COMING OF AGE

on the

STREETS OF RIO

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the lives of children, adolescents and young adults who live or have lived on the streets of Rio de Janeiro. Fieldwork was conducted amongst these youngsters, and with workers in governmental and non-governmental agencies, asking why youngsters go to live on the street and why and how some eventually disengage from it. The thesis suggests that in their trajectories these youngsters experience and conceive of the city as a place of material, affective and symbolic resources with implications for their sense of self. Their ways of being in the city, are here contextualized within specific notions of risk which take into account the climate of fear, insecurity and scarcity of both the community of origin or the home and of the street. For many going to the street is narrated as a form of defiance against such conditions and as an aspiration for 'freedom'. The thesis explores how the 'freedom' of these youngsters is, both in the past and in the present, perceived as threatening by many segments of society, who come to regard these youngsters as not only at risk but also a risk. The view of youngsters on the street as a threat, has historically informed the genesis of the category of 'street children', this thesis traces the genealogy of this category in Brazil examining how it continues to affect the lives of those who live on the street. As well as being a source of stigma, the thesis also investigates how the category of 'street children' is defied, appropriated or else internalized in particular circumstances in the encounters between youngsters on the street with the rest of Rio's citizens. Also significant are the ways in which youngsters on the street aspire to the identity of being a citizen, of being just like anyone else. This thesis concerns itself not only with 'being' on the street but also with 'disengaging' from it, raising the question of what happens to these youngsters once they come of age, and as such fall outside the category of 'street children'. Significant in this is the network of institutions that provide services for youngsters and attempt to either remove them or persuade them to leave the street. Paulo Freire's pedagogy has had a great influence in this approach, offering a very different notion of 'freedom' or liberation from oppression to that articulated by youngsters on the street. The encounter between these two 'freedoms', this thesis reflects, provides insight into some of the reasons behind the failures and successes of these organizations and of individual youngsters to fulfill their desire to become a Brazilian citizen.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

All the photographs were taken by the author unless stated otherwise in which case the permission for their use in this thesis has been kindly granted. Stills taken from the documentary film 'Coming of Age on the Streets of Rio' have a black border and were shot on a digital video camera by Michael Mandel Butler.

CHAPTER 1

DISSONANT CHILDHOODS

Tuesday 25th September 2001 (from field-notes).

Lapa (an old bohemian district or *bairro* in Rio de Janeiro's center), two boys sleep on the plaza side by side. They are both about 13. They both sleep facing the same way on top of flattened pieces of cardboard, one, darker skinned and taller, sleeps in front. Between his ribs and his folded left arm is the hand of the other boy, lighter skinned with bleached-blond hair. They both sleep soundly disregarding the scorching midday sun, clad in nothing but ragged Bermuda shorts, their bodies showing the marks and dirt of existence on the street, bruises, scars, burns. There they rest and perhaps dream away from the noisy cars that pass either side of the plaza going beneath the tram arches of Lapa, away from the stench of piss and beer that the pavement lays bare.

I return an hour later and they are gone.

Images such as this remain imprinted in memory after the flow of experiences of fieldwork. The image is evoked here at the beginning of this work because it can be said to encompass the contradictions that surround the phenomenon of children and adolescents living on the street. The almost serene image of two youngsters, two friends, peacefully asleep amidst the bustle of the street of Rio's city center, appears at once incongruous and misplaced. That they should appear so comfortable and at ease in a space which most *Cariocas*[1] associate with danger, and through which they perambulate with caution, is striking. Such a scene presents itself as dissonant to deeply held notions, showing individuals, whose life-stage is supposed to be one of fragility, immaturity and in need of adult protection, at home on the street, a space often associated with moral corruption, danger, lack of protection and impersonal encounters.

Throughout my stay in Brazil, whenever I engaged in conversation, which invariably came round to what I was doing in Rio, I mentioned my research with street children. Without

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[1] *Carioca*s are what the residents of Rio de Janeiro are called.

fail I would get some kind of response or opinion, always tinged with emotion, related to a personal experience of injustice or fear. Everyone has an opinion of why street children exist, of what these children do or need – and this is always spoken with conviction. Most of these responses tended to oscillate between a sense of injustice, with a social interpretation of the phenomenon linking it with poverty and family problems, to a sense of fear of an unknown and dangerous 'other'. Quite often these two poles coexisted.

That I should have encountered such impassioned responses adds credence to the claim that street children have become a 'phenomenon', a social fact or occurrence that has become part of the experience of living in urban centers not only in Brazil but in much of the developing world. Street children are a common subject in the media, both in Brazil and internationally, often appearing in Brazilian daily newspapers and on news TV programs. Films have been made about them, most famously Hector Babenco's *Pixote* (1980) set in Brazil, Luis Buñuel's *Los Olvidados* (1950) set in Mexico and more recently *Ali Zaoua* (2000) by Nabil Ayouch set in Morocco. Novels have also been written, perhaps most famously Jorge Amado's *Captains of the Sand* [*Capitães de Areia*](1937). These works can be seen as part of a long-established fascination with the subject matter of youngsters fending for themselves outside adult supervision, a lineage stretching back to such seminal works as Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (1837), Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), and William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies* (1954). Street children have established themselves – or rather, have been established - in the popular imagination, not only of countries where they are found in significant numbers like Brazil, but all over the world. From magazine articles, to TV bulletins and documentaries, through the proliferation of images of street children in countless pamphlets of organizations procuring funds on their behalf, we have all come across, at least superficially, the phenomenon of street children. Beyond their presence in the popular imagination, the phenomenon of street children also has had political repercussions. As Tobias Hecht has noted, UNICEF has declared them a top priority and they have even found their way into Brazilian foreign policy, with foreign ministers having to account for the atrocities against street children when negotiating abroad for loans in the early 1990s (Hecht 1995:3). The phenomenon, as Hecht, researching street children in Recife in the Northeast of Brazil defines it, is "the almost obsessive dialogue about street children and the institutional action on their behalf" (Hecht 1995:208). Clearly though, the phenomenon of 'street children' has two counterparts; the actual presence of children and adolescents on the street and the manner in which their presence is understood and acted upon by society. As Hecht and many authors on the subject have come to believe (Aptekar 1988, Glauser 1990, Leite 1991, Connolly and Ennew 1996, Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman 1998, Hecht 1998, Graciani 1999), street

children have become an obsession "because of the extent to which they diverge from readily accepted models of childhood" (Hecht 1995:217).

For Benno Glauser the category of 'street children', "becomes necessary in the response to speak about children who fall outside the frame of what is considered 'normal'... After all," he continues, "children can be found using fields, lofts and gardens without there being any apparent need to coin terms such as 'field children', 'loft children' or 'garden children'" (Glauser 1990:145). Glauser concludes that the concern and importance given to the concept of 'street children' serves not the needs of the child but those of society. This aspect of street children falling outside normal expectations of childhood is also noted by Lewis Aptekar (1988), in his classic study *Street Children of Cali*, in Colombia, who explains that the smallest children that are seen on the street produce a form of 'cognitive dissonance' in many adults. By this he meant that in encountering them on the street the observer's concept of a child as innocent and in need of family protection and of a child who is capable of producing a self-sustaining livelihood are incongruous. Aptekar concludes, "Street children can be defined as an aberration of childhood in a particular society with a particular point of view about childhood" (Aptekar 1988:46).

In a similar vein it has been noted that the term 'street children' is never far from the word 'problem' (Hecht 1995). Liisa Malkki (1995) has made a similar observation about the term 'refugee'. In order to understand why refugees have been treated as a 'problem' in writings and reports about them Malkki uses Victor Turner's concept of 'transitional beings':

> "transitional beings are particularly polluting, since they are neither one thing nor another; or may be both; or neither here nor there; or may even be nowhere (in terms of any recognized cultural typography), and are at the very least 'betwixt and between' all the recognized fixed points in the space-time of cultural classification" (Turner quoted in Malkki 1995:7).

Whereas refugees have been considered in this light because they fall outside a categorization of the world (and of people's identity) in terms of nation-states, we can similarly see 'street children' as such transitional or liminal beings, neither here nor there in terms of a recognized cultural typology of childhood. Whilst conventional views of childhood in the West see it as a time of play protected by the confines of the home, as Duncan Green puts it, street children beg, sniff glue, steal, fight with bottles and knives and have sex (Green 1998). We have come to cultivate a very particular 'cultural typology' of childhood in contemporary Western society as a

life-stage that needs to be protected, a space kept away from adult issues and themes (in particular, work, drugs and sexuality).

The 'cognitive dissonance' of which Aptekar writes stems not only from the particular cultural typology of childhood in itself, but also from very particular views about where this childhood should take place. As Judith Ennew argues, a crucial aspect of childhood in modern society is domesticity; "The place of childhood is inside – inside society, inside a family, inside a private dwelling" (Ennew in Panter-Brick 2000:5). Adult supervision, either inside the home or else in other key childhood institutions such as the school, appears as a vital element of our modern conception of childhood with institutions and specialisms, as Jenks observed, serving to patrol the boundaries of childhood (Jenks 1992:15). Street children undermine this boundary in being not only outside the home but also outside adult supervision. Of further significance here are the meanings attributed to the different worlds of the home and the street, particularly in Brazil.

Yet it is not enough to consider the notion of 'dissonant childhoods' as only related to the incongruity with normalized models of childhood. As we shall examine in this present work, a thread running through the genesis of the category of 'street children', and its full blown emergence in the 1980s as a social phenomenon in Brazil, is a class and color prejudice whereby the childhood of the poor, and often black, *favela* dwellers is somehow regarded as different from that of middle-class white children. This has led authors such as Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman to point to the heavy class bias in the category, which they consider to be a means of classifying children found in the wrong place, in the urban and commercial public spaces, the territory of the middle-class, of people of 'substance and quality' (Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman 1998:358). As we shall see in the present thesis, 'street children' can be regarded as the latest in a long history of classifying - and disqualifying - terms for poor youth, who are somehow to be treated and governed differently to the sons and daughters of the middle classes. Their trajectory, as we see here, has many parallels with the broader marginalized *Carioca* population, but youngsters on the street are also subject to violence and discrimination because of their age, and because of where they are found.

The authors mentioned above, and others who are referred to throughout this thesis, initiated an enquiry into the social phenomenon of 'street children' as related to what I have here referred to as 'dissonant childhoods'. In this thesis I take further this analysis and look into the genesis and social reproduction of the category of 'street children', in the context of Brazil and specifically of Rio de Janeiro, exploring the genealogy of attitudes, institutions and practices, such as that towards public urban space and civic order, that are crucial for its emergence.

Further, I examine the way in which the category is reproduced in the present, in encounters between children and adolescents on the street and adults who come to regard them through the prism of the category of 'street children'. The thesis also explores how this interaction and the popularly held images of street children, including those reproduced through the media, are internalized or strategically appropriated by youngsters on the street. In short, how the category and its related images have implications for the processes of identification of those youngsters living on the street. The thesis then tries to capture the perspectives of those who are categorized, stigmatized or discriminated. It tries to find out through their own accounts and narratives, who are these children, adolescents and young adults who live or have lived on the street, why they have gone there and how the city is experienced by them. The thesis suggests that in their trajectories through the street, youngsters re-imagine the city as a place of material, affective and symbolic resources. It examines how being on the street, for many, also creates a series of opportunities. I contend here that this form of being on the street needs to be contextualized within specific notions of risk which take into account the climate of fear, insecurity and scarcity of, on the one hand, the community of origin or the home, and on the other, that of the street. Here I explore how these conditions of adversity manifest themselves, creating what Bourgeois in the context of his fieldwork in East Harlem referred to as 'social structural oppression' (Bourgois 1996). In the case of Rio I examine how this social structural oppression is manifested in the experiences of youngsters and how for some the street becomes a viable option. But if the street is a space of survival, it is also a place in which youngsters attempt to engage with identities which may confer a gratifying sense of self. As such, though stigmatization is a common occurrence for those on the street, it is rarely if ever passive and youngsters constantly assert their affiliation to other categories and identities, most tellingly that of being a 'citizen' or being 'normal' like anyone else. This thesis is therefore also about how youngsters on the street strive to claim identities which reconnect them to the rest of society.

As the title of the thesis suggests, the present work is also concerned with the passage of time. Just as I have been concerned to address the processes of identity, or identification and the meanings attached to the experiences in the day-to-day lives of children and adolescents on the street, so have I also considered the way these experiences and the meanings given to them change with the passage of time. How is being on the street different for child, for an adolescent and for a young adult? What is the significance of coming of age, and of turning eighteen for those who are still on the street? What does it mean to be a 'street child' when one is no longer a child?

For many youngsters, going to the city is seen as an exercise of 'freedom' and autonomy perhaps, as will be investigated here, a form of defiance against the social structural oppression they are subject to. Yet this notion of 'freedom' expressed by many on the street is not without its contradictions. How do youngsters reconcile the 'freedom' which they claim to experience on the street with the statement, also commonly found, that the street gradually becomes something that is addictive, described as a 'vice', and progressively harder to disengage from? As we see here, whereas the life-style and identity of being a 'street child' may in certain cases confer its own sense of power or gratification, these youngsters express a great deal of anxiety at the thought of becoming a 'street adult'. Also, how is this experience of 'freedom' reconciled with the common experience of fear, which is also often expressed, and with the series of restrictions and very real dangers that youngsters encounter on the street? As will be addressed here, children and adolescents on the street may appear to be outside parental or adult supervision, but discipline and punishment is instead taken on by the state or by non-governmental agencies, with the former, in the shape of the police, often guilty of brutality and discrimination.

Children and adolescents on the street pose further moral dilemmas in connection with the theme of freedom. Should they be free to circulate through and dwell in urban space as they wish, even if in doing so they may be endangering themselves and compromising their future opportunities? Or should the state take upon itself the responsibility of removing them? This question also relates to the relevance of Brazil, and Rio in particular, as the site for this ethnography. Brazil's transition from colonialism and slavery to a modernizing capitalist republic, and the social, cultural and political transformations which ensued provided the impetus for the creation of laws and reform programs, concerned with the governance of the citizenry and the re-organization of urban space. Children on the streets at the end of the nineteenth century in Brazil, as they had been in Europe some fifty years earlier, were a topic of much discussion amongst legislators and social reformers. Then the Brazilian elite often looked to Europe and the USA for the latest policy experiments, as they struggled to steer the country into a tropical Euro-American version of modernity. But throughout the twentieth century Brazil engaged in a series of social experiments of its own; this is particularly noted in the area of children's rights. The Child and Adolescent Statute 'Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente' passed in 1990 by the Brazilian legislative, came about largely as a consequence of the activism of the pro-democracy movements of the 1970s, and is considered one of the world's most progressive and comprehensive children's rights legislations. Yet the legislation has not prevented the forced removal of youngsters found on the street by the police and municipal agencies working for the protection of children and adolescents as we see in chapter 7.

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The brutality and discrimination suffered by youngsters on the street, at the hands of the police and civilians, can be seen as evidence of a society that has never really come to terms with its deep divisions and inequalities, many of which date back to the period of colonialism and slavery. Also significant in the Brazilian case is the strength of the forces which have fought to remedy these deep divisions. Particularly noteworthy is Paulo Freire's pedagogy and the Popular Education movement in creating new ways of working with youngsters on the street. The adoption of these methods by a broad spectrum of the NGO community and some key government agencies, has meant that Brazil has become a significant site of experimentation in programs working with youngsters on the street. Instead of forced removal such programs advocate the necessity for gradual persuasion and the consideration of the subjective needs of these youngsters.

FENCING OFF THE FIELD

There are specific difficulties in having 'street children' and adolescents as the subjects of study. Some of these difficulties are common to other urban ethnographies, or indeed ethnographies more generally. The problem is one of defining the 'field', of gaining access to subjects who constitute this field within an urban environment in which people are linked through a vast array of networks and linkages to a plurality of actors and institutions. But more significant in this particular case is the difficulty of identifying a group that, on the surface, shares many characteristics with other youngsters in Rio. Walking along Copacabana's famous cobbled pavement in mid-summer, a multitude of youngsters can be seen. Some are clearly accompanied by adults or otherwise show signs of having a home, such as well-kept clothes or a manner that in subtle ways betrays a timidity not found in youngsters known to be 'of' the streets. But soon the differences are blurred as children roam the pavement, beaches and beach-side restaurants selling chewing gum, sweets or asking for money to buy biscuits or a drink. To more clearly define our group, we'd have to stay out until later as the beaches empty, as most *Cariocas* and tourists go home (an event that quite often doesn't happen until very late in the evening). But even now as we look towards the sand, at the cardboard box shelters erected for the night, we still would not obtain an accurate glimpse of our field. Many people, both adult and children, sleep in Rio's Zona Sul *bairros*,[2] particularly in the summer, preferring to rest in their place of work than return to

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[2] *Bairro* or district, is how the city of Rio is divided up. The *bairros* in Zona Sul (South Zone) like Copacabana, Ipanema, Leblon, are the beach-side home of the upper-middle class and the preferred destination for many youngsters on the street.

their homes in the suburbs which are not only more than an hour or so away but also several bus fares away. It was this that led me to begin to question the very category of 'street children'. This was not in itself original since, as we have seen above, others have gone down this route before. Nevertheless, this got me thinking about what distinguishes these youngsters from their peers other than the obvious sleeping on the streets with no parental supervision. This initial question shapes the thesis.

Despite the difficulties outlined above as regards the category of street children, I eventually came to fence off the field for this research. Besides the literary sources which added the historical dimension and provided the tools for forging the links between the category of street children and social-political and economic processes, the ethnography focused on youngsters – children, adolescents and young adults – ranging in age from eleven to twenty-six, who were living or had lived on the street for a period of time that ranged from a few days to many years. It consisted of the programs, both governmental and non-governmental, that offered a variety of services to this population in Rio de Janeiro. Initially I approached Rio's largest NGO, *São Martinho*, which provided a drop-in center for youngsters on the street, as well as a network of shelters and a range of other services and facilities. Here I followed the daily routine, talked to the educators, 'pedagogues' and coordinators and met many children and adolescents whom I also interviewed. In *São Martinho* I was also able to follow the work of 'street educators' right from the process of '*abordagem*' [literally the boarding, as in going aboard a ship, but in this sense – approximation or approaching] on the street, to the activities inside the drop-in Day-center, through to the shelters where those children and adolescents who feel themselves to be ready to leave the street go. Subsequently, I also approached two other key NGOs working in this area, the first, *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha* [If This Street Was Mine...] also offered a drop-in center based around various ludic and educational activities (in particular those related to the circus), as well as a shelter. The other NGO, *Ex-cola*, worked with young people who had reached the age of eighteen and therefore could no longer stay in other NGOs or government-run shelters, and provided them with shared flat accommodation and support. The questions of what happens to these youngsters once they reach the age of eighteen began to concern me the more I pursued my research. Both because there appeared to be a lack of research in this area, but also, more importantly, because other than this relatively small NGO, no other assistance appeared to be available for youngsters once they reached this age since, from here on, they found themselves outside the protection of the Children and Adolescent Statute. Through these institutions I gradually got to know the individuals whose stories make up the body of this work.

My fieldwork in Rio consisted of a multi-layered approach to the phenomenon of children and adolescents living on the streets. To begin with, through participant observation in a series of NGOs working in this area, I was able to identify the various actors involved with young people who have lived, or are living on the street; organizations, educators, pedagogues, research institutes and a number of youngsters. During this initial stage I carried out a series of interviews with pedagogues, project coordinators and with children and adolescents who still lived on the street or who were in a shelter. This initial stage of participant observation also allowed me to gain an insight into the practices and ideas behind these social interventions – on the part of NGOs, the state and the church. In this context I came across a 'street pedagogy', a method of working and set of ideas influenced by Paulo Freire, that seeks to work from the conditions that the individual is faced with and engage with his/her potential. I address this further in chapter 7.

Subsequently I sharpened my research to focus on youngsters and young adults who were living or had lived on the street. I did this for a variety of reasons. One of them has to do with the lack of information about this transitional phase; between being an adolescent and being a young adult. To reach eighteen is also very important because it is an age when youngsters are no longer protected by the Childhood and Adolescence Statute, which had, at least on paper, protected them from being imprisoned and ensured that a range of services, governmental and non-governmental, where available to them. Reaching eighteen is significant in many different ways not least because of the coming together of legal, institutional and subjective factors at this point in the life-cycle. Another reason for shifting the research focus was that the young adults and adolescents I met, many of whom had left the street, appeared to be a lot more reflexive in talking about their street days, about how and why they went to the street and how some came to leave it. This reflexivity and the way in which their trajectory was narrated impressed me, particularly since it had a bearing upon my interest in how subjectivities and identities are fashioned on the street, and the changes these undergo over time. I was also very interested in the question of what kind of place the street is to grow up in. That is, given the 'freedom' and lack of adult tutelage the lives of these youngsters appear to be blessed and cursed with, how does this process of socialization – the adoption of values and competencies to get by in society – occur? In this way this layer of the research has become one of tracing the trajectory of growing up on the street and why and how some eventually manage to leave it.

This part of the research consisted mainly of life history interviews with twenty-two adolescents and young adults (fifteen male and seven female) who were living or had lived on the

street[3]. Most of them were in their early twenties though a quarter of them were eighteen years or under. These conversations in most cases consisted of between one and three interviews with each individual over a period of time, some recorded and others not depending on the particular context of the meeting, whether it had been pre-arranged, whether I had the equipment on me. In a smaller number of cases, in particular the four individuals who had left the street and whose life-stories are discussed in chapters 7 and 8, further to these recorded interviews, we met informally on a number of occasions throughout my fieldwork. All the individuals interviewed in this part of the research were 'self selected' in the sense that I got in touch with them through NGOs, which are a constant reference to them since they are the institutions that brought structure into their lives and even ensured that they stayed alive, as many of them recognize. Yet, having said this, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the majority of youngsters on the streets of Rio, particularly those who have been there for a while, have circulated through or interacted with these governmental and non-governmental agencies. Though I conducted life-history interviews with adolescents and young adults who were still on the street, because of my interest in why and how individuals disengage from the street I have presented here more material and further analysis of individuals who have left the street (chapters 7 and 8). Youngsters who manage to leave the street and engage in activities that are creative, constructive and legal I am finding that, sadly, are in some respects exceptional. It is virtually impossible to get a quantitative picture of the 'post-eighteen years of age' situation; this would require a coordination between research on the population of the penitentiary system, the drug trade, the adult homeless population, as well as taking into account the numbers of adolescents and young adults who are murdered or die each year. A task far beyond the scope of what I as an individual could achieve here. Instead what I strive to do in this work is to get a sense of what the street is like as a place for a child to grow up and to develop and also to outline the difficulties of leaving this life-phase and entering adulthood.

The above methods and delineated field made up the core of my research, but through my association with CESPI[4], I was able to greatly enrich my research and add a series of dimensions to both my methods of enquiry and to the scope of the field. Considering the difficulties in

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[3] As I outline in chapter 5, research shows that on the street in different cities in Brazil boys outnumber girls, making up on average 80% of the population.

[4] CESPI (Coordenação de Estudo e Pesquisa sobre a Infância) – The Center for Study and Research into Childhood – is a research organization initially based in Rio de Janeiro's Santa Ursula University. During my stay, the center changed its name to CIESPI (Centro Internacional de Estudo e Pesquisa sobre a Infância) and moved to be based at Rio's Pontífica Universidade Católica (PUC). Henceforth in this thesis the organizational will be referred to as CIESPI. For more details on the range and breadth of CIESPI's work see www.ciespi.org.br

gaining access to children who were still on the street, as well as my desire to have a broader picture of this phenomenon in present day Rio, I was fortunate enough to be asked to join a big research project with CIESPI that mapped out almost exactly what my initial research proposal was; the subjectivity, world views and identification processes of children and adolescents living on the streets of Rio. This research effort was also very exciting since it involved all the leading NGOs and government agencies working on this issue in Rio. The research involved street educators from all these key institutions as co-researchers in the project, myself and two other researchers who were all involved in research training seminars, as well as in jointly constructing the research instruments (the research methodology, the questions to be asked etc.) with these educators. This research was the first part of a process that is attempting to improve the way in which these NGOs and agencies work with these youngsters by working from a better understanding of their trajectories, their organization on the street, their hopes and the ways in which they make sense of their situation. The hope is that through this first step, ways of working can be found that better meet the needs and expectations of these youngsters and which are more successful in providing them with attractive alternatives to the street. The timing of my involvement in this research project was also fortuitous since I participated during the formative stages of setting up this network of NGOs, government agencies and research center, forming an entity that came to be known as *Rede Rio Criança* [Rio Children Network]. My involvement in this project was also important for me in my belief that pursuing anthropological research can actively contribute to those it seeks to study.

My collaboration with CIESPI and with their research allowed me to amplify my field in a way that would have otherwise been impossible for an individual to do, since the research involved some thirty researchers who interviewed around seventy children throughout the streets of Rio. It has allowed me to gain a broader insight into the lives of dozens of children and adolescents and of how they narrate their trajectory through the street, what they see as the attractions and detractions of the street. Being part of the research group also placed me within an intellectually stimulating environment that greatly enriched my own thinking upon the subject. I managed to contribute my own research interests towards this research, particularly through a concern with issues of identity and subjectivity, the key issues being the meanings children and adolescents attribute to their life on the street and to their experiences in this space; how they orient themselves in the world of the street; the dreams, fears and worries these boys and girls have; their perspectives for the future and the way they interpret their predicament. The format of interviews adopted in the CIESPI research consisted of semi-structured interviews where a series of key questions would be asked and from which the youngsters were free to respond and

elaborate as they liked. All of the interviews were with youngsters between eight and nineteen years of age, forty-five of these took place on the street and fifteen inside shelters. The interviews on the street covered all the main areas where children and adolescents gather in Rio. The interviews were carried out by three people, one being the main interviewer who addressed the child directly, another standing by picking up on issues around the interview (which would be discussed later, entailing an observer's account of how the interview proceeded) and a third who would act as a facilitator to the interview in the context of a public and urban environment. This facilitator, often a street educator who knew the area, would approach the child or adolescent to be interviewed, interact with other youngsters of the group who might have been present, as well as explain what was happening to passers-by or the authorities during the interview (which happened on a number of occasions).

Though the presentation of these individuals interviewed in the CIESPI research (and not necessarily by me) may not have the same vividness or be as in depth as the life-history approach I undertook, this layer of the research helped me in tracing a broader range of life trajectories found on the streets. This also gave me a more robust quantitative database that can be placed alongside the more qualitative nature of the other phases of the research. Another important aspect of this phase was that through close contact with the key institutions and with educators, I was also able to be in a position of participant observer that greatly enriched my understandings of the NGOs and educators' practices and of the thinking behind their interventions. Also my discussions with the other researchers provided many insights for which I am greatly indebted. Academic tradition adheres to a notion of 'self' and 'authorship' whereby an individual comes up with ideas and original research, acknowledging where necessary the work or ideas of others. This tradition appears more bounded in the social sciences than the natural sciences where working in collaboration has become the norm in many fields. Acknowledging the constant dialogue that occurred between me and many others in the production of this work (see Acknowledgements) I, nevertheless, will try to delineate where possible what came from what research citing the appropriate origin of data, concepts and ideas.

The fruits of my collaboration with CIESPI did not end there. The first project I was asked to contribute to was part of a series of research projects on youth and poverty in Rio de Janeiro carried out by CIESPI. The first project with which I got involved, was a large scale participative research project that was attempting to map out the support bases which youngsters

from a periphery community of Rio[5], relied on. That is, who do youngsters from an impoverished community count on for emotional and health issues, what are the spaces available to them to have fun, to practice sports or religion. As part of this project I was involved in many aspects of the research and had the opportunity to visit the *favela* communities of Vila Aliança and Nova Aliança many times. My greatest contribution came from a participative video documentary project I organized with the youngsters from the community who themselves were the key researchers in the project. My interest in using video as a possible medium for research and for the presentation of research initiated a long series of experiments which greatly enriched my experience of and in the field.

Though I was initially concerned that this video project was taking too much time from the 'real' research, it nevertheless brought forward a series of extremely rich encounters and first hand accounts of what it is like to live in Rio's impoverished communities. Through the video project, and more generally through my association with CIESPI, I realized that I was having access to various people and communities, to a degree that I never would have had had I been pursuing research on my own. What emerged primarily from the video project, but more generally through my association with CIESPI, was the hardship faced by so many people in these communities. Though containing a diverse population with a range of different backgrounds, economic and educational levels, for the majority in these *favela* communities, just getting by economically appeared as the rule. Vila and Nova Aliança, are by no means the poorest of Rio's *favelas*, indeed I often considered whether they should be called *favelas* at all[6]. The 4.000+ population all live in brick houses, they have access to water, the roads are paved, a sewage system is in place. The lanes are spacious, and there isn't the feeling of people living in houses on top of each other that one gets in the hillside *favelas* closer to Rio's center. Yet even though this physical environment appears much better than in many other *favelas*, the social conditions did not seem to vary greatly, similar stories of husbands incapable or unwilling to contribute to the household or to raising the children, of large families existing within the same small spaces, of teenage pregnancy, were heard again and again.

Another issue which clearly affected the youngsters involved in the video project, was that of drug trafficking in the community. The dealers appeared as a constant unseen threat, their whereabouts were always inquired about, so that our passage in the community might be a safe one. Adults also spoke of them, in reference to youngsters taking the '*caminho errado*' [the

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[5] Periphery, as used in this thesis, refers to the suburb communities of Rio. Many of these are *favelas*, but unlike the cramped hill-side construction closer to the city center, these peripheral *favelas* are built on unoccupied flat land that is often many miles from the center.

wrong path] but it appears that it is really the young who have much more to fear from them. During the two weeks of our filming inside the community shoot-outs did occur, though at night when I wasn't there, and on the night prior to the last day of filming somebody was killed. The dealers were adolescent males who hung around strategic points in the community, in parks, on corners, some acting as look-outs, some carrying weapons, and they sold cocaine and marijuana mainly to local youngsters. We would often see, much to the dismay of our crew who would quickly put an end to any aspiration we might have had of filming in that locale, youngsters smoking pot in groups under the bridge or around corners in alley-ways. If the youngsters in our crew were in any way comparable with other youngsters in the community, it could be said that they live in a climate of fear of the dealers. Though they may know who the dealers are, have grown up with them, even attended the same school, the dealers now have terror and unpredictability on their side. And this terror, the potential to use violence, is their currency or capital which makes them the wealthiest individuals around. The effects of the drugs trade are further explored in the thesis, not least because many youngsters end up 'exiled' from their communities on account of the drug gangs, some seeking protection on the street. The experiences in the communities of Vila and Nova Aliança on the periphery of Rio as well of Santa Marta, a picturesque hill-side *favela* beneath the giant statue of Christ, Rio's most famous landmark, taught me a great deal about the environment where children and adolescents who are found on the street come from. It also helped me to understand, or at least to imagine, how a life on the street can appear attractive or an alternative to one at home, when that home and community is felt to be lacking in so much.

My experiments with a visual, or documentary, medium of research also took me into another project towards the latter part of my fieldwork which contributed another layer to my research. This video documentary, with the same title as the thesis, is about the lives of three young adults I had met in my research, who grew up on the street in Rio de Janeiro. In the 55-minute long documentary they revisit their childhood and convey their experiences, narrating how they decided to leave the street and turn their lives around into a more creative activity. This second project allowed me to get much closer to these young adults and to experience first hand many aspects of their lives such as their place of work, their home, or where one used to live on the street, but also it allowed me to gain a closer intimacy with their stories. This occurred for a variety of reasons, one being that by this stage I had got to know them better and they had got to know and trust me more. But perhaps more significant, I believe, is their understanding of the 'medium of research', in this case, the video, as opposed to academic research, i.e. thesis,

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[6] For a more in-depth discussion of the origins and definitions of *favela* see chapter 4.

journals, etc., meant that they felt they were participating more in the process. For most people I interviewed, and that probably goes for the majority of people, social research appears an abstract concept, often mixed up with journalism – how many people actually read research findings, let alone a thesis?

On the other hand the audio-visual recording of a statement - even if documentaries or even more esoterically, ethnographic films are also distant – appeared closer to home because the youngsters were more familiar with the format into which their statements and images were appropriated. People are familiar enough with television and journalism to see how bits of statement and images of people, places and situations are edited in the media. Also they have a more tangible understanding as to the kind of use to which their statement and image will be put to, and to a degree, what kind of setting they might be shown in. I believe that in this respect, the film crew can even be liberating for the subject, providing not only a direct audience but also an unclearly defined 'other', a generalized audience or a posterity towards which his/her statements and image will reach. Being with a crew and making a film gave me access to situations I might have otherwise not have had. For instance, I was able to go to the graduation performance at the National Circus School and the flat where one youngster lived with other young people who had lived in shelters.

My interests in film are also part of a broader concern with representation. David MacDougall, identifies a recent resurgent interest in the field of visual anthropology which he attributes to two tendencies in anthropology; the first he terms a 'pictorial turn' in critical thinking arising as a reaction against the linguistic focus of structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction and semiotics. The second tendency refers to the questioning within anthropology of the adequacy of ethnographic representation. MacDougall quotes Edward Sapir who was already aware of these issues in the 1930s:

> "If we made the test of imputing the contents of an ethnological monograph to a known individual in the community which it describes, we would inevitably be led to discover that, while every single statement in it may, in the favorable case, be recognized as holding true in some sense, the complex of patterns as described cannot, without considerable absurdity, be interpreted as a significant configuration of experience, both actual and potential, in the life of the person appealed to" (Sapir quoted in MacDougall 1998:62).

1.1 Author and crew filming in *favela* Vila Aliança (photograph by Alexandre Soares)

1.2 Author and crew filming in *favela* Santa Marta (photograph by Alexandre Soares)

As MacDougall writes, the present interest in visual anthropology may well come from such dissatisfaction with the discrepancy between the anthropologists' encounters in the field with real people, and "the terms in which they often feel constrained to write about them" (MacDougall 1998:62). This issue is also tackled by Talal Asad, speaking of the notion of 'cultural translation' (Asad 1986). Anthropologists, Asad writes, must 'write their people up' in the conventions of representation dictated by their discipline, by institutional life and by wider society. Cultural translation, Asad argues, needs to accommodate itself not only to a different language – English as opposed to Kabbashi Arabic for instance – but also to the British, middle-class, 'academic game', as opposed to the 'modes of life' of the 'tribal Sudan' (Asad 1986:159). Asad contends that given this, translating an alien form of life may not necessarily best be done through the representational discourse of ethnography, but that in some cases a dramatic performance, a dance, or a piece of music may be more appropriate. Such endeavor, Asad writes, brings into light the wider issue of the relationship between the anthropological work and its audience, questions of the 'uses' as opposed to the 'writings and readings' of that work. Asad asserts that as anthropologists we are trained to translate other cultural languages as texts, translation being essentially a matter of verbal representation (Asad 1986).

Countering this verbal bias in anthropological representation, MacDougall writes of the possibility that visual anthropology may be a means of exploring social phenomena and expressing anthropological knowledge. MacDougall addresses the complexity of such a task since the continuity from knowledge produced through prose and that produced through image is not a straight-forward one. Instead it would mean shifting anthropology's dominant orientation away from the verbal and "conceiving of an image-and-sequence-based anthropological thought as distinct from a word-and-sentence-base anthropological thought", and one that is able to express the non-verbal (MacDougall 1998:63). MacDougall considers the films of John Marshall and Jean Rouch as succeeding in creating such visual anthropology through the construction of a 'filmic discourse'. Their films, as MacDougall argues, require the engagement of the viewer in the imaginary geographical and social space created by the film. The anthropological achievement of their films, MacDougall writes: "lies not primarily in ethnographic content of the sort that can be summarized or duplicated in anthropological writing, nor even in a physical evocation of people and places that writing could scarcely achieve, but in cinematically created understandings of the emotions, intellect, desires, relationships, and mutual perceptions of the participants" (MacDougall 1998:67). I in no way claim to have been successful in achieving such a 'filmic discourse' in my own film. What I can say is that I experimented with different ways of representing in an attempt to engage with both the research participants and the audience. As

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MacDougall and many others have noticed visual representation also has its own problems (Crawford and Turton *et al* 1997). These relate to what, on the one hand, is considered the abundance of meanings which the image is said to convey, that is, how, in not being literal, interpretations can be considered as open depending on the viewer's experience (MacDougall 1998, Pinney 1997). On the other hand, visual representation may also suffer from a lack of context, as Hastrup puts it, whereas the text invokes a particular kind of reality, images only show part of reality (Hastrup 1997). Clearly meaning is created in film not only through what is represented but also how it is edited together, how the film narrative is constructed, how scenes are juxtaposed. As regards my use of film here, I believe that alongside the written word, the video enriches my endeavor to convey a sense of what it is like to have lived on the streets.

ENGAGING WITH THE FIELD – ETHICS AND MORAL COMMITMENT

The present research raises many issues as regards ethics in research. Beyond the well-trodden issues of informed consent, and assurances of the anonymity and safety of research participants, working with children, adolescents and especially with such a stigmatized and victimized group also poses questions of the considerable power imbalances within the research context. As regards anonymity, this applies to the young research participants, whose names have been changed in the text. The exceptions to this are the three young adults who appeared in the documentary. They had no problems about being identified in the research and the documentary and whose life-stories have appeared elsewhere in a public context (in the media, through performances, and in talks given by themselves) on a number of occasions. The names of the institutions and of the educators and coordinators have also remained unchanged since nothing found here compromises the integrity of the work the institutions and the individuals pursue.

As regards informed consent, this was also sought at all stages of the research process, but it needs to be added that those on the street are very used to a barrage of questions from a multitude of 'assailants'; from street educators, journalists, researchers, police or the general public. As such children and adolescents on the street are usually very wary of being questioned and have been known to be mistrustful of being approached by unknown adults, and rightly so. Because of this, there was always a concern with how I interacted with the interviewees – how I approached them, being non-judgmental and leaving the youngsters at ease to express themselves in our conversations. This is an important point because of the great stigma suffered by this group as well as because of the power imbalances as concerns both class and age. In this sense it was absolutely imperative that the youngsters I talked to were at ease in all research encounters.

During the *Rede Rio Criança* research, this aspect was even more important because the majority of interviews were carried out in places where children and adolescents were extremely vulnerable, especially on the street, and where the youngsters were often encountering the researchers for the first time. The knowledge and experience of the street educators and their familiarity with the youngsters proved very important in this respect.

This issue of trust (or lack of it), between youngsters on the street and the researcher, is a recurring theme in the literature on 'street children'. Researchers like Lewis Aptekar (1988) noted a mistrust amongst boys and girls on the street, which he describes as a survival strategy. In this way, in their relationship to researchers and journalists boys and girls develop ideas about how the information they offer will be received and interpreted; they manipulate their stories according to what they feel to be their own advantage (Aptekar 1988). Graciani (1999), who carried out her fieldwork research in São Paulo, writes about how the boys and girls are used to people coming up and asking them questions like: "where is your family?"; "do you steal?", etc. as a consequence they become adept at offering ready-made answers or fables so as not to expose themselves. These are issues that will be further addressed in chapter 6.

Although this 'fabulation' can at times be detected (and at other times may well go by unrecognized) it must also be noted how keen to participate in the research children and adolescents were, how freely they recounted their stories, which were in many cases very intimate. It was as if, in sharing their stories, they were reaffirming themselves and their identity of 'survivor' or 'fighter', presenting themselves as experienced and proud of the fact that they were there, alive to tell their tale after untold hardship, like a trophy they conquered. With care I tried to get close to the stories of these youngsters in order to understand how, in this specific circumstance of living on the street, their processes of identity, which appeared to show so much dependence upon the gaze of the other, came about. This enthusiasm to tell their tales seemed to grow amongst those who were no longer on the street and hence their stories were not only of having survived on the street but of having had the will to leave it. In their enthusiasm I felt very privileged to have been entrusted with their stories. These stories, some of which are recounted in chapters 7 and 8, were often framed within narratives of redemption in which the street becomes a space that was overcome and during which a self-transformation was brought about.

It would be unfair to outline issues of power imbalances without referring to the agency of the youngsters I encountered. Whilst interviewing on the street for the CIESPI research we would come across youngsters who just did not wish to participate and who were obviously free not to do so. Equally the inquisitiveness of these youngsters needs to be acknowledged. There were times when in their presence I found myself in situations in which they seemed to be asking me

more questions than I was asking them; where was I from (on the condition of me being so white and yet being a native Portuguese speaker with a *Carioca* accent), what languages I spoke, where my family was, where I lived, what football team I supported, if I was married. One instance in particular comes to mind, when in a shelter for boys on a Rio suburb I remember sitting on the porch being ceaselessly asked questions; about England, Scotland, what things are like there, about the police, the price of things, how far away it was, etc. Curiosity, I found out, is a great way of finding out about people, as the questions they ask also reveal things about themselves, about the world they know and understand. Which only leaves me wondering what my barrage of questions and my own curiosity must have meant to them.

One final point concerning the ethics of research needs to be addressed. I have often been asked why I pursued this particular research topic, and for a long time the answers I provided referred to the situation of stigmatization and violence that these youngsters experience on a day-to-day basis and of the need for greater understanding of their lives and trajectories through the street. However, one day, in conversation with my mother she reminded me of an incident that I had failed to recollect. It was July 23rd 1993 a day before the Candelária Massacre. On that day, so my mum reminded me, my mother, my siblings and I had gone to the cultural center in Rio across the square from the Candelária church to see an exhibition. On our way out my brother and I got chatting to some children who were hanging around the area by the car park (did I consider them 'street children' at the time? I do not know). I do not recollect what we talked about, nor do I know if any of these children were amongst the victims of the massacre by the church on the following night. I do have a memory of the shock of the news the day after and of feeling indignant that a radio program declared that about 20% of those polled, supported the extermination group's 'clearing' of the streets. The ethics of the research, I believe, are also about the uses to which the research engagement can be put. I agree with John Gledhill's argument that anthropologists should be readier to argue publicly for "more inclusionary human futures, fortified by what they can learn of the range of human experience" (Gledhill 2000:242). For Gledhill this can only be achieved through a theoretical engagement with power, in history and in our own academic world (Ibid). I am also sympathetic to the case made by Scheper-Hughes of anthropologists as 'witness' or clerk, "a minor historian of the ordinary lives of people often presumed to have no history" (Scheper-Hughes 1995:409). That there is a real need for greater understanding of youngsters living on the street is unquestionable. The challenge arises in finding ways to write and talk about them that may lead to 'more inclusionary human futures'. Though I acknowledge the limitations of an academic endeavor within this process, it may be relevant here

to briefly state ways in which the research I was engaged with in Rio through CIESPI and the Rede Rio Criança, has contributed to this movement.

Following the CIESPI research and a conference held to debate the findings, a series of press articles were released which portrayed children and adolescents on the street in ways that had not been common in the media. These articles, using parts of the research, reflected the difficulties, the fear, abuse and discrimination that youngsters on the street suffer from daily, as well as their aspirations for their future. Also of significance here was my suggestion that the research findings be transformed into a format that could be accessible to young people themselves, both those who lived or had lived on the street and for youngsters from Rio more generally. The book *A Rua no Ar* [The Street on the Air] tries to capture the spirit of the stories heard in the original CIESPI research, in which children and adolescents shared their experiences and perceptions of living on the street, whilst addressing a young audience. As such, the book incorporates fragments of stories and interviews within a fictional story narrative, whose core elements nevertheless ring true to the narratives we heard on the street. In presenting key research insights in a format and language appealing to youngsters themselves, it was hoped that the book would provoke debate amongst youngsters from all backgrounds through representing the experiences of those that have lived on the street. The book, whose cover can be seen on page 22 was published in conjunction with Terre des Hommes (the Swiss NGO which funded the research) and is being distributed free to schools and organizations working with youngsters on the street.

The multi-layered approach to field-work is then also a multi-layered expression of that work and of my experiences in the field. This thesis is one such expression that presents this encounter with the field in a language and exposition which is, hopefully, appropriate to its particular audience. But other expressions are also relevant for a fuller account of my engagement with the field: the research and publications jointly carried out with CIESPI, the book for children and adolescents that resulted from this research, the video documentary made with young adults I met through my research. These expressions have emerged from my own, and other researchers', educators', pedagogues' encounters with youngsters who live or have lived on the street. These encounters have at times had the quality which Paulo Freire described in reference to his radical pedagogy whereby educators and the educated work together, based on the experiences and cultural and socio-economic context of the latter, to unravel the many layers of oppression that can be found within that experience, shedding light on its origins, manifestation, reproduction and how they might be overcome (Freire 1993). These become encounters or meetings in which learning, or understanding is generated. But beyond these encounters, also discernable in the contested field of power, practices and representations which makes up the world of those who
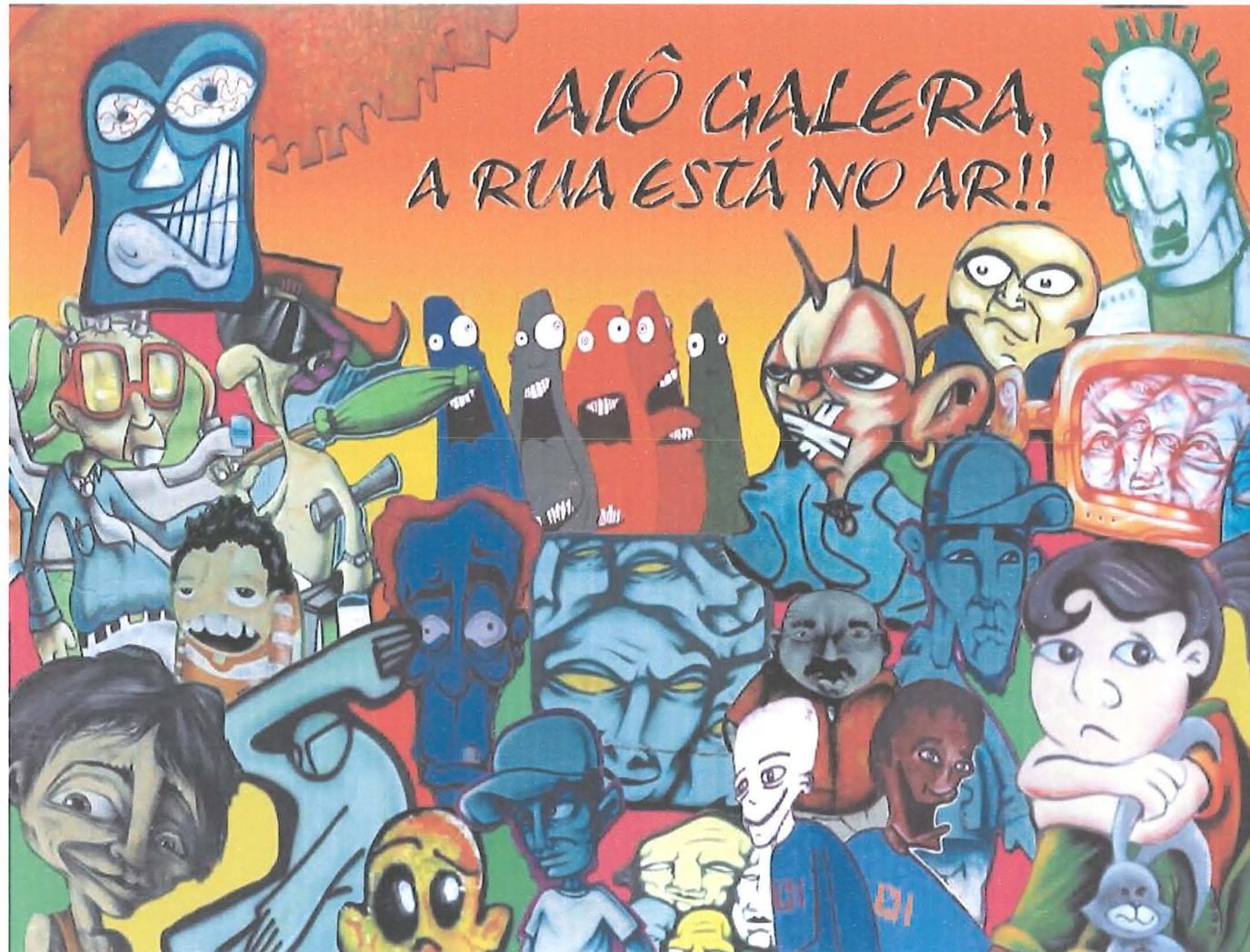
1.3 Image from book 'A Rua No Ar' resulting from the CESPI research and designed for children and adolescents.

live or have lived on the street and those who act on or speak about them, are the voices of youngsters which speak with their own clarity, some of which are referred to in this thesis. For Nego da Bahia, this voice can be heard through his circus performances and his amicable banter with the audience as he retells his own story and displays his talent and his own perseverance. Renato, similarly through his acting and radio DJ slot, conveys his own struggle and achievements. For Humberto, this is done through his published poetry pamphlets. All these voices, to which I, other researchers, street educators and pedagogues have added our own, have tried in our own ways to make the lives of those who go to the street as children and adolescents a little better understood.

CHAPTERS SUMMARY

Chapter 2 – The Life of a Category - introduces the theoretical debates which underlie the thesis. Beginning with the problematic of establishing the number of 'street children', the chapter addresses the definitional aspects of establishing a category that categorizes people. This is followed by a discussion of the power relations reflected in the act of categorizing and how these forms of labeling have effects upon the subjectivities of those who are categorized (Foucault 1982 and 1991, Hacking 1999, Rabinow 1991, Goffman 1990). The chapter then goes on to address how such categories and forms of social labeling must also be viewed from the perspective of the subject. As such it reviews the role of agency as related to the realm of childhood and youth (Panter-Brick 2000, Ennew 2000, Veale, Taylor and Lineham 2000, Wulff 1995, Caputo 1995) and reviews the use of the notion of 'abandonment' in the literature on 'street children' (Ennew 2000, Panter-Brick 2000). A greater understanding of the interplay between agency, subjectivity and social categories is here obtained through the theoretical debates on self and identity (Hall 1997, Mageo and Knauf 2002, Rose 1992). The chapter also problematizes the notion of identity, introducing debates over the dimension of narrative (Somers and Gibson 1994, Calhoun 1994, Denzin 1989), experience (Turner 1986, Bruner 1986) and oppression (Freire 1993, McLaren and da Silva 1993, Shor 1993).

Chapter 3 – Cidade Maravilhosa – The Past - traces the genealogy of the category 'street children' by looking at the social, political and cultural transformations dating from Brazil's transition at the end of the nineteenth century from colonialism and slavery to capitalist republic. The chapter looks into the process of the abolition of slavery, in particular at the subsequent re-

organization of urban space and the creation of a series of laws to control what was experienced as a threatening and 'idle' mass (of both adults and children) who came to occupy the city center. The modernist project of nation-building that characterized the birth of the republic, guided by racist ideas concerning the need to 'whiten' the population, failed to incorporate the population of ex-slaves who migrated to the city following abolition in 1888 and who consequently became asymmetrically connected to the political economy of the city. The state's initial concern with 'street children' and with the childhood of the poor in the form of the *menor* or minor can be traced to this period, through a series of debates and laws.

Chapter 4 – Cidade Maravilhosa – The Present – Building on the historical context outlined in the previous chapter, this chapter explores how the urban poor continue to be excluded from the political economy of the city. We here address Janice Perlman's (1979) work on *favelas*, and the notion, or myth, of marginality. We go on to investigate how much or little *favela* life has changed since the 1970s when Perlman carried out her studies. In this context we examine the rise of the drugs trade over the last two decades and the destructive effect this has had on *favela* communities. In the present condition of violence, discrimination and exclusion from the fruits of consumer society and from the possibility of social mobility faced by many *favela* residents the chapter reflects how for youngsters, joining the ranks of the drugs trade or going to the street may for some youngsters emerge as viable options.

Chapter 5 – The city as contested space - is an outline of Rio de Janeiro as a divided city in which social distance is combined with physical proximity as poor communities often live close to affluent neighborhoods. In light of this, and given the social structural oppression described in the previous chapter, this chapter analyses how living on the street in the urban center may provide youngsters with a series of opportunities. Departing from the experiences and trajectories of children and adolescents on the street the chapter explores how many refer to the street as a place of 'freedom' and autonomy, as well as a place of protection in which groups are formed and solidarity with other youngsters in a similar predicament is obtained. But the chapter also questions these narratives since also evident in them are traces of the city as a fearful and dangerous place. Here the chapter addresses the increasing levels of urban crime and the emergence of 'urban cleansing' perpetrated by 'extermination groups', self-professed keepers of law and order comprised in part by off-duty police officers in the post-dictatorship period in Brazil in 1980s which have targeted these young people. The most notorious incident, the Candelária Massacre, is explored here, as are the repercussions of this event on the experiences of

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youngsters on the street, and in the ways through which it has re-shaped the groups and the circulation of groups of youngsters on the street. The chapter also addresses how youngsters find safety and solidarity on the street through the formation of groups. The gender differences of these strategies of finding protection on the street are also investigated, as are the different motives for going to the street.

Chapter 6 – The preservation of self in the discrimination of everyday life - examines how the category of 'street children' and its related images have implications for the processes of identification of these youngsters living on the street, torn as they are between wanting to be considered as 'normal' as anyone else, and at the same time being regarded as different or else appropriating that difference in their search for respect and self-affirmation. The chapter notes that children and adolescents on the street, like the majority of Brazilian society, also aspire to have an education, a job and a family. They also want to have access to the same status symbols that others have, to walk around all 'smart and clean' and be respected. But Rio's highly unequal society and the frustration of accessing these symbols, achievements or identities, felt by a great number of youngsters that live not only on the street but in the *favelas* and peripheries of the city, can make such aspirations problematic. In this context the chapter explores the feeling and experience of *revolta*, revolt, or inner rage, a common expression both on the street and in the *favela*, referring to cumulative experiences of discrimination and the frustration at the conditions of exclusion. The chapter is then an analysis of how living on the street is a struggle not only for material survival but also a struggle for engaging with a gratifying sense of self.

Chapter 7 – Significant others: institutions and pedagogies - considers how whereas a notion of 'freedom' and autonomy is key to the sense of self which many youngsters on the street ascribe to, their trajectories on the street are in fact closely tied to a range of organizations. The care of youngsters by the state and by the non-governmental sector in institutions such as day-centers, shelters and youth correctional facilities, has undergone profound changes since their creation over one hundred years ago. Though brutality and reactionary tendencies are still widespread, this network of care has moved away (at least on paper) from a conception of the *minor*, of the problematic urban child from a poor family who is considered as either abandoned or delinquent, towards thinking about all children as subjects of rights. Paulo Freire's pedagogical approach and his views on freedom, liberation and critical consciousness have been significant factors in promoting this shift. The chapter therefore analyses Freire's influence on the emergence of new ways of working with those on the street through the 'street educator' and through a Street

Pedagogy. The chapter investigates how Freire's ideas have attempted to be implemented or institutionalized in a broad network of organizations working with youngsters on the street in Rio and the challenges posed by this implementation. Finally, the chapter reflects on a young adolescent girl's trajectory through the street and through this network of care. Through her narrative we explore the unfolding changes on her subjectivity as she passes through a series of structural and relational influences which come to bear at each stage of her journey to and through the street.

Chapter 8 – Coming of age on the streets of Rio – takes further the examination of the effects of the trajectory to and through the street upon subjectivity and reflects on the life stories of three individuals and the way in which they managed to disengage from the street. Through the narratives of the three young men Humberto, Renato and Nego da Bahia, we see that life on the street is threaded with many aspirations and contradictory experiences and that going to the street is a complex phenomenon. The street in these narratives, as well as a site of danger or moral perdition, the chapter reflects, is also a place of learning and of opportunity. Through their narratives and life-stories we get a sense of how Freire's critical pedagogy is embodied, how it can be said to provoke profound transformations in how these individuals came to regard both themselves and their world. The chapter also reflects on how much is still unknown about the trajectories of youngsters on the street, in particular once they reach adulthood.

CHAPTER 2

THE LIFE OF A CATEGORY

Representations of young people living on the street in the academic literature has turned from labeling them as 'abandoned minors', to 'street children', to 'children of the street' and more recently to 'children in situations of risk' (or 'situation of street – or in difficult circumstances').[1] These changes can be said to reflect a shift from labeling what was once held to be an undifferentiated population of children and adolescents occupying urban space, towards a greater consideration of the myriad of circumstances, relationships to the family, to school, to crime, to the street and to work that constitute the trajectories of youngsters who come to live on the street. But these different terms can also be said to reflect the socio-political climate of the times, which more recently can be characterized by an anxious political sensitivity amongst researchers, increasingly aware of how labels and categories have both a history and an effect beyond the intention and control of the professional; that labels, once created, tend to have a life of their own.[2] As we address in this chapter, the imprecision of the category of street children has meant that in the past estimates of the numbers of young people living in urban centers have been wide of the mark, better reflecting the political agendas of those doing the counting (or guessing) than what is actually the case. This in turn takes us to the theoretical debates this thesis engages with. In the first place we consider the social and cultural aspects and the power relations involved in the act of categorizing. Following this we discuss how we can best understand categories from the inside out – that is from the perspective of those who are labeled. Central to these discussions are the issues of agency, self, identity and experience which, this thesis

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[1] This latest term, also a UNICEF category - 'Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances' (CEDC)- was originally coined in 1984 to include refugees, children with disabilities, children affected by organized violence, as well as street and working children, but is now closely associated with 'street children'. This term was in turn replaced by UNICEF in 1996 to 'Children in Need of Special Protection' (CNSP) (Connolly and Ennew 1996).

[2] It is in this sense that the category of the 'minor', addressed more fully in the next chapter, was challenged a fate which has more recently fallen on the category of *meninos de rua*.

suggests, mean that the act of categorizing is never simple or passive. This is at least in part because, despite acts of discrimination and stigmatization and the reality of power differentials, people invariably use the resources available to them in an attempt to forge identities that endow them with a fulfilling sense of self. The chapter goes on to discuss potentially useful ways of investigating the issues of self and identity. Referring to recent challenges to the notion of identity, we review whether a closer attention to experience, life-stories and to culturally and historically situated narratives can provide us with a more effective explanatory notion of identity by providing the context in time, place and social relations in which identities are claimed and expressed.

"DANCING NUMBERS"

In his article on the genesis of the category of child abuse, Ian Hacking goes on to ask the question: when is a concept well understood? He answers with the following; "Philosophers have a trite necessary condition. If the concept applies to individuals, the criteria for applying the concept should be clear enough that one can go about answering the question 'how many?'" (Hacking 1999:143). As Hacking goes on to point out for the case of child abuse, considerations of 'how many' is never an easy task, always depending on the particular criteria used to do the counting as well as on the desired political outcome such counting could lead to.

Estimates about the numbers of youngsters who live on the streets of various urban centers in Brazil as well as in other countries, have always suffered from a high degree of speculation that appear to better reflect the anxieties of the middle class, often media induced, about the 'degeneration' of urban centers and the rise of crime, than have any bearing upon the real scale of the phenomenon. The figures are also 'fiddled' as a form of political capital both by national and international NGOs to justify obtaining resources, or else by reactionary forces wishing to implement programs of forced removal from the street or as a justification for lowering the age of penal responsibility. An article in *Time* magazine from 1978 put the figure of Brazilian children 'abandoned by their parents' at 2 million (quoted in Hecht 1998:100). UNICEF's 'Ideas Forum' of 1984 put forward a figure of 30 million Brazilian 'street children', which if true would mean that there are more children living on the streets than in homes in urban centers (Rosemberg 1993). An often-recurring figure for Brazil is that of 7 million, cited by institutions, journalists and academics in the 1980s, i.e. Amnesty International, Childhope (Hecht

1998). As Hecht observes this figure is invariably quoted as someone else's estimate. Yet as he concludes, if this estimate were accurate street children would account for 6% of Brazil's 1993 population. For Fúlvia Rosemberg this great 'dance of the numbers' is telling for three important reasons; poor children in urban centers become synonymous with street children, children who leave home to work are transformed into 'marginals'[3], and their numbers are always said to be growing (Rosemberg 1993). If, however, we take a more detailed typology that is aware of the different uses that children and adolescents make of the street, as has gradually emerged in the literature over the last decade or so, we find the number of youngsters sleeping in urban centers apart from their families to be much smaller.

Whilst early research tended to lump together all youngsters found on the street under the generic category of 'street children', it was only towards the end of the 1980s that a distinction began to emerge between youngsters who return home and those who have severed links with the family. The work of Mark Lusk, in the late 1980s, in defining this typology is important here. Lusk conducted a four-month fieldwork research in Rio de Janeiro in which 113 children and adolescents were interviewed. His work was prompted by what he felt was an absence of a standard definition in the literature, leading to an over-inflation of numbers by considering all poor children in an unsupervised situation and to the erroneous reference to these as abandoned children. Lusk uses a definition common amongst NGOs in the 1980s of 'street children' for his study, as,

> "... any girl or boy... for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings and wasteland, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood; and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults" (quoted in Lusk and Mason 1994:161).

This definition is broad enough to encompass those who work on the street full and part-time and yet live with their parents, and acknowledges that the child who may appear to be abandoned is part of a family network. Lusk's findings divide this street population into four groups, each with distinct indices of schooling, engagement in illicit activities, differing family structures and

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[3] The Brazilian Portuguese term *marginal* has come to mean an individual who is not only at the margins of society but who also engages in criminal activities.

relationships with their family and with the street. The four groups Lusk refers to in his research are the following:

1. Family based street workers – representing 21,4% of those interviewed. These are the young people who live with their families, and it is the need to work that drives them to the street. Of this group 90,9% are boys and 72,7% go to school. Their families are made of a father (or step-father) and mother in 59,1% of cases and their involvement with illegal activities is considerably less than in other groups. The average age of the group is 13.

2. Independent street workers – represent 50,5% of the interviewed population. Here Lusk notes, family ties begin to break down and the child involves him/herself more with 'street culture'. Families are made up of both parents in 61,5% of cases. The children sleep on the street periodically and are more involved with illegal activities (44,9% of cases). They are mainly boys (73,1%), and 60% have had dealings with the police or correctional institutions. Of this group only 30,8% said they still go to school and their average age is also 13.

3. Children of the street – represent only 14,6% of the population of youngsters on the street. These are children who are no longer linked to the family. They come from two-parent families in 53,3% of cases and have a strong tendency to carry out illegal activities (60% of subjects responded affirmatively). They are mainly boys (73,3%), and have a strong involvement with drugs (80%). Many admit to having been arrested and to have spent time in correctional institutions for minors (80%). The average age is 14 and only 6,7% go to school.

4. Children of street families – represent 13,6% of the sample. They stay all day on the street with their families, primarily their mothers. In only 35,75% of cases was there a male figure present. There is also a significant involvement with illegal activities (38,5%), and drugs (57,1%). Whilst dealings with repressive institutions (police or FEBEM[4]) are lower because they are with their families, 14,3% admit to being interned, and 42,9% have been apprehended by the police. Boys are in the majority (though lower than in the other categories) at 64,3% and the average age is also lower than in the other groups at an average age of 10,4, and 14,3% of them go to school.

In 1993 two NGOs, IBASE and *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha*, used this distinction between the different uses of urban space by youngsters in an attempt to provide a more accurate picture of this population.[5] Through two different counts at different times and in different places in Rio de

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[4] FEBEM (Fundação Estadual para o Bem Estar do Menor) - The State Institution for the Well Being of Minors or youth correctional facilities.
[5] IBASE (Instituto Brasileiro de Analise Social e Econômico – Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis) and *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha*... (If this street was mine...).

Janeiro and surrounding areas, 797 children and adolescents where found to be sleeping on the street. More than half of these were unaccompanied by adults (IBASE 1992). A year later, a similar result was obtained using a similar method in São Paulo, here 895 youngsters were found to be sleeping on the street (Rosemberg 1993). With these results, and with other similar counts carried out in other Brazilian cities, Hecht concludes that for every one million urban residents in these cities there are 115 children living on the streets. If this ratio holds true this would mean a total of 13,000 street children in Brazil as a whole (Hecht 1998:100). The sociologist Herbert de Souza, founder of IBASE, reaches a similar conclusion in his introduction to the IBASE report:

> "The poor children of Brazil are certainly in the millions. They are part of the social drama that afflicts the majority of the Brazilian population. The abandoned children are probably in their thousands, given the extreme poverty that affects a significant part of their families. The children that live and sleep on the streets of Brazil, according to the available information, must be under 10,000" (IBASE 1993).

