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# Race matters: race, telenovela representation, and discourse in contemporary Brazil

Samantha Nogueira Joyce  
*University of Iowa*

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RACE MATTERS:  
RACE, TELENODELA REPRESENTATION, AND DISCOURSE IN  
CONTEMPORARY BRAZIL

by

Samantha Nogueira Joyce

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of  
Philosophy degree in Communication Studies in the Graduate College of The  
University of Iowa

May 2010

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Joy E. Hayes

## ABSTRACT

This research examines what happens when a telenovela directly addresses matters of race and racism in contemporary Brazil. *Duas Caras* ('Two Faces', which means a person who leads a double life), a *TV Globo* telenovela (October 1, 2007 to May 31, 2008) was a watershed program for two main reasons: It presented audiences with the first Afro-Brazilian as the main hero, and it openly addressed race matters through plot and dialogue, a practice that had never been done previously, due in part to the widespread belief that Brazil was a "racial democracy." Additionally, for the first time in the history of Brazilian TV, the author of the telenovela kept a web log or "blog" where he discussed the public's reactions to the storylines, media discussions pertaining to the characters and plot, and directly engaged with fans and critics of the program.

This investigation combines a traditional textual analysis of *Duas Caras* along with a study of related media – blogs, news pieces, reader's comments, and so forth – in order to demonstrate how the program introduced novel ideas about race to the audience as well as offered a forum where ingrained as well as alternative views about race, racism, class and racial relations in Brazil were discussed. This is not a reception study in the traditional sense, it is not a story of entertainment-education in the strict sense, and it is not solely a textual analysis. Instead, it is a study of the social milieu that the telenovela (and especially *Duas Caras*) navigates, one that is a component of a contemporary progressive social movement in Brazil, and one that views the text as being located in social interactions. As such, this study reveals how telenovelas contribute to social change in a way that has not been properly accounted

for in previous scholarship. In particular, it tracks the dynamic process through which *Duas Caras* worked to debunk the ideology of racial democracy in Brazil.

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Graduate College  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the Ph. D. thesis of

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has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the  
Doctor of Philosophy degree in Communication Studies at the May 2010 graduation.

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To Mike and Tabatha



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I could not have finished this dissertation without the support, guidance, love, friendship and patience, from a few special people who helped me while developing this research. My husband Mike, my family, and my wonderful professors-colleagues-friends at the University of Iowa, in particular my supervisor and mentor Joy Hayes.

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CHAPTER I  
RACE MATTERS:  
RACE, TELENVELA REPRESENTATION, AND DISCOURSE IN  
CONTEMPORARY BRAZIL

Introduction

Although Brazil has always had a racially and culturally diverse society, this diversity has not been reflected on television, especially not in telenovelas. While the genre has been the most popular program type in Latin American for the past 30 years, traditionally, when it comes to Brazil, African descendents have been virtually invisible or relegated to secondary roles. But this is changing. Writers and politicians have been making a conscious effort to introduce a more diverse cast as well as incorporate storylines that address matters of race and racism in a country that was once believed to be a “racial democracy” (in 2004 a system of quotas was implemented for Brazilian television). This research examines what happens when a telenovela (*Duas Caras*) directly examines matters of race and racism in contemporary Brazil.

*Duas Caras* was a *TV Globo* telenovela which aired from October 1, 2007 to May 31, 2008. This was a watershed program for two main reasons: It presented audiences with the first Afro-Brazilian as the main hero, and it openly addressed race matters through plot and dialogue, a practice that had never been done previously, due to the belief in the “racial democracy theory”. Additionally, for the first time in the history of Brazilian television, the author of the telenovela kept a blog where he discussed not only the telenovela, but the public reactions to the storylines, the media discussions pertaining to the characters and plot, and directly engaged with fans and critics of the program.

In this study I am interested in uncovering the ways in which race and race relations were negotiated in the telenovela. I will also investigate how different factors such as narrative, audience reaction, as well as media criticism and commentary played a dynamic role in creating a meta-discourse about race in the mass media. In a larger sense, I will examine how the social discourses about contemporary race relations and racism in Brazil were circulated, constructed and reconstructed during the time the program aired.

In order to do so I will combine a textual analysis of *Duas Caras* with a study of broader media and cultural discourse. I will examine numerous blogs – including Aguinaldo Silva’s blog – news stories, reader’s comments, and so forth in order to demonstrate how the program introduced novel ideas about race to the audience as well as offered a forum where ingrained as well as alternative views about race, racism, class and racial relations in Brazil were discussed. This is not a reception study in the traditional sense, it is not a story of entertainment-education in the strict sense, and it is not solely a textual analysis. Instead, it is a study of the social milieu that the telenovela (and especially *Duas Caras*) navigates, one that is a component of a contemporary progressive social movement in Brazil, and one that views the text as being located in social interactions. As such, this study reveals how telenovelas contribute to social change in a way that has not been properly accounted for in previous scholarship. In particular, it tracks the dynamic process through which *Duas Caras* worked to debunk the ideology of racial democracy in Brazil.

The present research also develops the Brazilian notion that telenovelas are “open texts”, meaning they are co-authored by a variety of industrial, creative,

cultural and social actors, into a methodological approach that expands the traditional idea of textual analysis. In addition to reading the telenovela text itself, this study investigates the production process, audience responses and broader media coverage. Thus, the public discourse about the telenovelas is a key part of the text itself. Indeed, the telenovela text was expanded even further through Aguinaldo Silva's blog, where an open dialogue between viewers and author was created. For instance, during its twelve month run, readers left 150,000 comments and accessed the blog 130,000 times daily (Silva, 2010, p. 9). Comments ranged from the audience's and media critics' views on the stories depicted in *Duas Caras*, and even a few personal attacks on Silva. Viewers especially liked commenting on the script: a story of racism, revenge, love, and 'grey areas'.

The story starts with a young, naïve and rich girl from the rural south of Brazil (Maria Paula, played by actress Marjorie Estiano). She falls in love and marries a complete stranger (played by Dalton Vigh) just days after becoming an orphan. She soon loses everything after he robs and leaves her, changing his name (Adalberto Rangel) and his face through plastic surgery. Meanwhile in Rio de Janeiro, a security guard (Juvenaldo Antena, played by Antônio Fagundes) working at a construction site, leads hundreds of migrant workers who have just been abandoned by their contractors (who have gone bankrupt) to invading the construction site and thus to start an illegal squatter's community (or "invaded community" as it is said in Brazil) along the lines of the Landless Movement. Together with his best friend Mizael Caó (Ivan de Almeida), and his young son and Juvenal's godson, Evilázio Caó (Lázaro

Ramos, who will later be the main hero<sup>1</sup> of the story), an evangelical pastor, Lisboa (Ricardo Blat), and Candomblé<sup>2</sup> leader Mãe Setembrina (Chica Xavier) they start a new shanty town. This is where the love story line between the white girl Júlia and the black young man, Evilásio will start and develop, but situations involving racism and class prejudice will permeate all segments of the fictional society, as it does so in ‘real life’’: at dinner parties, on the bus, on the streets, and so on.

Within the second week of broadcasting, the telenovela jumps ten years into the future. We now know that Maria Paula was pregnant when she was abandoned by Adalberto Rangel and has a son, Renato (Gabriel Sequeira). Juvenal is the well known leader of *Favela da Portelinha*, which is known as a “model favela<sup>3</sup>” (favela-modelo), a poor community that prides itself for not having any drugs or crime, as long as it is lead by their beloved, but nonetheless “iron-grip-leader” Juvenal Antena, and his right hand and protégé Evilásio. And Marconi Ferraço (formerly Adalberto Rangel) is a real estate mogul who has bought the land where the *Portelinha* invasion started and is therefore Juvenal’s arch enemy. As the plot moves forward, Evilásio will start to question his godfather’s tactics<sup>4</sup>, showing a superior moral code and will

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to point out that in a telenovela with a cast of 90 actors pinpointing exactly who the protagonist is becomes a difficult job. An argument could be made that Adalberto Rangel who actually had ‘two faces’ since he got plastic surgery to change his identity was the protagonist. However, Evilásio not only was described on TV Globo’s website as the main hero and often referred to as the first main Black hero in a telenovela, additionally, he was the only one who fulfilled the traditional characteristics of the telenovela hero: handsome, moral, ethical, loving and the one who ‘can do no wrong’. Thus, while he might share the role of protagonist, he is undoubtedly the ‘good hero’.

<sup>2</sup> An Afro-Brazilian religion

<sup>3</sup> A favela is a shanty-town.

<sup>4</sup> For example charging a small percentage fee from the small business owners in *Portelinha* which he used to ‘better the community’, but also kept a part to himself. He was also a type of dictator with a ‘take it or leave it’ attitude.

eventually become an elected politician, which he sees as the legal and most effective way to help his poor community.

While the background story might seem highly detailed, it is extremely relevant to the love story line between our black hero, Evilásio, and the white heroine, Júlia. The invaded community is the place where they meet, fall in love, and eventually start a family and get married (in that order). Thus, in addition to being of different races, the two protagonists are also of two completely opposite social locations, literally and figuratively. Júlia is rich and lives in the urban city in a very expensive and highly secured apartment building. As the Brazilians say, she lives in the “asphalt”. On the other hand, Evilásio not only is poor, and black - two traditional signifiers of inferiority – but in addition; he lives in the “hillside”, which is synonymous with shanty towns in Brazil, and all its negative associations: extreme poverty, drug lords and violence. So much so that when Julia first sees Evilázio coming in her direction she believes he is coming to rob her and begs him not to. Evilázio quickly points out that she is racist and that she assumed he was a robber based on the color of his skin and the place where he lives – the favela. The reason why Evilázio had approached Julia was to give her assistance, since she had a flat tire. The girl apologizes for her racist assumption and from that first moment on the love story develops.

### Method

As noted above, this study combines a textual analysis of *Duas Caras* with an analysis of related media in an effort to demonstrate how the “open text” of the telenovela is linked to questions of nationality, cultural and racial identity. However,



it is important to note that the present research relies in part on the television criticism tradition. In *Critical Approaches to Television*, Bruce Gronbeck (2004) points out a key element of TV criticism: it is not “the history of TV” (p. 31), or what he calls “TV historicism”. Gronbeck explains that although critical TV essays might have historical elements to them (tracing the evolution of TV, or genre, mapping the relationships between the medium, the programs airing at a particular time, the laws, etc), television critics - and I include myself here - write for different reasons than historians. While the latter focuses on questions of “what” and “why,” the television critic focuses on questions of “how” and “what does it mean”. Bruce Gronbeck argues that the critic is more concerned with generating than finding meaningfulness.

Thus, according to Gronbeck (2004), television criticism is concerned with providing insightful interpretations that stimulate people to look at television texts in new and different ways. Although tracing the history of Afro-Brazilians in telenovelas is an important aspect of my research, the meanings that might be generated due to their representation in the medium is one of my main interests. I see the medium and more specifically, the genre, as a forum for critical public debate, where participation in representation is a key element towards democracy, or as what Newcomb and Hirsch (1983) describe as a “cultural forum for debate” (p. 571). Within this framework, the research that arises is one that is preoccupied with social change, practice, and the construction of public spheres encompassing of multiple voices, which I see as essential to democracy. Consequently, like Newcomb and Hirsch, I am “far more concerned with the ways in which television contributes to

change than with mapping the obvious ways in which it maintains dominant viewpoints” (p. 571).

Additionally I start from the premise that the telenovela is a site of mediations between production, reception, and culture. There is constant negotiation between the writers, director, production team, actors, audience, and institutions that participate in the social formation (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003; Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Melo, 1998). The rationale for the textual analysis approach is that “meaning is a social production, and as such is embedded in issues of power” and because “textual analysis recognizes this postulate since it considers the conditions of production [and consumption] of the text” (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003, p. 278). In addition, “unlike content analysis, the text is not the end in textual analysis, it is the means by which we study a signification process, a representation of reality” (p.278).

Thus, the textual analysis of *Duas Caras* is akin to Campbell’s (1991) examination of CBS’s newsmagazine *60 Minutes*: it is “a close reading from a critical observer” (p. XII). I write from the standpoint of a Brazilian, a feminist, a viewer, a fan, a critic, and a cultural studies researcher who, as a Brazilian living in the United States, faces and struggles with race related issues in a completely new way: from being socially constructed as “white” in Brazil to a “Latina” in the US. Moreover, following Campbell’s (1991) model, I do not locate my interpretation of *Duas Caras* in statistical methods or content analysis. Instead, I add to the British cultural studies tradition the American cultural studies perspective: I regard telenovelas as culture, and interpret them as a cultural anthropologist who understands the genre as rich storehouses of stories and meanings (pp. XVI-XVII).

Key to this type of analysis is Campbell's (1991) understanding that a "program's cultural meanings are always something more than the best work and intentions of producers, [reporters], and editors" and that its meanings "become as diffuse and diverse as the electromagnetic spectrum itself" (p.XIII). The multiple codes of the telenovela open up the possibility for plural as well as empowered readings. Through the textual analysis of *Duas Caras* I hope to demonstrate that while telling stories of love and revenge true to the melodramatic style of the genre, telenovelas are a powerful tool for introducing topics for debate and pro-social change, such as the instances where the dialogues openly challenge previously ingrained racist ideas in Brazilian society. Finally, as I replicate Campbell's study, I am not interested in measuring a precise "impact" or "effects" of *Duas Caras*, which would require a different perspective and method (p. XVIII).

The present critical cultural studies perspective is based on Campbell's understanding that doing cultural studies affords a researcher the benefit of drawing on a variety of perspectives and disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and linguistic, for sense (pp. XX-XI). Thus cultural analysis is "not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). Based on the textual analysis I hope to unravel various meanings about what it means to be black, poor, Brazilian, and racist in contemporary Brazil.

Finally, I will also rely on Julie D'Acci's (2004) "circuit of media studies model", also known as "integrated approach to media studies", which examines four main sites – production, cultural artifact, reception and socio-historical context – which operate in a framework of articulation between sites and which inscribes the

researcher within the model itself, because it is the researcher (or receiver) who produces his or her own version of the object and the articulations (pp. 431-432).

#### “Data” (Textual) Analysis

A selection of episodes of *Duas Caras* which have been taped from *TV Globo* (via satellite) and which can also be accessed through *TV Globo*'s media library (available through subscription online) will serve as the “data”. Since the original text is in Portuguese I will be translating selected dialogue to English. The episode selection will be done on the basis of instances where the characters openly express racism or talk about racism and race in Brazil. By scrutinizing the codes (visual and dialogue) of the telenovela (*à la* Fiske, 1989) in question I am hoping to reveal how new as well as traditional views of racism are presented and represented in the program and offered to viewers as guideline, point of reference and/or discussion and debate.

#### Cultural Value

In order to connect the textual analysis with a broader cultural level I will also be scrutinizing how the Brazilian media as well as the author himself (through his blog) discussed matters of race and racism in *Duas Caras*. This will be done through an analysis of newspapers and magazine articles both inside and outside Globo's corporation, such as *Veja* Magazine and *A Folha de São Paulo* newspaper.

Founded in 1969, *Veja* is a (national) weekly magazine with the highest circulation in Brazil. The magazine has dedicated its cover to telenovelas five times throughout its existence. The latest was in February 2005, which had an eleven page article about *Senhora do Destino*, which was Aguinaldo Silva's previous telenovela in

*TV Globo* that year. According to the editors of *Veja*, the reason for articles like that is because telenovelas give the magazine's journalists an opportunity to go beyond their scripts and to discuss the cultural habits of the Brazilian people, the social-political situation of the country, and behavior related issues portrayed by them, for example gender issues or drug abuse (February 9, 2005).

Founded in 1921, *A Folha de São Paulo* is a (national) daily newspaper with the highest circulation in Brazil and one of the most influential. According to the paper's website (<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/conheca/>) last year they sold in average of 299 thousand issues daily and 370 thousand on Sundays. *A Folha* was also the first newspaper in Brazil to have its content available online. During the time the telenovela was broadcasted the paper gave weekly summaries of the chapters to come (as it is customary for papers to do so in the country), but also dedicated many articles to discuss topics presented in the telenovela, many of them directly related to the present research.

### Literature Review

But before we can start a close analysis of race and representation in *Duas Caras*, it is important to trace the social historical importance of the genre in Brazil, or what La Pastina (2003) calls "the centrality of telenovelas in everyday life in Brazil". Additionally, we must look at the history and present state of miscegenation and racism in that country, and the intersection of the two. Thus, the social history of blackness in Brazil is crucial to my interpretation of *Duas Caras*, and a more thorough analysis will be offered in chapter 2. Meanwhile, it is important to keep in mind, as Fiske (1991) argued, that television is a subject that is worthy of critical

investigation: “The characteristics of its texts and modes of reception enable an active participation in the sense making process which we call ‘culture’” (p. 19). So while a skeptical critic might raise questions regarding the relevance of studying the representation of Afro-Brazilian in such a frowned upon and consumer geared genre such as telenovelas, a thorough understanding of the phenomenon will provide additional compelling reasons: The telenovela is more than its American counterpart, the soap opera. It has a centrality in everyday life in much of Latin America. The text will comment very directly on current events and people are glued to the set across social classes. The audience includes lots of men as well as women — and we’re talking prime time, not daytime. Another specific characteristic of telenovelas is the format: they last an average of just nine months and are directed to a happy ending that is immediately followed by the beginning of another telenovela. The audience knows and expects this, which is very different from the American soaps, as some of them are 30 years old and still going (Costa, 2000; Klagsbrunn, 1993; Dowing, 2002; Matos, 2004).

In addition, telenovelas are the most popular television program in Brazil and are exported to more than 140 countries worldwide (Telles, 2004), making evident the importance of telenovela research. Brazilians see themselves mirrored on the television set, and use the characters and their actions as guidelines to their own personal problems and aspirations (Telles, 2004; Tufte, 1993; Valladares, 2005). The genre is not only big in Brazil. Other Latin American countries also export their telenovelas quite successfully around the world – for example the exclusive US rights to the plot-concept of Colombia’s hugely popular “Ugly Betty” (*Betty La Fea*). In

other words, when we're talking telenovelas, we're talking about something ultra high profile (Dowing, 2002, ¶ 3). Thus, due to its immense popularity, it is not hard to notice that the social roles of men and women often end up dictated by the same stories that seem to merely represent them (Costa, 2000, p.11). So how they portray—or don't—people of color is a real important factor in our multi-colored hemisphere (Dowing, 2002, ¶ 4).

Many of the issues with which Latin American scholars have struggled and continue to struggle are similar to current issues that include a worldwide search for theoretical answers that might help guide democratic media theory and practice, such as the construction of public spheres that are encompassing of multiple voices, which are viewed as a staple of contemporary democracies. Interestingly enough, Latin American media theory in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century resembles American media theory in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was not until the 1970s that Latin American scholars started to challenge the traditional transmission model (sender-receiver), calling for the development of alternative theories to guide media practice (Huesca, 1994, p. 53). But still, the body of research which gained prominence in Latin America in the 1970s was based on ideas of “cultural imperialism”, which were based on “cultural dependency and domination theories” (Link, 1984; Mohammadi, 1995).

Amongst the early media research in Latin America were those which focused on the flows of communication, typical of dependency theories that are concerned with the directions and the flows of communication. They specifically focus on the problems of unidirectional information flow, which, according to the theory, usually comes from the north to the south. Dominant media were viewed as “vertical media”.

Additionally, Latin American media research focused on “horizontal communication”, which was based on Paulo Freire’s “liberation theology”. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) emphasized dialogue instead of a monologue as the communication process by which one can attain critical consciousness.

Schiller (1976), was one of the major proponents of the “cultural imperialism theory” and proposed the term to explain the ways in which large multinational corporations (including the media), of developed countries dominated developing countries. At the core of the theory was the belief that there was a very distinct imbalance between the production of media between two or more nations. The idea of domination was prominent: it was believed that the ways in which information was exchanged between the nations was based on a mixture of political and/or economic controls. The cultural imperialism theory assumed an active role on the part of the dominating country and a deleterious effect on the dominated one. The theory was mostly used in reference to Latin American contexts, but in the 1980s and 1990s it was reformulated and even discredited by some scholars.

Straubhaar (1981, 1991) and White (2000) called attention to what they deemed as the biggest flaw in the media imperialism tradition: the fact that the theory does not acknowledge the audience's ability to process information and interpret messages differently based on their individual background (questions of class, gender, ethnicity, etc., are not taken into account). Additionally, Straubhaar (in the 1990s) introduced the terms “asymmetrical interdependence” and “cultural proximity” as a



more precise and complex way to deal with the debunk notion of “cultural imperialism”.

According to Straubhaar (1991), “cultural proximity” is the idea that audiences are deemed as actively searching for a cultural proximity in cultural goods as a way to incorporate the role of the “active audiences” (*à la* Stuart Hall) concept into the media imperialism debate. Additionally, “asymmetrical interdependence” considers the limits imposed by dependency theories and the growth in cultural industries and technological changes. Straubhaar examines how national cultural industries (in particular Brazilian television), have the ability to grow in their capacity as production structures. This is clearly reflected in the genres they produce and export (such as telenovelas). Thus, asymmetrical interdependence refers to a variety of possible relationships in which countries find themselves unequal, but possessing variable degrees of power and initiative in economics, politics, and culture. Straubhaar (1991) recognizes the strength of powerful media countries but calls attention for the aspect of relative interdependence as opposed to total dependency between a ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ nation.

Thus, starting in the late 1980s till today, Latin American media theory has shown influences from the critical cultural studies perspectives. The audiences are seen as active and not passive in their ability to produce meanings. Additionally, they are also viewed as being active actors in their own oppression, albeit capable of resistance and opposition, and processes such as cultural creation and consumption, incorporation and production (Huesca, 1994). Influenced by theories of hegemony, Garcia-Canclini (1988) and Martín-Barbero (1987) started to develop more

sophisticated theories and created new concepts such as “hybridization”, “syncretism”, and “mestizaje” (the mixture of Spanish and Indian blood) to guide inquiry.

Although the terms *mestizaje* and *syncretism* were seen as a cultural product that stayed away from complete opposite dualities such as “indigenous versus alien”, the terms encountered criticism due to its association with biology and religion. Thus, Garcia-Canclini coined the term *hybridization*, to fix that. What these terms have in common is that they take away the focus on dialogue alone and place it on popular culture as an important place of analysis of media practice in and theory. However, one needs to be cognizant of the fact that the notion of hybridity is still a “risky” one, and that rather than a single idea, or all unifying concept, its contradictions need to be taken carefully and examined under different historical and rhetorical, contexts (Kraidy, 2005, pp. vi-xii).

The most striking characteristic of Latin American media research is its strong connection to social movements and social praxis. Self-reflexivity and *concientización a la Paulo Freire* (in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*), are still fundamental issues for Latin American media researchers. Latin American scholars place great importance in the people and in the media, and use the liberating models of pedagogy and communication. A more recent example of this is Miguel Sabido’s (2004) Entertainment-Education method, which adds to a body of research that concerns itself with a quest for communication theories of and for democratic practice and the creation of multiple voices and public spheres, as will be discussed later.

### Brazilian Television History

Television first appeared in Brazil in 1950. Telenovelas came shortly after, in 1951, transmitted by the now extinct TV Tupi<sup>5</sup>. Although TV channels are owned and distributed nationally by the federal government, the transmission of sound and image is extremely monopolistic. This was the aim of the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1988), and this trend towards monopoly continues well after the democratic government took place. As a result of the military's "network politics" (*política de redes*) about 400 channels were concentrated into a handful of private corporations, which resulted in a network system (*sistema de redes*). The move towards concentration was intimately connected with the military's obsession with national integration, which was facilitated by Embratel, the Brazilian Telecommunication Corporation. Furthermore, media monopoly in Brazil was not restricted to television, but encompassed all aspects of media (Amaral & Guimarães, 1994; Hamburger, 2005).

The television industry in Brazil was greatly influenced by the United States, for example the notion of commercial media imbedded within a capitalist economy. Additionally, the Brazilian elites accepted a role for Brazil in the world economy and structures and explicitly capitalist model of development in which TV and advertising were to create consumer demand to fuel growth (Straubhaar, 1991, pp. 47-48).

In 1964, the year of the military coup, Time-Life created a joint venture with TV Globo. Although a few years later, in 1969 the military intervened to expel Time-Life, several employees stayed with the corporation, which helped TV Globo set up

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<sup>5</sup> TV Globo was founded 15 years later, just one year after the military coup which took place in 1964.

an extremely efficient US-style network administration (Straubhaar, 1991, p. 48).

Although the Brazilian television industry had a boost from the government, and, in the case of TV Globo, first world know-how, the growth of the medium was slow. As expected, in a developing country the number of television sets in Brazilian homes has historically grown according to the economy and the growth of the urban cities.

In 1960, just ten years after TV first appeared, only 4.6% of Brazilian homes had a TV set. The number jumped to 22.8% in 1970 and to 56.1% in 1980. In 1991, 71% of Brazilian homes had at least one receiver (Hamburger, 2005, p. 22). Another distinctive characteristic of the Brazilian television industry is that, from the start, the audience's overall preference has been for national programming. This was also aided by the government - which imposed limits to the amount of foreign shows that could be broadcasted in Brazilian territory (Straubhaar, 1991; Hamburger, 2005). Although the growth of the industry was slow, TV Globo had a few advantages from the start: In addition to the deal with Time-Life, and later its employees, due to the political support given to the military government the group was able to crush the competition - TV Globo had prompt access to technological advances provided by the government (Hamburger, 2005, p. 32).

The first telenovela distributed in Brazil was *Sua Vida me Pertence* or 'Your Life Belongs to Me,' which aired live, and only twice a week. But with the advent of the videotape, they began to air daily. The first daily telenovela was 2-5499, *Ocupado*<sup>6</sup>, or '2-5499, Busy'. It was an adaptation from the Argentinean Alberto

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<sup>6</sup> The name of the telenovela alludes to the fact that the protagonists (the hero) and his love interest (a prison inmate who works as a telephone operator) meet when the hero dials a wrong number and immediately falls in love with the operator's voice. In contrast, the inmate (who has also fallen in love with the man) tries her best to avoid any type of personal contact. The first lines in the first telenovela

Migre and was broadcasted by the now extinct TV Excelsior in July of 1963 as a way to try to capture a larger audience. Although it took a while for the public to get used to a daily program, by 1964 they were hooked. The culprit: the enormously successful adaptation of the Cuban, *O Direito de Nascer*<sup>7</sup> or 'The Right to be Born' by Felix Caignet (Braga et al. ¶1-3, Fernandes, 1988, pp. 36, 48). According to Costa (2000) "just five months after the military coup, the country was united in front of the television set, to watch a live broadcast of its final episode" (p. 64).

### Soap Operas Vs Telenovelas: 'Distant Relatives'

Usually the first mention of the word "telenovelas" brings to mind the equivalent of the melodramatic American soaps, but in Spanish. However, although they were both modeled after the radio genre, the soap opera and the telenovela are distinct and filled with peculiarities. Perhaps the best way to compare the two would be to say they are "distant cousins".

The name 'soap opera' came from the initial financial support given by detergent companies such as Colgate and Palmolive who financed television dramas (operas) geared towards women (Romero, 1993, p. 124). The same type of financial support was given to the Brazilian genre, referred to simply as 'novelas' in Brazil.

Additionally, a distinct characteristic of Brazilian telenovelas is that they not only

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broadcasted in Brazil were: 'hello?' And "2-5499, good morning." Followed by: "Forgive me, wrong number" (Fernandes, 1997, p. 39).

<sup>7</sup> Contrary to previous telenovelas, 'The Right to be Born' had a very peculiar plot. There were no surprises to be revealed to the audience during its final episodes. The audience knew every detail of the story, but the characters in the telenovela did not. The hook that kept the audience tuned in was the characters' reactions to the story as it slowly unraveled itself: Maria Helena gave birth to a baby boy out of wedlock. She belongs to the Cuban high society of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The baby's life is in danger when her father threatens to kill him to prevent the family from shame. In order to save the boy Maria Helena gives him to her black maide, who raises him as her own, under a different name (Albertinho). Years later Albertinho becomes a doctor and ends up saving the life of the grandfather who rejected him, and to top it all off, ends up marrying his own cousin (Fernades, 1997, pp. 50-51).

differ from the soap operas in the United States, but they also differ from other Latin American telenovelas in many ways, so much so that producers and researchers refer to them as a truly Brazilian genre (Fadul, 1993; Fernandes, 1997; Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990).

One of the most distinctive characteristics which deem the genre as truly “Brazilian” is the high production value and cost. For instance, outdoor scenes are shot on location and the themes and plots usually take place in the present and in a local environment. This is recognized as a decisive step in the evolution of a specific Brazilian genre that gives the telenovela an additional appearance of reality (Fadul, 1993; Fernandes, 1997; Ferreira, 2003; Klagsbrunn, 1991; Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Melo, 1988; Vink, 1988). Another distinctive difference between the American soaps and the telenovelas is that the latter usually last an average of just nine months, and are directed to a happy ending that is immediately followed by the beginning of another telenovela. The audience knows and expects this (Costa, 2000; Klagsbrunn, 1993; Matos, 2004), unlike the in US, where some soaps are over 7 decades old.

Perhaps the most essential feature of Brazilian telenovelas is that they are defined as an “open text” or “open art work.” What this means is that, basically, anything can happen: plot twists, new characters, deaths. Because the story is written at the same time that chapters are shown, the public’s reaction to the telenovelas is taken into account by the writers in the chapters to come. It is this integration between the writers and the public that characterizes the telenovelas as an “open art form.” And to channel this large viewer participation (with the aim of maintaining a high audience share), TV Globo constantly conducts surveys and focus groups to ensure

that the viewers are happy with stories and plot lines (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Fernandes, 1997; Klagsbrunn, 1993; Matos, 2002).

It is important to note that Brazilian telenovelas air from Monday through Saturday. Thus, changes in the script can happen extremely quickly. Additionally, because telenovelas are an everyday event (or in the Brazilian case, every evening), this allows the audience to develop a relationship of suspense and intimacy with the story and its characters; leading spectators to this intimate and close participation (Fadul, 1993; Costa, 2000; Fernandes, 1997; Melo, 1998).

### The Centrality of Telenovelas

For more than thirty years now telenovelas have dominated primetime programming on most of the Latin America's television. The term 'Latin America' refers to more than a geographic area: it covers a culturally constructed region that goes from the southern tip of South America to the United States, where one can watch daily telenovelas on the two Hispanic networks, Univision and Telemundo (La Pastina, Rego & Straubhaar, 2003, ¶ 1), not to mention via TV Globo International, offered by The Dish satellite.

Some of the main criticisms that have been associated with the genre are its inevitable associations with consumerism, and perhaps an escapist nature. But despite the heavy dependence of Latin American television on sponsorship, some scholars have argued that the telenovela has created the space for critical-realist dramas whose narratives and controversial issues, such as women's liberation, political corruption, and homosexuality have called attention to actual conflicts, and mobilized public opinion for social change. In other words: within certain limits, the telenovela is a

vehicle of innovative, provocative and politically emancipatory popular culture rather than a mere instrument for the reproduction of capitalist ideology and consumer desires. The truth is, these serialized programs in many other parts of the developing world have become central to the discussion of the nation (La Pastina, et al, 2003, ¶¶ 3-4).

Telenovela audiences are a diverse mix of men and women of all ages and social classes, including children (Lopez, 1995; Costa, 2000). It is not hard to understand how writers and directors interweave the narratives of the characters with the everyday life of the audiences. The genre exploits personalization – the individualization of the social world – as an epistemology. Also, it ceaselessly offers the audience dramas of recognition and re-cognition by locating social and political issues in personal and familial terms and thus making sense of an increasingly complex world (Lopez, 1995, p. 258). The television genre is actually accepted as a “discursive practice” and as a “producer of cultural meanings it has been a major force in the production of images congruent with the complex processes of Latin American modernization, nation-building, and increasing transnationalization” (Lopez, 1995, p. 257).

Additionally, politics have always played a part in Brazilian telenovelas; either through the characters who played politicians or through character’s comments on world and Brazilian affairs. Because Brazilian telenovelas present and highlight current themes to a large audience they can represent a strong hold on the political regime and its representatives during the time it is being aired. Telenovelas can powerfully influence public opinion. This is greatly recognized by politicians, so



much so, that, during the military regime a number of episodes and even an entire telenovela (*Roque Santeiro*, in 1975) were censored, due to political criticisms (Alencar, 2002; Fernandes, 1997; Monteiro, 1997; Braga et al., 2001). TV Globo's censored telenovela *Roque Santeiro* ('Roque the Saint Maker') was written in 1975 by Dias Gomes and Aguinaldo Silva (who is also the author of *Duas Caras*). Set in the fictitious city of Asa Branca, supposedly somewhere in the northeast of Brazil, the telenovela discussed and criticized Brazilian habits, religion, popular mysticism, and especially politics. Although it was originally censored in its entirety, it was remade eleven years later, in 1986 during the New Republic and was a huge success (Klagsbrunn, 1993; Fernandes, 1997). Thus Aguinaldo Silva is a writer that has been traditionally associated with controversial themes. It is no surprise that he was the first to address racism so openly and bluntly in a telenovela.

