

The Depiction of Evil in Brazil's Cultural Products

Erika Hulshof
3125041



Master thesis
Supervisor: dr. Fernando Nina
July 31, 2011

Abstract: This thesis examines the portrayal of Evil in contemporary Brazilian cultural products. An analysis of the notion of Evil is followed by a description and analysis of Brazil's history and religious plurality and an overview of the major literary and film movements in Brazil over the past decades. With the help of the knowledge acquired in these analyses an explanation is sought for the way the image of Evil has become linked to the favela. This leads the way for a final discussion of the movies *City of God* by Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund and *Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within* directed by José Padilha, and the novel *Inferno* by Patricia Melo in an attempt to show the way in which the image of Evil is changing and how the focus is shifting from the favela to Brazil's political system.

Key words: Evil, Brazil, favela, social exclusion, *City of God*, *Inferno*, *Elite Squad 2*.

Index

Introduction	1
The Concept of Evil From a Multidisciplinary Point of View	2
Political History Brazil	5
Religious Plurality in Brazil	10
History of Race in Brazil	14
The Favela and Social Exclusion	20
Interim Conclusion	30
Cultural Products as a Vehicle to Spread Nationalistic Ideas	32
The Power of the Protagonist	33
Techniques and Elements Used to Reinforce Ideas	34
Overview of Literary Developments in Brazil	39
Overview of Cinematic Developments in Brazil	43
The Representation of the Favela and the Use of Stereotypes in Cultural Products	45
Current Debate	47
<i>City of God, Inferno, and Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within</i>	48
<i>City of God</i>	49
An Analysis of <i>City of God</i>	54
Rocket vs. Lil' Zé	54
Portraying of the Favela in <i>City of God</i>	55
Techniques Used to Reinforce the Filmmakers Message in <i>City of God</i>	57
Conclusion <i>City of God</i>	58
<i>Inferno</i>	58
An Analysis of <i>Inferno</i>	62
Techniques Used to Reinforce the Writer's Message in <i>Inferno</i>	62

Dante's <i>Inferno</i> vs. Melo's <i>Inferno</i>	63
Colso's Paradise vs. Melo's <i>Inferno</i>	64
Melo's Kingie and Reader vs. Dante's Dante and Poet	65
Kingie the Protagonist	68
Conclusion <i>Inferno</i>	69
<i>Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within</i>	69
An Analysis of <i>Elite Squad 2: The Enemy within</i>	76
Nascimento	77
Techniques Used to Reinforce the Filmmakers message in	
<i>Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within</i>	78
Portraying of the favela in <i>Elite Squad 2: The Enemy within</i>	79
Conclusion <i>Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within</i>	79
A Comparison Between the Three Cultural Products	80
Conclusory Thoughts	81
Bibliography	83

Introduction

The notion of Evil has always been of great interest to scientists and many have made an attempt to give an accurate description of the phenomenon. There is no holistic explanation however of what Evil is exactly and every culture has its own and “personal” explanation of what Evil entails.

In Brazil attempts were made to explain Evil as well. However, instead of giving an abstract meaning to the phenomenon it was given a human face. This human face would later be replaced with a geographical location and especially since the rise of cultural products, i.e. novels, films and the media, the notion of Evil and the image of Evil grew apart and the image of Evil started to live a life of its own. At first the black African slave was used to represent Evil in early post-abolition novels, but with the shift in ideologies came the shift in focus. Now no longer merely the black Brazilians, but the places where the underprivileged lived, the favelas, were seen as the place where Evil resides. This resulted in the belief that the inhabitants of places must carry some form of Evil inside them. As novels and films started to use urban settings for their stories, the favelas and the favelados started to play an essential role and with the strong rise in drug related violence in the favelas since the 1980s the favela not only became a symbol for poverty and backwardness but it also became a symbol for violence and Evil.

Contemporary Brazilian artists have been preoccupied with closing the gap between “high” and “low” culture and simultaneously attempting to close the gap between “high” and “low” Brazil. A recent study has shown that addressees psychologically connect to the protagonist of a fictional story and for a little while become that protagonist. This information serves as the basis of an examination of the way the protagonists of the three cultural products that are analyzed develop and how these developments relate to the representation of Evil. To

see how these attempts to close the gap affect the representation of the favela and favelados in relation to Evil the contemporary Brazilian novel *Inferno* by Patricia Melo, and two films, *City of God* directed by Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund and *Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within* directed by José Padilha will be analyzed. Special attention will be given to the way Evil is portrayed in the cultural products, to the role the protagonists play, and to the portrayal of the favela.

The Concept of Evil From a Multidisciplinary Point of View

The concept of Evil speaks to the imagination and everyone seems to have an idea of what Evil entails. Yet when people are asked to give a clear description of Evil no one answers the same and no one particular source from which they derive their interpretation can be singled out. It is known that at first the Church held a monopoly on the concept of Evil. When anyone had questions or doubts they would turn to the bible in search of answers. However, over time the bible was no longer enough and people wanted to find an answer to why there was so much suffering in the world if there was a good God that was supposed to take care of them. Over the past decades scientists have tried to tackle the concept of Evil from several different theory areas of expertise. (Cooper 2007)

In his work Cooper explains that Evil when examined from a Darwinist/biological point of view that the answer was that "suffering seems to be "built into" the very process of nature." (Cooper 2007:17) Darwin's evolution theory argues that within nature the strongest were destined to survive. This automatically meant that through natural selection the weakest had to be eliminated. He argued that within nature neither "moral direction" nor "metaphysical foundation" was to be found. Therefore, from a Darwinist point of view

suffering and elimination of the weaker types within their species was not a matter of Evil, but rather a way to weed out the weak from the strong. The “[e]volutionary theory also had a lot to say about human beings, ethics and religion itself.” (Cooper 2007:57) However, even though much information and insights can be obtained from his theory it is limited in regards to possibilities and not all can be explained by applying this theory. (Cooper 2007)

When Cooper in his work addresses Evil from a psychoanalytic point of view he finds several theories worth mentioning. First, Freud’s theory on the human death instinct. Freud explains that every human being has in itself what he calls the life instinct, Eros, as well as the death instinct, Thanatos. Thanatos can be recognized in the hateful and aggressive nature of human beings. He lives inside each and every person and could become self-destructive if he is to be kept inside. Eros on the other hand will do everything to fight the self-destruction and the only way to do this is to push Thanatos outward. However, as hate and aggressiveness need to be vented against a human being it always involves casualties. (Cooper 2007) Second, Fromm’s theory. Cooper explains that Fromm does not agree with Freud’s theory. Cooper explains that Fromm claims that the human being is, essentially, not corrupt and that the original sin, the disobedience towards God, was needed in order to develop as human beings. He does however state that Evil is progressive and that it can accumulate, leading to more evil behavior. The main difference between Freud and Fromm is that Fromm believes that evil is not so much biological, but rather a choice. (Cooper 2007) The last psychoanalyst that Cooper brings forward is Becker, according to Cooper Becker claims that it is not the death instinct that is pushed outward that makes people evil, but rather the denial of death that makes them evil. “Killing others, then, becomes a way of defying our own death. It is *they* or *we*, who are dying. By witnessing the death of others we perpetuate the illusion that we are escaping it.” (Cooper 2007:132) In other words, people are fighting against death and Evil is a side effect.

No matter how well thought through these theories are they can still not fully explain the concept of Evil. “Many feel that if we want to grasp fully the dynamics of human evil, we must move beyond an individual, psychological analysis toward a more expanded view of larger social realities.” (Cooper 2007:181)

Cooper in his work explains that especially the atrocities witnessed during WOI and WOII made that scientists came to realize that psychoanalysis alone could no longer explain how human beings could participate on such a large scale in such horrendous events. This is where social sciences get involved and the main conclusion of research in this area was that “the social context can pressure people into doing a lot of things they normally wouldn’t do. Evil is not performed by “monsters” from whom we can feel safely disconnected; instead, evil more often results from a growing erosion of ordinary people no different than you and me.” (Cooper 2007:183) However, it needs to be noted that it is easy to fall into the trap of overgeneralization if one would only follow this explanation of Evil. Not everyone from an unfortunate background will turn out to be Evil and not all people that turn out to be Evil come from unfortunate backgrounds. Therefore, it is important to look for a balance between psychoanalysis and the social scientific approach towards Evil to get a more inclusive idea of Evil. (Cooper 2007)

While it may be tempting to place the investigation of Evil on a timeline moving from (evolutionary) biology to (evolutionary) psychology and now sociology, these three fields are not mutually exclusive. It is true that the focus shifted from biology to psychology and then from psychology to sociology over time. But as there are three overlapping dimensions of destructiveness – the natural, the personal, and the social or systemic, “a multidisciplinary approach, consistent with these dimensions, is necessary for the study of evil.” (Cooper 2007:250) Moreover, as Evil is “an “excess” that resists total comprehension”, one needs to

keep in mind that investigation of “evil is an open-ended, ongoing process.” (Cooper 2007:263) As science fails to supply us with a complete and overall answer on what Evil is, let alone one that can be applied to a universal notion of Evil, it is necessary to take existing notions of Evil in consideration and define what Evil means within the context of Brazil.

Political History Brazil

Brazil has witnessed a very turbulent political past and the politicians of today have to balance between picking up the pieces which were left to them by their political ancestors and modernizing the old ways of doing politics. Contemporary Brazil faces the great task of combating clientelism, corruption, great social inequalities, and increasing drug related violence to name just a few things. However, many of these aspects can be related to and explained by taking a look at the political past of Brazil.

When Brazil was declared a republic in 1889 no one could know that it would only be the first of several. The period of the First Republic would last from 1889 till 1930 and in this period the first constitution was drawn up. Technically the constitution was a copy of the US constitution. Brazil from that moment would be made up out of 20 independent states. The president was to be elected directly and would hold power to intervene directly in each state in case of any threat. (Skidmore 1993) One could only vote when literate, which meant that before 1930 less than 3,5% of the population was allowed to vote and in 1930 this increased to 5,7%. The First Republic encountered a few very turbulent years, and only became somewhat more stable in 1894 after “recognizing the legitimacy of the entrenched oligarchical regime in each state”. (Skidmore 1993:153) This recognition of the oligarchical regimes resulted in the division of political power at national and at local levels. The

governors would still be practicing politics at a national level. However, the colonels, i.e. rural bosses, would be the ones deciding the politics. “Colonels could produce bloc votes for the governors and in return they obtained control over state and national funds in their area of influence.” (Skidmore 1993:153) Political leaders would bargain with the colonels in hope of gaining their support during election times when they would run for president. Of all 20 states in Brazil the states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais were the most powerful. The foundation on which the First Republic was build started to crumble when both the acting president, Alfonso Pena, and the president-to-be, Governor João Pinheiro, suddenly died. A struggle between two candidates who both felt entitled to occupy the presidency lead to accusations of dishonest power division. (Skidmore 1993) Once this Pandora’s Box was opened there was no way back, even though attempts were still made, to how things were before the unforeseen loss of the president and the presidential candidate. Brazilian born elites started to criticize the way of governing, accusing it of being corrupt, and revolts started to erupt in the country. Protestors demanded a European-like electoral system but were met with heavy repression by their far more militant opponents and the protests started to fade away. When in 1929 the world economy crashed the coffee market collapsed as well. (Skidmore 1993) The value of money started to decrease and plantation owners were stuck with an unsellable coffee harvest. The government failed to take appropriate steps to protect the economic market, i.e. coffee plantations owners, and was accused of trying to please the foreign economies at the cost of the Brazilian economy. This behavior was no longer tolerated and the military stepped in and passed power to Getúlio Vargas. (Skidmore 1993)

The change of presidents also came with a change of the constitution. One of the first things Vargas did when he became president was replace all governors, except for the one in Minas Gerais, and all were given instructions to report directly to the president. He also

reduced state autonomy, which meant that states could no longer place taxes on goods that were shipped interstate and he restricted foreign ownership of national companies. However, in 1934 the country again witnessed many social revolts. (Skidmore 1993) Political parties on both the political right and left of Vargas were gaining power. The political left was swept from the political field with relative ease, but the political right started gaining power rapidly and was getting convinced that it could win the elections that were supposed to be held in 1938. Vargas, in return, in an attempt to stop the growth of the political right held a radio speech in 1937 and announced that Brazil had entered the Estado Novo. Brazil turned into a dictatorship. (Skidmore 1993) He justified this legal dictatorship by claiming that they had to do this to save the nation from communist threats. The legal dictatorship of Vargas had positive as well as negative side effects. Under his rule Brazil grew to become an important player in making war machinery and secured US investments for making this war machinery. Existing market cartels for cacao, coffee, sugar and tea were strengthened, new enterprises were created, and labor unions were installed. (Skidmore 1993) The downside of the Vargas dictatorship was the hardening mentality against opponents, government institutes did not shy away from torture and heavy censorship was exercised. The downfall of fascism in Europe heralded the end of Vargas's Estado Novo. By 1945 Vargas was deposed by the military and democratic elections for a new president were held in 1946. (Skidmore 1993)

With the installment of a new president and the new constitution drawn up the Second Republic became a fact. The new constitution decentralized power and reinstalled individual liberties. The elections also showed that the traditional political machines still functioned strong. The political left also started to pop up, but was just as quickly repressed again. (Skidmore 1993) Even though Vargas had been deposed by the military he never left the country, instead he went into voluntary exile on his estate in Rio Grande Sul. It is also there

where he got elected as governor and gained a lot of power and popularity. Four years after he had been deposed, in 1950, he ran again for president of Brazil and won. Vargas made the economic policy a top priority and things seemed positive at the beginning of his presidency. (Skidmore 1993) However, due to measurements taken in an attempt to improve the economic situation the inflation went up by 11% in 1951 and by 1952 even with 20%. The foreign trade balance went in debt and the US withdrew their earlier made loan commitments. It became clear that reforms were needed, as Brazil was yet again faced with an economic crisis. However, the measurements taken met a lot of resistance and as the situation was turning into a personal disaster for Vargas he saw no other solution than to commit suicide in 1954. (Skidmore 1993) Vargas was followed up by Kubitscheck, but he too could not turn the problems around. Elections held in 1960 were won by Quadros, but he unexpectedly resigned just one year after installment. His follower, Goulart, would effectively be Brazil's last democratically elected president until the democracy would be installed again in the mid 80's. Goulart did not enjoy support from all sides and the gap between the elite, mainly made up out of the military, and the labor parties installed by Vargas widened. (Skidmore 1993) However, it was not until the labor parties radicalized and Goulart started to get involved with them that the military intervened. The military seized power in 1964 and installed an authoritarian regime that would last until 1985. (Koonings 1999)

The intervention of the military and the installment of the military rule didn't come as a complete surprise. As the military had already stepped in to intervene in national politics during the past decades they became a "quasi-party" and "[t]he aim of this military "party" was to influence or take part in government on behalf of a project of national development and 'greatness'." (Koonings 1999:198) The military would introduce an institutional act to justify and legalize their intervention. Claiming that the only way to protect the democracy

was to suspend it in order to ensure its survival. Following institutional acts would allow the military to gain more control which would facilitate them in the elimination of opposing political parties. They also installed a new voting system, from that moment on the “[d]irect presidential and gubernatorial elections were substituted by elections in federal and state electoral colleges.” (Koonings 1999:201) As social and political resistance to the military rule grew, protests and strikes broke out. The military’s reaction to these protests and strikes was to strike back by persecuting the resistance members and outlawing any form of activities that could lead to more protests. More institutional acts followed giving the military even more political rights and giving way to more repressive measurements to be taken against opponents. The repression intensified as “a complex security apparatus was set up that was formally controlled by the army command hierarchy, but at the same time wielded considerable operational autonomy and involved personnel and resources from various branches of the security forces.” (Koonings 1999:203) As the autonomy with which the branches within the security apparatus functioned it allows them to operate in a way that “was largely uncontrolled and arbitrary.” (Koonings 1999:203) This resulted in a perceived ever present threat for Brazilian residents and a climate of fear started to emerge. Apart from the repressive nature of the military rule they did have the intention to reinstall democracy, under the condition that it was done on their terms. The military was faced with a couple of problems, as a consequence of their way of ruling, when they tried to find a way to reinstall the democracy without losing too much of their control. It was decided to gradually reinstate liberties and they allowed limited admission of political parties. (Koonings 1999) From 1982 left-wing political parties started to slowly be allowed back on the political field as an important step towards the re-installment of the democracy. It is important to note however that when the democracy was reinstated again in 1985 the major political actors, who were

already enjoying power under the authoritarian regime, remained in power. (Koonings 1999)

