

Nationality and Black Diaspora in Marcelo D2's Music

1. INTRODUCTION

Emerging from marginalized communities in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and other cities, Brazilian hip-hop is a significant cultural expression that both signifies and explores the anxieties and negotiations of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Often denied political agency through the traditional political realm, many hip-hop artists, particularly Afro-Brazilians have used hip-hop as a way to disseminate information, develop consciousness, create protest, and challenge established social inequalities. Hip-hop in Brazil has created a performative space for Afro-Brazilians to mobilize both a black diasporic identity and Brazilian identity affirming Afro-Brazilian roots. Brazilian hip-hop is part of a global hip-hop culture and a transnational black diasporic expressive culture as Brazilian hip-hop constantly references the African diaspora and at the same time, creates a distinct musical form that is unique to Brazil in both its musicality and its specific discourse of Brazilian social themes. I consider transnational narrative of blackness to be related to diasporic consciousness or understanding of a diasporic condition, yet at the same time often questions the concept of blackness as a complex convergence of a variety of histories, cultures, and realities

This paper specifically looks at the cultural productions of Marcelo D2, widely regarded as one of the pioneers of Brazilian hip-hop, play into transnational narratives of blackness, yet also stake a claim for blackness within the vision of the racially mixed nation. Marcelo D2 offers both progressive and conservative posturing of race and gender within a masculinized hip-hop ethos. A critical analysis of Marcelo D2's music and

music videos confront the limitations, contradictions, and possibilities of articulations of race, gender, and sexuality through the medium of hip-hop, and subsequently how these intersect with national, black diasporic, and transnational imaginaries.

I will look at how race, gender, and sexuality are mediated in the works of Marcelo D2 and will consider how these mediations are used often in contradictory ways to contribute to articulations of both Brazilian and transnational identities. By showing the contradictions of race, gender, and sexuality between and within cultural texts, the paper will examine how these intersecting categories are used to reinvent ideas of Brazilian national identity as well as an alternative black diasporic identity. Through an examination of how race, gender, and sexuality are both embodied and performed in hip-hop, the paper proposes an approach to Marcelo D2's based on an intersectional framework, which analyzes gender as category that intersects with other categories such as race, sexuality, class, and nation.¹ Therefore, the paper does not look at these categories as ranked hierarchally but rather sees these categories as interlock. An intersectional framework aids in the deconstruction of power and thereby makes visible not only difference but invisible norms² that structure power relations.

The article will consider the multiple and often contradictory ways in which Marcelo D2 performs and creates black diasporic and Brazilian masculinity. In order to place Marcelo D2's work into social and cultural context, the paper will also look at Brazilian hip-hop broadly as well as Gilberto Freyre's influential theories of Brazilian national identity.

2. ORIGINS OF BRAZILIAN HIP-HOP

Hip-hop emerged in Brazil in the early 1980s, primarily in São Paulo through break-dancing and graffiti, which are two of the four key components in hip-hop. Brazilian youth gathered by the São Bento metro station and the Galeria 24 de Março to dance, compete, listen to music, and exchange information.³ The introduction of the 1984 Hollywood film, *Beat Street* was pivotal to the popularization of hip-hop in Brazil.⁴ Television, film, and radio were important mediums of communication for the dissemination of hip-hop in Brazil. These forms of communication

and information, such as music video clips, record album covers, and stylized images of African-American life in Spike Lee films soon found their way to the *periferia* (marginalized suburbs)⁵ and *favelas* of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. By the 1990s, MTV Brasil and other mediums of communication contributed to the mass distribution of hip-hop culture.⁶ In particular, the increasing racial and political consciousness of United States hip-hop greatly influenced Brazilian hip-hop as well as broader concepts and cultures of black diasporic consciousness.

3. BLACK POPULAR MUSIC AND DIASPORIC FLOWS

In *The Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy highlights black popular music as part of global disseminations of culture and politics that responds to similar histories of racial inequality, colonial legacies, and neocolonialism throughout Africa and the African diaspora in Europe and the Americas. For example, Thaíde, one of the founders of Brazilian hip-hop, cites Afrika Bambaataa and other American hip-hop founders as a major influence in his intellectual awareness of the purpose of rap and sees rap as a founding of a culture that affirms African descent as a source of pride.⁷ Thaíde and others understood the consciousness of the hip-hop movement from this transnational awareness of *periferias* beyond the locale of São Paulo and the mass organizing of black youth to create a culture of positive values, self-respect, and dignity despite the marginalization and social exclusion of the *periferias* and Afro-Brazilians.⁸ Derek Pardue argues that many hip hop artists mediate their social and economic marginality through discourses and practices of negritude in ways that gesture toward diasporic belonging.⁹ With this consciousness of the ability to use rap as a weapon against marginalization also came a responsibility to spread the hip-hop message.