'Social Drama' is precisely the name of the last survey, published in 1999, that shows a change in the number of youngsters who use the street as a living space in Rio de Janeiro. Over a period of three days in the city of Rio de Janeiro and surrounding areas, a research team focused not only on youngsters but on people living on the street in general. Of the 3,535 people counted, only 440 were under eighteen years of age. On this basis the research reports a reduction in the numbers of youngsters living on the street compared with IBASE's 1992 count. Dario de Souza, coordinator of the research, offers two possible explanations for this. The first hypothesis is that the Child and Adolescent Statute – 'Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente' (ECA) ratified in 1990 - and the alternative programs for this population, particularly those offered by NGOs, have managed to reduce the numbers of youngsters on the street, both through its preventative programs and by direct intervention. Many municipal initiatives in the area of prevention of child labor and domestic violence could be mentioned here, as well as NGO programs, influenced by Paulo Freire's pedagogy, that work with methodologies specific for this population. The second hypothesis offered by de Souza is less optimistic and suggests that today the more economically attractive option for many youngsters is to stay within the community and work for the drug trafficking gangs that have proliferated since the 1980s rather than to go to the street (de Souza

1999). These are issues addressed throughout this thesis, for behind these numbers, which themselves cannot but be considered a tentative quantitative description, lie the identification options and life-choices taken by youngsters on the streets and in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro.

This 'dance of numbers' tells us two things. One is that what has been viewed as a dissonant childhood has tended to provoke an anxiety that contributes to the speculative inflation of their numbers, which have at times been wildly off the mark. Such large numbers then appear to reflect a moral panic, prompted by situations which can be likened to Mary Douglas' (1984) notion of 'anomaly', that these youngsters appear to induce. The high numbers are then used as a justification for concern and action. Secondly, taking the most reliable figures, which are themselves by no means fool-proof, we see that the number of youngsters living on the street is actually relatively small. This raises a further question about the political priorities at work in drawing attention to and intervening on this particular category as opposed to the broader category of impoverished children, something that we began to address in the previous chapter. Why should such a relatively small number of youngsters in urban centers provoke so much indignation? This question is also raised by other researchers in the field such as Hecht who writes that whilst horrific in itself, the murders of street children are greatly outnumbered by the 144,426 children under the age of 4 who died in Brazil in 1987 as a result of hunger in combination with infectious and parasitic diseases, respiratory infections, and other diseases originating in the perinatal period (Hecht 1995:146). As this thesis suggests these issues are related to Rio's particular social history, and a conception of dissonant childhoods. Here the childhood of the poor is divided between that which is visible, finding itself on the streets and plazas of the urban center, and the overwhelming majority, which remains invisible or is only seen through statistics.

MAKING PEOPLE UP

These issues raise more general questions about categories, about their power to express or reveal a social reality whilst at the same time concealing many of its key constituent social conditions. Hacking suggests that it may be vacuous to state that any idea is 'socially constructed' since any idea that is debated, assessed, applied and developed is necessarily formed in a social setting. Because ideas or categories emerge at a certain time and place they can be said to reflect the concerns and knowledge of that time (Hacking 1999:125). Hacking uses the term 'transient'

in reference to disorders and social problems that are defined by professionals and whose symptoms appear to change and dissipate over time (Lynch 2001). Such phenomena are what he refers to as examples of 'interactive kinds', inasmuch as they are categories that interact with people and their behavior and are involved in 'making people up' (Hacking 1999:131).

'Making people up' through forms of professional knowledge and subsequent social, medical and legal interference are also what Michel Foucault is concerned with in his genealogical method. Foucault describes his work as dealing not with the phenomenon of power but as an attempt to create a "history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (Foucault 1982:208). Foucault states that his work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects. The first mode involves the objectification of the speaking or the productive subject, for instance in the disciplines of economics, biology, linguistics or the social sciences more generally. The second part of Foucault's work involves an analysis of what he termed 'dividing practices'. In this mode, characterized by Foucault's analysis of the isolation of lepers in the Middle Ages, the confinement of the poor, the insane and vagabonds in the General Hospital in Paris in the seventeenth century, and the rise of modern psychiatry, "the subject is objectified by a process of division either within himself or from others" (Ibid). For Rabinow the dividing practices are processes of social objectification and categorization, mediated through science (or a pseudo-science) and through practices of exclusion (both spatial and social) in which individuals are given a social and personal identity (Rabinow 1991:7). Throughout this thesis we shall be problematizing the social objectification and categorization of 'street children' and the practices that have ensued. In the following chapter we attempt to trace the historical moment in which a concern with 'street children' came about.

Foucault's third mode of objectification entails the 'subjectification' of the individual, or the "way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject" (Foucault 1982:208). Here we see a concern with how humans make themselves up, operating on their own "bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct" (Foucault quoted in Rabinow 1991:11). Similar processes of subjectification are also explored by Hacking and by Ervin Goffman (1990 [1963]) both of whom describe it as the 'looping' effect, whereby categories established by professionals (both were speaking primarily about psychiatry) and other, as Lynch calls them, administrative sciences loop back into the personal experiences and identities of persons within society at large (Lynch 2001). The everyday interpersonal relations between individuals and the

role such categories play is central to Goffman's work which addressed the ways in which people strategically reveal or conceal aspects of themselves in their relations with others (Goffman 1990). Goffman's insights into how these processes play themselves out amongst the 'stigmatized' are used in chapter 6 where we question whether they can shed light upon the relations between youngsters on the street and others. Also important here are the Freirean practices of NGOs and street educators working with youngsters on the street, in day-centers and shelters. As we analyze in chapters 7 and 8, the values and beliefs contained in these pedagogical practices are at times embodied by youngsters catalyzing significant changes in their sense of self. The above authors have provided interesting insights as to how the categorizing of groups of people is intrinsically bound to systems of knowledge and practices of management or governance. They have also indicated how such knowledge and governance has significant consequences for the subjectivity for those who are categorized, these are themes that will be explored throughout this thesis.

AGENCY AND THE WORLDS OF CHILDHOOD

Another way of looking at the life of a category is by exploring the perspectives of those who are labeled. Yet recognition of the subjective needs of children and adolescents, and in particular of 'street children' often goes unacknowledged in the ways in which they are represented. The feelings 'street children' tend to provoke in adults have encouraged a proliferation of charities, both national and international which invariably portray them as helpless victims of hunger and violence, creating what Ennew has termed a "pornography of misery, which may unloose some brief charitable responses, but fails to change attitudes and policies towards children" (Ennew quoted in Panter-Brick 2000:63). This use of the powerful image of the child as victim to evoke pity is common, as is the reference that such children are 'abandoned'. The uncritical use of the word 'abandonment' is common in both the media and in social welfare literature, as Catherine Panter-Brick's review points out; foundlings, 'street children', victims of war, child prostitutes and children of refugee parents are all commonly portrayed as abandoned (Panter-Brick 2000). This image is also often used by those closely involved in administering assistance programs, to provoke the impulse to rescue the children whilst, as Ennew observes, obscuring the real issues of their lives. Veale, Taylor and Linehan analyze the use of the term 'abandonment' as a social construct also reflecting notions of the

'proper place' of childhood. 'Abandonment' becomes a term that tries to make sense of these dissonant childhoods in that it removes the possibility of agency from the child transferring the act of abandoning to another, be it the parent, the community or the government. But as writers, especially those working with 'street children' have demonstrated, in these cases it is very often the child who is doing the abandoning, choosing a new life on the street (Veale, Taylor and Linehan 2000).

The complex set of circumstances and representations of the street and the home that come to play upon the decision to leave home to the streets are central to this thesis. As discussed throughout this thesis, going to the street may well be an act of 'freedom' or a form of rebellion within a climate of scarcity, confinement and violence in the *favelas* and peripheries from where these children and adolescents originate. Taking the perspectives of those who are categorized we here analyze the different notions of risk and a re-imagining of urban space in which youngsters strive for the fulfillment of their material, emotional and symbolic needs. The notion of 'abandonment' must then be seen within the context of a cultural typology of childhood in which the notion of agency has become increasingly redundant. The more childhood has become a protected enclave of the life-cycle, bounded and policed within a series of institutions, spaces and 'specialisms' the less agency has been attributed to the constituents of this group. This typology has been reinforced by decades of theorizing about childhood, particularly within the social sciences, which have emphasized this time as one of 'social becoming' (Jenks 1992).

As Helena Wulff writes, anthropological study on youth has included the traditional focus on family and kinship, for example, in the work of Margaret Mead (1973 [1928]) or on rites of passage such as Victor Turner's analyses in 1960s. In these early studies youth was viewed as a stage on the way to adulthood "rather than producing something on their own which might not last in the long run but could still be significant for them at the time" (Wulff 1995:3). Talcott Parsons appears to have introduced the term 'youth cultures' in the 1940s to mean a distinctive world of youth, structured by age and sex roles, in particular in referring to white middle class American youth. Yet it is in the field of psychology that the main arena for childhood research in the social sciences is to be found, with human development and socialization models providing the framework for these studies. These models, as Virginia Caputo writes, promote a view of children as part of a process in which social knowledge and competence is imparted to them by adults. In turn, 'children are transformed over time into adults' (Caputo 1995:23).

Caputo argues that these psychological models focusing on the child's acquisition of a cognitive map, and socialization models, emphasizing the notion of the transformation of the child into a competent adult, point to what the child lacks and turn their attention towards the eventual incorporation of the child into the adult world, implying that 'the child is in some way incomplete' (Caputo 1995:29).

"She or he is in the process of becoming a full adult member of society. This conceptualization depicts children as 'partially cultural'. Their contemporaneity with adult cultures is dismissed as well, along with the 'present' of their life experiences (...) For children at least, this process reinforces the notion that children's lives are only significant in relation to some future state or in relation to adult cultures. In turn these models promote the view, for the most part, of the passivity of the child whilst notions of agency are almost completely obscured" (Caputo 1995:29).

Instead Caputo seeks to promote a view of children as actively engaged in the production of their own social worlds. Following Suransky, Caputo considers the following as significant questions to ask in order to gain an understanding of childhood:

"How in the past, and how in the present does the child see herself – as a child? As a miniature adult? To what extent have adult constructions of reality misrepresented the historical child and to what extent do they continue to misrepresent the child's experience of 'being in the world'?" (Ibid).

This perspective of children as producers of their social world is found in the work of the anthropologist Charlotte Hardman who suggests that childhood worlds are not necessarily pre-rational nor at a pre-adult stage, thus pointing to the importance of children as people to be studied in their own right and not just as the receptacle of adult teaching (Caputo 1995). This view of childhood as a life-stage replete with agency and no longer contained 'within discourses that guarantee their passivity' is also what I wish to explore here. I echo Caputo's concern in asking the key question 'What is the child's experience of being in the world?' Or more

specifically, what is the child's (and adolescent's) experience of being in the world whilst living on the street outside parental supervision?

STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE

A concern with the agency and with the point of view of youngsters who take to the streets then leads us to pay attention to their experiences. Anthropologists such as Victor Turner, Edward Bruner who edited the book *The Anthropology of Experience* (1986), and others whose work is included there, share my concern in returning to the primacy of experience. These authors go on to explore, how experience may be approached and reveal something about the social, cultural and historical context in which it is expressed. As Bruner points out, our expressions structure the ways in which we make sense of our experiences, "in that dominant narratives of a historical era, important rituals and festivals, and classic works of art define and illuminate inner experience" (Bruner 1986a:6). As Bruner acknowledges, there often appears a gap between our experiences and our expressions of them. As anthropologists, he states, we are only too aware that the genres of anthropological expression – our field-notes, diaries, and publications – "do not capture the richness or the complexity of our lived experience in the field" (Bruner 1986a:7). Real life is always more complex then, since it is in a continual flow. Instead:

> "We create the units of experience from the continuity of life. Every telling is an arbitrary imposition of meaning in the flow of memory, in that we highlight some causes and discount others; that is, every telling is interpretative. The concept of an experience, then, has an explicit temporal dimension in that we go through or live through an experience, which then becomes self-referential in the telling" (Bruner 1986a:7).

Turner continues, outlining Dilthey's distinction between 'mere experience' and 'an experience'; the first is characterized by the passive endurance and acceptance of events, the second, "like a rock in a Zen sand garden, stands out from the evenness of passing hours and years and forms what Dilthey called a 'structure of experience'" (Turner 1986:35). 'An experience' is then cut off from the flow of chronological temporality, being instead "distinguishable, isolable sequences of external events and internal responses to them", some

being personal whereas others are shared (Ibid). These experiences are often associated with new 'life-ways'; first day at school, first job, marriage, etc. They are experiences that disrupt routinized repetitive behavior through shock or pleasure, followed by an anxious need to find meaning in which we try to put past and present together (Turner 1986:36).

Norman Denzin also draws on the anthropology of experience, and Turner's work in particular, to provide significant insights into the way in which people tell their lives through sequences of what he terms epiphanies. Epiphanies, are the interactional moments and experiences that leave a mark on people's lives. These are often moments of crisis that radically alter the "fundamental meaning structures in a person's life" (Denzin 1989:70). Denzin draws parallels between these experiences and what Victor Turner called the 'liminal phase of experience' where the person is in a "no-man's land betwixt and between... the past and the... future" (Turner quoted in Denzin 1989:70). Some of these experiences, Denzin goes on, are ritualized, as in rites of passage, others are routinized whereas others are emergent and unstructured. The meanings of these experiences are given retrospectively, he concludes, when a person retells what happened to them (Denzin 1989:71). Denzin's contribution, derived from his fieldwork with recovering alcoholics in the Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) where a public retelling of one's story is central, stems from his insight that life-stories contain multiple stories, each of which is organized in terms of epiphanal moments (Denzin 1989:71). In the case of those individuals Denzin met in the A.A. meetings, their story of grace and innocence, fall from grace, and final redemption replicates the particular A.A. cultural context of narratives and is also situated within a particular storytelling tradition of Western culture. As such, it is "continuous with all those other stories that came before" (Denzin 1989:73). As we observe in chapter 7 and 8, the life-stories of youngsters who go to the street and eventually disengage from it are also retold through such epiphanal moments.

Experience, and its expression in narratives, is given coherence through its re-telling, a process which draws on narrative conventions or tropes. But whereas anthropologists like Turner and Bruner have focused on the ways in which dominant narratives or cultural forms within a specific historical era, rituals and festivals, and works of art all define and illuminate inner experience, Paulo Freire concentrated on how these forms manifest themselves in contradictory ways in the experiences of the oppressed. As McLaren and da Silva suggest, every society has a treasure stock of stories, of narratives and conventions through which experience is both expressed and rendered meaningful. But as Freire argued, not all stories have the same value, and

in fact those in society's 'rifts' or 'margins' are often devalued (McLaren and da Silva 1993:72). This is where Freire's notion of the 'culture of silence' comes in, a culture of the oppressed which is neither heard, expressed nor made manifest and which may also include internalized elements of the ideology of the oppressor (Freire 1976). But as Giroux contended, Freire's work argues for more than a legitimation of the culture of the oppressed, since it also recognizes the contradictory nature of cultural experiences that whilst harboring the potential for radical change and emancipation, also include vestiges of oppression (Giroux quoted in McLaren and da Silva 1993:72). A critical pedagogy then works with individuals in an attempt to unearth and reflect on these many layers of experience, something this present thesis also seeks to do.

Through the writing of this thesis I was struck by the similarities between the ethnographic endeavor to try to represent anthropologically a 'category' of young people who have been historically stigmatized and Freire's notion of *consicentização* – often translated as critical-consciousness - in which the layers of oppression in the social, political and economic sphere become perceptible (Freire 1996 [1970]). This is perhaps not so surprising considering that, as Ira Shor argues, Freire's writing demonstrates a very anthropological notion of culture, and culture for Freire lies at the heart of the project of *conscientização*. For Freire, culture results from the actions of humans in society, how they interact and what they add to the world; it is what people do every day. According to Freire, "human beings emerge from the world, objectify it, and in so doing can understand it and transform it with their labor" (Freire 1996:106). Similarly, Freirean educators can only work effectively with a critical pedagogy through this anthropological study of human actions and understandings. As Shor puts it, Freirean educators study their students in their classrooms and their community, to discover the "words, ideas, conditions, and habits central to their experience" (Shor 1993:31). From these raw materials educators identify 'generative words and themes' which represent the most pertinent issues in the speech and life of the community, and which come to be the foundational subject matter for a critical curriculum. "These generative subjects are familiar words, experiences, situations, and relationships. They are 'problematized' by a teacher in class through a critical dialogue, that is re-represented back to the students as problems to reflect and act on" (Shor 1993:31). The uncovering of such generative words and themes form a crucial part in this thesis. As we shall see the experiences, narratives and epiphanies associated with *liberdade* [freedom] and *revolta* [revolt, inner rage], provide rich material through which to obtain a greater understanding of the trajectories of youngsters to and through the street.

Ethnography can be said to possess many similarities with *conscientização* inasmuch as both are concerned with how social interactions come to make up an elaborate set of practices, institutions and systems of meaning. *Consientização* and this particular ethnography are also concerned with how these meaning systems, ways of labeling, these institutions and practices have acted to discriminate and exclude sectors of the population, who come to be the marginalized, or in Freirean terminology, the 'oppressed'. This thesis, following much of *consientização* work, seeks to historically contextualize the genesis of this oppression and the processes of exclusion. As such, I have preferred to use the term 'structural oppression', rather than 'structural violence' to describe these processes of exclusion, a term also used by Bourgois to describe similar forces at work in East Harlem (Bourgois 1996). Though these terms differ, the social, economic and political processes they refer to are the same. So when Paul Farmer speaks of how, "large-scale social forces crystallize into the sharp, hard surfaces of individual suffering" in the lives of the people he writes about, he is speaking about similar processes of exclusion and marginalization. This thesis, like Farmer's work, tries to explain these processes by embedding "individual biography in the larger matrix of culture, history and political-economy" (Farmer 2002:431). As regards the case of youngsters on the street in Rio, both this ethnography and the work of street educators are concerned with investigating how exclusion and discrimination are perpetuated in everyday life, and how the categories created by the 'oppressor' are both defied and internalized by the 'oppressed'. Both *consientização* and this thesis can also be said to depart from the experiences of the 'oppressed'. McLaren and da Silva defend Freire's use of experience against criticisms of romanticism. They argue that Freire is very much aware that experience never speaks for itself, that it is never pristine and unmediated. Instead, as the authors argue, experience is a way in which individuals "confront the contingency of the present and the politics of daily living", a way of understanding which is "constructed largely linguistically as an interpretation over time of a specific concrete engagement with the world of symbols, social practices, and cultural forms" (McLaren and da Silva 1993:60). As this thesis reflects, experience can only be made sense of when it is seen within the broader context of culture, history and individual biography.

DOMAINS OF SELF AND IDENTITY

Another way of confronting the 'contingency of the present and the politics of daily living' is through the processes of identity. A useful definition of 'self' has been given by Mageo and Knauf (2002), as the domain that encompasses all aspects of personhood and subjectivity, constituted by acts of identification with elements of experience and with persons, groups and representations in the cultural world. Identity is the sense of self that is derived from these acts of identification. As they outline in their article we identify with our emotions, with our family, our clan, village or job, though in most cases all these operate simultaneously as constituent parts of our identity (Mageo and Knauf 2002:3).

The self is here understood not as a fixed essential entity, but as ever shifting and multiple. Identities within gender, ethnic, religious and class categories are not conceived as hermetically sealed and homogeneous but as complex and ever shifting. Identity cannot be traced back to an original point, a defining and definitive quality such as 'Brazilianess', instead identities are always articulated in particular historical moments and the form they take are contingent upon these moments. This point is addressed by Stuart Hall:

> " Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves" (Hall 1997:4).

Representation, as Hall stresses, plays a key role in what I here call the 'processes of identity'. For Hall identities are points of temporary attachment that connect an actor to a myriad of social positions throughout the life-cycle. These positions all exist within specific cultural and historical contexts. The subjects' attachments to any one of these positions is contingent upon the cultural value and power that embracing a particular identity confers. My own experiences in the field seem to confirm Hall's view of identity as a process of engaging with the available resources of language, culture and history, as we shall see throughout this thesis.

The domain of self would appear to shed light upon the processes by which people make sense of their experiences and their place in the world. Identities are implicated in the structure of subjectivity, in the way a person experiences him/herself as an individual and social being, in the way the subject orders experience creating a sense of self in the process. This ordering process is shaped by many ingredients; the values, forms of behavior and representations expressed through culture, the actual historical socio-political conditions the subject is situated in as well as the implications of class, ethnicity and gender (Calhoun 1994, Zaretsky 1994, Somers and Gibson 1994). Equally, as we shall see, power relations are implicated in this process of the self. For power lies behind not only the kinds of representations that are assimilated by the self, but may also lie behind the self's impetus to defy certain kinds of representation in favor of others. As we shall see in the case of youngsters living on the street, the aspiration for freedom is very significant in drawing youngsters away from their homes and into the city center, forming in many cases a central point of reference for their processes of identification. Equally significant is the discrimination and violence these youngsters are subject to in their daily existence, leading to forms of identification closely tied to the experience of *revolta*. Even though they are perceived to be inhabiting this liminal universe, outside the cultural typology of childhood, the sense of self of youngsters on the street, as we shall see, can also show remarkable continuities with youngsters from across the Brazilian social spectrum. In their aspiration for home and family life, work and education most children and adolescents on the street demonstrate middle class values, something which Janice Perlman also found amongst Rio's *favela* residents during her fieldwork in the 1970s (Perlman 1979[1976]). This is also found in some of these youngster's practices regarding the care of the self; in terms of their physical appearance, consumption, dress and sexuality. The question of how these ruptures and continuities with the rest of Brazilian youth and with the country's citizenry are asserted or defied by youngsters, is central to this thesis. Given the very real constraints, violence and discrimination they encounter daily, a key question in this thesis then becomes how these youngsters connect with identities that ensure a gratifying sense of self.

Referring to the work of George Herbert Mead, father of symbolic interactionism, Hannerz considered the self as 'that which can be an object to itself' arising in social experience (Hannerz 1980:222). Hannerz goes on to explore how this particular experience, this sense of self, may become acute in urban living. He argues that this awareness of self is always there to a degree, but more often it is a silent awareness, existing 'quietly'. But, under particular circumstances, "this awareness can be heightened, the self calling for more conscious attention

and reflection" (Hannerz 1980:222). Hannerz considers that urban existence provides an enhancement of these circumstances of self-reflection. This can be seen from two perspectives; on the one hand what Hannerz terms the 'contrast model' posits that, because of the diversity of city life, the self is faced with a great variety of alternative resources – life-styles, beliefs, perspectives – from which to draw on, something Calhoun (1994), Giddens (1997 [1991]) and others have also addressed. In this context the difference between self and other are clearly perceived. On the other hand, in what Hannerz terms the 'deprivation model', the social order of the city is so saturated with 'normative' controls, with relations based purely on functional roles which frustrate the possibility of divulging personal information that people "feel the pain of personal obliteration, driving them into other relationships where they can compensate by expressing their selves more fully" (Hannerz 1980:228). Both these models appear applicable in the case of youngsters on the street, though with some qualification since the conditions of marginality appear as a highly significant influence on the particular selves that are fashioned, aspired to or defied. As we consider in this thesis, 'personal obliteration' is expressed in an experience of the home and community as confining or else through unrewarding relationships with relatives and other adults which may then lead youngsters to seek out on the street ways of 'expressing themselves more fully'.

As regards the 'contrast' model of heightened awareness of the self, Nikolas Rose's consideration of the growth of 'technologies of freedom' in the twentieth century, appear relevant. These practices of freedom, Rose suggests, are marked by "choosing or shaping the form or style in which one lives ones life" (Rose 1992:14). In its external form these practices involve the forging and the display of life-style through consumption. Rose describes how the rise of consumption and industries of the image over the last century or so have come to shape the ways in which we purchase and use commodities. Through advertising, marketing, design, and more recently the mass media, with television, cinema and music, these industries have "established a new relation between the sphere of the self and the world of goods"; they have "associated goods with seductive forms of life and eroticised personalities" (Rose 1992:15). This new sphere of realization of self or identities, which are forged and legitimized through acts of consumption have come to redefine what is respectable, acceptable and normal in regards to how we organize our lives and what we aspire to. This new sphere of 'self as consumer' is nowhere more clearly visible than in the city, and nowhere is the contrast of the inclusion and exclusion into this sphere more marked than in highly unequal cities like Rio with their 'Carioca model of

segregation' in which very disparate socio-economic groups live side by side. This is an issue that this thesis explores, as we look at some of the consequences for youngsters who are excluded but who nevertheless have very similar aspirations to the rest of the Brazilian citizenry.

IDENTITIES AND NARRATIVES

One of the dangers when speaking about identity is that unless the notion is qualified, as Hall, Mageo and Knauf have done, the concept runs the risk of essentializing and freezing affiliations within particular categories, which in turn obscure the broader context in which identities are claimed or defied. These problems surrounding the notion of identity are successfully raised in a collection of essays edited by Craig Calhoun (1994). As Calhoun himself describes it, identities are often personal and political projects in which we participate, "empowered to greater or lesser extents by resources of experience and ability, culture and social organization" (Calhoun 1994:28). At the heart of this process, Calhoun believes, are the interrelated problems of self-recognition and recognition by others. For Calhoun, recognition is vital for self-reflexivity, for one's capacity to look at oneself and choose one's actions (Calhoun 1994:20). Calhoun believes that though such recognition may never have followed immediately on socially derived or sanctioned identities, the present historical period is unprecedented in the challenges it has set for recognition, in terms of personal self-recognition or recognition or lack of it, by others. This has occurred because of the great scope and complexity of recognizable identity schemes within a world of large nation-states, international diasporas, broad realms of personal choice, large networks of social relations, mass media and the proliferation of cultural transmission, and what Calhoun terms the 'multiplicity of discourses attempting to name or constitute persons' (Ibid).

According to Calhoun and others (for example Giddens 1997), these complexities of the project of identity in the present historical period have given rise to an increasingly complex politics of identity. For writers such as Somers and Gibson and others, this in turn has led to the belief that the very notion of identity needs a radical rethink in the way it is studied and theorized in the social sciences. Somers and Gibson align themselves to an emerging tendency within the social sciences that links concepts of identity to that of narrativity, in order that a different approach to theories of agency and social action might be obtained. Somers and Gibson identify a shift in recent works on narrative studies, away from a focus on what they term 'representational' towards 'ontological narrativity' (Somers and Gibson 1994: 38). Philosophers of history such as

Louis Mink and Hayden White, the authors point out, thought that narrative modes of representing knowledge were forms imposed by historians onto the 'chaos of lived experience' (Ibid). But recent researchers, in particular from the social sciences, Somers and Gibson argue, have postulated that narrative is much more central to social life than previously considered, that social life "is itself storied and that narrative is an ontological condition of social life" (Ibid). This new approach to narrative Somers and Gibson explain,

> "is showing us that stories guide action; that people construct identities (however multiple and changing) by locating themselves or being located within a repertoire of emplotted stories; that 'experience' is constituted through narratives; that people make sense of what has happened and is happening to them by attempting to assemble or in some way to integrate these happenings within one or more narratives; and that people are guided to act in certain ways, and not others, on the basis of the projections, expectations, and memories derived from a multiplicity but ultimately limited repertoire of available social, public, and cultural narratives" (Somers and Gibson 1994:39).

In this new paradigm of 'ontological narrativity', narratives are the ways through which we come to know, understand and make sense of our social world and constitute our social identities, whether as social scientists or subjects of research (Somers and Gibson 1994:59). Crucial in this is the notion of 'emplotment', which gives meaning to particular events turning them into episodes within a broader story-line. Somers and Gibson highlight the difference between emplotment and categorization, the latter saying little about the context within the life-cycle which a particular category was embraced whereas the former allows for linkages in time and space and in a network of social relations and cultural representations which in turn render the event meaningful. We come to be who we are, Somers and Gibson argue, echoing Marx "by locating ourselves in social narratives rarely of our own making" (Ibid).

Somers and Gibson suggestion that narratives are central to the way in which social actors make sense of their lives and help us decide how to act, appears useful. The connection they make between these 'ontological narratives' and the 'public narratives' within which they take shape and which are "attached to cultural and institutional formations larger than the individual, to intersubjective networks or institutions" such as one's family, workplace, church,

government or nation, also point towards potentially fruitful enquiries (Somers and Gibson 1994:62). Like all narratives, they write, these public and individual stories have "drama, plot, explanation, and selective appropriation" (Ibid). In the context of this thesis we shall examine a number of such ontological and public narratives. As we shall see, the experiences of youngsters on the street are often narrated within narrative conventions in which being or not being a 'street child', a 'Brazilian citizen', 'normal just like anyone else' are recurrent themes. This is also true of the reasons given as to why certain practices or life-choices are adopted with the narratives of freedom and *revolta* providing two crucial nodes of identification through which a range of experiences are rendered meaningful. However, perhaps Somers and Gibson go too far in giving such a privileged position to narratives. It must be remembered that we come to be who we are, not just by locating ourselves within narratives, which are essentially verbal means of giving and expressing meaning, but also by having acquired a vast array of non-verbal capacities and means of expression related to our bodies and our emotions. Though narratives are important when trying to understand the experiences and identities of others, clearly they are not enough in themselves. Here lies the importance of participant observation, of being mindful of how meaning can be found not only in words but also in actions and gestures, in the expression of emotions, in dress and in the non-verbal communication between persons. The narrative approach to identity, which is also partly used in this thesis in particularly in chapters 7 and 8, sees the importance of relating the snap-shots of identities claimed in different contexts to the life-course or biography of the individual. But it is crucial to include these non-verbal meanings, especially since not all individuals have a clear sense of their biography or life-trajectory. This is particularly significant in this thesis as many of the children and adolescents approached, instead of the elaborate life-stories offered by the individuals represented in chapters 7 and 8, offered fragments of experiences. Meaning and understanding, then, cannot be limited to only that which is or can be expressed verbally, as the discussion in the previous chapter about the use of film in anthropology tried to convey, instead the rich array of experiences that confront anthropologists in the field also need to be considered.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The discussions outlined in this chapter have provided the threads of a potentially fruitful approach to the themes of self, identities, narratives, experience and the processes of

categorization. It is important to recognize at the outset the uncertainties and implicit political agendas behind the efforts to establish the numbers of youngsters living on the street. Not only Foucault, but also Hacking and Goffman, provide useful insights of how the act of categorizing reflects power relations whilst also influencing the subjectivities of the categorized. It is the perspective of the categorized, the children and adolescents falling under the label of 'street children', that is a key concern in this thesis. In this respect, referring to recent debates in the anthropology and sociology of childhood, we noted how the notion of agency is very often absent from representations of childhood, a life-stage which has instead been characterized as a 'social becoming'. A similar fate has befallen many representations of 'street children' by tying them to the idea of 'abandonment', a notion that has served to obscure the real conditions and motivations which affect the lives of youngsters living on the street, stripping them of the possibility of agency. The chapter then considered how best to approach the perspective of these youngsters by considering experience, self and identity. We did this by linking Denzin's work on epiphanies and biographies with the anthropologists of experience's concerns with experience and its expression and with Freire's critical approaches to the experience of the oppressed. These debates of experience and its expression was embedded within broader theoretical concerns with narratives and the politics of identity addressed by Calhoun, Somers and Gibson and others. The work of these authors provide us with a way through which to conceive of the links between personal subjective experience and its expression in personal narratives, and the public, culturally and historically specific narratives available. Their work usefully opens up the notion of identity and connects it to an analysis in which personal representations of the self are given meaning by their location in time, space and relationality. Furthermore, these concepts mean that the study of self and identity is given a more tangible research methodology. That is, self and identity can be approached by paying attention to the ways in which people retell their lives and experiences, and by making the connection between this and the publicly available narratives, the categories through which persons are labeled and the broader social, economic and political environment in which they exist. It is in this 'opened up' sense that I use the term identity, or processes of identity, in this thesis. Yet, as we noted, more than that which is verbally expressed in narratives, an understanding of the perspectives of youngsters on the street also requires an awareness of the non-verbal meanings, the bodily practices, ways of dressing the emotions and non-verbal communications between persons which are also constitutive of our everyday lives.

CHAPTER 3

CIDADE MARAVILHOSA – THE PAST

The most striking impression of Rio de Janeiro when you first arrive, is its beauty. Steep undulating granite hills, covered in emerald green Atlantic forests, rise, as Levi Strauss unflatteringly put it, like a toothless mouth, from the Atlantic ocean forming a vast bay. The immediate, visceral impact of the stunning hills, the beaches and their juxtaposition to a settlement numbering close to 6 million inhabitants, points to what Mary Karasch describes as one of the loveliest yet most improbably located cities in the world (Karasch 1985). It is not surprising that Rio is praised as the *cidade maravilhosa*, the marvelous city, by its own citizens, the Cariocas, as well as by the millions who come to visit it each year. Yet at times this epithet most closely resembles the surrealist's, in particular André Bretton's, notion of the marvelous than an adjective expressing a straightforward admiration of its positive qualities. The marvelous in the surrealist sense of the term, describes a quality of surprise through the mixing of discordant objects or ideas, that reveal a surreality - a marriage of dream and reality (Bretton 1995 [1924]).

Rio de Janeiro, marvelous city - in a surrealist sense of the term: internationally famed for its natural beauty, its easy going inhabitants, its football, its carnival and its role as birth-place of samba and bossa-nova yet notorious for its high level of crime and violence, its street children, its extermination groups and brutal police-force. In 1992 the city signaled to the world the possibility of a new era of international cooperation and concerted efforts to tackle the issues raised by the global environmental crisis by hosting the first UN conference on Sustainable Development and the Environment. A year later the city once again makes it in the international media through the massacre of 7 children and 1 youngster by off-duty policemen in front of the Candelária church in July and a few months later by the massacre of 21 residents (including children) in the *favela* of Vigário Geral, also by off-duty police.
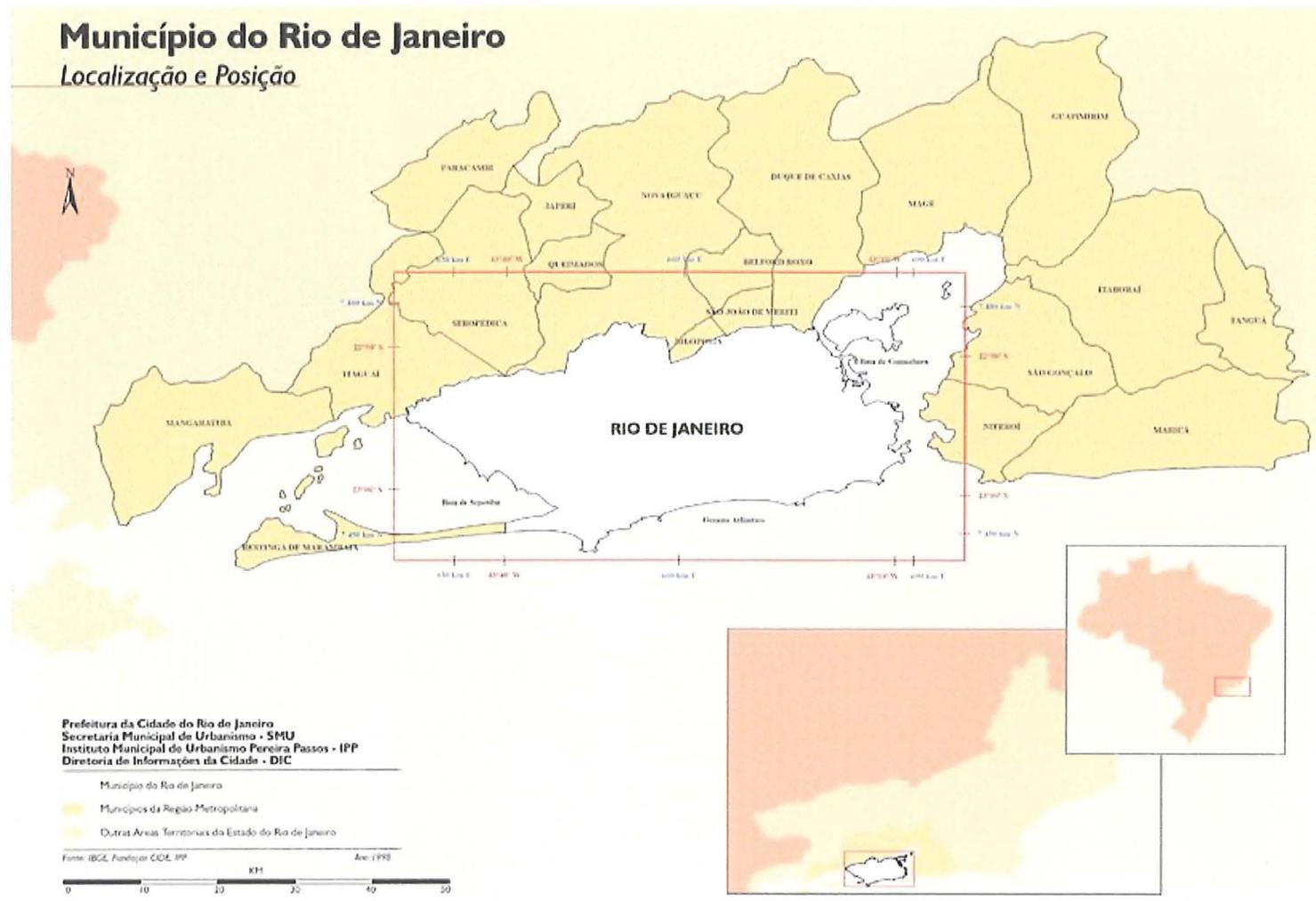
3.1 Municipality of Rio de Janeiro (and its position in the state of Rio de Janeiro and in Brazil) – source council of Rio de Janeiro.
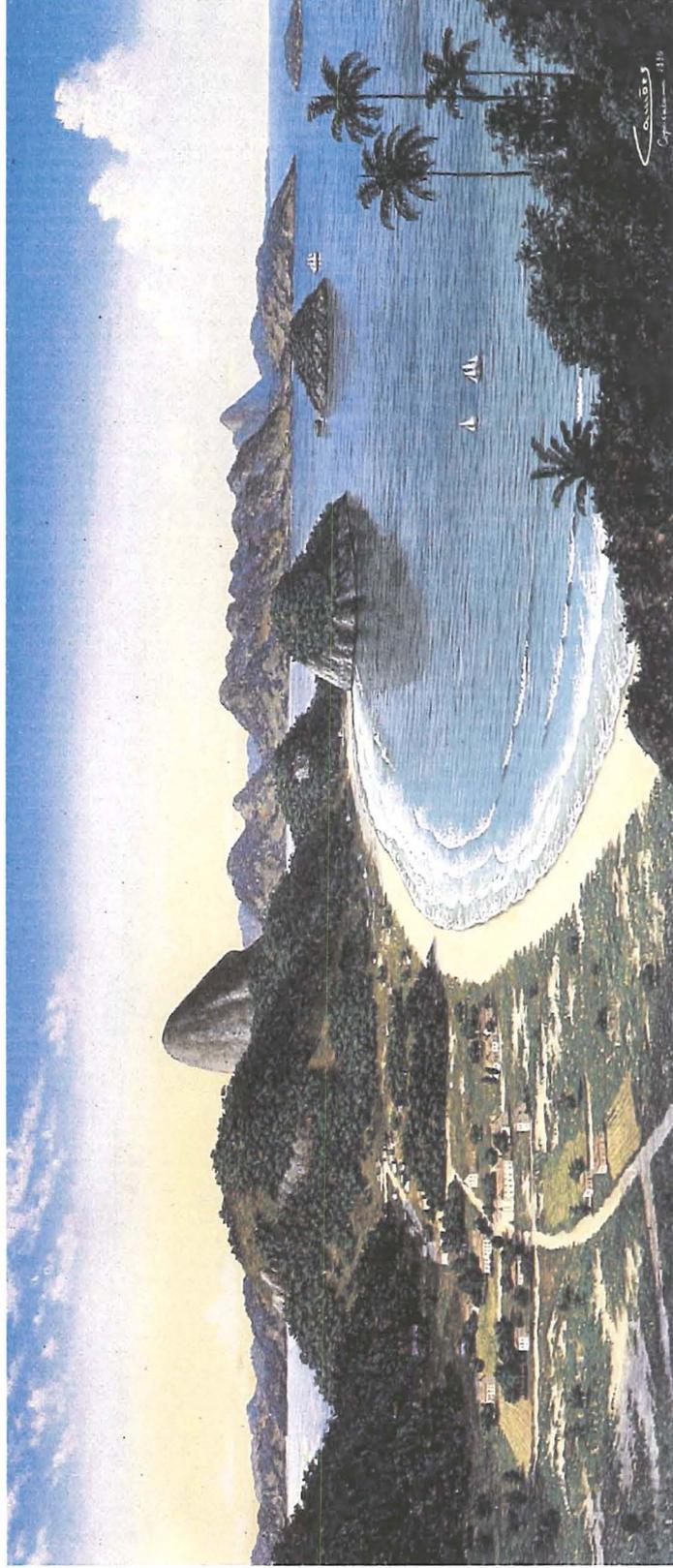
3.2 Painting of Copacabana beach by Camões in 1890.
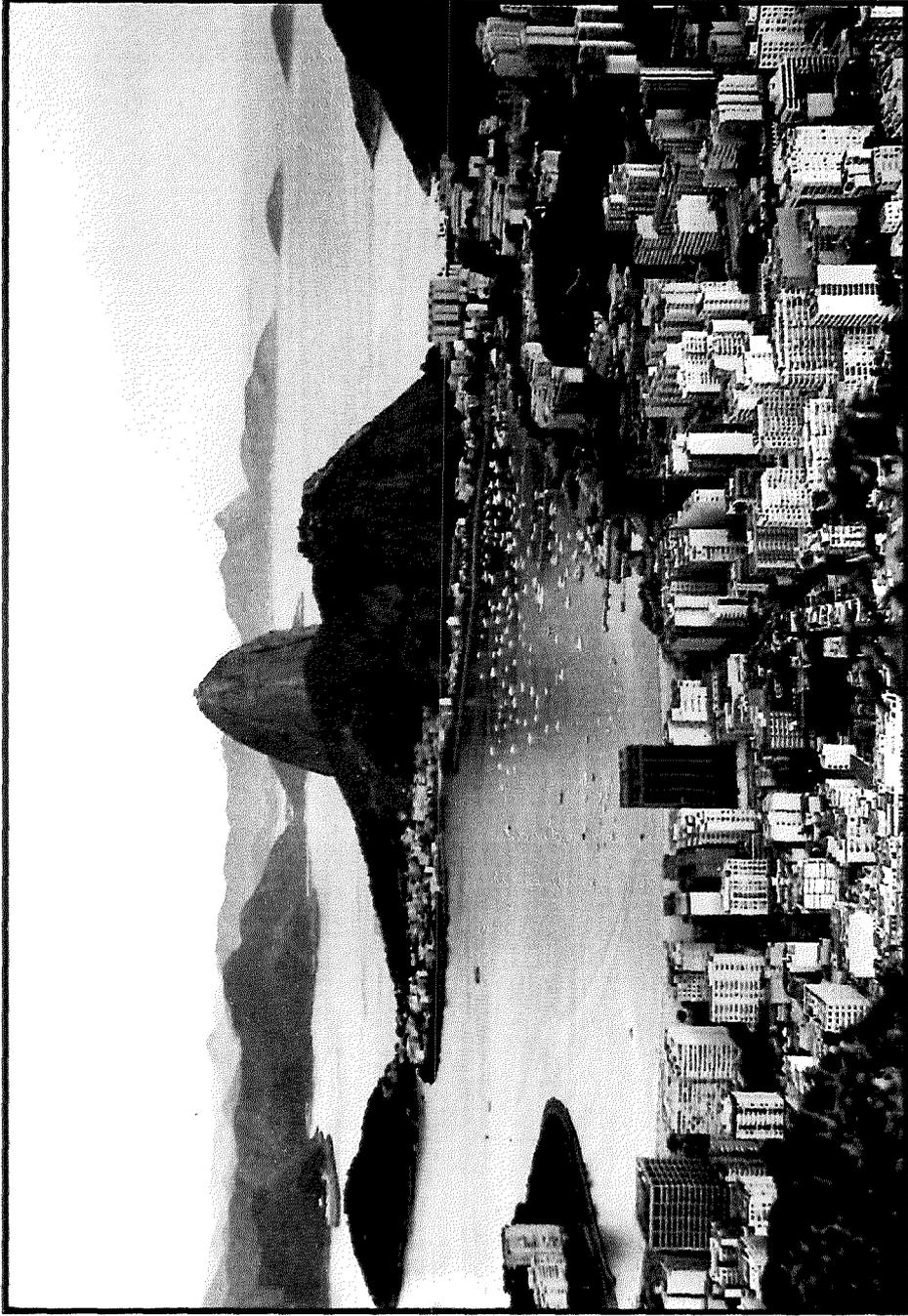
3.3 Postcard of Rio de Janeiro 100 years after Camões' painting.

What links the present surreality of the city, in particular macabre episodes such as that of the Candelária and Vigário Geral, with the transition from a plantation based slave-led economy to a capitalist one? This chapter argues that the plantation system and its demise in Brazil had important consequences for the country as whole and for Rio in particular, in terms of its class composition and problems of inequality. I argue here that the manner in which abolition occurred in Brazil, failed to incorporate the population of ex-slaves into the political-economy of the new nation giving rise to both the idea of 'marginality' and the concrete poverty and lack of opportunities that underpin it. Behind this failure to integrate ex-slaves into Brazilian society, as we discuss here, are racist and discriminatory attitudes, closely connected to aspirations of nation building, which were concerned with the 'whitening' of the population and actively encouraged European immigration to the detriment of an already existent Afro-Brazilian workforce. Following abolition, this chapter outlines, a series of laws were passed to govern this newly freed population whose growing presence in urban centers was often perceived as a threat by the ruling elite. It is within these laws for the 'Repression of Idleness' that debates first emerge around the presence of 'street children' in urban centers. Informing these laws was the desire to build a work ideology, closely connected to a new sense of national identity. At this time, children became a matter of state policy, emerging not only as the 'future of the nation' but also, in the case of 'street children', its potential downfall and corruption. The post-abolition period, as we shall see here, provided not only the structural conditions that underpin the present-day excluded communities in Rio, but also the means of classifying them. The idea or myth of marginality is one such way of classifying, which we will address in the next chapter. In this chapter we examine the notion of the 'minor', the child from a poor 'unstructured' family who was a prime subject for state intervention.

In the foreword to Janice Perlman's book *The Myth of Marginality* (1979), and before entering political office and being elected president of Brazil on consecutive occasions in 1995 and 1999, the sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso wrote that *favela*dos [residents of the *favelas*] have been seen as an ecological group rather than as part of a social system. He argues that in order to bring about a Copernican revolution in marginality theory it is not enough to show empirically that *favela*dos are not apathetic, disorganized, underemployed, and that they are part of a system of exploitation and systematic repression, which, as we will show in the next chapter, Perlman's work clearly did. Instead, Cardoso argues, one must reconstruct the history of this exploitation. This history would establish the mechanisms through which,

"in a varying but persistent manner, the means of exploitation and repression are recreated. They are continually recreated by the structural condition which characterizes the initial stages of capitalist accumulation and by its distinctive form of social classes and the division of labor, including the division between country and city" (Cardoso in Perlman 1979:xiii).

As I intend to show in this chapter, the 'structural conditions' that recreate exploitation include not only those related to forms of organizing the means of production, which Cardoso's Marxist analysis of 'dependant development' imply.[1] Also significant are the systems of knowledge and governance, the myths, assumptions and representations which have the power to structure the possible field of action of others (Wolf 1990) by 'dividing', 'objectifying' or 'subjectifying' persons (Foucault 1982 and 1991). The goal of this chapter is then to provide the links between the historical conditions, the social, political and economic transformations occurring in Rio and in Brazil at the end of the 19th century and the new forms of governing and representing the population. These forms of governance and representations are important in this thesis because they provide the images and practices through which the category of the street child was and continues to be understood and acted upon.

THE INSTITUTION AND ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

Being in Rio one cannot help but wonder at what the Tamoio and the Temimino Indians, who were settled in this region when the Portuguese arrived in 1502, looked out on 500 years ago. Human presence is now ubiquitous, eclipsing the once-green hills with high-rise flats and *favelas*, which, year-by-year eat away the remaining trees, hills and marshes. The forests have mainly gone as have the swamps that once rendered much of Rio uninhabitable. You can still find enclaves of the region's original ecology, its forest parks and waterfalls, its forested mountains, its lagoon and beaches. But now the city sprawls out for several kilometers, showing the gradual 500 year-old digestion and regurgitation of human occupation. When asked in a newspaper interview how he would improve the city of Rio if he could do anything to it, Oscar Niermayer

the famous Brazilian architect who designed the new capital, Brasília (which came to replace Rio as the capital in 1960), replied that he had a dream once where the city of Rio started a few kilometers away from the beach, nature having control of the coast. You can really sympathize with him.

Portuguese settlement was consolidated in Rio only in 1555, more than fifty years after the first landing, and only because of the threat of French interests in the region. Rio was then originally intended as a military and religious outpost for the defense of southern Brazil, as well as a base from which to mount Portuguese expansion into the interior (Karasch 1985). Rio gradually gained in importance, serving as the Viceroyalty of Brazil in 1763, which had been in Salvador (in the Northeast State of Bahia), as the seat of the temporary exiled Portuguese court in 1808, capital of an independent Brazilian Empire in 1822 and capital of the new republic in 1889, an honor it held until the inauguration of Brasília in the 1960 (Ibid).

European travelers who wrote of Rio in the first half of the nineteenth century, noted not only its beauty but also its large African slave population (Karasch 1987). As Karasch writes, Rio was the principal market place through which slaves, originating in West, Central and East Africa, were distributed to the interior provinces of Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and São Paulo "where the great coffee plantations were carved out of the tropical forests" during the coffee boom of the 19th century (Karasch 1987:xx). The peak of slave numbers in the city is reached in 1849 with 80,000 slaves living and working in Rio, according to Karasch, the largest urban slave population in the Americas. "Almost a million Africans passed through or near the port of Rio [between 1800 and 1850]. While the majority did not remain in the city, enough were kept there to influence the national origins of Cariocan slaves and hence their culture" (Karasch 1987:xxi). The first slaves imported from Africa to Brazil are believed to have arrived in 1538 imported in order to meet the labor demands of the colony that had failed in its attempts to incorporate indigenous labor into the political-economy (Burns 1993). Once this human traffic was established, it lasted for some 300 years with the movement of slaves from Africa exchanged for Brazil's tobacco, sugar, manioc and other indigenous goods (Ibid). As Burns writes, by the end of the eighteenth century merchants from Rio dispatched twenty-four ships a year to the African colony of Angola in this trans-Atlantic trade (Ibid). Over these three centuries conservative estimates put the number of slaves imported from Africa into Brazil at 3.5 million. Of these

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[1] Cardoso was one of the key exponents of the 'Dependency Theory' which analyzed the relations of the core (capitalist, colonial Europe or USA) to the peripheries (providers of raw products, colonies, Third

100,000 came in the sixteenth century, 600,000 in the seventeenth century, 1,300,000 in the eighteenth century and 1,600,000 in the nineteenth century (Ibid).

Although, as Eric Wolf writes, the British decision to abolish the slave trade in 1807 stopped the flow of slaves to the British Caribbean and reduced the numbers going to the United States, a further 600,000 slaves went to the Spanish areas of the New World in the nineteenth century (the majority to Cuba), and a further 100,000 were traded to the French Caribbean (Wolf 1990b:201). Yet the majority, around a million and a half, were trafficked to Brazil, which continued to import slaves from Africa, both legally and illegally, throughout the first half of the century and it did not fully abolish the institution of slavery until 1888. We now address why this was the case.

As Emilia Viotti da Costa writes, following the independence of Brazil from Portugal in 1822 and the establishment of the Brazilian Empire, its population consisted of 2,813,351 free inhabitants and 1,147,515 slaves (da Costa 2000). The slaves were concentrated in the sugar growing areas in the Northeast of Brazil, the gold-mining areas of the Southeast and in Rio de Janeiro. Though the largest concentration of slaves worked in the sugar, and later coffee, plantations, slaves could also be found in the cities engaged in a variety of activities (shoemakers, carpenters, tailors, potters, masons, street vendors). These city slaves could also be hired out and would be required to turn over their earnings to the master in the evenings (da Costa 2000). When the Portuguese court moved to Brazil in 1808, as da Costa writes, despite promises to the British government to abolish the trade, and despite the Congress of Vienna's ruling in 1814 to abolish the trade north of the equator, the Portuguese government failed to take action, instead seeking out its supply from Mozambique and Angola. Some years later, needing British support, the newly independent Brazilian government passed a law in 1831 freeing all slaves arriving from outside the empire and imposing penalties on slave smugglers, but these proved ineffective because of the entrenched interests of the plantation oligarchies whose demand for slave labor, ensured a constant supply. As da Costa argues, the courts and the administrative power in the provinces failed to apply legislation since these were to a large extent controlled by the oligarchies, if not directly than through ties of family, friendship or influence (da Costa 2000).

From the first half of the nineteenth century, the Brazilian population was divided on the issue of the abolition of slavery between the 'good children of the Enlightenment', primarily an urban bourgeoisie who pointed to its drawback to the nation, its affront on reason and morality

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World) in a world system marked by exploitation and unequal development.

and who believed they could effect change by changing public opinion; and the interests of the plantation oligarchies who were highly influential in key institutions of the empire (da Costa 2000). It is for this reason that, even after successfully banning the import of slaves into Brazil through a law passed in 1850, the institution of slavery was to survive for another 38 years with the price paid for slaves trebling in the period (Ibid). In these intervening years debates raged on between both sides resulting in incremental laws being passed such as the 'law of the free womb' passed in 1871 designed to free the children born of slave mothers.[2] For da Costa slavery was able to survive for so long in Brazil because of the slow change of the political-economy of the plantation system which only gradually, and under pressure from competition from producers abroad, came to shift the system of cultivation and processing towards more capital intensive forms of production. Wrapped up in this political economy of the plantation was the social prestige associated with slave ownership and the high amounts of capital invested in slaves. Gradually, as da Costa describes, improvements in transportation, in the processing of coffee and the manufacture of sugar, as well as the growth of the free population modified the economy creating more possibilities for free labor (Ibid). Also significantly, as da Costa argues, in some areas slave labor became less productive when compared to free labor (Ibid). The influx of European immigrants throughout the second half of the 19th century, in particular from Italy, contributed to this. In the province of São Paulo the authorities sought to actively stimulate European immigration in order to work in the plantations, passing a law in 1871 authorizing the issuing of grants for those wishing to immigrate. From this period, as da Costa writes, the era of subsidized immigration begins, the Association to Aid Colonization is established in 1871 and brings together planters and entrepreneurs from São Paulo (Ibid). During this period there is also a shift in the attitudes of some planters who come to consider the drawbacks of the slave system as exacerbating the problem of free labor shortage. In 1875, João Elisário Carvalho Monte Negro owner of a 'model' plantation said that foreigners were reluctant to work by the side of slaves, and further that the slave system discredited Brazil in European eyes (Ibid). A number of planters came to think as he did, and, as da Costa argues, the adherence to the notion of free labor by this group is what made the abolition of slavery possible (Ibid).

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[2] Da Costa considered this law as a delaying tactic, a concession to more radical demands. The measure tried to ensure that children of slave mothers born in the empire were free and that the slave owner raise such children until the age of eight after which they were either to hand the youngster over to the government in return for compensation or else employ their labor (da Costa 2000).

Towards its dying days, the whole system of slavery was becoming unmanageable. High numbers of slaves were fleeing the plantations, and were often encouraged to do so by abolitionists. Also significant here was the army's growing reluctance to recapture them. As da Costa writes, in 1887 in Parliament the abolitionist Joaquim Nabuco urged the army to refuse to catch runaway slaves. The army complied soon after asking Princess Isabel of Portugal to be relieved of such a duty (da Costa 2000). Da Costa describes the ensuing shift of power away from the traditional sugar-growing oligarchies identified with the monarchy towards the new coffee growing areas of the region of São Paulo. A year after abolition, the monarchy was overthrown and the republic set up.

Following abolition, da Costa describes the emergence of new possibilities of social mobility. This is the period of the beginning of urbanization and the development of industry, construction, transport and commerce. Immigrants, da Costa points out, were able to make use of these new opportunities whereas former slaves, especially because of discrimination, were denied these possibilities, and were unable to compete with the immigrants (da Costa 2000). Da Costa describes how the majority of ex-slaves continued working in the fields "in a style of life not different from the one they had had before abolition" whereas others were attracted to the urban centers, to live 'by their wits' and taking on the 'lowest tasks' (Ibid). Da Costa concludes:

> "Since abolition had been the result more of a desire to free Brazil from the problems of slavery than of a wish to emancipate the slaves, the dominant classes did not concern themselves with the black man and his integration into a class society. The ex-slave was left to his own devices. His difficulties in adjusting to new conditions were taken by the elites as proof of his racial inferiority. Many ex-slaveholders went as far as to say that the blacks had been happier as slaves than they were as free men since they were incapable of leading their own lives" (Ibid).

In other words, though the economic system of slavery was abolished and the colonial structures that had underpinned it were superceded, the racism and discrimination that gave the system legitimacy in the eyes of many remained intact, and continue to be influential to this day. This has also been noted in the case of other slave plantation systems in the Americas. In all these regions where slavery was present, as Drescher and McGlynn argue, the hopes held out by

emancipation have not been fulfilled because of what Raymond Smith terms as the 'stubborn cultural residue of racism' (Drescher and McGlynn 1992). In the case of Brazil, Helio Santos takes on this issue and contrasts the treatment awarded to European newcomers as compared to the recently released slaves, and attributes to this initial disparity the subsequent inequalities that have plagued the black and brown population of Brazil. Besides receiving land and financial support, European immigrants also received other benefits and preferential treatment from the state and the Brazilian elite with regard to jobs (Santos 2001:42). Juxtaposed to this treatment, on the 14th of May 1888, the day after abolition, more than 700,000 people, 5% of the population at the time, are in one stroke put in what Santos calls a 'fictional labor market' (Santos 2001:79). After this date huge numbers of ex-slaves left the *senzala*, the slave homes in the farms, to go to the peripheries of the cities and the peripheries of society (Santos 2001:78). The manner in which the abolition of slavery was conducted, Santos concludes, condemned blacks to social immobility, hindering their economic and educational possibilities. Those who had been up to now a vital part of the national economy were left to their own devices to compete in a labor market where they were not only discriminated against in favor of white European immigrants, but were also disadvantaged in comparison with the immigrants who were, in many cases, better prepared for urban wage-labor.

THE REPRESSION OF IDLENESS

According to judicial, journalistic and literary documentation dating from the period soon after abolition, it is clear that there was a large population wandering the streets and public squares of Rio and that many saw that the time had come to impose more drastic measures on what was perceived as a growing threat in the urban centers, from a 'rootless' mass (Irene Rizzini 1995). This 'rootless' mass, according to historian Caio Prado Jr. was the product of the great chasm that always existed in Brazil between the dominant and the popular classes, between master and slaves who had during colonial times clearly defined roles in the political-economic domain (Irene Rizzini 1995:116). With the breakdown of the colonial order, a 'rootless' mass is created, made up of those 'disqualified', maladjusted individuals, with no precise occupation or without any occupation at all (Irene Rizzini, 1995:116). In his book 'Os Bestializados' José Murilo de Carvalho points out that Rio de Janeiro had a population that could be compared to the

so called 'dangerous classes'[3] these were the "thieves, prostitutes, *malandros* [knaves or tricksters], army, navy and foreign ship deserters, gypsies... gamblers, shoe shiners, crooks, *pivetes* [young thieves]..." (Ibid). As regards the latter, Carvalho, referring to an observation made by Evaristo Moraes in 1892, points out that together with this seemingly idle mass, there were a number of 'abandoned minors' (Irene Rizzini 1995:116). As Rizzini argues, the concern with repressing idleness comes about as an inevitable part of the process of transformation of the socio-economic relations under the transition to capitalism. As she writes; "With the abolition of slavery, how do you make the free man work voluntarily, be he slave or migrant?" (Ibid). According to Sidney Chalhoub, what was at issue here was the construction of a new work ideology, where work is both 'dignifying and civilizing' and closely connected to one's sense of national identity (Chalhoub quoted in Irene Rizzini 1995:116). The Law for the Repression of Idleness, passed in July 1888, two months after abolition, was precisely this, an appeal to the ethics of work as the solution to social ailments and public disorder, which came to define, classify and govern a vast sector of the population who were comprised on the whole of the most excluded and marginalized. From Drescher and McGlynn's edited collection of essays, with historical research carried out in other plantation societies throughout the Americas, it can be seen that Brazil's 'repression of idleness' was far from unique. As the authors point out, such measures are typical of the way in which the planter class, in collusion with the state, both fearing revolt and labor disorganization codified new laws and forms of governance (Drescher and McGlynn 1992).

That the first laws decreed after abolition in Brazil were concerned with the 'repression of idleness' then should come as no surprise, considering the anxieties which marked the period of transition from slave economy to a capitalist one, from the management of persons by brute force to an Enlightenment version of governance, from empire to republic. There was a fear, primarily amongst plantation owners, that there would be a lack of adequate, voluntary labor to support the economy, and in both cities and plantations there was a fear of what this newly freed population of ex-slaves might do were they not to be obligatorily engaged in productive labor. The second paragraph in the legislation for the 'Repression of Idleness' proposes the education of 'guilty infancy' through the establishment of correctional facilities that would treat 'idlers' who were under 17 years of age, by imparting the discipline of work. The document states:

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[3] As Lydia Morris points out, the 'dangerous classes' was a term employed in Victorian England to describe 'social outsiders', individuals who stand outside of not only mainstream society and its institutions

"... the reform is profoundly moral and humanitarian... The effective application
of idle hands, turned to work and the repression to the tendency of vagrancy,
parasitism, vagabondage, mendicancy and dishonest work are amongst the
measures that can efficiently contribute to the development of society" [my
translation] (1887-1889 Parliamentary Documents quoted in Leite 1991:64).

Prior to this law in times of slavery, slaves were prohibited from congregating in public places or
shops, they were forbidden to enter taverns or gambling houses (da Costa 2000:140). It was also
illegal to buy any goods from slaves unless they showed authorization from their masters, so as to
reduce thefts it was argued (Ibid). Subsequently after abolition, according to Irma Rizzini, the
beginning of the republic was marked by a period of repression. In 1893 a law ordered the
removal from the streets of Rio de Janeiro, then the federal capital, of 'vagrant, vagabonds and
capoeiras, of any sex and age' (Irma Rizzini 1995). In 1902 after police reforms, the government
demanded the internment of 'vice-ridden minors' in correctional colonies and the penal age of
responsibility was lowered from 14 to 9 years of age (while the legal working age was established
at 14) (Abreu & Martinez 1997:26). In 1903 the Correctional Colony of Dois Rios was created in
Ilha Grande, to receive these 'minors'. The Colony, built on an island many miles from Rio, had
the goal of cleaning up the city and isolating the undesirables (Irma Rizzini 1995:248).

The turn of the century was a time when concerns about child criminality were evident
world-wide. As Nikolas Rose writes, 19th century thought was haunted by the specter of the
crowd, the mob, the mass, the riot, the revolutionary or disruptive potential of the concentration
of people in public urban space (Rose 1992). It is in this context that the imperative to transform
towns into well-ordered spaces, to institute laws and practices of governance in the city arises. It
is also in this context that the differential treatment between the childhood of the poor and that of
the well-off becomes a matter of policy. Brazilian legislation at the time reflects these concerns,
attempting to regulate the removal of children found on the streets, as well as those caught
breaking the law.

At the beginning of the century there was a widely accepted idea that minors should be
educated in 'appropriate institutions', so that in 1905 Franco Vaz referring to a speech of the then
president of the Republic of Brazil, Rodrigues Alves states that;

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but who also reject its underlying norms and values (Morris 1994:2).

"there is a clear perception that in a sanitary and modern city it was also necessary to have a population purged of its worse elements (...) it is urgent and indispensable to repress vagabondage, vice and crime with the creation of correctional colonies, preserving at the same time the youth that are driven there by means of education in appropriate institutions" [my translation] (Vaz quoted in Irma Rizzini 1995:248).

From this post-abolition period then the first recorded use of the category 'street children' (in embryonic forms, though not the term itself which as we saw in the last chapter only came to be clearly defined in the 1980s) is evident in debates amongst the law-making and governing city elite about what they saw as the lawlessness and disorganization of the city. This occurred some fifty years after similar concerns were shown in England for the children of the streets of large cities such as London and Manchester (Cunningham 1991). Whereas the English at that time were experiencing the consequences of industrialization and urbanization, Brazilians were moving from a colonial monarchy and slavery to a republic based on a capitalist economy. Whereas in England, as Cunningham work shows, the categories used to describe the children of the street contained a class prejudice, in the case of Brazil a further dimension of race is also added. Yet in both countries an underlying obsession with the 'freedom' and autonomy of children and adolescents on the street can be seen, and the concern that they are not fully civilized.[4] We may well consider whether such obsession with the 'freedom' of these youngsters did not spring from broader anxieties about 'freedom' at the time, in particular the anxieties prompted by the recently attained status of 'free' by slaves in the New World and other freedoms attained by the working class in Europe, anxieties, as Rose put it, about the specter of the crowd (Rose 1992).