In 1988 a new constitution was drawn up which restored the “direct presidential elections, confirmed full freedom of party organization and collective action within civil society, and gave greater power to Congress and to the state and municipal levels of government. The vote was extended to illiterates and youngsters from sixteen to eighteen years of age, the formal position of Indians was improved, and provisions against gender and ethnic discrimination were included.” (Koonings 1999:221) So far the elections in Brazil have been quite fair, but at the same time it has to be noted that Brazil still struggles to fight against corruption, elitism, clientelism, personalism, and great social inequalities. (Koonings 1999)

When analyzing Brazil’s political past it can be noted that the party system has been fluid and unstable, political institutions are subject to constant change, and continuous institutional reform has been used as a solution for political dilemmas. Where governments are supposed to take on an exemplary role for its citizens the contrary has happened in Brazil. If the government, the one making the law, fails to implement the law one can only estimate the influence this has on its citizens. Also, the lack of intent to hold civil dialogues between opposing parties does not supply the society with an example on how to deal with disagreements. (Koonings 1999) However, and maybe even more importantly, the ease with which constitutions are discarded and new ones drawn up cannot give much security to the ones having to obey the law. Laws are apparently not a given and can be subject to change at any moment. (Koonings 1999)

Religious Plurality in Brazil

When the colonizers first set foot on the mainland it turned out that there were already civilizations existing there, all with their own beliefs and practices. The idolizing of the pagans deities became a great incentive for the Catholic Church to send priests in order to save the souls of these new found savages. However, the Catholic Church had to deal with a shortage of priests to spread the Catholic dogma on the new continent. (Blancarte 2000, Sanabria 2007) The shortage of priests was one of the reasons the Catholic Church was unable to claim a monopoly on religion in the New World. Also, with the import of African slaves, new sets of beliefs and practices were being imported to the New World. All these factors lead to the rise of several hybrid religions and an open attitude towards religions in general that can still be detected today. (Blancarte 2000, Sanabria 2007)

In the 16th and 17th century the Catholic Church fought against the worshipping of pagan deities in several ways, not shying away from the use of torture, coercion and forced indoctrination. However, none of these measures taken by the Catholic Church could prevent the merger of all the pagan belief practices with the Catholic religious beliefs and practices. A very popular, and in some ways successful, strategy to promote the acceptance of the Catholic dogma as the only true faith was to focus on similarities between the Catholic beliefs and those of the African slaves. As the African peoples had a polytheistic religious system, i.e. the worshipping of multiple deities, the Catholic priests aimed at the insertion of Catholic holy beings into this polytheistic system. (Sanabria 2007) Also, as some of the African deities fulfilled the same role as some of the Catholic deities, the former were gradually being replaced by the latter. The fusion of the Catholic beliefs and African practices made way for an evolved Catholicism, also known as Popular Catholicism. Popular Catholicism, which on

its own could already be interpreted as the failure of the Catholic Church to have the Catholic dogma recognized as the only true belief, also had as a major side effect. (Sanabria 2007) It decentralized the power of the Church. Rituals to please the holy deities no longer had to be held within a church, but could just as well be practiced from the homes where special shrines were created in honor of the deities. The major problem of having the people worshipping at home is that there is a loss in direct contact between the Church and the worshippers which in turn would allow for the worshipper to apply his own interpretations on the Catholic beliefs. (Sanabria 2007)

Colonialism had not only resulted in Popular Catholicism, the colonization and syncretism had also lead to the emerging of religions, i.e. Candomblé, Santería, and Voodoo, that were build on the fusion of different African religious beliefs and practices. These religions emerged at the plantations where African slaves of different ethnicities were deliberately placed together in the hope that the mixture between ethnicities would decrease the chance of a social uprising. (Sanabria 2007) However, no matter how fierce the attempt to fully assimilate the African slaves, it can only be noted that this worked for the linguistic differences between the several African ethnicities; the same cannot be said for their cultural heritage. Candomblé, Santería and Voodoo share a belief in supreme creator gods and smaller deities. These supreme creator gods have little to do with the daily worldly lives of their worshippers and the deities take on the role of intermediaries between the supreme gods and the worshippers but could also be addressed in relation to their specific functions. (Sanabria 2007) Deities require sacrifices and gifts and in return they would complete favors for their worshippers “fortifying them in the struggle to survive.” (Sanabria 2007:205) Nowadays, as it was in the time of slavery, these religions are mainly practiced by the people that can be found at the lower end of society. Most likely in an attempt to gain back some power over

their lives and find help to “overcome moments of hardship and face everyday challenges.” (Sanabria 2007:206)

When the freedom of cult law was passed in the 19th century, allowing other religions than Catholicism to be practiced in Brazil, it was just one more factor that reinforced the open attitude towards religions. It made way for Protestantism to spread its view on the true word of God. Protestantism speaks out strongly against drinking, violence, smoking or any other behavior that could be interpreted as inappropriate it gave, females in particular, a good reason to convert to Protestantism and convince their husbands to do so as well. (Sanabria 2007) It also made way for the Pentecostal Church to spread its message to the Brazilian people. Their message might not differ too much from the previous ones, but Pentecostalism is much more flexible when it comes to adapting to new environments and adjusting its message to local populations. Religion in contemporary Brazil is “no longer simply handed down (and therefore easily dispensed with), but something to be sought, to be obtained.” (Carvalho 1992:292) The fact that religion is now something to be sought rather than someone telling you what to believe asks a lot more personal initiative but it also creates a shopping for morals culture among practitioners to find the religion that best suits their needs. Religious movements play into these needs as they “are concerned with finding a form of expression which simplifies the act of interpretation and hence can establish a much more direct means of influencing the new adherent.” (Carvalho 1992:280) In other words the religious movements with the most success are those “that tailor the production and marketing of their religious goods for the realities of private life.” (Steele 2011:6) The dynamics in the “religious market” can also be noted when looking at the statistics. Where in 1940 95% of the Brazilians would label themselves as being Catholic by 2003, these numbers now are down by almost 20%. At the same time when one would look at the growth of the Evangelical

population one would see a growth of about 20%. It is also estimated that one new Pentecostal church is opened each day. (Steele 2011) Also, in research about teen pregnancy in R o de Janeiro 32 young girls were asked about their religious background. Each mentioned that they had at least had previous affiliation with a religion, but when a list was drafted made with their present religious connections it was concluded that on the list of answers of the 32 participants “there were more than 32 present religious ties mentioned” and several of the respondents “were attending more than one place of worship at the time.” (Steele 2011:17) These statistics seem to imply that Brazilians “may not only choose their own faiths, but may also decide which principles of those faiths can pragmatically be assimilated into their lives. Moreover, they apparently encounter little resistance during this process from their religious leaders or co-congregants.” (Steele 2011:23)

It appears that the procedures used to integrate native religions into the Catholic religion which eventually made way for Popular Catholicism, the lack of priests on the continent which meant preventing them to gain a monopoly on spreaders of religion, and the fusion of African beliefs and practices in the religions of Candombl , Santer a and Voodoo has lead to a very open stance towards the different religions. However, this has also lead to the “shopping around” and adjusting of moral codes. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it does mean that there is not one fixed source for all Brazilians to turn to for questions of right and wrong. The open stance towards religions and the great offer of religions in Brazil makes for many interpretations of notions of right and wrong. (Carvalho 1992, Sanabria 2007, Steele 2011)

History of Race in Brazil

After Brazil was discovered, in the period between 1500 and 1544, the Portuguese started building port towns along the coastal lines. The main purpose of port towns such as Salvador and R o de Janeiro was to facilitate import and export between the Old and the New World. While many products were being exchanged between both worlds it turned out that the Brazilian coastal line had very fertile soil, which was perfect for the cultivation of sugarcane. With the increased demand from Europe for refined sugar it didn't take long for sugarcane plantations to start spreading along the Brazilian coastal line. (Sanabria 2007) Sugarcane plantations thrived so much that the sugarcane export business became "a central pillar of the colonial economy." (Sanabria 2007:85) With the increase of plantations the need for manual laborers grew. As the need for laborers could not be met by the immigrants and natives were either not easily accessible or not physically equipped to do the hard work it was necessary to have a steady flow of workers coming to Brazil. This flow of incoming workers was assured through the import of African slaves. These "African slaves -legally no more than chattel faced extraordinary levels of mortality and unimaginable difficult, grinding, and cruel labor conditions." (Sanabria 2007:94) As many slaves died due to the conditions they faced and the income from the export of sugarcane became more important it was key to get more slaves and between 1551 A.D. and 1810 A.D. two million African slaves reached the mainland of Brazil where they were forced into labor on the plantations. In order to understand why Africans were used as slaves it is necessary to take a look at how slavery had developed in Europe. As slavery already existed in Europe in the times of the Romans and Greeks it is important to note that the color or geographical origin of the person was no reason to be enslaved. (Fredrickson 2003)

At the time that the New World was discovered the ideas about blacks were divided. Some myths seem to reinforce the idea about the 'noble savage' others were aimed to inflict fear on Europeans. However, within the Iberian Peninsula ideas about blacks differed from the main ideas that were prevalent in the rest of Europe. The difference between these ideas can for the most part be explained by the influence of the Muslims on the Peninsula. The Muslims, just as Europeans, held slaves in all colors, but when labor was divided, the blacks were "generally assigned [...] the most menial and degrading task. [A]nd it was normal for Christians, as well as Muslims, to begin to associate sub-Saharan African ancestry with a lifetime of servitude." (Fredrickson 2003:29) Once Portugal obtained their own African colonies, even before the discovery of the New World, they started trading African slaves reaffirming the existing link between blacks and servitude. Parallel to what had been happening at the Iberian Peninsula the slavery of Christians was abolished. Europeans could no longer justify the use of their fellow Christians as slaves. It was when it was also decided that Native Americans could not be enslaved that Europeans turned to mass enslavement of the Africans. (Fredrickson 2003) The church did not protect Africans, unlike Christians and Native Americans, and it was also this church that supplied the justification of enslavement of the Africans. The myth of the curse of Ham/Canaan was used as a popular justification to the enslavement. The curse of Ham/Canaan tells the story of Noah, who one day became so drunk that he undressed himself and fell asleep naked. Canaan saw his father naked, however, due to anger that he felt after an earlier quarrel with his father, made fun of his drunken state and left him uncovered. God became so angry at Canaan that he banished him from his father's land, sending him south and cursed him and his offspring to become "servants unto servants". (Fredrickson 2003:43) Later on in history Ham, who was allegedly the ancestor of all Africans, replaced Canaan. However, still at this point it was religion rather than race that

justified African slavery. Africa, at this time, was only a geographical location and Africans were merely the residents of this geographical location. The fact that Canaan/Ham was sent south was much more important to explain enslavement and their black color was explained as an effect that the environment had on them. (Fredrickson 2003) It was not until the discovery of the New World and the first encounters with Native Americans took place that the Portuguese discovered that, even though Native Americans and Africans lived in similar environmental circumstances, Native Americans were of a yellowish color instead of black like Africans. (Fredrickson) The blackness of the skin was interpreted as a visible mark of the curse that God had casted on them. The blackness of the skin signified “that Africans were designated by God himself to be a race of slaves.” (Fredrickson 2003:39)

Slavery had become a question of race, in other words the notion that “the grouping of human beings based on the presumption (but not the reality) that biological differences separate people into distinct populations” (Sanabria 2007:110) combined with the popular idea that “children had the same blood as their parents” (Fredrickson 2003:8) made that the enslavement of black Africans and their offspring was now justified by biological differences that were passed on from parent to child. This shifting of ideas lead away from the idea that the soul of the black Africans was cursed; it was now a matter of having the “wrong” blood. However, where in Europe race was fixed and unchangeable the contrary was believed in Brazil. When the Portuguese left for the New World there were significantly less Portuguese women to join the men on their voyages. (Fredrickson 2003) The lack of Portuguese women made it acceptable for men to either marry, or maintain sexual relationships with, both native Brazilians and black slaves. More often than not children would come out of these relationships and the offspring of these mixed racial encounters would lead to a new racial classification, the mulatto. Mulatto was the term used to describe the children of

predominantly white Portuguese fathers and a non-white mother. This new racial classification was something unseen in the world, especially compared to the United States where one drop of black blood meant that the person would automatically be labeled as black. (Fredrickson 2003) For Brazil this meant that even before the abolition of slavery the Brazilian society had technically become a multi-racial society instead of a bi-racial society. However, even though the offspring of white Portuguese males with non-white women would lead to a new racial classification it does not to the full extent explain how the Brazilian society became multi-racial instead of bi-racial. (Skidmore 1993)

After the abolition of slavery in 1888, meaning no new slaves were brought to Brazil and former slaves had to be freed, it became apparent that actions had to be taken to ensure plantation owners to have enough manpower to continue harvesting. Around the same time of the abolition of slavery, the economic centers moved from the north of Brazil to the south and slaves had moved south with the plantations. As a result slaves no longer were to be found regionally, but they had spread over the whole nation leaving blacks to be found throughout the society. The dispersion of blacks throughout Brazil should however not be interpreted as also leading to more acceptance of blacks. (Skidmore 1993) Since the 1890's scholars and elites agreed that in order to resolve the racial problems, and by resolving the racial problems to become a "modern" nation, one would have to strive for a "white" population. This was because "white" was at that time a synonym for Europe, which translated into "modernity" and "progress". "Black" on the other hand was seen as "pre-modern" and "backward". It is also during this period that European migration was seen as the solution for whitening the society, and introducing the "modern" morals into Brazilian society. (Skidmore 1993) But it was not until the 1920's, the era in which racist ideas flourished, that Oliveira Vianna came up with a systematic theory on how race could be an explanation for why Brazil was still not

“modern”. He made a schedule of “*degrees* of inferiority”, explaining that the more one would carry “the black race” within oneself the more backward one would be. The contrary would be the case if one would carry a lot of “the white race” within oneself. A person with a lot of “whiteness” would be considered superior and more civilized. These theories were in itself not new, as they were already recognized in the 1890’s. (Skidmore 1993) However, he was one of the first to claim that “by mixing and re-mixing with the mixed-blood (*mestiço*) population, it helps, with equal speed, to raise the Aryan content of our blood.” (Skidmore 1993:202) The white European represented the ideal “somatic norm image” [Referring to having the] most socially prized physical characteristics.” (Skidmore 1993:44) The whitening of Brazilian society happened through multiple aspects. As stated, due to the abolition of slavery, workers had to be found elsewhere. This led to a great immigration stream of white Europeans (often Spaniards, Italians and Germans) to Brazil. Another aspect that attributed to the whitening of the Brazilian society, were the low birth rates among the black population. (Skidmore 1993) These low birth rates were attributed to the hard labor that black male slaves had to endure, but possibly more important, that black women could opt for a lighter male because of the female scarcity in the country. Through the miscegenation lighter skinned children were born and they were no longer considered black, but instead mulattos. Mulattos, in turn, were not by any means considered white, but it was believed that “miscegenation did not inevitably produce “degenerates”, but could forge a heavily mixed population growing steadily whiter, both culturally and physically.” (Skidmore 1993:65)

As a consequence of the whitening of the Brazilian society and the increase of the mulatto population in this society it was believed that race in Brazil was a fluid concept; race was changeable. The idea that race could be changed, i.e. improved, still echoed in Brazilian society for decades to come. And while whites were considered superior in all ways, the

mulattos were no longer judged merely on the color of their skin. Note that this did not apply as much to the black population who were still to be found at the lower end of society. (Skidmore 1993) Mulattos were to be judged on moral qualities, as well as apparent wealth or status. It can be said that within the notions of the Brazilian society money whitened. Ties with family or friends that were considered of lower class had to be cut, as one could become lower in status by association. (Sanabria 2007) In the 1960's the whitening ideal was no longer seen as a way "to reassure [the "white" population] about their racial future and to establish claim to a morally superior solution to the race problem."(Skidmore 1993:209) A new theory was introduced by social scientists, and would later be referred to as "the myth of racial democracy". This theory explained how there was a "complex web of correlations between color and social status". (Skidmore 1993:216) Implying that race would no longer be the reason for backwardness, but that social circumstances would be the explanation. This also meant that if one would want to escape these social circumstances one would be able to do so through hard work and determination. This well accepted myth left no room for the notion that race still played a big part in everyday life and that options for the population at the lower end of the social ladder were limited to non-existent. This caused the higher class Brazilians to blame and hold the lower class responsible for their level of poverty and underdevelopment, giving way to ascribing new negative stereotypes and reaffirming old existing ones. (Skidmore 1993)

The Favela and Social Exclusion

It is not possible to talk about the favela and not at least mention social exclusion. From the moment the favela was founded it became a synonym for inferiority and social outcasts.

However, in order to understand all processes that attributed to this image it might be appropriate to take a look at the history of social exclusion, the history of the favela and the relationship between both.