Just as Michael Hanchard shows with Brazil's Black Soul movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the dissemination of ideas and culture from the United States constituted another form of engagement with a transnational black diaspora. As Michael Hanchard points out concerning the Black Soul movement, "Never before had black Brazilians collectively identified with cultural forms that were black but neither African nor Brazilian...."¹⁰ This collective identity rooted itself in cultural and political

symbolism and music that emphasized blackness as a legitimate site of empowerment. However, at the same time, the Black Soul movement was widely criticized and repressed. Conservative leadership, including Gilberto Freyre, insisted that the Black Soul movement was both racist and unauthentic and that the movement was a black foreign separatist consciousness incompatible with an identity of *mestiçagem*.¹¹ Therefore, Brazilian hip-hop needs to be seen within this larger context of transnational narratives of blackness and articulations of Afro-Brazilian identities as well as the challenges to the development of black consciousness.

Brazilian hip-hop is carrying on a legacy of diasporic transculturation in the way in which it morphs various elements of the African diaspora to create a new musical form. It is also important to note that contrary to myth, hip-hop from the United States was never solely an African-American musical form. Its very roots suggest a global interplay of the African diaspora of the United States, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico, occurring in the locality of the South Bronx. DJ Kool Herc, considered to be one of the founders of hip-hop, brought the technologies of Jamaican sound systems into the Bronx and influenced the sound of what would later become hip-hop.¹² The close living quarters of different ethnic groups and rivalries of African-American and Puerto Rican gangs also infused a hybrid dance, visual art, and music to create a hip-hop sound and a hip-hop lifestyle. DJ Kool Herc says, "Hip-hop is a family, so everybody has got to pitch in. East, west, north, or south—we come from one coast and that coast was Africa."¹³ Brazilian hip-hop, in this sense, can be seen as part of the hip-hop family of the black diaspora and a uniquely Brazilian form of expression as it incorporates specific Brazilian social themes, such as *favelas* and Brazilian traditional music, such as samba.

While focusing on Anglophone contexts, Paul Gilroy's work in *The Black Atlantic* highlights the syncretic nature of black diasporic cultures that resists essentialist notions of racial or cultural authenticity. In particular, Marcelo D2's music participates in dialogic expressions of Brazilian, black diasporic, and United States cultures into cultural productions that are not the synthesis of such influences, but part of ongoing diverse processes of cultural and identity formations. However, within this focus on hip-hop, it is essential to think about the racial, gender, and sexual dimensions within Brazilian culture. In order to assess the work of Mar-

celo D2, an understanding of the racial situation in Brazil becomes immediately necessary. In order to analyze the cultural production of Marcelo D2, I begin with some key background on race and gender in Brazil and then turn to situate Marcelo D2's work within Brazilian hip-hop, and then later within global hip-hop .

4. RACE AND GENDER IN BRAZIL

The work of Marcelo D2 is planted in the adoption, reinvention, or refutation of Brazilian national identity. At times, these cultural productions represent an effort to create an alternative Afro-Brazilian or black diasporic identity as an oppositional response to the dominant national identity constructed in large part by Gilberto Freyre. In a radical departure from most of his predecessors, including the influential Oliveira Vianna who promoted policies of scientific racism in Brazil, Gilberto Freyre attempted to discredit prevalent ideas of scientific racism that supposed white superiority, the dangers of racial mixing and the degeneracy of mixed-race people. Rather than espouse a rhetoric of *branqueamento*, (whitening), which argued that the population could be lightened by European immigration and inter-racial marriage, Freyre put forward the idea that racial mixing created a hybrid vigor suitable for the tropics and this new population would pave the way for a modernized prosperous future rather than previous assertions of a backwards condemned nation. At the time, Freyre's valorization of the place of the *negro* could be seen as a radical progressive shift towards anti-racist rhetoric, but also had profound implications for the creation of a myth of racial democracy based on deeply gendered and sexualized relationships. Freyre's espousal of the benefits of *mestiçagem* or racial mixing carried forth into national lore the idea that through mixture, there were no racial difference and all Brazilian could claim a stake in African, European, and indigenous ancestry.¹⁴

In *Casa grande e senzala* (1933), Freyre also laid out the basis for later ideas of racial democracy¹⁵ in which the sexual and cultural mixing and integration of African, Portuguese, and indigenous elements converged in formation of national identity and a new hybrid tropical race.¹⁶ Freyre proposes that the type of structure in the *casa grande* (the plantation hou-

se) and *senzala* (slave quarters) permitted miscegenation under the rural patriarchal family. Freyre proposes that the relative shortage of white women and the natural attraction of Portuguese men for mulatto and black women were essential to processes of Brazilian colonization and the Brazilian nation. For Freyre, the *casa grande's* family structures shaped Brazilian society from the colonial period well into the nineteenth century. However, it is important to note that the emphasis on Freyre's constructions of inter-racial sexual unions are predominantly of white male masters with black and mulata slave women.