During the post-abolition period, there are many registers in the contemporary literature of concerns provoked by children on the streets of Rio de Janeiro expressed by the city's governing elite, its lawyers, politicians, judges and reformists. In a speech to the Senate in 1896 Lopes Trovão describes the 'sordid' life of children on the street who steal and vandalize. A few years later in 1905 Franco Vaz, points to the situation of 'morally abandoned children on the

streets, the criminals of tomorrow, loose by themselves... without protection or scruples, living face to face with hunger, anxious to also possess what others possess' (quoted in Irma Rizzini 1997:59). The proposed solution is the removal of these *pivetes* [young thieves] from the streets.

Abreu and Martinez point out what they believe are the dual motivations that informed these debates and the creation of programs and interventions for this population.

> "The context of the crisis of slavery and the discussions around the necessity to form free and disciplined workers, without doubt, was fundamental for the emergence of social concern about children, in particular those from the poorest sectors of society. Informing these debates, beyond the economic problem of the construction of free labor and the attempts at social control, there were also visions of children as being responsible for the future, future citizens on whose shoulders was the task of bringing 'progress' and 'civilization' to the fatherland" [my translation] (Abreu, M and Martinez A. 1997:25).

Legislation during the period of transition from Empire to Republic in Brazil at the turn of the century shows a concern with the reordering of the political and social structure particularly influenced by notions of national identity that came to dominate the popular imagination of the time (Irene Rizzini 1995:110). In this context we see a growing concern with childhood. Whereas this concern during times of the Colony and the Empire could be seen in the sphere of religious organizations and charities, in the new republic these become the prerogative of the state, in particular the judiciary which takes upon itself the task of formulation the 'problems' of this population as well as searching for possible 'solutions' (Irene Rizzini 1995:111). As the Deputy for São Paulo wrote in 1909;

> "of all the unfortunates, that of abandoned or guilty infants is the more worthy of our endeavors. The sick, the alienated and the old are certainly worthy of all interest; but, the greater part of these wretched is made up of the destitute already at life's decline. The abandoned minor, on the other hand, will grow: according to the education he receives he will become a danger for those around him, or an

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[4] Such children on the streets of England were often referred to through terms such as; street urchin, ragged boys, or else as Cunningham points out, by references to animals or to 'savages' written about at the time,

honorable one capable of forming, for instance, nucleus of good men" [my translation] (quoted in Irene Rizzini 1995:110).

In 1900, showing more insight than most at the time, the jurist Evaristo Morais in denouncing the conditions of children interned in Rio's detention center, opens his report with what seems almost like a present-day evaluation of the causes of the 'abandonment of childhood':

> "Of the most horrifying phenomenon of the present times, derived on the one hand by the dissolution of the family and on the other by the economic crisis that signals the transformation of the capitalist order – the abandonment of childhood seems to moralists, sociologists and criminologists as worthy of all our attention because of the direct links it has with urban criminality" [my translation] (Moraes quoted in Irene Rizzini 1995:111).

Permeating much of the thinking and policies around childhood at this time was the sense that children were the 'genesis of society', as Senator Lopes Trovão put it (Ibid). But behind such thinking there was also, as Irene Rizzini argues, a constant oscillation between wanting to protect the child and on the other hand to protect society, or the public order (Ibid). As we have already noted with the case of 'street children', the dilemma is that they are conceived as both at risk and a risk. And so, as Rizzini points out, the 'problem of childhood' at this time begins to acquire a political dimension.

Tracing the genesis of the term 'minor' [menor] in Brazil, Londoño suggests that up to the 19th century 'minor' was used as synonymous with child, adolescent, or youth and used only to demarcate civil or canonical responsibility (Londoño quoted in Faleiros 1995:209). But from the end of the 19th century onwards the Brazilian judiciary,

> "discovers the 'minor' in the poor children and adolescents of the cities, who by not being under the authority of their parents and tutors are considered abandoned by the jurists... The minor was then not the son of 'a family' subject to paternal authority, or an orphan under tutelage but a child or adolescent

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here the children became; 'street Arabs', 'English Kaffirs', 'Hottentots' (Cunningham 1991:108).

materially or morally abandoned" [my translation] (Londoño quoted in Faleiros 1995:209).

Irma Rizzini provides a succinct account of the genealogy of the term 'minor' in Brazilian legal practice and social intervention (Irma Rizzini 1995). A 'minor', she argues from the end of the 19th century came to mean not just an individual less than 18 years old, but someone from a;

> "disorganized family, where bad habits, prostitution, vagrancy, moral turpitude, and all manner of other negative characteristics prevailed, whose conduct was marked by immorality and lack of decorum, who used coarse language, who had a dishelved appearance, various diseases, and little schooling, worked on the street to survive, and wandered around in gangs, in suspicious company" (Irma Rizzini 1994:99).

In reference to Western European history, Ariés (1973 [1960]) pointed out that children gradually became separated from the adult world and confined, in what he terms, a kind of quarantine in the form of school or college before being released into the world (quoted in Faleiros 1995:210). In Brazil for the minor this confinement occurred in institutions other than schools. Also, as Faleiros suggests, childhood became ever more divided between the rich child whose problems were resolved within other networks of support in particular by the family, and the poor child, whose family was considered as problematic and unstructured, and a problem for the state, for the Judiciary and correctional institutions (Ibid). As such Faleiros notes the institution of a double minority – that of the child and that of the minor. This attitude, which can be described as the myth of the poor child, of which street children are a sub-category, continued and continues to inform thinking on and policy for children from low-income communities. Between 1927 and 1990 when the Minor's Code was in force, children and adolescents from the poorest sectors in society were potentially categorized as being in an 'irregular' situation under which a plurality of cases was considered ranging from orphans, abandoned minors, street minors, young criminals, etc. Being thus labeled, youngsters were removed to institutions such as correctional facilities and came under the tutelage of the state (Ibid). The Children and Adolescent Statute of 1990 attempted to remedy this situation in its claim to offer universal protection to children and adolescents. Yet habits diehard and the use of the term 'minor' in its original, divisive format is

still widespread in the general population, in the judiciary, the police as well as in the media. We return to this issue in chapter 7 when we refer to the social movements, many inspired by Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, which have challenged the notion of the 'minor' and pressed for the ratification of the new Statute.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This brief history of government intervention upon childhoods that were seen to be 'out of place' shows that whilst the exponents of these laws and debates saw themselves as motivated by reformatory and nation-building aspirations, the consequences of their reforms were in fact highly repressive. These governmental acts, governmental in Foucault's sense of producing and acting on subjects (Foucault 1982), were marked by the removal, internment and segregation of part of the population considered as misfits and a threat by the governing elite. That the embryonic notion of 'street child' should have its origins in a historical period when a particular sense of urban and national space was being built is extremely significant. Summing up the arguments in this chapter, we can observe that in Brazil and its capital Rio de Janeiro, a particular vision of nation, childhood and urban space arise simultaneously in the transition from slavery and monarchical colony, to capitalist republican nation. These imagined and interlocking notions and practices of governance, though progressive and modernist in their aspirations, proved to be discriminatory and exclusionary. Chapter 5 explores further how these imaginings and ordering of urban space continue to affect the experiences and trajectories of children and adolescents who live on the street. One particularly perverse reinterpretation of these notions of order which we have already encountered, the Candelária massacre, will also be further analyzed since, as one of the accused off-duty police officers claimed in his trial, he was cleaning urban space from 'dangerous' individuals.[2] As these imagined ideas of order begin to be articulated and enforced by a self-consciously modern and European influenced Brazilian elite at the end of the nineteenth century, so it relegated to the margins those who just didn't fit in; vagrants, vagabonds and a particular anomalous kind of childhood they called 'street children'. In the next chapter we will explore the consequences of these exclusionary and discriminatory practices in the living

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[5] Military police officer Marcus Borges Emmanuel was sentenced to life in prison for his part in the massacre (quoted in Amnesty International Report 1999).

conditions of those who came to settle in the city by looking at the *favela* communities of Rio from which the youngsters on the street originate.

CHAPTER 4

CIDADE MARAVILHOSA – THE PRESENT

In the previous chapter we chartered some of the historical conditions which produced a particular way of representing and governing an urban population, comprised to a large part by ex-slaves or their descendants, who were perceived as being either dangerous or else in need of correction for the good of the nation. In this chapter we provide an overview of these communities at the 'margins' of the city from which youngsters on the street originate. This overview will provide two things; first, through the work of Janice Perlman who conducted research in Rio's *favelas* in the 1960s, we demonstrate that whereas these communities have been represented as being 'marginal', they are in fact deeply embedded, although asymmetrically connected to the political-economy and culture of the city. Secondly, through a series of social and economic indicators, we will map the disparity between *favela* communities and the rest of the city. This quantitative map of inequality in the city is important in this thesis for it provides the background in which the trajectories to and through the street described in the following chapters are initiated. This chapter concludes by addressing the most pressing issues for young people in these communities, the increase in violence and the rise of the drugs trade. The drugs trade and the street, we conclude here, are the two most extreme options for youngsters in an environment of social structural oppression.

FAVELA LIFE AND MARGINALITY

Perlman's seminal work, *The Myth of Marginality*, first published in 1976, is an extensive study of the inhabitants of the *favelas* and urban peripheries of Rio that have come to be considered 'marginal'. Perlman traces the origin of the term and the concern with marginality to the period between the two World Wars, when sociology as a discipline grew in popularity. Perlman attributes the popularity of sociology at the beginning of the 20th century, in particular in

the USA and in Europe, to an increasing awareness of the growing social inequality and its potential threat to the social order. The various myths of marginality which developed, Perlman suggests, "are in part an ideological expression of the sociologists' concern with the integration of masses of people" (Perlman 1979:247). Marginality theory found its initial expressions in the Chicago School of Sociology, in particular in the writings of Robert Park who coined the term in the 1920s to refer to the transitional stage in the integration of people, mainly from immigrant communities, into urban life (Hannerz 1980). Park's initial meaning is subsequently transformed by other authors who have come to use the term 'marginal' to refer to those that do not adapt to the city, who fail to integrate into its customs and economy. Perlman observes, citing the work of Lisa Peattie and Alejandro Portes, that in Latin America the city was historically seen as the depository of high culture and the elite, and so tended to be highly homogenous in its class composition. This led to the pejorative connotations of the urban poor, who, alongside rural migrants, were seen as a threat to the urban elite, and who subsequently have been labeled as marginal (Perlman 1979).

At the time of Janice Perlman's study in the 1960s, Rio was one of the fastest growing Brazilian cities and showed the widening gap between urbanization rates and the capacity of the industrial sector to absorb the labor force. The *favelas* of Greater Rio numbered 300 then and held a population of about 330 thousand (Cezar 2002). While the city of Rio itself was growing at a rate of 3.3 % a year the *favelas* and *suburbios* (urban peripheries) were growing at a rate of 7% (Ibid). Squatter settlements in the Third World, Perlman argues, reflect the same interplay of social forces which arise through the scarcity or high price of standard housing in cities, prompting low-income families wishing to be close to the economic and educational opportunities of the city to seek out vacant lands and cheaply available materials to fashion their homes. In the 1960s such settlements represented about one third of the population of Rio, 45% of Mexico City, 35% of Caracas and 25% of Lima and Santiago (Perlman 1979:12).

Perlman quotes the Official Bulletin of the Brazilian Secretariat of Social Services which describes a *favela* as "a group of dwellings with high density occupation, the construction of which is carried out in a disorderly fashion with inadequate material, without zoning, without public services, and on land which is illegally being used without the consent of the owner" (quoted in Perlman 1979:13). Rio's most famed *favelas* are built improbably and at times seemingly in defiance of gravity on what was historically unused land alongside the city's steep granite hills. These hills surround the flatter land and beach-front stretches on which the city is

densely built. But *favelas*, in particular the more recent ones, are also found in the peripheries of the city and here, less restricted by space, the houses have tended to be further spaced out from each other and in some instances, at least in the past, to possess a small garden or yard. Perlman's description of the *favela* offers a vivid picture that I will here quote at length in order to provide further on a contemporary description of a *favela* and to see how much or how little life in these communities has changed since the 1960s:

> "From the outside, the typical *favela* seems a filthy, congested human ant-heap. Women walk back and forth with huge metal cans of water on their heads or cluster at the communal water supply washing clothes. Men hang around the local bars chatting or playing cards, seemingly with nothing better to do. Naked children play in the dirt and mud. The houses look precarious at best, thrown together out of discarded scraps. Open sewers create a terrible stench, especially on hot, still days. Dust and dirt fly everywhere on windy days, and mud cascades down past the huts on rainy ones.
>
> Things look very different from inside, however. Houses are built with a keen eye to comfort and efficiency, given the climate and available materials. Much care is evident in the arrangement of furniture and the neat cleanliness of each room. Houses often boast colorfully painted doors and shutters, and flowers or plants on the window-sill. Cherished objects are displayed with love and pride... Also unapparent to the casual observer, there is a remarkable degree of social cohesion and mutual trust and a complex internal social organization, involving numerous clubs and voluntary associations" (Perlman 1979:13).

Perlman notes that, although at the time of her research most governments spoke of eradicating them and converting them into public housing, there were few signs that *favelas* were, or indeed are, a temporary phenomenon (Perlman 1979:14). This policy attitude and the notions about *favelas* that underpins it, held not only by government officials and policy makers but also by academics and the public at large, are the central focus of Perlman's book. Central in these notions is a stigmatizing stereotype of the *favela* and its inhabitants which Perlman identifies as an idea of the *favela* as a 'pathological agglomeration' of;

"unemployed loafers, abandoned women and children, thieves, drunks, and prostitutes... In appearance an eyesore, the *favela* detracts from the picturesque panorama of the city. Economically and socially it is a drain, a parasite, demanding high expenditures for public services and offering little in return. *Favelados* stick largely to their separate enclaves, they do not contribute skills or even purchasing power to the general welfare, and they are a public menace. Furthermore, the lands they occupy are often of high financial value, thus pre-emptying more profitable land use and lowering district property values" (Perlman 1979:14).

Perlman also points to an opposing vision of the *favela* and one that her own research drew out; in which the *favela* is seen as a community striving for elevation, inhabited by:

"dynamic, honest, capable people who could develop their neighborhoods on their own initiative if given the chance. *Favelados* contribute to the economy as workers and consumers and through improvements they make on their land and houses. Over time the *favela* will evolve naturally into a productive neighborhood, fully integrated into the city... These supposed 'backwaters' are, in fact, central to the cultural identity of Brazil. Much of the spirit for which Rio is famous - the samba, the colorful slang, the spiritist cults - spring directly from the *favelas*" (Perlman 1979:15).

Perlman's research concluded that far from being marginal, *favelados* are integrated into society but in a way that is detrimental to their own interests; they are tightly bound to the system but in a 'severely asymmetrical form' (Perlman 1979:195). Perlman writes;

"It is my contention that the *favela* residents are not economically and politically marginal, but are exploited and repressed; that they are not socially and culturally marginal, but are stigmatized and excluded from a closed social system. Rather than being passively marginal in terms of their own attitudes and behavior, they are being actively marginalized by the system and by public policy" (Perlman 1979:195).

What Perlman found is that *favelados* have "the aspirations of the bourgeoisie, the perseverance of pioneers, and the values of patriots" (Perlman 1979:243). That they are socially well organized and make creative use of the urban environment and its institutions, that they are optimistic and aspire for a better education for their children, and for better life conditions for themselves. But their aspirations for social mobility are frustrated by the closed nature of the Brazilian class structure, their children are priced or zoned out of schools, they get the worst jobs with the lowest pay for themselves, often for rates below the minimum wage. Yet the myths of marginality survive "not because of snobbery, moralizing or ethnocentrism, but because they fulfill the ideological-political function of preserving the social order which generated them" (Ibid).

Establishing that marginality is not a feature of individuals' own attitudes and attributes, Perlman goes on to analyze the circumstances outside individual control that put him/her into this asymmetrical relationship to the social structure. What she looks into here is the nature of the labor market, social stratification, the class system and the role of the state in modern capitalist societies as well as Brazil's position within an international system. In this analysis Perlman considers marginalization as a consequence of a particular model of development or 'under-development'.[1]

FAVELA LIFE NOW

Favela life, entering in some instances its third generation, has undergone considerable change since Janice Perlman described it in the late sixties. Rio is no longer growing at the rate it was three decades ago, with smaller towns in the state of Rio now growing at a much higher rate. Over the last two decades the population of the city of Rio grew 0.71% as compared to the growth rate of 1,21% for the state as whole. Whereas the city of Rio is growing at a slower rate than it once did, many surrounding municipalities are now flourishing, either through the rise of tourism in coastal areas such as Angra dos Reis (the population of which grew at 3,68% in that

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[1] In this part of her work Perlman takes on board much of the dependency theory developed by Latin American intellectuals such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso in the 1960s. Simply put, dependency theorists like Cardoso argued that the underdevelopment of much of the Third World is due to the extraction of surplus during the colonial era from the colonies, the peripheries, to the European colonial centers, the core. This extractive process hindered the development of native industries and markets and froze the native economy into an export regime that relied on primary products. After the end of colonialism the Third World's late arrival into a competitive industrialized global capitalist system, placed them in considerable disadvantage compared to the more advanced economies of 'core' countries.

same period), or through other booming industries such as oil, in the region of Macaé, or the automobile industry in the interior of the state (Davidovich 2003). Yet in Rio *favelas* are still growing at a faster rate than the rest of the city, even though their growth rate is considerably lower than in the 1960s. In 1950 Rio's *favela* population stood at 169,305 people, as compared with a total city population of 2,337,451. In 1991 the total population of the city of Rio was calculated at 5,480,778 people of which 882,483 lived in *favelas*. In 2000 this figure grew to 5,851,914 of which 1,092,783 lived in *favelas* (IBGE figures quoted in Cezar 2002). This means that the percentage of the city's population living in *favelas* has steadily increased; in 1950 it stood at 7.2% of the total population, in 1980 it was 14%, in 1991 16% and in 2000, 18.7% (Ibid).

Santa Marta

My first experience of a *favela* was a visit to Santa Marta with other researchers from CIESPI. Santa Marta, one of Rio's more picturesque *favelas*, is built on the hill of Dona Marta underneath the great hill on which the statue of Christ (Corcovado) is found. Santa Marta is in the *bairro* of Botafogo, an affluent Zona Sul district replete with upper-middle class houses, condominiums and shopping centers. The line between *morro* (hill and *favela*) and *asfalto* (the ground) is crossed as one takes a turn off a busy street and heads towards the hill-side. The houses at first appear indistinguishable from the rest of the *bairro*, these are often the older and wealthier residents who don't necessarily consider themselves as living in a *favela*. Then suddenly there is no longer a road or traffic and the only way up the hill is through narrow walkways and stairways. We climb up towards Santa Marta through a detour from the main stairway leading up the hill into the community because of a sewage leakage that was pouring the contents from a manhole down the main stairs. As we walked up the alternative stairway we were confronted by a symphony! Oklahoma University Music Faculty graduates were performing with their orchestra and choir at an entrance to the *favela* in a small concrete courtyard surrounded by buildings before one enters the labyrinthine corridors and alleys that wind their way up the hill. A philharmonic orchestra surrounded by brick shacks, satellite dishes, hanging electricity cables, and children running around imitating the maestro's hand motions. André Bretton could not have devised a better image.

Município do Rio de Janeiro
Favelas

Segundo o Cadastro da Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro - 1999
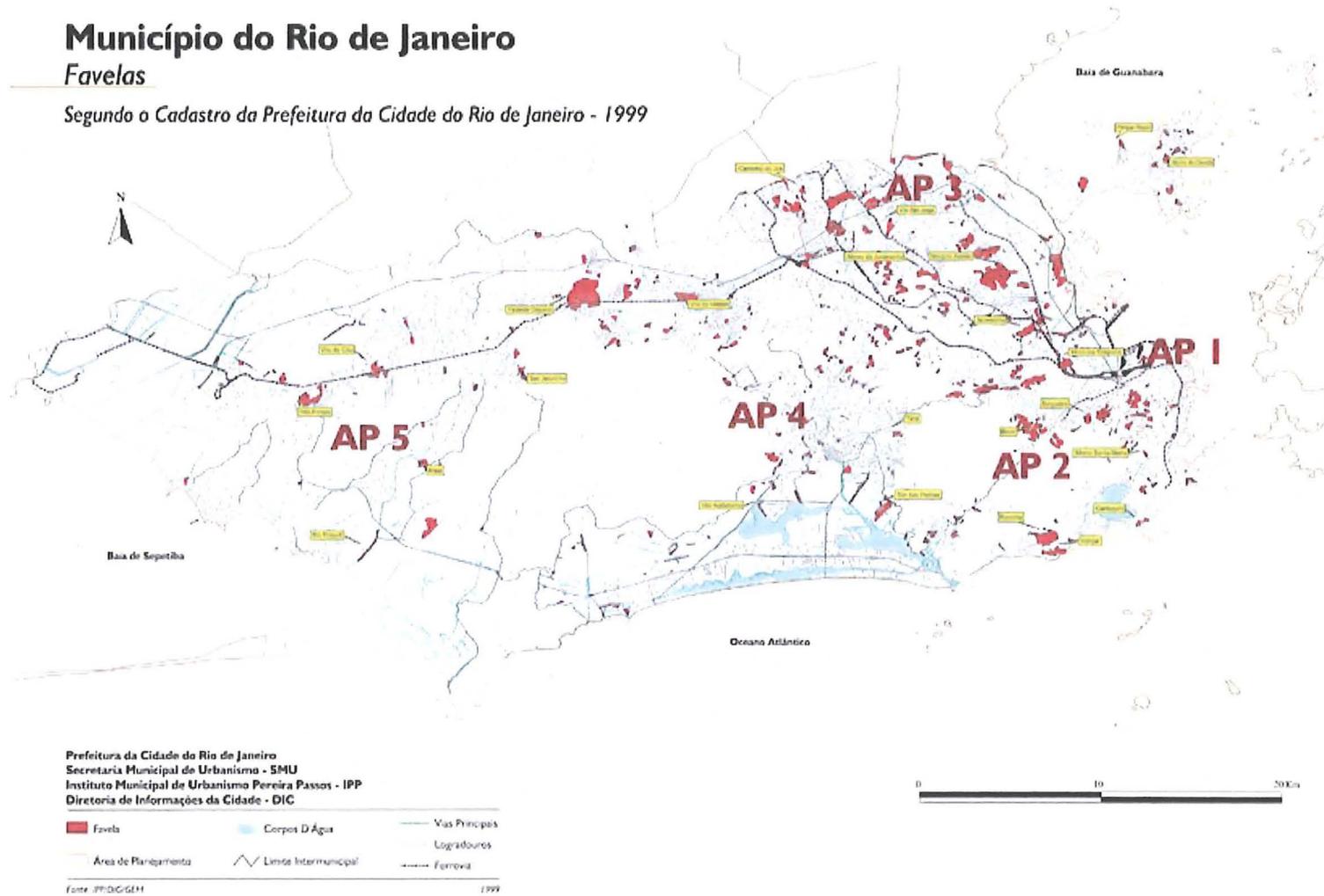
4.1 Municipality of Rio de Janeiro and position of its main *favelas* (1999) - source council of Rio de Janeiro.

4.2 *Favela* Santa Marta (photograph by Karen Ward).

4.3 View from the top of *favela* Santa Marta of the middle-class high-rises below (photograph by Karen Ward).
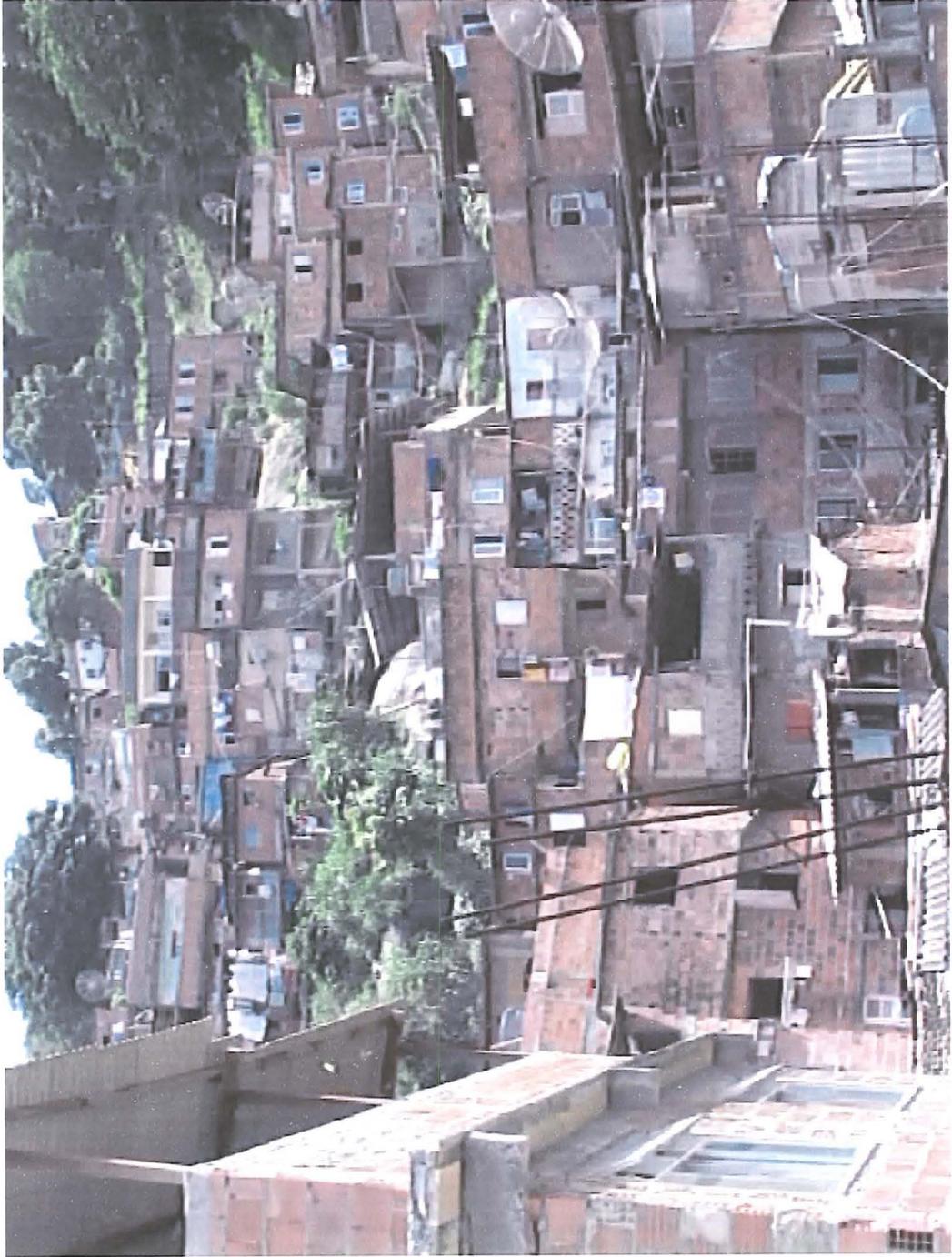
4.4 *Favela* Santa Marta.

4.5 Difference between exterior and interior, *Favela* Santa Marta (photograph by Karen Ward).

4.6 Statute of Mary and Jesus, *Favela* Santa Marta (photograph by Karen Ward).

4.7 Community-run crèche at top of *favela* Santa Marta.

As the photographs of the *favela* of Santa Marta in Rio's Zona Sul show, (pages 74 to 76) houses are still built tightly next to each other. The long history of many *favelas* like Santa Marta, combined with political pressure by residents' associations and civil society organizations, has prompted a shift in municipal policy away from the removal of squatter settlements that characterized the 1950s and 60s towards the urbanization of *favelas*. Instituted since 1996 the urban regeneration program '*Favela-Bairro*' has sought to urbanize *favelas* by bringing them into the city's infrastructure through the provision of water supply, sewage disposal, rubbish collection, electricity, road and alley paving, turning them into another urban neighborhood. With the increased security involved in the ownership of their abode, bricks have in the majority of houses replaced wood and scrap as material of choice. Many houses have increased in size, now having two or three floors, by the ingenious addition of rooms and floors to the original structure. Even more than in Perlman's time, the insides of houses display an active consumer culture with video recorders, satellite television, stereo systems, and other domestic appliances. *Favela* homes, though often small and inhabited by large and sometimes extended families, efficiently make use of space with bedding being removed during the day and many cupboards used for storage. Satellite dishes pepper the unpainted brick exteriors of the houses through which *Rede Globo*, Brazil's most popular, and populist, television channel feeds a daily menu of the now world-renowned Brazilian *novelas* [soap operas]. *Favelas* like Santa Marta now can also boast a small games arcade, community buildings and a selection of churches[2]. Children are rarely seen at 'play in the dirt and mud'. Most children frequent the local primary school not far from Santa Marta and the younger children make use of at least two community crèches (page 79). Santa Marta is, to a degree, a well-organized community with housing associations, youth clubs and churches. Even more so than in Perlman's time, organized cultural activities like samba schools have grown in strength and continue to pass on skills to new generations. Now though, *baile funk* (funk dances) are the new manifestation of this musicality of the *favela* and have become a regular feature in many communities attracting tens of thousands of youngsters every weekend. *Favelas* have also become more active in the way they are seen and represented to *Carioca* society more broadly. Rocinha, Rio's largest *favela* with over 40,000 inhabitants, boasts its own website

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[2] Over the last 3 decades a variety of religious denominations have flourished all over Rio including many inside *favela* communities. Particularly popular have been evangelical cults which are said to number around 4,000 organizations in Greater Rio and comprise around 2 million adepts. The force behind the growth of the evangelical movement has not been so much through its more 'traditional' denominations (Methodists, Presbyterian, Baptists, Lutherans) as through 'neo-Pentecostalists', millenarian and messianic cults often relying on spectacles of healing and exorcism (Ventura 2002).

visibly advertised in a giant banner as you drive past the bottom of the *morro*. Rio's *favelas* are also linking up electronically, the site 'Vivafavela' is dedicated to news and events common to *favela* residents, and also describes the history of the *favela* in Rio (www.vivafavela.com.br).

All these changes point to a positive integration of *favelados* into *Carioca* society, but unfortunately they do not tell the whole story. The force of the 'myth of marginality' is still very much at work informing the preconceptions many *Cariocas* have towards those that live in the *favelas*. These individual prejudices together come to form the structural constraints that continue to exclude *favelados* from social, economic and cultural resources that other *Carioca* citizens enjoy, either by active discrimination or by a lack of adequate policies and initiatives to combat marginalization. As such *favelados* are still excluded from the social mobility they strive for.

'Africa is Here. And so is Europe' was the headline of one of a series of weekly reports that appeared in 2001 in *O Globo*, Brazil's leading newspaper. The articles based on a recent UNDP (United Nations Development Program) report, the first of its kind, analyzed the Human Development Index (HDI) of the municipality of Rio de Janeiro and its many districts or *bairros*. 'Africa is here and so is Europe', refers to the finding that whereas Rio's more affluent *bairro*, Lagoa, perched near the sea and beneath the giant statue of Christ that stands on one of Rio's tallest hills, could claim a standard of living comparable to that of Italy, its poorest *bairro*, Icaraí, measured alongside the living standards of Algeria. To say that Rio, and Brazil more generally, is a land of contrasts is nothing new. What was new about the UNDP report was that it was able to provide specific figures for what *Cariocas* experience on a daily basis: the co-existence of a modern cosmopolitan metropolis with a poverty and destitution that have been unknown in Western Europe and North America for perhaps some 100 years.

The UNDP report chose Rio precisely because the co-existence of these two worlds is so visible, and yet these are worlds that at times scarcely appear to meet. For many of the affluent elite that inhabit the beach-side high-rise flats in Zona Sul along Rio's stunning coastline the reality of those that live less than a stone's throw away is the stuff of news bulletins, only rarely piercing through a carefully maintained seclusion through a highly sophisticated regime of security and surveillance. For their 'neighbors', living on the hill-side *favelas*, the lives of the elite is something only to be dreamed of and imagined through the ubiquitous *novelas*. The gap between these worlds, of the *favela* or *morro* and the *asfalto*, if the latest statistics are to be relied on, appears as wide as ever. Luiz Cezar Ribeiro, a sociologist involved in writing the report, has termed the city's particular version of inequality as the 'Carioca model of segregation' (Ribeiro

2003). This model, Ribeiro explains, is one that combines social distance with physical proximity. This creates the possibility of interaction between groups that are at complete variance in the social scale. Rio is what it is, he argues, because of this proximity between the rich and the poor (Ibid).

This social distance begins early in the life cycle. Absent from the UNDP report but discussed in the report from the Center for Information and Statistics of the State of Rio, is the fact that the suburbs and peripheries of Rio show high indices of malnutrition among young children. In *bairros* such as Nilópolis, 14% of 0-5 year olds were found to be malnourished, a figure that was compared in a newspaper article to that found in Zimbabwe (*Jornal do Brasil* in December 2002). Though the average per capita earning of *Cariocas* (R$ 522 a month)[3] is higher than the national average (R$ 264 a month), 12% of the city's resident are considered 'poor', that is, they live on less than R$ 82 a month, considered the minimum for the provision clothes, housing, and a basic diet (UNDP report quoted in *O Globo* May 19th 2001)[4]. This figure is also lower than the national average of 33.8% living in poverty, but it still means a total of around 700,000 people in the city are without access to the economic resources needed to provide them with the basic necessities for survival. Though pockets of poverty co-exist with more affluent neighborhoods throughout Rio, poverty is more marked in the suburbs and peripheries, in particular in the western part of Rio, a region called the Zona Oeste. Here average per capita income stands at R$ 279 per month as compared to R$ 1,395 in Zonal Sul where *bairros* like Copacabana, Ipanema, Leblon and Lagoa are found (Ibid).

Rio's unemployment rate stood at 8.6% in January 2003, just under the national average of 11.2% taken from Brazil's six largest metropolitan centers by the IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geographia e Estatísticas)[5]. Brazil's unemployment figures are just above the average figures for Latin America and the Caribbean, at 10% unemployment for the years 2001 and 2002.[6] But such seemingly low figures for the city of Rio, hide the fact that 48% of its working population is engaged in the informal sector or labeled as 'autonomous' workers, with only under 40% of Cariocas in the formal labor market (UNDP report quoted in *O Globo* May 19th 2001).

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[3] The Brazilian currency, the *real*, has fluctuated over the last few years as have many throughout Latin America and other developing countries. The *real* to dollar rate used in this work, at the time of fieldwork was between R$ 2.5 and R$3 to $1.
[4] The UNDP report on which the articles were based has not as of yet been published, and so the *Globo* articles were the only publicly available source of the study's findings.
[5] Figures taken from IBGE at www.ibge.org.uk
[6] Figures from the ILO January 2003, www.ilo.org

Also, according to the IBGE of those in employment 13.9% receive less than the minimum wage[7] (cited in *Folha de São Paulo* 5th July, 2003). Whereas 8.6% unemployment is taken as the city's average, Silva, de Lima and de Melo point out that unemployment rates in low income communities are on average three times higher than for the city as a whole (Silva, Denize de Lima, José and de Melo, Doriam 1999). This would make unemployment in *favelas* around 25% in 2003, though the figure is probably higher. In the Zona Oeste and the suburbs close to the city center, 4.3% of 10-14 year olds are also involved in the informal labor market, as compared to 2.1% of children from the Zona Sul (Ibid). The relationship between education and earnings is highlighted in the UNDP report. The report points out that in Rio there is an increase in average earnings of 5.5% for every year of basic schooling and a further 15% rise for every year of further education (*O Globo* 12th May 2001). That 7.3% of the city's children, about 50,000, aged between 7 and 14 years of age were out of school in the 1990s, does not bode well for the future (UNDP report quoted in *O Globo* April 28th 2001). This result, according to Rosane Mendonça, author of the report's chapter on education, stems from Rio's lack of investment in its primary education (Ibid). Whereas for residents of Rio's more affluent Zona Sul *bairros*, 67% have more than 9 years of study, one third of *favela* residents are illiterate and only 1.3% have studied for more than 12 years (Ibid). For instance, 59% of Lagoa's residents went to university as opposed to 2% of residents from Rocinha, a *favela* very close by (Ibid). Yet Rio as a whole boasts one of the country's lowest illiteracy rates.

The references to Africa in newspapers' reporting on social research carried out in the city of Rio is significant. On the one hand, the contrasts with development figures in Africa (Algeria or Zimbabwe in this case) have often been evoked in development literature, considering that development indices for many nations in the African continent are ranked low in tables provided by reports from institutions such as UNDP and the World Bank. But in the case of Brazil, there may well be an undertone of that post-slavery nation building aspiration in which Europe was something to strive for and Africa something to get away from. But 'Africa is here and so is Europe' can also mean in the case of Brazil, the acknowledgement that peoples of different ethnic origins have benefited differently from Brazil's development.

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[7] Minimum wage in 2002 was set at US $ 100 a month.

4.8 The 'Carioca model of segregation' (photograph by Karen Butler).

It is scarcely more than 100 years since slavery was abolished in Brazil and the social debt to ex-slaves and their descendants accumulated over that era is yet to be settled in Brazil whose black and mulatto population is well represented amongst the poorest sectors of the population. This contrasts with Brazilians of European descent, whose quality of life has also correspondingly been more akin to that of Europeans. Perlman's work already pointed out that in the late 1960s 21% of *favelados* were black, 30% were mulatto and 49% white. Yet the black population living in the *favela* represented nearly all of Rio's blacks.

THE MYTH OF RACIAL DEMOCRACY

As da Costa argues, up until the 1970s there was a prevalent and unchallenged myth in Brazil, which was also propagated internationally, that the country could boast an idyllic racial democracy where racism did not occur, where slavery was not as cruel as in other parts of the world, where the mixing of the races provided a model to counter the segregation which occurred elsewhere. With exponents such as the eminent sociologist Gilberto Freyre (a student of American anthropologist Fortes) claiming that social distance in Brazil was a result of class difference rather than color prejudice (da Costa 2000:234). Freyre argued in the 1950s that blacks in Brazil enjoyed the opportunity for social mobility and cultural expression, and because of this they did not develop a consciousness of being black, as their American counterparts had done (Ibid). Yet as da Costa points out, some twenty years later a new generation of social scientists came to different conclusions about race relations in Brazil. For these new researchers, many of them black or mulattos with affiliations to an emerging black consciousness movement centered around the University of São Paulo, blacks were not legally discriminated against but were "'naturally' and informally segregated" (Ibid). This was clear since the majority of the black population in a variety of social indicators, were to be found at the bottom rung of society. For these social scientists, such as Florestan Fernandes, racial democracy was a myth and Brazilians suffered from the ultimate prejudice; the belief they were not prejudiced (da Costa 2000). This new view of race relations was not welcomed by many Brazilians, attached as they were to idyllic notions of racial harmony expounded by Freyre. The revisionists were accused of creating a racial problem which did not exist.

Da Costa analyzes the myth of racial democracy in reference to the 'whitening' of the population ideology which we have already encountered. In this Brazilianized version of Euro-

American racist theories racial types were not absolute, but could be mixed in order that the white, civilized blood, could usurp the African blood in the building of a new productive nation. Within this schema the mulatto was a special category, someone on his way up the civilizing process. But in as much as 'whitening' was not only about color but also about culture, Brazilian white elite society tolerated amongst its ranks individual blacks who had moved up the social scale. In this context we can understand the cases of eminent individual blacks and mulattos within the elite at the turn of the century, such as the engineer and abolitionist André Rebouças, or the novelist Machado de Assis. These, as da Costa writes, were 'special' blacks, 'blacks of white soul' as a common white upper-class expression puts it, whose price for their social ascension was to adopt the "white's perception of the racial problem and of themselves" (da Costa 2000:240). As da Costa points out, the success of these individual cases was testimony to society that social mobility was a real possibility. Instances of this continue to the present. A few years ago Edson Arantes do Nascimento, better known as Pelé, was made sports minister. As Anani Dzidzienyo puts it: Pelé, as

> "the 'King of Football', was an invaluable ally of the Brazilian authorities, constantly used to demonstrate the validity of their 'racial democracy' propaganda. He himself claimed that there was no racism in Brazil..." (Dzidzienyo quoted in Vieira 1995:39).

Yet the statistics point otherwise. At birth a black Brazilian has a 30% greater chance of dying before the age of five than a white Brazilian, and their average life expectancy is 50 as compared to 63 for white Brazilians (Vieira 1995). Black people earn on average 20% less for the same professions than a white person doing the same job and black people make up 60% of the 10 million poorest Brazilian families (Ibid). Also, as Vieira points out, it is estimated that between 78% and 88% of Brazilian prison inmates are of African descent (Ibid). Similar indices can be found in many categories; schooling, university entrance, positions of power, representation in the media, etc. all of which point to the myth of racial democracy. The relevance of this for the present research is the disproportionate numbers of black or brown youngsters on the street. Figures dating back to Irene Rizzini's research in the 1980s, and confirmed by CIESPI's more recent research, point out that around 80% of children and adolescents on the

street can be considered black or brown, with only 20% of them white[8] (Rizzini 1986). These figures become more significant when placed against the 2001 census for the State of Rio where 54% of the population was considered white, 11% black and 35% brown (Jaccoud and Beghin 2002).

In the UNDP report *favela* residents, whatever their color, felt that they were discriminated against in getting a job because of where they lived (UNDP report quoted in *O Globo* 26th May 2001). The pejorative connotation of saying that you live in a *favela*, has meant that residents very often refrain from the term preferring instead to say that they come from the 'community' of Rocinha for instance. In this respect Rio is also plagued by a regionalism where some express prejudice or shame not only because of living in *favelas* but also in the Zona Norte or Zona Oeste, as opposed to the more 'noble' Zona Sul. In this sense it is as if the whole landscape of the city has become 'racialised', that is, persons regardless of color take on the prejudices and discrimination commonly associated with race by virtue of where they live.

Such 'racialized' regionalism is also present in the city's security apparatus. Whereas Zonal Sul can claim one police officer for every 351 residents, Zona Oeste and the suburbs only have one officer for every 1,027 people (UNDP report quoted in *O Globo* 26th May 2001). These figures inversely reflect the crime and violence rates of these areas, with the lowest levels of crime occurring in Zona Sul *bairros* such as Lagoa and Jardim Botânico and the highest in Zona Norte *bairros*. One issue that united people from all sectors of Carioca society was that of regarding violence as the city's worst problem (Ibid). Crime and violence figures have steadily risen in the city from the 1980s, an increase which has been blamed on the expansion of Rio's drugs trade which greatly increased the number of arms pouring into the city. Alongside this shift, the police have become ever more likely to use excessive or lethal force.[9] But as Leonarda Musumeci (2001) points out, research shows that police use of force is highly selective, with deaths through encounters or 'resistance' being concentrated in Rio's West and North Zones (the peripheries), in *favelas* rather than outside them, and disproportionately amidst the black

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[8] The term 'black' *preto*, 'brown' *pardo* are officially used by the Brazilian Statistical Research Institute (IBGE) in their census. When the first census on ethnicity was taken in Brazil in 1872 the results were the following: white 38%, brown 42% and black 20%. For 1991 the following figures are given: white 51%, brown 42%, black 5% (also with an addition of two categories yellow 0.4% and indigenous 0.2%) (IBGE quoted in Santos 2001).
[9] The number of people killed 'resisting arrest' in confrontation with the police in Rio has grown from 155 in 1993 to 358 in 1995, so that in 1995 the police killed almost a person a day. This is a figure not found in any other city from which data is available (Musumeci 2001).

population. Musumeci concludes that police violence is more intense in the less developed regions of the city, and that racism operates within the force (Musumeci 2001). Rio's homicide rate has reached 45.5 homicides per 100,000 people in the year 2000, a figure just below that of Washington (49.7 per 100,000) (UNDP report quoted in *O Globo* 26th May 2001). But these figures are unevenly distributed in the city, with the Zona Oeste having 57.5 homicides per 100,000 and Zona Sul 16.4 per 100,000. It is important to point out, as the report does, that Rio's police are responsible for about 10% of these homicides, earning it the unenviable title of the most lethal police force in the world (Ibid). Three times as many people die in confrontation with Rio's police, than are taken in as wounded, and 65% of its victims are shot in the back. Police homicides are also concentrated in the poorest areas of the city; between 1993 and 1996 the police killed 512 people in the *favelas* as compared to 430 in the *asfalto* even though the population of the *asfalto* is five times that of the *favela*.

THE GROWTH OF THE DRUGS TRADE

These increasing levels of crime and violence have been linked to the expansion of the drugs trade in Rio. Since the 1960s the world has witnessed a dramatic increase in the volume and reach of the illicit drugs trade. The increasing sophistication of drug cartels, their network of production and distribution as well as the ever-growing demand for consumption in the developed and developing world have made illicit drugs one of the world's biggest money earners with a retail value of around $500 billion per year, an income exceeding that of oil and second only to that of arms (UNRISD 1995). Rio de Janeiro has become very much embedded within this illicit drug political-economy, with disastrous repercussions for the social fabric of the city. According to Brazilian Federal police 2.5 tonnes of cocaine and 5.5 of marijuana are consumed every month in the whole of the city of Rio de Janeiro. Many *favelas* have become key retail points in this trade, some generating up to R$ 1million [about $ 400,000] a week (*O Globo* Saturday 4th August 2001).

The repercussions of such a vast influx of resources through the illicit trade in drugs - weapons, drugs and money - into Rio and its *favela* communities are clearly visible. As Alba Zaluar points out referring to the drug wars that have ensued; "We are before a new kind of war in which, in Rio de Janeiro in the 1980s alone, more young men have perished than American soldiers during the Vietnam War" (Zaluar 1994:42). Luke Dowdney's research into the

involvement of children and adolescents in the drugs trade in Rio, points out that though Rio de Janeiro is not officially at war, the role of children and adolescents participating in the territorial disputes of drug factions in Rio have more in common with the lives of 'child soldiers' than with gang members found in other parts of the world (Dowdney 2002). Though soaring homicide rates are perhaps the most significant aspect of this political-economy of illegal drugs, many other consequences have followed, further dividing and alienating the *favela* from the city, revitalizing the myths of marginality.

Yet as Dowdney rightly points out, *favelas* are not the only place where drugs are sold, and may well represent the drug trade's "poorest and least sophisticated manifestation" (Dowdney 2002:6). That *favelas* have become only one point of, in a way, small-time resellers, has often gone unnoticed. With a series of recent high profile arrests of suppliers and middle-men at the beginning of 2002 the general population in Brazil has recently come to realize that far more lucrative wholesale operations occur outside the *favelas* and involve a vast corrupt network of police officers, lawyers, politicians and other professionals. That the drug trade has become intrinsically associated with the *favela* has become very problematic for those who live there. In one way it has re-fuelled the stereotypes that Perlman outlined as regard this population as 'marginal', as somehow morally corrupt. In this sense the constant, and highly insensitive, police operations that frequently take place in the *favelas* have more often than not served to foster distrust and fear by local residents towards the police, in particular by the young who are most often at the receiving end of police repression. This sense of alienation from the police, and by an extension towards the state, plays into the hands of the drug dealing gangs the *comandos*, who have become what they themselves, and other commentators refer to as a 'parallel power'.

Dowdney's research traces the changes in the scale and structure of Rio's drug trade from the 1980s, identifying a radical restructuring, militarization, territorialization and increasing disputes and incidents of armed conflict and deaths with the arrival of cocaine into the city with its high profitability and with the growth in the demand for illicit drugs.[10] Drug factions, or *comandos*, in Rio are divided into 3 large groups that battle each other for the control of drug sales points, or *bocas de fumo*, based in most of Rio's *favelas*. As Dowdney describes, the drug trafficking factions can be more accurately seen as a 'network of affiliated actors' comprised of

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[10] This increasing organization of criminal factions is often attributed to a period in the late 1970s during the military dictatorship when bank robbers belonging to both criminal gangs and political organizations were jailed together in a high security prison in the island of Ilha Grande, in the State of Rio. The political

the heads of each sales point, that offer mutual support. These local heads, *donos*, control a rigid hierarchical and militarized structure guided towards economic success in the trade. Statistics from the security forces estimate that such factions employ a total of 10,000 members in Rio, the majority of whom are armed, accounting for about 1% of the present *favela* population. Of these *comando* members it is believed that over half are under eighteen (Dowdney 2002:6).

Directly related to this increasing territorialization and militarization of the drugs trade, has been the increasing levels of violence in Rio, over the last two decades. The defense of sales points, or the taking over of a rival's pitch, has created an increasingly hostile environment between *favelas* dominated by rival factions. These have armed their members with ever more sophisticated weapons, which very often claim many lives of innocent residents. Whereas in 1991 3,956 firearms were seized by the police, this number reached 10,322 in 2000 (UN report quoted in *O Globo* 26th May 2001). Firearms-related deaths in Rio have soared since the 1980s, from 1,430 deaths reported in 1980 to 2,649 in the year 2000 (having peaked in 1989 with 3,182 deaths). Yet, as we saw, these deaths are disproportionately concentrated in areas of the city where rival factions battle each other for control of sales. The involvement of children and adolescents in the drug factions is also reflected in increasing firearms-related deaths in this group. In 1979 92 homicides of youths under 18 were reported (81 firearms related), this reached its peak in 1998 with 364 homicides (276 firearms related) (Dowdney 2002). These figures mean that firearm-related homicides are the leading cause of death of children and adolescents in Rio (Ibid). Downdey compares these firearm fatalities to several major armed conflicts around the world occurring throughout the last two decades and found that, deaths related to the drugs trade in Rio top the fatalities incurred in most of these conflicts (Israel/Palestine, FARC/Colombia, Sierra Leone) (Ibid).

The drug factions require the support, or at least the silence and non-interference, of the local community in order to operate in the locality. This support is developed through what Dowdney terms a 'forced reciprocity' whereby the faction takes upon itself the role of 'protector' of the community, protecting it from rival factions and from police interference, in exchange for the collaboration and silence of the community regarding their illicit activities (Dowdney 2002:6). Members of the factions are usually from the community, and as Downdey points out, they are often accepted by the community as a legitimate 'socio-political force' because of fear

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prisoners, it is said, taught the other criminals how to organize themselves, resulting in the criminal organization the Falange Vermelho forerunner to the Comando Vermelho, Rio's largest drug faction.

and a lack of viable alternatives. This lack of alternatives, Dowdney and many others argue, stems from the state's failure to maintain a social contract with *favela* residents, which on the other hand, the *comandos* do very effectively. The factions achieve this by applying a strict set of rules in the *favela* against theft, wife-beating, rape and denouncing their activities to the police. Infringements of these rules by any member of the community are dealt with severely by beatings, exile from the community or torture and death. Exile, as we shall see, has direct bearing on children and adolescents who end up on the street. Some of these youngsters, either directly or indirectly (through family or friends), can be said to have been exiled from their communities and to have sought the street for safety, a point we explore further on. Factions also attempt to legitimize their authority in the locale through the occasional distribution of goods, such as food items, or money to families or individuals in need, and by their regular sponsoring of events such as funk dances in the community.

State presence in the *favelas* when it does occur in the form of the police, tends to be seen as intrusive, as an 'invasion' or 'occupation' as residents and the police themselves describe it. These actions are carried out, as Dowdney observes, as military operations in which the police enter the *favela* to obtain their objective, such as the arrest of a gang member or the prevention of inter-factional war, and leave immediately (Ibid). Also, as Dowdney's report demonstrates, reflecting a common knowledge of many Cariocas, the police is indiscriminate in their attitudes to policing the *favelas*, considering its inhabitants 'guilty until proven innocent' and as a result further alienating many residents from the state apparatus and its representatives, as they are unjustly targeted and disrespectfully treated (Ibid). This was a common experience, imparted to me by many youngsters who lived both on the streets and in the *favela*, triggering the commonly expressed experience of *revolta*, revolt or rebellion. As we shall see further on, *revolta* is both a consequence of the discrimination of the security apparatus and an expression of frustration about the inaccessibility of the fruits of a consumer society and social mobility, by a sector of the population characterized by poverty and lack of opportunities. Also fuelling this *revolta*, and the suspicion regarding the state's security apparatus is that the police are very often connected to the drugs trade. A significant number of police officers take bribes from the factions in exchange for continued non-interference, or else demand ransom for captives from the gangs. The massacre of Vigário Geral mentioned at the beginning of the previous chapter, was a consequence of such corrupt involvement of the police in the drug trade. The killing of 21 *favela* residents by off-duty police, it came to light, was executed as a revenge attack for the murder of corrupt police officers

at the hands of the local faction in a deal gone wrong (Ventura 2002). Incidents such as the Vigário Geral massacre feed into the cycle of violence and murder that the city has become marred with, and with which the feeling and experience of *revolta* is closely intertwined. *Revolta*, as Dowdney identified, is often referred to by youngsters as their reason for joining the *comandos*. *Revolta*, as we shall see in chapter 6, was also narrated to me by youngsters on the street, particularly as an explanation of why some of them engage in illegal activities.

Starting in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the *comandos* have actively employed and recruited young men and boys from the local communities to act as messengers, look-outs and gunmen in their activities, which range from trafficking to robbery and kidnapping, when drug sales are down (Zaluar 1994). Authors like Alba Zaluar have tried to explain this growing fascination that the *comandos* exert upon these youngsters. She considers that the swelling number of youth involved in drug trafficking is the result of a process of degeneration in the 'personal networks of control and socialization'. Schools, she argues, have failed as a socializing agent and as a transmitter of instruction with truancy growing over the last few years, in particular amongst the 'popular classes'. In the crisis of values that follows, she writes, youngsters who become ever more disconnected from such structures, create their own values and isolate themselves from the world of adults and their own social class. Another of the institutions with the supposed role of transmitting social values, the police; "even has the opposite to the desired effect by reinforcing delinquent practices by the anti-pedagogy of corruption and of robbery with violence" (Zaluar 1994:113).

This climate of degeneration of socializing institutions, Zaluar believes, is also surrounded by a 'consumerist and a pleasure-seeking ideology', that she characterizes as one which stimulates youngsters through a dominant cultural framework propagated through the media, and TV in particular, which values and creates a sense of a lack of limits to individual desire. Zaluar writes;

> "The here and now of the realization of individual desires, some of which become impossible in the current climate of low wages, lowering of industrial growth and the valorization of qualifications for a socially mobile professional career, combines with the emptiness created by the demoralization of parental words and rules about living with respect and equanimity. In the absence of an institutional engineering that seeks justice and opportunities for all, and which

would feed into the emergence of a new culture, there arise the conditions for the emergence and diffusion of this tragic life of young bandits" [my translation] (Zaluar 1994:116).

Zaluar's words appear equally fitting to describe the motivations behind many children and adolescents who take to the streets, as I shall examine in subsequent chapters. What Zaluar describes is the internal logic of cumulative marginalization, that is, how the exclusion of this sector of the population who live in the *favelas* has prompted some, particular amongst its younger generations, to opt for a way of life which acts in defiance of "parental words and rules about living with respect and equanimity". Philippe Bourgois noted something similar when conducting fieldwork amongst crack dealers in East Harlem, which he termed a 'street culture of resistance'; this was not a coherent or conscious political opposition but a set of spontaneous rebellious practices which came to constitute an 'oppositional style'[11] (Bourgois 1996). The contradiction of this oppositional style, as Bourgois points out, and which is equally applicable to *favela* drug traffickers, is that,

> "the street culture of resistance is predicated on the destruction of its participants and the community harboring them. In other words, although street culture emerges out of a personal search for dignity and a rejection of racism and subjugation, it ultimately becomes an active agent in personal degradation and community ruin" (Bourgois 1996:9).

Other than the desire for consumer goods identified by Zaluar, Dowdney also points to the 'normalization' of factions within *favelas* as key in understanding their appeal for some youngsters (Dowdney 2002:89). The *commandos* have been around in many *favelas* since the 1980s, in growing up in these communities children, therefore, are constantly aware of their presence and their exercise of power. Yet perhaps the most significant reason for choosing to enter the ranks of the *comandos* is an economic one. Youngsters are faced with an increased lack

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[11] This can be seen in the USA in the popular phenomenon of 'gangsta rap' and its glorification of guns and violence, which though initially confined to disaffected young inner city blacks is now commodified and consumed by middle class white North Americans and beyond. Dowdney also refers to this development of a youth subculture, familiar in many inner cities where drugs or gangs are prevalent, that glorifies the drug dealer as a defiant figure, who goes against the police and the 'system' and yet is true to his 'roots' in his community and his background in poverty (Dowdney 2002).

of hope of being fully integrated into the city, they are only too aware of the scarcity of jobs and opportunities for social mobility. For those that choose to enter the factions, this may be seen by them as a consequence of a lack of other viable alternatives.[12] Indeed, in Rio drug trafficking for some of these youngsters is considered an attractive option offering around 10 times or more the minimum wage, as well as the sense of power, fear and prestige that the *movimento*[13] instills in the local community (Zaluar 1994). Dowdney's research pointed out that even at the lowest ranks of the faction's hierarchy, that of look-out, youngsters can be expected to earn about US $20 a day (Dowdney 2002:35). The positions of drug-seller or soldier, one rank up from look-out, can expect to earn between US $ 600-1200 a month, far above the minimum wage that stood at under US $ 100 a month in 2002 (Ibid).

The continuation of the prevailing socio-economic environment of exclusion and lack of opportunities for social mobility or full integration into the city combined with the repercussions of the drug trade, have taken a heavy toll on *favela* communities. These spaces can be considered instances of what James Garbarino (1995) termed 'socially toxic environments'. The term 'socially toxic environment', offered by Garbarino, describes the way in which the social environment in which children grow up has become poisonous to their development, a term analogous to the way in which the toxicity of the physical environment has increased through the effects of pollution. Though Garbarino's analysis is of communities in the United States, his insights appear significant in the context of Brazil. Garbarino identifies the ingredients of this social toxicity: violence, poverty and other economic pressures on parents and their children, disruptions to relationships, nastiness, despair, depression, paranoia and alienation. As the social environment becomes more toxic, Garbarino writes, it is the children - particularly the most vulnerable amongst them - who show the worst and the most extreme effects (Garbarino 1995). These are the children who are most vulnerable to 'risk factors' in their development - absent fathers, poverty, racism, addiction, poor physical health, educational failure, family violence, and adult emotional problems that impair parenting. The two most 'extreme' consequences or choices for children and adolescents of this environment in Rio appear as the *tráfico* or the street.

There exist some parallels and significant contrasts between the recruitment of children and adolescents into the drugs trade and their trajectory to/through the street as possibilities of

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[12] This was also noted by Bourgois, who described crack-dealing in Harlem as the fastest-growing, if not the only, equal opportunities employer of men (Bourgois 1996)

[13] Literally 'the movement', this is how organized drug trafficking is often referred as. With the implication of both a movement in goods and services, a trade, as well as a political force.

defiance, escape, protection and autonomy. In many instances such cases can be seen as partially motivated by economic scarcity as well as an expression of rebellion. But whereas in the case of the former, youngsters seek to be incorporated into a rigidly hierarchical criminal organization within the *favela*, the latter leave the *favela* and seek out opportunities in the city. Whereas the number of youngsters from *favelas* participating in the drug trade has been put at under 1%, a similar figure has been found of the number of youngsters from a *favela* who said they had at some time in their lives slept on the street (PROMUNDO/CIESPI 2001). A consideration of numbers, however rough these may be, is important here. Rio's *favela* population stands at over 1 million, about half of whom are under 18, whereas youngsters employed in factions number roughly 6,000 (Dowdney 2002). Youngsters found to be living on the streets are less than half this figure, calculated to be between 1,000 - 3,000, as we saw in chapter 2. Considering the conditions of hardship in these communities a more appropriate question may well be not why there are so many that opt for these two extreme measures, but why there are so few. As regards those going to the street the significant question also becomes why do these (relatively few) youngsters who live on the streets appear to attract so much attention? Why have they become a social phenomenon? We went some way towards addressing this in chapters 2 and 3.

Though the relationship between youngsters on the street and the *comandos* is markedly absent from the literature, it is clear that these two worlds of the *tráfico* and the street do interpenetrate at times. My research suggests that although in the past little relationship existed between these worlds, evidence now points to a much stronger presence of drug trafficking and drug factions on the street, as we will see in the following chapters. The street and the *tráfico* form a powerful polarity of extreme options for youngsters growing up in the *favela*. As some street educators told me, their 'battle' in the 1990s and in the new century is redrawn primarily in terms of wanting to get youngsters away from the *tráfico*, the street here taking secondary place in terms of risk.

As we have seen, the action of drug *comandos* can force individuals or families to be exiled from the *favela* because of breaking the rules of a local gang. A street educator related to me how she has over the years seen increasing cases of very young children, boys and girls, who become involved in drug trafficking, either directly or through their families, and then for a variety of reasons have had to leave the community because they have made enemies with the *movimento*. With no other place to go, and running scared such children end up on the street. In some cases children are taken to shelters away from the community by their mother or by a

relative; these may also then run away and take to the street. There are also instances of whole families who go to live on the street because of such situations. As one educator recently told me, in such instances the street provides a form of security for those involved, as it is a public place and the drug gangs rarely venture outside their own *favelas*.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter gave an overview of the difficulties and challenges encountered by *favela* residents in particular by reflecting on various social and economic indicators which point to the continuing disparity between those who live in the *morro* and those in the *asfalto*. This inequality was contextualized within the subtle and not so subtle forms of racism that operate within Brazilian society as we examined the country's myth of racial democracy. From this the *favela* emerged as a racialized space through which its residents, regardless of color, suffer from prejudice and discrimination. Related to this we also examined the myth of marginality, of how this population has been regarded as apart from the city when in fact it is intrinsically connected to it though in unequal ways. Exacerbating these problems of exclusion and emerging supposedly in defiance of them, we also analyzed the rise of the drug trade in *favela* communities and looked into the socially-toxic effects of the trade, particularly to the young. What are the linkages between this background environment of the *favela* and urban peripheries and the trajectories and processes of identity of youngsters who end up living on the street? This question is what the rest of the thesis tries to answer.

CHAPTER 5

RE-IMAGINING THE CITY

As the previous chapter demonstrates, Rio de Janeiro is not one city but many, living in very close proximity. The conditions of exclusion and marginality have meant that the city is seen and experienced from a variety of view-points depending upon one's socio-economic and ethnic position, or more generally, depending on where one lives. This chapter analyzes the experiences of the city from the perspective of children and adolescents who live on the street. As we examine here, in looking at their trajectories through urban space, the city is re-imagined as a place through which material, affective and symbolic resources are obtained. These re-imaginings, as we analyze here, derive from specific notions of risk, which take into account the climate of fear and insecurity and scarcity of on the one hand the community of origin, and on the other that of the street.

LEAVING HOME

Children and adolescents never really leave home just for the street, but find themselves in a plurality of other spaces – NGOs, shelters, the homes of relatives or of other adults, state youth correctional institutions, etc. – of which 'home' and the 'street' can be said to designate only opposite poles of ideal types. In this respect it is significant to draw out what 'home' signifies for these youngsters. The precarious living and housing conditions in the communities of origin described to me by many youngsters who spent time on the street, paint a picture of the home more as a relationship to other members of the family, in particular the mother, than a physical space. If physical space was alluded to, the boundaries of home and the street appeared to blur. To illustrate this one young adult explained to me how during his childhood he slept on the floor of his mother's shack, a common practice in the poorer and more cramped households in Brazil's *favelas*. In this case, Humberto now 26, told me how his mother and her seven children slept at night on the floor, on newspapers padded out with their clothes as matting covered over

with sheets. Yet descriptions of home as a physical space, such as this, were rare. What is more often described is a series of conflicting relationships and fragmented affective ties.

What became clear when listening to the stories of children, adolescents and adults who spent time on the street were the constant episodes of ruptures that exist in their lives, in particular the rupturing of affective ties with parents and relatives. Painful ruptures are always present in their tales, with the father or mother, step-mother or step-father, grandparents, aunts and uncles or adults bearing no blood or marital relation. As a background to the relationship with these various adults, and to the flux between them, the youngsters narrate a constant movement between localities and communities. Difficulties in establishing family relationships that are solid, continuous and lasting appeared in many cases as catalysts for leaving home.