#### Audience, Democratic Participation and Public Spheres

When it comes to democracy, participation and public sphere, telenovelas and a television audience may not be the first thing to jump to mind. For example, as the history of communication studies show us, Lippmann's (2007) view of the public and its democratic capacity was dim, to say the least. His assertion was that in fact, that the experts create a 'phantom public'. However, Lippmann does not argue that to achieve democracy is unattainable. Instead, as he points out, what stymies the achievement of a democratic community is a structural problem that, although specific to modern mass societies, is one that can be overcome.

It is impossible to speak of public participation and public spheres without mentioning *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, by Jürgen Habermas,

where the author explained the shift that happened between being a spectator (under feudalism) to actually being an active participant of a critical public sphere and eventually its demise in the late 19th century where the social structure shifted from a public sphere of democratic participation to one of commercialism and consumption (Habermas, 1991, pp. 9-10, 27, 160; 2006, pp. 75-77). How then, can one assume that rational critical debate can be sparked by a product of consumerism and capitalism such as telenovelas? This is where so called ‘social merchandising’ and Sabido’s ‘Entertainment-Education’ (E-E) comes in.

As Habermas (1991, 2006) explained, in this new reality, “public” gives way to “publicity”. Furthermore, the communication systems treat citizens as consumers and spectators rather than actively engaged democratic citizens. Proponents of E-E disagree with this view and actually see in certain commercial products of the mass media, such as telenovelas, a venue where debate can and does happen. Although Sabido does not explicitly cite Dewey, the connection between the two can be revealed: Dewey (1991) recognized that the way to achieve a “Great Community” is through communication. Thus, by modifying the ways in which we use certain media technologies, we can indeed achieve a public which holds participatory and critical debate (p. 141). Sabido, like Dewey, views technology as a way to “inform desire and effort and thereby direct action” (p. 155) to certain topics. This is also one of the strategies and foundations of E-E: having access, or being exposed to new ideas, discussions and debate is essential. As Dewey (1991) pointed out:

Without such communication the public will remain shadowy and formless, seeking spasmodically for itself, but seizing and holding its shadow rather than its substance. Till the Great Society is converted into a Great

Community, the Public will remain in eclipse. Communication alone can create a great community. (p. 141)

This dissertation takes Dewey's (1991) view into account. Thus, although Habermas (1991) contends that public opinion needs to flourish from deliberation amongst citizens and that this does not happen after the decline of the public sphere, where information becomes commodity (p. 163), proponents of E-E or the Brazilian "social merchandising" model actually take the opposite route, as they believe that the commercial entertainment create the optimum venue for proposing new ideas and debate. The same is true about those who see television as "cultural forum", especially those who base research on "careful textual analysis which show that television is dense, rich and complex" taking into consideration the multiplicity readings, the range of meanings and responses by audiences, creators and network decision makers (Newcomb & Hirsch, 1983, p. 571).

But what is E-E, social-merchandising and how do they work?

#### Entertainment-Education

The 'Sabido Method' is a methodology for designing and producing serialized dramas on radio, and especially television, which can win over audiences while imparting prosocial values. Miguel Sabido developed this methodology when he was Vice President for Research at Televisa in Mexico in the 1970s. The key to Sabido's methodology is 'change'. Characters may be first presented as having the opposite qualities and actions of what is being taught, but as time passes and the plot turns, they come to see the value of the program's underlying message such as safe sex, issues involving AIDS, abortion, family planning, domestic violence, racism, and

literacy, all in a non-threatening and even enlightening matter (Singhal & Rogers, 1999, pp. 47-53).

Although a 'direct-effect' is not credited to the Sabido method, it has been credited to have stimulated critical discussions about the topics highlighted in the telenovelas that adopt entertainment-education, or social merchandising, as it is known in Brazil. In 2006, the Brazilian telenovela *Páginas da Vida* has as the topic of social merchandising family planning and Down Syndrome. The telenovela started by telling the story of a teenager who gets pregnant and is abandoned by her boyfriend, who does not want to be a father. Nanda dies during the birth of her twins (a boy and a girl), and after the baby girl is diagnosed with Down syndrome, Nanda's mother, who calls the child a 'defective retard' decides to give the child up for adoption. Dr. Helena, the obstetrician, adopts Clara, the child with Down syndrome, and experiences prejudices and is stigmatized by people.

The telenovela was highly praised and numerous quantitative and qualitative research indicated that viewers changed their behavior towards unprotected sex as well as their attitudes towards people with Down syndrome. The telenovela was also credited to have raised an ongoing debate on the treatment of those with disabilities throughout the Brazilian media, audiences and even policy makers. This is in line with various studies which suggest that the main effect of entertainment-education is to trigger interpersonal peer communication and debate, which lead to changes in the social discourse of the audience, as well as to stimulate changes in behavior (Storey, 1998, Sood & Rogers, 2000; Vaughan & Rogers, 2000; La Pastina, 2004).

### Ethical Dilemmas

There have been certain questions about the ethical dilemma that is to use a popular mass media program to persuade viewers to change their attitudes one way or another. Miguel Sabido established a moral framework to ensure that the values promoted by E-E are protected by legal statutes and the constitution of the place where it is being implemented. The use of local creative teams and writers ensures that the program is culturally sensitive. Specialists are also consulted to make sure that the information in the program is accurate. Additionally, characters take various actions – positive and negative – and face realistic consequences. In this way, the plot is not preached in a didactic manner, but a dilemma is offered and is open enough to lead the audience into discussing the topics and drawing their own conclusion (Singhal & Rogers, 1999, pp. 217-218).

On a final note, it is important to point out that this dissertation sees telenovelas, E-E, and social merchandising in a pragmatic way. This approach works with education and mass media via what is currently available. While it is critical about many aspects of commercial programming (i. e. gender role stereotypes, consumerism and so forth) it considers E-E as a tool and an aid to work with what is currently at our disposal rather than waiting for a ‘perfect situation’. Therefore this approach and dissertation are critical and practical at the same time.

### Conclusions: Current Reality, Future Possibilities

For a while now researchers have pondered what the future of the telenovelas might be. Contrary to a belief that in a ‘globalized’ media world, the genre would become obsolete, some experts suggest that the future of telenovela is to become

incorporated into international systems as they increasingly become globally interconnected. In fact, research indicates that in the last decade the Latin America telenovela producers have confronted the advent of new technologies, the opening of markets leading to both national and cross-national competition (LaPastina et al, 2003, ¶¶ 21, 22). Insightful uses of the genre such as E-E, or the social merchandising approach, as well as the use of telenovelas as a type of public sphere offer an optimistic and interesting use of a genre that is widely popular and lucrative, pointing to the need to further investigate the phenomenon.

Traditionally, the images of blacks in Brazilian television revealed an intrinsic complicity between the *branqueamento* (whitening through miscegenation) ideal within Brazilian society and the medium that so closely and pervasively represents it – television, and more specifically, the telenovela genre. The small array of representation of Afro-Brazilians is even more alarming when contrasting the numbers alone. As Araújo's (2001) research revealed, between 1980 and 1990, a period that marks an elevation in the numbers of blacks on Brazilian telenovelas, of the 98 programs developed by *TV Globo* (with the exclusion of those that dealt with slavery), there were instances (28 to be exact) where not a single Afro-brazilian could be found (p. 305).

Due to its immense power to influence and to reflect attitudes and social change (Straubhaar, 1982; Vink, 1988; McAnny, 1993; Sodr , 1996), as well as its production values and current topics which render the telenovela a certain realism (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Sodr , 1991; Mattos, 2004; Villa, 2004), critics and fans alike sometimes refer to the telenovela as a "mirror of reality". But a close look

at the traditional representation of *negros* and *mulatos* in the Brazilian imaginary might paint a different and extremely problematic picture. Araújo (2001) contends that by not giving visibly to *negros*, the telenovela denies Brazil of its racial diversity (p. 306). And that is not all.

Brazil, a country which oftentimes still prides itself in being a racial democracy is far from it, on TV and in “real life”. The traditional dominating message in Brazilian telenovelas has been that of praising the physical attributes of whites as the beauty ideal for all Brazilians (Araújo, 2001, p. 306). ‘Color’ (since race is really a matter of skin tone) in Brazil does not hold any power. In addition to the telenovela, the electoral process is a perfect example of this. The UN considers that a country has democratic representation when the racial breakdown of those in government positions is the same as the general population. This means that Brazil would be a true democracy when at least 44% of authorities are black women and men (Rufino, 2006, ¶¶ 4-6).

Needless to say, a glance at the political spectrum as well as in the television spectrum in Brazil, reveals a vast sea of ‘whiteness’. Rufino reminds us that municipal, state and federal governments are the mirrors in which blacks can see their faces. There continues to be very few blacks in this mirror (¶ 5). The same is true in regards to the other so called “mirror”: television. But while Brazilian programming in the past revealed itself to be a mirror of a sad reality – that of racial discrimination and segregation, the telenovela *Duas Caras* with its multi colored cast and first Afro-Brazilian as the true hero of the saga, appears to be a step in a different direction.

Additionally, we need to have a deeper more complex understanding of cultural texts to help guide reception and effects research. Interpretive textual analysis seeks to get beneath the surface denotative meaning and examine the more implicit connotative and taken for granted social meanings. This approach views culture as a narrative or story-telling process in which particular texts or ‘cultural artifacts’ (i.e. telenovelas) consciously or unconsciously link themselves to larger stories at play in society. The key question here is how texts can create identities for those who use them (Allen, 1985, 1987; Radway, 1984). Textual criticism addresses this question by exploring particular meanings at play in particular texts. As Saukko (2003) has pointed out, textual analysis often takes an optimistic approach. According to textual critics, symbolic resistance, such as the consumption of subversive images of gender or sexuality, can transform culture and have further spill-over effects. This line of inquiry often ends up being more optimistic about the possibilities for resistance and social change (Saukko, pp. 49-54).

In order to have a more meaningful audience and/or content research, we need to understand the complexities of the text presented to the audience and its various possibilities. Content analysis is a more quantitative approach that broadly surveys for example how many instances “A” (i.e. curse words) appears during a television program, or how many Afro-Brazilians appear in a chapter of a telenovela. This information can be very valuable. Even more so when we combine it with a more qualitative analysis such as the textual analysis I am suggesting above (Radway, 1984; Saukko, 2003).



### Outline of Chapters

In Chapter two (*Duas Caras, the Legacy of Whitening and Racial Democracy Ideology in Brazil*) I will discuss more closely the historical construction, dissemination, perseverance and current demise of the racial democracy ideology in Brazil. I will also explore cultural mixing such as mestizaje (Martín-Barbero, 1987) and hybridity (Valdivia, 2003; Avtar & Coombs, 2000; García-Canclini, 1988), and how they differ from the whitening ideology in Brazil. The chapter thus focuses on the changes in racial democracy ideology in the national discourse as well as in the narratives of telenovelas, and more specifically in *Duas Caras* (2008), exploring the ways in which this narrative questioned such ideology.

The racial discourse in the fictional world of *Duas Caras* is extremely important to this project as it helps us in understanding the changes in the national racial discourse. As I will show, this analysis reveals an intimate interweaving relationship which is quite difficult to untangle: that between reality and fiction. Thus, in order to understand the role of *Duas Caras* when it comes to race relations in Brazil, we need to recognize and understand it as a reaction and a critique of the racial democracy ideology, *branqueamento*). Additionally, Chapter two will also take a look at the cultural role of narratives of cross-racial love in Latin America.

Chapter 3 (“*My Little Whitey*”. “*My Big, Delicious Negro*”. *Telenovelas, Duas Caras, and the Representation of Race*) is a historical examination of the representation of Black Brazilians on television, culminating with *Duas Caras*. The analysis revealed a strong correlation with the representation of Blacks in American visual media. In fact a parallel can be drawn with Bogle’s (2001) research and his

classifications of African Americans as “Toms”, “Coons”, “Mullattoes”, “Mammies”, and “Bucks”. As Araújo (2001) reveals, the representation of Afro-Brazilians in TV has placed them as inferior, and in demeaning roles, as slaves, or in marginal positions such as villains, and in a situation of servitude. As we look at the contemporary representation of Brazilian Blacks, especially in *Duas Caras*, my analysis reveals that although the program can be credited with the fact that it presented audiences with the first prime time Black hero, one cannot discount that the representation was sometimes problematic and contradictory: While Evilásio was a loving, friendly, smart, and moral, character, he was also hyper sexualized in what Bogle (2001) described as “Buck”. In this chapter I will also discuss how, the representation of “color” and race in this program ignited a racial debate about what it means to be Black in Brazil and to live in a multiracial society permeated by an outdated and discriminatory racial discourse.

Chapter 4 (*Deu No Blogão! It Was in the Big Blog! Writing a Telenovela, a Blog and a Metadiscourse*) discusses the construction of the metadialogue more closely, examining the various agents and sites that participated in this process. Of significance is the author’s personal blog, popularly known as Blogão<sup>8</sup> (“Big/Biggest Blog”) where Silva engaged first hand with his critics, readers, viewers and so forth. I will also provide additional examples and examinations of characters and reactions to storylines, thus illustrating once again the need for a new type of textual analysis, or “open textual analysis” as I call it, illustrating how the public’s discourse about the telenovela becomes an integral part of the text itself.

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<sup>8</sup> In Brazil the suffix ‘ão’ stands for an augmentative. In reality, “deu no blogão!” was short for what the audience named “Blogão do Aguinaldão” (Silva, 2010, p. 7).

In Chapter 5, (*Duas Caras as a New Approach to Social Merchandising*) I discuss the similarities and differences between Miguel Sabido's E-E, the Brazilian variation deemed social merchandising (SM) as well as I place *Duas Caras* as a new type of social merchandising. Key to this part of the analysis is an understanding that SM is a type of E-E, but with its own logic and characteristics, and the most important one: to be commercially successful. SM has marketing strategies and profits as its main objective (La Pastina, Patel, Schiavo, 2004; Reginatto, 2007). Thus, while SM programs aim to educate, the network's first priority is to profit from the E-E message.

Ultimately I argue that *Duas Caras* is unique: While it is not a traditional E-E intervention, it has certain characteristics of E-E. And although I argue that it is a new type of SM, it also possesses some characteristics of traditional SM programs such as the prosocial message; an issue reflecting the author's taste and personal agenda; and the fact that it is based on the principle of telenovelas as open text. Crucial to this analysis is the fact that SM is not only good to the networks due to its high profitability, but also the fact that by disguising itself as a public service program by a business (TV Globo network) who is supposedly socially responsible, telenovelas that use SM keep the positive image of TV Globo in the public eye. Thus, everyone is happy: the authors, the network, the audience and the government, who gives TV Globo its concession and license (Reginatto, 2007, p. 1, 15, 24).

Finally, Chapter 6 (*Conclusions*) will offer a summary of my findings as well as suggest future possibilities for the genre. On a final note, I would like to point out

that the textual analysis of the telenovela episodes will permeate all of the above chapters.

CHAPTER II  
BLACK FLOWS:  
*DUAS CARAS*, THE LEGACY OF WHITENING AND RACIAL DEMOCRACY  
IDEOLOGY IN BRAZIL

Do you have blacks, too?<sup>9</sup>

The widespread nature of discrimination in Brazil seems to be the *topic du jour* in the country's politics, popular culture and media. This is due to the fact that, for many years, many Brazilians believed their country to be a 'racial democracy', while *de facto* racial discrimination was vigorous in every aspect of society. The myth was historically constructed and widely accepted, especially due to one of its most prominent defenders, Brazilian anthropologist Gilberto Freyre (1933-1983), who used the very history of the country's colonization and miscegenation to back up his claims. While many Latin American countries have concepts of racial and cultural mixing such as *mestizaje* (Martín-Barbero, 1987) and hybridity (Valdivia, 2003; Avtar & Coombs, 2000; García-Canclini, 1988), it was Gilberto Freyre who codified it into the racial democracy ideology in Brazil. In this chapter I will discuss changes in racial democracy ideology in the national discourse in that country as well as in telenovela narratives, more specifically *Duas Caras* (2008), and the ways in which this narrative questioned such ideology.

Before exploring the relationship of *Duas Caras* to discourses of race in Brazil, it is important to establish a social and historical approach to race. This research follows Telles (2004) in defining race as a social construct, with no or very little biological basis, that exists only due to racist ideologies (p. 21). But when we

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<sup>9</sup> George Bush asked the question to the president of Brazil in 2002, as cited by Eduardo Telles in *Race in Another America*, p. 1, and *Harper's* (June 2002). The conversation was generally ignored by the U.S. media.

choose to look at race as a ‘social construct’ we cannot discount the fact that it still has very potent social reality, even if the concept has no scientific basis. The concept is associated with access to and denial of wealth, power, privilege, prestige, etc. By recognizing race as a construction, racial formation theory makes it possible to analyze how a society determines racial meanings and assigns racial identities (Daniel, 2006, p. xiii).

It is also important to take a historical look at race in order to unveil the myth of whitening through miscegenation (*branqueamento*) at the heart of the Brazilian ideology of racial democracy. This concept of race is clearly distinct from the dominant ideologies of race in the United States. As Dowing (2002) explains, while in the USA for most purposes we use a binary code — you are either black or white, in much of Latin America, the code that dominates is one which values you by how close to white you appear. It is assumed that the closer you are to the ‘white’ side of the scale, the more beautiful, intelligent and respected you are. This assumption seems to hold true both in real life and in the ‘imagined’ one, within the boundaries of the television screen (¶¶ 5-6). Thus, the concept of whitening is at the heart of Brazil’s discourse of racial democracy, revealing its racist nature from its inception.

Therefore, while I am looking at the representation of Afro-descendants in Brazilian telenovelas, and the metadiscourse such representation sparked, the comparison and clarification in regards to race and racial difference in Brazil and in the United States is imperative, in order to contextualize both countries and their racial discourse, but also the traditional racial discourse in Brazil and the current one, with *Duas Caras*. Perhaps one of the most important aspects to point out about

Brazilian's social construction of race is that the "one drop rule" which is applicable to the United States does not hold true in Brazil. Daniel, (2006) asserts that the 'rule' renders blackness and whiteness as mutually exclusive, if not hierarchical, categories of experience. However, in Brazil, the racial blending has been validated not into a binary, but a ternary racial classification that differentiates the population into *brancos* (whites), *pardos* (multiracial individuals, also popularly known as *mulatos*) and *pretos* (blacks) (p. XI).

Consequently, instead of an oppositional dyad, black and white in Brazil are extremes of a continuum where physical appearance (in addition to class and culture), rather than ancestry is what determines one's racial identity and status in the social hierarchy. This also means that in Brazil, there was an absence of legal barriers to equality, which in turn has promoted the belief that Brazil is a racial democracy. However, while this might make sense on paper, de facto, no such thing exists, since historically, whites and to some extension, *pardos*, were the ones with access to money, education and opportunities, rendering the reality that equates blacks with poor and all the cultural and social-economical downfalls that are connected to this (Daniel, 2006, p. ix).

As Dowling (2002) points out, while in the USA "for most purposes we use a binary code — you are either black or white (p. 5), in much of Latin America, the code that dominates is one which values you by how close to white you appear. Thus, the whiter a person is, the more powerful, attractive, intelligent and respected they become. This assumption seems to hold true both in real life and in the "imagined" one, within the boundaries of the television screen. This Brazilian code of

“whiteness”, brings to the fore a process known as *branqueamento*, or whitening, a much desired accomplishment, since the “black” signifier is associated with unattractiveness and stupidity. Consequently, the very concept of *branqueamento* undermines the notion that Brazil is a racial democracy as many would like to believe (Dowing, 2002, ¶¶ 5-6).

*Branqueamento* is thus a concept that is seen and coveted on TV and in real life. As Moore (1989) demonstrated, race, is a specially complicated term and concept in Brazil. In fact, the nation stopped using "race" as a category after the 1960 census. Before that time the functional categories were *branca* (white), *preta*, (black), *amarela* (yellow, for Asian), *parda*, (brown or a miscegenation with blacks), and *Índio* (native). However, because of the stigma attached to being black, many Brazilians refused to list a racial group (p. 397). This is an old but persistent problem in Brazil. As far back as 1980, Ianni, a social scientist at the renowned Catholic University of São Paulo, noted that,

[Racial prejudice in Brazilian society is a general reality, persistent, diffused and, moreover, well covered with a White ideology which affirms and reaffirms that Brazil is a racial democracy.] (Moore, 1989, p.399).

O preconceito racial na sociedade brasileira é uma realidade geral, persistente, difusa e, mais ainda, recoberta pela ideologia do branco que afirma e reafirma que o Brasil é uma democracia racial.

This reflects the ideology that class immobility, not race, is a problem in Brazil (Crook & Johnson, 1999). The dilemma is even harder to solve in instances such as when acclaimed Brazilian writer Jorge Amado<sup>10</sup> (now deceased) claimed, that

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<sup>10</sup> Jorge Amado de Faria (1912-2001) is one of Brazil's best-known modern writers. His work has been translated into some 30 languages and popularized in films such as *Dona Flor and her Two Husbands* (1978). His work dealt largely with the poor urban black and mulatto communities of Bahia



poverty in Brazil is indeed a matter of class, not race. Amado was quoted in *The New York Times* in 1984 saying that Brazil was indeed a racial democracy and that the country's history of racial mixing (miscegenation) had created such democracy (Moore, 1989, p. 400).

Research indicates that branqueamento has encountered a miniscule decrease. According to a private research done in conjunction with the Brazilian Perseu Abramo Foundation and the German Institute Rosa Luxemburgo from 1995 to 2004, the percentage of people who consider themselves as being “the color black” went from 46% to 50% of the population. According to the Brazilian census from 1995 to 2000, the numbers went from 6% to 15%. Furthermore, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the marriages between whites and blacks represented 1,3% of the total marriages in 1991 and, in 2000, 2,6%. Although this is a small increase, it is significant and seems to indicate an “extra-official racial apartheid”<sup>11</sup> (Silva, Hollanda, Côrtes & Miranda, 2004, ¶ 6). On the other hand, the increase of people who traditionally denied their ‘color’, but now consider themselves “blacks” might be indicative of something else: Afro-Brazilian actors believe that a change in their representation on TV has contributed to a sort of “black pride” amongst the population (¶4).

Additionally, another distinct characteristic of the construction of race in Brazil is the fact that from the start, there was a notion that racial mixing was the formula to be used for imagining national unity (Sommer, 1993). This is especially poignant in regards to *Duas Caras*, since the romance between the white young

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<sup>11</sup> The “extra-official apartheid” refers to the fact that while it is not instituted by the government, it is ingrained in everyday social relations.

woman with a black man serves as a clear marker of racial differences and division in Brazil, and not of a wide accepted view of miscegenation as being the concept under which we are all Brazilians who live in a racial democracy, without any type of distinctions caused by race.

Race and Raça.  
The United States and Brazil:  
Similar History, Disparate Outcomes

Although both the United States and Brazil share a common history and legacy of slavery and therefore of miscegenation, it is important to point out that in addition to a different outcome of the mixing of races, another key distinction between both countries is their processes of emancipation. This was key to forming disparate views about race and different race relations in those countries. Thus, this comparison helps us understand the current racial debate in Brazilian politics, culture, and more specifically in *Duas Caras*, as it questioned the ideas of whitening and of a racially democratic nation.

Ultimately, both countries are united in their legacy of the slave experience in addition to the fact that blacks have been constructed as the “others” in both contexts. Thus the historical black/white paradigm has provided the larger context in which their experiences have been grounded. Even though they might be bi-racial or multiracial – African Americans, Native (North or South) American Indians, if they look predominantly black, that is the designation used (Daniel, 2006, p. x).

Thus, I hope to have made it clear by now that underlying Brazil’s racial democracy ideology is, of course, the country’s history of miscegenation. At the same time, it is also evident that this idea alone does not explain why such an ideology did

not flourish in the United States. And thus we must take into account the post-abolition environments of both countries: Brazil was a colony of Portugal. Portuguese men went to Brazil without their wives and had sexual relations with indigenous and black women from the very beginning of colonization (with or without their consent). Regardless of the unethical or immoral situation in which this might have happened, this intermingling of racial mixing and colonization was said to loosen social distances between the races (Lima, 2007, p.462) and not to create a divide i.e. the ‘one drop rule’<sup>12</sup>. It was against this historical backdrop that Gilberto Freyre formulated the racial democracy ideology.

Additionally, as suggested by Winant (1999), the main distinction between the US and Brazilian racial politics, is the presence of explicit and legally sanctioned racial difference in post-abolition USA and its relative absence in Brazil. Thus, the very process of abolition played a crucial role in the types of racial formation and politics that would flourish in the future: Abolition in the US was a result of a bloody Civil War, while in Brazil, it came as a recognition by the state that perhaps 90 percent of Afro-Brazilians had already obtained their own emancipation running away and sometimes starting their own communities<sup>13</sup> (quilombos) (p. 102).

Moreover, Brazil was never faced with any type of ‘separate but equal’ segregation,

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<sup>12</sup> As Daniel (2006) explains, The ‘one drop rule’ of hypodescent says that the offspring of interracial unions are to be defined as African American, regardless of the background of their other parent and also anyone who has any traceable African descent, anyone with ‘one drop of African blood’ is designated black. This rule supports a binary racial project that renders racial identification as either black or white. The one drop rule is unique to the United States and is applied to the offspring of Native Americans, European Americans and other Americans of color such as Asian, Latinos, etc. But the non-blacks have encountered more flexibility. Because being black is then ‘perpetual’ it renders blackness and whiteness as mutually exclusive, if not hierarchical, categories of experience (pp. viii-ix).

<sup>13</sup> The *Quilombos* were slavery resistance settlements. *Quilombo dos Palmares* was the most famous one and had ‘Zumbi dos Palmares’ as its leader.

or laws prohibiting inter-racial marriages. Miscegenation was sought after, and the belief in whitening was the norm. Consequently this brought to the aforementioned distinction between Black and White (i.e. ‘one drop rule’), and Whites, Mulatos and Blacks living in a racially democratic nation. However, as I suggest, *Duas Caras* questioned this theory, as the plot called attention to the fact that the blending of races did not erase racism as it was supposed to have done.

One again, key to racial democracy ideology is the idea of whitening codified in Freyre’s studies of race relations in Brazil, as evidenced in *The Masters and the Slaves* (1933) in addition to *The Mansions and the Shanties* (1936). While Freyre is credited as having coined the racial democracy ideology, his thought drew upon his mentor, anthropologist Franz Boas, who believed that the mixing of races (miscegenation) could only lead to good things. At the core of the ideology is the notion that racial prejudice and discrimination was absent in Brazil, and this in turn, would make an egalitarian economic and social environment for whites and blacks (Andrews, 1991; Hasenbalg, 1985, Lima, 2007).

Thus, a key term within this context is “miscegenation”, a complex and important concept to grasp. The term gained international prominence in the 1950’s, when Columbia University and the state of Bahia sponsored a joint research project on social change in Bahia. The research was expanded later that year when United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) granted funds over a large scale analysis of race relations. Inspired by anthropologist Gilberto Freyre's formulation of racial democracy, these projects were initially designed to explore and document the absence of racial prejudice and discrimination in Brazil.

However, empirical data about Brazilian race relations did not correspond to the expectations. Though opinions differed on how physical appearance might influence future social mobility, researchers generally agreed that Brazilians who were phenotypically more African were disproportionately located at the bottom of society in terms of education and, occupation, and income, which again fuelled the belief that in Brazil, class and not race was a factor when it came to prejudices in Brazil (Daniel, 2006, pp. 178-179).

The scholars of the Bahian School agreed that the overwhelming majority of the affluent were white and that most African Brazilians were impoverished. They also recognized the existence of racial stereotypes and prejudice but did not view these as the source of discrimination but rather, individual integration into the white dominated mainstream was contingent on the African Brazilian's cultural orientation and class position. The conclusion was that discriminatory behavior emerged from Brazil's rigidly stratified class structure, which coincidentally corresponded to racial stratification. The belief was that once African Brazilians achieved sufficient income or education, they would be fully accepted by whites. The racial democracy ideology began to take a small turn in the 1960s, when scholars from São Paulo proposed that racial stratification continued primarily because African Brazilians had been "handicapped" by slavery. Consequently, they were unable to "adapt" to labor market competition in the post-abolition Period (Daniel, 2006; Winant, 1999).

As late as the 1970s Freyre, as well as other North American Brazilianists such as Donald Pierson, Charles Wagley, and Carl Degler vehemently believed that any existing inequality was due to enslavement of blacks and their adherence to

traditional cultural values, but those scholars predicted that it would soon disappear. The biggest problem, according to those scholars, was class, and racial discrimination was largely irrelevant, and was at the heart of Brazil's hierarchical social relations. These scholars believed that being Brazilian automatically implied a metaracial character, which muddled racial distinctions through extensive miscegenation (Telles, 2004, p. 7).

That was hardly the case, especially when the concept of whitening underlies the ideology of miscegenation, and works on many levels. It is believed that miscegenation in Brazil works as a tool to walk up the social hierarchy latter in a white supremacist way, since the closer you are to looking white, the better. Additionally, *branqueamento* works pragmatically, as well as discursively: As 'institutional relations', such as when the Brazilian government favored immigrant labor over Afro-Brazilians, especially between 1890 and 1914. The government gave incentives to immigrants, who were deemed as 'qualified labor', while the blacks were seen as non-qualified. Secondly, on the level of 'social perceptions and relations', whitening works alongside the strong correlation between social class and skin color. In Brazil, race is a matter of phenotype, and is literally a matter of skin. For example, a very poor white, a poor *mulato* and a black person are all considered 'black'. On the other hand, a well off white and a wealthy black are considered 'white' (Lima, 2007, p. 464).

Although the myth of racial democracy started to be challenged as early as the 1960s by authors such as Florestán Fernandes (1965) who believed that racism was a phenomenon of dependent capitalism, and as such, transitory, decades later racism is

still a powerful presence, and whiteness continues to be a kind of project for the nation, a positive self image. Additionally, being white fulfills a social role: It means taking a place in society that carries authority (Hanchard, 1999; Sovik, 2004).

Although the practice is evident in everyday situations, it had never been so openly discussed within all segments of Brazilian society as it was during the time *Duas Caras* aired. The telenovela genre, as a medium that opens the door for discussion and unites all segments of society – men, women, rich and poor (Almeida, 2002; Costa, 2000, Fernandes, 1997), facilitated and exacerbated the discussions regarding race and racism, especially through the blatant racist dialogues and storyline it presented its audience nightly for a period of nine months.

Brazilians know that whiteness facilitates movement and lowers barriers and allows blacks and *pardos* with high economic and social status to take on the same role as whites. An important part of the racial social discourse in Brazil particularly that of *mestiçagem*, is its paradoxical nature. While whiteness is valued, the racial discourse says that color is not important, thus, whiteness, as a set of complex internal structures, end up forming the machinery of white supremacy. For many years, as part of the racial democracy discourse, social class was to blame for a history of prejudice in Brazil. According to this view, coincidentally, and due to a history of slavery, blacks occupied the lowest social strata. However, this view is insufficient, and only explains part of the problem (Sovik, 2004, pp. 315-317). The many instances where the rich, white and powerful lawyer called the hero of *Duas Caras* Evilásio a ‘nigger’, and a ‘descendent of Africans’ who was not worthy of his

daughter's love pointed out a blatant racism that was heightened by his lower social condition, and made worse by the color of his skin and race.

### The Cultural Role of Narratives of Cross-Racial Love

The fictitious love relationship between 'black and white' in *Duas Caras* played an important role in the discussions of race and racism in contemporary Brazil as such narratives have done so in the past as well. When it comes to telenovelas, it is noteworthy to point out that social models of behavior are constantly shaped and reshaped by the allegories in the storylines, and distributed to the entire Brazilian territory and many parts of the world: "They establish a pattern that the spectators don't necessarily agree upon, but they certainly serve as legitimate point of reference, allowing them to form an opinion, by giving visibility to certain issues, and behaviors and by blocking out others" (Braga et al., 2001, ¶ 4; Joyce, 2009). Telenovelas bring to the fore political events, news, trends, as well as questions about ingrained traditions such as gender and sexuality, and therefore function as a type of public sphere (Livingstone & Lunt, 1994).

Additionally, the strategy of using romance, eroticism and tension to tell the tale of a unified nation is a formula that has been proven itself fruitful, especially in books. As Sommer (1993) noted, novelistic plot entanglements were used in novels in the 19th Century that were intended to inspire a "passionate patriotism" (p. 33) in newly formed nations in Latin America (such as Brazilian's *O Guarani* and *Iracema*). Such narratives used the stories of racially diverse lovers to resolve or abate historic tensions between races, regions, and economic interests in the national space.



According to Sommer (1993), those fictional unions represented the necessary conciliation in those new societies, as the tales provided models of behavior for the countries' citizens. This is exemplified by the fact that the governments of Latin American countries institutionalized such books as the national novels of Latin America in schools, which makes them nowadays indistinguishable from patriotic histories. This, according to Sommer, shows how through interracial romance and national identities were imagined into existence (p. 30). But interestingly enough, the obstacle-filled relationship between Julia and Evilásio served to make evident not the racial democratic Brazilian society, but one that is very much divided by race.

