêmio Recreativo e Escola de Samba Beija-Flor de Nilopolis included her as a key figure of black culture in “A Grande Constelação das Estrelas Negras” from 1983, alongside other incongruous icons such as Ganga Zumba, an escaped slave warrior and one of the leaders of the Quilombo dos Palmares; Luana, a black Bahian fashion model who worked with the fashion houses of Paris and eventually married a French count; Pinah, a sambista known for her dark skin, shaved head, and her selection as Prince Charles of Great Britain’s dance partner during a ball at the Palácio da Cidade in Botafogo in 1978; Grande Otelo, a well-known Afro-Brazilian comedian; and Pelé, the legendary soccer star. The figures selected by the enredo’s composer, Neguinho da Beija Flor, to represent black Brazilianness are largely contemporary, apart from Ganga Zumba. Clementina’s
mention in this samba is rather brief; it simply mentions her happy song, yet she is the only figure mentioned here who could possibly identified as a “preta velha.” Given the abbreviated nature of this enredo, these figures of black culture are mostly mentioned as place holders, meant to recall the breadth of the Afro-Brazilian recognition, much in the same way that specific figures in African diaspora history are cited by Bahian blocos afros--to shape a critical mass of figures that demonstrate Afro-Brazilian historical participation and significance.

Ô ô ô Yaôs quanto amor
Quanto amor
As pretas velhas Yaôs  BIS
Vêm cantando em seu louvor
A constelação
De estrelas negras que reluz
Clementina de Jesus
Eleve o seu cantar feliz
A Ganga-Zumba
Que lutou e foi raiz
Do negro que é arte, é cultura
É desenvoltura deste meu país
Êh ! Luana
O trono de França será seu baiana
Pinah êêê Pinah
A Cinderela negra
Que ao príncipe encantou
No carnaval com o seu esplendor (2x)

Grande Otelo homem show
Em talento dá olé
E o mundo inteiro gritou, gol!
(É gol)
Gol do grande Rei Pelé
Ô Yaôs

In this enredo, important Afro-Brazilian figures are plentiful in areas such as music, dance, performance, and sports, with the sole exception of the colonial rebel Ganga
Zumba, whose struggle is portrayed as the basis for later cultural development. The song does not attempt to emphasize the broader achievements of these figures, but instead recalls them as part of a background from which ordinary Afro-Brazilians can draw confidence and inspiration. They are stars that shine in the sky of black Brazilian history, providing points of departure for the future achievements of the community. Their achievements are expected to be creative and entertaining instead of provocative or political. The figures featured in this samba-enredo make benign contributions to Brazilian culture as a whole without drawing attention to uncomfortable themes such as social inequality or discrimination. Featured as an embodiment of happiness, Clementina is again used to reinforce an image of Brazilian racial harmony and tolerance.

“Música de boa qualidade”: Performing Clementina’s Legacy

Clementina’s legacy was reiterated and confirmed in a fundamental way through her participation in a series of shows under the mantle of Projeto Pixinguinha in the late 1970s. Projeto Pixinguinha was organized by Clementina’s “discoverer,” Hermínio Bello de Carvalho himself, under the auspices of FUNARTE, or the Brazilian National Foundation of the Arts.* Projeto Pixinguinha continues to operate today, and is the only significant state intervention in Brazilian popular music in the last four decades (Stroud Defence 118). The goal of the project was to utilize empty theater space to put on economically accessible shows geared towards a Brazilian public without much access to what the organizers referred to as “música de boa qualidade.” The shows were based on a
similar series known as *Seis e Meia*, also organized by Herminio Bello de Carvalho in Rio de Janeiro, and named for the time during which the shows were held. The performances featured two performers, one who was older and more established musically yet had perhaps been forgotten commercially, and another artist who was beginning to build a career. The two artists would perform separately, and then close out the show together, “buscando similaridades musicais” (Pavan 146). The shows were exceedingly popular, often drawing lines around the block, and ultimately succeeded in diminishing the long lines at bus stops after work.

Clementina’s participation in these publicly funded projects contributed to the idea of her legacy in two ways: first, she was selected and labeled as someone who made “música de boa qualidade” by a group of individuals within the industry, further affirming her status in Brazilian music. Second, her performances formed an essential part of “um novo modelo de produto artístico” (Pavan 156) that allowed her characteristic style of singing and performing to be appreciated and embraced by younger generations who were less likely to have heard of her before through standard forms of divulgation, such as commercial radio. This opportunity was directly aligned with *Projeto Pixinguinha*’s original intentions, which revolved around “[creating] a symbolic link with the traditions of the great Brazilian musical stars of the past in the minds of younger generations, and thereby [rescuing] that tradition from a position of cultural oblivion” (Stroud *Defence* 125).

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4 FUNARTE was formed under the Geisel administration in 1975 as a means of connecting the military government to arts and culture, thereby providing it with a more “human” face (Stroud *Défense* 111).
The meaning of the term “música de boa qualidade,” while left unexplained by Projeto Pixinguinha’s organizers, can be parsed through examination of the artists that the project chose to feature. The project’s organizers arranged collaborations exclusively between samba, bossa nova, and MPB artists. Musicians that identified with more commercially successful styles such as música sertaneja, brega, Brazilian rock, or funk were conspicuously absent. Stroud points out that the music showcased by the project reflects elitist tastes, while populist styles that are consumed by the majority of the Brazilian population are left out of the category of “música de boa qualidade” (126). As an artist, Clementina fit comfortably into the characterization of “quality music” precisely because she held little appeal for mainstream Brazilian music audiences. Her unusual sound was embraced by only a small group of people—which necessarily meant that her music was elitist, even though she herself had always belonged to the working class that made up o povo.

Given that Clementina was featured in the first performances of both Seis e Meia and then Projeto Pixinguinha, her image became tied to this sort of cultural experiment. As each project was under (at least partial) control of Hermínio Bello de Carvalho, Clementina’s legacy in this sense connects back to her initial experience of discovery and to the personal connections that she made throughout her life and career. Carvalho was not only essential to Clementina’s first public exposure, but also to the way that her image was constructed and reiterated throughout her life, often bringing her back into the public light when she was in danger of being forgotten by the public. Carvalho has been

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5 The first year of Projeto Pixinguinha in 1977 included shows featuring Marília Medalha and Zé Keti; Jards Macalé and Moreira da Silva; Nana Caymmi and Ivan Lins; Cartola and João Nogueira; and Dóris Monteiro and Lúcio Alves.
equally important in constructing Clementina’s image and in reiterating and reinforcing it, contributing not only to the way that the public saw her for the first time onstage at performances of *Rosa de Ouro*, but how they continue to frame her within the genre of Brazilian popular music and culture.