In the last chapter we noted the difficulties that many families encounter in *favelas* and the peripheries of Rio. Very often the street appears as a way out of conflicts and difficulties faced by the child or adolescent within the family. A common theme running through the stories I heard on the street involved some kind of violence in the home. Incidents of prison or death of members of the family can also be identified. Besides the economic difficulties to the family that these incidents provoke, they also mean that the child is more vulnerable, having fewer carers and supervisors. Also common were cases of remarriages where the step-father, step-mother, or else their children, appeared to antagonize the child provoking their exit from the home. These reconfigurations of the family mean that the child or adolescent may lose or feel that s/he has lost the protection or affection of the family. For many youngsters I talked to, stepmothers and stepfathers were very much present in their accounts. New family configurations appear in many cases to be a further stimulus for the child to seek an alternative space were the youngster feels s/he is accepted. Nego da Bahia, a 22 year old who as a child and adolescent had lived for many years on the street explained this to me:

> "After my dad died... I don't know, my mum began to change, that was the day that I started going to the street, stared living on the street, started liking the street... But I returned home and my mum let loose on me and whacked me and my brothers. But I don't like talking about this, you see. I don't like saying this about my mother because, thank God, she is still alive. It is something I am proud of, I am proud of it. So right, because of this fact that she hit us, I ran away from home."
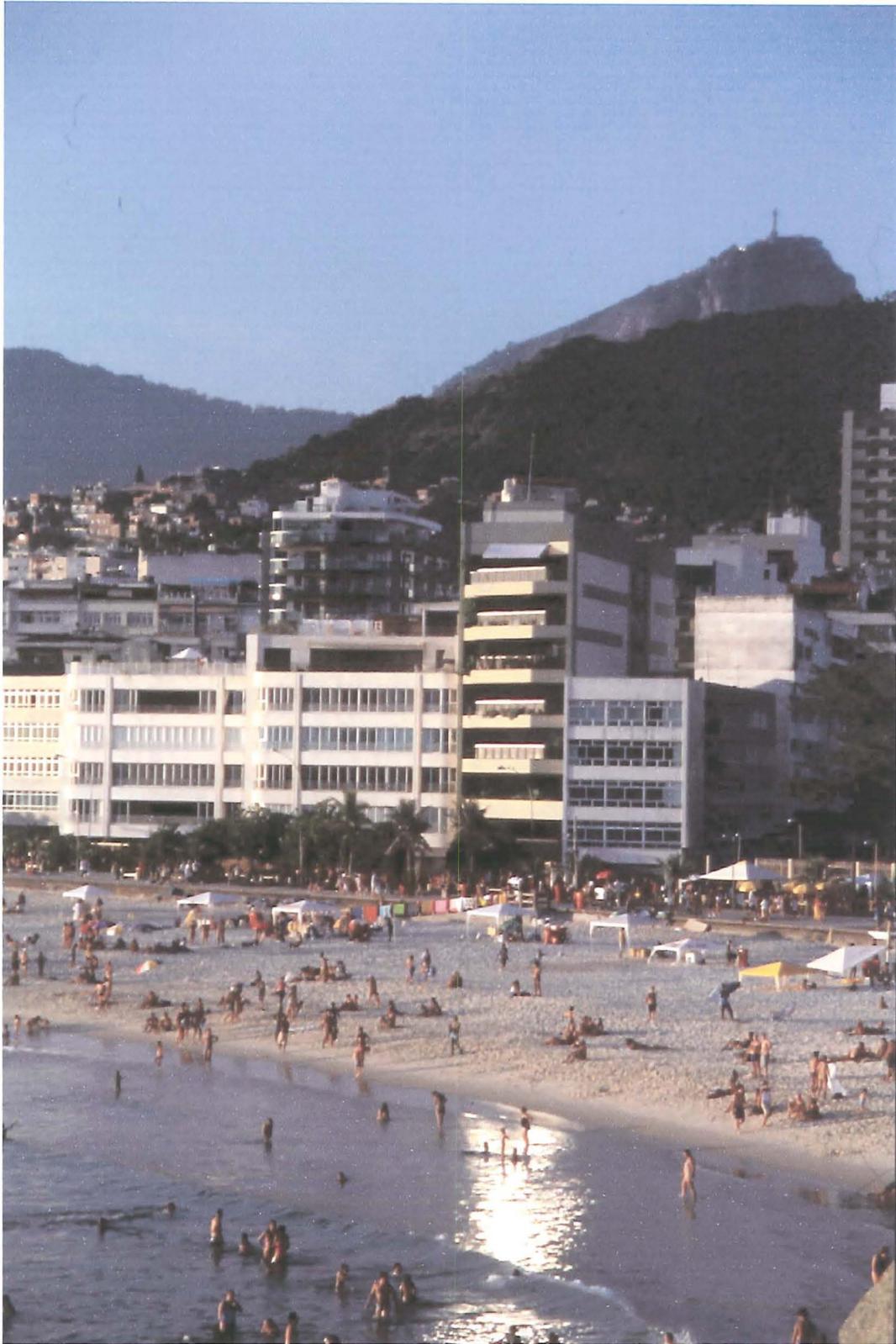
5.1 Rio's famous spaces - Ipanema beach, *favela* and the Cristo statue on the hills

5.2 One of Rio's *favelas* more affected by the rise of the drug-trade on the way to its International Airport.

Even when the child leaves for the street there is a period when the parents, mothers in particular, will try to bring them back home, seeking them out on the street or in shelters. Yet after a while, with the child constantly fleeing home, a strong bond is formed with the street and what it has to offer in terms of financial independence, friendships and leisure, creating, in short, a 'habit for the street'. Even when such a habit is formed, the bond with the family is never, or rarely, completely broken. Visits or communication with the family becomes more sporadic with time, but they rarely cease altogether.

So in these cases is it right to blame the family, as politicians, the media and some authors have tended to? It is easy to attribute the reason for children leaving their families and homes for the street to the negligence, lack of supervision and affection on the part of their families. But this would be too simplistic an answer. In fact the children attribute their leaving home to many other reasons as we shall see. The desire for freedom is very prominent in these. This is a freedom articulated in opposition to a perception of home as either a place of violence or confinement or else as a place of scarcity. According to parents in the communities from where these children come, children are kept at home for their own protection, to keep them away from the possible malevolent influences of the area in which they live and to keep them out of trouble. This protection, however, if not followed up by explanations or affection, can be interpreted as a form of imprisonment by children. Also significant for many youngsters, was the conception of the home as a place where certain 'needs' are not fulfilled. Humberto who lived on the street for many years, addressed this in his explanation for leaving home:

> "Many leave home because they are beat up... Not me. I left home because of some necessities, wanting to have breakfast, all those things. Sometimes, I had to go to a friend's house, when cooking was going on, I waited there to see if his mum would give me a plate of food to eat. It was because of this. Afterwards, when I started going to school, I started to meet friends who already stole, so I started having things which I didn't have; chocolate, sweets. These things which I didn't have inside my house I found on the street, on the street I found them, at home I didn't have them, it wasn't because of getting beaten up."

In such instances, instead of blaming the family, we should look, like James Garbarino and others have done, at the systemic forces at work that may lead to both a situation of conflict within the family, as well as the ways in which these families attempt to raise their children, using

Garbarino's terminology, in ever more 'socially toxic' environments as we saw in chapter 4 (Garbarino 1995).

The notion of 'support bases', as devised by Rizzini and Barker comes to mind here. In a way this is a concept that is diametrically opposed to that of 'social toxicity', describing the support bases that are the crucial elements which come to contribute to the wholesome development of children and adolescents. These are the formal and informal support networks existing in the community and in the family that catalyze in the child and adolescent the development of their abilities and potentials, giving them a secure environment where friendships and affective ties may arise that come to contribute to their cognitive, emotional, cultural and vocational development (Rizzini, Barker and Cassaniga 2000). Such support network may include local youth clubs and associations, after-school clubs, or else the networks of friends and family which individuals count on. Failing to provide such an environment the forces, that might have otherwise held the child, lose their power and s/he gravitates towards places where s/he feels her needs will be met.

In moving from the home to the street, however unsavory it may appear from a point of view in which home is a place of protection and the street a place of danger, many youngsters in fact feel that they are doing precisely the opposite, moving away from danger and towards protection. Some authors have recently argued that their response could in fact be considered as a healthy reaction to circumstances of extreme poverty and violence (Veale, Taylor and Linehan 2000). These points lead us to current debates around the notion of 'risk'. Anthropological writings on risk, with Mary Douglas appearing as a key exponent, consider the broad divergence over what people consider to be risky, over what risks are ignored and which are taken and over how risk is managed (Douglas in Caplan 2000:8). Douglas rejects notions of risk as being a matter of psychological traits or character dispositions, instead giving prominence to culture, "the area of shared beliefs and values" (Ibid). As such, Caplan argues, Douglas brings morality and power into the arena of risk: "Common values lead to common fears, thus the choice of risks and the choice of how to live are linked and each form of life has its own risk portfolio" (Caplan 2000:9). Power also has a part here since risk management, as Sophie Day argues in her work about sex-workers in London in the volume cited above, can lead to forms of control by government or other agencies over particular populations (Caplan 2000). This is also evident in discourses around street children, as we have seen in chapter 3, both in nineteenth century England and Brazil, street children having the paradoxical status of being both at risk and of being a risk to society and the moral order. Also relevant here, as already pointed to above, is the different conception of risk for youngsters who go to the street. The street, from this viewpoint,

far from a place of risk as we examine in this chapter, can be in fact its opposite, a place of economic and social (e.g. friendships) resources as well as a place of safety.

In the majority of cases, going to the street is a gradual process whereby the child or adolescent begins to frequent the street during the day but returns home at night, eventually spending a night on the street. This gradual process allows the child or adolescent to get used to the new surroundings and make new friendships, eventually becoming habituated with the street. Sandra, for instance, first left home when she was 11 years-old - as she described it to me "like a bird in a cage, when the door opens the bird flies away". Hers, however, was a gradual flight. Sandra began frequenting the streets when she was nine years old, selling sweets in Copacabana. The first time she went her older brother (two years older than her) took her because he already stayed on the street, shoe shining and mugging. Sandra also knew other children who stayed on the street when she lived at home, boys who would go into her community to buy drugs. From the age of 10 years Sandra stopped selling sweets and became more involved with the boys and girls who stayed out on the street. It was through her contact with these youngsters that she decided to leave home.

This flux between the street and the home, going to the street to earn money, hang out with friends or else as an escape when things got too turbulent or confined back home, was a constant with those I talked to and was also demonstrated through the CIESPI research in which I was engaged. In the latter research, in only six out of the 60 individuals we interviewed did we find definitive rupture with home that took the child from one moment to the next to the street (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002). What we see then are the fields of influence of the home and the street exerting their forces differently at different times, but with a tendency of a growing influence of the street. The CIESPI research found that approximately half of those interviewed had their first experience of being on the street, that is, working or sleeping there, between the ages of seven and 11 years. This is precisely the age at which children usually begin to take on board influences other than those from the family and close friends. And it is precisely at this age that the support bases appear not to meet the increasing demands of the child. Between the ages of 12 and 15 years, 25% of those interviewed had their first street experience, the period of entering adolescence where the prerogative appears as the forming of groups and pairs (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002). A very interesting finding of the CIESPI research, which concurred with my own conversations with youngsters, was that about 50% of those interviewed said that they knew someone who lived on the street before they went there. Of these over half said they knew them from the area they lived. This knowledge appears to be a very important factor in the gradual move to the street, as Sandra's story and many others appear

to confirm. The knowledge that friends, sometimes relatives, or other youngsters of similar age, have been living on the street, that there they can be economically independent, have fun and hang out with their peers in an unsupervised environment, proves a very important ingredient in the decision of leaving home for the street. Joé, a 27 year old I talked to who lived on the street as a child, vividly explained it to me:

> "My leaving [home], well I met up with these *moleques* [urchins] so dude I go 'you guys disappear', and they go 'stay here in the *favela* to do what? Come there with us, we'll take you to a cool place.' So I left with them to Tijuca [a *bairro*]. And they go 'here it's cool we get a load of money'. I said 'that's funny, how do you get so much money?' 'We ask for it, we go "auntie spare us some change".' At that time people were more open, they collaborated more, and there was that thing that if you asked they gave to you, or bought you a snack."

Joé's revisiting of his childhood exploration of the street touches on some crucial points. In the majority of cases going to the street is not a solitary act, the youngster goes there with someone, whether this be a friend, or in Sandra's case, a relative. And so city-space begins to be imagined and experienced through networks of information from friends and others. Once on the street the youngster establishes new friendships enhancing his/her confidence and familiarity in this space. Also, as Joé acknowledges, there is a strong economic imperative behind entering the space of the street. But Joé also points to a historical change for the worse on the street, something also related to me by other young adults who spent the late 80s and early 90s on the street, as we shall see.

On the street it is possible to obtain money in a variety of ways and there are also many avenues of consumption open to youngsters on the street. As Carlos, a veteran street educator and head of an NGO working with youngsters on the street told me, the street has an attraction because it is first and foremost a 'center of consumption' – it is a source of labor or income as well as where one can spend money. It is on the street that consumers meet, he tells me, where the shops, restaurants, parking spaces and shop-windows are. The street, therefore, has an economic representation, it is a place of consumption. It is here that youngsters can find something that is absent from their communities of origin. Shining shoes, selling sweets, flowers, peanuts, juggling at the traffic lights, carrying shopping at the market, parking cars, begging and stealing, are some of the ways youngsters earn money on the street. Asked what they do with the money they earned, one third of the children in the CIESPI research reported that they bought food (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

5.3 Favorite leisure activity in the *favela* – for the young and the not so young – kite flying.

5.4 Different use of the street in the *favela* Vila Aliança.

Even though youngsters reported that they were also given food on the street by passers-by or were given the left-overs from bars and restaurants, money, we were told, allows them to buy a more 'elaborate' meal than they would otherwise have got, in a restaurant or fast food outlet. From the 60 youngsters interviewed in the CIESPI research, 12 youngsters reported that they used the money they earned to buy drugs, and 10 of them mentioned buying clothes with their money. A further 7 reported that they helped out their family with the money and 8 mentioned they spent it on their own entertainment (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002). That consumption on the street should be related not only to survival but also to a symbolic self-affirmation – i.e. buying a 'better meal', clothes that are in fashion or beauty products, is very important. As we shall see in the next chapter, these are significant ways of asserting one's identity as a 'citizen', as being 'like anyone else', as strategies for maintaining self-esteem in a highly consumer-oriented society.

A distinction needs to be made between the different kinds of uses to which the street is put, as has been made by Mark Lusk which we addressed on page 29, leading to different kinds of 'streets' to arise (Lusk and Mason 1994). My own research was restricted to what can here be described as *children of the street*, though I also came across many youngsters who had been raised on the street by their mothers. The majority of those we interviewed in the CIESPI research would have also fallen within the typology of *children of the street*, followed by *independent street workers*. Some *family based street workers* were also interviewed; when asked what they did with the money earned they replied that they helped out at home, but also bought things for themselves such as clothes and sweets.

> "[Dario 12 years old]
>
> Working here is good, I can also find money to take home. So I give half to my mum and keep the other half. So my mum buys what she needs and I buy clothes or some sandals for me" (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

Work appears in these cases as a positive value. The worker is proud to be working to be productive and earning an honest wage. This is done through informal sector activities such as shoe-shining, carrying shopping in the markets, selling sweets, flowers or peanuts, looking after parked cars or else performing juggling at Rio's more busy traffic lights. And so city space is creatively used to generate income. Opportunities for profit are sought in strategic spaces such as traffic lights, where over the last few years youngsters have taken up juggling for the stationary cars in ever more elaborate shows. But in their majority these youngsters are not *children of the*

street but *independent street workers* who still live in *favelas* or the periphery. Earning money on the street in these cases, we found in the CIESPI research, was not always linked to helping out at home, but also solely to meet consumer demands of the youngster, and ensuring them a financial independence from their parents.

> "[Sidney 15 years old]
>
> I come just to get some money, so I can spend it, play arcade games, have a soft drink where I live, cut my hair, it is not because of necessity" (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

'FREEDOM'

Independence and freedom appear as crucial motivating factors for heading to the street, either as a place where economic opportunities are found or else as a fun, unsupervised space where boys and girls meet. Freedom, or the perception of the possibility of freedom, exerts a strong fascination for the youngsters I talked to often preventing them from being placed in other spaces such as government or NGO run shelters. Mariana, a 15-year old girl I talked to, doesn't like shelters, they confine her, she tells me. She'd rather be in the open *'eu gosto de sentir o cheiro da rua, de ficar no ar livre'* [I like feeling the smell of the street, staying in the open].

Perhaps it is this wholehearted embrace of this ideal of freedom that is responsible for the familiar pattern of life on the streets; a confused trajectory, in and out of shelters, family houses of relatives and other adults, and youth correctional facilities. Joana, a young woman who lived on the streets for many years, tells me of the numerous shelters she went in and out of, I ask her why she left each time.

> "It's because nobody likes being told what to do. Nobody likes being told what to do, I don't like obeying orders, well I didn't, because now I see it all differently. I thought on the street it was better, it was freedom, no one told you what to do, I slept whenever I wanted to, woke up when I wanted to, apart from when the police gave you a flick every once in a while, but it was OK! When you were hungry you sniffed glue to kill the hunger."

In the CIESPI research we became aware of this taste for freedom when we asked the question 'what is good on the street', which, when a positive response was given, was almost

invariably 'freedom'. 'Freedom' equaled work as the most common motivation for going to the street (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002). In contrast to the confined and restrictive places of the home and the community, the street appears, at least in the imaginary of these youngsters, as a carefree, open place where one can indulge in all that elsewhere appears forbidden. Close to the notion of 'freedom' expressed by the children as the positive side of the street, we find the value of non-interference with the freedom of others, sometimes referred to as the '*não alugação*', not lecturing or 'being a drag', or as Joana put it 'not being told what to do', something also noted by Hecht (1998) and Gregori (2000). As Suzana, interviewed in the CIESPI research said:

> "[Suzana, 15 years old]
>
> *Question: For you, what is good on the street?*
>
> Suzana: Freedom. On the street you don't hear what you hear at home all the time. There isn't any rubbing in your face, sometimes on the street you could be hungry, you know that you are risking your life but even so you know that in a certain way you are free, you can think what you want, you can do what you want, no matter what the circumstance, you can do the things you wish" (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

Freedom, independence or autonomy are also recurrent themes in the literature on street children, and have been analyzed by various writers (Gregori 2000, Hecht 1998, Fenelon, Martins and Domingues 1992, Vogel and Mello 1991). One common finding of these authors, and confirmed in my own research, is that boys and girls who come from environments of extreme poverty, confinement and at times violence, appear magnetized by the promise of freedom and fun that urban centers seem to offer. The chance to live amongst other boys and girls, have fun, hang out with youngsters of the opposite sex, go to parties and consume legal and illegal drugs – all in an environment without the supervision of adults, is extremely attractive, especially in the urban center where opportunities to have fun are never far away. As Vogel and Mello write:

> "On the street there is no right time to do anything, and one is not forced to do or stop doing anything. To live on the street means to have no boss or father. Because of this, beyond attaining in time and space a liberty inconceivable to home children, the children are also able to use their bodies in the manner they

please, through sexual experiences and drug consumption" [my translation] (Vogel and Mello 1991:145).

Whereas many factors influence the journey from the home to the street, the youngster's perception that s/he is moving from a space that is restrictive and confining to a place where s/he feels s/he can be free, play and meet others, is very significant. This is not to deny that other structural factors are at work, both in their families, in their communities of origin and in the economic climate that permeates these. This 'ethos of freedom' is a recurrent theme for youngsters on the street, appearing as one of the central nodes upon which their identity is hinged. For Gregori the promise of freedom on the street begins within the very family dynamic into which these children are inserted, particularly through their circulation between relatives and others (Fonseca 1994), by the mobility of the family, through irregular schooling and through the children's familiarity with the city (Gregori 2000). This 'taste' for freedom is generated within a context of instability that makes the creation of roots difficult, roots in a place – like the community, home or school – and roots in time – like daily routines.

Freedom and autonomy can be understood as both an idealized aspiration that contrasts with the scarcity, conflict and confinement of the home or community, as well as a form of rebellion or resistance to these. Gregori suggests that youngsters transpose to something generic like the 'street' many of their childhood aspirations; necessity for protection, care, attention, learning and play. And these needs are somehow met on the street (Gregori 2000). But also, as noted in the previous chapter, going to the street or entering the drug trafficking trade can also be understood as two extreme options for a climate of social exclusion in which the fruits of consumer society are denied. These are forms of resistance, closely identified with the term *revolta*, which for Zaluar (1994b) resulted from "the demoralization of parental words and rules about living with respect and equanimity", and for Bourgois (1996) and Downdney (2002), came to constitute an 'oppositional style', something I address in more depth in chapter 6.

In this form of resistance, through the embrace of freedom and autonomy, youngsters on the street resemble the peoples studied by the authors of *Lilies of the Field: Marginal People Who Live for the Moment* (1999). By living each day as it comes, Day, Papataxiarchis and Stewart suggest that the peoples addressed in the book invert their marginal status and become "the center of their own moral universe... Freedom and autonomy stand in opposition to transcendental values associated with a variety of institutions that organize long-term social reproduction and, simultaneously, produce hierarchical relationships" (Ibid: 2). As such, these people who live in

the present (London prostitutes, Hungarian Gypsies, Greek peasants, and others) in disengaging from these institutions find in their sense of 'timelessness' a tool for resistance and opposition.

Fenelon, Martins, and Domingues (1992), note the 'immediatism' of the girls they studied on the street in Goias, in Brazil. The girls they observed concerned themselves entirely with immediate survival and acted without concern for the future, without the worry of saving things/resources for latter. For these girls, the authors argue, only the here and now exists and the here and now "is what characterizes their concrete perception of themselves and of the world" (Fenelon, Martins, and Domingues 1992:66). In this context daily work, weekly or monthly pay as a way of obtaining resources for their maintenance did not make sense. This was also something I observed in Rio, intertwined with the embrace of this 'ethos of freedom', was a distinct attachment to the present moment that very often precluded the possibility of long-term plans or projects. Sandra, a 15 year-old who had lived on the street for many years provided an example of this immediatism during one of our conversations. She was describing to me how she and her friends, when they were in their early teens made trips to one of Rio's more prestigious shopping centers in Zona Sul.

> "We got there, then I went to the food court, I ate all that I could, then I looked around and went 'let's go to the Aldeia dos Ventos [a clothes shop], lets go buy clothes'; so there we went this band of kids, we all went into the shop like this, with the security guard there looking at us, barefooted, all ragged, and the guards were like 'what do they want?' and then we left there full of bags, right (laughs). Went in all dirty and left there full of new clothes, sandals, shoes, without having a bath, and the people looking at us.
>
> **And how long did the clothes last?**
> Last! They didn't. One week, in the next they were going in the bin, because we didn't wash them right, it was very difficult, we washed our knickers there on the tap but clothes its like this; 'it's dirty, there's no way to wash it, let's throw it away', so we threw a load of clothes away. Because you have that saying right, money which comes easy goes easy, right. So the money came easy and I wanted to really blow it, I didn't care."

The down-side of this living in the moment though was that it was also often associated with a fatalism, common also to youngsters employed in the drug-trade, an attitude which believes that

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death may come at any moment. Such an attitude, which can on occasions represent a reckless disregard for one's own safety, encourages the taking of greater risks and engagement in dangerous situations.

Other Brazilian authors have criticized this notion of 'freedom' when applied to youngsters on the street. The anthropologist Maria de Souza Minayo (1993) writes that:

> "It cannot be ethical to philosophize about the alleged freedom of choice that moves street boys and girls that 'choose' to live in this space, when it is the 'kingdom of misery' which pushes them to a possible social space inserted between a structural violence, the violence of correctional institutions, domestic violence and the violence on the street" [my translation] (Minayo 1993:13).

What appears as the issue here are different notions of agency and the complexity of the term 'freedom'. As we noted in chapter 2, the idea that youngsters on the street have been 'abandoned' has been questioned by many authors who conclude that for some leaving for the street may well be the least bad option considering the climate of scarcity and conflict from where they originate (Panter-Brick 2000). As we considered in this chapter, also at stake are different perceptions of the risk of the spaces of the home and community and that of the street. Though I am sympathetic to Minayo's sense of indignation at the conditions which youngsters on the street endure, her analysis fails to take on board the youngsters' agency, their own sense of freedom and their particular notions of risk and danger. This is not to say that every youngster on the street I talked to, spoke of freedom, resistance and autonomy. Many also told me that there was nothing good about the street. Also the element of 'choice' or 'agency' is far from being a homogenous quality for those on the street. Some clearly had less choice than others about being there, since their family (or more commonly their mothers) had brought them up on the street. Freedom then, like resistance and assessments of risk, is culturally and socially specific and depends upon differential access to cultural, economic and social resources.

FEAR AND VIOLENCE IN THE CITY

The perception of the street as a place of freedom arising as a contrast to the experience of hardship, scarcity and confinement at home in the *favelas* and peripheries is only part of the story. Instead, as the youngsters themselves acknowledge, their lives are never far from the experience of fear, for the city is also full of dangers and boundaries. In the city, instead of being

supervised by the family, it is often the state, especially in the shape of the police, that enforces the limits of what can or cannot be done, and quite often in a very brutal way. At the heart of this conflict are two opposing visions of the city; one held by children and adolescents who imagine the city as a free, unsupervised space, a center of consumption where economic and entertainment opportunities are plentiful even for those who possess nothing. Contrasted to this is a city imagined from the 19th century onwards as a highly regulated urban space where human activity is closely observed and where unproductive or deviant activities are severely dealt with. It is certainly not the place of the unoccupied or the poor and definitely not the place of the young and poor. The clash of these different experiences of city space is what we now turn to, a clash which, like Victor Turner's 'social drama', reveals the tensions in Carioca society (Turner 1986).

Towards the end of the 1980s academic research and the media in Brazil began taking notice of the large numbers of poor and often black or brown youths murdered every year in Brazil's largest cities. Particularly significant was the research conducted by MNMMR, (*Movimento Nacional de Meninos e Meninas de* Rua - National Movement of Street Boys and Girls), IBASE and NEV-USP (two social research centers[1]) in 1991, published in *Vidas em Risco: Assassinatos de Criancas e Adolescentes no Brasil* [Lives at Risk: The Murders of Children and Adolescents in Brazil]. The research, which looked into the murders of youths in Brazil between 1984-89 through an analysis of newspaper reports and reports from the Legal Medical Institute, found that a significant proportion of the murders had been committed by on-duty policemen, and others, whose culprit was unknown, pointed to the work of extermination groups, partly comprised of off-duty police. What was also shocking about these murders was the number of times in which the crime was not fully investigated and no one was charged.

Human Rights Watch, who also conducted research on this theme in 1994, point out that between 1989 and 1991 5,644 youngsters between 5-17 years of age were victims of violent deaths in Brazil according to Brazil's Ministério Publico (Human Rights Watch 1994:ix). The authors give the following view of why such violence is perpetrated:

> "Children, and especially poor children and adolescents, become targets of killing by off-duty police and death squads because they are often popularly perceived as criminals. Violence against children is largely the result of this perception combined with three other factors: the lack of policing in poor neighborhoods; the belief that the justice system is inefficient; and traditions of

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[1] IBASE (Instituto Brasileiro de Analise Social e Econômico – Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis).

violence, many dating back to Brazil's era of military dictatorship. In each instance a cycle of official omission, disregard or complicity accentuates the problem and perpetuates the violence" (Human Rights Watch 1994:30).

Though this campaign of statal and para-statal 'urban cleansing' targeted youngsters from the *favelas* and peripheries more generally, the most notorious of these incidents, which provoked international outcry, was specifically aimed at street children. We already introduced this incident from my own perspective in chapter 1, since I was in Rio at the time. We mentioned this tragedy may well have influenced me, almost a decade later, to embark on this research. The facts as they came to light were as follows. On the night of 25th of July 1993, men arriving in two cars opened fire on a group of some forty children and adolescents sleeping outside the Candelária Church in the heart of Rio's business district killing 7 children and one young adult.

In an unprecedented move in these not altogether uncommon, extra-judicial murders, one of the perpetrators, a member of the military police, was convicted in 1996 for his participation in the massacre, after being identified by one of the survivors of the shooting, and sentenced to 309 years' imprisonment, later reduced to 89 years. During the trial one of the accused ex-police officers, Marcus Borges Emmanuel, defended himself by saying that the children were 'dangerous' and had been known to attack innocent people and the police. During the trial the presiding judge noted the "abhorrent nature of the crimes attributed to the defendant, driven by the shameful aim of exterminating socially marginalized children" (quoted in Amnesty International Report 1999). By 1999 three other ex-military police officers had been held responsible for the murders.

This critical event, which became known as the Candelária Massacre, is quite possibly the most significant event to mark the history of the phenomenon of street children in Brazil. It has become a historical marker for all those concerned with this population, and continues to reverberate in the minds of those who still live on the street, as we shall see, even of those who were not around at the time. The Candelária Massacre provoked a wave of national debate in the media, in academia, in government and civil society, with one of the most often asked questions being, 'what kind of society kills its own children?' As Itamar Franco, then president of Brazil, put it, "The massacre should hurt our faces like a humiliating slap" (quoted in *O Globo* 29th December 1999).

5.5 Candelária Massacre, with church of Candelária in background at the heart of Rio's business district. (from *O Globo* newspaper)

The Candelária Massacre was indeed a slap in the face for Brazil. As news of the murders spread across the globe a wave of national and international indignation and demand for justice followed. But behind the event a further slap followed, as we have already seen, as opinion surveys in Rio showed that close to 20% of *Cariocas* sided with the vigilantes (Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998). That a fifth of Rio's population said they supported the 'urban cleansing' advocated by the extermination group demonstrates the widespread acceptance of a particular vision of urban space, as the right of only certain kinds of person. This vision was aided by media reports throughout the 1980s on the increasing lawlessness of the city. In the period from the 1980s on there has been a dramatic increase in crime levels in Rio and Brazil's other urban centers, but in the media and in the minds of many of Rio's citizens criminality and the phenomenon of the *'menor de rua'*, the street minor, have become increasingly bound together.

Taking a historical overview of this situation Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman ask why should the period of democratization in Brazil (the military dictatorship lasted between 1964 and 1985) be accompanied by a dramatic increase in public violence? For the authors, democratization itself may be to blame.

> "With the gradual dismantling of the military police state, the former authoritarian structures that had kept the social classes 'safely' apart and the 'hordes' of disenfranchised, hungry, and 'dangerous' poor children at least symbolically contained to the *favelas* (urban shanty-towns) or in long term public detention weakened. And suddenly - or so it appeared to a great many Brazilians - the *favelas* ruptured, and poor, mostly black, and aggressively needy children descended from hillside slums and seemed to be everywhere, occupying boulevards, plazas, and parks that more affluent citizens once thought of as their own" (Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman 1998:353).

Whilst these children have in the past been tolerated, the authors note an increasing weariness towards what over the past couple of decades has come to be conceived as a 'dangerous' group. For Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman what has changed is the inability of the modern and the 'hyper-segregated post-modern city' to absorb this large and growing number of children, leading them to conclude that street children are simply poor children in the wrong place (Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman 1998).

In relating this 'divided city' to the experience of youngsters on the street we see that night-time appears for them as a threatening period, a time of danger and fear where they are

most vulnerable to all kinds of violence. If, as we previously mentioned, the promise of freedom, autonomy and protection are frequently mentioned as the prime incentives for going to the street, soon the youngsters discover that the street is also a fearful place. For the young adults that I talked to who had been living on the street in the early nineties, the Candelária Massacre appeared as a threshold dividing a time of a more tolerant society to a period of increased violence, both by segments of society such as extermination groups and the police but also by the youngsters themselves.

The Candelária Massacre left a mark of fear on the streets of Rio and on all subsequent generations of children and adolescents that came to dwell there. For the older ones I talked to, all of them had some tale to tell of the day, how they had been to the Candelária earlier in the week, how they had known some of the youngsters murdered, how they had heard shots some days before. For the younger ones, not on the streets at the time, Candelária left them with the possibility that they themselves may perish on the street, that there are very real dangers and forces on the street that do not want them there.

> "[Wando 15 years old]
>
> It is dangerous on the street to lie down in the early hours, without knowing what tomorrow will bring, because there are people with evil minds and good minds... we don't know if they are coming here to take us under their wing or to set us on fire, you understand?" (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

Many youngsters in the CIESPI research mentioned this fear of being set on fire, a direct reference to the case of the Indian Galdino. This was a shocking case widely reported in the Brazilian media in 1997, when a Pataxó Indian was burnt alive by four middle class youngsters whilst he was sleeping in a bus stop in Brasília. This episode and that of the Candelária massacre are very present in the imaginary of these youngsters, giving shape to the very real fears they experience every night on the street.

SOLIDARITY – RE-IMAGINING URBAN SPACE

Faced with these dangers of the street, youngsters find protection in the group, which in turn can be seen as a way of imagining and creating their own place in the city, turning public space into a place of solidarity and friendship. The children, adolescents and young adults I talked to related examples of strong friendships created on the street, and I found many examples of

groups that lived together for many years. In some cases, this friendship already existed inside the community of origin, facilitating the initiation into the street as we have already seen. It could be observed that friends do help each other on the street. At the same time the term 'groups of street children' can lead to an inaccurate impression of excessive cohesion or resemblance to the phenomenon of gangs from which it is distinct. The contrast between these groups and gangs is explored in the following chapter; here it will suffice to say that what appears to exist on the street are groups of friends of different sizes who '*param*', that is, literally 'stop' or 'hang out' together and who transit through different spaces where they meet other groups of friends. A larger group is sought normally at night, for protection since at this time they feel more vulnerable.

> "[Suzana 15 years old]
>
> I always slept here, but I never slept alone, I always slept in the middle of boys bigger than me, boys, because I was a child, you understand uncle[2]... so on the street, you seek out protection, it doesn't matter if they have broken the law, but someone who defends you, because there are people on the street who defend us, you understand, who have been longer on the street... There are always bigger people who ask for money for the smaller ones and help them, stand by their side, help out, sometimes take them away from the police and from thieves, don't seduce them" (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

For children and adolescents who effectively live on the street this experience of friendship and solidarity within the group is what gives them a sense of protection and support, and perhaps, the feeling of a social belonging absent in their past with their families. It may be because of this that, despite all the evidence against it, many affirm they feel safer on the street than at home. I asked Silvana about the dangers of the street and she told me that on the street you are more protected than at home.

> "Because inside the home you sleep, lie and rest in peace and are not paying attention to anything, whilst on the street you pay attention to everything, you don't sleep, you rest! Or for instance on the street, inside the house you have stray bullets, why? Because you live on the *morro* [literally the hill, the *favela*].

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[2] It is common in Brazil for youngsters to address adults, even those they do not necessarily know as *tio* or *tia*, uncle or auntie. This is not confined to youngsters on the street.

The *morro* is worse than the street. On the street you can sleep at ease if you don't have an enemy no one will harm you. Some people say 'ah you are going to the street you will be raped' It's a lie, this doesn't happen on the street, I was never raped on the street, I was at home. So there is this, the street is more protected because one protects the other, at home you have one against another, it's different. The street is more protected, there is more harmony."

The statement of belief that the street is more harmonious and one is more protected than at home in the *favela* is extremely significant. It points, I believe, to two important elements of life on the street in Rio. Firstly, 'harmony' on the street, as opposed to at home, refer to bonds of friendship and solidarity that are created and sustained in an atmosphere that these youngsters describe as being mutually supportive. This contrasts with the turbulent bonds of kin that these youngsters experienced in their homes. Whether as a consequence of sibling rivalry, fighting or abusive parents and relatives, or else as a consequence of a lack of security in the community, the bonds with friends created on the street were described to me as more wholesome, at least from the point of view of many youngsters I interviewed. Secondly, as we saw in the previous chapter, the increased level of violence and police repression in the *favelas* caused mainly by the growth of the organized drug trade has been a further incentive to leave home for the street. It may be because of this desire for protection that children and adolescents are so easily accepted by groups on the street, easily forming friendships. In contrast to the stressful environment of the *favela*, which lacks a sense of security and protection, the street appears for some youngsters as a space where at least you have your group for support. This may seem very counter-intuitive at first considering the fear and danger that these youngsters are routinely subject to and bearing in mind episodes like the Candelária Massacre, but as mentioned before it derives from very specific notions of risk and danger.

The group is at times referred to as the *maloca*. This refers both to the group as constituted by its members as well as the place where the group rests, or stops, *para* in Carioca slang. The etymology of the term *maloca* is interesting. It is an indigenous word designating the long hut where families sleep together. Subsequently, the term has been used in Brazilian Portuguese to refer to a hiding place, particularly of untrustworthy persons or bandits. The term *maloqueiro*, came to mean the member of one of such gangs or more specifically a 'street urchin'. Street children are sometimes referred to as *maloqueiros*, particularly in the northeast of Brazil, a term which they have themselves sometimes embraced when referring to each other (Hecht 1999).
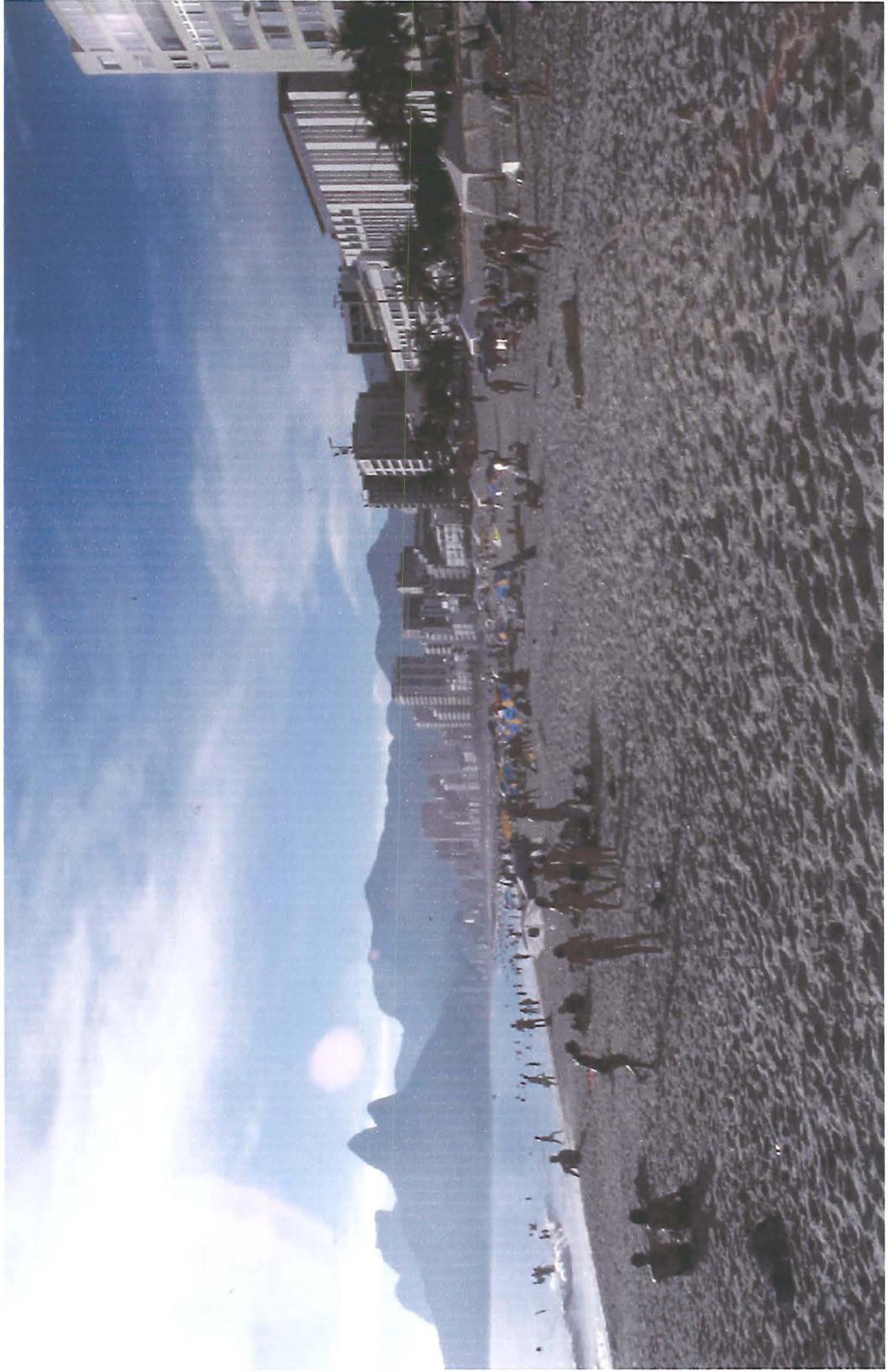
5.6 Ipanema beach.
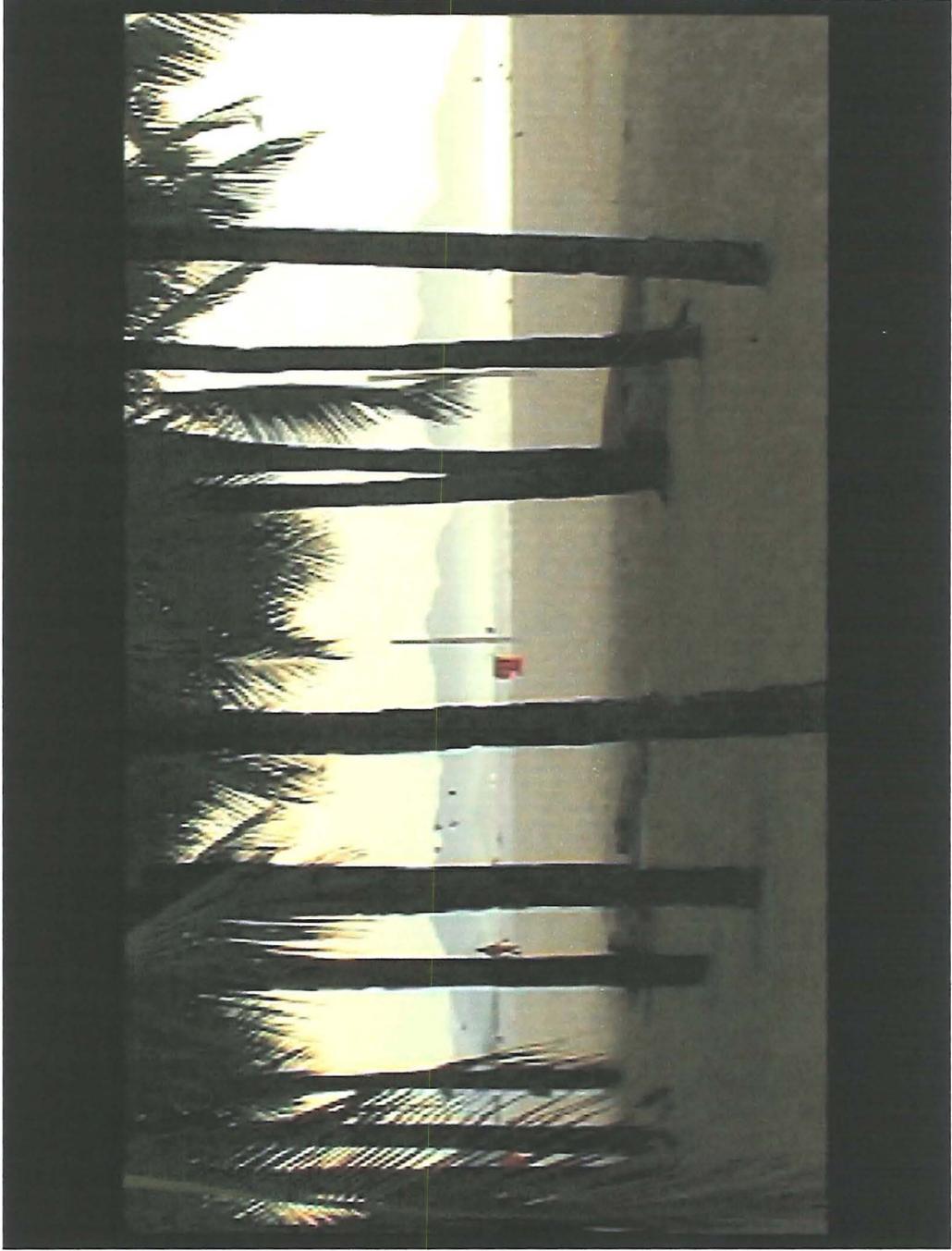
5.7 Youngsters sleeping on Copacabana beach.
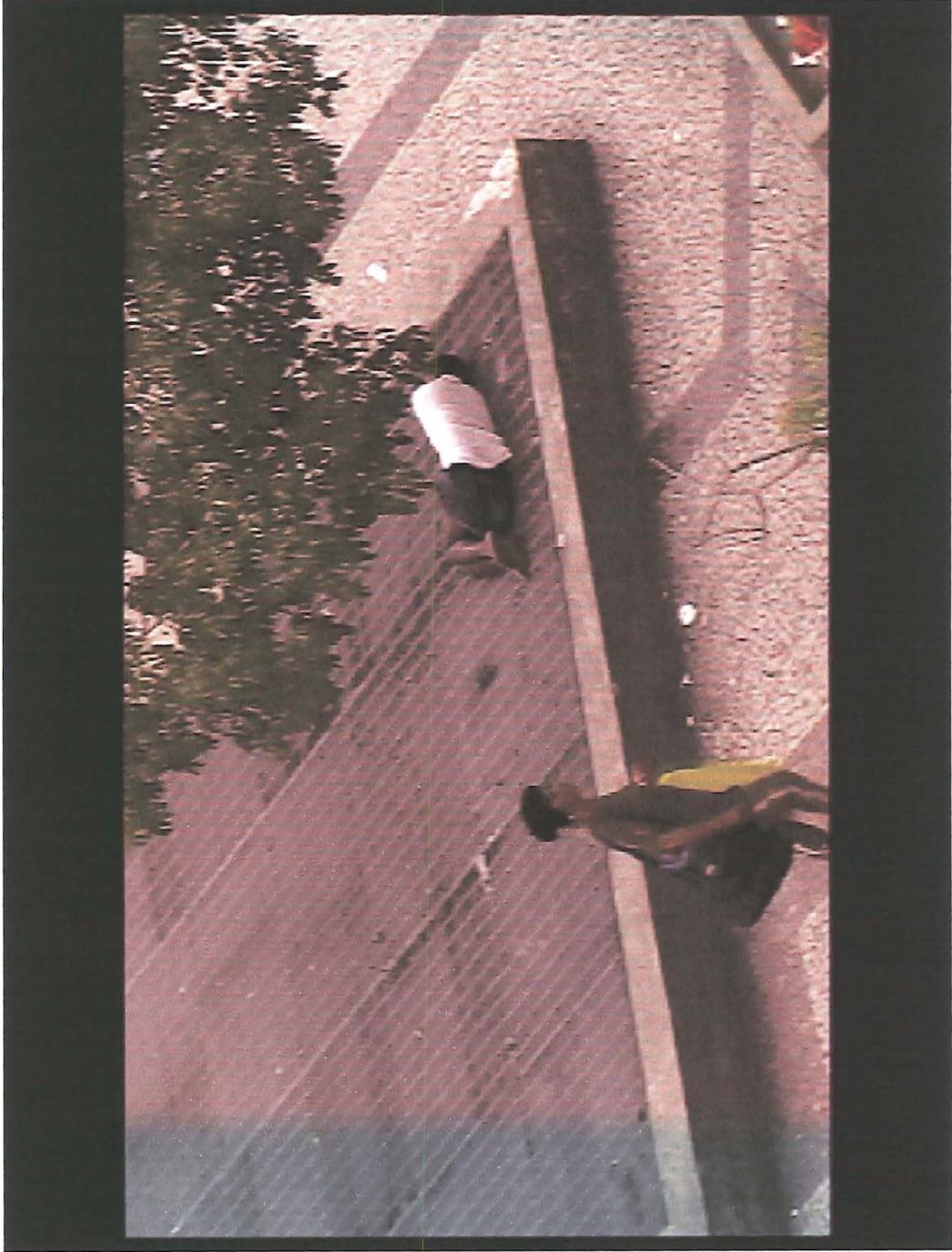
5.8 Youngster sleeping on subway vent.

A mixture of all these meanings appear in the way the youngsters refer to the *maloca* – it is a place of hiding from society, it is also a communal place, as well as a *bonde* (literally a tram), a slang term that can be translated as a crew or posse – a group of people united by a common bond and purpose.

Silvana's *maloca* live in a quiet square surrounded by tall trees and shrubs in the *bairro* of Flamengo. Flamengo is a beach-side *bairro* beneath the Sugar Loaf mountain, a couple of coastal hills with a cable car stretching between them, one of Rio's main tourist attraction. Flamengo, whose sea-front consists largely of fancy hotels built in the 1950s, is made up of a large area of land that was reclaimed from the sea, the Aterro, upon which Rio's National airport is located. Here a complex of parks, football courts, green areas, and the beach are also found. Two large parallel roads run the length of the Aterro surrounded by green areas and pathways on either side. The abundance of such public spaces, some five minutes walk away from Rio's central business area, has made the Aterro a much sought after area by many of the city's homeless, both adults and children.

Rucksacks, shoe-shine boxes, powdered milk tins, the staple possessions of street dwellers, lie on the edge of the square and on the park benches surrounding it. In the distance a group of youths, the members of the *maloca*, sit beneath a tree on park seats by a concrete table. Silvana is 22 years old, her *maloca* has about 11 people and though most of them are in their early twenties many have been on the street for many years and in conversation some still referred to themselves as street children [*meninos de rua*]. Silvana tells me she has been on the street since she was born, and though she did live with her mother on the street until she died the previous year, Silvana had also circulated through different houses, sometimes living with relatives, and at another time being sent away for to a youth correctional farm out of the state (for her own protection, she told me) after her drug dealer boyfriend was murdered. Now Silvana heads this *maloca* in the Aterro, she is considered as figure of authority some referring to her as a *mãe de rua*, a street mother. The *maloca*, in some instances such as in Silvana's group, can be considered as a surrogate family, a tightly bound community of friends on the street who help each other. Silvana explained to me what a *maloca* is:

> "*Maloca* is a group of street children, street people, it doesn't matter, boys and girls each have their own groups. For example you have this dude's crew or that dude's crew, you understand? So, for instance, we all get together and you become a family and we stop in this place here... Because all that I eat I share, and all that they eat they share with us. What happens to one happens to

everyone. Good or bad. So it becomes a family, a *maloca* because of the police, they don't accept us here on the street, so we become a *maloca*! Who doesn't share is out, at least in my group it's like this... Sometimes it doesn't fill my belly but because it is being shared then it has filled it!"

The sharing of 'good and bad' means that the members of the group do stick up for each other, Silvana told me they'd defend members of the group against others, but that if a member of the group was found to be in the wrong, they themselves would reprimand this person, perhaps using force or else expelling the individual from the group. The group, as Silvana described it to me, appears to have a strong moral element; Silvana claims that she tries to help people, stop them from doing wrong and even helping them off the street. I asked her what her group does if someone wants to join it:

"We don't do anything, it's just arrive and say that you are on the street and that you need a place, that there are people trying to take advantage of you because you are new to the street. I for example ask; 'do you have a mother?', if they say they have a mum, dad, we find a way to get them here and take them back, because sometimes you can fix things. If we give too much support they won't go back home... But when the mum and dad go there all arrogant with the child, then we find a way for the child to escape and we take care of them. We give food, clothes, everything!"

The *maloca* can then be seen as a re-imagining of urban space, as both a set of relationships that emphasize sharing and mutual support and as a temporary physical space that youngsters call home. Gregori came to a similar conclusion observing the actions of the youngsters that lived in Praça da Sé, in São Paulo, when she speaks of the way they transformed the street into something private, using its corners as a toilet, bathing in the fountains, sleeping on the air ducts of the underground, calling all the people that passed by 'tio/tia' [uncle and auntie], and asking them for all kinds of things. "There was a clear attempt to turn this space - which for the common citizen is impersonal and transitory - into something intimate" (Gregori 2000:116). This point is also made by Hecht, whose book is appropriately titled *At Home in the Street* (1998). In the following chapter we will address in more depth the dynamics and functions of the group. Also, as I argue in the following chapter, this re-imagining of the city is not without problems since the increasing agility of surviving in the city can lead to the acquisition of

practices and defenses that make it progressively harder for youngsters to leave the street and be re-included in society through the education system and the labor market. This was very much the case of the young adults in Silvana's *maloca* who, bound by the ties to the group, found it hard to engage with other networks of people and places.

THE GENDER DIFFERENTIAL

Gender is a significant differentiating factor on the street. This is seen not only in the different motivations and circumstances in the home which encourage the trajectory of boys and girls to the street, but also in the different strategies they adopt on the street. Girls are greatly outnumbered by boys on the street. The earliest data compiled from various cities in Brazil in the late 1980s and early 1990s showed that girls accounted for on average 12% of youngsters on the street (from Rizzini and Rizzini 1991). It is probable that in the last decade this percentage has increased because of the activities of drug gangs and the greater number of families on the street.

The trajectories of girls through the street can be said to be considerably different from that of boys. Although their reasons for going to the street may well be similar, cultural factors and barriers mean that not only are girls likely to be more reluctant to go to the street, but they are also likely to suffer more discrimination and be faced with greater dangers once they do so. Added to the common dangers of living on the street already discussed, girls (more so than boys) are faced with a constant threat of sexual abuse. The perceived threat of these dangers by girls who are still at home, may well be the first deterrent to their leaving home for the street. Combined with this perceived threat of the street, in Brazil, and in Latin America more generally, there is a strong social stigma attached to females who stay out on the street, invariably tied with the notion of loose morality and prostitution. Though other researchers and educators have said that many girls on the street resort to prostitution, the youngsters I met did not report doing so themselves, though they said they knew of girls who had. Prostitution is another factor that, paradoxically, accounts for why there are fewer girls on the street. Instead of having to sleep rough, beg or earn money through the various jobs youngsters on the street engage in, some girls may opt to sell sexual services. In such cases money earned may be used to pay for lodgings or else accommodation is provided by pimps. Though my research did not tackle prostitution as a theme, girls who adopt this way of life find themselves within different networks and spaces, and are faced with different dangers to those of youngsters on the street. But the strongest factor as to why girls are found in less numbers on the street than boys is a cultural one. Just as there is a strong stigma attached to females sleeping out on the street, so there is a strong cultural impetus

that girls should stick by their mothers and help out in the home no matter what. This expresses itself in the way that a mother raises her daughter and in the way notions of duty are internalized by girls. This upbringing may be expressed in a form that is too confining. As we saw in the previous section, many boys and girls hold the promise of freedom provided by the street as one of the key motivating factors for their venture. For the girl this confinement may well be expressed in different ways. Added to the responsibilities she is burdened with in the home, such as house-hold chores, looking after younger siblings and working, parents living in the *favelas*, as elsewhere, often impose a series of prohibitions on going out, in an attempt to protect their daughters. A girl interviewed in the CIESPI research mentioned she slept out on the street because her father would not let her go out at night, locking the door after a certain hour.

Cultural factors then are the most significant reasons as to why, given these added pressures on girls, more of them do not end up on the street. This was also related to me by Devanir, coordinator of *São Martinho's* shelter for girls, Casa das Meninas. Devanir told me how, whereas boys are raised more 'on the street', *mais solto* (looser or with less constraint), because of the machismo of Brazilian culture, the upbringing of girls is more confined. Devanir described how for boys the experience of violence and suffering in the home can rapidly lead to a decision to leave, whereas for a girl this suffering can go on for years without any action being taken. These cultural factors may be akin to what Hecht described as the 'matrifocal logic of motherdom'. For Hecht what essentially distinguishes street children from poor homebound children is their relationship to their mother (Hecht 1998). Street children, Hecht argues, forge their own sense of identity based on their interpretation of how they differ from other poor children who contribute economically to the home, "They are street children not merely because they inhabit the physical space called the street, but because they have betrayed motherdom, the moral and economic logic of the matrifocal home" (Hecht 1998:94). It would appear that this 'betrayal' is even more acutely felt in the case of girls, hence their lower numbers on the street.

The perception of the greater dangers encountered by girls on the street was also borne out by the CIESPI research where we asked if it was better to be a boy or a girl on the street. For those who addressed the question 30 replied that it was better to be a boy and only 8 a girl. Some of the answers given illustrate these perceptions of the greater fragility of girls on the street.

> "[Camarada 15 years old]
>
> Women suffer a lot, there in Copacabana, they get slapped in the face, she is dissed, you understand?

[Aldair 17 years old]

It is better being a man, because women go through many hassles, people come and try to feel them up when they are asleep, people coming back late from the dance all high, they abuse, grab them up.

[Jenifer 17 years old]

It is better being a boy because on the street the majority of boys have a job, they shine shoes, and the boys always seem to have more friendships... the men on the street they are stronger, they have more creativity to protect themselves and deal with people, whilst the girl she is fearful, scared" (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

In order to cope with this perceived disadvantage, girls adopt very particular ways of behaving on the street. One of the most visible is the way in which they dress to appear more like boys. It is common on the street to see girls with their hair cut short or even shaved, wearing baseball caps and baggy clothes.

"[Luiza 15 years old]

Many girls if you looked at them you'd say it was a bunch of boys, all with their heads shaved, wearing a cap, with men's clothes, all talking slang, all cocky...

[Cássia 17 years old]

When I stopped on the street, for you to have an idea, uncle, during the day I stayed as a girl but at night I dressed like a man. I always wore a cap, a big coat, long trousers, like an urchin, if you saw me you would say I was a boy..." (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

Again night-time is identified with danger and strategies are found to cope with it. On a number of occasions during fieldwork I could see girls wearing baggy masculine clothes on the street, particularly at night. Interestingly, the girls that wore very feminine clothes, such as mini-shorts and small tops, more in line with Carioca fashion, tended to be girls who had a steady boyfriend, and hence could do without the extra protection of cross-dressing.

It is also worth noting that in the CIESPI research of the 8 answers which affirmed that it was better to be a girl on the street, 5 came from boys. The motives they gave related to the ease with which girls were perceived to be able to acquire things on the street.

"[Fúlvio 12 years old]

Who does well on the street are girls, because girls can get a lot of money. They ask, and are given R$ 2,00, R$4,00.

[Andrade 15 years old]

On the street? A girl, because with a girl the women don't get scared, when a boy goes to ask for something the Mrs already thinks he is going to steal something..." (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

I also noted other differences when talking to the girls and young women I encountered during my research. Firstly, it appears that a number of girls on the street are raised by their mothers on the street, and so they do not have a home to leave in the first place. Not all females I talked to fell within this category but a significant number did. This seems to indicate that life on the streets is less of a 'choice' for girls than boys. Another significant point was that for these young women and girls, school appeared as a frame of reference which in turn was absent in the discourses of most boys and young men.

For instance Joana, a 22 year old who had lived on the street for many years but who was now living in a *favela* on the periphery of the city, whilst describing the carefree life she led on the street, also told me that for a time she frequented school, "On the street there was a time when I sniffed glue during the day, but when 6 o'clock came I stopped sniffing glue, went to the fountain to bathe and then went to school." This interest in school, Joana and her friend Silvana told me, was more widespread amongst girls than boys. Two sisters I talked to, Marli and Marina both now also grown up, who lived for many years on the street with their mother after she separated from her husband, confirmed this. On the street Marli used to sell sweets with her mother. She used to get up early and go to buy sweets at Central Station. She had to sell all the sweets or else her mother would beat her. She sold sweets in the morning and went to school in the afternoon until 5 o'clock. Afterwards she would again sell sweets or beg in Copacabana. "I was really ashamed." Marli told me, "It is very sad asking people for things. I am ashamed to death of begging." I asked her why she was ashamed of begging, "Because my body was already formed [mature]. With 11, 12 years of age, I already had a fully formed body so people tease you

if you go, 'Ah lady can't you pay this for me'. They go like this, 'why don't you get a job?' ".
Marli points to a common phenomenon on the street, which we return to in the next chapter, that
of how it becomes progressively harder with increasing age to get by on the street through the
sympathy of others. But whereas Marli retells of an experience of shame for most others, and
especially for males, this growing hardship is expressed as *revolta*. This is not to say that girls did
not also experience *revolta*. Many did, but what I found was that girls were more reluctant to
engage in certain forms of behavior associated with *revolta*, such as crime. We return to the
theme of *revolta* in the next chapter.

Like other young women I talked to, both Joana and Silvana said they never robbed on
the street because they were too scared to do so. Girls they told me, would instead be given other
jobs on the street, such as holding on to stolen money or goods for the boys. It is both fear of the
activity itself, as well as the potential lack of fear felt by the victim, that inhibit many girls from
such crime. Yet, though robbing or mugging appeared more common amongst boys on the street,
girls also engage in it. For Sandra, dressing up as a boy and adopting male mannerisms, meant
she could transcend the fears of robbing. For others, like Silvana, I was told that she cried every
time she robbed, she cried for her victims because she wanted to give them their things back.

The police, as we have already seen, are often cited as one of the greatest dangers to
youngsters on the street, yet the actions of the police appear contradictory, at times brutal and
unjust, at others at the very least indifferent. As Lora tells me, "there are many guards who come
grabbing our arms, they come wanting to hit us, in the early hours they come dissing us, as they
have done so many times, taking us from our covers and putting us out in the rain, under the
bridge, put everyone out in the rain sitting down." But the police offer a range of responses to
youngsters on the street, ranging from the brutal and humiliating, as Lora demonstrates, to
tolerance. Silvana told me how the police wouldn't arrest her because they knew she was stealing
to feed her brothers and sister. "I never had a vice", Silvana told me,

> "so they all knew about my life, the police did. Sometimes they would look away
> and pretend not to see, or sometimes they would see and give me advice, or even
> things. But I said to them; 'I don't have another alternative, nobody wants to give
> me money anymore', I asked for money but after I became a young woman
> nobody wanted to give me money anymore, and being a prostitute I never
> wanted, I don't have the gist for that! So they only took me to the police cabin or
> the police station, but then there they say 'constable leave her, let her go'."

The police then appear to treat boys and girls differently. Within the context of a macho culture, where it is considered cowardly to 'hit girls', the police are more willing to use physical punishment to chastise boys. Though girls are hit by the police, they are more likely to suffer some form of humiliation at their hand, the 'dissing' or *esculashar* that is commonly spoken of.

INTRA-CITY MIGRATIONS

As well as symbolizing the very real dangers that life on the street holds, the Candelária Massacre appears to have changed the configuration of groups on the street. With the ensuing fear from extermination groups, the police and the municipal authorities, groups of youngsters have dispersed and fragmented in order not to draw attention to themselves. In the post-Candelária era, as I was told by many street educators, no longer do we find large groups of children and adolescents congregating in public space. This is a consequence not only of Candelária but of municipal policies of active removal of youngsters from the street by FIA (Fundação da Infância e Adolescência) to Rio's already overcrowded shelters, an issue which is explored further in chapter 7. Such campaigns of removal appear more active during important events in Rio, such as carnival, the visit of international dignitaries or high profile international conferences such as the UN conference in 1992.

Cynically, as we shall see in chapter 7, such campaigns of enforced removal from the street are also present in the period leading up to local government elections. Indeed the ridding of the city of its street children has been the focus of many a political campaign. These campaigns invariably feed on the public's anxiety about increasing levels of urban crime and violence, often fermented by a sensationalist media that is keen to link crime and violence with street children. A common example of the kind of headlines found in such popular newspapers as *O Globo* and *Jornal do Brasil* is: "Minors take fear to the streets: Adolescents number 3,200, the majority in Copacabana where cases of theft and violence are growing" (*Jornal do Brasil* February 7th 2003).

Many *Cariocas* have come to realize there is no easy solution for the 'problem of street children'. As a commander of the 19th battalion of the military police, Dario Cony, quoted in the article mentioned above says the operations of forced removal of 'minors' has turned into a policy of 'papering over cracks'. In the last two months, he goes on, 90 'of them' were removed and without places in the state's shelters, have returned to the street. But even when places are available in the shelters this is no guarantee that youngsters would voluntarily stay on. As we have heard in this chapter, the ethos of freedom many youngsters aspire to very often means that such confinement in a place of rules and regulations is just not desirable.

Youngsters on the street though, are also subject to involuntary confinement. Though the Child and Adolescent Statute has done away with much of the arbitrary imprisonment of children and adolescents in the period before its introduction in 1992, many youngsters caught breaking the law still end up being locked away for periods of weeks or months. Though the new statute describes these institutions as 'socio-educational', youngsters who are submitted to them invariably describe them as 'prisons'. We will explore further the implication of the Child and Adolescent Statute in chapter 7. But it needs to be acknowledged here that these state institutions – shelters, youth correctional facilities – and non-governmental run shelters and day centers, also form part of the lives of youngsters on the street.

