

Paper

The Pleasures of Violence: Irony and Post-testimonial Discourse in *Cidade de Deus* by Paulo Lins

Aaron Lorenz
Tulane University

Abstract

The novel, *Cidade de Deus* (1997), by Paulo Lins, can be seen as a landmark in the shift towards a new aesthetics of poverty in Brazil and marks the massive entry of a range of major and minor protagonists from the favela in Brazilian literature.¹ The author has a long relationship with *Cidade de Deus*. In addition to growing up in *Cidade de Deus*, Lins also worked for many years with the anthropologist Alba Zaluar interviewing *Cidade de Deus*' gangsters. Critics of the novel have invariably framed their interpretations of the novel within the extra-literary context of the author's relationship to *Cidade de Deus*. In response to this pervasive critical approach to the novel, the current essay looks at the critical reception of the novel *Cidade de Deus* in the context of testimonio literature.² ...

“Only intellectuals enjoy poverty. (Quem gosta de miseria é intelectual)” Joáozinha Trinta. Quoted in “Traficando Informação.” MV Bill

The novel, *Cidade de Deus* (1997), by Paulo Lins, can be seen as a landmark in the shift towards a new aesthetics of poverty in Brazil and marks the massive entry of a range of major and minor protagonists from the favela in Brazilian literature.¹ The author has a long relationship with *Cidade de Deus*. In addition to growing up in *Cidade de Deus*, Lins also worked for many years with the anthropologist Alba Zaluar interviewing *Cidade de Deus*' gangsters. Critics of the novel have invariably framed their interpretations of the novel within the extra-literary context of the author's relationship to *Cidade de Deus*. In response to this pervasive critical approach to the novel, the current essay looks at the critical reception of the novel in the context of *testimonio* literature.²

Paulo Lins, alongside numerous critics like João Cesar de Castro Rocha, Roberto Schwartz, and others, have linked to naturalism with Aluisio Azevedo's *O Cortiço*, to social realism with Jorge Amado's *Capitães de Areia* and José Lins do Rego's *Fogo Morto*, to autobiography with *Cuarto de Despejo* by Menina Carolina de Jesus and to Brutalism with Ruben Fonseca's *O Cobrador*. While this is the first essay that looks at Lins's novel in the context of *testimonios* in Spanish, de Jesus' *Cuarto de Despejo* has been examined in that context in ways that parallel and precede my interpretation of *Cidade de Deus*. Else Vieira, Eva Paulino Bueno, and Steven Hunsaker have respectively discussed Menina Carolina de Jesus's diary in the context of *testimonio* literature. Rarely considered in *testimonio* criticism, Bueno complains that the absence of *Cuarto de Despejo* from the canon indicates a prejudice on the part of *testimonio* critics who are uninterested in the book because it doesn't correspond to their ideas of a transparent and noble subject. Steven Hunsaker argues that *Cuarto de Despejo* exceeds many of the parameters of *testimonio* through Maria

Lugones's notion of “thickness.”³ Rather, De Jesus's conflictive approach to her neighbors makes her unique and unrepresentative of the community. In fact, much of her discourse is a determined negation of the cruel hypocrisy of “the apparent act of charity” (Hunsaker 44) such as the “donation” of rotting food to the favela.

Similarly, *Cidade de Deus*'s use of irony exceeds notions of a unified subject who could represent and imagine a coherent community. While Lins's novel and de Jesus's autobiography make no claims to representing the community “truthfully,” as did *testimonio* literature, they were nevertheless received as such by critics and readers in interesting ways. Just as feature films have been experimenting with documentary film traditions within an economy of suspense, so too does Lins's social realist novel make use of a number of qualities of *testimonio* literature and of anthropological description, though for different effects. In this respect, the novel's numerous points of contact with *testimonio* justify the use of the term post-testimonial discourse. In fact, the novel's insistent irony places it squarely within Elzbieta Sklowdowska's notion of the term. She argues that “post-testimonial discourse... is in reality a metadiscourse that through parody, demystifies the contradictions of *testimonio* that critics have not yet been able to catalogue” (Sklowdoska, 1992: 101. Trans. A.L.).

Despite *Cidade de Deus*'s obvious use of parody, the novel and *testimonio*'s most obvious similarities can be found in the critical discourses surrounding them. Like the criticism of *Cidade de Deus*, the criticism of *testimonio* literature suggested that in texts like *The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave*, and *I, Rigoberta Menchú: an Indian Woman in Guatemala*, a new type of literature was emerging which would give voice to oppressed, subaltern groups who have historically been silenced. For instance, in their essay, “Voices for the Voiceless: Testimonial Literature in Latin America,” Georg Gugelberger and Mi-

chael Kearney affirm that “people who were taken as objects are now insisting on being subjects, the distinction between them being that whereas the former are spoken about, the latter speak for themselves. This breakdown of what was the firmly structured distinction between subject and object reveals the deeply politically and culturally constructed nature not only of anthropology but also of the ‘knowledge’ that it produces” (1991: 7).

The criticism of *testimonio* literature and *Cidade de Deus* celebrate the transformation of objects of anthropological study into the subjects of new texts where they speak directly to an audience without the filter of anthropological framing. This new voice in *testimonio* is structured as a collective voice whereby the “witness” speaks in the name of a community. “Whereas the Western writer is definitely an author, the “protagonist” who gives testimony is a speaker who does not conceive of him/herself as extraordinary but instead as an allegory of the many, the people.” (1991: 8). *Cidade de Deus* too provides an allegory of the people, but the hundreds of minor protagonists and narrators leads to a different kind of collective subject made of competing and conflictive voices. *Testimonio* also has a specific political objective of “denunciation” in relationship to official ideology, and acts as a way of “exorcising and setting aright history.” The theoretically complex use of realism also effectively checked the discourse of post-modernism and led to the creation of a new terminology to describe the phenomenon in relationship to other literary forms. “John Beverly called it a post fictional discourse (1989: 11-12), and George Yúdice has correctly placed it in the mode of writing which arms itself against the increasing postmodernist attempts to abolish representational discourse for a ludic discourse... Barbara Harlow has characterized it as ‘Resistance Literature’” (Gugelberger, 1991, 10-11). In the context of *Cidade de Deus*, a similar move can be seen in João Cesar de Castro Rocha’s argument for the use of the term “aesthetics of marginality,” to define

what he perceived of as an emerging genre.

The criticism of *Cidade de Deus* can be summarized in two trends. The dominant trend essentially follows the paths laid by Roberto Schwarz’s pioneering essay.⁴ Schwarz argued that *Cidade de Deus* is an “event” in Brazilian literature that marked the arrival of previously excluded subjects from literature. The other trend, sustained by Wilson Bueno, Germana Sousa and Luis Felipe Miguel, claim that that the novel is clumsy in its narrational styles. In addition, Miguel complains that it is only Schwartz’s bullying essay that convinced critics and popular audiences of the novel’s value. Interestingly, both trends suggest that Lins is the voice of the favela and that *Cidade de Deus* is something more than a novel. His origin as a favela resident and his anthropological research with Alba Zaluar form a contextual frame that establishes the dual credentials of his critiques of the structure of the favela. As confirmation of this hypothesis, Lins frequently appeared in the press as a public intellectual representing the favela in numerous contexts. The confusion over the “real” and artistic elements in the novel further extended into Lins’s life after the success of the film unleashed a lawsuit by angry residents who claimed that Lins misrepresented their stories when he chose to maintain their real names.