This erotic narrative produces the racial figure of the mulata, who has been celebrated as the unifying symbol of *brasilidade*¹⁷. In Freyre's framework, the racial mixing prevalent throughout Brazilian history and the celebration of the mulata became proof of a racially harmonious Brazilian society. This framework functions in part because inter-racial sexual relations are constructed as a love allegory without noting colonial and sexual violence and the exalted sexuality of the mulata is used to justify sexual exploitation.¹⁸

The sexual myths of the lasciviousness and desirability of the mulata woman also have its historic origins in Freyre's narratives and therefore, demonstrates the malleability and erotic construction of the *mulata*, which will later be in Marcelo D2's work. From Freyre's analysis, black men and white women appear largely absent in this process of building the Brazilian nation. Therefore, it is essential to consider how ideas of Brazilian national construction are also deeply gendered within a system of a racialized white patriarchy. This point is important to consider later in how Marcelo D2 mediate racialized gender and sexual identities within this framework. Through these imagined intimacies of a patriarchal narrative, Freyre associated Brazilian cultural construction with miscegenation and therefore, helped build a national identity based on racial mixing.

5. BACKGROUND ON MARCELO D2

Marcelo D2, a former vocalist for the controversial rock group, Planet Hemp,¹⁹ is one of the more mainstream commercially successful hip-hop artists. Unlike other rap groups such *Os Racionais*, Marcelo D's music

tends to be less overly political and radical yet still related to urban culture. The massive explosion of his music videos into the mainstream, the popularity of his music among urban middle-class youth, his signing to the Sony music label, his participation in events like *Skol Beats*, and the infusion of samba and pop far from Brazilian hip-hop roots and from the dominant São Paulo style hip-hop, testify to Marcelo D2's prominence. However, the *carioca* rapper should still be taken seriously for the study of Brazilian popular culture due to the wide appeal of his music as demonstrated through record sales and downloads and his crossover from *periferia* to *asfalto* (outside marginalized zones). Marcelo D2 exhibits that Brazilian hip-hop is a mass media phenomenon that has penetrated a larger Brazilian public sphere beyond the *periferias*. With access to multiple social classes, his music has the potential to influence various sectors of Brazilian society. Furthermore, the international commercial and popular success of hip-hop should not be understated.

The insertion of Brazilian hip-hop into these global transnational flows and specifically, the global popularity of Marcelo D2 with regards to the dissemination and consumption of his music warrant that such research has implications for the study of popular culture and mediations of race, gender, and sexuality beyond Brazilian national borders. As with many of the discussions concerning the mainstream middle-class popularity of United States hip-hop, the implications of Marcelo D2's "crossover" appeal in both its manufactured and resisted form, raise important questions concerning issues of authenticity and racial identity. Therefore, the cultural expressions of Marcelo D2 become an intriguing subject of study for the analysis of race, gender, and sexuality concerning Brazilian national identity and global hip-hop culture.

6. MARCELO D2'S MUSIC AS CULTURAL TEXTS

Marcelo D2's work shows remnants of Freyre's legacy through identification with or rejection of his constructions of nation, race, gender, and sexuality. Marcelo D2's music therefore must be seen through these precedents of Gilberto Freyre, hip-hop, and samba. As he was one of the key proponents of the exaltation of Afro-Brazilian culture, the shift from a repression of samba to an embracing of samba by the Estado Novo can

also be linked in part to Gilberto Freyre. Under the Vargas government, certain cultural elements influenced by Afro-Brazilians, such as *feijoada* and *samba* became national symbols representative of a racially mixed Brazilian identity.²⁰ However, even with this valorization and co-optation of Afro-Brazilian culture, a patriarchal structure still prevailed. For example, the continuing prevalence of sexist songs, explicit sexual connotations, and the use of women, especially the mulata as sexual object of desire are quite common.²¹ Therefore, Marcelo D's innovative mix of samba and hip-hop should be seen in the context of the racial and gendered subtexts at play.

My methodology for the discussion of Marcelo D2's "*Samba de primeira*" and "*Qual é?*" entails a textual analysis of the musical lyrics as well as visual practices in the film and music video. The analysis asks what aspects of Brazilian culture or diasporic black culture and identities are represented in these texts; it also critically pays attention to how race, gender, and sexuality are mediated in the texts. Marcelo D2's music and music videos offers an expression of the often contradictory representations of race and gender. The paper will concentrate on Marcelo D2's lyrics and music video for "*Samba de primeira*" (1998) and "*Qual é?*" (2003).

