

“Hung, Hot, and Shameless in Bed”

*Blackness, Desire, and Politics in a Brazilian Gay
Porn Magazine, 1997–2008*

“You’ve never seen anything sooooo big.” This was the cover caption for the February 2007 issue of *G Magazine*, Brazil’s most successful publication directed at a gay male audience. The model was Iran Gomes, a recent contestant on the hit reality show *Big Brother Brasil*. Iran wore a white suit, silk shirt, and straw hat, with gold chains hanging from his neck. With one hand jauntily placed in a pocket, the other seductively pulling aside his shirt, his posture slightly slouched, he would have been recognizable to any Brazilian as a *malandro*, a stock figure of Rio de Janeiro popular culture since the early twentieth century.¹ Frequently imagined as dark-skinned, the *malandro* is a chronically and willfully unemployed hustler who wears gaudy jewelry, a white suit, and a straw hat and wanders about the urban landscape composing samba songs, supporting himself through odd jobs and cons. The subtext behind Iran’s posture and vaguely sullen facial expression, along with the contrast between the shadowy background, the suit, and his black skin, was clear. Black is exotic. Black is dangerous. Black is sex. As one reader commented in an online message board dedicated to

the magazine, “These big black guys (*negões*) are extremely hung, hot, and shameless in bed.”²

This chapter analyzes how desires and fantasies about blackness, through both their presence and absence, structured erotic and political representations of African-descended men in *G Magazine*. Between its founding in 1997 and sale in 2008, *G* was Brazil’s best-selling publication targeted at an audience identified as “gay,” a term appropriated directly from English with its connotations of a globalized identification based upon male same-sex desire. While articles on travel and fashion, as well as LGBT activism, occupied many of the magazine’s glossy pages, the engine driving sales was the pornographic photographs (with erections) of straight-identified athletes, musicians, singers, and TV stars, their bodies on display for an implicitly upper- and middle-class audience. In keeping with Brazilian society’s pervasive association between whiteness, beauty, and wealth on the one hand and blackness, ugliness, and poverty on the other, the magazine’s cover models were overwhelmingly white. Afro-Brazilian men did appear on occasion, but when they did, the magazine’s gaze was profoundly ethnographic, as it nearly invariably represented eroticized black and brown models as malandros, primitive natives, athletes, samba artists, or manual laborers, their racial and class “other-ness” granting them their value in a capitalist marketplace of same-sex desire.³

Yet this was only one facet of how the magazine’s editors and readers gazed upon and appropriated black bodies. Paradoxically, alongside these racialized erotic representations, *G* self-consciously advanced a political discourse that claimed to challenge nationalist myths of racial democracy and promote an alliance between Brazil’s black and LGBT movements. This tension between desire and identity politics seems odd, even jarring, at first glance. Yet it was at the heart of the magazine’s representations of African-descended men and demonstrates that even as Brazil’s black movement has successfully brought attention to racism and promoted policies to remedy inequality, erotic representation remains governed by racialized discourses so firmly rooted that even a well-intentioned, politically progressive magazine reinforced them as it represented black bodies as consumable fetishes for a white capitalist market.

If one were to examine only *G Magazine*’s “discourse of desire” via its sexualized photographic and written representations of African-descended men, it would be easy to condemn the magazine as simply another example of the silences and stereotyping that pervade global representations of African-descended people. However, focusing solely on the magazine’s

parallel “discourse of identity politics” could lead to the flawed conclusion that *G* was on the cutting edge of progressive racial politics. This chapter avoids such a dichotomous understanding through an empirical analysis of production and reception, as revealed through a broad range of sources. In addition to analyzing an eleven-year run of the magazine, including photographs, captions, reader-contributed erotic stories, personals ads, and letters to the editor, it uses social media, online interviews, and chat sessions with models. It also incorporates my own face-to-face interview with *G Magazine*’s owner, Ana Fadigas, and her editor, Klifit Pugini, to explore the complex interplay between the representation of race and the production of erotic and political meaning. At the same time as Fadigas and her editorial staff determined the types of models and images that were most likely to sell magazines, they also attempted to promote an antiracist discourse in which they asserted the magazine’s solidarity with marginalized Afro-Brazilians and claimed to challenge their absence from Brazilian media.

Models contributed as active subjects by presenting their bodies as sites of desire and drawing attention to their own experiences of racism. Readers in turn participated as they communicated their desires as consumers, contributed content, and weighed in on the political discussion. These negotiations between editors, models, and readers sometimes reinforced and other times challenged Brazilian racial assumptions. While *G Magazine*’s endorsement of a progressive racial politics was unable to displace a discourse of desire that objectified black men as “hung, hot, and shameless in bed,” it was also not simply a farce or an attempt to ameliorate the magazine’s racially charged erotic representations. Rather, these seemingly contradictory discourses were emblematic of the broader debate about race that continues to rage in Brazilian society, with all the contradictions that entails as a nation that still prides itself on its cordial race relations and fluidity of racial categories grapples with the realization that the black and brown half of its population suffers from structurally enduring poverty and racial prejudice.

Despite nearly a century of studies of race in Brazil, it has only been in the last twenty-five years that scholars have seriously examined Brazilian mass media’s gross underrepresentation and stereotyping of Afro-Brazilians. Joel Zito Araújo’s 2000 book and 2002 documentary *A negação do Brasil* stand out for their nuanced analysis of both the drastic underrepresentation of Afro-Brazilians in prime-time TV soap operas, a genre that is complicit “with the persistence of the ideal of whitening and the desire of Brazilians to Euro-americanize,” and the stereotypical roles

that are usually assigned to the rare Afro-Brazilian characters.⁴ Another rich area for analysis has been the experiences of African-descended women in a country that imagines the mixed-race woman (*mulata*) as the ideal of sexualized beauty while simultaneously casting darker-skinned black women as unattractive and unworthy of romantic relationships.⁵ Yet although the representation of blackness in media and the sexualization of Afro-Brazilian women have been addressed extensively, the ways in which Afro-Brazilian men are represented and sexualized in Brazilian popular culture have received virtually no attention at all.

If studies of race in Brazil have seldom examined black male sexuality, studies of male sexuality in Brazil, particularly nonnormative sexualities, have paid little attention to race. For example, anthropologist Richard Parker, in his pioneering study of gay male culture in urban Brazil, argues that race is “generally secondary to, or at best function[s] in concert with, the more sharply dividing cleavages that organize sexuality around the lines of social class.”⁶ Don Kulick, in his superb ethnography of transgendered sex workers in Salvador, never addresses their color, although his photographs reveal them to be predominantly African-descended, nor the role that race might play in their marginalization.⁷ The most important exception to this trend was Nestor Perlongher’s study of *michês* (stereotypically “masculine” sex workers) in 1987, in which he identified pervasive racial prejudice among both clients and *michês*, even though over half of the sex workers he observed were Afro-Brazilian.⁸ More recently a new generation of Brazilian anthropologists has studied race and male homosexuality in the neoliberal marketplace. Isadora Lins França has studied the intersection of class, masculinity, and race among working-class Afro-Brazilian men in a gay samba club in São Paulo.⁹ Similarly Camilo Braz has examined how a variety of social cleavages, including race, structure interactions between men in São Paulo sex clubs.¹⁰ And Osmundo Pinho has offered tantalizing hints into the ways that paid gay porn websites fetishize and commercialize a mixed-race, hypersexual “Brazilian-ness.”¹¹

With its analysis of written sources such as print and social media, personal ads, and visual representation, combined with my interview with *G Magazine*’s founder and longtime owner and editor, this chapter proposes a more nuanced analysis of the layers of desire, stereotyping, political conviction, and market considerations that structure the erotic representation and reception of blackness. It stands apart from most earlier work on Brazil by identifying race, not social class, as the focal point for social divisions. That is, rather than arguing that African-descended men are marginalized

because they are poor, it maintains that there is a set of racially based stereotypes that structures erotic representation and desire in Brazil that operates parallel to but separate (and in very different ways) from social class.¹² It also innovates by looking beyond underrepresentation and stereotypes to examine how these interact with politics.

