

CARMEN MIRANDA: RIPE FOR IMITATION

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Lori Hall-Araujo

CARMEN MIRANDA: RIPE FOR IMITATION

This project examines Brazilian-raised performer Carmen Miranda's (1909-1955) star image—comprised of look and performance style—and the complex ways in which it got constituted during her lifetime and after her death. I provide historically situated analyses of how her look and performance got constructed in Brazil and in the United States. I pair this with analyses of Carmen Miranda parodies drawn from a range of sources including live performance, festival events, television, and film. The power of Carmen's distinctive look and performance lent themselves to easy repeatability, yet no two Carmens have ever been quite the same. I examine the cultural factors contributing to Carmen Miranda's early cultivation of a star image and what it meant for her to be Brazil's "Ambassador of Samba" in the 1930s. I show the circumstances that made her Brazilian success possible facilitated her Hollywood stardom in the 1940s and 1950s. While global and hemispheric politics during her Hollywood career meant she became a Latin American caricature, her "lady in the tutti-frutti hat" image was sufficiently flexible that it could be deployed to signify a range of meanings. A strong association with carnival and the carnivalesque made her image flexible and characterized her career in Brazil and the US. In tracing the carnival and the carnivalesque throughout her career I show that her star image encouraged playful, carnivalesque interpretations with a broad range of meanings.

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CARMEN MIRANDA: RIPE FOR IMITATION

Introduction

On my third research trip to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2011, I took a break from carnival festival research to meet up with a friend in Argentina. On the flight to Buenos Aires I struck up a conversation with the middle-aged *porteña* [someone who lives in Buenos Aires] seated next to me, explaining that I was in Brazil conducting research related to Carmen Miranda. When she told me she had no idea who that was, I helpfully suggested, “The woman who wore fruit on top of her head.” A look of recognition crossed her face as she exclaimed, “Ah! Frida Kahlo!”

Since I first began this project in 2007, I have been struck by how frequently the performer Carmen Miranda and the artist Frida Kahlo get conflated and wondered why. It may be, I thought, that the two women are visually elided into an exotic Latin/a American stereotype – even within Latin America. Both have had their images widely circulated and re-used in a range of contexts such that they are now part of the Western Hemisphere’s popular culture visual lexicon. Yet their iconic images have meant different things for different people. Apart from being easily caricatured, Frida Kahlo and Carmen Miranda have both been powerful signifiers of national identity in Mexico and Brazil, respectively. In pondering similarities between the two icons, I realized there is yet a third 20th century Latin American woman strongly associated with national identity that has entered popular culture for iconic re-circulation: Argentina’s former first lady, Eva Perón.



Figure 1: Film still of Carmen Miranda from *The Gang's All Here* (1943) (screen shot)

I began to wonder what phenomena were at work in the 20th century Latin American context to give rise almost simultaneously to three, iconic national figures—Carmen Miranda (1909-1955) in Brazil, Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) in Mexico, and Eva Perón (1919-1952) in Argentina. I wondered if their cultural significance had not been tied to emerging nationalism, popular ethnic conceptions, and gender expectations. What has struck me most profoundly is how each of these women fashioned herself through dress and appearance to make a significant sociocultural impact that continues to resonate. Unsurprisingly (to me), each woman has had a museum dedicated to her in her home country, which houses sizable personal clothing collections.¹

In *Carmen Miranda: Ripe for Imitation*, I begin to address the issues related to all three icons by looking at the cultural context that gave rise to Carmen Miranda and examining it in relation to her evolving dress and appearance. I demonstrate that through the cultivation of an identifiable visual image, which met changing social expectations, the performer facilitated her icon status. In her early career she was glamorous and modern eventually shifting to become a signifier of exoticized – albeit glamorous – and idealized racial mixing in Brazil. Upon her move to the United States her image – and how it was perceived – altered once again such that she came to represent an imagined pan-Latin American ethnicity.

From 1929 to 1939, Carmen Miranda enjoyed a successful career as a singer of Brazilian music. Her popularity in the thirties paired with technological changes and a nationalist climate

¹ Interestingly, while the Frida Kahlo Casa Azul [Blue House] seems to be popular with Mexicans and foreign tourists, the Carmen Miranda and Eva Perón museums appear to be largely the purview of foreigners.

meant that she also enjoyed success in five Brazilian musical comedy films. From 1939 until her 1955 death, Carmen's career was primarily in the United States. Her earliest US performances were live productions though her greatest success came via the Hollywood films she made. While her star image in Brazil was mainly that of a glamorous Euro-Brazilian, in early 1939 her final Brazilian film was released to dramatic effect. For one musical sequence she dressed in a Hollywood-inspired, shimmering costume that was meant to evoke an Afro-Brazilian woman from the state of Bahia, the "baiana." That costume, which she designed and wore for live performances in Rio de Janeiro at the time of the film's release, garnered her the attention of a Broadway theatrical producer, Lee Shubert. From her June 1939 Broadway debut until her final 1955 performance on the televised *The Jimmy Durante Show* the night before her death, Carmen Miranda wore some variation of the baiana costume for nearly all her performances. Today in both Brazil and the United States the memory of Carmen Miranda before she donned the baiana seems almost entirely forgotten. While this makes some sense in the United States where her film contract with 20th Century-Fox Studios required that she not publicly divulge any information about her Brazilian film career, the national amnesia in Brazil is more puzzling. The power of Carmen's baiana and what it has signified is at the heart of this project. I find that the different meanings of Carmen's baiana are broad ranging. In the United States she often represents a pan-Latin/a American identity, at times a positive figure to emulate and at other times a loathsome stereotype. In Brazil, the emergence of Carmen's baiana in the late thirties occurred in the midst of broader cultural endeavors to reevaluate what it meant to be Brazilian in terms of race and culture. At the time, popular, intellectual, and official rhetoric was beginning to celebrate Afro-Brazilian cultural contributions to Brazilianness despite continued

racist laws and practices that treated Afro-Brazilians as second-class citizens. On the one hand there was a general cultural shift toward recognizing Brazil as a place where different cultures came into contact with each other and on the other hand daily and official practices did not always reflect the heralded openness Brazilians were meant to possess. In this atmosphere there emerged Carmen Miranda, a Portuguese-born, Euro-Brazilian performer who achieved success by singing Afro-Brazilian associated music. Why didn't some other female performer who was mixed race achieve comparable success at the time? Why is the image we see today of Carmen Miranda – whether in Brazil or the United States – her Hollywood baiana version? Even in Brazil one is hard pressed to find Carmen representations that are not her Hollywood baiana even though she was one of the thirties' most popular singers.

Though the connections between Mexican artist Frida Kahlo and Brazilian performer Carmen Miranda may not be immediately apparent, I do find a couple of important similarities. First, both women were highly reflexive public figures who fashioned iconic images that continue to circulate. Second, the distinctive, easily identified looks that they created for themselves took shape during periods when their countries were experiencing important popular and rhetorical shifts with regard to national identity. Increasingly the nations were fashioning themselves as comprised of mixed race people: Spanish and indigenous in Mexico and African, Portuguese, and, to a lesser extent, indigenous, in Brazil. Through her manner of dress, self-portraits, and glamorous photographs, Frida Kahlo presented herself as a mixed race Mexican. She did this at a time when it was fashionable to do so especially among the Mexican artistic, intellectual, and social elite. A Mexican woman, especially if she were lighter skinned and from the upper classes, could express ethnic authenticity by wearing indigenous attire – that is if the woman was not

otherwise too indigenous. From the 1930s until her 1952 death, Frida Kahlo appeared in public and painted self-portraits as a *china poblana*, albeit with her own additional glamorous styling. The *china poblana* is a national folk figure originating in the city Puebla and is recognizable for her distinctive attire and hairstyle that incorporates ‘traditional’ indigenous and European aesthetics. Such a blending² was desirable in the post-revolutionary Mexican state where *mexicanidad* [Mexicanness] to signify national identity relied upon a narrative that characterized modern Mexicans as Spanish-Indian *mestizos* [people of mixed race].³ Joanne Hershfield calls this trend to glorify “native” roots among the political and intellectual Mexican elite a kind of “domestic exoticism” (Hershfield 2008).

In Brazil the *baiana* as a domestic exotic did not become an important signifier of Brazilianness until *after* Carmen wore her glamorous interpretation of the costume. During her decade of Brazilian success, the performer dressed fashionably while building a Brazilian music catalog that consisted almost entirely of music widely understood to have African origins. Both in Brazil and in the United States samba was the main genre in which Carmen sang (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 42). Samba, as José Ligiéro Coelho points out (1998), is a word that comes from

² Frida Kahlo’s rendering of *la china poblana* is fascinating for more reasons than can be explored in this introduction. Yet two points are worth mentioning. First, while Kahlo dons garb categorized as indigenous, she counterbalances the ‘traditional’ effect with glamorous modern make-up application. Furthermore, her physical features reflect her Hungarian Jewish ancestry arguably more so than any indigenous heritage. The modern, European, and indigenous all converge in Kahlo’s look to reflect an idealized cultural blending in 20th century Mexico.

³ The official and popular narrative about *mexicanidad* neglects the African presence in Mexico although artists and academics have begun exploring this more fully in recent years.

the African Kikongo language (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 19). As it is used today in Brazil, its meaning changes depending upon where the accent is placed. When the accent placed on the first ‘a’ the word means “to pray, to implore, to plead” and when the accent is placed on the second ‘a’ the word means “to dance” (ibid). According to Ligiéro Coelho, samba has had this double meaning – praying and dancing – since it entered Brazilian Portuguese in the 16th century when Kongo-Angolan slaves were first brought to the region (ibid). From the onset the word was associated with Afro-Brazilian ritual practices including *candomblé* [a syncretistic Afro-Brazilian religion that incorporates African and Catholic aspects], which were outlawed by the Brazilian government well into the 20th century, past Carmen’s 1955 death (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 20).

Though samba and associated Afro-Brazilian ritual practices were illegal and socially stigmatic for centuries, by the 1920s many composers, singers, and musicians adopted samba as a musical style (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 23). *Sambistas* [anyone who composes, sings, or plays samba music] by this time included not only people with African heritage but also Euro-Brazilians such as, for example, the popular composer, Noel Rosa (ibid). Although many sambistas such as Carmen did not come from African-descended communities, the musical genre was widely understood to have African origins (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 24). While understood in this way, samba was also recognized to be a blending of European and African rhythms and instrumentation. Music scholars (e.g. Dent 2009, McCann 2004, Vianna 1999 [1995]) have demonstrated that by the 1930s the genre’s blending and ‘African-ness’ contributed to samba’s becoming popularly recognized as a traditional and national art form. Though European born, Carmen’s strong association with African influenced samba lent cultural authenticity to her public image, which (looks-wise) was modern, implicitly white, and Hollywood inspired.

Through their artistry and self-fashioning through dress, Frida Kahlo and Carmen Miranda created public, popular, and glamorous personae that interpreted new ideologies about national identity and racial constructions. In the context of their times and social circles, it was not necessarily cultural appropriation for Frida Kahlo to dress in a range of regional indigenous styles or for Carmen to sing Afro-Brazilian influenced music. Rather the two women were cultural mediators of 20th century modernity (Marxism for Kahlo and consumerism for Carmen) and domestic exoticism, which glamorized and romanticized ‘traditional’ dress forms. Neither had ideal roots conforming to emergent nationalist ideologies about mixed-raceness – Frida Kahlo’s father was a Hungarian Jewish immigrant and Carmen was born in Portugal to Portuguese parents – yet they deployed the social privileges for creative interpretation accorded to artists and performers to represent their nations. Though Frida Kahlo was serious and politically minded while Carmen was playful and apolitical, through public performance and dress both women communicated their interpretations of desirable mixed-raceness. What the two women have in common with each other and with Eva Perón is a powerful and effective agency at self-fashioning a public image through dress.



Figure 2: November 2012 cover of México Vogue adapted from Nickolas Murray's 1939 portrait of the artist, Frida Kahlo

Chapter 1 takes these concepts as its starting point, addressing shifting ideologies about *brasilidade* [Brazilianess] in terms of racial mixing and what was happening in the nation's capital, Rio de Janeiro, in the twenties and thirties. I show that increased consumerism and related urban leisure activities such as beach- and movie-going, significantly shaped Carmen Miranda's path to stardom and self-fashioning as a modern glamorous woman. The look she cultivated in the twenties and most of the thirties functioned similarly to Argentine first lady Eva Perón's forties couture look. In each case the public figure engages fashion and Hollywood glamour to represent a broader national movement that supports consumer culture as signifier of modernity and prosperity. Interestingly, a young, unknown actress named Eva Duarte – the future Evita – was introduced to the famous Brazilian singer while she toured Buenos Aires in 1934 (Castro 2005: 114).



Figure 3: Official 1947 state portrait of Eva Perón, first lady of Argentina (1946-1952)—from the cover of *La Razon de Mi Vida* [The Reason for My Life] by Eva Perón

Since the thirties, the popular trope about Brazilian national identity – at home and abroad – has been that since all Brazilians are *mestiço* [mixed-race], racism does not exist in Brazil. One way this gets reinforced is through the conflation of race and culture. I address this matter in chapter 2, expanding my discussion of the Brazilian cultural context to examine the impact imported Hollywood films had on modern aesthetic sensibilities and shifting ideologies. Through analyses of Carmen's costume designs for her Brazilian films, I demonstrate that the film looks reflected an implicitly white Hollywood aesthetic. As a popularizer of Afro-Brazilian influenced music, however, she effectively became a white envelope for Afro-Brazilian culture. Her glamorous mixing of Afro- and Euro-Brazilian sensibilities culminated in an ironic exoticized 1939 carnival costume ostensibly signifying an Afro-Brazilian woman, the *baiana*. Literally *baiana* means a woman from the state of Bahia. Yet the term is used in Brazil to signify women of African descent principally of Fon and Yoruba West African origins (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 26). Descendants of these African peoples have to the present day managed to maintain discernable aspects of their respective cultures despite persecution by the government, the Catholic Church, and slave masters (Ligiéro 1993). One such cultural manifestation has been through the uniquely Brazilian religious practice *candomblé*, which is characterized by a strong presence of African and Afro-Brazilian women (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 27). These women blended practices and manners of dress from Africa, the Americas, and Europe (ibid).

As early as the 19th century, international visitors to Brazil romanticized the *baiana* for her “beauty, mystery, and sensuality” (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 29). Though there were at that time and continue to be a range of ways for one to dress as a “*baiana*” – for example in the wildly different contexts of Rio de Janeiro carnival or a *candomblé* ritual – there is nevertheless a

history of using the term baiana to signify Afro-Brazilian culture and Afro-Brazilians more generally (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 33).

In the 1920s the baiana as a recognizable costume type began to appear in Rio de Janeiro stage musical revues, most notably as worn by performer Aracy Cortes, a woman of African descent (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 92). At this time the baiana also came to be the subject of highly romanticized samba music lyrics in connection with the portrayal of the Northeastern state, Bahia (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 93). By the time Carmen Miranda debuted her version of the baiana for live performances in late 1938, within Rio de Janeiro the baiana as a costume type was principally worn by “lower-class, predominantly Black and mixed-race persons” (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 95). In creating her version, Carmen borrowed from a number of different baiana fashion traditions (e.g. candomblé practitioner, marketplace vendor) and incorporated her own innovations as well. Though her costume looked unlike anything anyone else had publicly worn – whether carnival participant, candomblé ritual practitioner, produce vendor, or prepared food vendor – her version nevertheless included a sufficient number of already circulating clothing signifiers to make it recognizable as a baiana costume. These clothing signifiers included some found in Brazilian folklorist/artist Cecília Meireles’ Rio de Janeiro baiana illustrations painted between 1926 and 1934, which Carmen is reported to have seen (*ibid*).

Carmen Miranda’s interpretation of the baiana was widely copied by *cariocas* [anyone from Rio de Janeiro] from all walks of life after its film debut in early 1939 in *Banana da terra*. Though we cannot pinpoint precisely why Carmen’s baiana gained such traction including among upper-class Euro-Brazilians who previously would not have worn the costume for carnival, I posit that Carmen’s being Euro-Brazilian herself helped to make the costume more socially

acceptable. She debuted the costume at a time when a national rhetoric was emerging about what constituted Brazilianness. A key tenet of this rhetoric was valorization of ‘tradition’ that was getting located in African and Afro-Brazilian roots. While it is true that Afro-Brazilians and their religious practices were officially persecuted at the time, there was nonetheless a theoretical appreciation for African influences on Brazilian culture such that Brazil was increasingly being conceived of as a place where races and cultures intermingled. Carmen’s overall thirties star image contributed to a shared Brazilian repository that informed what it meant to look and sound Brazilian at a time when racial and aesthetic mixing were becoming part of the national narrative.

In *Hello, Hello Brazil* (2004), Bryan McCann examines 20th century *música popular brasileira* (MPB) [popular Brazilian music] positing that it was a means for people from all walks of life to negotiate modern ideas about *brasilidade*. As one of the thirties’ reigning radio, record, and film stars, Carmen Miranda’s music and image had an impact on such discourses. Her music and films were both deeply connected to carioca carnival, which was then becoming another means for signifying Brazilianness (Vianna 1999 [1995]). As a top-selling recording artist whose ‘look’ was important to her success, she had a presence in a range of media forms that meant her likeness circulated widely via celebrity endorsements, in popular print media, and in film. I show that her public image – both pre- and post-baiana – were indebted at least in part to Hollywood aesthetics, a point no academic literature has thus far addressed.

In chapter 3 I examine what happened to Carmen’s image during her US career spanning from 1939 to 1955. I show that the Afro-Brazilian carnival costume she created and donned for her Broadway debut accrued new meanings in a US context. The costume itself eventually went

through many changes at the hands of Hollywood costume designers while still retaining key elements that were often exaggerated. Where she had enjoyed Brazilian success through a close connection to carnival, in a US context she came to be associated with the carnivalesque by virtue of her performance and appearance. Moreover, in a World War II context she came to signify Latin America more generally.⁴ I look at the performance and dress patterns in her fourteen Hollywood films demonstrating that their distinctiveness within a single film genre, the musical comedy, contributed to her image's durability and easy re-use for parody. I posit that getting framed by carnival and the carnivalesque is essential for the later production and reception of other Carmen examples (i.e. Carmen Drag). The connection I draw between Carmen and carnival and the carnivalesque has received little attention heretofore.

Although Eva Perón, Frida Kahlo, and Carmen Miranda came from different cultural contexts that informed the public personae they crafted (and that others crafted about them), what is common to all three is their use of dress to construct a powerful public image. All three women's images have been widely re-used in popular culture in the US and in Latin America.⁵ In

⁴ It would be interesting to investigate to what extent Miranda's films were distributed internationally after WWII. For example, a well-known Bollywood actress, "Helen," performs a musical number in the 1966 film *Dus Lakh* dressed in a Carmen Miranda-inspired costume. Interestingly, Helen was herself recognized as a kind of racial mix in India, having been born to an Anglo-Indian father and a Burmese mother. Helen's amazing 1966 musical number, which includes a man who strips from his mariachi-inspired costume down to a leotard so that Helen may walk him on a leash, can be viewed on YouTube by entering the search words "[duniya uski sunti hai](#)" (accessed 4/23/08).

⁵ Common post-mortem circulating narratives (e.g., Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita* [premiered 1976], the film *Frida* [2002], the documentary *Bananas is My Business* [1995]) about each of the women use melodramatic tropes about suffering (e.g. cancer for Eva Perón, a debilitating bus wreck for Frida Kahlo, an unhappy marriage for Carmen

chapter 4 I demonstrate the proliferation of Carmen's image re-use and examine the ways it gets deployed to achieve different ends. These examples of what I call Carmen Drag are typically framed as carnivalesque moments or otherwise occur within a carnivalesque genre and allow for a wide range of meaning making within the broader social context. They demonstrate the ease with which her iconic image can be reproduced and flexibly interpreted – at times to reinforce hegemonic discourses and at other times to challenge normative ethnic and gendered expectations. I focus on drag because it is a highly reflexive means for exploring social categories through dress and performance. Before she became a Brazilian star, Carmen routinely and reflexively dressed in costumes that reflected aspiration, parodying, or some form of homage – all aspects of drag broadly characterized as a playful means for exploring social roles. My subjects for analyses include mediated examples in film and television, Halloween costumes, and Carmen Miranda impersonators.

An Interdisciplinary Approach

My approach to this project is rooted in dress studies, which is necessarily an interdisciplinary area of scholarship. My reasons for studying dress emerged from a deeply a personal interest in the topic. Like many girls and women, I have long been keenly aware of the power dress has in negotiating social relationships. I explored this theme first as a theatrical costume designer and next as a museum preservationist for historic clothing artifacts. These experiences prompted my academic interest in examining clothing's meaning. My costume

Miranda), loss, early death, and childlessness to achieve what Lauren Berlant describes as universal feminine emotional understanding/relate-ability (Berlant 2008).

design experience is chiefly in the realm of physical theater where bodily manipulation, movement and gestures, not words, powerfully communicate meaning. It was for this reason I was dissatisfied with Alison Lurie's claim (1981) that clothing is a "language" for communication. Although, as Roland Barthes has posited (1983 [1967]; 2006 [1993]), an article of clothing can carry semiotic significance, context renders its meaning far too variant to disregard contextualizing factors such as the body and sociocultural circumstances; a point I address in my discussion of the turban (chapter 4). Moreover, bodily adornment tends to allow for a high degree of meaning inference. If we are to think of clothing as a communicative form, then it is more accurate to engage Richard Bauman's performance studies approach to verbal art (1984 [1977]). In this way clothing can be understood to be more akin to expressive genres such as poetry or art in that the recipient has a good deal of agency for meaning-making requiring little directive from the creator (Bauman 2001: 80-81). Clothing is like language insofar as it is understood to be an emergent event. Clothing is not like language in the Barthesian sense; that is, the semiotician's categorical meaning assignment for clothing signifiers – e.g. satin to signify five o'clock (Barthes 2006 [1993]: 47). Such an understanding of dress would be woefully inadequate for understanding its complexity and multivalence.

Fashion studies (e.g. Davis 1992) and dress studies engaging performance studies scholarship (e.g. Shukla 2008) has made progress toward considering the social context for dress such that the messiness of human communication and miscommunication are preserved. Which brings us to a range of terms in use and their meanings: costume, appearance, fashion, dress, and body art.

'Costume' has been in use in the English language since the 18th century. The term has

French etymological roots and in its early English usage was meant to indicate the mode of “personal attire and dress” (*Oxford English Dictionary* online, accessed September 27, 2013). It continues to get used in certain contexts (e.g. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute) to indicate clothing generally, though it has become somewhat rarefied as its use to indicate museum clothing collections suggests. I use the term in a more colloquial sense to refer to an outfit meant to characterize “a particular period, person, place, or thing” such as worn for a theatrical performance or during a festival event like Halloween, Purim, or carnival (*Merriam-Webster* online dictionary accessed August 20, 2013). Costume in this sense is arguably a more self-reflexive creation than daily attire but not necessarily. After all, some people put more thought into their daily looks than others. Likewise, not all Halloween costumes are carefully thought out concoctions. All the same, essentially the costume wearer is understood to have self-consciously adorned her or himself with an implication of disguise to appear as something other than what one “actually” is.

As for the term appearance, I avoid it whenever possible as it does not generally take movement into consideration. Carmen Miranda was highly kinetic and a dancer, someone whose portraits always seemed to catch her in mid-motion (Shaw 2013). As such it is especially important that she be examined beyond her appearance to include movement and performance.

With regard to the term fashion, George Simmel (1957) has emphasized its function as a time chronicler per Edward Sapir’s 1931 definition of the term. I put this perspective into dialogue with Benedict Anderson’s notion of imagined communities (1991 [1983]) wherein the nation as identity-maker is a relatively recent phenomenon that allows for shifts in conceptions

of space-time. Fashion and conceptions of the nation speak to each other and can simultaneously create identities as Carmen's earliest baiana did. Her glamorous, domestically exotic carnival costume engaged popular 1930s Brazilian conceptions of race and culture.

One reason fashion is a good chronicler of time is that it is subject to changing tastes and trends. This can happen in any context, but fashion's impact in terms of marking out time in increasingly discrete segments is a relatively recent phenomenon. One reason for this has to do with industrialization and increased availability of inexpensive mass-produced clothing. For this reason fashion is often associated with consumer culture (see for example Thorstein Veblen's 1899 *Theory of the Leisure Class*). Yet fashion is not restricted to consumer-oriented contexts. For example, punk dress emerged from a post-World War II seventies nihilistic British youth movement that rejected mainstream fashion and consumerism. Punk style has managed to be distinctive and recognizable even as it has gone through fashion changes in its over 40 years of existence, reflecting changing tastes and trends. Moreover, as the subcultural dress trend migrates to different cultural contexts – from London to Mexico City – reasons for adopting the punk look and what it means change. I regard the social barometer of fashion – an identity-maker that allows for shifts in conceptions of space-time – as but one component within the larger study of dress.

While there is no agreed-upon way to define 'dress,' I engage Joanne B. Eicher and Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins' approach put forth in their 1992 essay "Definition and Classification of Dress." They use the word dress as a gender-neutral "comprehensive term to identify both direct body changes and items added to the body" (Eicher and Roach-Higgins in Barnes and Eicher 1992: 15). Their essay stresses the importance of meanings understood by the wearer

and the viewer, often not perfectly aligned. Thus they define dress as “an assemblage of body modifications and/or supplements displayed by a person in communicating with other human beings” (Eicher and Roach-Higgins in Barnes and Eicher 1992: 15).

My research has further benefited from Pravina Shukla’s (2008) emphases on material culture and the “merger of will and circumstance” in addressing what she calls “body art.” I like Shukla’s term because, as I mentioned previously, bodily adornment is a form of expression that more closely aligns with poetry or visual art than it does with daily language-based communication. Ultimately, however, I demur from using the term “art” in connection with dress studies. My work aims to reach a broad audience that includes non-academics and I feel that “art” carries so much cultural baggage, which can potentially confuse or distract from the areas under investigation. In the end I find the term dress – though for some it implies gender – is less controversial than body art. How I use the term dress is really no different than how Shukla uses body art and this project is certainly indebted to her scholarship.

As a folklorist, Shukla engages performance theory and notes in her study of Indian women’s dress that “the act of seeing is seldom neutral” (Shukla 2008: 424). Any adorned body – whether in the context of a staged performance or on the street – subjects itself to viewer assessment for effectiveness (Bauman 1984 [1977]). Some bodies – such as women’s and performers’ – are subjected to greater scrutiny than others increasing the likelihood for dress failures. By dress failure I mean failure to meet social expectations for the context.

Where mediated dress is concerned, there has for some time been scholarship devoted to the study of costume and film that investigates costume’s meaning in order to better understand a character (Gaines and Herzog 1990). From such studies have come psychoanalytic

approaches to understanding costume's meaning in film (Bruzzi 1997). Falling within the purview of film studies, the psychoanalytic approach treats the film as 'text' for close examination to understand how characters get constructed. While my research does include close analyses of costume in film, I am principally concerned with relating costume's meaning to the broader social context. I ask how and why the sociocultural context informs dress and how and why a film costume can in turn inform the culture within which it is received. I treat mediated examples as performances that, though recorded, change meaning depending upon the context in which they are viewed. I find that Carmen Miranda's distinctive performance and look—platform shoes, turban, bared midriff, exaggerated jewelry—can be bounded off, decontextualized, and recontextualized. As an icon she is easily reproduced and made transportable becoming identifiable and intelligible to different co-creators of meaning. In this way I extend the insights from performance studies – itself influenced by linguistic anthropology – to include the study of dress as an expressive mode of communication.

Research Methods

My research for this project began with a brief exploratory visit in December 2007 to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during which time I visited the Carmen Miranda Museum (Museu Carmen Miranda – MCM) to see the exhibits and to introduce myself to museum staff. I returned to the city for three months in 2008. That summer I was enrolled in Portuguese language and Brazilian culture classes through a Duke University overseas study program. For seven weeks I attended classes Monday through Thursday and on Fridays spent the day at the Carmen Miranda Museum. Days at the museum consisted of my looking through the archives. Their holdings

included Carmen-related newspaper clippings from the 1950s to the present, exhibition-related materials, biographies, artwork, and assorted Carmen-related ephemera. Given my professional experience as the former Collection Manager for Costumes and Textiles at the Chicago History Museum, I was also allowed supervised access to the clothing artifacts. At that time the MCM's artifact collection included 65 clothing objects, 338 accessories, 60 personal objects (e.g. religious charms), 1,500 original photographs, sheet music, disc recordings, films about Carmen Miranda, and assorted original 2D materials (e.g. show programs, telegrams). While my perusal of the collections was by no means exhaustive, I did have an opportunity to at least view all of the storage areas. My first summer at the museum was intended to be ethnographic in anticipation of a longer ethnographic research project. While most of the data I collected on the museum culture did not make its way into this work, I imagine that taking an ethnographer's approach informed the final product.

After the Duke classes ended, I remained in Rio de Janeiro for an additional five weeks during which time I increased my visits to the MCM to 2-3 times per week. I also conducted research in the newspaper and magazine archives at the Biblioteca Nacional and at the Casa Rui Barbosa. My research at these two institutions focused on film and performance in Rio de Janeiro in the 1930s and to a lesser extent the 1920s. With the ethnography project in mind, I spent a good deal of time talking with MCM staff and conducted an interview with the museum director, César Balbi. I also talked informally with Carmen Miranda Brazilian documentary filmmaker Helena Solberg and interviewed the performer's niece, Carmen de Carvalho Guimarães.

By 2009 it was clear that a yearlong ethnography project at the MCM was not going to be

feasible for me, so I began exploring other possible avenues for ethnographic research. I had been interested in performance studies as a means for understanding the communicative possibilities and limitations of dress and so an ethnography was more appealing to me than a strictly text-based project. In my exploratory research I discovered that Carmen Miranda and Carmen-inspired commercially produced Halloween costumes were widely available. I wondered whether “Carmen” would be popular at Halloween events. Since New Orleans is known for its street festivities, I decided to spend the last weekend of October 2009 “hanging out” in the French Quarter. While there was too much street chaos that Halloween weekend to do anything more than request photographs of the different costumed revelers, it was nonetheless a useful exercise. Most significantly, I learned that Carmen Miranda was still culturally relevant enough to be a costume inspiration.

The Halloween experience prompted an investigation into drag club acts in Chicago. I contacted several clubs including one that caters to tourists, “The Baton.” The Baton’s manager told me that no one had been doing Carmen on a regular basis since at least the nineties. At his suggestion, I began contacting businesses that hire out celebrity impersonators for special events. That winter I searched for Carmen Miranda celebrity impersonators in New York City, Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. The San Francisco Bay Area proved to be the most “fruitful” in terms of performers who at least occasionally impersonate Carmen. With four performers expressing some willingness to participate in my project I spent August 2010 to February 2011 conducting participant-observation research in the San Francisco Bay Area. Unfortunately for my project, people dropped out, moved across the country, and otherwise redirected the kind of involvement they wanted to have. In the end my data was limited to only

several Carmen Miranda impersonation performances and many other non-Carmen performances. I conducted interviews with the two participants most involved with the project. My analyses of their Carmen Drags appears in chapter 4.

At the end of February 2011 I returned to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil where I remained for eight weeks with a ten-day excursion to Argentina where I visited the Eva Perón Museum. My aim in Brazil was to be a participant-observer of carnival festivities while I looked for traces of Carmen Miranda's influence on the celebrations. I participated in public street revelries and private events for approximately ten days. During my time in Rio, I also devoted one to two days per week to time in the archives at the MCM. At the museum I observed their student educational programs and conducted further archival research. I also spent two afternoons and one evening with a private collector of Carmen-related material, Fabiano Canosa. Fabiano is a Brazilian film and music curator who divides his time between New York City and Rio de Janeiro. He was curator for an exhibition on Carmen – “Carmen Miranda para sempre” [Carmen Miranda Forever] – that opened in 2005 at the Museu de Arte Moderna [Museum of Modern Art] in Salvador, Bahia. Though Fabiano would not allow me to record our conversations and demurred from anything that seemed too much like an interview, we did spend some time talking about Carmen and her cultural significance. I photo documented all the Carmen-related materials in his Rio home including his notes on Carmen. Most of the items in his collection are what is referred to in museum parlance as 2D; that is, flat and usually paper-based. His collection includes Carmen-related ephemera, photo reproductions, sheet music, movie theater lobby cards, and clippings. While the material I saw did not add much new information to what I had already gathered, I very much enjoyed my conversations with Fabiano and expect that some of

his observations about Carmen's cultural significance in Brazil have informed my assessments.

Of Carmen's Brazilian films, only one remains in its entirety, *Alô alô carnaval!* [Hello, Hello, carnival!] (1936). By the time I returned to Rio de Janeiro in 2011, I had seen the surviving fragments from her other Brazilian films and all her Hollywood films many times over. Over the past several years I have watched numerous film and television Carmen impersonations and collected print and advertising media examples of Carmen Drag. I include some of the most memorable examples of Carmen Drag in Appendix B.