Let us remember that the black hero, Evilásio, was a *favelado* and that the white heroine, and wannabe film maker Júlia, was a very rich girl. The squatter's community is the place where they meet (when she is scouting the place for a documentary), fall in love, and eventually start a family and get married. It is noteworthy to point out that in addition to being of different races, the two protagonists are also of two completely opposite social locations, literally and figuratively. Júlia lives in the urban city in an expensive and highly secured apartment building and Evilásio (who is poor and black) lives in a shanty town (conjuring up negative and stereotypical associations of extreme poverty, drug lords and violence). These were Julia's assumptions when they first met during the flat tire incident when Julia later apologizes for her racist assumption and from that first moment on the love story develops.

Thus, through their love story the author Aguinaldo Silva used the interracial love affair and all its obstacles not as allegory for national unity, but quite the

opposite – he questioned the very essence of the racial democracy ideology. Thus, the fictional story contributed to the current discussions of race, racism and affirmative action policies such as quotas in Brazilian media, law, politics and society at large<sup>14</sup>. As exemplified by the viewers’s response to the author’s blog (over 700 comments for each post) as well as the many discussion in various media – talk shows, newspapers, and so on, a telenovela, as well as literature, “has the capacity to intervene in history, to help construct it” (Sommer, 1993, p. 10).

### The Black Movement in Brazil

It is thus clear that the legacy left by racial democracy ideology had dire consequences in Brazil. While inequalities, prejudice, and racism were very much felt by *blacks*, *pardos* and *mulatos*, it allowed the national discourse of a racial democracy intact by permitting questions such as “Why bother to study or presume racial inequality in a place where it is nonexistent?” and “Why should nonwhites struggle for civil rights in a society based on miscegenation and racial egalitarianism?” (Hanchard, 1999, p. 5). But starting in the 1970s a Black Movement began to form and later, in the 1990s, those assumptions started to be questioned more vehemently and to take a more prominent role in Brazilian society.

In the late 1970s the MNU (*Movimento Negro Unificado* or ‘Unified Black Movement’) was formed. The MNU was the first National African Brazilian political organization to form since a failed attempt in the 1937 with the ‘Black Front’, and is

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<sup>14</sup> While I argue that the romance between black and white in *Duas Caras* represents division instead of national union, I am in no way suggesting that the inter-racial unions present in national romances were obstacle free. Additionally, while for many months Júlia and Evilásio suffered terrible racism and criticism, as it is usual in *telenovelas*, the couple married during the final episode, which can ultimately suggest a type of racial national reconciliation suggested by the author as an ideal which can be accomplished in the future even though it is not the reality of Brazilian contemporary society.

the closest to being a national civil rights organization. The movement emerged out of protests in May 1978 in São Paulo and it coincided with the anniversary of the abolition of slavery (May 13, 1888). The MNU argues that Afro-Brazilians constitute an underclass whose labor maintains the wealth and power of the European Brazilian elite. Its methods have ranged from demanding recognition of important historical events involving African Brazilians to calling for economic, social, and political reform. They fought on the streets with protests as well as in the courts, to ensure that the enforcement of existing antidiscrimination laws in the workplace are being followed (Daniel, 2006; Silva, 1999). However, at its early stages, the movement lacked a strong political force.

The MNU suffered a lot of criticism including from Afro-Brazilians who felt they were being forced into a specific Black consciousness political agenda. Thus, in 1988 the Movement had to re-think some of its tactics, and was revamped especially since they began to realize that carnival groups were more popular and had more effect on Brazilians of Black origin than the Movement itself. By the 1990s the black movement had recognized that cultural organizations were doing important political work in forging Black consciousness and thus the members of the MNU decided to join forces and work with cultural organizations rather than perpetuate a further rift in the black movement. The MNU's current position is that a combination of cultural politics and political culture provide a strong platform upon which African Brazilians can articulate their demands (Daniel, 2006, pp. 187-188).

In the end, by shifting back the focus on how race, rather than just social class is a key determinant of social inequality African Brazilian organizations, along with

the MNU seek to highlight the de facto apartheid that the racial democracy ideology had previously masked. Activists have also rearticulated the dichotomy of black and white in order to challenge their hierarchical ranking. They've also replaced the words *pretos* and *pardos* (blacks and brown), which evoke color, to *negros*, which evoke race. However, critics of the Movement in Brazil call it "un-Brazilian" and accuse its militants of simply imitating the United States's Civil Rights Movement and racial thinking as well as a type of reverse apartheid (Daniel, 2006, pp. 198-199).

But the Movement actively moves on. For instance, in 1988 just two days before the official celebration of the Centennial of the abolition of Brazilian slavery, Black Movement activists organized a public protest in Rio de Janeiro that had thousands of people marching and chanting the slogans "100 years without abolition" and "you are still enslaved! Racial democracy is a lie". The demonstration garnered support from politically and socially conscious intellectuals, the church and workers organizations concerned about social justice (Daniel, 2006, p. 237). Additionally, in February of 2008 during the carnival festivities in Bahia, four thousand members of the group *Malê Debalê*, a local carnival group in Salvador, chose as its theme the Afro-Brazilian experience 120 years after the *Lei Áurea*, the Law that abolished slavery in Brazil. The title of the parade was "Áurea 120 years. What about us?" (Costa, 2008, ¶1). Thus, militants in the civil rights struggle have played a crucial role in the discussion about race, racism, and the role they play in the discussion. As Senator Benedita da Silva asserts: "we have to create the conditions to create possibilities" (1999, p. 187) and thus, social movements have been able to exert pressure in government.

Benedita da Silva, a black woman from a poor community in Rio de Janeiro (a *favela* in fact) was well aware of the importance of organizing the movement and belonging to a political party. Benedita was active in community work as a *favelada*<sup>15</sup>, and as a black woman, but new she would have more strength if associated to a party. Thus, in 1982 she joined the Worker's Party (PT), which was formed in 1979-1980 (Silva, 1999, p. 187). The senator explained that "the party understood that everyone should be involved in the electoral process and that the various leadership groups, whether it was the Black movement or the Community Movement, the PT should have a candidate. It was under these circumstances that I became a candidate" (Benedita da Silva has been a counselor in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, Federal deputy and senator. She also ran for mayor of Rio de Janeiro) (p. 180). In a sense Evilásio's story mimics that of the senator and mixes the boundaries of fiction and reality, since he tells his 'people' that by holding a political office he would be able to help the *favela* a lot more than just as 'the boss's right hand'. And the electorate understands this and eventually elects him.

Historically, political parties in Brazil whether from the Left, Right, or Center, never paid much attention to racial matters. Thus, by joining the party, Benedita da Silva saw an opportunity to "raise and tackle this racial question with much emphasis". (p. 181). Benedita started to get involved with issues regarding racism and racial apartheid. She headed a campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela, for cutting relations with South Africa, and for the rights of blacks in Brazil (Silva, 1999, p. 181). Gradually, issues of race and racism were taking over all segments of Brazilian society.

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<sup>15</sup> Person from a *favela*

In June of 1993 another episode called attention to racism in Brazil, this time in the city of Vitória, the capital of Espírito Santo. Hanchard (1999) described the episode as driving “another nail into the coffin of the ideology of Brazilian racial democracy” (p. 59). Ana Flávia Peçanha de Azeredo, a black 19 year old college woman was punched in the face by a mother-son duo after they were forced to use the public elevator since Ana Flávia was holding up the ‘social’ one<sup>16</sup>. The duo assaulted the woman after informing her that blacks did not have a place in their building (Hanchard, 1999, p. 59).

The incident of racial discrimination and violence was well publicized, particularly due to the fact that Ana Flávia was none other than the daughter of the state’s Governor, who employed lawyers and forensic doctors to examine his daughter and to file a lawsuit against the mother and son. Ana Flávia’s tale is a perfect example of racism and the white ideology present in Brazilian society: As Hanchard (1999) stated: “She is a composite of status-filled and status-less roles in Brazilian society: considered a member of Brazilian’s elite when identified by birth; treated as lowly, powerless member of society when identified by race” (pp. 59-60). Although racist incidents like this started to slowly appear in the media, it was with *Duas Caras* that the issue was openly addressed, dramatized and broadcasted to the entire Brazilian territory in the telenovela genre.

The subject of race and the division between class as exemplified by expensive high rises versus the *favela* was also depicted in *Duas Caras*, (on January 8, 2008) when the two best friends Gislaine Caó (Evilásio’s sister), and Solange

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<sup>16</sup> This means she was using the elevator designated to whites, rather than the service elevator.

(Juvenal Antena's daughter), two afro-Brazilian girls, meet two white rich guys at a beach in the upscale neighborhood of Barra da Tijuca. The two boys, who are referred to as 'playboys' by the girls, invite them to their posh apartment and feel entitled to drug and take advantage of them sexually, since they are just poor girls from the *favela* and should feel happy to have been invited to a small party at their expensive flat - they do not only act in that manner, but openly express their thoughts through dialogue. But Gislaine escapes and is able to get a hold of Evilásio and Juvenal's gang who rush in and save the day.

It is easy to see that gradually, various segments of society and especially the Black Movement were beginning to question racial democracy and to exert pressure in government and society at large. And those segments slowly garnered an alliance with the media, who did not only shed light to such topics, but also one in which culminated with the storyline of *Duas Caras*, and the discussions revolving around the topics depicted by it. This alliance between the Black Movement and the media can be seen as far back as 1995, when, as part of the celebration of 300 years since the death of Zumbi dos Palmares (the black leader of the marooned slave community that was able to resist the Portuguese for nearly one hundred years), black movement activists and labor leaders marched in Brasília and met with members of Congress as well as the president Fernando Henrique Cardoso to voice their concerns and to demand concrete measures to combat racial discrimination.

The incident was well publicized and on that same day Cardoso announced the creation of the Interministerial Working Group for the Development of Public Policies to Valorize the Black Population (Telles, 2004, p. 56). Thus, questions such

as “why bother to study or presume racial inequality in a place where it is nonexistent?” And why should nonwhites struggle for civil rights in a society based on miscegenation and racial egalitarianism?” (p. Hanchard, 1999, p. 5) were now being addressed, questioned, and answered.

With so many sectors of society voicing their concerns in regards to racism, starting in the 1990s, academic research on Brazilian media began to focus on the representation of blacks (Rial, 1999; Araújo, 2000; Braga et al, 2001). Additionally, popular sectors were also dissatisfied with the “super-representation” of whites in relation to the negros and mulatos in Brazilian television. This omission, Braga et al (2001) assert, is a clear example of how the narratives of the telenovelas perpetuate and reproduce racial discrimination in Brazil, however this was not true in the case of *Duas Caras*. In addition to being denied visibility, research shows that historically, Afro-Brazilian have occupied secondary roles and subplots (pointing to the importance of the groundbreaking role of Evilásio Caó). Thus, starting in the 1990s, race would begin to be accepted as a legitimate field of study in the Brazilian social sciences, which reflected the new overall consensus that race and racism were extremely important in Brazil (Telles, 2004, p. 55). But it took almost two decades since then for such matters to be openly addressed in a telenovela, which makes *Duas Caras* so unique, especially since race and representation in that genre had been somewhat questioned either by the black movement or by academic research.

Affirmative Action Policies.  
Quotas and Racial Identity in Brazil

In 2001, a survey showed that in the four telenovelas that were aired that year - *Estrela-Guia*, *Um Anjo Caiu do Céu*, *Porto dos Milagres* and *Roda da Vida* - the



total of Afro-Brazilians or mestiços present in those telenovelas did not sum up to 10% of the cast, while in Brazilian society, they made up 44% of the population. Based on this alarming racial disparity, politician Paulo Paim from the Worker's Party brought before the Brazilian Congress a Law that, among other things, creates a quota of 25% of the total actors for Afro-Brazilians in the networks (§ 1) and in 2004 a system of quotas was implemented for Brazilian television.

Interestingly enough, at first, the Statute on Racial Equality, proposed by Paulo Paim, was not viewed with enthusiasm by writer Aguinaldo Silva, who in 2002 criticized it. The author of *Duas Caras* - the very first telenovela to present audiences with a black hero - actually reaffirmed the myth of the racial democracy discourse at that time by stating that whites in Brazil were practically non-existent and that everyone who is considered white is actually a *mestiço* who circulates in between groups. Additionally, Silva protested against the quotas, as he viewed them as external limitations on creativity, and affirmed that fiction only reflected but did not affect the achievements of movements and struggles in 'real life' (Sovik, 2004, p. 318). However, in 2008 his discourse changed as *Duas Caras* questioned the very ideas of racial democracy and whites, blacks and mestiços living in harmony.

Since the early 1990s Affirmative Action Policies have also been slowly introduced in Brazil, but have been met with great resistance. In 1995 the Brazilian Foreign Ministry Report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights laid the foundation for radical reformulation of state policies to address social inequities by committing itself in principle to combating inequality "affirmatively". The report provided the rationale for affirmative actions that would serve as a corrective to the

link between color and social inequality that disproportionately affect nonwhites. In 1996 then president Fernando Henrique Cardoso's National Human Rights plan officially recognized racial groups "as categories for targeting of public policies" (Daniel, 2006; Lima, 2007).

For example in 1995 the Brazilian Foreign Ministry report to the United Nations commission on human rights laid the foundation for radical reformulation of state policies to address social inequities by committing itself in principle to combating inequality "affirmatively". The report provided the rationale for affirmative actions that would serve as a corrective to the link between color and social inequality that disproportionately affect nonwhites. In 1996 Fernando Henrique Cardoso's National Human Rights plan officially recognized racial groups "as categories for targeting of public policies". Although he did not commit himself to anything specific these discussions were a sign of a shift in the official racial discourse in support of affirmative action and diversity policies (Daniel, 2006, p. 241).

In *The Accidental President of Brazil*, Fernando Henrique Cardoso's memoir, he highlights the persistent problem of race and poverty in Brazil: "In Brazil, meanwhile, there can be no doubt about how, even to this day, the nature of poverty has been defined by slavery (Cardoso, 2006, p. 252). He also adds that he was shocked to find out, when, in 1999, during his government, a survey indicated that though blacks made up 45% of the total population of Brazil, they constituted 64% of the people who lived below the poverty line. Additionally, a twenty-five year old white Brazilian had an average of 8.4 years of schooling, while a black Brazilian of

the same age, had just 6.1 years. Additionally, while illiteracy among whites over fifteen years of age was 8%, it jumped to 20% among blacks (Cardoso, 2006, pp. 252-253).

But although Cardoso contributed 'affirmatively' to race matters in Brazil, he can also be used as example of how, unfortunately, the racial democracy ideology is not buried in the past, but in fact remains in vigor, perhaps due to the convenient ideas of a social democracy that a country marked by a history of dictatorships hopes to have achieved. For instant, when former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso was inaugurated, he proudly presented himself as the proof of the genetic ancestral democratic nation that had emerged in Brazil after centuries of miscegenation.

Although Fernando Henrique did not say he was Afro-Brazilian he publicly declared he was of African descent and was in fact a little mulatto (*mulatinho*), referring to the color of his skin. He used the racist and condescending euphemism of "having a foot in the kitchen" (*um pé na cozinha*) to announce his own miscegenation. While later on during his presidency Cardoso failed to address the whitening ideology implied in Brazil's racial and cultural blending and the existence of social economic educational inequality based on race, he did introduce subtle changes in the official Brazilian racial discourse (Daniel, 2006, p. 241).

One of the most controversial affirmative action policies is the one that includes quotas for blacks in public universities – the most prestigious ones in Brazil. One of the arguments against these quotas is that they actually work in reverse, and create more discrimination. According to defenders of this point of view, quotas create segregation, and additionally, due to centuries of miscegenation, it is hard to

figure out who is black in Brazil, once again replicating racial democracy and whitening ideals. The solution found by the majority of the public institutions who have adopted quotas is to implement a mixed system of quotas (i.e. for poor, or public school students) with racial subquotas directly proportional to the percentage of blacks and pardos in the local population (Lima, 2007, 471).

The shift from national racial democracy ideology to policies of affirmative action in the 1990s is a watershed moment in Brazilian history and politics. This transition showed a public acknowledgement of racism by the government and society in general, as well as the consolidation of the Black Movement organizations, their limited incorporation into the democratic process, and finally, the implementation of race-based affirmative action policies in many Brazilian institutions (Telles, 2004, p. 47). But while there was a shift in the political arena, the television landscape, particularly the telenovelas, had remained the same.

In the 2000 presidential elections, candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (the current president of Brazil), promised to turn his attention to Afro-Brazilians and promote to cabinet level the government agencies dealing with racism. In one of his rallies he introduced African-American activist Jesse Jackson to the crowd (Daniel, 2006, p. 241). During Lula's presidency, Senator Paulo Paim, of the Worker's Party (the same as Lula's) wrote the Racial Equality Statute (*Estatuto da Igualdade Racial*) which established that the number of Afro-Brazilians on TV could not be less than to 20% of the white actors. It also introduced the implementation of affirmative action programs in education, culture, sports, workplace, etc. Additionally, in 2003, President Lula signed Law 10. 639/2003, which makes mandatory the teaching of

Afro-Brazilian culture in all public as well as private schools throughout Brazil (Jungman, 2008).

The quotas in general and the ones on TV are a necessary way to remedy racial and social inequality in Brazil. As Daniel (2006) pointed out, recent data indicate that African Brazilians are 2 1/2 times more likely than white to be illiterate. Only 12.1% of whites are illiterate, as compared to 29.3% for *pardos* and 30.1% for blacks. The black and multiracial children are also disadvantaged when they enter school. All else being equal, African Brazilian children enter school later and leave school earlier. Furthermore, the portion of African Brazilian children who have no access at all to school is three times greater than that of whites, and educational opportunities for children across racial groups improve with higher social economic status. Yet marked differences in access to education remain, even at higher family income levels, and in addition, they indicate that white children displayed significantly greater rates of progression in school than African Brazilian children<sup>17</sup> (pp. 189-190).

The implementation of quotas for minorities is still a new concept in Brazil. In October of 2001, following the Durban conference, Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ) and the Northern Fluminense State University (UENF) which are two of Brazil's largest and most prestigious centers of higher learning became the first public institutions to observe a legislation in the State of Rio de Janeiro that propose to allocate 40% of African Brazilians in its 2003 the entering class. This figure corresponded to the fact that approximately 45 % of Brazil's 175 million people now

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<sup>17</sup> 71.6% of blacks and 68.7% of Pardos, but only 31.6% of whites, failed to complete eight years of schooling.

consider themselves African Brazilian (black and *mulato*). In addition the legislation mandated a 50% quota for graduates from public secondary schools as well as 10% for students with physical disabilities and special needs (Daniel, 2006, p. 286).

The mere idea of racial quotas had long been considered scandalous in Brazil, in part because of society's refusal to admit the existence of the problem. One of the main problems faced by president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, in 2001 was, as he stated: "How could we define who was black? There had been so much mixing of races over the years that racial identity was often extremely subjective. At that point, we decided to go with an eclectic mix of affirmative action policies" (Cardoso, 2005, p. 253).

Thus, starting in 2001, government agencies started to announce different affirmative action policies. For instance, the agriculture ministry launched a program establishing a 20% quota for black employees and in firms seeking official contracts. The justice ministry established a similar quota for, blacks (20%), women – (20%), and handicapped people (5%) The general principle was also established that, in government, if there were two people with equal qualifications to name to a post, one being black, that would be the one chosen. Additionally, a more effective ways to create quotas was established. For instance, with regard to the foreign ministry, Cardoso offered fellowships for blacks entering diplomatic corps, and those who were successful would be given an opportunity to become Foreign Service officers. This was a solution to a problem that is faced by blacks in the US: black students gain admission, but don't finish at the rate that the white students do (Cardoso, 2005, p. 254).

Schooling and illiteracy are still a big factor in Brazil, especially when it comes to race. The average Brazilian attends the public secondary schools which are over crowded and under funded and with significantly inferior quality than the private schools that middle-class, wealthy, as well as overwhelmingly white Brazilians attend. Brazil's government operated universities are among the most prestigious in Latin America and are the training ground for the corporate and political elite. They are also the bastion of the white and affluent. Traditionally, less than one student in five is African Brazilian. The implementation of affirmative action effectively doubled and in some cases tripled the enrollment of black and multiracial students in the elite professional schools such as law engineering and medicine at UERJ. Although these policies had stimulated a national debate about racial inequality and encouraged working-class students to apply it has had ambiguous results and is proving to be an awkward solution to a complex problem (Daniel, 2006, p. 286).

Racial quotas were also a matter addressed by *Duas Caras* writer Aguinaldo Silva. During an interview for the show *Marilia Gabriela Entrevista* ('Maria Gabriela Interviews',<sup>18</sup>) Aguinaldo Silva addressed the fact that his cast was multi racial and that he was aware that the sheer number of multiracial couples in his telenovela stood out from the traditional ones. According to the author, that was not due to quotas, but because he wanted the fictional world of the telenovela to reflect Brazilian reality - where that type of mixing is common. The numbers were as follows: In a cast of 92 actors, 76 were whites/pardos and 16 were afro-Brazilians, and let us not forget that

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<sup>18</sup> The program aired on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009 on TV Globo International.

the main hero was black<sup>19</sup>. Although one might raise the question of a racial quota that might have catapulted Lázaro Ramos to this breakthrough position, in a column in the newsweekly magazine *Época*, entitled “Aguinaldo Silva’s biggest audacity,” journalist Dagomir Marquezi gives kudos to the author for putting an Afro-Brazilian as the main hero “after 45 years of Brazilian telenovelas.” Dagozi added that not only was Evilásio Caó black, but he was also a *favelado* (from the *favela*) and regardless of what some might think, actor Lázaro Ramos did not become a part of the telenovela due to racial quotas, but because regardless of the fact that the actor was black, this was a very well constructed role (Marquezi, 2008. ¶5).

Another theme that was present in *Duas Caras*, was the matter of Brazilian black racial identity. The subject is complex anywhere in the world, but in Brazil it is complicated further by what Federal University of Bahia anthropologist, Sansone (2003) identifies as a lack of ethnicity. In *Blackness without ethnicity: Constructing Race in Brazil*, the author openly acknowledges the widespread racism in Brazil. However, his main argument is that Afro-Brazilians are not engaged with the politics of racism in such a way as African Americans are. Sansone draws a clear distinction between black culture and black identity, and argues that while on one hand, in Brazil, the black culture is thriving, on the other, ethnicity which he defines as being engaged in identity politics is somewhat nonexistent. Additionally, while black culture such as the *Candomblé* religion, the martial art *Capoeira*, or more recently in Rio de Janeiro de funk movement, have been associated with blackness, the author contends that it is by no means an oppositional form of identity politics.

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<sup>19</sup> Although the percentage does not reflect the real racial distribution in Brazilian society it is remarkably higher than any other previous *telenovela*.



In *Duas Caras* two characters dealt with racial identity more prominently than the others: Sabrina was an Afro-Brazilian maid who worked for Julia's family and who professed to be 'one hundred percent black'. There was no miscegenation with whites in her family and she was proud and familiar with her African history and heritage. Sabrina constantly mentioned her ancestors, including an African princess who was brought to Brazil as a slave and struggled with identity issues when she fell in love with a white and rich man, Barretinho, who was Julia's brother. Sabrina, the maid for the Barreto household, constantly reminded Barretinho that he was white and therefore had no place in her life for that exact reason. She did not want to 'mix'. It was not until her father pointed out that she was enacting a type of reverse racism that she decided to give Barretinho a chance.

While Sabrina was proud to be black and identified with her African heritage expressing it verbally and in her looks - such as her braided curly hair and what could be identified as ethnic fabrics and jewelry - Solange (who was the daughter of Juvenal with an afro-Brazilian woman who did not appear in the telenovela), tried her best to be identified as non-black. She straightened her hair, and wore preppy pastel colored clothes. She constantly professed that she did not grow up in a *favela*, but in the 'asphalt' and that she only moved in with her father (the leader of the squatter's community) after her mother had died. Solange constantly told people she was not black, only her mother was, and that her father was white. She referred to her skin color as 'dark', but not black.

Solange's storyline can be seen as an allegory to the concept of whitening through miscegenation which to some extent is still alive to this day. In fact, "many

blacks have been assimilated into the whitening ideology, up to the point where black racial identity is lost its purpose, with blacks intentionally looking for people with a different skin color with whom to have intimate relationships, thus trying to escape from or minimize the consequences of the ‘skin color burden’” (Lima, 2007, p.467). The degree and variability of racial self-identification by Afro-Brazilians is another problem poignant to racial identities in the country. As Hanchard (1999) stated, “phenotypic self-identification does not operate as a free floating signifier for Brazilians, but within long standing parameters of white and black, with qualified but nonetheless oppositional meanings attached to both phenotypic categorization”(pp. 9-10).

As previously mentioned, racial politics in Brazil is particularly difficult. As Hanchard (1999) stated, “one person’s mulatto is another’s Negro; yet Negro remains a category many people do not want ascribed to them” (p. 72). And Sovik (2004) adds: “One can be white in Brazil, but not in US, white in Bahia but not in Rio Grande do Sul” (p. 323). This contextual variety further complicates notions of racism. Additionally, another factor which makes the very notion of Brazilian racism a hard one to grasp is the sheer size of the country. As Lima (2007) noted, in a continental country with as many regional disparities as Brazil, we have to take into account both proximal and distal contexts of racial relations as variables of evaluations. There are different types of racism and different types of analysis to be considered in the country (p. 462).

Thus, race in general and as analyzed in this research is a social construct, but nonetheless, a discursive act with very palpable effects. As such, its meaning change

over time. As Winant (1999) stated: “Race is constantly being transformed and recast as political, cultural, and indeed global developments affect our sense of who we are, and shape the demands we place on our institutions” (p. 99). One of the places where such meanings are constructed and reconstructed is in the media in general and more specifically in telenovelas such as *Duas Caras*.

### Conclusions

Racism, race relations, and racial difference in Brazil are hotly contested in contemporary Brazil. As Lima (2007) states, “there have never been so many discussions about who is black and who is not black, and the criteria of racial equality and equity”. In addition, discussions about racial democracy as well as the class-over-race issue permeate public discourse and are on the tip of the tongue of common citizens, blacks and non-blacks, in public and private sectors of society (p. 471).

The matter of representation of blacks in the media is an important one when it comes to trying to understand race relations, racism and the role of telenovelas in Brazil. Additionally, a comparison between US and Brazilian black TV is also fruitful and one that should be the subject of further academic research. At the same time, it is also poignant to point out that “the invisibility of blacks in the media and their near absence in the middle and upper classes in Brazil are more drastic than in the US” (Lima, 2007, p. 469).

Moreover, although both countries follow an ideology based on white supremacist race relations, they were very different from the start. As Telles (2004) points out, W.E.B. Du Bois set the stage for the study of race relation in the first decade of the twentieth century, by declaring the ‘color line’ as the problem of the

century (p. 1). However, as Telles asserts, this was clearly based on the US model, where blacks and whites are clearly understood as distinct groups. In the case of Brazil, the color line was not the central problem. Additionally, Telles finds it crucial to point out that while Du Bois noted that blacks were exceptionally excluded from North American democracy, for most of the twentieth century there was no democracy in Brazil, and most of the population, including whites, was excluded from access to the most basic rights and were subject to authoritarian discrimination (p. 2). Political history, coupled with a distinct type of colonialism based on whitening through miscegenation, and racial democracy ideology all add up to a very distinct type of racism and race relations in Brazil in ‘real life’ and in the fictional world of television.

The Brazilian elite appropriated racist theory from Europe and the US to formulate their solution to the ‘negro problem’. However they abandoned two of its principal tenants: the belief in absolute racial differences and the degeneracy of multiracial individuals. By rejecting the existence of intrinsic racial differences, whitening through miscegenation provided Brazil an escape from the deterministic ‘scientific’ racism. This whitening ideology was also reconciled with the existence of a sizable population of individuals designated as multiracial or ‘mulato in Brazil (Daniel, 2006, p. 176). The belief in this intermediate category of individuals was central to Brazilian racial thinking (Skidmore, 1974, pp.76-77).

However, the ideology of whitening did not eliminate racism in Brazil and in fact for many years prevented any real discussion on the state of discrimination on telenovelas, and in the Congress, and further stymied any implementation of

affirmative policies in that country. As Lima (2007) pointed out, articulated efforts of knowledge and intervention by social scientists and civil society representatives can create pressure in the government to apply and equalize public policies that promote social equality. The analysis of the representation of blacks in Brazilian telenovelas and its connections with discourses of race, racism as well as affirmative action tools are in tune with the history of media research in Latin America, in its pursue to wed theory and practice. Aguinaldo Silva, a writer, journalist, political activist and intellectual has done so with *Duas Caras*, criticizing racial democracy ideology and whitening while using the genre as a type of public sphere as described by Livingstone & Lunt (1994).

As discussed in the Introduction, the clear dialectical symbiosis of the theoretical and applied is the single most important factor distinguishing Latin American communication theory as a coherent body of work (Huesca & Dervin, 1994, pp. 4, 54). The historical concerns as well as the wedding of theory and practice reflect a close and intimate relationship between media, social change, and more specifically, telenovelas as a site of public discourses about the politics of representation, gender roles, as well as issues regarding race, politics and democracy. This research follows in this tradition by making evident through the textual analysis of the racial discourse in *Duas Caras* juxtaposed by the various media analysis, criticism and stories surrounding not just the narrative's fictional racism but additionally, the state of race relations in Brazil, therefore showing how through fictional elements a metadiscourse about race was created in that country during the time the program aired.

The next chapter offers a close analysis of the representation of blacks in Brazilian telenovelas historically and more specifically in *Duas Caras*, specifically the situations involving the black and white protagonist couple Julia and Evilásio in addition to other supporting roles such as Sabrina and Barretinho.

CHAPTER III  
 “MY LITTLE WHITEY”  
 “MY BIG, DELICIOUS NEGRO”  
 TELENOVELAS, DUAS CARAS, AND THE REPRESENTATION OF RACE

But, if you’re thinking about my baby it don’t matter if you’re black or  
 white<sup>20</sup>

This chapter argues that an examination of the representation of Black Brazilians on television reveals striking similarities with that of Blacks in American visual media. For instance, Bogle’s research (2001) provides us a historical view with clearly defined classifications of the representations of African Americans in films, such as “Toms”, “Coons”, “Mullattoes”, “Mammies”, and “Bucks”. In Brazil, Araújo’s work (2001) traces the representation of Afro-Brazilians in television and reveals a similar finding: historically the majority of Brazilian Blacks have been portrayed in marginal positions such as villains, and in inferior and sometimes demeaning roles, such as slaves, servants, maids, and other service roles. Due to this, Araújo claims that *negros* are denied visibility and participation on Brazilian TV and society. Additionally, comparisons between a televised Brazilian Black family in the 1990s (the Noronha’s) and the *Cosby Show* are often times made.

The following analysis shows that, although *Duas Caras* can be credited with presenting the first Black hero in Brazillian prime time and including a large number of blacks and *pardos* in its production, it did not escape this history of stereotypical representations. For example, while Evilásio was a loving, friendly, smart, and moral character, he was also hyper sexualized in what Bogle (2001) described as the “Buck” stereotype. My argument, however, is that in *Duas Caras* stereotypical representations existed alongside provocative critiques of Brazil’s “racial democracy”

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<sup>20</sup> Michael Jackson, *Black or White*, 1991.

discourse. Like Lobo & Orofino (2008), I view *telenovelas* as a site of multiple readings, a space of struggle for signification, a place that goes beyond a mere marketplace, and additionally a space that can activate knowledge and dialogue in the social production of meaning (§ 7). I also approach such meanings as not contained within the *telenovela* site or specialized media, but I affirm such meanings are in a continuous flow and as such, able to navigate through various segments of society creating a metadiscourse (open text) about certain issues (i.e. race).

While traditional textual analysis does not look at the metadiscourse in the way I am suggesting (“open textual analysis”), it is still extremely important to look at the text itself. Thus it is crucial to analyze how the text portrays race relations. Of interest is another a key distinction about *Duas Caras*: the way in which stereotypical portrayals were used – as provocations – and the metadiscourse thereafter. Thus, part of what is significant and unique characteristic about *Duas Caras* is the ways in which the author uses stereotypes in a productive way: to create conflict and promote social discourse about race.

Additionally, in order to understand how stereotypes were used differently I will start by making a historical comparison between various stereotypical representations of Blacks in the American and Brazilian contexts, showing that Brazilians have a more ideological framework for dealing with race. I will also address the importance of the telenovela ratings to TV Globo and the love-hate relationship between the audience, general media and the author Aguinaldo Silva, who is famous for his controversial themes which are often addressed by the



characters in his telenovelas and which were addressed by the author himself via his blog, creating yet another thread of the open text which I am referring to.

Finally, I will provide a traditional textual analysis of a few scenes which contributed to the open text. When juxtaposed with Silva's blog postings and comments against racism, these scenes show how the progressive and stereotypical representations of Blacks are in fact intentional, and thus, key to look at the important and interesting ways they seep into a broader social discussion about race, permeating various media outlets such as blogs, magazines, editorials and so forth. Therefore, I will demonstrate with *Duas Caras* and its open text that there is participation and social debate in the act of watching a telenovela all of which contribute to the open text quality I am referring to.