In fact, many critics of *Cidade de Deus* were influenced by their desire to find a realer truth reserved for the favela resident and ignored the novel’s nagging doubt as to the power of language to correct injustices. Elzbieta Sklodowska has suggested that *testimonio* criticism’s desire to celebrate the act of subaltern speech was perhaps influenced by “*testimonio*-seeing” eyes that overlooked literary effect in favor of naive notions of authenticity and truth. She writes, “if definitions of *testimonio* are indeed symptomatic of what we look for when we read with *testimonio*-seeing eyes, this brief re-reading of *The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave* tells us also what we tend to overlook. Yúdice, Beverly, and Zim-

merman find *testimonio*'s authenticity in the voice of the victim, who has the unquestioned power to "summon truth," "denounce," "exorcise," and "set aright." But they also tend to overcompensate for the internal discord we may find in specific texts, and they direct our attention away from the problematic inscription of the *differend*. For these critics, the testimonial word that emerges from oppression is perceived as natural, pure, uniquely insightful, and immune to ideological blindness (Skłodowska 1996: 97). In other words, the focus on the act of enunciation in the testimonial overlooks the silences.

As a framework for understanding *Cidade de Deus* in the context of *testimonio*, it would be useful to revisit François Lyotard's notion of the *differend*. He writes that "in the *differend*, something 'asks' to be put into phrases, and suffers from the wrong of not being able to put into phrases right away. This is when the human beings who thought they could use language as an instrument of communication learn through the feeling of pain which accompanies silence (and of pleasure which accompanies the invention of a new idiom), that they are summoned by language, not to augment to their profit the quantity of information communicable through existing idioms, but to recognize that what remains to be phrased exceeds what they can presently phrase, and that they must be allowed to institute idioms which do not exist" (Lyotard 1988: 13, cited in Skłodowska 1996: 97). In response to the uncritical approach towards the use of persuasion and literary license by the editors/transcribers/authors, Elizabeth Burgos Debray and Miguel Barnet, Elzbieta Skłodowska and Doris Sommer have insightfully analyzed the ways in which Burgos-Debray and Barnet's texts are aesthetically constructed to create a realist discourse of truth that "hides" its rhetorical strategies. In Skłodowska's analysis of Esteban Montejo's rhetorical strategies, she reveals an internal system of self-questioning whereby Montejo "inoculates" his story against external cri-

tique" (95). Sommer's essay, "Rigoberta's Secrets" similarly examines the ways in which rhetorical silences are used to emphasize the power of the speaker to withhold information, thereby feeding the desire to "know" her story on the part of the reader.

The majority of the critics of *Cidade de Deus* similarly approached the novel with "truth-seeking" eyes that draw attention away from the silences the book theorizes. Just as the emergence of speech by historically silenced subjects is by no means guaranteed and necessitates a reordering of literary priorities, the urgency of poverty and urban violence theoretically frames the novel in terms of speech and its alternative, violence: "speech balks: the bullet talks" (Lins: 11). Lins radicalizes the relationship between enunciation and silence and indicates an understanding of violence as a nonverbal communication that comes to inhabit the space of the *differend* in favelas like *Cidade de Deus*. Violence has none of the redemptive qualities of a guerrilla struggle that they have in Menchú's narratives where there was a clear system of oppression constituted by the landowning elite and the government's oppression of local indigenous communities through systems of sharecropping, dispossession, relocation, and conscription policies. Rather, in , violence substitutes speech, whereby the witnesses and protagonists are helpless to stop the systematic slaughter of the community's youth. The novel further complicates the ethical stance of the reader by contextualizing the actions of murderers and executioners (both the police and the gangsters) within the hardships endured during childhood and the struggle for survival and dignity.

In her analysis of Lyotard in the context of *testimonio* literature, Elzbieta Skłodowska suggests that a number of steps are necessary in order to understand testimonial narrative's mediation of reality and truth.

Four premises are needed, according to Lyotard, to constitute a phrase universe of testimonial contract as a truth-believing paradigm, First. an addressee

- someone not only willing to listen and accept the reality of the referent, but also worthy of being spoken to. Then there is an addressor, a witness who refuses to remain silent. Third, a language capable of signifying the referent. Then there is a “case” or the referent itself that “asks to be put into phrases, and suffers from the wrong of not being able to be put into phrases right away” (Lyotard 1988, 13). The referent, continues Lyotard, may be obliterated if silence results from the denial of one or several of the preceding three instances (14). In other words, testimony takes place only if the reality of a referent is established and in order for this to happen all silent negations must be withdrawn and the authority of the witness, addressee’s competence, and language’s ability to signify must be assured. (Skłodowska 1996: 97)

Skłodowska highlights the leaps of faith necessary for a relationship of solidarity between reader and speaker to be successful. The relationships outlined by Lyotard suggest a number of links in a chain of knowledge and which include the eyewitness quality of a speaker who has been wronged, a sympathetic addressee willing to listen and who has some power to correct the problem, and the belief that language can communicate reality objectively. As Skłodowska remarks, *testimonio* also adds another link in the form of the editor who faithfully transmits and shapes the speaker’s story according to aesthetic and literary criteria. The failure of any of these conditions “obliterates” the speaker and transforms them from witnesses into “victims.”

While the urgency of the wrong perpetrated against residents parallels the truth-speaking paradigm, *Cidade de Deus* calls attention to the failure and breakdown of testimony in other ways. Not only is the narration undermined by irony, the status of the protagonists as criminals erodes their credibility as speaking subjects. If in the classic example of *I, Rigoberta Menchú: an Indian Woman in Guatemala*, the indigenous Mayans are conscious agents in a political and military struggle for change against a repressive state apparatus, the gangsters in *Cidade de Deus* occupy a more ambiguous relationship to the state. They are not witnesses but violent agents of a variety of different crimes including armed robbery, rape, and murder. They actively sub-

orn and corrupt the police, and are in turn victimized by corrupt cops and forced to pay bribes to operate their illegal business. Rather, the gangsters in *Cidade de Deus* lack a political awareness that would allow them to fully understand their subordinate relationship to the city as second-class citizens. In fact, their violent acts are a determined negation of subaltern status in their struggle to be both feared and famous.

Another difference between *Cidade de Deus* and *testimonio* literature is the author’s corrosive irony and a nagging doubt about language’s ability to faithfully communicate the truth of an entire community that has been historically stigmatized as the locus of crime. *Cidade de Deus* stands in direct relationship to Brazilian crime TV programs like *Linha Direita* and *Cidade Alerta* as a kind of parodic commentary on the “moral panic created in the press,” and as a way of contextualizing violence beyond the perversity of a few deranged individuals.⁵ *Cidade de Deus* denounces the historical presentation of a reality preconfigured by hegemonic discourse as marginal, and through this denunciation, it reframes the favela as central. In this way, the novel calls attention to the way language frames truth through its depiction of the news and mass media. On the one hand, the news frames the way *Cidade de Deus* is understood by the larger city as part of a “crime” problem. However, the news and the mass media are also consumed and interpreted by favela residents, thereby complicating the relationship between the community and the tools used to understand them. This reframing of the media in the novel and film calls attention to the power and the limitations of the media, as well as the potential of fiction as a corrective and denunciatory tool. The author’s use of irony also corrodes the over-dramatized and sensationalistic calls of the press for more repression in the favela.