In contrast with the Brazilian literature, the relationship between race and (homo)sexual visual representations has been explored in great depth by scholars of black cultural studies in the Anglophone world. Going back at least to Kobena Mercer's provocative critiques of Robert Mapplethorpe's famous photographs of black men, which itself builds on a far older tradition of black scholarship that dates to Frantz Fanon, scholars have turned a sharp eye to how black men are sexualized by both white and black artists and authors.¹³ Yet these works seldom look beyond the United States and United Kingdom. With over 100 million people who identify as black or brown, Brazil has the world's second-largest African or African-descended population, trailing only Nigeria. With its 350-year use of enslaved labor on sugar and coffee plantations and in gold mining, its peaceful and gradual process of abolition, the lack of any system of legal segregation similar to Jim Crow, mass black and brown migration from north to south in the twentieth century, and a national discourse that glorifies rather than demonizes racial mixture, Brazil offers a fascinating point of comparison to and departure from the United States and helps clarify which manifestations of and challenges to racism and inequality are uniquely Anglo-American and which might be diasporic, perhaps even global. As this chapter's title makes clear, Brazilian sexualized representations of black men are immediately recognizable to North Americans. The ways in which Brazilians recognize and interpret racism and racialized representations, particularly in the context of racial democracy, can be strikingly, even uncomfortably, different.

Finally, I would like to reflect on my role as I have looked at these images for a decade, grinned as I have shown them to shocked and titillated audiences at academic conferences, and write about them now. This project began in 2006, my first year as a doctoral student, in a seminar on Afro-Brazil at Duke University. I had just returned from six months in Brazil and brought back several copies of *G Magazine*, which I'd intended to show off to my gay friends in the United States. During the week our seminar discussed the absence of Afro-Brazilians in Brazilian media, I brought a copy of the magazine with me to class, with a white, green-eyed cover model in the process of removing a suit and dress shirt. The caption said, "This is the

type of guy you marry!” At the urging of the professor, John D. French (my advisor), I made *G Magazine* the object of my research in a seminar with Pete Sigal on the history of sexuality. Yet as I have presented the project to that class and conferences and invited talks in both the United States and Brazil, I have found myself forced to reckon with the same issues over and over, issues that relate to my own implication in producing and reproducing the ethnopornographic gaze.

First, as I have shown these images and put black bodies—specifically, “big (hard) black dicks”—on display for an audience of largely white academics, have I not reproduced the same ethnopornographic gaze that structures racialized representation in *G Magazine*? Indeed, when we consider the added dynamic of relatively privileged North Americans of any color casting our gaze upon Brazilian Others, is my own gaze not even more complicit with racial, class, and national structures of inequality? Is the point a critical discussion of Brazilian representations of black men, or am I using black bodies to win attention as “that guy who showed naked black guys”? Over the years, I have experimented with several ways to address this. Sometimes I have passed the images out as a handout; other times I have shown them on the screen for only a few seconds, replacing them quickly with a blank slide. For this chapter, however, I have chosen not to show them at all. In part, this is because *G Magazine* was sold in 2008 and ceased publication a few years later. The company it was sold to is also now defunct, complicating my efforts to obtain permission to reproduce the images. Yet I also leave the images out because I want to ensure that my reproduction of black bodies is not the focus. Besides, I am confident in interested readers’ ability to execute an online image search if the fancy strikes.

Second, there is the question of what it means not only for an American historian to examine and reproduce pornographic images of black Brazilian bodies but also how my own race and sexual preference fit into the analysis. I am a gay, white man who has dated several black and brown Brazilian men over the years, and my gaze here is informed by the sexual and romantic relationships I have had with these men who are stereotyped as “hung, hot, and shameless in bed,” as well as the pleasure and desire I feel when I look at the images in *G Magazine*. Consequently, my own analysis is not just an analysis of the ethnopornography that pervades *G Magazine*; it is intensely and inescapably ethnopornographic itself. I have no illusions of an idealized objectivity, for, as the introduction to this volume shows, such claims only further the ethnopornographic “Othering” of black bodies. There is no way for me to escape this, but I would be remiss

if I did not acknowledge it. This is an analysis of white discourses about blackness, written by a white, gay, cisgender male who often finds himself attracted to darker-skinned Brazilians. Undoubtedly the account of a black or brown Brazilian gay, cisgender male scholar would complicate the ethnographic gaze in very different ways.¹⁴

G Magazine: A Pioneer in Brazilian LGBT Media

Launched in 1997 in São Paulo, *G Magazine* distinguished itself by combining soft-core pornography (a staple of earlier gay publications) with information on the gay bar scene in major cities, travel information, fashion tips, body care, workout recommendations, advice columns, and frequent forays into activism. Its format proved popular, but even more importantly, *G* possessed the initial capital to pay famous actors and athletes to pose nude. In August 1998, *G* succeeded in recruiting a well-known *novela* (prime-time soap opera) actor as a cover model.¹⁵ This was followed in January 1999 by the controversial appearance of the African-descended soccer star Vampeta, who played for Corinthians, the most popular football club in São Paulo, if not Brazil, and who would later play on Brazil's 2002 World Cup championship team.¹⁶ The combination of full-frontal nudity (with erections), nonsexually oriented material, and, above all, icons of popular culture was wildly successful. By 2005, owner Ana Fadigas claimed that *G* averaged 110,000 copies sold per month, nearly half the 240,000 copies per month sold by the Brazilian version of *Playboy*.¹⁷ By January 2008, when Fadigas astutely sold the magazine as more and more Brazilians gained access to the internet and its endless variety of pornography, *G* had released over 120 issues and become a staple of urban Brazilian gay culture.

G was popular for at least four reasons. First, it combined pornography, which previous gay lifestyle magazines lacked, with travel, fashion, activism, and other nonexplicit content, which previous pornographic magazines lacked. Second, its format was glossy, professional, and eye-catching. Third, it marketed a cosmopolitan, fashionable, internationally oriented, healthy “gay lifestyle” at a time when male homosexuality was becoming increasingly tolerated in Brazil, as evidenced by the spectacular growth of what would become the world's largest gay and lesbian pride parades and the increasing visibility of gay men and lesbians in the media and entertainment. Fourth, and by far most important, it offered its readers the opportunity to see athletes, actors, reality show participants, and other icons of

pop culture nude, from the front, with erections. In a 2003 online survey of users of *G*'s website, 59 percent of respondents indicated that their first choice for a cover model was "someone famous, just to see him nude," while only 20 percent preferred "someone attractive, not just his body, but also his face."¹⁸ *G* thus benefited from the same desire that drives the market for celebrity porn—the desire to see what beautiful and famous people have underneath their clothes, for the viewer to gaze upon their image and experience its reciprocal gaze.¹⁹ As the photograph looks back at the viewer, it penetrates him through its seductive gaze—the famous person "enters" the viewer.