As Hamburger (2005) shows us, to watch a *telenovela* and to follow its plot means to incorporate the story to one's day to day life and in a way to participate in the social dynamic which shapes where the narrative will go. This analysis of *Duas Caras* exemplifies this. Furthermore, while writing, Hamburger asserts, the authors establish an exchange, even if a fictitious one, intentionally or unintentionally with imagined and/or privileged viewers. The anonymous viewer is incorporated to the dynamics of making a *telenovela*. And the makings of such programming involves a complex relationship between professionals amongst themselves and between them and the public, a relationship which is mediated by the media and by power relationships (pp. 44-45).

### Brazilian Blacks and TV

Brazilian Blacks have been a part of *telenovelas* since their inception. This is not the case in all Latin American telenovela productions. For example, in *Tuning Out Blackness*, Rivero (2005) shows that in Puerto Rico, blacks and mullatos, whether Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, or Cubans, traditionally relied on Brazilian *telenovelas* to see black performers on TV (p. 182). However the mere presence of Blacks on TV is not what is significant. As Araújo states, “it is important to discuss any distortions that might have damaged the process of self affirmation and self esteem of the Black population in this symbolic field which happens everyday in the most important means of mass communication in Brazil – television” (p. 21).

As Araújo (2000) points out, research shows that in Brazil, the whitening ideology was sought after and disseminated as ideal, which culminated in the racial democracy discourse, as seen previously. The author points out the key role played by the press in disseminating such ideals, in addition to respected intellectuals who embraced the ideology such as Sílvio Romero, Oliveira Viana, João Batista Lacerda, Gilberto Freyre, and of course, the power of radio, television and cinema in disseminating such ideals. Araújo asks how then, after an entire century of a persistent whitening ideology, do Afro-Brazilians define their racial belonging<sup>21</sup>?

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<sup>21</sup> An interesting case to point out is that of Brazilian media mogul and former model (white, blond and blue eyed) Xuxa and the soccer player deemed the “King of Soccer” - Pelé (Afro-Brazilian). Xuxa shows how whiteness dominates TV and her relationship with Pelé reinstates the miscegenation ideal. This is an example worth mentioning about the various ways in which racial democracy has been disseminated in Brazil. The duo had a six-year, well publicized relationship in the 1980s. As Simpson (1993) states, “she was able to endorse the myth of racial democracy in part by continually reminding the public of the symbolic coupling of black and white that her affair with Pelé represents” (¶ 8). And Xuxa was not simply a fair skinned Brazilian of Portuguese descent who claimed to be white. As Simpson (1993) explains, “with ancestors from Austria, Poland, Italy, and Germany, Xuxa is even whiter than the white of Portuguese” (p. 32).

Historical Uses of Racial Stereotypes.  
American and Brazilian TV

Although a parallel can be traced between the historical uses of racial stereotypes between the United States and Brazil, a key difference is that when it comes to the latter, it is that at times, it can be quite difficult to point out who is black, and who is white. A content analysis in this case would be extremely difficult and subjective. However, research suggest that until recently, although Brazilian society was multicolored, on television, it was white. Except during the broadcasting of the carnival parade, where a “miscegenation spectacle” was presented to the public, while during the rest of the year, the *telenovelas* as well as the television commercials kept on confirming the symbolic victory of the whitening ideology and racial democracy in Brazil (Araújo, 2000, p. 38). If for no other reason, *Duas Caras* is noteworthy for the fact that its cast was at least more colorful than the previous ones, which pale in comparison (pun intended). Nonetheless it is noteworthy that the number of Blacks, *Pardos*, and Whites which formed the cast of the program, is subjective, which points to the difficulty and intricacies of the racial discourse in Brazil. Not only are people exceptionally creative when it comes to describing their color and race, the classification is extremely subjective and nonetheless racist, as the majority of people do not call themselves Black. For instance, research shows that when asked to define their color, Brazilian non-whites gave 136 definitions ranging from ‘a bit dark’ (*escurinho*) to ‘the color of a donkey when he is running away scared’ (*cor de burro quando foge*) (Araújo, 2001, pp. 26-34).

When it comes to *Duas Caras*, the classification of race was also a complicated matter. For example, while Kennedy (2008) was critical in regards to the

representation of certain characters in *Duas Caras*, he praises the program for the number of Blacks and Pardos in its cast. However, he also points out that,

I say a character is Black or White according to common sense, since in a country as miscegenated as ours, it is extremely difficult to define what is White or *Negro*. When I speak of racial matters I also do so based on common sense, since I do not make use of the term, and believe that when we say “I am of the Black race” we only reinforce the strategy of the white segregation of the past, since we are all of the same race, but of different ethnicities, origins and references (§ 8)

[Digo que tal personagem é Branco ou Negro de acordo com o senso-comum, já que num país mestiçado como o nosso é muito difícil definir o que é branco ou que é negro. Quando falo de questões raciais também faço baseado no senso-comum, já que não comungo do termo e acredito que ao dizermos “sou da raça negra” só reforçamos a estratégia de segregação branca de tempos passados, já que somos todos de uma única raça, mas de etnias, origens e referências diferentes.

As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, the representation of race in Brazilian mass media (especially TV) is similar to that of the US – one that was based in stereotypes from the beginning. In addition to stereotypes, Brazilian and American television used ‘black-face’. As discussed in the Introduction, when “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” (*A Cabana do Pai Tomás*), aired in 1969, a white actor, Sérgio Cardoso, was chosen as the protagonist. The actor’s face had European features and was thus painted black. He also went as far as wearing corks inside his nostrils and lips in order to make them fuller (Araújo, 2000, pp. 89-95). Here, the obvious stereotype, as described by Bogle (1995) is of the Tom: The old black man who is wise, loyal, kind, trustworthy, or the black man with the white soul (pp. 4-7). It is interesting to notice how the stereotypical representation of Blacks both in the American and Brazilian media go beyond national and localized stereotypes and cross over nations to repeat themselves in the same shameful way.

For instance, a typical stereotype used when representing American Blacks was that of “Mammie”: As Dates & Barlow (1993) show in *The Beulah Show* (in the 1950s), such stereotype was evident. Similarly, as Araújo (2000) points out, in 1964, the first Brazilian *telenovela* presented audiences with their own version of Mamie, or *Mamãe Dolores* (‘Mommy Dolores’), (p. 20). Later in the 1960s and 1970s, American Blacks started to gain more visibility on TV, due in part to the Civil Rights Movement, but, like Evilásio’s (in *Duas Caras*), their portrayal was also problematic, as their ‘good qualities’ were extremely exaggerated. In Brazilian TV, the ‘Toms’ and ‘Mammies’ persisted until the end of the 1970s (Araújo, 2000, pp. 96-102).

While both countries have a similar history of the way they represented Blacks in the visual media, Brazil lags behind the United States by a few decades when it comes to including Black families on their repertoire of programming. While the first African American family appeared in *Good Times*, in 1974, and later another family took center stage with the Huxtables and *The Cosby Show* in 1984 (Dates & Barlow, pp. 270-279), it was not until 1995 that Brazilians saw a ‘successful’ Black family on primetime television. The TV Globo telenovela *A Próxima Vítima* (‘The Next Victim’) distinguished itself for adopting a type of affirmative action in dealing with racial issues by presenting a positive model of the black middle class family, the *Noronhas* (Hamburger, 2005, p. 57).

In 1970, with the Brazilian telenovela *Irmãos Coragem* (The ‘Courage Brothers’) there was a high number of Blacks in the cast in both the extras and in a supporting role. However, like in the US, the main Black and White relationship was that of the white hero accompanied by his loyal partner and friend, the *negro*.

Nonetheless this was an important role, as *Irmãos Coragem* marks the beginning of TV Globo's leadership when it comes to producing telenovelas and obtaining the highest ratings amongst all the networks. It is also noteworthy that the director of the program was a Black actor with an extensive movie and theater background – Milton Gonçalves, who was also a close friend of the writer - Janete Clair (Araújo, 2001, pp. 116-117). Thus, one can infer that the relationship between writer and actor was a key ingredient to giving visibility to Blacks, and not some other social-political factor in Brazilian society, especially in light of the fact that they were mainly “using the service elevator” throughout the 1980's and did not become protagonists until 2008.

Another prominent role given by Janet Clair to a Black actor – once again Milton Gonçalves - was in 1975, with *Pecado Capital* ('Capital Sin'). Gonçalves played Doctor Percival, a psychiatrist who had obtained various degrees in Europe. Gonçalves revealed in an interview with Araújo (2001) that the role was a “gift” given to him by Janete Clair after he had complained that he wanted to play a role where he would wear a suit and tie, since he was tired of talking about the masters and the slaves. Janete Clair also tried to portray an inter racial love affair between this character and a white woman, but the storyline was axed due to pressures from the public and the government, through political censorship (pp. 118-120).

In the 1990s Blacks slowly started gaining a more prominent role on primetime Brazilian TV. It was not a mere coincidence that it was in this decade that academic research began to focus on the representation of Blacks in Brazilian media revealing that Afro-Brazilians were either largely absent from visibility or were portrayed as either service workers or outlaws in all segments of mass media –

including magazines, TV commercials, as well as telenovelas (Subervi-Vélez & Oliveira, 1991; Rial, 1999; Araújo, 2000, Braga et al (2001).

Although the Noronha family were not the main characters in the telenovela *A Próxima Vítima* ('The Next Victim', 1994), they had a lot of visibility for the innovative way in which they were portrayed. Unlike its predecessors, this was a nuclear family – happily married parents with children. Additionally, they had a stable and loving relationship between all members: the father played by Antônio Pitanga, the mother, actress Zezé Motta, two sons (Norton Nascimento and Lui Mendes) and a daughter (Camila Pitanga). The oldest son was a bank manager, the other was going to Law School and the daughter was a famous model. Although opinions differed within the family about various issues, they were always resolved through dialogue until an agreement had been reached (Hamburger, 2005, pp. 57-58).

Although in Brazil a nuclear Black family such as the Noronhas did not gain prominence in primetime until the mid 1990s, as discussed previously, Black Brazilians were a part of the cast of telenovelas from the beginning. Some of the conflicts faced by the Noronha family were clearly racially marked: The relationship between the daughter and a white photographer, and the relationship between the youngest gay son with a white young man. According to research conducted at the time, viewers identified with this type of affirmative action incursion in the telenovela, and furthermore indicated that the Noronha family was the “ideal Brazilian family” and Zezé Motta’s character was identified as the “ideal Brazilian woman” (Hamburger, 2005, pp. 58, 152).

Of interest is the fact that American Soap Operas were extremely White until the end of the 1980s. Until then, Blacks only had extremely insignificant roles when at all present (Dates & Barlow, 1993, pp. 318-319). And this was true in the previous decade in Brazil, where, Blacks had some prominence in telenovelas in the beginning of the 1970s. But, throughout the 1980s, TV Blacks were “only using the service elevators” (Araújo 2000, p. 104). In addition to the Black nuclear family, “*A Próxima Vitima*” turned another stereotype on its head: this was a rich and intellectual Black family that had a slow-witted White maid. On top of the change in racial positions traditionally seen in the media, the White maid had yet another strong characteristic: it was tremendously hard for her to learn and understand things, while all the members of the Black family were intelligent and bright (Silva & Cooper, 2004, ¶29).

The Noronha family was a step in the right direction when it comes to including, representing and giving visibility to Blacks in Brazil. There is no denying that celebrities that are prominently featured in entertainment programs become of role models for audience members. Although this is a highly controversial<sup>22</sup> subject, some authors believe that despite some criticism of the show for creating high expectations unattainable to most blacks at the time, Bill Cosby who modeled the life of a morally responsible and faithful husband in *The Cosby Show*, had a powerful positive and direct effect on how Blacks viewed their own families (Cummings, 1988; Brown & Fraser, 2004).

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<sup>22</sup> For example in *Enlightened Racism: The Cosby Show, audiences and the myth of the American dream*, Sut Jhally & Justin Lewis' (1992), argue that on one hand the show depicted a successful black family in a non-sexist manner, in addition to providing a positive role model for African-Americans, negating traditional stereotypes such as 'stupid' or 'lazy'. However, the program also lacked realism and set high standards of the “Huxtable lifestyle” that real blacks could not achieve at the time due to social, economical and historical reasons.



Other storylines including Blacks and White in the 1990s that are smaller, but noteworthy were present in TV Globo's 1992 telenovela *De Corpo e Alma* ('Of Body and Soul'), which included a storyline portraying a relationship between a white judge and a black judge; a white mother and a black mother; a white boy and a black boy. The central story involved an incident where two new-born babies have been mistakenly switched at the hospital soon after birth. When the truth comes to light seven years later, both mothers' reactions show the difference between them. The audience's final view of these binary relationships had leaned towards supporting the black mother, the black judge and the black child. These black characters presented qualities their white counterpart characters did not possess: reliability, sincerity, ethics, professionalism, sensitivity to others' feelings, and responsibility (Silva & Cooper, 2004, ¶¶ 27-28).

The trend has continued in recent years. For example, in 2003, TV Globo launched "*Mulheres Apaixonadas*" (*Passionate Women*). This 8 o'clock telenovela showed no blacks in service positions, only whites. Additionally, it presented audiences with a black young woman who was a (medical) doctor, and a prominent character in one of the central plots. Her mother was a Black singer and her father a White musician. In this same telenovela, two female school teachers are housemates: a Black woman (Adelaide) and a white woman (Santana). Santana is an alcoholic. Adelaide, always sober, helps in the white woman's rehabilitation (Silva & Cooper, 2004, ¶34).

Another stereotypical way of representing Blacks in the US and Brazil is to portray them as the over sexualized "Buck" (Bogle, 2001). Interestingly, although

Evilásio was represented as an extremely sexual character, this stereotype did not provoke much social discussion as when Blacks were referred to in derogatory ways such as when Júlia brings Evilásio to a family dinner (as will be discussed in the social merchandising analysis in Ch 5). It is important to reiterate that a judgment on whether the Black hero Evilásio was a good or bad portrayal of Afro-Brazilians is difficult to determine. We must recognize the complexity of telenovela texts and understand that they cannot be reduced to a simplistic dichotomy of “good” and “bad.” We can however point to the fact that Evilásio’s role as the first Black protagonist with high morals was innovative and a breakthrough. Furthermore we are able to place *Duas Caras* as a meaningful site of mediations between production, reception, and culture while acknowledging the constant negotiations between writers, directors, production team, actors, audience, and various institutions that participate and play a role in the social formation of gender and other cultural meanings (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003; Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Melo, 1998).

#### Representing Contradictions: Evilásio’s Case

Evilásio’s portrayal is interesting because it is filled with contradictions. While he represents the first Afro-Brazilian hero, therefore possessing positive connotations such as polite, loving and loyal – on the other hand, he was also represented in traditional stereotypical ways. The metadiscourse created around Evilásio was particularly broad and fruitful to this dissertation. Thus, in addition to the telenovela text and Evilásio’s portrayal, it is important to look at the multiple texts created by various media regarding race, *Duas Caras*, and Evilásio, as “meaning is a

social production, and as such is embedded in issues of power” (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003, p. 278).

Moreover, on one hand Evilásio could be seen as a “good guy” – the traditional ‘hero’ with good morals, high work ethics, love for family, and so forth, he is also active in helping his poor community both through the neighborhood association and later, as an elected politician. However, at times he was also portrayed as hyper sexualized as “Buck”. Another representation of Evilásio’s character which is reminiscent of the Bucks of the 1970s American films<sup>23</sup> has to do with his choice of becoming an elected politician and leaving behind the Boss Juvenal Antena who ruled the favela with a tight grip through fear, payoffs, threats, but with all the likability of a populist politician, only there was nothing legitimate about his rise to power: He became the boss after leading worker into invading an empty lot, and ruled his crime free favela by making trouble makers mysteriously disappear in the dead of he night. According to Boyle (2001) films of the ‘Buckmania era’ presented audiences with a black hero who was out to clean the ghetto of its ills while giving lip service to the idea of political commitment (p. 241).

Thus, it is fair to say that Evilásio can be compared to the 1970s image of the Black man in US films: a Buck, or a sexually charged urban cowboy out to topple past wrongs and eager to get more than his hands on white women (Bogle, 2001, p. 232) while contradictorily, he is a highly ethical and loving family man. For example, on the episode which aired on December 10th, we see Juvenal and Evilásio walking

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<sup>23</sup> A comparison between the representation of Blacks in Brazilian TV and American cinema is poignant due to the fact that these two visual media while different and each possess characteristic of their own, have the same impact in the two countries. TV Globo is in fact popularly and academically referred to as the “Brazilian Hollywood” (Hollywood Brasileira).

the streets of Favela da Portelinha. We also see Evilásio's cousin Zé da Feira stumbling and falling down to the ground because he is extremely drunk. The hero interrupts his conversation with his boss and quickly jumps to his cousin's rescue and says that he "[I] will not let anyone make fun of my cousin". When kids start to tease him Evilásio quickly disperses them by clapping his hands pushing them out of the way. He then tells his cousin that his aunt Setembrina has been looking for him since early that morning. Zé da Feira replies in a drunken manner that "all she wants to do is to complain" and Evilásio sternly tells his cousin that it is about time he hears a few truths and that if he "keeps going like that, the liquor will get the best of you, it will finish you". The drunken cousin then replies that he is the one who will "finish the liquor" as he starts to improvise a song. At this point local residents start to make fun of him again and Evilásio once again shouts at them and asks for respect, showing his good character and loving nature. He then starts to take him home (television broadcast, December 10th, 2007).

On that same episode the *favela* Boss Juvenal starts to gather his 'men' and orders them to circle the favela around and to close all of its exits to look for a man who uses drugs and beats up his wife (ironically, a white, blond hair green eyes actor), since something like that is not allowed in his favela. When Evilásio tells his Godfather he does not have a cell phone to contact him with, and Juvenal lets him borrow one of his. Evilásio tells Juvenal that he will attach it to his belt, setting the stage for upcoming events involving the cell phone and racism, which will play out in an important plot in the near future – it will set the stage for the love affair between Júlia and Evilásio.

In the next scene, rich girl Júlia arrives at the favela at night with a terrified look in her face – she is after all entering uncharted territory: a poor community. She runs over a garbage can with her car and with the sounds of broken glass in the background she shouts “shoot” and starts to get out of the vehicle. As the audience learns she has a flat tire, the camera jumps to Evilásio, who is watching her in the dark, wearing a hooded vest which covers his head. He is also chewing on his ‘dog tags’ as he laughs away at the girl. The miscenscene sets the stage for their first encounter and also depicts Evilásio as the stereotyped ‘black thug’. He is lurking in the dark watching the damsel in distress, hiding under a cloak type outfit, wearing chains around his neck, in a dark corner of a *favela*, and the most obvious dangerous signifier: he is black (Television broadcast, December 10th, 2007).

Júlia attempts to change the tire but is obviously in trouble. At this point the ‘wife beater and drug addict’ man can be seen walking behind the oblivious girl. Evilásio spots him and calls Juvenal and as he approaches Júlia, putting his cell phone back in his belt and walking towards her from the dark corner she looks at him in terror, as she watches his gesture, which is made to look like he is reaching for a gun. She jumps in the car and locks herself in (Television broadcast, December 10th, 2007).

At this moment, Evilásio, who is still wearing his hood, knocks on her window and she starts to shake her head from side to side and to shout: “no, no, no, my wallet is empty!”. As he keeps on knocking, she continues, trying to avoid eye contact: “my car is bullet proof, go away, and hurry”. As Evilásio grabs what looks like a piece of wood she starts yelling “Oh my God, he is going to break my

window!”. But instead, Evilásio starts changing her flat tire. And at this moment the usual soundtrack which accompanies the hero every time he shows up starts to play in the background “I am a *negro* cat, I disappear in the dark, I have seven lives, seven chances to win... I am a *negro* cat... I live in the *favela*” (this is a popular and old well known Brazilian song which made a comeback in the telenovela soundtrack). As Evilásio finishes changing her tire he shows Júlia that his cell phone and not a gun is what he is carrying latched onto his belt. He heads back to the dark corner and leaves her with a puzzled look on her face (Television broadcast, December 10th, 2007).

While the previous scene blatantly represented Evilásio as having both the characteristics of a good and bad guy, at times, he was portrayed as the traditional “Black other”, the sex symbol who is waiting to be “eaten” and “consumed” as described by bell hooks (1992). For example, later in the episode he is in bed in his underwear with a very light skinned woman, decades his senior. This scene reveals the secret love (actually explicitly and exclusively sexual as they described it) affair between a White and Black couple, as well as one with obvious age differences. Production wise, Evilásio’s body is objectified through camera angles and additionally through his wardrobe – or lack of one, while the woman’s body is not (Guigui). While he is almost naked, she is wearing a long nightgown and puts on a robe as soon as she stands up – while he remains half naked. Her actions – kissing him while grabbing on to his buttocks, telling him he cannot have breakfast at her home, and letting him know that it is her decision to keep their story going and as a secret that lets the audience know who the boss is. And the pinnacle of the

objectification happens when she tells herself out loud as she locks the door behind him: “delicious” (Television broadcast, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007).

Evilásio’s body and virility are once again evidenced a few episodes later when Júlia goes to his home to apologize for having confused him with a robber during their first encounter. In this sequence he is once again shirtless, cleaning the dust off a rug and beating it with a broom. When he realizes she is watching him – eating him with her eyes – as the expression goes in Brazil - he asks if in addition to being sued for racial discrimination she wants to be prosecuted for invading his home. Júlia does not say anything. She simply stands in awe and lustfully watches Evilásio’s body as he works: his bare back, his muscles (Sai faísca de Evilázio e Júlia.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv\\_UPIiLIWc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv_UPIiLIWc)

From a Traditionally “White Privileged” Space  
to “Multicolored *Duas Caras*”

Aguinaldo Silva used his advantage and privileged position as a successful and well known *telenovela* writer to discuss race matters in contemporary Brazil. After all, one of the biggest criticisms regarding the program, and especially the ones produced by TV Globo is its whiteness and lack of color, so to speak. For instance, Vink’s (1988) renowned research on Brazilian telenovelas, where the author examined in detail the content and structure of 24 stories broadcast between 1971 and 1987 showed that if on one hand, the telenovelas always give their viewers images of male/female behavior and inter-class relations, on the other hand, the stories lacked a portrayal or discussion of ethnic relations. At the time, Vink justified this due to the direct influence of advertising and as well as the direct and indirect pressures of state

interference, i.e. the military government of the time. But as we have seen, problem persists well after democracy was re-established in Brazil.

This was not only blatantly addressed by *Duas Caras*, and the numerous other discussion threads ignited by it, but it was also present in a subtle way when Evilásio's sister Gislaine is reading a book during the episode that aired on March 11th 2008. A close up of the cover of the book 'We Are Not Racists' (*Nós Não Somos Racistas*) took Center stage for a mere few seconds, but was enough to trigger comments from various media. For example Eduardo Guimarães who writes for a watchdog non-profit organization was skeptical of the entire idea of the book, not to mention its use in the *telenovela*. He writes that he was surprised to see the character reading Ali Kamel's book – a big time Power house in TV Globo. According to Guimarães, it is at least ironic that White TV Globo professes not to be racist when in fact a *telenovela* such as *Duas Caras*, which claims to be non-racist is in fact racist:

In Globo's fictitious Brazil, the rich and White are dying to marry the Blacks from the favela. In *Duas Caras*, Barretinho (Dudu Azevedo) and Júlia (Débora Falabella), the offsprings of mega rich and mega racist lawyer Barreto (Stênio Garcia), are in love respectively with Sabrina (Cris Vianna) and Evilásio Caó (Lázaro Ramos), and Claudius (Caco Ciocler) with Solange (Sheron Menezes). The image and the shameless propaganda – the book by Ali Kamel has one purpose only. Blacks and Whites in *Duas Caras* interact according to every comma told in the hateful book written by the head of news department in TV Globo (...) In reality, I came away with the notion that it was a well intended attack on those who revolt against the cynicism in *Não Somos Racistas*. It is as if Globo said: Go ahead and bad mouth us, but we have a TV which reaches 90% of Brazilian homes to persuade our theory of how we love our Black brothers (...) They are in fact racists, because they try to stymie the struggle for equal opportunities for blacks in the job market and in universities affirming shamelessly that such opportunities exist. In addition to being racists, they are liars<sup>24</sup>. (¶¶ 4-12)

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<sup>24</sup> The excerpt leaves the question of whether Silva is merely doing 'propaganda' for TV Globo or if race and racism are first and foremost personal topics of interest to the author. I will examine these questions more closely on Chapter 5, while discussing the Social Merchandising approach.



[No Brasil fictício da Globo, brancos ricos estão doidos para se casar com favelados negros. Em *Duas Caras*, Barretinho (Dudu Azevedo) e Júlia (Débora Falabella), filhos do riquíssimo e ultra-racista advogado Barreto (Stênio Garcia), derretem-se, respectivamente, por Sabrina (Cris Vianna) e Evilásio Caó (Lázaro Ramos), e Claudius (Caco Ciocler) por Solange (Sheron Menezes). A imagem - e a propaganda descarada - do livro de Ali Kamel tem um propósito. Negros e brancos de *Duas Caras* interagem de acordo com cada vírgula contida na odiosa obra do manda-chuva do jornalismo da Globo (...) Na verdade, a sensação que tive foi a de uma pretendida afronta a quem se revolta com o cinismo de *Não Somos Racistas*. É como se a Globo dissesse: podem falar mal, mas nós temos a televisão que entra em 90% dos lares brasileiros a referendar nossa teoria sobre como amamos nossos irmãos negros (...) Eles são racistas, sim, porque tentam frear a luta por oportunidades iguais para os negros no mercado de trabalho e nas universidades afirmando descaradamente que essas oportunidades existem. Além de racistas, são mentirosos.] (¶¶ 4-12)

Additionally, on May 31th, 2008 on the website *midia independente.org*

(‘independent media.org’) Eduardo Guimarães criticizes the character Solange not only for reading *Não Somos Racistas*, but also for being openly against quotas for blacks and “defends other racist ideas such as the ones in Kamel’s book” (¶ 6). A quick *Google* search on Ali Kamel and *Duas Caras* turns up over 5900 websites. Thus, as previously stated in this dissertation, the main focus here is not to judge whether or not blacks were correctly represented on the program or whether or not TV Globo telenovelas are racist, but in fact to show how a television programming can contribute to and in fact *Duas Caras* has contributed to a metadiscourse about race and racism in contemporary Brazil.

While the environment for discussing race matters was created, in general the author did not receive kudos for his portrayal of blacks, even though he is a self-described *mulato* and went as far as criticizing Gilberto Gil’s racist acts (according to Silva), as discussed previously. For example, let us look at the character played by

black actress Adriana Alves, a.k.a. ‘morena’<sup>25</sup>. This was a stereotypical portrayal of Brazilian Black women, as Kennedy (2008) points out:

Another point that should be addressed is regarding actress Adriana Alves, the morena and Juvenal Antena’s former girlfriend. She disappeared for ten years and now reappears with the title Countess Finzi Contini. She acquired the title after marrying a rich and old Italian man. She quickly became a widow and came back to Brazil. This is the typical case of the ‘export style’ Brazilian woman, especially the *mulatas* who become involved with the gringos in the well known ‘gold digger move’. Even if there was love between her and the deceased, the way in which she reintroduced herself puts her in the position of a prostitute who took advantage of her husband. (§ 5)

[Outro ponto a ser discutido é o personagem da atriz Adriana Alves, a morena, ex-namorada do Juvenal Antena. Ela sumiu por dez anos e agora reapareceu com o título de Condessa de Finzi Contini. Ela conseguiu o título após casar-se com um italiano rico e muito velho. Logo tornou-se viúva, a condessa retorna ao Brasil. É o típico caso da mulher, principalmente da mulata brasileira tipo exportação, que se envolve com os gringos e ficam ricas no famoso golpe do baú. Ainda que houvesse amor, entre ela e o marido falecido, a forma como ela se reapresentou a colocou com uma prostituta aproveitadora] . (§ 5)

Grinberg (2008) also questions the representation of Blacks in *Duas Caras* by pointing out that on one hand actors Dudu Azevedo (Barretinho) and Cris Vianna (the maid Sabrina) break a well known taboo: the rich boss will actually fall in love with the Black maid. However, he points out that if you are a millionaire, no one questions what the color your skin is, and adds that blacks are only well accepted when they are rich. He additionally points out that in the telenovela even the Countess was treated differently by Barreto – because she was not seen as Black, but as a noble rich woman. “I wonder what his reaction would have been if she was poor”, he asks (§ 2).

Another subject of criticism in regards to representing race in *Duas Caras* was the fact that the *Favela da Portelinha* was extremely white in its population, a distant

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<sup>25</sup> The word ‘morena’ is used to refer to light skinned Brazilian women. It is an euphemism, a way to not call a person black. This is ironic when it comes to *Duas caras*, but especially due to the fact that the actress is a Black woman with dark complexion.

reality from actual favelas. As pointed out by Kennedy (2008), the majority of the population in the fictional favela was white, even its leader and the members of the community association, except for Evilásio. The writer points out that even though there is an essentially black story line within the *favela*, that of the *Candomblé* religious leader Mother Setembrina (Mãe Setembrina, played by Chica Xavier), the majority of the population was white (§ 7). Noteworthy is the fact that the very portrayal of this Afro-Brazilian religion during prime time also contributed to the national discourse about race in Brazil. As Grinberg (2008) points out this was a significant storyline within the plot as he cites Aguinaldo Silva's blog entry regarding the subject, where the author stated that, "in a country that becomes more and more miscegenated on a daily basis, this theme which interests so few should interest more people. This is why I approach the subject on TV but I am an isolated voice" (§ 5).

Racial matters took center stage in Brazil during the time of the broadcast of *Duas Caras*. Whether people loved or hated the storyline, and the portrayal of the Black characters, race and racism were discussed across the media spectrum as well as during interpersonal encounters, as stated previously. Additionally, as Grinberg (2008) notes:

Never before in the history of this country have racial prejudices been discussed as it is in *Duas Caras*. This is all people talk about regarding Aguinaldo Silva's story. After discussing the theme through the interracial couple portrayed by Evilásio (Lázaro Ramos) and Júlia (Débora Falabella), the author has spread the subject through all the other subplots (...) It was about time this subject is discussed in a telenovela. We are in a very good process of evolution. A while ago, the media were racist, the telenovelas were racist. Aguinaldo is helping to open up doors. (§§ 1,7).

[Nunca na História deste país falou-se tanto em preconceito racial como em 'Duas Caras'. Só se fala disso na trama de Aguinaldo Silva. Depois de discutir o tema a partir do casal interracial vivido por Evilásio (Lázaro Ramos) e Júlia

(Débora Falabella), o autor espalhou o assunto por todos os núcleos (...) Já estava na hora de esse assunto ser abordado numa novela. Estamos em um processo de evolução muito bom. Antigamente, a mídia era racista, as novelas eram racistas. Aguinaldo está ajudando a abrir portas]. (¶¶ 1,7)

While there was consensus in the fact that racism should be addressed in the number one rated television program in Brazil, the ways in which Blacks were represented was the subject of criticism by various critics, showing once again that even the best authorial intentions are sometimes not enough. This also points to the polysemic nature of television texts. As Campbell suggests, a “program’s cultural meanings are always something more than the best work and intentions of producers, [reporters], and editors”. Additionally, the Campbell states that its meanings “become as diffuse and diverse as the electromagnetic spectrum itself” (p. xiii). Thus, the multiple codes of the telenovela open up the possibility for various readings regarding race and multiple discussions of its portrayal.

For instance, when it comes to the love affair between Júlia’s brother Barretinho and the family maid Sabrina (an Afro-Brazilian), this subplot sparked outrage as some read that this meant that the maid was not only suffering from sexual harassment, but also that she succumbed to the white boss’s advances (Kennedy, 2008, ¶ 3). The same opinion is shared by Lobo & Orofino (2008) who also believe Sabrina was suffering from sexual harassment in a “non spoken type of racism” even though Barretinho confesses to his mother that he is indeed in love with the maid. The authors point out that the scenes which led to the love story line where Barretinho is clearly harassing Sabrina and literally could not take his hands off her are reminiscent of the Brazilian slave heritage where in addition to having her daily duties as maid,

she also serves as the vehicle of sexual initiation of the bosses and their sons (¶¶ 12-13).

### *Duas Caras*, Ratings, Racism and Public Pressure

Preparations for a telenovela start as soon as the preceding one airs. Actual taping starts weeks before the first episode is broadcast and the rhythm is dictated by each chapter's airing, in the likes of the feuilleton. Usually when the first episode airs, the twenty following ones have been already taped but oftentimes a scene or two will be taped on the same day they air. Additionally, some episodes may be edited even moments before the broadcast due to unexpected events such as pressures from the public. The writers are responsible for writing six chapters every week and the producers are responsible for taping blocks of six chapters weekly. This corresponds to an average of 40 pages per day (Hamburger, 2005, pp. 42, 43). This worked in Aguinaldo Silva's benefit since due to the highly controversial racial matters in *Duas Caras*, the author suffered threats to his life (according to his blog postings as will be discussed later on this chapter) and took a small 'vacation' from writing immediately after the first few weeks of the broadcast of *Duas Caras*. The author announced in his blog that he had been receiving anonymous threats on his phone. The messages were to let him know that he was going to wake up one day "with his mouth filled with ants" (The Brazilian expression is analogous to "sleeping with the fishes" in the US).