Clementina performed at both *Seis e Meia* and *Projeto Pixinguinha* with João Bosco. These experiences made a profound impact on him, both creatively and philosophically. As Bosco would relate in a newspaper article after a *Projeto Pixinguinha* performance in São Paulo:

> A gente tem um carinho especial — meio de mãe— com ela. A gente não consegue conviver com a Clementina no mesmo nível porque ela está muito além. É preciso perguntar sempre as coisas para ela. Clementina tem uma informação de séculos sobre a cultura brasileira — ela é um patrimônio da cultural brasileira — e eu sou um sujeito que precisa ouvir a Clementina para viver… Ela tem uma série de filhos e netas que ela mesmo adora e eu estou muito contente ser um deles. (Cardoso)

With these words, João Bosco reaffirms Clementina’s legacy as a maternal figure with deep ancestral knowledge who deserves to be respected and listened to carefully. The *Folha de São Paulo* also contributed to this legacy by featuring Clementina in this article, recording in print the ideas that were circulating at the time. As such, those that read the article in the future will continue to carry on the same ideas, influencing the next group of listeners.

Clementina de Jesus was embraced by many artists during her lifetime, and continues to be respected and revered today. When other artists reference her in their work, they use her as a symbol of the past, of tradition, and of Afro-Brazilianess, concepts that transfer to the artists who employ them. Samba composers and interpreters
revered Clementina, but artists who were not as closely aligned with the samba tradition also embraced her.

João Bosco is a composer, singer, and guitarist who is usually categorized as an MPB strongly influenced by samba, or *Música Popular Brasileira*. Felipe Trotta defines MPB as a category that above all exudes an air of musical “sophistication,” and is often performed by artists without affiliations to any particular genre, such as samba (122). While MPB artists may be inspired by particular genres, they approach musical styles not as strict categories whose characteristics must be adhered to at all costs, but as a jumping off point from which to express their own musical creativity and originality. This is much the case with João Bosco (b. 1946), who comes from rural Minas Gerais, a place that is not as strongly rooted in nationally recognized musical styles like Rio de Janeiro or the Northeast. His place of origin gives him greater freedom to experiment across musical genres without having to commit to any one musical style. Bosco approaches his music as a research project, searching for inspiration and influence across a wide field of musical styles. While he often works in the style of samba, he is not wedded to the style in the same way that someone from the *morros* of Rio de Janeiro might be, and his sambas are not judged along the same lines of authenticity as others.

Bosco’s musical history follows a trajectory similar to that of other young middle-class musicians in the late 60s and early 70s in Brazil. While studying civil engineering at the university in Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais, Bosco began to write his own songs and develop relationships with other young, politically active musicians at the time, relationships that would later be revealed in what Regina Carvalho refers to in his songs as “o tecido referencial… de trama complexa, rica, inesgotável— a cada leitura, mais um
fio, mais um desenho, mais um ponto” (79). The multiplicity of connections and influences that Bosco began to amass initiated in the politically musical (and musically political) arena of Ouro Preto.

João Bosco eventually moved to Rio de Janeiro as his musical career began to develop, but the element that is central to this project was his introduction to Clementina de Jesus and her subsequent influence on both Bosco’s understanding of the black roots of Brazilian music and his vocal style. According to Bosco (Entrevista), it was Hermínio Bello de Carvalho who offered to introduce him to someone he referred to as “minha mãe”— who of course was not Hermínio’s biological mother, but Clementina de Jesus. Hermínio arranged for a collaborative performance between the two in August 1976 through Seis e Meia. Hermínio was continuing to work on projects that were designed to bring unusual musical combinations to the Brazilian people, inspiring interest in the public and giving the artists a new context in which to perform.
Marketing a Legacy: Reissuing *Rainha Quelé* for a Contemporary Audience

After Clementina’s death in 1987, one of the principle ways in which her legacy was constructed and preserved was through the rerelease of her recordings in different musical collections and through boxed sets. While the ostensible purpose of rereleasing these recordings was to expand the singer’s reach to listeners who were either previously unfamiliar with her work or who didn’t have access to it, the way in which they were rereleased served to reach an even smaller portion of potential listeners than for the original releases. The rereleases contributed to the sense that Clementina’s work was something rarified and unusual, only accessible to a small number of people.

The first of these marketing deals took the form of a rerelease of Clementina’s first solo LP, *Clementina de Jesus* (Odeon), originally recorded in 1966. This record was the first in which Clementina sang all of the tracks, apart from the special appearance of João da Gente on “Barracão é seu.” The album’s rerelease, which one critic wrote was “ajudando a reavivar sua memória” (Grunewald), was sold together with the book “Clementina Cadê Você,” and was only available in FUNARTE stores in the large population centers of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, and Curitiba. The book, a collaboration involving Adriana Magalhães Bevilaqua, Herminio Bello de Carvalho, Irapoan Cavalcanti de Lima, Paulo da Costa Martins, and Myriam Lins de Barros, had a small rerelease in 1988, coinciding with national celebrations of one hundred years of the abolition of slavery in Brazil. Around the same time, Clementina’s 1970 album, *Clementina, cadê você* (Museu da Imagem e do Som) was also rereleased.
The next rerelease of Clementina’s material appeared in 1998, as part of EMI’s “Tiragem Especial” series, a package of releases that were previously unavailable on the medium of the moment, the compact disc. The album selected was *Clementina e Convidados*, originally released in 1979, perhaps the most easily accessible to those unfamiliar with her work. In featuring duets with several other samba artists who were popular at the time such as Clara Nunes and Dona Ivone Lara, the album strengthened the Clementina’s reach through the fans of her singing partners. This album was a natural choice for the “Tiragem Especial” collection, which critics from the *Folha de São Paulo* described with the phrase “vamos agradar a todo mundo” (“Série”). This article also criticized the selection of this album out of all of Clementina’s available LPs, the anonymous critic who referred to Clementina as “a sacerdotisa primitiva” writing that “não dá para entender a EMI: com uma discografia inigualável em seus arquivos, escolhe o álbum mais artificial da artista— daqueles desvirtuados por excesso de convidados especiais”. The unnamed critic wanted a more “unadulterated” version of Clementina, pure and uncut by the influence of other artists. Considering Clementina’s long history of creative collaborations, however, this distinction comes across as forced and artificial—she was an artist who always worked with others, who clearly saw herself as part of a community of artists, and benefitted greatly from her creative interactions with others. From a similarly commercial standpoint, an album featuring other popular artists was far more likely to sell on an already crowded musical market.