Contributions to Existing Literature

Given Carmen Miranda's tremendous success in thirties Brazil and in the United States in the forties and fifties, there is surprisingly little academic or popular literature on the significance of her star image. There are several popular biographies: Cássio Barsante's *Carmen Miranda* (1994), Ruy Castro's *Carmen: Uma biografia* (2005), and Martha Gil-Montero's *Brazilian Bombshell* (1989). Gil-Montero's is the only one in English while Castro's is the most comprehensive and thoroughly researched. The first notable, lengthy academic intervention was José Ligiéro Coelho's doctoral dissertation for New York University in the Department of Performance Studies, "Carmen Miranda: An Afro-Brazilian Paradox" (1998). "Zeca's" dissertation examines Carmen Miranda's performance style as a whole as it articulates Afro-Brazilian culture. His work examines Carmen's appearance and performance style in order to demonstrate the impact of African culture on Brazilian culture overall. My dissertation extends his research – particularly from Carmen's Brazil period (1909 to 1939) – to consider what it meant for Carmen to engage Afro-Brazilian culture in the 1930s.

Much of the academic literature pertaining to Carmen Miranda focuses on her US career, which spanned from 1939 to 1955. Contributions include Shari Roberts' 1993 article for *Cinema Journal*, “The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat’: Carmen Miranda, a Spectacle of Ethnicity.” Roberts posits that Carmen Miranda was principally a comic grotesque figure whose racist stereotyped persona helped to support US objectives for harmony in the Americas during World War II. What I find most useful in Roberts’ work is her acknowledgement that Carmen performed a self-parody during her US career, a point I expand by demonstrating that the star had already engaged in a parodying performance style during her Brazilian career in the 1930s.

Priscilla Peña Ovalle devotes a chapter to Carmen Miranda in *Dance and the Hollywood Latina: Race, Sex, and Stardom* (2011). In “Carmen Miranda Shakes it for the Nation” Peña Ovalle engages Roberts’ position about performing an ethnic stereotype and further asserts that Carmen enjoyed an “in-between” status in terms of racial categorization in both Brazil and the United States. In Brazil Carmen enjoyed the privileges of whiteness though ultimately, says Peña Ovalle, she was not white enough in the United States. According to the author, Carmen came to be aligned more closely with blackness than whiteness in the US. My research has yielded different results in terms of Carmen’s racial and ethnic categorizations in Brazil and the United States. In chapter 2 I show that while Carmen sang in a musical style associated with Afro-Brazilians, she clearly crafted a public image that engaged Euro-Brazilian beauty ideals. The star was part of an emergent thirties racial and cultural blending rhetoric that did not include “in-betweenness” as a way of being Brazilian. In-betweenness suggests a racial binary that did not align with the ways in which modern Brazilians were then fashioning Brazilianness. While there is certainly evidence that racism in Brazil existed then and now, in-betweenness as Peña Ovalle

uses the term, suggests a US-orientation in terms of thinking about race. I find that it does not translate so easily to Brazilian culture. Peña Ovalle posits that Carmen Miranda was associated with cinematic blackness in the US principally because she wore turbans, a point I disprove in chapter 3.

Other literature on Carmen Miranda includes Brazilian scholar, Ana Rita Mendonça's *Carmen Miranda foi a Washington* (1999), which examines Carmen's role as unofficial cultural ambassador to the United States during World War II. In this historic survey, Mendonça demonstrates that Carmen Miranda was unable to avoid reinforcing US stereotypes of Latin America. What I have found most valuable in Mendonça's work is her assertion that in thirties Brazil Carmen Miranda represented a balancing of black and white culture. In the thirties, says Mendonça, Carmen's Euro-Brazilian looks paired with a musical style widely understood to have Afro-Brazilian roots provided an image that well aligned with emergent popular and official rhetoric, which was then constructing the popular myth that Brazil was a nation of mixed-race and culturally mixed people. I have engaged Mendonça's position to articulate my argument in chapter 2 that Carmen Miranda constituted a glamorous modern figure that was suitably qualified to manufacture domestic exoticism in the form of a baiana costume.

In a survey of Brazilian cultural history, *Brazil Imagined: 1500 to the Present* (2008), Darlene Sadlier devotes a chapter to "Good Neighbor Brazil" in which she considers Carmen's screen persona during WWII. Sadlier asserts that Carmen functioned primarily as a comic ethnic "other" whose image was circulated to promote good will towards Latin America. In chapter 3 I engage Sadlier's position in order to situate Carmen's star persona historically.

As of this writing (December 2013), the most recent contribution to the existing body of

literature on Carmen Miranda is Lisa Shaw's *Carmen Miranda* (2013) for the British Film Institute (BFI). An academic who specializes in early Brazilian film, Shaw addresses a popular audience for this first installment of BFI's "Film Stars" series. My work is indebted to Shaw's observations regarding patterns in Carmen's performance style throughout her film career. *Carmen Miranda: Ripe for Imitation* engages Shaw's work and expands the discussion on dress.

Additional Notes on Terms Used

Throughout *Carmen Miranda: Ripe for Imitation* I refer to the performer's 'look.' I use 'look' interchangeably with 'dress' for stylistic variety. In referring to Carmen as a star and at times as a celebrity, I refrain from engaging in debates about the differences between "stars" and "celebrities" (see Langer 1981; Fisk 1987: 149-78) as the subtleties are not essential for my discussion. My use of the term star draws upon Richard Dyer's foundational star studies work, which characterizes stars as those participating in a production system that are recognizable for their images (Dyer 1998 [1979]). An image, according to Dyer, is more than simply a visual sign. It constitutes a "complex configuration of visual, verbal and aural signs" that is particular to the individual and includes a unique name associated with a particular face, personal narrative, and specific style (i.e. of acting, dress, and so on) (Dyer 1998 [1979]: 34).

Whenever possible I avoid using the term "American" to refer to people from the United States as it carries an inherent chauvinism that disregards the rest of the Western Hemisphere's American peoples. Nonetheless there are times when other expressions become too cumbersome to use and so I reluctantly say American to mean people from the United States.

Another terminology challenge I have faced is “Latino,” as it gets used to connote so many different ethnic and national categories. For example, some Brazilians living in the United States do not like to be put into this category as for them it refers only to people from Spanish-speaking countries. Further complicating the matter is where a person is born. I understand Latino or Latina to signify someone born in the US that is of Latin American descent while a Latin American is someone born in Latin America, regardless of where they live. In a US context, all of these different groups are frequently lumped together as one undifferentiated mass. Though it is unwieldy, I use the expression “Latin/o/a Americans” to encompass “Latinos” and “Latinas” – those born in the US of Latin American origin – and “Latin Americans” to describe those born in a Latin American country. I do not use Latino/a to refer to people from the Iberian Peninsula as some do. Yet I must make one great exception with regard to Carmen Miranda. In a US context the Portuguese-born performer is commonly associated with Latin/a/o Americans and thus I discuss her according to these terms.

One of the things that drew me to study Carmen Miranda had to do with the way she complicates nationality and ethnicity, though this does make it difficult to situate her in different contexts. When I discuss her life in Brazil, I define her as ‘white’ and Euro-Brazilian, which is how she was perceived within the culture’s broad and complex color spectrum. In a US context, she ceases to be perceived as white and thus I must shift to categorizing her as Latin/a American. While Latin/a American actually says nothing about a person’s racial or ethnic make-up, in the US the category is widely understood to imply ‘darker’ people and non-whiteness. As others have demonstrated, Carmen’s US career was founded on exaggerated ideas of ethnicity and femininity (Ligiéro Coelho 1998; Roberts 1993). Recent studies have preferred to call her “in-

between" since in the US there has historically been a tendency to place people within a black/white binary (Ovalle 2011). Unconvincingly, the "in-between" categorization maintains that Carmen Miranda aligned more closely with blackness than whiteness in a US context. I argue rather, that Carmen's playful performance and costumes paired with her carnival and carnivalesque associations afforded her different kinds of social movement in Brazil and the US.

Chapter 1:

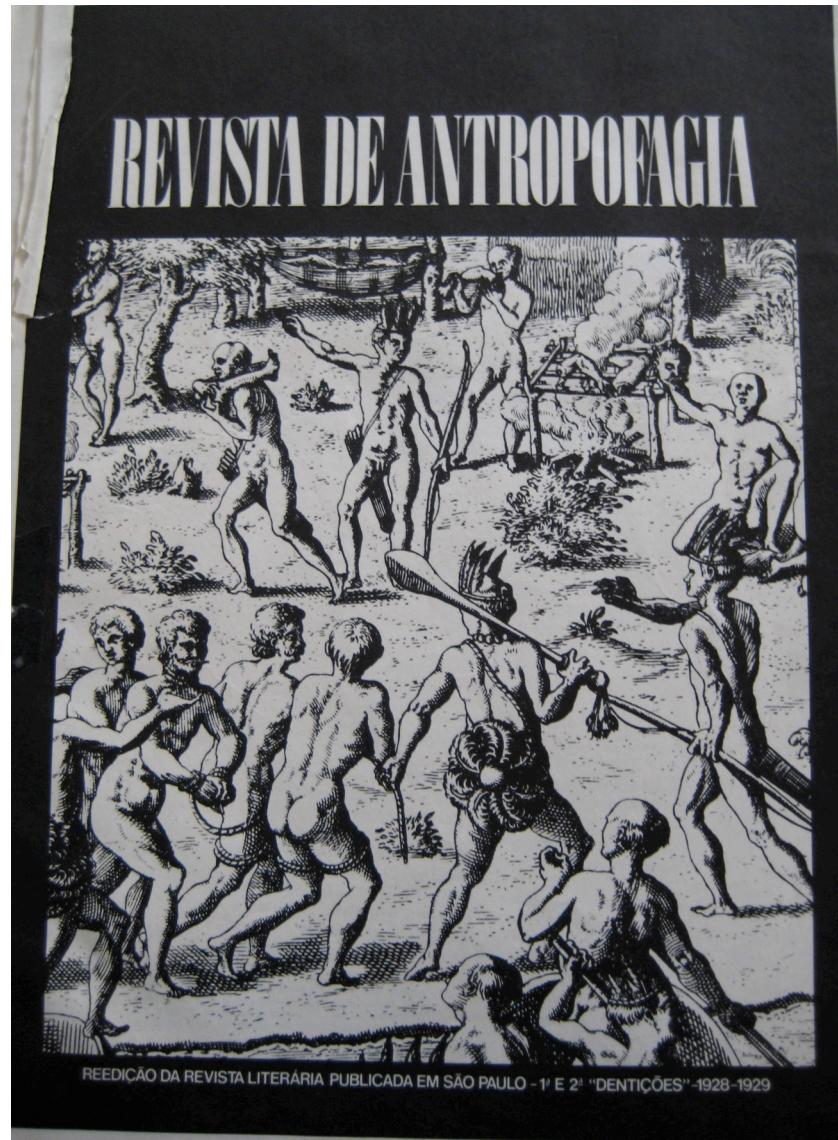
'Clara Boa,' a Carioca 'It' Girl

Within Brazil and abroad it is common to describe the inhabitants of South America's largest country as racially and culturally hybrid. What has become a stubbornly persistent national mantra was profoundly shaped by twentieth century Brazilian popular culture—music, film, and an early domestic star culture. Carmen Miranda emerged within this context to become a cultural mediator – a mediator of racial constructions and the associated cultural qualities (e.g. blackness and the ability to dance).

This chapter situates Carmen Miranda historically as she came of age in the 1920s. I address what was happening in Brazil in terms of emerging ideas about *brasilidade* [Brazilianess] and modernity describing Carmen's engagement with these factors. I show the connections between *brasilidade* and modernity to twenties consumerism, circulating media, Hollywood aesthetics, and an urban beach culture. I demonstrate that these different factors coalesced to inform the image young Carmen created for herself. By sketching her early biography I show that Carmen was particularly well positioned to mediate across the social spectrum. Her ability to do so would inform her star role in the 1930s when she participated in the development and circulation of emergent conceptions of *brasilidade*.

The chapter begins by identifying significant cultural currents in twenties Brazil then moves to a consideration of imported Hollywood style's impact in creating a domestic star culture. I next address the emergence of Rio de Janeiro's beach culture and what it signified. The chapter's second half situates Carmen's personal biography within this cultural landscape.

Figure 4: 1975 reproduction of the *Revista de Antropofagia* [Cannibalist Magazine] cover, originally published 1928-1929



Brasilidade

Emergent 20th century ideas about *brasilidade* and national identity had a profound impact on Carmen Miranda's Brazilian success in the 1930s. Moreover, the ideologies that contributed to her popular appeal in turn were reinforced by her iconicity; that is, her recognizable widely circulating image. The story of her rise to fame is rooted in politics and the country's search for a national identity as it sought to escape the specter of a colonial past. A former Portuguese colony, Brazil received independence in 1822. Portuguese monarch João VI had returned to Portugal in 1821, leaving his son, Pedro, in command. After his father had left Brazil, Pedro seceded the colony from Portugal. In so doing he created a constitutional monarchy and named himself Emperor Pedro I of Brazil. The Brazilian Empire existed until 1889, when Pedro I's son, Emperor Pedro II, left Brazil for Europe resulting in a bloodless end to the constitutional monarchy. From 1889 into the 20th century, Brazil continued to function as a republican state run by landowning elites. The oligarchy maintained its power through fixed elections and other nefarious methods (Williams 2001: 3). Through the 1920s, those elected came principally from the wealthy states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais.

While wealthy landowners controlled Brazilian politics, an avant-garde artistic movement took shape in São Paulo. In the 1920s Brazil experienced a modernist cultural renaissance that included addressing issues of race and nationhood (Green 1999: 69). Left wing intellectuals and artists grappled with what made Brazil, Brazil even as they questioned the political establishment. This *movimento modernista* [modernist movement] included such literary figures as Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade (no relation) who challenged Eurocentric elites' unwillingness to recognize—never mind celebrate—widespread miscegenation in

Brazil. Through their art, the modernistas acknowledged valuable cultural contributions that indigenous and African-descended Brazilians had made. Symbolic of this movement was the 1922 Week of Modern Art held in São Paulo where participants strove to create ‘authentic’ Brazilian culture through their art. Among the different ideas to emerge from the movement was the notion of *antropofagia* [anthropophagy] as cultural authenticator; that is, the metaphorical cannibalization of European culture for a Brazilian context. In other words, there was a notion that European (or any other) culture could be consumed or ingested and in the process be made Brazilian. The idea was an ironic response to foreign characterizations of Brazilians. Since the colonial era, Europeans had characterized native Brazilians – both in pictures and in words – as savage cannibals. One of the most famous such depictions was in the German explorer Hans Staden’s illustrated 1556 book recounting his experiences while held captive by the anthropophagic Tupinambá indigenous group. The modernistas embraced such European-created images – even putting woodcuts from Staden’s book on their magazine cover – as a means for re-imagining *brasilidade*.

In his “Manifesto Antropófago,” [Cannibal Manifesto] (1928) published in *Revista de Antropofagia* [Cannibalist Magazine], Oswald de Andrade addresses the documented historical occurrence of cannibalism in Brazil with pride rather than shame. Though actual cannibalism was not nearly so widespread as Europeans made it out to be, the modernistas acknowledged its historical occurrence and playfully subverted outsiders’ depictions. Mockingly and with tongue firmly in cheek, cultural cannibalism was meant to be an ironic acknowledgement that

Brazilians are ‘cannibals.’⁶ Oswald characterizes Brazil as a former colony with diverse elements, such that all cultures and languages are available for consumption (Young 1998: 6). The movimento modernista marked an ideological shift away from privileging white elites and their Euro-centric culture. The movement called instead for celebrating Brazilian racial and cultural diversity such that Brazilians should *actively* cannibalize all cultures. Says Oswald in his manifesto:

“Tupi or not Tupi that is the question” (in English in original)

The line is ironic and exemplary. The Tupi indigenous Brazilians were documented to have been cannibals, while the phrasing itself is cannibalized from Shakespeare.⁷

Though the movement did not have an immediate impact on the broader cultural landscape, it nonetheless reflected changing conceptions about what it was to be Brazilian.

⁶ This kind of ironic response to outside imperialist impositions is characteristic of Brazilian humor. In July 2013 Brazilian newspapers began reporting that the US National Security Agency (NSA) had been putting Brazilians under surveillance collecting emails, text messages, and other mediated communications. By September 2013, Brazilian novelist Vanessa Barbara wrote in *The New York Times* that she and her friends had taken to embedding nonsense or deliberately misleading messages in their email exchanges such as “stop holding my heart hostage, my emotions are like a blasting of fundamentalist explosion” (“Have a Nice Day, N.S.A.” *The New York Times* September 26, 2013).

⁷ Most of the manifesto is written in Portuguese, though foreign phrases and expressions are incorporated as they are here putting into practice the very cannibalism that the modernists proposed.

Hollywood Comes to Rio

Nearly two decades before the working-class born Carmen Miranda appeared in her first Hollywood film, *Down Argentine Way* (1940), she was a Brazilian shop girl who dressed according to Hollywood style. At the time Rio de Janeiro was the nation's capital and cultural center. The port city was a point of entry and exit for people, ideas, and technologies. The city developed rapidly in the twenties and expanded its offerings of popular amusements for a burgeoning consumer class. Cinemas were constructed throughout the city, beach going increased thanks to easier auto access to the *zona sul* [south section of the city], and record production studios were built.

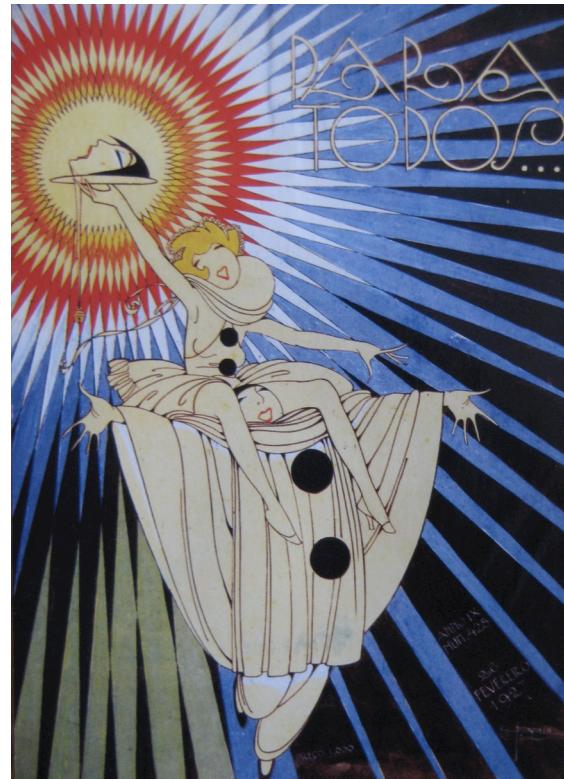
Like many young *cariocas* [plural for a Rio de Janeiro resident] who came of age in the twenties, Carmen sunbathed at *zona sul* beaches where a seaside culture was emerging (Galli O'Donnell 2011). She read lifestyle magazines and went to the movies where mostly Hollywood films were screened. The increased circulation of Hollywood style via films and magazines was soon reflected in the culture.

By the time Carmen began working as a shop girl in the mid-twenties, she and other *cariocas* began to mimic Hollywood dress styles (Galli O'Donnell 2011). Her short waved hair, cosmetics, and clothing gave Carmen a modern appearance and she flaunted 'It' as she entered magazine contests that sought future starlets (Castro 2005: 36; Shaw 2013: 11). Though unknown and working class, she was determined at least to look like a star. Using her sewing savvy, the young woman made many of her own clothes and posed for studio portraits that reflected Hollywood aesthetic sensibilities. The photographs belie a familiarity with Hollywood styles replete with spit curls, Clara Bow painted lips, and self-aware coquettish modern poses.



Figure 5: Carmen Miranda dresses as Clara Bow in a studio portrait taken before she achieved fame, ca. 1927 (Barsante 1994)

Figure 6: The February 26, 1927, edition of *Para todos* [For All]



Carmen's self-fashioning demonstrated an appreciation for Hollywood style as well as the tools at her disposal for negotiating women's changing social roles in the rapidly modernizing Rio de Janeiro. As Brazil industrialized, women began to engage in 'un-ladylike' behavior such as smoking in public and working outside the home. While Brazilian women did not gain full voting rights until 1932, the harbinger of things to come could be found in magazines of the day. *Fon-fon* [Honk Honk], *Para todos* [For All], and other lifestyle magazines from the era were filled with images and articles that captured rich, urban-dwelling, flappers' activities. Illustrations and photographs documented young society women sunbathing in imported swimsuits, showing their legs at clubs, and wearing their hair bobbed. While less affluent women in more remote areas of the country might not have been able to engage in many flapper practices, the nationally circulating magazines conveyed a sense that at least in the capital women were behaving and dressing in ways that interrogated gendered expectations. The term 'It' even entered the Brazilian Portuguese lexicon un-translated and retaining its meaning of indefinable sex appeal. 'It' as portrayed in popular magazines in the United States and Brazil was implicitly something that rich young white women could possess. Though Carmen was working class, she had the advantage of being Euro-Brazilian and living in a major city. Geography and skin color along with creativity and personal resourcefulness meant that unlike many other women, she had opportunities to possess 'It' and to become a Brazilian star.

Marketing Star Culture

After World War I, Hollywood established itself as a powerful economic force, domestically and internationally. Star actors and actresses helped propel this economic success. As film scholar Richard Dyer has noted, stars became lucrative commodities in high financial

stakes Hollywood film production (Dyer 1998 [1979]). Women stars especially were important in the 1920s and 1930s for their role promoting products advertised to women consumers (Berry 2000; Eckert 1990; Herzog 1990). By the end of the 1920s US marketers had determined that a product was made more desirable by virtue of a connection to female Hollywood stars and style (Eckert 1990: 107). The growing cosmetics industry had an especially powerful connection to Hollywood, democratizing beauty and teaching female consumers that anyone could be a star, or at least look like one with the right products (Peiss 1998).

The Hollywood aesthetic was ultimately a commercial one driven by economic interests (Maltby 2003 [1995]: 46). Yet there were other factors at stake that had sociocultural ramifications. Questions that arise when considering commercial Hollywood aesthetics include: What does it mean when some images are created and circulated over others? What impact do different conduits for image circulation have on a star's broader sociocultural meaning?

Stars are not simply performers. They are people recognizable for their images (Dyer 1998 [1979]). An image, says Dyer, is more than just a visual sign. It constitutes a "complex configuration of visual, verbal and aural signs" (Dyer 1998 [1979]: 34). A star image is particular to the individual and includes a unique name we associate with a particular face, personal narrative, and specific style (i.e. of acting, dress, and so on). These qualities taken together make the star easy to recognize regardless of film role. According to Dyer this is why character-type and star persona often converge, blurring the distinction between film role and the individual.⁸ Jane Gaines adds that a star's imagined personality may conceal what is often a caricature derived from the performer's physical body, such as Greta Garbo's "old world repose" to articulate her famous slouch (Gaines 1990: 201).

The star system within the United States had its antecedent in popular theater (primarily vaudeville), though it did not become essential to show business until the economics of Hollywood film production made it so in the late 1910s and 1920s. Hollywood studios manufactured the star system just as the US economy was growing, when new industries (e.g., electric refrigeration, radio, the automobile) paired with modern advertising meant consumers were offered ever more ways to spend money (Marchand 1985: 2). Widely circulated consumer statistics from the 1920s and 1930s claimed that women made 80 to 90 per cent of all household purchases (Eckert 1990: 119). Unsurprisingly then, women became advertisers' targeted audience. Nimble and modern, the Hollywood motion picture industry emerged as one of the most potent forces in capitalist culture to promote consumerism (Eckert 1990: 121), especially where fashion and personal care products were concerned.

Economic growth had propelled the Hollywood star system in the late 1910s and 1920s. In the 1930s a similar phenomenon helped to create Brazil's star system. Factors specific to that country and its global engagement shaped how Brazilian stars were produced, circulated, and consumed. Michael Warner's "Publics and Counterpublics" (2005) provides a useful lens for considering Brazilian and US star systems. Warner describes "publics" as reflexively constituted social groups, comprised of strangers that exist only insofar as they are addressable as a group (Warner 2005). Addressable groups are comprised of individuals who may participate in multiple groups. As such, a number of different publics contribute to generating a star's cultural significance. Publics shaping Carmen Miranda's changing meaning have included Brazilian citizens, moviegoers, cariocas, and people who listen to the radio, to name a few. In the 1930s, new publics were emerging that facilitated Carmen's Brazilian star status.

Shapers of Modern Sensibilities

These new publics had begun to take shape in the 1920s as a result of economic changes, which affected leisure activities, lifestyles, and practices. In particular, beach going, living in cities (especially Rio de Janeiro), and increased consumerism were important factors. Within 1920s Rio de Janeiro, these publics overlapped. The new, urban lifestyle was popularized and legitimized through extensive coverage in Rio-based, nationally circulating magazines. It is impossible to disengage one of these publics—beach going, movie going as an outgrowth of leisure consumerism, lifestyle magazine reading—from the other in connection to emergent *brasilidade* at the time. They expanded concurrently for related reasons. Meanwhile lifestyle magazines addressed the beach going and movie going publics and those publics that would have liked to belong to such groups. Several things happened in Rio de Janeiro, the nation's capital at the time, which brought about these changes.

First, an aristocratic beach culture developed rapidly (Galli O'Donnell 2011). This culture was centered principally in the *zona sul* area where a tunnel completed in 1892 connected Copacabana to the city center.⁸ Easier access to the beautiful *zona sul* beaches led to the establishment of hotels like the Copacabana Palace Hotel (1923), which could accommodate tourists. Additionally high-density apartment buildings were constructed, which contributed to the rise of a growing white-collar community (Velho 1975: 15). Locally, nationally, and internationally, the *zona sul* became a desirable destination for its beach culture.

Within Brazil, *zona sul* as a modern leisure destination and as a high status residential neighborhood gained currency among magazine reading publics. Popular Brazilian women's

⁸ The three principal beach neighborhoods in the *zona sul* are Copacabana, Ipanema, and Leme.

magazines in particular emphasized cities—specifically Rio de Janeiro—as centers of modernity (Galli O'Donnell 2011: 107). Many of these magazines (e.g. *Careta*, *Fon-fon*, *Selecta*, *O Malho*, and *Para todos*) were published in Rio and included extensive beach-oriented photographs and illustrations that participated in visually constructing a modern sensibility (Oliveira 2010: 8, cited in Galli O'Donnell 2011: 107). Among the available circulating titles, *Beira-mar* [Beach Front] was an important society and lifestyle magazine. Like other magazines in the genre, *Beira-mar* was well illustrated and included coverage of beach culture as well as fashion, sports, photography, movies, and automobiles. Moreover, the magazine's title paired with its advertising for Rio de Janeiro shops reinforced for readers that modernity was located in the city and at the beach, particularly in zona sul (Galli O'Donnell 2011). *Beira-mar* readers learned that the modern lifestyle was associated with the beach and consumerism.

In twenties North America and Europe the rich had become interested in physical fitness and sunbathing; a trend that was increasingly popular among Brazilian elites too. The well heeled engaged in beach activities such as swimming and sunbathing, as beautifully portrayed in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* (written in the 1920s and published in 1934).⁹ The tanned aesthetic came about as a result and coincided with medical endorsement of the sun's health giving properties (Mendes and de la Haye 1999: 67), which further fueled the sunbathing craze.

In twenties Brazil, a sculpted and tanned *white* body – skin darkened by the sun rather than melanin – signified that one belonged to the upper classes (Galli O'Donnell 2011: 201). An

⁹ In *Tender is the Night*, the rich and glamorous American expatriates, Dick and Nicole Diver, pass their time moving from one French beach to another.

athletic body was part of the ideal physique and by the twenties, practices for toning the body included public exercise on the beach (Galli O'Donnell 2011: 207).¹⁰ Such a public display in a fashionable location was desirable because athletic, sporting bodies were considered a mark of civilization and belonging to modern society (Dunning and Elias 1992 cited in Galli O'Donnell 2011: 201, fn.21). The *corpo praiano* [beach body]—tanned (implicitly white), healthy, athletic, and youthful—had become the ideal carioca body. By the 1930s a similar aesthetic was valued in Nazi Germany, which filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl insidiously and expertly captured in her state supported documentaries. Brazilian anthropologist Julia Galli O'Donnell suggests that such eugenic notions can also be implicated in white carioca elites' valuing of the *corpo praiano* (Galli O'Donnell 2001: 210-11). So while avant-garde modernistas celebrated cultural cannibalism and Brazil's diverse peoples, other very different popular trends were emerging in the nation's capital.

According to popular twenties magazines, one vital way to be a consumer and thus to be modern, was to cultivate Hollywood style sensibilities. Two factors at the time contributed to this idea: greater exhibition of Hollywood films and increased accessibility. After WWI, Hollywood films had a stronger presence in Brazil than in the past and increasingly shaped carioca tastes in music (namely jazz) and fashion (Galli O'Donnell 2011: 218). Prior to WWI, from

¹⁰ In the 21st century a body cult in Rio de Janeiro remains visible and strong, especially at many of the popular zona sul beaches in Ipanema such as *posto 8* and *posto 9*. People exercise and play sports regularly on the beach wearing only swimsuits. Another 21st century means for drawing attention to the beach body is through tattooing. People of all ages (excluding children) can be spotted sporting tattoos in Rio de Janeiro. Henna artists troll the beaches with flash art for those who want more temporary body art.

1900 to 1912, Brazilian films had dominated the market and were a leisure activity that few beyond the urban elite could afford to enjoy. Unlike in North America and Europe where early movie going was associated with the lower classes, movies in Brazil did not reach a broad audience spectrum until it began importing films. By the teens North American and European companies had begun making inroads into the Brazilian market, setting new standards for production expectations (Johnson and Stam 1995 [1982]: 22). At the same time increased industrialization transformed movie going into a more affordable leisure activity available to the Brazilian masses (ibid). By 1927, 88.3% of films shown in Brazil—and initially received in Rio de Janeiro—were US made (Thompson 1985: 139). At the time, cinemas were opening up rapidly in the *centro* [central] and *zona sul* neighborhoods, especially in Copacabana (Galli O'Donnell 2011: 210, 219). Hollywood popular culture came to be enjoyed by people across the class spectrum and had an important influence on style.

Where there were cinemas, people could go to the movies. Where there were beaches, one could sunbathe. For those who did not have regular access to cinemas or beaches, there were the magazines such as *Beira-mar*. These periodicals offered synopses of Hollywood films and were richly illustrated with celebrity photo spreads and film stills. Although such lifestyle magazines had been established as early as 1907 when *Fon-fon* was first published, it was not until the 1920s that they began to dedicate greater space to Rio beach culture and to Hollywood films and style.

The influence of 1920s *zona sul* beach culture, Rio-based magazines, and Hollywood film style were profoundly signified in the Brazilian flapper. Like her US counterpart, she was both a product and symbol of modernity. As in other parts of the developed world, technology,

modernity, and urbanization helped to change women's social roles. *Fon-fon, Para todos*, and other similar periodicals from the era are filled with images and articles suggesting that Brazilian flappers were a common phenomenon among the rich and something to aspire to among the less privileged.

As in the United States, consumerism became a way for women to challenge gendered expectations. The Brazilian magazines' implicit message was that buying power provided one with the means to be modern and independent. Of course, consumerism as a symbol of modernity was not limited to women. One conspicuous way for men in particular to demonstrate wealth was via car ownership. The title of one popular magazine, *Fon-fon*—an onomatopoeia whose English equivalent is “honk honk”—suggests that the automobile was a further means for defining modern social life. In addition to providing a public way to display wealth, cars increased people's mobility while creating new spaces to navigate changing social norms. In Elinor Glyn's *This Passion Called Love* (published in the United States in 1925), the author cautions young women against drinking and indulging in “automobile petting parties.” The urbane, popular author—credited with coining the term ‘It’ to indicate some indescribable sex appeal—suggests in *This Passion* that the automobile is useful for creating new opportunities for a woman to be alone with a man. While she regards this as desirable, Glyn warns that dangers may come from drinking and seclusion. In Brazil such modern ‘petting parties’ are a documented twenties phenomenon. According to Carmen biographer Ruy Castro, the aspiring star had her first sexual experience in a car (Castro 2005: 29).

It was within this context that Carmen came of age. I devote the remainder of the chapter to examining her personal biography and situating her within this environment to show

how the daughter of immigrants became an early star and an important influencer of popular discourses about *brasilidade*.

On the Path to Stardom

The Early Years

Maria do Carmo Miranda da Cunha was born in Portugal on February 9, 1909, the second child of Maria Emilia de Miranda and Jose Maria Pinto da Cunha. The young Catholic parents named their daughter in honor of the Virgin Mary and the infant's godmother. Despite the religious Catholic origins of her name, they began calling her Carminha¹¹ or Carmen because she is said to have "looked Spanish" (Castro 2005: 12).¹² Carmen was a popular name for girls at the time because of its association with the gypsy heroine in George Bizet's comic opera, *Carmen* (ibid). Since the opera's debut in 1875, the name had remained a fashionable one in Europe.