7. SAMBA DE PRIMEIRA LYRICS AND MUSIC VIDEO

In "*Samba de primeira*" released in 1998, much of Marcelo D2's lyrics argue that his music presents the fusion of hip-hop and samba as continuing processes of reinvention within Brazilian culture and hip-hop culture. The tension between global hip-hop and local inflections of samba is presented as a possibility of a uniquely Brazilian cultural expression: "*Meu samba é duro na queda/não é conversa fiada/é e sempre foi a voz da rapaziada*" ["My samba is hard in the fall/it's not trusted conversation/it was always the voice of the people"]. Marcelo D2 clearly works within this framework through the absorption and adaptation of technologies, sounds, and aesthetics from United States and other international hip-hop. Marcelo D2 creates a juxtaposition of Brazilian hip-hop in relationship to Brazilian and North American and global culture industries: "*O DJ é o pandeiro, o MC é o parteiro /tem samba no meu hip-hop/porque eu sou brasileiro*" ["The DJ is the tambourine, the MC is the bandleader/

I have samba in my hip-hop/because I am Brazilian”]. Marcelo D2 suggests that he needs to incorporate samba into hip-hop because of his Brazilianess. Like Thaïde and other rappers, Marcelo D2 looks to Brazilian culture and Brazilian traditions as one of the many sources of inspiration for his songs and thereby challenges cultural boundaries of a static authentic hip-hop from the United States and an unchanging samba immune to other cultural and national influences. Marcelo D2 presents hip-hop as new form of cultural expression that does not conflict with the Brazilian roots of samba. Through Marcelo D2’s music, it is possible to see an argument for the incorporation of samba into his hip-hop as presenting a manifestation of *brasilidade*. Thus, Marcelo D2’s identity is in both the transnational tradition of hip-hop and in the Brazilian roots of samba. Marcelo D2’s music also grapples with concerns relating to the cultivation, preservation, and expression of samba. According to Marcelo D2, he is the caretaker and defender of Brazilian popular culture: “*Essa é pra você que vem do lado de lá/Tentando acabar com a nossa cultura popular*” [This is for you that come from that side over there/Trying to get rid of our popular culture]. Rather Marcelo D2 proposes that he is continuing the tradition of samba for new generation: “*Eu sou da nova geração e minha ginga é de bamba*” [I am from the new generation and my ginga is that of bamba]. Marcelo D2 roots his production of hip-hop and samba in the streets and with everyday life. His lyrics and musicality are used to present a flavor of the streets in order to show the musical richness and life that springs from these areas. He raps, “*A batida é crua e você vai a lua e as letras mermão/vêm direto das ruas*” [“The beat is crude and the lyrics my brother/come direct from the streets”]. Forming the basis of his music in the streets and the music of speaking, singing, and other cacophony as the inspiration of Brazilian hip-hop and the derived core culture of the street, Marcelo D2 narrates from lived experience: “*Eu canto as coisas que vejo na minha vida*” [“I sing the things that I see in my life”]. Furthermore, Marcelo D2’s lyrics allude to both cultural and racial mixing. When he describes his rhyme as *cinza* (grey), Marcelo D2 adopts an inflection of racial and cultural mixing as a musical and cultural aesthetic of *cinza* that forms a Brazilian and diasporic racially mixed space through hip-hop. It is possible that Marcelo D2 uses a Brazilian system of color classification for a socially reproduction function comple-

mentary to a hip-hop and samba synthesis of different racial elements and of different national and cultural elements. In this sense, Marcelo D2 might be aligned with a Gilberto Freyre vision of a *brasilidade* based on racial mixture. However, this idea of *cinza* might also suggest a flexible subject position that assimilates to, reinvents, and resists the meaning of racial mixing and the racially mixed subject.

Therefore, it is possible that Marcelo D2 uses the idea of racial mixing not just as a function of hegemonic conformation to a national identity, but as a strategy of cultural empowerment and expression of pride in the racial and cultural hybridities of individual and national subjects as mediated through samba, and hip-hop. However, at the same time, Marcelo D2 notes that "*O cabelo é piaçava*" [The hair is *piaçava*]. This reference to hair as *piaçava* (a fibrous material made from a Brazilian palm tree found mainly in Bahia and Pará and often used to make brooms) brings connotations of kinky coarse hair. In this instance, Marcelo D2 alludes to images of black hair, placing cultural and political aesthetics into broader collective Afro-Brazilian and black diasporic identities. Marcelo D2's description of the texture of hair becomes a symbol of racial difference and therefore an indicator of a racialized identity. The explicit racial implications of hair marks a visibility of African descent. Rather than an attempt to hide or change the texture of hair, Marcelo D2 uses the hair as *piaçava* as a self-conscious racialized construction of identity and a counter-politics to Eurocentric ideals, which devalues visible black appearances and aesthetics.