A later release of Clementina’s recordings perhaps best reveals the restricted nature of the audience that she continued to reach and be marketed to. In an article in the *Folha de São Paulo* entitled “Clementina sai em CD para poucos,” journalist Pedro
Alexandre Sanches explained that 3000 copies of a full collection of Clementina’s work had been released by BR Distribuidora, a subsidiary of the national petrochemical company Petrobras, as a gift for their clients, music researchers, and the press. The collection, organized by Hermínio Bello de Carvalho and titled *Clementina de Jesus—100 anos* in honor of the centenary of her birth, included 8 CDs recorded with all of the tracks from the 9 LPs she had recorded during her lifetime. In Sanches’ article, Hermínio expressed great frustration at the logistics of releasing the collection, saying that he had been trying to release a complete collection of Clementina’s work for the past twenty years, eventually “compromising” by maintaining full creative control over a product with only a highly limited release. Hermínio cited the recording companies’ difficulties in how to market the work of someone such as Clementina:

> Imagino a dificuldade das empresas em situar Clementina nos nichos que inventaram para classificar artistas como classificam, por categoria, o público consumidor. Não sabem se devem vendê-la como pagodeira, que são dois nichos da moda, ou então colocá-la na prateleira das coisas exóticas. Como não conseguem situá-la condignamente, incluem-na aleatoriamente, por exemplo, nessa coleção ‘Raizes do Samba’ (da mesma EMI), que é um verdadeiro atentado cultural. Retalhem trabalhos conceituais e fazem coleções absurdas, sem nenhum a lógica. (Sanches)

BR Distribuidora’s release of the boxed set was particularly problematic in that it made Clementina’s oeuvre--already classified as elite by initiatives like *Projeto Pixinguinha*--even more exclusive, elevating it out of the commercial market entirely and

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6 According to their website, BR Distribuidora and Petrobras have sponsored a variety of cultural projects through the Leis de Incentivo à Cultura since 1995 (http://www.br.com.br/wps/portal/portalconteudo/meioambiente/sociedade/cultura/). Popularly referred to as the federal Lei Rouanet (after Sérgio Paulo Rouanet, secretary of culture in 1991 when the law was passed), the measure provides tax breaks to businesses in exchange for the support of cultural activities.
making it accessible only to those who were affiliated with an enormous petroleum supplier, or had press or music connections. Although we cannot discern which of Petrobras’ clients received the boxed set, with such a limited number of copies it is highly unlikely that the CDs were given away at one of Petrobras’ seven thousand Brazilian gas stations, and far more probably that they ended up in the hands of highly valued corporate clients. The majority of Clementina’s recordings was at that point solely available on out of print LPs, and with this release it passed into even more rarified territory, becoming priceless. The intellectual middle class demographic that was interested in Clementina’s work was not defined by their age, but instead by their elite tastes. While there may be some overlap between her fans and Petrobras clients, the motivation behind Clementina’s selection as the subject of this boutique cultural project is not immediately apparent.

The BR boxed set came out soon after Christmas in 2001, with the promise of a commercial release later in the year that never occurred. The collection’s highly limited release speaks to the similarly limited and elitist nature of Clementina’s legacy: “ainda é para poucos,” as the journalist Mauro Dias wrote in his review of the collection. The release nevertheless allowed for new textual components to be incorporated into Clementina’s media and musical legacy through media reviews, texts that continued to emphasize Clementina’s blackness, her naturalness, and her marginality. According to Dias, Clementina:

manteve a voz imaculadamente negra, em registro grave de cantora de partido e jongo. A dicção perfeita não era fruto de esforço, mas habilidade. Clementina não tinha a preocupação de resgatar história ou de fazer história: carregava no canto os séculos da raça, traduzia a formação do povo brasileiro.
The public’s limited access to Clementina’s work and information about her life that has been “covered up” by dominant forces have served to make her even more exotic and attractive to those who have “discovered” her in their own way. A large part of her appeal lies in her unfamiliarity and exoticism to most of the Brazilian music audience. For those who speak of Clementina, it is as if they are cherishing and preserving a sort of special secret, one that is only available to those who are truly “in the know” and have a sense of both the trajectory of Brazilian history and black music, and have the cultural capital with which to access a marginalized figure left in the corner with an unusual and unconventional voice.

**Carolina, then and now**

Carolina’s work and image also live on in her legacy, both through other artists who have drawn inspiration from her work and personality, and through a complex discussion about the role of race, gender, and class between Brazil and other countries. In this section, I will first explore how Carolina was used as a symbol of poverty that inspired others during her life. Then I will examine how the debate around the place and role of Carolina’s work continues to evolve today, and what this debate reveals views of race, gender, and class in Brazil and in other countries.

Perhaps one of the key aspects of Carolina’s legacy that comes through in her texts is the multiplicity of ideas and viewpoints that were circulating at the time. As such, she functioned as a conduit that picked up on the thoughts of the day, giving us access to some of the most important ideologies from the period during which she was alive. Her
writings particularly emphasize her belief in social and economic progress, her admiration of developed countries like the United States, viewpoints on whitening and racial democracy, an emphasis on the hard work required for social, spiritual and moral betterment, and the perception of different moral vices (Ferreira 105).  

Carolina had big dreams about how to solve the world’s social problems, but in the end did not succeed in making the social impact that she had envisioned for herself. Nevertheless Robert Levine points out that, “Carolina became a heroine for a small group of marginalized black intellectuals, and lives vaguely in the memory of scattered groups of poor black women” (“Different Carolinas” 63). Carolina’s relationship with the small group of black intellectuals was explored in Chapter 3, but in this chapter I will explore how she is seen today. First, I explore how Carolina’s initial publication, *Quarto de Despejo*, inspired a 1961 São Paulo theatrical production and what this production entailed. When Carolina’s story was adapted for the theater, it reached a different audience than it had as a published book. The play and its subsequent media coverage raise complex issues about authenticity and the representation of poverty.

The last part of the chapter is devoted to the debate about the role of Carolina’s public image between Brazilian and international readers. Much of this contentious issue has been clearly laid out in the numerous publications by José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy and Robert Levine, whose arguments I use to frame my own perspective. The majority of the dispute around Carolina in Brazil revolves around whether or not her published work can or should be classified as literature. Outside of Brazil, the literary status of

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7 From Carolina’s texts, the reader sees that alcoholism and sexual liberation were thought to be the greatest social ills of today, in contrast to the problems of drugs and violence in today’s favelas.
Carolina’s work is rarely discussed, where she is seen more as an example of worldwide poverty and discrimination in general.