The magazine's appeal was increased for many of its readers by the fact that virtually all the cover models were assumed to be (and identified as) heterosexual. The interviews with the models nearly always remained ambiguous, however, using gender-neutral language and carefully avoiding questions about sexual orientation. In one issue, the interviewer asked Iran Gomes (the man dressed as a malandro referenced in the introduction), "Do you often use your body to seduce someone?" Iran responds, "That's normal, isn't it? I've passed by that men's area of *Posto 9* [the gay section of Ipanema Beach in Rio de Janeiro]—then there comes the applause, everyone looking at you."²⁰ Thus, readers all "knew" that the models were straight, but the magazine avoided any mention of wives or girlfriends and left the interviews ambiguous enough for readers to participate in a fantasy of a sexually attainable straight man.²¹

African-Descended Models in *G Magazine*: Underrepresentation and the Gay Market of Desire

Scholars and black activists alike have long noted the near absence of African-descended people in Brazilian media, even though in the 2010 census over half of Brazilians identified as brown or black. *G Magazine* followed this pattern—as of January 2008, when Fadigas sold the magazine, out of a total of 139 cover models, 121 were white, with only 16 black or brown men. (The two remaining models were of Asian descent.) This is notable not only because of the inflated number of white models compared to the population but also because among the African-descended models, most had prominently "African" phenotypical features; only 4.3 percent of the models demonstrated a visibly mixed ancestry.²²

Most of the Afro-Brazilian models appeared in the earlier issues of the magazine, through May 2001. But from June 2001 to April 2007, only five Afro-Brazilian models appeared on the cover, and the magazine once published thirty-three consecutive issues with white cover models, many of them blonde and blue-eyed. This decrease in African-descended models coincided with an editorial decision to refine the magazine's image by reducing its emphasis on sex and nightlife. As the magazine grew in popularity and the editors experimented with various types of models and gauged reader responses, both through letters and sales data, it is possible that they reduced the number of African-descended models accordingly. Marcelo Cerqueira of the Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB), a gay rights organization in Salvador, expressed this view in an interview with *Revista Gold*, reproduced on the GGB's website. "Here in Brazil, editors of magazines directed at the gay public say that *negros* on the cover do not sell magazines."²³ When I interviewed her in 2008, Fadigas agreed, claiming that when she put a black man on the cover, she knew that unless he was very famous, that issue would sell 30–40 percent fewer issues than one with a nonfamous blonde model, but that she insisted on having, on average, one black model per year, because she believed it was important to open up space for Afro-Brazilians in media.²⁴ *G* was invested in an effort to project a modern, fashionable image of a Brazil that mimicked Euro-North American gay life. Due to the centuries-old association of blackness with lower-class status in Brazil, which squares well with Western standards of beauty that define attractiveness according to European norms, *G* had little space for Afro-Brazilian models.

Letters to the editor indicate that some readers were concerned with the relative absence of African-descended models. The force of these letters was blunted, however, by their publication alongside ones asking for older models, hairier models, more pictures of feet, and more photos of *bunda* (ass). Whiteness, sculpted bodies, and youth remained the norm; any departure from that norm, including blackness, was relegated to the status of fetish.²⁵

Considering the near absence of blackness in Brazilian media, the low proportion of black models in *G Magazine* was unsurprising. Although this certainly showed how the dominant aesthetic in Brazilian gay culture assumed whiteness as normative, it is more instructive to explore how *G* represented Afro-Brazilians when they did appear and, in so doing, ask how such representations circulated in the gay marketplace of desire. The following pages analyze images of models, interviews, letters, and erotic stories to

explore the representation of Afro-Brazilians as desirable in *G*, suggesting how these representations can be interpreted within the context of the sexual marketplace and transnational sexualized representations of black men.

King of a Free Nation—Créo Kellab

The May 2000 issue of *G* featured Créo Kellab, a model and theater actor who had appeared in minor roles in novelas. The cover proclaims him “king of a free nation,” and the first page of the photo essay contains a short paragraph to set the stage for the images that follow. “Although he has faced the jungle of the big city with all its competition, it’s in the middle of nature that Créo Kellab exhibits his astonishing black beauty in all its fullness.”²⁶ The photographs portray a dreadlocked Créo next to (and in) a river in the rainforest, wearing only tribal jewelry and carrying a brightly colored spear. It is unclear if Créo is “king of a free nation” in the jungles of Africa, or if he is the leader of a maroon community (*quilombo*) in Brazil.²⁷ Regardless, the representation implies that the black man is “in his element” in the jungle. Ultimately, the urban jungle of Rio de Janeiro, where he actually lives, is not where Créo belongs; the most appropriate environment for the exhibition of his “astonishing black beauty” is the real jungle, surrounded by rocks, trees, and water—a black man in his native habitat.

The placement of Créo in the jungle highlights his supposed savagery and closeness to nature. In most of the images, he appears barely conscious of his nudity, and his penis is erect only in one or two images, heightening the sense that he is a native in his natural environment. However, although Créo may appear unconscious of his own nudity, he is not unconscious of his sensuality and ability to seduce the reader. For despite his unselfconscious nudity, Créo is not merely a primitive object upon whom viewers direct their devouring gaze. Rather, as Todd McGowan points out, “The gaze is not the look of the object, but the point at which the object looks back. The gaze thus involves the spectator in the image, disrupting her/his ability to remain all-perceiving and unperceived.”²⁸ The photos also temper the innocence of his unselfconscious nudity with the spear he carries. Long and erect, it communicates the message of aggression and danger that his penis does not—this “savage” in his native habitat possesses the ability to hunt the reader down with his spear, to penetrate the reader with his weapon and gaze alike.

Reader responses printed in the letters to the editor in the months after Créo’s appearance were generally positive, yet they focused almost

without exception on his color, referring to him as “a god of black beauty,” and “well-hung, doing justice to the fame of the *negros*.”²⁹ A female reader stated that the essay took her breath away with “the perfect and inspiring forms of this *negro* stud.”³⁰ Yet another called Créo “a true representative of this delicious race . . . not only beautiful [but also] charming, hot, and erotic to the maximum.”³¹ These comments gave voice to racialized beliefs about the sexuality of African-descended men that circulate well beyond Brazil, and it was precisely these supposed characteristics that made black men desirable for these readers. Such references to color occurred only when the models were not white; white models might be referred to as “Greek gods,” but no one made them representatives of their race.

You’ve Never Seen Anything Sooo Big—Iran Gomes

In February 2007, *G* featured former *Big Brother Brasil* reality show contestant Iran Gomes on the cover. As stated previously, the cover caption proclaimed, “You’ve never seen anything sooo big,” establishing from the beginning that it was first and foremost Iran’s (black) penis that merited attention and made him a commodity in the gay marketplace of desire. Although all gay pornography exhibits a rather predictable focus on the penis, this preoccupation became an obsession in *G*’s images of Iran. In one picture it hangs innocuously from the open fly of his white pants as he holds onto and leans away from a lamppost on a Rio de Janeiro street. In another, he clutches it, fully erect, as if debating where to aim a weapon, while gazing directly at the camera and, by extension, at the viewer. This direct gaze, together with the hand grabbing the erect penis, invites the viewer to fantasize being penetrated, being possessed, by this aggressive black man and his “big, black dick.” In still another, he caresses the tip with his finger as he gazes dreamily at it, eyes nearly closed. Once again, the penis is the focal point—Iran directs his gaze at it and touches it gingerly, while its dull blackness contrasts sharply with the shininess of the rest of his body. In others, Iran holds his hand just next to his flaccid penis, not quite touching it, as if to remind the viewer that, though soft, it is nevertheless ever at the ready.³² In most of these images, Iran wears the gold jewelry of the malandro—and little else.

The setting is also telling. All the images show Iran on the streets and in the bars of Rio de Janeiro at night. In contrast to Créo Kellab, who although he lived in the city belonged in the jungle, Iran is represented as being completely in his element in the city, evidenced by his carefree posture and cool,

relaxed demeanor. The urban setting is directly connected to his representation as a malandro. After the abolition of slavery in 1888, formerly enslaved Afro-Brazilians migrated en masse to urban centers, especially Rio de Janeiro. They built shantytowns on the steep hills (*morros*) overlooking the city, where they developed a community structure that existed alongside yet was largely separate from the city below, where white elites dreamed of recreating Paris in the tropics.³³ Due to their marginal status the residents of the *morros* often found themselves excluded from the formal economy. Jobs were scarce and prejudice common; thus, it is not surprising that many African-descended and working-class men did, in fact, wander about the city looking for odd jobs or resorting to petty crime to support themselves.³⁴ By the 1930s, the figure of the malandro, with his white suit, silk shirt, straw hat, and gold jewelry, had become a Rio de Janeiro icon. He became a constant theme of the songs of the samba culture that was emerging in Rio in the 1930s, and through the growing influence of radio, the malandro of the samba lyrics soon became a national icon as well.³⁵ The malandro is intimately associated with not only Rio de Janeiro but also blackness. All the attributes of the racialized malandro are transferred to Iran in the photographs—the clothes, the jewelry, the urban setting, but above all, the focus on danger and a legendary sexual prowess with the power to seduce and conquer.