Yet, the potentially progressive and radical politics of the lyrics of "*Samba de primeira*" are mitigated through the "*Samba de primeira*" music video. The medium of the music video is another space to explore the ways in which race, gender, class, and sexuality intersect in popular culture. Additionally, the attitudes expressed in the music video often contradict those of the lyrics. The "*Samba de primeira*" video opens with landscapes of Rio de Janeiro derived from the classic film, *Black Orpheus* (*Orfeu Negro*, 1959) scenes and later progresses to scenes of samba dancing in the street and during Carnival from the film. *Black Orpheus* is often closely associated with Brazilian culture and acted as a global vehicle for the promotion and dissemination of a vision of Brazilian culture. While the use of *Black Orpheus* introduces a version of a beautified lan-

dscape of Rio de Janeiro, Carnival, and samba dancing, the next sequence in the video leads into a basic white empty background with Marcelo D2, a DJ, and *mulata samba* dancers. Although the video attempts to disrupt the mythologizing of Brazilian culture from *Black Orpheus* through the subsequent implosion of a samba-hip-hop fusion, the next frame goes to Marcelo D2 rapping amongst dancing mulata sambistas in skimpy theatrical Carnival type costumes. Rather than complicating the image of Brazil, the music video encompasses previous stereotypes, myths, and imagery of Brazilian culture. Whereas the music video's focus on hip-hop and funk brings in new conditions of Brazilian culture and music, the visual imagery falls back on the representation of mulata women as objects of desire and of sexual and media consumption. The video clip uses the mulata in a conservative framework that idealizes the mulata as a flat silent symbol but not as a potential voice or active contributor to the Brazilian national identity.

The empty blank white space that Marcelo D2 and the mulata sambistas occupies contrasts with the rich imagery of the *Black Orpheus* film and functions to create a vision that solely focuses on Marcelo D2 and the samba dancers. This blank space works as not a depiction of reality, but rather as an autonomous space for the production of a deeply gendered racialized and sexualized ideal of leisure, identity, fantasy, and desire. This empty slate reinvents and recirculates the ideal woman of desire as the mulata and thereby preserves older characteristics from samba songs and some of the imagery of the sensuality of the mulata as evoked by Gilberto Freyre. Hence the dancing mulata in the video is thought of in purely corporal terms imbedded in racialized, sexualized and gendered images of a *brasilidade* that fuses samba and a national identity as embodied through the dancing mulata. The "*Samba de Primeira*" music video mobilizes foundational national myths of Brazil and international perceptions of Brazil through the incorporation of *Black Orpheus* and samba dancing *mulata* bodies.

However, Marcelo D2's video does not just make suggestions regarding the representation of women, but also presents a vision of masculinity. The music video relies on a sexualized fantasy in which the blank white space works as a performative space for representing masculine desire. In the video, the mulata sambistas act as symbols of the affirmati-

on and expression of a stable masculinity. The women do not speak or even sing, but rather only the dancing body is valued. This sexualization of the sambistas in the video allows for a control of the female image while Marcelo D2 actively constructs his own voice through his ability to rap and thereby, enunciate his identity. The video thereby as medium or technology of a male subjectivity that is created in part through the production of the racialized, gendered, and sexualized mulata sambista.

Feminist theorists such as Laura Mulvey have pointed to how patriarchal culture have embodies women as of objects of the “male gaze.” In her influential essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Laura Mulvey posits that an active male gaze predominates through a patriarchal structure in dominant mainstream cinema. Through identification with the male protagonist and the camera, the viewer is given a sense of mastery by occupying the male gaze over the female object.²² This process begins when Marcelo D2 establishes himself as the main narrator in his music video through the central positioning of himself in the majority of the frames. Mulvey argues that the female object is then eroticized and fetishized through the process of this gaze. Therefore, to identify with the male protagonist and to objectify the female subject is to be given a sense of mastery and power.

The video clip presents the mulata sambistas as objects to be desired, to be gazed upon, and to be fetishized. The camera pans and tracks the dancers’ movements and often put these bodies on display through the camera’s positioning to focus on specific body parts and through enduring shots of these parts. Thus, the audience viewer takes on the gaze of the contestant and what is presumed to be a male gaze according to Mulvey. The sambista then becomes an object of eroticism and a spectacle of desire in which she is looked upon by Marcelo D2 and the audience viewer. The audience is allowed to participate in a collective fantasy through the viewing of the music video and thereby, embrace or reject Marcelo D2’s vision of a Brazilian identity based on the mulata. At the same time, the celebration of the mulata as a symbol of Brazilian miscegenation and Brazilian national identity perhaps also reveals the rejection and devaluing of the *mulher preta* (black woman).