**Quarto de Despejo no palco: Staging Representations of Poverty**

Uma vez resolveram montar uma peça baseada no *Quarto de Despejo*. O produtor falou com Audálio, que por sua vez foi conversar com a minha mãe. Sabe o que ela aprontou? Disse que só deixava montar o espetáculo se ela mesma fizesse o papel de ‘Carolina.’ Queria porque queria ser atriz e trabalhar no teatro, de qualquer jeito! Bateu o pé até o fim! Nem o Audálio conseguiu tirar a ideia da cabeça dela. É claro que a peça acabou saindo sem ela; escolheram a Ruth de Souza, que já era atriz profissional e tinha semelhança física com minha mãe. Só que no dia da estréia foi o maior escândalo. Durante a apresentação, minha mãe gritava da platéia: Não é nada disso! Está errado!

Vera Eunice de Jesus Lima (Meihy and Levine *Cinderela Negra* 78)

One of the most intriguing ways that Carolina Maria de Jesus’ legacy was augmented early on was through her book’s adaptation for performance in the theater. Produced and directed by Amir Haddad, the theatrical rendition of the same name was written by Edy Lima and performed by the Compania Nydia Licia at the Teatro Bela Vista in São Paulo beginning in mid-April of 1961. Carolina was involved in the adaptation from the very beginning, inviting Lima and the members of the cast to her home. In the end, the celebrated Afro-Brazilian actress Ruth de Souza was given the role, and a great number of preparations were taken in order to ensure the piece’s “authenticity” to both Carolina’s life in the favela and to the diary she wrote about her experiences. Apart from Ruth de Souza, Amir Haddad featured “atores negros da favela”

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8 See Jesus *Little House* 120.
in the performance (48). Prior to the theatrical premiere, the Estado de São Paulo reported that, “a fim de dar maior autenticidade ao seu desempenho, Ruth de Souza foi visitar a favela do Canindé em companhia de Carolina Maria de Jesus… chegou a catar papel na rua, para reconstituir o ambiente em que se desenrola a trama” (“Quarto de Despejo em ensaios”).

According to Carolina’s diary, this field trip to the favela became a media event in its own right.9 Carolina described the experience as follows:

We are going to visit the favela. Ruth wants to see the people in order to be able to act on stage. We went to Ruth’s place. She got dressed to leave. I thought it was interesting when she picked up the burlap sack that I used to scavenge for paper before getting in the car. I told her, ‘if scavenging for paper were like this, in a car listening to the radio, life would be a paradise’.

Looking through the window I was reminded of the places where I used to work. When we got to the favela I felt concern for the poor people who inhabit such a filthy place. We got out of the car and walked towards the favela. Children could recognize me from a long distance. ‘Look, it’s Carolina!’ The favelados came out of their shacks to see me. They were barefoot and looked very dirty. Ruth was photographed near the water spigot carrying a can of water on her head. She was not perturbed by the situation. I was. Looking at the stream of water I thought of all the people who had to share it. (Little House 128-29)

Apparently, the items that Ruth and Carolina collected on their trip to Canindé were insufficient, because the Estado published the following announcement a week later, under the heading “Objetos para ‘Quarto de Despejo’”:

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9 This field trip also included “the reporter,” Audálio Dantas.
A peça... requer na montagem grande número de objetos, ferro-velho, brinquedos quebrados etc. Pelas dificuldades encontradas na busca desse material, a Cia. Nydia Lícia e o Teatro da Cidade pedem aos interessados que enviem, como doação as coisas velhas de que dispuserem em casa. Haverá espaço para tudo em ‘Quarto de Despejo’. O material pode ser enviado para o Teatro Bela Vista.

Together with this request, the article informs the reader that Carolina has already made donations of her own to the production, including “as roupas que usou nos anos em que viveu na favela do Canindé, tendo cedido seu casaco preto, calças e camisas de seus filhos, vidros de perfumes, e numerosos objetos pessoais.” In her own diary, Carolina mentions “[putting] together the clothing that Ruth de Souza, the actress, [was] going to wear in the play” (Little House 123). The theatrical production of Carolina’s favela experience had grown so significantly that it needed objects that recalled the original scenario but actually had nothing to do with the original experience in order to substantiate it. The production’s need for objects that represented “poverty” points to greater truths about the separation between how the poor are perceived by society at large, and how their lives are lived on a daily basis. In this middle-class construction of poverty, the poor are not without things, but their things are instead smaller in number and in quality or newness. The producers requested items from the general public’s actual quartos de despejo to complete and fill an imaginary one to be reconstructed on the theater stage. In filling the stage set with the discards of the newspaper-reading society at large, they are inviting potential audience members to furnish the imagined rejected space with their own rejected objects. While the article does not specify the ultimate destiny of the donated objects beyond the theater, we can assume that they were discarded and left
behind, eventually ending up in the city’s actual *quarto de despejo*, the numerous favelas that Carolina Maria de Jesus no longer lived in.

In a subsequent article in the *Estado de São Paulo* reporting on the performance’s opening night, the dramatist Edy Lima spoke at length to the challenges and rewards of adapting Carolina’s work for the theater. Her intention was to attract a public that was increasingly distant from the theater, whose indifference was the most significant factor contributing to the so-called “crise do teatro,” drawing the audience towards an experience that was simultaneously cultural and pedagogical. Given that *Quarto* was a problematic publication that incited strong opinions about poverty, race, and representation in the reading public, Lima’s hope was that in recreating the book’s “problemas verdadeiras” and social issues for the stage it would attract some more unlikely theater-goers. It is important to note that Lima both praises and belittles Carolina’s original text in the same breath, first praising its status as the best-selling book in Brazilian history, then adding parenthetically that these book sales “não tenha sido feita em virtude do êxito do livro mas do seu valor intrínseco como levantamento de problema dava margem a realizar-se uma peça sem as habituais concessões lírico-românticas, espécie de armadilha para segurar o público” (“Estréia”).

Central to the theatrical adaptation was the concept of authenticity, particularly as it pertains to Carolina’s lived experience and the broader experience of favela living in Brazil during the early 1960s. Carolina’s own response to the theater performance is somewhat ambiguous, with some sources citing her support, and others focusing on her poor behavior during the opening night performance. According to the aforementioned
article in the *Estado de São Paulo*, Carolina so approved of the adaptation that she contributed the following text to the show’s program:

> Fui ver o ensaio da peça, ‘*Quarto de despejo*’. Fiquei emocionada. Revendo a cópia fiel de minha vida, na favela. As brigas constantes no meu barracão. Considero a favela a sucursal do inferno, com suas cenas degradantes. A peça no palco retrata com fidelidade as ocorrências da favela do Canindé. A Ruth de Souza está magnífica no papel de Carolina Maria de Jesus. Ela representa o pavor que eu sentia, quando residia naquela núcleo degradante. (...) A peça é cómica, dramática e chocante. E vai agradar o público culto de SP. Felicito à dramaturga Edy Lima pelo seu trabalho, conservando a fidelidade ao livro.