In the history of social exclusion two important events need to be discussed; the birth of the asylum and the birth of prison. When leprosy broke out in Europe in the Middle Ages it was quickly discovered that it was highly contagious and that in order to stop contamination it was needed for the sick to be removed from the healthy as far as possible. This led to the building of big lazaret-houses at the outskirts of cities where the sick could be sent to. Leprosy disappeared in 1635 which meant that all the lazaret-houses that were built for the sick were left empty. (Foucault 1973) However, in order to not let the lazaret-houses go to waste they were soon converted into either reformatories for young criminals or were used as places where the poor were fed. And as “[l]eprosy disappeared, the leper vanished, or almost, from memory; these constructions remained. Often, in the same places, the formulas of exclusion would be repeated, strangely similar two or three centuries later. Poor vagabonds, criminals, and “deranged minds” would take the part played by the leper.” (Foucault 1973:7)

At the end of the 17th century a new very contagious disease roamed around Europe, the plague, and where first “the plague gave rise to rituals of exclusion, which to a certain extent provided the model for a general form of the great Confinement, then the plague gave rise to disciplinary projects.” (Foucault 1991:198) Strict rules were implemented about who would be allowed on the streets, when and where. There was a complete control of who would receive treatment and who would give it to the needed. The plague was addressed in a very organized manner as it was deemed very important to sort out where the disease was and who the potential carriers were. Lessons were taken from the leprosy break out and ones who were once labeled as potential lepers were now indicated as potential plague victims; the

“beggars, vagabonds, madmen and the disorderly.” (Foucault 1991:199) The authorities would make divisions and would label people “mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal” and according to which category a person would be put in it was decided whether or not and how they had to be treated. This way of operating which was applied in the battle against the plague would later be applied regularly by the disciplinary power from the beginning of the 19th century in the psychiatric asylums and the penitentiary institutions. (Foucault 1991)

Until the 17th century it was believed that “evil in all its most violent and most inhuman forms could not be dealt with and punished unless it was brought into the open.” (Foucault 1973:7) Evil resided in the darkness and could only be balanced out by the light in which it was trialed. However, this attitude would later change. Later it was believed that bringing some evil into the public could duplicate the Evil through contamination and oblivion was seen as the only solution. This meant that these evildoers had to be placed in asylums, far away from society. (Foucault 1973) These precautions were not only taken to prevent the multiplication of the evil act, i.e. to protect the public order, but also to protect the good name of the family. With the arrival of asylums an attempt to cure the mad was made and curing methods were introduced. All of this was done with the intention to cure and later reintegrate the person. (Foucault 1973)

The birth of prison and the developments in the punitive system most likely influenced the way in which the mad were approached. Till the 18th century punishments and the carrying out of the punishment were focused on the body, stemming from the notion of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. However, from in the 18th century the objective of punishment changed. The body was no longer the culprit of the wrongful doing; it was now the soul that made one do the evil deeds. (Foucault 1991) Therefore, each form of punishment was

designed to punish the soul rather than the body. Judges started to focus on the intentions of the criminal rather than the crime itself. The punishment changed from being made to punish an act into a mode to find a cure for the soul that committed the act. This meant that brutal physical punishes were (mostly) banned, but at the same time it meant condemning people to having an Evil soul. (Foucault 1991)

When exclusion from society first became applied it was to protect the society from a very contagious disease. Later the disease would be replaced by alleged malevolent mad minds. “The constant division between the normal and the abnormal, to which every individual is subjected, brings us back to our own time, by applying the binary branding and exile of the leper to quite different objects; the existence of a whole set of techniques and institutions for measuring, supervising and correcting the abnormal brings into play the disciplinary mechanisms of power which, even today, are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him, are composed of those two forms from which they distantly derive.” (Foucault 1991:199-200) When it turned out that the methods used to cure the evil minds failed, the attitudes towards the asylums and prison changed. Both were considered birth places of violence. The belief was that violence was contagious and could be multiplied and therefore the asylum and prison became contaminated places and there was a fear that this contamination could be passed over to the rest of the society. In the end it was and still is the fear, rather than solid proof, that justifies why the people in those places were being locked up and kept from society. To see how these dynamics work in Brazil a closer look need to be taken at the favela. (Foucault 1973)

At first favela was just a name given to a plant it would over the decades develop into a negative term that not only applies to a geographical area, but also to the people that are identified with this area. The first time the name favela was given to an area was in 1889,

when homeless soldiers in wait of pay and compensation for their battles fought for the Brazilian Republic started to settle on one of the hillsides of Rio de Janeiro. The squatter settlement was built on the Morro da Providência and they later decided to rename the hill Morro da Favela. They named the hill after a plant that thrived in the area where they had fought the battles for the Brazilian Republic, the branches of which provided them with building material and the leafs of which they could make tea from. The plant was also renowned for causing itching however. (Valladares 2007) The public services did not reach the favela and the state almost immediately was against these popular settlements and planned to have them removed as soon as possible. (Perlman 2005, Valladares 2007) During the Estado Novo period there was not much improvement for the favelas. Even though the favelas were recognized as a “site of cultural creativity, the situation of the poor did not improve markedly.” (Arias 2006:23) The favela became an eyesore to the residents of the “civilized” city centre. State operatives refused to include the favelas in city maps, which meant that the areas in which the favelas were located were shown as empty green zones on city maps. The favelas were an abnormality within the modern city, and the removal of the favelas was set in motion. Favelados were transferred to so called *parques proletários*, which can be described as “a closed, state-administered form of popular housing with strict curfews.” (Arias 2006:23) When it turned out that the land on which these *parques proletários* were build had considerably increased in value the favelados found themselves to be on the verge of being expelled again. (Arias 2006, Perlman 2005, Valladares 2007)

Due to the industrialization of Rio de Janeiro favelas grew quickly. Poor immigrants came down to the city in search for a better life and by the 1950's the term was applied nationally, and was used to describe all areas that shared the same geographical trades as Morro da Favela. However, these “migrants from the country side were seen as maladapted to

modern city life and, therefore, responsible for their own poverty and their failure to be absorbed into formal job and housing markets. Squatter settlements were seen as “syphilitic sores on the beautiful body of the city,” dens of crime, violence, prostitution, and social breakdown.” (Perlman 2005:5) However, the quick growth of the favelas also meant that they became more attractive for politicians in search for cheap votes. The interest of the politicians should however not give the impression that the favelas were safe from removal. The threat remained and the favelados started to unite themselves in organizations to fight this threat. The first Resident’s Association (RAs) was founded in 1945, these associations would not only occupy themselves with the battle against removal they were also there to serve the favelados in other ways. They would “organize themselves into *policia mineira* (vigilante groups), which resolved disputes, controlled fights between residents, and stopped theft and other activity that violated neighborhood norms.” (Arias 2006:24) Even though the threat of removal of the favelas was ever present it was not until the 1960s that the “war of favelas” was declared and that the state started to forcefully remove the favelas. (Arias 2006, Perlman 2005, Valladares 2007)

During the 1960’s the term was related to a social phenomenon that took place in the metropolitan areas of Brazil, and all favelas were seen as a problem and as “abnormal within the urban environment” and the state considered “the removal of favela housing as essential to the full integration of residents of these communities into the social and political life of the city.” (Arias 2006:25) The removal of the favelas took place through “burning or bulldozing down houses” and “forcing residents into garbage trucks, which took them to public housing complexes.” (Perlman 2005:3) By the time it was 1975 about 70 favelas and 100.000 residents were forcefully removed. The established RAs started to fight the evictions, but had to suffer the consequences for going against the authoritarian state. At the same time

favelados started to resolve problems on their own. As favelas were treated as non-existent and ignored by the state it meant that favelados could not appeal to the court system to solve property disputes and RA leaders started to take over this role. The solutions offered by the RA leaders were “based on local norms, and on popular (if inaccurate) understandings of the legal system” and this “informal system of jurisprudence [...] paralleled, but differed from the official jurisprudence of Brazil’s courts.” (Arias 2006:26)

As Brazil slowly became a democracy again in the 1980s it also made room for political parties, the RAs, from the favelas to enter the political arena in Rio de Janeiro. They at first had great success, but it is precisely this success that also meant the downfall of the power of the RAs. The RAs made sure that public services were distributed in the favelas. However, as the state became the supplier of the services the RAs could no longer charge for these services and the lack of income made the organizations weaker. (Arias 2006) As the growing drug trade expanded the power of the drug traffickers increased in the favelas. The expansion of the drug trade also meant that an increase of crime and violence could be noted in the favelas. As the drug traffickers also employed local residents, i.e. creating job opportunities and offering a steady income, and gave financial aid to the poor it made the attitude towards the drug traffickers ambiguous. However, “[t]he growing strength of drug traffickers did not simply stem from the ways in which they met the needs of residents of from the weakness of [RAs]. It also resulted from state corruption, a social policy dominated by personalist politics, organizational strategies learned by common criminals while incarcerated with political prisoners during the dictatorship, and the particular economic and political geography of Rio in an era of globalizing markets.” (Arias 2006:28)

When we look at the favela from how it was in 1889 up to now it can be noted that “[n]owadays it stands in Brazil for a poor segregated area in the city and it is often seen

contradictorily as an area of solidarity and sociability, but where violence, associated to drug dealing, is present in everyday life”. (Valladares 2007:2) Formal rights have been improved notably however only few have the resources to benefit from these. At the same time “drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and general violence have increased dramatically in Rio. [Rio] became a central node in the subdividing and transshipment of drugs [...], with most of the activity conducted within the territory of the *favelas*, taking advantage of the absence of “full protection of the law” [...] and of networks of complicity within the police, the judiciary, and the political structure at all levels.” (Perlman 2005:17) The relations between drug traffickers and favelados are versatile. Drug traffickers are known to provide aid and protection to the favelados, but they do also not shy away from threatening the same favelados. This lead “nearly all residents to at least tolerate criminals’ presence.” (Arias 2006:34) It cannot be negated that the favela has suffered greatly under state rule, corrupt politicians and policemen, and the continuing presence of the drug traffickers, but much of the information makes it seem as if there is only a handful of favelas that all deal with the same type of problems at the same magnitude. Therefore, it is needed to place all the information about the favela and the related violence in perspective.

First of all, by 2005 there were “at least 752 favelas in Rio de Janeiro [...] with approximately 1.65 million inhabitants.” (Perlman 2005:1) As favelas have been growing quickly over the past decades, not only in size but also in locations and inhabitants, it no longer suffices to identify the favelas in the same ways as have been done in the early 1900s to the mid-1900s. One can no longer make the assumption that favelas are illegal squatter settlements due to the fact that most now have the *de facto* tenure. Also, most have access to urban services, houses are now constructed with bricks instead of scrap metals, nor are all residents of these places poor. (Perlman 2005:1) Representations of the favela also fail to

show that favelas often that favelas are too an “urban centre like any other, containing shopping centres, schools, leisure centres, banks, supermarkets; perhaps more precarious than in other places, yet there.” (De Marcato Medeiros 2009:90) The blurring of the boundaries from the perspective of the favelados is also shown in the results derived from surveys held under the favelados population. Of those interviewed 93.1% says that the favela is not “the place of the <<poor and black>>”. (De Marcato Medeiros 2009:84) Another 50% of those interviewed “believes they live just as well as anybody on the asphalt” -the “asphalt”, *asfalto*, is used to refer to the rest of the city whereas the “hill”, *morro*, is used to refer to the favela- and another 70% of those interviewed consider themselves integrated into society. (De Marcato Medeiros 2009:91) Second, when it comes to the scope of the drug traffic a distinction between the real and perceived scope of the drug traffic needs to be made. For those involved in the drug traffic it is proven that most of them are lower income male youths. These youths, who fight against discrimination, limited options for a better future given by the society, and in search for respect might sooner turn to gang life than those who do not face these circumstances. (Zaluar 2004) However, as the social circumstances might explain the attraction that the gang life has on these youths it does not explain how they have access to drugs and weapons. Zaluar only indirectly implicates that others might be involved in this when she says; “poor youths may acquire in their neighbourhoods, instruments of power and pleasure (guns and drugs) that come from elsewhere. This is all possible because of institutional failures and social values that push them to the pursuit of sensation and easy money.” (Zaluar 2004:149) However, Arias is more direct when he says “weapons in the hands of traffickers [are sold to them] by corrupt officers and soldiers.” (Arias 2006:35) Also, when asked about the drug trafficking in the favela City of God it was stated that “more than 120.000 people live in the City of God, but it is estimated that less than 0.5 percent of them

work for the drug traffic.” (Oliveira 2008:48) These numbers are reinforced by the outcome of another survey in which the 85.1% of those interviewed say that the “favela is not the <<haunt of criminals>>.” (De Marcato Medeiros 2009:84) Therefore, it needs to be argued that when one addresses the violence inside the favelas one might need to take into consideration that what is shown is only the tip of the iceberg. The existence and magnitude of this violence cannot be purely explained by looking at those who visibly participate in this violence. Invisible factors are possibly more to blame for the existence of this violence, but due to the invisibility it is hard to grasp the magnitude of their involvement.

Even though statistics and academic research try to go against popular ideas on the favela, the image of the favela has not changed a lot. The favela still struggles to get rid of their negative stigma. However, it is hard to get rid of a stigma that some try so hard to keep alive. Especially the media plays a big part in keeping the stigma alive and spreading fear amongst Brazilians. Perlman describes this phenomenon as a “sphere of fear”; she sees fear as a blanket that prevents residents from moving around freely. Castillo Berthier and Pansters take this idea one step further, and says that this fear is caused by what he calls the “phantom of violence”. The phantom of violence theory agrees that there is a sphere of fear, but rather than saying that it is a blanket which covers the residents it is an independent entity that comes alive in the imagination of the residents and starts to live its own life. The mentioned scientists agree that the result of this phenomenon leads to a decrease in social capital. People tend to go out less and interaction between neighbors diminishes. (Castillo Berthier & Pansters 2007, Perlman 2005) This means that within neighborhoods the social ties between people are far less strong than they could be. The favelados do not talk to their neighbors often and lose informal access to new job opportunities. Another outcome of the perception of fear is that people only tend to visit those places that they deem safe. Investors see more

benefits in investing in areas that are visited frequently and this causes those places that are labeled unsafe to fall into decay due to lack of investments made to improve the area. People do not only tend to avoid places that they label as dangerous, they do the same with people that they label as dangerous. (Castillo Berthier & Pansters 2007, Perlman 2005) And as the image of a contemporary favela drug trafficker has the face of a young black male, it leaves them even more excluded from “mainstream” society. However, even though as fear is experienced by the Rio de Janeiro inhabitants it could not grow to the magnitude it has today without help from the media. As the whole “market of fear” sells well to the audience both the media and cultural products, such as literature and cinema, take advantage of this and tend to exploit and inflate the phenomenon. (Castillo Berthier & Pansters 2007, Perlman 2005)

In short when it comes to the favela, and the social circumstances that are ascribed to these areas, it needs to be argued that there is a thin line between what can be labeled as “real” and what should be labeled as “ascribed”. The distinction between the favela and the rest of the city can no longer be based on geographical, social, or economical factors. The only distinction that can be observed that distinguishes the favela from the rest of the city is that the favela can be recognized by “the deeply rooted stigma that still adheres to them.” (Perlman 2005:2)

Interim Conclusion

When looking at Brazil’s history it can be noted that both the State and the Church have failed in supplying the citizens with a fixed dogma. The turbulent past marked by violence, impunity and social exclusion has created instability and a lack of unconditional loyalty towards the Republic from a resident’s perspective. Also, when one looks closely at the history on which

contemporary Brazil is funded and would then have to point out, based on this history, which part of society, i.e. which people, best fits the notion of Evil it could be argued that this would be the upper class rather than the lower class of society. The upper class has maltreated, abused and exploited African slaves (this later shifted to lower class citizens) for their own benefits. Once slavery was abolished it was this upper class that decided that one could only participate and benefit from prosperity when one was considered to be white enough. It was also the same upper class to which laws either did not apply, they could act freely without having to suffer the consequences of their behavior, and which could change laws and even discard constitutions all together. More often than not this left the socially excluded subjected to their whims and in far worse circumstances than they were before. Why then is it that when speaking of dangerous, read evil places in town, one automatically points to the favela rather than the upper class neighborhoods?

Especially over the past few decades the favelas became known for drug trafficking and drug related violence. Yet numbers have shown that only 3% of the favelados are directly involved in the drug business. It is also no secret that gang members are relatively small fish compared to the people that import these drugs, but they are not caught or killed by the police or rival gang members because they can afford to live in upper class neighborhoods and pay for security. Yet all of this information does not change anything in the beliefs that the favela and Evil are closely related to each other.