However, Marcelo D2’s music is often contradictory particularly in regards to issues of gender. While in “*Samba de primeira*” women were

stereotypical sexualized objects of masculine desire, gender works more subtly and in less blatantly sexist ways in the music video "*Qual é?*". These inconsistencies might be read as part of the multitude of contradictions of cultural forms. These variances are constantly negotiated within radical and conservative hegemonic and alternative discourses. Marcelo D's music exhibits a multidimensionality and hybridity that shifts and contradicts itself that does not come to any dialectical space, but rather is a dialogic process that engages with other voices, cultures, and discourses from Brazil and abroad. This notion of a dialogical open discourse is critical as it allows the contradictory and complex politics of identity and community to emerge without the desire to block engagement and confrontation.

8. "*QUAL É?*" LYRICS AND MUSIC VIDEO

In "*Qual é?*", Marcelo D2 offers a vision of black diasporic and Brazilian imaginaries. In the music video he creates a transnational narrative of blackness. Therefore, Marcelo D2 intermixed Afro-Brazilian cultural elements with other black diasporic elements in a multifaceted narrative through video and lyrics. In his "*Qual é ?*" video, he shows colorful images of his neighborhood with Afro-Brazilian children playing in the street, women walking by, elderly men playing samba instruments, young men listening to music on boomboxes. Furthermore, Marcelo D2 demonstrates that he is rooted in community through the visual tour of the neighborhood and the large musical and meal gatherings of multiple generations in the video. While "*Samba de primeira*" opens with *Black Orpheus*' panoramic view of Rio de Janeiro, "*Qual é*" gives an aerial view of the street, but never leaves the neighborhood.

Marcelo D2 situates these local and transnational imaginaries of blackness within the context of struggle and resistance to a status quo. However, it is not explicitly clear what such a movement or struggle entails. Marcelo D2 addresses his listener and transmits ideas and demands. While Marcelo D2 seems to advocate for personal and collective behavior and the will to participate in struggle, the struggle itself is not named: "*Que você mantém a conduta/Será?/Que segue firme e forte na luta.*" [That you keep the conduct/That you remain firm and strong in the struggle].

The advocacy of a personal obligation to family and community are stressed through the demand to develop a collective consciousness of social and economic responsibility: "*Daqueles que quando/Sua família precisa?*" [Of those that when /your family needs you] Marcelo D2 therefore posits hip-hop itself as an ongoing process and space of struggle and negotiation. The deployment of the discourse of struggle and upward mobility are placed in a context of a fight against extensive histories of colonization and slavery: "*Há 500 anos/Essa banca manda a vera/Abaixou a cabeça já era*" [It's been 500 years/this judge commands you for real/putting your head down, it's over]. Therefore, Marcelo pushes his listener to combat their social, economic, and political subordination.

Through the song's lyrics, Marcelo D2 also expresses a consciousness of a larger marginalization of the black diaspora as a global means of oppression. In "*Qual é?*", Marcelo D2 repeatedly addresses his listener as *neguinho* such as in "*Qual é neguinho?*" The use of *neguinho* demonstrates a slipperiness of terms as the term could be a racialized diminutive of the variant *negro*, an affectionate sign of intimacy, or a generic reference. However, the repeated use of the term along with the circulation of the English word "black" and "brother" throughout the song seems to suggest that the form of address might be specific to Afro-Brazilians. The refrain of "*Amar como ama um black, brother/ Falar como fala um black, brother/ Andar como anda um black, brother/ Usar sempre o complemento black, brother*" [Love like a black loves, brother/Talk like a black talks, brother/Walk like a black walks, brother/Always use the black complement, brother] incorporates English into his lyrics with the signifier of brother. This utilization of English signifies an understanding of a black collective community beyond the borders of the *favelas* and Brazil.

By rapping in English and Portuguese, Marcelo D2 also demonstrates a transnational black solidarity. Hip-hop is used as a means of communication that surpasses linguistic barriers and cultural borders in order to create a transnational black imaginary and the sustentation of a collective black struggle for social justice. Cultural exchange and the memory and mutual understanding of the black diasporic condition are key to forming a sense of black transnationalism and black diasporic identity. However, at the same time, blackness cannot be taken for a given or overdetermined to an ideal universal as questions of intersectionality

and divergent national and local conditions impact the cultural social and political meaning of blackness. Hence, Marcelo D2 includes a mix of samba and hip-hop as well as variety of black aesthetics.