Carolina’s written support reinforces the performance’s adherence to its original source of inspiration, bestowed upon the director and the cast by the one woman who has the authority to give it. Nevertheless, other accounts speak of Carolina yelling at the actors onstage from the audience during the opening night, and insisting on playing the lead role herself, pointing to the above text’s questionable credibility. Levine and Meihy write: “Carolina was invited to be the guest of honor for the opening performance. Although she responded that she was moved by the gesture, she quarreled with the director and demanded that she be given the leading role in place of the original actress” (*Life and Death* 60). Reports of Carolina’s bad behavior may have been fabricated in order to support the public image of Carolina as an eccentric that continuously drew attention away from the actual social issues that were raised by her work. It’s also possible that she didn’t approve of the play and the above text was falsified. It is more likely, however, that Carolina had complex and conflicting feelings about the play, leading her to first write a positive review of the play based on a rehearsal, and then act out on opening night. In her second diary, Carolina described the scene at the theater as
such: “I looked around, observing all the well-fed and well-dressed people. The word ‘hunger’ is an abstraction for them.” (*Little House* 147)

Carolina’s desire to play herself in the theatrical adaptation of her partial life story raises interesting questions about representation and authenticity. While this desire may have stemmed from her own aspirations for fame and public attention, it also casts light on how Carolina envisioned her own story and its public reception. By playing the role herself, she could ensure total fidelity to the story as she lived it, an authenticity that was noticeably absent when she was portrayed instead by a successful actress who had merely visited Carolina’s favela life for a day. Carolina imagined a portrayal that was in essence true-to-life, but that was far from what the play’s producers had in mind. By casting someone else in Carolina’s role, the play was further removed from her reality in a way that was likely to be less painful and awkward for the audience, casting a protective veil between uncomfortable lived events and those who had not experienced them. Ruth de Souza’s representation made the play into a narrative parable instead of a reenactment, separating the participants and audience from the disagreeable truth of Carolina’s life.

The performance drew enough empathy from the crowd that audience members began to give donations to the cast that were intended for the poor that were being represented on stage. The number of “contribuições que possam minorar o sofrimento dos favelados” (“Quarto de Despejo auxilia”) was so significant that the theater company hired two social workers expressly for the purpose of distributing the collected money in the favela. As such, the theatrical adaptation of *Quarto de Despejo* affirmed the legacy of its author through an uncommon level of audience participation in both the material and the sociocultural aspects of the performance, first by contributing their own rejected
possessions to the construction of the set, and then by making financial donations to the
general cause of the city’s poor that was portrayed before a backdrop of their own
discarded goods. By creating a version of the story that was enacted by living and
breathing individuals on stage before the audience, Edy Lima appears to have succeeded
in solidifying the legacy that began to emerge through the publication of Carolina’s diary,
giving new life to the story and adapting it to a different narrative realm that allowed it to
reach audience members in a new way. Members of the public who either contributed
their broken toys and scrap metal to the performance, left money in the hands of the
social workers destined for the favelados, or both—were personally contributing to the
construction and reaffirmation of Carolina’s legacy, adding layers of individual
significance and meaning atop of her own story. These forms of involvement were also
likely to have helped alleviate the possible guilt that the middle class were likely to have
felt when they confronted Carolina’s story and what it stood for in terms of poverty and
destitution in a place geographically very close to their own lives and homes. Channeling
philanthropy through the theatrical performance was a safe way to assuage the guilt of
audience members regarding the increasing gulf between the classes, without having to
come face to face with the uncomfortable economic discrepancies all around them.

While the theatrical adaptation of *Quarto de Despejo* allowed the theater-going
public (even those that were not typically theater-goers, but were drawn in by the
particularity of Carolina’s story) a view of favela life, it did so in a relatively controlled
manner, introducing aesthetic elements of poverty to an audience that was unlikely to
experience them in other ways, such as by actually visiting a nearby favela. It packaged
the experience of poverty and favela life in a way that allowed the theatergoer to
experience it without danger or actual physical discomfort, directly accessing the abstract idea of the favela without going through the complications of getting there. The experience of this performance is similar to the *Rosa de Ouro* musical review that was performed shortly thereafter in Rio de Janeiro, site of Clementina de Jesus’ stage debut, that packaged the aesthetics of poverty and brought them to a neutral space for the viewing pleasure of middle-class theatergoers in a comparable fashion. The theatrical experience has the potential to reconstruct other cultural spaces and offer glimpses to those who would otherwise ignore them or be completely ignorant of them. While these performances may inspire empathy and the discussion of social ills amongst the middle class and the elite, they are nevertheless mere reconstructions of the lived experience of the poor, despite preoccupations with the inclusion of “authentic” elements.

In adapting her diary for the theater, the play’s producers further enriched and complicated Carolina’s legacy, expanding the reach of her work in a highly controlled manner. The on-stage portrayal demonstrated the differing understandings of authenticity and representation held by Carolina and the play’s producers. Carolina’s desire was for absolute authenticity in the representation of her life, while the producers instead wanted to select certain aesthetic elements that would lend credibility to the adaptation while still protecting their middle class audience from Carolina’s uncomfortable reality. In the end, the production provided a regulated space where audience members could empathize and show support for the plight of the poor without experiencing any physical or emotional difficulties themselves.
Much of the controversy surrounding Carolina Maria de Jesus and her work is divided along national lines, with Brazilians holding a very different opinion about her place in their national culture than the way that international readers perceive her. This conflict resonates deeply through differing concepts of race, gender, and poverty, creating two very different legacies for the author. Some of the most interesting writing on this subject has been published by the scholarly team made up of the late North American Brazilianist Robert Levine and the Brazilian oral history scholar José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy, who constantly stir up the differences in opinion about Carolina between them. In many of their texts together, Levine and Meihy point out that the differing viewpoints on Carolina in different cultural contexts “espelham imagens indagantes das próprias realidades em que foram produzidas” (Cinderela Negra 11). Carolina has become a lens through which individuals view the values of their own societies, reflecting what is thought of as important and what can be ignored.

Many of the issues surrounding Carolina Maria de Jesus in Brazil do not revolve around the issues of poverty, race, or gender reflected in her story, but instead center on Carolina’s idiosyncrasies in the way she comported herself throughout her life. She did not meet the expectations of leftist intellectuals, and her poverty and lack of education meant that she could never be a “real” writer to the intellectual elite. As a consequence, the Brazilian discussion surrounding Carolina frequently falls back on the question of whether or not her work can be justifiably categorized as literature, a hallowed concept that only pertains to the wealthy and cultured elite. By centering the discussions of
Carolina and her work on the question of her literary categorization, she is continually
denigrated and marginalized as an author, left to wait in a sort of literary purgatory while
the gatekeepers discuss whether or not she belongs in the club.