These constant comings and goings, from home to the street, from the street to shelters or youth correctional institutions, are movements that recur in the lives of youngsters on the street. This perpetual motion also makes the job of the researcher that much harder in trying to get a sense of their life trajectories, making it extremely difficult to piece fragments of experiences together in any orderly or chronological fashion. Instead the youngsters I talked to narrated their life stories in a non-linear, discontinuous way. Being on the street is then necessarily an existence of high mobility for children and adolescents. Even if the youngster has one particular area as a point of reference, s/he would rarely remain solely within this region. There are many reasons for this. The youngster may have to move to another area for economic reasons, to a place where it is easier to obtain resources, or else s/he may have been threatened in that particular place by local shopkeepers, local drug dealers or the police. S/he may also move because other places in the city provide more opportunities for leisure. The youngster may also be removed from a particular area by the police if s/he has committed some crime, or else by the municipal authorities and taken to one of the city's shelters. The free movement of children and adolescents on the street is also affected by a form of urbanization that has tended to fence off public spaces and restrict access to parts of the city. A point brought home to me by Alexandre Soares, a member of the CIESPI research team. Rio, Soares argues, like other large cities in Brazil, appears to be undergoing a form of political urbanization whereby parks and squares and spaces under highways, which have historically concentrated the homeless, are fenced off from the public (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002). This form of urban planning makes it impossible for this population to remain at rest in these localities and as a result increases their mobility through the city. One further consequence of this form of urbanization, is that the homeless population of the locality is no longer known by those who live in the area. Instead the homeless, including youngsters found on the street, are increasingly seen as faceless and therefore 'dangerous'. Mike Davies has made similar observations concerning the city of Los Angeles and what he calls the 'militarization of

urban space'. Davis argues that a universal consequence of the 'crusade to secure the city' is the destruction of a truly democratic urban space (Davis 1995:356). "The 'public' spaces of the megastructures and supermalls have supplanted traditional streets and disciplined their spontaneity" (Ibid). This privatization of public space can also be seen in Rio in the fencing off of public squares and the proliferation of shopping malls. But also, as Davis pointed to in Los Angeles, this 'militarization' of urban space has seen the increase of gated communities – buildings and condominiums locked behind high security fences, modern surveillance equipment and private security forces. Needless to say, these developments render youngsters on the street ever more 'out of place'.

The high mobility of youngsters on the street is well expressed in the slang they use to designate a place where they 'live', which literally means where they stop, or rest – *'paro'* in Portuguese. The reasons for 'stopping' in a place, as we have seen, are related to where the possibilities of leisure and money are thought to be the greatest. For this reason, Copacabana, close to the beach and replete with tourists, was found to be the place of the greatest concentration; in the CIESPI research, 30% of those we interviewed mentioned they had stayed there at some point. This was followed by Barra da Tijuca, also a beach-side *bairro* and replete with the nouveaux riche and financial possibilities. Though in much fewer numbers, the suburban *bairros* of Rio de Janeiro also have youngsters who live on the street, but the beach-side locations were those that attracted the largest concentration of youngsters. The beach is at the heart of Carioca identity and provides its quintessentially democratic space. It is no coincidence that youngsters claim the beach as their most popular leisure space since, despite the increasing restriction to public space, the beach is still largely an open space for all. It is also interesting to point out that street educators and others working with youngsters on the street have noted a seasonal increase in their numbers during Carnival. At this time of the year in Rio, it would appear that the economic possibilities of the street are dramatically increased with the influx of *gringos* to the city.

Another force has also affected the mobility of youngsters on the street. As we have seen in chapter 4, drug gang rivalry combined with police intervention in the drug trade claims thousands of lives of the poor, young and, more often than not, afro-descendents, every year in Rio. What is worrying within the specific context of the street is the way in which every year the *comandos* force into exile an unknown number of youngsters from their community of origin, often prompting him/her to seek protection on the street. As Roger who had been living on the street for some months said to one of our interviewers in the CIESPI research:

"[Roger 15 years old]

Its like this, I was a dealer too, I've been part of a drug gang. But I lost the package, marijuana package, so I had to pay. If I didn't pay, they said they'd kill me. But I've already paid half of it, I have to pay the rest.

So if I go round there, I can only turn up with the money" (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

As noted in the last chapter the drug trafficking *comandos* have had a dramatic effect on the lives of those who live in *favelas* and the peripheries. The gangs have on many occasions added a further motive for youngsters to leave their communities at times, resorting to finding protection in the street. These situations of exile may be the result of the youngster's direct involvement with the *comandos* – like Roger above, by being indebted to the gangs or else by breaking one of the 'laws' they try to enforce in the community. Sometimes the youngster may have to stay away from the community because s/he or else a relative has in some way antagonized the gangs, as was the case with Silvana and others I talked to. I have even heard of cases where the parent actively removes her son or daughter from the community for fear that s/he will be hurt by the gangs, sometimes interning them in a shelter.

An article appearing in the newspaper *O Globo* referred to research carried out by SMDS (the Municipal Secretariat for Social Development) which found that between 12% and 15% of people living on the streets of Rio had been exiled from their homes by drug dealers (*O Globo* 4th February 2002). This research put forward a figure of 1,700 homeless adults living in the city, which would mean that of these around 250 would have been exiled from their communities. But as the researchers themselves suggest the figures, both of homelessness and of exiles, may be much higher. Considering that it is the younger population that has suffered the most consequences from the growth of the drug trade, it would not be surprising to find the percentage of child and adolescent exiles amongst those living on the street to be even higher. A young woman in the newspaper article expresses the fear and tyranny of the dealers and the hold they have over the population: "When a dealer gives the order, you leave with only the clothes you have on" (Ibid). Because of this fear and because of the *comandos'* control of economic resources, many houses in the *favelas* end up belonging to them, increasing their power in the community.

RIO DE JANEIRO
em perspectiva

5.9 Rio de Janeiro relief map.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the highly segregated communities of Rio de Janeiro, with pockets of extreme poverty clustered on the hill-side *favelas* surrounding the city center and its high-rise upper middle class beach-side flats, 'street children' like other homeless adults, appear to defy this partitioning of urban space. By making their home on the beach, plazas, the doorways of shops and the towering residencies of the middle-class, youngsters on the street re-imagine and experience the city as a place in which some of their material, emotional and symbolic needs are met. We considered here that this form of being in urban space can be seen as a form of resistance, a defiance against the inaccessibility of the fruits of consumer society by attempting to re-engage with the city, the 'center of consumption'. Significantly, it is in the city that a sense of place and a feeling of protection is often found through the bonds of friendship and solidarity with other youngsters in a similar predicament. This re-imagining of the city, we argued here, must be seen in the context of the way they see life at home in the *favelas* and peripheries, marked as it is in their narratives by fragmented affective ties and a range of unfulfilled 'necessities'. But this re-imagined sense of place in the city is constantly threatened by many dangers, of which the most threatening is the action of the police and of extermination groups. Alongside this struggle for safety and material survival, youngsters on the street are also engaged in a battle for self-affirmation. It is this other struggle to which we turn now.

CHAPTER 6

THE PRESERVATION OF SELF IN THE DISCRIMINATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Children, adolescents and young adults living on the street, like anyone else, identify with different people, symbols and ideals, in different moments of their day-to-day lives. Like every one, they are limited in these processes of identity by the resources of culture, history and language (Hall 1997) and by the constraints of power relations (Mageo and Knauft 2002). But in the case of youngsters on the street the most pertinent constraint is the discrimination which they encounter daily and which is implicated in the category of 'street children'. "I am not a street child," asserts Nego da Bahia, a 23 year who had lived on the street for many years, "not a thief, not a marginal... I am a Brazilian citizen like everyone else." How is this tension between an exclusionary category and the aspiration for an inclusive identity resolved in the lives of those on the street? To complicate matters, as we address here, there are times when it is advantageous to be regarded as a street child, in particular as a means to secure resources from sympathetic passers-by and NGOs. Yet, if at times youngsters engage with the identity of street child, a great dread is shown at the prospects of becoming a street adult, a homeless beggar or 'bum' as they describe it.

As addressed in chapter 2, authors such as Foucault, Hacking and Goffman have all been concerned with the ways in which labeling or classification of groups of people affects those who are labeled, not only in terms of the way this group is treated or managed by others, but also how this comes to influence the way through which individuals come to themselves (Hacking 1999, Foucault 1982, Goffman 1990). This is what Hacking referred to as 'dynamic nominalism', how persons come into being at the same time as the label designated to describe them (Hacking 2003). This process, explored by Hacking and Goffman, is also what both authors have termed the 'looping' effect, whereby categories once created loop back into the personal experiences and identities of persons within society at large (Lynch 2001). This chapter will consider the effect of the category of 'street children' as it is appropriated or defied in particular circumstances in the

public encounters between youngsters on the street with Rio's other citizens. The possibility of defiance or embrace of the category is very significant within the broader struggle for self-affirmation which takes place within an urban environment marked by the inaccessibility of status symbols through consumption and opportunities for social mobility. This chapter investigates the intricacies of being in or out of particular categories for youngsters on the street. Within this unfolding struggle for self-affirmation we shall be looking at how youngsters are stigmatized on the street, the experiences of being in a group, the experience and consequences of *revolta* from repeated discrimination and the desire to be considered as normal.

BEING A 'PERSON' ON THE STREET

In orienting themselves on the street, youngsters acquire a series of competencies that teaches them how to obtain resources for their survival, fun and self-affirmation. For Gregori, an anthropologist who studied street children in São Paulo in the late nineties, these competencies are what she terms *'viração'* – which can be translated as 'getting by', or 'making do' – a colloquial term that refers to the obtaining of resources for survival – particularly through informal means. For boys and girls who live on the street, *viração* means something more than just survival, it is also, as Gregori argues, a way of manipulating 'symbolic and identity resources' to dialogue, "communicate and position oneself in the city and to its various characters" (Gregori 2000:31). As we shall see in this chapter, a youngster's day-to-day life on the street is a constant process of revealing and concealing, of claiming and defying identities and representations.

What Gregori termed *'viração'* resembles in part what Ervin Goffman called 'information control' or, in the case of groups of people who are stigmatized, 'stigma management' (Goffman 1990). The work of Erving Goffman can help us in our analysis of the relationship between self and others, by providing a framework for understanding the processes through which the interaction of children and adolescents with other actors on the street contributes to their identity formation as they struggle within a minefield of representations. The field of representations on the streets of Rio is mined for youngsters who dwell there since they constantly suffer the very real and brutal consequences of being placed in a particular category. How youngsters 'surf' through and experience this minefield is what we address here.

Published in 1963 Goffman's, *Stigma: notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, drew together a decade's worth of theorizing on the theme of individuals who are 'disqualified from full social acceptance' (Goffman 1990:9). The book goes on to outline the ways in which

the stigmatized and those whom Goffman calls 'normals', constitute a dialectical and complex mutually-defining relationship. The normal and the stigmatized, Goffman writes, "are not persons but rather perspectives. These are generated in social situations during mixed contacts by virtue of the unrealized norms that are likely to play upon the encounter" (Goffman 1990:164). These encounters are then not only meetings between individuals in their day-to-day life, but also more broadly speaking, interactions between social (collective) representations and personal (individual) experience. These debates are relevant when talking of children and adolescents on the street because they not only belong to a highly stigmatized social group, but are also the most 'public' social group around, living as they do under the constant gaze of those who pass through Rio's city center.

We have discussed in chapters 2 and 3 the genesis of the category of 'street children' and the extent to which it arose as a necessity to label what has been historically perceived as a dissonant form of childhood, falling outside the realm of 'normal childhood'. We saw that in making themselves at home on the street outside adult supervision, engaging in activities that are the prerogative of adults and in spaces that are normally off-bounds to the poor, these youngsters go against deeply held notions about the rightful place of childhood – at home, supervised and cared for by the family. The label 'street children', though not always used derogatively, helps to put such youngsters aside as a group with particular attributes and origins. As we noted the term 'street children' is never far from the word problem, and neither is it far, as Hecht noted, from the words 'the causes of' (Hecht 1998). In other words, the presence of youngsters on the street becomes a social phenomenon with repercussions for the social structure as a whole and hence is identified as a problem in reference to what is considered normal within that structure. Once identified as that which falls outside the normal, various responses are evident when people encounter street children, ranging from the friendly and charitable to the violent and abusive. The experiences of discrimination, violence, belittling and humiliation are common for youngsters on the street. In this context a fuller account of Goffman's work is relevant here, and we shall see whether his model of stigma can be adequately applied to the case of street children.

Goffman writes that it was the ancient Greeks who used the term *stigma* to refer to:

> "bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier. The signs were cut or burnt into the body and advertised that the bearer was a slave, a criminal, or a traitor – a blemished person ritually polluted, to be avoided, especially in public spaces" (Goffman 1990:11).

Today we use the term akin to the original literal sense, but it is applied to the stigma generating entity itself rather than to its bodily evidence. Though the stigmas Goffman refers to may appear as very different,[1] he endeavors to show the commonalities they induce in respect to the encounters between 'normals' and the stigmatized, the strategies of 'information control' or 'stigma management', as well as the conflicting identity struggles of the stigmatized.

When introducing his terminology of 'normals' and 'stigmatized', Goffman states that the social interaction between the stigmatized and the normal does not require those involved to know one another 'personally'. Stereotyping or 'profiling' of our normative expectations regarding conduct and character, he writes, is a habitual aspect of the way through which we hold in mind broad categories of persons such as 'customers', 'motorists', 'policemen', or in our case, 'street children' (Goffman 1990). It is interesting to note the ways through which the stereotype of the street child is generated, even before an encounter occurs. In Brazil in particular, images of street children are often found in the media and appear thoroughly ingrained in the popular imagination of the urban population as we saw in chapter 1 (see photograph on page 142).

The stigma symbols[2] street children display are many. Perhaps the most prevalent and damaging of all is the ubiquitous glue sniffing. This sign, characterized by plastic water bottles filled with glue or thinner (a solvent based paint-stripper), or by the sniffing of a piece of cloth or T-shirt that is dowsed with the substance, in many cases serves to distinguish street children, more technically speaking 'children of the streets', from 'children on the street'.[3] Being on the street, whether occupied selling goods at traffic lights, or just hanging out, are not sufficient signs to being labeled with, and consequently suffer from, the stigma of being a 'street child' – though many will. Yet being seen sniffing glue, is almost a sure sign that one will be placed within this category. Clearly other signs are also relevant here, such as the practices or 'street style' learned on the street: the skills in begging, the slang and gestures picked up on the street, the form of dress (often barefoot, ill-fitting ragged and unwashed clothes) and the forms of interaction with

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[1] Goffman divides the stigmas he refers to in his work into three groups; firstly what he calls the 'abominations of the body' – the various kinds of physical deformities and ailments; secondly the 'blemishes of individual character' where he includes addiction, imprisonment, unemployment and mental illness amongst others; thirdly, what he refers to as the 'tribal stigmas' of race, nation and religion, which can be transmitted through lineages and may be applicable to all members of a family (Goffman 1990:14).

[2] Goffman's contrast of prestige symbols and stigma symbols is relevant here. Whereas the former refers to the acquisition, or the perceived acquisition, of symbols valued by society or groups within society and that can be said to endow its bearer with prestige, the latter as Goffman puts it, draws attention to a 'debasing identity discrepancy' of the individual with a 'consequent reduction in our valuation' of him (Goffman 1990:59).

[3] For a discussion of the distinction between being 'on' or 'of' the street, see chapter 2.

adults. A clear sign is also the presence of the child or adolescent within a group of other youngsters displaying similar signs in particular public spaces and times.

All these signs, combined with the stereotype of the street child – that is, a child or adolescent who has no home, who is outside the supervision of responsible adults, who lacks morals, takes drugs and steals - informs the reaction of many passersby. Veale, Taylor and Linehan try to account for the persistence of the stereotype through 'cognitive dissonance theory' (Veale, Taylor and Linehan 2000). Cognitive dissonance, they write, occurs in situations when experience and attitudes, in this case regarding the expectations about childhood and the experience of street children, come into conflict. The ensuing tension is resolved either through a change of attitude or a change of understanding of the situation. The dissonance when faced with street children, they argue, is reduced by believing that such children are abandoned or else delinquent, lest the 'normal' passer-by should have to review ideas about the family, the home and society and the place of the child in this scheme of things (Veale, Taylor and Linehan 2000). In this way the stigma is often reinvigorated.

Goffman writes that there is a popular notion that, whereas impersonal contacts between strangers are subject to stereotypical responses, "as persons come to be on closer terms with each other this categoric approach recedes and gradually sympathy, understanding, and a realistic assessment of personal qualities takes its place" (Goffman 1990:68). Yet, as he rightly observes, this does not always take place and 'familiarity need not reduce contempt' (Goffman 1990:70). Street children are a very clear example of this, suffering daily abuse from those who see them every day: the police, security guards and the guards inside the youth correctional facilities through which some of these youngsters circulate through. Equally, local residents in areas where street children settle have been very vocal to the local authorities and the media about their wish to see them removed from the area, citing as justification a list of attributes commonly associated with the stereotype. This is not to say that these youngsters refrain from engaging in the activities they are often accused of indulging in – glue sniffing, petty theft, etc. – since clearly as a group many of them do. Yet when we deal with specific cases, with individuals, these acts whether performed or not, are often already assumed and the individual is subsumed into a stigmatized category. This, as we shall see, provokes a series of responses from youngsters, often associated with what they refer as *revolta* – a sense of revolt or inner rage, that may lead to the appropriation of the stereotype, or the performance of the role that is expected of them.

The instance of the meetings between 'normals' and the stigmatized hold particular interest to Goffman, revealing what he terms 'stigma management'. This occurs in the public sphere and refers to "the contact between strangers or mere acquaintances, to one end of a

continuum whose other pole is intimacy" (Goffman 1990:69). Revealing and concealing the signs of stigma are part of street children's everyday cycle, where they adopt, in Goffman's terminology 'techniques of information control'. Depending on whom they are addressing and the spaces within which they are found, different strategies of 'stigma management' are adopted. We referred to the work of Gregori in this respect who termed this exercise *viração* – getting by (Gregori 2000). These options, or orientations serve as survival strategies on the street, where images held by the public at large of 'street children', as the 'poor kid' or 'young thief', are appropriated by the youngsters to their advantage in particular encounters. This may mean the playing up to particular passers-by, especially women and the *gringos* (tourists), whilst begging for money or food. It could also mean using the fear of a passer-by for a mugging since, in the eye of the beholder, the youngster is already a thief anyway. An example from the CIESPI research illustrates a typical encounter between youngsters on the street and passersby.

> "[Aldair 17 years old]
>
> **These people here on the square, who pass by each day, what do you think they think about you?**
>
> Aldair: They must think we are going to rob them... today I asked for R$1 from a woman, she then held on to her watch and mobile phone, and I said, 'look I am not robbing you, I am asking'.
>
> **Do you think that people have a reason to think this way?**
>
> Aldair: Yes because the majority of people here rob, do shitty things, so they get scared" (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

Being inconspicuous, particularly in the proximity of the police, security guards, or council workers who take children away to shelters, is also important. As a group of researchers from the CIESPI research recounted, the youngsters they approached feared the researchers were council workers who had come to take them away and were adamant in claiming they were not street children but were there waiting for their mothers to pick them up. This occurred after ten o'clock at night and they were standing at Central Station, one of the more dangerous parts of Rio's center.

6.1 Image from *O Globo* newspaper, photographs such as these often accompany articles on 'street children' commonly using the term *menor* to refer to them. Note how the image catches the youngster looking at the camera sniffing either glue or thinner dowsed in his T-shirt.

These encounters in the public space of the street are very significant in trying to understand the processes of identity of the children and adolescents who reside there. Though imbued with collective representations and stereotypes these encounters also take place in the dimension of the 'personal'. The personal would appear to lie between the social – the realm of collective representations and practices - and the self – that of the subjective experiences. This is where Erikson considered the "interplay between the psychological and the social, the developmental and the historical" took place, a space of which he called *psychosocial relativity* (Erikson 1968:23).

Personal identity then appears as a series of such encounters, constituting what Goffman considered the unique combination of life history that comes to be attached to the individual.

> "Personal identity, then, has to do with the assumption that the individual can be differentiated from all others and that around this means of differentiation a single continuous record of social facts can be attached, entangled. Like candy floss, becoming then the sticky substance to which still other biographical facts can be attached" (Goffman 1990:74).

Goffman discusses social and personal identity and contrasts it to ego identity. The latter refers to a subjective sense of the individual's own situation, continuity and character obtained as a result of various social experiences, what Erikson describes as a *subjective sense* of an *invigorating sameness* and *continuity*, what we are here referring to as the Self (Erikson 1968). Social and personal identity by contrast, are part of other persons' concerns and definitions regarding the individual in question. The social, the personal and the subjective are analytical categories through which we try to make sense of the processes of identity that occur on the street. Clearly they are all intrinsically bound together since social representations are at work in the face to face encounter of persons which in turn are implicated in the ways that we experience the world and ourselves.

One example of this is the way in which youngsters on the street appear to interiorize society's discourse about them. Fenelon, Martins & Domingues (1992) noted that the girls they interviewed in Goiás, another Brazilian city, ended up reproducing an assistentialist[4] discourse in their talk – speaking about the necessity to change their lives and other things that they assumed

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[4] *Assistencialismo* – or assitencialism is a Latin American term analogous to the English term clientalism. It refers to a patron/client relationship in which the receiving party is always in a less powerful position and

others wanted to hear, something I also heard on many occasions. But next to this 'acceptable' institutional discourse, they also found another discourse that reproduces the prejudice of society:

> **"What do you think people think about girls like you?**
>
> Tramps, *maloqueiras*.
>
> **And you, what do you think about yourselves?**
>
> Tramps, *maloqueiras"* [my translation] (Fenelon, Martins and Domingues 1992:63).

Statements I encountered in the field also presented this interiorization or naturalization of the prejudiced discourse from certain segments of society. For instance, there were many cases when children or adolescents, both on the street and in the *favelas*, referred to themselves or their peers as a *menor*, a 'minor'. Using in their speech an institutionalized, legalistic discourse originally created to refer to children and adolescents in conflict with the law, but which became a more generic and a prejudiced term, referring to youngsters from the popular classes in general and who are, in the majority of cases, non-white something we addressed in chapter 3. Other derogatory terms youngsters at times used on the street to refer to themselves and their peers included *pivete* – pick-pocket or young thief, *cheira-cola* – glue-sniffer.

But whereas youngsters were almost invariably unaware (or unconcerned) about the interiorization and naturalization of such prejudiced discourse in their speech, they were very sensitive to episodes in which they felt discriminated against by others. When asked what they thought other people thought about them, almost everyone I talked to who lived or had lived on the street replied that they had a sense of being discriminated against. As the research I undertook together with CIESPI pointed out, from the 34 interviews which touched on this question, 29 reported that they felt that others feared them, believing them to be thieves. Only 3 reported positive perceptions that others had of them and all of these were children below 13 years of age who only worked on the street but did not live there (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002). This suggests that discrimination is cumulative on the street, that the longer you live there and the older you are the more likely are you to be seen to have the stigmatizing signs of the street. One example from the report, though more elaborate and articulate than most, typifies a sense of injustice that is often felt.

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acts in ways that ensure the continuation of benefits and assistance without challenging the inherent power relationships at work or the social inequalities that underpin them.

"[Marta 15 years old]

The people who are passing here on the street, what do you think they think about you?

Marta: Pickpocket, thief, marginal, bum, glue-sniffer, sometimes you don't even use drugs, or maybe you have used in the past, but it doesn't matter, 'when dust mixes with the crumbs you end up eating it all up'. If you are in the middle of a posse of minors sniffing glue, but you don't use, you have used but don't anymore, you are taken as a glue sniffer, you are taken as the same thing as they are. A lot of times the *revolta* [revolt, inner rage] of the street children is society, uncle."

What do you mean?

Marta: Because society doesn't understand our side. I know we are wrong in being on the street, we could look for a shelter, or something, but sometimes society makes us get into drugs more quickly, you know what I mean? There are many people who have never gone through what we have on the street and who think that to say something bad to a minor wont hurt them, but we feel, you know what I mean uncle. We also feel. We are also a person, right uncle, even if we are drug users, or whatever, it doesn't matter what he is or isn't, but he is a person, it is a person for me, and I think that everybody deserves a chance in life, not one, many. You just have to take them" (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

Marta's comments that 'we are also a person' is important and very widespread on the street as we shall see later on. Also very significant is the statement that 'the revolt *(revolta)* of street children is [because of] society'.

REVOLTA AND GROWING UP ON THE STREET

As already mentioned *revolta* [revolt or inner rage] is a common expression both on the street and in the *favela*, referring to cumulative experiences of discrimination and frustration at the conditions of exclusion. Many episodes of discrimination were narrated to me throughout my fieldwork. In some cases these episodes recounted the fear of passersby when youngsters approached them, at other times incidents of being verbally abused by passersby on the street were reported. More sinister were the cases of police brutality, of searches, beatings and

humiliation at the hands of employees of the state whose real function should have been to protect its citizens.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the street is a very violent place and the police are often the main perpetrators of this violence. Another term commonly used on the street is *esculachar* – here translated as the slang 'dissing', short for disrespecting – used to describe a form of violence that can be physical, symbolic or moral. The police were very often the perpetrators of this 'dissing', the police, as well as the unarmed Municipal Guard, being greatly feared. The cumulative effects of this daily encounter with discrimination and violence, is *revolta*. Before we explore further the implications of this daily discrimination upon the processes of identification of youngsters on the street, we briefly reflect on the role of racism.

The influence of racism on the discrimination of children and adolescents on the street has not been tackled in depth by research on this population, and in the literature on street children in Brazil the question of ethnicity is rarely explored. This color-blindness, can be partly attributed to what thinkers on the subject of racism in Brazil have termed the cordial racism in Brazilian society, the way in which it operates in a more subtle and insidious way than in societies where the same degree of miscegenation has not occurred, such as in the USA (Santos 2001). Yet as we saw in chapter 4, ethnicity does play a large part in the process of exclusion and discrimination. But issues of ethnicity, or race in the case of Brazil, are complicated precisely because of miscegenation, and the ways in which people identify with a particular race or ethnicity or, as most often happens, with a particular color. The term 'Afro-Brazilian' or afro-descendent is almost unheard of outside a very small number of black political activists and academics.

This 'confusion' over ethnicity is also found on the street. As we noted in chapter 4, figures dating back to Rizzini's research in the 1980s, and confirmed by CIESPI's more recent research, points out that around 80% of children and adolescents on the street can be considered black or brown, with only 20% of them white (Rizzini 1986). These figures do not represent the ethnic, or in this case color, composition of the State of Rio whose population the 2001 census described as being 54% white, 11% black and 35% brown (Jaccoud and Beghin 2002). Yet for most children or adolescents on the street that I and other researchers have talked to, ethnicity did not appear as a conscious marker of identity. In cases where the sense of being discriminated against was present this was always felt to be because of the category of street child rather than as an attribution of race or ethnicity. The overrepresentation of black and brown youngsters on the street, though noted by authors such as Leite (1991), is yet to be analyzed more comprehensively.

Questions relating to whether there are different treatments and trajectories for whites and non-whites on the street also remains a question to be explored.

As discussed in chapters 3 and 4, for Santos, poverty in Brazil has a color and the legacy of slavery as a people and the post-slavery period is with us today, in terms of questions of habitation, inequality, crime and violence (Santos 2001). For Santos, this legacy is not only seen in the external signs of poverty but also in the psychology of being stigmatized, of having endured slavery and of being continuously discriminated against in day to day life by an unconscious racism operating throughout Brazilian society. Whether or not youngsters on the street are conscious of the connection between this more widespread Brazilian racism and their own discrimination, it would appear that by being on the street they suffer an even more extreme form of discrimination, as the many instances of violence and even murder that plague the history of this group demonstrates. In this case I believe that youngsters suffer for their color, their size or age (that is they are the *menor*) and for where they are.

Stigma, racism and socio-economic exclusion combine to make up what Philippe Bourgois describes as 'social structural oppression' in his work on crack dealing in East Harlem which deals with some similar issues to those described here (Bourgois 1996). This social structural oppression, I believe, provides the most significant constraint on the processes of identity of those on the street. The main consequence and experience of this constraint, this power relation, upon the self is *revolta*.

Revolta is a complex term with many possible meanings. It is used to refer to the response to the felt sense of injustice and 'dissing', the consequences of being stigmatized, as Marta explained on page 145. This injustice or dissing is cumulative, related to repeated episodes of discrimination and abuse by others and is often experienced by youngsters in their communities of origin, before they reach the street. For those living in the *favelas* the police are the perpetrators of great injustice, as we noted in chapter 4. *Revolta* also has a more general socio-political sense of felt injustice that manifests itself amongst the Brazilian popular classes, especially amongst the young. This has to do with the perceived lack of opportunities for social mobility in Brazilian society that we described in chapter 4.

This form of revolt or rebellion appears very different from the rebelliousness of adolescence which Margaret Mead set out to problematize in *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1973 [1928]). Mead was skeptical about the universalizing of rebelliousness as a psychological feature of a life-stage and instead showed it to be specific to complex cultures in which youngsters are faced with a plurality of possible life-styles, moral codes and belief systems, something she did not find in the transition to adulthood in Samoa. For youngsters from the *favelas* and peripheries

of Rio, I believe another form of rebellion can be identified, and one which cannot be attributed to the plurality of choices for identification and conduct during the transition into adulthood, but to precisely its opposite, to the lack of choices available to them.

Revolta can be considered as a shorthand way of expressing a complex emotional and psychological state, commonly associated with anger, inner rage or a sense of withdrawal, which intrinsically linked to experiences of injustice, discrimination and oppression. As the expression of something felt, *revolta* can be considered as the embodiment of oppression, a pervading sense of inner rage against an unfair system that is revealed in specific concrete incidents. But *revolta* expresses not only something felt but also serves as a narrative convention to explain or justify why certain forms of behavior are adopted. Youngsters on the street often used *revolta* to describe both why they leave the abuse or confinement suffered at home, and why some give in to 'anti-social' forms of conduct and identities, e.g. robbing, taking or dealing in drugs. On the street *revolta* appears to grow gradually and becomes more acute with increasing age as we shall see, though most youngsters can be said to have arrived on the street with at least a little of it. It grows, as we noted, through the cumulative encounters with discrimination and disrespect which tend to occur more often the older one is on the street. Some young adults I talked to, who had lived on the streets as children, also informed me that this growing *revolta*, which they described through de-personalized, mythic, language – such as a black cloud descending or an evil of the street, for instance – is also in part a consequence of the influence of their peers, often individuals who have been on the street for longer.

Renato a 22 year old who is no longer living on the street, spoke to me of this 'black cloud' 'growing in his heart' after he had been on the street for some years. Here *revolta* as a sense of social injustice and frustration from consumer culture is clearly present. I ask him what he means by 'black cloud' and he replies:

> "Black cloud because I began to feel the *maldade* [nastiness, evil] of the street, I began to feel, to hang out with the bad boys, I began to incorporate myself in them, I began to feel the spirit of the pig that the street has, that the street brings to the inside of the boy, of stealing, threatening people, of sniffing glue, of using drugs, of saying 'ah the cool thing is to put a gun round your waist and take that thing from that kid, the cool thing is for you to slap that little dude because he is white, because he is a mummy's boy and he will shit himself, because I am a bad fucker', excuse my language, ' and I will go and take all he has because if I take it away then his dad will buy him a new one anyway, but I will take it from him

because I want to wear designer labels just like him.' So it was like this, I had this black cloud inside of me."

Renato's 'black cloud' incorporates many of the key ingredients of *revolta* that we have spoken of. It firstly points to the exclusion from consumer society and its status symbols. It also excludes Renato from a middle class model of childhood and family whereby the child is provided for or nurtured, rather than one, as he expressed to me on another occasion, where he had to nurture the household. As we shall see in chapter 8 this leads to the common expression found on the street that youngsters on the street have not had a real childhood. Renato's cloud also points to the adoption of oppositional practices, symbols and identities, 'the coolest thing is to put a gun round your waist.' It shows an aspiration to a form of masculinity and a racialized masculinity that is able to instill fear, and perhaps, as a consequence, to acquire respect. For as he says, "the cool thing is for you to slap that little dude because he is white, because he is a mummy's boy and he will shit himself, because I am a bad fucker".

Renato's awareness of race was the exception rather than the rule, it is perhaps related to his love of Brazilian rap music in particular to black rap artists like Racionais MC whose song he sang in the documentary film I made. As Renato confides in the film, this song was the one with which he identifies the most, its lyrics, like Racionais MC's other work, is highly political concerning the oppression and violence faced by afro-descendents in the *favelas* and the lack of opportunities offered to them. The awareness of race and politics for those on the street appeared primarily to come from Brazil's blossoming Hip Hop culture, but also, as we see in the next chapter, from the Paulo Freire-inspired street pedagogy. Whether the image Renato gave me, of the gun-totting 'bad fucker' is to be taken literally or not I do not know, yet the macho, lawless, autonomous bandit figure, or the *malandro* [the urban trickster], its more old-fashioned and benign predecessor (as we shall see in chapter 8), is one persona that appeals to disenfranchised youngsters, both on and off the street, in a society that has tended to exclude them from the possibility of attaining status and respect.

Clearly, not every youngster on the street engages in criminal activities nor would they all subscribe to the image Renato paints. Yet the experience of *revolta* can, on occasion, push youngsters towards those who are 'more experienced'. Humberto 26, another young adult who appeared in the documentary and who also spent many years on the street, speaks of the temptation of the street that results from his increasing familiarity with it. He speaks of this time on the street as an illusion:

"All was illusion, but it was a world that I thought was better for me. I felt better on the street than at home. On the street I could go and ask for money and when I didn't, I robbed, bought some bread, or sometimes got some food. At home I didn't have that. I didn't get bread, didn't have meat to eat, didn't have these things. On the street I had everything. So would I leave all this behind and return home where I went through so much need? No way. So I started to learn everything. But the problem kept getting worse. I became experienced and met more malicious people, people who had evil about them, people who had more time on the street, people who robbed and dealt drugs."

Discrimination, *revolta* and 'becoming experienced' - the learning of a series of competencies on the street to obtain resources for survival, fun and 'self-affirmation' - appear to be intrinsically connected. For Carlos, a prominent street educator who heads an important NGO in Rio, being 'streetwise' means that youngsters build up a knowledge system about how to behave on the street towards different people and in specific situations. In this knowledge system the city and its people are mapped out: where, how and when to beg for food or money from passersby, houses or restaurants; where, when and what to get from NGOs, shelters and religious organizations; where to rob or steal; where to obtain drugs and where and how to consume them; where to sleep; which areas of the city can be freely accessed and where and when they should run from the police. This, as we noted in the previous chapter, relates to the ways through which the city is re-imagined through networks of friends. As Lucchini observed, being 'streetwise' may well be a central aspect of the identity of children and adolescents on the street (Lucchini 1999: 201). For Carlos, this knowledge can also lead to the build-up of a defense mechanism by youngsters, ways of protecting themselves emotionally and psychologically within a difficult form of existence. But, Carlos suggested, though useful on the street in time these defense mechanisms make it very problematic for youngsters to leave the street as they inhibit trust in others who may be offering opportunities and ways out of the street.

In this respect it was interesting to find that a number of youngsters that I talked to described themselves as addicted to life on the street, something also related by other researchers (Hecht 1998, Gregori 2000). A common expression about street life was; '*quando a gente acostuma, é um vício*' – 'when we get used to it, it becomes an addiction'. I once asked a 14 year-old boy who had been on the street for some months, if he missed his mother. He told me he did and I could see the welling of emotion her memory provoked. Then he added, "but you know like we say, I got used to the street." I believe it is the social context of the street that youngsters

become addicted to; to the 'freedom to' and 'freedom from' they so fondly speak of; the relative ease through which they learn to obtain resources for survival and pleasure; and, significantly, the friendships and solidarity they find with other youngsters in the same predicament. This 'getting used to' must be understood in the context of the experience of unfulfilled needs in the home and community, as well as to different notions of risk which we addressed in the previous chapter. We have already noted that this is a very paradoxical freedom, as we shall also see in the following chapter, this is a freedom which in the end is really a set of competencies or capacities, that can end up imprisoning children and adolescents in a lifestyle where, with increasing age, opportunities for their wholesome development and for their insertion into society (in particular through formal education and the labor market) became ever scarcer.

Increasing age and growing *revolta* appear intrinsically bound. This is not surprising considering that the responses to those on the street are very different depending on whether the individual in question is a child or an adolescent, the latter finding it progressively harder to get by on the street from begging since the population becomes ever more intimidated by their growing size. This is succinctly conveyed by Aldair (on page 141), a seventeen year old who had to reassure a scared lady he approached on the street: "look I am not robbing you, I am asking." Getting by on the street as a child is much easier since other people are more willing to give money or food and in general have a more sympathetic perception of the youngster, considering him/her as 'abandoned' and in need of protection. This is reflected in what the younger children (on page 144) considered to be other people's positive perceptions of them. As children become adolescents, this perception shifts and youngsters are regarded as even more threatening and are either associated with crime, as Aldair narrated, or else are told to get a job as Marli demonstrated on page 128. These reactions by the public may produce a feeling of shame, as was the case with Marli, or as is more often the case, the feeling of *revolta*. And so whereas being a child on the street may in some instances provide a temporary promise of 'freedom' or autonomy and an escape from the violence, confinement and scarcity of the home, coming of age on the street is often associated with *revolta* – an acute experience of exclusion, discrimination and violence. Aldair puts this point across well during an interview in the CIESPI research.

> "[Aldair 17 years old]
> On the street its good when the person is small, but from 15, 16 years upwards things get even worse, because the guards hit you more, they think that we who are big should pay for the mistakes of the little ones. So they take the bigger ones and hit them, the little ones they only give a little slap and send them away, on

the big ones they put them in the van and break them. The big ones pay for the little ones..." (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

BEING 'NORMAL' OR BEING 'DIFFERENT'?

Goffman noted that a key desire of the stigmatized everywhere is to be considered 'normal', like anyone else. But before we look into the ways in which youngsters on the street stake their claim to such an image of normality, we also need to ask the question if those on the street see themselves as 'different' in any way. The answer to this very much depends on who they are asserting their identity to. On the whole, when statements about identity, life goals and, to a degree, morality, are made to an outsider, that is, one who is not part of what Goffman would term the 'In-Group', these tend to lay claim to a 'normal' identity. This is of course to be expected since to do otherwise, especially in the case of street children whose stigma and actions are associated with immorality, would be a betrayal of the group. This in fact can be often witnessed on the street. During some of the interviews on the street we carried out for the CIESPI research, some groups of youngsters we approached were suspicious of our intentions. If we managed to persuade one of the group members to talk to us, on some occasions the others in the group would intimidate this individual saying s/he was *dando mole* – a slang term that can be loosely translated as 'letting your guard down', or in other words, betraying the group. Yet in our interviews, and in my own research, youngsters did not shy away from telling tales that could be judged by mainstream society as exemplifying antisocial behavior, such as leaving home, stealing, drug taking, fighting. As we saw in Renato's statement, a young adult who had already left the street, we can observe that in certain moments children and adolescents - though not only those on the street - are aware of having adopted practices or values that are loathed by society at large, a path that is closely related to *revolta*. Some children and adolescents refer to their life on the street as 'the bad path', *o mau caminho*, frequently related to their use of drugs or else to the trade in drugs and engagement in crime. It can be noted that in many cases an initiation into street life, or at least the moment in which the child or adolescent understands him/herself to have been initiated into a 'street culture', is associated with the use of drugs.

Though not all children and adolescents on the street use drugs, a great number of them has at least at some stage experimented with them. In the research I conducted with CIESPI, just under half of those interviewed admitted to having used some kind of drug, the most popular being marijuana and inhalants such as glue or thinner (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002). These figures do not necessarily indicate higher drug use by youngsters on the street than

off. Instead they point to the centrality of drugs for many youngsters on the street. As Lucchini points out, drug consumption on the street serves many purposes: there is the aspect of fun, it can serve as a way of breaking inhibitions (such as the fear felt before carrying out a mugging), and they can also serve to break the routine of day-to-day life and as a physiological device to abate hunger or cold (Lucchini 1999). More significantly, for the topic of this chapter, Lucchini points to how drug consumption on the street is also a form of provocation, a way of claiming a collective identity with the group and a ritual form of integrating into the social group. In this respect drug consumption, its practices, displays and the sense of identity it confers, can be seen as another form of oppositional identity forged on the street.[5]

In some cases the influence of the drugs trade and drug trafficking gangs on the processes of identification of these youngsters could also be noted. Not that many of them would be directly involved with drug trafficking gangs – although some clearly had been at some stage in their lives – but that the territoriality of the drug gangs, the *comandos*, exerted an influence over their lives and over the way in which they saw themselves. As we have seen from the previous two chapters, drug trafficking gangs have become a significant institution in the social landscape for many youngsters who live in *favelas* and the peripheries of urban centers all over Brazil. The various demarcations of territory that have come about as a result of these gangs, are evident on the street as well as in other spaces through which these youngsters circulate, *favelas*, shelters and youth correctional institutions. In a way the association of a boy, adolescent or young man (since this is primarily an issue for males, though females are not altogether exempt) with a certain area, and a certain *comando* is almost inevitable, although this affiliation is not necessarily visible in all of his relationships, in the same way that supporting a football club is not. Whenever it does operate or reveal itself, the association with a particular *comando* may strengthen the solidarity between individuals or else, in its less benign manifestation, discriminate against non-members, sometimes in very violent ways. But in this respect, the identification with the *comando* is no different if the youngster resides in a *favela* or on the street.

As we noted in chapter 4, authors like Zaluar have argued that the place of the drug dealer in the imaginary of many youngsters living in the *favelas* and low-income communities in Brazil's urban centers has replaced more traditional and acceptable role models and offers an

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[5] Lucchini concludes that the use of inhalants on the street has more to do with social conduct than with the behavior of addiction. Inhalants cannot be considered only as substances that alter the senses of the individual, though this may be an end in itself, but primarily as a means through which the individual participates in group activities. Though individual consumption does exist, more important is group consumption, a claim that is strengthened by the fact that for the majority of adolescents who leave the street drug consumption is reduced or abandoned (Lucchini 1999).

attractive alternative to employment (or unemployment) (Zaluar 1994). This often occurs within the climate of *revolta* that we have spoken of, where an acute sense of injustice and discrimination is felt. The fascination exerted by the symbolic power and the prestige that the gangs confer within the community provides youngsters with another form of oppositional identity (Zaluar 1994). We can consider the role of drug trafficking gangs in the imaginary of some of these youngsters on the street, akin to Zaluar's analysis.

Another important issue that might reveal something about the processes of identity on the street refers to the way these children and adolescents communicate. As regards the communication skills of many youngsters I talked to, it was clear that they were blessed with a creative linguistic capacity. Although many of the boys and girls interviewed had dropped out of school early on, many showed themselves to be very versatile in their speech with an accentuated sense of humor, demonstrating a great ability to acquire resources for their survival through *papo*. *Papo* is a Brazilian term that literally translates as talk, or chat, but in this case more accurately as banter, and refers to linguistic cunning, or persuasion. For youngsters who literally possess nothing but their bodies and speech, the latter becomes a crucial instrument of survival on the street.

This linguistic ability leads to another aspect of communication observed in the field, and which is also referred to by other authors, that is the great amount of slang and gestures that these youngsters use and which are, very often, impenetrable to the outsider [see the Glossary in the Annex] (Fenelon, Martins and Domingues 1992). As these authors understand it, this kind of language is a way of constituting a social identity, that is, a form of identifying with other members of the group who speak the same language. In this way this is not a specific street phenomenon but something common to many groups, specialisms and sub-cultures. The terms employed by each sub-culture say something about the collective experience of the group. Terms that frequently come up as youngsters talk about life on the street include; *esculachar, maldade, judaria and xisnovar* – dissing, nastiness, treachery and betrayal - all of which indicate the violent, prejudiced and stressful climate in which these youngsters exist.

BEING IN A GROUP

Despite the symbols, practices and language that claim an identity as different, or oppositional, a group identity of children and adolescents on the street is not as clearly defined or expressed as say, in the gangs of Los Angeles, where arduous initiation, group symbols and a strict code of loyalty, to other gang members and to the local, are all present (Vigil 1988). Unlike

North American gangs, the groups of children and adolescents on the street in Rio are not based around an identification of ethnicity – though they are comprised in their majority of black or brown youngsters. But, like the Chicano gangs Vigil studied in Los Angeles, we can consider the particular sub-cultural style or practices and identities forged on the street as responses to the pressure of street life, which are in turn "a source of familial support, goals and directives, and sanctions and guides" (Vigil 1988:2). For youngsters found on the streets of Brazil, the group as we saw in the last chapter seems to function as a reference for identification that unites excluded young people who have left their homes. Also significantly, as we noted, the group serves as an entity that transmits knowledge about how to survive on the street. However, other features of the group, such as the style of dress, the music sung and enjoyed (primarily funk or rap), demonstrates continuity with other youngsters from the *favelas* and peripheries.

Some groups, as we saw in the last chapter, have *mães de rua* [street mothers] as their leaders – girls, who though not necessarily much older, take responsibility for the well-being of the group and are seen as a moral authority and chief organizer. *Mães de rua* are instrumental in creating links to various people in the locale who might help the group. But even here, the 'sons' are in constant flux between groups and associations. Though boys or young men can also be found in roles of leadership in groups of youngsters on the street, the nature of their leadership, appears rather different to that of *mães de rua*, often emphasizing qualities of power and strength. Marcio, a very strong young man, who taught *capoeira* and who had lived on the street for many years explained to me how at one stage he had become a sort of leader to a group of youngsters. This was a time some years back when Marcio was working out a lot and taking steroids, he was training boxing and doing *capoeira*. "I didn't have to hit anyone [on the street]", he told me "they saw my body and they were intimidated. So with a little chat here and little talk there I began to gain respect." Marcio's leadership role, he told me, meant he could 'get the girls' and was also given money by the rest of the group from the odd-jobs or muggings which they carried out. In exchange Marcio, stronger and older than the others, taught them self-defense. There are then many different kinds of groups. Some, as we saw in the last chapter, can be a way of trying to reconstitute a family on the street. This appears more significant for those who have been on the street for longer, in particular for young adults. In such groups females appear to have more prominent roles. For groups of younger adolescents or children, in particular for boys, the group may well be more akin to Marcio's group.

Gregori found that groups differed in their character, some comprising of children that had been together for years, demonstrating some form of collaborative group cohesion (in this case the group was mixed – boys and girls); others were less committed to the group and to a

particular locality, the group often splitting up and children ending up by themselves. Gregori comments that it is the girls that establish this connection with the locality and local businesses fixing mealtimes, a regular place to sleep and washing clothes. Yet regardless of the relationship to the locality and the rigidity of routines, there is the common rule that 'the rule is not to have rules', and that 'each one makes up the rules' (Gregori 2000: 122).

Some of these basic rules or values include being trustworthy and not being indebted to others. When you borrow something you should always pay it back, e.g. cigarettes, money, etc. A particularly heinous offence is what is called *olho grande*, literally 'big eye', a common slang term in Brazil and widely used on the street meaning the coveting of other people's stuff, or more specifically other people in the 'in-group', that is, others in the same predicament. The scarcity of personal possessions and the problems in finding suitable storage spaces in a world where by definition everything is public space, means that *olho grande* is considered a serious offence and a constant source of fights and, I was told, even murder on the street. Interestingly, the series of prohibitions around *olho grande*, mainly the respect for the possessions of others and the rejection of coveting, appears as an ethos that is more present amongst those who have lived on the street for longer. When I talked to Lora, who was explaining to me the democratic and consensual basis of her *maloca*,[6] she told me that the group as a whole had in the past chosen to vote someone out of the group because of *olho grande*. Lora explained to me that those who have arrived recently still covet other people's stuff because they have not experienced how hard life is on the street.

Another important rule is not to 'grass' or 'snitch' on anyone. As noted before when interviewing youngsters on the street, there was at times a reluctance or at least a pressure by the group, for individuals not to divulge the activities the group engaged in. Though values, codes of ethics and beliefs do seem to exist on the street and to play a role in constituting subjectivity and the way in which such youngsters orient themselves, these may often go unacknowledged, etched over by their ideal of freedom, as Gregori argues. Julio, a youngster she interviewed succinctly explains:

> "Look on the street there are no rules. The rule is kind of everyone for himself and... if I found something for me to eat, I share it with another, if I don't want to share it, don't go saying bad things about me... its all in a law that you do

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[6] *Maloca*, as we saw in the last chapter, is a term often used on the street to describe the group they hang out with or the physical place where the group congregates.

things by yourself. If you wait for things to fall in your hands... you will get left behind" [my translation] (Gregori 2000: 127).

A romanticized image can sometimes be attached to street children in the form of an ethical group behavior of 'one for all and all for one', an image they themselves sometimes like to convey. Clearly there are many situations in which youngsters on the street do help each other out in situations of risk and violence, and share the resources they obtain on the street. As we saw in the last chapter, grouping is a very important way of ensuring protection, especially at night, and the opportunity to hang out with friends was cited as a key motivation for going to the street. Yet, writers like Ferreira argue that group solidarity amounts to no more than a 'franchise of participation' in the activities of the group, the youngster may partake of the work activities, in activities of leisure or crime, and may have access to the information that the group manipulates, but he shouldn't expect the group to come to his rescue in a moment of need or insecurity (Ferreira 1980:107). For Ferreira, the group serves an essentially pragmatic function, it does not necessarily fulfill the youngster's emotional needs, or their need of intimacy and affection.

Claudio, a boy Ferreira interviewed, expresses this absence of intimacy on the street; "private subjects I don't speak to anyone about. All of them [pointing to others in the group] also have things they don't share with the group" [my translation] (quoted in Ferreira 1980:110). I also witnessed this reluctance of youngsters on the street to 'open up' to their group. On many occasions I asked youngsters whether they talked about things like why they were on the street or about their family, to each other, and always obtained a negative answer. Speaking of the friends she hung out with whilst she lived on the street, Sandra, a 15 year old girl I spoke to on many occasions, says they were like a family, and they stuck up for one another. Yet, whereas solidarity is demonstrated on the level of physical protection, intimacy of feelings or a sharing of emotions is not demonstrated.

"We never liked to talk about these things [related to family], because if we did, someone always got messed up by it, and there would always be a fight as a result, and maybe even death. So nobody liked to touch on these issues (...) Nobody talked about nothing, they were only worried about what was happening at that time, who messed up, who got beat up, who is alive, who is going to die, like that."

6.2 Group of friends hanging out in the square.
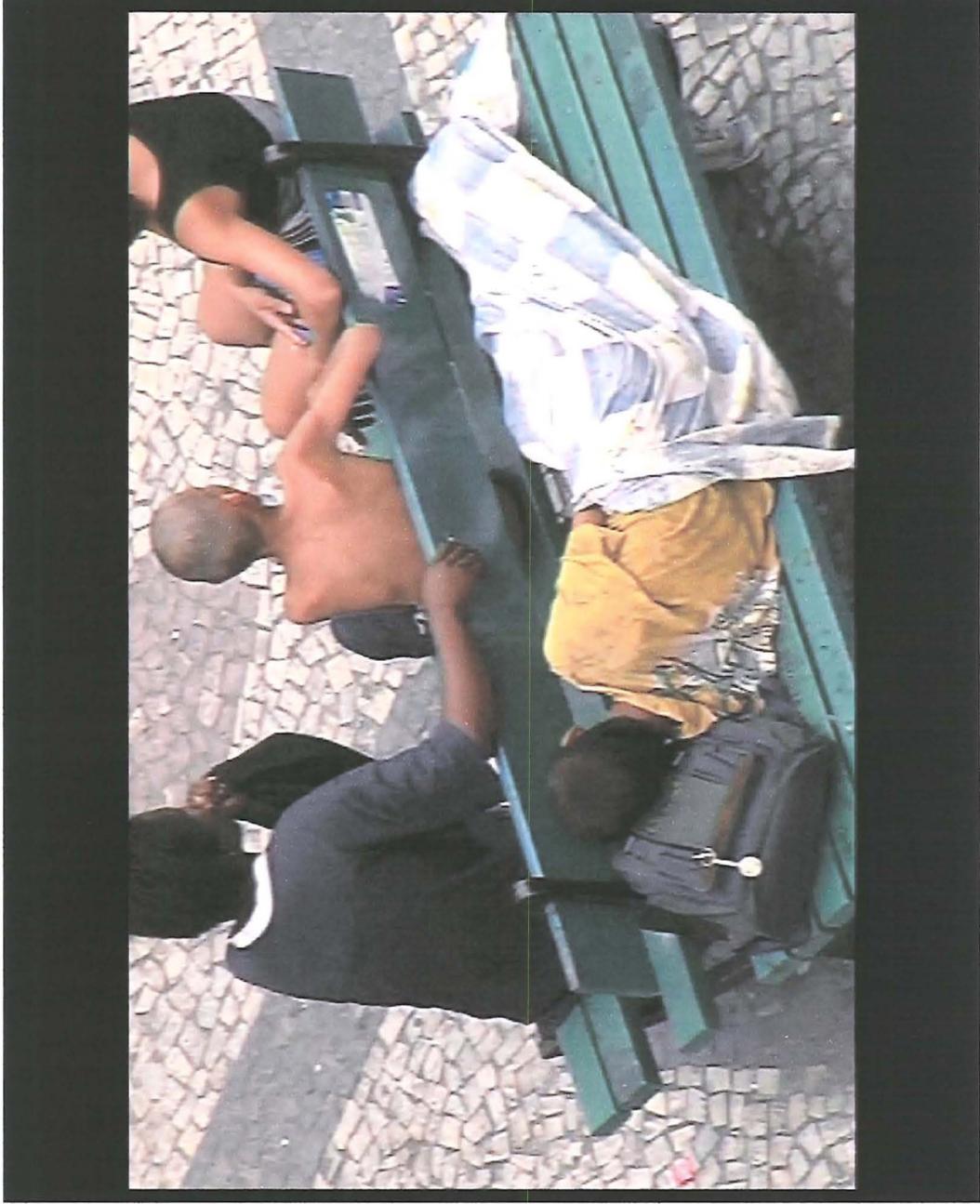
6.3 Close up of previous picture.

Whether this lack of intimacy within the group is a consequence of a particular survival strategy on the street whereby you just don't dwell on matters of feelings and emotions, or whether it is a consequence of a certain ambiguity towards the group is not clear. A young woman I talked to who had been living on the streets for many years told me that people on the street don't think about these things because if they do, they suffer too much. She concluded by telling me she has no time to think, only time to act. Intimacy, however, can also be found on the streets. In my own research and in the CIESPI research, we found a number of friendships that had lasted for many years on the street, indeed friendships that had originated in the *favela*. The research also found many couples whose relationship had endured on the street for many years. All these issues will be further explored in the next two chapters when we relate the forging of identities on the street to the passage of time and to attaining adulthood and consider in greater depth how coming of age on the street can be said to have repercussions for the development of a sense of self. What is clear from the above discussion is that there is not only one type of group on the street, but rather loose configurations that come and go.

In this respect the repression by the state (and para-state in the form of 'extermination groups') over the last decade has led to significant changes in these configurations. As we noted in the previous chapter, many street educators I spoke to related how prior to the Candelária Massacre in 1993 groups of dozens of youngsters could be seen populating various parts of Rio. After the Massacre and with the ensuing fear both of the police and of municipal authorities groups have dispersed and fragmented in order not to draw attention to themselves. The group, and its configuration at any time, has then been responsive to political factors, to the current municipal government's public policy towards the removal of youngsters from the street and to the presence of para-statal militias.

The ambiguity the stigmatized may have towards his/her own group was already noted by Goffman. The stigmatized individual can at times adopt the attitude 'normals' have towards him upon others who are more stigmatized than himself. For instance, as Goffman writes, the hard of hearing see themselves as anything but deaf persons, and those with defective vision as anything but blind (Goffman 1990). I also witnessed this ambiguity towards full identification with the group by youngsters on the street. The group oscillates between being 'them' and 'us' in the discourse of the children and adolescents I talked to. This reluctance is understandable considering how stigmatizing the category of 'street children' is. There is also a more pragmatic reason for the non-identification with the group. As the example cited previously by CIESPI researchers who encountered a group of boys late at night on the street shows, not identifying

with the group means that you are not categorized and therefore treated in a certain way by the state apparatus, in this case with FIA, the institution that removes youngsters from the street by placing them in shelters.

This reluctance to identify with the group may mean that some youngsters choose not to partake in the activities of a group and instead stay on the street with one or two friends. As Alba, an adolescent girl, narrated to us in the CIESPI research:

> "[Alba 17 years old]
>
> I don't really like grouping together, I don't like it. I prefer being by myself. I like friendship but it depends on the friendship, so I stayed more with her. When I couldn't be with Jaqueline I preferred being alone, I didn't hang out with other boys… Also because grouping up causes many problems" (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

Alba's astute recognition that grouping together causes 'many problems' is significant. It is a recognition that one of the key aspects in the process of stigmatization of those on the street, is how they as a group, as a category of persons, are viewed by society at large. This is not to deny that individual youngsters are stigmatized when outside the group, but to emphasize that society's encounter with those on the street is rarely one of person to person, individual to individual, but almost always an encounter with a representative of a category or group. As we noted earlier, one of the chief stigma signs for youngsters on the street is to be found amongst a group of other youngsters. Equally as we noted in chapter 3, the very origin of the notion of 'street child' came from the need to categorize a group of youngsters perceived to be causing havoc in urban space.

One other significant aspect in the processes of identity of those on the street is the way children and adolescents greatly feared turning into 'bums' or 'beggars', as they described it. Many expressed their dread at staying on the street and turning into an adult homeless beggar. Tony, a street educator working with an NGO, explained to me that if youngsters on the street want to swear at each other they call them a 'beggar', a *mendingo*. Renato told me that when he lived in Praia Vermelha, the beach area beneath Sugarloaf Mountain, he used to sit on the rocks by the sea by himself and think, wondering about his future, "wondering how it would be, if I would become a bum or whether I would have a car tomorrow, with my house, my children and my girlfriend by my side (…)" As such, Renato's statement encapsulates very well the aspirations and anxieties of those on the street; on the one hand the dread about growing up on the street and

failing to escape from it turning into a homeless beggar; on the other the hope that one day the same dreams held by society at large can be achieved.

A further example of this occurred during a visit to an NGO, when three boys in their early teens came by to ask for help to bury their friend, who had drowned the day before. Their friend, Barriga, was 21, he had been living on the street for many years and was a kind of leader figure to many of the younger boys on the street. His young friends came to ask for help because they didn't want him to be buried like an *indigente* – a beggar, an indigent – which happens to bodies which are not recognized, or provided with the proper papers. Adult homeless people, though at times demonstrating casual links with youngsters in their day-to-day, were often held in ridicule by youngsters on the street. That this particular group should be stigmatized by street children upholds the view that their perception of being on the street is related to a temporary situation and linked with being under-age, even if, as is the case, many do in fact attain adulthood on the street, as we shall see in the next two chapters.

BEING LIKE EVERYONE ELSE

The other side of the experience of prejudice or stigma is the great necessity to project oneself as equal to others, as being 'normal', as Goffman would say. Being treated like a 'person', a 'citizen' or just like anyone else was a strong wish repeatedly expressed by the children, adolescents and young adults I talked to. As Goffman writes, stigmatized individuals tend to hold the same beliefs about identity that we do; "His deepest feelings about what he is may be his sense of being a 'normal person', a human being like anyone else, a person, therefore, who deserves a fair chance and a fair break" (Goffman 1990:17). For Goffman the notion of the 'normal human being' may have its source in the medical approach to humanity, in the sense of medical science's claim that we are all biologically the same, or else in the tendency of large-scale bureaucratic organizations like the nation state, to treat all its members in some respects as equal. To this I would add the influence of Christian ideas of the 'brotherhood of man', as well as more recent legal language of rights and citizenship. Instances of youngsters claiming an identity as a person like anyone else by appealing to citizenship or to religion were common on the street. These notions, Goffman concludes, provide the basic imagery through which laymen currently conceive of themselves (Goffman 1990).

Goffman's point about the bureaucratic state creating subjects, found more strongly in Foucault (1982), is relevant here since many claims for the identity of a person, of a normal 'citizen' by those on the street are in some way mediated by the state, or else by the language of

citizenship. It was common in conversation with youngsters on the street for the topic of documentation to arise. The documentation individuals carry around with them with the purpose of establishing a personal identity - such I.D. cards, passports, driving licenses, employment cards – provide another interesting angle from which to look into issues of identity on the street. In Brazil even children and adolescents are expected to have forms of identification such as I.D cards or school matriculation cards. Many on the street did not have these, most probably because they never had them whilst at home, as obtaining them requires an interface with Brazil's notoriously complex and labyrinthine bureaucratic apparatus. Not having a birth certificate or I.D. card was a cause of distress and reflected not only a sense of disqualification of the individual before the state but also before society. Being nobody before the state, that is, having no I.D., has very real material consequences since it means that the individual is more subject to exclusion from the provision of state resources and benefits as well as in attempts to get a formal sector job. More significantly it also means being more at risk from state violence, since if you cannot prove who you are before the police or show that you have gainful employment you are often considered a criminal unless proved otherwise.

From the point of view of personal identity, the lack of such public, state-endorsed, signs of identity reduce or erase the individual to anonymity, to a 'ghost'. As Nego da Bahia, a 23 year old who had lived on the street for many years, expressed it, summing up the fears of many of those who live on the street: "So I was really a street child…If I had died somewhere at that time, I would have died like a beggar, I would have died like a ghost, I didn't have a birth certificate, didn't have anything." The pride at having one's birth certificate, and of having a job with a signed work card (meaning official work, that is taxable, with social security and a pension) narrated to me by many youngsters who were old enough to officially work (16 years of age in Brazil), can only be understood as expressions of pride at being a person before society.

Although prejudiced sectors of society believe that the street is a place devoid of values and morals, talking to youngsters on the street, I, like many others, found precisely the opposite (Hecht 1998, de Castro 1997). Almost all the youngsters I talked to appeared to value the same things as society in general; being respected, having their own home, work, family and study as a form of social mobility. This concurs with Perlman's research findings in the *favelas*, which showed the values of *favelados* to be in many respects continuous with the rest of Brazilian society (Perlman 1979).

Though the majority of youngsters on the street are not in school, education was nevertheless seen as a form of attaining the status of citizen. For Nego da Bahia this was one of the main motivations for him to study, so that no one could fool him, but more poignantly that

others would treat him as a citizen. "...so that no one thinks that I am stupid, like, if I am on the street for a policeman to come and talk to me and talk like I am a Brazilian citizen, that I am not a street child, not a thief, not a marginal, that I am not nothing. I am a Brazilian citizen like everyone else." As other youngsters also related to me, education is a great source of pride, of self-esteem. It is both, as in this case, a way of accessing citizenship, as well as the opportunities that study opens up in work and further education. Alba expresses a similar feeling: "Even though you are living on the street you don't stop being a person, you don't stop being a human being. You are living on the street but in many cases you have an *educação* [education or more specifically a moral conduct or upbringing]" (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002). In the next two chapters we explore in more depth the processes which some youngsters undergo to gain access to the educational system and how some do manage to engage with the status of an 'official' Brazilian citizen through having an I.D. and a formal sector job.

Although the life projects of boys and girls who live on the street are normally linked to their immediate survival and security, their dreams are frequently related to overcoming the prejudices they suffer in their day-to-day life, and in particular they dream of doing so by acquiring goods and status valued by society, an issue already pointed out by others (Hecht 1998, de Castro 1997). An excerpt from an interview from the CIESPI report gives a flavor of the most typical responses to what is desired in life.

"[Emerson, 15 anos]

How would you like your future to be?

I would like to have a family, work, to have already finshed my studies. That is what I would like. To have a good life.

Good life, what is a good life? How would it be better than it is now?

Having my own home, finding work, being happy. Raising my own family" (Rizzini, Soares, de Carvalho, and Butler 2002).

As I have tried to demonstrate throughout this thesis, youngsters living on the street are in many ways like their peers off the street. This is evident not only in their claim for citizenship or their aspiration for a family, housing, jobs and education. Instead, more immediate continuities can also be observed; in the way they dress, the slang they use, the music they listen to, the

leisure activities they engage in and the spaces they frequent. As regards their dress this oscillated between a lack of concern for appearance – dressing in torn ill-fitting unwashed clothes which contributed to what we considered as the 'stigma signs' of the street child – to a characteristically Brazilian concern with cleanliness and an attention to being *arrumado* or *bem vestido*, well attired or well dressed. These two extremes varied between people and circumstances, sometimes as Sandra observed in the previous chapter on page 111, it was just not practical to wash clothes on the street. But equally, as Sandra pointed out, when she and her friends had money they went to Rio's most exclusive shopping center and bought clothes from expensive shops normally accessible only to Rio's middle class. Sandra's image of a 'band' of them entering the shopping center unwashed but walking out with bags of new clothes which did not last long because they couldn't wash them, appears as a succinct description of the dilemmas posed by living on the street. Wanting to have the same status symbols and appearance as others but being restricted by the conditions imposed by living on the street.