Marcelo D2 creates an identity based in aesthetic and racial terms through attempt at forming black expression. For example, in a barbershop, a female hairdresser styles Marcelo D2's hair to accentuate his hair into a full-fledged Afro hairstyle and then later into cornrows. It is interesting to note that the interaction between Marcelo D2 and the female black hairdresser is respectful, non-sexual, yet intimate. Therefore, the space of the barbershop reveals a relative absence of sex-role stereotypes and socializations. Other images of young women walking down the street or involved in familial or neighborhood social gatherings also have a relative lack of sexual undertones.

However, while not as sexually explicit as "*Samba de primeira*", "*Qual é?*" still does involve dark shots of a bedroom scene in which Marcelo D2 touches the backside of a half-naked woman and long camera shots of bare female stomachs. While these scenes are implied to take place at night, the sexualization of women is still prevalent. The suggested sexual activity with multiple women validates Marcelo D2's masculinity through a display of sexuality. The commodified view of female flesh pushes women into the patriarchal gender structures. Furthermore, this contradiction appears to manifest as a binary between neighborhood and familial relationships in the community versus more impersonal urban nocturnal settings. The video demonstrates multiple expressions of masculinity as well as contested gender relations.

In terms of style, Marcelo D2 encourages a black identity through aesthetics. The process of transforming Marcelo D2's hair into an Afro and cornrows occurs during the lines "*Andar como anda um black, brother*" suggests that Marcelo D2 is attempting to stylize a specific way of being as specific black aesthetic that is transnational. The command to "*usar sempre o complemento black, brother*" affirms a black pride and a message to carry this black pride and community into one's everyday life. This line aligns with the image of Marcelo D2 with cornrows and a clenched pumped fist in the air. This image correlates to the raised closed fist²³ of the black-power movement in the United States and Marcelo D2's usage of the image is emblematic of the development of international signifiers of black protest.

Images such as the raised clenched fists of United States black athletes receiving their medals in the 1968 Olympics have transnational impacts and as such, have been adapted as part of a black political and cultural identity. Images like the clenched fists of the 1968 Olympics, which symbolize an allegiance not just to the United States, but to a collective transnational identity, are resignified beyond United States historical specificities in favor of a more expansive black diasporic reading and adaptation. Marcelo D2 utilizes this visual imagery for re-encoding and awakening a transnational black diasporic consciousness that garners potential for symbolic political mobilization.

The clenched fist, hairstyles, and clothing are part of a black self-fashioning that makes a nod to transnational black aesthetics. At the same time, Marcelo D2 is not constrained by such an aesthetic. For example, Marcelo D2's attire ranges from street clothes to a stylized black hip-hop aesthetic, especially through hair of Afros and cornrows. He uses older b-boy styles of wearing gold chains and Kangol cap with other stylized attire of uncombed hair and nondescript baggy clothes. This mix of styles affirms that blackness can be defined from multiple identities and subject positions.

Furthermore, the visual use of Marcelo D2's family portrait is important for also expanding a black transnational identity. In the line "*Amar como ama um black, brother*," the video shows a frame of Marcelo D2 and his family smiling for the camera. This frame offers a visual and realistic representation of the racially mixed family, and hence the racially mixed nation of Brazil and hip-hop. Marcelo D2's video family is presumed to be his real biological family and thereby, reworks mixed race family histories and expands boundaries of blackness into the text of the music video. Additionally, the refrain commanding love focuses not on sexual aspects, but rather includes rules on how to act in regards to the black and racially mixed family and partnerships. The command to love "*como um black*" denotes a responsibility to nation and family.

However, at the same time Marcelo D2's sexualization of various women in his music videos puts an emphasis on masculinity through male sexual activity and therefore, poses his responsibility to nation and family through sex. While Marcelo D2 makes frequent references to "brother" in the song, it cannot be assumed that such a reference also inclu-

des women as part of a larger transnational black and Brazilian community. At the root of this discourse is the concept of the nation as family/genealogy though patriarchal structures. Marcelo D2 offers a multifaceted identity that embraces a flexible and dynamic idea of *brasilidade* and blackness. Rather Marcelo D2 demonstrates that black diasporic, *mestiço*, Brazilian, and specifically, Afro-Brazilian identities can co-exists and mingle, at times harmoniously or contradictorily, with them.

9. CONCLUSION

A focus on the work of Marcelo D2 demonstrates the construction of national and transnational diasporic subjects through mediations of race, gender, and sexuality. The use of race shows the salience of national and transnational imaginaries that highlight cultural, social, and political meanings of blackness across borders. The meaning and use of blackness as aesthetics, consciousness, and politics foreground questions relating to the function of blackness and diaspora as well as possible shifting locations of political, social, and cultural understanding. In particular, Marcelo D2 does not see racial mixture as collapsed into the nation or as a challenge to Afro-Brazilian or black identities, but rather as part of the nation and larger inclusions of Brazilianness and transnational black identities.