There is relatively little Brazilian scholarly writing on Carolina Maria de Jesus
since she first emerged onto the public stage in the late 1950s. Rather than critiquing her
work, she was largely ignored by the literary establishment, a fate perhaps more harmful
than criticism itself. She was simply ignored, treated only as a curious novelty. As a
novelty, there was far more attention paid to how she got to where she was and the
specifics of her social awkwardness than to the problems that she stood for, or the ideas
she was trying to communicate through her writing.

The attention paid to Carolina’s path to success usually focuses in on her
relationship with Audálio and others, such as Paulo Dantas at the Livraria Francisco
Alves, that led to the publication of her work. A level of disbelief that Carolina’s words
are truly her own and a doubt about the intentions of others involved in the publication
process have been a constant presence since the publication of Quarto de Despejo, the
target of much criticism and naysaying. In an interview with José Carlos Sebe Bom
Meihy, Audálio Dantas classified the intellectual responses to Carolina’s work
(particularly Quarto de Despejo) as belonging to one of two camps: either marked by
prejudice towards the poor and non-white, a train of thought summarized by Audálio as
“como é que o livro dessa crioula pode estar fazendo tanto sucesso?” or a sense of
indignation and doubt about Audálio’s participatory role in Carolina’s success, which he
sums up as “essa cara tá fazendo sensacionalismo, tá a fim de ganhar dinheiro em cima
da favelada” (Meihy and Levine Cinderela Negra 107). The first critique, which in
essence argues that a marginalized individual is incapable of creating true art or literature, let alone an individual whose marginalization is threefold like Carolina, is widespread. Rufino dos Santos, an Afro-Brazilian intellectual whose opinions of Carolina have evolved and transformed over time, writes that when *Quarto de Despejo* was initially released in his youth, he refused to read it because of the widely accepted thought that “uma catadora de lixo não podia escrever um bom livro, mesmo um testemunho” (18). His thoughts on this were to change, however. Years later when he finally did read Carolina’s diary, he writes that, “pude reconhecer que havia boa literatura em *Quarto de Despejo*. Largando o critério elitista, vi que a norma culta, estranha a Carolina, só pode transmitir conteúdo culto.” The division in Brazilian culture between intellectuals and the working class and poor is such that they are practically speaking different languages, divided by a series of complex rules of linguistic usage known as the *norma culta*, or the “cultured norm” that is generally mastered by the elite.

Carolina’s written language often aspired to a higher level of sophistication than she ever actually attained, leaving much of her linguistic style stilted and unusual for readers. This approach leads to much of the criticism of her writing, which tends to focus on her unusual and often old-fashioned phrasing. Wilson Martins, in a scathing critique released over fifteen years after Carolina’s death, calls her “estilisticamente, uma preciosa,” focusing on her antiquated and unusual language, using terms such as “abluir” instead of “lavar” when she writes of washing her face, and referring to a pregnant neighbor as “gestante” instead of the more common “grávida”. Martins saw these awkward turns of phrase as interjections on the part of Audálio, a theory that was later disproven by the release of Carolina’s handwritten drafts that showed the language to be
her own. Renata Wasserman points out that perhaps a better explanation for her linguistic particularities and stilted style is that according to Carolina’s own statements, her intention was always for her work to be read as “literary” in the traditional sense (134). For a woman who did not have the educational foundation or social upbringing to understand the nuance of literary language, the way that she attempted to achieve it was through the frequent adoption of old-fashioned or complex words instead of the ordinary language that she heard all around her. Wasserman further emphasizes that Carolina’s frequent mixture of high and low language in her texts are unique because “[they] are read as unselfconscious and spoken by the same voice in the text that claims the knowledge and analytic ability of the customary first-person narrator in a novel” (139). The inappropriate use of literary vocabulary is not a sign of outside interference from a mediator like Audálio, but instead a sign that Carolina has been “imperfectly educated.”

Much as the debate amongst Brazilians has centered on whether or not Carolina’s writing can be classified as literature, there is a parallel debate amongst (mostly North American) foreign scholars about whether or not Carolina’s writing should be categorized as testimonial literature, a genre with specific rules that at times fit with the general gist of Carolina’s oeuvre. Carolina’s text is often approached as a testimonial because it provides an outsider’s viewpoint to the struggles of a community whose thoughts and struggles are largely unexplored. Nevertheless, Carolina’s work does not fulfill several of the main tenets of the *testimonio* genre, particularly the fact that testimonial literature is meant to speak for an entire community or group of people. While Carolina is a poor black woman writing from a favela in Brazil, she never professes to speak for others, largely concerned with the wellbeing of her family and her
own self. If she is a voice of the favela, this status is accidental and not one that she
claims for herself. Per Eva Paulino Bueno:

As… an organic intellectual, she speaks from the space of the people: not all the people, not even all the black people, nor, as we see in her diary, all the people from the slum. Rather, she speaks as a specific kind of individual whose voice, because it is so idiosyncratic, so problematic, can function as a way for those of us, outsiders, to begin to understand the complexities of both the subject of Carolina Maria de Jesus and of those other women who live at the margins of capitalist society. In other words, Carolina’s text, as well as her life, cannot be taken as paradigmatic of all women of Brazil, much less of all women in Latin America. (277)

A large part of this is due to Carolina’s own intentions in her writing. She wrote simply to stay sane in the conditions in which she lived in, not out of solidarity for others who also lived in those conditions.

As previously mentioned, some of the most intriguing voices in this debate are united in the scholarly partnership between José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy and the late North American Brazilianist Robert Levine. Through years of discussion and collaborative work, both men came to better understand the separate national standpoints on Carolina, consolidating both the disparaging viewpoints and how they perceived each other. According to Meihy, “os estrangeiros que continuam a idealizar Carolina como uma heroína são vistos pelos acadêmicos brasileiros como figuras que têm uma imagem congelada da dinâmica nacional e que não levam em conta a rapidez das transformações operadas no Brasil.” (Cinderela Negra 47) The Brazilian academics in question here see Carolina as a representation not of Brazilian society in general, but as a representation of a very particular time in Brazilian culture whose relevance does not hold in contemporary times. Meihy also emphasizes that Carolina unmasked the myth of racial democracy in that she proved that Brazilians were not all equal regardless of race, yet Brazilians
struggled with this understanding of Carolina’s work because many passages in her work revealed her own racial prejudice. When Carolina criticized migrants from the Northeast for their lack of work ethic, in the eyes of Brazilian scholars she stood for racial animosity, instead of unity or solidarity.