The slang or language of those on the street, though having uniqueness as regards some of its terms and concerns that are specific to life on the street, is also continuous with the language of youth from *favelas* and peripheries. Indeed many of the terms found in the Glossary are also employed in these spaces; this relates to the broader Carioca youth culture of the *favelas* and peripheries of which youngsters on the street are part. An important element in this culture is music. The musical form which the youngsters I talked to mainly identified with was funk. Funk in Rio is not like its 1970s manifestation in Europe and the US, nor does it sound anything remotely like James Brown. Instead it is a peculiarly Carioca creation, an electronic beat overlaid with simple, jingoistic lyrics, often sexually explicit, which has a very broad following in Rio. Funk in Rio emerged in the late 1970s primarily in the *favelas* and peripheries, attracting hundreds of thousands of youngsters every weekend to the *baile funk*, the funk balls or dances. These dances often took place in community halls and in their early days were predominantly sponsored by the local *comandos*. In the late 1980s funk attracted wide attention in the media for the 'ritualized violence' they seemed to represent, with 'crews' from different *favelas* mixing dancing with fighting other crews on the dance-floor (Vianna 1997). More recently, funk, like samba more than half a century ago, entered mainstream Carioca popular culture. Funk's popularity, commercial appeal and increasing regulation (or clamp-down) by the authorities have transformed it and tamed its more violent manifestations. Over the years funk culture has become more commercialized with professional DJs, sound systems, record labels and artists making a living from a musical form which makes millions of dollars in record and ticket sales.

6.4 Robinson takes off his football team's hat to display his newly-bleached hair.

Many youngsters I talked to were very much into funk and always aware of the latest sounds. I often observed youngsters singing the catchiest lyrics and performing the matching dance steps either on the street or in NGOs. The fashion of boys bleaching their short shaved hair, can be attributed to funk. Many of these youngsters, though living on the street, would report how they would go to funk parties at the weekend, how they would look forward to it all week and save money for it. Joana described this to me:

> "We went to the *baile*, come Friday we'd go to *São Martinho* [NGO], from there we'd have a bath and we'd keep our clothes for the dance at the reception so that when school finished we got ready and went to the dance. Chapéu Mangueira, Mangueira, Santo Amaro, Santa Marta, [names of *favelas* which had a dance] we went to any dance (...)
>
> The boys there even liked it [that we lived on the street]... Sometimes the boys there from the *morro* came to stay with us because they couldn't believe us [that we lived on the street] because we went very dressed up to the dances. We stayed on the street but we never walked around *esculachada* [scruffy], we always walked around well-dressed, with our money in our pocket."

Other than funk dances and funk culture, the other significant space which youngsters on the street share with other youngsters is the beach. As addressed in chapter 5, the beach is the place of leisure, as well as shelter, for many youngsters on the street. The beach is after all Brazil's archetypal democratic space. Black, white, poor, rich, old, young, all congregate within breathing distance of each other along miles of sandy coastline. The only restriction, barring a few hotels that have somehow managed to colonize small stretches of sand by placing sun-shades and deck-chairs in front of their beach front sky-scrapers, is how far from the city center you are able to travel. Having said this, the beach is used very differently by different people. It has its own cycles of activity, and though *Cariocas* may co-exist within this same space, their lives do not necessarily meet, or, if so, only in passing.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter the terms 'normal' and 'stigmatized' have provided analytical categories through which the processes of identification and the encounters between the discriminated against and those who discriminate have been clarified. But Goffman's setting up of such

dichotomous categories can also obscure what is, at heart, a much more complex phenomenon. In some respects youngsters on the street just want to be 'normal', like anyone else, like a 'citizen' or 'God's children'. They want to have an education, a job and a family. They also want to have access to the same status symbols that others have, to walk around all 'smart and clean' with designer labels. But Rio's highly unequal society and the frustrations from the difficulties in accessing these symbols, achievements or identities felt by a great number of youngsters that live not only on the street but in the *favelas* and peripheries of the city, can also generate oppositional identities that are seen as altogether more accessible. Brazilian popular culture has for generations created a series of identities and cultural forms of resistance or opposition to the processes of oppression, exclusion or domination by the elite. Indeed, these forms have become so popular and diffuse as to become what Brazil is internationally known for: samba and carnival, *capoeira*, *candomblé*, to state the most known examples. These cultural forms and identities originating in the *favelas*, urban peripheries and the *senzalas* (the slave quarters) have been a source of strength, pride and self-affirmation through many generations for those living in conditions of exclusion. The practices and identities adopted by many youngsters on the street can be regarded in a similar manner, I believe. As we considered in the previous chapter, in re-imagining the city, which has historically excluded them from the fruits of consumer society, existence on the street for many youngsters can be taken as a form of resistance.

Over the last two decades the exacerbation of what has been here termed as the 'structural inequality' or 'social structural oppression', combined with the growth of urban violence that has resulted from the drug trade, has fuelled the experience of *revolta*, felt by youngsters both on and off the street. As we mentioned here this experience of inner rage may lead to the idealization of figures which command respect such as the drug dealer or the bandit. Bourgois (1996) noted something similar in his fieldwork amongst crack-dealers in East Harlem. For Bourgois, the oppositional life-style adopted by dealers instead of providing cultural forms that became a source of strength for the community, entailed its very demise or destruction. This is also evident in the relationship between Rio's drug *comandos* and the *favelas*, as we saw in chapter 4.

From this it can be seen that the struggle for identity and for self-affirmation is never a straightforward process, particularly within an environment of discrimination and prejudice in which the socio-economic climate renders a whole range of symbolic resources inaccessible. These processes do not, I believe, occur in a calculating, rational way that Goffman's language of 'information management' or 'stigma control' might imply. 'Management' and 'control' as Goffman uses them, are metaphors that attempt to describe the interactions between the

stigmatized and the 'normal'. A more appropriate metaphor, for the local context of Rio, is that the processes of identity that these youngsters on the street undertake are more akin to surfing. These individuals surf within the larger tides of Brazilian youth culture, and more specifically the youth cultures of poor Brazilians living in the *favelas* and peripheries of Rio de Janeiro. Added to this are the particular waves that living on the street generate. The waves both limit and allow the expression of movement, providing, to quote Hall, "the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves" (Hall 1997:4). Another constraint of this wave is the historical baggage and prejudices carried by the category of street children, a category that, as we saw here, may be appropriated, defied or else uncritically internalized. Similarly the 'looping' effect through which Goffman (1990) and Hacking (1999) considered that groups of labeled individuals came to regard themselves, cannot be regarded in a reductive way. Like any good surfer, even confined by the structure and momentum of the wave – the resources of history, language and culture, but also the processes of stigmatization and power - the individual is also an agent, standing up and maneuvering with his/her balance and skill in the present before every new situation.

CHAPTER 7

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS:

INSTITUTIONS AND PEDAGOGIES

As we have seen from the previous chapters, 'freedom', whether real or illusive, is a significant marker of identity for many children and adolescents on the street. This 'freedom' is one that in essence claims autonomy from adult supervision allowing for an unrestricted movement in urban space, and engagement in activities of work and pleasure. Though as we noted in previous chapters, rather than originating from the family, authority and punishment instead derives from the state, and in particular the police, often in very brutal and discriminatory form. But the police are only the most extreme, and oppressive manifestation of this extra-parental authority which includes a plurality of actors and institutions whose history can be traced back to the end of the nineteenth century as regards the state, or even earlier for religious and charitable organizations as we saw in chapter 3. Whereas chapter 3 traced the genesis of the state's attention towards a group which came to be labeled as *menores* [minors], this chapter will provide a closer look at these provisions, actors and institutions, those who I have here termed 'significant others', as they stand in the present since they have come to form an inextricable part of the lives of children and adolescents on the street. Also addressed here is the shift in the practices of many institutions away from a conception of *menores*, addressed in chapter 3 to a more contemporary vision of all youngsters as 'subjects of rights'. Today these two opposing notions, of the *menor* and of the youngster as subject of rights, are contradictorily found in this network of care, encompassing different state institutions and the NGO sector, such as day centers, shelters and youth correctional institutions, through which, youngsters constantly circulate. These contradictory visions of the *menor* and the subject of rights and agency found in Carioca society and its institutions are then also the topic of this chapter. The latter notion, as we shall see, is closely associated with an educational approach to children and adolescents on the street centered around the figure of the 'street educator', whose methodology is highly indebted to the work of Paulo Freire. Freire's key concepts as they relate to this Street Pedagogy are

addressed here. We also trace the genesis of this Street Pedagogy from the early 1980s and address how it is evident in the present in a wide network of institutions. How Freire's ideas have been applied to the context of the street is the guiding theme of the chapter, which as we conclude, can provide an alternative and more political conception of 'freedom' from that to which youngsters initially aspire. An important element in this chapter is an account of the effects of these 'significant others' upon the lives of youngsters on the street, for as we see here, they are often credited with being the catalysts for self-transformation providing the spaces and the influences that have contributed to the disengagement from the street.

ABORDAGEM - APPROACH

Though institutions are only addressed midway in this thesis, they were in fact my first port of call in the field. It was through institutions, in particular through NGO's day-centers and the work of street educators that I first came into contact with the children and adolescents in this research. What follows are some of my first field-note entries where I followed the work of street educators belonging to Rio's largest NGO working with street children, *São Martinho*.

> Walking along Copacabana beach with Lúcia and Marcos (street educators from *São Martinho*) it is 8:30 a.m. Lúcia is very confident and well known, she greets the youngsters as they wake up from beneath the trees shaking the sand from their blankets. The children are all very excited and lively, some have not heard of *São Martinho* before. Some show marks of being on the street longer or else project themselves as being more 'of' the street – a kind of streetwise, know-it-all assertiveness.
>
> The educators approach the children with the promise of a bath, breakfast and lunch. But also, a series of rules and discourses on how they should leave the streets, etc. follows. We wait for the van to take us to the day center and Lúcia already seems in control, enforcing rules like 'no drugs allowed in there'. One of the few girls we saw was about 13 and had a bruised eye; she said she had been punched by her boyfriend. "You don't deserve this, you know that!" pleaded Lúcia. The other girl, also 13 and pregnant, had cuts on her feet, knees and arms, she said she had been running on the road and fell and was almost run over.
>
> After we all got in the van an older youth (18 +) whom we had also chatted to before, rushed up to the van very menacingly and aggressively and said to the younger children inside, "Look, I've got my eyes out for you, if you come back here!" These were words

to the effect that this was the Copacabana posse and he didn't want any betrayals, or else. These fierce characters appeared to exert some influence or terror on the other children. As it was later confirmed to me by an educator, these youths belong to the drug *comando*. The street educators, on the other hand, constantly stress that inside *São Martinho* 'there is no faction or *comando*, the *comando* here is *São Martinho*!'

The above entry gives a sense of the work of the street educator, going out to the street to attempt to engage with youngsters and draw them to a space where their pedagogical endeavor may be more successful, away from the street and its chaos and dangers. The above activity is termed '*abordagem*', literally 'approach' or 'approaching'. For NGOs like *São Martinho*, this approachment is never enacted through force but through persuasion, or reasoning, and the gaining of trust. Persuasion, as we shall see, plays on desire, on promising resources such as food and shelter, or more long-term goals like jobs and education. It is a process I heard referred to on several occasions as 'seduction', meaning that you 'seduce' or 'conquer' the youngster by awakening in him or her, the desire to leave the street. This, it goes without saying, can only be achieved through a process of gaining the youngsters' trust and familiarizing yourself with what his/her particular situation and desire is. This pedagogical attitude of non-governmental street educators is a source of identity that marks them off from other forms of forced intervention. Street educators, social workers and other employees of the municipal authority (SMDS – *Secretaria Municipal de Desenvolvimento* Social - The Municipal Secretariat for Social Development) and of the State of Rio's institution (FIA – *Fundacao para Infacia e Adolescencia* the Foundation for Children and Adolescents) in charge of children and adolescent services in the city, are in the unenviable position of being torn between a natural affinity towards a non-forceful pedagogical approach and of having to enforce the requirements of legislators (in particular state governors and city mayors who see street children as a key electoral issue) and the judiciary (who see them as a threat to security), to remove children and adolescents from the street even against their will.

Contrast the above description of what I have termed here the pedagogical approach with the incident reported by *São Martinho* staff, that occurred during the Carnival of 2003 just outside their day-center in Lapa, part of Rio's old bohemian historical center. Just prior to the Carnival holiday week, on the 27th of February, a time when Rio attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists and the city authorities are particularly active in 'cleaning up' the streets, a number of police officers were attempting to forcefully remove a group of adolescents from the public square. As the youngsters proceeded towards *São Martinho's* day center, they were shot at by the police. The

São Martinho educators who came out to see what was going on, were threatened by the police. The context for this operation was that both the mayor and the Secretary for Public Security had issued statements to the effect that the extreme use of force by the police was justifiable and that the streets were to be cleared at all cost. This occurred at a time of particular insecurity in Rio since drug factions had organized a campaign of attacks on buses and demanded that businesses be shut down over two days throughout the city in protest, or retaliation, against police encroachment into their illicit activities.

Forced removals from the street are not rare occurrences. They are part of the SMDS and FIA's every-day activities, their white vans and logos having become feared amongst youngsters on the street, who have described to me how they would try to run away whenever they appeared. A newspaper article in *O Globo* (October 2002) encapsulates well the tension in which organizations like SMDS and FIA operate. The article begins with the headline, 'The State [of Rio] does not meet its target of removing minors from the street', and goes on to say that six months after taking over from the elected governor (who stepped down to run his campaign for the presidency of Brazil) Rio's new governor[1] had failed to meet her pledge. The article goes on to point out that whereas in four months 2,209 'street minors' where taken to reception centers run by SMDS, about half of these were 'repeat cases'. As Vanda Orenha, director of SMDS's program 'Vem pra Casa' ['Come Home'] points out in the article, it is a mistake to choose this problem as the challenge of your period in office, as the problem of youngsters on the street is a complex one that cannot be solved in one step. It demands broad social policies because 'the factory of poverty doesn't stop' (Vanda Orenha quoted in *O Globo* 27th October 2002).

There is then a significant contrast between a pedagogical approach and a repressive intervention, between the demand for quick solutions (demanded in the above article and by the population at large) as opposed to an understanding of the phenomenon of children and adolescents on the street as complex and systemic. Whereas the position favoring forced removal and confinement has a long history dating back at least to the middle of the 19th century, as we saw in chapter 3, the pedagogical effort can be traced only to the 1970s. This is not to say that repression and pedagogy are themselves mutually exclusive terms. As we saw in chapter 3 the laws concerning the 'Repression of Idleness' possessed a strong pedagogical element in as much as they were also concerned with teaching a young generation of 'street urchins' the value of labor, as they were considered to be the future of the nation. The new pedagogy chiefly

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[1] The new governor, Benedita da Silva, was Brazil's first black woman state-governor. Benedita came from one of Rio's *favelas* and has been for many years a leading activist for the PT, the Partido dos

influenced by Paulo Freire emerges precisely through its recognition of this, that education reflects the power relations and ideology of society. Following a period of active engagement and debate in the 1970s, led by the Catholic Church and civil society and consolidated in the left-wing Latin American mass social movement of Popular Education, reform was sought in respect of a whole series of oppressive practices, relations and institutions. The consequences of this mass popular movement are still very evident in the discourse of many educators, pedagogues and coordinators of NGOs I met during my field work, and is well summed up in the statement made to me by Tony, a street educator; "To take away from the street does not mean to collect and put in a shelter, it means that you create in the subject this internal will, this desire, this motivation to no longer live under the bridge".

THE EMERGENCE OF A STREET PEDAGOGY

It is during the period of the gradual opening up of the military regime in the 1970s that we see the emergence of the first alternative practices of working with children and adolescents on the street in what were termed 'alternative community practices', based on the principles of Popular Education.[2] Graciani describes the emergence of Popular Education as a politico-pedagogical alternative to counter state educational projects that were seen as not representing, or of negating, the concerns and realities of the majority of Brazil's population (Graciani 1999). The clearest expression of this counter-movement is found in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) which outlined the pedagogical struggle of the popular classes, the oppressed of Brazil, Latin America and Africa in a historical dimension. This movement of Popular Education, of which Freire was the key figure, expressed itself through many campaigns and projects throughout the Latin American left. Projects focused on areas such as adult literacy, popular and union movements, education movements in the *favelas* and peripheries, politically engaged church communities (particularly as articulated in Liberation Theology) and finally through the work of *Educadores Sociais de Rua* [Street Social Educators] with children and adolescents on the street. The guiding principles of Popular Education, expressed by Freire and others, as Graciani describes, is that of a struggle for education as an emancipatory force, education as a practice of freedom and as a precondition for democratic life. As such, Popular

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Trabalhadores or Workers Party whose president has recently come to power in the 2002 election. Benedita failed to be re-elected as governor, losing to the previous governor's wife, Rosinha.
[2] Significant in this emerging movement was the support of UNICEF, which arrived in Brazil in 1948 two years after its creation in the aftermath of World War II. UNICEF, in its remit of defending the rights of children and adolescents, worked alongside both the government and later with NGOs.

Education is a politico-pedagogical process in opposition to a colonial, or colonizing education, and it attempts to reverse the negative effects such an education has had on the popular classes over many decades (Graciani 1999).

Freire's pedagogical approach, where dialogue and departure from the cultural context of the student were of central importance, proved hugely influential in the movement that created a new way of working with children and adolescents on the street, particularly through the figure of the street educator. Freire's most important contributions in this respect were two notions, that education is a political act, and that this act consists of an exchange between educator and educated carrying within it the potential for emancipation from a repressive order, as the traditional distinction between teacher and pupil is dissolved.

Education, Freire writes, is a political act and so the educator is also a politician, whose role is necessarily related to his political options, and as he puts it, related to 'that which he dreams politically' (Freire 1984:5).

> "In truth, however, it is not education that forms society in a certain way, but society which, being formed in a certain way, constitutes education in accordance with its guiding values. But, as this is not a mechanical process, the society that structures education in function of the interests of those in power, has in it a fundamental factor for its preservation" (Freire 1976:146).

Freire's analysis is clearly evident in the Popular Education movements' critique of what came to be seen as the repressive system of internment and confinement of *menores*. This system came to be seen as discriminatory and inherently repressive and as such mimicking other repressive measures of the military regime but more fundamentally of other exclusionary aspects of Brazilian society. By extension, Freire's contention and the critiques of the system of confinement dating back to the nineteenth century, also find resonance in this thesis.

Freire's second important contribution was the view of education as a process of interaction and an exchange between the educator and educated in a dialectic whose outcome was that of a radical, emancipatory, critical consciousness. Freire characterizes the Pedagogy of the Oppressed as a pedagogy that must be forged with, and not for, the oppressed, making oppression and its causes objects of reflection and, through reflection, engaging in the struggle for liberation (Freire 1993:30). Central in this process is Freire's notion of *conscientização*, critical consciousness, a term clarified by Freire in the footnotes to his Preface to *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed:* "The term *conscientização* refers to learning to perceive social, political, and

economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire 1993).

Freire's influence, in the context of the present research, is manifest in the notion that the child and adolescent on the street should be the "subject of the pedagogical process and should be worked on in the context in which s/he is found" (Graciani 1999:262). An important player in this change of approach is the Roman Catholic Church, which, critical of its previous charity-based or assistentialist practices, sought new ways of interacting with youngsters found on the street. As Graciani writes, through the initiative of the archbishop of São Paulo, the Pastoral do Menor was created in 1979, signaling a shift in the Church's policy towards children and adolescents. The new position concentrated on two central tenets: community and education programs in the *favelas* and peripheries, and social-institutional work with children and adolescents on the street around a new street-based pedagogy, the *Pedagogia de Rua* (Graciani 1999).

In 1983 the Pastoral do Menor in São Paulo published a pamphlet, 'Educador Social de Rua' which, in describing recent experiences, outlines what are to become the basic premises of this new street pedagogy. The text outlining the project of the 'Street Educator' run by the Pastoral, states:

> "Our basic attitude is to go and meet them [the children and adolescents], live and discover with them new kinds of relationships and ways to satisfy their basic necessities...
>
> Our being with them on the street is a state of solidarity, where as a result of the lived reality we experience together, things are taught and learnt. This reality, jointly lived, felt and reflected on, has been the spring from which our educative actions depart" [my translation] (Pastoral do Menor 1983:7).

The objectives and methodology of the Pastoral clearly reflect Freire's ideas of a radical, reflexive and participative pedagogy. As the text cites, the main objectives of this process of encounter is to "make possible the self-recognition of street boys and girls as persons, as a group that is part of a people, who have a history" (Ibid). Reflecting this new attitude, Costa writes: "The child is no longer seen as lacking in a series of ways but is perceived as the subject of his/her own history and of his/her people, as having a myriad of possibilities open to the future. Now it is asked, who is s/he, what does s/he know, what does s/he bring, what is s/he capable of?" [my translation] (Costa quoted in Graciani 1999:263). Freire's influence was not restricted to the Pastoral but also proved crucial in the formation of the Movimento Nacional de Meninos e

Meninas de Rua (MNMMR), the National Movement of Boys and Girls on the Street created in 1985. This movement, broadly composed of children and adolescents from the popular classes, as well as youngsters on the street, sought to mobilize and organize a mass movement at local, regional and national level for the protection of the rights of children and adolescents.

The MNMMR, the Pastoral and the growth of an active NGO sector proved very influential in the consolidation of a powerful national grass-roots movement for the protection of young people's rights, culminating in the elaboration, drafting and ratification of the *Estatuto da Criança e Adolescente* (ECA), the Children and Adolescent Statute in 1990. As Graciani writes, until ECA all legislation for minors in Latin America, including Brazil, was based on the doctrine of the 'irregular situation', whereas the new statute changed this towards a philosophy of 'integral protection' (Graciani 1999:265). That is, whereas the first considers a particular kind of childhood which it sees as problematic, the latter treats all children and adolescents as subjects with rights. The new statute, in many respects, follows the approach of the Pastoral in its attempt to generate a spirit of collective social responsibility for the child and adolescent at the level of the family, the community and the nation.

The Pastoral's street education work, which first began in São Paulo in 1982, around Praça da Sé in the center of the city, was transplanted to Rio de Janeiro two years later by educators connected to the Pastoral who came and created *São Martinho*, an NGO with affiliations to the Dominican order. The Pastoral's basic pedagogical posture, that of "respecting the minor in his life organization, in his most intimate being" is, as we will see, still very evident in the speech of many educators and in the practices of key institutions (Pastoral do Menor 1983:7).

THE APPLICATION OF STREET PEDAGOGY

Two decades have passed since the first outings onto the street to meet children and adolescents were made by a handful of committed social workers from São Paulo's Pastoral. Since that time in Brazil, as we saw in chapter 2, media and academic attention over the phenomenon of children and adolescents on the street has grown. Alongside this, and also partly because of the increasing international focus on Brazil and its 'street children', governmental and non-governmental programs for this population have proliferated. Flávia Impelizieri counted 43 institutions specifically for street children, some of them umbrella or advocacy organizations, in Rio alone (Impelizieri 1995). With this vast network of institutions, personnel and resources it is pertinent to ask what became of Freire's radical pedagogy. Though the evaluation of the

implementation of Freire's ideas was not something I set out to do in this thesis, through my fieldwork I invariably came across the institutionalization of his ideas in the practices and discourses of the street educators, pedagogues and coordinators I met. It was only after a more in-depth reading of Freire and his commentators that I could see how or whether his key premises had been incorporated in the day-to-day work of those who I here call the 'significant others' of the youngsters I sought to represent in this thesis.

São Martinho

São Martinho, as previously mentioned, is Rio's largest and most established NGO working with children and adolescents on the street. It is a vast organization, comprising of dozens of employees – street educators, pedagogues, social workers, lawyers, coordinators, administrators, teachers of various subjects, technicians, cooks and guards. Its staff is divided between different centers and various shelters throughout Rio. *São Martinho* boasts not only a number of shelters, housing youngsters according to gender and age, but also a well-organized infrastructure comprised of a legal advice center, centers for vocational courses, community centers next to some of Rio's *favelas* and, perhaps more significantly for the work of the street educator, two day-centers where children and adolescents first arrive from the street. Also, having been around for nearly 18 years now, *São Martinho's* infrastructure is funded by a plurality of agencies and organizations ranging from the local city council, to the state of Rio's government agency for childhood and adolescence (FIA) to a range of international NGOs and funding bodies. *São Martinho's* key center and first port-of-call for youngsters on the street in Rio is its day-center, the Centro Socio-Educativo in Lapa. This day-center's daily intake of youngsters living on the street varies on average between 10 to 30 children and adolescents; some of these are first timers whilst others are regulars. A pedagogue told me that in the year 2000 *São Martinho* 'served' some 1,500 youngsters, since a register of all those who make use of its services is kept. For the year 1998, according to *São Martinho's* 'Activities Report' the following information is provided: total number of children and adolescents seen by the institution – 945; total number directed to *São Martinho's* shelters – 203. This is the mission statement of *São Martinho* found in the report:

> "To redeem the human dignity of children and adolescents running social risk. To provide them with the means to develop affection, winning a more transcendental conception of life. Through the development of an individual life

project to turn them into citizens able to face the social challenges to come" (*São Martinho* Activities Report 1998).

Reference to a 'more transcendental conception of life' must be seen in the context of *São Martinho* as a religious institution, affiliated to the Dominican order. The Dominican order in Rio has a managing role over *São Martinho* for historical as well as legal and bureaucratic reasons. But it can be said that many of its employees are committed Christians as is the general ethos of the organization. *São Martinho's* report goes on to describe the particular function of the day-center in Lapa as:

> "the doorway to the integration of children and adolescents who live on the streets. It is an open space which aims at attracting boys and girls to take an active part in the process of disclosing a new horizon for their lives, based on love, solidarity, respect, commitment and responsibility" (Ibid).

The ethos of the approach of NGOs like *São Martinho* is clearly distinct from the forced removal from the street by the police that we encountered at the beginning of the chapter. Given that such approaches start from a Freirean influenced view of the pedagogical endeavor and of the individual as not only the subject of rights, but also of lived experiences and desires, this Street Pedagogy relies on factors like 'attracting' and 'persuading' rather than force. The beginning of this long process of persuasion begins with *abordagem* which we have already described (page 171). At *São Martinho*, two street educators go early in the morning twice a week into various parts of Rio to approach children and adolescents as they are waking up and ask them whether they want to go to the center, to have a shower, a meal, etc. In the center, various activities take place; games, theatre, football, *capoeira*, craft workshops and sometimes writing and arithmetic classes. Youngsters who have been coming for a while, and who decide that they want to leave the street, are either taken home if appropriate or, if available, are offered a place at one of Rio's shelters, some of which belong to *São Martinho*. These shelters take in not only youngsters who have been on the street but also those from precarious or problematic family situations.

When I began frequenting *São Martinho's* day center on a regular basis I wondered whether the children and adolescents just kept coming for the food and the chance to relax that the organization offered. The educators were also aware of this since the majority of youngsters leave after having lunch or try to sleep in the shade by the courtyard or in some other part of the building and are constantly warned by the staff that the day center ' is not a hotel!' Talking to

children and adolescents, I felt that at times they treated institutions like *São Martinho* as another 'client' from where they obtain resources. Indeed some more politically astute youngsters I talked to, whose 'critical consciousness' would have made Paulo Freire proud, suggested that institutions like *São Martinho* needed them in order to exist, and so saw their relationship to such organizations as a symbiotic one. That is, they were aware that the NGO sector survived only because there were 'street children' to be taken care of. Statements to this effect could occasionally be heard in *São Martinho*'s day-center addressed at some educator or other, particularly in situations when a youngster was angry.

The pedagogical approach to which *São Martinho* and other similar NGOs subscribe to has also come under criticism for encouraging children and adolescents to stay out on the street. Some critics argue that in providing the resources available in the drop-in day-center, children and adolescents are not really changing their lives but are instead provided with opportunities (food, temporary safety, medical attention, legal advice) that perpetuates their life on the street. Street educators and pedagogues are only too aware of such criticisms. Also, some of the more reflexive educators acknowledge that the plurality of institutions (governmental or otherwise) concentrating on street children may well provide this population with more resources (financial, personnel, training, medical and legal attention) than their peers in the *favelas*. Such criticism against NGOs became very prominent in the early nineties, paradoxically, after the Candelária Massacre. At that time NGOs were accused, particularly in the press, of creating an 'industry of minors' that received millions in grants from international organizations.[3]

Such criticisms aside, through my fieldwork I began to see that institutions like the drop-in center at *São Martinho* do provide an invaluable space to those whose daily existence on the street is marked by constant struggle and stress. For many youngsters I talked to spaces like this were attributed with providing the first possibilities for reflection that contributed to their disengagement from the street. Inside *São Martinho*, as well as having a meal, a bath, clean clothes, medical and dental treatment, advice, leisure and educational opportunities and the option to leave the streets and go to a shelter, youngsters can just relax for a few hours. Between the time it opens at 9 a.m. and when it closes at 4 or 5 p.m. here is a space amidst all the constant hustling for survival and self-affirmation, the constant vigilance required on the streets, when children and adolescents can let down their guard, relax, lounge around or sleep. Clearly it is not a complete letting down of guard since inside this space are found not only adults you may not altogether

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[3] Press articles of the time placed statistics out of context by claiming that whereas research pointed to only 797 children being found on the street, organizations for 'needy children' in the city numbered 620. What

trust, but also many youngsters not all of whom you know or like. On top of these more immediate concerns the constant attention, advice giving and attempts at persuasion by the staff, creates an environment where, at least for some, Freire's ideal of the development of a critical consciousness begins.

Not all youngsters who pass through *São Martinho* for the first time choose to go to a shelter, indeed as previously mentioned, the majority do not, and seem content to frequent this space more or less regularly. Taking on *São Martinho*'s own figures for 1998 from their 'Activities Report' which recorded that 945 youngsters passed through its day-center and that of these 203 were directed to shelters, means that of those registered through its day-center only 21% were referred, that is wanted to go to a shelter. Yet as we shall see such estimates are far from reliable since they tell us little about the number of those referred to shelters who actually stayed on there, a figure which is considerably less. It is on these youngsters who are either not immediately interested in going to a shelter, or who have already been circulating through many shelters, that the pedagogical program of institutions like *São Martinho* concentrates on.

In the small staff room at *São Martinho* the following weekly plan is found on the wall:

	Monday	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
9:30	*Bom dia* – good morning with educators				
10-11	Relaxing	Art room	Lecture on rights by lawyer	Reading room	
11-12	Courtyard games	Basketball/ Volleyball	Football	Reflection with adolescents	
12-13:30	Lunch				
13:30-15:30	Video	Reading room	Shoe-shine group[4]	Art room	

The table gives a sense of the kinds of activities children and adolescents engaged in. It is depicted here very much as I found it on the wall of the staff-room in *São Martinho*. It points to how the time and space is divided up in the day-center, a curriculum which is marked by its informality, with time and space for 'relaxing', for 'reflecting' with educators, for reading in the reading room, as well as by the emphasis on physical activities. There is a concentration on sport

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the article omitted was that of these only 43 institutions targeted street children specifically, and many of these were umbrella or advocacy organizations (Impelizieri, Flávia 1995).

[4] The shoe-shine group was a subject of some debate amongst street educators at *São Martinho* and beyond; youngsters, both 'of' and 'on' the street, those living or just working there, can be seen shining shoes throughout Rio. In the past *São Martinho* had a time and space to teach youngsters how to make their shoe-shine boxes in order to engage in this enterprise. The debate this provoked was whether NGOs should be encouraging this kind of work.

and art rather than academic subjects. This is very much in line with the pedagogy described above, originating from Freire and the Pastoral. As Vanda Orenha, coordinator of the municipal SMDS quoted in the newspaper article mentioned above, described to me:

> "All pedagogical work is geared towards cultural and socio-educational questions because we feel that from these diverse languages we will be able to see the abilities we will awaken in these children, these youngsters, in a more ludic way the issue of having as reference point another life project that isn't the street and the involvement with violence that they have had all their lives" (Vanda Orenha interview).

We will explore this pedagogical approach further on when we consider in more depth how this 'awakening' takes place, but Vanda's statement highlighting the role of play is generally shared by educators. An instance of this ludic approach can be seen in the ubiquitous game of football. Children and adolescents in Brazil as a whole clearly love playing football. For those on the street, the *São Martinho* courtyard was a very suitable space for the game, this was encouraged by the educators here as well as in many other institutions. The principle behind using games like football is that as well as being a practice, or language, common to all youngsters in question, football also has a disciplining force. The referee is respected, and though arguments are almost inevitable, there is some kind of consensus over the rules which are held more or less sacrosanct.

Freire's insights about departing from the specific cultural context of the student were also evident when two *capoeira* instructors came to start up a class. Capoeira can be described as an Afro-Brazilian martial dance form involving the playing of instruments, singing and a form of play-fighting to various rhythms.[5] During the *roda*, the ritual circle of musicians and participants who take turns to challenge each other to a game, most youngsters present in *São Martinho*'s courtyard were very keen to participate. The *capoeira* class showed me that many youngsters seem to have picked up bits and pieces of *capoeira* since *rodas* are often quite public events in plazas or on the beach in Rio.

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[5] It is often said that *capoeira* was developed by African slaves in Brazil as a form of self-defense whereby they sublimated very lethal moves into a dance and rhythm form in order not to attract unwanted attention from their masters.

7.1 Jorge inside *São Martinho's* day-center, Lapa.

7.2 Street educator with Luciene and Bianca inside *São Martinho's* day-center, Lapa.

7.3 Capoeira in *São Martino*'s day-center, Lapa.

7.4 Capoeira in *São Martino's* day-center, Lapa.

7.5 A youngster displays his pyrographic skills at the workshop in *São Martino's* day-center, Lapa.

7.6 A youngster finds a place to sleep inside *São Martino's* day-center, Lapa.

Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha...

Using activities or practices familiar to youngsters on the street is clearly a way of engaging with them and a possible ludic way of 'awakening' their interest in, as Vanda mentioned, reference points in another life-project other than that of the street. This premise has been successfully capitalized on by *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha* (If This Street was Mine), another NGO whose ludic pedagogy focuses on the use of circus skills. Beginning with *capoeira* classes on the street in 1992, this NGO soon realized that many youngsters had a natural aptitude for acrobatics and so introduced circus training. From this interaction on the street (the NGO also has street educators and carries out *abordagem*) children and adolescents are encouraged to attend its day-center in the pleasant leafy *bairro* of Laranjeiras. Se Essa Rua (as it is more commonly known), like *São Martinho*, is a well-established NGO in Rio. Like *São Martinho* its practice has evolved over the years, as has its infrastructure and facilities. Like *São Martinho*, Se Essa Rua is funded by agencies and organizations ranging from the local city council, to the local government social development iniative (SMDS) to the state of Rio's government agency for childhood and adolescence (FIA). Se Essa Rua also relies in a large part on international NGOs and funding bodies, like Terre des Hommes and the Ford Foundation amongst others. At the heart of Se Essa Rua's infrastructure is its day-center, a large house in Larangeiras. Here 10-20 children come in the mornings and adolescents in the afternoon, from Monday to Thursday, for amongst other things, circus workshops. They all attend regularly, some have been coming for years. The children and adolescents are from neighboring poor communities as well as from the street and an educator told me there was little difference between the groups in terms of needs, attention or frequency of attendance. Two educators work here, and they are helped by 4 'monitors', youngsters of between 18-23 years of age, who have frequented the NGO for many years, some coming from the street, and who now teach other youngsters. These 'monitors' receive a bursary of R$250 (US$100) a month and also attend the National Circus School – a prestigious course that lasts 4 years. As we shall see in chapter 8, one youngster who was key in this research and who participated in the video documentary, recently graduated from this school and related to me with much pride how much he had achieved since leaving the street. Other activities in the center include dance, theatre, computing and extra school tuition – since some of the youngsters here do go to school. The organization also has a shelter, Casa da Vila in the *bairro* of Tijuca and a community activity center in Coelho da Rocha, serving the local *favela* community. Including all of these, the NGO serves some 200 children and adolescents. Those youngsters involved

regularly with the group give performances in schools all over Rio. Like *São Martinho*, Se Essa Rua also engages in *abordagem*, using activities like the circus and *capoeira*.

I worked closely with *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha* and observed on many occasions the appeal of the circus for many youngsters. The NGO does appear to manage to create a new 'reference', as Vanda Orenha put it, for, admittedly a relatively small, number of youngsters who pass through its doors. But as we will shortly see, even if new references, in this case the circus, are provided there are no guarantees that such references will provide the youngster with job opportunities when he/she comes of age.

Projeto Ex-cola

One particular concern of this research was what happened to adolescents living on the street once they come of age, considering that from the point of view of the Statute for Children and Adolescents (ECA) they are no longer protected by the state or given any preferential treatment before the law. As I pursued my research I also noted that this protection was also no longer given to youngsters by the shelters where they may have spent many of their formative years. On reaching eighteen shelters are no longer legally obliged to keep adolescents and, if they have not made alternative arrangements, some have been known to end up on the street again, or, in some cases, for the first time. In interviews, I was repeatedly told by youngsters that on reaching eighteen they were required to leave the shelter where they grew up. The city does have provision for homeless adults, a small number of state and church-run hostels are found in Rio and a large 'colony' of homeless families, the Fazenda Modelo, is found on the outskirts of the city. This colony, I was told by an educator, resembles an old fashioned psychiatric institution. These arrangements seem far from adequate, not only for the adult population themselves but more specifically for youngsters who either grew up on the street or else in shelters. The only organization that provides services that appear to fill this transitional gap when entering adulthood is *Ex-cola*.[6]

The novelty of *Ex-cola* lies in its proposal of 'republics', flats where 5 male youngsters (over 18) live and learn to have more responsibility over their lives and their living arrangements. *Ex-cola* has 5 such flats, with a total of around 25 youths, a very small number if we consider that there are around 1800 children and adolescents in Rio's shelters, and that only about 60 youngsters make it to the selection interviews for these places each year. The youngsters can live

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[6] Escola means school but cola is also glue and so the project *Ex-cola* also has the meaning of no longer sniffing glue or going beyond glue.

in these flats for up to two years with a possible 6-month extension. The average stay is around one year. Since the project started in 1996 a total of 45 youths have passed through the flats with only one returning to the street afterwards. Data on where the youngsters go are kept, and an annual meeting for past and present tenants was introduced one year ago. The flats house males who come from the city's shelters. Vacancies are advertised to other organizations which then refer the youngsters to the selection process. As related to me by an *Ex-cola* coordinator, the criteria for selection are: whether this is the kind of living arrangement that the youngster wants (some are referred by their shelter but they do not really want to go); whether they have alternative residence; and also whether they have 'traces of autonomy and life projects' (Beth interview). This last point was considered particularly significant, since the project was for a limited time, it was considered important that the young adult should have the determination to make something of this opportunity. As the educators in the project related to me, the project is one in which the youngsters learn about taking responsibility. As Beth, from *Ex-cola* described, these youngsters, generally speaking, have led an existence within shelters where everything was spoon-fed, provided for, where they did not have to take their own decisions, and where there was always an educator around to solve problems or mediate between them, 'they are boys without a tie to individuality' (Beth interview). This lack of encouragement of personal initiative and autonomy within the shelter regime was reaffirmed to me during an interview with a young man who had lived in a shelter for many years. He told me how shelters confine you, *'te prendem muito'*; this sentence, as we have encountered before, is not an expression of imprisonment but of over-protection, of quite literally 'sheltering'. As Marcelo, resident in one of *Ex-cola*'s flat related to me, there was little dialogue with the outside world in the shelter; instead there were routines of study and work, often defined by the institution. As Edu, another tenant present in this debate succinctly put it:

> "There are institutions that are like a mum and dad and the person goes on thinking that it is mum and dad. So when he turns eighteen... he goes without mum and dad. He doesn't know what to do, because he is given everything in his hand. That is a bit dangerous because afterwards he won't have any structure, because there was always someone there helping...".

In contrast to this, in the republics, they find themselves in an environment of autonomy and responsibility where they have to make their own decisions, about the courses and training to take, work to do, as well as about the maintenance of the house, and the interpersonal

relationships between those in the flat. The project workers visit the flats but do not police them. They are there as a last resort and in a mediating capacity should any problems arise, but the youngsters are encouraged to resolve their own issues. Here in this project there is no punishment, for as the educator pointed out, what could they do, throw the individual on the street? And so the group is encouraged to try and resolves any issues that arise.

A bi-weekly meeting is held with all the youths where workshops on various issues (AIDS, work, etc) are arranged. The flat members pay the electricity bill and R$ 20 (£5) towards a condominium fee; the rent and a monthly food voucher is given by the NGO *Ex-cola*. These young adults are supposed to work or study and *Ex-cola* also passes on information about possible study opportunities and scholarships. *Ex-cola* also has the Oficina Basico de Arte (OBA), the Basic Art Studio, which consists of three arts projects: a theatre group, a percussion band and a sound technician course. The former two have currently been suspended because of lack of resources. SMDS (the Municipal Secretariat for Social Development) pays for running three of the flats and the other two are paid for by FIA (the Foundation for Children and Adolescents).

The importance of *Ex-cola* dawned on me as the youngsters I interviewed spoke not only of the opportunity the project gave them to find their feet, but also of how many of their friends whom they knew through projects or shelters had ended up in prison, on the street or dead. As I mentioned before, it is very difficult to find out what happens to people who spent their childhood on the street, or to those who grow up in shelters, once they attain adulthood and it is even harder to try to put a number on cases of those who end up in prison, dead or on the street. But stories I heard from youngsters at *Ex-cola* gave me a sense that their 're-integration' – through work, education or finding more permanent accommodation - is a very delicate process, particularly considering the prevailing socio-economic climate which many youngsters in Brazil, especially those from the *favelas* and peripheries, today face. Talking to these youngsters there was a real sense that projects like *Ex-cola* are, in a way, their last chance before they are literally out there in a dangerous and hostile world by themselves.

A sense of this fragility was conveyed to me by Zizum, a young adult who had lived for many years on the street and circulated through many shelters and projects. Zizum learnt how to read and write through these projects, and they provided him with many job opportunities throughout his street career. After turning eighteen Zizum continued to be given such opportunities, in this case by *Ex-cola*. The role of these opportunities and the structure they provided him are clearly illustrated in the following excerpt from an interview with Zizum, "I also worked in Maracanã [a *bairro*], where I sold ice-cream. I made the ice-cream, then I sold it.

[But] the project finished. That is when I despaired and went to the street again, started robbing and went to an adults' prison". Zizum had been in youth correctional facilities before but, in his latest encounter with the law, he was sentenced to two years by the penal code since he was now no longer protected by ECA. Zizum served 17 days inside and is now serving his sentence on 'conditional discharge', or 'assisted liberty', a kind of supervised parole scheme being piloted for young offenders.[7] Zizum now lives with his grandmother, the one person in the world whom he admires and works as a car-park attendant as well as a Disc Jockey in *Ex-cola*'s community radio.

Looking at Zizum's institutional trajectory a pattern begins to emerge. We have spoken before about how the trajectories of so many youngsters involve what we have termed a circulation through the different spaces of the home, the street and the institution. But sometimes this circulation is not always initiated by the youngster; sometimes it is the institution or project that is to blame. The cycle of the project or institution itself may have an inadequate follow up – such as a job placement in a company that lasts a few months and then finishes abruptly - or even a stay of many years inside a shelter which fails to impart adequate skills for the youngster to pursue different opportunities for himself. Sometimes this is not due to faulty pedagogy but to funding cuts or to the economic climate. For instance at the time of my fieldwork, Rio's city council was cutting back on grants to many NGOs, Zizum's ice-cream selling project included, meaning a sudden end to many activities. Equally the down-turn of the economy has meant that companies are more reluctant to take on new staff, or to form projects or associations with shelters and NGOs.

As recounted by Marcelo and Edu, the *Ex-cola* tenants above, there is a danger that seeing the institution as 'mother/father' creates a dependency and lack of initiative or, as the educator from *Ex-cola* put it, a lack of 'individuality' or autonomy that is crucial for successfully negotiating everyday life in contemporary Brazilian society. This dependency was clearly articulated to me during an interview with Joana, a young woman who had lived on the street for many years and was now part of a project for young mothers run by *Ex-cola*. The project over, I asked Joana what she was going to do now. She replied: "Find work, anything. If I can't get one then I'll find another project!" Joana's coy grin at the end of the sentence spoke volumes to me. It

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[7] Though my fieldwork did not focus on the encounter between children and adolescents on the street and the law, clearly this is a crucial subject. Throughout my research I repeatedly heard stories of children and adolescents' brush with the police with many ending up in one of Rio's youth correctional facilities. This is a vast area in which much research has already been carried out (Violante 1989, de Assis 1999). A general point to be made about such incidents reported to me is that they confirm both research and common knowledge that these institutions are far from adequate both in the facilities they provide in terms of shelter and 'socio-educational' activities but, more worryingly, because of the frequent incidents of physical and emotional abuse.

showed she was acutely aware of her own dependence on institutions like *Ex-cola*, and considering the current economic climate of Brazil who could blame her. What kind of job could a young, black, semi-literate, pregnant mother, living in the periphery get?

One solution is to work for the very institutions that have raised you. NGOs like *Ex-cola*, *São Martinho* and others employ a number of youngsters who have used their services for years. From cleaners, to street educators and administrators, these organizations recruit young adults who grew up on the street and whose experience, it is felt, could positively contribute to their aims and pedagogical approach in reaching out to other children and adolescents on the street. Throughout my research I met many such young adults who came away from the street and ended up working with the organizations that took care of them for many years. For these youngsters, some of whom are presented in the next chapter as we look further into life histories and ask more in depth what it is like to grow up on the street, the sense of pride and achievement such employment confers is palpable. But these organizations do not have the resources to employ every youngster that passes through its doors. And clearly neither would this be desirable since those who are chosen for employment, are considered through their abilities and not through charity.

That a pedagogy premised on the development of critical consciousness and independent individuals should end up with many cases of what appears to be 'institutional dependence' is not as disastrous or a sign of failure as it may first appear. For it is crucial that we take into account the political, social and economic climate in which these individuals are situated. Before doing so, it is interesting to note how Freire's radical pedagogy is reinterpreted in the account of Renato a street educator, who himself had lived on the street for many years.

THE REAL-POLITIK OF STREET EDUCATION

Renato gave me the most succinct, and what appears to me, the most brutally honest, explanation of the work of a street educator. When we talked about his work as a street educator, I asked Renato what he felt was the best way to try to invite youngsters off the street. He told me that you have to 'seduce' them, to 'fool' them in a certain way, to show them that they have abilities, which may well be true, and, in so doing, try to awaken their interest in something other than in the day-to-day routine they are engaged in. Once this interest is awakened in the child or adolescent, Renato relates, he will drift away from the street. I ask Renato how he does this. You study the boy first, get close to him and then go for it, he tells me. The consequence of this study of the individual for Renato is a weaving of an 'illusion' out of the child's or adolescent's desire.
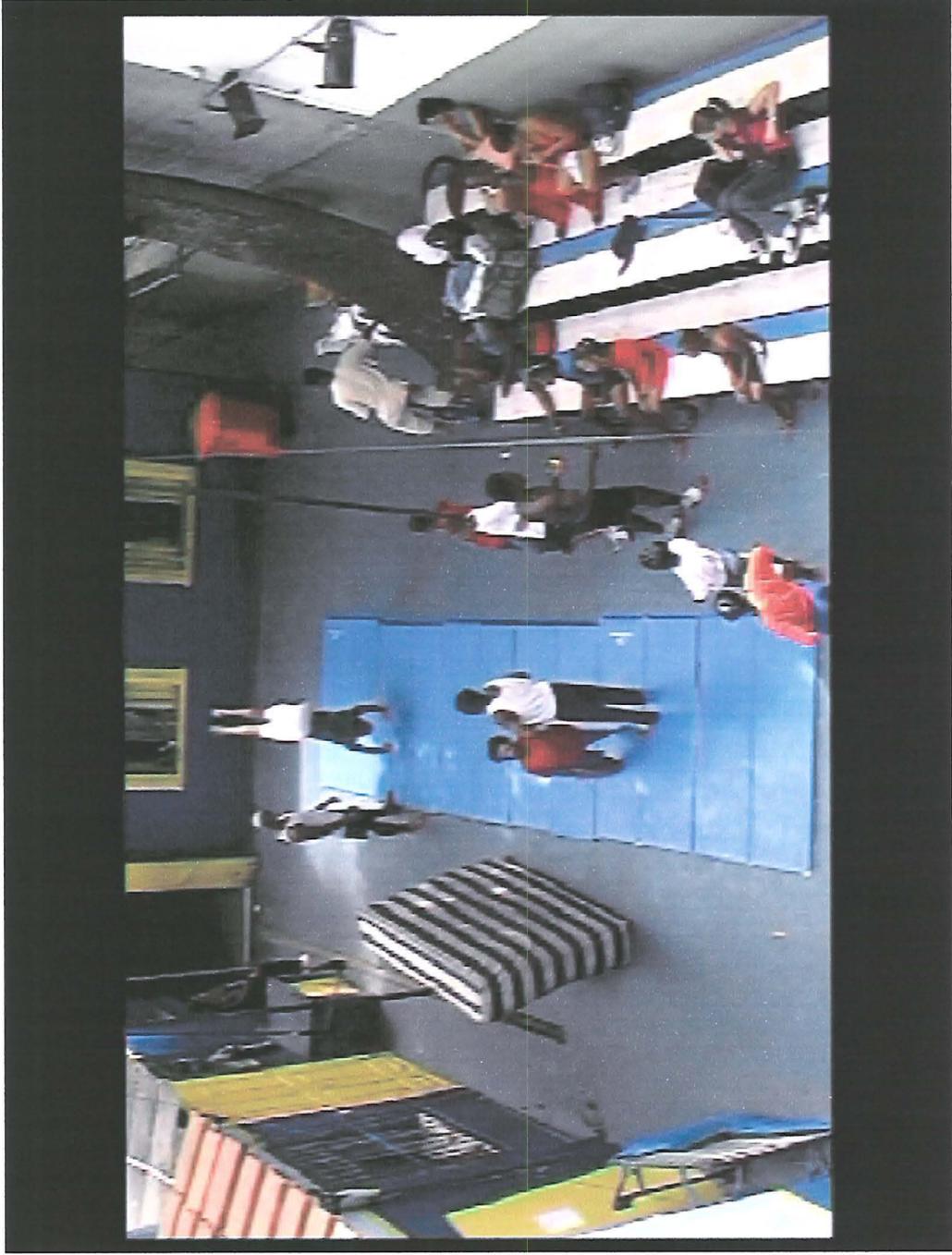
7.7 Courtyard at *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha...*

7.8 Nego da Bahia teaches the Diablo at *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha...*

Illusion, Renato explains to me, in the sense that everybody will have a dream; work, money, etc. The awakening of interest or desire and the process of seduction has to do with offering these, or making them seem possible, he tells me. This is clearly not what Freire meant about the relationship of the educator and educated and the development of a critical consciousness, aware of the 'social, political and economic contradictions' and able to take actions against this reality. Instead it appears more as real-politik Street Pedagogy which, though it may still have the welfare of the child or adolescent at heart and shows an awareness of the individual's desire and situation, is rooted in persuasion and cunning. Perhaps Renato's view is tempered with a realism or with an identification with the *malandro* [the urban trickster], which he claims the street has taught him to be and which he clearly sympathizes with, as we see in the next chapter. In contrast, we can perhaps postulate that such cunning is usually absent in educators who have not lived on the street. Educators who have not lived on the street may well be more idealistic about the political possibilities behind Freire's pedagogy as well as their consideration of the opportunities available to those who leave the streets. Renato's view, on the other hand, appears more down-to-earth, perhaps in line with what he has achieved as opposed to what he believed he would achieve in leaving the street. As he tells me during one of our conversations, he is trying to get together a CV to find work. In it he will put the 12 courses he has done through his institutional trajectory; sound engineering, mathematics, mechanics, electrician, painter, HTML, Windows/Excel, percussion, micro-enterprise, street educator, cinema. Yet with all of this experience and with the work he has done in cinema, he still appears unfulfilled. He stills dreams of having his own place and another job. Now he earns R$ 240 (US $100) a month working in *Ex-cola*.[8]

Could it be argued that individuals like Renato, after years of being subject to a Freirean pedagogy through the institutional settings he grew up in, did not develop critical consciousness to its radical conclusion? I believe not. As noted in the previous chapter, Renato was one of the few youngsters I talked to who was acutely aware of the role of racism in the discrimination suffered by youngsters on the street and in the peripheries. Though the Freirean process cannot take all the credit for this since, as already mentioned, many youngsters are also very tuned to Brazil's thriving Hip Hop scene some of which is highly politicized. There is no doubt that Renato, like others subjected both to this pedagogy and to Hip Hop, seem well versed in the diagnosis of oppression in Brazilian society. But the next level in the process of critical consciousness, the praxis involved in the organizing of collective activity to redress the

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[8] Renato, as we see in the next chapter, took part in the highly acclaimed Brazilian *favela* gang-land epic *City of God* (2002). Despite the talent he and many other non-professional actors displayed on screen, the fame and success he dreamed of have not materialized.

oppressive aspects of reality, poses a particular challenge for youngsters who are or were on the street like Renato. One such challenge is that, by definition, the category of being a street child is a transient one, and once adulthood is attained the oppression or the structural constraints faced by young adults like Renato become much the same as those faced by large numbers of the urban population living in the *favelas* and peripheries. As regards the revolutionary potential of this population, Perlman's analysis describes how both the left and the right have been mistaken in their assessment that the marginalized constitute a politically revolutionary force (Perlman 1979). Perlman concluded that both the right's fear and the left's hope are misplaced and that the inhabitants of the *favelas* demonstrate many continuities with the middle class. This applied not only to what they aspired to in terms of family, education and consumption, but also in their political affiliations.

One critique which has been raised against the pedagogical approach outlined here, is that, though it appears successful in a number of individual cases, it is also highly time and resource consuming. As Carlos, coordinator of *Ex-cola* pointed out to me, what funders who support NGO projects want is group results, collective results, they want numbers and not individual cases, and certainly not subjectivity, or an intimate knowledge of the subject which this pedagogy appears so reliant on. Funders, as well as the majority of Carioca society, in particular the media and other conservative forces with more affinity to the repressive approach to social intervention, want quick results. Street Pedagogy appears a world away from the auditing culture of project finance as well as from the desire for a speedy transformation of youngsters found on the street demanded by politicians, the media and the general public. Instead, the work of street educators is time-consuming and labor intensive, its measures of success are more elusive, though when stories of success occur, as we see in the next chapter, these are enthusiastically celebrated.

More often though success is subtle and small-scale. For instance, Carlos related to me how, after working with a young man who had lived on the street for eighteen years, after just over one year's work *Ex-cola* managed to get him to save all the money he earned to go towards paying for a room in a bed sit. Carlos echoed Renato's insight as to the need both to see the capacities in the youngster in question and to encourage his dream or desire. With reference to the small victory of this young man in the *Ex-cola* project, he decided to be a rap singer but, as Carlos confided in me, he made up very bad songs. Nevertheless, by having his dream encouraged by *Ex-cola*, this individual managed to organize his life. This process is only possible once the value of the person as subject is recognized and encouraged, something which only comes about through paying attention to the interests and aspirations of the individual. Yet this is a very lengthy process. Not least because, as Carlos related to me and as I have mentioned

elsewhere, through sheer survival strategy, youngsters on the street put up many defenses, both emotional and psychological. This self-protection, which involves a non-revealing of the self, makes the work of pedagogues and street educators even more difficult, since in some cases the process of trust building can take years. Carlos concluded our interview with the comment I had also heard from other coordinators and educators, that no NGO or organization takes anyone off the street. He went on to explain:

> "The youngster, when he exercises his capacity, he leaves the street; this is a human capacity to react, to have plans, to access what he has inside, like something which sustains him, like a bridge to freedom, to success, to the amplification of his conception of life. I like telling them that on the street you also live, but I don't know if living for ten years on the street can be considered a life, [for in that kind of life] you are always surrounded, always in debt, always persecuted, that is no life (...) Our discourse [here] is one of autonomy in which the sooner he discovers his capacity to react, to be responsible for himself and for his desires, be responsible for whom he chooses to relate to and where he chooses to work and with whom he has amorous relations with, the better."

STREET PEDAGOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF WIDER SOCIETY

NGOs such as *Ex-cola* attempt to provide the right conditions for this process of autonomy. But also of crucial importance in this process, as Carlos reminded me, is 'society', or, more precisely, its lack of acceptance of youngsters such as these. The more actors and institutions are involved in this process of understanding the better and, as Carlos explained, it is no good for the population as a whole just to stand back and demand that something be done by the government or the NGOs. For this reason, Carlos has been very vocal in the NGO community in advocating that the role of NGOs should not be one of subsidiary government, or of replacing government in the provision of social services. Instead, their role should be one of fostering the participation of society as a whole in particular areas. This would entail a kind of participative social pedagogy into the phenomenon of street children with the contribution and active participation of different actors; from the business community, local residents, media, etc. For instance *Ex-cola*, as other NGOs and government agencies, have over the years formed links with large businesses in Rio who agree to take on a number of youngsters to train and give paid work experience every year. Another example from *Ex-cola* consists of its local short-wave radio

station, run by and for youngsters on the street, which broadcasts to the region of Lapa but which also has the potential of informing others on issues concerning youngsters on the street. Such social participative pedagogy, or even social participative thinking, is still at the early stages in Rio. The future may well lie in notions of the 'support bases' or the 'support networks' occurring in the *favelas* which Rizzini, Barker and Cassaniga (2000) have described (see page 102). The question then becomes what are these support networks for youngsters on the street and how can such networks be used to strengthen trajectories that lead to citizenship and full participation in society.

What must be remembered is that such pedagogical endeavors take place within society. This position was emphasized by Tony, another key figure in *Ex-cola*, who stated that the biggest difficulty these youngsters encounter in their development of autonomy is posed by the reality of the labor market, "What use is it to be autonomous if at the end of the day, the youngster does not have a job, does not have money in his pocket, so he won't have autonomy?" Cezar, coordinator of the NGO *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha...*, added to this debate concerning the relationship between the role of the institution/organization and that of broader society. Considering the flux of youngsters through these spaces, Cezar concludes that the biggest challenge for organizations like his NGO is "to be more seductive than the street". He goes on:

> "Because on the street you are living amidst a series of attractive things that offer an immediate financial result... It is everything we all want, money and pleasure, these are common issues that we all seek but it is something that ends up making the space of childhood, of play, of commitments, very difficult so that the majority of the popular classes, do not have this possibility of living these phases [of childhood] intensively, these [phases] are always connected to the meeting of necessities."

One way of making the space of the institution more seductive than the street, as Cezar explained to me, is by showing that the street also has walls and boundaries, that it also has its limits and is not the space of 'freedom' that children and adolescents often credit it with. Part of the job of the street educator is then to deconstruct these myths about the street, by trying to bring to light the unspoken rules and boundaries that youngsters on the street live by or through. This is what Freire meant by the contradictions found in reality that hide different forms of oppression. Like Tony and Carlos, Cezar also points to the difficulties involved in this kind of work since even though *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha...* creates a space for learning, mutual respect and growth,

at the end of the day this is only one space amongst many that the youngsters will circulate through. As Cezar points out, "If I have ten [youngsters] on the street, I can bring eight back here [to Se Essa Rua...], but from here I can't work on six [youngsters], I already reduce my possibility because I depend on a correlation of forces and actions by other agents. The more pleasurable space that I propose here isn't necessarily the same that I will encounter, say, at school".

In other words, in spaces such as Se Essa Rua, *Ex-cola* and *São Martinho*, the variables – in terms of pedagogy employed, in terms of staff and their relationship to the youngsters, in terms of the curriculum, in terms of the sort of environment and set of relations which is being aspired to – can to a degree be controlled. But outside these spaces – in schools, other shelters and NGOs, youth correctional facilities, etc. - through which youngsters constantly circulate a whole other range of variables or influences will be found which cannot be controlled.

The difference between institutional spaces is, I believe, one of the biggest causes for the circulation of children and adolescents. There is clearly a lack of consistent practices, approaches and ideologies amongst Rio's state, church and NGO sectors. Whereas such diversity of practices is perhaps only to be expected in a pluralist society, it has the effect of sending very confusing messages to the children and adolescents who circulate through them. Different rules and organizational structures, different expectations and provisions have the effect of creating a sort of services supermarket for these youngsters. It is not surprising then that many youngsters see the individual organizations in this network of care as just another patron amidst a complex web of actors on whom they rely for survival on the street. The recently created *Rede Rio Criança*, a network of NGOs and some state organizations such as SMDS and FIA, which participated in the CIESPI research and to which I referred in chapter 1, was trying to remedy this situation at the time of my fieldwork by coordinating their efforts. The network was trying to learn from each other's experience and to work in concert, complementing each other in their strengths and weaknesses. For instance they were trying to coordinate their *abordagem* on the street and mapping out the places where youngsters were found. The network was also trying to work together in their preventative campaigns with families 'at-risk' in the *favelas* and in awareness raising campaigns in the city about youngsters on the street. These institutions were also trying to build a system of record-keeping of the youngsters that frequented their organizations in order to tackle the youngsters' needs more efficiently. This would have been particularly useful considering that as youngsters circulate through many institutions they provide scraps, and sometimes very different scraps, of information to each one. But the implementation of this

scheme by the *Rede Rio Criança* has been delayed by the dilemma of what kind of information should be kept in these records and who should have access to it.

The inconsistency of institutional quality and practices is also derived from a lack of regulation or application of the Children and Adolescent Statute (1990). The Statute does provide measures and supervisory bodies for the full implementation of its laws, which includes the supervision of organizations working with children and adolescents. Clearly the Statute is far from being fully implemented and many organizations fall well below the standard that the law demands in the services and facilities they provide and, more worryingly, in the cases of physical abuse of youngsters in institutional settings that I heard of during my fieldwork. With these inconsistencies it is not surprising that children and adolescents circulate through Rio's NGOs and state-run organizations and shelters. At each stop they point to the shortcomings of that space. But neither are institutions completely at fault, as children and adolescents themselves are only too aware, in many of these spaces they were offered opportunities that they did not take because, as I often heard, they were too used to the street. Beyond these issues of institutional inconsistencies and, in some cases, a lack of adequate practices and provisions, lies the more profound issue of conflicting notions of freedom and autonomy – those which youngsters on the street aspire to, and that which the Freirean pedagogy promotes.

A FREIREAN CONCEPTION OF 'FREEDOM'

As we have seen from the previous chapters 'freedom', real or illusive, is a marker of identity for many children and adolescents on the street, something which has also been noted by other authors (Gregori 2000, Hecht 1998, Fenelon, Martins and Domingues 1992, Vogel & Mello 1991). This 'freedom' is one that in essence aspires to autonomy from adult supervision and constraint and allows for an unrestricted movement in urban space, and engagement in activities of work and pleasure. Contrasted to this freedom and autonomy and this particular view of self-affirmation, and also differing from the incomplete freedom that the abolition of slavery brought about, Freire's work provides a radical notion of freedom.

At the heart of Freire's idea of freedom, liberation or empowerment (though, as far as I know, he did not use the term empowerment itself which in Portuguese has no equivalent) lie two key notions; *conscientização* and *praxis*. *Conscientização*, as we noted, refers to the ability to perceive the social, political and economic contradictions within the historical context in which the individual is located, *praxis* is then the actions taken against the oppressive elements of this reality, both individually and collectively. Personal experience, relationships, culture and history

are the raw resources used in this process of reflection and action. This is indeed what street educators work with when they engage with youngsters on the street in that 'game of seduction' which educators have here recounted. The freedom offered here is 'radical' because it is one in which self-affirmation is sought not within the structures of oppression, for instance in this case the fringes of a denied urban consumer society, but through an overhaul of that structure and by overcoming of its forms of exploitation and exclusion. But, as Nelson and Wright's outline of models of power demonstrate, empowerment is very often a long drawn out process in which individuals pass through many stages of self-awareness and awareness of the power relations within which they are embedded (Nelson and Wright 1995). This is well exemplified by Sandra whose trajectory we now turn to because it highlights the embodiment of Street Pedagogy as a living-breathing process of self-transformation.

I first met Sandra during my visit to *São Martinho*'s shelter for girls, Casa das Meninas. This was a spacious two-storey house in the lower-middle class suburb of Vicente de Carvalho. With some five or six large bedrooms with five beds in each, Casa das Meninas is home for some twenty five girls aged between six and sixteen, not all of whom had lived on the street, but who had a family situation that ensured them a place there. The house also has a TV lounge, a classroom for extra school-tuition, a craft-room and a chapel. The girls kept the house tidy themselves, each being responsible for a particular task. Sandra was fourteen years old when I first met her; she had a real ease about the way she retold her tale volunteering the story of her experiences on the street spontaneously, eloquently and without inhibition, including her involvement in robberies and with drugs. Sandra had only recently arrived at this shelter and, fresh from the street, she still had her hair shaved, though she commented that she was letting it grow and was becoming 'more feminine'. She wore small shorts, a tight shirt, lipstick and make up. But on the street Sandra shaved her hair, used baggy clothes and in general tried to hide her femininity. She told me this was in order to look like a boy when she was mugging someone, so she could intimidate them more.[9]

When I met Sandra again at the shelter some 6 months later, the femininity she had been trying to cultivate was more visible. Her mannerisms and conduct showed that she was erasing or exorcising traces of the street from her being, something which she also related to me:

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[9] Sandra also mentioned, as we have seen in chapter 5, that dressing like a boy serves a very important protection strategy on the street, in particular from the police and from adults who might want to sexually abuse them. This strategy is observed more frequently in girls who do not have a steady boyfriend who himself acts as the protector.