Only seven months after the future Carmen Miranda was born, Jose Maria parted from his wife and young children, setting sail for Brazil. Like many Europeans in the early 20th century, he left his homeland in search of work. The plan was for his family to join him once he was settled in a home with a job. Among the countries the da Cunhas might have emigrated to in the Western Hemisphere, Brazil made the most sense. Brazil was a former Portuguese colony where people spoke the da Cunhas' language and shared some of their cultural values,

¹¹ Carminha is the Portuguese diminutive for Carmen, a Spanish name. In Portuguese Carmen is spelled Carmem. Carmen Miranda never spelled her name "Carmem" however references to her within Brazil sometimes are made according to the Portuguese spelling.

¹² I have been unable to ascertain what it meant to "look Spanish" in early 20th century Portugal.

rendering assimilation and integration an easier task. José Maria arrived and settled in Rio de Janeiro where he set up shop as a barber. Several months later, in December 1909, José Maria's wife and two daughters joined him in the bustling port city where they lived in São Cristóvão, a Portuguese immigrant neighborhood (Castro 2005: 14).

When the da Cunhas had their fifth child, Aurora, in 1915, they moved from São Cristóvão to Lapa. The neighborhood was more centrally situated than their previous one with easy access to the port and commercial district. This location shaped Lapa's character, which was an area where newly arrived European immigrants mingled with Brazilian sailors and soldiers. Daytime commercial activity in the nearby city center bustled thanks to a network of *bondes* [trams] and other transportation connecting it to outlying areas. Yet at night the centro and its periphery—including Lapa—were transformed into a scene of prostitution and violence (Botelho de Mattos and Campos Ribeiro 1994: 63). Once a posh area, by the 1890s Lapa's large homes had been converted into rooming houses. The neighborhood's increased affordability made it more inviting to the working poor and “working women.” In time political pressure rid the area of many prostitutes (females and male transvestites). Yet when the da Cunhas moved there in 1915, the neighborhood still had its share of bohemians, *malandros*,¹³ and prostitutes (Botelho de Mattos and Campos Ribeiro 1994:72).

¹³ A malandro is a type of idealized Brazilian folk figure; a suave, well-dressed confidence man who hustles to survive and leads a life of leisure rather than engage in conventional work. He is typically attired in an immaculately clean white suit and white hat demonstrating his leisurely lifestyle. Men possessing these qualities might also be referred to as malandros. He is a figure associated with urban culture and carnival and is often Afro-Brazilian.



Figure 7: A 1932 map of Rio de Janeiro's *centro* [downtown]. Area from northernmost point in the *centro* to the southernmost point in Lapa is approximately 1.5 miles.
NB: The map was originally created with a southward orientation.

From the collection at the Biblioteca Nacional in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



Figure 8: Close-up map of city center including the Lapa neighborhood. Note the locations of Carmen's convent school, and the da Cunha boarding house at 13 Travessa do Comércio. Cinelândia, a popular downtown entertainment district, is just to the south of Rio Branco.

A year after their move to Lapa, the two eldest children, Olinda and Carmen, were sent to the nearby Catholic *Colégio Santa Teresa* [Saint Theresa's School] (see the upper left area of figure 8). By 1919, however, Olinda bore the responsibility given the eldest child, and dropped out of school to work and help support the family. At age twelve, she began working in a nearby French-owned women's hat shop, not far from where her mother was employed washing clothes (Castro 2005: 18). From 1915 to 1919, Lapa began to transform. In four years a lively nightlife scene emerged that included bars, cabarets, and other places of entertainment (Castro 2005: 19).¹⁴ Meanwhile, Carmen continued her studies and by 1923 had entered a convent, perhaps less for religious purposes than to meet her parents' expectations (*ibid*).

As someone who worked in Lapa's retail service industry, Olinda had more direct contact with bohemian culture than her siblings did. She is described as learning all the latest songs and in the evenings teaching them to Carmen (Barsante 1994: 53). This instruction would prove useful to the young woman who came to be appreciated in the 1930s for her easy pronunciation and knowledge of the *gíria* [street slang] associated with Rio's bohemian street culture.

For ten years the da Cunhas lived in Lapa. Though their Catholic household was purportedly a strict one, bohemian Lapa culture was all around them. When Carmen entered the convent in 1923, the police "cleaned up" prostitution in nearby streets. Their cleanup consisted of shifting where prostitution took place. Many of the sex workers ended up moving into housing on the da Cunhas' street. Carmen and her siblings could not help but to see the

¹⁴ A century later Lapa retains its reputation as a locus for nightlife and an adult playground—albeit one getting "cleaned up" in anticipation of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics—where transgendered prostitutes line some streets and outdoor portable toilets help contain fluids.

women who perched half-dressed on windowsills, calling out to passersby. With this change in the neighborhood, the da Cunhas decided to move. Finding a suitable new home proved to be difficult. As a result, they remained in Lapa for two more years, until 1925 when they secured a space at 13 Travessa do Comércio.

In many ways 13 Travessa do Comércio, located nearer the city's commercial district, was in a better neighborhood. While the centro was characterized by "legitimate" daytime commercial activity and nighttime prostitution (Botelho de Mattos and Campos 1994: 70), Travessa do Comércio was a short side street adequately removed from illicit goings-on. In their new home, the da Cunhas were even closer to transportation hubs, commerce, cultural activities, and leisure time establishments. Portuguese influence in the previous century had shaped the area. In 1808 the royal family moved the empire's capital to Rio de Janeiro bringing with them their European tastes. During their time in Rio, the crown constructed many cultural institutions situated near the da Cunha home.¹⁵ Of course these benefits also meant higher rent, so the da Cunhas sought ways to make ends meet.

Unfortunately, something happened in the da Cunhas' lives at this time to add to their financial worries. The year they moved, Olinda, then seventeen, contracted tuberculosis. The da Cunhas attributed her illness to heartbreak, as she had fallen ill after her boyfriend got someone else pregnant (Castro 2005: 31). Although a theory of illness as a result of a broken heart was a romantic holdover from 19th century sensibilities, it is certain that she was sick.

¹⁵ Once a provincial colonial town, the Portuguese court razed old buildings and constructed a city center influenced by European configurations of urban spaces. The Museum of Fine Arts and National Library remain in downtown Rio de Janeiro as a testament to the court's temporary tropical residency.

Regardless of the cause, tuberculosis meant Olinda was unable to work. This meant one less source of income for the family and worse, additional medical expenses. After trying a number of remedies, in 1926 Olinda was sent to a well-known sanatorium in Portugal where she eventually died in 1932.

While Olinda was sick, two new means for making up lost income significantly shaped Carmen's path to stardom. First, Carmen's mother, Dona Maria, opened up the doors of their home to men on work break, preparing and serving daytime meals (Castro 2005: 22). Around the time she began doing so, there was an influx of sambistas to the city. Subsequently some of those Dona Maria served were samba singers, composers, and musicians.

As the nation's capital and a cultural center, Rio offered sambistas many opportunities to perform live. Moreover, by the late 1920s new technologies, namely radio and records, created additional means for circulating music beyond live performance. Until 1928, Brazil had only one major recording studio, the British-owned Casa Edson, and it was in Rio de Janeiro. Yet in 1928 three more opened: Parlophon, Odeon, and Columbia. In 1929 two more were established, Brunswick and RCA. All were located in Rio de Janeiro (Vianna 1999 [1995]: 78). A burgeoning live music scene paired with new technology meant that more sambistas flocked to the city and to Dona Maria's table. As they dined in the da Cunha home, the pretty and charismatic Carmen was often present, singing the songs her sister Olinda had taught her. José, whose shop was nearby, came home each day to take his meal with these men. His direct contact with the sambistas allowed him to learn something about the music industry. Although Carmen later liked to characterize her early career as something she pursued on the sly against her father's wishes, biographer Ruy Castro says José supported her from the outset (Castro 2005). While her

father may have been protective as Carmen later suggested, his friendliness with the sambistas paved the way for future collaborations.

The second way the da Cunhas made up for lost income was by sending Carmen to work. In 1925, when the family moved to Travessa do Comércio, Carmen left the convent. Although years later she would tell a Rio newspaper that she left school not because she was obliged to but because she sought to amuse herself (Barsante 1994:46), it is more likely Carmen ended her education so she could help her family. Between her sewing skills and personable demeanor, Carmen had no difficulty finding a ‘respectable’ job in a retail shop.

1920s Brazil, as in many parts of the world, was experiencing rapid industrialization, accompanied by increased consumerism and attendant cultural changes. Within Brazil, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo were at the heart of social changes. Elite cariocas cultivated their modern appearances by shopping in the downtown boutiques where there were dressmaker, millinery, and haberdashery shops. As in many industrialized Western cities, a mark of modernity was manifested in women’s transforming social roles and made visible through dress.¹⁶ Women increasingly entered the work force and began dressing in ways that accommodated such activities. Dress and consumerism became a means for articulating modernity especially for women. As such, clothing shops became a space for young women to find work. And so Carmen followed in Olinda’s footsteps to work in retail.

Over the next few years she worked first at a men’s haberdashery then at women’s hat

¹⁶ For a discussion of how this played out around the same time in Mexico, see Ageeth Sluis’ 2010 article

“Bataclanismo! Or, How Female Deco Bodies Transformed Postrevolutionary Mexico City” in *The Americas* 66:4, 469-99.

ateliers. Carmen's entry into the retail service industry was a crucial component for her future success. Between the sewing instruction Olinda had given her and what she learned making hats, she became an adept seamstress. This is significant because her design and sewing abilities allowed her to exert control over her own appearance that would otherwise have been impossible given her modest financial means. Moreover, by working at expensive boutiques, she was immersed in a culture where appearances mattered and where she learned how to construct desirable looks. In her retail work Carmen developed a social competency to sell clothing and accessories to Rio's elites. Meanwhile, she cultivated her self-presentation by sewing her own clothes and making hats on evenings and weekends (Castro 2005: 24-25). Where flappers with money might look at the latest magazines and then shop downtown, Carmen could look at those same sources and make the garments herself. We know she was successful at creating her own modern look because her appearance eventually allowed her to comingle with Rio's upper classes.

While working at the haberdashery Carmen reportedly flirted with her customers though never accepted invitations to become better acquainted (Castro 2005). One young man, however, did turn her head. That was Olympic rower Mário Augusto Pereira da Cunha (no relation) who became her first lover. The young man, four years Carmen's senior, was from upper class Flamengo, a posh neighborhood boasting scenic beaches. Not sure how Carmen's father, José, would react to their relationship, the couple initially passed their time strolling through Rio's latest sensation: Cinelândia. Cinelândia was a downtown entertainment district that boasted theaters, shops, cinemas, and bars. Although many of the businesses remained open until very late, it is likely Carmen arranged to meet Mário there during the day or early

evening just after work (Castro 2005: 27). After several weeks, she introduced him to her family. The da Cunhas did not object to the handsome, wealthy young man and the two were allowed to see each other provided Carmen arrived on her doorstep by 10 p.m. (ibid). With her parents' blessing the two spent more time together going to the movies and to Rio's chic new beach areas in Ipanema and Copacabana (Castro 2005: 28).

We may surmise that Carmen's protective, immigrant, working-class parents found the match desirable. An association with such a well established, elite family could only improve the da Cunhas' own social standing. Mário had social connections that could be beneficial.¹⁷

In addition to his status appeal, Mário had the ideal 'look' of his generation. His was a strong, tanned young body that aligned with 1920s ideals of attractiveness. He achieved his rower's physique through regular athletic training and daily exercise at Rio's beaches where the new beach culture was emerging (Galli O'Donnell 2011).

¹⁷ While Mário da Cunha and others interviewed for Helena Solberg's 1994 documentary, *Bananas is My Business*, have idealized the relationship as Carmen's great romance, such characterization seems precious at best. Rather I contend that framing their relationship as "true love" lost is an effective narrative device, that participates in a tradition of mass popular culture advocating normative universal feminine emotions. In this case, fleeting love. For a discussion of sentimentality in American popular culture, see Lauren Berlant's 2008, *The Female Complaint*. Although Solberg is Brazilian, she is of a generation exposed to American popular culture and its tropes. Further, she lived in the United States for many years. In fact, it was after encountering Latin stereotypes in the US in the 1970s and being the subject of discrimination that she was prompted to make *Bananas is My Business*. Discrimination was particularly galling to Solberg as she came from a privileged, upperclass, educated white family.

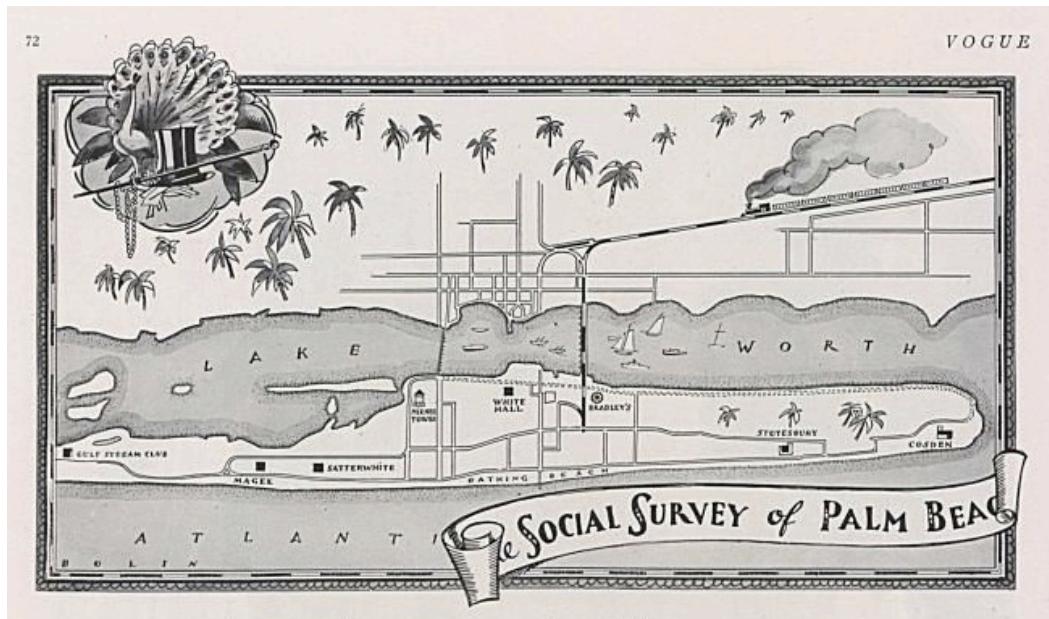


Figure 9: This illustration from the April 1, 1925, issue of *Vogue* magazine (p.72) highlights the social benefits of spending time at the beach (Condé Nast online archives)

The adolescent Carmen probably saw in Mário's bronzed *corpo praiano* precisely what it was meant to convey: wealth, youth, and modern beauty.

Photographs taken at the time attest that Mário introduced Carmen to fashionable beach culture. In one she leans smilingly against the rocks at the zona sul's Arpoador beach. Biographer Ruy Castro says that Mário also took Carmen to sports clubs frequented by the rich (Castro 2005: 28). As a wealthy and modern man Mário also had a car, which he used to drive her through the tunnel to the zona sul so they could swim or walk along the now famous tiled beachfront.

Figure 10: An undated photograph of Mário da Cunha walking on the beach with his father (Barsante 1994). The photograph was probably taken in the 1920s when swimsuits of this style were very fashionable in North America and Europe. Advertisements in magazines from the time confirm that many cariocas bought imported North American swimsuits. That trend has since shifted and now Brazilians are more likely to wear swimwear by Brazilian designers.



Moving Between Social Worlds and Playing the Part

While they were involved, Carmen sat for many studio portraits, which she inscribed to Mário. Often Carmen appears to be trying out Hollywood-inspired poses. In figure 11 she wears contemporary beach attire, which suggests that beach culture was an important influence for how she chose to craft her image. The portrait sitting was an opportunity to wear little clothing and showcase her own *corpo praiano*. Posing in a swimsuit is noteworthy since it indicates a modern sensibility, as beach culture scarcely existed in Rio de Janeiro before the 1920s. The bathing costume she wears is one that might have been seen on a woman at any of the fashionable *zona sul* beaches. Yet in what is likely a departure from *zona sul* norms, Carmen playfully heightens a sense of glamour by accessorizing with a beret, pearl choker, and modern cosmetics. These accents create a sense of drama and fantasy such as found in Classic Hollywood costumes where the idea is not necessarily to replicate daily life appearances so much as to improve upon them. Moreover, the photo could even be called a parody of Hollywood glamour insofar as it demonstrates how easily one can appear glamorous. Carmen seems to be not simply wearing a swimsuit but posing in “Beach Attire” as a category. Other photos from the time show her in carnival costumes reflecting a keen interest in creating winking, visual quotations of different social groups such as “Pirate.”

What did it mean for Carmen to be Mário’s girlfriend and to enter into Rio’s elite culture? Although Carmen had been exposed to the city’s seedier side while living in Lapa, she attended Catholic school throughout and thus had a different experience than a more typical Lapa resident with no education. Her Catholic schooling meant that she was literate at a time when many working-class Brazilians were not. Moreover, she was white in a country where the

abolition of slavery was recent (1888) and where whiteness offered a social edge. Yet her family was poor and lived in a neighborhood where she was exposed to Afro-Brazilian culture. Through daily movement between her Santa Teresa school and Lapa home, Carmen learned how to negotiate different worlds.

When she began to work in boutiques, Carmen became comfortable and socially competent among the rich who shopped there. She was sufficiently capable of socializing in the elite's world for Mário to treat her as his public girlfriend and not merely as another of the many sexual conquests he is described to have had (Castro 2005). While it is true that she was quick to learn elite mores, she also had opportunities to cultivate such habits. At the convent she had learned French well enough to perform at events (Castro 2005). French would have been an especially prestigious language to learn since for many elite cariocas at the time, it was still associated with cultural refinement, a holdover from the colonial period. Some knowledge of the language could only increase Carmen's social capital, in a society where linguistic accomplishments signified wealth, education, and, implicitly, whiteness.

Another important means for Carmen to enter Mário's world was through her appearance. As mentioned previously, she made many of her own fashionable clothes. Well-dressed in her homemade garments, she moved daily between elite social spaces and her parents' immigrant home. This back and forth movement between social worlds is characteristic of Carmen's childhood and adolescence. Throughout, she appears to have successfully negotiated different cultural worlds, which would serve her well in the future as a star when she began addressing different publics.

Figure 11: Carmen in beach attire,
probably taken in the late 1920s
(Barsante 1994)



At the height of her Brazilian stardom in the 1930s, Carmen Miranda was arguably the most accomplished cultural mediator in popular Brazilian music. Cultural mediators such as Carmen have figured prominently throughout the history of Brazilian popular music (Vianna 1997 [1995]: 84). In the 1920s and 1930s, *sambistas* [people who play, sing, or compose samba music] introduced music associated with the poor and black to the upper- and middle-classes who were primarily white. Accessible recorded music meant the rich did not have to venture into seedy clubs or poor neighborhoods to hear samba and so cultural mediators helped to preserve distance for them. By 1925, when she began dating Mário and interacting with his social set, Carmen already had first-hand familiarity with *sambistas* and with elites. Her familiarity with these two worlds prepared her to be a sambista star. Record producers would downplay her Portuguese birth and familiarity with Rio's elite culture in favor of emphasizing her Lapa roots. This was because by the time she recorded her first song in 1929, samba authenticity was already associated with Afro-Brazilians and the "world of popular street festivals like carnival" (Vianna 1997 [1995]: 84).

A Modern Woman

Carmen appears to have been an adept and eager participant in Rio's modern culture. We know that with her rich boyfriend Mário she visited the chic new beaches, she made and wore Hollywood inspired clothes, and, per Flapper norms, she was unashamed of her sexual experience (Castro 2005). According Carmen biographer Ruy Castro, Carmen tried to persuade Mário to rent an apartment so that they could more easily spend time alone. In addition to cars as places for sexual rendezvous, rich carioca men kept small apartments downtown for such

trysts or visited hotels with sexually liberated rich flappers (Castro 2005: 29). The athlete was reportedly too stingy to accept Carmen's suggestion. Moreover, he is supposed to have been a committed womanizer and an apartment would have meant Carmen could potentially interfere with his philandering (Castro 2005: 34-35).

The many photographs she posed for in the 1920s provide proof that Carmen enjoyed interpreting Hollywood style. Her hair, make-up, and clothing were modeled after Hollywood's "It" girl, Clara Bow (Castro 2005). She mimicked Clara Bow not only for portraits but also in her daily life, complete with spit curls and carefully applied make-up. As she walked down the streets, passersby recognized her imitation and called out, "Clara *boa!*"¹⁸ Through her self-fashioning, Carmen, along with many carioca women, participated in a discourse that created a visual look to complement modern Brazilian women's social roles.

While it seems clear that creation of the modern Brazilian woman through dress and appearance was informed by Hollywood glamour, we must be careful not to attribute Hollywood influence to a simple "Americanization" effect. In her 2005 analysis of Mexico's *la chica moderna* [the modern girl], Joanne Hershfield examines Classic Hollywood's influence on Mexican women who were redefining their modern gender roles. Rather than regard Mexican women as victims of capitalist hegemonic advertising, Hershfield posits that women used Hollywood style to interrogate their social roles. Similarly, Jackie Stacey (1994) identifies groups of women in 1950s Great Britain that used Hollywood dress styles to challenge their culture's

¹⁸ Clara *boa* is the Brazilian Portuguese pronunciation of Clara Bow's name. It also constitutes a word play, translated roughly as "clearly good." In shouting "Clara *boa!*" to Carmen, people approvingly acknowledged the resemblance.

norms. In 1920s Brazil, a comparable phenomenon took place. Brazilian women were increasingly participating in public culture. Fashion, self-presentation, and consumerism were a means for navigating the changing social landscape. Popular media, such as magazines and imported films, circulated visual representations to emulate. Carmen had access to these media forms and, as documented in photographs, was an early adopter of modern Brazilian styles.

The extent to which women from all points in Brazil's social spectrum had access to dress as a tool for self-definition is unclear. Region would have certainly affected this. Carmen's studio portraits provide only one example of a working-class urban-dwelling woman who was able to use dress as a means to interrogate her social position.¹⁹ Through careful control over her appearance she presented herself as modern and elegant. In addition to making her own clothing, she also had access to cosmetics, a less expensive means for modernizing one's appearance and which she adeptly applied to mimic makeup styles popular in Hollywood film.²⁰

Yet even as Carmen presented herself in a way that privileged whiteness in terms of the *corpo praiano* and Hollywood style, she lived in a world where the power and popularity of Afro-Brazilian music were gaining traction.

¹⁹ A more thorough analysis would examine what working-class women wore. Unfortunately, I have found no examples of their attire being documented in the magazines.

²⁰ 1920s Brazilian women's magazines feature far more advertisements for personal care products than for clothing shops suggesting that brand consciousness was more important with regard to toiletries than clothing. It may also be the case that small dress shops could not afford to advertise in the magazines yet could establish prestige among local shoppers.

Chapter 2:

From Samba to Cinema: Crafting Brasilidade through Dress and Performance

Even more so than in the 1920s, in the 1930s Brazil was characterized by discussions of what constituted *brasilidade*. Participants in these discussions spanned the social spectrum: from consumers of popular culture to politicians to intellectuals and artists. The decade marked an important point in Brazilian history when *mestiçagem* [mixed raced-ness] came to be a powerful signifier of *brasilidade* that was increasingly being embraced and celebrated. Popular culture became the most effective means for circulating this emergent ideology. From the 1930s through the 1950s, Brazilian popular culture was characterized by a generous exchange between music and film. Carmen Miranda was among those whose star persona got circulated across radio, records, and musical films resulting in her becoming the “Queen of Samba.” These media forms were widely circulated and consumed, creating new discursive possibilities for people from all walks of life to identify what made someone or something Brazilian. Carmen emerged as a performer just as broad nationalist interest in Brazilian-generated popular culture was growing. Moreover, she possessed a particular blending of different racially coded signifiers – Afro-Brazilian sound, Euro-Brazilian appearance – that allowed her star image to help propagate the notion of a *mestiço* [mixed-race] national identity.

While Carmen was Euro-Brazilian, she was allowed to be (and celebrated for being) adept at musical styles that were widely understood to have Afro-Brazilian roots, most particularly samba. Though samba has gone through different sonic variations, as early as 1907 the musical style maxixe, samba’s precursor, was being publicly likened in Rio newspapers as an Afro-Brazilian cultural contribution (McCann 2004: 45). Samba retained this Afro-Brazilian

connection. Thus, at least within the nation's cultural center and capital, Rio de Janeiro, Carmen Miranda was perceived to be a singer of Afo-Brazilian music.

By 1933 her success as a sambista was so great that when she appeared in her first film she was dubbed the “Ambassador of Samba,” though she retained a Portuguese passport. MPB (*música popular brasileira*) [popular Brazilian music] and the Brazilian musical comedy films in which Carmen appeared were instrumental for facilitating broader social acceptance of Afro-Brazilian cultural contributions to Brazilian heritage. While there is no question that racist governmental sanctions against certain Afro-Brazilian practices existed – such as the ban on candomblé rituals and the martial art capoeira – there was nonetheless a cultural shift taking place in the 1930s. A popular and official rhetoric was emerging at the time asserting that Brazil was a racial democracy. Furthermore, as early as the 1910s music that blended African and European forms was praised for capturing the national essence for mixture (McCann 2004: 45). Samba, which was indebted to the musical antecedents of lundu and maxixe – both blends of European and African instrumentation and rhythms – was and continues to be a key symbol for articulating this notion of national identity (McCann 2004).

Characterizing Brazil, Brazilians, and Brazilian art forms as cultural and racial blendings did not happen overnight. Nor did any one single thing or person transform popular acceptance of this ideology. Yet Carmen Miranda was a powerful figure in facilitating such acceptance and she became a popular star at a pivotal transforming moment in the development of national ideology. Moreover, there is evidence that conflicting ideologies about race coexisted, which makes her commercial success and the wide circulation of her image so intriguing to investigate.

On the one hand media outlets expressed appreciation for Afro-Brazilian food and music

even as Afro-Brazilians were allowed to perform but not be patrons at elegant nightclubs (Stam 1997: 89). Although race and racism continue to be thorny issues in Brazil, there is nonetheless evidence that at least in theory if not practice Afro-Brazilian cultural contributions were gaining greater acceptance in mainstream Brazil during Carmen's rise to stardom.

Yet such acceptance occurred at a time when conflicting ideologies about race coexisted. On the one hand, as recently as the late 19th century, the Brazilian government supported 'scientific' racism to eliminate what it considered to be the source of the country's problems—the historical fact of European miscegenation with African and indigenous peoples. African influences were considered particularly widespread – many indigenous having not survived colonization and slavery – and so in efforts to 'whiten' the country's mixed race people and thereby dilute imagined negative African influences such as indolence and impulsiveness, the government encouraged European immigration, especially Northern European. When few Northern Europeans immigrated, Brazil opened its ports to Southern Europeans and to Japanese.²¹ Interestingly, this whitening effort relied upon an understanding that race was ultimately flexible and that imagined race-based personality traits were alterable through miscegenation (Mendonça 1999: 49).

In tension with the residue of a *branqueamento* [whitening] ideal there coexisted what Roberto DaMatta calls the fable of the three races, which emerged in the early 1930s (DaMatta 1981: 58-85 cited in Mendonça 1999:49). At the time, intellectuals such as Gilberto Freyre promoted an imagined history of harmonious racial mixing, which acknowledged that many Brazilians were mixed-race while ignoring the politics of miscegenation (i.e. rape, force) in favor

²¹ Brazil has the highest population of Japanese-descended people outside of Japan.

of an emphasis on race-based cultural contributions (Mendonça 1999: 49). Carmen Miranda's star persona – a white envelope for Afro-Brazilian culture – balanced these tensions of what constituted ideal Brazilianness: a racial blend that manifested itself through culture without 'looking too black.' A thirties mixed-race or black Carmen Miranda could not have existed.

As her popularity grew, Carmen's image circulated and turned her into an early figure of the Brazilian star system. She leveraged her appeal by becoming one of the first celebrities to endorse commercial products in print ads. Meanwhile, the pairing of her Euro-Brazilian looks with an Afro-Brazilian musical style created a shared popular culture repository for what constituted thirties *brasilidade*. Her star image and musical sound effectively linked aural and visual symbols together to signify a type of hybridity.

In this chapter I show that Hollywood beauty ideals informed the thirties star image Carmen created and which circulated via Brazilian advertisements, film, and print media. Her Euro-Brazilian looks paired with her performance of Afro-Brazilian music helped shape emergent ideas about *brasilidade*, which was coming to encompass racial and cultural hybridity. Her star image balanced contradicting ideological positions that valued whiteness and the romanticized idea of Afro-Brazilian cultural contributions. Though her music was widely understood to be rooted in Afro-Brazilian traditions, the look she created was informed by Hollywood's implicitly white aesthetics. Ultimately, however, it was Carmen's eventual adaptation of Hollywood exoticism that situated her as a modern signifier of *brasilidade* and *mestiçagem*. Ironically, the Hollywood-inspired glamorous and exotic costume she created got re-Hollywood-ized once she began to appear in US films in the forties. While the Technicolor tutti-frutti hat image is how she is now most often remembered in Brazil and beyond, I contend that Hollywood did not invent

the popular Latin performer but rather that Carmen Miranda uninhibitedly borrowed Hollywood sensibilities to invent herself as a modern Brazilian. This image creation occurred within the context of expanded media (radio, records, lifestyle magazines, film—co-occurrent and interrelated) circulation and consumption thereby increasing her popular culture presence.

I begin the chapter by describing thirties Brazil's political, intellectual, and cultural context. Next I describe Carmen's route to commercial success and its connection to new media technologies. This is followed by a discussion of her film career and what it signified. I close the chapter with analyses of costumes she designed for three of her five Brazilian films, showing that they exemplified emergent ideas about *brasilidade* characterized by racial and cultural hybridity.

Emergent Brasilidade

The Vargas Presidency

In 1929, seven years after the modernistas held their Week of Modern Art in São Paulo, President Washington Luiz Pereira handpicked a successor, Julio Prestes, from his home state of São Paulo for the 1930 elections. Regional oligarchs were upset by his choice, having expected the president to nominate someone from Minas Gerais. Their distress was compounded by concern over a weak export economy—which included products from the mineral rich state of Minas Gerais—that had been badly hurt by the 1929 Wall Street stock market crash. Such concerns led elites from Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul, and Paraíba to give their support to Rio Grande do Sul's governor, Getúlio Dornelles Vargas.

Vargas ran for the presidency as part of a new political party, *Aliança Liberal* [Liberal Alliance]. The party called “for political reform, economic stabilization, and *renovação* [renewal]

[which] resonated with many" (Williams 2001: 4). Although Vargas received oligarchical support, he campaigned on a populist platform. Many Brazilians supported the Liberal Alliance candidate because he called for social change at a time when people were frustrated with the bureaucratic, elitist past. Yet his broad appeal was no match for the political machine that elected Julio Prestes.

Amid claims of election fraud and the unrelated assassination of Vargas' vice-presidential candidate, the Liberal Alliance's armed forces supporters made plans to overthrow the newly elected government. Their armed insurrection began in early October 1930 in the southern part of Brazil and spread to the Northeast. On the 31st of October, Vargas arrived in the nation's capital, Rio de Janeiro, where he was welcomed by the masses and by armed troops (Williams 2001: 4).

From his arrival in the capital through the 1930s, Getúlio Vargas remained in power replacing the "liberal-oligarchical political culture of the First Republic with a nationalist-authoritarian political culture that endured until the mid-1980s" (Williams 2001: 6). The new administration sought to 'officialize' nationalism, so it tapped into mass media, especially radio, expanding it and trying to control content (Williams 2001: 66). The government wanted to use radio to circulate a populist message about Brazil as a homogenous society characterized by narratives of harmonious racial and cultural blending—African, indigenous, and European. As part of the nationalist ideology under Vargas, official cultural programming became a priority.²²

²² Some modernists eventually became active in the Vargas administration. Although the Vargas regime was supported by the military and elites, it somewhat paradoxically embraced and financed certain nonconformist members of the modernist movement including the poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade and architects who

State policy actively promoted and sponsored cultural activities that contributed to the formation of a distinctive Brazilian national identity, recognizable for its homogeneity.

Brazilian scholar Ana Rita Mendonça notes that an important motivating factor for affirming a national identity was to strengthen the economy (Mendonça 1999: 44). In a sense, Brazil sought to ‘brand’ itself for foreign and domestic markets. An economy that focused on exported goods and increased domestic consumerism proved to be an ideal one for manufacturing a Queen of Samba.

Social Scientists and Brasilidade

Before the Vargas regime officialized nationalism that propagated racial harmony, twenties vanguard artists and intellectuals initiated their own cultural *renovação* celebrating *brasilidade*. Although the modernistas and *antropofagistas* [cannibals] had been a small movement in the twenties, their ideas affected influential social thinkers of the thirties such as Gilberto Freyre and Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (Borges 1994). Freyre and Buarque de Holanda played a crucial role in fashioning a durable ideology about Brazilian national identity as a social “mixture,” that has persisted into the 21st century.