Rather than a naive presentation of the truth as a call to action, the use of irony as a rhetorical tool in the narrative adds another

filter through which truth is understood. The novel claims that truth is always mediated, and what is understood as “truth” in the narrative of the novel, is really the consciousness of the mediative power of language and silence. Unlike *testimonio* discourse, which posits a witness seeking retribution and a counter discourse that corrects official accounts, *Cidade de Deus* displaces the locus of truth towards a multiplicity of competing voices locked in a struggle to contest geographic and symbolic space. As *testimonio* invokes the many through the single story, seamlessly transcribed such that editor and speaker become one, *Cidade de Deus* too presents the multitude, but corrosively fragments the unitary discourse of a single narrator, discipline or genre capable of describing the totality of the favela.

Finally, *Cidade de Deus* casts doubt on the readers’ sympathy towards the favela. The novel calls attention to the readers’ fascination with crime by adopting the frame used to stigmatize the favela, and turning it inside out in numerous ways. For example, in the opening pages, the narrator presents numerous childrens’ games that animate the early years of the government project. Suddenly, in one of the few moments that the narrator addresses the reader, it is to remind him or her that “the subject here is crime. That’s why I am here.” In other words, the narrator has been summoned to talk about crime – not childrens’ games, implying that that is what the reader wants. Lins indeed gives them crime, but presented in unexpected ways.

Cidade de Deus then is an odd mirror of *testimonio*. Because secrecy and informing are such central security concerns to these gangsters living in semi-clandestine conditions, the notion of testifying in a juridical sense against state injustices loses its transparency amidst the criminal practices of numerous individuals and groups within the favela. Rather, to return to Lugones’s notion of “thickness,” the opaque relation to truth is emphasized in the novel through the ironic oscillation between narrational registers as well as in the parody

of genres and discourses. As Roberto Schwarz suggested at the novel’s publication, Lins’s novel rearticulates anthropology, social realism and naturalism, the historical novel, the press, samba, and police discourses in “a discursive web that has no final word; and that operates, in turn, as an element in a wider mystery, formed by the huge business of crime, with its amorphous boundaries, and by the laws of motion and contemporary society – on whose effective shape such explanations have nothing to report” (Schwarz: 2005:10).

Cidade de Deus is both a historical document and a subversion of popular entertainment. First, the novel documents the evolution of a government project on the west side of Rio de Janeiro from the perspective of its gangsters and youth in a tradition of “social inquiry” (Schwarz: 2005: 9). Featuring hundreds of protagonists, the novel portrays a dense network of informal economic practices ranging from street vending to armed robbery. Following a pattern developed by naturalism and social realism in Brazil, the novel diverges from these approaches through its anthropophagic approach to popular language, the mass media, and academic discourse. The novel also works on a register of suspense that makes it a page-turner, while maintaining an unconventional approach to the plot development. The gangsters indeed die as the reader fears, but “before the projected climax, from adventitious hands, for half-forgotten reasons” (Schwarz: 2005:11).

The novel is structurally divided into three sections that historically mark the favela: the 1960’s, the early 1970’s, and the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. Each period corresponds to a single gangster that forms the locus of the action despite the participation of hundreds of discrete characters. The first section relates the establishment of the project as a moment of idyllic hope for hundreds of working class black and northeastern families who had been displaced by drought, floods, and arson. At its foundation, Rio de Janeiro’s natural beauty frames the government project and animates

the children's games, the gangsters daring surprise hold-ups, and the cultural traditions that the residents bring with them to their new neighborhood. The second section, "A Historia de Bené," introduces the theme of drug trafficking as Bené and his partner Zé Pequeno take over the local drug trade. This section documents the consolidation of their power as they settle old scores and take over another favela with the help of soldiers from the local barracks. The operations of the drug trade are explained and documented as the new standard for gangsters who had historically survived through armed robbery. The final section, "A Historia de Zé Pequeno," documents the transformation of the government project into a "neo-favela." The consolidation of military and economic power leads to a protracted war between neighboring gangs. The rape of Mané Galinha's girlfriend by Zé Pequeno unleashes the conflict, but soon the causes of the war are forgotten as the main protagonists die, are arrested, or are forced into hiding and their lieutenants take over the management of the operations.

Following through on some of the many directions that Roberto Schwarz indicated in his original review, Wellington Augusto da Silva has thoroughly analyzed the use of the narrator in the novel to create a range of distances and registers through which the reader identifies with the protagonists. The novel accomplishes the shift in the readers' perspective through the oscillation between a "malandro narrator," seen in the indirect free speech of the gangsters and a "refined narrator," seen in the indirect discourse used in the descriptions. As Silva has demonstrated concisely, the novel achieves a powerful alienation effect through the tension in the narration between refined and street discourse. Cinematically, the internal monologues of the gangsters act like a close-up or voice-over, while the "refined" and lyrical descriptions by a more traditional third person omniscient narrator act like pans to reveal the interconnections between the characters and the overlapping spheres of in-

fluence. Each of these techniques introduces critical distance, as the indirect free speech of the gangsters is parodied to reveal particularly ridiculous beliefs, or as the indirect speech parodies anthropological protocols or the division of labor into legal and illegal activities, when the majority of residents participate in the informal economy.

Lins uses the dynamic tension between narrational styles to reveal the gangsters' incipient racial and class-consciousness, as well as to critique the gangsters' misogynist attitudes. These incipient and variable layers of consciousness reproduce what Raymond Williams refers to as the division between "official" and "practical consciousness." As Williams writes,

Practical consciousness is almost always different from official consciousness, and this is not only a matter of relative freedom or control. For practical consciousness is what is actually lived, and not only what is thought is being lived. Yet the actual alternative to the received and profound fixed forms is not silence: not the absence, the unconscious, which bourgeois culture has mythicized. It is a kind of feeling and thinking which is indeed social and material, but each in embryonic phase before it can become fully articulate and defined exchange. Its relations with the already articulate and defined are then exceptionally complex. (130-131)

The novel employs a number of interesting strategies to document the "practical consciousness" of the gangsters and favela youth. The malandro narrators place the reader in the shoes of the gangsters, often speaking in their words, and permitting the reader a window into their thoughts. The refined narrators create ironic distance and historical context, and parody the "official consciousness," the press, anthropology, crime fiction, westerns, and other mass media texts. In fact, if *testimonio* builds up its narrators into truth speakers, *Cidade de Deus* actively casts doubt on its narrators' ability to perceive the world beyond their subjective experience.

Silva also notes the importance of the character Busca-Pé as an internal narrator who historically frames the first two sections of the novel. His failure in straight jobs and in

crime affirms his choice of photography in a doubling of the author's own artistic choices. Busca-Pé's disappearance in the final third of the novel indicates the irony through which the author self-reflexively views the potential of art to redeem favela youth in the systemic proliferation of violence. Just as violence sensationally rivets TV viewers, it forms the underlying logic of the novel that determines the focus of the narration. In fact, in one of the only times the narrator addresses the reader, the narrator ends a long digression about Busca-Pé's childhood games in the forest and rivers surrounding Cidade de Deus by reminding the reader of their joint purpose: "the subject here is crime – that's why I'm here." The narrator's interjection can be interpreted as a momentary flash into another relationship between the reader and the text. Like an anthropological or police informant, the narrator is summoned to reveal the favela to the reader. Just as TV viewers watch sensationalist press, the novel too fulfills this function of stimulating the audience by partially confirming their voyeuristic desire to read violence and crime. Because of the complex relationship between reader and narrators, many critics were falsely cued into a contextual reading of the novel that saw it as the emergence of an unmitigated favela voice, forgetting that Busca-Pé's choice is ironically framed in the novel as a digression from the focus of violence. This choice indicates the author's doubt at the limitations of literature/photography to effect change and deter urban violence.