Marcelo D2 uses hip-hop as for tool for reworking racial and gender identity but also as an alternative to marginalization. However, within hip-hop, contradictions relating to race, gender, and sexuality come into play that challenges the idea of a united homogenous bloc unit. The paper exposes how Marcelo D2 challenges certain cultural and social norms, but also how certain norms, especially in regards to gender, are often reinscribed or distorted. The desire and sexualization of women in Marcelo D2's music video are deemed as essential to *brasilidade*. Hence, *brasilidade* is coded as masculine. There is very little alternative space for other forms of gender or sexual identity or space in his videos. The various discourses towards race, gender, and sexuality and the discrepancies between lyrics and music video imagery demonstrate that cultural identity is often multifaceted and often shifting or contradictory.

NOTES

¹The term *intersectionality*, first highlighted by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, calls attention to the 'multidimensionality' of the lived experiences of marginalized subjects and asserts an alternative to a 'single-axis' framework in favor of an analysis that takes into account the ways in which race and gender interact (Crenshaw, 1991:1244). See Kimberle, Crenshaw. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43 (1991): 1241-99.

² Lisa García Bedolla, "Intersections of Inequality: Understanding Marginalization and Privilege in the Post Civil-Rights Era." *Politics and Gender* 3 (2007): 232-248.

³ César Alves. *Pergunte a quem conhece Thaíde*. (São Paulo: Labortexto), 2004.

⁴ *Ibid*, 35.

⁵ All translations in the paper are my own.

⁶ Cristina Magaldi. "Adopting Imports: New Images and Alliances in Brazilian Popular Music of the 1990s". *Popular Music* 18.3 (Oct., 1999): 314.

⁷ Alves, 35.

⁸ Alves, 38.

⁹ "Derek Pardue. "Putting Mano to Music: The Mediation of Race in Brazilian Rap." *Ethnomusicology Forum* 13 (2004), 253-286.

¹⁰ Michael George Hanchard. *Orpheus and Power: the movimento negro of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil, 1945-1988*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 113.

¹¹ Hermano Vianna. *O funk carioca*. (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 1988), 28.

¹² Jeff Chang. *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*. (New York: Picador, 2005), 67-85.

¹³ qtd in Chang, xiii.

¹⁴ Denise Ferreira da Silva, "Facts of Blackness: Brazil Is Not (Quite) the United States. ... And Racial Politics in Brazil?" *Social Identities* 4 (1998): 201-234.

¹⁵ It is unclear as to if Gilberto Freyre actually ever coined this term. However, his theories of the Brazilian nation are considered fundamental to the idea of racial democracy in Brazil. See Antônio Sérgio Guimarães, *Classes, raças e democracia* (São Paulo: Editora 34; Fundação de Apoio à Universidade de São Paulo, 2002).

¹⁶ Gilberto Freyre. *Casa Grande & Senzala*. 19th Portuguese-Language Ed. (Rio de Janeiro: José Olimpo, 1978).

¹⁷ By *brasilidade*, I am referring to the notion of an essence of Brazilianness that defines Brazilian national character

¹⁸ Sonia Maria Giacomini. *Mulher e escrava: uma introdução histórica ao estudo de mulher negra no Brasil*. (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1988), 66.

¹⁹ Planet Hemp was controversial for advocating for the legalization of marijuana. Marcelo D2 is still associated with his controversial use of marijuana.

²⁰ Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2004).

²¹ For example the classic Ary Barroso's "*É Luxo Só*" (1930s) celebrates the sensuality and movement of the *mulata* as well as express desire for the *mulata*. Contemporary groups such as *É o Tchan* have also employed the image of the dancing *mulata sambista* as part of their performances. Other examples can be found in the tourist consumption of shows de *mulata* (theatrical commercial spectacles where Afro-Brazilian women dance *samba*).

²² Laura Mulvey. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". *Screen* 16.3 (1975): 6-18.

²³ The raised clenched fist has also been associated with labor and communist movements in the United States as well as with anti-colonial and anti-fascist struggles. Therefore, the fist itself was already borne out of transnational movements. The relationship between the clenched fist and the Black Panthers and the black power movement most likely emerged from these antecedents. For more on the uses of the clenched fist in anti-colonial and anti-fascist struggles, see Adi Hakim and Anandi Ramamurthy. "Fragments in the History of the Visual Culture of Anti-Colonial Struggle," in *Visual Culture and Decolonisation in Britain*, ed. Simon Faulkner and Anandi Ramamurthy. (London: Ashgate, 2006.)