Among those writing in the thirties, Gilberto Freyre was arguably the most influential. A US-trained sociologist, Freyre published his seminal work *Casa-grande e senzala* [The Masters and the Slaves] in 1933, three years after Getúlio Vargas took the presidency. The book is

eventually turned the city of Brasília into a modernist marvel (Williams 2001: 15). What joined these two disparate groups was their shared vision to renew and reinvent Brazilian culture, emphasizing modernity. It was against such a backdrop to “make it new” and quintessentially “Brazilian” that Carmen Miranda the star emerged in 1929 amidst an expanding consumer marketplace.

ostensibly written as an historical account of Brazilian colonial life and is meant to explain Brazilian national character. Freyre devotes individual chapters to addressing the historical import of what he sees as Portuguese, African, and indigenous qualities. He weaves these together to fashion a 20th century Brazilian, the happy by-product of so much racial and cultural mixing.

The most significant concept Freyre helped to promote was the celebration of Afro-Brazilian culture. Unlike previous works that had treated the African presence as sullyng, *Casa-grande* praises the African tendency to be “merry,” “sociable,” and “loquacious” (Freyre 1956 [1946]: 261). Moreover, Freyre imagines lusty, warm-blooded Portuguese slaveholders as more open than other European masters to Africans’ charms. *Casa-grande* portrays the master-slave relationship as largely affectionate and puts a positive spin on the reality of Brazilian miscegenation (more likely the result of colonial rapes than romps). Freyre privileges the positive effects of imagined cultural mixing over any serious consideration of why miscegenation took place and its sociopolitical impact.

One of the most fascinating and culturally transformative things about Freyre’s work is his understanding of race and culture. *Casa-grande* is framed as emerging from his studies under anthropologist Franz Boas at Columbia University where Freyre claims to have learned how to differentiate between race and culture. Yet his long career (d.1987) is marked by a clear tendency to conflate race and culture. According to Freyre the young white masters who learned about ‘love’ from beautiful mulatas also received what he calls the “mark of the Negro” through contact (Freyre 1956 [1946]: 278). Earlier I mentioned that supporters of branqueamento perceived race and imagined race-based characteristics as being fluid and alterable through

miscegenation. Freyre extends such race flexibility to allow Portuguese slaveholders to bear the “mark of the Negro” through sexual contact. I emphasize that despite their contradicting perspectives of what constitutes a desirable racial makeup, Freyre followers and supporters of whitening both regarded race as so flexible that contact leads to a kind of cultural porousness. In the Freyrian universe, the mark of the Negro shaped all Brazilians and Brazilian culture such that authentic *brasiliadade* is characterized by Afro-Brazilian influences. For Freyre, to deny the Afro-Brazilian impact is to deny what it is to be Brazilian. Significantly, skin color is less a gauge of Brazilianness than recognizing and embracing the African influence. Yet racism persists and in a 1930s context it becomes possible – perhaps even necessary – to appreciate *vatapá* [a popular flavorful Afro-Brazilian dish] even while disallowing Afro-Brazilians to sit down to supper at an elegant club meant for Euro-Brazilians.

Such conflicting practices have led countless Brazilians and non-Brazilians since the 1950s to object to Freyre’s story about colonial and slave era racial harmony. Brazilian anthropologist Roberto DaMatta (1986), for example, has noted that in a narrative where all Brazilians have the mark of the Negro—that is, presumed universal African ancestry—race and racism disappear. Unlike the United States where a biracial president must choose between self-identifying as either black or white, the Brazilian ‘racial democracy’ largely eliminates such distinct classifications. Regardless of skin color and other physical features, it is widely understood that everyone has, to use a Brazilian expression, “one foot in the kitchen” – the kitchen being the domain of so many Afro-Brazilian women, past and present. DaMatta and others have noted that in fact racism does exist in Brazil despite the claim that there are no ‘pure’ races there. What is important to take from this discussion is that an ideological pillar was erected in the

thirties; namely that Brazil is a racial democracy because its people are *mestiços*, regardless of appearance or racial make-up. Widespread appreciation of Afro-Brazilian culture became a means for demonstrating an acknowledgement of such heritage. The popularity of Afro-Brazilian influenced music, especially samba, would reinforce the story Brazilians were beginning to tell themselves about themselves.

Música popular brasileira

Intellectuals, artists, and political figures were not the only shapers of emergent *brasilidade*. In the twenties and thirties *música popular brasileira* (MPB) [popular Brazilian music] became an important medium for negotiating what it was to be Brazilian – a medium that created a discursive space open to anyone with access to the music. Beginning in the 1920s, MPB has arguably been “the most important vehicle for the affirmation of . . . *mestiço* national identity both at home and abroad” (Dunn 2001: 13). One way MPB has done this is by emphasizing the blending of musical styles and instruments. According to the evolving modern Brazilian logic, cultural and racial hybridity were becoming interchangeable concepts. By the 1930s, MPB was more than entertainment. It was becoming an expression of public culture and a legitimate means for defining *brasilidade* (McCann 2004).

In grappling with what made popular music distinctly Brazilian, performers and audiences weighed the significance of African and European aesthetic influences.²³ Such concerns addressed more than music styles; they also spoke more generally to what it meant to be

²³ While the popular Brazilian narrative characterizes Brazilians and their culture as being a blend of European, African, and indigenous influences, indigeneity has not been credited with having the same impact that African influences have had where MPB is concerned.

Brazilian. Music that 'mixed' rhythms and instruments while demonstrating a clear Afro-Brazilian influence was especially popular. Samba and other carioca carnival music such as marches were the clear leaders in this regard. In this context Carmen Miranda emerged as the Queen of Samba.

In 1930, the year Vargas became president, Carmen Miranda's career took off with a popular music recording. The timing could not have been more propitious for a young, modern white woman adept at Afro-Brazilian inflected slang and music.

A White Envelope for Mestiçagem

In the 1920s Carmen had experimented with her appearance, which included dressing up as Clara Bow, crafting carnival costumes, and mimicking Hollywood star styles for the many studio portraits she had taken. Meanwhile she entered 'star search' contests in the hopes of becoming a film star. Eventually her efforts paid off. Though she was chiefly interested in becoming a movie star, the young woman got her start by singing.

"Pra você gostar de mim" [In Order for You to Like Me]

On July 7, 1926, the lifestyle magazine *Selecta* ran a headline that asked, "Who will be the next queen of Brazilian cinema?" The seventeen-year-old Carmen Miranda was among the young women whose photo was chosen to appear in the magazine, even though she was not identified by name. Her face and ambition were emphasized over any proven talent; the caption read that she was a young woman "who knew how to sing and wanted to work in film" (Castro 2005: 36). Carmen entered other similar competitions at the time, revealing two things: her interest in being a film star (Shaw 2013) and a media-fed movement to create a domestic star

system where none previously existed. As discussed in chapter 1, Hollywood style and consumerism were increasingly a means for articulating modern Brazilianness. *Selecta*'s contest provided young women with a domestic means for experiencing the popular Hollywood fairytale about being 'discovered.' That there was not a strong Brazilian film industry in 1926, hardly mattered. The magazine's search for a film queen optimistically suggested the possibility of there being one. A country with the technological resources to make movies would render the nation modern in a global context. The performers associated with a star system would be modern by default and a "queen of Brazilian cinema" could usher in modernity for Brazil and for herself. The inclusion of Carmen's photograph and that of other Euro-Brazilian women reflected media preference for the white ideal. Not until more than ten years later would Carmen's appearance suggest mestiçagem more concretely.

Although magazines were an older media form compared to radio and films, they preemptively set the terms for public engagement with new technology. As we saw earlier, twenties Brazilian lifestyle magazines emphasized movie going and celebrated Hollywood aesthetics. As Brazil entered the 1930s, print media continued to feed a taste for iconic images that extended to other new media forms including radio. Radio circulated performers' music and created pathways to future stardom. Yet a star system could not exist without a visual component, something magazines provided. They did this by creating an indirect means for engagement with radio stars that relied on images. For example, a person could live in a rural area and not have regular radio access but could still become acquainted with radio performers' names and faces through magazine coverage. Although radio was transmitting music and other aural communications, a visual complement was essential for crafting a Brazilian star system.

Selecta's star search for a *Brazilian film queen* suggests that consumer culture was increasingly concerned with portable visual signifiers of modern *brasilidade*.

Selecta (1924-1930) and other lifestyle magazines including *Para Todos* (1924-26) and *Cinearte* (1926-42) circulated throughout Brazil introducing emergent publics to new portable visual signifiers. These magazines shaped visual understandings about what constituted "feminine beauty, modernity and fashion" (Shaw and Dennison 2007: 118). Magazines' beauty standards were modeled after Hollywood norms, even using untranslated English language terms such as 'It' to indicate sex appeal (*ibid*). Lisa Shaw and Stephanie Dennison (2007) have posited that glamour and whiteness paired together in such magazines of the time erased the African and indigenous presence in Brazil. This white aesthetic ideal in print media reflected the durability of late 19th century *branqueamento* efforts. *Selecta*'s photo spread of white only candidates for a future Brazilian film queen implied that she would be Euro-Brazilian. The magazine likely saw cinematic promise in young women such as Carmen: she was photogenic, modernly attired, and unmistakably Euro-Brazilian.

By 1928 she began to make good on the claim that she "knew how to sing" when she started performing with Aníbal Duarte. Aníbal was a sambista and Bahia native who dined at the da Cunhas' and invited Carmen to sing with him at live shows. Carmen's transformation from shop girl to would-be star included adopting the stage name "Carmen Miranda;" a composite of her nickname "Carmen" and her birth name, Maria do Carmo Miranda da Cunha. By late 1929, Aníbal had introduced Carmen to Rio-based RCA Victor representatives including composer Rogério Guimarães. Rogério worked for RCA as a Brazilian talent scout. Though RCA Victor was a foreign company, it was interested in creating a national music genre and thus expanding

markets.

When Carmen was still an unknown, she auditioned at the studio, which was conveniently situated near her home. Rogério signed her for two reasons: because she was able to sing ‘street style’ and because he thought Carmen’s modern looks would help to sell records (Castro 2005: 50; Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 43). Both reasons had racial implications. Street style was implicitly Afro-Brazilian while modern good looks were implicitly Euro-Brazilian. In Carmen Rogério saw a hybridity with potential commercial appeal. She had ‘street’ credibility thanks to her working-class background yet she looked white and bourgeois.

In twenties and thirties Rio de Janeiro, verbal street style meant knowing the local slang and being able to rapidly rattle off tongue-twisting lyrics.²⁴ Carmen’s verbal artistry was further enhanced by her improvisational skills, which included interjecting exclamations and comments to bridge the singing (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 69). She delivered comic asides and innuendoes that made her singing “loquacious” and “flirtatious” (McCann 2004: 47). At times Carmen’s improvisations reflected a more narrative talking style of singing. This musical style was rooted in African musical traditions (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 69), though we do not know to what extent different listeners recognized the connection.

Carmen’s modern good looks reflected twenties Brazilian commercial beauty ideals, which were equated with photogenic white Hollywood glamour (Shaw and Dennison 2007: 118-119). Rogério’s approval of Carmen’s appearance suggests that culture producers such as RCA Victor wanted to cultivate the Euro-Brazilian visage found in magazines. So even though

²⁴ The Brazilian type of improvisation that Carmen was so expert at has been likened at times to “scatting” in American jazz vocalizations where the voice is used as an instrument.

emerging notions of musical authenticity – defined by ‘street style’ and implicit blackness – valued Afro-Brazilian contributions, the white Hollywood aesthetic remained commercially desirable. In Carmen, Rogério found a blend of two cultural ideals: white glamorous physical appeal and black musical style. She became an excellent vehicle to balance opposing popular ideals: she dressed elegantly while expertly delivering lyrics about the city according to current slang (Mendonça 1999: 53). Her skin color was important, but at least equally important was that she successfully performed Brazilianness through a celebration of Afro-Brazilian culture.

RCA Victor hired Carmen to record several songs. If the records were successful, the studio would offer her an exclusive contract. In the negotiations, a few important terms were agreed upon: first, she would only be allowed to sing Brazilian music (no Argentine tangos, which she loved) and second, her publicity was to omit the fact that she had been born in Portugal (Castro 2005: 50). Since Rogério’s job was to find Brazilian performers, one infers that he wanted them to be ‘authentic,’ which being European born would unsettle. The contract terms suggest (at least from the studio’s perspective) that being Brazilian-born and singing only Brazilian music were signifiers of authenticity.

In December, Carmen recorded a two-sided record—both songs composed by Josué de Barros—that hit stores within a month. Its immediate success led the studio to invite her to record four more songs on January 22 and 23, 1930. Of the four songs Carmen recorded in January 1930, two were *marchinhas* [diminutive of march]. A *marcha* [march], or *marchinha*, is considered to be of African origin and is a Brazilian musical style created for carnival celebrations (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 44). Given RCA Victor’s ability to quickly press 78s, the records were clearly intended to coincide with carnival, which fell in March that year.

By January 27, Carmen was back in the studio recording Joubert de Carvalho's "Pra você gostar de mim" [In order for you to like me], better known as "Taí" (Castro 2005: 51). "Taí," a marchinha,²⁵ became wildly popular, selling over 35,000 records and breaking all record sales to become the year's most popular carnival song (Shaw 2013:12). Meanwhile RCA Victor embarked on a print publicity campaign to circulate her smiling image as a singer of Brazilian music (*Vida Doméstica* [Domestic Life] magazine reproduced in Castro 2005: un-paginated interleaves). "Taí"'s success turned the young woman who hoped to be the next Queen of Brazilian Cinema into a singer of Afro-Brazilian carnival music. Although Afro-Brazilian culture was ostensibly getting celebrated, as reflected in the popularity of music with Afro-Brazilian origins, it was white music performers that enjoyed the most media coverage and ultimately the most commercial success (Mendonça 1999: 52). Carmen was not the only white *sambista* [someone who sings, composes, or plays samba music] whose image circulated widely. This suggests that even in a climate where racial mixing was increasingly valued, looking white still mattered very much.

"Eu gosto da minha terra" [I Love my Land]

<i>Deste Brasil tão formoso</i>	From Brazil so powerful
<i>Eu filha sou, vivo feliz</i>	I am a daughter, living happy
<i>Tenho orgulho da raça</i>	I have pride in the race
<i>Da gente pura do meu país.</i>	Of the pure people of my country.
<i>Sou brasileira, reparem</i>	I am a Brazilian, observe
<i>No meu olhar, que ele diz</i>	In my appearance, what it says
<i>E o meu samba denuncia</i>	And my samba betrays
<i>Que eu filha sou deste país . . .</i>	That I am a daughter of this country . . .

²⁵ Stylistically, marchinhas were appealing because they allowed Carmen to sing in a style that suited her voice, which was pleasant but lacked range. In fact, she would eventually record over one hundreds songs in the genre throughout her career (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 44).

The same year Carmen achieved success with “Taí,” RCA Victor had her record “Eu gosto da minha terra.” The song’s lyrics (partially excerpted above) reflect the studio’s efforts at publicity triage over a gaffe Carmen had made in a magazine interview. When asked by a *Vida Doméstica* [Domestic Life] reporter if she had been born in Rio – the city regarded as the birthplace for urban samba music – Carmen replied, “That’s interesting. Everyone who knows me thinks I’m Brazilian, born in Rio. As you see, I am a *morena*²⁶ and am a true type of Brazilian. But I am a daughter of Portugal. I was born in Marco de Canavezes and came to Brazil at one year old. But my heart is Brazilian and if it weren’t I would not be able to comprehend so well the music of this marvelous and enchanted land” (Castro 2005: 63). Her comments reflect the Freyrian idea that one can be a “true type of Brazilian” regardless of race or where one is born. To understand Brazilian music and to perform it well could give one a Brazilian “heart” and therefore make one a Brazilian. The lyrics when considered alongside Carmen’s comments suggest that being among Brazilians her whole life made Carmen Brazilian as well such that one can even see it in her morena appearance. Her samba seems to “betray” the mark of the Negro.

Since Carmen’s agreement with RCA Victor had included obscuring her Portuguese roots, the studio was mortified by her admission. “Eu gosto da minha terra” was recorded and released within a month of the interview as a means of reinforcing her authenticity and right to sing what

²⁶ Morena is a broadly encompassing term in both Spanish and Portuguese to indicate ‘dark’ physical coloring of hair, skin, and eyes. In Brazil the term is also laden with class implications. While morena often suggests a white person with dark features, I have heard it used to describe people who are obviously of African descent yet are middle-class. In such cases, it is considered an insult to describe a middle-class person as black, *negro*.

was becoming national music. The incident reflects a couple of things. First, music producers were anxious to locate ‘authentic’ *brasilidade* as being connected somehow to Afro-Brazilian culture or race. Second, possessing Afro-Brazilian authenticity did not necessarily require being of African descent. In Carmen’s case, her ability to samba well demonstrated that she was a true “daughter” of the “Brazilian race,” which was implicitly mixed. Interestingly, following her 1930 admission of being Portuguese born, there was no public outcry over her ‘right’ to sing samba. Lack of interest in Carmen’s origins in relationship to authenticity suggests that notions about the fluidity and porousness of Brazilian race were already in circulation before Freyre published *Casa-Grande* in 1933. This is not to suggest that appearing white and elegant were not important for Carmen’s success. Rather, Carmen presented a balance of modernity and tradition that was then desirable (Mendonça 1999: 45-47). Her glamorous, modern white image complemented her music, which was understood to be ‘traditional’ by virtue of its connection to Afro-Brazilian culture. Such a balancing required carefully honed self-presentation and performance skills. From Carmen’s comments and the popularity she enjoyed, we may infer that performing *Brazilianness* well was supremely important.

The Importance of Radio

One reason samba and MPB in general were so influential had to do with technological developments. When Getúlio Vargas became president in 1930, his administration sought to treat mass media as a “public utility” in order to regulate Brazilian culture (Williams 2001: 66). Although the government had wanted to emulate the Fascist approach to radio control, the quickest path to expansion proved to be the legalization of commercial radio. Argentine radio had been making inroads into Brazil and was affecting popular taste as reflected in Carmen’s late

twenties love of tango. Not long after Carmen made her first record in 1929, the government became concerned that Argentine radio would overtake Brazil's airwaves. So in 1932, radio advertising was legalized with the objective to quickly expand domestic transmission (McCann 2004: 23). Shortwave and commercial radio frequencies expanded their reach in the thirties and extended to the far corners of Brazil (Vianna 1999 [1995]: 77). As transmission increased, the cost of radio sets decreased. Even working-class families could now afford radios and radio ownership in households grew (McCann 2004: 23). For those in small towns who could still not manage the expense, public loud speakers were set up by the end of the decade (Vianna 1999 [1995]: 77).

Radio programs mostly emanated from the nation's capital, Rio de Janeiro. By 1935 fourteen radio stations had established studios. As Carmen Miranda became one of the thirties' best-known sambistas, Rio-based stations broadcast up the Atlantic coast reaching a vast audience (Vianna 1999 [1995]: 24). Most of the stations featured live music programming and easily filled their airwaves by drawing upon local talent (McCann 2004: 23). In thirties Rio de Janeiro, the popular local music was samba.

With commercial radio expansion, MPB became more accessible, though radio was not the only means for circulating music. Comparable to US commercial radio, Brazilian radio aimed for a schedule of live studio performances yet still needed records to fill some slots (McCann 2004:25). Before Rio de Janeiro was the nation's radio center, the city had already become the twenties Brazilian recording center. Thirties radio producers could choose from a range of record labels to fill their open airtime slots. Odeon, RCA Victor, Columbia, and Brunswick had all entered the Brazilian market in the twenties and based themselves in Rio de Janeiro. Before the

radio industry began drawing upon local talent, the recording industry had already begun to hire carioca musicians. Though the recording labels were multinational, they were not interested in saturating the Brazilian market with imported music. Rather, Odeon, RCA Victor, and Columbia²⁷ wanted to expand their international markets and sought to build consumer taste for popular Brazilian music (McCann 2004: 26).

Newly available and affordable records, record players, and radios helped to create conduits for music circulation. Music genres and performers' radio personae were circulated via these pathways functioning as highly portable symbols that could carry nationalist meanings. Even as the very act of purchasing a record represented participation in Brazil's new consumer culture, the records and performers one preferred could signify opinions about Brazilian musical aesthetics and authenticity. Access, circulation, and shared repositories of symbols in thirties Brazil led to an environment that created an addressable public known as Brazilians who were increasingly self-identifying as *mestiço*. Consumers purchased media products, experienced the circulation of ideas, and developed shared understandings about what media symbols such as Carmen Miranda meant. As addressed above, she represented a balancing act of different ideologies connected to race and *brasilidade*: modernity and tradition, white glamour and Afro-Brazilian culture. What constituted *mestiço* and Brazilian were in effect getting negotiated through popular culture figures such as Carmen. If an elegant Euro-Brazilian could demonstrate such skill at interpreting Afro-Brazilian music then she was an example of how malleable the Brazilian 'race' could be.

In thirties Brazil, Carmen became the "Ambassador of Samba" and one of the best-selling

²⁷ Brunswick did not remain long in Brazil leaving the market to the other three labels for the duration of the 1930s.

recording artists. People from all walks of life—bureaucrats, musicians, and fans—could belong to a Brazilian public whose musical tastes were getting based on an idea of what was good for the nation (McCann 2004:15). To ‘elect’ Carmen Miranda as Brazil’s samba ambassador would have been impossible without the thirties media that circulated her star image and its associated look and sound.

Ambassador of Samba

Carmen’s new found national popularity with “Taí” in 1930 was significant for two reasons. First, it linked Carmen to carioca carnival and second it framed her as a singer of music heavily influenced by Afro-Brazilian styles and instrumentation.

Marchinhas such as “Taí” worked for Carmen because they suited her vocal abilities and because they were carnival-themed. Singing carnival music gave Carmen license to evoke street slang, make sexual innuendoes (common in carnival music), and engage in Afro-Brazilian forms of verbal play. These qualities associated with carnival music happened also to be areas of particular strength for Carmen as a performer.

Being associated with Afro-Brazilian music was important because increasingly samba was becoming emblematic of national identity. During the Vargas regime *samba-exaltação* [samba exaltation] emerged as a means for defining *brasilidade*. Therefore those associated with samba could in turn have a hand in shaping *brasilidade*’s meaning. In addition to being an adept sambista and looking glamorous and white, Carmen had the good fortune to live at the center for samba production. In the twenties and thirties, if a sambista wanted to get recorded and be heard on the radio, she needed to be in Rio to gain a national audience, since the nation’s capital was also the country’s music capital. From Rio de Janeiro samba got transmitted

out to the rest of Brazil popularizing the local music and turning it into a national cultural form.

Among the stations popularizing samba, the most influential was Rádio Nacional.

The station played MPB and was known for hiring talented producers and famous performers (McCann 2004: 20). Commercial radio producers, such as those at Rádio Nacional, tapped into local trends and broadcast them to a national market. While the station's programming included a range of different samba styles, Rádio Nacional consistently claimed that samba was a national cultural form with a distinctive nature and meaning (McCann 2004: 42-43).

Though a number of sambistas' voices and perspectives were heard on the air, lyrics and critical reviews portrayed samba as coming down from the *favelas* [shanty towns in Rio's hills] into the city center in a pure, authentic expression of *brasilidade* (McCann 2004: 42). The popular origin narrative about 'pure' samba as a product of the favelas was implicitly a narrative about race as carrier of cultural authenticity. The favelas were and continue to be occupied by black and mixed-race Brazilians. Rádio Nacional's polemic about samba origins was a reductive one that "... lent credence to a rhetoric of racial democracy which pointed to esteem for Afro-Brazilian culture as evidence racism did not exist in Brazil" (McCann 2004: 43).²⁸ At the same

²⁸ Racial discrimination is real in Brazil though difficult to identify in its subtlety. For example, dark skinned Brazilians are underrepresented in higher education and positions of power. Class has a great deal to do with racial discrimination, but what often gets overlooked is the history of slavery that has left so many Afro-Brazilians in poverty. In recent years there have been efforts to counter academic underrepresentation through US-style affirmative action. Yet the formula does not work because of the widespread belief that all Brazilians are "mixed." So asking a student to self-identify their racial make-up on a form is often a futile exercise. Since the late 1950s, scholars—Brazilian and non-Brazilian—(e.g., Fernandes 1969; Hanchard 1994; Skidmore 1993) and Afro-Brazilian

time, samba was simultaneously conceived of as a “musical blending of white and black culture” (Vianna 1999 [1995]: 12). Though samba’s Afro-Brazilian influences were celebrated via on-air radio rhetoric, in practice it was white sambistas such as Carmen that appeared in print media (Mendonça 1999: 52). In this way samba became the “national rhythm” that balanced between “the celebration of racial harmony and the whitening ideal” (Mendonça 1999: 50). Through the vehicle of someone such as Carmen Miranda, this balancing had the potential to represent Brazil as a racial democracy.

While there was no changing her phenotypical whiteness, performance-wise Carmen was adept at speech and singing styles associated with Afro-Brazilian sambistas. Thus she was simultaneously white and ‘authentic.’ She created “musical performances, which were characterized by humorous allusion, corporeal expressiveness, and a strong sensuality” (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 25), qualities popularly associated with Afro-Brazilians. By 1930 samba’s authenticity rooted in carioca blackness – a blackness characterized by urban living, the city’s *morros* [hills], and musical tastes – was already the normative standard as exemplified by Carmen’s 1930 recording of “O nêgo²⁹ no samba” [The Black in Samba]. The song proclaimed that unlike blacks, white people didn’t know how to samba (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 55-56). Significantly, this song was only one of many Carmen recorded which humorously addressed

activists have widely rejected what has come to be referred to as the “myth of racial democracy.” Nonetheless, Brazilians of all skin colors and social strata continue to evoke the idea that Brazil has no racism because everyone is “mixed.”

²⁹ Negô is a variation of “negro” [black], which is a colloquial term meant to express affection. The closest English equivalent is “nigger” (though without the strong negative connotations) as it is sometimes used among African Americans on intimate terms with each other. Brazilians of all hues use the term negô to address one another.

Brazilian racial dilemmas (Mendonça 1999: 53). In “Oônego no samba” Carmen sang that only someone such as herself who was “nasce” [born] black could publicly deride those born white, since white people had no samba skills. Considering that she was fond of injecting humor into her recordings and that she sang a number of songs celebrating her ‘blackness,’ it seems likely that “Oônego no samba” was delivered ironically. Irony can make difficult concepts easier to negotiate by creating distance from the subject – in this case Carmen navigates her Brazilian ‘race’ by singing an opposite fact; namely that she was ‘born black.’ Irony is deployed here to elicit ambivalent laughter by stating what seems to be an opposite fact since, as we saw, early in her career she revealed that she was European. Via her music Carmen helped to circulate the notion of a flexible and universal Brazilian mestiço heritage even while she poked fun at the idea.

Carmen’s ironic delivery of such lyrics coexisted with circulating notions of Brazilian ‘race’ as highly porous. Carmen’s demonstrated *jeito* [skill, ability] to samba ‘proves’ her Afro-Brazilian heritage even as she ironically calls herself black. Though she does not appear black, in a context of fluid racial identities where cultural performance is important, she demonstrates that Afro-Brazilian heritage can be expressed in ways apart from physical features. In other words, ‘doing’ samba effectively was more important than ‘being’ black. Emergent ideas about what it was to be Brazilian meant celebrating shared Afro-Brazilian cultural roots. The white Carmen Miranda’s singing “Oônego no samba” participated in this social construction.

Thanks to the 1930 success of “Taí,” Carmen became Brazil’s most famous singer. In 1931 she toured to Argentina and then again in 1934 as the “Ambassador of Samba” (Shaw 2013). Between visits to Argentina, 1932 saw Carmen earn a contract for her own weekly

fifteen-minute slot on Rádio Mayrink Veiga (*ibid*), a popular commercial radio station in competition with Rádio Nacional (McCann 2004: 35).

As Ambassador of Samba, Carmen represented Brazil domestically and abroad. In this unofficial popular culture role, Carmen's star image participated in constructing new ideas about what being Brazilian meant in terms of culture. Her image balanced the tensions between two opposing idealized perspectives on *brasilidade*: a white aesthetic and harmonious racial blending. She represented *mestiçagem* by appearing appropriately white and bourgeois while successfully interpreting an Afro-Brazilian influenced art form. New technologies, increasing acceptance of hybridity (as a racial and cultural conflation), and nationalist sentiments converged for the white, working-class born Carmen to popularize samba. Popular Brazilian beauty ideals and modernity circulated in the media and were founded in part on Hollywood's racist aesthetic ideals. At the same time *brasilidade* was informed by distinctly Brazilian ideas about what constituted "cultural roots," namely authenticity in Afro-Brazilian culture (McCann 2004: 21).

The wide circulation of Carmen's white, glamorous photographs and films in connection with a black influenced music form made her an ideal example of Brazil as a "mixed" racial democracy. Rádio Nacional's popular rhetoric seemed to prove Freyre's assertion that *brasilidade* was indebted to Afro-Brazilian culture and that Portuguese masters loved their slaves. While the polemic about samba authenticity was reductive, its simplicity and portability meant that a song such as "O négo no samba" could easily communicate the emergent national rhetoric. Through the expression of musical taste, consumers got to participate in popular discourses about samba's articulation of pure *brasilidade*. Contributing to samba's impact on

new understandings about *brasilidade*, was the Brazilian star system that emerged in the thirties, making stars out of performers straddling the music and film industries.

The Brazilian Musical

In 1929 Carmen made her first record and by the 1930 carnival season she was a national sensation. Three years later she was cast in the Brazilian musical film *A voz do carnival* [The Voice of Carnival] (1933). Like many of Brazil's early film stars, Carmen first established her career as a live radio and recorded singer of MPB before appearing in movies. Most of Brazil's first sound films were musicals centered on carnival themes and were interspersed with performances by popular singers and musicians (Shaw 2013: 12). It was a lucrative formula that attracted audiences despite production values that could not compete with the usual Hollywood fare.

A Brazilian Star System

Rio-based Cinédia studios began making sound films in 1933. Cinédia saw there was money to be made from musical films featuring carioca carnival songs destined for seasonal popularity (Dennison and Shaw 1993: 17).³⁰ And so producers began casting radio stars with commercial appeal, a formula guaranteed to draw an audience (Shaw 2013). Commercial appeal meant not only talent but also whiteness. Though there were popular black and mixed-race sambistas, as we saw earlier the ones chosen to appear in print and film media were white (Mendonça 1999: 52).

³⁰ Beginning as early as 1906, silent documentary films shot during annual carioca carnival celebrations had been very popular (Dennison and Shaw 2004: 17).

These musical comedy films were precursors to the *chanchada* genre that was to remain popular through the 1950s.³¹ Critics scorned the movies, but they were wildly popular with the public (Stam 1997: 83). Though influenced by Hollywood musicals in terms of making the music numbers focal points, Brazilian musicals were unique in that they featured national music³² and were carnival themed. The films were also indebted to Brazilian “revue” theater in terms of performance styles and type of humor. Being carnival oriented, the films were steeped in irony and parody and released during carnival season. The radio stars that appeared in the films typically performed marchas and sambas. These popular musical comedies reinforced the importance of Afro-Brazilian music and carioca carnival in Brazil and helped create a domestic star system. Performers did not become stars after appearing in a musical comedy. Rather, the white sambistas already considered marketable and whose images already circulated via print were cast in the movies thereby increasing their popularity. Such a cross-generic presence improved a performer’s likelihood to become a star.

Star systems in the US and elsewhere emerged as 20th century phenomena representing a convergence of artistry, new media technologies, and consumerism. A comparable convergence occurred in thirties Brazil, though the trajectory was different. Early Brazilian stars

³¹ In the 1970s, a variation on chanchadas emerged called pornochanchadas. The films were erotic comedies intended to titillate straight male viewers by including excessive female nudity (Johnson and Stam 1995 [1982]: 40).

³² By contrast, Argentine musicals –signifiers of that country’s national identity – at the time tended to have more melodramatic plotlines. One of the most popular Argentine radio and film stars was Carlos Gardel whose music was celebrated for its evocation of sadness and longing. In Brazil, much popular music, even when addressing sadness, often has an upbeat tempo. Film-wise, music and carnival or the carnivalesque have been popular recurring themes in Brazilian cinema.

crossed back and forth between popular music and film—samba and musicals—in genres that were laden with nationalist sentiments. To be a star of Brazilian cinema and samba was to inform what it meant to be Brazilian. Carmen Miranda was one whose portable image circulated widely across the different media.

Although leading roles were given to Euro-Brazilians, blacks were very much present in the musicals though they were cast in minor roles that showcased “white stars and a white aesthetic” (Stam 1997: 81).³³ Paradoxically, samba was celebrated for its Afro-Brazilian connections. It has been suggested that the films that were a vehicle for samba’s popularity helped create the impression the music was a “white cultural product” (Stam 1997: 84). While some audiences may have interpreted samba as such, given the circulating rhetoric that samba emerged from the black morros, I would posit that more audiences understood the generic hybridity someone such as Carmen was meant to embody. In Carmen was a star image balancing the tensions between idealized, shared Afro-Brazilian cultural heritage and valorization of a white physical aesthetic.