Readers' responses to Iran were similar to their responses to Créo Kellab seven years earlier. On the now-defunct social networking website Orkut (a precursor to Google+, at the time the most popular social networking site in Brazil), readers expressed their opinions on the message boards of the *G Magazine* community, a group organized for fans to share images and discuss the magazine. Even before the magazine hit newsstands, once it had become known that Iran was to be the February cover model, members speculated about what his images might reveal. "When the magazine comes out, could someone post his pictures? He's delicious, and he must be hung."³⁶ Once the magazine hit newsstands on February 1, several posters to the site, both male and female, speculated about what it would be like to be penetrated by Iran's admittedly large penis. "It's the biggest dick in the history of *G*; anyone who bottomed for him would risk rupturing internal organs."³⁷ This led to a discussion of precisely how large it was and whether large members were a universal characteristic of black men, along with what other sexual characteristics black men might possess. One poster exclaimed, "I only hook up *negões* [big black guys] because they are extremely hung, hot, and shameless in bed. . . . I only go out with *negros*. In

addition to being hot, they're also passionate and make me delirious. Who here has already enjoyed a really well-endowed *negão*?”³⁸ In response, another poster gushed, “*Nossa Senhora* [Our Lady], where would I be without these *negões*? I adore a *mulato*, or, better yet, a *negro*. I've hooked up with four, and of the four, I think the smallest was 20 centimeters.”³⁹

It is from statements like these, which unlike the letters were not filtered through an editorial staff, that it is easiest to capture the way readers exoticized black men as Other. Readers looked upon the black penis with a mixture of fear, awe, and pleasure. While some posters feared it as something that could cause physical injury, others expressed a strong (and not necessarily contradictory) desire to be penetrated by Iran's penis (or one similarly big and black). Furthermore, through the various discussions concerning Iran and *negros*, it again becomes clear that the *negro* was viewed as someone or something fundamentally Other. It never appeared to occur to any of the posters that black or brown men might buy the magazine or post on the message board; rather, African-descended men were an Other by whose enormous penises the presumably white posters dream of being penetrated, either literally or metaphorically.

Immense Penises and Insatiable Sex Drives—African-Descended Men in Erotic Stories

Paralleling their relative absence from the magazine covers, African-descended men seldom appeared in reader-contributed erotic stories; however, when the stories did mention race, it was nearly always because one of the characters was *mulato* (mixed race) or *negro* (black). When African-descended men did appear, particularly when they were dark-skinned, they were even more racialized than the cover models, represented as brutishly strong, extraordinarily well-endowed, aggressive, sexually insatiable ravishers of meek, smooth, young white men.⁴⁰ The stories were nearly invariably told from the perspective of a white “bottom” who lusted after a black “top,” and the Afro-Brazilian character was never well-developed—one story does not even give his name, instead alternately referring to him as the *negro*, the *negrão* (a variant of *negão*), the *afro*, and the taxi driver.⁴¹ The *negro* (or in one case, *mulato*) was always the active partner who penetrated the white character with his “immense” penis.

The following story, titled “Sexta-feira 13—O Terror” (“Friday the 13th—The Terror”), is representative. At the end of the semester at a trade school,

the students throw a costume party on Friday the 13th. The unnamed protagonist relates that all semester he had his eye on Pepeu, “a strong mulato the size of a wardrobe,” but that Pepeu never looked twice at him, even though he was “blonde, tan, and [had] an ass that could make girls envious and turn any man on.” He encounters Pepeu drunk at the costume party, and Pepeu immediately makes known his desire to penetrate him. They move to a bathroom stall, where the mulato reveals his “immense dick, as hard as a rock . . . thick and dark.” “Famished,” the “uncontrollable *macho*” sucks and invades the protagonist’s ass “with an animalistic fury,” devouring his little body. Pepeu penetrates him once, but as soon as they finish, the insatiable mulato is ready to do it again. The blonde, tan protagonist concludes with, “I doubted that fuck, already the second, would be the last. The night was going to be a terror.”⁴² This story, then, repeats practically every popularly-held belief about black male sexuality and would be easily recognizable in the United States—Pepeu is masculine, well-endowed, sexually insatiable, and, of course, the top.

Erotic stories in *G* featuring white characters or characters whose race was not specified also referred to penis size, but instead of possessing incredibly “immense” penises, white men were simply “well-endowed,” “big and thick,” or “really big.”⁴³ Unlike Pepeu, however, whose penis was immense, hard, thick, *and* dark, white men were never described as having large *white* penises. This phenomenon is reminiscent of popular attitudes toward the black penis in the United States, where the same intimate association between size and blackness holds true. In his analysis of the place of the black penis in North American gay culture, Dwight McBride states, “It is virtually unimaginable that one might hear in [a gay pornographic] film, ‘Give me that big white dick.’ . . . The nomenclature of size is so integrated with blackness that when it comes to the pornographic idea of the penis in the imaginary, it is nearly impossible to think of disaggregating the two.”⁴⁴ Or, as Scott Poulson-Bryant succinctly puts it, “The size is the color. The color is the size.”⁴⁵

Regardless of the race of the characters, erotic stories were nearly always told from the perspective of the passive partner, either in the first person or in the third person with an omniscient narrator. In the same way that the direct gaze of the models in the photographs generated a fantasy of possession and penetration by the model in the viewing subject, the near exclusive focus in the erotic stories on the experience of the passive partner likewise encouraged the reader to place himself in the position of the protagonist, to imagine himself seduced and penetrated. The immense,

insatiable, uncontrollable, and always penetrating, never penetrated figure of the *negão* was especially well-suited to such a fantasy.

“The Problems a Negro Faces”: *G Magazine* and Racial Politics

To summarize, in the context of desire, African-descended men were distinguished in *G Magazine* primarily by race-based markers, which expressed themselves through several different themes or motifs—the sexually aggressive, sinister urban figure and the primitive native, among others. Yet this discourse of desire was only one form that discourses about race took in *G*. Paradoxically, even as the magazine underrepresented African-descended men and portrayed them according to long-standing transnational stereotypes, it also issued strident critiques of Brazilian racism, lamented the socioeconomic marginalization faced by Afro-Brazilians, and pointed out the limited space afforded them in the country’s media. On occasion, this political discourse even bled over into erotic representations of African-descended men, representing them quite differently from the manner described above. While the photographs, as the most sexualized feature of the magazine, acted as a site only for desire, columns, interviews, letters to the editor, and erotic stories exhibited both erotic and political discourse. Editors, models, and readers all participated in this parallel political discourse and combined it with the discourse of desire. The results did not cancel out the stereotypical representations the magazine employed; indeed, in a magazine that was bought primarily for its photos, it could never fully supplant sexualized discourses. Nevertheless, they showed that old understandings of Brazil as a racial democracy and black men as aggressive and savage must now share space with admissions of Brazil’s deep-seated racism and more humanized depictions of African-descended men.

The editors of *G* encouraged political content about race in the magazine first and foremost by granting African-descended models much greater exposure than they had in other Brazilian pornographic magazines. It could at first appear absurd to claim that *G* granted heightened visibility to African-descended models; after all, between 1997 and 2008, 87 percent of the cover models were white. However, for a Brazilian pornographic publication, 12 percent was actually a high percentage of African-descended cover models. The percentage of African-descended models in the Brazilian version of *Playboy* during the same period was far lower. Out

of 155 *Playboy* cover models between October 1997 and January 2008, 150 (96.8 percent) were white, with only five (3.2 percent) black or visibly mixed women. The Afro-Brazilian *Playboy* models were usually at the lighter end of the color spectrum and their hair was usually straightened. Although *G* once published thirty-three consecutive issues without featuring an African-descended cover model, Brazilian *Playboy* once published *two hundred* consecutive issues, from 1980 to 1996, without featuring one cover model with African phenotypical features.⁴⁶ This far higher percentage of African-descended models in *G* could have been for two non-mutually exclusive reasons. First, *G* could have believed that its target market, gay men, was more open to African-descended models than *Playboy's* market. Second—and this was the argument made by the magazine's founder—*G* could have been making a political statement by including African-descended models, attempting to express solidarity with the black struggle in Brazil.