An important explanation could be that the favela has always had the image of being the place where the lower class and the vagabonds lived. For a long time the favela, and therefore also the favelados, have been ignored by the state and state officials. Everything was done to get rid of them, in ways that made the favelados less than human. It is therefore needed to no longer focus on the notion of Evil but instead on the image of Evil. The notion

of Evil and the image of Evil do not have to coincide entirely however they do need to have some common ground. Some elements from the notion of Evil have been taken and used to create an image of Evil and when used often enough the image of Evil has taken over the role of the notion of Evil. The image of Evil is what is believed to be the true definition of Evil. As films, novels and media play a big role in the creation of these images it is needed to examine some of the products deriving from these cultural outlets. By examining the cultural products an analysis can be made of how the image has come to exist and how it has developed over the past years.

Cultural Products as a Vehicle to Spread Nationalistic Ideas

Literature has played a very important part in the formation of the early nations on the American continent and was used to create a strong and unified nation. The importance of a unified nation, or a nation that at least is perceived and thought of as a unified nation, has always been recognized. However, unity or the creation of that unity is even more important for those nations that are at the beginning of their existence. (Anderson 1991) Anderson described a nation as “*imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” (Anderson 1991:6) As a nation is *imagined* it is even more important that it is perceived as a union, a whole that belongs together and can be counted on in times of need. In other words, “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.” (Anderson 1991:7) This perceived comradeship was important as sacrifices were needed from “the people” to fortify the new nations, and this nationalism moved “so many millions of people,

not so much to kill, as willingly die for such limited imaginings.” (Anderson 1991:7) The construction of nation states was reflected in the literature produced in the new nations. Literature was used as a channel for spreading the idea of a unified nation. The idea that “national myths” were spread through literature was taken up by Sommer. She concluded that literature, and in particular novels, “helped to legislate modern mores”. (Sommer 1991:33) The body was often used as an allegory for the nation, and through “love”, a heterosexual relationship, the “other” could be introduced into the minds of society. This was because people could relate to passion and love and through the use of these concepts one could also learn to love the “other”. This “other” could vary between new political or new social concepts or formations. (Anderson 1991, Sommer 1991, Mallon 1996, Smith 1996) Where at first the novel was the primary source for spreading national myths it had to give room to the rise of films. Films and novels are similar in nature as “both films and novels tell long stories with a wealth of detail and they do it from the perspective of a narrator.” (Monaco 2000:44) Everything that can be told in a novel can also be translated into film, and vice versa. It can therefore be said that both literature and film have proven to be very important when it comes to constructing socially accepted images of what society is or should be. (Monaco 2000)

The Power of the Protagonist

When stories are trying to “sell” you an image it is important that you relate to the one that is trying to sell this image to you. To have a protagonist that everyone feels related to or at least feels some form of sympathy towards can greatly help the artist with getting his message across. Recent studies have shown that when one reads a part of a novel they, for a moment, “become a part of the collective described within the narrative”. (Gabriel & Young 2011) It is

in our human nature to feel the need to relate to other human beings, no matter whether they are fictional or not. Possibly the fact that characters are fictional makes the addressee relate even more to them as they have the rare possibility to get access to the protagonist mind. (Fludernik 2009) As humans have grown accustomed to look for one's intentions before judging their actions the insight to one's mind can have great influences on how that person is perceived. By looking into the protagonist's mind the addressee can "see" what his intentions are and find possible explanations for his behavior. This does not mean that once the addressee sees all the explanations the protagonist is freed from moral judgment however, seeing the explanation might soften the moral judgment. (Eagleton 2010)

Techniques and Elements Used to Reinforce Ideas

In order to spread national myths it is key to stay as close to reality as possible in order to remain credible. Especially "realism", i.e. the style and the technique, attempts to show the fictional world as a part of the real and authentic world. "Instead of imitating reality, realistic novels refer to aspects of reality which are already familiar to reader; these are then perceived as part of a conceptual frame and ultimately integrated into the world readers know." (Fludernik 2009:55) The writer or filmmaker will therefore "seek to establish connections between the habitual moral positions and political views of its [public], and the actions and the opinions of the characters in the story." (Fludernik 2009:55) The illusion of looking at a fictional world as being a part of the real world is created and reinforced by the focus a writer or filmmaker places on their narrator. More depth, and therefore a feeling of truthfulness can be established through both the shape of the story and the surroundings in which the story takes place. (Fludernik 2009) Especially in film one needs to pay attention to the use of

sounds, music or noise, and how the film was put together; the “montage”. Also, both writers and filmmakers make use of “space”, the geographic location where the stories play. And lastly, it is needed to take a look at the concept of intertextuality, where the interaction between texts creates an extra layer for interpretation, but can also add credibility to a storyline. (Monaco 2000)

One of the techniques to create a credible account is the use of multiple “points of view”, or narrative perspective. In early literary texts, such as the bible or chronicles, it is not possible to establish a “point of view”. Both types of texts claim to depart from “truth”, the writer and the narrator are the same and the text that is produced is an account of the truth. In later texts the narrator no longer had to depart from truth however in all cases the departure points were static. (Lotman 1977) The narrator would either depart from a lie, and would be considered the bad guy, or would depart from the truth and would be considered the hero. These types of texts would not leave any space for “grey areas” and would later be “condemned as lacking in truth.” (Lotman 1977:269) In order for a text to be considered a reflection of life, to be considered truthful, it was needed to “construct an artistic (organized) text which will appear to be non-artistic (unorganized), to create a structure which will be perceived as lacking structure.” (Lotman 1977:270) The first time that a text like this was found in literature was in the 18th century in Choderlos de Laclos’s *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Dangerous Liaisons), where multiple characters gave their interpretations of the event that had taken place earlier. It was where these stories intersected that a sense of truthfulness appeared. It was noted that in order to create a text that could be “perceived as the illusion of reality itself [...] and to create an objective reality, there was a great import in the specific interrelation of these multiple centers.” (Lotman 1977:277) The multiple “points of view” do “not replace the others, but correlates with them. As a result the artistic model reproduces a

very important aspect of reality -the fact- that there is no exhaustive, finite interpretation.”
(Lotman 1977:277)

In modern literature three “points of view” can be distinguished, the omniscient narrator, the first-person narrator, and the reflector figure and “in modern texts writers use an open perspective structure [...]: here the separate ‘truth’ of the individual characters cannot be reduced to a common denominator.” (Fludernik 2009:39) In film all three narrator types can be found. The most prevalent narrator in film however is the omniscient narrator; “we see and hear whatever the author wants us to see and hear.” (Monaco 2000:207) Film can duplicate the narrator modes used in literature by varying their camera angles. To create an objective “point of view” in film, the filmmaker could use “long shots, deep focus and static camera” or when a more subjective “point of view” is needed he could use “close-ups, shallow focus and moving camera.” (Monaco 2000:207) The “point of view” is very important when it comes to how the main character will be perceived. Literature, unlike film, can rely on the fact that it could supply the addressee with an elaborate account of the internal life of the characters in the novel. The addressee can get a complete insight into the emotions and intentions of the characters. If these emotions and intentions show much resemblance to those of the addressee it would allow the latter to relate to the character and establish a bond of trust with the character. (Fludernik 2009) For film it is not possible to establish this connection between the addressee and the character in the exact same way. If the same technique would be applied in film, showing a lot of internal conversation, etc, this could make the film boring. Instead a film will have to rely on external factors, such as facial expressions and behavior, to give an insight to the character’s character. As in film the “point of view” alone will not allow for the addressee to connect with the character the filmmaker will have to turn to other techniques and elements in order to establish this connection. Therefore, in order to analyze film one

needs to also take into account the visual and auditory aspects of films. (Monaco 2000)

Due to the visual aspect of film a lot more is shown than what would be shown in a novel. The writer of a novel suffices by describing the scenery and the addressee will fill in the gaps with his imagination. In film the addressee is confronted with images and these images need to correspond exactly, or at least come close to, the image that already exists in the imagination. Therefore, in order for a filmmaker to create a feeling of truthfulness he has to turn to what is called "mise-en-scène". "The codes of mise-en-scène are the tools with which the filmmaker alters and modifies our reading of the shot." (Monaco 2000:179) In order to create a realistic film from a visual perspective the filmmaker will take into consideration the "aspect ratio: open and closed form; frame, geographic, and depth planes, depth perception; proximity and proportion; intrinsic interest of color, form, and line; weight and direction; latent expectation; oblique versus symmetric composition; texture; and lighting." (Monaco 2000:195) However, the filmmaker not only has to pay attention to the visual aspect of the film, they also need to take into consideration the auditory aspect of the film. In literature a writer can also add an illusionary auditory aspect by describing the noises or songs that the character is hearing. Film, on the other hand, can let the addressee hear these noises without having to introduce them in a visual (textual) manner. Filmmakers can therefore use sound in a very subtle way and change the whole ambience with the use of certain music. This happens in such a subtle way that the addressee often does not even notice that it is happening. (Monaco 2000) Filmmakers are well aware that "a still image comes alive when a soundtrack is added that can create a sense of the passage of time. In a utilitarian sense, sound shows the value by creating a ground base of continuity to support the images. [...] Speech and music [...] have specific meaning. But the "noise" of the soundtrack - "sound effects"- is paramount. This is where the real construction of the sound environment takes

place. (Monaco 2000:213) Another technique in film is “montage”. “Montage” can be seen as “a trimming process, in which unwanted material is eliminated” as well as “building action, working up from raw material.” (Monaco 2000:216) “Montage” can be used to either “create continuity between shots in a scene” as well as to “bend the time line of a film.” (Monaco 2000:218)

Another technique that is primarily used by writers, though filmmakers sometimes also turn to a similar technique, is the use of “intertextuality”. Intertextuality refers to the effect of interaction between literary works either because one literary work refers to another literary work or because that which is written shows great resemblance to another literary work. “Intertextuality is less a name for a work’s relation to particular prior texts than an assertion of a work’s participation in a discursive space and its relation to the codes which are the potential formalization of that space.” (Culler 1976:1382) By directly referring to other literary works a writer could insert specific presuppositions into his own text. However, a writer could also write his work in a certain style that refers to another body of work and by doing so he could also refer to the idea behind that other body of work. (Culler 1976)

Besides all the techniques used to add extra layers to either film or literature, one should also see the (geographical) location as an element that adds an extra layer to the product. In order to make the location seem more realistic writers and filmmakers often “create literary regions that are not really imagined fantasies, but “real places” in which the reader recognizes a certain character and identity.” (Lando 1996:6) The location that is picked creates a certain ambience just by mentioning it. These locations are ascribed certain characteristics that serve the purpose of the story and this could also work negatively on the actual place. As “real places” share similarities with the actual place, when the image of the “real place” is believed it can happen that this becomes the “dominant image of that place.”

(Lando 1996:6)

Filmmakers and writers use many techniques and elements to create an “authentic” and “real” feel to the stories they produce. As they can exercise all this control over what they produce, and the image that they send to the public, it can be used as a very effective tool to bring across a certain message. However, as the fictional images they portray are often confused with reality and the fictional could become accepted as the truth it can lead to incorrect image formation of social groups or geographical locations.

Overview of Literary Developments in Brazil

Brazil also recognized the importance of a unified nation, but most importantly this importance was recognized in combination with the creation of a “modern” nation and when it became independent from Portugal in the late 19th century. There was a great need to produce an ‘own’ literature, native to Brazil. However, in the first few decades after the independence of Brazil there was not much innovation in Brazilian literature. The Brazilian literature was very much focused on developments in France and a lot of imitations of French literature surfaced in Brazil. (Skidmore 1993) This period would later be referred to as the ‘belle époque’ of Brazilian literature. The imitative nature of Brazilian literature led to some heated debates among Brazilian intellectuals. Some felt that Brazil would never produce a unique literature while others explained the imitative nature as something understandable as Brazil was still shaping its own nationality and it was therefore logical that it didn’t have an own literature yet. Those intellectuals saw having an own national identity essential for creating Brazilian literature. (Skidmore 1993) As a reaction on this debate two points of view can be noted in the literature produced in those times. One point of view was that the criticism

on the construction of a national identity were overdone, they claimed that Brazil's progress was admirable. One of the most important writers with this point of view was Alfonso Colso. He wrote a novel called *Porque me Ufano de meu País* (Why I am proud of my country) and it gave a utopian description of Brazil, which was later used as obligatory literature in schools. According to Alfonso Brazil was a heaven on earth; "a geographic paradise chosen by God as his favored nation for the modern age." (Skidmore 1993:100) It was an elaborate description of Brazil's beautiful flora and fauna and the remarkable character of the Brazilian. He also described eleven reasons why Brazil was superior compared to the rest of the world, reasons "which included its territorial greatness, its beauty, the variety of its climate (no natural calamities), its noble national character (and excellence of races that made it up), and a history unmarked either by defeat or by humiliation of other peoples." (Skidmore 1993:100) The other point of view was a lot less euphoric. These intellectuals agreed that something was wrong in the fundamentals of the national identity and in their literature they "attempted to think through the relationship between their identity and the problem of race." (Skidmore 1993:98-99) Euclides da Cunha, was one of the writers that transmitted these worries through his novels, with *Os Sertões* (Rebellion in the Backlands) being one of the most popular works that dealt with these issues. The novel described the rebellion that took place in the Northeast of Brazil and how the military struggled to bring an end to this rebellion. Da Cunha too gave very elaborate descriptions of the flora and fauna. He did, however, focus only on the Northeast of Brazil, which tends to be very dry and infertile. And he was one of the first to introduce "local colloquial terms unique to the Northeast. In his novel he analyzed the people of the Northeast and even though he felt some admiration towards them as they were able to fight back against the military in such skillful ways, he did express his concerns towards the mixing of races. (Skidmore 1993) Even though Da Cunha thought highly of the Indians and

was a proponent of the mixing of the white and Indian races, he felt the opposite with regard to the African race. He considered Africans to have bad blood and he thought the mixture of the African race with the white race would lead to cultural degenerates. He was very much “worried by the great degree of racial mixture, he sought to explain the behavior of the *sertanejos* by their racial origins” and “worried that much of the Brazilian population, such as the *sertanejo*, was still in an interim stage of zoological development- too “unstable” to come together as a genuine society.” (Skidmore 1993:106-107)

The outbreak of World War I led to the rethinking of the Brazilian national identity. As most nation ideas were imported from France, and France now all of a sudden started to become a battlefield, it was no longer the ideal country to derive ideas from. The Brazilian intellectuals realized that they needed to start to come up with ideas of their own instead of attaining them from others. With the reevaluation of the national identity of Brazil also came a reevaluation of race. By the 1920s there were two movements that are worth mentioning. There was the Modernist and the Regionalist movement. (Brookshaw 1986) The Modernist movement rejected the European intellect and “sought in the Indian and Negro, not a paradigm of Christian virtue, but rather the exotic, the pagan, the sensual, the embodiment of a counter culture.” (Brookshaw 1986:91) They did not step away from the whitening ideal and the idea behind miscegenation. They believed that Brazil had to, and was, becoming whiter. They also realized however that the Brazilian national identity would be based on the Indian, Black and White race. The product of this “would be a new syncretic Brazilian culture” and that is “what “mesticismo” meant to the Modernists.” (Brookshaw 1986:93) The Regionalist Movement was different as, in the search for the “authentic” Brazil, it focused on the Northeast and on the social conditioning of the protagonists. For them going back to basics

would show them the “very sources of life, culture and regional art.”¹ In the 1930s a novel by Gilberto Freyre was published, *Casa-grande e senzala* (The masters and the slaves), in which he dealt with the negative effects of slavery and the positive effects of miscegenation. He claimed that the sexual relations between white slave owners and African slaves had as a positive effect that the relation between the two races was of a very informal nature. (Brookshaw 1986) Freyre also “saw a certain “democracy” in the social possibilities offered to favored mulattoes, usually the offspring of the planter or of one of his sons. In this way the Afro-Brazilian could be accepted into the “casa-grande”, to be assimilated later into the white man’s world of the city.” (Brookshaw 1986:123) This work would later become the foundation of what would become known as the “racial democracy myth”.