Whether or not it was their original intent, Levine and Meihy have played a significant role in affirming Carolina’s legacy and its continuation simply by continuing to discuss the contentious elements of her work, constantly reintroducing it to new audiences that might otherwise be unfamiliar with it through their various publications that focus on her. Robert Levine, who often included his own introduction, afterword, or notes in the text, brought the majority of Carolina’s writing that is available in English translation today to the publishing market. This is a strategy frequently employed in the publication of testimonial literature that Rebecca Atencio described as follows: “it is also common for the compiler or activator to include a preface, epilogue, and explanatory notes, in effect ‘framing’ the testimonial narrative and depriving it of its own legitimacy” (279). Although Carolina’s work does not technically fit into the box of testimonial literature because she was decidedly NOT a representative of a community, but instead of her own reality, and because her writing was done alone, not in the form of an oral history that is compiled by a mediating outsider, this “framing” device employed by Levine has a similar effect to other US academics who have introduced seminal testimonial texts such as *I, Rigoberta Menchú*.10 Apart from depriving it of legitimacy, Atencio notes that, “the excessive use of mediation risks displacing what is being

10 Bueno cites *I, Rigoberta Menchu* as the text against which all testimonial narratives are measured to qualify within the category (263).
portrayed from its context, creating the comforting illusion that it is more distant and alien from the reader’s reality than it truly is.” While the English translations of Carolina’s writings certainly benefit from the context and reflection provided by Levine’s supplementary writings, they also “frame” the text within a specific context, that of the exotic other that needs to be explained, which undoubtedly influences the reader’s approach to the text. This brings us back to the understanding that Carolina’s writings are not interesting in and of themselves (in other words, as literature), but because of the situation and context that they grew out of and that developed around them. It also shifts the focus to the role of academics such as Levine have in allowing marginalized voices to be heard and valued within the North American academy. Bueno writes that this affords North American academics a “position of almost divine neutrality,” in their decisions about which books are worthy of study and why, turning them into cultural intermediaries themselves who “more than anybody else constitute the ‘powerful outside’ that will determine how a book, or an idea, or a cause from Latin America fares in the US” (264). Even as he champions Carolina, her cause, and her work, there is no way for Levine to successfully present her in a direct, unmediated fashion. His own position will always strongly influence those who access her work and how they see it.

**Conclusion**

Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus were two Afro-Brazilian women who achieved sudden success in their respective fields of literature and popular music, and each has cultivated a legacy well after death. In this chapter, I explored how
their work was an inspiration for others in similar or related fields, and how these outcomes influenced the continuing public perception of Carolina and Clementina and their work, contributing to their legacies.

Even twenty-five years after her death, Clementina maintains a listening public that is mostly constituted of intellectual specialists in music who revere her for her “pure” and unique performance style. Several artists have recorded songs that reference Clementina or have emulated her style, embracing her memory in a way that gives them a unique level of legitimacy in musical circles that value “authenticity” and roots culture. For a contemporary artist, referencing Clementina de Jesus is like employing a secret password that confirms one’s membership in an exclusive club of individuals who share the same musical taste and values, through which some of Clementina’s specific popularity rubs off on the artist making the reference. Rather than diluting the power of Clementina’s image, these references expand it over a broader area, attracting more individuals who subscribe to similar musical ideologies.

Carolina Maria de Jesus’ legacy, like the rest of her life, is more contentious. Much like Clementina, Carolina’s work was the inspiration for several adaptations and references. The 1960 theatrical performance of *Quarto de Despejo* expanded the theatergoing public due to the success of the book, bringing individuals to the theater that did not regularly frequent it. This adaptation increased the breadth, reach, and significance of Carolina’s work, expanding her legacy in turn. In the last twenty years, the discussion around the meaning of Carolina’s publications has gained energy, creating a polemic between Brazilian and North-American and European scholars, which has also
increased the number of people thinking, talking, and interacting around the work of a woman who was born in the early twentieth century in Brazil.

The representations and reiterations of both women and their work ultimately reveal the underlying dichotomy of racial identity in Brazil: although the concept of racial democracy has been disproven through research time and again since the 1950s, it continues to be widely accepted in daily life. Clementina embodies the vision of the mãe preta in her appearance and good nature, loving others as her own offspring and serving as “proof” of interracial harmony in Brazil. Sonia Roncador describes the colonial archetype of the mãe preta as follows:

Geralmente velha, corpulenta, supersticiosa, e fervorosamente católica, a mãe-preta não despertava qualquer perigo de degradação moral da família através da copula com o senhor ou “s inhôzinho” brancos; além disso, sua índole fiel, mais devota, às demandas da casa-grande que aos interesses da própria senzala, distanciava-a igualmente do escravo revoltado, e vingativo. (131)

This passage illustrates a stereotype that emerged during the colonial era, yet was continuously revered in literature and other forms of cultural production as an expression of nostalgia for an aristocratic tradition in decline particularly linked to positive childhood memories. It also reveals that the figure of the mãe preta was so widely accepted because she was utterly benign, representing no threat whatsoever to mainstream white society. She is loved in contrast to more “dangerous” images of blackness, particularly those that express anger or sexuality.

In contrast, the public does not embrace Carolina because she embodies the opposite of the mãe preta, representing instead the threatening aspects of blackness. She is a mother, but only to her own children whom she has conceived with white men, and
she is an overtly and awkwardly sexual being. She decries the societal injustices that have shaped her life, aligning her with the resentful slave of the past. She gives voice to uncomfortable truths that those who benefit from the same injustices do not want to hear.

Carolina and Clementina’s legacies reflect and emphasize these racially charged archetypes, resonating with Brazil’s complex racial history. Clementina’s acceptance and Carolina’s rejection by the intellectual elite reveal that despite the passage of time, images of Afro-Brazilian women continue to recall colonial racial divisions.
CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have examined the role of cultural mediation in the lives and work of two Afro-Brazilian women who were active during the mid-twentieth century. Clementina de Jesus was a Rio de Janeiro singer known for her unique voice and her emergence onto the Brazilian national music scene late in life at the age of sixty-four. Carolina Maria de Jesus was a poor woman residing in a São Paulo favela whose personal diary, written on scraps of discarded paper, was published to national acclaim. Both women were “discovered” by white men from outside their communities and achieved national recognition through the media at the time. They went on to act as official representatives of larger themes in Brazilian life, and later came to symbolize these themes in the work of others.