7.9 Sandra (standing up) and friends at Casa das Meninas.

> "... I have been in this house for 9 months now, 9 months away from everything,
> away from drugs, from everything. You came here, you saw a bit of me
> becausewhen I arrived, you got to know a bit of the old Sandra still coming from
> the rhythm of the street; now I've changed a lot, now I'm here, I love myself
> now. Before I didn't care about anything, if you messed with me, I just came out
> hitting, didn't care about anything, now I sort everything with dialogue, by
> talking..."

I asked her what made her change in these months:

> " Ah, the company was different! (...) On the street you don't have someone who
> gives you love, gives you support, there isn't anyone to come and say; 'hey you
> are doing this wrong, that is not right' or; 'do this, because this is better, someone
> to always be there nagging at you, complaining, saying what is right, what is
> wrong, on the streets you don't have that. On the street what you have is those
> who say; 'let's go and do this, we don't care, what happens, happens'. When we
> want to change, when we have *força de vontade* [will-power] we have everything
> that we want (...) Nowadays I am like this, my mind has changed a lot, I don't
> think about any of those things, other people come up and say: 'ah, you were a
> street girl', that street girl doesn't exist anymore, those that are on the street exist,
> living with the street, getting by on the street, but that one who is inside a house,
> has a home, a place to sleep, puts her head on her pillow, sleeps at ease, doesn't
> think about anything anymore, for me is not a street girl anymore..."

Willpower is then a crucial ingredient for changing one's life, something that not only Sandra but also others who made the successful transition away from the street recounted, as we shall see in the next chapter. Will-power is related to a new-found sense of agency, a taking responsibility for one's actions. As Sandra put it: "When I lived on the street I spoke like this; 'I was born only to suffer, to live like this', but I saw that it wasn't that at all which was happening, that everything was different, we suffer because we want to, right, that's it, that's all." The transition from a fatalistic assessment of one's life situation to one in which the individual feels empowered is a crucial aspect of Freire's notion of the development of critical consciousness. The former fatalistic attitude narrated by Sandra can be seen as an example of what Freire termed 'semi-intransitive' consciousness, which he describes as a form of consciousness which does not manage to capture the challenges of the context in which it is situated or which perceives them

distortedly (Freire 1976). Freire characterizes this form of consciousness as one in which explanations to problems are sought outside reality, in divine signs or destiny, or in the internalization of feelings of 'natural inferiority' (Ibid). As such, actions derived from here often take a 'magico-defensive' or 'magico-therapeutic' form (Ibid). Having said this it must be noted that Freire was himself a religious person and deeply connected to the Liberation Theology movement. In his analysis of 'semi-intransitive' consciousness he is not negating religious belief, as Marx did, but pointing to how in looking at the 'supernatural' for explanations, more tangible forces of social and economic oppression are cloaked-over. Whereas in this mode of thinking dominated groups believe that their fate is out of their hands, the beginning of critical consciousness entails the emergence of a sense of agency, the *força de vontade* which Sandra describes above.

If these nine months inside the girl's shelter reflect a significant change in Sandra's perception of herself, equally significant in this process has been other people's perception of her. I asked Sandra what she thought other people thought of her and her friends on the street and she replied, impersonating them: "Look there, a bunch of street children, a bunch of wasters with no future, you know what their future will be, in a ditch with a bullet in the head, they thought like this..."

I asked how people saw her now:

> "I'd say that I have more love from my mother, the love, the respect of my
> family, the respect of many people, inside here I have the respect of everybody
> from the day I arrived, but even more so now, right. Because before I was here I
> was Joe nobody, you have that Joe nobody who is nobody, right. Not today
> though, now I have changed; I have the love of my sisters, the love of my
> mother, I always had the love of my mother but not how it is today..."

The perception of others, or of one's effect on and relationship to others is then also of crucial importance in the process of transformation of the self. Whereas in the previous chapter we saw how the discrimination, fear or disrespect of others contributed to youngsters sense of self and to *revolta*, Sandra here describes the effect of entering an environment that can be said to be diametrically opposed, one characterized by the care, love and respect of others. Sandra had been in other shelters before Casa das Meninas but she never stayed for long in these finding them a

bagunça, a mess or a disorderly place. Before she came to Casa das Meninas she had been frequenting *São Martinho*'s day-center in Lapa for a year and spoke lovingly of its educators, whom she thanks for being alive. On one of these educators Sandra showered much praise, for giving her advice, telling her things and making her think, reflect. She spoke of this process as promoting a change in her. At first she went to the day-center, like many others youngsters do, *para zoar*, to doss or fool around. Gradually, Sandra tells me, she started thinking about her life, about how she was also important, how she was beautiful, how she had '*muito para crescer*'- 'a lot to grow up', and had ambition and things to achieve. Through this reflection Sandra became determined to change her life. The first shelter she went to didn't work out but she says she really liked it here in Casa das Meninas; the place was tidier, things were more organized. She also spoke of the transformative effect of seeing one of her friends shot in front of her on the street. She was shot by someone her friend had robbed, and who recognized her. When they were in a group this man came up to them and only shot at her friend.

I asked Sandra why she thought some people manage to change their lives and get out of the street whilst others don't. She returned to the theme of death:

> "Those who stay on the street do so because they have no shame, they really like it, and those who change their lives do so because they have high thoughts, see that that there is no future there. We are worse than dogs, because dogs survive better than us who live on the street, there are dogs who get run over and die but who didn't see the car, right. But not us, we see death and go forwards, we see death and go towards it, when death arrives we regret it but it's too late then, there is no way back, you have to go back before you see death in front of you and you have to go back and say this: 'ah, that is the past; put a stone on it, hit a hammer over it, and say; right, I've hit it with a hammer, that is no life, let's go to another path now, like this."

Sandra's encounter with death on the street was a reminder of her own mortality. But also it reinserted a sense of time in her perception of herself, as such removing her from that pervading sense of the present that, as we have already addressed in previous chapters, seems popular on the street. This sense of reinserting youngsters into a sense of time, a sense of their own life-project was also conveyed to me in a conversation with Cezar, coordinator of *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha*.

Cezar pointed out to me how some youngsters from the street have over the years become attracted to developing their circus skills and eventually enrolled in the National Circus School. As Cezar told me, many on the street hold on to the belief that they could die tomorrow, and yet if they enroll on a four year course s/he is already not thinking about dying tomorrow anymore; at the very least s/he may be thinking that s/he will die in four years time but not tomorrow. Otherwise such long-term planning would not be an option. In other words, something about their perspective has changed, something about their life options and their sense of continuity through a life-project.

The opportunity for such a life-project is one thing which the various projects associated to Street Pedagogy do offer. As Sandra related to me, being in the shelter has offered her other paths:

> "When I arrived here I couldn't write my name, now I am going into second grade [second year of primary school] (...) Here I am in the football team, the netball team, I have extra school tuition, I make jewelry, I go to the psychologist every week and also what I like about this place is that doctors are not lacking, there is a health center right next door."

Sandra was looking forward to being able to work when she is legally old enough to do so, so she can earn money and take her mother out of where she is living at the moment. She saw her mother every week and phoned her almost everyday. I asked her what she wanted for her future. "My future, I will have children, will marry, have a family, with my mum, with my children, my husband, my grandchildren, which I will have one day; how about that, I am already thinking of grandchildren!" Sandra celebrated her fifteenth birthday in Casa das Meninas. In Brazil the 15th birthday party is a big event, especially for girls. She mentioned her birthday as one of the best things that has ever happened to her, "the dream of every girl, right?" The last I heard of Sandra, on a more recent visit to Rio, was that she had moved back with her mother, was still at school and had started working.

To help us visualize Sandra's trajectory from the home to and through the street, I have drawn a model that describes the different key events that mark each point of transition. The process is here divided into three categories which can be taken as different aspects of analysis of events, which are here termed structural, relational and subjective. This model is influenced by ideas from 'ecological' or 'transactional' models of developmental psychology as expounded by

Bronfenbrenner (1992), Garbarino (1995) and Sameroff (2000). For Bronfenbrenner and Garbarino the context in which children and adolescents grow up is a "socially constructed system of external influences that is mediated by individual's minds... whatever influences local environments have on children must be seen as a product of how these environments are perceived and interpreted by parents and children" (quoted in Donald, Dawes and Louw 1999:3).

	going to the street	being on the street	disengaging from the street
STRUCTURAL			
RELATIONAL			
EVENT			
SUBJECTIVE			
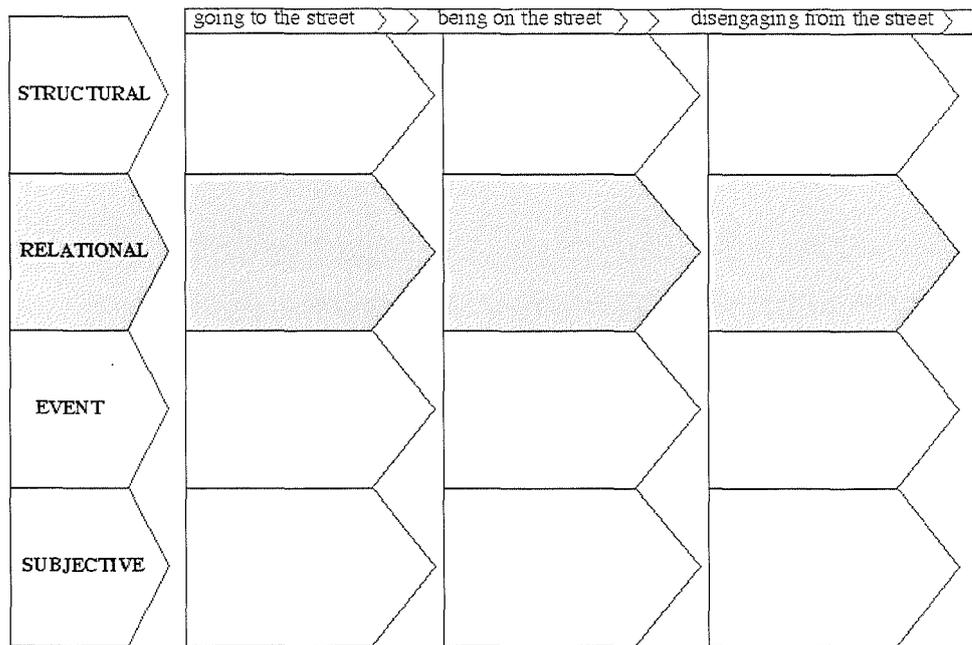
Bronfenbrenner then proposes that these influences can be differentiated into different systems or levels which affect the relations between persons. First are the face-to-face relations between the youngster and others, in the diagram termed **relational**. This is followed by settings that do not involve the youngster directly but which include the actions of those who have a relationship with him/her (for instance the parent's relationship with employers, a single mother's relationship to her neighbor), which, for simplicity I have also here included within the relational domain. The political and cultural levels of the system are a further level of influence described by Bronfenbrenner, which includes the cultural values and ideas about childhood that give rise to 'scripts' for childcare, what I have in the diagram term the **structural** (Ibid). I have complemented Bronfenbrenner's model by also adding the **subjective** dimension, which involves the way in which these other domains of influence are experienced by the individual.

The **structural** dimension here, takes on board broad societal conditions and representations; aspects such as the material environment of the *favela* are considered here, as are

the relations of the *favela* to the city in general, a relationship characterized by a lack of full integration or of an asymmetrical integration as Perlman (1979) described, in which opportunities for social mobility are denied. Structural constraints also include the 'decentered' and 'subjectless' notion of power influenced by Foucault's analysis. Whether this is manifested through overt forms of racism and discrimination or through categories such as the *menor*, as we have seen throughout this thesis, the experiences of youngsters on the street are intrinsically bound to the terms through which they are categorized. In the case of Sandra these affect the way through which she is seen and acted upon on the street by others, whether they are passersby or state employees such as the police. This structural dimension clearly affects what is here called the relational realm, that is, the conduct between persons which Goffman described so well and which we addressed in the previous chapter.

In Sandra's case the relationships at home are clearly affected by the structural constraints of the *favela* environment. Not that all households respond the same way. But in her case, her step-father's unemployment and drinking and the scarcity experienced in the home meant that Sandra and her brother were expected to help out in nurturing the home, that is to support it economically through their labor. The relational domain is also evoked as Sandra begins to hang out with other youngsters on the street, learning to be 'streetwise' picking up slang and mannerisms and the ethos of the street. Sandra's relations with passersby and others on the street who *esculasham*, who disrespect her, strengthens her solidarity with these other youngsters and her own oppositional identity. In Sandra's description of her experiences and feelings, going to the street is seen as liberating, the street is a space of freedom, a place *para zoar*, to fool around, have fun; that is a world away from the confinement and violence experienced at home. But the street is also a space of fear (especially at night) and of discrimination.

Sandra's engagement with street educators, day-centers and shelters are considered initially as just other clients in a broad network of resource providers, as just other spaces to *zoar*. These spaces may themselves be experienced as inadequate, as a *bagunça*, a mess and disorderly place. Gradually though, in Sandra's case, another set of structural and relational influences come to exert a force. She gravitates towards spaces and people who appear to listen to and respect her, give her advice and induce a process of reflection upon her life. This new domain of influence appears to derive in large part from a Freirean pedagogy as described above. As Sandra moves further into this sphere of influence, frequenting a shelter for many months, she describes a profound transformation in her regard for herself which allows her to eventually return home with a new perspective for her future.

Sandra's trajectory through the street

	going to the street	being on the street	disengaging from the street
STRUCTURAL	*Favela* environment : Poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing conditions, schooling and leisure. Lack of opportunities for social mobility.	Persistence of stigmatized notions of 'street child'. Lack of training and awareness of Children & Adolescents Statute (by general public, but in particular police and other state officials).	Presence of individuals or Institutions that are respectful willing to listen and to give time and attention. Awareness of Statute and influence of Freirean pedagogy
RELATIONAL	Climate in the home: Scarcity Nurturing expectation of childhood Tense relation to/between parents	Influence of other youngsters on the street and *ethos* of the street. Interaction with police, passersby, street educators, are often contradictory (some positive others negative), but stigmatizing attitudes dominate.	Street educators, social workers pedagogues. Other youngsters undergoing same processes or in same spaces (shelter, day-center)
EVENT	Leaves home at age of 9 with brother to sell sweets in the city center	Hanging out in Copacabana. Becoming 'streetwise'; adopts mannerisms and slang of other youngsters, dresses like a boy at night for protection, engages in petty thefts and uses drugs	More regularly frequenting Day-center and eventually being directed to a shelter (aged 14). In shelter pursues a series of activities and begins school once again. After 9 months returns home to live with her mother.
SUBJECTIVE	Experience of home: Confinement and repression, physical violence	Freedom, *zoar* [fool around] Fun combined with fear (especially at night) and a growing sense of discrimination (*esculashar*) Shelters and Day-centers seen as either another 'client' in network of resources or else as not satisfying needs being too disorderly (*uma bagunça*)	Undergoes process of reflection as consequence of advice from educators and disillusionment with the street. In shelter reports feelings of being respected, of being cared for leading on to growth in self-love.

Circulation: home/street/ day-center/Shelter.

The process we described here demonstrates a trade-off from an initial spontaneous form of rebellion and attempt at self-affirmation through a re-imagined city, to a sense of agency and control of one's life-projects characterized by a positive self-image or self-regard and by positive or reformulated relationships with significant others – in this case siblings and her mother. Sandra's trajectory then took her back to her home, to her family, but also, perhaps more significantly, forward to a sense of self which she liked.

Has the Street Pedagogy produced revolutionaries, as Freire and many street educators hoped? Undoubtedly, Street Pedagogy has been successful in disengaging children and adolescents like Sandra from the street by getting them to reflect upon their predicament, through an approach, an *abordagem*, which isn't forceful but persuasive and which is grounded in activities (like circus, *capoeira*, music, and others) that resonate with many youngsters. A small minority have also gone on to take the Street Pedagogy to heart and have found themselves in positions to influence other youngsters on the street, as the life-stories addressed in the next chapter demonstrate. But as Freire himself acknowledged, the radical overhaul of the structures of oppression is a long process and education can only have a partial role in this. As he enigmatically confided in an interview towards the end of his life, when he was Secretary for Education for the state of São Paulo:

> "Today I live the enormous joy of perceiving with every passing day that the strength of education resides precisely in its limitations. The efficiency of education resides in the impossibility of doing everything. The limits of education would bring a naïve man or woman to desperation. A dialectical man or woman discovers in the limits of education the raison d'etrê for his or her efficiency. It is in this way that I feel that today I am an efficient Secretary of Education because I am limited" (Freire 1994:106).

In this passage, I believe, Freire comes to the same conclusion as the educators mentioned in this chapter; that however well-crafted, progressive, inspirational or transformative the pedagogical space, it is only one space amongst many others through which individuals circulate. Perhaps Freire's 'dialectical' thinking made him see that the best he, as an educator or as a Secretary of Education, could do was to concentrate on that space the best he could. For some of the educators working in Rio, like Carlos, Tony and Cezar, the challenge they face now is not only how to make their pedagogical spaces optimum in attracting youngsters away from the street, but also of

how to forge links with other spaces and institutions, like schools, the work-place, the police, the media and general public, so that their work can be more effective.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter we have examined the genesis of a Freirean pedagogical model of working with youngsters on the street. We looked at how Freire's ideas have tried to be implemented or institutionalized in a broad network of organizations working with youngsters on the street in Rio. We also noted the challenges posed by this implementation; a political climate in which forced removal from the street is still the preferred option for politicians, the media and the general public and where project financiers and political pressure want quick results and cost-effective and measurable successes. We also saw that crucial for the success or failure of the implementation of Street Pedagogy is the influence imposed by other social forces and institutions; unemployment, study opportunities, levels of discrimination. Lastly, we considered that also highly significant in this success or failure is the interaction between conflicting notions of freedom and self-affirmation found on the street and in Freirean pedagogy. As such we contrasted the aspirations for freedom and autonomy of those who go to the street with the Freirean conception of freedom and liberation from oppression through *conscientização*. This took us back to subjectivity and the sense of self. Analyzing Sandra's trajectory, we obtained a sense of the transformation of this aspiration to freedom and self-affirmation as she moved from home-life in the *favela*, to the street and back again. We modeled this trajectory and the different stages or episodes it contains through the interplay of structural, relational and subjective forces. I argued here that Sandra's story and transformation can be understood by the field of influence of Freirean pedagogy comprised of institutions and actors, but, most importantly, of ways of relating and seeing the world, with which she increasingly came to identify with. In the following chapter we take further this enquiry into life-trajectories on the street, focusing on the life-stories of three individuals who eventually came to leave it. In doing so we will gain more insight into why and how disengaging from the street occurs, and what narratives are used to describe this process.

CHAPTER 8

COMING OF AGE
ON THE STREETS OF RIO

In chapter 6 we considered in detail what I referred to as 'the processes of identity' occurring on the street and in particular their relation to the category of street children. Relying in part on a symbolic interactionist approach, and in particular on Goffman's notion of stigma, we saw the ways through which youngsters on the street appropriate, or defy, the category of street children and the representations it contains in particular situations in their day-to-day encounters with others on the street. This method of analysis suited these processes since I was concerned primarily with the forms of identity forged in public, on the street, through the encounters between the general public (including sectors of the state such as the police) and children and adolescents from a highly stigmatized group. We were then able to address the interplay between personal identity (the publicly available concerns and definitions about the individual and including the social and collective practices and representations, such as the category of street children) and the subjective experiences of individuals, what we considered the domain of self. In the latter part of my fieldwork my interest gravitated towards the life-stories of adolescents and young adults who spent much time on the street, some of whom had managed to leave it altogether and who were more reflexive about their experiences and their time in this space than the younger children and adolescents whom I first encountered. As these research participants narrated the stories of their trajectories through the street I began noticing the subtle ways in which the street was described as a space of learning or moral corruption, and the forms in which some described their disengagement from the street as an act of willpower, cumulative disillusionment or aided by other persons. In terms of analysis, the focus on the processes of identity or identifications, and interaction between persons can be likened to a photograph, a snap-shot of identities frozen in time and space, and in categories. On the other hand, being mindful of narratives and life-stories is more akin to a film. The key difference in terms of analysis is not only the introduction of a time dimension, but more significantly of the notion of

individuals as story-tellers, as persons who either in the research interaction or in other instances of their lives create, recreate and express meaning through their life-experiences. As discussed in chapter 2 the narrative approach to identities allows us to go beyond the rigidity and essentialism that the notion of 'identity' can at times lead. Instead, focusing on narratives means that identities are contextualized within the life course and within cultural conventions of (re)telling stories. This chapter looks at the life stories of three young men who grew up on the street, with this theoretical approach in mind.

As we see in this chapter these narratives are also influenced by the category of street children and by popular notions of the street as a place of danger or moral perdition. In the life-stories presented here, the use of religious language and metaphors to describe the passage through the street is also significant, as is the use of other narrative domains or tropes, such as that of social mobility and folkloric figures, such as the *malandro*, or trickster, with which at least one of the youngsters here appears to overtly identify. There is a further reason for presenting these life-stories towards the end of this thesis. As previously mentioned, in my fieldwork I gradually became interested in the more reflexive stories of those who had lived for many years on the street. Some of these adolescents and young adults had managed to leave the streets and embark on a new life and I wanted to explore how this process of transition or self-transformation came about and how their experiences of the street were understood and narrated from the vantage point of this disengagement. In the previous chapter we focused on institutions and how many have attempted to work within a Freirean framework and we began to look at this network of care on the lives of those on the street. We started this through an account of Sandra's trajectory through the street, analyzing different domains of influence and experience, referred to as structural, relational and subjective. This chapter goes further in that it also analyzes the ways through which these experiences are retold. As such it gives us more insight into what in the diagram on page 211 is labeled as the subjective domain of this trajectory.

The three stories presented in this chapter were chosen because they came from individuals whose reflexivity and power of expression had managed to turn their experiences on the street into complex stories that contained within them themes common to the narratives of many other youngsters I heard on the street. This quality of their narratives was combined with the amicability and willingness of these individuals to participate in the research, as well as in the making of a documentary film about their trajectory. Though their narratives include many themes common to other youngsters who have experienced life on the street, they are also in some respects not quite representative since they show, in their own words, stories of success or redemption, that is, narratives in which the street was overcome. The three life-stories presented

here were narrated to me in the course of many one-to-one meetings as well as in the context of filming the documentary video *Coming of Age on the Streets of Rio*, which in Portuguese I instead called *Além da Pista* [Beyond the Track].[1] A further reason for presenting these life-stories here and for making the film was my concern to counter the stereotypes of street children that we have addressed in previous chapters. By presenting these trajectories through the street, threaded through with many motives and contradictory experiences, an eventual disengagement from the street and attachment to life-courses that can be said to be highly creative, I wanted to reflect how going to the street is a complex phenomenon and that youngsters can, so to speak, go through the street and then go on to lead fulfilling and inspiring lives.

The lives of children and adolescents on the street is intrinsically connected to the act of telling stories, indeed it can be considered a central activity found not only in the daily hustle for obtaining goods for survival but also in their constant need to explain or answer people's questions as to why they are there. As we saw in chapter 6 *papo*, banter or linguistic cunning, is a prized characteristic for those on the street securing access to many opportunities for food, money, clothes, protection, drugs and other resources. We also saw in the previous chapters that by the very public nature of their lives and in particular because they are considered 'out of place'- in the urban center away from home and parental tutelage – children and adolescents on the street are constantly asked to justify their presence. They are repeatedly questioned, day in and day out, by passersby, social workers and NGO representatives, church workers, journalists and researchers, as well the police. They live in a state of perpetual inquisition that asks them all-too-familiar questions; where are your parents, where is your home, why are you here, why don't you go back home? It is only natural that many of them should adopt answers that ensures them protection or else a desired response from their inquisitor. This is the central tenet of Goffman's notion of information control or management which we addressed in chapter 6. As we noted previously, many researchers and people who work with these youngsters have noted this propensity to fabulation that makes it hard to unearth the 'truth' behind their narratives. As we noted in the previous two chapters, this can be seen as a 'defense mechanism', as it was described to me by an educator, or a strategic response in which tales are woven around their true experiences and desires in order that intimate stories, experiences, feelings and wishes remain protected from disclosure and scrutiny.

It may well be impossible to distinguish between fiction and fact in the lives of these youngsters or, when it comes to that, in the life of any individual, but as Norman Denzin argues, this may well be beside the point. All narratives, he considers, are fictional in some way, yet at

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[1] Track being the slang term for the street as used by many youngsters who live there.

the same time they are all 'multiple versions of subjectivity' (Denzin 1989:66). The narrative forms through which these stories are expressed are never a purely individual creation. Instead they rely on publicly available story-telling conventions and images, and on particular tropes. Equally, the themes woven into the fabric of these individual narratives can also be said to comprise of publicly available threads of common experiences deriving from the context of the street. This chapter is then an exploration of these narratives, and of the threads of common and individual experience out of which they are woven.

THE MARK OF THE STREET

Before presenting the life-stories it is useful to consider the way the street has tended to be used in biographical accounts. What does the overwhelmingly popular and respected, recently elected president of Brazil, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, and the recently deposed Iraqi dictator, Sadam Hussein, have in common, other than their engagement in politics? Both spent part of their childhood on the streets, a fact often remarked upon when commenting on their biographies. For Lula, who migrated with his family at the age of 5 from Brazil's impoverished and drought-stricken Northeast, the streets of São Paulo provided him with economic opportunities, which allowed him to help support his family. Lula has been billed as the 'shoe-shine' president in many articles, with reference to the time he spent working on the streets of São Paulo shining shoes and selling peanuts, a reference that was often closely followed by the fact that Lula only learnt to read when he was 10 (*BBC news website* 18th September 2002). In Lula's trajectory from poverty to political maturity with the creation and leadership of the PT (Workers Party), and eventual electoral victory after four attempts, the street is evoked as a symbol of humble origins, of past hardship and suffering and of Lula's heroic strength and perseverance.

In many accounts of Saddam's early life, the streets of Baghdad are mentioned, as is the poverty he faced in childhood and the brutality of his step-father (Miller & Morad in the *Boston Globe* December 2002). In Saddam's case the street is also evoked as a symbol of suffering, hardship and humble origins, as well as of the dictator's strength. More subtly, the street also becomes a space associated with Saddam's cruelty, where he learnt the laws of survival that aided his ascendancy to leadership of the Ba'ath party and his eventual stranglehold on Iraq.

Though both individuals came to be involved in politics, their lives and methods of political action could not have drifted more apart. What unites them is the association of the street as a marking space or period in their lives, as their biographical narratives are revealed. For Lula these narratives tend to emphasize that, even from humble beginnings, anything is possible in

Brazil, that social mobility is not a myth. The narrative of social mobility, as we shall see, is very evident in the life-stories presented here. For Saddam the narratives suggest that life on the street is cruel and scarring and serves to explain the cruelty he went on to inflict on others by the violence he himself experienced as a child. What is clear from these biographical accounts, and holds true for others too, is that the street is employed as a powerful metaphor of a base state, of the ground and turbulence of modern urban existence. As Da Matta claimed, the street is equivalent to the category of wilderness or jungle. It is a "half-known and half-controlled domain, peopled by dangerous characters" (Da Matta 1981:72). As such it invariably leaves a mark on individuals who come into contact with it and are either contaminated (Saddam) or else draw power from it (Lula). Does the street in fact leave such a mark[2] in individuals' experience and future conduct or is it only a narrative device employed in the retelling of lives? I asked this question to many youngsters who had managed to disengage from the street.

HUMBERTO

"Nasci pivete chorando uma bagana pra comer

Saí de leve, com um passo de quem nunca quis chegar"

["I was born an urchin crying with only bad food to eat

I left lightly, with a step of one who never wanted to arrive"]

('Meio Leve' in *Babilônia*, Humberto de Jesus dos Santos 1994)

Humberto is one of the key research participants. We met on a number of occasions throughout my stay in Rio. His articulate and poetic retellings of his experiences on the street, both in front of the camera and off, offered many insights on what life is like on the street as well as in the process of re-entering 'society', as he put it. Humberto is also a special individual, finding a talent for poetic expression whilst in a youth correctional facility. He began writing down his experiences at the age of 16, and has published three pamphlets of poetry.[3] Because of his power of expression, and his own improbable trajectory, I invited Humberto to take part in the documentary, which he gladly did. What follows is a summary of his trajectory as he recounted it to me.

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[2] As Hecht points out in reference to the work of Patel, the street children of Bombay are said to refer to themselves as *Sadak chap* literally 'those who carry the mark of the street' (Hecht 2000).

[3] The poetry books are slim pamphlet publications of a few hundred samples published through the publisher associated with CIESPI.

Humberto was 26 years old when we met. He is of slight build and always dresses smartly. Humberto is very amicable and enjoys talking, whether conversing about Brazil's current political and economic situation or else retelling his experiences on the street and at youth correctional facilities; he communicates with ease and with a relish for metaphors as befits his poetic vocation. Humberto grew up in a small house in the suburb of Cidade de Deus, today a sprawling *favela* and a notoriously violent area of Rio where he lived with his mother, his older brother and five sisters.[4] He frequented the local school and says that the teachers liked him, but that on reaching the age of twelve Humberto began to mix with a group of friends who led him on shoplifting sprees. He also began to smoke marijuana and went on to steal bigger things, "I got into the group and that's it; I went to the beach with them, so it turned... my life upside down. I didn't know who I was anymore, where I lived and my home was the universe."

From this time on, he began to stay away from home, staying away for a spell at a time and returning home to see his sisters or his mother. He spoke of a certain sense of strangeness of his actions, of his agency, in going to the street as if he were not himself.

> "...because I suffered a lot in life and it seems like I was being forced to do things. I saw that my life wasn't that, I wasn't made for that, but necessity forced me to, not only the necessity for food, there were many necessities, the necessity for affection, the necessity for love, the necessity of a better life, it was these necessities that forced me to do things that hurt me more and more, that is, which only hurt me... So necessity for all this changes the mind of a person, you transform a child, sometimes it is not that which he wants, but he is forced to do that to seek attention, because of necessity, when something is missing. So for me it was this lack, lack of many things."

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[4] The recent internationally acclaimed Brazilian film *Cidade de Deus* (2002), tells the story of this *favela* but reduces the story to one of the rise of drug gangs and warfare. The film has generated much debate in Rio and has been criticized by many *favela* residents, particularly those from Cidade de Deus, who contend that far from addressing the variety and complexity of the community the film further stigmatizes its residents who become even more closely identified with banditry and lawlessness.
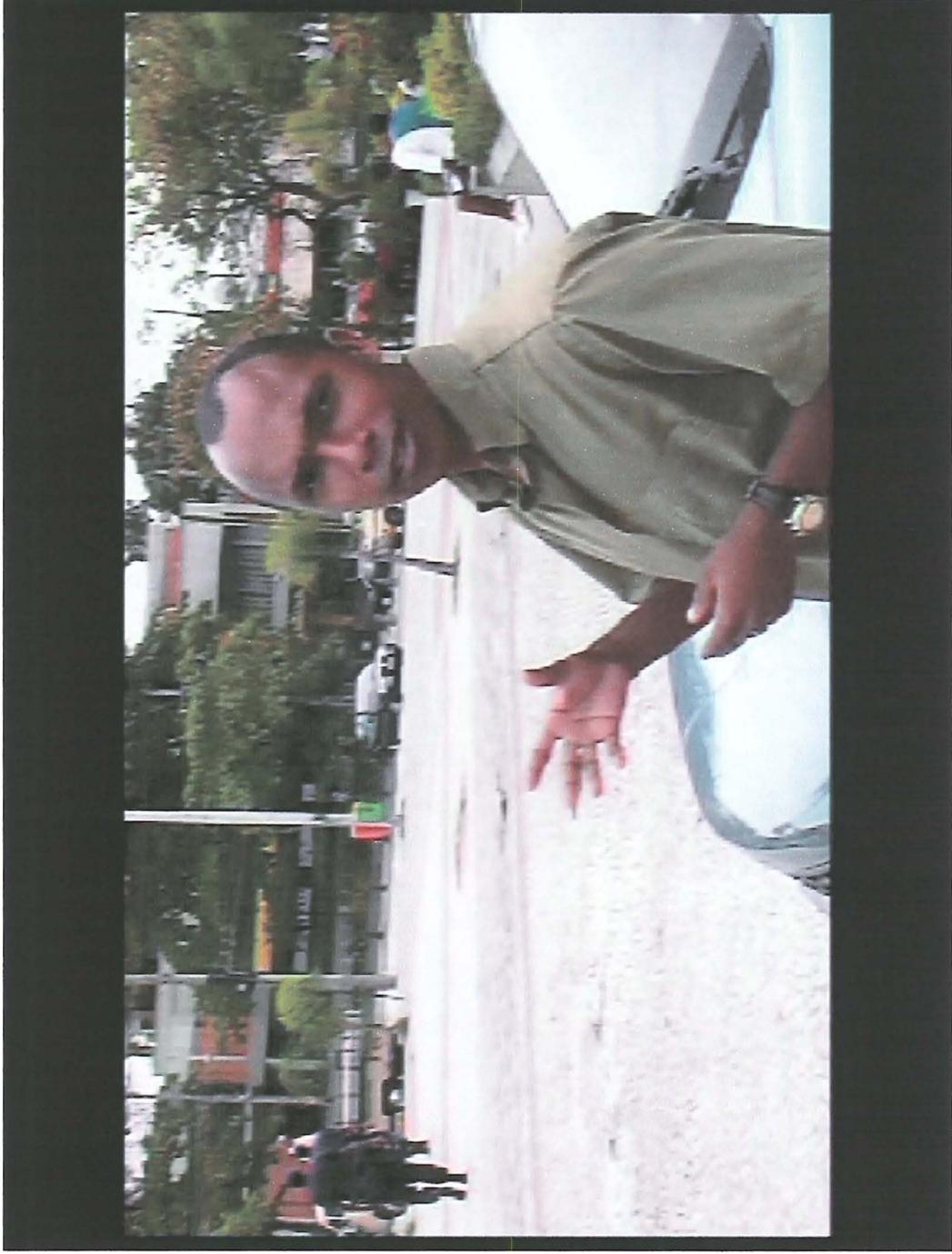
8.1 Humberto takes me on a tour of where he used to live on the street.

As Humberto told me: "My mother didn't have the time to give me an education, didn't have the time to inform me about this and that."

On the streets Humberto stayed in many different places, in the central business region of Rio, at its main railway station, in its public squares. He also stayed out at Rio's upper middle-class *bairros* like Leblon and Barra da Tijuca. There he would beg, look after parked cars and steal money to buy food and drugs, but, perhaps most importantly, he would hang out with other youngsters in a similar predicament.

Speaking of the different friends he met on the street, Humberto says that some had the same problems as him, whilst others had parents who also stole and consumed drugs. Other children ended up on the street because they 'grouped-up', took drugs and enjoyed it. Some didn't even have the 'necessity' to stay on the streets, but because of the friendships and the taste for stealing and using drugs, they stayed. These youngsters knew each other from school or from the community of origin or else they met there, on the street.

Humberto left for the street in order to meet the necessities he didn't find at home and at the time believed that these were being met on the street, but in retrospect, when he speaks of his time on the street, he regards it all as a 'fantasy', an 'illusion':

> "Before, all was just fantasy. I created the fantasy in my head and it seemed like that fantasy was true... but because of a lack of affection, of attention, of information, I only saw that in which I was born and raised. That is all I saw, I didn't see anything beautiful in the world, my beautiful world was the street... my fun, my play was to steal, to smoke and snort [drugs] and sleep on the street that was what I enjoyed. It was the most enjoyable thing in the world for me to sleep on the street and talk with my friends, play, laugh and say: 'damn, that robbery that you did, you got punched, did you also hit out?' It was like this, life was like this. If you are born in an environment where you only see that, you will only know how to do that. If you were born in an environment where you have to wake up every morning and tidy up the house, you grow up with that, every time you wake up you tidy up your bed. So what I mean is, I didn't, every time I woke up it was already to look for a watch to steal, for me to eat some bread or something and also to buy the drugs that made me forget the suffering within which I was born."

Like other Carioca youngsters his age, Humberto also frequented the shopping center in Barra da Tijuca (a *bairro*). As well as playing the video-games, he would also steal from the expensive clothes shops there, or sometimes steal from middle class youngsters in the car park around the shopping center. In one such robbery things went drastically wrong as the youth they went to rob ended up beating them up and then the police came after them and shot his friend in the stomach. Humberto was fourteen at the time and this was the first time he had been arrested as well as the first time he had encountered death, as his friend later died in hospital. Humberto credits this event, and the bad treatment he received inside the youth jail, as being the beginning of a process of reflection about his life. But he only stayed inside for two to three weeks and as soon as he got out he returned to a life of crime. These robberies would be carried out in small groups of four or five, and though at times no weapons were used, their intimidating behavior was often enough to achieve what they wanted.

In one such robbery on a bus Humberto was arrested for the second time and went to Rio's more notorious youth detention center, Padre Severino. Humberto was now fifteen. This time he was detained for a month and a half and during this time he began to write down on scraps of paper all that he was feeling and which he couldn't express to anyone else verbally. In Padre Severino he laid down on the bed and felt a Bible beneath his mattress. He read the Bible and came across the story of a city destroyed by God because it was full of sin, the city, Babylon, the name he would later give to his first collection of poems. One day in Padre Severino there was an event attended by municipal deputies and by the famous Brazilian sociologist and activist, Herbert de Souza (Betinho). Seizing his chance Humberto approached one of the delegates and said that he wanted to get out of there because he couldn't stand that life any longer; Humberto gave her his poetry asking her to do something with it. The poetry was passed on to Betinho who stood up when it was his turn to speak and declared that 'we have a poet amongst us here in Padre Severino'. 'Who is Humberto?' Humberto stood up and Betinho said he would help him, that he would launch his book for him.

But this help did not materialize straight away; Humberto was asked to look Betinho up when he left the institution, but instead he carried on "going around, smoking, snorting, robbing and such, getting arrested. And I was going on seventeen [years of age], see how much time went by!" Humberto returned to Padre Severino one last time. Whilst in the institution his mother and his little sister came to visit and cried for him to return home. Humberto spoke of this moment as one when he began to feel things, feel the hurt of the people he loved. And his poetry or the process of writing down his feelings were a catalyst for this.

"I couldn't open up to anyone but I had to somehow. So I looked to open up to myself and to the paper. So my salvation was the paper, God in the first place, but the paper! The paper understood me, nobody understood me but the paper understood me and you understood the paper! It was through the paper, the paper spoke for me and speaks for me today. But today my life is different, today I know how to speak a few phrases, I know how to communicate. Now I can open up with more ease, but before I couldn't, couldn't pronounce anything, it was a difficult thing for me to come and speak, tell my story, that I was suffering."

This process of transformation, of opening himself up to the world – that is, of taking on board the existence of others and of allowing himself to express his feelings to others – begins the process of a *self-transformation*, that is, of a radical new conception of what 'me' as a person constitutes; an individual with a rich tapestry of feelings, experiences, volition and relationships to others.

"Before, I didn't feel a thing, for me my life didn't have any value, I didn't see a thing... When *eu me dei como gente* [I understood myself as a person], I began to see the importance, the value of life, I began to fight for it and began to feel inside of me and this made me [want] to write. I began to write and write, open up everything I was feeling inside, it seemed that it had all accumulated inside me. I was on the street since I was little but I didn't feel a thing, I didn't give any value to a drop of tear that fell from my family!"

This process of giving value to his own life, of considering himself as a person, of feeling both his own pain and that of others meant that for the first time Humberto allowed others to get close to him, to offer him opportunities. We can see the parallel with Sandra's own transformation which we came across in the previous chapter.

"Before I couldn't open up to anyone because there was a great revolt [*uma grande revolta*] inside me. I could only speak in codes, in slang. So I didn't let anyone get close to me. Afterwards when I began to want to be helped nobody wanted to listen to me, and even so because of my revolt being so great, because of the misery in which I lived, I didn't give anyone the opportunity and also I couldn't express myself well. How to ask for help? So I started to ask through the

paper, through the poetry I asked for help. The poetry was my voice, it spoke for me, I shouted through my poetry."

The *revolta*, revolt, that Humberto describes is a very common experience on the street as we have seen in other chapters. We have heard it before in reference to how youngsters are 'dissed' by others on the street and how their sense of humiliation may lead some to give up begging in favor of crime. We have also heard it in reference to humiliation and aggression suffered at the hands of the police, also causing some youngsters to engage in illicit acts and in violence. Humberto speaks eloquently about this revolt as something that built up inside him, causing him to behave in particular 'street-wise' ways, using slang and keeping others at bay. For him it was poetry that offered the key to this imprisonment within *revolta*. It is interesting to note that, like Sandra in the previous chapter, Humberto speaks of slang and of the behavior of being 'street-wise' as a way of keeping others at bay, of 'speaking in codes'. As we saw in chapter 6, slang is a way of constituting group identity, but as both Sandra and Humberto describe it, it is also a means of protection and defense, of self-concealment.

Whilst Humberto may attribute his entry into the street as stemming from an almost impersonal spectrum of 'necessities' and of behaving as if compelled, his exit from the street is talked about as originating very much from his own will. Whereas his existence on the street is spoken of using depersonalizing psychological (i.e. necessities) and sociological (i.e. the environment) concepts, leaving the street is talked about in a personalized language of will power and personal effort.

"To take a minor from the street you'll have to fight a lot because you don't know, it has to come from him. It's no use you coming and saying 'I'll take you out of the street, I'll help you'. That has to come from him...It is the person who has to change, no one changes any one else. I speak to you from experience and practice, because a lot of people before I became '*Babilonia*', [title of Humberto's first published poetry book] before I launched the book, a lot of people wanted to help me but only I knew what I wanted. It was here inside, only I knew it, I didn't want anything from anyone who wasn't my family. Why would I want anything from you if I'd never met you before? I don't know you and you didn't see my birth, my adolescence, didn't follow my birth, so it was like this."
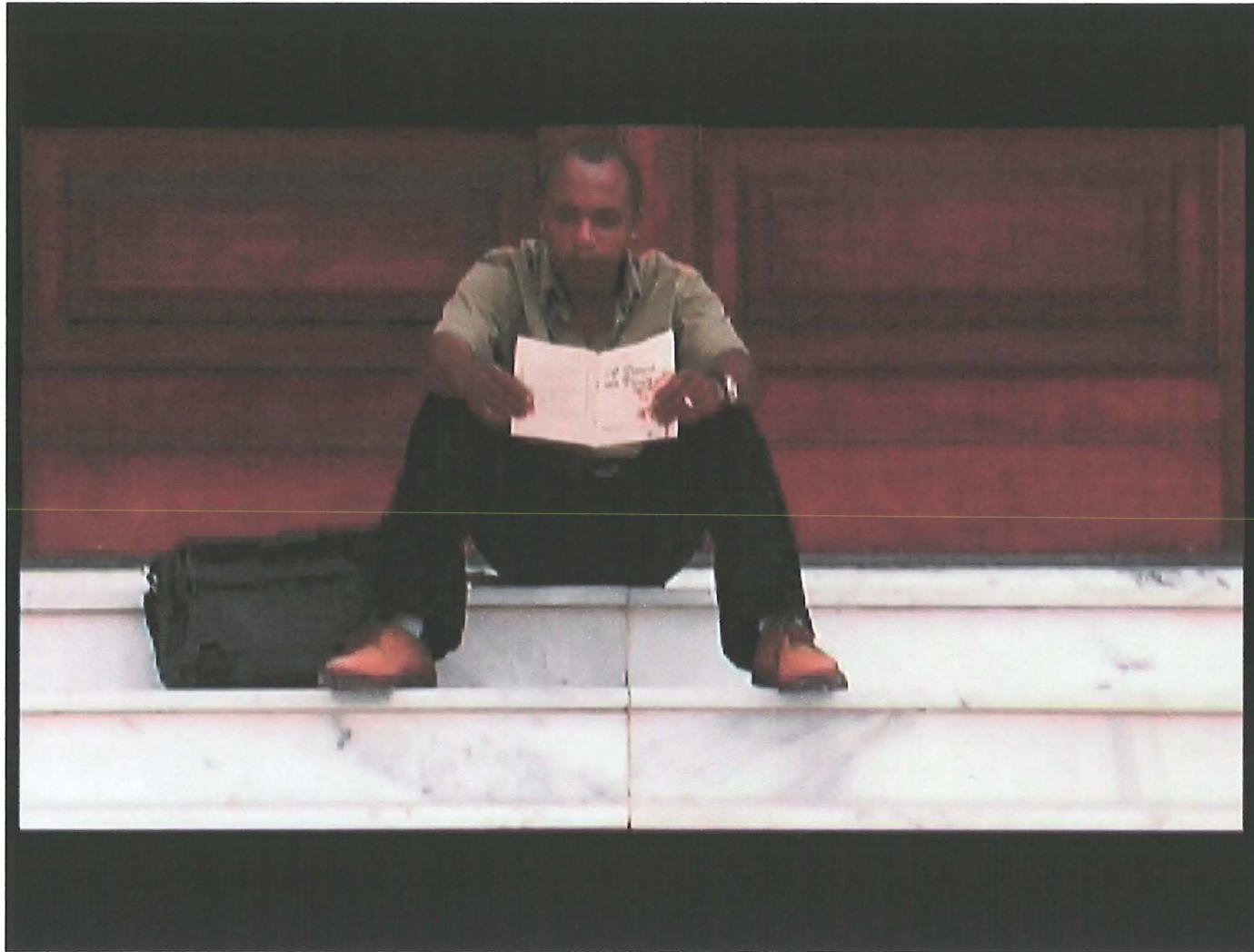
8.2 Humberto reads his poetry at the steps of the church where he used to sleep.

This mistrust of the help of others also stems from the knowledge that those who offer help, NGO and government workers, are being paid to do so, that is, this is their job and they act not out of affection but out of monetary obligation, a belief that was widespread amongst youngsters. It is also interesting to note the role of poetry as a means of objectifying pent-up emotions and experiences as a key constituent in this process of transformation. Poetry here not only serves as a catalyst for learning how to communicate with others, but also as a basis for a new identity as 'writer'. As Humberto poignantly describes above 'I became *Babilonia*', that is 'I became the book I wrote', or 'I became an author', an identity bigger than his previous self, capable of reaching hundreds of people and to a degree immortal. Poetry, or communication more broadly, is also Humberto's vocation, an almost missionary vocation since he strongly believes that in telling his story he is helping others. Humberto tells me that when he has children of his own, he wants to tell his story to them, take them to all the places he lived, even in jail, and show them what it is like so that this should never happen to them.

Whereas Humberto attributes his leaving the street to his own will power, his discourse also expresses a deep belief in God and in destiny. When I ask him if he is religious Humberto says that before he wasn't but that once he began to feel things he began to believe in God, ask for opportunities to be given to him. Equally, Humberto, though not wishing his own predicament upon anyone, least of all any future child of his, believes that it was destiny that took him to the streets and subsequently gave him the opportunities, including that of being a writer, that he now enjoys.

"If it hadn't happened, today I wouldn't be here. It had to happen. So it is something that is all connected, otherwise I wouldn't have a story to tell, I wouldn't have anything to tell, it wouldn't have emotion, there wouldn't be tears to shed for the sadness I went through."

Though admittedly this statement was made during our filming of the documentary, it is revealing in as much as Humberto's story has in his hands become a form of cultural (or perhaps emotional) capital. As a 'success story' Humberto, particularly in the early 1990s when his first book was launched, found himself the center of attention from the media. Articles were written about him in newspapers, TV programs mentioned him, even a little international attention focussed on him briefly. But, as he acknowledges now, this was all fleeting and his illusion that he would be rich didn't materialize. Today Humberto still works for the office of one of Rio's

deputies, a job he got almost a decade ago with the help of Betinho, the social activist who helped him launch his book. This is a job which appears not to have changed in all this time as he is an 'office boy', running errands for his employee, a municipal deputy in Rio's council. Humberto is living in his own house which he is slowly building in a poor suburb of Rio. Though he has a steady job, he nevertheless finds it hard to make ends meet and to build his house at the same time. Humberto is in touch with his mother sporadically. He cannot go back to his mother's house or his community because of his brother who was a local dealer and was murdered by local gangs. Subsequently, other youngsters took charge of the drug trafficking and didn't want anyone connected with the murdered dealer around, as is often the case in gang feuds.

During the filming of the documentary, Humberto, myself and our two other crew members,[5] wandered through the beach-side suburb of Barra da Tijuca to the places he had frequented in his early days; the church at whose doorway he slept next to the car park where he looked after the cars, or, as he told me, pretended to as a cover for his robberies; the bridge from which he jumped for fun with his friends into the river far below. Whilst we walked and chatted we passed by a beach-side kiosk where we met one of his friends from the old days, now also in his late twenties. They hadn't seen each other in some ten years. His friend was working at the beach side kiosk so we stopped to get a drink. Gilson was sullen, quiet, and looked high on drugs. I witnessed their meeting as they talked about how they thought each other was dead. Gilson spent time in prison and had only recently been released. He could not go back to Cidade de Deus where they both grew up also because of problems with the local drug gangs. This was his second day at the job, a man at a local building site was letting him sleep there. Gilson looked respectfully towards Humberto, and Humberto looked proud and confident and offered advice and encouraging words to his old friend. He said he would try to help him, he signed a copy of his published poetry books for his friend (who is illiterate). We could not film or interview him since it was his first day here and we did not want to get him into trouble, as they did not know about his past. Unlike Humberto, Gilson had not positioned himself in a context in which he could tell his story. Whilst for Humberto, life on the streets was something he could draw on for his creative work and an aspect of his life with which he came to be publicly identified, for Gilson, like countless others, his past on the street is seen as highly stigmatizing and something that should remain hidden.

Seeing Gilson and Humberto talking together about their trajectory since their youthful days on the street made me see more clearly what Humberto had achieved. Gilson, just out of prison, homeless, visibly still on drugs and just starting a job he didn't look like he would be able

to hold down for long. He is also illiterate, slow in speech and has problems expressing himself. Gilson describes his past as being under the influence of the devil and speaks of his conversion in prison, how - '*encontrei a palavra de Jesus, eu sou analfabeto mas encontrei a palavra de Jesus*' ['I found the word of Jesus, I am illiterate but I found the word of Jesus']. Standing next to his old friend, Humberto's demeanor was proud and eloquent. I recall that Humberto has been employed for over 10 years in the city council in the deputy's office, is building his own home, up to recently with a long-term girlfriend and still writing, with three books of poetry published up to now. The past for Humberto is a complex mix of unfulfilled necessities, dreams and illusions, as well as the hand of fate. Clearly it is unfair to compare individuals, for behind every trajectory lies a complex story which involves a mosaic of life experiences dating back to birth. But the meeting of these two friends after ten years showed me that there is nothing inevitable about the street, that Humberto, in a way like Lula, was able to draw strength from his experiences there. Though in Humberto's case talent and luck played a part in his personal trajectory, as we saw in the previous chapter there are a number of individuals and organizations who encourage youngsters to disengage from the street. The reason why some seize these opportunities and change and others appear not to was an important question which I always asked youngsters on the street. As we began to see in the last chapter, and will explore further on, the reason appears to be a complex web of structural (economic, institutional, etc.) and subjective factors (aspirations for freedom and autonomy, lack of trust).

After this bizarre encounter I asked Humberto why he felt some manage to leave the street and start a new life whilst others don not.

> "You know why? It's destiny. People have to pass through certain things in order to, I don't know, to arrive, to recognize the true value of life or to fight for their lives. Everyone has their destiny. If he hasn't had the opportunity yet [referring to his friend] it is because he hasn't given opportunity for people to come and help. But it's hard to say, because only God can. The opportunity comes from God. If God thinks that person deserves an opportunity, a better life, that person will get better. Otherwise, if he doesn't, he will stay the same way, until the end of his life."

At the same time this religious discourse is tempered with an individualism that appears to have been born through having to survive on the street. Asked what he learnt on the street, Humberto

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[5] Our filming crew consisted of me, a camera operator and a sound operator.

tells me he learnt the 'law of survival', that you have to fight for yourself and that only you can do that. As we analyze further on, at the end of the day will-power or agency may well be the crucial ingredient for leaving the street.

RENATO

Renato is 23. He is a lively youngster I met through the *Ex-cola* project where he was working. He had been in the *Ex-cola* project for some six years, and after participating in various projects with them, was eventually offered an administrative position in the NGO. Renato also had a DJing slot in a community radio, Rádio Madame Satã, where he played music and offered advice on health and rights issues to people living on the street. Renato also took part in the documentary; this choice was made because of his very interesting trajectory as well as his articulate and expressive way of telling his story. I got to know Renato over a period of time, talking to him on a number of occasions, some of which were recorded. Whereas Humberto's vocation was poetry, Renato's retelling of his story was no less poetic. The metaphors he used to describe his time on the street were very often rich and vivid and at times, as can be seen in the documentary film, highly amusing. Whereas Humberto alluded to more literary images, Renato's strength was his fluency in slang, in reverting to the ways he talked on the street, with its intonations and mannerisms. For whilst Humberto now works in the council, Renato is still very much in that world of the street as he works for *Ex-cola*.

Renato lived in the Morro da Mangueira with his mother, sisters and stepfather. His stepfather, who was almost the local boss of the drug trafficking trade, constantly threatened Renato, the oldest and only boy. Renato told me he was frightened of all that, his stepfather's life style and his aggression. He also told me of the environment of confinement he experienced in his home.

> "When I was at home I had to look after my two sisters, Tatica and Bianca. I went to school and when I got back from school I had to tidy up the house, make both of them food, bathe them and put them to bed before my mum got back. If I hadn't done all these tasks I was hit. My mum hit me and I'd be real pissed, I didn't have the right to even go out and fly a kite, I was confined at home like a little woman, that made me real pissed. I didn't like that, the way my mum treated me, 'the oldest has to have responsibility, has to do this and that', the

oldest huh, I think everyone has to have responsibility, that's how I thought. I still do."

It was after one such incident with his mother, being hit for doing something he didn't think warranted punishment, that Renato ran away from home for the first time when he was eight or nine. Though he was sent back home after the municipal authorities found him, he was soon to leave again for good.

Renato went to the street when he was nine. At first he was scared of the street, scared of people who 'stole children's organs to sell abroad', scared of being kidnapped, scared of people on the street.[6] But gradually he got to know other youngsters there who taught him how to defend himself, how to conduct himself on the street. He spoke of his first day on the street, being threatened by and then fighting with another boy. This boy became his first friend and through him he got to know others on the street. The existence on the street Renato retells is one where violence is a device for self-defense and a way of asserting one's position within the group and against others on the street.

It was during this time in the street that Renato speaks of a 'black cloud' growing in his heart, (see chapter 6, page 148). This was not the first nor would it be the last time I heard the street referred to through such religious language – as an evil spirit that descends on one after a time. Amongst a deeply religious people, which Brazilians generally are, it is no wonder that such vivid metaphors of good and evil are employed. Almost all youngsters I talked to came across as religious people, or at least as individuals who at some level made sense of the world through religious metaphors. This is particularly true of the way in which many youngsters have tried to understand their predicament and of the force that gave them strength to change their lives.

Renato told me of how when he lived in Urca, when he was thirteen or fourteen, beneath Rio's famous Sugarloaf Mountain, he and his friend used to go round from flat to flat ringing the buzzer and asking for food until they had a bag full of food. He would also go to a restaurant where he knew the owner who would give him food every night. At this time he lived in Praia Vermelha nearby. There he met fishermen who paid him to look after their boats and help them clean their fish and nets. Renato would also dive in the sea for fish-hooks which he then sold. There, Renato played football with youngsters who lived in the surrounding buildings.

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[6] The story of vans driving around the city and kidnapping children to remove their organs to sell abroad was common on the street. Unlike the fear of being burnt alive, another story which circulated but which had a real basis in local facts and in reported news events, I am unaware of actual cases of organ stealing. Which is not to say that they did not happen. Truth or rumor, these urban stories indicate the fearful, tense and violent nature of existence on the street.
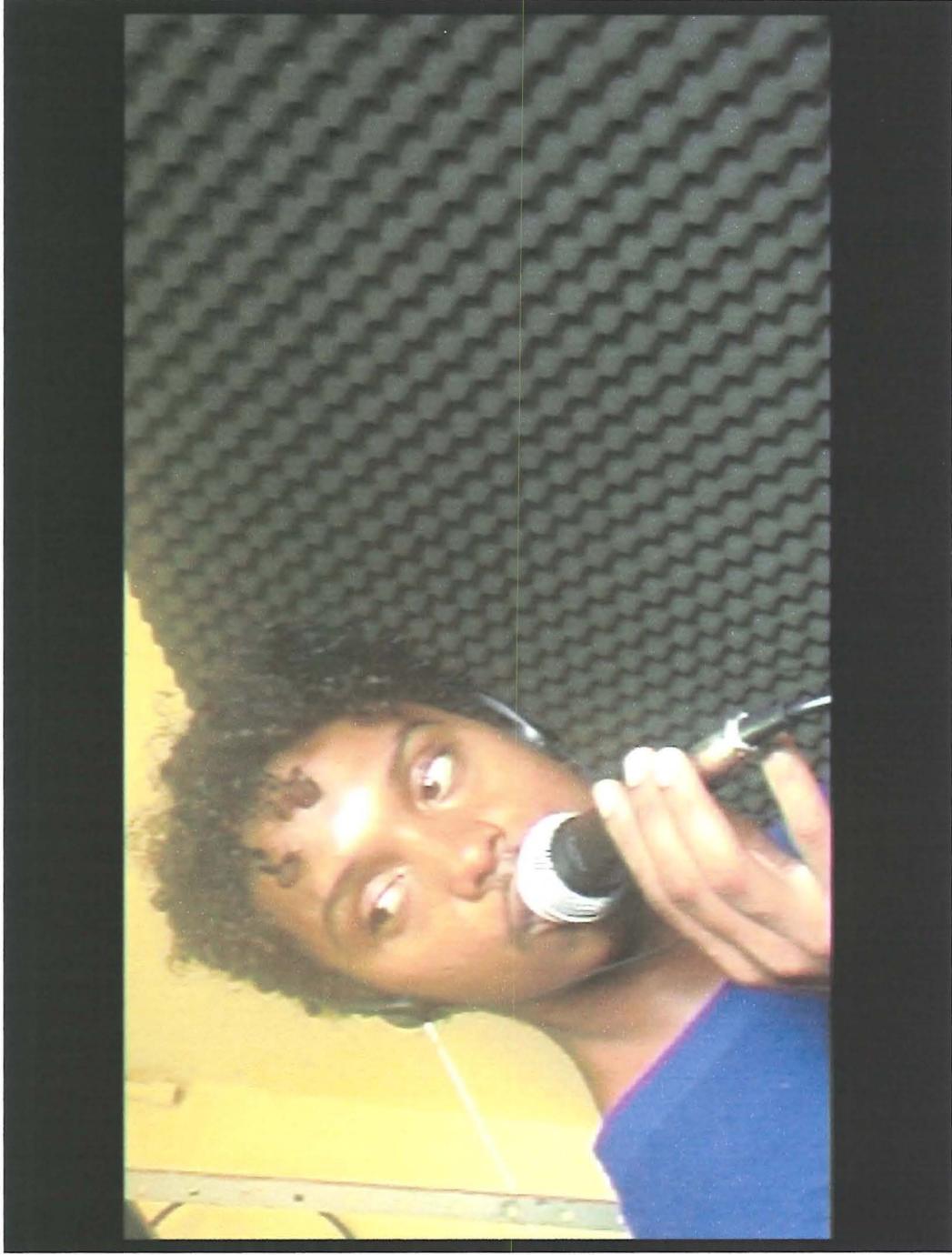
8.3 Renato (a.k.a DJ Mascara) at Radio Mm Satã, a *Projeto Ex-cola* initiative.

Whilst other youngsters have told me that on the street you don't really have much time to think about things, to question things and look into your predicament, Renato's account was different. When I asked him about what he did if he wanted to be by himself, if he wanted privacy, he told me that you could always have privacy. When he lived in Praia Vermelha, the beach beneath Sugarloaf Mountain, he used to sit on the rocks by the sea by himself and think.

> "I used to think about my life, my future, wondering how it would be, if I would become a bum or whether I would have a car tomorrow, with my house, my children and my girlfriend by my side (...) I got carried away thinking about my parents, my mum, my sisters, about the time I had spent on the street, like, what I would eat later, or whether there was someone after me."

We talked about how he decided to leave the street. He told me that one day whilst living in Praia Vermelha he was given a newspaper by a woman who lived nearby with an announcement by the council saying that there were vacancies for street children to come and work. The following day, barefooted and dressed in a T-shirt, Renato went to try and find this place. I asked him if he decided just like that from one day to the next. He told me that he always had in mind to leave the street. "I went to the street for only one reason, to conquer my ideals. Because I know that if I had stayed at home I would become a dealer or worse, *dono* [head dealer]." From the day that he sought help, after finding the council building he was sent to a shelter for children where he stayed from the age of fourteen until he was seventeen years old. This time in the shelter, in order not to be sent back to his parents' house, he made up a name and a story, saying he came from outside Rio and that his parents were dead.

After he turned seventeen, Renato got a place in one of *Ex-cola*'s youth flats since he had been in a shelter for the past three years and met the selection criteria. He stayed until he was twenty. This stay in the project was interrupted for half a year or so, when he fell out with his flat-mates and with the project educators and had returned to live with his mother. There, living in the *favela* of Mangueira, Renato got involved with the local dealers through going to funk dances and through friendships. He started working for them, rising through the ranks of the drug-dealing world. After a while he left. He told me it was because he didn't feel that life was for him. He didn't have the same urge as before to carry a gun and all the macho ethos that surrounds working for drug trafficking gangs. Instead he wanted to earn an honest wage, he tells me, and *Ex-cola* gave him this opportunity once again.

Macho culture is alive and well in Brazil. Decades of a progressive move towards female empowerment in the workplace and at home have made some inroads into eroding some of the macho ethos, but in Brazil, like other Latin American countries, many of its cultural manifestations are still evident. We have already seen in chapters 4 and 5 how in the drug trafficking gangs the macho image takes on a particularly insidious form. Another form is the way in which males are not supposed to show weakness or admit to crying. And yet the youngsters I met would openly tell me of instances of such emotions on the street.

> "There were days on the street when I was just in my underpants and a T-shirt, out in the rain, in the cold, underneath a bridge and I asked myself 'is this living?' I cried, who wouldn't? But I didn't cry for my mother, that I didn't do. When it got tight, I held on, and I said to myself things would change, I would overcome, today I could be here in my pants but tomorrow I will be there wearing a robe, in my own house. Maybe there isn't anything in the fridge, maybe there isn't anything, but the house is mine, I conquered it, I bought it, I sweated for it."

Renato has very high ambitions, he doesn't want to be regarded as just an ex-street kid, he wants to be internationally famous. But even so, like others I have talked to, he doesn't turn his back on those who still live on the street, trying to help them out or giving them advice.

> "My life" he tells me, "I want to be an example for the crew on the street. (...) Talking to myself on the street I said, Renato, you are already getting to be a certain age, when you beg people are not going to give, they are already saying 'go to work you bum' (...) So I said, you know what my dream is, I could even die afterwards, but it is to be famous internationally. So this film came up, a film which will be shown worldwide."

Renato had a role in the film *Cidade de Deus* [City of God], a part he got by auditioning with dozens of other youngsters from Rio's *favelas*. Renato, through *Ex-cola*, had taken part in theatre workshops and he displays great skill on screen. Yet, in some ways like Fernando Ramos da

Silva, the actor who played Pixote in Hector Babenco's 1980 film, himself someone who had lived on the street, success has not materialized.[7]

At the time of our last meeting Renato was living with his parents in Itaboraí, Niteroi. I asked him what it was like to be back home.

> "Now I am 23 years old, I am no longer that child that they could come and slap, now you have to talk, now it would be weird for him [step-dad] to come and slap me because he knows I wouldn't like it and I would want to hit back. So it's like this, we talk, we have a dialogue, now it is the other way round, he asks me if I think he is wrong. I feel a bit like the man of the house now. My dad is unemployed so it is me who helps in the house, who gets stuff for the house."