Before she appeared in film, Carmen’s early music career was enhanced through the circulation of her glamorous photographs in print media. Such a white aesthetic was considered commercial and presented a lucrative complement to her genuine musical ability. The success she enjoyed musically was reinforced through such print media circulation and facilitated her transition to screen. The ‘right look’ and sound got her cast in the early musical comedies (Shaw 2013) while her white skin guaranteed that she would be featured prominently (Shaw and

³³ For example, in *Alô, alô, Brasil!*, a black drummer from the Simon Boutman orchestra accompanies Carmen Miranda (Stam 1997: 81).

Dennison 2007: 118).

Carmen's film debut was in Brazil's first sound documentary *O carnaval cantado no Rio* [Rio Carnival in Song], released on Ash Wednesday, March 1, 1933 (Shaw 2013: 14). The film included footage of Rio's wealthy classes at their exclusive balls, working class street processions, and Carmen performing in the studio (ibid). That same year, just after Lent had begun, Carmen appeared in Brazil's first narrative musical film *A voz do carnaval* [The Voice of Carnival], performing in three musical numbers at the Rádio Mayrink Veiga station. The movie was interspersed with footage taken from carioca street carnival festivities that provided pretext for the studio-shot musical numbers (ibid). Carmen's filmic performances at the radio station strengthened the connection between broadcast music and musical films for Brazilian moviegoers. By portraying radio stars as themselves in their 'natural habitats,' *O carnaval cantado no Rio* and *A voz do carnaval* addressed the Brazilian public that had already been established by radio and reinforced the connections between music, carnival, and Rio de Janeiro. Moreover, the films situated Carmen as a carioca sambista who participated in carnival.

Early radio broadcasters greeted their national audiences with the phrase, "Alô, alô, Brasil" [Hello, hello, Brazil]. The expression became standardized as it circulated throughout the vast country and addressed an imagined unified community. The media phrase was highly portable and we may infer highly recognizable given that it was decontextualized from radio and recontextualized into the 1935 film entitled *Alô, alô, Brasil!* Moreover, film producers were probably appealing to radio listeners by naming the film after a recognizable phrase from another mass media form. The circulation of the phrase suggests that similar work was being done in thirties Brazilian radio as in the 1990s Zambian radio-listening community Debra

Spitulnik studies (1996). In Spitulnik's research she finds that radio broadcasting can become both a "reservoir and reference point" for linguistic innovations (Spitulnik 1996: 180). Radio phrases' infiltration into the vernacular suggests a highly intertextual verbal culture. In the case of thirties Brazil, what does it mean to circulate the expression "alô, alô Brasil"? While we cannot definitively claim that the message created the addressee "Brazil" – a Brazilian citizen – the implication is that media was creating a shared repository for broad swaths of Brazilian radio listeners and moviegoers. Recognizing "alô, alô, Brasil" implied one's engagement with modern mass media, a significant reservoir and reference point for circulating popular rhetoric about national music and character.

In 1935 Carmen appeared in two musicals: *Alô, alô, Brasil!* and *Estudantes*. Having appeared in one documentary and three narrative films in just two years, Carmen was established as "the most popular figure in Brazilian cinema" (*Cinearte*, May 15, 1935). This title well complemented her stature as a leading sambista in a climate where radio and film were engaged in exchange to create a Brazilian star system. Print media further circulated and popularized such stars.

Carmen Miranda the Star

Carmen's white Hollywood-style glamour provided the visual complement to her samba singing. Whiteness paired with the glamorous appearance she had carefully begun to cultivate in the twenties meant that Carmen met popular thirties beauty ideals. Even though Afro-Brazilian culture was ostensibly getting embraced, in practice white beauty standards continued to be what got upheld. Although the media circulated Euro-Brazilian looks, which is clear from magazines and films of the time, the media also celebrated Afro-Brazilian cultural influences.

Carmen's popularity suggests that Brazilian 'It' was implicitly both Afro-Brazilian and white. As early as 1932, before appearing in any film, Carmen was described in magazines as having 'It' in her voice and gestures (Barsante 1994: 67). Since Carmen's vocalizations were indebted to Afro-Brazilian vocal performance styles, the implication was that blackness contributed to 'It,' that is, modern appeal.

Photographs from early in her career show a coquette-ish and distinctly white glamorous figure, another way of expressing 'It.' The balancing and blending of idealized whiteness and Afro-Brazilian music interpretations was what gave Carmen 'It' and made her success as a popular singer of national music possible. Magazines that attributed 'It' to Carmen contributed to her future film success. Her well-rounded participation in the different coexisting media forms then available to her helped complete her star image visually, verbally, and aurally.

One of the distinguishing things about Carmen's success is that she first became known through her recordings, which led to live performance bookings. This was atypical because at the time, artists were getting recorded only after they had first built a career in theater or by performing on the radio (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 45). Although Carmen had performed live and on the radio before recording, these were not the means by which she gained a following. In Carmen's case, appearance and talent contributed to her presence in the interrelated emergent media forms. In order to build excitement just prior to her first in-person performances under contract with RCA Victor, the studio released publicity photos of her to the press (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 45). The photos confirmed that she *looked*³⁴ like a star just as her 1926 photo in *Selecta*

³⁴ This is a formula that was used throughout the 20th century and one that is still employed today where 'looking' the part is at least as important as performing well within the genre. Some 20th century examples include The Sex

proved that she had (visual) star potential.

In addition to recording Brazilian music and appearing in publicity photos, Carmen appeared in print advertisements. In fact, in 1930 she became one of the first Brazilian stars to endorse a commercial product. In 1930 she began a long relationship as celebrity endorser for the Rio-based deodorant manufacturer *Leite de Rosas* [Rose Milk]. As someone with 'It' her endorsement suggested to consumers that they too would have 'It' if they used the deodorant (Castro 2005: 61).

While a new phenomenon in 1930 Brazil, film star endorsements were an established practice on the other side of the equator. Hollywood cinema helped to drive a consumer culture that targeted women. Such celebrity endorsements emphasized self-beautification and personal invention through appearance, consumerism, and "social performance" (Berry 2000: xxi). Within Brazil, a similar phenomenon occurred and Carmen was among those to lead the way. Dress and appearance provided a means for Brazilian women to invent themselves and be

Pistols—whom Malcolm McLaren, co-owner of SEX with designer Vivienne Westwood, organized after admiring their punk clothing aesthetic—The Monkees of sixties television fame, and countless eighties boy bands. In the early 21st century someone with the right looks and resources can self-promote via the video-sharing website YouTube. The performer Lana Del Rey (born Elizabeth Woolridge Grant) is a notable example of someone that created a stage name, posted a YouTube video in 2011, and became famous. It is interesting to consider that Del Rey is caucasian, had a WASP-y upbringing—including time spent at a Connecticut boarding school—and yet chose a stage name that suggests Latina roots. The name is perhaps intended to lend her the stereotyped Latin/a musical skill and sex appeal. Blogging people of color (e.g. AfroDiaspores on 4/5/2012 at <http://afrodiaspores.tumblr.com/post/20546315375/singer-lana-del-rey-has-described-herself-as>) have roundly criticized her use of a Spanish name as cultural and ethnic appropriation.

modern. Carmen's longstanding contracts as an endorser suggest that she was becoming a celebrity to emulate.³⁵ The renewal of her contracts also suggests that her endorsements generated revenue and possibly followed a US model, which assumed that women consumers wanted to be like the stars with which they imagined a sense of intimacy (Berry 2000:23).

In addition to ads for Leite de Rosas, Carmen appeared in other advertisements for toothpaste and soap (Shaw 2013: 83). Through participation in consumer culture in this way Carmen got situated as modern. Additionally the ads increased her visual presence in popular culture further circulating her identifiable image. Carmen's earliest product endorsements predate her first film appearance by three years. By the time she was cast in musical comedies, Carmen had already proven her marketability in connection with personal care products. The advertisements promoting personal hygiene products also may have reinforced Carmen's relatability—even samba stars get body odor—creating a sense of intimacy with Brazilian publics. So while Carmen Miranda cut a glamorous attractive figure in the photographs, her prettiness was made to seem achievable.

Already a glamorous radio star whose image appeared in magazines and advertisements, film further increased Carmen's popularity. During her decade-long Brazilian career, Carmen made six films.³⁶ Of her first four films³⁷—*O carnaval cantado no Rio* (1933) [documentary], *A voz do carnaval* (1933), *Alô, alô, Brasil!* [Hello, Hello, Brazil] (1935), and *Estudantes* [Students]

³⁵ A similar phenomenon occurred in Mexico after the revolution between the 1910s and 1930s when magazines advertised trends and goods with international associations (Hershfield 2008).

³⁶ “O que é que a baiana tem?” was later re-used in *Laranja da China* [Orange from China] (1940).

³⁷ See Appendix A for film chronology.

(1935)—all are thought to be lost. Her fifth movie, *Alô, alô, carnaval!* [Hello, Hello, Carnival!] (1936) is the only one that remains in its entirety. Carmen’s final Brazilian film, *Banana da terra* [Banana of the Earth] (1939) sadly has also disappeared, though her career-altering performance of “O que é que a Baiana tem?” [What Does the Woman from Bahia Have?] remains.

All of these films included Carmen Miranda recordings, all were Brazilian productions, and all were either carnival-themed or carnivalesque.³⁸ The films were musical comedies with flimsy plots and an emphasis on the music numbers. They shared this quality in common with many popular Hollywood musicals of the day (Cohan 2002). For audiences of Brazilian and Hollywood musicals, the appeal was in the elaborate song and dance numbers. Storyline was not particularly important and so it hardly mattered that Carmen’s only narrative role was in one film, *Estudantes*, where she played a facsimile of herself: a young radio singer.

In all her other movies Carmen was filmed and recorded as a performer delivering a performance. These musical numbers were easily inserted, extracted, and even re-incorporated into later releases. The inclusion of musical numbers that were not integrated into the storyline is an approach that 20th Century-Fox Studios also liked to use (Griffin 2002: 29). By the time Carmen had a contract with Fox in the 1940s, the formula was still in place furthering the extractability of her performances. One advantage to appearing in this sort of film was that a recording artist could sell her records in advance of the film release date and after the movie was no longer showing in theaters. She could even sell records to non-moviegoers. The extractability of Carmen’s performance and a connection to the carnivalesque are qualities one

³⁸ *Estudantes* centers on *Festa Junina* [June Festival], which involves wearing costumes, drinking, and dancing; activities also associated with carnival.

finds in all of Carmen's Brazilian films. These carnivalesque qualities would remain with her throughout her Hollywood career in the forties and fifties, as I discuss in the next chapter.

Though the Brazilian musical comedies were influenced by Hollywood musicals, the domestic studios had modest budgets. Films were made more cheaply with performers providing their own wardrobes. For Carmen this was an opportunity to showcase her millinery and dressmaking skills. Since she was a skilled and creative seamstress, acting as her own costume designer meant that the star had more leverage over her appearance than someone who had to rely on what she found at shops.

The remainder of this chapter examines the impact of Hollywood style on Carmen's image in her Brazilian films. First I discuss Hollywood glamour and her appearance in *Alô, alô, Brasil!* and *Alô, alô, carnaval!* Next I examine the impact of Hollywood exoticism on a look she created for a number in *Banana da terra*. My analyses demonstrate that Carmen Miranda's hybridized film image – white glamorous appearance paired with an interpretation of Afro-Brazilian influenced music – reflected emergent ideas about what it meant to be a modern Brazilian.



Figure 12: Publicity still of Carmen Miranda for the film *Alô, alô, Brasil!* (1935) (Barsante 1994)

Costume Analyses

Alô, alô, Brasil!

When Carmen appeared in her second musical *Alô, alô, Brasil!*,³⁹ she was chosen to perform “Primavera no Rio” [Springtime in Rio]⁴⁰ for the closing number, a prized position indicative of her star power (Shaw 2013:16). Her look in the number consists of a wide brimmed hat, organdie gown, fashionable hair, and modern make-up. The gown has puffed sleeves and a clinging, bias cut skirt that trumpets from the knees to the ground-grazing hem. The gown’s silhouette echoes proportions and styles popular in Hollywood film at the time. For example, one popular look that is called to mind is costume designer Adrian’s ‘Letty Lynton’ gown for Joan Crawford in the 1932 film of the same name.⁴¹ Though Carmen’s design could hardly be called a direct copy, there are several similarities. For example, both are made of white organdie, both feature a puffed sleeve, and both have a high neckline. One obvious difference is that Carmen’s design is much clingier through the hips and thighs while retaining a sweeping hem.⁴²

³⁹ The film took its title from the popular radio greeting for programs broadcast nationally from the capital.

⁴⁰ Carmen had originally recorded the song on the Victor label in 1934 (Shaw 2013: 16).

⁴¹ Although several sources have indicated that the Letty Lynton gown caused a fashion sensation that led to a reportedly 500,000 knock-offs sold (e.g. Gutner 2001: 119), dress scholar and curator Melissa Leventon says she has never been able to locate a single surviving costume artifact (personal communication, 2011).

⁴² While Joan Crawford’s gown is cut more loosely through the skirt than is Carmen’s, clingy garments cut on the bias were another design aesthetic that Adrian favored, memorably worn by Jean Harlow (e.g. *Dinner at Eight* [1933]).



Figure 13: Joan Crawford in the famous Adrian-designed gown for *Letty Lynton* (1932). Crawford's puffed sleeve organdie gown caused a fashion sensation that led to a reportedly 500,000 knock-offs sold (Gutner 2001: 119).

During his tenure as the chief costume designer at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Adrian was well known for creating innovative evening gowns that had an impact on women's fashions. The trend-sparking oversized shoulders that would become Joan Crawford's trademark, for example, were an Adrian invention. Carmen seems to have been among those to be inspired by a style that was originally intended to obscure Crawford's naturally broad shoulders. Though we do not know whether Carmen saw *Letty Lynton* (1932), it is quite likely that she saw similar fashions and other costume designs that Adrian's gown inspired. For example, a publicity still of Dolores del Río for *Flying Down to Rio* (1933) shows the Mexican-born star in a white organdie gown with a similar short puffed sleeve. *Flying Down to Rio* was screened in Rio de Janeiro where Carmen Miranda is reported to have seen it (Castro 2005: 107). These two Hollywood examples demonstrate a possible influence on Carmen's design particularly in terms of fabric choice, color, bodice, and sleeve shape.

Figure 14: Costume designer Walter Plunkett's version of the "Letty Lynton" sleeve for Dolores del Río in *Flying Down to Rio* (1933) (screen shot)



Alô, alô, carnaval!

The influence of Hollywood glamour on Carmen's Brazilian film costumes extended beyond marcelled⁴³ hair and gowns to include modern interpretations of men's attire. After *Alô, alô, Brasil!*, Carmen appeared the following year in *Alô, alô, carnaval!* [Hello, Hello, Carnival!] For both of her numbers in the film – “Querido Adão” [Dear Adam]⁴⁴ and the duet with her sister, Aurora, “Cantoras do rádio” [Radio Singers] – Carmen wears trousers.

“Cantoras do rádio” was filmed on an art deco set designed by the illustrator J. Carlos (Shaw 2013: 20). In the sisters' musical number a band performs against the painted background, which includes dramatic curving interpretations of a piano, an oversize 78 RPM record, and dancing figures in silhouette. In front of the band Carmen and Aurora sing into a large microphone. The sisters wear costumes that Carmen designed: lamé (or satin) trousers with tailcoats of the same fabric. Matching top hats and shiny blouses with large bowties complete their ensembles. Their costumes suggest a modern sensibility found in other Hollywood films of the era. Perhaps most memorable among these is Marlene Dietrich's top hat and tails performance in *Morocco* (1930).

Carmen's interpretation of men's attire suggests a familiarity with risqué and glamorous

⁴³ Marcelled hair refers to a marcel wave, which *The Fairchild Dictionary of Fashion*, 2nd edition revised (2003) defines as: “Artificial wave put in woman's hair with heated curling irons, devised by hairdresser Marcel of France in 1907 and popular in the 1920s” (225).

⁴⁴ For her solo number, “Querido Adão,” the trousers Carmen wears could be the same ones from her duet with Aurora minus the top hat and tails. Her short-sleeved blouse is draped across the bust line and has an oversize pointed collar worn with large stylized necktie.

Hollywood costume trends. Yet women in trousers carried greater significance than a mere fashionable flight of fancy. Partly what made trousers on women in Hollywood film so risqué and glamorous was that they were a form of gender parody (Garber 1997: 338) that suggested sexual agency/ambiguity and general social mobility. By 1936 when *Alô, alô, carnaval!* was released, women had had the right to vote in Brazil for four years. Moreover, Brazilian women including Carmen, were increasingly mobile thanks to automobiles and entry into the paid work force. The tuxedoes reflect not only Hollywood aesthetic sensibilities but also changing social dynamics in Brazil.

While their 'menswear' costumes may have pushed the social boundaries for socially acceptable women's attire, Carmen's design includes feminizing touches: textile choice (lamé or satin rather than wool); high-heeled shoes; long hair; cosmetics; trouser cut. Moreover, their performance takes place within the context of a carnival-themed film; carnival, of course, being a festival when social boundaries are meant to be tested and parody is celebrated.



Figure 15: A painted art deco backdrop frames Carmen (on left) and Aurora in their “Cantororas do rádio” attire for *Alô, alô, carnaval!* (1936) (Castro 2005)

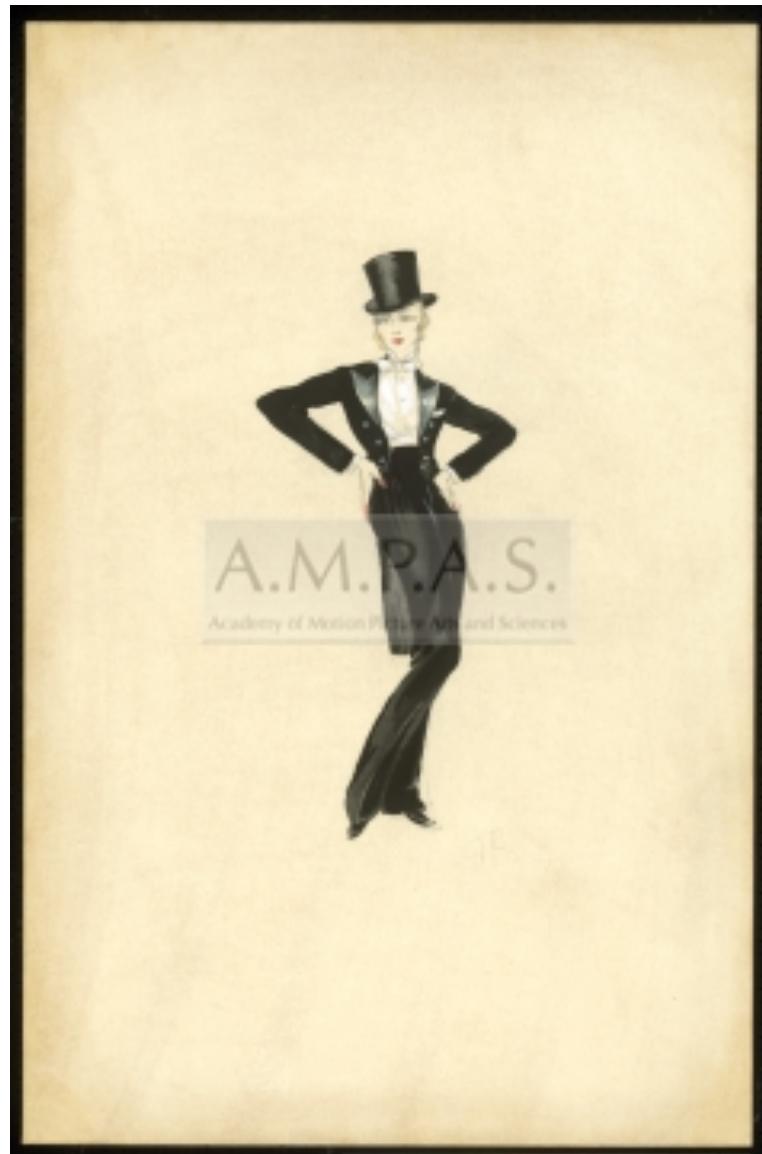


Figure 16: Costume illustration by Travis Banton for Marlene Dietrich in *Morocco* (1930). From the archives at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Kinetically speaking, one sees in *Alô, alô, carnaval!* Carmen's emerging performance style, which would become so recognizable during her Hollywood career. The sisters sing much of "Cantor as do rádio" in front of an oversize microphone but during the musical bridge are afforded an opportunity to dance around the stage. Though the song is a carnival marcha, the women do not dance as a Brazilian carnival dancer might with "syncopated elbow and hip movements," but rather according to a synchronized vaudevillian fashion such as one might find in a contemporary Hollywood musical giving the performance a modern flair (McCann 2004: 145). Yet the duet is not simply an imitation of Hollywood style. Significantly, close-up shots of Carmen's performance in both musical numbers – "Querido Adão" and "Cantor as do rádio" – demonstrate her use of techniques associated with *teatro de revista* [Brazilian theater revue]: eye rolls, facial gestures, and mischievous smiles (Shaw 2013: 32). As a teenager in the 1920s Carmen had regularly attended theatrical revues, suggesting she learned this performance style through observation as an audience member (Castro 2005: 38). Known throughout her life as an adept mimic, it seems likely that Carmen imitated a performance style she enjoyed.⁴⁵

Hollywood Exoticism and Carnival

Among the cultural shifts to take place during Carmen's Brazilian career was the increased national significance of carioca carnival – that is, carnival celebrated in Rio de Janeiro. Situated in the nation's capital, carioca carnival was becoming ever more popular as a national cultural form. One of the most important parts of carioca carnival is to dress up in a *fantasia*. In Brazilian Portuguese *fantasia* refers to a costume or disguise that imitates a type of clothing worn especially for carnival. *Fantasia* can also mean something created from the imagination

⁴⁵ Aurora does not deploy Carmen's theatrical revue performance style but rather sings 'straight.'

such as a dream or wish (DaMatta 1986: 74-75). During carnival when the world's social order is turned upside down, the fantasia allows one to move freely across boundaries into different social realms or spaces (DaMatta 1986). Social strata are subverted and social boundaries get mocked.

In the 1930s, recognizable 'types' of carnival costume suggestions filled the Rio newspapers and magazines. Frequently the suggestions were ironic and parodic. For example, one fantasia suggestion from 1939 is 'Tourist.' Since most Brazilians did not have the means to be international tourists themselves, dressing up as a tourist allows one to mock visitors to Brazil while creating a fantasy world in which one has the mobility to travel. The outsider's gaze gets turned back on itself and a tourist costume becomes a subject of irony.

Other fantasia types suggested during the 1939 carnival season include 'Apache' and 'Russian' (*Carioca*, January 7, 1939). *Carioca* magazine's accompanying Apache illustration closely resembles the sort of 'Indian' costume one might see in a Hollywood film of the era complete with fringed buckskin breeches and headdress. Whether a parodic fantasia or an earnest rendering, any truly effective costume must be recognizable if it is to elicit approval or laughter. In other words, historical or cultural accuracy is less important than a shared understanding that the fantasia is a successful interpretation of the imagined represented type.



Figure 17: Pages from the January 1939 issue of *Jornal das Moças* with carnival costume suggestions including “tourist” (lower right on left-hand page). From the collection at Casa Rui Barbosa in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

'Apache' was not the only fantasia suggestion to be culled from far-off lands. South Asian, Polynesian, and European costume suggestions also appeared in the press at the time. Very often the illustrations bore a closer resemblance to Hollywood film renderings of such peoples than to what people might actually wear in those different regions. Hollywood interpretations likely influenced fantasias because of the aforementioned increased circulation of US made films. Moreover, exoticism through a Hollywood lens was gaining popularity within the United States before films circulated to Brazil.

Since the early days of the US star system, Hollywood femininity has been marketed to rely on different 'types' of glamour (Berry 2000: 94). Such glamour as consumable products could be sold in the form of film knock-off dresses and Hollywood inspired cosmetics. Among the types to emerge as marketable in the thirties was 'exotic.' The 1930s in Hollywood film saw the rise of 'exotic' actresses such as the dusky, sensuous Dorothy Lamour, the perpetual native girl in a sarong. While some performers had 'exotic' ethnic origins such as Chinese-American Anna Mae Wong and Mexican-American Rita Hayworth, often the conceit in star magazines and cosmetics advertisements was that all types of feminine beauty were universally achievable. Examples abounded that demonstrated the transformation of European and Anglo-American actresses into exotic beauties. Magazines taught women consumers that through careful clothing selection and cosmetic application, they could create a range of different looks (Berry 2000: 99). In short, exoticism was getting popularized as masquerade (*ibid*).

While the self-censoring Production Code Administration (PCA) in the United States sought to eliminate representations of racial hybridity from film and cast white actors in, for example, 'yellow face' to avoid interracial romance, such hybridity in Brazil was becoming a

cause for celebration. 1930s Brazil saw intellectuals, politicians, artists, and the general population begin to idealize racial and cultural blending. Unlike other Latin American countries at the time that were also beginning to celebrate racial hybridity (e.g. Mexico and its valorization of a *mestizaje* [mixed-race] heritage: indigenous and Spanish), Brazilians were coming to value the African implications. *Mistura* [mixture] of all kinds was becoming highly desirable proof of hybridity as part of the emerging narrative about Brazilian national identity. Glamorous exoticizing of difference and exotic masquerade may explain some of the fantasia suggestions one finds in Brazilian periodicals from the same era. Nonetheless Brazilian interpretations of Hollywood exoticism could not but reflect Brazilian sensibilities.

Non-Brazilian examples of perceived *mistura* were also valued. This meant that when Hollywood exoticism found its way to Brazil, it got interpreted according to Brazilian terms. One Rio de Janeiro newspaper, *Diário Carioca*, described the Hollywood actress Movita as follows in its 1939 review of *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935):⁴⁶ [Movita is] “a beautiful morena, perfect Polynesian type, a descendant of Mexicans who appeared in *Flying Down to Rio*” [as a Brazilian!] (*Diário Carioca*, January 22, 1939). In one sentence the review describes Movita as racially hybrid with a difficult-to-place appearance that makes her plausibly Polynesian, Mexican, and Brazilian.

Unlike in the United States where the PCA was uneasy with racially hybrid identities such as the mulatta character in *Imitation of Life* (1934), in Brazil such cultural blending and racial ambiguity were valued, at least theoretically according to the circulating rhetoric. To describe Movita as a “beautiful morena” is to put her in an already ambiguous category that indicates a

⁴⁶ Presumably the movie took several years to arrive in Brazil for distribution.

person's coloring and features. Morena – as it is used in Brazil – is a term that can describe anyone from a dark-skinned woman of conspicuous African descent to a Euro-Brazilian with dark hair and eyes. The term tends not to be used disparagingly and as the Movita description suggests, is tantalizingly ambiguous. Tellingly, *Diário Carioca* praises the actress not for successfully masquerading as exotic but for being racially hybrid and having a flexible appearance. *Diário Carioca*'s characterization of Movita also reflects popular expectations for desirable feminine beauty in thirties Brazil: hybridity and ambiguity. While mixed-race women had been sexualized since the Brazilian colonial period, the decade in which Carmen Miranda became a star marked a pivotal moment for idealizing such hybridity. One important testing ground for such mixture exaltation occurred in the context of carnival, a safe period for exploring boundaries and identities via fantasias.

The Baiana and Carnival

Studio portraits she had taken in the twenties show that Carmen Miranda enjoyed dressing for carnival before she became a star. There are photographs of her in a pirate fantasía with one fist clenched and the other hand wielding a dagger while her facial expression is one of mock aggression. In another photograph she wears a matador's costume with arms extended overhead in a nod to the matador's physicality while one high-heeled foot points provocatively to the side. For these portraits she wears fantasias that she likely constructed herself or at least assembled from existing items. She enhances her overall appearance with accessories, styling, and poses. Though they are still photographs, the portraits seem to catch her in mid-movement. Her entire body including her facial gestures is expressive. Of the several photos of Carmen in the pirate fantasía, she smiles constantly. Even the photo of her with an 'aggressive' expression

in her eyes one sees the hint of a smile playing at her lips. The fantasias themselves are not meant to replicate exactly what a pirate or matador would wear. Rather they are stylized interpretations that playfully incorporate high heels (for the matador costume), satin fabrics, fashionable waved hair, and modern cosmetics. These fantasias constitute parodies and a playing with distance between the type she is meant to imitate and her own voice. She is not simply a pirate or a matador but rather a “pirate” and “matador” delivered with a wink according to the carnival spirit where nothing is ever entirely serious. In crafting these fantasias Carmen draws from a range of sources and adds her own creative touches to make something new and playful. In the carnival context such playfulness is appropriate as the festival is a time for upending social expectations including expectations for what the different types look like.

She continued to create fantasias throughout her Brazilian career with her most successful being the *baiana* [a woman from the state of Bahia] fantasia she wore for live performances in late 1938 and for film in early 1939. Her interpretation had a profound impact in terms of its successful balancing of white aesthetics with an appreciation for Afro-Brazilian culture. The fantasia was a visual means for participating in discourses that allowed for universally shared Afro-Brazilian heritage through cultural contact and without regard for racial makeup. As a Euro-Brazilian singing Afro-Brazilian music in a glamorous and ‘traditional’ exotic costume, Carmen presented a hybrid performance and look that was broadly influential on modern understandings of *brasilidade*.



Figure 18: Carmen dressed in a pirate fantasia, c. 1927 (Barsante 1994)

Before Carmen debuted her baiana fantasia, earlier iterations had already been making inroads into carioca carnival. As the Rio de Janeiro festival became more popular, the number of samba schools – clubs that dance and perform competitively during carnival – grew in Rio de Janeiro and beyond. By 1935 the city had begun to regulate the schools and required that each include a group of women dressed as baianas (Vianna 1999 [1995]: 90). Baiana literally translates as a woman from Bahia, yet functionally implies a woman of Afro-Brazilian descent. While technically speaking dressing like a woman from Bahia can mean anything, there are several dress signifiers that have long reinforced popular shared stereotypes. For example, dressing as a baiana can mean wearing the clothes one sees worn by the prepared food and produce vendors that proliferate on the streets of Bahia and Rio de Janeiro. It can also mean dressing like a candomblé priestess attending an Afro-Brazilian religious ritual event. The layering within the different baiana ‘types’ is made further complex by, for example, a candomblé practitioner’s rank and the occasion for which she dresses. Yet another variation on the baiana would be the carioca samba school baianas parading during carnival. Because there are so many different ways to dress as a baiana, Carmen had multiple sources of inspiration available to her. As someone who lived in Rio de Janeiro and who had travelled to Bahia earlier in the decade, it is likely that Carmen was familiar with a broad range of baiana dress examples to emulate. It is useful to compare Carmen’s baiana fantasia to her pirate fantasia in terms of what the look is meant to achieve.

Referring back to figure 18, one notes that Carmen uses several dress signifiers meant to evoke the pirate: skulls, bicorne hat, dagger, and boots. And yet her fantasia is clearly a parody of the pirate type. She wears a short skirt, uses satin fabrics, and styles her hair and make-up

according to contemporary trends. Nonetheless she incorporates a significant number of pirate signifiers to effectively communicate what she is meant to be. By incorporating satin, etc., Carmen inserts her own ‘voice’ into the fantasia to create a parodying distance between herself and people who violently take over ships and steal cargo.

A baiana fantasia in the context of carnival serves a similar playful function. On the one hand the ensemble is a costume that meets shared cultural expectations for the type depicted. On the other hand it does not necessarily reflect precisely what a baiana might wear. So what were popular understandings of what constituted baiana dress signifiers? Gilberto Freyre’s 1933 description of the baiana in *Casa-Grande* is a typical characterization: [she is] “aristocratic in bearing, possesses grace, wraps her head with a turban, wears full skirts and adorns her body with a great deal of jewelry including gold earrings, amulets and bracelets” (Freyre 1986 [1933]: 275).

Before Carmen debuted her baiana fantasia, baiana as carnival costume was appearing not only in the samba school parades mentioned above but also at live music events in Rio de Janeiro. The fantasias tended to follow the basic, broad lines Freyre describes, with the addition of a striped shawl. The amulets to which Freyre refers would include those used by candomblé practitioners. These might include special colored beads with religious significance and most important the *balangandã*: “an open silver arch where all kinds of amulets are hung in a bundle and according to a particular organization: fruits, hearts, keys horn, animal teeth, birds” (Ligério Coelho 1998: 104-105). Depending on the occasion, a baiana candomblé practitioner might also wear fine textiles if possible, including silks. Another common dress signifier of baiana as type is the turban, which is at times called more specifically an *ojá* or a *torço*. *Ojá* is a term with

Yoruban roots signifying a type of shawl that is twisted and worn on the head. The term's association with Yoruba means that its usage connotes Afro-Brazilian religious practices (*Michaelis Dictionary*, accessed online 12/12/13). Torço is a term also used to signify a shawl worn on the head in turban style. The term is regionally specific to Bahia (*ibid*). While there are nuances to the different terms and the ways in which one might deploy them, they share basic visual deployment. That is, in all cases the head is covered and wrapped with fabric. While a baiana is by no means always obliged to cover her head, what is important to note here is that baiana fantasias consistently incorporate a head cover made from fabric. The length, quality, and decoration of the clothing signifier and how it is worn varies just as how a bicorne hat is worn varies, e.g. sometimes a bicorne hat is worn to signify Napoleon and sometimes it signifies a pirate costume. In examining Carmen's fantasia, I use the general term turban as it encompasses a wide range of variations.