Carolina and Clementina came to represent very different ideas about race and gender in Brazil: Clementina was a familiar figure in line with the mãe preta archetype, while Carolina was portrayed as a discriminated favelada. Carolina was criticized for all of the ways that she changed after entering the national spotlight, while Clementina was praised for her apparent consistency throughout her life. Clementina symbolized a rich tradition of working class women of African descent that recalled legends as such as Tia Ciata, whereas Carolina was a pioneer who stood alone, stubbornly unique in both her poverty and her drive as a writer. Through her representation in others’ work,
Clementina’s image as a mãe preta was constantly repeated, often used as a reference to confirm others’ cultural legitimacy and to sustain the dominant yet disputed ideology of “racial democracy”. Others used Carolina’s writing and life experience to symbolize poverty and social injustice, drawing attention to the effects of Brazil’s race, gender, and class-based hegemonic structure. In the building and maintaining of their individual legacies, Carolina and Clementina are used as lenses through which individuals continue to view and perform their own social values. They serve both as role models for contemporary marginalized artists, demonstrating the possibility of success despite limiting structural factors, and as cautionary examples of the continuing existence of said factors.

The news media played a large role in the development of both women’s public personas, framing their lives and work in particular ways. Journalists chose which aspects to emphasize, and which to leave out, mediating between Carolina and Clementina and their audiences. While Carolina and Clementina had some choice regarding which episodes from their lives would be repeated, given that they told and emphasized them in the first place, their star images were frequently manipulated beyond their control to a point at which their agency was often compromised. Media texts that refer to each woman provide a complex body of material from which to examine their portrayal and reception.

Both Carolina and Clementina were specifically selected to embody broader ideas about race and culture that they did not necessarily agree with, highlighting the differences between their own self-perception and how the world saw them. Clementina was chosen as a positive symbol of Brazil’s relationship with its history of slavery,
standing for the harmony of racial democracy and the essentially “primitive” nature of Afro-Brazilian culture, although she did not think of herself in this way. Carolina’s mediating experiences served as a connection between her destitute past and what she hoped to be an educated and comfortable future, but she was primarily chosen to participate in public events as a representative of the poor and marginalized.

This project focuses on the specific trajectories of two women in a particular time and place, many of the broader themes that I investigate are essential to contemporary understandings of the dynamics of race, gender, media, identity, and representation in cultural production. Cultural works are not produced in isolated situations, but instead through networks of individuals and organizations that influence one another, at times through collaboration, at times through manipulation. Examining the paths of cultural production reveals the workings of power relationships that are deeply embedded in diverse societies, often demonstrating how social networks function in a multiplicity of ways. The process of cultural mediation involves a discussion in which individuals exchange different manifestations of power and capital. The roles inherent to this process are not fixed or static, but can alter over time and changed circumstances. The conclusions I have drawn can be used to shed light on the study of contemporary artists in similar situations of marginalization, such as musicians like Dona Onete and Lia de Itamaraca, or literatura marginal authors like Paulo Lins and Ferréz.

My conclusions about the role of the print media are also applicable to broader contexts. The productions of celebrity and the star text over time occur in all post-industrial societies through similar mechanisms, indicating the underlying values of the societies that create them. Certain characteristics of public figures receive emphasis,
while others are neglected or unmentioned, in the interest of shaping a specific media characterization. A similar process occurs in the creation of artistic legacies, in which individuals pick and choose certain elements to emulate and repeat at the expense of others, confirming their importance and reaffirming a cultural figure’s dominant image. Examining cultural production inspired by other’s work reveals the continuing significance of creations of the past.

This study also indicates broader themes in Brazilian culture outside of the specific circumstances of Carolina Maria de Jesus and Clementina de Jesus. It uncovers the centrality of racially based archetypes that evolved throughout a history of slavery and social inequality, as well as the importance of authenticity and “the real” in a constantly shifting society. Over one hundred years have passed since the Abolition of slavery in Brazil, but racialized and gendered disparities established far in the past are still reflected in today’s cultural production and values.

This project has left me with many questions that I have been unable to answer within the scope of a dissertation, but that I hope to explore in the future. The work of each woman is alive with visual significance and symbolism, which is an area that I was only able to touch on briefly here but certainly deserves more attention. An analysis of the use of imagery in Clementina’s ouvre is sorely lacking, between her album covers and promotional material, and the way that she was visually portrayed in the media. Much the same can be argued for the collection of imagery around Carolina’s published works and public appearances. A comparative project that looks at this in detail would
provide significant new insight into the visual representations of race and gender in Brazil.

Another interesting direction in which to expand would be an examination of the role of cultural mediation on a nationwide scale, increasing the project’s scope beyond the “eixo Rio-São Paulo” to other areas of Brazil. Others followed a trajectory similar to Carolina and Clementina, with experiences of discovery that were followed eventual symbolism of greater themes in Brazilian culture. It would also be intriguing to broaden the scope of the project beyond the limits of Brazilian culture, including comparisons to individuals who invoke similar ideas about race, class, and tradition, such as the Capeverdian singer Cesaria Évora, or the African-American blues singers Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith, who are frequently compared to Clementina. Given both the tradition of racial comparison between Brazil and the United States, and the continuing evolution of racial thought in both countries, these themes are ripe for exploration.

Although Carolina and Clementina never met one another, they were bound together through common experiences of discovery, cultural mediation, and representation. As ordinary women plucked from specific contexts and placed in the national spotlight, they came to stand for broad ideas about race, class, and gender during a complicated time period. Their lives add nuance and complication to the sociocultural reality of living and working as a working class black woman in twentieth century Brazil.
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BIOGRAPHY

Elise Margaret Olson Dietrich was born in Gallup, New Mexico in 1979, while her parents worked for the Indian Health Service on the Zuni Indian Reservation. She spent most of her childhood in Hanover, New Hampshire, and graduated from the Cambridge School of Weston in Massachusetts in 1997. She studied Studio Art and Spanish at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2001. She spent two years traveling, teaching English as a Second Language, and learning Portuguese in Brazil, spending the most time in Rio Grande do Sul, Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro. She then returned to the United States and worked for several years with the Brazilian immigrant community in Boston, Massachusetts, holding jobs as diverse as selling açaí pulp and serving as a Portuguese-speaking loan officer for the microfinance non-profit ACCIÓN USA.

Elise moved to New Orleans in 2007 to begin graduate school at Tulane University, from which she received a Master of Arts degree in Latin American Studies after completing a thesis titled, “A Turma do Pererê: Representations of Race and Gender in a Pre-Dictatorial Brazilian Children’s Comic.” While at Tulane, she taught classes in Latin American Studies and Portuguese Language. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Portuguese in the Department of Foreign Languages at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York.