I ask Renato why he feels some youngsters manage to take the opportunities given and leave the street whilst others don't. "It is the mind," he answers. "Some people come to the street and they come out alright, others come with the aim of being a street kid, others come because they have no option but if better things are offered they run after it..." This exchange with Renato got me thinking that for some the street can in fact be an opportunity for better things away from the confinement and drug dealer ruled world of the *favela*. As we have already seen in the previous chapter, this concern was also voiced by some street educators. As we noted, bearing in mind the amount of resources that are put into the institutional network for street children, and how much is made available for community development schemes, it may even be that more resources are available to those on the street than those who stay at home. Not that the child would be making this kind of calculation, but the example of many youngsters who have lived on the street and taken the opportunities offered them, made me question whether these same opportunities would have been available to them had they stayed at home.

I ask Renato what marks he feels the street has left on him, in terms of his way of thinking or of his qualities.

> "Thank God the street left me a wonderful heritage of being able to know, to observe things well, of being able to perceive dangerous places and people, of

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[7] Fernando Ramos da Silva's life, in fact, appeared to follow the dictum that life imitates art. The fame he attained through Babenco's film far from giving him the success and financial security he expected, made him notorious amongst Rio's police force. Unable to gain further employment after a short stint on TV, Fernando Ramos da Silva entered the life of crime he represented in *Pixote* and was gunned down by the police unarmed outside his home.

perceiving good people. Also how to talk, how to explain myself (...) The street left me this good side of being able to perceive things at the right time with the right timing (...) The street teaches you how to be a *malandro* [trickster, knave]..."

Before we further explore this aspect of the street and Renato's identification with the *malandro*, we turn to one more life-story.

NEGO DA BAHIA

Nego da Bahia is a very funny, amicable and talented young man. I met him at the project *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha* and talked to him on many different occasions, some of which were taped. Nego is now a circus performer, recently graduated from Rio's prestigious state funded National Circus School. I attended and filmed his graduation performance there, as part of the documentary. Watching the film, the joy on Nego's face is palpable, a joy that is even more understandable knowing what he went through to reach where he is today (see photograph on page 236). Like Humberto and Renato, life on the street is also described using a language rich in metaphors and similes. In Nego da Bahia's speech, his story is retold in a manner which evokes both the sadness and misfortunes of his past but equally his vitality and his humor, a quality which is very difficult to capture on paper.

Nego was born in the Northeastern state of Bahia, hence his adopted nickname and stage name Nego da Bahia [Negro – in Brazilian Portuguese it has a much more endearing and affectionate connotation than its English translation]. At the age of eight his stepfather died and his mother, burdened with the responsibility of feeding her seven children, found it difficult to cope with working, putting food on the table and mothering all her children without recourse to beatings. "I don't like saying bad things about my mother, but when she hit me, she hit me not to teach, to fix or correct me, but to really break me, to leave a mark, right. This made me *revoltado* [enraged] even more and made me choose the street as my home." Nego began to run away from home and frequent the local streets of the small city of Itabuna. After a while he returned home but seeing that his mother hadn't changed he'd leave again. One day he was invited by an older friend to go further afield to Vitória da Conquista, a larger city. "She was a prostitute and I was a street child, but we had a good friendship." This escapade eventually took them to Rio where they stayed at first at Central Station [railway terminal], but as time went on she started to tell him what to do so he left her.
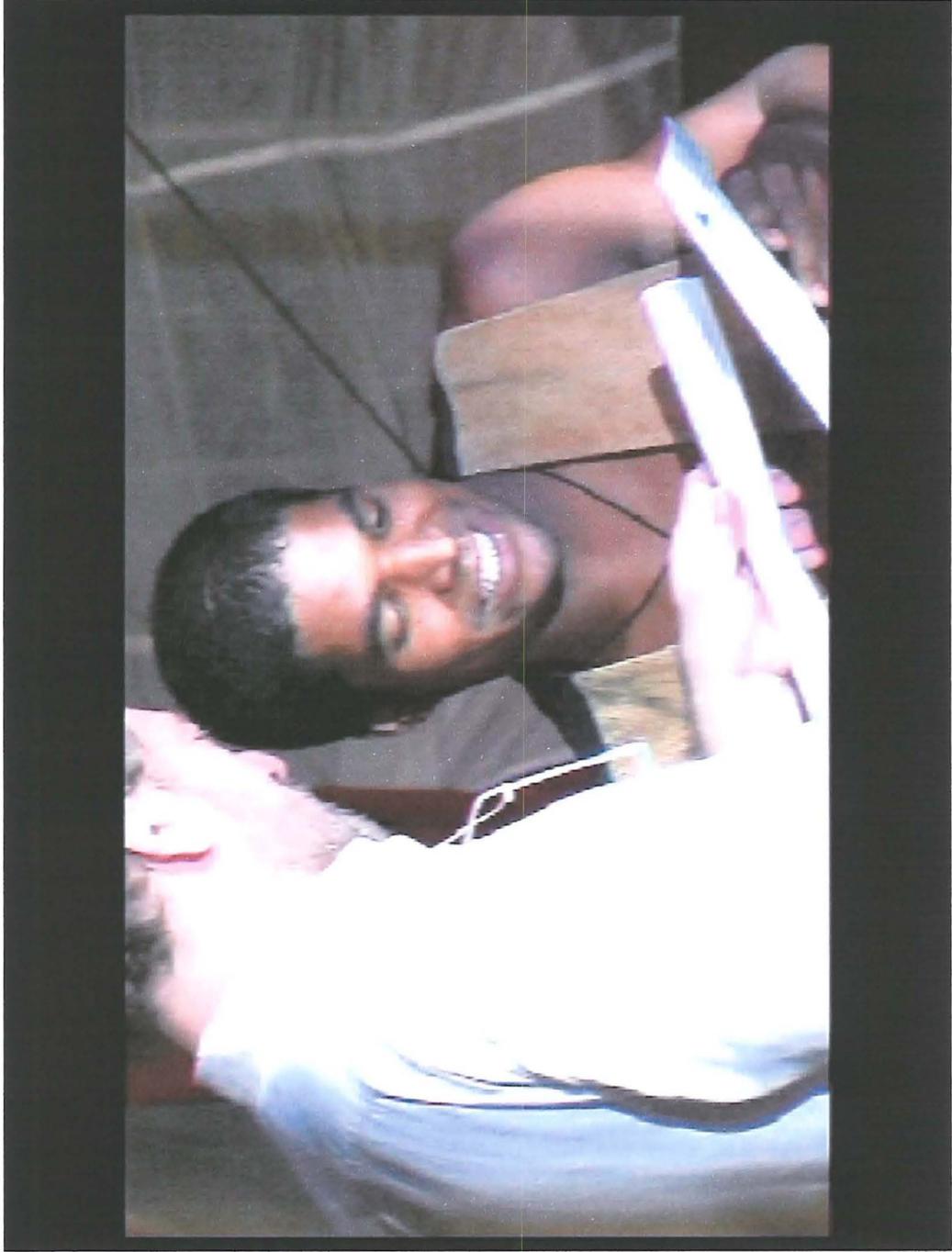
8.4 Nego da Bahia at his graduation from the National Circus School.
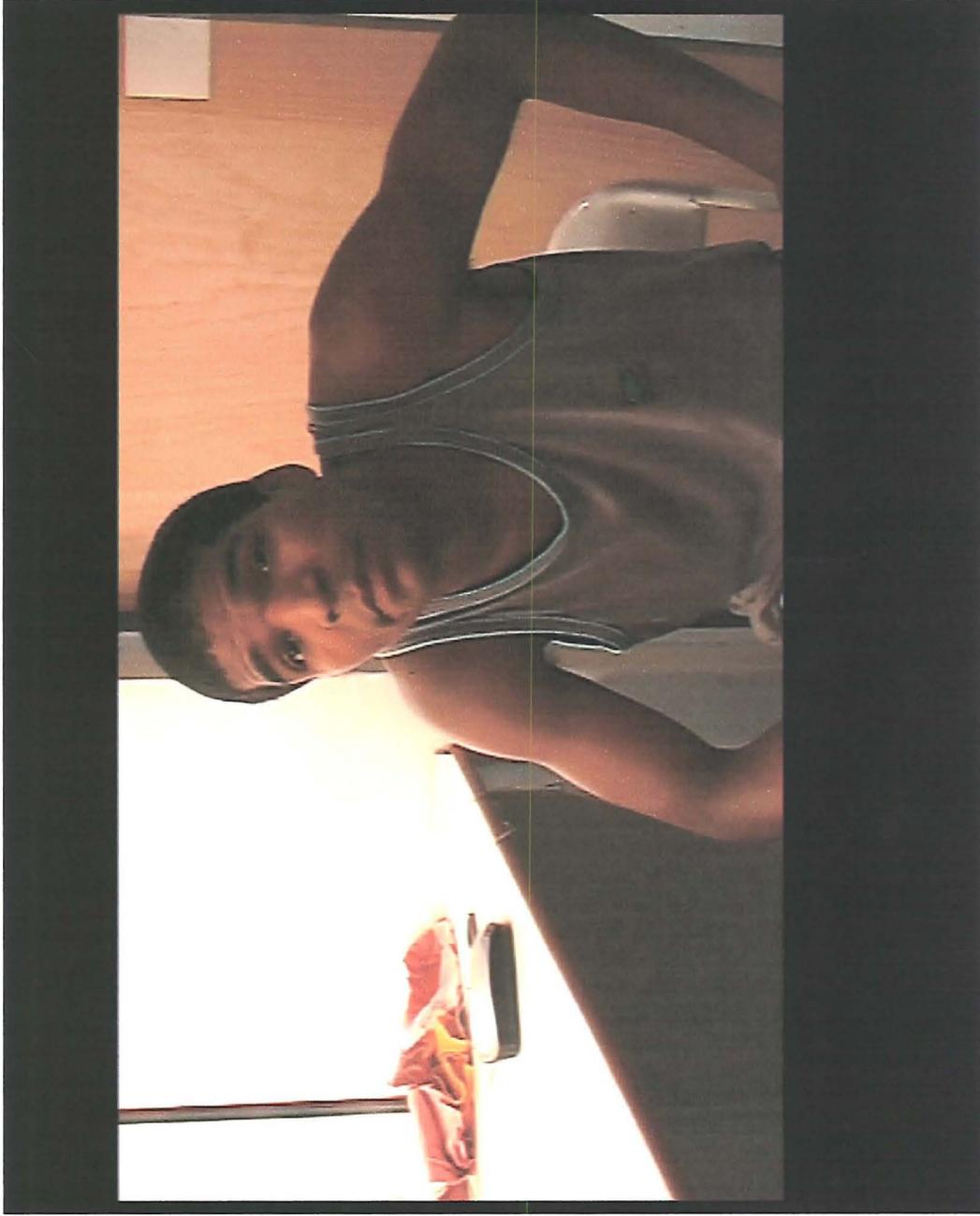
8.5 Nego da Bahia during an interview at *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha*.

During this time Nego moved around different parts of the city, after Central he went to Candelária, then to Copacabana. This, he tells me, was because sometimes places became *pixado* – tagged, as in graffiti speak - meaning that the area became tainted or spoilt because they had antagonized local shopkeepers or else attracted too much attention from the authorities, the police in particular, especially because of illegal activities.

Nego told me more of his involvement with other youngsters on the street in particular around 1994 when he got to Copacabana, a time he attributes to his involvement in robberies and drug taking.

> "It's like this; God doesn't lead anyone on the bad path, the angel doesn't lead anyone on the bad path, right? There is always a little devil. So this little devil motivated the crew… It's like this, if you hang out with thieves you are a thief. So I hung out with thieves and was a little thief, a young thief, a bum, all that was left was to die at the hands of the police. It is thanks to God that I am here."

Like others I have spoken to, Nego speaks of the humiliation he encountered on the street when begging and how this led to stealing. He tells me that now when people on the street ask him for money, he prefers to buy them something to eat. "I have been through it so I know; some of them will go off and smoke pot, sniff glue, buy some rubbish or play arcade games." I ask him if this is what he did with his money. "Why of course! Man, I spent a phase of my life only sniffing coke. If I had kept all that money in a bank, today I'd be rich, because I have spent a lot, a lot."

Some five or six years after arriving in Rio, Nego began to be drawn to the projects for street children. At first he encountered *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha* and educators on the street instigated his relationship with circus activities. Eventually he moved into a shelter in Leblon where he spent a year or so before moving to the more structured regime of Casa da Vila, another shelter.

> "It's like this, during that time I was a happy bum, I wasn't a bum, but I walked around with a white shirt which instead of being white was black. I walked around with a kind of vulgar smell on my shirt that when others smelt they went straight away for a bath. But I walked around this way because I didn't have an opportunity, but afterwards when I started to frequent the Leblon shelter, also right here at *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha*… I started to change because here is

where I started to study, started to read (...) I went to school (...) So I don't have that way of being a street child anymore. It is because of these projects that I changed, you understand? I fought for it, I fought so much that today I am a teacher here at Se Essa Rua... And this is a great joy, I think I am a warrior (...) That is why I think I am happy, man. I don't think I am really happy though, I will only be really happy, my life at ease, when I have my own little house, even if it is in the *morro,* but that I have my own roof, that I don't have to listen to 'do this, do that'[8] (...) Today I have students who respect me a lot, you understand? For a boy who didn't have respect, [who was] small, a glue-sniffer, with the police coming and pouring a pot of glue on his head, with long hair and feeling really ashamed..."

Although Nego points to the institutional framework that helped him in his change of life, he also points to key individuals within this network, such as Tia Vanda and others, individuals whom he has known for a while, who have followed him from his life on the street to his life in the institutions, who have constantly given him support and whom he considers, like the institutions, as a kind of mother. "Casa da Vila received me. Casa da Vila gave me food, clothes, work, it gave me understanding, attitude, it taught me to respect and also gave me courage, conscience, you understand man? (...) Casa da Vila was a mother."

Like others I talked to, Nego mentioned that many others who were given similar opportunities did not take them and have ended up on the street or in jail. I ask him why he thinks he has succeeded where others have failed.

"Will power, understanding and following the straight line without bending it. Following my straight path. Following it, which is for me the circus. I have a lot to thank the circus for, also the National Circus School. The circus has many projects and many things that have influenced my life and kept me away from drugs, from drug trafficking."

Nego speaks of a time when he began to 'structure' his life in a shelter in Leblon.

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[8] Nego was at this time living in one of *Ex-cola*'s flats with four other young men.

"In the shelter in Leblon we left in the morning and came here [to *Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha*]. From here I went on to school (...) So from here on I started to structure my life. After Tia Vanda [an educator] took me to Casa da Vila I started to be respectful, to respect others, to make my bed in the morning, I learnt to tidy up the house, to wash clothes (...) I learnt to take care, take care of myself, walk around well groomed. I didn't use to have these thoughts about walking around well groomed..."

During an interview for the documentary, in a very vivid simile Nego conveys a sense of his trajectory.

"My brother, before I didn't know how to read, didn't know how to write, didn't have anybody, didn't have a family, perambulated the world with another birth certificate [not his real one], perambulated like a ghost, didn't have anyone, I cried a lot, missing my mum, family, brother, you understand? My aunt, uncle, great-grandmother, grandmother! So this keeps away the happiness of a human being, you understand? A human being is like Tarzan. Tarzan was born in the jungle, that is, grew up in the jungle, right? He didn't have anyone, only the animals which were, I don't know, the monkey, gorilla, who were his family. And my family was the street children, thieves, bums, which I myself turned into; a thief, a bum, I almost died because of this, but thank God... Many have stayed in this path, some have left, many have died, many is been arrested, many have been arrested, right? And I am here free. This is the biggest pride in my life."

Nego is proud of what he has achieved, and this sense of pride, of having overcome a terrible ordeal against all odds is a significant part of how many youngsters who have left the street conceive of their new identity. Nego, however, does not turn his back on past friendships from the street, as vestiges of solidarity remain with those who are still what he once was. "There are dudes, who have risen in life and who see some guy they have lived with on the street and, like, turn their back on him, don't go and talk to them (...) But if I forget the old friendships and stay only with the new ones, what about the past? I can't forget, you understand?"

I ask Nego with all his experience why he thinks children end up on the street.

"Boys go to the street, I think, because of a lack of leisure, lack of food, lack of work, and some because of their mothers. Because there are many mothers who like to hit and this ends up provoking the youngster to *revoltar* [rebel], making him commit this act that is to go to the street. But if the family cares for the child, gives a good school, good study, the child will never end up on the street, you understand? Because a child without love at home, without care, he will go to the street of course. Or else get into drug trafficking. Because no one likes being treated badly. Everybody wants to live well. Everybody wants to dress well. Everybody wants to walk around well dressed. That's it."

LIFE-STORIES, NARRATIVES AND EPIPHANAL MOMENTS

For many children and adolescents I talked to who were living on the street, there was a palpable feeling of a sense of achievement at having survived or of surviving on the street. For those who disengaged from the street there was also a great sense of having overcome the street, as the narratives in this chapter relate. But beyond this representation of the street as a space of hardship and suffering, which also applies to the evocation of the street in the case of the biographies of Lula and Saddam, other attitudes to the street can also be found. We saw in chapter 6 that the street also leaves a mark in as much as youngsters found within this space, and showing the signs and behaviors associated with it, are stigmatized by the general public, by state officials and the media. With this in mind, we can better understand the narratives recounted here as situated within the context of a wish to remove the stigmatizing influences of the street through the forging of new identities. As noted in chapter 6, in their aspiration to being considered 'normal' just like 'anyone else', youngsters on the street were also trying to defy stigma. Also in chapter 6, we addressed the issues of how stigmatization may also engender the internalization of prejudiced discourse in the way some youngsters come to regard themselves and their peers. On the other hand, some also came to adopt oppositional practices and identities, usually associated with the experience of *revolta*, which made children and adolescents ever more 'streetwise'. All of these responses can be seen in the narratives presented here. Though the experiences on the street described in the narratives above contain events, behaviors and attitudes which paint the street as a space of moral perdition and corruption in which it is referred to as the 'bad path', the 'spirit of pig', the 'black cloud', a more subtle underlying tone can also be found. This describes the positive learning that occurred on the street. As Renato in this chapter pointed out, the street teaches you how to observe people, how to be sharp in a whole range of situations, how to be a

malandro – a trickster or knave. But, perhaps more importantly, the street, as the three narratives above demonstrate, is also a space replete with potential opportunities.

The survival imperative at work on the street does foster the development of important competencies by children and adolescents, forced as they are to make do with the resources they obtain by their own wits, a factor already observed by researchers on street children throughout the world (Aptekar 1988, Hecht 1998, Veale and Taylor and Lineham 2000). It is for this reason that organizations like *Ex-cola* in their selection process give priority to youngsters turning eighteen coming out of shelters who have never lived on the street, over those who are still on the street, or only recently left. The latter are equipped with survival skills for precarious conditions, something absent in those protected for years within an institutional environment. But at the same time it would be misleading to over-glorify such skills for, as we addressed in the previous chapter, with increasing age and a growing contempt by the authorities and the general public, these ways of getting by are made increasingly redundant, and the individuals who carry on living on the street are rendered ever more marginal to mainstream society and its economy. Individuals like Humberto, Renato, and Nego da Bahia, who manage to transform the skills learnt on the street in such a way that they can be applied in broader society, are indeed rare.

Recounted above are the stories of three individuals, through a collage of fragments of interviews interwoven with analysis. We may well ask, as Bourdieu has, what gives such life-stories coherence, what makes them anything other than a series of events experienced in time. For Bourdieu life is compared to a subway line where "the stops have no meaning by themselves, only as part of a larger structure" (Bourdieu quoted in Denzin 1989:62); the biographical project in this scenario is an illusion since any coherence is imposed by the larger culture, by the researcher or by the subject's belief that his/her life should have a coherence at all. I agree with Denzin's contention that the point is not whether biographical coherence is an illusion or a reality, instead what is significant is how individuals "give coherence to their lives when they write or talk" autobiographically. "The source of this coherence, the narratives that lie behind them, and the larger ideologies that structure them must be uncovered" (Ibid).

The life-stories addressed in this chapter are retold through the narrative of innocence, fall from grace and redemption, common to Western narratives of the hero's journey. They also have other context specific features that we will address below, mainly the use of religious language and metaphors (or folkloric ones in the case of the *malandro*) through which experiences and events are rendered meaningful and other narrative tropes, such as that of social mobility. I agree with Denzin that life stories appear to be narrated as sequences of epiphanal moments. In the case of the narratives of children and adolescents who lived on the street, four

overlapping and not mutually exclusive epiphanal sets can be identified. Briefly these are; 1ˢᵗ) *lack* or *confinement* closely followed by that of *freedom*; 2ⁿᵈ) *repression* and *discrimination* closely bound up with that of *revolta* and of being *streetwise*. The following two epiphanal sets are found in the narratives of those who have left the street and they are; 3ʳᵈ) *reflection* and *disengagement* and; 4ᵗʰ) the *mission*. Before we elaborate further these sets we briefly turn to the other 'dominant narratives' that appear to 'illuminate' experience.

In the narratives presented here the words used to describe the epiphanies found subsequent to disengagement from the street– redemption, mission - have a religious ring to them. This is designed to reflect the religious language that is often employed to describe this process of disengaging from the street and for putting in perspective the trajectory through the street. As I have mentioned elsewhere, religious language and metaphors are not restricted to those disengaging from the street, nor to the good and evil universe that the street seems to conjure up in the minds of many Brazilians. Whether Catholic (in the majority of cases), Protestant (with Evangelical cults steadily growing in influence in Brazil), or through Afro-Brazilian religions such as *Umbanda* and *Candomblé*, Brazilians often employ religious concepts and metaphors to make sense of and express their experiences. The life-stories presented here clearly reflect this. In particular, through some notion of God or destiny which helped the youngsters here, as well as others I talked to, make sense of their trajectory to and away from the street.

Other folkloric notions also inform the ways through which experience and practices are made meaningful. The figure of the *malandro* – the trickster, found in Brazilian popular urban folklore, can also be seen, if not directly, in the text, as in the case of Renato's narrative, at least in elements of the ethics some youngsters I encountered appeared to prescribe to. The *malandro* is a city trickster, from poor origins and associated with the *favela*; he belongs to Rio's tradition of the good crook, who outwits authority, and in particular the state, and manages to get by through cunning. He, for it is invariably a he, is resourceful in making do in the city through, often illegal, acts and by not having gainful employment. He is a good dancer, a musician or *sambista* who is also in touch with his roots, with his humble origins. The *malandro* is also a womanizer and potent symbol of masculinity.

Also, as mentioned above, the stories of many who have disengaged from the street follow the pattern of 'social mobility' in which the street is overcome to reach a social status that is more desirable. It is easy to understand the framing of life-stories within such a narrative considering the stigmatizing power of the street. A story of social mobility from the street, as in Lula's case, becomes one of drawing power from the street, of showing one's strength and world-

wisdom. As such the narrative is one of defying the destructive or contaminating power of the street.

Like many conventional narratives, the stories I heard (and wanted to hear, since I also shaped these narratives in as much as I asked the questions) began at home, home life in infancy is where most stories begin. But, rather than a happy innocence, what was often recounted was a problematic childhood marked by a scarcity of affection, of food or consumer goods, or else of a home described as repressive, confining and containing episodes of violence. This story was recounted many times, as was the belief that, as many described to me, they did not have a 'childhood'. This contrast of the realities of a childhood marked by scarcity and forms of repression and violence as opposed to publicly available stories about what a 'proper' childhood should be like, is significant. It demonstrates the conflict of those two notions of childhood, nurturing and nurtured, which Hecht identified and which we referred to in previous chapters (Hecht 1998). The first epiphany in these narratives can then be considered as the realization of this, either suddenly through a particular event in which a strong sense of injustice or of the inappropriate behavior of certain adults is sensed or, as is more common, gradually through encounters with other youngsters from the neighborhood who impart information about the opportunities available on the street.

The epiphany of *freedom*, addressed at length in previous chapters, plays a part here. The realization of the possibility of another form of existence away from confinement and scarcity constitutes a highly significant shift in the world-view of these youngsters. Freedom, as we have seen in previous chapters, has its own story or trope, the way it is talked about, as a lack of supervision and constraint and as the possibility of engaging in activities of fun and work. As we have considered, this sense of freedom must be placed in the context of a cultural logic that links the world of goods and consumption with fulfilled identities and life-styles (Rose 1992). Following, or closely bound to, the epiphany of *freedom* is that of becoming familiar with the street. That children and adolescents learn to get by on the streets, learn to be *streetwise*, learn to 'speak in codes', as was suggested before, may be a key aspect of their processes of identity and their search for self-affirmation and respect; as such it is also a key element of their stories. Closely associated with this is the habit, addiction or vice of the street, succinctly related to me in the statement by Jorge who, when asked if he missed his mother replied that he did but, "as we say, I got used to the street." "As we say" is the heart of the statement, it suggests not only the expression of the individual's experience but also the awareness that this experience is a common one to the group, and is retold in a common or public narrative structure.

Intrinsically connected with these periods on the street, or in some cases already beginning in the home or community of origin, are the epiphanies of *discrimination* and *repression* closely followed by, in many cases, that of *revolta*. We addressed in chapter 6 the narratives of discrimination and stigma that are all too familiar to those on the street. The narrative of *revolta* also seen in chapter 6, we saw as being related to the adoption of oppositional identities, often associated with *o mau caminho*, the bad path, and linked with crime and drug consumption. As we have seen over the previous chapters, life on the street becomes progressively harder with age. Obtaining resources through the goodwill of others is a rarer event and the authorities become even more intolerant and brutal. This, combined with the reaction of the public towards adolescents brings about an increasing self-consciousness which may be experienced as shame (see Marli on page 128, or Nego on page 239) or, as is more common, as *revolta*. Whereas feeling ashamed of one's predicament may well lead more directly to a desire to change one's life, for those experiencing *revolta* this is more problematic. As we have seen here and in the previous chapters, it requires some form of unlocking or release, a process which I have here described as the epiphany of reflection.

In the previous chapter we described Sandra's epiphany which took place primarily through the attention of street educators in *São Martinho*'s day-center. Reflection, in the case of Sandra and Humberto, and no doubt others, is also connected to the experience of death (in both cases of a close friend) and, by extension, a reflection upon their own mortality, bringing about a shift in a conception of time and of one's life-project from the present to being future oriented. In the case of Renato and Nego this occurs in part by reflecting on their increasing age and growing concerns about attaining adulthood. This is a key trigger for many adolescents on the street. In all individuals I came across who went through this epiphany of reflection and subsequently acted upon their change of attitude, institutions whether statal or NGOs played a significant role in providing them with opportunities for their next step. Whether this 'next-step' be returning home, entering a shelter, frequenting day-centers, school or engaging in vocational courses or other activities, the role of particular individuals within these institutions who take an active and respectful interest in the lives of the youngsters (as addressed in the previous chapter) appears of crucial importance.

As the three stories found here relate, youngsters are very aware of the opportunities available to them if only they were to grasp them. The failure to change, as addressed here and by others such as Sandra in the previous chapter, is blamed on the individual's incapacity to seize these opportunities. But behind this epiphany of change, of redemption, another force seems to move from the inside of these individuals that extends outwards to grab hold of these

opportunities. The most common term describing this new found agency is 'will power'. Though this narrative of 'will power', of individual effort, was on many occasions found alongside religious narratives ascribing change or redemption to God or destiny, for the youngsters I talked to this did not present a contradiction. Whether the initiative for change came from 'above' or from 'inside', the result - a change in behavior and in the way the self, the world and others are seen – was regarded as a positive transition. The other ways through which this change or epiphany is talked about is highly significant. For Sandra in the last chapter, this newly found agency is a consequence of a reappraisal of individual worth; as she described it, she stopped seeing herself as 'Joe nobody' and saw herself as 'important', as 'beautiful' and having ambition and a lot to learn. For Humberto, the change comes when he 'understood himself as a person', a process that was intrinsically bound up with letting go of the *revolta* he felt inside and allowing others to get near him. For Nego da Bahia this involved in part a greater concern with 'taking care of himself', as regards his conduct and appearance. Common to all these cases is a new regard of the Self, a new understanding and experience of the individual, of his/her relationship to the world and to others, of his/her sense of the past and aspirations for the future. It is as if a sense of agency and a sense of a life-project arise simultaneously with the individual's volition having a privileged position as the driver of that project.

Redemption also involves others; for many youngsters I talked to this meant some form of reconciliation with their family, asking for forgiveness being a common element in this. For some this may mean going back home to live, as in the case of Sandra and Renato; for others like Humberto where this may not be possible, it means re-establishing contact with relatives. Other than family, the narratives of redemption also incorporated others on the street towards whom youngsters may have acted unjustly. I often heard in the narratives of individuals undergoing this process of redemption an awareness of the injury they caused to people they robbed on the street. Bound up with this is an awareness of the feelings and hard work of individuals who lead honest lives and a regret that they should have been targeted.

The final epiphany is that of the *mission*. For individuals who have come away from the street their lives are in many cases offered, by themselves and others, as examples of the possibility of change. As mentioned before, some of these youngsters are engaged in working for NGOs who helped them off the street in the first place, and presenting their lives as success stories is beneficial both to these individuals as well as to the NGOs who draw on their experience and ability to communicate with other youngsters to render their work more effective. These individuals, perhaps more than others, appear to have taken to heart the Street Pedagogy, and the Freirean *conscientização*, or else the not altogether dissimilar Hip Hop culture of

reflecting on and speaking against oppression. They can be said to exert a positive influence on those they come in contact with who are still on the street. The appropriation of success stories though, occurs not only through NGOs. The publishing world is also interested in the lives of those who have spent time on the street. The most recent example of this is Esmeralda Ortiz's *Esmeralda, Porque Não Dancei* (2001) [*Why I didn't screw-up*], which tells the story of the author's trajectory in São Paulo through the street and youth correctional institutions from an early age to her eventual conversion into a 'citizen'. An earlier example of this is seen in Herzer's *A queda para o alto* (1982) [The fall to the heights], which related a similar story. Segments of the media, contradictory as the Brazilian media is, are also keen to highlight stories that show the possibility for change, the three youngsters included here t have appeared in articles on a number of occasions to that effect.[9]

LIFE-STORIES AND THE MEDIA

Street children, as we have noted elsewhere, have become somewhat of a national and international obsession. The media, as we have seen, plays a large part in fermenting an ever-growing haze of images and stories about children and adolescents on the street. Some of these stories show continuing prejudices and stigmatization implicit in the *menor*/child distinction. In such cases these youngsters are invariably portrayed as a social threat. We noted an example of this form of coverage in headlines found in popular newspapers such as *O Globo* and *Jornal do Brasil*: "Minors take fear to the streets: Adolescents number 3,200. The majority is in Copacabana where cases of theft and violence grows" (*Jornal do Brasil* February 7th 2003). But the media, even within such monopolizing forces as the *Globo* conglomerate, do not speak with only one voice and instead contain multiple view-points some of which, as the articles on the UNDP report on Rio (addressed in chapter 4) indicate, can be considered as genuinely reflexive. I mentioned above the difficulties in tracing the trajectories of those who have lived on the street other than through the success stories. One noble effort that attempted to seek out those unheard stories of youngsters who stayed on the street was carried out by *Extra*, another high circulation newspaper in Rio. In a series of reports beginning on the 29th of September 1999, the newspaper ran the story of its investigation into what happened to the survivors of the Candelária Massacre, six years on. The report states that for two months its reporters searched the *favelas* and *morros* of

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[9] Humberto once proudly showed me the file of press-cuttings he keeps, particularly from the early 90s when he published his first collection of poems, about his success story.

Rio's Zona Norte, its correctional institutions and its streets in search of the fourteen young survivors of the massacre. Of these fourteen, the article states, eight have been sentenced for drug trafficking, robbery or theft, with six currently serving their sentences. One has been murdered by the drug *comandos*, whereas for three "destiny has been less uncompassionate. To them was given school and work" (Ana Cristina Campos in *Extra* 29th September 1999). The others have continued on the street like M. who now has a daughter of her own, thus creating a second generation of street children.

If *Extra*'s report is anything to go by, the odds do not look good for making it out of the street. Cariocas, Brazilians, and indeed an international audience, were to be made aware of this when another of Rio's great twentieth century tragedies hit the airwaves on the 13th of June 2000. That day Cariocas and the rest of Brazil were glued to their TV screens for four hours as live broadcasts of the 174 bus taken hostage in the middle-class *bairro* of Jardim Bôtanico, brought the theme of the 'street child' once again into the public domain. That the hostage taker's intention was to rob the passengers and not be the center of a media spectacle only became apparent afterwards. As did the information that Sandro do Nascimento Silva, the gunman, was one of the survivors of the Candelária Massacre. The gruesome news-footage, which kept Brazilians transfixed for hours, showed the tense negotiations between Sandro and the large number of special anti-kidnapping forces of Rio's police which surrounded the bus. Sandro gradually let most his hostages leave the bus, after a macabre theater of violence which included the co-opting of some of the female hostages forced to stay behind and participate in the simulation of the murder of one of the hostages and in the displays of fear (which were no doubt genuine as well as affected). The spectacle, though, was also one of police incompetence. Rio's governor, following the unfolding situation on television, made it explicit that he did not want to see blood live on television, a police response which this situation would usually provoke. Instead of raiding the bus, police eventually persuaded Sandro to leave with the one remaining hostage, only to be fired upon by a police officer from a few feet away as they exited the bus. The shot missed Sandro and grazed the hostage; Sandro, scared, also fired his gun hitting the female hostage who died on the spot. Sandro was subsequently bundled into the police van where he died of asphyxiation on the way to the police station.

This episode of Brazilian history was remembered in a series of reports in the media a year later. *Rede Globo's* television piece was filled with interviews of people who were also on the bus, of the victims' family and friends, of police officers, crime victims etc. Alongside this lengthy reportage, a very short segment was filmed during *Ex-cola*'s vocational course in Lapa, which is attended by youngsters from the local community, from shelters and includes some that

lived on the street. The short clip showed youngsters using the radio equipment for the sound engineering course, a brief interview with one of the boys who had lived on the street – his face blurred out of focus – and a brief (about five to ten seconds) interview with one of *Ex-cola*'s educators, who was only able to say "we are able to recuperate some 20% of the youngsters who come here". This figure, she later admitted to me, she was coaxed into saying. The short clip on *Ex-cola*, came under the pretext of what can be done on the social level to prevent such crimes happening again. This was *Globo's* representation to the rest of Brazilian society. That the segment devoted to projects like *Ex-cola* should have occupied such a tiny and unelaborated amount of air-time as compared to *Globo's* more usual, sentimental take on the tragedy would appear to vindicate many educator's suspicion of the mass-media.

A more balanced account of the 174 bus siege was given in a documentary *Onibus 174* (2002), directed by José Padilha and Felipe Lacerda and released to wide acclaim in Brazil. The documentary has interviews with police officers, relatives of the killed hostage and with those who knew Sandro, including social workers, educators, a guard at a youth correctional facility, a friend (whom I also interviewed in my research) and Sandro's adoptive mother. The point made in this film is that Sandro, himself coming from a lower middle class family, was emotionally scarred through witnessing the murder of his mother shortly after going to the street. What the documentary also suggested was that though Sandro had entries in Rio's youth correctional system, he did not have a history of violence and that the violence he played out on the screens, was just that, violence played out, enacted. The playing out of violence, as we have seen in chapter 6, is a characteristic of some on the street, who use the currency of the threat of violence to secure resources. That Sandro should have found himself in a situation where his simulations of terror brought his own demise points to the fragility of the boundary between fact and fiction, play and reality, in a society plagued by what many describe as a culture of violence and of impunity.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter presented the life-stories of three youngsters who disengaged from the street. Paying close attention to their narratives, I tried to convey a sense of how life on the street is experienced through the passage of time and how these experiences are woven into a life-course in their retelling, a retelling which in turn reflects a position, attitude or present identification. Their retelling of their lives was here analyzed through the notion of epiphanal moments each with its own associated set of structural and relational factors, a model which we

introduced in the previous chapter (page 208). Epiphanal moments would then be found in the subjective category of the diagram on page 211. As Norman Denzin points out: "There is no single life story or self-autobiography that grasps or covers all that a life is for a person. There are only multiple stories that can be told" (Denzin 1989:72). The stories narrated to me here clearly are not the whole story. In these narratives of redemption, many sub-narratives leaked between the cracks of a more conventional 'hero's journey'. These leaks do not undermine the journey as such, but merely point to the difficulties encountered in the past and present by individuals who manage to leave the street but which are also difficulties encountered by the majority of poor, often black or brown, residents of the *favelas* and peripheries in a highly unequal society. These problems, which we initially mapped out in chapter 4, were also addressed in the previous chapter by youngsters in the *Ex-cola* project and by the educators I talked to. For these stories, whether of redemption from or of stagnation on the street, occur within larger stories of poverty, discrimination and lack of opportunities for social mobility evident in Brazilian society as a whole.

CHAPTER 9

UNLOCKING 'FREEDOM',

RELEASING *REVOLTA*

March, 2001 [under the heading of "Personal"](from field-notes).

Being amongst these youngsters is a very demanding emotional experience and the demand on one's awareness is also great. As an educator said to me outside [of *São Martinho*], you need time to chill out. It is also a very sad experience, because you see so much aliveness so much potential in them and yet you know the circumstances they are in and lack of opportunities they have had. I had a sense, seeing them all playing football in the concrete court of *São Martinho*, that here concentrated in this space, was a group of individuals all with similar stories, trajectories and experiences. All went through processes of exclusion, through some kind of abuse, through a great deal of suffering. Here was the result of all this suffering, the result of all the worse that society could do to its own, embodied in these youngsters, emotively playing football.

This is an entry in my field-diary at the beginning of my fieldwork. As fieldwork unfolded and after some reflection paying close attention to what I saw happening on the streets, I realized that it is important to consider not only what 'society' does to these children and adolescents, that is, how poverty, discrimination, exclusion and violence affects them directly or indirectly through their families and communities, but also what their response is, how they act under these conditions. As this thesis has shown, children and adolescents on the street are not a group that passively suffers from being 'abandoned', unless we consider 'abandonment' in broader political terms. Instead, their personal trajectories must also be accounted for in terms of 'choices', in terms of options or lack of them and in terms of desires and aspirations. To merely

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consider such a group as 'abandoned' distorts a more complex reality and makes it impossible for us to understand the social relations and the processes of identification at work in the day-to-day lives and in the trajectories of youngsters on the street.

Norman Denzin speaks of the interpretative project at the heart of the disciplines concerned with the study of Man, which asks; "How do men and women live and give meaning to their lives and capture these meanings in written, narrative and oral forms?" (Denzin 1989:10). Denzin continues, quoting the well known passage from Marx when he observed that men and women "make their own history, but not... under conditions they have chosen for themselves; rather on terms immediately existing, given and handed down to them" (Marx quoted in Denzin 1989:10), and asks who are these people who make their own history and what does history mean to them? How are these lives, histories, and their meanings to be studied, how should sociologists, anthropologists, historians, and literary critics read, write, and make sense of them? (Ibid). When considering youngsters who live or have lived on the street, the guiding concerns of this thesis have been to try to understand what is this history that is handed down to them, how it manifests itself in the social, economic and power relations within which they, their families and communities are embedded and what effects these have on their day-to-day encounters, their subjective experiences and sense of self and on their personal trajectories. In short, this thesis has been concerned with how youngsters who live or have lived on the street make their own history under conditions marked by exclusion, discrimination and violence, which we have here described as social structural oppression.[1]

A central aspect of this history is the very category of 'street children' itself. The history of this category is indivisible from a broader history of the country's marginalized population. We noted how in Brazil an embryonic notion of the 'street child' as a subcategory of the *menor* – the problematic urban child from a poor family – emerges at the transition from the colonial slave plantation system to a capitalist economy and an independent republican nation. The failure of the governing elite to provide support for the social and economic integration of recently freed slaves during this period of transformation is largely responsible for the continuing social structural oppression of large sections of the population, many of whom settled in the *favelas* and peripheries of cities. Instead of a program of integration, a systematic regulation of urban space

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[1] This thesis, in line with work inspired by the Freirean concept of *consientização*, has sought to historically contextualize the genesis of oppression and the processes of exclusion and its manifestation in the experiences of the 'oppressed'. As such, I have preferred to use the term 'structural oppression', rather than 'structural violence' (Farmer 2002) to describe these processes of exclusion (see Bourgois 1996).

and of the urban population was undertaken, often through repressive measures. Within this program, the children and the very experience of childhood of the poor, the *menor* in urban space, became a subject for state intervention.

The exclusion and repression of the population of ex-slaves and their descendants, either actively through policies or passively through omission, and often informed by racist ideology and the ideal of 'whitening' the population, had very tangible material effects on the living conditions of those who migrated to the city throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. Though the *favelas* where they came to settle are also made up of people not of African descent, as we noted in chapter 4, the *favela* emerged as a racialized space whose residents experienced social exclusion and discrimination and living conditions far below those available to other residents of Rio. The disparity between these communities and the rest of the city, combined with the increasing sophistication of a global drug-economy, which has found a thriving base in the *favelas,* has had a devastating effect on these communities and more generally on growing levels of urban violence. In a climate which Garbarino (1995) describes as 'social toxicity', some youngsters living in the *favela* may join the *comandos*, the drug gangs, or go to the street in search of protection, self-affirmation and possible ways of engaging with a highly consumer-oriented culture.

This thesis raises questions of how to engage with a category that has historically turned persons into subjects of state intervention and which has served to marginalize and obfuscate a more complex social reality. The category 'street children', carries history, power relations and assumptions about the rightful place of childhood and questions of abandonment as opposed to agency. It has also served to mobilize attention and resources, not always positive, as the murderous work of death-squads show. The category has at times proved beneficial for youngsters themselves, who have used it to obtain resources from the state or the NGO community or from others on the street. The thesis has proposed that a category must be examined in all these different dimensions. Categories, in particular those which classify groups of people, need to be approached from the perspective of how they come to play on the day-to-day lives of those it labels as well as on how they resonate within their subjectivities. These issues fall within what has been referred to here as the domains of self and identity. The domains of self and identity have been important in this thesis because they provide a way of looking at categories from the inside, but also, more importantly, they help us understand how people make their own history.

The processes of identification of youngsters on the street revealed a range of identities that are claimed or defied in different encounters and stages of their life-cycle. Significant in these processes were the attachments or defiance of identifications of being 'normal like everyone else', 'a Brazilian citizen', a 'street child', a member of the *maloca* or the group. At play at each of these moments is a combination of forces such as the perceptions and reactions of other people who come to regard those on the street with sympathy, fear or anger. Gender is a significant differential here, as girls have to face different cultural preconceptions and risks in relation to the street. For example, girls use different strategies to ensure their safety on the street, such as cross-dressing at night. Also important in these processes of identification is the power, status or desirability of the identity claimed.

A number of continuities with youngsters from across the Brazilian social spectrum were identified in this thesis. In their aspiration for home and family life, work and education most children and adolescents on the street demonstrate middle class values, something that Perlman also found amongst Rio's *favela* residents (Perlman 1979). This is also found in some of these youngsters' practices regarding the care of the self, in terms of their physical appearance, consumption, leisure activities, dress and sexuality. Youngsters on the street often stress their claim to being a 'citizen' like 'everyone else'. This is particularly poignant bearing in mind their acute experiences of being discriminated against and stigmatized on the street. Yet when citizenship is denied, through acts of discrimination or episodes of violence by the police or others, youngsters may take on what I have here described as oppositional identities associated with behavior, such as engagement in crime and drug taking, that serves to further stigmatize the group.

Closely tied with the domain of self and identity is that of experience. Experience is important in this thesis because in its retelling, research participants conveyed what and how things and events are understood. It is these fragments of experiences retold during fieldwork that contribute to an understanding of how people make their own history. Given the focus on the youngsters' experience, what in the Freirean pedagogical approach are called 'generative words' and themes, shed light upon the motivations of these youngsters to go to the street and clarify their vision of what kind of space they felt it to be. As Shor, referring to the work of Freirean educators put it, 'generative words and themes' represent the most pertinent issues in the speech and life of the community (Shor 1993). In the case of this thesis such key themes became crucial

for understanding a series of experiences, situations, relationships, processes of identification and life-trajectories.

The two most significant generative terms identified were *liberdade* [freedom] and *revolta* [revolt, inner rage]. The expression of going to the street as an aspiration for freedom, articulated in opposition to a perception of home as either a place of violence or confinement or else as a place of scarcity was common to many narratives, and is indeed shared with many groups of people with a marginal status (Day, Papataxiarchis and Stewart 1999). Alongside the value placed on freedom it is crucial to identify specific notions and experiences of risk. Douglas' view of risk as culturally specific (in Caplan 2000) invites us to investigate how the street is viewed by these youngsters. This research shows that, from their perspective, far from a place of risk or danger, the street is a place of economic and social (e.g. friendships) resources as well as a place of relative safety. We saw here that 'freedom', whether real or illusionary, is a key marker of identity for many on the street, that it can be understood as an ideal that claims autonomy from adult supervision allowing for an unrestricted movement in urban space, and engagement in activities of work and pleasure.

Though going to the street may in the short-term fulfill some of these youngsters' material needs and their aspirations for solidarity and self-affirmation, the very real situations of danger, violence and discrimination to which they are subject to daily, constantly threaten their existence in this space. Furthermore, whereas for children living on the street resources may be obtained with relative ease because of the sympathetic gaze of some passersby (behind which there often lies the vision of an abandoned child in need of protection) and whereas the police may be more reluctant to use physical violence in dealing with them - apart from extreme episodes carried out by extermination groups such as the Candelária Massacre - this is no longer the case as far as adolescents are concerned. For adolescents life on the street becomes increasingly hard and violent as their presence is regarded as more threatening and others view them as being closely associated with urban criminality. The experiences, narratives and practices associated with this transition, with this coming of age, were often referred to as *revolta*.

Revolta is a shorthand way of expressing a complex emotional and psychological state, commonly associated with anger, inner rage or a sense of withdrawal that is intrinsically linked to experiences of injustice, discrimination and oppression. As the expression of something felt, *revolta* can be understood as a pervading sense of inner rage against an unfair system that is revealed in specific concrete incidents. *Revolta*, as Dowdney identified, is often referred to by

youngsters in the *favelas* as their reason for joining the *comandos*, an experience that is commonly associated with police violence (Dowdney 2002). *Revolta* therefore is not restricted to those on the street but has become a common expression amongst youth who suffer from social structural oppression, not just in Rio but worldwide (see also Bourgois 1996). Also, *revolta* as I have described here has become a common word in Brazilian Hip Hop culture, with lyrics peppered with references to it. *Revolta* then expresses not only something felt, but, like 'freedom', provides a narrative convention to explain or justify certain forms of behavior. We saw that youngsters on the street, as well as referring to the aspiration for freedom, used *revolta* to describe both why they leave the abuse or confinement suffered at home, and why some give in to 'anti-social' forms of conduct and identities, e.g. robbing, consuming or dealing in drugs. Though increasing age and growing *revolta* appear to be intrinsically connected, most youngsters can be said to have arrived on the street with at least some sense of *revolta*. We noted how this form of revolt or rebellion appears very different from the universal idea of rebelliousness of adolescence that Margaret Mead set out to problematize in *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1973 [1928]). For youngsters from the *favelas* and peripheries of Rio and for those on the street, *revolta* emerges not because of the plurality of choices for identification and conduct during the transition into adulthood but precisely because of a lack of choices. So the two complex experiences and narratives, or what I eventually came to describe as epiphanal moments or narratives, of *liberdade* and *revolta*, form the backbone of many life-trajectories and processes of self-identification found on the street.

The term epiphany as used here, follows from Denzin's understanding of epiphanies as interactional moments and experiences that leave a mark on people's lives radically altering their 'fundamental meaning structures' (Denzin 1989:70). As such epiphanal moments point to an experience, or a cluster of experiences in which the individual's understanding of his/her social world and his/her place in it is transformed. Such moments lead to particular identifications, say for instance with oppositional figures and forms in terms of *revolta*, and also provide a framework for expressing or justifying behavior. This thesis has tried to draw out the social and cultural forces and constraints at work at these particular moments in pointing to the junctures between a history that is handed down and a history that is made. The epiphanal moments outlined here were: the epiphany of *lack* or *confinement* (in the home) closely tied to the aspiration for *freedom*; the epiphany of *repression* and *discrimination* (both in the home and on the street) closely bound with *revolta* and of being *streetwise*; and for those who have left the

street this is followed by the epiphany of *reflection* and *disengagement* and the epiphany of the *mission*.

Concentrating on the first two sets of opposing experiences, freedom and *revolta*, reveals interesting points in regard to the relationship of the individual to the social structure. Whereas the aspiration for freedom, however illusionary and paradoxical it may be, places the youngster at the center of his or her life project, inasmuch as an environment experienced as confining, scarce or violent is defied, the opposite is true of *revolta*. As we noted here *revolta* and its causes were often described through de-personalized, mythic, language; as a black cloud, an evil or as something that just happened, imposed by the injustices and discrimination of society. Individual will is absent here, it is instead what society does to the individual, it is what I referred to as an embodiment of oppression. The opposition of these two key experiences is significant: freedom in this sense becomes an aspiration, an ideal to strive for in opposition to social structural oppression. An ideal that may be either circulated through friends and relatives, with the city as a place abundant in opportunities of leisure and work, or through the media and other encounters with the city, where urban space is represented as leading to fulfillment through consumption. *Revolta* is the opposite, it is not an aspiration or ideal but an experience in the flesh, in the emotions, of what it is like to be faced with the barriers of social structural oppression. It is a very tangible experience of the limitations to one's freedom, both in the choices available, but also, in how others come to be agents in limiting those choices or even worse, in committing acts of violence against oneself.

This is not to idealize the 'freedom' to which youngsters on the street aspire to or claim to have, for as we noted here, this is a belief in freedom which obscures underlying social relations of power and control, and personal practices that are addictive and restrictive in terms of both the present, and as regards the possibilities for the future. Rather than this representation of freedom and autonomy, the street has barriers, rules, places that are inaccessible. Also, as was often heard on the street, rather than being 'free', street life comes to be increasingly addictive and ever harder to escape from. We noted how the set of practices associated with this conception of freedom and autonomy - 'becoming experienced' - may have the effect of imprisoning youngsters within a life-style in which the capacities learnt on the street and the defensive survival strategies adopted make it difficult for the youngster to re-engage with work and education, or with relations of trust, making their aspiration for true citizenship increasingly problematic.

Also significant is that, rather than originating from the family or community, control, supervision and punishment derive directly from the state, and in particular the police, often in very brutal and discriminatory ways. But there are others connected to the lives of youngsters on the street, organizations that I have here termed 'significant others'. These constitute a network of care, encompassing different state institutions and the NGO sector, such as day centers, shelters and youth correctional institutions, through which youngsters constantly circulate. As such, understanding the relationships of this network, complex and contradictory though it is, becomes crucial.

The care of youngsters by the state and by the non-governmental sector has undergone profound changes since the creation of these institutions over one hundred years ago. They have moved away from a conception of the *menor*, of the problematic urban child from a poor family who is considered as either abandoned or delinquent, towards thinking about all children as subjects of rights. This transition, heralded by the new Children and Adolescent Statute of 1990, is far from flawless, and prejudice and a failure to fully implement the statute are prevalent. Yet, both the statute and the mass social movement that pushed for its ratification have promoted a considerable change in how youngsters on the street are treated. Paulo Freire's pedagogical approach and his views on freedom, liberation and critical consciousness have been crucial for this shift. In particular, Freire's perspective has had a formative influence on the development of new ways of working with those on the street through the 'street educator' and through a Street Pedagogy, where the experiences and aspirations of those on the street are taken on board in an attempt encourage a process of self-transformation.

The implementation of Freire's ideas in Rio's network of care faces many challenges such as a political climate in which forced removal from the street is still the option preferred by politicians, the media and the general public, or project financiers and political pressure wanting quick results and cost-effective and measurable success. It is crucial to locate the success or failure of the implementation of Street Pedagogy in the context of social forces and institutions; the economic climate and levels of unemployment, the involvement of the private sector in offering work placements and apprenticeships, the availability of study opportunities, the levels of prejudice and discrimination and the political will to tackle these. But also vital are what we examined as the conflicting notions of freedom or liberation that Street Pedagogy expounds, as contrasted to the ideas of freedom and autonomy found amongst youngsters on the street. For, by being locked within processes of identification largely built around politically unelaborated

aspirations for freedom or the embodied oppression of *revolta*, youngsters are often unwilling to seize the opportunities offered to them. But there is nothing deterministic about *liberdade* and *revolta*, since as some of the youngsters represented here described, attachment to these identifications and narratives can also be overcome and the experiences associated with them can provide the raw materials through which a creative and fulfilling life and sense of self can be fashioned.

It is significant to note that the work of street educators situates itself within a particular vision of freedom or liberation, which owes a great deal to the Freire's emancipatory politics. Here oppression is overcome by being conscious of how it operates in a variety of ways in everyday life, and by a subsequent political mobilization to combat the power relations inherent in everyday existence. This thesis reflected the encounter between two different freedoms; the first being a spontaneous defiance against the structural forces of poverty and violence experienced in the home and the community by youngsters who go to the street and the second being a critical engagement with these structures through *conscientização*. We addressed these issues, primarily through the life-stories of four young individuals: Sandra, Humberto, Renato, Nego da Bahia, an adolescent girl and three young men who after spending many years on the street managed to successfully disengage from it. Through their narratives we were able to get a sense of how Freire's critical pedagogy is embodied, how it can be said to have provoked profound transformations in how these individuals came to regard themselves and their world. This is what the epiphanies of 'reflection', and the 'mission' describe. Why some individuals come to change their lives and seize the opportunities given to them whilst others do not, was a question I constantly put to youngsters who were living or had lived on the street. The reasons appear as a complex web of structural (economic, institutional, etc.), relational (i.e. finding inspiring individuals within these institutions, or else being reluctant to separate from relationships made on the street) and subjective factors (aspirations for freedom and autonomy, lack of trust associated with *revolta*). And yet, common to all the cases of youngsters who did disengage from the street was a new regard of the self, a new understanding and experience of the individual, of his/her relationship to the world and to others, of his/her sense of the past and aspirations for the future. We noted that youngsters spoke about a sense of agency or willpower – *força de vontade* - and a sense of a life-project arising simultaneously in which the individual has a privileged position as the driver of that project. Though God was never distant in the narratives describing the epiphanies of lives that were transformed, there was no contradiction between the

role of the divine and that of the individual's willpower. Instead we can understand such expressions as deriving from a new sense of self but one that is articulated within a deeply religious cultural idiom.

The process of researching and writing this thesis has raised a number of questions deserving of further research. Though this thesis has concentrated on the point of view of youngsters who take to the street, it is clear that as well as their relationship to a 'network of care' on the street, their relationship to their families and community of origin is crucial in accounting for their trajectory and their processes of identification. Though these issues were not directly tackled here, these relationships need to be understood for a more complete picture of how social structural oppression affects not only these individuals through the life-cycle, but also their families and communities. Another theme this thesis has identified as requiring further investigation is the question of racism. Though most youngsters I talked to conveyed experiences in which they were discriminated against, these episodes were almost invariably believed to be because others associated them with the category of 'street children' and not because of racism. In this respect the thesis considered that 'race' was not a category that youngsters on the street found meaningful to identify nor was racism significant for them in their understanding of their own trajectory. There were one or two notable exceptions to this coming from more politicized youngsters embedded in a Brazilian Hip Hop culture where issues of race and racism dominate. We noted the complexities of 'racial classification' and identification in Brazil a nation which, unlike the USA, has a long history of miscegenation and whose elite has constantly claimed that there is no racism in Brazil. Pointing to a series of social indicators that demonstrate the continuing discrepancy between Brazil's afro-descendants and its white population, we noted that racial democracy is indeed a myth. Though racism was not articulated by youngsters on the street as a cause of discrimination, this is not to say that it did not or could not play a significant part. Bearing in mind the disproportionately high numbers of black and brown children and adolescents on the street, it is important to understand how racism may differentially influence the trajectories of youngsters and their own processes of identification.

A further route of enquiry concerns becoming an adult on the street. It is virtually impossible to say with any certainty what happens to adolescents who have lived on the street once they come of age, since no quantitative and very little qualitative information is available. This thesis shows that some of them do manage to leave the street. Some may find shelter returning to their families, with partners, or in rented or bought accommodation in the *favelas*

and peripheries. These youngsters often become engaged in Rio's informal labor market, doing odd jobs such as selling goods on the streets as *camelôs* [street-hawkers] or else for a smaller number, like some of the individuals presented here, gaining official employment with NGOs or other organizations willing to take on individuals with incomplete formal education. Through conversations with professionals working in Rio's 'network of care' and with young adults who have experience of living on the streets and with those now living in *Ex-cola*'s shared flats, this research suggests that those who manage to successfully disengage from the street are a minority. For most, 'success' means that they join the ranks of the 'marginalized', that is, those who live in the *favelas* and try to hold down precarious jobs. For many others, however, their trajectories are less clear. Some remain on the streets turning into the 'bums' that as children and adolescents, they dreaded becoming, though they may not admit this to themselves and seek to perpetuate practices still associated with their youthful existence on the street such as sniffing glue or continuing to expect help and advice from NGOs and street educators. For these individuals, adult life on the street invariably proves a lot harder than in the past. No longer can they rely on the generosity of passersby, who are ever more wary of their size and what is perceived as their increasingly threatening presence. Past the age of eighteen, they can no longer rely on NGOs or the law to protect them and many pass through the penal system and Rio's notoriously inhumane jails.

How many make it into adulthood is a question that remains unresolved. A number of children and adolescents perish on the streets, killed in accidents, by drugs overdose, or by diseases such as AIDS. A significant number of youngsters who grow up on the streets are also murdered by extermination groups that may be para-statal, comprised of off-duty police and security guards, or from the drug *comandos* - a distinction that has become ever harder to maintain. Some die at the hands of others living on the street. It is impossible to establish the numbers in each category since the category of 'living on the street', is not registered in prisons, hospitals or the morgue. Clearly more quantitative and qualitative research is needed to gain a sense of what happens to the 'street children' when they become adults.

The trajectory of persons belonging to a category marked as it is by reference to a life stage - 'street children' - is then marked by an overwhelming set of unknowns. Perhaps the main reason for the opacity of the lives of grown-up 'street children' is precisely that once they enter adulthood, youngsters on the street are no longer 'street children', and cease to provoke the effects of a 'dissonant childhood' on the moral sensibilities of the public and the academy.

Absorbed into the ranks of the urban destitute, homeless adults, beggars, 'bums', which, though undesirable occupants of urban space, fail to provoke the contradiction between reality and cherished ideals of childhood. They become instead one amongst the vast, daunting and politically challenging category of the poor. A category where the notion of 'abandonment', if employed at all, becomes undeniably 'political'. 'Street children' is then a fleeting category, the individuals it labels are considered as somehow different from the thousands of other impoverished youngsters in the *favelas*, peripheries and in rural areas because of their visibility in urban centers. The children and adolescents who fall under its label, may at times embrace or defy this category, though in most cases they will have little say about or control over how others use the term or consider them. Yet when they come of age, the term disappears and they once again become invisible. Having been revealed, rendered visible, their experience and identities overdetermined by the category that defined, contained, oppressed and protected them, the youngster growing up in the streets of Rio de Janeiro is then marked by a loss – of visibility, of identity, of security and perhaps also of freedom.

GLOSSARY

abordagem	approximation, approaching or 'approaching' - referring to the work of street educators with youngsters on the street.
asfalto	asphalt, slang term to describe the distinction between the *morro* (the hill where the *favelas* are) and asphalt surface where the rest of the city resides.
bagunça	a mess or a disorderly place.
baile funk	funk dances or balls, occurring for decades in the *favelas* and attracting thousands of youngsters.
bairro	district
bocas de fumo	drug sales points, primarily in the *favelas*, where cocaine and marijuana are sold.
camelôs	street hawkers selling a wide range of goods
caminho errado	the wrong path.
Candelária Massacre	massacre in which 7 children and a young adult were murdered in 1993 by the Candelária church in the heart of Rio's business district by an extermination group partly composed of off-duty police.
Candomblé	Afro-Brazilian religion.
Capoeira	an Afro-Brazilian martial-arts dance form involving the playing of instruments, singing and a form of play-fighting to various rhythms.
Casa das Meninas	Girls' House, *São Martinho's* shelter for girls.
Cariocas	residents of Rio de Janeiro
CIESPI	Centro Internacional de Estududo e Pesquisa sobre a Infância – The International Center for Study and Research into Childhood – a research organization in Rio de Janeiro.
Cidade Maravilhosa	Marvelous City, complementary adjective attached to Rio de Janeiro.
cola	glue.

comandos	drug trafficking gangs. The main ones in Rio being the *Comando Vermelho* and the *Terceiro Comando*.
conscientização	critical consciousness, Paulo Freire's term referring to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality (Freire 1993 [1970]).
Copacabana	one of Rio's most famous *bairros* or district
dando mole	slang term that can be loosely translated as 'letting your guard down'
donos	literally 'owners' referring to the bosses of the drug trade.
donas	madams.
educação	education, or more specifically, a moral conduct or upbringing.
Educadores Sociais de Rua	Street Educators.
esculachar	slang term translated here as 'dissing' short for disrespecting – used to describe a form of violence that can be physical, symbolic or moral.
ECA	*Estatuto da Criança e Adolescente* - Child and Adolescent Statute passed in 1990.
favela	hill-side shanty-town or squatter settlement common in Rio from the beginning of the 20th century.
favelados	*favela* residents.
FEBEM	Fundação Estadual para o Bem Estar do Menor - The State Institution for the Well Being of Minors or youth correctional facilities.
FIA	Fundação para Infância e Adolescência – The Foundation for Children and Adolescents.
força de vontade	will power
gringos	foreigners
indigente	beggar
judaria	treachery or betrayal
mães de ua	street mothers – girls, who though not necessarily older, take responsibility for the well-being of the group on the street and are seen as a moral authority and chief organizer.
malandros	trickster, knaves
maldade	nastiness, evil
maloca	the term refers both to the group as constituted by its members on the street as well as the place where the group rests.

maloqueiro	has come to designate the member of one of such gangs or more specifically a 'street child'. Street children are sometimes referred to as *maloqueiros*, particularly in the northeast of Brazil, a term which they have themselves sometimes embraced when referring to each other.
mau caminho	bad path
mendingo	beggar
meninos de rua	street children
menores abandonados	abandoned minors
moleque de rua	street urchins
moleques	urchins, the term originally referred to the children of slaves who became apprentices.
morro	literally, hill. Term that is often used instead of *favela*
movimento	literally 'the movement'; this is how organized drug trafficking is often referred as. With the implication of both a movement in goods and services, a trade, as well as a political and social force.
MNMMR	Movimento Nacional de Meninos e Meninas de Rua, the National Movement of Boys and Girls on the Street created in 1985.
não alugação	not lecturing or 'being a drag'
novelas	soap operas
O Globo	Brazil's leading newspaper
olho grande	literally 'big eye', a common slang term in Brazil and widely used on the street meaning the coveting of other people's possessions.
Padre Severino	Rio's more notorious youth detention center.
papo	banter or linguistic cunning.
param	slang term meaning literally 'stop' referring to the process of 'hanging out' together or staying in a space for a while.
Pedagogia de Rua	Street Pedagogy.
Projeto EX-COLA	NGO working with youngsters and young adults in Rio.
pixado	slang term, literally, tagged, as in graffiti speak, referring to an area that becomes tainted or spoilt by antagonizing local shopkeepers or the police.
Rádio Madame Satã	radio project by and for youngsters on the street set up by *Projeto Ex-cola*.
Rede Globo	Brazil's most popular, and populist, TV channel.

Rede RioCriança	Network Rio Children, network of NGOs and government agencies working in the state of Rio.
revolta	rebellion, revolt or inner rage.
sambista	musician, composer or dancer of samba.
Santa Marta	one of Rio's most picturesque *favelas* in the Zona Sul.
São Martinho	one of Rio's largest NGOs working with youngsters on the street.
Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha...	If This Street Was Mine... another NGO working with youngsters on the street.
senzala	the homes of slave in the farms.
SMDS	the Municipal Secretariat for Social Development
suburbios	urban peripheries.
Terre des Hommes	Swiss NGO which funded the consolidation of the *Rede Rio Criança*.
thinner	pronounced 'tchiner', literally thinner, a solvent-based paint-stripper.
traficante	drug trafficker.
tráfico	drug trade.
Umbanda	syncretic Afro-Brazilian religion.
Vila and Nova Aliança	*favelas* in the peripheries of Rio.
viração	translated here as 'getting by', or 'making do', a colloquial term that refers to the obtaining of resources for survival particularly through informal means.
zoar	to fool around.
Zona Sul	South Zone. Area lying alongside the coast where the upper middle-class districts are to be found.
Zona Norte or Zona Oeste	North and West Zones. Areas associated with the peripheries of Rio where the poorer districts are to be found.

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