Thirties stage performers before Carmen who wore baiana fantasias tended to wear long full skirts, lots of beaded necklaces and bracelets, a modest peasant blouse, and a turban. Among the professional performers to wear this type of baiana fantasia was someone whose music Carmen knew: Aracy Cortes, a woman of African and Spanish descent. In the 1930s Aracy had been performing in baiana attire at carioca clubs. As a great admirer of Aracy's music and fellow carioca, it is likely Carmen saw her contemporary perform (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 46). Another performer to don a baiana fantasia for her performances in the thirties was Elisa Coelho, whose costume Carmen is also reported to have seen (Shaw 2013: 30).



Figure 19: Carmen dressed as a baiana for “O que é que a baiana tem?” in *Banana da terra* (1939) (screen shot)

Visual artists have also found the baiana an interesting subject to interpret. For example, Brazilian folklorist/poet/artist Cecília Meireles made watercolor paintings of baianas from 1926 to 1934. Cecília Meireles' interpretations were popular at the time and it has been suggested that her renderings were yet another source of inspiration for Carmen in crafting her fantasia (Ligiéro 2006: 92). While the baiana as a type is today a looming mythical and implicitly African-descended figure, it has gained popularity through different artistic interpretations including by the likes of foreigners prone to romanticizing Brazil, namely French photographer Pierre Verger (1902-1996) and the Argentine artist known as Carybé (1911-1997). Concurrent with foreigners' romantic interpretations of the baiana were domestic celebrations such as Cecília Meireles'. The popular film star Carmen Miranda's glamorous baiana fantasia was in step with current trends but more important, in the context of film it had the potential to reach a much broader swath of the population than any painted or artistically photographed interpretation.

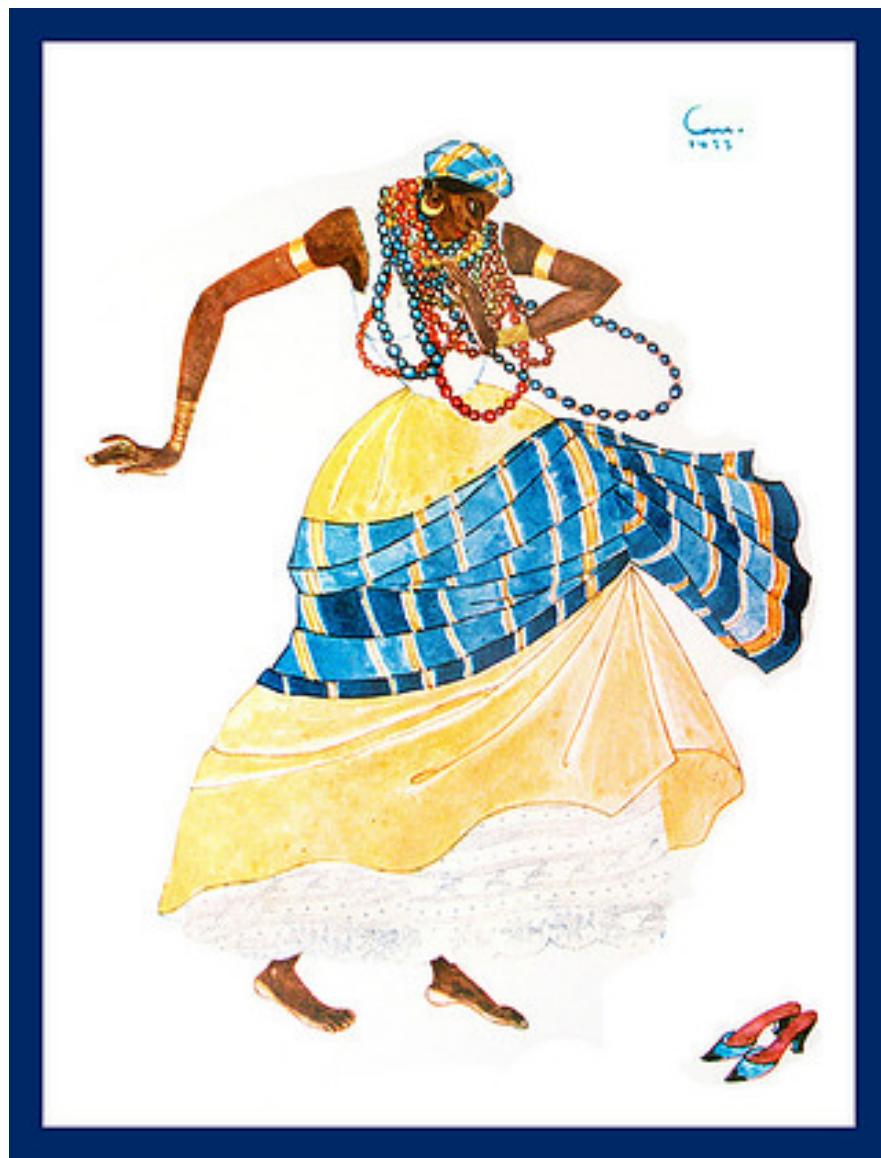


Figure 20: A watercolor interpretation of the baiana by Brazilian artist and folklorist, Cecília Meireles (Meireles 1983)

“O que é que a baiana tem?”

Although the song “O que é que a baiana tem?”⁴⁷ [What Does the Woman from Bahia Have?] is about a woman from Bahia, Carmen’s musical number in the film opens with shots of the Rio de Janeiro coastline. The scene transitions to a simple painted street scene set where Carmen and her band, *Bando da Lua* [Moon Band], perform. Surrounded by the musicians and moving within the small space Carmen sings about the baiana as someone who wears a silk turban, a *pano da costa* [a type of shawl associated with slave women in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro], a golden necklace, balangandãs, a starched skirt, and an embroidered blouse. She has grace and “when she moves her hips I’d like her to land on me” (Ligiéro Coelho translation 1998: 94). The lyrics never overtly refer to the baiana’s race, though the aforementioned cultural practices associated with Afro-Brazilians imply race. Since Carmen is obviously Euro-Brazilian, her performance reinforces the Freyrian perspective that Afro-Brazilian heritage is universally shared through cultural contact regardless of one’s race. Moreover, the implication is that all of these qualities – dress, religious practices, and physical movements – are what is most important to being a baiana. Theoretically, then, anyone can be of Afro-Brazilian descent if she possesses these qualities. The song, when delivered by Carmen, aligns with Freyre’s romantic vision of Afro-Brazilian culture accrued through contact. In an era when shifting ideas about *brasiliadade* were taking shape to conflate race and culture, not mentioning race was particularly effective for cultivating Brazilian hybridity. As a white woman and well-known performer of Afro-Brazilian influenced samba and marchas, Carmen was an ideal interpreter of the lyrics. A popular figure for over a decade, Carmen had established a reputation as someone very photogenic and

⁴⁷ See Appendix D for complete lyrics.

glamorously fashionable so that when she did what not many white middle-class women would do at the time – dress as a baiana – her fantasia was sure to have an impact. At the time, dressing as a baiana for carioca carnival was not uncommon but only among the lower-class street revellers who were typically black and mixed-race (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 95). As a glamorous white film star, Carmen helped make the baiana a more acceptable fantasia for more people.

Carmen's earlier film performances constituted donning a 'white mask'—to use Franz Fanon's (1952) characterization of such practices—to perform Afro-Brazilianness. That is to say, she dressed in a glamorous, white Hollywood style that was counterbalanced with her musical interpretation of Afro-Brazilian styles. The baiana fantasia, however, constituted a shift in that for the first time she attempted to dress the part. That said, it is important to note that her fantasia did not constitute a denigrating mockery of Afro-Brazilians or even an attempt to 'fool' anyone that she was a baiana. Rather, the fantasia was a parody just as her pirate fantasia was a parody. In both instances Carmen plays with distance between her own creative 'voice' and the costume stereotype. One way she does this is through the evocation of the glamorous Hollywood style she so adored emulating through dress. Interestingly Carmen draws upon Hollywood exoticizing costumes to fashion her baiana. As demonstrated by Freyre's 1933 characterization and thirties artistic interpretations, the baiana was an increasingly popular folk stereotype. Carmen's interpretation had the effect of reinforcing the baiana as a domestically exotic figure.

In crafting her fantasia, Carmen mixes 'modern' with 'traditional' elements. As she sings about each article of clothing, she gestures to her own body and apparel pointing to garments

that are clearly not what she says they are. Her turban is not silk but lamé. Moreover, it is made according to the glamorous styles of the day—small and of a stylish fabric. Though the lyrics do not mention the baiana as carrying food on her head as a baiana street vendor might, Carmen draws upon what she already knows about street vendors in Bahia and Rio and makes a small, stylized fruit basket to top her turban. Her skirt is not starched cotton but rather lamé to match the turban. Its stripes evoke the pano da costa, which is often a striped fabric. Moreover, she has constructed the costume to emphasize the lines of her body. As with her gown for “Primavera no Rio,” Carmen’s overall baiana silhouette is meant to flatter her figure, a corpo praiano. The bias cut skirt’s stripes are placed directionally so that they point towards the center of her person, emphasizing her hips and lower body movements. While the skirt has some fullness and is long, Carmen has done away with the petticoats a baiana might wear thus further modernizing it. Rather than a modest cotton peasant blouse, Carmen wears instead a midriff-baring lamé top. Her shawl is of a sheer shimmery fabric adding to the overall theatricality of her appearance. Finally her many necklaces, bracelets, and the oversize hoop earrings appear to be costume jewellery and not gold as the lyrics indicate. It is clear that she does not attempt to wear an ensemble corresponding precisely with the lyrics. This contrast emphasizes what is unique about Carmen’s costume ‘voice’ reinforcing her ironic, winking delivery. I posit that these combined qualities in a carnival context contributed to the success of Carmen’s baiana.



Figure 21: February 1, 1939 cover of *Jornal das Moças* in which a Euro-Brazilian models a midriff-baring fantasia. From the collection at Casa Rui Barbosa in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Figure 22: A page from the January 5, 1939, issue of *Jornal das Moças* in which head wraps and two-piece ensembles are recommended for the beach. From the collection at Casa Rui Barbosa in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



Parece incrivel que, apenas com trinta centimetros de fazenda, se pode fazer a moda, ou melhor, acompanha-la. Cortam-se dois panos. O de cima é todo pregueado no meio e as pontas lisas. Cose-se um com 3 pedacos de panos diferentes, que se juntam em seguida. — Uma maneira de fazer um soutien muito original e interessante é a que se vê no modelo abaixo. — Outro modelo muito interessante de soutien é o que se vê tambem, em baixo, mas ao lado. E' feito em fazenda quadrada e pregueada ao centro.

Significantly, the queen of Brazilian cinema engages Hollywood aesthetic sensibilities in several ways. For example, lamé, which at the time was woven with metal fibers, was popular in thirties Hollywood film. As we saw earlier, Carmen had used previously lamé in *Alô, alô carnaval!* (1936) reflecting her continued interest in the flashy textile. In a departure from other contemporary baiana fantasias, Carmen bares her midriff, which was a new fashion trend at the time. Newspaper photographs of Aracy Cortes dressed as a baiana in the 1930s show her in a modest blouse. In baring her midriff, Carmen further modernizes and exoticizes the baiana costume, simultaneously widening the intertextual gap between ‘baiana’ as folk stereotype and her own baiana interpretation. Carmen’s rendering in this way is consistent with her thirties star image, which included wearing the latest fashions. During the 1930s, two-piece bathing suits began to come into fashion in the US and Brazil. Hollywood costume design may have been influential in this regard. Popular films such as *Tarzan and His Mate* (1934) and *Cleopatra* (1934) were among those to include midriff-baring costumes. For Brazilian beach going, a 1939 edition of the magazine *Jornal das Moças* [Young Women’s Journal] suggests different styles of two-piece bathing suits to be worn with a head wrap (see figures 21 and 22 for contemporary examples of a fantasia and Brazilian beachwear that incorporate bared midriffs).

Carmen’s head covering in the music number resembles current fashions – a fashionable cross between a hat and a head wrap. Having worked with a French milliner in Rio, there is little doubt that Carmen designed her headwear and probably constructed it. While her head cover is meant to suggest a turban, it looks more like a removable hat or even the kind of chic head wrap that *Jornal das Moças* describes as “*a moda*” [in fashion] (see figure 22). While Carmen’s baiana look would eventually help popularize turbans and head wraps in the United States in the 1940s,

it was an increasingly popular style that predated her May 1939 arrival in New York. US fashion magazines such as *Vogue* heralded the turban's stylishness in an issue published only weeks before Carmen debuted on Broadway (*Vogue*, May 15, 1939). As with the glamorous, exoticizing bared midriff, the fashion trend likely traces its roots to Hollywood film where Orientalist turbans were incorporated into costumes such as Greta Garbo's for *Mata Hari* (1932).

Performance-wise for “O que é que a baiana tem?” Carmen continues to deploy the Brazilian theatrical revue techniques she used previously in *Alô, alô, carnaval!*. She rolls her eyes, smiles constantly, and uses facial gestures to insinuate double entendres and provocativeness. In a departure from earlier performances, however, Carmen alters her dance style from the more Hollywood synchronized technique seen in “Cantoras do rádio.” Though there were no rules to samba dancing, there were some basic rhythmic patterns and movement styles that Carmen engages to create her own stylized version of samba dancing (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 135). For example, she uses *ginga* in her performance which constitutes a kind of back and forth balancing that involves weight shifts from one leg to the other.⁴⁸ She also keeps her feet low to the ground and seems to glide across the performance space. Her torso is mostly fixed while her hips twist, another basic samba step called *rebolar* (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 137). Her arms are bent and held above the hips deploying gestures associated with Kongo African-descended Brazilians' dance techniques (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 141). Engaging these different performance techniques Carmen kinetically and visually ‘quotes’ sambista dance styles and gestures while retaining the comic facial expressions associated with revue theater. The

⁴⁸ Ginga is a balancing technique also used in the Afro-Brazilian martial arts form capoeira (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 136).

performer did not apprentice with a samba master nor does her performance appear to be an exact copying of samba dance styles she would have observed at Rio's street carnival. Rather the dance and gesture techniques become additional means for articulating a unique theatrical performance style (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 141) just as her fantasia was a unique composite rendering.

The different fantasia elements taken together with Carmen's performance style suggest that her glamorous film baiana was a parody, that is, a "repetition with difference" (Hutcheon 1985:32). Though parodic, her performance and fantasia do not appear deliberately to denigrate the baiana, though surely there were those who considered her interpretation to be insulting. Any performance is subject to assessment and there will always be those who question the social limits one may test within a carnival context. Nonetheless, a parody such as Carmen's baiana constitutes a means for retaining critical distance in order to create new meanings, a point I explore further in chapter 4. Though parody may ridicule its subject it does not need to. Carmen's baiana is more akin to an homage or pastiche in that it offers an admiring, playful stylized imitation of an exotic figure (Genette 1997 [1982]: 98) much as her matador and pirate fantasias did.

Figure 23: Gimbel's advertisement featuring a turban for travel wear, *Vogue*, April 16, 1939 (Condé Nast online archives)

GIMBELS

33rd Street and Broadway PEnn. 6-5100

Train Turban \$5

Brow smooth, hair sleek--the perfection of grooming possible only with a beautifully draped turban! This one's softly padded and tucked rayon crepe. White, black, wine, navy, miniature blue, red in the group.

GIMBELS — Millinery — Second Floor

The advertisement features a large, bold title 'GIMBELS' at the top. Below it, the address '33rd Street and Broadway' and phone number 'PEnn. 6-5100' are provided. A price of '\$5' is listed next to the description of the 'Train Turban'. The text describes the turban as being made of softly padded and tucked rayon crepe, available in various colors including white, black, wine, navy, miniature blue, and red. The advertisement also mentions 'GIMBELS — Millinery — Second Floor'. To the right, there is a small inset for 'GIMBEL BROTHE' with the text 'Adjoining Pennsylvania Station' and '15 Minutes from the WORLD'S FAIR'. Below the main text, there is a black and white photograph of two women wearing patterned coats and hats, standing side-by-side. To the left of the photograph, there is a detailed illustration of a woman's face wearing a turban. The overall layout is clean and professional, typical of mid-20th-century magazine advertisements.

Conclusion

Carmen Miranda's thirties star persona reflected her skillful balancing of conflicting coexisting ideologies about race in Brazil. She appeared elegant and white while interpreting Afro-Brazilian associated music. At the time whiteness continued to be an idealized aesthetic, which carried over from earlier branqueamento efforts ostensibly to improve Brazilian national character. This idealization of whiteness meant that circulating images in print and film were mostly of Euro-Brazilians. Coexistent with notions of the white ideal was rhetoric that celebrated mestiçagem and Afro-Brazilian cultural contributions. Carmen successfully balanced these conflicting ideals by being an adept interpreter of Afro-Brazilian informed musical styles while creating an image modeled on glamorous white Hollywood beauty ideals. Such blending was effective in supporting emergent ideas of *brasilidade* as essentially hybrid. She achieved the height of such hybridity through the creation of her *baiana* fantasia, which was a parodying form of domestic exoticism. Modern glamour met Afro-Brazilian 'tradition' in the form of her costume. The conflicting, coexisting race ideologies of the thirties coalesced in her *baiana* to create a powerful visual signifier whose import continues to resonate. The immediate popularity of her fantasia during carnival season tells us several things: first, that Carmen's look was recognized as a parodic costume, not a literal interpretation, which is less desirable in a carnival context; second, that her fantasia provided a means for transgressing and testing a range of social boundaries, including those related to race and class; and three, that in popular Brazilian culture people found ambiguity appealing.

The popularity of Carmen's *baiana* interpretation took off immediately after *Banana da terra*'s February 10, 1939, release. Carnival occurred a week after the film opened. On the

streets of Rio de Janeiro and in elegant clubs, women, men and children dressed as Carmen's baiana. And though cross-dressing has long been a popular carnival fantasia for men, among those to dress as Carmen's baiana were homosexuals (Green 1999:1). For these men, Carmen's already parodic glamorous fantasia was a rich source for further parody of heteronormative social roles (*ibid*).

The ambiguity in Carmen Miranda's star persona had previously played with ambiguities of nationality, ethnicity, and race when she wore glamorous attire –born in Portugal, she was raised in Brazil, and engaged Afro-Brazilian musical styles. In creating a baiana fantasia she used clothing to articulate more fully those ambiguities. Her fantasia was simultaneously traditional in that it made a nod to what were already recognizable elements of a baiana fantasia in Rio de Janeiro and it was modern. Incorporating glamorous Hollywood sensibilities as she had long been doing, Carmen expanded her visual repertoire to include Hollywood-inflected exotic stylizations through her baiana. In a Brazilian context, her performance suggested a racially ambiguous woman, a source for sexualizing exoticism. In the larger cultural landscape where Afro-Brazilian cultural contributions were increasingly valued at least in terms of official and popular rhetoric if not practice, Carmen's baiana represented a shift toward the national ideology about *mestiçagem* as distinctly Brazilian.

Chapter 3:

From Carnival to Carnivalesque: Carmen in Hollywood Film

Carmen Miranda's parodic baiana look and performance for 1939's *Banana da terra* were an embodiment of emergent ideas about mestiçagem and brasiliade. The culturally hybrid carnival fantasia she created was a great success and helped launch her career in the US within the year. When she came to the US, the success of her baiana Broadway revue performance facilitated migration to the Hollywood carnivalesque genre of musical comedy films where the fantasia took on new meanings.

Since she first created and introduced her baiana, Carmen Miranda has been widely impersonated and had her image recontextualized again and again. Most impersonations and recontextualizations have been based on the Hollywood version of her baiana. Because her Hollywood image is the one that is most widely circulated and best recognized, in this chapter I examine her Hollywood performance and look, from 1940 to 1953 when her films were released.

Other scholars have noted that Carmen's Hollywood success relied upon her always playing the part of a pan-Latin/a figure (e.g. Ligiéro Coelho 1998; Ovalle 2011; Roberts 1992). While this is certainly true, there is surprisingly little investigation into what specifically made her performance and look unique. Her Hollywood star image was certainly shaped by US culture producers yet it was also a product of the image and style she had long been cultivating in Brazil. Her baiana's success on Broadway in New York during the summer of 1939 had to do with her performance as much as her look. One of the most salient qualities of Carmen's performances was to elicit ambivalent laughter through, for example, singing innuendo-laden songs delivered with a wink.

In Brazil Carmen had made a career out of a direct carnival connection in both her music and film repertoire, all the while retaining a glamorous image. The glamorous modern fashion sensibilities she had cultivated for over a decade were traded in for a permanent assignment to the carnivalesque when she donned the baiana costume, which became her ‘Latin’ look in the US. In so doing, she came to inhabit a liminal space where a range of social boundaries could be playfully crossed. Among the normativities her performances troubled were femininity and ethnicity. Though she has been described as a “nonsexual camp female grotesque” (Roberts 1992), at times Carmen exuded a sexuality that was extreme in the way of carnival’s exaggerated sexuality. Sometimes her costumes and the props around her resemble grotesque genitalia that unsettle puritanical sensibilities then dictating Hollywood film content in the studio’s self-censoring Production Code Administration era. While ‘normalcy’ is restored at the end of Carmen’s films, I posit that her presence creates temporary disruptions that potentiate socially transforming consequences, which I explore in greater depth in chapter 4.

In this chapter I examine what is carnivalesque in Carmen’s Hollywood films and performances. The effect of her belonging to a carnival/carnivalesque genre is that this becomes a means for orienting related discourse about her. Charles Briggs and Richard Bauman have shown that such frameworks can orient “the production and reception of discourse” (Briggs and Bauman 1992: 142-3). I situate her historically in terms of US policy and show how this is related to the types of movies she made. I examine the patterns in her films, which include always being cast as a performer, and plot emphases on performance, masquerades, and comic reversals. I show that the different patterns made her look and performance highly extractable. The uniqueness of her look and performance contributed to her iconicity, which

facilitates the portability of what I call ‘Carmen Drag.’ That is, performing as ‘Carmen Miranda,’ a theme I further address in the next chapter.

The Brazilian Bombshell

In the months following carnival and *Banana da terra*’s 1939 release, Carmen Miranda continued to wear the baiana costume popular with Brazilian audiences from across the class spectrum. Moviegoers had been delighted with her glamorous baiana look while the elegant people who filled Rio’s chic clubs got to see her perform in living color.

Infusing the stereotypical baiana costume with her glamorous sensibilities, Carmen continued to draw audiences during the tropical city’s seasonal shift from summer to autumn. Among the nightclubs where one could see Carmen perform was the Cassino da Urca near the iconic Sugarloaf Mountain. The club was easily accessible for carioca elites as well as foreign tourists disembarking from luxury ocean liners. The Urca neighborhood where Cassino da Urca was located is close to the centro while remaining set off in an idyllic tree-lined residential area on the waterfront. Among those to visit the club that autumn was a New Yorker named Lee Shubert. Lee and his brothers Sam and Jacob were Broadway producers whose keen recognition of Carmen’s potential commercial appeal would change her life within months.

The story of how he ‘discovered’ Carmen at Cassino da Urca has been re-told many times and in different ways making it difficult to sort out the particulars. What we do know is that Shubert saw Carmen’s baiana performance in February 1939—possibly at the prompting of

friends⁴⁹ —and arranged to meet with her on the ship that had brought him to Brazil, the S.S. Normandy (Castro 2005; Coelho 1998). By March Carmen had signed a contract with Shubert to appear in his Broadway production of *Streets of Paris*.

After some negotiating, Carmen was able to ensure that her band, Bando da Lua, was able to accompany her. Concerned that the nation’s “Ambassador of Samba” could not fully represent *brasileidade* without her band, President Getúlio Vargas made sure that the six-member Bando da Lua had its passage paid for by the Brazilian government (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 111-112). In terms of representing Brazil, there was a great deal riding on Carmen and Bando da Lua’s passage to the United States. In addition to their Broadway performances, the band was slated to perform at the Brazilian Pavilion in the New York World’s Fair. People from all over the world would get their first taste of Brazilian culture at the fair. For this reason, a Brazilian media frenzy accompanied the group when they set sail from Rio de Janeiro on May 4, 1939. Carmen’s tearful nationalistic speeches and interviews delivered before her departure made clear that she fully understood the significance of her task as an unofficial Brazilian cultural ambassador.

Before she even stepped off the S.S. Uruguay that brought her to New York, the US media was prepared to document her arrival. Carmen had picked up a few words of English along the way and delighted journalists by joking, “I say money, money, money. I say money, money, money, and I say hot dog. I say yes and I say no, and I say money, money, money. And I

⁴⁹Shubert’s traveling companion, Sonia Henje, suggested he check out Carmen’s performance (Castro 2005: 182).

According to another source, Shubert had friends in Rio, US-transplants, who encouraged him to see Carmen’s performance (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 109).

say turkey sandwich and I say grape juice. I say mens, mens, mens" (Castro 2005: 201). It is possible that Carmen chose to deploy this particular limited vocabulary in order to poke fun at American cuisine and obsession with money as well as outsiders' conceptions of Latin/a American women as 'man eaters.' Moreover, how she strings together her sentences demonstrates a poetic playfulness and an ear for aural sounds that are rhythmically pleasing, a pattern one finds in her music repertoire as well.⁵⁰

After this memorable introduction to the US, Carmen and Bando da Lua impressed audiences and "saved Broadway" from the competing World's Fair by increasing ticket sales to *Streets of Paris*. They were thrilling and different from anything that had previously been seen on New York stages. Though few in the audience understood what Carmen sang, her powerful performance and unusual appearance had appeal that transcended language barriers. While Carmen was ostensibly an unofficial Brazilian cultural ambassador in 1939, over time her star persona became less nation-specific as she was engaged to represent "Latin-ness" more generally in the US.

Though she performed only three numbers in *Streets of Paris*, Carmen was a sensation. Her performance style and baiana costume captivated audiences eager to see the Brazilian Bombshell singing at the end of the first and second acts ("Carmen Miranda: The Girl from Rio" 2008). One of the show's performers, Magda Mastrogiovanni, notes in the documentary, "Carmen Miranda: The Girl from Rio," that Carmen was a hit not only with audiences but also with other performers. According to Mastrogiovanni, Mickey Rooney returned night after night

⁵⁰ I am grateful to Susan Seizer for pointing out the poetics of Carmen's early English vocabulary as delivered to the press in 1939 and how similar it is to her singing style.

to sit in the front row and watch Carmen perform (ibid).

Part of Carmen's appeal had to do with the costume she wore, a variation of the baiana look she had created for her performance in *Banana da terra*. Evidence that her unusual style had appeal is clear from retailers' prompt interpretation of her look. New York department stores installed Carmen Miranda mannequins in their windows and manufacturers created both licensed and un-licensed Carmen-inspired jewelry, hats, and garments (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 120-123). Carmen's look quickly became commodified material culture produced on a mass scale; a commodification that paralleled US commodification and marketing of Latin American natural resources such as bananas.

It wasn't long before Hollywood took notice of the singer whom newspapers had begun to refer to as the "Brazilian Bombshell" (Castro 2005: 211). Though she spoke very little English, Twentieth-Century Fox invited her to perform in its forthcoming musical film *Down Argentine Way* (1940). Carmen had long been eager to be a film star. While still performing in *Streets of Paris* in July 1939, Fox shot a Technicolor screen test of Carmen and Bando da Lua at a New York studio (Castro 2005: 220). Studio executive Darryl F. Zanuck immediately sent a contract to New York for filming to commence in January (Castro 2005: 221). Not speaking English proved to be no barrier. She was to reprise "South American Way" and "Bambu bambu" from *Streets of Paris*. In addition, she would perform a third number, "Mamãe eu quero." Carmen's East Coast performance schedule made her too busy to fly to California to shoot scenes. Since Fox was so eager to include her in its film, all of her numbers were shot in New York. This had a couple of advantages. First, it meant that she would play a non-speaking performer on stage, thus making her inability to speak English a moot point. Second, her scenes could easily be edited into the

movie with little connection to the film's overall plot (Griffin 2002: p. 43, FN 46).

From sold-out shows to the Carmen influence on fashions found at Macy's, Bergdorf Goodman, and Saks Fifth Avenue, it is clear that the performer already had commercial appeal by the time Fox invited her to perform in *Down Argentine Way*. Yet there were other factors that attracted Fox. At the time, the studio sought 'specialty acts' for its musical comedies. A specialty act was one that showcased a performer's unique talents in such a way that the number could be incorporated into the film without the number's having any direct tie to the film's storyline (Griffin 2002: 29). This gave the film a vaudeville kind of aesthetic such that different types of acts needed no point of continuity to follow one another (Griffin 2002: 29-30). Acrobatic tap dancers, jugglers, black, and 'ethnic' performers are the sorts of acts that could fall into the specialty act category. With an elaborate costume and songs delivered in a language unintelligible to most US moviegoers, Carmen was cast as a specialty act. Fox initially sought to cash in on Carmen's commercial appeal. In the process the studio effectively complied with WWII-era governmental policies about more positive Latin American representations in film.

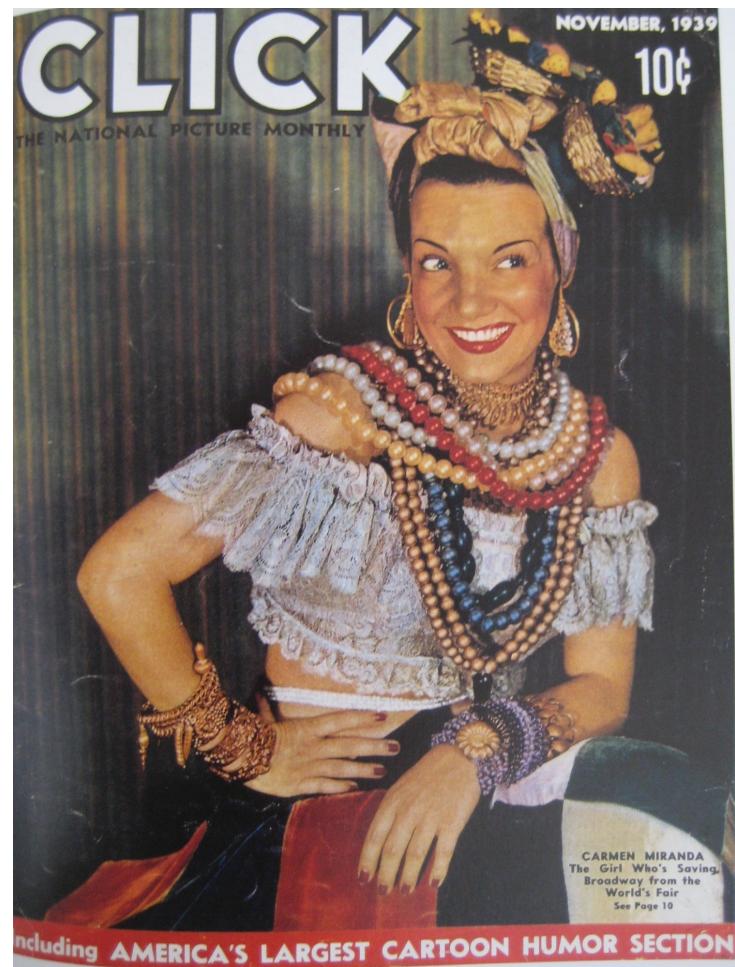


Figure 24: Carmen in her Broadway baiana attire on the November 1939 cover of *Click* (Barsante 1994)



Figure 25: A Bonwit Teller department store Carmen Miranda mannequin, c. 1939 (Barsante 1994)

Good Neighbors

During the twenties silent film era, Hollywood experienced a so-called Latin invasion of ‘Latin lovers’ that included popular stars Ramon Novarro, Dolores del Río, Gilbert Roland, and Lupe Vélez (Beltrán 2009: 18). Yet the romance with Latin/o/a American performers was soon to end when silents transitioned to sound ushering in a period of British-inflected diction (Beltrán 2009: 26). While some performers found work in studio produced Spanish-language films, others rode the thirties and forties wave of Latin musicals that paired music and dance with Latin or Latin-influenced musical styles (Beltrán 2009: 27). Such roles in musical films, however, were very often minor ones that supported white leads (López 1991). Carmen Miranda would become the exception to this rule when she embarked on her Hollywood career.