The author's doubt as to the power of art is inverted by an enthusiastic critical reception that elevates Paulo Lins to the triumphant status of an emblem of the favela. Critically, there is a general acceptance that the novel speaks a reality which had until then been denied about the Brazilian ghetto. This course would be followed by proponents and opponents of the novel and would soon frame Lins as an organic intellectual in affairs relating to the favela and urban violence. According to Schwarz, *Cidade de Deus* represents the

fictionalization of Alba Zaluar's study, "from the perspective of the objects of study – and (without promoting any political illusions) with a corresponding activation of a different class's point of view" (Schwarz, 2001: 109). Rocha echoes this perspective when he suggests: "an important point to remember is the complexity and ambiguity of the narrator [of *Cidade de Deus*], who does not convey a particular viewpoint, but rather tries to embody the many layers, which comprise the fabric of the shantytown itself. Lins's text is not the expression of his particular voice, but rather the articulation of a social stratum, which implicates Brazilian society as a whole" (62).

The link between anthropology and literature is often brought to the fore in the criticism of the novel. Lacerda writes that "perhaps this book is the very first ethnographic novel of Brazilian literature" (Lacerda. Trans. A.L.). Jaguaribe also suggests that the dual role of former resident and researcher was a truly novel situation in Brazilian literature. "As Zaluar's research assistant and as a resident of the favela, Lins acquired a dual role as anthropological researcher-informant and as a community member. Both the legitimacy of his authorship and the subject matter of a new, radically violent drug culture within the favela offered middle-class readers an insider's view of an unknown terrain" (333). Beatriz Resende also champions this approach when she suggests that a new current of literature is emerging in Brazil that would speak from the perspective "of the excluded." As opposed to earlier approaches such as Clarice Lispector's *Hora da Estrela*, that poeticized poverty, "what seems new is that in literature, the poor now appears not only as a socio-economic condition, but as a subjectivity, an alternative position to be revindicated. (Resende: 29. Trans. A.L.). In Resende's opinion, *Cidade de Deus* is the paradigmatic example of this new current: "the strongest expression of what it is to formulate one's own discourse, without external mediators in our recent cultural production. And the story of poverty, created from

‘within,’ emerges in a new form, much different from the one created by ‘realist’ narrators and their powerful omniscient voices, sure of themselves and *neutral*” (Resende: 33. Trans. A.L. Italics hers).

The excitement generated by the emergence of a subaltern voice in Brazilian literature puzzled some critics. Luis Felipe Miguel, for instance, claims that it was only its reception as the voice of the favela that accounted for its critical success - despite its formal flaws.

For someone with Paulo Lins’s *background*, who is not an innate member of the cultural elite, the rise to literary success is extremely difficult. But there is always the possibility to invert the parameters, presenting as an advantage what was once a *handicap*. And that is what the author of *Cidade de Deus* does. As a favela resident, he would have access to a *realer* reality, from which middle class intellectuals have been barred... Paulo Lins does not want, however, to be read as a deposition about the favela. He wants to be a novelist, not a Carolina Menina de Jesus in pants... For that reason, he mixes the codes of the literary and the ‘authentic.’” (Miguel 8. Trans. A.L. Italics his).

In Miguel’s opinion, Paulo Lins’s success is the result of bad faith: namely, his ability to invert the rules of the game by trading on his origins for critical recognition. His naive desire to become a novelist is expressed through his mixture of literary references and street slang. This condescending approach to the novel exclusively attributes ‘almost instant success to Roberto Schwarz’s glowing essay. He sardonically remarks, “by investing his prestige, in the way that he did, in a work with so many defects and that so obviously deviates from the standard of good taste, Roberto Schwarz shows his influence” (8. Trans. A.L.). Germana Sousa also takes this direction in her critique of the novel when she suggests that Lins’s lyrical pretensions were falsely understood as the legitimate voice of the favela. She sarcastically remarks,

The master of the voice, the one who juggles erudite discourse, who tries to poeticize grammar – “kill... a verb requiring a bloody object’ is the *suspect/subject* Paulo Lins, resident of *Cidade de Deus*, voice of the periphery who *makes himself* heard in the media. And

that is the reason the novel *justifies itself* and finds its place – as the spokesperson for this pain. Now, we simply need to discuss the authenticity of the voice. Where, for example, are the other components of this complex web of relationships from the favela? *Paulo Maluco*, as he was called by his friends, *becomes a writer*, but gives little voice to the working class and women (2 Trans. A.L. Italics mine).

In the italicized examples above, Sousa’s sarcastic critique implies that the “*do no do voz*” “tries,” and fails, to poeticize grammar is the “the subject,” Paulo Lins. “*Sujeito*,” which can be translated into “subject” as well as “suspect” doubles with its meaning in Portuguese police jargon, often referring to criminals. The use of the reflexive too to indicate that the author “*se faz ouvir*” and that the novel “*se justifica*” also removes the agency from both and rather situate the novel in a passive relationship with the literary establishment rather than as an intervention in literary theory. The condescension is paralleled through Sousa’s reference to Paulo Maluco, Lins’s nickname and poetic pen name, who “*vira escritor*,” as though in a kind of lottery.

In the context of Wellington Augusto da Silva and Livia Lemos Duarte’s analysis of the innovational use of narration, Sousa and Miguel’s condescending critique of Lins’s use of indirect free speech in the narration as an accidental flaw can be summarily discarded. The often times jarring mix of lyricism and street slang is in fact one of the main innovations of the novel alongside its pastiche of literary and extra-literary references and parodies. Nevertheless, Sousa and Miguel rightfully question the triumphant reception of Lins as an “authentic” voice of the favela.

This question of “authenticity” is one of the most riveting points of contact with *testimonio* literature. Doris Sommers and Elzbieta Sklowdoska have insightfully addressed this question with regard to *testimonio* collaboration and the literary and rhetorical techniques that form the basis of the book’s “reality effects.”⁶ Yet, with *Cidade de Deus*, a book that purports to be a novel (on the cover), the notion of authenticity reemerges uncritically. As

mentioned earlier, the notion of the book's authenticity is based on Lins's own prior experience as a resident and the dozens of interviews Lins conducted as a research assistant to anthropologist, Alba Zaluar. This leads to a kind of doubling of Lins's role as author: on the one hand, he is an eyewitness; on the other hand, he is the editor and compiler of the many interviews, which he synthesizes in the novel. Obviously, his experience interviewing gangsters for anthropologist Alba Zaluar informs the novel in ways similar to testimonial discourse and makes it a kind of historical document. Yet, the novel exceeds and contests the ability of anthropological description to document "practical consciousness."

The breakdown of the anthropological paradigm can be seen in Alba Zaluar's reflections on her project with Paulo Lins in Rio de Janeiro's favelas. In her account, there is an erosion of the anthropological model that she employs, due to the realization of the insurmountable chasm between herself and her subjects, and which necessitated her utilization of Lins and other assistants to act as her prostheses, cultural guides, interpreters, and informants.

In the second [series of interviews], completed in the last years of the decade, the barriers were so strong that the facts could no longer be understood and I was faced with lies (Zaluar: 1992). I returned here, and there, I left research assistants... I dodged the lies, but the passage between here and there was restricted to the ear that listened to the recordings of the interviews made by another, or to the eye that read the texts of others (Zaluar 2004: 11. Trans. A.L.)