By the 1950s/1960s there was a shift in settings, the urban setting started to replace the rural. Due to the repressive authoritarian rule of the 1960s/1970s, which lead to heavy censorship in the hay days of the authoritarian rule, writers saw themselves forced to turn to alternative ways to express their opinions. Writers often turned to allegory and took an “anti-authoritarian stance toward the dominant political, social and artistic ideologies of that time.” (Vieira 1992:115) The use of alternative ways of expression was developed throughout the 1970s and the 1980s and the opening up of the democracy created a lot more “space to explore and experiment with more heterogeneous combinations.” (Vieira 1992:115) The contemporary writer takes it upon himself to become the voice of the oppressed through literature. (Vieira 1992)

Brazilian writers now combine cultural elements, introducing popular culture, such as TV, music, or sensationalist journalism, to name a few, in their literature. A good example of a writer that crosses these cultural borders would be Rubem Fonseca. The title of Fonseca’s

¹ Freyre, Gilberto, *Manifesto regionalista*, 1926: 68-69. Taken from Brookshaw, 1986: 118.

novel, *A Grande Arte* (High Art), shows that this novel should be taken seriously as it is high art. Fonseca plays with this notion in the unfolding of his story which is about a criminal lawyer that takes on the task of a detective and finds himself in all sorts of adventures. (Vieira 1992) In this novel Fonseca plays with notions of what would be considered high and low culture, as well as with behavior that would be ascribed to upper and lower class and mixes and combines all elements. The “admixture may be interpreted as a self-conscious Brazilian politics for internal and structural change away from exclusively bourgeois ideals or extremes and toward the inclusion of interests from “othered” groups such as women, blacks, the underprivileged, ethnics, gays, and other minorities.” (Vieira 1992:111) The attempt of Fonseca can also be noted by other contemporary Brazilian artists who seem to strive to close the gap between high and low, moving towards a more inclusive Brazil, both artistically as socially. (Vieira 1992)

Overview of Cinematic Developments in Brazil

The Brazilian film market was long dominated by American film distributors. As Brazilian films could not compete with American films, due to the lack of budget and the high standard of quality that American films could offer but could not be attained by the Brazilian films, it would take until the 1950s before a Brazilian cinematic movement started to come up. Cinema Novo was a response to existing mainstream film making. It was a rejection of the “artificiality and expense of the studio system.” (Johnson 1984:102) Cinema Novo, influenced by Italian neo-realism, had a clear political and social message. Unlike the commercial studios, Cinema Novo “opted for an independent and inexpensive mode of production using small crews, location shooting and non-profession actors.” (Johnson 1984:102) The

movement became known for what would be called the “esthetic of hunger” or the “esthetic of violence” by others. The movement gave “hunger and poverty a positive and transformative connotation, forging a political discourse and a radical esthetic that expressed all the brutality of poverty.” (Oliveira 2008:44) For the Cinema Novo movement the idea became more important than a perfect end result. However, it needs to be said that even though Cinema Novo was fighting the noble battle to spread social awareness they did not completely succeed. The films produced by this movement were sober in style and not easily accessible for the layman and therefore not very attractive for the big public. The films were also shown in pre-existing establishments which were affordable to the lower class. This meant that Cinema Novo films were primarily viewed by the “enlightened, intellectual elite, and not the [...] filmgoing public, much less Brazil’s impoverished masses”. (Johnson 1984:103) In the early period of Cinema Novo the focus was turned to the rural side of the Brazilian society, but around the mid-1960s the focus started to shift to the urban side of society. As well as the literary discourse, the Brazilian cinema suffered much under the harsh authoritarian rule. They too had to turn to alternative ways of expressing their opinions and, as did the writers, filmmakers turned to allegory as their preferred way of doing so. As mentioned the urban setting became an important background for films over the past decades and in these settings the favela would always be portrayed as a symbolic place “where primitive rebels and revolutionary characters emerged to disrupt and de-stabilize the social and political powers”. (Oliveira 2008:44) In the 1990s the favela would no longer be related to rebellion and revolutions. From that moment the favela was mostly portrayed in relation to drugs and violence. Contemporary Brazilian cinema is being accused of being “more concerned with production values and with success in the marketplace” (Johnson 1984:105), but on the other hand they too are still concerned with the social debate. One might even

argue that because of the commercial approach they become a lot more accessible, and therefore a lot more effective, when trying to get their message across.

The Representation of the Favela and the Use of Stereotypes in Cultural Products

Both literature and cinema use the favela as the background against which their stories evolve. However, the favela has suffered some major changes in the way it has been portrayed over the past decades. The favela has become a synonym for violence and poverty. The photogenic slums have witnessed great rises in drug related violence, but at the same time they have been a fertile ground for the creation of popular culture. The favela as a “real and symbolic” place invokes the “Brazilian imagery”. (Bentes 2003:121) Because of this the favela functions as an independent character in both literature and films. Two tendencies can be distinguished; the favela is either portrayed as “close to heaven” or “close to hell”. “In the positive image, the favela is a vital place for the creation and performance of popular art forms. On the negative side [...] the favela has inhabited the urban imaginary as a locus of illness and epidemics, as the place par excellence of bandits and idlers, as a promiscuous heap of people without morals.” (Peixoto 2007:171) The developments within cultural products also point out that the favela more often than not is displayed in the negative instead of the positive way. On top of that both literature and films are being accused of stereotyping the favelados. This has led to a concern that these negative images of the favela, and the favelados, might lead to more stigmatization of the favelados and even more social exclusion. (Bentes 2003, Peixoto 2007)

Stereotypes are the result of the prejudiced way people are viewed by others as well as themselves based on their ethnicity, gender, or social standing. People are ascribed certain characteristics which correspond to the way members of their ethnicity, gender, or social

standing are generally perceived. These characteristics, and therefore the stereotypes, can change in accordance with social, economic, and ideological developments and “merely serve to reinforce and justify prejudice”. (Brookshaw 1986:2) In order to see how the stereotypes of the black African slaves evolved into the contemporary stereotypes of blacks and mulattos it is needed to take a look at rise of these stereotypes in Brazilian literature and later in the films.

Prior to 1850 the black man did not exist in literature produced in Brazil and it was not until after 1850 that the black man started to appear in literature as slaves. However, distinctions were made between black males and black female slaves. The black male was related to disgust, pity or were seen as inhuman. (Brookshaw 2003) The black female slave on the other hand was more often seen as noble and as suffering. Even though the black female slave was ascribed some positive characteristics it was quite clear that black was the exact opposite of that what was considered beautiful, innocent, or of having moral purity. This would later give “precedence to the Immoral and the Demon slaves.” (Brookshaw 2003:28) In post-abolitionist literature two tendencies can be distinguished when it came to the portrayal of the black slave. On the one hand the black slaves were portrayed as both docile and passive and this passivity would become a permanent characteristic of the black man. Both the black male and female were “incapable of initiative and consequently incapable of participating in a free society.” (Brookshaw 1986:68) On the other hand the black slave was seen as a burden to the white man, always seeking revenge for their enslavement. Besides the stereotype of the black slaves there was also the rise of the stereotype of the mulatto. The mulatto was considered a potentially dangerous element as a possible cause of the degeneration of the white race. However, more emphasis was placed on the mulatto woman. She was portrayed as being seductive, voluptuous and sensual. The mulatto was almost always used to make binary divisions, as “instinct over reason”, “violence over civilized values”, and “mestizo immorality

over white virtue”. (Brookshaw 1986:66) In the 1920s and 1930s, at the time in which Brazilians were desperately looking for a national identity and where the whitening ideal played such a big role, the mulatto woman was no longer seen as immoral, she instead would evolve into “the symbol of national beauty and desirability”. (Brookshaw 1986:51) Writers, and later filmmakers, realized that the Brazilian society was made up out of multiple races, and they had these races come together in the character of the mulatto woman, giving her a combination of the best characteristics that Brazil had to offer. The black man also did not depart from the artistic scene but the character of the black slave had evolved into the character of the “happy-go-lucky-negro”. Characteristics such as “[h]appiness, childlike innocence, spontaneity, and superstition, all confirmed the Negro’s picturesque superficiality and explained his social and economic dependence on whites.” (Brookshaw 1986:107) In contemporary settings race has taken a back seat to the social location. Both the Sertão and the favela became what defined the persons living there. At first the inhabitants were seen as “noble poor” trying to fight for a better life on the music of the samba. These “noble poor” were portrayed as happy and outgoing, dancing on the samba music, carrying their poverty with dignity. Poverty became idealized. However, as drug related violence became more visible the favelados changed from being portrayed as “noble poor” to being portrayed as immoral savages, drug dealers, prostitutes and addicts. (Bentes 2003, Brookshaw 1986, Peixoto 2007)

Current Debate

Cinema and literature have both been used to create an image of the national identity, but also to construct an (imaginary) identity of those living in favelas. As films and literature often revert to old stereotypical clichés it is feared that the favelados end up more stigmatized and

more socially excluded than they did before. Academics claim that the favelas that are portrayed in cultural products are portrayed inaccurately. By simplifying the social processes that play a part in the social exclusion of the favela and by glamorizing violence without supplying sufficient background information it is not possible to place the favela in the appropriate context. Cultural products denounce “a social dynamic of segregation and violence” yet in order to do so they “showcase violence” and this “can have the undesirable effect of strengthening social segregation.” (Peixoto 2007:174) Therefore, calls have been made to construct “a new and meaningful mode of representing poverty.” (Oliveira 2008:44) This mode should not fall back on old clichés and still be able to supply the needed wake-up call.

City of God, Inferno, and Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within

For the following part a closer look will be taken at three recent cultural products that each has enjoyed great successes with the public. They will be dealt with in the following order; first a closer look will be taken at the film *City of God* based on a novel by Paulo Lins and directed by Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, then a closer look will be taken at the novel *Inferno* written by Patricia Melo, and as last the film *Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within* directed by José Padilha. *City of God* will be looked at first, even though it has been released after the publish date of *Inferno*. This decision has been made because *City of God* was based on the novel *City of God* that has been published in 1997 and since there has been a lot of developments in the genre in concern to how the storylines are build up it is best to place the movie at an earlier period, before Patricia Melo’s *Inferno*.

City of God

The movie starts with shots cutting back and forth between the sharpening of knives and a chicken attempting to escape. There is samba music in the background, people sitting on a roof top and then the chicken frees himself from the rope around his paw and flutters towards presumed freedom straight into the area where several young hoodlums are walking. The chicken's wish for life is tested again as Lil' Zé gives the order to go after the chicken, there is chaos, and all of a sudden the chicken is on a road with passing traffic surrounding him. From the other side Rocket is walking towards the scene, talking to his friend about the troubles that he believes he finds himself in. All of a sudden Rocket finds himself right across from Lil' Zé, who is given him the directions to catch the chicken and while he bends down he hears someone warning for coming policemen. Rocket looks up at Lil' Zé, turns around and sees the police and the camera makes a 360 degree circle around Rocket, making him the centre of attention, and the viewer gets sucked into Rocket's mind where they become a witness of Rocket's life that flashes before his eyes.

When the images stop going around in circles a spacious suburb bathing in golden light starts to appear. Rocket introduces himself for the first time and explains that what is shown is the City of God in the 1960s. Some kids, including Rocket, are playing football on a small field. Three cool looking guys are introduced as the "Tender Trio" which turn out to be the hoodlums of those times who acted in a Robin Hood kind of spirit. They took from the rich and gave to the poor. There is samba music in the background, shots of people all dressed in white. Rocket tells how everybody had come to the City of God when their houses were destroyed in fires or floods. He tells that people came in search of paradise. You can see an electricity pole being installed, while at the same time Rocket explains how there was no

electricity, paved roads or any public transportation. He explains how the rich and powerful did not care about them and did not see themselves confronted with the people from the social housing projects as they were far removed from where they lived. In these idyllic times where the hoodlums are still urban Robin Hoods a young kid, then still Lil' Dice, shows much criminal promise. He comes up with a lucrative plan to rob a motel, but when the plan is put into action he has to stand guard outside of the motel while the "Tender Trio" carries it out. Part of the plan is that once the police show up Lil' Dice will shoot a window, allowing the "Tender Trio" to escape on time. While the robbery is taking place a window is being shot and the "Tender Trio" flee the scene, but Lil' Dice is nowhere to be found. Due to the brutal scene that the police encounter when arriving upon the motel they start to search the City of God. Everybody claims to have seen nothing and Rocket marks this specific event as the beginning of frequent police raids in the neighborhood. The "Tender Trio" flees the scene of the crime, two go towards the woods, and one hides out with a friend. As a result of the events one decides to turn his back to crime and will follow the path of the church and lives, the other two are later found dead.

The color changes from warm golden to cold blue as we enter the 70s. Rocket is at the beach taking pictures of the girl he has a crush on, Angélica, and the rest of his friends. A discussion starts about how marihuana is out and that cocaine has become the drug of choice. Angélica wants to smoke some marihuana and Rocket knows where to get it. While he is on his way to the selling point the camera zooms out showing how the spacious neighborhood has gotten crammed and filled with small houses. When he arrives at the selling point that once belonged to Carrot, was later given to Blacky and got taken over by Lil' Zé the viewer takes a jump back in time to witness how Lil' Dice became Lil' Zé. It goes back to the robbery, it shows how Lil' Dice got tired of waiting and shoots the window. He enters the

motel and shoots the first people he sees, he laughs. More shots are heard and when the shots die out the camera returns to the scene and shows how Lil' Dice has left a trail of death. He lays low in the favela and becomes a small time, yet successful, criminal together with his friend Benny. Another jump in time, Lil' Dice is around 18 and very ambitious; he wants to take control of the whole favela. He goes to see an Umbanda priest and brings homage to "Exu-the-Devil" or he who "is the light that shines forth". The priest says: "Why remain in the City of God where God has forgotten you? In order to gain the power that Lil' Dice desires he will need to stay loyal to "Exu". The priest also gives Lil' Dice a new name, from then on he should be known as Lil' Zé. The scene changes and we are once again in the apartment. The takeover is successful and Lil' Zé has a new territory to add to the areas that he already rules. With satellite pictures of City of God and red marker lines the areas are divided into either belonging to Carrot or Lil' Zé. Comparisons between a regular business and the drug trafficking business are made, from the delivery to the assembly line and from delivery boys to managers. The scene goes back to the beach and Rocket and Angélica are smoking some marihuana when a group of little children, the "Runts", disturbs the romantic moment that they are having. The "Runts" turn out to be a bunch of wild children that go around and rob the residents and shop owners in the favela. Lil' Zé receives news about the group and decides to address their behavior. He has one killed and another shot through the foot. Meanwhile Benny is distancing himself from the hoodlum life, he changes his clothes and hair and starts hanging around with Rocket's friends. Benny ends up being the boyfriend of Angélica and Rocket feels betrayed by his own lack of power and poverty. He gives the criminal life a go, but fails at every attempt and gives up. He is not cut out to be a criminal. Benny and Angélica become more in love and Benny wants to get out of the gang life. He organizes a go-away party, but Lil' Zé is far from pleased. Benny has always had his back,

was his conscience and moral support. Lil' Zé starts to take out his bad mood by harassing a girl and her boyfriend and later by harassing Benny while he is trying to give a gift to Rocket. The music changes, the normal lights are replaced by a flickering disco light, there is chaos, a gunshot, and Benny lies dead on the ground. He has been killed by one of Lil' Zé's enemies. After Benny's death Lil' Zé remains in an ever present violent mood. By chance he runs into the girl and her boyfriend, Knockout Ned, that he got into a fight with at the goodbye party of Benny, and he decides to rape the girl and makes her boyfriend watch. He lets the boyfriend live at first, but changes his mind and pays him a visit at his place. His family doesn't allow Knockout Ned to go outside and his younger brother goes instead. The gang ends up killing his brother and his uncle. The anger that Knockout feels drives him into the arms of Carrot and while he at first was against being a hoodlum he would later become a much feared member of Carrot's gang. Without Benny there to talk Lil' Zé down the rivalry between Carrot's gang and Lil' Zé's gang is getting serious and a war between the two erupt.