The political and cultural changes that made Carmen a desirable figure to cast in *Down Argentine Way* had begun several years earlier in 1934. That year President Franklin D. Roosevelt made his first visit to South America, declaring “good neighborliness” in the Americas a point of concern for his administration. Such neighborliness was borne of a desire to gain greater fiscal and political influence in Latin America. Before Roosevelt’s visit, US businesses had already begun to explore ways to make money in South America including the sourcing of raw materials for making automobile tires (Grandin 2006 [2010]). It was not until World War II got underway that the Good Neighbor policy was more actively pursued. With the war in Europe threatening to have a global impact, the Roosevelt administration wanted to be sure that Latin American countries would fall in step with the US and support Allied forces.

Although US companies had for decades made money from Latin American produce and other natural resources, the war changed US perspectives on global trade. As European and

Asian export markets closed, US businesses turned to Latin America as an export destination. Concurrent with this change were Brazil's efforts to participate more fully in the global marketplace. Natural resources such as coffee and bananas were what South America's largest nation was well equipped to export. In 1939 both Brazil and the US wanted to cultivate trade between the two countries, which is why President Vargas publicly supported Carmen's passage to the US as an unofficial cultural ambassador (Enloe 2000 [1989]; Mendonça 1999; Sadlier 2008).

By 1940 the US government established its Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA) headed by Nelson A. Rockefeller. Rockefeller was deemed qualified for the position based on his overall wealth and sizable economic investments in Latin American petroleum. The CIAA's objective was to represent "Latins" in a more positive light to US citizens and thereby increase popular support for inter-American unity (Woll 1974: 279). One way the CIAA sought to do this was through the circulation of subtle propaganda in popular culture, especially film.

Although *Down Argentine Way* can be classified as a Good Neighbor film with its depiction of friendly relations between North and South Americans, it was made before Rockefeller became directly involved with popular movie productions. Fox executive Zanuck was chiefly interested in Carmen as a specialty act because she had commercial appeal that aligned with growing popular interest in *Latinidad* [Latinness] and tropical locales for films (Castro 2005: 265). The studio made a wise investment in Carmen as she soon became Fox's highest earning performer.

Nonetheless, the timing of the film's release coincided with Rockefeller's appointment

and *Down Argentine Way* became an early project for him to tackle given its poor reception in Latin America. When it first arrived in Argentina *Down Argentine Way* was greeted with protests regarding its inaccuracies and overall offensiveness (Castro 2005: 266). The filmmakers had paid little attention to cultural differences even costuming rural Argentines as 'Mexican' peasants. Another sore point for Argentines was the casting of a Brazilian performer in what was ostensibly a Buenos Aires-based film. The film was banned in Argentina prompting the CIAA to persuade Fox to spend \$40,000 re-shooting scenes. The hope was to placate South American audiences, which ultimately did not happen (Castro 2005: 267).

At the height of her US career, Carmen was the most visible Latin/a/o American performer in Hollywood. As early as 1941 she was leaving her hand and platform shoe prints in cement outside Grauman's Chinese Theater in Hollywood. Being such a public figure she came to inform 1940s US discourses about Latin/o/a Americans. As others have noted (e.g. Enloe [1989]; Sadlier [2006]; Woll [1974]), during WWII Carmen was a key hemispheric cultural figure whose Hollywood career facilitated US influence through non-militaristic means.

After *Down Argentine Way* Carmen made other films that directly referenced the Good Neighbor policy, most notably *Springtime in the Rockies* (1942) and *The Gang's All Here* (1943).⁵¹

⁵¹ President Getúlio Vargas banned *The Gang's All Here* in 1943 because he objected to the "Tutti-Frutti" hat number, which included what many saw to be oversize phallic bananas (Sadlier 2008: 232, FN 26). Sadlier argues that Orson Welles' representation of Brazil in the documentary *It's All True* (shot between 1941 and 1942) relied on highlighting similarities between Brazil and the US. By contrast, Carmen's US career was built upon highlighting the differences between the two countries (Sadlier 2008: 233). Nonetheless, both Carmen Miranda and Welles participated in *samba exaltação* [samba exaltation]. Samba exaltação was a patriotic and dominant paradigm in early 1940s Brazil that celebrated samba as a distinctly Brazilian music form that had come down from the favelas

In other films the policy is indirectly referenced. For example one scene from *Week-End in Havana* (1941) describes Cuba's sugar plantations as an important hemispheric resource. The scene seems out of place with the rest of the film's lighthearted tone as it takes on the air of a public school educational documentary. While Carmen's characters in the Good Neighbor films are consistently harmless and comic, her visibility in US popular culture nonetheless marked an important improvement over past Hollywood 'Latin' representations as "greasers," villains, and sultry Latin lovers (Beltrán 2009; Woll 1983).

During this era of Good Neighbor films, Rockefeller appointed millionaire crony John Hay Whitney to oversee the organization's motion picture section. Not only did the two men engage in oversight of film content, they also produced several newsreels and film shorts including the Walt Disney animated shorts *Saludos Amigos* (1942) and *The Three Caballeros* (1944) (Woll 1983: 108). Aurora Miranda even dressed as a baiana for a musical number in *The Three Caballeros* when Carmen herself was unavailable for filming. Both films featured the Brazilian parrot character Zé Carioca.

Of course patriotism was not the only motivating factor for more favorable Latin American representation in Hollywood films. With European distribution markets closing as the Germans gained control in Europe, by 1940 Central and South America became the primary

(McCann 2004: 43). Thanks to Carmen and Welles, samba exaltação gained international traction (McCann 2004: 77). Welles included samba in his radio broadcasts for US audiences and throughout her US career, Carmen incorporated samba beats even into American standards such as "Chattanooga Choo Choo" (Sadlier 2008). As such Welles and Carmen both effectively promoted the nationalist rhetoric of Brazil as racial democracy (McCann 2004: 77).

importers for US films (Woll 1983: 110).

Theoretical Implications: Extractability, the Carnivalesque, and the Performer

My theoretical framework for analyzing Carmen Miranda's Hollywood film repertoire and the impact her look and performance had and continue to have on normative femininity and ethnicity relies on three key points: what is extractable in her look and performance; the carnivalesque quality attending said look and performance; and the consistent casting of Carmen as a performer.

Extractability

In addressing the bounded quality of Carmen's performances and appearance, I use the term "entextualization." While it is problematic to address dress and performance in a way that implies language through use of the term "text," the concept is nonetheless useful. Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs describe entextualization as being "the process of rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit—a *text*—that can be lifted out of its interactional setting" (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 73). Such entextualization lends itself to being extracted (Bauman 2004: 4). Moreover, such extraction also potentiates detachability; that is, the entextualized unit can have a kind of separateness from other interactional settings.

The concept of entextualization is an interdisciplinary one indebted to linguistic anthropology. I seek to extend it to mediated performances such as film. What I find useful is entextualization's focus on the process of performance, what Bauman (2004) calls the "emergent quality." That is, each performance, even when it is recorded and mediated such as

in a film, is unique. The performance is not static but rather has the ability to be experienced in new ways according to each new context.

A performance event such as a musical phrase or number is inherently reproducible and transportable. Bounding off the event—decontextualizing and recontextualizing it—potentiates experiencing it anew in a different context (Bauman and Briggs 1990). Carmen Miranda's musical numbers are interesting in part because they rely so heavily on repeatable visual signifiers in addition to performance repeatability. A photograph of a costumed Carmen Miranda, for example, is an extractable visual sign vehicle capable of conveying new meanings in different contexts.

The Carnivalesque

In twenties and thirties Brazil Carmen Miranda participated in the ritual public festival of carnival. She dressed in costume and built her career on participation in carnival's commercialization, which included recording carnival marches and appearing in carnival-themed movies. While carnival is not a popular ritual festival in the US,⁵² some popular culture genres have experienced carnivalization, that is, carnival's influence on genres (Bakhtin 1984: 122). I call genres or events that have been carnivalized, carnivalesque.

Carnival itself is characterized by sensuality; by universal participation; suspension of daily laws, prohibitions, and restrictions; and suspension of hierachal structures (Bakhtin 1984:

⁵² Mardi Gras in New Orleans is similar to carnival in many respects – including religiously – but it is not popular throughout the rest of the United States. Halloween as it is celebrated in the United States is arguably the closest public ritual to Brazilian carnival and also an event when Carmen Miranda seems most likely to be impersonated in the US.

122-123). During carnival, ambiguity reigns as relationships are explored half-seriously and half-playfully. Opposites such as sacred/profane and life/death get drawn together to emphasize ambiguity. One result of this ambiguity is an atmosphere marked by obscenities often focused on the body's lower strata (Bakhtin 1984: 123). This can include bodily functions and oversized genitalia (Bakhtin 1984 [1965]). Ambivalence about change and the cycle of death and renewal are also qualities associated with ritual carnival (Bakhtin 1984: 124). The laughter that carnival evokes is likewise ambivalent as are carnival images (Bakhtin 1984: 126). During carnival, images get paired that are in stark contrast to each other (e.g. fat/thin) or otherwise present a doubling, such as twins (ibid). While carnival laughter is ambivalent, it is typically directed towards life's crises and toward something higher than oneself (Bakhtin 1984: 127).

Carmen's Hollywood films are filled with carnivalesque moments and scenes that extend beyond the simply comic typically attending musical comedies. Carmen's film characters frequently move between different social planes, thus playing with existing hierarchies and creating uncertainty about where she 'belongs' ethnically and socially. Among the ways Carmen moves between social planes is through doubling, pretense, and masquerade. This leads to mistaken identities and confusion. Her carnivalesque spirit at times extends to other film characters such that they too get doubled or masquerade as someone else. The overall effect is to create a carnivalesque reality within the film narrative.

Doubling and masquerades are executed in Carmen films frequently through the use of costumes. The costume facilitates social and spatial movements that result in mistaken identities/situations that can create a sense of license. I prefer most of the time to refer to costumes in these instances as *fantasias*, as the Brazilian term is more accurate in this context.

The fantasia, of course is not only a carnival costume but also something created from the imagination such as a fantasy or wish (DaMatta 1986: 74-75). Among the fantasies or wishes that Carmen's fantasias evoke in Hollywood film is the fantasy of what a Latin/a American looks like.

Other characters during the carnivalesque periods of Carmen's films also don fantasias. This leads to confusion and mistaken identities that feed comic scenes and build narrative tension. Like carnival, which ultimately ends and restores daily life, at the films' endings, deceptions are explained, confusions resolved, and the status quo restored. Typically the plot trope of Carmen's Hollywood films is for a white heteronormative romantic relationship to prevail over obstacles.⁵³ Although the masquerades and the carnivalesque get abandoned by the films' ends, this is not to say that quotidian life is precisely as it was before the carnivalesque. The disruptions potentiate broader, if subtle, changes to the social hierarchy.

The Performer

In all of Carmen Miranda's Hollywood films she is cast as a performer, sometimes as herself or as a character named "Carmen." Her performer character moves between onstage and backstage personae. One of the things at work here is a heightened reflexivity about playing a part, frequently already some type of caricature.

⁵³ Carmen Navarro's (Carmen) relationship with her manager Lionel Devereaux (Groucho Marx) in *Copacabana* (1947) is an exception. One of the film's jokes is that they have been engaged for eight years. Throughout the film Carmen dates other men and Lionel pursues other women. Their reunion at the film's end is ambiguous and unresolved. There is no suggestion that they intend to marry or otherwise change the nature of their relationship. It is as though their respective nationalities/ethnicities—Brazilian and Jewish—which are lower ranked in the social hierarchy (i.e. non-WASP) give them the license to explore a non-conventional romantic relationship.

This pattern of being cast as a performer was first established in *Down Argentine Way* when she played the Brazilian performer “Carmen Miranda” appearing at a Buenos Aires nightclub. By always playing the performer, the opportunities for identity conflation and confusion increase.

Being framed as a performer is significant for two other reasons as well. First, performers are those who ‘put on an act.’ Conceivably anyone with the skills to do so could also put on such an act. That Carmen’s film performances are typically over-the-top and exaggerated further emphasizes what is performed about them. Moreover, performance style extremes lend themselves to mimicry.

Playing the part of a performer is also important because it further reinforces what is carnivalesque about Carmen’s performance. The performer has skills that create opportunities to masquerade, impersonate, and at times deceive others. Sometimes her characters get doubled, either because she doubles or masquerades or because another film character mimics or impersonates her within the film.

Carmen’s Musical Comedies as a Carnivalized Genre

Carmen made a total of fourteen⁵⁴ Hollywood musicals: her first ten were under contract at Fox; one at United Artists where she sought to break out of the ‘Latin’ mold and be a leading lady; two at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM); and one at Paramount (see Appendix A for full filmography). Among the consistencies across these films released between 1940 and 1953 is

⁵⁴ In addition to her Hollywood career, Carmen had a rigorous international live performance schedule that is detailed in Ruy Castro’s 2005 biography *Carmen*.

that they are all musical comedies. Hollywood musicals in their Golden Era from the 1930s through the 1950s were characterized by extractability. That is to say, at the time, studios sought to get the greatest possible exposure of films' songs so they could maximize commercial crossover. This meant that radio, film, records, and sheet music intersected to increase a song's public accessibility and financial success (Cohan 2002: 6-7).

Carmen's precedent for making musicals had of course already been set in Brazil where she made five of the country's earliest musical films. Her status as radio and record star allowed her smoothly to transition into chanchadas, which sought to capitalize on singers' popularity. For over ten years in Brazil she performed on the radio, recorded songs, appeared in films, and lent her image for advertising campaigns.

At the beginning of her career in the US, it appeared that she would follow a similar trajectory. Recordings of her Broadway musical numbers were circulated before her first Hollywood film was released. Yet by the end of her life in 1955, Carmen had only made thirty-two recordings after sixteen years in the US—a far cry from the over two hundred records she made in Brazil between 1929 and 1939. In a US context, it seemed that audiences and producers wanted a Carmen Miranda whose star image had less to do with her musical talent than with what she looked like and how she performed. Carmen's commercial crossover meant providing a product that could be bounded off and easily put into new consumer contexts. Though she did not make nearly so many records in the US as she did in Brazil, she nonetheless provided a product that could be widely circulated—her look. In the very early part of her US career, Carmen's look was commodified as fresh, desirable, and fashionable. While she performed on Broadway, clothing manufacturers and department stores were quick to sell

authorized and un-authorized Carmen-inspired clothing that included jewelry and turbans (Castro 2005: 222). Yet Carmen Miranda as an easily bounded off ‘product’ had a durability that outlasted the faddish ensembles displayed in New York Macy’s and Saks Fifth Avenue store windows.

One of the factors contributing to that durability had to do with film genre, in Carmen’s case, musical comedies. Her particular repertoire, which consists entirely of musical comedies, has two significant interrelated qualities: the films typically have carnivalesque plots and they have musical numbers that are easily decontextualized from the narrative. What makes the musical numbers easily decontextualized or extracted from the films has to do with how they are situated within the narrative. While there is no consensus on how to define a musical comedy, it is typically characterized by song and dance numbers that heighten or disrupt the cinematic reality (Rubin 2002). As such, there is a reliance upon “dual registers with the contrast between narrative and number” (Feuer 1993: 68). By this definition, traditional musical comedies are not simply films with musical numbers in them (such as, for example, *Dirty Dancing* [1987] or *Coal Miner’s Daughter* [1980]), but rather those with ‘impossible’ musical numbers. Part of what makes the numbers impossible is that they are “persistently contradictory in relation to the realistic discourse of the narrative” (Rubin 2002: 57). In their disruption of film narrative reality, the numbers that are relatively easy to bound off from the film and extract for reuse in other contexts.

Carmen’s first ten films were made at Fox while she was at the height of her US popularity. This is significant because Fox musicals were “non-integrated,” which meant hewing to a vaudeville approach that emphasized variety of acts. Unlike other studios making musicals

at the time, Fox made films where the musical numbers lacked cohesion with the overall storyline (Griffin 2002: 31). Forties musical filmmaking leader MGM by contrast made “integrated” films, which meant making musical numbers “integral” to the film’s plot (Altman 1987). For example, in an MGM musical such as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), the performers suddenly burst into song about their journey to Oz as they skip down the yellow brick road. If the viewer suspends disbelief, then it is perfectly natural to the film’s narrative reality that Dorothy and friends should sing and skip to a magical land.

By contrast, a Fox musical number is much less likely to be integral to the plot. Rather, musical numbers are framed as separate performances. Often the performance is an outrageous spectacle that disrupts the film’s reality. Taking place in a theater or in a nightclub on spectacular sets, the numbers have an unreal quality insofar as normative expectations are temporarily up-ended and subjected to critique (Griffin 2002: 31). What makes Fox’s approach vaudevillian is its emphasis on variety and a series of entertaining segments that need not be related to each other in any way (Jenkins 1992: 63). Moreover, since the different performances did not need to be integral to the film’s plot, Fox could cast ‘ethnic’ performers without having them interact directly with leading white stars. In contrast to MGM, which tended to feature all white casts, Fox musicals included African-Americans and other ‘ethnic’ types in its films without disrupting a film’s racial segregation where plots revolved around white leads. Many of the performers providing such disruptions of cinematic reality were referred to as “specialty acts.” Among those Fox hired to appeal to non-white audiences were chanteuse Lena Horne, the tap dancing Nicholas Brothers, and of course, Carmen Miranda (Griffin 2002: 32). An important distinction about Carmen Miranda, however, is that she was less problematic for producers in

terms of her ethnicity and race and therefore allowed to interact more directly with white leads. Moreover, her scenes were not edited out of the films as Horne's were for distribution in the South.

Carmen's musical comedies tend to have carnivalesque themes that include plots and subplots related to illicit activities and masquerades intended to fool someone. Her characters sometimes engage in morally questionable behavior such as selling bootleg liquor (*Greenwich Village*), performing in burlesque shows (*Doll Face*), and seemingly having illicit love affairs (*Week-End in Havana*, *A Date with Judy*, and *Springtime in the Rockies*). Musical comedies facilitate such themes in addition to having highly extractable musical numbers. These qualities, paired with Carmen's carnivalesque appearance and performance, coalesce into cinematic realities marked by a sense of license and ambiguity.

To explore the specific way Carmen Miranda's image was constructed and then recontextualized I begin with an analysis of her first Hollywood film, *Down Argentine Way* (1940) followed by more general analyses of patterns and differences in the remainder of her films.

Down Argentine Way

Down Argentine Way was a Darryl F. Zanuck Fox Studios⁵⁵ production intended to capitalize on the popularity of Latin-themed films. The Technicolor film starred blonde Betty Grable as the wealthy American "Glenda" who tries to buy a horse from Argentine Ricardo (Don Ameche). Early in the film we learn that antagonism between the leads stems from a long-

⁵⁵ Carmen's Fox contract required that she not mention her previous Brazilian film career. She was to be the studio's 'discovery' (Castro 2005: 221).

standing feud between their two families. Ultimately they overcome the different challenges and fall in love. Much of the film's action ostensibly takes place in Buenos Aires, which created opportunities for the filmmakers to include 'Latin' music and dance styles. Moreover, it was an opportunity to insert scenes of Carmen Miranda, the new Broadway sensation.

Unlike the Brazilian musical films Carmen had appeared in throughout the thirties, *Down Argentine Way* was a major Hollywood production enjoying international circulation. The production values were high and the distribution reach was to be great, even with a mostly closed European market. Carmen's image and performance were circulated on a scale that amplified the impact her Broadway appearances, department store likenesses, and news coverage had already begun to have. At the time Latin music was enjoying great popularity in the United States and carried with it connotations of bodily liberation and sexual license (Sandoval-Sánchez 1999: 31-32).

As Carmen's first Hollywood film, *Down Argentine Way* introduced moviegoers to her distinctive performance style and look. While her look would evolve and the nature of her film roles would change over the years, the film is notable for establishing her recognizable basic style – a style that could easily be extracted. Significantly, Carmen impersonations have frequently referenced *Down Argentine Way*'s "Mamãe eu quero."



Figure 26: A close-up photograph of the waistband on Carmen's Broadway baiana skirt. The garment is currently housed in the Carmen Miranda Museum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (author)

Components of the Hollywood Baiana Fantasia

When Carmen traveled from Rio de Janeiro to New York in 1939 she brought with her six baiana fantasias, several made by Brazilian designer Gilberto Trompowski (Shaw 2013: 37). Carmen described her ensembles to the Brazilian press as being “fancy” (ibid). Within weeks of Carmen’s arrival, her appearance and performance were the subject of much press coverage. She was photographed in her colorful baiana outfits for *Life*, *Vogue*, *Esquire*, and *Harper’s Bazaar* (Shaw 2013: 38). Though her Broadway baiana fantasias were more elaborate than what she had worn in Brazil, over time Hollywood designers would retain elements of her look while exaggerating it at times to the point of absurdity.⁵⁶

Travis Banton was costume designer for *Down Argentine Way* (see Appendix C for complete list of costume designers). His interpretation of Carmen’s Broadway ensemble when compared with later Hollywood costumes is relatively subdued. On Broadway Carmen had worn a skirt that consisted of square velvet pieces in multiple colors expertly stitched together. Given the drape of the garment when worn, the squares appear as diamonds. The diamond pattern of the skirt is mimicked in four slashes at the waist that expose the skin. Like the Broadway version, Banton’s solid red baiana skirt similarly deploys a narrow, rhinestone waistband with slashes that create the illusion of exposed flesh—illusory because flesh colored sheer fabric is stitched into the slashed areas. In keeping with Carmen’s Brazilian and Broadway baiana ensembles, Banton left her midriff bared. She wears a matching red bandeau top that has short ruffled sleeves embellished with gold lace.

⁵⁶ A notable exception is Sascha Brastoff who designed Carmen’s costumes for *If I’m Lucky* (1946), which I discuss later.

Figure 27: Salvatore Ferragamo's 1938 design for a platform shoe. From the collection at the Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto, Canada



The actress supplied her own gold platform shoes. In 1938 Italian shoemaker Salvatore Ferragamo first introduced his platform shoes, a style Carmen helped to popularize. In all her Hollywood films Carmen is almost always seen wearing platforms.⁵⁷ While she helped to popularize the shoe style, it is noteworthy that her platforms tended to be considerably higher than those that would have been worn by ordinary women. This is significant because it demonstrates what is excessive about her look and therefore comic and carnivalesque. The extremity of her shoes also makes them easy subjects for parody.

Carmen joked in interviews that the shoes gave her the extra height she desired in order to look over boyfriends' shoulders while they danced (Ligiéro Coelho 1998). As anyone who has ever worn platforms would understand, the shoes also had the potential to highlight her performance skills. The higher the platform, the more impractical it becomes to wear. A solid platform sole makes it almost impossible for the wearer to bend one's foot at the arch. To walk about and dance in theatrical platform shoes such as Carmen did requires practice and skill. Her exaggeratedly high platform shoes became part of her star image that were easily identified and recontextualized.

⁵⁷ Carmen dances barefoot for one number in *Doll Face* (1945) and for the number "Baião Ca Room 'Pa Pa" in *Nancy Goes to Rio* (1950). Otherwise she appears in all her Hollywood films wearing platform shoes. *Nancy Goes to Rio* was made at a time when Carmen was having many personal problems. Her possible use of drugs and alcohol is reflected both in her weight gain, tired expression, and relatively low energy performance. While she wears platform shoes in other scenes, she appears to be a bit unstable on her feet. It seems likely that the decision to perform barefoot was made for practical reasons: so that she wouldn't fall.



Figure 28: A pair of Carmen's platform shoes currently housed at the Carmen Miranda Museum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (author)

Carmen likely provided much or all of the jewelry she wears for her Hollywood debut. Ever creative and inclined to embellish, she frequently accessorized studio-made costumes with jewelry from her own collection (interview with the author, Carmen de Carvalho, July 7, 2008). For *Down Argentine Way*, she wears large gold hoop earrings, layers of costume jewelry necklaces, layers of costume jewelry bracelets on both wrists, and rings on both hands. Her overall look is completed with darkened brows and lashes, bright red lipstick, and long red nails.

While there had been a baiana previously depicted in Hollywood film—*Flying Down to Rio* (1933)—it lacked the glamour of Carmen’s baiana, which had a much greater cultural impact. Though her costume was unique, in other ways her appearance as Latin/a American hewed to existing stereotypes. The appropriate cosmetics, dark hair and a light olive complexion were essential for meeting Hollywood-established expectations.

In the twenties and thirties the Mexican-born María Dolores Asúnsolo López-Negrete, re-invented as Dolores del Río, was one of those whose appearance set expectations for Latin/a American looks consisting of dark hair (usually with a center part), light olive skin, red nails, and red lips. These essentialized aspects of del Río’s appearance got her cast in a range of roles that included playing the ‘exotic’ Brazilian—though not a baiana—in *Flying Down to Rio* (1933), the Polynesian⁵⁸ primitive in *Bird of Paradise* (1932), and other ‘Latin’ characters.

⁵⁸ Paramount costume designer Edith Head popularized the Hollywood interpretation of a Polynesian look when she costumed the “Queen,” dark-haired beauty Dorothy Lamour, for *The Jungle Princess* (1936). Lamour became famous for her sarongs as well as a flower in the hair, a look that got recycled in the Polynesian-themed films that followed.



Figure 29: Dolores del Río in as an island girl in a publicity still for *Bird of Paradise* (1932) (Wikimedia Commons, 2013)

By the end of the 1930s, increased cinematic portrayals of non-white women paired with cosmetics advertising led to the fashion for “exotic” looks that could be achieved with “Tropical,” “Chinese,” and “Gypsy” make-up colors (Berry 2000: 95). Exoticism became a form of masquerade as Anglo actresses changed races including performing in “yellow-face” (e.g. Loretta Young as Chinese in *The Hatchet Man* [1932]). Directed towards white consumers, lifestyle and fan magazines instructed women on how to “change their faces” through the use of make-up (Berry 2000: 105). Dark hair and red lips were achievable means for capturing the vogue for tropicalism that Dorothy Lamour helped popularize in the thirties with her many island girl roles (Berry 2000: 121). This vaguely “exotic” look encompassed “Latin types,” including del Río. Yet it was Carmen Miranda who brought the Latin look to the height of its popularity in the forties (Berry 2000: 126). During a period of clothing and other wartime rationing, cosmetics provided an inexpensive, low-commitment means for modifying one’s appearance.

Topping (so to speak) her *Down Argentine Way* fantasia is a red headdress. The close-fitting turban is truly more of a hat since it does not appear to be something that can be untied. It is decorated with a relatively subdued flourish on top consisting of stylized flowers and is further ‘gilded’ with silver and gold ornamentation. A small section of Carmen’s hair, with a center part, is visible at the front.



Figure 30: Dorothy Lamour as an island girl in a 1930s studio publicity still (www.fanpop.com accessed 10/20/13)

As with the platforms, the turban gave the petite performer additional height. Turbans and headdress variations were probably the most important signifiers of her Hollywood look. While Carmen has sometimes been credited with sparking the forties headscarf/turban fashion trend, it had actually been gaining popularity among very fashionable American women in the thirties (cf. Ligiéro Coelho 1998). In the May 15, 1939, issue of *Vogue*—on newsstands before Carmen’s May 17th arrival—an article on turbans proclaimed: “All over America, heads are being bound up in turbans” and “To-day, turbans turn up literally everywhere.”

As others have noted, there is no question that Carmen’s initial baiana turban was meant to evoke a stereotype of Afro-Brazilian women (e.g. Ligiéro Coelho 1998). Yet it is important to recall that hers was a *glamorous* interpretation. I posit that her stylish 1939 lamé turban was at least as much indebted to the pages of fashion magazines such as *Jornal das Moças* as it was to what Carmen saw women wearing on the streets of thirties Salvador, Bahia, as she later told reporters (cf. Gil-Montero 1989). As discussed in chapter 3, by the time she donned her baiana head wrap for *Banana da terra*’s February 1939 release, Brazilian fashion magazines, which featured white beauty ideals and targeted middle-class women, had already begun to devote text and illustrations to two-piece bathing suits to be worn with head wraps described as *a moda* [in fashion].



Figure 31: Carmen arriving in New York on May 17, 1939 (Barsante 1994)

As a milliner and follower of fashion, Carmen likely took note of the new trend and became inspired when she first created her glamorous baiana look in late 1938. While Carmen's first baiana turban was meant to evoke Afro-Brazilian women – just as her twenties bicorn hat was meant to evoke pirates – it was clearly part of a fantasia and a glamorous one at that. Furthermore, Carmen's film 'turban' was really more of a close-fitting hat and not a piece of fabric wrapped as a headscarf, which is precisely what a turban, *ojá*, or *torço* would be.⁵⁹

When the Brazilian Bombshell first arrived in New York in May 1939—just as *Vogue* declared that turbans were ubiquitous—it seems unlikely that the head wrap Carmen wore when she disembarked from the ship was meant to evoke the baiana. Rather, the photographs taken upon her arrival show an elegant woman in modern attire that includes a monogrammed day dress, furs, and, yes, a fashionable turban. Carmen probably helped to popularize turban wearing for women in the US, but it is inaccurate to say she initiated the trend.

⁵⁹ *Turbante* (turban) is an umbrella term for the more regional and racially specific terms *torço* (Bahia) and *ojá* (a Yoruba-derived word with African religious implications). “O que é que a baiana tem?” refers to the baiana as wearing a *torço*, which situates the baiana regionally in much the same way that using the term “pop” to refer to a carbonated soft drink situates a person as being from the American Midwest. I am grateful to Pravina Shukla for pointing out the nuances in the different Brazilian terms that can be used to indicate a turban.



The turban winds up with fame

ALL over America, heads are being bound up in turbans. We're not surprised. Somewhat gloatingly, we say—we told you so. It all began in 1936. In our June 15, 1936 issue, we showed a Paisley satin one wound around Mrs. Astor von Hofmannsthal's head (see it here). Under the picture, we prophesied: *This may start a fashion.* Repeatedly after that, we went on showing them. In 1937—a white cheese-cloth turban that Bergdorf Goodman made; a Schiaparelli jersey turban that Bergdorf imported. In 1938—the mesh turban John-Frederics twined around Tilly Losch's head. In 1939—scores of jersey and fish-net turbans you could drape yourself.

To-day, turbans turn up literally everywhere. On the avenue. In the country. In the theatre. In automobiles. On trains, ships. Turban addicts have whole drawers full. Some are masterfully made by expert milliners—such as the white mouseline de soie one worn here by Merle Oberon. Some are just mesh scarfs plucked off veiling counters, twisted by hand, anchored with gold hairpins. Some are knitted by nimble fingers—you can get knitting directions for the one opposite from us or from Alice Maynard. After four years, fame has come to turbans. They are everybody's darling. Tie one on.

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Figure 32: A spread on turbans from the May 15, 1939, issue of US *Vogue* (Condé Nast online archives)

In thirties Brazil and the US, a black slave association with the turban was being erased and replaced with glamour and leisure. The text accompanying the *Vogue* images in figure 32 clearly associates the turban with a white, wealthy, cosmopolitan lifestyle. There is nothing to indicate that Mrs. Astor von Hofmannsthal intended to masquerade as an African-American mammy when she wrapped her head in 1936 (cf. Ovalle 2011). Though there may have been some popular connection between traditionalized blackness and a turban prior to the mid-thirties in Brazil and the US, by the late thirties fashionable styling sufficiently altered the accessory to connote exotic glamour. Who wore the turban (white women) and how (rich fabrics with modern attire) contributed significantly to the clothing signifier's meaning by the time Carmen arrived in New York.

Throughout the forties the turban and other head wraps would come to be associated with Carmen Miranda's essentialized star image. It is quite possible that once the turban was connected to Carmen it began to lose the high glamour association it had enjoyed in the thirties when worn by the likes of Mrs. Astor von Hofmannsthal. A Latin American in a turban restored some of the "primitive" Orientalist connotations that got blunted when donned by a white woman. White actresses – such as Merle Oberon who also appeared in the *Vogue* spread – and members of high society imbued the head covering with glamour. For the Anglo-American wearer, donning a turban gives one a piece of the Other's exoticism and mystery without the negative connotations. In a Brazilian context Carmen had been white while in a US context she was 'Latin' or not-quite-white. Carmen's imagined tropical exoticism on the other hand, transformed the turban to signifier of Latin-ness. This point is all the more ironic when one recalls that Carmen Miranda was European by birth and had used a glamorous Hollywood lens to

re-imagine a stereotype of Afro-Brazilian dress.

While the starting point for fashion trends can be difficult to locate, the turban's popularity in the forties has been well documented. Some dress scholars have maintained that such head covers provided women working in wartime factories with a stylish means for keeping their hair out of machinery (Tortora and Eubank 1998: 402)

The Musical Numbers

Before *Down Argentine Way* was released on October 11, 1940, Carmen had recorded several songs with Decca (Castro 2005: 565). Three—all from *Streets of Paris*—were included in the film: “South American Way,” “Bambu bambu,” and “Mamãe eu quero.” The movie opens with a musical number of Carmen performing “South American Way,” which has lyrics in English and Portuguese. The remaining two numbers are performed back-to-back and sung entirely in Portuguese. When compared with the film’s other musical numbers, Carmen’s performances are particularly incongruous moments. This had to do in part with how the numbers were edited into the film.