Zaluar's description of her role as an anthropologist divorced from her objects of study by an incommunicable gulf becomes one of compiler, mediator, and translator. Through the prostheses of her assistants, Zaluar is able to ask questions, probe answers, without revealing her irreducible difference from the subjects being interviewed. She describes difference in geographical terms: in the "here" and "there" which depend on the absoluteness of difference. The anthropologist

dodges the "lies" through these prostheses, tricking her subjects into revealing the other truth, the one reserved for other young black men from the ghetto, as opposed to the lie which is reserved for the white, middle-class woman anthropologist.

The thorniness of Zaluar's dilemma is located in the obscurity which separates these two locations so far from Gilberto Freyre's vision of a unified Brazil⁷ – where combinations of power, race, gender, class and legal distinctions determine which side is which and that complicate a traditional anthropological approach through the lens of culture. Rather, she imagines a new role for the anthropologist in this post-Freyrean universe: as a mediator able to break down discriminatory stereotypes and translate opposing positions that erase one another and that feed hatred and resentment.

After the first interviews in which obstacles created a discourse addressed to someone from the outside, from superior race and class, of the opposite sex, that is, me, but also in a lying discourse, since in it, the relationship between the speaker and the act of speech was not sincere. This became clear in the last interview I did with a boy who told me that he had not committed any of the crimes of which he was accused by the neighborhood and the police, which made me believe that I was faced with excellent material to denounce the injustice present in our institutions. As always, in this second interview, I was accompanied by assistants; young university students who were residents of the area and who had known some of the gangsters since they were kids. When we left, and I expressed my enthusiasm over the interview, one of my assistants said: "but he was lying the whole time!" From then on, the hermeneutics of distrust in relation to the interviews we had already completed was so great that I was simply prohibited from using any of the information in them and concluded that, given the research conditions surrounding the targets of extreme and continuous repression, associated with illegal practices that must remain secret in order to maintain material and symbolic privileges, the communication with the researcher from the outside was seriously damaged. Later, from one of my assistants who lived there, I discovered that I had also almost been raped in one of the visits to the house of a young man with whom I thought I had made friends in the first stage of the research. (Zaluar 2004: 11 – 12. Trans. A.L.)

Zaluar's attempt at a political alliance between the misguided captains of *Cidade de Deus* stumbles across other less convenient desires: those of criminals determined to utilize discourse to advocate for themselves on their own terms – and which Zaluar is able to identify through the translation of Lins and her other “assistants” as lies. A great interview is revealed as fiction by a native interpreter, transforming an attempt at epic discourse into one of comedic failure. The interviewer becomes a puppet of her object, a naive advocate, taken in by a bunch of lies, intended to shield the interviewee from potential persecution. In addition, we have the complete reversal of the anthropological paradigm, something akin to the anthropophagic moment in Nelson Pereira dos Santos's film *Como Era Gostoso o Meu Francês* (1971) when the anthropologist who has gone native is eaten at the end of the film. Here, Zaluar is informed retrospectively of her vulnerability to rape by her interviewees.

These assistants are then more than assistants. In addition to administering structured and unstructured interviews with street and prison gangs, they also act as witnesses of the veracity or mendacity of the interviewees' statements. Despite Zaluar's obfuscation of the identities of these important collaborators in her scholarly work, it is quite clear from Zaluar's statements the absolutely fundamental role of these assistants as collaborators, and vice versa. There are a number of interesting points of contact between Zaluar and Lins's respective projects that relate to questions of adaptation, translation and anonymity. In Zaluar's project, the interviews that form the basis of her work are alimanted by a statistical analysis, translated into a terminology foreign to its emergence, and applied to a discussion of larger issues of violence, criminality, and security. With *Cidade de Deus*, as well as Paulo Lins's later work in film and TV, there is a shift to the literary and cinematic even when an anthropological and sociological framework is retained within the structure

of the narrative. While Zaluar denies naming even her assistants, cloaking them as well as her subjects under the guise of anthropological anonymity of informants, Lins employs the real identities of subjects like Zé Pequeno, who are historic local figures, as well as the dozens of secondary characters that form the *tableaux vivant* of *Cidade de Deus*.

Part of the anthropological dilemma that *Cidade de Deus* poses involves the depiction of a fragmented and plural notion of citizenship in relation to the lived experience of historical race and class inequality. Retrospectively, Lins evokes the dissident political ramifications of the novel in ways that refer back to Bakhtin's notion of the political function of the novel.

My commitment as a writer was to look for the imaginary of those who were socially segregated. And for the sake of verisimilitude, it was to call attention to the appalling inequities of income distribution in Brazil, to spur the creation of forums about racism, to reprove the abandonment of aged people, to rebuke the government's continuous disregard of children, pervasive violence, police arbitrariness and corruption, and to challenge the lack of public, social and cultural policies (Lins: 2005: 129).

Despite his idealism, Lins often expresses doubt over the vehicle of literature to affect change and the class composition of his potential audience. The intended favela audience is illiterate and the middle class audience consumes the novel without understanding it. In a joint interview with the author Ferréz, Lins claims “our books are published and nothing will come of it. Maybe one or two read them. But there are millions that don't even read the newspaper. They only watch TV, which is commercial. (Paiva: 2000. Trans. A.L.).

Minimizing the novel's status as a best-seller, Lins instead focuses on the absence of favela readers, who are only exposed to commercial TV. In other interviews, he compares cinema and literature as vehicles for reaching a favela audience. In response to the question, “Cancino – and do you think that favela residents will go see the film, *Cidade de Deus*?” Lins – the film, yes. Film, even with its limited reach, has more than literature. No one

bothered to read the book” (Cancino. Trans. A.L.). Cidade de Deus residents expressed confusion during the writing of the novel as well, often imagining that Lins was working on a film. “I had a film club there. And because of that, when I started interviewing the guys, the real gangsters, for the book, they would invariably say: ‘You’re going to make a great film!’” No one saw the book when they spoke with me, just a film” (Lins and Buarque de Holanda. Trans. A.L.). In fact, the use of real names of residents and historical figures from Cidade de Deus is a key element of the confusing blurring of fact and fiction. For example, prior to the lawsuit, there is a kind of festive attitude to Lins’s role as favela *griot*. In an interview shortly after the publication of the novel, Lins remarks “the main character of my book ended up being poverty, the favela,” while his interviewer, Paulo Roberto Pires, narrates that Lins is “constantly being interrupted by acquaintances, and speaking to all about the long anticipated book of which they are the protagonists (Pires, Trans. A.L.).

The film adaptation of the novel acted as a watershed that drastically changed Lins in relationship to the community of Cidade de Deus. Ironically confirming Lins’s rumination that literature had almost no impact in the favela, a lawsuit was filed by residents *after* the success of the film. Alba Zaluar for example, was among the numerous critics of the veracity of the film. She affirms that, “in my research, I never saw school children with a gun. And it wasn’t Zé Pequeno who killed all those people in the motel. It was another one we interviewed” (*Folha* 1/13/2003. Trans. A.L.). Dona Bá claimed that the use of her name in the novel was a form of defamation. A member of the lawsuit against Lins, she declares, “I found nine pages saying I was a prostitute and the manager of a brothel. I’ve done many things wrong, but I’ve never been a prostitute” (*Folha* 1/13/2003. Trans. A.L.). Given the title of the first edition of the novel, *Cidade de Deus, Romance* (novel), it is odd that Lins would have to explain the difference

between novel and reality: “I wrote a narrative based on reality. But it is not reality” (*Folha* 1/13/2003. Trans. A.L.). The case was ultimately dismissed in 2005 on the grounds that Lins’s novel was obviously a work of fiction and not a biography, and that the distinguishing characteristics of the character, “Bá,” were quite commonplace (Erdelyi).