The war gets worse and where "the ghetto had been a purgatory, now it was hell." Young favelados volunteer to join one of the two gangs for various reasons and are given guns to fight their battles. Rocket wants to get out of the neighborhood and takes a job at the newspaper and he tells the story of how the media is getting interested in the turf war and because of this interest the police are forced to take action. Knockout Ned is being arrested and ends up giving an interview in the news. His picture appears in the newspaper and is spread all over town. When Lil' Zé sees this he becomes agitated and feels that he should be getting the recognition instead of Knockout Ned. He decides that he needs pictures too and calls for the help of Rocket. Rocket takes a lot of pictures of Lil' Zé, the gang, the weapons and has them developed at the newspaper. The next morning when he is in the van on his way to deliver the newspapers he is terrified to find out that the pictures that he had taken were

posted on the front page. He returns to the newspaper in search of answers and states that he can no longer return to the favela. Lil' Zé also sees the newspaper and is over the moon when he sees his picture there. Back at the selling point an arms dealer is there to show his merchandise, Lil' Zé decides not to pay, but forgets that behind every arms dealer there are corrupt policemen selling their weapons. These policemen catch up with the arms dealer and kill him. Lil' Zé starts to give weapons to the "Runts" so that they can fight on his side against Carrot, there is a gunshot, and we are back to where the movie began. Rocket finds himself between the gang and the police. As the police are outnumbered they decide to go away. Lil' Zé tells Rocket to take a picture of them standing there and while he takes the picture a gun is fired shooting one of the members of Lil' Zé's gang. Rocket keeps taking pictures while a gunfight between the rivaling gangs breaks out. Then there is silence, there is blood everywhere and bodies lay scattered on the pavement. And as the sound comes back the police arrive, they take Lil' Zé with them in the car, and Rocket follows them on foot. They bring Lil' Zé to his place and demand money. As he doesn't have enough they leave him there and tell him that they will be back later for more. The "Runts" enter the screen, pull their weapons and kill Lil' Zé. They are now the new leaders of the neighborhood. Rocket, who kept taking pictures of the whole event, comes out of his hiding place and starts taking pictures of the dead Lil' Zé. The pictures that he has taken land him an internship as photographer at the newspaper where he worked as a delivery boy. The "Runts" are filmed again while they walk around the neighborhood making plans of who to kill and one of them asks whether they have ever heard of the "Red Commando". The camera starts to zoom out and we hear Rocket's voice again, he says: "My name is no longer Rocket, I am Wilson Rodrigues - photographer. At the bottom of the screen you can read "based on a true story".

An Analysis of *City of God*

In order to make an analysis of the film *City of God* it is necessary to take a closer look at several elements of the film. First of all an analysis will be made of the main characters in the film, then an analysis of the portrayal of the favela and lastly a closer look will be taken at the techniques used to reinforce the filmmakers message.

Rocket vs. Lil' Zé

Rocket is introduced as the younger brother of one of the "Tender Trio" members. He is a quiet boy that goes to school and stays far away from trouble. Rocket grows up to be a kind teenager, always willing to help his friends. He is very much into photography and decides to take a low end job at the newspaper just so he can start somewhere and he ends up with getting an internship with that same newspaper and at the end of the movie there is a dramatic statement that his name is no longer Rocket, but "Wilson Rodrigues - photographer".

Opposite from Rocket stands the character of Lil' Zé. Lil' Zé has never shown any interest in going to school and from early on he plans to become the biggest hoodlum known to the City of God. His first big act is the killing in the motel and from there on he starts to take over the drug trafficking business in the favela. Lil' Zé is also shown visiting an Umbanda priest who calls out to Exu-the-Devil on Lil' Zé's behalf, in order for him to gain the strength needed to take over the drug business.

The main criticism of both characters has been that Rocket was made into the embodiment of the "racial democracy myth" and that Lil' Zé has been displayed as the negative stereotype of the black man. Lil' Zé, deprived of any human emotions, doesn't shy

away from excessive violence to get where he wants to be, on top. (de Medeiros Marcato, Oliveira, Peixoto) Arguments that Rocket is the embodiment of the “racial democracy myth” should not be disregarded. However, it should also be recognized that most of the characters that were the embodiment of this myth were created by non-favelado writers. The film *City of God* has been inspired by the novel of Paulo Lins, written in 1997. Lins, a former inhabitant of the actual City of God who got out of the neighborhood and became a writer, might have been used as an inspiration for the character of Rocket and could referring to Lins’ success rather than referring to the myth.

When the theory that the addressee establishes a psychological connection with the protagonist is applied it can be argued that the role played by Lil’ Zé becomes less important. Rocket comes to think of Lil’ Zé as a feared enemy and as the story is told through his eyes so does the addressee. Therefore, when the addressee sees Lil’ Zé evolve into the evil gang leader it only gives more credit to the earlier expressed feelings of distrust towards Lil’ Zé by Rocket. Rocket’s gut feelings were right about Lil’ Zé and this, in combination with the way Rocket’s character is portrayed as an honest young man willing to get a better life, makes Rocket a credible and trustworthy protagonist. There is no reason for Rocket to lie and therefore whatever he tells in the film must be true and at the same time the addressee has to acknowledge that not all people from the favela are evil.

Portraying of the Favela in *City of God*

When the film starts a very organized suburb bathing in golden sunlight starts to appear while a happy samba song is heard. It’s the 1960s. The suburb is described by Rocket as a safe heaven, a place where people come to find paradise with their previous houses destroyed by

fires or natural disasters. The residents all seem to be dressed in white and children can still safely play outside. Rocket continues to explain that at that time there was still no electricity, no paved roads or public transportation in the City of God, but it was a tranquil community where the only crimes committed were those of the Robin Hood-like hoodlums. The City of God starts to change when people get killed in a nearby motel and from that moment on policemen go on frequent raids and make random arrests.

The color changes, the neighborhood appears behind a cold blue filter. The organized suburb grew into a crammed area filled with little houses. The people no longer dress in white and the sweet samba music made place for an upbeat tune. It's now the 1970s. Marihuana stops being the drug of choice and cocaine is on the rise. Drug trafficking is growing and becoming more professionalized and gangs start to rule the favelas.

The color starts to change again; all events seem to take place at night. The esthetic appearance of the favela stays the same, but due to the grim atmosphere created by making it seem dark all the time and the constant gunfights you know that times have changed. The favela is in constant warfare and where "the ghetto had been a purgatory, now it was hell."

It needs to be mentioned that the reasons mentioned by Rocket as to why the people had moved to the City of God were deceiving. His explanation gave the impression that people were willingly moving to the City of God. However, looking at the circumstances in which Brazil found itself during the 1960s, in the entire film there is no mention of the dictatorship, it is more likely to presume that people were forcefully placed there. Even though the favela is secondary to the personal story of Rocket it is not hard to notice that the favela changes during the film. The way City of God is portrayed in the 1960s as an idyllic place stays true to the way the favela was portrayed in earlier cultural products. In these earlier products the favela is often portrayed as close to heaven and this can be seen reflected

in the churchgoing residents all wearing white. As the film progresses the idyllic neighborhood starts to change into the contemporary idea of what a favela is supposed to be. A cramped area filled with little shacks, gangs, thieves, dirty little children and a lot of excessive violence.

Techniques Used to Reinforce the Filmmakers Message in *City of God*

The filmmakers of *City of God* made use of several techniques and elements to make the movie as credible as possible. The most important element used to give credit to the film must have been the message displayed at the end of the film stating that the film was based on a true story. However, besides this message more techniques have been applied.

In the film, and development of the story, a lot of references are made to newspapers as well as an interview in a news broadcast on TV and satellite pictures. Newspapers play a big part in the real world and are believed to print accurate and up to date news. The newspapers were easily introduced in the film as Rocket starts a job at one of the newspapers and therefore it does not feel as something fabricated but it forms a natural part in Rocket's life. By introducing the concept of the newspaper in the film the filmmakers also introduce what the newspaper stands for. Therefore, by integrating the newspapers in the film they give credibility to the storyline. Another way to introduce the real world in the fictional "real" world was by including a reenacted interview with Knockout Ned in the press. The fictional Knockout Ned gave exactly the same interview in the film as the real Knockout Ned had done years before, which can be seen at the end of the movie when the real video is shown. Another element used to create the feeling that the City of God from the film and the actual City of God are the same is through the use of the satellite pictures. The satellite pictures that

are used to show which areas belong to Lil' Zé and which belong to Carrot are actual satellite pictures of the City of God. These pictures are used to reinforce the belief that the location in which the film is shot is the same as the area where City of God is located.

Conclusion *City of God*

The most important thing that the film has established is that the public was introduced to the possibility that the favelados have a good side. The good side of the favelados came in the persona of Rocket. Unfortunately, the film did not succeed in showing off the good without contrasting it with the bad. And the bad could not be portrayed without turning to negative stereotypes. The same goes for the favela. The filmmakers were not able to leave the existing notion of what favelas should be behind. They continued to use the favela as a place of misery and violence from which sometimes something good derives.

Inferno

When the story begins Kingie, the protagonist of the story, is still a little boy growing up in the Berimbau favela that has to deal with a lot more than many other children of his age do. His mother, Alzira, has been abandoned by her alcoholic and abusive husband making her the primary caretaker and supplier for her children. In order to make ends meet she works as a maid for an upper class family where she suffers daily from mental abuse. The tiredness, belittling, and the bleakness of her situation take a toll on her. These frustrations are often taken out on Kingie, making him a victim of domestic violence. In her daughter, Carolaine, she sees an alliance, and she turns her into a fellow prisoner of her emotional suffering when

she pours her heart out during their private moments. Carolaine is Alzira's pride and joy. Alzira has placed all hope for a better future on her daughter. Unfortunately, Carolaine is not able to do these hopes justice. Carolaine misses the emotional awareness, something which Kingie will acquire throughout the novel, to make something of her life. In spite of having had the possibility to get an education it turns out that Carolaine has been turned off by the idea to work a regular job. She sees working as something that pays little and takes a lot of effort. Afraid of turning out like her mother, Carolaine goes in search of what she sees as the only way out of her misery. She easily falls in love with any man that gives her the slightest attention, and falling in love turns out to be the same as getting pregnant. Carolaine ends up in a vicious circle of laziness, falling in love, getting pregnant, and starts to eat large amounts of food. Even though his direct surroundings show little love Kingie does find the love he misses at home in the girl next door. Suzana, first Miltão's and later Zequinha's girlfriend, tries to take care of Kingie from the day he is born, and cherishes him as if he were her own. Unfortunately, she will not always be there to save him from harm. However, she will give it the best that she can.

In this context of lost hope and despair one needs to place Kingie. The story begins with Kingie at the foot of the hill as he slowly starts to climb the hill side where he "works" as a lookout post for the gang. One day he messes up and Miltão, the current gang leader shoots him through his hand. When his mother finds out about the wound in his hand she immediately realizes that he son is working for the gang. She is so disappointed and gets so angry at Kingie that she starts hitting him till there is blood. She then walks to the Miltão's office and demands that he never lets her son work for him again. Kingie always loved the fact that by being the lookout post he had the chance to observe everything that went on in the favela and he prides himself of being a discrete observer, but Kingie doesn't only see, he also

gets seen. After one of his last beatings he goes to a party in search of Miltão to ask for his job back when he is approached by Reader. Reader is quite erudite and manages to relate all that he has read to what is happening in the favela, and comes up with all sorts of solutions. When Reader is introduced in the story he immediately addresses the issue of domestic abuse, and makes it clear that such behavior is never acceptable. Kingie is reluctant to accept what Reader has to say and finds him somewhat annoying and meddling. Miltão tells Kingie that he doesn't want him back in the gang, but does decide to give him his paycheck. Kingie moves out of his mother's house and moves in with his grandmother and with the money he received from Miltão he buys all the drugs he can get. As his drug problem starts to grow so does his need for money. He first steals from his grandmother, but this will later evolve into car hold-ups in front of stop signs. Reader notices Kingie's drug problem and confronts Alzira with this and Alzira and Kingie come to the agreement that he will stop doing drugs if she lets him work with Miltão. From that moment on Kingie is back into the drug trafficking with Miltão and he starts out as a drug runner. At this time he also meets Fake, a young man who is into music and has a small radio studio subsidized by the gang, and they become close friends. One night Fake takes Kingie out to a club. Kingie meets Marta and he falls madly in love with her the minute he sees her. Due to some chaos outside of the club caused by the arrest of Fake, Kingie loses track of Marta and he will not see her again for months. During these months Suzana decides to leave Miltão for a rivaling gang leader, Zequinha, and Miltão declares war against the leader of the Marrecos favela. Miltão doesn't handle Suzana's leaving very well and starts to do more drugs by the day and while he slowly loses it some members of the gang are looking for a way to get rid of him. In one of his angry moments he starts a fight with a well loved priest that is trying to organize a festival in the favela. Therefore, when the priest is found dead on the day of the festival the favelados are convinced

that Miltão has killed him. The death of the priest is the justification that Kingie needed to start to design a plan to get rid of Miltão. In order for the plan to succeed he needs more men and firepower and Fake introduces him to Zequinha. When he is at his house he finds out that Marta is Zequinha's daughter and he has a hard time focusing on the business that is being discussed. However, Zequinha and Kingie come to an agreement and Kingie goes into the Berimbau favela, kills Miltão and claims the hill as his own. Reader will prove to be his true friend. Someone he can rely on for support and good advice in times of need, and also someone that will enlighten him on the social issues that make the favela the place that it is today and with his help Kingie comes to be the leader of the favela, and will be united with his one big love, Marta. With Kingie as the charismatic leader, and Reader as the walking encyclopedia, the empire starts to grow and just as much as they are loved and respected they are envied and seen as a threat. Zequinha feels that he is wronged by Reader and Kingie when they go to one of the big arms dealers without his consent. They become too much of a threat and he plots an attack on Reader. Reader is not fatally hit, but becomes paralyzed and loses the ability to speak. Reader's loss of speech sets the decay of Kingie's empire in motion. Kingie starts to plan a revenge attack on Zequinha and sneaks into the Marrecos favela and kills Zequinha. Marta doesn't leave Kingie, but she doesn't talk to him either. When Kingie one day descends the hill to celebrate the birthday of a friend he is arrested by undercover policemen. When Kingie is off to jail Marta takes over the business and starts running it as if it were hers. Kingie in turn is desperately trying to find a way to escape from jail and when he succeeds and returns to the favela all the gang members that were loyal to Marta forget all about her and proclaim their loyalty to Kingie again. Marta doesn't want to return being Kingie's girlfriend and plans the assassination of Kingie. Kingie finds out about Marta's plans thanks to a deciphered message of Reader and finds himself forced to leave the favela.

Together with Kelly, his first real girlfriend the one he had even before Marta, he hops on a bus and he moves to some quiet and desolated place. When Marta is led into an ambush pretty much everyone who was Kingie's direct enemy is killed. Kingie at that time realizes that this peaceful place does not give him any sense of belonging or peace of mind and as Kelly also leaves him for another man he decides to go back home to the favela. The story ends with Kingie standing at the foot of the Berimbau hillside observing how nothing has changed; realizing that new traffickers have taken over the hill as he slowly starts to climb the hillside.

An Analysis of *Inferno*

As Patricia Melo's novel *Inferno* is build up slightly different than the films that are being analyzed it is important to change the order of the analysis around. As in the case of this particular novel the implied, not necessary written information, plays a big part in the way in which the novel should be interpreted it is needed to first take a look at the techniques that she uses in her novel. The outcome of that analysis will be the departure point from which the favela and the protagonists will be analyzed.

Techniques Used to Reinforce the Writer's Message in *Inferno*

As noticed by Vieira, contemporary Brazilian writers focus on closing the gap between "high" and "low" culture. This can also be strongly noted in the novel written by Patricia Melo. In her novel *Inferno* she combines notions of "high" culture with notions of "low" culture in several ways. As the title of her novel might already imply she loosely bases her novel on the moral constructs of Dante's *Inferno*. This can be also be noted in her two main characters,

Kingie and Reader. She relies on intertextuality, as Reader quotes one person after another. And she also takes ideas from Colso's novel *Why I am proud of my country* and turns those on their heads.

Dante's *Inferno* vs. Melo's *Inferno*

A short summary of Dante's *Inferno* is needed to make a comparison between both works. Dante's *Inferno* is based around the character of Dante. When Dante starts his journey he is already an older man and in search of his love in Heaven he will first have to pass through Hell. On his journey through Hell he is accompanied and protected by his loyal companion Virgil or Poet, his master. Virgil has already died and "lives" in the limbo. He is there because he was born before Christ, and because of that he could not convert to Christianity. This automatically meant that he could not go to Heaven, making him a sinner before sinning even existed. When Dante is first confronted with the souls that live in Hell he still feels remorse for them, but Virgil has taken it upon himself to explain to Dante what the sinners have done to justify their suffering in Hell. In Hell Dante is confronted with "mythical" sinners and "real" sinners, but they have all committed one of the seven deadly sins. The "mythical" sinners are the characters that are derived from ancient myths and the "real" sinners are all acquaintances of the writer Dante, and have done him wrong in some shape or form. It is towards the end that Dante begins to feel less sympathy for the condemned souls and starts to acknowledge that the sinners are rightfully punished. The last circle of Hell, the one in which Lucifer lives, is the circle which holds the worst sinners of all. In this circle the traitors can be found, and when he finally sees Lucifer it turns out to be a monster with three faces holding Judas in one mouth, Brutus in the second and Cassius in the third. It is at this moment that

Virgil turns to Dante to tell him that they have seen everything, and that it is time to go. In order to go to Heaven they will need to pass through Lucifer, and once they have done that they end up at the other side, Heaven.