The first possibility is intriguing but difficult to prove. My examination of a selection of the personals ads published in *G* between 1997 and 2000 revealed that although 70.3 percent contained a racial description of the person placing the ad, only 17.1 percent of men who placed personals ads specified that they sought men of a particular race.⁴⁷ In contrast, a 1984 study of personals ads in the United States found that 42 percent of North American men posting in gay personals specified a racial preference, as compared to much lower percentages of heterosexual men, heterosexual women, and lesbian women.⁴⁸ And anyone who has spent any time at all on gay dating apps today knows how often white gay men in the United States say, “Sorry, no blacks. Not a racist, just my preference!” This could mean that Brazilian gay and bisexual men were less preoccupied with race than their North American counterparts, but it was more likely just the result of Brazilian racial etiquette and its desire to avoid the appearance of prejudice. It is telling, after all, that many of the ads requested a photograph, thus enabling the solicitant to reject respondents who did not fit their racial or other aesthetic preferences.

The second possibility, that *G* included African-descended models as a political statement, finds more definitive support within the magazine. *G* occasionally published columns or made editorial comments that expressed the magazine's support for the black struggle and its opposition to all forms of discrimination. For example, in a column titled “Black and Homosexual: A Double Dose of Prejudice,” Marcelo Cerqueira asserted that new spaces were opening for those whose racial or sexual identities

once consigned them to marginality. “Our era is witnessing the affirmation of identities which for centuries were denied or stigmatized: to be *negro* was shameful, to be gay, a hideous crime. Today, ‘Black is beautiful!’ [in English] and, ‘It’s cool to be gay!’ Human rights have come to include all the ‘minorities,’ including the ex-slaves and the ex-sodomites.”⁴⁹

Yet at the same time, Cerqueira affirmed, “In Brazil, being black alludes to a sad past of exploitation, official racism, slave labor, and forced exile from Mother Africa in the New World.”⁵⁰ Cerqueira knew that racial discrimination still existed, but the only examples he gave were of immigration agents at airports in Portugal, Chile, and the United States scrutinizing his passport more carefully than they did those of white Brazilians. By the end of the column, however, he admitted that prejudice was not confined to the past or to other countries. “Despite not having much pride in our Brazil, so unjust, corrupt, violent, and prejudiced, it is here that I have chosen to transform our land into a happier, more fraternal, more joyful society, where neither skin color nor sexual orientation are reasons for division, insecurity, or suffering.”⁵¹

Cerqueira thus moved successively from claiming that modern society affirmed formerly marginal identities like never before to admitting that although slavery and official racism were in the past, their memory remained, to asserting that although racism existed, it existed primarily in other countries, and, finally, to expressing disillusionment with Brazil and its social problems, of which racial prejudice was only one. Ultimately, neither the consignment of racism to the past nor its displacement to other countries made Cerqueira forget the prejudice African-descended Brazilians still experienced at home. Yet he held out hope that Brazil could still become the kind of country he dreamed of, that it could turn into the racial democracy it claimed to be. As Robin Sheriff has argued, racial democracy is not simply a myth or form of false consciousness that deceives Brazilians into believing that equality actually exists; rather, it is a yet-unrealized dream of equality that Brazilians believe should and can exist.⁵²

Furthermore, Cerqueira directly tied the struggle for racial equality to the struggle for equality for sexual minorities, a connection that the gay rights movement in Brazil and abroad had consistently attempted to make. By linking gay rights to the struggle for racial equality—and by publishing a column by Cerqueira, himself a black gay activist—*G* attempted to posit the Brazilian gay rights movement as a natural ally of Brazil’s black movement. In so doing, it exposed its readers to the discourse of the black movement and helped reinforce what many Brazilians have come to accept—that

racism and prejudice remained widespread in Brazil. By stating that being black and gay exposed one to a “double dose of prejudice,” *G* equated the prejudice felt by gay men to that experienced by black men—a problematic claim, to be sure, since white gay men in Brazil and elsewhere still enjoy racial and class privilege, but nonetheless an acknowledgment of the black struggle in Brazil’s “racial democracy.”

Interviews with models were another politicized medium through which *G* attempted to establish its consciousness of racism and inculcate that consciousness in its readers. When Afro-Brazilian models appeared in the magazine (except as athletes), *G* tended to draw attention to the limited space for them in Brazilian media and entertainment. Interviews were also the most obvious means through which black or brown models participated in political discourse. In an interview with *Big Brother Brasil* contestant Alan, the issue of race comes up repeatedly. Born in the Baixada Fluminense, a sprawling mass of working-class suburbs north of Rio de Janeiro, Alan moved with his parents to Angra dos Reis, a gritty coastal city, when he was eleven. When speaking of his teenage years, Alan recalls that although he attended the best high school in the city, his classmates always saw him as “the *neguinho* [little black kid] who came from the Baixada,” indicating that race and class were jointly responsible for his marginalization. People began to accept him only when he started playing basketball for a local team, and as he played sports and built up his body, “that *neguinho* stuff came to an end.”⁵³

After being voted off *Big Brother Brasil*, Alan had the opportunity to act in several television commercials, all destined for a foreign market. “In Brazil, it’s the same as ever—I don’t do commercials.” The interviewer asks, “Why? Prejudice?” Alan, however, in a classic manifestation of Brazilian racial etiquette, is reluctant to make such a harsh accusation. “I don’t know if that’s what it is.” The interviewer presses the issue, “The products sold out there exist here too.” Emboldened, Alan responds, “Absolutely. For example, you don’t see a *negão* doing a toothpaste commercial, a shaving cream commercial, here in Brazil. And I’ve done three commercials like this for other countries. In the United States, if the toothpaste commercials don’t show a *negão* brushing his teeth, people won’t buy it. There is more exposure [for blacks] there. But not here. As far as teeth go, for example, damn, our teeth are the best. Even so . . .”⁵⁴ Finally, when the interviewer asks who his idols are, Alan lists not Brazilian heroes but Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, “those who taught me to pursue my goals.”⁵⁵

Alan expresses a willingness to discuss prejudice but is astute enough to realize that it has seldom done Afro-Brazilians much good to complain about it. The interviewer suggests that his absence from commercials in Brazil may be due to prejudice, and when he equivocates, the interviewer presses him, reminding him that these same products are also sold in Brazil. The interview repeatedly compares the space afforded black men in Brazil negatively with the space available in the United States. Whereas in the United States consumers will reputedly not buy toothpaste unless a black man appears in the commercial, in Brazil, Alan has not managed to appear in one commercial. His idols are the heroes of the North American civil rights movement, implying (incorrectly) that Brazil does not have similar role models who can teach young black men to pursue their goals.