In retrospect, Lins reminisced about the causes of the lawsuit and attributed them to his own naïveté. He claimed,

There were some names that I put that were true. But they weren’t those people. I was in a very silly situation. I love books and wanted the community to read. So, this guy comes up and said, ‘OK Paulo Lins, you’re going to write a book, but no one reads here.’ ‘And what if I put some of their names in it?’ and he answered: ‘yea, put some of their names in it.’ I said: ‘but its not that person, I created a character.’ ‘Put the names, put the names, so that they read it.’ The guy is a reader, a writer, a lawyer, believing that people would read it... I don’t want people to just read *Cidade de Deus*, that they only read leftist books, I want them to read Fernando Pessoa, Machado de Assis, Maiakóvsky, Baudelaire, Heidegger... but no one read it, it didn’t get us anything, just the lawsuit. (Lins and Amaral et al: 35. Trans. A.L.)

There is a profound ambiguity in Lins’s responses towards his role as cultural ambassador of the favela to the middle classes. In many ways, Lins’s interviews and his malandro narrator approaches Paul Gilroy’s redeployment of W.E.B. Dubois’ notion of “double consciousness.” As Gilroy puts it, “striving to be both European and black requires some specific forms of double consciousness... where racist, nationalist, or ethnically absolutist discourse orchestrate political relationships so that these identities appear mutually exclusive, occupying the space between them or trying to demonstrate their continuity has been viewed as a provocative and even oppositional act of political subordination”(1). Dubois saw this as the emergence of Black Americans as a “world-historic” people: “the negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in the American world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always look-

ing at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Dubois: 3, cited in Gilroy: 134). Given the novel's frequent portraits of gangsters who are conscious of racial and class discrimination directed against them, their criminal activities are often reframed as vengeance in a class and race war. In numerous provocative interviews, Lins challenged the relationship between the favela and the larger city in terms of the casualties suffered by the favela and exemplified by his mother's death.

MARINA AMARAL – But do you think that Marcinho VP is a potential revolutionary with that political performance of his or do you think it is all a lie?

PAULO LINS – No. Marcinho is my friend.

MARINA AMARAL – Do you think that movement of his was real?

PAULO LINS – I think so. Marcinho VP is a person who spoke of society with a very great clarity, and there are a lot of angry people out there. There was some shooting just now at two hotels in Gloria and at the Meridien, and I saw an interview with the head of a hotel chain saying that Rio de Janeiro had lost 30 million. Where was this money going? *To the ones shooting? To the favela residents? Not likely, therefore, my friend, the man/black man is indignant and outraged and I think that it is justifiable to rob and kidnap, the conditions in which people live, hunger justifies the shots...*

FERRÉZ – Do you think it is justifiable to rob the rich?

PAULO LINS – I think so.

NATALIA VIANA – And kill?

PAULO LINS – I think so. I am saying something politically incorrect. The bastards will attack me for this and I know it. And I won't answer. But that's the way it is. Go to the public hospital! My mom died for lack of medical attention, she went to the hospital and made an appointment for one or two years later and died of a heart attack. They gave those generic pills to her in two minutes and sent her home. There is no medical care, there is no food, there is no dignity whatsoever, and there are no houses, there is nothing.

NATALIA VIANA – And weren't you angry? Did you think about killing?

PAULO LINS – I did. I wrote *Cidade de Deus*. (Lins, Amaral, et al.: 34 Trans. A.L. Italics mine).

In the above interview, Lins defends armed robbery and murder on the part of

the poor as legitimate survival strategies in the context of absolute poverty, yet maintains his own choice of using literature as a vehicle of change, despite the death of his mother. Lins's strategy ironically doubles that of the narration in *Cidade de Deus*, oscillating between a refined and a malandro discourse. Responding to a barbed question referring to Marcinho VP, the protagonist of numerous police operations, gang wars, and also of the novel *Abusado, O Dono do Morro* by Caco Barcellos, Lins completely changes the tone of the question by first stating that he is Marcinho's friend.⁸ The response checks the tone of the question, making it clear that Lins won't speak badly of a friend, and then continues to explain the positive contributions of Marcinho VP in the conceptualization of Rio de Janeiro's drug wars in a context of desperate poverty. The rhetorical question, "para onde ia esse dinheiro?" is answered in a twist towards Rio's malandro street slang and the provocative assertion that armed robbery and murder are legitimate tactics in a class and race war, "nego está revoltado, e acho que é de direito o sujeito pegar e seqüestrar, a situação que o sujeito vive, que passa fome, é de direito o cara dar tiro." Finally, in another reversal, Lins refers back to his mother's death as a way of justifying murder and kidnapping as the poor's response to prior injustice.

Paulo Lins's provocative literary and rhetorical strategies have successfully transformed Lins into a complex representative of the favela. Since the publication of the novel, Lins has worked on numerous government literacy projects, co-directed the award-winning music video clip, *A Minha Alma*, by the Hip-Hop Reggae fusion group O Rappa, and has co-directed two episodes of the award-winning TV series, *Cidade dos Homens*. He appears in the press as a dissenting and critical voice towards government repression in favelas, and even advised Cacá Diegues unfortunate remake of *Orfeu*. His artistic choices since the publication of have confirmed Lins's view as to the limitations of literature as a vehicle

for a broader audience that would include the favela. Thus, *Cidade de Deus* addresses the central dilemma at the heart of the *testimonio* narrative: its readership. It is for this reason that the narrative of *Cidade de Deus* makes such effective use of suspense and the literary adaptation of cinematic techniques in a naive attempt to engage a broader audience that is only semi-literate even in audio-visual technology.

To conclude, *Cidade de Deus* and *testimonio* literature share numerous points of contact. First of all, these texts have focused national and international attention on the relationship between poverty, unemployment, and systemic violence of which, the poor are the primary victims. Second, these texts employ a realist discourse of truth and authenticity that are manifested through literary and rhetorical strategies. Finally, the criticism of these texts has understood them contextually and politically as the emergence of unmitigated subaltern voices in the literary sphere.

Despite these parallels, *Cidade de Deus* exceeds the already uncertain contours of *testimonio* through its use of pastiche, irony, and an unconventional approach to the dramatic suspense of popular entertainment in ways that make it post-testimonial. These techniques have the effect of undermining a unitary discourse that could speak for the favela and rather point to an erosion of the potential for witnessing in cases of chronic and systemic violence and poverty. Part of this is due to the position of the protagonists in *Cidade de Deus* and the necessity of creating empathy between the reader and extremely violent subjects. Just as Zaluar confronts the “lies” of the ghetto, so too *Cidade de Deus* corrodes its own discourses, calling attention to the inability to understand the “practical consciousness” that guides the actions of *Cidade de Deus*’s residents. Like the “practical consciousness” of the gangsters, *Cidade de Deus* calls attention to and elaborates Lyotard’s notion of the *différend* in such a way that violence is reconceptualized as a form of nonverbal speech.

Cidade de Deus’s floating narrator constantly displaces and shifts the relationship between the reader and the text across disciplines and genres. Like the uncanny moment when the eight year old *Filé com Fritas* boasts, “look man, I smoke, I snort coke, I bin beggin’ since I was a baby, I’ve washed car windows, shined shoes, killed, stolen... I’m not a kid. I’m a man!” (Lins 2006: 334), the reader and the narrator are only partial allies, consumed by a logic of mistrust that places the reader simultaneously in the shoes of the victims and the assailants. The masterful quality of the narrative lies in its ability to incite the desire of the reader to understand crime from the perspective of the criminals, thereby denying his or her own position as a potential victim of crime. The hermeneutics of suspicion that the novel encrypts between reader and narrator is paralleled in Lins’s interviews where he provocatively reframes violence in terms of desperate poverty and class warfare, even to the point of justifying kidnapping and murder.