Melo's novel *Inferno* is loosely based on the framework of Dante's *Inferno*, which by some is referred to as "the Dantean model". The comparisons are present yet it cannot be said that it is a complete copy of the framework used in Dante's novel. Melo too names her novel *Inferno* and has her protagonist placed at a hill, but unlike Dante Kingie does not descend but climbs the mountain. Kingie shares with Dante that they both observe the events around them, but at the same time emphasizing the differences. Reader and Poet share that they are educators and the guardians of the protagonist. Yet, all is done quite loosely and is more of a hint to Dante's work than a complete integration of his work. Many other authors have gone before Melo and used "the Dantean model" because it "emphasizes the novel's serious moral tone and gives a universalizing mythic dimension to what otherwise might be considered a narrow subject [...]." (Ward 67) Melo's work does not differ from this observation.

Colso's Paradise vs. Melo's *Inferno*

The title of Melo's work might not only refer to Dante's *Inferno*, but could also be considered an indirect referral to Colso's novel *Why I am proud of my country*. This novel has been heavily propagated in Brazilian schools. His image of a paradisiacal Brazil has been left behind in many young Brazilians minds. In his novel he describes a beautiful Brazil, filled with wonderful inhabitants free from humiliation. This optimistic view of Brazil is not shared by all and this is shown in Melo's novel. The Brazil described by Melo is the exact opposite

of the utopian Brazil described by Colso. Brazil is no longer the country of great beauty, noble characters, variety in climate, in other words a paradise. Melo's Brazil is that of an inferno, her Brazil is filled with "SUN, LICE, SCAMS, GOOD people, *pagoda* music, rags, flies, television, funk, loan sharks, sun, plastic, storms, junks, sun, garbage, and con men". (Melo 2002:1)

Melo's favela is described through the observing eyes of Kingie and he only seems to focus on the ugly side of the favela. He only sees ugly fat women with ugly feet. It is always hot; there is a lot of dust and sand. The people that surround him vary between an abusive mother, a cheating oversexed bar owner, a prostitute and gang members. Kingie, and especially his mother, suffer from daily humiliation. Not a day goes by that his mother isn't called stupid or ugly by her employers that exploit her and take advantage of her miserable position.

Melo's Kingie and Reader vs. Dante's Dante and Poet

For his novel Dante made use of two main characters; Dante and Virgil. Virgil was there to guide Dante on his journey through Hell and was there to teach Dante about the sins the condemned souls committed. When an analysis of Dante's *Inferno* is made Virgil represents Reason and Dante is seen as a representation of Humankind. (Dante 1995) Virgil is also referred to as Poet or master and refers to the Roman poet Publius Vergilius Maro. In the period in which Dante wrote *Inferno* poets were seen as people that held wisdom, and therefore it is not strange for Dante to choose a poet to represent Reason in his novel. (Dante 1995) Another noteworthy observation is that Dante enters Hell, and he only enters Hell with the prospect that once he has finished his journey, after facing Lucifer, he can leave and will

go to be with his big love Beatrice. Dante is just there to observe and learn, and in his questions to Virgil he will only ask for the sins committed and never for why they were committed in the first place. Virgil on his turn only addresses the questions asked without ever actively engaging Dante in a thought process.

When it comes to Kingie, he is not a passerby observer. He is not a tourist as could be said about Dante, Dante who from a distance tried to observe what was happening. Kingie did not enter the favela, or Hell, with the idea that if he were to stick to the journey that after completing the journey the love of his life and Heaven would be there to await him. This might have caused Kingie to be less judgmental than Dante. Kingie, like Dante, observes however, “[h]e was a professional observer. And he liked to observe, not this way, from the heights, the complex, the entire favela, the shacks, the crowds. He liked details.” (Melo 2002:3) This could be a reproach to Dante. Dante tried to look at the sinners from a distance and because of the distance and because he did not interact with them he could never see the bigger picture. The distance made things less clear, and the details that make the larger event cannot be clearly seen. For Kingie this is his life, and it is something he needs to learn to live with. By understanding the issues he might be able to avoid certain situations or even try to improve them. Also, when Dante did address the sinners or spoke about them he only wanted to know why they were there and after hearing the painful story he was done with them and moved on to the next one. He was quite blunt, and by not questioning any further he became very judgmental. This is not like Kingie, Kingie always tried to stay discrete and tried not to judge. And he realizes this again when he is sitting on a bench after receiving some heavy beatings by his mother. He is left all bruised and people stare at him as if he was a freak, and this made him think to himself: “Was that the way he watched people? Indiscreetly, laying his eyes on other’s pain? Never.” (Melo 2002:24) This reinforces the idea that Kingie is not there

to judge the people, but only to observe them. However, it is best shown when Kingie is already leader of the Berimbau gang and one of the favela residents, Done Das Dores, comes to him in search of help. She tells him that she has problems with the rent collector. He has been very rude to her and threatened to take away some of her belongings if she would not pay the rent. Kingie sends out his men in search of the rent collector and also takes the times to listen to his story. He pays the due rent, and sends both people off by saying: “And, starting today, Das Dores will only resume paying when she finds work. [...] And you, Dona Das Dores, start looking for work this very day.” (Melo 2002:185)

When it comes to Reader, like Poet, he too can be seen as a representation of Reason and he is also the one that educates Kingie. However, unlike Virgil, Reader doesn't focus on the sins committed, but instead focuses on how the social situation leads to possible misbehavior. In Dante's novel Virgil was presented as Reason, and because he was named after a real person he could only make use of his “own” wisdom. In Melo's novel Reader doesn't give away his real name, which allows him to use multiple sources of knowledge. In his intent to spread awareness he refers to Bill Clinton, quotes Charles Baudelaire, and he uses ideas deriving from the bible and academic studies. Because Reader can appeal to such an extended source of knowledge he is able to paint a much more colored view of right and wrong and as he gains credibility as an erudite person so do his theories. Reader is the complete opposite from what one would expect to find in a character that is the right hand of a drug lord and through him issues such as domestic violence, drug problems and the decriminalization of drugs, institutions' organizational and structural problems, etc. are being addressed. It is also through his teachings, that the addressee is confronted with his stand on social issues. Reader, for example: asks: “Is Marijuana bad for you? The what about boxing? And mountain climbing? And speeding? Why don't they outlaw all of them? Why not outlaw

obesity, which kills millions worldwide? We don't want people to fuck themselves but we permit cigarettes and alcohol. That makes as much sense as handing a loaded .38 to a suicide." (Melo 2002:31) Or when he addresses Kingie after he receive another one of his beatings. "I used to be like you. Exactly like you. I pretended it had nothing to with me. I turned my back on myself. It took me over ten years to realize what I'm trying to tell you now. Anyone who beats a child, whoever it is, is stupid. A piece of shit. They're the pieces of shit, not us." (Melo 2002:60) Reader's position on social issues is voiced clearly. He confronts the addressee with these issues and is forcing them to have an opinion. The addressee is free to agree or disagree, but not having an opinion is made impossible.

Kingie the Protagonist

Kingie, as the protagonist of the story, is a very likeable character. The reader gets to know him at a very young age where he receives daily physical abuse from his mother. As he is still so young and vulnerable the reader starts to care for his character and wishes him to do better in life. As he starts to become heavily dependent on drugs and starts mugging people it comes as a relief that he is taken from that situation even if it means that he enters the gang. Kingie only wants to get into the "business-side" of the gang. "Kingie had only one objective in life: to be a trafficker. He wanted to work with drugs, selling, packaging, transporting, negotiating, making a profit. It had never entered his head to be a car booster, a bank robber, a kidnapper. Never." (Melo 2002:124) His stand against robbing and kidnapping, in the context of the story, makes him look as a young man with good morals. Even when he becomes a popular gang leader he starts to implement laws which, in the context of the novel, are very ambitious and morally justified. Melo has succeeded to create a likeable villain that the reader can relate

to and starts to care for. He can't even be seen as a villain because she makes his every move understandable and explicable and as the reader gets more engaged in the story his decisions start to make more sense.

However, at the same time if Kingie is analyzed from a more critical point of view, he can also be seen as yet another favelado that does not desire to get a normal job. He wants to make a lot of money the easy way and drug trafficking is the only way for him to do so. Once he is the gang leader his ego becomes larger than life and he starts to become less emotionally involved. This leads to extremely violent behavior which he downplays and dismisses as necessary measures.

Conclusion Inferno

In this novel "high" and "low" culture meet at several levels, yet this has not been done with the intent to portray the favela in a more positive manner. Melo's favela is dirty, filled with lowlifes and immoral characters. However, when it comes to the protagonist she succeeded in making the epitome of an evil character, a ruthless gang leader, into a likeable and fragile character. She has managed, without making the reader feel uncomfortable or turn to lectures on what is right and wrong, to raise questions about the reader's belief system when judging the favelados.

Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within

At the beginning of the film a short message appears stating that the film is fictional and that the story takes place in Rio de Janeiro at the present time. The shots jump between a hospital,

bullets, a heart monitor and the loading of guns until Nascimento, the protagonist of the film, leaves the hospital. He is being followed to his car; he gets in and drives away. Within minutes cars come from all directions and block him completely. Then the gunfire starts. While the gunfire takes place Nascimento explains that during his time as a member of the elite squad he has taken out a lot of junkies, criminals and crooked policemen, but that he never made it personal. He was prepared for the work by the society and “a mission assigned was [...] a mission accomplished.”

The music starts, baile funk, flash backs to *Elite Squad 1* are shown as well as extra scenes to fill in the gaps in the story between the two movies. Nascimento is portrayed as a hardworking elite squad member who is eagerly awaiting the birth of his son, has a fight with his wife about an affair, more elite squad shots, and then we find ourselves 4 years before the “present time”.

Nascimento starts to talk again, and while the audience is looking at a prison revolt in progress, he explains how Bangu Uno is a prison where the drug lords are held all in their separate wings in order to prevent major slaughter between the different gangs. The lenses of the security cameras are sprayed black and the images on the security videos turn black. Nascimento continues to explain that the gangs inside the prison are doing exactly as they would outside the prison, only now with the help of the prison guards. He explains that in Brazil there are two prevailing ideas on how to treat those in prison, one is to throw away the key and have the drug lords kill each other and the other is the prominent idea among the intellectuals that try to get leftist ideas in people’s heads about social inequality and how these criminals never had a chance to begin with. This is the moment that Fraga is introduced, he is giving a lecture about the prison system in Brazil and comes across as a popular human rights fighter, but Nascimento immediately says that Fraga isn’t the one that has to deal with the

criminals on a daily base. The film switches back to Bangu Uno and one of the guards in the video security room calls in reinforcement as the revolt starts to appear serious. The scenes go back and forth between the class room and prison and while Fraga explains how in his opinion Brazilian society is perceived and how it actually functions the revolt in Bangu Uno is getting more and more violent. The camera starts to shake as one gang enters the wing of the other and slaughters the drug lords of the opposite gang. While they make an attempt to enter yet another wing BOPE appears in the prison. The phone of the gang leader starts to ring and he tells the person on the other end that he doesn't negotiate with the police. At that moment the phone of Fraga starts to ring and he is rushed in a helicopter to Bangu Uno.

André, a BOPE member who has been trained in *Elite Squad 1* and is a trustee of Nascimento, has positioned himself and the team behind the wall that separates them from the revolting prisoners. Nascimento tells them to wait there until he gives further orders. At the same time in the office of the governor a deliberation takes place on how to continue and the governor expresses his view that he doesn't want another "Carandiru" this time. Back in the prison, Fraga enters and demands to be let into the area where the revolt is taking place. He starts to negotiate and all seems to go well so Nascimento tells his men to stand down. André doesn't listen, takes the team into the area, there is chaos, the gang leader holds a gun against Fraga's head, André tells him to put the weapon down, but when he sees the chance he fires a bullet through the gang leader's head, Fraga falls into a puddle of blood which leaves a blood stain on his "Human Rights" t-shirt.

There is a big media frenzy about the way the revolt was handled, Fraga accuses BOPE of ethnic and social cleansing and says BOPE is much more violent than those against which they protect society. The debate divides the population in pro- and con-Nascimento sections. While the TV repeats the interview with Fraga the audience sees how Rosana,

Nascimento's ex-wife, is now married to Fraga. When Nascimento gets back to the BOPE base the day after the event he knows that they are in trouble, but his superiors refuse to talk to him on the phone that is why he pays them a visit in the restaurant. Once at the restaurant he is received as a hero and this leaves his superiors with no alternative other than to talk to him. The scene changes and Fortunato, a TV presenter who later is elected as state official, is hosting his popular TV show and is sending a clear message to the governor about the events that took place in Bangu Uno; he wants actions to be taken. The camera zooms out and the audience is watching Fortunato's TV show on a TV in the governor's office.

Due to the media attention Nascimento is released from his duties as leader of the BOPE team, but instead of being placed at a lower function he is upgraded to sub-secretary of intelligence and he now controls all wiretaps in Rio. In the meantime at a police station a former BOPE drop-out has made it to Lieutenant-Colonel and discusses what to do with André who has been placed in their precinct as lower ranked policemen. André is appalled with the situation and decides to contact a journalist to tell his side of the story. This proactive behavior is not appreciated and André is sentenced to thirty days in jail. Nascimento goes to visit André and is accused by him of betraying BOPE. Fraga benefits greatly from all the media attention and is running for state representative. Nascimento is having some rough times in his private life; his son accuses him of being a bully and a killer. That is when he completely starts to focus on his job and he turns BOPE into a war machine, completed with armored trucks and helicopters. Due to the militarization of BOPE all drug trafficking seizures and Nascimento believes that it now is only a matter of time before all corruption will be eliminated. However, he turns out to be completely wrong. As drug traffickers no longer have the money to pay of the corrupt policemen they end up being eliminated by these policemen who start to charge the favelados "taxes" for "social services". These militia squads function

the same way as the mafia; you pay them to protect yourself against them. Fraga, now elected as state representative, finds out about the militias and demands an investigation. Fortunato, who now too works for the state, accuses Fraga of only wanting this investigation for his own political benefits. The investigation is denied as elections are too close and there is too much at stake. Nascimento talks again and explains that “the system” starts to change, it starts to evolve. At first politicians used the system to make money, but now they need the system in order to get elected. The militia leader Rocha is throwing a party in the favela in honor of the four year anniversary of Centrum Rocha and in his speech he thanks the governor, the secretary of public safety and Fortunato for their presence. He ends with “Let the samba begin” and the party starts.

Lieutenant-Colonel Fábio is on a yacht with Rocha and other militia men, there is plenty of alcohol, jewelry and women to go around and they discuss how to take over the Tanque favela. At the same time there is a raid at a police station and weapons are stolen from the weapons depot. Fortunato, who is also still a TV host discusses the raid in his show and demands actions to be taken against the drug dealers that stole the weapons. The matter is also being discussed at the governor’s office until someone comes in with the election materials. The police chief of the raided office is being interviewed by a female journalist and it turns out that he doesn’t believe that drug dealers stole the weapons as their equipment and vocabulary reminded him more of fellow policemen. The journalist discusses her findings with Fraga, who in turn is convinced that the militia is behind the raid. However, the governor is convinced that the drug dealers were responsible for the raid and plans a takeover of the Tanque favela. It all turns out to be a strategic move by the militia. If the government clears the favela of the drug dealers it will not be hard for the militia to take over the favela. The militia is already scouting for the right guy to get rid of the drug dealers and that is how they

end up with André. André, unaware of the militia's set-up, agrees with his return to BOPE and starts to plan the takeover of the favela. Nascimento still tries to convince his superiors of the mistake that they are about to make, but he is not heard. André successfully enters the favela and finds the drug dealer that is supposedly responsible for the raid at the police station. Nascimento can follow the invasion from images retrieved from a mobile phone and when he sees the weapons that were confiscated he scoffs that the mission should have been called "Mission Iraq". André too soon learns that the reasons to invade the Tanque favela were made up but when he demands clarification from his superior he is being killed by a shot in the back.