This incident was well publicized in various media, and journalist Reinaldo Azevedo (2007) who writes a blog for the news weekly magazine *Veja* even reproduced Silva's entire posting on his own blog. Let it be known that *Veja* does not specialize on television and it is also part of the *Abril Group*, a competitor of

*Organizações Globo*, which attests to the fact of the highly pervasive nature of telenovelas in general in Brazil, but more specifically of *Duas Caras* and its racial and controversial discourse. Azevedo often criticized Silva and his plot during the time of the broadcast and openly raised questions about the supposed threats Silva was receiving, but eventually believe them, since the author had to in effect take a leave of absence from TV Globo – another first for Aguinaldo Silva and TV Globo in general. Azevedo writes that the threats were not a folk tale, but a form of intimidation towards the author (§ 1). As commented on the journalist’s website:

Silva assured his viewers and the general public that he was indeed afraid: I tell you without beating around the bush. At this moment I am afraid and I have serious reasons to be. Judging by what some calls say from cell phones which have the caller ID blocked, due to reasons outside of myself I may not finish *Duas Caras*, due to the discussions it has raised. But here is the warning: If I stop it will not be due to my own volition. And even though what I do is “merely Chinatown”, in other words, a *telenovela*, if I am in fact unable to finish because as they say, I woke up “with a mouth filled with ants”, I hope Mother History will pronounce itself and find who did it. (Azevedo, 2007, §§ 11-12)

[Digo a vocês sem maiores rodeios. Neste momento eu sinto medo, e tenho sérias razões pra isso. A julgar pelo que dizem os telefonemas disparados dos tais celulares com IDs privados, por motivos alheios à minha vontade posso até nem terminar a novela DUAS CARAS, que tanta discussão está gerando. Mas fica o aviso: se eu parar não será por minha própria vontade. E embora, no final de contas, o que eu faço seja “apenas Chinatown”, ou seja, uma novela, se eu não puder terminá-la porque amanheci, como dizem os tais telefonemas: “com a boca cheia de formigas”, espero que um dia Mamãe História se pronuncie e alguém venha a ser responsabilizado por isso]. (Azevedo, 2007, §§ 11-12)

The magazine *Veja* was not the only one reporting on the event. The newspaper *A Folha da São Paulo* also publicized that Aguinaldo Silva was taking a leave from the program. Fernandes (2007) however suggested that the real reason why Aguinaldo Silva was taking a break was due to ratings:

TV Globo announced today that Aguinaldo Silva, the writer of “*Duas Caras*” will stay away from the program until December 16<sup>th</sup>. Since it first aired in October, the Ibope of the telenovela has been bellow expectations, while Aguinaldo Silva has been collecting disaffections via his blog.

His latest was criticizing the Minister of Culture Gilberto Gil: “I read somewhere that Gilberto Gil will receive his European Union passport soon, issued by the Italian government” ... “I’ve been thinking: where did his ancestors come from? Perhaps Nigeria. Or Guinea, I don’t know, but without a doubt, He would be entitled to an African passport. Since he always places such importance on Black matters, I ask: does he have one yet?”

In an official note the network explained that Aguinaldo Silva Will take care of “private matters” in the upcoming weeks. According to the network, he has left “several episodes” written and should return to the program after he returns from a trip.

During his absence, his collaborators Maria Elisa Berredo, Nelson Nadotti, Gloria Barreto, Izabel de Oliveira, Filipe Miguez and Sergio Goldenberg Will coordinate all the Jobs pertaining to the telenovela and will accompany the day to day of the story with its director Wolf Maya (Fernandes, 2007, ¶ 4).

[A Globo informou hoje que Aguinaldo Silva, autor de "Duas Caras" (21h), ficará afastado da trama até o dia 26 de dezembro. Desde a estréia de "Duas Caras" no começo de outubro, o ibope da novela tem ficado abaixo das expectativas, enquanto Aguinaldo Silva tem colecionado desafetos por meio de seu blog].

A última do novelista foi criticar o ministro Gilberto Gil (Cultura): "Li em algum lugar que o ministro Gilberto Gil receberá por estes dias o seu passaporte da Comunidade Européia, emitido pelo governo italiano (...) andei pensando: de onde vieram os ancestrais dele? Talvez da Nigéria, ou da Guiné, não sei, mas sem dúvida Gil teria direito a passaporte de algum país africano. Como ele dá tanta importância à questão da negritude, eu pergunto: será que ele já tem um?".

Em nota, a emissora explicou que Aguinaldo Silva vai cuidar de "assuntos pessoais" nas próximas semanas. Segundo a emissora, ele deixou escritos "vários capítulos" da novela e deve retomar a trama na volta de uma viagem. Na sua ausência, os colaboradores Maria Elisa Berredo, Nelson Nadotti, Gloria Barreto, Izabel de Oliveira, Filipe Miguez e Sergio Goldenberg vão coordenar os trabalhos relacionados à novela e acompanhando o dia-a-dia da história com o diretor de núcleo Wolf Maya] (Fernandes, 2007, ¶¶ 1-4).

As attested above, just like with any network in the USA, ratings are an extremely serious business in Brazil. Although TV Globo has been on top for the past three decades, since the 1990s Brazilian television started a process of diversification in programming and it is a constant battle to stay on top. With the late introduction of

cable TV, in addition to video cassettes, DVD players, videogames, satellite programming, the remote control and ‘zapping’, and finally, the internet, audiences found themselves with more options of programming and due to this competition, TV Globo began to suffer a loss in viewership, but not enough to shake its leadership in comparison to the other networks. Competition between TV Globo, and news from the SBT network as well as with *telenovelas* from the now extinct TV Manchete signaled a diversification in the aesthetic as well as narrative conventions in news and dramas, especially when compared to the twenty years prior to that decade. The competition between the networks took the form of a dispute between style as well as different interpretations of Brazil, which eventually confirmed that in that country, television’s primetime, and especially *telenovelas* have become a privileged space where matters of nationality are questioned (Hamburger, 2005, p. 121).

Within this context, it is imperative to point out that even with all the competition and distractions, the triumph of TV Globo’s primetime telenovela is ever impressive, and “watching a good 8:00 PM telenovela is still an experience that Brazilians love to share (Valladares, 2005, p. 65; Joyce, 2005). For example, although television ratings in general have dropped in the last decade, Aguinaldo Silva’s previous *telenovela*, which aired on the 8PM slot in 2004 – *Senhora do Destino* (‘Master of her own Destiny’) attracted 45 million spectators every night, for nine months (Valladares, 2005, p. 58).

Additionally, despite remarks from various media outlets, on April 4th, 2008, Aguinaldo Silva bragged in his blog that *Duas Caras* was the number one show on Brazilian television, reaching 45 daily points in the IBOPE (*Instituto Brasileiro de*



*Opinião Pública e Estatística* or ‘Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics’), which measures the size of the audience in Brazil). IBOPE points have been the measure schema for Brazilian television ratings since the 1980s and the expression ‘my Ibope is high/low’ has become part of the popular lexicon in Brazil, indicating a person’s likeability factor. As Mattelart & Mattelart (1990) explain:

The ‘tyranny’ that IBOPE exercises over programming is expressed by rights of life or death over any one program. A *novela* which fails to obtain a satisfactory IBOPE rating after a certain number of episodes will be prematurely terminated, whereas a *novela* that maintains a high rating will see its life span increased. (p.38)

Thus, Silva was not just giving his opinion, but he had the IBOPE numbers to prove his popularity and the success of his *telenovela*. According to Silva’s (2008) posting, based on the IBOPE poll, *Duas Caras* was ahead of the second place programming - *Jornal Nacional* (TV Globo’s prime time news) by 8 points, and also 18 points ahead of the Globo 7 PM *telenovela* *Beleza Pura* (‘Pure Beauty’), as well as 24 points ahead of *Os Mutantes. Caminhos do Coração* (‘The Mutants. Ways of the Heart’), a TV Record *telenovela*. In addition to having the highest TV ratings, Silva’s blog was also the one with the most number of hits and the most number of replies to postings in the server BlogLog. One of the viewer-reader’s comments on the author’s blog stated that for those who do not believe in the IBOPE ratings, all they had to do to corroborate its verifiability would be to step outside their homes and go to a bar, supermarket or bus station, where everyone was talking about it (*Fala aí gente boa*, 2008<sup>26</sup>).

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<sup>26</sup> The writer’s blog is no longer available and unfortunately the original posting can no longer be accessed.

The example above attests not only to the privileged position acquired and conquered by TV Globo *telenovelas* in Brazil, but to the leadership role of TV Globo itself, despite any competition. In a posting entitled *Geni não mora mais aqui* ('Geni does not live here anymore'), Aguinaldo Silva discusses his IBOPE ratings and points out that not only is *Duas Caras* the number one show in Brazil, but the first ten shows in the ranking are all being aired on TV Globo. TV Record's telenovela *Caminhos do Coração* (Ways of the Heart), which is considered a high rating telenovela outside of TV Globo had 15 points, meaning it placed below all TV Globo telenovelas, including the one rerun which airs mid afternoon. Aguinaldo Silva's IBOPE rating translated to 68% of the audience share, which according to one American writer's comment on the author's blog, made him the television writer with the biggest share in the world – and ironically this was during the writer's strike in the US (February 19, 2008, *Geni não mora mais aqui*).

<http://bloglog.globo.com/blog/blog.do?act=loadSite&id=201&mes=2&ano=2008>).

I hope to have made it clear by now that there is more to following a *telenovela* than mere watching TV. *Telenovelas* are extremely pervasive and powerful. And significantly, they are not simply a 'woman's genre'. In fact, 40% of the audience for the eight o'clock *telenovela* is men (Hamburger, 2005, p. 64). Additionally, as evidenced by the previous media excerpts and blog exchanges, it is easy to notice, as Hamburger points out, that even those who do not watch the telenovelas daily are aware of the narrative and what happens within the program. They also know the soundtrack, and the characters. The practical knowledge that the audience has of the genre suggests the role of mediator of the *telenovela* in the social

relationships in addition to a shared repertoire and of a metaphor for everyday life and conflicts (p. 81).

Thus, Hamburger (2005) describes telenovelas as “a space of discussion about the nation” and a “legitimate space for the shaping and reshaping of models of nationality, family and gender relations and roles”. According to the author this role was established not so much due to careful planning to maintain this leadership role, but due to a process of securing an audience through the depiction of current and or controversial events, acting as a type of a window of new products. Hamburger points out the irony of attributing a certain newsworthy verisimilar character to this dramatized world (using in fact a documentary style of shooting and taping). A world which does not reflect the national reality, especially in regards to the racial and class diversities, not to mention violence, amongst other topics, which are present in Brazilian society but more often than not are absent in the tele-visual world. The various elements present in the makings of a telenovela (documentary style, current events, pervasiveness, and viewer participation) mesh narrative genre, gender and make possible the union between spaces defined as domestic and political. Due to this successful interweaving, telenovelas are able to capture an ideological universe within which various political positions align themselves, and as a result, ironically telenovelas have transformed themselves into a privileged space, establishing ever growing connections with other public domains (pp. 117-120).

#### My Little Whitey and My Big Delicious Negro

Aguinaldo Silva not only dared to introduce the first black hero to Brazilian telenovela audiences: He also dared to explicitly depict love making scenes between

him and not only one but two extremely White skinned woman. And as if that was not enough, the dialogue between Júlia and Evilásio in the sequence leading to the first time they went to bed together was in addition, to being silly and actually a bit dull, without a doubt, exceptionally politically incorrect, to say the least. In this sequence we see the room that the production company Júlia works for is renting in the back of someone's home in the *favela*. This is the 'headquarters' for the documentary they are shooting. Júlia obviously has 'second intentions' as she prepares a romantic environment as she waits for Evilásio, turning down the lights and lighting candles (A primeira vez entre Júlia e Evilásio <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnnZOtAIUmM>).

When she opens the door for him she jumps on his laps and kisses him passionately, wrapping her legs around him. As he looks around the place and compliments it, Júlia says that everything is great and asks "can you believe the couch turns into a bed, just in case someone needs to sleep here"? And Evilásio replies: "No kidding"? And Júlia asks him if he wants to see it. As she unfolds the sofa-bed Evilásio says "oh, it is a queen size and it is already made". And Júlia: isn't this so cute? Evilásio asks her if it is comfortable and decides to try it, sitting at the edge and bouncing up and down playfully with Júlia by his side, doing the same. Júlia puts her hand on top of his and he grabs it and kisses. The camera angle focuses on them from far away, with candles on first plane, out of focus. Evilásio teases Júlia by saying he is tired and is going to take a nap. She says that if all he wants to do is sleep he should go home. At this point he grabs her and kisses her and the two have their first night together as lovers. The scene is the typical 'romantic soap opera love

making' type, except here there are chopped close ups of their body parts, hands, backs, and the contrast of one on top of the other making evident the difference between the color of their skin. The sequence is subtle. It is explicit in regards to the racial aspect of the love story as Evilásio stops kissing her to say "I cannot believe you are really going to be mine, my little whitey" [Não acredito que você vai mesmo ser minha, minha branquinha]. To which she replies: "I am already yours, my big delicious *negro*" [Eu já sou sua, meu negão gostosão] (A primeira vez entre Júlia e Evilásio <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnnZ0tAIUmM>).

Moments later when the two are lying in bed barely covered by a white sheet Júlia tells Evilásio he is "in trouble because she is never letting go of him". She adds that she could stay there in his arms forever, but she must go back home, since it is so late. Evilásio comments that if she does not go back home soon her father Barreto will send the elite squad to rescue her. At this point Júlia gets out from under the sheet as the camera shoots her white naked skin from the back while Evilásio stares at her back. As she gets dressed Júlia tells Evilásio they need to have the 'talk' because she needs to know if he is taking their story seriously and that what she feels for him she has never felt for anyone else, not even anything close to it and that she needs to know if it is as serious for him as it is for her. She needs to make it clear that she is taking it seriously and that she is not just a preppy and spoiled girl who changes her mind on a whim. Júlia then says that from the moment she first saw him she knew he was "the one" (Evilásio e Júlia <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBsltMH8qQg>).

At this point Evilásio light heartedly smiles and says that this is a lie and reminds her that she thought he was going rob her when they first met. Júlia interrupts

him by saying she wants to forget that first encounter and that she realized he was the one when she noticed that she had really hurt his feelings and it was then she understood that her life only had meaning by his side. After exchanging a passionate kiss Evilásio takes her hand and tells her that things are going to be extremely difficult for the two of them and that it is going to be “them against the world”. She replies that she is aware of that and he adds that they are going to suffer tremendously if they decide to be together as Júlia replies that being apart would make them suffer even more. He asks her if she is sure of what he wants and she says yes, and “what about you?”. Evilásio replies that even if he “has to fight, even if he has to take her to the ends of the earth nothing or nobody will be able to separate them”, as she wipes her tears of happiness from her face and the two embrace each other (Evilázio e Júlia é para sempre <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBsltMH8qQg>).

Aguinaldo Silva is no stranger to controversy and matters of political correctness. The author actually invites it in his productions – politically incorrectness that is. According to Silva (2009) *telenovelas* are becoming less and less interesting lately. According to him, the main cause is the preoccupation with politically correctness, which ruins the language of the genre, which has excess as its main trademark: the villain is capable of terrible acts, has an aggressive style of speech. And these days, Silva suggests, the language in the *telenovelas* are lukewarm, which is little by little killing the texts. Silva concludes that “some authors agree with the politically correct. I don’t. I don’t mean to be a hypocrite. Things are what they are. I cannot say that a man is ‘vertically challenged’. He is a ‘midget’” (Maia, 2009, ¶ 3).

### Conclusions

After five decades of telenovelas in Brazil audiences were presented with the first Afro-Brazilian hero, signaling that contrary to the opening epigraph, it does matter if you are Black or White. This examination of race and representation of Blacks and Whites on Brazilian TV, especially within the *telenovela* genre revealed a few similarities between Brazilian and American visual media. A representation of the stereotypical “Toms”, “Coons”, “Mullattoes”, “Mammies”, and “Bucks” as described by Bogle (2001) is a converging schema for both countries, where the black hero Evilásio is a complex characters who is at times portrayed as loving, friendly, smart, and moral, while at others, he is also hyper sexualized as a “Buck”.

(The analysis took into account the polysemic nature of the *telenovela* text as well as the multiple readings created by different audience members as I juxtaposed the text in *Duas Caras* (visual production aspects as well as the accompanying dialogue) to the multiple texts and meaning created by various media agents as well as audience members – bloggers, newspaper and magazine reporters as well as advocates of non profit websites. This examination was not a value judgment on whether or not Aguinaldo Silva wrote a good or bad or even fair portrayal of an Afro-Brazilian. This assumption would imply that there is such a thing as one single type of Black or White person and this would be an essentially racist analysis.

By examining the portrayal of several Black characters in this program in addition to their interracial relationships and the reactions caused by such across a varied media spectrum I show how *Duas Caras* – a television program which is popularly viewed as ‘bad’ or ‘inferior’ programming - fomented a national debate

creating an open text about what it means to be Black in contemporary Brazil and what it means to live in a multiracial society permeated by an outdated and discriminatory racial discourse. In the next chapter I will provide additional 'data' and analysis in order to further prove this point.



CHAPTER IV  
*DEU NO BLOGÃO!*  
 (“IT WAS IN THE BIG BLOG!”)  
 WRITING A TELENOVELA, A BLOG, AND A METADISCOURSE

Amidst the various media which facilitated the metadialogue about race, racism and *Duas Caras* during the time of the program’s broadcast, perhaps the most significant one was the Internet. This was partly due to the writer’s personal blog, commonly known as Blogão<sup>27</sup> (“Big/Biggest Blog”) where he engaged with his critics, readers, viewers and so forth<sup>28</sup>, but also, as illustrated in earlier chapters, due to the fact that other journalists used their own blogs to address Silva and ‘his’ race matters. *Deu no Blogão!* (“It was in the Big Blog!”) became a common expression used by readers and viewers to share information, prompting them to go the blog and read, write, participate, share opinions, and so forth about issues pertaining to *Duas Caras* (Silva, 2010, p. 7). Additionally, in January of 2010 *Deu no Blogão!* became the title of a book<sup>29</sup> by Silva where he published<sup>30</sup> some of the most controversial blog postings about race, politics, the script, and gender issues in *Duas Caras* and where he also published a few of his viewer’s comments. In this chapter I will use a few of these examples as evidence of the metadiscourse that was created during the time the program aired.

Thus, with the viewers/writer’s comments and contribution – and here I include journalists and activists in these categories - I will illustrate why, in addition to reading the text of the telenovela in the traditional sense, it is imperative to

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<sup>27</sup> In Brazil the suffix ‘ão’ stands for a augmentative. In reality, “deu no blogão!” was short for what the audience named “Blogão do Aguinaldão” (Silva, 2010, p. 7).

<sup>28</sup> And consequently these social actors with each other.

<sup>29</sup> Also available for Kindle.

<sup>30</sup> In his book, Silva explains that the comments published on the book were randomly selected from a pool of the most avid commentator/writers of the *Blogão* (p. 7)

investigate it in conjunction with the production process, the audience's response, and finally, with the broader media coverage, since they keep writing the original text. Consequently I will illustrate how the public discourse about the telenovela becomes an integral part of the text itself. Not only did the text kept on being written during the time the program aired, and especially during the *Blogão*'s twelve month run, but additionally, *Duas Caras*'s text is still being written, and now, it has Silva's book as another aid in the process.

Before being pulled off the web in May (2008) immediately following the end of *Duas Caras*, Silva revived the *Blogão* that following September, due to the outcry from the public, who exerted such pressure that they not only got the *Blogão* back, but in addition, they now have Silva's book (Silva, 2010, p. 7). The astounding number of the original 130, 000 daily readers/writers who commented 150,000 times in the original blog almost doubled soon after it was re-born. However, in this inception the *Blogão* covers other topics, such as the author's new miniseries (*Cinquentinha*, which refers to 50 year old women) and anything else Silva and his 'contributors' want to talk about (Silva, 2010, p. 9). It is interesting to point out that during the 'first run' of the *Blogão* when the controversies surrounding *Duas Caras* were at their peak, the contributors were not only passionate with their keyboard, but at times, with the entire palm of their hands! While the author was aware of the polemic that accompanied his telenovela text – i.e. media excerpts, viewers' feedback, and the promise that he would "wake up with a mouth full of ants" – what followed was a complete shock, as Silva (2010) explains<sup>31</sup>:

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<sup>31</sup> This is a transcription of a posting by Aguinaldo Silva on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in the *Blogão*, which later became the back cover of his book. The posting also serves to show Silva's sense of humor, in

Whenever I am in Paris, I find a way to sit in Le Deux Magots, a café at the Boulevard Saint Germain, drinking port and pretending I am waiting for Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir in order to have a philosophical discussion. One of these days I was sitting at a table when a big blond woman who was strolling down the sidewalk saw me and decided to approach me in Portuguese: “You are Aguinaldo Silva (. . .)? “Yes” (. . .) I answered, full of myself, thinking I had been recognized by a fan, and in Paris, imagine that! However, as I was answering, the woman gave me a big slap on the face and yelled: “You nasty, faggot, son of a bitch!” (. . .) I noticed that all around me, in the crowded tables, people were staring at me in utter and complete silence. “How embarrassing” I thought, pretending to be a statue. And the waiter approached me and asked: “What was that?”. And with my mad writer’s imagination running wild answered, in French loudly enough so that everyone could hear me: “My ex-wife”. And the waiter answered: “I understand. You left her for another woman”. “Not for another woman, for another man”. And added “If you know what I mean” (. . .)

[Sempre que estou em Paris dou um jeito de sentar (. . .) no Le Deux Magots, um café do Boulevard Saint Germain, e lá fico, a tomar um “Portô”, e a fingir que estou esperando Jean-Paul Sartre e Simone de Beauvoir pra termos juntos uma discussão filosófica (. . .) Dia desses estava eu sentado na mesa (. . .) quando uma mulher loura e grandalhona, que ia passando pela calçada, me viu e veio falar comigo em Portugês. “Você é o Aguinaldo Silva (. . .) “Sim, sou o próprio” – eu respondi já todo pimpão, pensando ter sido reconhecido por uma fã... E logo em Paris, imaginem! Porém, mal respondi, a mulher me deu um tremendo tapa na cara, gritou: “safado, veado (. . .) filha da puta!” (. . .) vi que, nas mesas lotadas, todos me observavam no mais absoluto e crítico silêncio. “Que vexame” – eu pensei, enquanto me fingia de estátua. Foi o garçon (. . .) quem se aproximou: “O que foi isso?” (. . .) E eu, já com as engrenagens da minha imaginação de ficcionista desvairado funcionando, respondi em francês, e bastante alto pra que todo mundo ouvisse: “Minha ex-esposa!”. E o garçon: “Já sei: o senhor a traiu, ou pior ainda, deixou-a por outra”. “Por outra não” – eu não resisti e repliquei: “por outro”. E acrescentei: “Se é que você me entende”.]

(<http://bloglog.globo.com/blog/blog.do?act=loadSite&id=201&postId=13795&permalink=true#>)

Moments like these serve to illustrate how the Blog postings, media excerpts and visceral reactions must be understood (or read) within a specific context: that of locating *Duas Caras* as a site of mediations between production, reception, and culture. We must keep in mind the constant influx of negotiation and renegotiations

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addition to the provocative nature of his tone, not just in his telenovelas and blog, but in his daily life as well.

between the various writers/readers of the text: writers, director, producers, actors, audience, and social institutions that participate in the social formation and that in their own way exert power and pressure over the text and more generally speaking, the telenovela (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003; Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Melo, 1998).

In this sense, my approach to telenovelas is akin to Lobo & Orofino (2008): the genre is a site of multiple readings, a ground for the political struggle for signification; a space that goes beyond a simple marketplace; and one that activates knowledge and dialogue in the social production of meaning (§ 7). Therefore, one can infer that meaning is not contained within the *telenovela* or the specialized media, but is active in a continuous flow permeating numerous and diverse segments of society creating thus an open text, which can be visualized using the metaphor of a quilt, creating a metadiscourse about various issues (in this case, about race in contemporary Brazil).

Fiske (1991) addresses the importance of the various “texts” surrounding and outside television narratives by examining the notion of intertextuality. For example the actors who are social and media people who bring with them not just residues of meanings of other roles, but also meanings from fan magazines and gossip columns (pp. 8-9). Additionally, Brundson (2000) also points out the role of gossip among soap opera fans. However, although these additional “texts” have been addressed as an integral part of the programs, research points to the uniqueness of the “open text” quality of Brazilian telenovelas (Mattelart & Mattelart (1990).

Thus, while an argument could be made that generally speaking the open text is a feature of all serialized programming the Brazilian case is exclusive. Some of the

qualities that render it as such, as described by Mattelart & Mattelart (1990) are: the rhythm of production, where often the episodes are taped on the very same day they air allowing for last minute changes based on public's reaction or daily events; the important role of the author (writer), who is compared to a cinematic auteur - and not second class citizens who respond to producers – and who invites participation of the audience in various production aspects of the programming in a swift and timely manner (pp. 126-131), or in a “time-space particular to telenovelas” (p. 43).

Additionally, unlike traditional serialized programs, including soap operas, “talk” about telenovelas are not relegated to gossip columns and fan sites (pp. 79-80).

When it comes to the writer's blog, an important aspect of it was that it served as a medium that exacerbated discussions and the open text, rendering another peculiarity to *Duas Caras*, but it was by no means the only vehicle of “talk” about the show. Another important aspect of the *Blogão* was that it was seldom moderated. The only time this happened it lasted but a few hours. According to Silva, “due to the absence of an active moderator, the space reserved to the blog was where those who access can enjoy absolute freedom, as long as you do so responsibly, always keeping in mind that the person responsible for the blog (Silva) is always entitled to a come back answer” (p. 8).<sup>32</sup> The incident with the moderator is so interesting that it deserves to be mentioned in the following transcription of the posting *A Galinha e Seus Pintinhos* (“The Hen and her chicks”):

Those who frequented the first phase of the *Blogão* will certainly remember the *Sufocador* (“Smotherer”), a person that for a while, stayed online with the blog for almost 24 hours daily. His objective was to annoy everybody and to try to dissuade people from commenting in this space. His tactic was simple:

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<sup>32</sup> Perhaps due to this, in September 2009, *Blogão* was given first place in a Brazilian contest that polled the best celebrity blogs for that year (Silva, 2010, p. 8).

If “So and So” posted something he would immediately contest it in an a highly offensive way. Then, such and such would reply in an even more offensive manner, and other people would interfere on So an So’s behalf, and the Sufocador would also be offensive to them... Pretty soon everyone was being offensive. Thus, the subject at hand did not self-identify as *Sufocador* in vain, because he really wanted to smother all of us. It was because of him that I had to do something which I hate: moderate the blog. But following the maxim “if life gives you a lemon, make a lemonade”, thanks to the *Sufocador* I was able to pull *Duas Caras* from one of its biggest crisis. “Subpoenaed” to end the Whiskey House set and Alzira<sup>33</sup>’s dance within one day, in the middle of the night, when the *Sufocador* was highly active I had the idea: What if I create a character named “The Smotherer” [in the telenovela] who will explode the Whiskey House<sup>34</sup>? What of he, in the shadows, just like here in the Blog, started to attack (. . .) and thus from that sour lemon I made a lemonade. The Smotherer left the blog immediately after (. . .) but he was so upset that the character was a hit that he came back soon after (pp. 93-94).

[O frequentador da primeira fase do *Blogão* com certeza vai se lembrar do *Sufocador* (“Smotherer”), um sujeito que durante certo tempo, ficou on line conosco praticamente 24 horas por dia. E tinha como objetivo perturbar todo mundo e fazer com que as pessoas desistissem de comentar nesse espaço. A tática dele era simples: se Fulano entrava com um comentário, ele entrava logo a seguir contestando de modo ofensivo o que o tal Fulano havia escrito. Fulano retrucava, ele respondia de modo ainda mais ofensivo, outras pessoas interferiam em defesa de fulano e ele também as atacava... E em pouco tempo estava todo mundo se insultando. Ou seja, o sujeito não se auto-apelidava de Sufocador à toa, pois ele queria mesmo era sufocar a todos nós. Foi por causa dele que eu tive que fazer uma coisa que detesto – moderar o blog. Mas como sempre levei a sério aquela lição “se lhe dão um limão, trate de fazer uma limonada”, foi também graças a ele que consegui tirar a novela *Duas Caras* de uma de suas maiores crises: “intimado” a detonar o cenário da Uisqueria e a dança da Alzira em uma noite, já de madrugada, quando o Sufocador se mostrava mais ativo (. . .) eu tive a idéia: e se eu botar um personagem chamado “Sufocador” para explodir a Uisqueria? E se ele, nas sombras tal como age aqui no blog, passar a atacar (. . .) e assim daquele azedíssimo limão eu fiz uma gostosa limonada. O Sufocador imediatamente sumiu do blog (. . .) Mas o fato é que não suportou o sucesso que o personagem com o seu nome (. . .) e depois voltou]

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<sup>33</sup> Alzira was a married woman, mother of two, who was married to a man who was ‘allergic to working’ so to speak. She posed as a nurse, when in reality she was a stripper. The storyline caused a furor with some conservative audience members, the church, feminist groups and so forth which scared TV Globo to the point that it “subpoenaed” Silva to axe the storyline.

<sup>34</sup> Whiskey House (Uisqueria) was the name of the Strip Club where Alzira danced wearing nothing but glitter and pasties.

The example above illustrates the open text of the telenovela being written by Aguinaldo Silva and the *Sufocador*, since Silva incorporated a blog persona into the actual telenovela. This shows some openness, but also points to the author's position as a 'master of puppets', with the power ultimately stifle an audience member's voice as well. Additionally, while the *Sufocador* incident also serves to illustrate the open text and metadiscourse intrinsic to *Duas Caras*, it also highlights the complex arena of production and consumption of the telenovela text and all those involved in reading and writing it. And various agents were talking-reading-writing about the program. And not just in the *Blogão*. And they were highly critical of the text. As pointed out by Kennedy, (2008) who writes for a media watchdog group:

*Duas Caras*, the TV Globo telenovela, must be the one with the highest number of Black characters, other than the period pieces. It is also one of the few telenovelas where Blacks do not just act as service people to white patrons, and even so it is still permeated with signs that perpetuate ethnic, social and gender prejudices in Brazilian media. (Kennedy, 2008, ¶ 1)

[A novela global *Duas Caras*, deve ser uma das que mais possuem personagens negros em uma novela não épica. É também esta, uma das poucas novelas em que os negros não atuam apenas como empregados de patronos brancos e mesmo assim ainda está impregnada de signos que perpetuam o preconceito, étnico, social e de gênero na mídia brasileira.]

The character Rudolf Stenzel also ignited heated debated and contributed to the multilayered construction of the social discourse regarding race. Rudolf was a green eyed Afro-Brazilian who was a part of the telenovela's private university setting (one of the various settings within the program in which some of the lower class *favelados* acted along side upper class characters via scholarships and so forth). Rudolf was a highly controversial character because he represented the Leftist student movement in Brazil in a poor light and through the lenses of the reactionary Right

according to some critics. Additionally he was extremely rich, but pretended to be poor because he thought that gave credibility to his politics. Ultimately he was a sham. The character was the focus of editorial pieces as well as academic research.

As Lobo & Orofino (2008) pointed out,

Rudolf Stenzel, the Black student leader is a farce, since he is the son of a millionaire. Within the text of this telenovela he represents various social subject positions such as: the poor, the Blacks, the young, and the student population (...) all of which are robbed by this character created by Aguinaldo Silva. Thus, the student leader Rudolf Stenzel is a sad caricature that articulates a struggle always grounded on a lie, on a low blow, on 'everything goes', in the absence of ethics, on shenanigans (...) With daily dosages of discrimination and prejudice, the author, Aguinaldo Silva helps to give echo and a voice to the criticism of the Brazilian Left (. . .) (pp. 7-8).

[Rudolf Stenzel, o líder estudantil negro, que é uma farsa, dado que é filho de milionário. No texto desta telenovela esta personagem representa vários sujeitos sociais, tais como: os pobres, os negros, os jovens e estudantes (...) Todos traídos pelo personagem criado por Aguinaldo Silva. Enfim, o líder estudantil Rudolf Stenzel é uma caricatura infeliz que articula uma luta sempre pautada na mentira, no golpe baixo, no vale-tudo, na falta de ética, na falcatura (. . .) Com doses diárias de discriminação e preconceito, o autor Aguinaldo Silva ajuda a dar eco e voz às críticas à esquerda brasileira (. . .) (pp. 7-8).

Scholarly criticism was accompanied by popular analysis and dissatisfaction.