The interview with Créo Kellab similarly draws attention to the prejudice directed at black men in the media and entertainment industries. The interview contains no questions, instead providing a narrative of Créo's career with quotations from the actor interspersed throughout. Créo grew up in Minas Gerais, the son of “a black man who was at the margins of society, who sold fish.” He moved to Rio de Janeiro at the age of eighteen to pursue a theater career, but, in the words of the editorial staff, “Créo was not aware of the problems a black actor faces.”⁵⁶ As Créo recalls,

For me, prejudice is something that is in people's heads. But soon I realized that there was no one with black skin on the cover of magazines. I would try out for the role of a young man who falls in love with a girl. No one would say so, but it could never be a negro. This hurt me a little. . . . Even so, I used my fear and innocence to become stronger, to conquer things. . . . In the beginning, I was just a black guy who wanted to work. But after I made a place for myself, I started to bother some people. . . . Thank God I had matured by then and learned to let certain situations slide.⁵⁷

Créo qualifies his allegations of racism by stating, “Prejudice is something that is in people's heads,” that is, it is an individual problem, not a structural problem. He also asserts that when faced with prejudice, sometimes the best response is to be mature and “let certain situations slide.” At the same time, Créo exhibits in his interview a conscious desire to increase awareness of the problems faced by Afro-Brazilians in entertainment. In an online chat between the actor and his fans organized by a Brazilian digital media conglomerate, Créo urged the chat participants to not only

look at his photos in *G* but also read the interview in order to find out about where he came from and the difficulties he had faced, “because it’s complicated for a black man to get on the cover of any magazine. Even as a professional, an actor.”⁵⁸

Créo clearly viewed his appearance in *G* as a unique opportunity for a black man to gain access to a medium normally inaccessible to African descendants, and he repeatedly referred to the difficulties he faced as a black actor. At the same time, by quoting Créo’s statement that he never saw Afro-Brazilians on the cover of magazines, *G* emphasized that he *was* on the cover of *this* magazine, thus highlighting its own cooperation with the struggle of Afro-Brazilians to carve out a space for themselves in media and entertainment. As a prominent voice of one oppressed group (homosexuals), *G* represented itself as standing in solidarity with another (blacks). This may have served as an attempt to establish solidarity between the LGBT movement and the black movement. It is also possible that *G* used this political discourse to offset the potential negative effects of its racialized discourse of desire and its underrepresentation of African-descended models. That is, an occasional column about the plight of gay Afro-Brazilians, along with a focus in interviews on prejudice in the media and entertainment industry, helped protect the magazine from charges of racism as it racialized and hypersexualized black men while displaying white models out of all proportion to their percentage in the Brazilian population.

Perhaps this was at the prompting of the editorial staff, and perhaps it was spontaneous on the part of the models, but either way, it is significant that these explicit challenges to Brazil’s most treasured national myth received such prominent, albeit occasional, attention in Brazil’s premier gay publication. Whatever the editors intended, even when models attempted to qualify or soften their critiques of racism in Brazil, the interviews *did* open discursive space that held the potential to destabilize the Brazilian system of racial etiquette that demands silence about racism and questions the patriotism of those who doubt the reality of racial democracy. The fact that this occurred alongside blatantly racialized visual representations blunts its effects, particularly for foreign readers who may be more shocked by such unapologetic peddling in stereotypes (something not uncommon in Brazilian media), but it does not eliminate them. The interviews show that the African-descended models who posed for *G* were not simply powerless victims whom the magazine subjected to racialized stereotypes to spur sales. Rather, these men were active subjects who, within certain limitations, were themselves engaged in the production of meaning.

Indeed, there is evidence that the models helped select the actual nude photographs that appeared in the magazine. In so doing, they were capable of appropriating images such as the malandro and the “king of a free nation” and using them to create an exotic, desirable image of themselves. For example, in the February 2007 issue that began this chapter, it appears that Iran had a role in selecting the malandro motif. In his profile on the *Big Brother Brasil 6* website, Iran gave his occupation as *sambista*—that is, composer of sambas. A longtime member of Salgueiro, a Rio de Janeiro samba school that participates in annual Carnival festivities, Iran composed songs for the school after his appearance on *Big Brother Brasil*.⁵⁹ As a member of Salgueiro, Iran gained a reputation as a womanizer, so much so that his teammates on the school’s soccer team reportedly joked that they preferred not to shower with him after a game because “that guy is the man—he screws all the women. You can’t let your guard down around him, or he’ll try to fuck you too.”⁶⁰ When his teammates told Neneo, a visiting *sambista*, about Iran’s reputation, Neneo and fellow samba composer Paulo Rezende were inspired to write a song titled “Meu Ébano,” about a seductive, passionate, dark black malandro, that later played on the 2005 novela *América* and became a national hit.⁶¹ Thus, when *G* portrayed Iran as a malandro, it did not solely use a racialized stereotype to stimulate desire in its readers; rather it used an image that he himself had long cultivated. As the magazine’s owner pointed out in our interview, for Iran, the malandro motif was an affirmation of pride in his blackness, not a stereotype, and when he was asked to appear in *G*, he insisted on being portrayed as a malandro and would not be dissuaded.⁶² When the magazine depicted him as sexually aggressive, grabbing his penis as though aiming a weapon, it used an image that Iran was proud of; no one even knew that he was the inspiration for “Meu Ébano” before he revealed this detail on *Big Brother Brasil*.

Finally, readers also contributed to the political discourse in *G*, although their contributions were less obvious than those of the editors and models. Readers did occasionally complain about the underrepresentation of black men in the magazine. As one reader put it, “In a country with such rich ethnic diversity as ours, your photo essays are becoming more and more tiresome due to the repetitive tone of the models, who always follow one ethnic and aesthetic pattern. Sometimes it seems like we are reading a gay magazine from Argentina [imagined as white by Brazilians]. We [in Brazil] have white, brown, *mulato*, Indian, black guys—all marvelous. You could diversify more.”⁶³

The implication that a magazine with predominantly white models would be more appropriate in another country and was thus not authentically Brazilian was repeated by other readers. “Is this magazine pro-apartheid? Are we in Sweden? Do you think that attractive black men don’t exist?”⁶⁴ It is possible that these letters reflected genuine concerns with underrepresentation, but it is also possible that their authors were merely using political discourse to demand a type of model that they personally found more desirable. Some letters, after all, did use more explicitly erotic language to request more black male models. “It’s always good to see boys who can make your mouth water, well-endowed and handsome black guys who truly complete the magazine.”⁶⁵ Still, it is notable that when political discourse did appear in letters, it revolved exclusively around the presence or absence of black men. No readers complained about the conventions according to which they were represented when they did appear. Ultimately, the political discourse contained in the letters was predicated upon and influenced by the discourse of desire, which portrayed black men as attractive based on racialized sexual characteristics.

Conclusion

This chapter ends in much the same way as it began, with a representation that at first glance is racially charged, even stereotypical, but this time one that destabilizes such representations. “A Todo Vapor” (“Full Vapor”), unlike other erotic stories in *G*, was told from the perspective of a black character. “I had the luck—and I take pride in this, even with the prejudice that ravages Brazil, and also the gay world—to be born black.” Miguel has recently purchased a new apartment, and he frequently uses the building’s gym. One evening he decides to visit the sauna and discovers that it is the setting for orgiastic encounters between the building’s male residents. Miguel knows the unique allure he possesses as a black man and is proud of his ability to elicit desire. “The white guys I screwed around with [enjoyed] the ease with which I could develop my chest and biceps. Mixing the ‘barbi’ look with the *ginga* of a *capoeirista*, I know how to drive guys crazy wanting to try out the delights of this *negão*.”⁶⁶ Nevertheless, once the orgy begins, Miguel defies the sexual characteristics usually associated with black men. He performs oral sex on two other men and allows another to penetrate him anally with a finger. He does not become the center of attention as the exotic black man; rather, he is simply another participant in the

orgy. His race comes up only once, when one of the other men comments, “I love a *negão* like you.”⁶⁷ This story is unique for its combination of overt political discourse with a discourse of desire in which hypersexual black men possess unique seductive qualities. Moreover, the discourse of desire, while present, is not dominant, and Miguel participates in activities that do not belong to the repertoire of expected black male sexual behavior. The story thus indicates that it is possible to envision a black man who uses racialized stereotypes to his own advantage but does not restrict himself to prescribed roles.