Nascimento comes home, visibly affected by the death of André. He starts to unravel that his work for the government has little to do with public safety and all the more with gaining electoral votes. During an attempt to patch things up with his son his phone starts to ring. Nascimento answers the phone and starts to explain to Valmir that he wants to do everything to find out who killed André. When he hangs up his son asks him if André's death had anything to do with the militias. Nascimento is surprised by Rafael's knowledge about the militia and asks him where he learned about the militia. At the newspaper the same journalist we saw earlier tries to convince her boss to run the militia story, but the editor wishes to see more proof first. Back at his office Nascimento gives the order to run taps on Fraga's phone. The journalist returns to the Tanque favela and starts to search for more evidence. That is when she sees how Rocha and his men are loading boxes into a house. When Rocha and his men leave she decides to enter the house and there she finds election materials. She calls Fraga in a hurry to explain what she sees, but at the same time Rocha is being informed of the journalist being in the house. He returns to the house and Fraga can hear how the men enter the room where the journalist is. In the next scene two men stand near a car, one poking

around in smoldering ashes while another guy is pulling out the teeth from a de-fleshed skull. The scene changes again and Fortunato, the secretary of safety and Rocha are having a meeting. Rocha is being informed that he is responsible for the “Fraga-problem”. Nascimento gets to hear the taped conversation between Fraga and the journalist and rushes to Fraga’s house to warn him of the coming threat. Fraga’s car pulls up; a motorcycle pulls up next to the car and starts to shoot. Rafael is hit and Nascimento orders Fraga to get into the car and to drive to the hospital. In the hospital Nascimento hands over the tape to Fraga. Nascimento’s superior finds out that Nascimento has taken the tape and start to inform his superiors of this. Nascimento realizes that he can no longer trust the police to do the good thing and he plans on facing “the system” head-on. He sets up a road block and pulls over the secretary of security. He violently starts to explain that if something were to happen to his family that he will kill him. Fraga at the same time starts an investigation against the corrupt officers and politicians and a press conference is held. However, in the press conference it is communicated that there is no incriminating evidence so far and that the only piece of evidence is an illegally obtained type by a jealous ex-husband.

Then we are back where the film began. Nascimento is crying at his son’s side, Rocha is putting bullets in his gun and that is when Nascimento’s voice is heard again explaining the situation. Nascimento knows that the politicians don’t want him dead, because that would only make him into a martyr. However, he knows that “the system” does not have a plan; it is “an inhuman mechanism” an “expression of twisted interests”. Rocha is getting ready to leave and Nascimento says his goodbyes in the hospital. He is aware that the militia wants to kill him and before getting into his car he takes out the gun. When he drives away from the hospital he finds himself blocked by cars, but Nascimento had already called for backup. His friends from BOPE start to jump out of the car behind him and while Nascimento rolls out of

his own car they start to engage in a heavy firefight. Rocha get's away, but Nascimento declares a war against "the system".

Nascimento is sitting in the witness stand and when the camera changes its angle we can see Fraga sitting in the middle of the tribunal. He asks Nascimento whether he is ready to answer some questions to which Nascimento replies that he needs time to say what he needs to say. Nascimento starts to talk for hours accusing the politicians of being corrupt; he starts to name names and points out culprits. While he talks shots are being shown of politicians being locked up or found dead in abandoned areas. But Nascimento discovers that the system reorganizes, new leaders are elected "and as long as the conditions for the system exist so would the system exist". Fraga, who would later become elected as a federal official, still tries to fight the system from within, accusing his opponents of being corrupt and the governor of using dirty money to subsidize his electoral campaign. And while we fly over Rio, Nascimento recognizes that "the system" is much larger than believed, that no matter who is in office it will remain and that changes to "the system" will take a lot of time. Then Nascimento is back at the hospital, at his son's bedside, and Rafael opens his eyes.

An Analysis of Elite Squad 2: The Enemy within

Since *Elite Squad 2* is a sequel of an earlier film it is needed to first analyze the protagonist as his character has already been developed in the first film. Therefore, for this film to be credible the development of protagonist has to be credible. After analyzing the protagonist a closer look will be taken at which techniques were used by the filmmaker. Finally the way the favela has been portrayed in the film will be analyzed.

Nascimento

Nascimento is a character that was already introduced in *Elite Squad 1* and therefore needs little more introduction in the sequel. In part one he is introduced as a high ranking BOPE officer and an honest man with a mission. He has zero tolerance for drug dealers, corruption and other criminal activities and he doesn't shy away from violence to obtain complete control. In part two he is positioned opposite a new character called Fraga. Fraga and Nascimento fight for the same values but they depart from different starting points. Fraga is a leftist and goes for a passive approach and Nascimento believes that the only way to get through to a criminal is to speak the language they speak, i.e. violence.

Nascimento is a very credible character as he is seen making a lot of personal sacrifices to fight for what he believes is right. The introduction of Fraga gives even more value to the character of Nascimento, as Nascimento openly disagrees with what Fraga has to say but still respects his opinion. However, the argument that is given by Nascimento that most leftists don't have to deal with the day to day violence as he does, which is shown throughout the film, results in the addressee being more on Nascimento's side. Therefore, it is more believable when Nascimento comes to the conclusion that the problem lies not inside the favelas and not with the drug dealers, but with the system then when Fraga would claim the same thing. Nascimento knows how it works not because of theories he learned in books but because he has learned it in real life, and the addressee is taken on this learning experience while the storyline develops.

Techniques Used to Reinforce the Filmmakers message in *Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within*

Unlike the other two cultural products *Elite Squad 2* states at the very beginning that the film is fictional; it has no claim to any truth. However, the major events that take place in the film are based on true events. In this case the filmmaker did something that carries great resemblances to what in novels would be called intertextuality. He takes real events and uses them in his movie and by doing so he gives credibility to the story that he is trying to tell.

The first event that was based on actual facts was the revolt in the Bangu 1 prison. In 2002 a big drug lord used a cell phone that was smuggled in to start a prison rebellion. The drug lord went into another cell block where he then killed some of his rivals in the drug trade. This event took place during election times and measurements that were taken had more to do with winning votes than with finding a proper solution. (Jones 2002)

The next major event is the militarization of BOPE. This also took place in the real Brazil in 2002. BOPE started to come into the favelas and their “approach is to meet violence with violence, in a strategy of confrontation and intimidation.” (Amnesty 2006) They can be recognized by the military-like vehicles, policemen in military style clothes, and everything is emblazoned with an emblem of a big skull.

Lula, a man of the people and the Brazilians’ beloved president from 2003 till 2011, found himself confronted with corruption in his own political party. Members were accused of corruption, which included buying votes with money. Lula promised to punish those involved, however it proved once and for all that even the most honest man could not resolve Brazil’s corruption problems overnight. (BBC News 2005)

So even though the filmmaker claims that the film is fictional, he deliberately inserts

real events. By doing so it becomes very hard to distinguish between truth and fiction. When the filmmaker makes the events visible he stays as close to the truth as possible, these similarities between what is seen in the movie and what can be seen on the news make the tale he tells in the film a very credible story.

Portraying of the favela in *Elite Squad 2: The Enemy within*

In *Elite Squad 2* the favela doesn't function as the primary background. Images that are shown of the favela are quite positive, there is a lot of liveliness, there are little stores and people seem to go about their normal daily business.

The film has made an effort to make a distinction between gang leaders or militias infecting the favela and the favelados. However, at the same time the favela is not made into a place to pity either. As a geographical location it is just a neighborhood however due to "the system" it is made into a place in which poverty and violence can exist as long as it benefits "the system".

Conclusion *Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within*

Elite Squad 2 is the only one of the three cultural products analyzed that makes a clear distinction between criminals infecting an area and the resident inhabiting the area. Thanks to Nascimento's discoveries the film even goes one step further. It claims that Brazil's actual problem is not the favelas (or its inhabitants), but rather the forces that created the favelas and keep them in existence.

A Comparison Between the Three Cultural Products

When the films and the book are compared several things can be noted. There have been significant changes in the portrayal of the protagonists belonging to the favela, the focal point has changed from the favela to a larger “system” and the way in which the favela is being portrayed has changed slightly due to this shift in focal points.

In *City of God* it was still important to show that besides all the bad people in the favela there were still some good people in there as well. The film shows a clear division between “good” and “evil”. The good was portrayed by Rocket, a nice and honest kid with ambition that was willing to work to get somewhere in life. The evil was portrayed by Lil’ Zé, a thug whose only dream was to become the most feared and successful criminal in City of God. This clear division allowed the addressee to take sides and relate to Rocket. Through this relation the addressee is slowly growing accustomed to the possibility of being able to relate to a favelado.

In *Inferno* no clear distinction between “good” and “evil” can be made. Melo created a lot of so-called grey areas. The protagonist of the story could be seen as the epitome of Evil, a gang leader. However, at the same time, he is a battered young kid with feelings and a wish to become a respected “business” man. Melo shows the weaknesses and strengths of her protagonist, but never fails to explain how and why things happened. The explanation of the behavior is most important as it creates understanding and tolerance for his character. Because Melo allows the addressee to see the internal life of Kingie it is easy to relate to him and by introducing Reader into the story the addressee is constantly confronted with social issues and is forced to read what he has to say, but at the same time the addressee is allowed to make up its own mind. The addressee is confronted with its own beliefs and ideas on social problems

without Melo trying to make the addressee feel uncomfortable.

In *Elite Squad 2* the focus changes yet again. It is no longer the favela in which Evil resides it is now “the system”. The favela is explained to be just a mere product of “the Evil system” that does everything to keep poverty and violence alive in contemporary Brazil. “The system” is shown to be selfish and inhuman, organized but without a defined plan, and willing to do everything to benefit from the misery of others. Nascimento’s character does not even bother trying to show favelados in a positive light as this could be perceived, by the addressee, as a “leftist” thing to do and as cause for Nascimento to lose credibility. Nascimento is there to show “facts” and not to resolve social struggles, yet he does acknowledge that these social struggles exist due to “the system” that maintains them still existing in Brazil’s society.

Conclusory Thoughts

Both the films and the novel have received considerable criticism stating that they rely heavily on pre-existing stereotypes and glorifying violence. Even though this might be true this does not necessarily mean that this is all that the novel and films do. The most important thing that all works have done is reaching their public by staying true to them. Something that cannot be said about the *Cinema Novo* movement. The *Cinema Novo* movement alienated the public they were trying to reach. Which meant that it did not matter how good the message was they were trying to get across as it never reached the majority of the Brazilian public. These three works may not have been able to move away from the appeal of violence completely, but they did educate their public. Together they have allowed the public to start to depart from the idea that the favela is a place of Evil and they created a fertile ground for the

realization that there might be other forces out there that need these places to exist in order for them to benefit from them.

The works might not have presented any direct solutions for the social inequality they depict but there is a strong argument to be made that they are instrumental in bringing the notion of Evil and the image of Evil closer together.

Bibliography

- Amnesty International. "Brazil "We have come to take your souls": the *caveirão* and policing in Rio de Janeiro" *Amnesty*. 13 March 2006. Web. 15 July 2011. < <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR19/007/2006/en>>
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991. Print.
- Arias, Enrique D. *Drugs & Democracy in Rio de Janeiro; Trafficking, Social Networks & Public Security*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006. Print.
- BBC News. "Brazil's Lula 'sorry' for scandal" *BBC News*. 12 August 2005. Web. 15 July 2011. < <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4146736.stm>>
- Bentes, Ivana. The *sertão* and the *favela* in contemporary Brazilian film. In Lúcia Nagib, ed. *The New Brazilian Cinema*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003. Print.
- Blancarte, Roberto J. (2000) Popular Religion, Catholicism and Socioreligious Dissent in Latin America: Facing the Modernity Paradigm. *International Sociology* 15 (4) (2000): 591-603. Print.
- Brookshaw, David. *Race and color in Brazilian Literature*. Metuchen, N.J. & London: The Scarecrow Press, 1986. Print.
- Carvalho, Jose Murilo de. The Force of Tradition. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24 (*Quincentenary Supplement: The Colonial and Post Colonial Experience. Five Centuries of Spanish and Portuguese America*) (1992): 145-162. Print.
- Castillo Berthier, Hector & Wil Pansters. Mexico City. In Kees Koonings & Dirk Kruijt, eds. *Fractured Cities: Social Exclusion, Urban Violence & Contested Spaces in Latin America*. London: Zed Books, 2007. Print.
- _City of God_. Dir. Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund. O2 Filmes, VideoFilmes, Globo Filmes, Lumiere, Wild Bunch, Hank Levine Film, Lereby Productions, 2002. Film.
- Cooper, Terry, D. *Dimensions of Evil; Contemporary Perspectives*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007. Print.
- Culler, Jonathan. "Presupposition and Intertextuality." *MLN* 91: 6 (1976): 1380-1396. Print.
- De Medeiros Marcato, Raquel. "Genre in Evidence: Does the Film, *City of God*, Manipulate

Reality?" *Electronic journal of theory of literature and comparative literature* 2. 2009. Web. 28 March 2011 <<http://www.452f.com/index.php/en/raquel-de-medeiros-marcato.html>>.

Eagleton, Terry. *On Evil*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010. Print.

Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within. Dir. Jose Padilha. Globo Filmes, Feijão Filmes, Riofilme, Zazen Produções, 2010. Film.

Fludernik, Monika. *An Introduction to Narratology*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Fredrickson, George M. *Racism: A Short History*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003. Print.

Gabriel, Shira & Ariana Young. "Becoming a Vampire Without Being Bitten: The Narrative Collective-Assimilation Hypothesis" publicabitur in *Psychological Science* (2011), s.p.

Howard, Richard. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason. Michel Foucault*. New York: Random House, Inc, 1973 [1965]. Print.

Johnson, Randal. "Brazilian Cinema Novo" *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 3.2 (1984): 95-106. Print.

Jones, Patrice M. "Brazil prisons hit meltdown point" Chicago Tribune. 17 September 2002. Web. 15 July 2011. <http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2002-09-17/news/0209170349_1_brazil-prisons-carandiru-rio-prison>

Koonings, Kees. Shadows of Violence and Political Transition in Brazil: from Military Rule to Democratic Governance. In Kees Koonings & Dirk Kruijt, eds. *SOCIETIES OF FEAR: The Legacy of Civil War and Terror in Latin America*. London: Zed Books, 1999. Print.

Landers, Clifford E. (translation) *Inferno. Patrícia Melo*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2002 [2000]. Print.

Lando, Fabio, Prof. Dr. "Fact and Fiction: Geography and Literature." *GeoJournal* 38.1(1996): 3-18. Print.

Mallon, Florencia E. Constructing mestizaje in Latin America: Authenticity, Marginality and gender in the Claiming of Ethnic Identities. *Journal of latin American Anthropology* 2(1) (1996): 170-181. Print.

Mandelbaum, Allen. (translation). *Inferno. Dante Alighieri*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980. Print.

Monaco, James. *How to read a film: The World of Movies, Media, and Multimedia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Print.

Musa, Mark. (translation). *Dante's Inferno: the Indiana critical edition. Dante Alighieri*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. Print.

Oliveira, Emanuelle K F. "An Ethic of the Esthetic: Racial Representation in Brazilian Cinema Today." *Vanderbilt e-Journal of Luso-Hispanic Studies* 4. 2008. Web. 23 March 2011. <
<http://ejournals.library.vanderbilt.edu/lusohispanic/include/getdoc.php?id=303&article=54&mode=pdf>>.

Peixoto, Marta. "Rio's Favelas in Recent Fiction and Film: Commonplaces of Urban Segregation." *PMLA* 122:1 (2007): 170–178. Print.

Perlman, Janice E (2005). "The Myth of Marginality Revisited: The Case of Favelas in Rio de Janeiro, 1969-2003." *The University of British Columbia*. 2005. Web. 23 March 2011
http://www.chs.ubc.ca/consortia/references/TheMythofMarginalityRevisited_english.pdf.

Sanabria, Harry. *The Anthropology of Latin America and the Caribbean*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2007. Print.

Sheridan, Alan. (translation) *Discipline and Punish; The Birth of the Prison. Michel Foucault*. London: Penguin Books, 1991 [1977]. Print.

Skidmore, Thomas E. *Black into White. Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993 [1974]. Print.

Smith, Carol A. Myths, Intellectuals, and race/class/gender distinctions in the formation of latin American Nations. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 2(1), (1996): 148-169. Print.

Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. Print.

Steele, Liza G. "'A Gift from God': Adolescent Motherhood and Religion in Brazilian Favelas" *Sociology of Religion* 72.1 (2011): 4-27. Print.

Valladares, Licia. "Social Science Representations of Favelas in Rio de Janeiro: A Historical Perspective." *Utexas*. 2007. Web. 15 January 2011. <<http://info.smtp.lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/vrp/valladares.pdf>>

Vieira, Nelson H. 'Closing the Gap' Between High and Low: Intimations on the Brazilian Novel of the Future. *Latin American Literary Review* 20.40 (1992): 109-119. Print.

Vroon, Ronald. (translation) *The structure of the artistic text. Jurij Lotman*. Providence: Brown University Press, 1977 [1971]. Print.

Zaluar, Alba. Urban violence and drug warfare in Brazil. In Kees Koonings & Dirk Kruijt, eds. *Armed Actors: Organized violence and state failure in Latin America*. London: Zed Books, 2004. Print