For example, Kennedy (2008) points out that Stenzel is a Black character who is considered unethical and overall is a bad representation of Brazilian Blacks since;

He never attends class (. . .) On the last episode I watched, Rudolf files a racism lawsuit against the Dean Fernando Macieira, played by José Wilker. The matter is then discussed by everyone since, without having met the student, who is always absent, the dean calls him a Zumbi (Zumbi<sup>35</sup>), meaning an alive-and-dead creature. This incident strengthens the deconstruction of actual lawsuits against prejudice filed by various people in

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<sup>35</sup> Zumbi had the double signifier of zombie as well as *Zumbi dos Palmares*, the black leader of the marooned slave community that was able to resist the Portuguese for nearly one hundred years in Brazil and who is seen as a hero by many Brazilians. In fact, November 20 is a national holiday that celebrates the National Day of Black Consciousness, also known as the Zumbi Holiday. While in court, Rudolf Stenzel claimed that when Macieira referred to him as Zumbi, he meant the black leader, and in a derogatory way.



our country and by various Black Movements, since it portrays the incident as something that was misconstrued by the Black man. In this case, that is true, but most of the time in real life, it isn't even though that is what Rede Globo wants us to believe (...)

[(. . .) Nunca frequenta as aulas e mobiliza politicamente alguns outros alunos. No último capítulo que assisti, Rudolf dá uma queixa de racismo contra o reitor Fernando Macieira, personagem de José Wilker. A queixa então é discutida por todos, já que, sem conhecer o aluno por suas ausências, o reitor o chama de Zumbi, no sentido de morto-vivo. O episódio fortalece a desconstrução das denúncias de preconceito feitas por pessoas e movimentos negros no país, já que coloca o caso como uma má interpretação do negro. Neste caso é verdade, mas na maioria das vezes não é caso de má interpretação e a Vênus platinada quer que imaginamos que seja (. . .)]

Maksymczuk (2008) comments on how certain issues that happen in the telenovela, including those involving Stenzel, end up extrapolating to real life, blurring the line between reality and fiction, as I have suggested earlier. The author writes that Rudolf's political discourse, ended up giving a boost to the Brazilian Student Movement and inspired many protests and demonstrations during the time the program aired. Finally, Maksymczuk asks: To which degree did the telenovela influence reality? Or did reality end up in fiction? (§ 13).

While Maksymczuk (2008) gives positive feedback to the character Stenzel, Priolli (2008) writes an editorial questioning such portrayal, where he goes as far as to point out that the character is misconstrued to the point that his own name is a contradiction, or what he calls, "Arian" (§ 6). In regards to the racism law suit Stenzel serves the dean, the author comments that:

(. . .) Rudolf is but an extra. His character is one-dimensional (...) no one knows anything or hears anything about him, except for the fact that he is obsessed with protesting, and causing havoc without any objective reason. In this episode his bad intentions are clear, and this obviously makes the spectator side with his opponent. But Rudolf is not simply a "problem student", as described by the telenovela website in the Globo.com portal. He openly represents a stereotype of the politically engaged student, who is

unjustified by the fact that he does not take into consideration any consequences, is stubborn and dishonest. (§6)

[Rudolf é pouco mais que um figurante. Personagem unidimensional (...) Não se sabe ou se ouve dele nada além da sua obstinação em protestar, criar caso, arrumar problemas sem razão objetiva. No episódio em questão, a sua má-fé é clara e, obviamente, suscita toda simpatia do telespectador ao seu oponente. Mas Rudolf não é apenas o "aluno-problema", como o site da novela no portal Globo.com o define. Ele representa um estereótipo abertamente negativo do estudante engajado, que é desqualificado como inseqüente, intransigente e desonesto.]

The excerpts above serve to illustrate one of the many ways in which *Duas Caras* facilitated a metadiscourse about race in Brazil. Additionally, such examples indicate the construction of the metadiscourse, and furthermore demonstrate once again the importance of looking at the many texts that are written alongside the telenovela, thus showing that the new “open textual analysis” I propose is fruitful, timely and in demand.

It would not be far fetched to assume that Rudolf Steintel’s political views and love for the Student Movement (albeit a misconstrued version of such, according to some) might have inspired the Student Movement in Brazil to be rejuvenated as previously suggested by Maksymczuk (2008). As Hamburger (2005) reminds us, in 1992 the Brazilian Impeachment movement was also closely connected to television – the miniseries *Anos Rebeldes* (“Rebel Years”, TV Globo, 1992). The author reminds us that the belief that the *Movimento dos Caras Pintadas*<sup>36</sup> (“Painted Face Movement”) had been inspired by the program is widely accepted and exemplifies how the medium has the potential to act in a positive manner towards building critical thinking (p. 129).

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<sup>36</sup> Students who took the streets with their faces painted in green and yellow to protest and ask for (then President) Fernando Collor’s impeachment.

*Anos Rebeldes* told the story of a different Brazilian Student Movement – that of 1968, when the dictatorship, censorship, ‘disappearances’, torture and so forth, led students to perform political kidnappings as well as to act in a guerrilla type of fighting against the government. Another spillover effect of the series was the fact that it brought *Tropicalismo*, a cultural movement that had been since then relegated to the elite and intellectuals, to the mainstream – the huge audience garnered by the miniseries. And when the students took to the streets in 1992, they were singing *Alegria, Alegria* and *Tropicália*, two staple songs of *Tropicalismo*, decades earlier.

Moreover, these are examples that serve to legitimize the metadiscourse about race matters I am proposing. Additionally, Rudolf Stenzel’s character was not the only controversial one that contributed to the thread in the discussions of race and race relations in Brazil. As I have previously shown other characters and situations that help to strengthen this point are those involving but not limited to the “dinner scene”, “Sabrina and Barretinho” (previously discussed on chapters 2 and 3), as well as “Mãe Setembrina” and ultimately her death (“Mother Setembrina”, the *Candomblé* leader). Thus, one can conclude that the telenovela is a site of multiple readings, as proposed by Fiske (1991), but also as I suggest, of multiple writings.

#### Mãe Setembrina

Mother Setembrina’s death sparked a conversation revolving around *Candomblé* (the Afro-Brazilian religion), as well as its near absence of representation on television. For example, Grinsberg (2008) wrote an article for the Rio de Janeiro paper *O Dia*, where the author reveals, amongst other spoilers that after Mãe Setembrina’s (Chica Xavier) death, Andréia Bijou (Débora Nascimento) would

become the new leader of the sect. Additionally, in the article, Nascimento points out that,

It was about time this was a subject discussed in a telenovela. We are in a very good process of evolution. A while ago, the media were racists, the telenovelas were racist. Aguinaldo is helping to open doors. (Grinberg, 2008 ¶ 7)

[Já estava na hora de esse assunto ser abordado numa novela. Estamos em um processo de evolução muito bom. Antigamente, a mídia era racista, as novelas eram racistas. Aguinaldo está ajudando a abrir portas]

In the same article Grinsberg (2008) points out that Débora Nascimento<sup>37</sup> suffered prejudice from a Black man for being “too White” for the role of Andréia Biju, the future *Candomblé* leader and school of samba dancer. The author adds that the actress quickly replied: “Do you know where I came from? Would you like to turn me inside out? I might be more Black than you are. Would you like to see me do the samba?” [‘Você sabe de onde eu vim? Quer me virar do avesso? Vai ver que eu sou mais negra do que você. Quer me ver sambando?']” (¶ 8). Thus, in addition to exemplifying the metadiscourse about race which was created by *Duas Caras*, the incident also reminds us about the complex nature of the social construction of race and blackness in Brazil.

Additionally, Mãe Setembrina and the Candomblé religion also were subjects of discussion in the *Blogão*, when viewers were dissatisfied with news of her death. The first time a viewer/writer discussed the theme came on a day that had an original and highly interesting blog entry. This is yet another interesting ‘thread’ to the metadiscourse created by *Duas Caras* via amongst other media, the *Blogão*. Besides the absence of the moderator, every so often instead of posting an original entry,

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<sup>37</sup> The actress has light black skin and green eyes.

Aguinaldo decided to retrieve some of the viewer's comments from the 'box' they are usually in, and post them as content. This was the case on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007, where Silva explained this would be an ongoing occurrence. This entry was entitled "Today you post, I comment". The first 'complaint' published on this day came from "Luciene" who wrote:

Hey Aguinaldo. Are you a queer? A faggot? You have never laid a silly hand on a woman's ass, as if it was something unintentional? Answer truthfully! Or are you creating polemic topics just to garner Ibope?  
<http://bloglog.globo.com/blog/post.do?act=loadSite&id=3378&permalink=true>

["Ô Aguinaldo voce é bicha? Viado? Você nunca passou a mão na bunda de uma mulher, assim como quem não quer nada? Responde aí, na sinceridade! Ou você gera essa polêmica toda pra ganhar Ibope?"]

And Aguinaldo's good spirited reply/comment was:

Oh, Luciene, here you go again. Please. Why do you want to know where my hands have been? All I can tell you about this is that my hand is never silly . . . And, according to my girlfriends, my fingers type divinely. And it is not I who generates polemics, it is those who come running after my blog . . . I am just an old tired journalist who is currently a novelist. But only temporarily.  
<http://bloglog.globo.com/blog/post.do?act=loadSite&id=3378&permalink=true>

[Ah Luciene, lá vem você de novo, que coisa! Pra que você quer saber onde é que eu ando passando a mão? Tudo o que lhe posso dizer a respeito disso é que minha mão nunca é boba... E, segundo minhas amigas, meus dedos digitam divinamente. E não sou eu quem gera polêmica minha querida, é quem sai correndo atrás do meu blog... Eu sou apenas um jornalista velho de guerra... Que está novelista, mas só por enquanto].

This example not only shows Silva's polemical and humorous bent, but it proves Silva's position as facilitator of a broader discourse. On the Blog entry about the *Sufocador*, Silva guarantees that the intent of the blog was to facilitate an open and sincere dialogue, and thus he was always open and honest. This contributed to him being extremely disappointed about the *Sufocador* who used subterfuge and a

false name to be nothing but rude to people so that they would keep mum. Silva wrote that he likes those whose posts are sincere, even when calling him a “faggot”. “These are the ones I like”, he affirms (p. 94).

Silva posted another comment by viewer Luis Lime regarding Mãe

Setembrina’s fate:

Aguinaldo. Is it true that the Mãe de Santo<sup>38</sup> character will leave the telenovela? I read in one of these gossip sites, and as usually they make stuff up. According to the feline<sup>39</sup> the character is leaving the telenovela because of the Evangelicals who do not approve of the legend of the *orixás*<sup>40</sup>! This is a lie, right? It was really nice that you were showing the beautiful side of the legend of the *orixás*"

(<http://bloglog.globo.com/blog/post.do?act=loadSite&id=3378&permalink=true>).

[Aguinaldo: É verdade que a personagem da mãe de santo sairá da novela? Li num site desses de fofoca e como sempre eles inventam! Segundo o felino a personagem sairá da novela por conta dos Evangélicos que não aprovam a lenda dos orixás! Mentira isso não é? Estava muito bacana vcs mostrando o lado bonito da lenda dos orixás! Espero que isso seja mentira."]

Aguinaldo answered that although Mãe Setembrina was indeed going to “die” she would remain in the telenovela. And added “the ways of the telenovela, my dear” (coisas de novela

<http://bloglog.globo.com/blog/post.do?act=loadSite&id=3378&permalink=true>).

Viewers would soon understand what the author meant by this, when, although the character had indeed died, she lived on, as a ghost! Later, on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008, Aguinaldo Silva played on the role-reversal concept once again, by publishing the viewer’s comments and then replying to them. Silva (2010) explains that the blog

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<sup>38</sup> This is the designation given to the Candomblé leader, roughly translated as “mother of a deity/saint”.

<sup>39</sup> In Brazil, a person with a feline’s tongue is one that oftentimes makes malicious comments.

<sup>40</sup> Orixás are a spirit or deity that reflects one of the manifestations of Olodumare (God) in the Candomblé religion.

comment from Viviane was being written while the death was being aired – or a few moments after (p. 105). Here’s what “Viviane”, who expressed deep dissatisfaction with Setembrina’s death, had to say<sup>41</sup>:

Esteemed Aguinaldo Silva,  
 How could you have killed Mother Setembrina, sir? I am shocked.  
 I am 33 years old, and it has been a while since TV Globo has included in its telenovelas the Brazilian Afro-religions. And when they do include them, it is in a veiled way, hidden, or by subterfuge . . . Although those who practice the Afro-religions do not admit to it publicly, Brazil is a country with millions of believers. Unfortunately I expected more from Mother Setembrina. I hoped that she could show to those prejudice people that the Afro-religions are not made of “devil worshipers” (. . .) We are a religion that has in its deities the forces of nature: iansã of lightning and winds, oxum of the rivers.  
 What I liked was the fact that she has one alcoholic son and one Evangelical, showing many people that our faith gives us strength to fight, but above all that we are human beings and have our downfalls, just like Evangelicals, Catholics, Jews, etc..  
 Anyway...  
 For me, Mother Bina was cut short of fulfilling a message. I saw the Evangelicals organizing a Bazaar for charity. You should have talked about our “All Saints Party”, where, in addition to worshipping the orixás, we have our ajeum<sup>42</sup> – when more often than not, this will be the only meal some of those people will have for an entire day.  
 Left out was the fact that in addition to wearing white and spreading leaves over our bodies (like it was done to Juvenal this past week), we also care about our community. How many terreiros<sup>43</sup> give away free food? And a small detail: We do this to all, rich, poor, Black and white. Put it to the test!!! Clearly, just like there are pedophile Catholic priests, our religion also has those who are up to no good... But please, we should not be judged by the bad examples.  
 I wish Mãe Setembrina would represent a landmark of the come back of Afro religions to TV. I belong to a religion that was born in Brazil, thus many people consider it the poor man’s religion as well as that of those who are excluded, but as long as there are orixás, we will stand tall. Axé<sup>44</sup>! (Silva, 2010, pp. 105-106)

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<sup>41</sup> This part of the blog entry (regarding Mãe Setembrina) later became part of the book *Deu No Blogão!* In a chapter entitled “Mãe Bina” (pp. 105-108).

<sup>42</sup> *Ajeum* means feast.

<sup>43</sup> *Terreiro* means the physical where the religion is practiced, space akin to a church.

<sup>44</sup> The Candomblé salutation designates good energy, or the forces of nature.

[Prezado Aguinaldo Silva,  
 Como o sr. pode matar a Mãe Setembrina??? Estou perplexa.  
 Tenho 33 anos e há muito tempo que a Globo não inclui mais em suas novelas as religiões afro-brasileiras. E quando inclui é sempre uma coisa meio velada, meio escondida, ou melhor sub-entendida.... Apesar dos praticantes das religiões afro não se declararem publicamente, o Brasil é sim um país que possui milhões de adeptos.  
 Infelizmente esperava mais da Mãe Setembrina. Esperava que ela pudesse mostrar aos preconceituosos que as religiões afro não são formadas por adoradores do "capeta" (. . .) Somos uma religião que tem nas suas divindades as forças da natureza. Ex.: iansã dos raios e ventos, oxum dos rios.  
 O que gostei foi do fato dela ter um filho alcoólatra e outro evangélico, mostrando a muita gente que a nossa religião nos dá força para lutar, mas antes de tudo somos humanos e temos nossas mazelas, assim como os católicos, evangélicos, judeus, etc....  
 Continuando...  
 Pra mim faltou a Mãe Bina dar o seu recado. Vi os evangélicos da novela organizando um bazar. Faltou falar que no terreiro, nas festas de santos, além de louvarmos os nossos orixás, temos o nosso ajeum - onde por muitas vezes já vi ser a única refeição que as pessoas faziam no dia.  
 Faltou mostrar que mais do que vestir branco e passar folha no corpo (como foi feito com Juvenal Antena nesta semana) nós também nos preocupamos com a nossa comunidade. Quantos e quantos terreiros não distribuem cestas básicas. E detalhe: fazemos a quem quer que seja, seja rico, pobre, preto branco. Faça o teste!!!  
 Claro que assim como os padres pedófilos, nossa religião também tem os picaretas.. Por favor, não podemos ser julgados pelos maus exemplos.  
 Eu queria que a Mãe Setembrina fosse um marco para a volta do tema religião afro na tv. Faço parte de uma religião que nasceu no Brasil, assim muitos a consideram como a religião dos pobres e excluídos, mas enquanto houver orixá, nós estaremos de pé!!! Axé!!!]

And Silva posted a coment to this former comment, which now became an entry on *Blogão*. Here Silva (2010) explains the rationale for killing Mãe Bina off. I especially wanted to use this example because it is highly interesting. There is a need to point out that although the writer seems to be following the traditional script of the telenovela, which would give room to a counter argument that the text is somewhat “closed”, the discussions pertaining to the text actually keep it “open” in the sense I am proposing. Another key point is the intertextuality of *Duas Caras*, when Silva



says that he will name one of the characters after a former character in a miniseries which aired in 1984 (both characters were *Mães de Santo*). Additionally, this excerpt is also indicative of a few points I am stressing in this dissertation: a) the complexity of Brazilian telenovelas, and b) Silva's role as instigator, and provocateur of broad discussion about various issues he deems important – in this case, Afro-Brazilian religions and their representation on TV. Regarding Setembrina's death, the author's response was:

My dear Viviane:

The script of *Duas Caras* was clear about the storyline regarding the terreiro and it will be fulfilled to the letter. This story is not about Mãe Bina, but about Andréia Bijou, the Young girl whose dream is to be the godmother of the drummers in the school of samba in the carnival parade, but who has been chosen by the orixás to be the next Mãe de Santo in a terreiro.

In my opinion, this is one of the most beautiful storylines in the telenovela. It shows that when the gods decide (regardless of religion affiliation), no human being can run away from the destiny which has been written to them.

To tell this extremely beautiful story about Andréia Bijou I needed Mãe Bina to die – otherwise there would not be a need for a successor in the terreiro.

Thus, I did not pull the Afro religion from the telenovela, on the contrary, I am following what was determined on the script.

I am proud to be one of the few authors who give praise to the religion and culture of Brazilian Afro-descendants, since I am one of them.

I am the author of "The Tent of Miracles" (Tenda dos Milagres), a miniseries which was based on the book by Jorge Amado that tells the story of resistance of Black culture in a White and racist Brazil. Written in 1984 and yet to be rerun in Brazil, this miniseries is a success abroad to this day. For example, there isn't a single year that it is not rerun on a channel in German, Dutch or French TV.

Here, in a country more and more miscegenated, this theme, which should be visceral to its inhabitants, is interesting to just a few. Maybe due to this, when I portray it on TV I am an isolated voice. Perhaps this is the reason why when I talked about the fact that Gilberto Gil did not have a Nigerian passport I was so criticized.

How many people would be proud to say they follow an Afro-religion, like you? Only a few. How many would worry about going after their roots and getting a Nigerian<sup>45</sup> passport? I don't think any of our blacks, mulattos, miscegenated, a little bit dark, Brown, bonbons, brunettes or whatever other name you wanna call it.

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<sup>45</sup> The episode is discussed on a different chapter.

Mãe Bina died, but do not fret, my Darling. After trials and tribulations at the end of the telenovela *Andréia* will adopt the name Majé Bassã (which was the name of the mãe de santo in Tenda dos Milagres) and being the new Mãe de Santo in the terreiro will be enthroned according to the customs (pp. 106-108)

[Minha cara Viviane:

A sinopse de *Duas Caras* era muito clara a respeito da trama do terreiro e esta será seguida na íntegra. Nela não se conta a história de Mãe Bina, e sim a de Andréia Bijou, a moça cujo sonho é ser madrinha de bateria de uma escola de samba, mas que, na verdade, já foi escolhida pelos orixás para ser a futura Mãe de Santo de um terreiro.

A meu ver, essa é uma das tramas mais bonitas da novela. Ela mostra que, quando os deuses decidem (sejam eles de que religião for), não há ser humano que consiga fugir ao destino que eles lhe traçaram.

Para contar essa história belíssima de Andréia Bijou eu precisava que Mãe Bina morresse – ou não haveria sucessão no terreiro. Portanto, não retirei a religião afro da novela, pelo contrário, estou seguindo à risca o que estava determinado na sinopse.

Tenho orgulho de ser um dos autores que mais valorizam a região e a cultura dos afro-descendentes brasileiros, já que sou um deles.

Sou o autor de "Tenda dos Milagres", minissérie baseada num livro de Jorge Amado que conta a história da resistência da cultura negra num Brasil branco e racista. Escrita em 1984 e jamais relançada no Brasil, essa minissérie faz sucesso no exterior até hoje. Não se passa um ano, por exemplo, sem que ela seja reprisada em algum canal de tevê da Alemanha, da Holanda, ou da França.

Aqui, num país que se torna a cada dia mais mestiço, esse tipo de temática, que deveria ser tão visceral para seus habitantes, interessa a poucos. Talvez por isso, quando trato do assunto na televisão brasileira, eu seja uma voz isolada. Talvez por isso, quando falei sobre a questão do passaporte nigeriano que Gilberto Gil não tinha, eu tenha sido tão execrado.

Quantos, como você, teriam orgulho em dizer que são adeptos da religião afro? Pouquíssimos. Quantos se preocupariam em ir atrás de suas raízes tirando um passaporte nigeriano? Acho que nenhum dos nossos negros, mulatos, mestiços, escurinhos, marrons bombons, chocolates, morenos ou que nome lhes dêem.

Mãe Bina morreu, mas não se preocupe, Viviane querida. Após passar por muitos percalços, no final da novela *Andréia Bijou* adotará o nome de Majé Bassã (era o nome da mãe de santo de Tenda dos Milagres) e, na qualidade de nova Mãe de Santo do terreiro, será devidamente entronizada]

This interplay between writer and viewer is another interesting aspect of the construction of racial metadiscourse: The relationship between all those involved in the production and consumption of the text who participate in what Porto (2008)

described as a “mass ceremony” in which images of nationhood are negotiated in Brazil. I suggest the same is true when it comes to blackness or race (p. 1). Porto bases this concept on a variation of Benedict Anderson’s “imagined community” – since here the medium which facilitates communion is electronic and not print. Additionally, the author argues that it is imperative to investigate the role of audiovisual spheres in general, and of television fiction in particular, in processes of nation-building (p.3). I believe the same holds true as far as building political discourses, i.e. race related ones.

### The Barretos

As previously discussed the storyline involving Barretinho (Dudu Azevedo) – the rich young man who was Julia’s brother, and Sabrina (Cris Vianna), the black maid who professed she did not want to mix with whites also sparked a lot of discussion. On one hand, there were those who believe that the love affair between Barretinho and Sabrina was good, since it shows for example that love has no boundaries (Grinberg, 2008 ¶ 2). On the other, (Lobo & Orofino, 2008), some viewed it as yet another instance of actual racism within and outside the boundaries of the television screen. According to the authors,

Although this relationship is not part of the main script, it is a complex one and worthy of attention (...) What is important here is the non-spoken racism, that of the sexual harassment that happens against those who are in a social disadvantage. The young<sup>46</sup> man Barretinho, the future successor in his dad’s Law firm is attracted to the beautiful Black house maid. He incessantly pursues her trying to get sexual favors from her, but she refuses. And what seemed like a pure physical attraction at first becomes an obsession. (Lobo & Orofino, 2008, ¶ 12).

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<sup>46</sup> And the restless!

[Chamam a atenção, duas relações que se apresentam complexas, mesmo que não façam parte da trama principal. A primeira delas envolve Barretinho e Sabrina. O que chama a atenção, aqui, é o racismo não-dito do assédio sexual contra pessoas em condições socialmente em desvantagem. O jovem Barretinho, futuro sucessor do pai no escritório de advocacia bem sucedido, sente-se atraído pela faxineira negra e bonita de sua casa. Busca incansavelmente obter favores da jovem, que se recusa. E aquilo que, num primeiro momento, parecia uma pura atração física, torna-se, para ele, uma obsessão. (Lobo & Orofino, 2008, ¶ 12).

It seems as though everyone had something to say about the telenovela, such as Silva himself, as it can be expected. On a piece discussing Silva's direct dialogue with his viewers and critics via the *Blogão*, Marthe (2007) notes that the author,

Commenting about the inter-racial couple formed by the Black and favelado Evilásio and the rich and white Júlia (Débora Falabella), did not miss the chance to make fun of this gang<sup>47</sup>: "The romance mixes up racism as well as class struggle, which pleases Labor Party Sociologists and their never tiring legion of followers." (Marthe, 2007, ¶ 2)

[num comentário sobre o casal inter-racial formado pelo negro favelado Evilásio (Lázaro Ramos) e pela branca riquinha Júlia (Débora Falabella), não perdeu a chance de ironizar de novo essa turma: "O romance mistura racismo e luta de classes, bem ao gosto dos sociólogos petistas e de sua incansável legião de seguidores".]

Although critics had a lot to say about the way in which the Brazilian Left and the Student Movement were represented, it is not surprising that the Barreto family inspired heated reactions and the construction of the metadiscourse. Julia was after all one of the telenovela's "leading ladies" and was also the "other half" of the most important interracial relationship in the program. It is not far fetched to say that her father Barretão was the biggest bigot in Brazilian telenovela history. In this sense, Silva's approach to using stereotypes was fruitful. It sparked visceral reactions and debate from the public at large. As Maksymczuk (2008) points out,

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<sup>47</sup> The "gang" of Leftists.

"Duas Caras" showed that it is possible to make a telenovela that reflects certain aspects of society without maniqueism. Aguinaldo Silva accomplished his mission.

Positive points:

1. Racism theme:

The Barreto family accomplished the best result in the entire program. The novelist was able to portray the racism "à la Brazilian" in rich details. The fight between Barretão (Stenio Garcia) and Evilásio (Lázaro Ramos), sitting at the lawyer's dinner table, will serve for future analysis about themes in the genre. Additionally, the type of racism from Blacks towards whites, like the one portrayed by Sabrina's character (Cris Vianna) and Barretinho (Dudu Azevedo) also deserve to be highlighted. (Maksymczuk, 2008, ¶ 9)

["Duas Caras" mostrou que é possível fazer uma novela que reflita aspectos da nossa sociedade sem maniqueísmos. Aguinaldo Silva cumpriu sua missão "Duas Caras" mostrou que é possível fazer uma novela que reflita aspectos da nossa sociedade sem maniqueísmos. Aguinaldo Silva cumpriu sua missão

Pontos positivos:

1. Temática sobre racismo:

O núcleo da família Barreto alcançou o melhor resultado na obra. O dramaturgo conseguiu retratar o racismo "à la brasileira" nos riquíssimos diálogos. A discussão entre Barretão (Stenio Garcia) e Evilásio (Lázaro Ramos), sentados a mesa na sala de jantar do advogado, servirá para análises da temática em telenovelas. Além disso, o racismo, pelo lado dos negros sobre brancos, com a personagem Sabrina (Cris Vianna) e Barretinho (Dudu Azevedo) também ganharam destaque.]

These instances of preferred, negotiated, oppositional and/or conflicting readings of the telenovela text are a good illustration of the ways in which the program ignited the metadiscourse about race. They are also a perfect reminder of Martín-Barbero's (1993) cultural mediations of everyday life. Thus, by looking at the mediations of telenovelas in Latin America Barbero reminds us of the important role people play as active producers of meanings, such as the production of a metadiscourse about race matters.

Additionally, the excerpts illustrate how discourses of race matters permeated multiple spaces, including those that are not part of Globo Organization – and could therefore be accused of “plugging”. One of these sites is the internet portal Uol, part

of *Grupo Abril*, who had a survey about the ways in *Duas Caras* portrayed racism. According to the survey, the readers of the online newspaper thought that the program portrayed Brazilian racism well. The survey focused on “the dinner scene” when Evilásio was mistreated by Barretão through blatant racist dialogue. According to the poll, the scene represented the “raw and nude reality” faced by many Brazilians (Amin, 2007, ¶ 1). The entire result of the poll was as follows: The scene “portrays the reality, naked and raw” (61.30% - 7489 votes), “takes away the veil of hypocrisy” (19.35% - 2364 votes), “Exaggerated and unreal” (13.31% - 1626 votes), and finally, “stimulates similar action” (6.04% - 738 votes) [*Retrata a realidade, nua e crua* (61.30% - 7489 votos), *Tira o véu da hipocrisia* (19.35% - 2364 votos), *Exagerada e irreal* (13.31% - 1626 votos), *Incentiva a ações semelhantes* (6.04% - 738 votos)] (Amin, 2007, ¶¶ 1-4).

And finally, as one can expect, Lázaro Ramos, (Evilásio) also gave his opinion about the “dinner scene”. In an article just six days before the end of the telenovela, Ramos claims that was the most memorable scene of *Duas Caras*, and that in addition to being a key moment for the character, it was also highly emotional for him and for the rest of the cast, and although it is difficult to choose one scene as a favorite, that one is definitely it (*Duas Caras. Cena do jantar*, ¶2).

#### The Role of Ratings: IBOPE

Although a more thorough explanation about the role of Ibope (*Instituto Brasileiro de Pesquisas e Estatísticas*, “Brazilian Institute of Research and Statistics”) and Silva’s relationship with it will be provided on the next chapter, I will briefly mention it, since the question of whether Silva is controversial for the sake of

Ibope numbers was raised on the *Blogão*, as I mentioned above. Ibope functions as a thermostat that decides the fate of the telenovelas. The results of the poll ultimately determines what happens to the script and characters, and sometimes determine “deaths” and/or “rebirths” of characters (in the form of “ghosts” and spirits). As Mattelart & Mattelart (1990) point out, Ibope ratings (akin to Nielsen ratings) work hand in hand with the symbolic spaces the program occupies such as day to day encounters, but also in various places in the media, which makes the telenovela a type of a public space, a forum for discussions about the telenovela, as well as discussions that go beyond it (p. 79).

As I suggest the construction of metadiscourse about race – due to the representation of race in *Duas Caras* - complements such idea as arguments, rumors, kudos, etc., circulated in various social arenas, also contributing to *Duas Caras*'s Ibope, whether the author admits to it or not. In typical “Aguinaldão manner”, Silva who is a house hold name in TV Globo and who is notorious for causing controversy actually claims that Ibope ratings do not please but in fact worry him; that he is merely trying to entertain people; and finally, that he has no intention of changing the public's view about anything. In a blog posting entitled *98 tiros de audiência. Você quer mais?* (“98 shots of audience. Do you want more?”) Silva (2008) professes that,

The author of a telenovela must keep his cool, otherwise he will go nuts. To me a great audience serves to give me a lot of worries and to exacerbate my sense of responsibility. I am writing for forty million people: what should I say to this people? This is the biggest responsibility of the author of telenovelas. He must entertain his public without losing sight of the fact that he does not have the right to try to make up his mind]. (§ 9)

O autor tem que tratar de manter os pés no chão, ou então enlouquece. A mim, a grande audiência me dá muita preocupação, pois serve para exacerbar meu senso de responsabilidade. Estou escrevendo para quarenta milhões de

peessoas: o que devo dizer a essa gente? Essa é a grande responsabilidade do autor de novelas. Ele deve divertir o seu público, sem perder de vista o fato de que não tem o direito de tentar fazer sua cabeça].

Although in this instance Silva claims not to care about changing the public's mind about issues, a closer look at his personal history, body of work, the *Blogão* and excerpts from his new book indicate to the exact opposite. All in all, the statement, although contradictory is not surprising. However, it is important to point out that Silva is not the only writer who tries to influence public opinion, whether he owns up to it, or not. As Schiavo (2002) explains,

There are directors<sup>48</sup> who are known for raising various questions in their telenovelas, amongst the most memorable ones are Manoel Carlos e Gloria Perez, who claims: "I believe that in a country where the institutions are still very frail and where we do not have a civil society that is sufficiently organized to claim their rights, our responsibility as writers of telenovelas go beyond mere entertainment." (p.02)

[Há diretores que são conhecidos por levantarem diversas questões em sua telenovela, entre eles os mais memoráveis são Manoel Carlos e Gloria Perez, a qual diz: "Eu penso que num país onde as instituições são, ainda, tão frágeis e onde não temos uma sociedade civil suficientemente organizada para reivindicar os seus direitos, nossas responsabilidades como autores de novelas vão além da simples diversão"]

### Conclusions

The multiple threads consisting of blog comments and postings, newspaper and magazine articles, scholarly papers, media watchdog editorials, and so forth support my argument that a metadiscourse about race and race relations in Brazil was facilitated by the broadcast of *Duas Caras*. These conversations, in addition to the expression *Deu no Blogão* capture an engagement between writer, critics, readers, viewers and so forth not only in the creation of the metadiscourse, but also in the

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<sup>48</sup> Although the original text refer to Manoel Carlos and Gloria Perez as directors, in actuality they are famous telenovela writers.



writing of the text of *Duas Caras*. This also serve to strengthen my point that traditional textual analysis benefit from the “open textual analysis” approach I am suggesting throughout this dissertation. The excerpts above also attest to the complex nature of Brazilian telenovelas, where, as Lobo & Orofino (2008) remind us, while on one hand, we can approach the genre as a space of contestation, on the other, it looks as though it reiterates the traditional hegemonic discourse of the patriarchal, bourgeoisie and conservative society (§ 37). Critics of the representation on the Lefts, the student movement in Brazil, and Rudolf Stenzel would certainly agree with this assessment.