Lins’s complex rhetorical and literary strategies betray his skepticism over the possibility of a testimonial contract in a context where the favela is consistently stigmatized. The solidarity necessary for such a contract to take place and for victims to become “witnesses” would require a complete re-evaluation of criminality and poverty. Lins’s statements constitute a challenge to the reader to confront his or her own prejudices about the favela. For instance, Rigoberta Menchú’s story hinges on the readers’ positive vision of indigenous Mayans. While Elizabeth Burgos-Debray minimizes differences between her and Rigoberta Menchú’s respective positions and emphasizes the equivalence of Rigoberta Menchú’s story with other Mayans, calls attention to race and class difference through the multiplication of varying forms of practical consciousness that simultaneously implicate the reader in uncomfortable and pleasurable ways.

Another point of failure in Lyotard's contract occurs on the level of the transmission of truth through language. Just as Zaluar is unable to distinguish truth from lies, language ceases to be a neutral referent, but interacts with gender, class, race and power. rehearses this on numerous levels, in each case revealing a limitation of each discourse it employs in an elaborate and subtle parody. In this way, is far more self-reflexive about the limitations and potential of discourse to convince or effect change than *testimonio* narrative. It actively casts doubt on its own discourses of "truth" and questions the ability of any academic discipline or artistic medium to fully do justice to a representation of the favela.

To end, I would like to question the relationship between *testimonio* and as messianic and utopian texts. In this regard, Rigoberta Menchú's work as a peasant union organizer and liberation theologian forms the basis for her testimony. The text itself becomes another tool in her fight for social justice. Esteban Montejo too must be understood in the context of post-revolutionary Cuba where an ex-slave could now speak and be celebrated by the post-revolutionary literary establishment. occupies a much different place with regard to popular movements.

While it could be said that Lula's presidential victory was accomplished through a cultural shift that valued investment in education and poverty eradication, goals that Lins shares, the novel's publication in 1997 briefly punctuated an escalating war between paramilitary self-defense groups, two major criminal gangs and prison syndicates, and official state forces. Like MV Bill's song "Traficando Informação," doesn't present the reader with transparent or noble heroes. The world is just too complicated for nobility or heroism. Rather the gangsters struggle against a system designed to destroy them, often choosing perverse and cruel paths. The chaotic gunfire effectively pulverizes a notion of unitary discourse, particularly due to the behind the scenes collaborations and alliances between the above groups. It is therefore essentially a dystopian universe that is characterized by apocalyptic violence, with a minor current of utopian hope, expressed in the children's games, in the rich reservoir of Afro-Brazilian culture, and in the character of Busca-Pé. This tension between different poles can be seen in the final pages of the novel. After Zé Pequeno's death in a singularly anti-climatic scene, the novel presents an image of hope in the resiliency of a child's kite flying.

Notes

- 1 To the confusion of critics, in response to a lawsuit filed by Sebastiana Geralda da Silva that alleged that her name was defamed by the novel's depiction of the character "Bá," the 2002 edition of and the 2006 English translation, in addition to being significantly shorter, change the names of the majority of the characters. Marreco, Cabeleira and Alicate become Tutuca (Squirt), Inferninho (Hellraiser), and Martelo (Hammer). The police Cabeção and Touro are renamed Cabeça de Nós Todo (Boss of Us All) and Bezelbu (Beezlebug). Dadinho, Zé Pequeno, and Bené are changed to Inho (Pipsqueak), Zé Miudo (Zé Pequeno) and Pardalzinho (Sparrow). In addition to the name changes of major characters, numerous smaller characters and place names are changed, such as the bar owners, samba musicians, minor gangsters. To avoid confusion, I refer to the characters by the names of the original 1997 edition. Excerpts from the novel are from the 2006 English edition, translated by Alison Entrekin.
- 2 As Elzbieta Sklowdowska has insightfully shown, the borders of *testimonio* are amorphous and may include a number of related genres such as autobiography, diaries, "new journalism" and anthropology (Sklowdowska, 1992: 7-51). It is not my intention to employ a rigid definition of *testimonio* literature. Rather, I focus on some common characteristics of canonical *testimonio* texts like *I, Rigoberta Menchú: an Indian Woman in Guatemala*, by Rigoberta Menchú and edited by Elizabeth Burgos Debray and *the autobiography of a runaway slave* by Esteban Montejo and edited by Miguel Barnet such as the use of the tape recorder to register oral voices from a subaltern community, the urgency of their struggle, and a sympathetic and international middle class audience.
- 3 Hunsaker here employs Maria Lugones' notion of "thickness:" "Thickness and transparency are group relative. Individuals are transparent with respect to their group if they perceive their needs, interests, ways, as those of the group and if this perception becomes dominant or hegemonical in the group. Individuals are thick if they are aware of their otherness in the group, of their needs, interests, ways being relegated to the margins in the politics of intragroup contestation. So as transparent, one becomes unaware of one's difference from other members of the group" ("Purity," 474. Cited in Hunsaker: 34).
- 4 Schwarz also helped publish one of Paulo Lins's poems in the magazine, *Novos Estudos*. He was also one of the first readers of the manuscript and encouraged the author to apply for a "Bolsa Vitae de Artes" in order to finish the novel (Mello: 126).
- 5 For a more thorough discussion of the press's construction of violence in Rio de Janeiro, see Leu (2004) and Hirschman (2000).
- 6 Roland Barthes coined this term in his collection of essays, *The Rustle of Language*. Barthes argues that novels employ detail as a form of persuasion, convincing the reader of their veracity through the attention to incidental detail.
- 7 Gilberto Freyre's landmark book *Casa Grande e Senzala: formação da família brasileira sob o regime de economia patriarcal* argues that Brazilian slavery fostered more harmonious racial relationships than in the United States. Freyre's influence led to the adoption of his vision as official ideology, in ways that have been criticized by Abdias de Nascimento as an attempt to block legislation that would protect the rights of Brazil's black population. Recently, Freyreanism has been enjoying a new vogue through the support of intellectuals like Yvonne Maggie and Antonio Riserio who have returned to Freyre's celebration of "mestiçagem" in order to justify their rejection of the institutionalization of affirmative action programs in federal universities.
- 8 For more on the fascinating story of Marcinho VP and his collaboration with Spike Lee, João Moreira Salles, and the author Caco Barcellos, see João Camilo Penna's insightful article, "Marcinho VP (um estudo sobre a construção do personagem)."