G Magazine was thus the site of two contradictory yet complementary, nearly separate but occasionally overlapping discourses of desire and politics. They are fused in a way that is often clumsy, even jarring, but they are there all the same. In the discourse of desire, photographs of and erotic stories about black models elicited a specific type of desire in their viewers. Through their penetrating gaze, hypersexualization, and association with exotic types such as the *malandro* and the primitive native, these representations of black models were intended to make the reader want to be dominated and penetrated by them. In the gay marketplace of desire, this made the black man desirable as the exotic Other to a white standard of male beauty. Through their letters, readers revealed that these were the images of black men that they found desirable, with no objection to such racialized representations. Indeed, during our interview, Fadigas appeared shocked that anyone might take offense at her magazine’s representations of black men and claimed there were certain themes that simply worked better with black models. To deny this, to represent everyone the same way—this would be prejudice, she told me.⁶⁸

At the same time, editors, models, and readers participated in a parallel political discourse that recognized the existence of pervasive racism in Brazil. This political discourse did not replace the racialized discourse of desire; rather, it served another purpose by attempting to associate the gay rights movement with the black movement and raise awareness of racism in ways that would have been impossible in Brazil only a generation earlier. These two discourses highlighted the success of the black movement in dramatically raising public awareness of racial prejudice and underrepresentation in cultural representations, but they also showcased the continued impermeability of desire to politics. As the locus of the discourse of desire and the primary engine that drove sales of the magazine, the photographs never questioned the racialization of black men as exotic Others. Only rarely, in a few interviews and erotic stories, did African-descended

men emerge from such roles and become something other than the Other, or at least more than simply the Other. Whatever the successes of the black movement, the political discourse of equality remains largely unable to touch the deeply engrained discourse of desire that structures erotic representation. And looking beyond Brazil, at a political and historical moment in which discussions about race in the United States have brought fresh attention to well-meaning white “allies,” we are reminded that whether we are progressive magazine editors, ethnographers with a genuine desire to protect and learn from indigenous cultures, or white gay guys who have dated black Brazilians and write articles about “big black dicks,” sympathy for the struggles faced by marginalized groups does not shield us from our own ethnopornographic desire. Politics don’t trump desire, but does desire trump politics?

Notes

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- 1 *G Magazine* 113 (February 2007).
- 2 Orkut, “Communities,” *G Magazine*, accessed February 20, 2007, <http://www.orkut.com/CommMsgs.aspx?cmm=2041528&tid=2514963010553268732>. While all links to Orkut Communities in this essay were valid as of 2007, Orkut, once Brazil’s most popular social media network, faded into obscurity as Facebook increased in

popularity. Google, Orkut’s parent company, shut Orkut down in 2014 but saved some of its fan pages (“Communities”) in an online archive, which was deleted in May 2017. See “Google vai apagar definitivamente arquivo de comunidades do Orkut,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, April 29, 2017, <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/tec/2017/04/1879806-google-vai-apagar-definitivamente-arquivo-de-comunidades-do-orkut.shtml>.

- 3 In contrast to the United States, which was long governed by the “one-drop rule,” the Brazilian racial system is a color continuum with many intermediate categories between *branco* (white) and *preto* or *negro* (black). Only those with the strongest African phenotypical features have traditionally been described as *negros*, while those with brown skin but more European phenotypical features have often been described with a host of intermediate terms, depending on specific characteristics and personal preference. The Brazilian census (and more than a few scholars) has simplified this system by referring to anyone who is not *branco* or *negro* as *pardo* (brown). However, since the 1980s, recognizing that *pardos* and *negros* experience similar economic disadvantages and racial prejudices, activists in the *movimento negro* (black movement) have promoted a classification system in which anyone with African phenotypical features is considered *negro*, which carries a connotation similar to “black” in the United States. For the best work in English on the Brazilian racial system, see Edward E. Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). See also Stanley R. Bailey, *Legacies of Race: Identities, Attitudes, and Politics in Brazil* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009). In this essay, the terms “African-descended,” “Afro-Brazilian,” “black,” and “negro” will refer to anyone whose physical appearance indicates African descent as evidenced by skin color and phenotypical features. This does not constitute a denial of the uniqueness of Brazil’s racial classification system; rather it acknowledges the fact that “negro” has become increasingly common to refer to all Afro-Brazilians. The owner and editor of *G* used “negro” in our 2008 interview in much the same sense.
- 4 Joel Zito Araújo, *A negação do Brasil: O negro na telenovela brasileira* (São Paulo, Brazil: Editora SENAC, 2000), 305; Joel Zito Araújo, *A negação do Brasil*, documentary film (São Paulo: SENAC, 2000), 92 minutes. See also Sílvia Ramos, ed., *Mídia e racismo* (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Pallas, 2002); and Samantha Nogueira Joyce, *Brazilian Telenovelas and the Myth of Racial Democracy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012).
- 5 See Erica Lorraine Williams, *Sex Tourism in Bahia: Ambiguous Entanglements* (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013); John Burdick, *Blessed Anastácia: Women, Race, and Popular Christianity in Brazil* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Sueli Carneiro, “Black Women’s Identity in Brazil,” in *Race in Contemporary Brazil: From Indifference to Inequality*, ed. Rebecca Reichmann (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 217–27; José Jorge de Carvalho, “The Multiplicity of Black Identities in Brazilian Popular Music,” in *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization*, ed. Larry Crook and Randal Johnson

- (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 2000), 261–96; and Donna M. Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
- 6 Richard Parker, *Beneath the Equator: Cultures of Desire, Male Homosexuality, and Emerging Gay Communities in Brazil* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 122. See also José Fábio Barbosa da Silva, “Homossexualismo em São Paulo: Estudo de um grupo minoritário,” in *Homossexualismo e outros escritos*, ed. James N. Green and Ronaldo Trindade (São Paulo, Brazil: Editora UNESP, 2005).
 - 7 Don Kulick, *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998). See also João Silvério Trevisan, *Perverts in Paradise*, trans. Martin Foreman (London: GMP, 1986); and Peter Fry, “Male Homosexuality and Spirit Possession in Brazil,” in *The Many Faces of Homosexuality: Anthropological Approaches to Homosexual Behavior*, ed. Evelyn Blackwood (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1986), 137–53.
 - 8 Nestor Perlongher, *O negócio do michê: Prostituição viril em São Paulo* (São Paulo, Brazil: Editora Brasiliense, 1987). For a partial exception to the rule, see James N. Green’s pathbreaking 1999 history of Brazilian homosexuality. Green notes that in gay communities, “skin color can determine social positioning,” and “sharp class divisions and a racial hierarchy have precluded substantial integration” between members of different socioeconomic and social groups. See James N. Green, *Beyond Carnival: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 284.
 - 9 Isadora Lins França, *Consumindo lugares, consumindo nos lugares: Homossexualidade, consumo e subjetividades na cidade de São Paulo* (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: EDUERJ, 2012).
 - 10 Camilo Albuquerque de Braz, *À meia luz . . . : Uma etnografia em clubes de sexo masculinos* (Goiânia, Brazil: Editora UFG, 2012).
 - 11 Osmundo Pinho, “Race Fucker: Representações raciais na pornografia gay,” *Cadernos Pagu* 38 (2012): 159–95. See also Adriana Nunan, *Homossexualidade: Do preconceito aos padrões de consumo* (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Editora Caravansarai, 2003).
 - 12 On the stereotyping of blackness in Brazil, not only sexually but also more broadly, see Viviane Barbosa Fernandes and Maria Cecília Cortez Christiano de Souza, “Identidade Negra entre exclusão e liberdade,” *Revista do Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros* 63 (2016): 103–20.
 - 13 See, along with his many other publications on the topic, Kobena Mercer, “Reading Racial Fetishism: The Photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe,” in *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 171–219.
 - 14 See, for example, the fascinating work of Darieck B. Scott on black-authored comics in the United States. Scott, “Big Black Beauty: Drawing and Naming the Black Male Figure in Superhero and Gay Porn Comics,” in *Porn Archives*, eds.

Tim Dean, Steven Ruszczycky, and David Squires (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 183–212.