On the other hand, the portrayals of Evilásio, Sabrina, and Mãe Bina remind us, as Porto (2008) suggests, of the complex nature of telenovela representations. The author asserts that it would be a mistake to assume that they have presented a monolithic view of Brazilian reality that only reinforced dominant cultural elements. Porto asserts that due to a deepening of democracy and a more organized and politically active civil society, telenovelas have gradually incorporated new themes and demands, giving visibility to emergent actors and demands (p. 15). *Duas Caras* exemplifies this, and thus, I agree with Porto’s assertions. Consequently, a more thorough examination of this historical process coupled with the development of telenovelas and the social merchandising approach is necessary. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV  
*DUAS CARAS* AS A NEW APPROACH TO SOCIAL MERCHANDISING

Telenovelas in Brazil have been traditionally associated with their authors - intellectuals and members of the Brazilian Left - who, for the most part were incorporated by TV Globo. The statement seems contradictory due to the capitalist nature of the genre and the socialist-based agenda of their writers, such as Aguinaldo Silva. What emerges from this contradictory scenario is, according to Mattelart & Mattelart (1990), an intellectual context nourished by the memory of oppression, a memory which cannot be understood without referring to the historical commitment of Latin American intellectuals to the people. Additionally, the authors suggest that while such memory and social consciousness are filtered by the mediations and constraints implied by the production of texts in a particular political and industrial contexts, leading the texts to bear the trace of a calculation, it also bears the trace of these social networks ( pp. 83-87). It is in this context that we must understand, Entertainment-Education (E-E) interventions, Social Merchandising (SM) and *Duas Caras*.

Defined in one sentence, E-E can be understood as entertainment programming with a prosocial message. Designed by Miguel Sabido, the methodology is based on theoretical approaches that range from Maclean's theory of the Triune Brain, Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, Bentley's Dramatic Theory and Jung's theory of Archetypes. A variation of E-E traditionally attributed to Brazilian telenovelas is known as Social Merchandising (SM). SM is a type of E-E, but with its own logic and characteristics, perhaps the most important one: to be commercially successful. Thus, while E-E has as its main characteristic the altruistic

desire to be a “process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience member’s knowledge about an educational issue (. . . ) create social norms and change overt behavior” (Singhal & Rogers, 2004, p. 5), SM has marketing strategies and profits as its main objective (La Pastina, Patel, Schiavo, 2004; Reginatto, 2007).

Consequently, while SM programs aim to educate, the network’s first priority is to profit from the E-E message. However, it is important to point out the uniqueness of *Duas Caras* within this universe: While it is not a traditional E-E intervention, it may be classified as what Singhal & Brown (1995) deemed as “the future” of Edutainment interventions: going beyond health related issues to include other prosocial messages such as peace and anti-racism (p. 18). Thus, the main intervention of *Duas Caras* is its uniqueness and hybridity: changing the face of SM while still maintaining some of its traditional characteristics: (A) a prosocial message (albeit not a health related one); (B) an issue which reflects the author’s taste and personal agenda; (C) profitability for the network; and finally, (D) it is based on the principle of telenovelas as “open texts”. Ultimately, *Duas Caras*, as a new approach to SM introduces to us a new possibility for using television as a vehicle for positive social change even while it might be recognizable as a ‘made for profit’ product.

Therefore, we can accept that *Duas Caras* functions as a type of “catch 22”: While it works to disseminate prosocial messages and to ignite debate, creating a metadiscourse about race and racism in Brazil, it is nonetheless a highly successful commercially profitable program. Thus, if on one hand a new type of SM is introduced, this model’s reliance on traditional telenovela and SM methodologies also

allows the traditional messages of telenovelas to go unchallenged, such as the formulaic happy-ending, the eternal love triangles, and finally, its consumerist messages.

Nonetheless, entertainment-education has emerged and is recognized as a major tool for social change throughout the world. Thus, *Duas Caras* functions as both: 'good' and 'bad'. After all the chief premise of these efforts is that audiences will benefit because they learn a new idea, think differently about some idea, or behave differently as a result of their exposure, especially because the message was embedded in an entertaining context. The parameters of E-E are limitless which no doubt constitutes a tribute to the considerable potential of this communication strategy. Topics and methods vary from a brief reference to a morning-after pill during a prime-time TV series; background posters hanging the walls of sitcom sets; a systemic portrayal over many months of a character dying of cancer; or an entire TV series such as *Sesame Street* (Greenberg; Salmon; Patel; Beck & Cole, 2004, pp. 191-193).

Although attempting to educate via mass media is not an easy task, it is a socially responsible one. For instance, as far back as 1995, Singhal & Brown noted that the promise of E-E interventions is that it represents a social desirable alternative to what they deemed "entertainment-degradation programs" and "boredom-education programs". The first classification referring to those programs filled with degrading messages to increase its entertainment value in order to achieve a larger audience, such as 'shock radio', or increased sexual and violent scenes. The second term applies to those educational shows in which good intentions and heavy investments do not

counteract the fact that they are extremely dull and didactic and therefore serve as an annoyance to the audience rather than an entertainment and educational aid (pp. 11-12).

The predominant approach to E-E has been for industry insiders to adopt Miguel Sabido's philosophy and techniques to create longstanding, commercially successful and scientifically based broadcast series designed expressly to educate the population about social problems, but doing so in an entertaining and engaging fashion (Greenberg et al. 2004, p. 193). One curiosity worth mentioning is that although it was translated into English as 'Entertainment-Education', Miguel Sabido, who defined himself as a "hands-on communication theoretician" first named his theoretically framed methodology as "entertainment with proven social benefit". Sabido began developing his methodology in the theater in 1957. He then started to apply it more thoroughly in 1967 in a series of communication studies sponsored by the Director of the Mexican Institute of Social Security (Racardo García Sainz), and in 1971 he started applying it to telenovelas. What began as a study on tone and how the audience responded to it, later developed into a theory for social change, in a partnership with Emilio Azcárraga Milmo, the CEO of Televisa (Sabido, 2004, pp. 61-63).

Sabido saw telenovelas as the perfect vehicle for social transformation due to several reasons. He believed that the emotional tone of the genre could be used to teach the audience certain social behaviors – adult literacy, family planning, and to fight against poverty. One key aspect of his method is the prolonged exposure by the audience to the message: day after day for several months – this was the case of *Duas*

*Caras*, not just through its ten month nightly broadcast, but through the author's blog as well. In addition, Sabido asserts that the format of the (telenovela), as opposed to the soap operas, with a clearly defined beginning, middle and end provides the opportunity to tie-in as well as to expand the needed infrastructure services (for example a family planning clinic). Furthermore, the format makes it possible to connect the audience with the infrastructure services in short epilogues at the end of every episode, in order to convey important information to the public. And finally, since the telenovela format is a reflection on what is good and bad in society, it is easy to add characters for identification by the audience individuals and groups, so they can learn social behavior change without harming audience ratings (Sabido, 2004, pp. 63-64). Telenovelas are after all a highly commercial enterprise by nature.

After Sabido's success story with *Acompáñame* (the first E-E intervention) – the nativity rate in Mexico actually dropped 33% from the previous year after the broadcast of the *telenovela*. Based on this success, David O. Poindexter, the director of Population Communication Center, decided to take the 'Sabido Methodology' to other parts of the world, and in 1987 the Population Center signed a formal agreement in Brazil with TV Globo. The network agreed to tackle population, family planning and family size content in its prime time telenovelas. The fertility rate in Brazil has dropped since, and TV Globo's programming is credited as playing an important role in the decrease (Poindexter, 2004, pp. 24-31; Sabido, 2004, p. 64)

#### The Social Merchandising Approach

While the first telenovelas in Brazil were set in far away places such as distant and non-existent kingdoms, since 1969 with *Beto Rockefeller* the discussion of

current events within the narrative consolidated the role of the genre as a type of window to new roles, behavior, politics and news (Hamburger, 2005, p. 131). *Beto Rockeller* was produced as an attempt to bring the stories closer to Brazil's reality. The language was contemporary and the use of slang was permitted. The sets, clothing and plots represented a window to 'all things modern' and trendy (Alencar, 2002; Braga et al., 2001; Fernandes, 1997, Joyce, 2009).

As the Brazilian telenovela matured and established itself as profitable and popular (the two go hand in hand) it increasingly began to deal with current topics, characters and situations. While still relying on drama and emotions, conflicts related to love, suffering and social struggles were now set in the present time and thus the plots were updated and with this change telenovelas began to journalistically accompany the affective changes in the liberal bourgeois family (Klagsbrunn, 1993, p.18).

Although Brazilian telenovelas became more modern in the 1970s, it was not until the mid 1980s with the political opening (and the steady decline of the military government and its censorship) that the genre began to address social and political agendas more openly. La Pastina, Patel & Schiavo (2004) explained the shift that occurred at that time: "In other words, Globo telenovelas were transformed, shifting from entertainment containing limited, and sometimes censored, socioeducational material to entertainment with a strong social agenda." Additionally, "Globo openly provided writers with a platform to delve into issues of social and political significance (e.g. elections, strikes, corruption), which under the military gaze could not be openly discussed" (p. 265). One such author is Aguinaldo Silva. *Duas Caras*

was not the first controversial and successful telenovelas he has written for TV Globo. On the contrary, controversy has followed the author for many decades.

For example, in 1975, TV Globo had to suspend a telenovela's broadcast after it was censored by the government. *Roque Santeiro* ("Roque the Saint Maker") was written in 1975 by the late Dias Gomes<sup>49</sup> and Aguinaldo Silva. The plot was set in the fictitious city of *Asa Branca*, supposedly somewhere in the northeast of Brazil. The characters in the telenovela discussed and criticized Brazilian habits, religion, popular mysticism, and especially politics. Although it was originally censored in its entirety, it was remade 11 years later in 1986, during the New Republic, and was a huge success (Klagsbrunn, 1993; Fernandes, 1997).

Although public debate regarding socio political and economic issues started to take place in telenovelas in the late 1980s, it was not until the 1990s that they actually assumed a more explicit role. Hamburger (2005) referred to these types of programming as "telenovelas of intervention", situating the genre as being "public service providers". Amongst such telenovelas are *O Clone* ('The Clone' by Glória Perez) and *Mulheres Apaixonadas* ('Women in Love' by Manoel Carlos) (p. 131). It was then that the social merchandising began to take shape as scriptwriters and producers increased telenovela revenues and profits by placing products and services into the narratives. As La Pastina et al demonstrated, in addition to selling consumer goods, TV Globo, along with its telenovelas writers came to realize that by placing socio-educational issues in their productions, they could also sell messages with community and social implications. Thus, as the authors stated, intentionally or not, TV Globo transformed the Brazilian telenovela from a purely entertainment program

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<sup>49</sup> Dias Gomes died on March 18, 1999.



that evolved away from the mainstream Latin American telenovela model into a forum for the discussion of Brazilian reality. In the process, social merchandising became established as a feature of 1990s Brazilian TV (p. 266).

While it may look like the move towards a pro-social agenda was mainly based on the writers's personal sense of social responsibility, the social merchandising approach as done by TV Globo was and continues to be extremely well planned. The two work together in a symbiotic strategy that keeps the network, writers and audience happy: Although pro-social messages began to be inserted in the programs in the late 1980s, SM was actually institutionalized in the following decade. As Reginatto (2007) explains, Rede Globo launched its Social Merchandising Department in the late 1990s, around the same time the neo-liberalist guidelines were consolidated in the country, a time marked by the emptiness of the notion of the State and by the transfer of the criteria of social justice to the scope of private companies, including broadcast stations ... Its high profitability disguises itself as a public service by a business who is supposedly socially responsible. And the news division pays especial attention to SM strategies, which in turn, keep the authors happy (pp. 1, 15, 24).

#### E-E and SM: Similarities and Disparities

E-E interventions usually deal with a social matter, or prosocial messages such as family planning, health campaigns, or domestic violence awareness, offering some sort of resolution or providing helpful resources to the issue at hand. Thus, is it possible to locate *Duas Caras* within this universe, as it questioned whitening and racial democracy in addition to fomenting daily discussions in interpersonal

communications, numerous media outlets, and of course, a direct dialogue with the author through his blog. However, while SM has been described as a marketing strategy and a Brazilian genre used to promote social and political views in an intended manner (La Pastina, Patel & Schiavo, 2004, p. 262), Reginatto (2007) reminds us that the expression ‘social merchandising’ is diffuse in Brazil and varies according to different authors, ranging from “private business philanthropy”, “social responsibility”, “marketing” to “social merchandising”. Whatever the author’s personal definitions may be, TV Globo has a clear strategy for it and has implemented it systematically, defining it as:

A communication strategy which consists in disseminating, within the narratives of dramas and entertainment programming, socioeducational messages, including those which are formulated intentionally, systematically and with well defined purposes, such as the ones which the audiences can take note of, through dramatic narratives in which they can extract positive teachings which are capable of changing their knowledge in a positive manner. (Reginatto, 2007, p. 17)

Thus, on one hand, Aguinado Silva’s *Duas Caras* had characteristics of the traditional social merchandising approach, and in a sense could be described as the type of SM which functions as a “telenovela of intervention” - as through plot, dialogue, media focus and the blog, the program served a function described by Hamburger (2005) as “a direct two way connection between viewers and authors” (p. 131). Additionally, as Hamburger explained, the authors who use social merchandising are well aware of the power of the television medium to create change. They are also aware of their own power of manipulating public opinion (pp. 133-134). But what are more specific peculiarities between E-E and Social Merchandising? And is *Duas Caras* a traditional SM program?

As discussed previously, traditional E-E interventions were designed to entertain while educating the masses through commercially successful programs in a non boring manner (1995). On the other hand, telenovelas using the marketing strategy SM aim to garner a steady and large audience through ‘selling’ a carefully planned prosocial message. While it turns the original aim of E-E on its head, the prosocial messages of SM while made for profit seem to result in positive change. As a result, the success of the campaigns created by Globo telenovelas serve to not only raise the ratings for TV Globo, but are also great for the company’s image as they solidify the corporation as a business that is socially responsible (Reginatto, 2007, p. 149).

One important similarity between E-E and SM interventions is that both strategies clearly mark a problem or specific social issue as such; creating a separate story line revolving around it: the heroine faces an unwanted pregnancy, another is beaten by her husband, a man needs a heart transplant. This is an integral part of Sabido’s methodology: a well planned strategy which starts as part of the telenovela’s script from its inception and is done in a way to change behavior by influencing the audiences attitudes towards the issue at hand, as well as to help create the necessary conditions for social change at the system level, serving as social mobilizer, agenda-setter, influencing public and policy initiatives (Singhal & Rogers, 2004, p. 6).

In the case of TV Globo’s SM approach, a well planned agenda to highlight a specific health or social issue is also the norm: TV Globo has given its authors a type of “how to manual” on how to implement social merchandising strategies. The Document is entitled “Politics for Social Merchandising – A project of

Systematization”. Here the network sets out the ABC’s of SM from how to approach the topic to how to chose the star who will be acting out ‘the problem’ in a separate storyline (Reginatto, 2007, pp. 16-18, 90).

It is important to point out here that a clear distinction of *Duas Caras* was the fact that racism permeated multiple segments of the telenovela, and therefore of the Brazilian society it portrayed. Additionally, due to the history of miscegenation and the discourse surrounding it, prejudice can be seen as something most Brazilians can potentially suffer, and not some isolated problem. For example, a key distinction of this telenovela was the sheer number of people of color in the program<sup>50</sup>. As pointed out by Kennedy (2008): TV Globo’s *Duas Caras*, is one of the Brazilian telenovelas with the highest number of blacks other than those which depicted stories in the time of slavery. It is also one of the few telenovelas where blacks are not employed by white bosses (§ 1).

But the number of Afro-Brazilians was not the only difference. Additionally, *Duas Caras* sets itself apart as a new and distinct way of utilizing social merchandising, or in this case, prosocial message insertions. The discussions about racism were clear and done explicitly through extremely graphic dialogue (another first), and showed that race and class are clear markers of difference in Brazil and that the idea of a racial democracy could not be further from the truth. One of the instances where racism was blatantly addressed was during a dinner at the Barreto’s. After a first encounter between Júlia and Evilásio where the young woman identifies the protagonist as a robber using stereotypical signifiers (she was in the favela<sup>51</sup>, at

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<sup>50</sup> Out of 92 actors, 16 were blacks and 76 were either white or *pardos*.

<sup>51</sup> This example will be examined more thoroughly later on this dissertation

night, he was a black man wearing chains around his neck and so forth) she apologizes and invites him to dinner at her expensive apartment with her rich family. The dialogue in this sequence was extremely racist and made not only the characters present at the dinner party uncomfortable, but it also sparked comments on various media outlets, as we will see below.

While the guests are at the table, Barreto attempts to unnerve Evilásio by asking for his opinion about the expensive wine they are drinking, since he is assuming the black man has never had the opportunity to savor such a delicacy up until that point. Evilásio does not seem to notice the provocation and replies that the wine “tastes like hot asphalt mixed with a cigar”. The comment sparks laughter from Narciso, a senator who is present at the table, and Júlia, who would be impressed by anything the hero would say, since she is obviously enamored in him. Júlia asks him where he got that from, and Evilásio says he read that in a magazine which specialized on wine tasting. He added that he had never tried hot asphalt or cigars, but certainly, that is what that wine tasted like to him. While Júlia and Narciso laugh, Barreto is offended and jumps up from his chair and shouts “what a cocky *crioulo*” - an extremely racist expression used to refer to blacks (O jantar entre Júlia e Evilásio: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4zCNjiZ--o&feature=related>).

At this moment the room suddenly becomes quiet and the background noises of the silverware, the chuckles and sounds typical of a dinner scene can no longer be heard. Then, Júlia asks Barreto to apologize to Evilásio and he replies that he has to apologize to his friends instead, for exposing them to this ‘type’ of person, and that he was not even sure that he could call ‘it’ a person. When Gioconda (Júlia’s mom) asks

her husband to apologize to their guests, Barreto replies that he is a *favelado* and in addition to that, “full of himself”. Júlia then shouts that he must have gone mad and Barreto replies that she is the one who went crazy when she decided to bring Evilásio into their dining table. When Júlia begs her father to apologize, he ironically replies: “imagine that: Paulo de Queiroz Barreto asking the forgiveness of a *tição*”, which is an unmentionable racial slur in Brazil - even worse than the ‘N’ word is in the US. When Evilásio stands up and starts to leave the table, Barreto goes further to say that he is vocalizing what everyone in the table is thinking and that he does not like ‘that type of people’ whose only merit is to stymie Brazil’s growth. This can be interpreted as the way in which the author found to send his anti-racist message through Barreto and to use him as an allegory for the racist viewers at home (O jantar entre Júlia e Evilásio: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4zCNjiZ--o&feature=related>).

After such racist declarations, Sabrina, the house maid who is an Afro-Brazilian and had been watching the entire scene, goes back to the kitchen and says she is disgusted and that she feels like going back in the dining room and vomiting on Barreto. When the scene goes back to the dinner fiasco, Barreto is still shouting racist remarks adding that the reason why Brazil is so corrupt and lagging behind other countries in development is because of ‘these people’. At this point the senator reminds the lawyer that racism is a crime in Brazil and that in his position as lawyer he should know this better than everyone else (O jantar entre Júlia e Evilásio: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4zCNjiZ--o&feature=related>).

The educational tone of the debate between the lawyer Barreto and the senator Narciso goes on when Barreto claims that the senator is only interested in “those

people's votes". And the senator replies that his "discourse reflects a historic ignorance and that Brazilian culture, music, and sports would be impoverished without the contribution of our African immigrants and their descendents". The senator adds that if "Brazil has a soul than it is a black one". Barreto replies that his "political discourse would fall apart if his daughter were to get involved with 'one of them'". And Gioconda uncomfortably replies that this was not the case here, and that the two were only friends. Then, the senator shouts that if he did have children he "would feel honored to have a son-in-law with the character and dignity such as Evilásio's". Barreto says that they "chat again after the senator has a daughter (O jantar entre Júlia e Evilásio <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4zCNjiZ--o&feature=related>).

At this point Barreto turns to Evilásio and asks "what are you waiting for in order to leave?", to which Evilásio replies politely: "I am waiting for you to finish, sir" with a defiant look and a calm tone of voice. He adds that the lawyer only invited him to his house so that he could humiliate him. When Barreto shouts that he did not invite him, Evilásio quickly responds that he also did not humiliate him and that he is leaving the house with the same dignity he had entered it with. The same one he inherited from his dad, a *negro* (a politically correct way to refer to blacks in Brazil in addition to Afro-Brazilian or Afro-descendent), who is a hard worker like himself, and who had taught him good manners. Additionally, Evilásio says that if anyone was humiliated, it was Barreto, in front of all his guests, due to his ignorance. He also added that if he really wanted Evilásio to leave, all he had to do was to ask politely and he would have gladly complied. Evilásio finally asks the guests to excuse him

and leaves, followed by Júlia and the senator who tells Barreto he is a Jew and will not wait for attacks on him. When Gioconda tries to end the dinner fiasco, tia Leinha, the ‘comic relief’ character who is always at the Barreto’s house to steal a meal replies that the show must go on and they should just forget about everything and eat (O jantar entre Júlia e Evilásio: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4zCNjiZ--o&feature=related>).

What happens next is an example typical of telenovelas: a love story that encounters obstacles and is heightened by these, one of the traditional ones being class differences (Tufte, 1993, p. 85), which in this case, is heightened by their different races. In this scene, Júlia and Evilásio are standing on the street in front of her building and she begs for his forgiveness “in the name of my dad and family”. Evilásio adds that she is just as racist as her dad and reminds her that she thought he was going to rob her when they first met, when in reality, he was there to offer his help and to change her flat tire. As Evilásio starts to leave Júlia asks him to “stay until you at least calm down” (O jantar entre Júlia e Evilásio: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4zCNjiZ--o&feature=related>).

When the scene goes back inside the apartment and to the dinner, Barreto tells his guests he is going to retire and that his guests should have fun without him. As he stands up, he accidentally drags the embroidered white table cloth with him and breaks all of the fine china, prompting his wife to cry saying that “they do not make those things anymore, and that those were all gifts from their wedding”, showing her futility in the face of the entire disastrous situation. Barreto says that she is crazy crying about that when his daughter has left the house with a *crioulo* using once again



the blatant racial slur to refer to Evilásio. At this point Gioconda desperately and cynically replies that once and for all he should refer to him as an Afro-descendant, and spells it out: “A-fro- des-cen-dant!!”. Gioconda adds that his son also “has a je ne sais quoi for the maid”, commenting on the aged tradition of rich white boys in Brazil having sexual relations with their house maids in closed quarters but marrying white rich girls publicly, which really dates back to the times of slavery and the very history of miscegenation in Brazil. Finally, at this point Barreto starts to cry saying that his sweet little daughter is in love with ‘him’, as he is dragged away by his son Barretinho to his room (O jantar entre Júlia e Evilásio <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4zCNjiZ--o&feature=related>).

While chaos happens inside the apartment, outside Júlia is still apologizing for her father’s actions. When she realizes Evilásio is crying, she kisses his tears until the two finally exchange a passionate kiss. While this might seem like the traditional love line where the lovebirds fight obstacles to be together, the obvious and blatant racist dialogue that preceded the scene was a first in Brazilian telenovelas, in addition to one ground-breaking difference: Lázaro Ramos was the first Afro-Brazilian as the hero in a prime time telenovela (Júlia consola Evilásio <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfBIAim4Vz0>).

The racist sequences and the historical kiss were commented on by various sources, including Aguinaldo Silva (2007) who posted a type of teaser to the entire scene on his blog. Silva wrote that while racism kept happening inside the apartment, outside:

Evilásio e Júlia, durante uma discussão sobre racismo, acabam se atracando... E aí descubrem que o que eles querem mesmo é se beijar! Começa assim, entre tapas e beijos, o Romeu e Julieta pós-moderno de *Duas Caras*: um romance que mistura racismo e luta de classes, bem ao gosto dos sociólogos petistas e sua incansável legião de seguidores. Barretão, o pai da moça, vai ou não chamar Evilásio de “negrinho metido”? Aguar-dem...

[During a discussion about racism Evilásio e Júlia end up fighting ... And thus find out that what they really want is to kiss! Therefore it starts, amongst slaps and kisses, the post-modern Romeo and Juliet of *Duas Caras*: a romance that mixes racism and class struggle, the type loved by sociologists and the labor party followers. Will Barretão, the young woman’s father, call Evilásio a “stuck up nigger” or won’t he? Stay tuned!] (Eu prometo: *Duas Caras* vai bombar!

<http://bloglog.globo.com/blog/post.do?act=loadSite&id=1749&permalink=true>)

The scene made a long lasting impression on members of the viewing public, and even on the actor who played Evilásio, who after the telenovela was over, commented during an interview that the dinner scene was his “favorite one” and that it was “very emotional for me and the rest of the cast” (*Duas Caras*: Cena do jantar, 25/5/2008). An entry on the website *vcfaz.net*, a type of forum about television, stated that when it came to race matters, the Barreto family, out of all the characters in *Duas Caras*, was the one that achieved the most overall in regards to racial matters and that the writer was able to depict the specific “Brazilian racism” with the extremely rich dialogue. Additionally, the piece on the website commented that,

the discussion between Barretão and Evilásio, sitting at the lawyer’s dinner table will serve in the future as analytical tool for the study of telenovelas (...) Aginaldo Silva was able to pinpoint the sore spot of Brazilian society on primetime television.

[O núcleo da família Barreto alcançou o melhor resultado na obra. O dramaturgo conseguiu retratar o racismo "a la brasileira" nos riquíssimos diálogos. A discussão entre Barretão (Stenio Garcia) e Evilásio (Lázaro Ramos), sentados a mesa na sala de jantar do advogado, servirá para análises da temática em telenovelas (...) Aginaldo colocou o dedo na ferida da

sociedade no horário nobre]. (Duas Caras mostrou. <http://www.vcfaz.net/viewtopic.php?t=72153>).

Although not everyone agreed with Aguinaldo's depiction of race and racism in Brazil, it is undeniable that due to the telenovela and additionally the various responses and reactions to it, a metadiscourse about race and racism was created in Brazil during the time the program aired. The key to my analysis here is not a type of ode to the author, or a realization that the telenovela was a perfect reflection of Brazilian society and race relations. But the author deserves kudos for wakening discussions and sparking debate about an issue that usually does not garner enough needed attention. While it was done in a new type of social merchandising, due to the nature of the theme chosen – not related to health - the prosocial message was clearly present and the issues depicted by the program were addressed and commented on, and not just in the specialized telenovela media, but in multiple outlets, as it has happened with other topics in telenovelas in the past. As Mattelart & Mattelart (1990) have shown in *The Carnival of Images*:

In the press, discussion on the *novela* is not limited to specialized magazines that are of minor importance in Brazil. All press genres – daily, weekly, monthly, for all readerships – speak abundantly of telenovelas, including interviews with authors, actor, directors, producers and viewers, roundtables on themes, reviews by specialized journalists, academic analysis, humor, and gossip in the tittle-tattle press. On top of the copious press dossiers prepared by Globo and weekly program bulletins it publishes, most Brazilian magazines devote extensive articles to novellas that serve as veritable national events, continually reiterated (...) A history of the social impact of a telenovela could be written through its echo in the press. The sheer volume of articles on the novela is without echo in Europe (pp. 79-80)

The former statement continues to hold true and comments about *Duas Caras*, especially about the infamous dinner are not hard to find. For example, a writer for the São Paulo newspaper *O Estadão*, which is not part of the Globo empire, noted

that the dinner at the millionaire's house where the lawyer calls Evilásio a *crioulo* only to be corrected by his wife to use the term 'Afro-descendent' was of an "exemplary cynicism" – as if the only atrocity he made was to use a politically incorrect term *crioulo* (Merten, 2007, ¶1).

Kennedy (2008), in the watchdog site *leiamídia wordpress* also had a comment on the dinner. Although he did not like the way racism was portrayed, he was nonetheless addressing the topic. As he stated that

(...) Lawyer Barretão has his daughter fall in love with a *negro*, Evilásio, played by Lázaro Ramos. In one of the chapters he clearly says that he does not like this race, this type of people of color. Do we really need to raise the flag against prejudice in this manner? I believe it is much better to beat racism showing similarities instead of differences, or better yet, showing that we are different, but that we all must respect each other, no matter what color, race or faith. It would have been better if he had accepted and received with open arms the *negro* from the *favela*, teaching a moral lesson

[(...) advogado Barretão, interpretado por Stênio Garcia. Sua filha se apaixona por um negro, o Evilásio, vivido por Lázaro Ramos. Em um dos capítulos ele diz claramente que não gosta desta raça, desta gente de cor. Será que precisamos levantar a bandeira do combate ao preconceito desta forma? Acredito que é muito melhor vencermos o racismo mostrando igualdade e não diferenças, ou melhor, de que somos diferentes, mas que todos devemos nos respeitar, independente de cor, raça ou credo. Seria muito melhor se ele aceitasse e recebesse de braços abertos o negro da favela dando uma lição de moral]. (Kennedy, 2008, ¶ 2)

Furthermore, the author himself made comments about the dinner on his blog on the day after the broadcasting. Aguinaldo Silva stated that he was

Touched, of course. Not because of something I did, but for witnessing how brave Brazilian television is and how far it can go. Yesterday, the lesson it taught us - and it did so in such a precise way, almost scientific – was: "what a disgusting and hateful? thing is racism". But enough with all the emotions and let's stick to the facts (...) During the entire final sequence of the dinner, minute by minute, the audience did not even blink, and did not drop even a tenth below 48 points. In the end, we achieved 43 out of 68 points, an excellent mark. The network with the second best score was Record, with 9. Now, tell me what you think: After his hangover is cured, will Barretão admit

what a monster he was? Send answers to our blog. Or perhaps it will be revealed tomorrow, in the next chapter. And go ahead, feel free to debate. I will let you. But please, no fighting.

[Estou emocionado é claro. Não por mim, mas por ver o quanto a televisão brasileira é corajosa e pode ir longe. Ontem, a lição que ela nos deu - e o fez de forma precisa, quase científica – foi: “que coisa mais nojenta e odiosa é o racismo”. 5 Mas chega de tanta emoção e vamos aos fatos (...) Mas, durante toda a seqüência final do jantar, no minuto a minuto a audiência nem piscou, e não caiu sequer um décimo abaixo de 48. No final, demos 43 de 68 pontos possíveis, uma excelente marca. A emissora mais próxima, a Record ficou com média 9. 6 Agora me digam o que acham: depois que o pileque passar, será que o Barretão, afinal de contas um homem fino e muito bem educado, vai se dar conta do quanto foi monstruoso? Respostas pro nosso blog... Ou amanhã, no próximo capítulo. E podem debater à vontade, eu deixo... Mas, por favor, não briguem]. (Silva, October, 26, 2007, ¶¶ 4-6)

The example above serves to legitimize the new direction of social merchandising – while it still seeks to maintain a steady audience, it is also a variation of E-E with the innovation that it places race in the forefront of the discussion and not a health campaign. But its is also important to set apart the Brazilian cases previous to *Duas Caras* as a particularity of telenovelas done in that country, and not Latin American programs in general. When it comes to Brazilian telenovelas, what deems the social merchandising approach a variation of E-E, is that, amongst other things, it does not rely on the theoretical methodologies and approaches specified by Bandura. Instead as discussed previously, it focuses on marketing strategies. Social merchandising is a marketing approach used in Brazilian telenovelas to sell not a product, but awareness of an issue deemed important by authors and network executives in order to maintain high ratings. It is a type of marketing, but the difference between SM and traditional commercial insertions is that the ‘product’ they ‘sell’ to the telenovela audience is a prosocial message, which serves to educate people, but also to maintain TV Globo’s image of a socially responsible network.

Additionally, unlike E-E interventions, the storylines in Brazilian social merchandizing “are constantly evolving due to community input primarily through audience ratings and focus interviews” (La Patina et al, 2004, p. 273). Additionally, as previously discussed, one cannot discount other forces such as the government, activist groups as well as the Catholic Church (Fernandes, 1997; Hamburger, 1993; Klagsbrunn, 1993; Matos, 2002, Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990), but the audience is extremely powerful when it comes to the direction of the plot. In fact, Aginaldo Silva has said he takes into consideration all the pleas from various sectors of society, but that ultimately the audience is the one with the most deciding power, since the telenovela is an open text. In his words, “o espectador é co-autor e eu tenho que servir a vontade do povo” [the spectator is co-author and I have to cater to the will of the people.] (*Senhor do Destino*. Streaming video, 2005, March 11).

Thus, the success and structure of TV Globo’s social merchandising approach can be summarized as follows: a strategic use of different time slots to target specific audience segments; and collaboration between scriptwriters who have their own social agenda and specialized merchandising writers who are attuned to time and audience (La Patina et al, 2004, p. 271).

It is important to point out that, just like in traditional merchandising or product placement, social merchandising ‘products’ are insertions which are not intended to break away from the narrative. Rather, they create an organic relationship between the advertised product and the narrative. This practice “encourages the viewer to ‘read’ the product as a quality of the characters using and approving it” (La Pastina, 2001, p. 541, Joyce, 2009, p. 31). Additionally, TV Globo’s social

merchandising is very well planned. Before the launch of a telenovela, a group of journalists who are in charge of covering television are invited to preview some of the most important clips which are part of the 20 episodes which have been taped ahead of the time of the actual first broadcast. This way journalists familiarize themselves with the topics that will be addressed by the telenovela ahead of time. This methodology was created by Marcio Schiavo, a former consultant for PCI (Population Communication International) and a current consultant for TV Globo since the 1980s (Reginatto, 2006, p. 16, 90).