Works Cited

- “Uso de nomes reais é criticado.” *Folha de São Paulo*. 13 Jan. 2003. (Cotidiano).
- Albin, Ricardo Cravo. “A face cruel do Rio.” *O Globo*. 27 Aug. 1997: 3 (Segundo Caderno).
- Alecrin, Michel. “Escritor transforma violência em arte.” *O Globo*. 5 Mar. 1998: 7.
- Barthes, Roland. *The Rustle of Language*. Trans. Richard Howard. Hill and Wang, New York, 1986.
- Bueno, Wilson. “Narrativa é caricatural e pretensiosa” in *O Estado de São Paulo*. São Paulo, 23 Aug. 1997.
- Castro Rocha, João Cesar de. “The ‘Dialectic of Marginality’: Preliminary Notes on Brazilian Contemporary Culture.” Centre for Brazilian Studies, University of Oxford, Working Paper 62.
- Duarte, Livia Lemos. “A Perspectiva do Narrador em *Cidade de Deus*.” Master’s Thesis, UFRJ. 2007 www.ciencialit.lettras.ufrj.br/trabalhos/2007/livialeamos_domalandro.pdf
- Fonseca, Rubem. “O Cobrador.” *O Cobrador*. Rio de Janeiro: Companhia das Letras, 1999.
- Freyre, Gilberto. *Casa Grande e Senzala: formação da família brasileira sob o regime de economia patriarcal*. Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio, 1952.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA, 1993.
- Gugelberger, Georg y Michael Kearney, eds. “Voices of the Voiceless in Testimonial Literature” in *Número Especial de Latin American Perspectives* 18.3 (1991).
- Gugelberger, Georg M. “Introduction: Institutionalization of Transgression. Testimonial Discourse and Beyond.” *The Real Thing. Testimonial Discourse and Latin America*. Edited by Georg M. Gugelberger. Durham and London: Duke University press, 1996: 1-22.
- Herschmann, Micael. *O funk e o hip-hop invadem a cena*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora UFRJ, 2000.
- Erdelyi, Maria Fernanda. “*Cidade de Deus*: Juiz rejeita pedido de indenização contra Paulo Lins.” *Revista Consultor Jurídico*. 4 Aug. 2005. <http://conjur.estadao.com.br/static/text/36823,1>
- Jaguaribe, Beatriz. “Favelas and the Aesthetics of Realism: Representations in Film and Literature.” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 13:3 (Dec 2004): 327-342.
- Jesus, Carolina Maria de. *Quarto de Despejo*. São Paulo, Livraria Francisco Alves, 1960.
- Lacerda, Rodrigo. “Um mosaico da violência.” in *Folha de São Paulo*. 8 Nov. 1997: 5 (Especial).
- Leu, Lorraine. “The Press and the Spectacle of Violence in Contemporary Rio de Janeiro,” in *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, December 2004: 343 -355.
- Lins, Paulo. . Rio de Janeiro: Companhia das Letras, 1997.
- . *Cidade de Deus*. São Paulo: Editora Schwarz, 2003.
- . *City of God*. Trans. Alison Entrekin. New York: Black Cat, 2006.
- and Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda. “HBH entrevista Paulo Lins: retrato em pedaços de uma cidade.” *Caras da Cultura*. Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano Editora –7/18/2003, no. 13.
- with Marina Amaral, Natália Viana, Andréa Dip, Flávia Castanheira, Ligia Morresi, Ferréz, Mauro de Queiroz, Rafic Farah, Ronye Quintieri, Wagner Nabuco and Sérgio de Souza. “Sem Medo De.” *Caros Amigos*. May 2003: 30- 35.
- . “Cities of God and Social Mobilization.” *City of God in Several Voices*. Ed. Else Vieira. Nottingham, UK: Critical, Cultural and Communications Press, 2005: 127 – 131.
- Lugones, Maria. “Purity, Impurity, Separation.” *Signs* 19, no. 2 (winter 1994): 458-79.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. *Peregrinations: Law, Form, Event*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
- Mello, Cléa Côrrea de. “O Desafio Critico de .” *Revista TB*. Rio de Janeiro, 141: 123/149, abr. – jun., 2000: 123-149.

- MV Bill. “Chegou a Hora de o Preto brigar pelo Poder.” Interview with Marina Amaral, Natalia Vianna, Alessandro Tarso, and Marcelo Salles. *Caros Amigos*. June 2005: 31 – 35.
- Miguel, Luis Felipe. “Um bicho-solto no campo literário.” *Literatura Brasileira Contemporânea boletim*. Ano 1: 11.
- Montejo, Esteban. *The autobiography of a runaway slave*. Ed. Miguel Barnet. Trans. Jocasta Innes. New York: Pantheon Books, 1968.
- Menchú, Rigoberta. *I, Rigoberta Menchú: an Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Edited by Elizabeth Burgos-Debray. Trans. Ann Wright. London: Verso, 1984.
- Miranda, Wander Melo. “Escenas Urbanas; la violencia como forma.” *Prismas, revista de historia intelectual*. No. 7, 2003: 315 -322.
- Nepumuceno, André Matias, “Literatura em estado de choque.” *Literatura Brasileira Contemporânea boletim*. Ano 1: 11.
- Nuto, João Vianney Cavalcanti, “Cidade sem Deus.” *Literatura Brasileira Contemporânea boletim*, Ano 1: 11.
- Paiva, Marcelo Rubens. “Literatura da periferia vê ódio substituir malandragem.” *Folha de São Paulo*. 22 Jul. 2000: E1.
- Penna, João Camillo. “Marcinho VP (um estudo sobre a construção do personagem).” *Estéticas da Crueldade*. Eds. Ângela Maria Dias and Paula Glenadel. Rio de Janeiro: Atlântida Editorial, 2004.
- Pires, Paulo Roberto. “A Poesia, a dor e a violência da ‘Cidade de Deus,’ o livro.” *O Globo*. 8 Oct. 1997: 1 (Segundo Caderno).
- Resende, Beatriz. “Imagens da Exclusão.” *Rev. TB*. Rio de Janeiro, 141: 27/38, apr. – jun., 2000: 27 – 39.
- Ribeiro, Paulo Jorge. “Cidade de Deus na Zona de Contato - Alguns Impasses da Crítica Cultural Contemporânea.” *Revista de Crítica Literária Latinoamericana*, 2003; 29 (57): 125-39.
- Silva, Wellington Augusto da. “Cidade de Deus: uma leitura formativa da desagregação.” Master’s Thesis UFRJ 2007. www.ciencialit.letras.ufrj.br/trabalhos/2007/wellingtonaugusto_cidadede.pdf
- Sommer, Doris. “No Secrets,” in *The Real Thing. Testimonial Discourse and Latin America*. Edited by Georg M. Gugelberger. Durham and London: Duke University press, 1996.
- Sklowdowska, Elzbieta. “Spanish American Testimonial Novel: Some Afterthoughts,” in *The Real Thing. Testimonial Discourse and Latin America*. Edited by Georg M. Gugelberger. Durham and London: Duke University press, 1996: 84 – 100.
- Sousa, Germana H. P., “A Voz do Dono e o Dono da Voz.” *Literatura Brasileira Contemporânea boletim*. Ano 1: 11.
- Schwarz, Roberto. “Paulo Lins’s Novel *Cidade de Deus*.” *City of God in Several Voices*. Ed. Else Vieira. Nottingham, UK: Critical, Cultural and Communications Press, 2005: 5 – 12.
- Vianna, Zelito. “‘Cidade de Deus’ vale mais do que qualquer tese.” *O Globo*. 22 May, 1998: 18.
- Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Yúdice, George. “Testimonio and Postmodernism.” Eds. Gugelberger, Georg and Michael Kearney. *Voices of the Voiceless in Testimonial Literature*. Número especial de Latin American Perspectives 18.3 (1991). 15-31.
- Zaluar, Alba. *Condomínio do Diabo*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Revan/ UFRJ Editora, 1994.
- Zaluar, Alba. *Integração Perversa: pobreza e tráfico de drogas*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2004.
- “A Minha Alma,” O Rappa. Dir. Kátia Lund, Paulo Lins. 2000.
- “Traficando Informação,” MV Bill. Dir. Kátia Lund. 1999.
- Como era Gostoso meu Francês*. Dir. Nelson Pereira de Santos. 1971.