- 15 *G Magazine* 11 (August 1998).
- 16 *G Magazine* 16 (January 1999). The publicity generated for *G* by Vampeta's appearance in the magazine is reminiscent of the publicity generated for *Cosmopolitan* by Burt Reynolds's nude centerfold in 1972. Of course, Reynolds's nudes were "discreetly posed," while Vampeta's nudes showed him from the front, with an erection; and Reynolds posed for a women's magazine, while Vampeta posed for a men's magazine. See David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution, an Unfettered History* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Co., 2000), 232.
- 17 Camila Marques, "G Magazine muda e público atinge quase a metade da *Playboy*," *Folha de S. Paulo*, May 26, 2005, <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/ilustrada/ult90u50966.shtml>, accessed 1 March 2007.
- 18 "Conta pra gente," *G Magazine* 67 (April 2003), 15.
- 19 On celebrity porn, see Adam Knee, "Celebrity Skins: The Illicit Textuality of the Celebrity Nude," in *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture*, ed. Su Holmes and Sean Redmond (New York: Routledge, 2006), 161–76.
- 20 *G Magazine* 113 (February 2007), 48.
- 21 In addition to its cover models, *G* also included a "Desejo" (Desire) section each month with a less-known nude model, whose profession was usually listed as model, go-go boy, or dancer. The magazine also occasionally recruited lesser-known athletes such as volleyball players and boxers. It often contained a "Replay" section with additional nude photographs of recent cover models. Finally, it usually contained a "Fetichê" (Fetish) section with themes such as soldiers, policemen, manual laborers, BDSM, and, of course, black men.
- 22 My statistics here contain an inherent classificatory problem. The census asks Brazilians to self-select their racial category, while my classification of *G Magazine* cover models is based upon my own subjective criteria. However, this problem is mitigated by the fact that the race of very few *G* models would be open to negotiation, even in Brazil—models in the magazine nearly always exhibit markedly European or markedly African phenotypical features, with very few (other than several professional soccer players) falling anywhere in between.
- 23 Marcelo Cerqueira, "Sexo, raça e relação entre homens gays," undated interview with *Revista Gold*, accessed 24 March 2007, http://www.ggb.org.br/musica_carnaval.html.
- 24 Ana Fadigas, interview with the author, July 17, 2008. Fadigas also pointed out that the magazine was primarily interested in attracting famous Brazilians and that other than athletes, most famous Brazilians are white.
- 25 This tendency is not unique to *G Magazine* or Brazilian gay pornography. As Richard Fung has noted, referring to North American gay pornography, "If we look at commercial gay sexual representation, it appears that the antiracist movements have had little impact; the images of men and male beauty are still of *white* men

- and *white* male beauty." See Richard Fung, "Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn," in *Asian Canadian Studies Reader*, ed. Roland Sintos Coloma and Gordon Pon (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 88.
- 26 Alessandra Levtschenko, Alfredo Sternheim, and Ana Paula Elias, "Negro é lindo," *G Magazine* 32 (May 2000), 43–58.
- 27 Due to the efforts of the movimento negro to raise awareness about the history of African-descended people, the maroon communities called *quilombos* loom large in the national consciousness. The 1988 Constitution contains a provision granting land to communities descended from quilombos, and Zumbi, leader of an enormous seventeenth-century quilombo in the modern-day state of Alagoas, has been promoted as a national hero. On the historical Zumbi, see Robert Nelson Anderson, "The Quilombo of Palmares: A New Overview of a Maroon State in Seventeenth-Century Brazil," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 3 (1996): 545–66. On the movimento negro, including its appropriation of Zumbi as a symbol of resistance, see Michael G. Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, 1945–1988* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- 28 Todd McGowan, "Looking for the Gaze: Lacanian Film Theory and Its Vicissitudes," *Cinema Journal* 42, no. 3 (2003): 28–29.
- 29 "Cartas," *G Magazine* 33 (June 2000).
- 30 "Cartas," *G Magazine* 34 (July 2000).
- 31 "Cartas," *G Magazine* 34 (July 2000).
- 32 J. Levis and Ane O'Connor, "Graaaaaaande brother!" *G Magazine* 113 (February 2007), 30–47.
- 33 Nicolau Sevcenko, *Literatura como missão: Tensões sociais e criação cultural na Primeira República*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo, Brazil: Brasiliense, 1985), 28–34.
- 34 Lisa Shaw, *The Social History of the Brazilian Samba* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000), 9.
- 35 Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello, Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 52–58.
- 36 Orkut, "Communities," *G Magazine*, February 1, 2007, <http://www.orkut.com/CommMsgs.aspx?cmm=2041528&tid=2513324854160506824>.
- 37 Orkut, "Communities," *G Magazine*, February 6, 2007, <http://www.orkut.com/CommMsgs.aspx?cmm=2041528&tid=2514205361100382190>.
- 38 Orkut, "Communities," *G Magazine*, February 10, 2007, <http://www.orkut.com/CommMsgs.aspx?cmm=2041528&tid=2514963010553268732>.
- 39 Orkut, "Communities," *G Magazine*, February 12, 2007, <http://www.orkut.com/CommMsgs.aspx?cmm=2041528&tid=2514963010553268732>.
- 40 Mulatos fall at the darkest end of the pardo category and can also be classified as negros depending on their social class and personal preference. Even if defined as pardos, mulatos look sufficiently African-descended so as to be unable to deny it. See Burdick, *Blessed Anastácia*, 31.
- 41 "Passivo por vocação," *G Magazine* 32 (May 2000).

- 42 “Sexta-feira 13—O Terror,” *G Magazine* 61 (October 2002), 87.
- 43 See, for example, “Hombre,” *G Magazine* 50 (November 2001), 94; “O esporte faz muito bem,” *G Magazine* 59 (August 2002), 87; “O padeiro,” *G Magazine* 58 (July 2002), 87.
- 44 Dwight McBride, *Why I Hate Abercrombie & Fitch: Essays on Race and Sexuality* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 109–10.
- 45 Scott Poulson-Bryant, *Hung: The Measure of Black Men in America* (New York: Doubleday, 2005), 75.
- 46 Playboy Covers of the World, accessed March 10, 2008, <http://www.pbcovers.com>.
- 47 “Procurados,” *G Magazine* 2 (November 1997), *G Magazine* 5 (February 1998), *G Magazine* 6 (March 1998), *G Magazine* 15 (December 1998), *G Magazine* 16 (January 1999), *G Magazine* 18 (March 1999), *G Magazine* 22 (July 1999), *G Magazine* 25 (October 1999), *G Magazine* 30 (March 2000), *G Magazine* 31 (April 2000), *G Magazine* 34 (July 2000), *G Magazine* 36 (September 2000).
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- 49 Marcelo Cerqueira, “Negro e homossexual: Preconceito em dose dupla,” *G Magazine* 58 (July 2002), 98.
- 50 Cerqueira, “Negro e homossexual.”
- 51 Cerqueira, “Negro e homossexual.”
- 52 Robin Sheriff, *Dreaming Equality: Color, Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 222–24.
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- 58 “Bate-papo com Créo Kellab, modelo e ator,” May 9, 2000, http://www1.uol.com.br/bparquivo/integra/bp_creo_kellab.htm.
- 59 “Ex-BVV Iran compõe samba para o Salgueiro,” *O Fuxico*, August 8, 2006, <http://ofuxico.uol.com.br/Materias/Noticias/2006/08/28710.htm>.
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- 61 “Iran inspirou sambista.”
- 62 Fadigas interview.
- 63 “Cartas,” *G Magazine* 62 (November 2002).
- 64 “Cartas,” *G Magazine* 6 (March 1998), 64.
- 65 “Cartas,” *G Magazine* 22 (July 1999), 79–80.
- 66 The point is that Miguel is muscular and attractive and has a swaying, self-confident gait when he walks. A *barbi*, taken from the English “Barbie doll,” is gay Brazilian slang for a muscular, attractive gay man who, as an effeminized Barbie doll, is the epitome of male beauty. A *capoeirista* is a performer of *capoeira*, an Afro-Brazilian combination of martial art and dance. A *ginga* is “the basic body

movement in *capoeira*” and “is derived from the word for swaying from side to side,” but it also “refer[s] to the signature way in which an individual carries themselves while walking.” Definition of “ginga” from John D. French, *Sharing the Riches of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University African and African American Studies Program and the Consortium in Latin American Studies at UNC Chapel Hill and Duke University, 2003), 40.

- 67 “A Todo Vapor,” *G Magazine* 18 (March 1999): 72–73.
68 Fadigas interview.