One interesting aspect of the open text nature of *Duas Caras* is the fact that although it was a traditional open text, meaning, it was subject to changes due to indirect societal pressures from groups such as the church, as well as a drop in ratings, it was more explicitly ‘open’ due to a direct relationship between Aguinaldo Silva and his viewers-readers through his blog. As journalist Dagomir Markezzi (2008) states,

Aguinaldo Silva was the first author to communicate directly with his public. In addition to having to face the heavy load which is writing the telenovela, he comments it on his blog and reads the reader’s comments, which amounts to hundreds. This is a new reality for writers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is ironic this Brazil of 2008. Our most alternative work ended up being the eight o’clock telenovela.

[Aguinaldo Silva foi o primeiro autor a se comunicar diretamente com seu público. Além de enfrentar a barra-pesada de escrever a novela, ele a comenta no blog e dá uma lida nos comentários que chegam às centenas. Essa é uma nova realidade para os escritores do século XXI. É irônico este Brasil de 2008. Nossa obra mais alternativa acabou sendo a novela das 8].  
(<http://bloglog.globo.com/blog/blog.do?act=loadSite&id=201&mes=12&ano=2007>)

Consequently a conclusion that can be made that perhaps distinguishes E-E and SM the most is the fact that when it comes to SM, social criticism and awareness, in the form of prosocial messages becomes a precious and valid commodity to be sold and marketed for profit: social merchandising, or the marketing of social solidarity. As Reginatto (2007) points out, a true social marketing (i. e. E-E) does not seek to profit ultimately, but to transform and ignite social change. There is a distinct difference between educating and selling (pp. 41-69).

Amongst the similarities between E-E and SM are the discussion of a social matter, the careful planning campaign strategy, and the artful use of the audiences' emotional involvement with the characters and issue at hand through months of exposure. As far as disparities, it is important to point out that E-E interventions are carefully planned one time projects and SM is integrated into the ongoing broadcast of the network. Additionally, while E-E strategies had its inception on the fear of overpopulation and was associated with health campaigns that would educate the masses in order to create a better society, SM in Brazil started with the political opening and the writers' desire to discuss previously censored topics as well as their personal agendas. The final characteristic intrinsic to SM is the open text nature of Brazilian telenovelas. A more thorough discussion of these topics will be addressed below.

#### Emotional Involvement and Personal Agendas

As discussed previously, key to Sabido's E-E methodology is dealing with affective and emotional aspects of human condition through months of exposure during the broadcast. As Singhal & Rogers (2004) explained, emotions are an



important form of human experience, which can trigger, for instance, changes in preventive health behavior. Thus, witnessing a character of a favorite program die from AIDS, and seeing the grieving family of the infected person, may serve as a more powerful trigger for adopting a prevention behavior than a rationally structured health campaign promoting condom use (p. 13). This is true in E-E programs as well as in Social Merchandising. It was also the case in *Duas Caras*.

For instance, emotional involvement was present with various characters in the plot, such as the storyline involving the black maid Sabrina, and Júlia's brother Barretinho; but it was especially present in the love-obstacle-field plot between white and rich Júlia and poor, black, not to mention *favelado* Evilásio. The suffering, humiliations and racism the two endured, especially through blatant dialogue such as the infamous dinner party, made racial matters an issue that people could sympathize with and relate to even more than a simple anti-racism campaign or intellectually driven debate.

Aguinaldo Silva keeps blogging and ironically mentions the fact that as the Minister of Culture of a respected and powerful country such as Brazil, Gilberto Gil should not be worried about such opportunities and that if he really wanted to claim ancestry, he should have claimed that in addition to being Brazilian and Italian, he should have opted and adopted a Nigerian citizenship since he professes to be proud of his African heritage. He also adds that he has never heard of a Brazilian doing such a thing and goes further to ask if Flora Gil, the wife would also make the same move as her husband and request the citizenship equivalency which she is entitled to. He finishes his posting by asking if an Afro-Brazilian, given the change, would opt for a

Brazilian-Italian citizenship, or a Brazilian-African one, since they love professing to be proud of their blackness. Silva ends his blog with an ironic statement: “Whites, Blacks. As for me, a *mulato*, when I think about these things I turn beige” (*Quem quer ser cidadão Nigeriano?*)

<http://bloglog.globo.com/blog/post.do?act=loadSite&id=2835&permalink=true>).

It is noteworthy to mention that in the telenovela, when Barretinho marries the maid Sabrina, the two decide to move to Africa, and Barretinho chooses to become a Nigerian citizen. Thus, by participating in discussions surrounding race through his blog, in addition to adding such prosocial messages to the telenovela plot and furthermore by inviting the public to discuss and contribute to his postings and fictional characters, Aguinaldo Silva is himself an important actor in the construction of the metadiscourse about race sparked by the program. Traditionally speaking, a key element that E-E and social merchandising have in common is the degree to which such interventions spark interpersonal communication, which undoubtedly happened during the time of the broadcast (Singhal & Rogers, 2004, p. 17).

In regards to the differences, one key issue that demarcates the Social Merchandising approach as unique is its close ties with TV Globo. As La Pastina et al (2004) showed, since the beginning, telenovelas have been the back bone of the network and TV Globo has kept a continuous broadcast throughout the day. In fact, for the past thirty years, the network’s telenovelas aired six days a week throughout the year in various timeslots creating a media space that tackles different socio-educational issues for different audiences and different demographics. This ensures that most of the viewing audience will be reached through a telenovela sometime

during the day. This is specific to social merchandising since E-E interventions only address one issue for a specific audience throughout its broadcast, not reaching other segments of the viewing public because storylines, characters, and messages were not created with non target groups in mind. TV Globo with the social merchandising approach has a solution to this problem because audiences are exposed to prosocial messages and characters that create a strong case of identification (p. 274).

It is noteworthy to point out that from 1997 to 2007 TV Globo broadcasted 1600 messages about reproductive health, 257 of those in relation to drug prevention, and 1500 about various other social matters. According to Reginatto (2007), this means is that Brazilian women between the ages of 35 and 40 have watched at least 15 thousand hours of telenovelas and all of its prosocial messages (p. 91). Another aspect of TV Globo's social merchandising is the fact that the directors and author's associated with social merchandising embody the cause in question and speak on behalf of the network in a heroic manner. For example, Reginatto points out that director Jayme Monjardim released the following official statement to the media during the launch of *Páginas da Vida* ('Pages of Life'), in 2006 (the telenovela dealt with the issue of Down Syndrome):

It is impossible to do a telenovela nowadays without social merchandising. I believe this is intrinsic to the authors of this decade. I think they feel they have the responsibility of always bringing somehow, a discussion that can make a difference towards changing our country and society.

[É impossível fazer hoje uma novela sem merchandising social. Acho que isso faz parte dos autores desta década. Acho que eles se sentem com o compromisso de trazer sempre, de alguma forma, a discussão de que a gente pode fazer alguma coisa para mudar o nosso país e a nossa sociedade]. (p. 15)

*Duas Caras* as the “Future of E-E”

It is somewhat ironic that although TV Globo is ultimately in search for profits by marketing ‘good intentions’, ultimately, when it comes to *Duas Caras*, the content of its prosocial anti-racist message can be described as what As Singhal & Brown (1995) have suggested, would be the future of E-E programming: a social marketing that should move away from family planning and public health issues to creating E-E programs to address other needs: “In the future, the scope of Entertainment-Education strategy is likely to enlarge and include other development topics such as environmental conservation, human rights, social tolerance, and others” (pp. 12-13). In this sense, the topic of racism and the questions raised about the so called racial democracy in Brazil, via the topics addressed in *Duas Caras*, the author’s blog as well as a discussion in various media, seem to have accomplished just that, yielding to a new type of social merchandising.

In the recent past TV Globo’s SM telenovelas followed the traditional health issue type of intervention and educated the public as far as how to deal with the issue at hand, which is also a characteristic of E-E interventions. For example, in *O Clone* (“The Clone”, 2001), author Carla Perez introduced and discussed matters of drug abuse and addiction. This telenovela was a mix of the traditional E-E programming with the SM approach. Testimonies of real life former addicts about their downfalls and road to recovery were introduced to the narrative. Although one of the characters was also a drug addict, the testimonies were highly stylized and cut away from the narrative, breaking away from the flow, by placing narrators against a black backdrop

while the camera emphasized different parts of their bodies and never showing the entire person (Hamburger, 2005, pp. 134-135, 150).

Another noteworthy example of SM was Manoel Carlos's *Mulheres Apaixonadas* ('Women in Love', 2003) which portrayed the violence present in everyday Rio de Janeiro and was a traditional example of the social merchandising approach, often cited by scholars. When one of the main fictional characters is hit by a stray bullet in the posh neighborhood of Leblon, the people ('real life' people) who lived in Rio de Janeiro organized a demonstration on the streets along with non-profit organizations, politicians and TV Globo actors who were part of that particular telenovela. The event made the news that week as well as was incorporated in one of the episodes of the telenovela that same week, mixing the boundaries between fiction and reality (Hambureger, 2005, p. 135).

Another innovation brought about *Duas Caras* which sets it apart from traditional SM interventions was the metadialogue and discourse made possible by the author's blog. A key problem pointed out Singhal & Brown (1995) in regards to E-E interventions was its one-way nature. The authors suggested that E-E interventions should take a more participatory role on the side of the audience. Thus, the exchange between the author and the viewers and critics via his blog, makes an important contribution towards achieving this goal. In fact, the dialogue was accomplished not just in the traditional 'comments' box in the blog, but it became an actual blogposting, making the comments more easily accessible to readers and viewers, rather than a two step process.

Although the notion of social merchandising takes away the purely philanthropically produced social messages – since ultimately the insertions are seeking profits – one cannot discount its actual benefits for the population. For example, in 1992, when TV Globo broadcasted a telenovela by Gloria Perez - *De Corpo e Alma* ('Of Body and Soul') a telenovela that discussed organ donations, the Brazilian Heart Institute had, for the first time, a 'surplus' of hearts in its bank. Three years later, in 1995 eight o'clock telenovela by Perez - *Explode Coração* sought to reunite missing children with their families by means of posters which were incorporated into the narrative. All of the children who had gone missing by less than one year and who had their posters shown during the telenovela broadcast were reunited with their families. According to the Office of Public Safety the percentage of kids who were found during the time of the broadcast of *Explode Coração* jumped from 55% to 80% (Reginatto, 2007, p. 91).

Additionally, The telenovela *Laços de Família* ('Family Ties'), by Manoel Carlos, which introduced the topic of Leukemia and bone marrow transplants also discussed the national campaign 'Solidarity and Citizenship' (*Solidariedade e Cidadania*), a special request by then first lady Ruth Cardoso, Fernando Henrique Cardoso's wife. The campaign pushed for public service and volunteer work by the population. During the time of that broadcast, the number of bone marrow donations jumped from 10 to 149 a month, and the number of blood donations from 10 to 154. Furthermore, that year, TV Globo was awarded the Bit Awards for Excellence, the most important European award for social responsibility. It was the first time a non-European country received the honors (p. 97) (Reginatto, 2007, 97). This exemplifies

not only a partnership between the State and a private corporation, but also the efficacy of social merchandising, regardless of the fact that ultimately, TV Globo is in search for profits.

### Racial Matters as a 'Social Good'

As evidenced by the central plot, the choice of actors, the blog postings, and so forth, racial matters is a topic of interest to Aguinaldo Silva, and the author consciously intended to sell a specific prosocial message with his program. Although the author has professed the importance of the open text in the past and the numerous contributors and agents of change to the final product presented to the audience in the past, with *Duas Caras*, Silva took a more prominent leadership role and was a sort of master puppeteer, steering the characters and the metadiscourse about race in the way he saw fit, or more socially responsible, perhaps due to the touchy and pressing nature of the subject matter.

On a blog posting written on May 30, 2008, entitled “My almost last words”, Silva comments on an interview given to journalist Andrezza Capanema Godói at *Jornal da Tarde*, and transcribed the entire interview. When asked if the *Duas Caras* he had intended to write looked anything like the one we saw on television, Silva declared that,

Out of all his telenovelas, *Duas Caras* is the one in which he was the most loyal to what was in the script in the beginning of the program. A bit due to my stubbornness: People bad mouthed it so much in the beginning, that I decided that under no circumstance I would change it, in order not to give credit to the critics. I know I seem arrogant when I say this, but the fact is that time was a wise gentleman, and the success of the telenovela attests to that: I was certain of that. *Duas Caras* was from beginning to end a telenovela which stayed away from the conventional and the politically correct, and without a doubt brought a new vigor to the television genre.

[*Duas Caras*, de todas as minhas novelas, foi aquela em que fui mais fiel ao que estava na sinopse original. Um pouco por teimosia: tanto falaram mal da novela no começo, que eu decidi não modificá-la sob nenhuma hipótese, pra não dar razão aos críticos. Sei que pareço arrogante dizendo isso, mas o fato é que o tempo foi o senhor da razão, e o sucesso da novela é um atestado disso: eu estava certo. *Duas Caras* foi do começo ao fim uma novela que fugiu do convencional e evitou o politicamente correto, e sem dúvida trouxe um vigor novo para o gênero do folhetim televisivo] (Última entrevista. <http://bloglog.globo.com/aguinaldosilva/#>)

### E-E, SM and the Importance of Celebrity

It is possible that even with all of the author's mastery, expert writing, good intentions and perseverance, *Duas Caras* could not have been as influential, had Aguinaldo Silva chosen a different set of actors to play his protagonists. As La Pastina et al (2004) pointed out, the sense of identification with the characters is amplified in the TV Globo network since even when a telenovela ends and the drama is off the air, the actors are often in other programs (particularly telenovelas, in various timeslots). The authors assert that the use of the same actors in different shows forces audiences to deal with the new prosocial issues in the new drama and potentially deal with older messages associated with the characters that the actors have portrayed in the past. Thus, Brazilian telenovelas and social merchandising engage audiences through character association with old and new prosocial insertions, even though the new telenovela may not contain any of the previous educational issues and messages (p. 274).

In this sense, it is impossible not to mention the powerful effect that 'celebrity' has when it comes to social merchandising. Brown & Fraser (2004) discussed the influential role that celebrities have in society in promoting social change through audience identification and are thus instrumental in promoting



prosocial messages. The authors asserted that even fictitious characters such as *Harry Potter*, *Ally McBeal*, *Felicity* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* can be promoters of social change (p.100).

Thus, just as celebrities can effectively promote product sales by endorsing certain products, they can also become the champions of prosocial behavior and provide audiences with examples of how to think and act as well as teach them what consequences will likely follow prosocial and antisocial behavior. They are vital components of E-E campaigns, and since the objective of the E-E communication strategy is to increase knowledge of a personal or social need, influence attitudes, or change overt behavior through entertainment, it makes sense to employ celebrities in this task (Brown & Fraser, 2004, p. 99 – 108).

However, while it might be advantageous to hire celebrities to promote certain issues, it is at the same time risky, as Brown & Fraser (2004) pointed out. If such celebrities ‘misbehave’ in their personal lives and the issue becomes public, it undermines the entire E-E project. Still, the authors conclude that the advantages of using celebrities for E-E outweigh potential pitfalls (pp. 110-111). Lázaro Ramos was the perfect celebrity to star as the first black protagonist in a prime time telenovela. His ‘celebrity’ status is high. He was well known to the public and viewed as a serious actor, with a background in theater and cinema, and as a black activist.

Although Lázaro is still a young actor, due to the nature and importance of his body of work, in addition to the prominent role he played as the first Afro-Brazilian to take a leading role in the prestigious eight o’clock telenovela he can be described as an icon. Prior to taking the leading role of Evilásio, he had acted in 15 plays, 19

films, 6 television series, one telenovela and had directed a documentary. Deborah Falabella was also extremely famous, having acted in 9 telenovelas, 7 films, and one series.

Lázaro Ramos has undoubtedly made a mark not just in Brazilian television history, but moreover, he has carved a spot in Brazilian history books. His success, popularity, and status as an icon are a testament of that. Brown & Fraser (2004) classify celebrities as follows: Most celebrities are generally conceived as ‘novas’ (starts that burn brightly but then burn out) than as guiding lights in age-old constellations. A few celebrities demonstrate amazing longevity and thus extend themselves into the realm of what they refer to as icons, or those popular figures whose renown transcends the constraints of space and time.

### Conclusions

*Duas Caras* is undoubtedly a watershed program when it comes to Brazilian telenovelas. Its main theme, surrounding around old and new ideas of race and racism in Brazilian society and television and the manner in which it was approached – racist dialogue, choice of characters and multiple storylines – place it as a new approach to the traditional social merchandising. Whether it was a success or not might be too soon to tell, or perhaps this is immeasurable. But it did accomplish one important task: it sparked debate and added to a metadiscourse about race, miscegenation, democracy, whitening and what it means to be black or white in contemporary Brazil.

As noted by Singhal & Rogers (2004), “in the future, we believe that E-E will also go beyond the boundaries of its mainstay messages – reproductive health, family planning, and HIV prevention – to include other pressing social issues such as peace,

conflict mediation, terrorism, race relations, and reconstruction. The authors added that the role of Edutainment would likely be further realizing an understanding of the struggles for liberation and empowerment (p. 18). Judging by the racial theme of *Duas Caras*, it is safe to say that the future is here and E-E is already changing its face.

Sabido's methodologies of E-E as well as its SM variation show that intellectual material can be added to an emotional flow without disturbing it. Problems such as poverty, population growth, and ecological destruction, which can never be solved by mere presidential decrees, governmental orders, or by today's concepts of charity, can be ameliorated with edutainment programs (Sabido, 2004, p. 71-73). E-E methodology fits naturally with the television soap opera, which can provide the backbone for a multimedia campaign (radio, television, brochures, posters, interpersonal communication, and audience groups) to change society in order to improve it (Bandura, 2004, p. 74).

The connections between E-E and empowerment are becoming tighter, and E-E programs are inherently designed to be empowering in that they allow audience members to witness their own problems and compare them with the problems that the E-E characters face: the Freirean empowerment-education (*à la pedagogy of the oppressed*) insists that learners should be involved in defining and naming their own problems; critically examining these problems and their root causes; creating a vision of a better community; and developing social strategies necessary to overcome limits and achieve their goals. As the suggestions for improving conditions and the actions taken to improve unfold within the E-E program, audiences can be motivated to

change the conditions in their own lives, cultures, contexts and relationships (Sood, Menard & White, 2004, p. 144).

So why would a network insist on SM? Fernandes & Dos Santos (2008) question, what is TV Globo's particular interest in disseminating prosocial messages via social merchandising when this type of marketing does not bring them any revenue. Additionally, the authors wonder if this would be an integral part of mass media - to educate the population, or maybe it is a tricky way to garner a captive audience due to the networks social responsibility obligation since the airwaves are a public resource (p. 8). While it might be impossible to pinpoint an exact answer, I suspect in the case of Aguinaldo Silva it is the author's personal choice and agenda (within industrial limits). And since his *telenovelas* have a history of being extremely popular with high Ibope ratings, TV Globo gives him cart blanche in regards to the choices he makes pertaining to social merchandising, personal agenda, main plot and multiple storylines. The obvious implication is that although SM does not bring TV Globo revenue directly, it does so indirectly, since a high audience rating is what drives advertisement revenues.

*Duas Caras* attests to all of that. And although I argue that it is a new type of social merchandising, it is, however, a unique example that was fruitful in a specific time and place. Aguinaldo Silva himself acknowledges that although the program accomplished lots of 'firsts' it might not change the face of future telenovelas. As stated in the previously cited interview with Andrezza Capanema Godói (2008), Silva declared that he,

Always told my contributors to be prepared, since *Duas Caras* was a high risk telenovela<sup>52</sup>. Because it was so different from any other, it would have to pay a high price, at least initially. The pressure that resulted from this made me lose at least one year of my life, but I have no regrets: I had the courage to go ahead, even while knowing I was paying a high price (...) Wolf Maya<sup>53</sup> says that after *Duas Caras* the telenovelas will never be the same. I have my doubts. The public always ends up watching any old telenovela, even if it is old fashioned and unimaginative, out of sheer habit. Any real change will only happen when the public says: Enough! And turns off all the sets. But I don't think I will be around to see that.

[Eu sempre disse aos meus colaboradores que estivessem preparados, pois DUAS CARAS era uma novela de alto risco. Por ser tão diferente das outras, ela teria que pagar um preço alto, pelo menos no início. A pressão que resultou disso me fez perder, sem sombra de dúvidas, pelo menos um ano da minha sobrevida, mas eu não me arrependo: Tive a coragem de ir em frente, mesmo sabendo que estava pagando um preço alto (...) Wolf Maya diz que depois de DUAS CARAS o folhetim televisivo nunca mais será o mesmo. Eu tenho minhas dúvidas. O público sempre acaba vendo qualquer novela, por mais quadrada e sem imaginação que ela seja, pela força do hábito. Mudança mesmo só haverá quando o público disser: CHEGA! E desligar as televisões todas. Mas acho que aí não estarei mais aqui pra isso]  
(Última entrevista. <http://bloglog.globo.com/aguinaldosilva/#>).

In closing, it is important to point out that unlike Glória Perez and Manoel Carlos, Aguinaldo Silva is not associated with social merchandising. The public does not view him as such and the academic literature does not cite his telenovelas either. Silva is also adamant about the fact that he is not a SM author and ironically insists that telenovelas should not raise awareness of “themes” such as the ones by Glória Perez, and should especially not be politically correct (Maia, 2009, ¶ 1). Although *Duas Caras* seems to fit into what has been deemed as “future of E-E” as it questions matters of racism, as mentioned previously, in actuality it seems to fit better the personal taste of the author who welcomes the controversy surrounding his work

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<sup>52</sup> Aguinaldo Silva is referring to the low Ibope ratings during the first few weeks of the broadcast as well as to the death threats he received from unhappy viewers who did not like the Black and White couple Júlia and Evilásio or the overall racial tone of the program.

<sup>53</sup> The director of *Duas Caras*.

through his dialogue, theme, as well as daily provocations in his blog. *Duas Caras* does not follow a strict SM agenda as suggested by Marcio Schiavo, the former consultant for PCI and current consultant for TV Globo's SMs either - where a careful planning of the SM insertion is addressed before the taping of the telenovela starts, as part of the main script of the program.

Once again, the question as to why TV Globo would allow such a politically incorrect storyline can be answered in terms of the audience it drew not just to the TV channel, but to its webpages, as well being incorporated into other aspects of social life – multiple newspapers, magazines, and day to day encounters and activities. In this sense, *Duas Caras* cannot be located purely as E-E or SM, but should be looked at as a new approach to social merchandising. On a final note, As Reginatto (2007) concludes, the success of the campaigns created and issues raised by the fictional programs serve to not only raise the ratings for TV Globo, but also to solidify the corporation as a business that is socially responsible (p. 149), which makes SM and controversial matters such as race and racism in contemporary society all the more desirable.

## CHAPTER VI CONCLUSIONS

The present examination of *Duas Caras* started with the premise that Brazilian telenovelas are a site of mediations between production, reception, and culture, where there is constant negotiation between the director, writers, production team, audience, actors and finally, institutions that participate in the social formation (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003; Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Melo, 1998). As a result, I proposed a multilayered type of textual analysis, one that combined the traditional approach, with the modified version, which addressed the many texts that kept on ‘writing themselves’ due to the audience’s encounter with the telenovela text, creating thus, a metadiscourse about race matters in contemporary Brazil and adding yet another layer to the notion of “open text”. The rationale for the traditional textual analysis approach was based on an understanding that meaning is a social production, and as such is embedded in issues of power and because this method recognizes this postulate, since it considers the conditions of production and consumption of the text. Additionally, the approach allows for just a few exemplary scenes to be analyzed because unlike content analysis, counting is not the determining agent, the text is. Additionally, the text is not the end but the means by which we study a signification process, a representation of reality (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003, p. 278). As Bruce Gronbeck (2004) argues, the television critic is more concerned with finding meaningfulness (p. 31), and thus this is the approach that best fit my project.

Television criticism aims to provide insightful interpretations that stimulate people to look at television texts in new and different ways (Gronbeck, 2004). The analysis of representations of blackness in *Duas Caras* and the meanings, discussions

and texts generated due to such portrayals was a fascinating and fruitful discovery. It indicated that the television medium and more specifically, the telenovela genre legitimates itself as a forum for critical public debate, where participation in representation is a key element towards democracy. This reflects the nature of my research, one that is concerned with using the medium as a tool for social transformation by suggesting changes in social attitudes and behaviors, and as an aid to the construction of public spheres encompassing of multiple voices.

In order to understand the current Brazilian national racial discourse I started with an examination of the historical construction, dissemination, insistence and somewhat downfall of whitening and the racial democracy ideology in Brazil as well as in the narratives of telenovelas, and more specifically in *Duas Caras* (2008), thus exploring the various ways in which the narrative questioned such ideology. The racial discourse (text) in the fictitious program proved to be key in understanding the changes in the national racial discourse, especially during the time the program aired. As I demonstrated previously, there is an intimate interweaving relationship between reality and fiction when it comes to Brazilian telenovelas. Thus, although I proposed a new textual analysis, I also relied on the traditional one to understand the role *Duas Caras* played in regards to discourses revolving around race relations in Brazil: that of a provocation, reaction, and critique against racial democracy ideology and *branqueamento*. The text also reminded us of the cultural role of narratives of cross-racial love in Latin America and revealed a novel way of using such tales. Whereas in the past, the strategy of using romance, eroticism and tension was told as an allegory of a unified nation in a sort of “passionate patriotism” (Sommer, 1933, p. 33), in



*Duas Caras* the relationship between Julia and Evilásio served as a marker of a society which is divided and not united by race.

In order to understand the relationship of *Duas Caras* to discourses of race in Brazil I first established a social and historical approach to race. Thus, this examination understood that although race is a social construct, it has real and palpable social reality, even if the concept has no scientific basis (Telles, 2004, p. 21). Additionally, the analysis between similarities and differences between the racial discourse in the American and Brazilian context was key to understanding the program's text as well as the additional "open text" it generated. The analysis also reminded us that regardless of the historical discrepancies, the outcome of racism is significant and expressed daily in power relations, oppression, and so forth. However, although racism is evident in Brazil, *Duas Caras* was a breakthrough program when it comes to addressing the matter, as never before had the subject been so openly discussed within all segments of Brazilian society (or presented in such politically incorrect manner) as it was during the time of the broadcast. The program exacerbated the discussions regarding race and racism through blatant racist dialogues and storyline. This yields to the importance of not just this program, but of the genre as a whole, which is a medium that unites and serves as a forum for discussion between various members of society (Almeida, 2002; Costa, 2000, Fernandes, 1997).

The comparison of the social construction of blackness in the US and Brazil also revealed a significant correspondence regarding the portrayal of Blacks in the visual media of both countries, as indicated by Bogle's (2001) and Araújo's (2001) research which classified such representation as "Toms", "Coons", "Mullattoes",

“Mammies”, and “Bucks”. While my research indicates a novel portrayal of Evilásio, and thus credited the program with the fact that it presented audiences with the first prime time Black hero, the fact that the representation was sometimes problematic and contradictory could not be ignored: On one hand, Evilásio was smart, respectful of elders, loving, friendly, religious and moral. On the other hand, he was also hypersexualized in a stereotypical manner, or as what Bogle (2001) described as “Buck”.

However one cannot jump to the conclusion that stereotypes were used in a traditional way. In fact, what my research revealed was that Aguinaldo Silva’s intentions were to be provocative with such portrayals and to ignite powerful, heated debate. This contributed to the metadiscourse about race matters in Brazil. Thus I was able to show how the flow of meanings that are created add a powerful and insightful layer to the traditional textual analysis. Consequently in this case, stereotypes were used to create conflict and promote social discourse about race.

The analysis of stereotypes and the metadiscourse it ignited yielded to another important aspect of my analysis and of telenovelas in general: of course, one cannot discount the importance of ratings and such controversial portrayals and discussion did not hurt the programming. In fact, the love-hate relationship between the audience, general media and Aguinaldo Silva, who is notorious for his unconventional portrayals of various political themes, gender issues and taboo subjects and which with *Duas Caras*, were openly addressed by the author himself via his blog, helped to boost not just the ratings, but added yet another thread to the open text which I am referring to. Thus, the scenes examined in this dissertation show how the progressive and stereotypical representations of Blacks were intentional and

were crucial to help us understand the interesting ways they seeped into a broader social discussion about race in Brazil, permeating various media such as blogs, newspaper articles, editorials and so forth. This also shows an important characteristic intrinsic to *Duas Caras*: that of public participation and social debate in the act of watching, reading and writing the telenovela text, all of which contribute to the open text quality I am referring to.

Finally, in order to complete my examination of *Duas Caras* as an igniter of social debate, I could not discount the fact that a traditional method used to contribute to such seemed to be at play: Education-Entertainment (E-E), and its variation, Social Merchandising (SM). However, a close analysis of the program revealed a new type of social merchandising. By comparing traditional E-E and SM interventions and juxtaposing them with *Duas Caras*, I was able to demonstrate that this program is unique and hybrid, possessing characteristics of E-E, SM in addition to its own logic. It presented audiences with a new type of prosocial message; an issue which reflected the writer's taste and personal agenda; and finally, it was based on the principle of telenovelas as open text. Crucial to this analysis is the understanding that SM is not just financially good to the networks, but also important is the fact that they can wear a cloak of social responsibility: they are a public service program by a network who is socially responsible, thus keeping the positive image of (in this case) TV Globo in the public eye. It is a winning formula where everyone is happy: authors, network, audience and the government, who grants concessions and licenses (Reginatto, 2007, p. 1, 15, 24; La Pastina, Patel, Schiavo, 2004; Singhal & Rogers, 2004). Another aspect of this type of SM is what I described as being a type of "catch 22": While it

serves to disseminate a prosocial message and to ignite a participatory debate, creating a metadiscourse about race matters in Brazil, it is also a highly a commercially profitable program. And so the cycle keeps going: A new type of SM is introduced but it relies on traditional telenovela codes and characteristics where other traditional messages go unchallenged, such as the formulaic happy-ending, the eternal love triangles, heteronormativity and finally, its consumerist messages. Like our hero Evilásio, telenovelas are highly complex and cannot be reduced to a simplistic dichotomy of good and bad.

While I have shined a positive light to SM interventions, one cannot discount the fact that the limitations of the genre are still pervasive. The inevitable happy ending is achieved; the (heterosexual) love triangles are resolved; the villain pays for his act or is redeemed, the white wedding between heroine and hero finally happens. Perhaps this is part of the nature of ‘the beast’, just like being made for profit is also a contradictory part of SM interventions. The fact is, in the end, it is a winning formula for the network, author and audience who all benefit from in their own way. It is a fair assumption to say that such interventions are not going to disappear anytime soon. The current 8 o’clock telenovela (*Viver a Vida*, “To Live Life”, by Manoel Carlos (2009-present) tells the story of a former runaway model who suffers an accident and becomes a paraplegic. The story accompanies her trials and tribulations in a didactic way that ranges from anti discriminatory messages to step by step demonstrations of her rehabilitation to social life: from learning how to move around on a wheel chair, to brushing her hair with special “adapters”.

As discussed earlier, promising is the understanding that the parameters of E-E and all its variations, - especially the one demonstrated here - are limitless and affirm the considerable potential of this communication strategy, where the connections between E-E, empowerment, participation and debate are becoming tighter, in a sort of *Freirean* way which attests that learners should be involved in defining and naming their own problems; and to critically examine such problems and the root of their cause; creating a vision of a better community in addition to developing social strategies necessary to overcome limits and achieve their goals. E-E interventions in the past, and now *Duas Caras*, have suggested how as suggestions for improving conditions and the actions taken to improve such conditions unfold within E-E interventions, audiences can be motivated to change the circumstances in their own lives, cultures, contexts and relationships (Sood, Menard & White, 2004, p. 144).

In conclusion, this dissertation shows the endless possibilities of this communication strategy so particular of Brazilian telenovelas, while being cognoscente of its limitations. By combining a traditional textual analysis to a type of “open textual analysis” I have made a contribution to Latin American Media Studies and also more generally to television studies. Ultimately, this investigation revealed how telenovelas contribute to social change in a way that has not been properly accounted for: The current dissertation is a hybrid: It is not a reception study in the traditional sense, it is not a story of entertainment-education in the strict sense, and it is not solely a textual analysis. *Race Matters...* is a study of the social milieu that the

telenovela (in this particular case, *Duas Caras*) navigates, one that is a component of a contemporary progressive social movement in Brazil, and one that views the text as being located in social interactions.

Additionally, the present research contributes to Latin American Media Studies in a couple of ways: First, it explores the role of the media, particularly the telenovela, in debunking the idea that Brazil is a racial democracy. Secondly, it incorporates the Brazilian notion that telenovelas are “open texts”, meaning they are co-authored by a variety of industrial, creative, cultural and social actors, into a methodological approach that expands the traditional idea of textual analysis. In addition to reading the telenovela text itself, this study investigates the production process, audience responses and broader media coverage. Thus, the public discourse about the telenovelas is a key part of the text itself.

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