The aforementioned filming logistics, which meant that Carmen’s scenes were shot in New York, contributed to the essential irrelevance of Carmen’s numbers to the narrative arc. The first song, “South American Way,” opens the film’s credit sequence and is interspersed with scenes of Buenos Aires. Since this number accompanies the credits and its lyrics locate where the action will take place, it does not require narrative incorporation into the rest of the film. Carmen’s other two numbers occur in a nightclub. “Bambu bambu” and “Mamãe eu quero” make greater narrative sense because she is ostensibly performing for a diegetic (that is, within the film) nightclub audience that includes film characters.

Another quality that makes Carmen's numbers extractable is that as a nightclub performer, Carmen does not interact directly with the diegetic audience even though some members do comment on her performance. Her musical segments, already entextualized from *Streets of Paris*, are readily subject to other entextualizations (Bauman and Briggs 1990). They can be removed and inserted into other contexts to create newly contextualized moments, often incongruous.⁶⁰ This performance extractability is especially pronounced in *Down Argentine Way* because she has no speaking part.

"South American Way"⁶¹ had already become a signature song in Carmen's New York performances mainly because she pronounced "South" as "Souse" (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 147). The pronunciation presents a kind of carnivalizing of the English language especially since 'soused' is slang for 'drunk,' a common state to be in during carnival festivities.

Carmen and Lee Shubert had both well understood the laughability and commercial value of her accent. While still performing on Broadway, the press widely reported on how

⁶⁰ Carmen Miranda's name is uttered exactly three times in the film. The first time is when the escort Tito (Leonid Kinskey) and Glenda (Grable) enter a nightclub. Tito tells Glenda that since Carmen Miranda arrived, nobody can get in but he has a cousin working there. The second time Carmen's name is mentioned is after Glenda and Tito have entered the club and begin to ask for a table. The host says, "Shhh, Carmen Miranda" and then Carmen glides onstage to perform her second and third songs in the film. The third time her name is mentioned is in the context of a joke. Just after Carmen sings "Bambu Bambu," Glenda leaves Ricardo (Ameche) on the veranda, angry with him for not selling her a horse. When he asks for an explanation for her leading him to believe she was interested in him, she says as she re-enters the club, "Shh, Carmen Miranda."

⁶¹ Jimmy McHugh and Al Dubin composed the song in collaboration with the un-credited Aloysio de Oliveira, a Bando da Lua member who had traveled to New York with Carmen (Castro 2005: 565).

audiences laughed out loud at her pronunciation. Recognizing the commercial appeal, Shubert instructed her not to correct her pronunciation even after her English had greatly improved (Shaw 2013: 40). While she may have had real difficulty with English pronunciations early in her career, friends, colleagues, and biographers of the performer have noted that she maintained a strong accent in films for comic effect. Acting colleague and friend Alice Faye notes in the documentary *Hispanic Hollywood* (1999) that Carmen had a good command of English and threatened to lose her filmic accent as a bargaining device when negotiating with Hollywood executives. Carmen's performance of Portuguese-accented English highlights the theatrical nature of her delivery. Since her pronunciation was already a theatrical construction, it was easy for later impersonators to mimic her and elicit a Hobbesian laughter of superiority over the parodied subject. The film's inclusion of Carmen's Broadway songs indexed and built upon her recent theatrical success. "South American Way" in particular situated her as South American without specifically identifying her as Brazilian.

In each of the numbers Carmen pairs her vocal delivery with shoulder shrugs and provocative eyebrow-raising that lend sexual allure and humor to her performance—qualities not often paired together by Hollywood's leading ladies at the time. The opening song's English lyrics emphasize the Latin American experience as a sensual one where the "South American way" includes dancing and making romance in the tropics. The lyrics are subject to interpretations that include exoticizing fantasies about a tropical escape:

“Have you ever danced in the tropics?
....
Have you ever kissed in the moonlight
In the grand and glorious
Gay notorious
South American Way?”
(excerpts from “South American Way,” see Appendix D for full lyrics)

While many Brazilians and Argentines later criticized *Down Argentine Way* for its cultural inaccuracies, the film never actually identified Carmen Miranda as Argentine as some protested. Though it is easy to miss, just before her second and third musical numbers, a neon sign is visible at the entrance to the nightclub where she performs as a “Brazilian Sensation.”⁶² Carmen had in fact performed in Buenos Aires during the thirties. Nevertheless, the film renders her national origins ambiguous—assuming that US moviegoers mistakenly thought Buenos Aires was in Brazil. This ambiguity about her national origins would simmer to the surface throughout her Hollywood career.

Later in the film, Carmen performs two more numbers back-to-back: “Mamãe eu quero,” a carnival march, and “Bambu bambu,” a *samba embolada* (a type of samba characterized by tongue-twisting delivery). Carmen’s vocal delivery of the Portuguese lyrics and her unique verbal artistry are showcased in the second number “Mamãe eu quero.” It was this song that

⁶² The film made plenty of other egregious cultural errors such as costuming rural Argentines in ‘Mexican’ peasant attire. These sort of cultural elisions resulted in the film’s being banned in Argentina, which suggests that the neon sign was an inadequate means of cultural distinction. Though the film’s producers tried to be culturally sensitive, even re-shooting scenes at the additional cost of \$40,000, the movie still managed to reinforce negative Latin stereotypes and conflate cultures. Carmen’s singing in Portuguese, despite playing herself, had the potential to misrepresent Argentina.

would become an iconic touchstone for impersonators and possibly the most parodied song during her lifetime.⁶³

Unlike “South American Way,” which relied on Carmen’s mispronunciation of ‘south’ for laughs, “Mamãe eu quero” and “Bambu bambu” are distinctive for the rapid-fire, though clear, diction (Shaw 2013: 42). Carmen had delighted—and sometimes confused—Brazilian audiences for over a decade with her impressive vocal style. To the US performers who would later impersonate her, such unintelligibility would become the subject of parody.

“Mamãe eu quero” was not written for Carmen but rather had been a popular 1937 carnival march. When she introduced it to US audiences, she made an indelible impression thanks to her poetic interpretation. Although US publics were unlikely to recognize a carnival connection, it is nonetheless useful to note that Carmen knew the carnival connotations and thus performed it in a carnivalesque spirit.

Although “Mamãe eu quero” and “Bambu bambu” are certainly examples of popular Brazilian music, for US audiences Carmen’s performance is framed in such a way as to situate her as a generic Latin/a American. For a mostly monolingual, English-speaking audience it would be easy to hear Carmen’s Portuguese as Spanish or to mistake her for playing an Argentine. To make matters worse, Carmen’s accompanying Brazilian band, Bando da Lua, is attired in distinctly non-Brazilian clothing; that is, Spanish flamenco style ruffles (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 147).

⁶³ Several YouTube clips of Carmen impersonators singing or lip-synching to “Mamãe eu quero” list the song’s title in Spanish as “Mama Yo Quiero.”

Of the many striking qualities in Carmen's Hollywood performance debut, one of the most significant is the poetics of her delivery. In "Mamãe eu quero" Carmen emphasizes the lyrics' sound parallelism. 'Mamãe' is a word already comprised of two similar sounds. The first syllable 'ma' is pronounced similarly to the English word 'Ma' (for mother) yet is nasalized. The second syllable, 'mãe' includes a nasal diphthong and is pronounced roughly muh-eeng, with a silent *g*. Carmen emphasizes the repetition of sounds in the word by uttering it as follows: "ma-ma-mamãe eu quero." She repeats the phrase "mamãe eu quero" and its stuttered variation nine times. A men's chorus complements and echoes her repetitions throughout the number. To further emphasize the repetitions, Carmen sprinkles several more 'mamãe's during her performance. She deploys this same poetic device in later musical numbers such as 1941's "I, Yi, Yi, Yi, Yi, (I Like You Very Much)" by Harry Warren and Mack Gordon for *That Night in Rio*. Such vocal repetitions would become part of her iconic Hollywood performance style.

In addition to "I, Yi, Yi, Yi, Yi," sonic repetitions can be found in other Carmen Hollywood film numbers including "Chica Chica Boom Chic" (1941), "Cai, Cai" (1941), "Chattanooga Choo Choo" (1942), "Tic-Tac Meu Coração" (1942), and "Tico-Tico (Tico-Tico no Fubá)" (1945). Carmen's artistry and interpretive style paired with lyrics emphasizing speech sounds made her iconic performances distinctive. "Mamãe" presents a good example of Carmen's poetic interpretation of sound and word repetitions, which lyricists and composers had a hand in cultivating. Among the most prominent to do so were Mack Gordon and Harry Warren (who together co-wrote six of Carmen's thirty-two US recordings) and Aloysio de Oliveira, the Bando da Lua member who wrote, co-wrote, or otherwise influenced almost all of Carmen's US recordings.

French philosopher Henri Bergson notes that mechanical interpretations of human behavior are a favorite device of parody (Bergson 1917 [1911]: 33). Carmen's ability to deliver lyrics so rapidly and with such clarity of diction has been commented upon and admired by many including Brazilian musician Caetano Veloso (Veloso 2002 [1997]). At times, Carmen speaks and sings so rapidly as to be unintelligible even to the native speaker of Brazilian Portuguese. It is as if she is a vocal machine, which is to say that Carmen's Hollywood debut was a parody of speech sounds that highlights her performance skills.

Yet poetic interpretations of repeating sounds were not all that made Carmen's Hollywood debut entertaining, humorous, and carnivalesque. Like her 1939 performance in *Banana da terra*, Carmen's musical numbers in *Down Argentine Way* are conveyed in a self-aware and self-parodying fashion (Roberts 1993). In one close-up shot during "Mamãe eu quero" she looks directly into the camera and winks. Winking at the camera was one of several comic effects she had already begun to explore in her Brazilian films. The wink seems to say, "This is a joke and you and I both know it," suggesting she was 'in' on the joke. This reflexive, self-parodying quality eventually lent her performance and iconic image to future interpretations.

"Mamãe" included some additional jokes that would have been lost on non-Lusophone audiences. The song is a carnival march and like many other carnival marches, has double or multiple meanings, many of which are sexual (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 180 FN 22 citing DaMatta 1994). The lyrics of "Mamãe" are ostensibly about a baby crying for its pacifier yet in a carnival context the song suggests a sexual relationship between mothers and sons or between men and women (Ligiéro Coelho 1998: 149). At several points throughout the number, Carmen puckers

her lips makes a sucking sound while suggestively swaying her hips, kinesthetically interpreting the song's sexual innuendoes for non-Lusophone audiences. That she manages to convey humor and sexual allure is a testament to her performance skills (see Appendix D for the full lyrics).

Before she performed these musical numbers in *Down Argentine Way*, Carmen had successfully debuted them on Broadway. The contemporary press documented her audience appeal suggesting that the performer and audience co-constructed positive meanings (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 59). One might even go so far as to say that she carnivalized *Streets of Paris* by providing sensational, provocative, and unintelligible interludes. Because audiences were largely unaware of the lyrics' meanings, they were compelled to rely upon her physicality, performance, and appearance—all informed by Brazilian carnival to some degree. Within the context of Latin music's popularity, increased political and commercial interest in Latin America, and the competition Broadway was facing with the New York World's Fair, Carmen delivered more than an enjoyable performance. She delivered a carnival experience for audiences who were mesmerized by the palpable joy she brought to her performances (*Carmen Miranda: The Girl From Rio* 2008). Humorous and sexy, her music indexed Brazil and Latin America while being a context-specific event, namely popular US entertainment (Silverstein 1995: 213, 195). Looking directly at the camera and winking suggests that Carmen's performance anticipated a response, making it dialogic (Bakhtin 1981). The responses to her performance would of course transform according to the viewing context.

Patterns and Differences in Carmen's Films

Almost all of Carmen's fourteen films have plots or sub-plots centering on groups of performers, people putting on a show, or show business culture generally. Since the viewer has a privileged perspective, the effect is to split characters into people with 'onstage' and 'backstage' personae. The film viewer gets to see onstage action that does not necessarily reflect the backstage dramas and relationships. This means that sometimes the performer is 'on' for the sake of a show or for keeping up appearances. To show someone successfully being 'on,' emphasizes the performer's artistry as well as the potential to deceive or to create false impressions. In this way, Carmen's films are carnivalesque for their emphasis on doubling, mistaken identities, and other types of social masquerades that allow one to up-end the social order.

One example of the dichotomy between onstage and backstage personae in Carmen films can be found in *That Night in Rio* (1941), Carmen's second Hollywood film, in which she was cast as a character named Carmen. An early scene has the Brazilian amicably performing "Chica Chica Boom Chic" onstage in a Rio nightclub with Larry (Don Ameche). After the performance the two bicker backstage, bringing to the fore their unstable romantic relationship. A similar device is used between Dan Christy (John Payne) and Vicki Lane (Betty Grable) in *Springtime in the Rockies* (1942). Dan and Vicki are a couple who perform together and are in a troubled romantic relationship. When Dan and Vicki are first seen performing onstage together, there is no obvious indication that their romance might be in trouble reinforcing the dichotomy between backstage/onstage life.

Both *That Night in Rio* and *Springtime in the Rockies* use additional means for doubling and masquerade that go beyond the backstage/onstage dichotomized lives of performers. In *That Night in Rio*, Larry is known for his onstage impersonation of a local Brazilian baron. He is such an effective impersonator that when the baron gets into financial trouble and must leave the country, two of the baron's employees enlist Larry to pose publicly as their employer. The idea is to keep angry investors at bay and to fool the baroness as well. Throughout the film Larry/Baron Duarte confuses his sweetheart, Carmen, as well as the baroness about his identity. In the end, the baron, who had been known to be a womanizer, is reunited with his wife while Larry makes up with Carmen. The film closes with a shot of a doubled Don Ameche—as the baron with the baroness and as Larry with Carmen. During the carnivalesque portion of the film, Larry flirted with the baroness and wooed her, a transgression of the social hierarchy where actors are meant to entertain elites from onstage. Once order has been restored and everyone is in his or her proper social place—performer with performer and baron with baroness—there is nonetheless room to interpret the carnivalesque interlude as transforming. The baron knows of the baroness' almost-affair with Larry and decides to abandon his womanizing to be a better husband. Carmen knows of Larry's impersonation for most of the film and at times reacts violently to his flirtation with the baroness, including scratching him. Yet she accepts his explanations and they are reunited at the end. Though Carmen herself is an over-the-top figure in terms of her dramatic performance and appearance, she remains locked in the carnival moment without any discernible post-carnival transformation.

Springtime in the Rockies deploys Carmen to perform a kind of masquerade. When Dan and Vicki become estranged early in the film, Dan goes on a drinking binge during which time he

hires “Rosita Murphy” (Carmen Miranda) to be his secretary. He wakes up in Canada with a hangover only to find that he has hired both a secretary and a valet. Dan had come to the Canadian resort in order to win back Vicki who has a new dance partner, Victor (César Romero). When Dan and Rosita are at the reception desk, Vicki walks past prompting Dan to kiss his secretary in order to make his ex-girlfriend jealous. For much of the film Vicki is uncertain of Dan’s precise relationship with Rosita.

Sometimes Carmen’s films, though not explicitly about performers’ lives, include scenes revealing backstage activity, such as when Dean Martin’s character plays a record offstage while Jerry Lewis’ character lip-synchs before an audience to “Mamãe eu quero” in *Scared Stiff* (1953). Other films with an onstage/backstage dichotomy include *Week-End in Havana* (1941), *The Gang’s All Here* (1943), *Four Jills in a Jeep* (1944), *Greenwich Village* (1944), *Something for the Boys* (1944), *Doll Face* (1945), *If I’m Lucky* (1946), *Copacabana* (1947), *A Date With Judy* (1948), and *Nancy Goes to Rio* (1950). For those counting, that leaves Carmen’s first film, *Down Argentine Way* (1940), as the only one not to have a plot or subplot focusing on performers’ lives onstage and off. And though Carmen has no narrative role in *Down Argentine Way*, she is nonetheless portrayed as a performer, the “Brazilian sensation Carmen Miranda.”

Other sorts of doublings or impersonations occur in Carmen films such as the aforementioned Larry/Baron Duarte doubling in *That Night in Rio* and Rosita posing as Dan’s love interest in *Springtime in the Rockies*. In *Copacabana* (1947) and *Scared Stiff* (1953), men impersonate Carmen’s characters. In one scene from *Copacabana*, Lionel Devereaux (Groucho Marx) hides from the police in the nightclub’s women’s dressing room. When the police open up the closet to find him, they discover him disguised in an assortment of women’s costume pieces

including a fruit laden turban, a visual ‘quotation’ of Carmen’s look.⁶⁴ In *Scared Stiff*, Carmelita (Carmen Miranda) cannot be found in time for her performance, so Jerry Lewis’ character dresses up in her costume and lip-synchs “Mamãe eu quero” to a record. In *Doll Face* (1945) Carmen even impersonates herself. A producer tells “Chita Chula” that if their show is a success, she might even be “another Carmen Miranda.” She flails her arms and says disdainfully, “Tico tico tico toc! Bah! What does she have that I don’t got?”

Sometimes characters get doubled through masquerade and ‘playing a part’ in order to trick someone or to get what they want. In addition to the examples already mentioned, in *Week-End in Havana* (1941), Cuban hustler Monty Blanco (César Romero) pretends to be wealthy in order to fleece a young American shop girl whom he mistakenly assumes is rich. In *The Gang’s All Here* (1943), an already-engaged soldier, Andy Mason (Phil Baker), woos a young nightclub performer (played by Alice Faye) by telling her his name is Pat Casey.

In none of Carmen’s films is the sense of ambiguity and confusion more pronounced than in 1947’s *Copacabana*. *Copacabana* marked Carmen’s parting of the ways with Twentieth-Century Fox and her efforts to become a leading lady. She ended her contract with the studio in search of roles that would give her respite from playing essentially the same re-hashed character again and again (Shaw 2013: 68). In *Copacabana*, a United Artists production, Carmen stars opposite Groucho Marx in a film that takes place in an actual New York nightclub, Copacabana. The club’s owner, Monte Proser, was a Carmen fan and a friend of Jorginho Guinle’s, the proprietor of Rio de Janeiro’s Copacabana Palace hotel. In 1941 Proser opened a tropical, Rio-

⁶⁴ One policeman observes, “They all wind up in the closet sooner or later,” implying perhaps that criminals or those in show business are homosexual.

themed nightclub, which paid homage to Carmen via its décor (Castro 2005: 321). As a Carmen Miranda fan,⁶⁵ Proser even invested in *Copacabana*'s production (Shaw 2013: 69).

In *Copacabana*, Carmen plays the performer "Carmen Navarro" who masquerades as a Moroccan chanteuse, Mademoiselle Fifi, in order to be hired as a nightclub singer. During negotiations, Fifi's agent, Lionel (Marx), manages to persuade the club to hire his Brazilian client, Carmen Navarro, as well. Occupying two separate dressing rooms and performing in different areas of the club, Carmen must alternate between performing as Fifi and performing as Carmen. Costume changes, linguistic shifts, altering performance styles, and different backstage personae—all plot devices found in previous Carmen films – converge in *Copacabana*. Eventually Mademoiselle Fifi is 'killed' and Carmen Navarro is revealed as having masqueraded as both singers.

At other times the masquerades are unintentional and rather instances of mistaken identity. For example, in *A Date with Judy* (1948), a middle-aged married man meets clandestinely with a dance instructor, "Miss Rosita," (played by Carmen) so that he can impress his wife with his new dancing skills. When his daughter sees the two together in his office, she assumes her father is having an affair with Miss Rosita.

Lisa Shaw observes that another pattern in Carmen films is the proliferation of mispronunciations and malapropisms. These linguistic distortions and exaggerated rollings of the letter 'r' get paired with Carmen's improvised Portuguese – occasionally peppered with Spanish – and are deployed to evoke 'Latin-ness' (Shaw 2013: 67). This particular pattern

⁶⁵ Proser had wanted Carmen to perform at the club on its opening night but she was unavailable so he hired her sister, Aurora, instead (Castro 2005: 321).

situates Carmen as a generic Latin/a American. Moreover, such mispronunciations and malapropisms are easily extracted from their original film contexts for use in different contexts. As Shaw points out, “grass in the snake” – instead of “snake in the grass” – first gets used in *That Night in Rio* only to be reused again in *Copacabana* (Shaw 2013: 70).

Figure 33: A post card from Monte Proser's Carmen Miranda-inspired Copacabana club in New York (author's collection)



Film	Onstage/Backstage Theme	Mistaken Identity	Masquerade/Multiple Identities
<i>Down Argentine Way</i> (1940)			
<i>That Night in Rio</i> (1941)	X		Larry/Baron Duarte (Don Ameche)
<i>Week-end in Havana</i> (1941)	X		Monty (César Romero) poses as wealthy Cuban
<i>Springtime in Rockies</i> (1942)	X	Rosita Murphy (Carmen) – presumed girlfriend to Dan	
<i>The Gang's All Here</i> (1943)	X		Andy/Pat (Phil Baker)
<i>Something for the Boys</i> (1944)	X		
<i>Greenwich Village</i> (1944)	X		Querida (Carmen) poses as Samoan, Portuguese, Gypsy, Irish, and Native American
<i>Four Jills in a Jeep</i> (1944)	X	Kay (Kay Francis) – unrecognizable in a turban	
<i>Doll Face</i> (1945)	X		Chita Chula (Carmen) in Carmen Drag
<i>If I'm Lucky</i> (1946)	X		
<i>Copacabana</i> (1947)	X		Carmen Navarro/Fifi (Carmen); Lionel (Groucho Marx) in Carmen Drag
<i>A Date with Judy</i> (1948)	X	Miss Rosita (Carmen) – presumed to be having an affair with her dance pupil	
<i>Nancy Goes to Rio</i> (1950)	X		
<i>Scared Stiff</i> (1953)	X		Myron (Jerry Lewis) in Carmen Drag

Table 1: Table identifying common themes in Carmen's Hollywood films

Appearance Patterns

Carmen's original Hollywood-inspired 1939 *baiana fantasia* got re-interpreted by Hollywood costume designers to retain elements of the earliest ensembles while complying with emerging conceptions of Latin American ethnicity and gender (Roberts 1993). In keeping with expectations, Carmen's fantasias were typically colorful and emphasized her physique and imagined Latin sensuality. Very often she wore clingy garments and her midriff was bared, though the navel obscured in accordance with production codes. Early in Carmen's Hollywood career, she was attired to be alluring while her performance was comic.

Beyond fulfilling an existing "exotic" type that included flesh exposure, Carmen's Hollywood fantasias added new elements to existing Latin tropes. Carmen's look in the forties and fifties included fruit-filled turbans, copious jewelry, bared midriff, and platform shoes. Even the more subdued fantasias retained elements of the spectacular - namely turbans or head covers, excessive jewelry, bared midriff, and platform shoes. Over the course of her fourteen Hollywood films, Carmen was consistently attired in platform shoes and turbans. As she aged and thickened in the middle, her midriff was bared less frequently, though she continued to be adorned with many bracelets, brooches, necklaces, and rings.

Among fourteen films made over the course of thirteen years, none misses an opportunity to attire Carmen in a turban. Yet the range of turbans and headdresses is broad. Travis Banton designed costumes for *Down Argentine Way* (1940) and *That Night in Rio* (1941), keeping Carmen's appearance highly theatrical and colorful. Platforms, turbans, a bared midriff, and plenty of jewelry are essential to her look in these color films. Completing her look are dark eyebrows, long eyelashes, a hint of dark hair visible at the front or back, red nails, and red lips

painted beyond the natural lip line according to forties fashions.

In Carmen's next three films (also all in color) – *Week-end in Havana* (1941), *Springtime in the Rockies* (1942), and *The Gang's All Here* (1943) – the costume designers literally raise the heights of the turbans and headdresses. Carmen's turban reaches surreal heights for her rendition of "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat" in *The Gang's All Here*. As the Busby Berkeley directed number comes to a close, the camera pulls back from Carmen to show that hundreds of feet of bananas are emerging from her turban. Yvonne Wood, who designed the film's costumes, went on to design for *Four Jills in a Jeep* (1944), *Greenwich Village* (1944), *Something for the Boys* (1944), and *Doll Face* (1945), creating among the most garish and vulgar costumes of Carmen's film career.

The Yvonne Wood costume era coincides with WWII and the height of Carmen's fame. Wood's costumes frequently relish making ordinary objects oversize. In addition to *The Gang's All Here*, which includes large fruit, Carmen's ensemble for *Greenwich Village*'s "I'm Just Wild About Harry" has large peppermint sticks. Such edible abundance on top of her head is exaggerated to excess further highlighting what is carnivalesque about Carmen. At times Wood's costumes are overtly sexual such as a black gown that makes Carmen appear to be a giant vagina, the gown having a center front slit embellished with pink ruffles in *Greenwich Village*'s "Give me a Band and a Bandana."



Figure 34: Carmen in an Yvonne Wood gown for “Give me a Band and a Bandana” in *Greenwich Village* (screen shot)

At least some audiences were aware of Carmen's sexuality made grotesque through costumes and musical numbers. When *The Gang's All Here* was released, the press commented on how "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat" constituted a Freudian fantasy with hundreds of dancing girls swinging oversize phallic bananas ("At the Roxy," *New York Times*, December 23, 1943). Apart from phallic associations, by 1943 the banana already connoted the tropics thanks to the imported fruit's popularity. And as consumers began eating more and more bananas, popular comedy adopted it for prat falls caused by discarded banana peels. In 1922 the hit recording "Yes, We Have No Bananas" further situated the fruit as comic.

Edible, portable, comic, and salaciously phallic were qualities associated with the banana by the time Carmen Miranda arrived in the US. Carmen herself came to be associated with the banana and not necessarily as an innocent unofficial diplomat seeking to increase trade between Brazil and the US. As early as 1941, Carmen had an erotic association with the fruit. An underground pornographic magazine that published fictional celebrity sex tales lewdly depicted Carmen masturbating with a banana (Castro 2005: 309). Adding to these carnivalesque connotations of excess and the lower extremities was a notorious 1941 photograph of Carmen taken during the filming of *Week-end in Havana*. During a dance number, Carmen's dance partner, César Romero, picked Carmen up and swung her around. Just as Carmen's skirts flared, a photographer took a photo that captured her without underwear (Castro 2005: 310). The photograph circulated widely.

Figure 35: A photo of Carmen Miranda without underwear taken during the filming of *Week-end in Havana*. From the private collection of Fabiano Canosa





Figure 36: Carmen performing "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat" for *The Gang's All Here* (screen shot)

In *Down Argentine Way* and *That Night in Rio* Carmen is portrayed as being desirable and sensual. Others have posited that after her first two films she tended to be cast as a more clownish or comic figure (e.g. Roberts 1993; Shaw 2013). Shari Roberts observes that Carmen's star image transformed once she began having speaking parts. Roberts maintains that after two successful Broadway roles⁶⁶ and one Hollywood film, Carmen's early sexual allure was blunted when she became "incorporated into plots and made to speak her comic, pidgin English in the films . . . [becoming] merely comic, the nonsexual camp female grotesque as she is remembered by today's fans" (Roberts 1993: 12).

While it is certainly true that Carmen was made less desirable after her first two films, I would say her characters maintain a degree of desirability despite posing little threat to the leading white women. Rather, her sexuality is carnivalized and made perverse through, for example, the Yvonne Wood vagina dress. Another Wood design was for a number eventually cut from *Doll Face* (1945). The number's turban included a miniature lighthouse on top. It has been suggested that the number was eliminated because the lighthouse was too phallic looking to comply with the Production Code Administration's puritanical standards (Barsante 1994: 117). The notorious panty-less photograph may have reinforced her carnivalesque sexuality or perhaps helped to spark it. Given Carmen's informal collaborations with Wood, it seems entirely possible that Carmen herself fueled the carnivalesque eroticism of her look and persona.

Meanwhile, at least while the war was ongoing, Carmen retained connotations of exotic allure chiefly via her ever-present turban. In 1944's *Something for the Boys*, Carmen works on

⁶⁶ After *Streets of Paris*, Carmen appeared in the Broadway musical comedy revue, *Sons o' Fun*, which ran from December 1, 1941 to August 29, 1943.

an assembly line where she is attired in coveralls and a colorful headscarf. The scene reflects real women's lives at the time who also wore turbans, likely inspired by Carmen.⁶⁷ Through 1947, the film turban fantasias, though increasingly large, tended to be glamorous. Consider, for example, *Four Jills in a Jeep* (1944), a film in which Carmen makes only a cameo appearance to perform "I, Yi, Yi, Yi, I Like You Very Much." Though Carmen is not integral to the film, the turban makes its appearance on one of the film's main characters. In one scene, Kay (Kay Francis) attends an elegant wedding party in a fashionable gown and turban. A character (played by Phil Silvers) she knows well searches for her in the scene. He walks by Kay several times, greeting her each time as a stranger. When he finally realizes that he's been saying hello to his friend, he remarks, "I didn't recognize you. You look so exotic!"

The *Four Jills in a Jeep* example demonstrates the turban's connection to exoticism and glamour during WWII. Kay is a USO performer who typically wears functional clothing on the base. The party provides her with an occasion to dress up. Kay's wearing the turban signifies dressiness while also demonstrating its power to transform her into someone unrecognizable. In other words, the turban is part of the fantasia: a transforming, exoticizing garment for masquerade. In the case of Kay, it creates a disguise that makes her more glamorous than she is in her daily life.

It is useful to consider how accessible the clothing symbol is. Anyone can don a turban and instantly transform into someone mysterious and enchanting. During wartime when there are rations, a turban or head cover can provide an inexpensive means for changing one's

⁶⁷ While costume designers chose to put Carmen in headscarves and turbans, Carmen herself was frequently photographed off-screen wearing a turban variation.

appearance. It is also less expensive and permanent than changing one's hair color.⁶⁸ As *Vogue* put it in May 1939, any scarf can be "plucked off veiling counters, twisted by hand, anchored with gold hairpins." The malleability of one's appearance is reinforced through the promotion of such consumer goods. *Vogue*'s portrayal of the turban as an easy means for personal transformation parallels what Sarah Berry describes as the cosmetics industry's marketing of different "types" initiated in the 1930s (Berry 2000).

While no one may have been more closely associated with the turban than Carmen Miranda, other Hollywood films at the time portrayed women in turbans to connote stylishness and mystery. For example in the 1946 thriller *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, costume designer, Irene, transforms femme fatale Lana Turner into a blonde Carmen, complete with bared midriff and white turban. The turban craze was soon to end, however.

Few fashion trends take off so rapidly and on such a wide scale as French couturier Christian Dior's post-war 1947 "New Look" did. Wide skirts, lowered hemlines, and cinched waists became popular seemingly overnight. Such ensembles were worn with either small hats or picture hats, making the turban look hopelessly out of date after the war. There were at least two ways in which this affected Carmen's star image.

⁶⁸ Eventually Carmen went the route of other Latin/a American Hollywood performers such as Rita Hayworth, and lightened her hair, which she wore down and uncovered for many scenes in *Copacabana* (1947). Yet the film is black and white and the effect not so dramatic. In fact, one might even miss the fact that her hair has been lightened as she wears a platinum blonde wig while playing the character Mademoiselle Fifi.

Figure 37: Lana Turner in a turban with a bared midriff in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946) (www.suspense-movies.com, accessed 10/20/13)



First, the costume designers who continued to dress Carmen in turbans made her seem out of step with fashion. The comic proportions of her headdresses were now simply ridiculous and unattractive. Second, appearing in turbans after they had gone out of style had the effect of essentializing and traditionalizing the look. Where Carmen's turban had previously made her seem glamorous, it now became a part of her "natural" appearance. As Pravina Shukla notes in her study of modern Indian women's dress, Westerners often mistakenly regard non-Western dress as "traditional" and outside of fashion cycles (2008). By continuing to appear in turbans, Carmen's star image took on increased "traditional" connotations of what a Latin American looked like.

Historically, fashion details have a way of going to exaggerated extremes until "they are unsupportable and implode" (Koda 2001: 11). Carmen reached the height of her US career in terms of screen time and salary at the same time her turban achieved its grandest proportions. In 1946 Carmen was the highest paid actress in Hollywood (Shaw 2013:1). She had an impressive five musical numbers for *The Gang's All Here* in 1943 and in 1944 five numbers for *Greenwich Village*. Though it took several years, the turban eventually became unsupportable and "imploded" for Carmen.



Figure 38: Christian Dior's "New Look" from March 15, 1947, US *Vogue* (Condé Nast online archives)

While one can easily locate dress patterns in Carmen's films, there are certainly differences among the fantasias. Fox studio designer, Yvonne Wood, was responsible for most of Carmen's Hollywood fantasias (see Appendix C for complete list of costume designers). The five films for which Wood was designer are notable for being comparatively garish, clashing, and excessive (e.g. 1943's *The Gang's All Here* was an Yvonne Wood design). According to Lisa Shaw, "Carmen encouraged Wood to push the boundaries" of the costumes' excessiveness (Shaw 2013: 124 FN 40). Despite the great expense to construct the elaborate ensembles, Wood's costumes look tawdry and vulgar when compared with, for example, Sascha Brastoff's designs for *If I'm Lucky* (1946).

If I'm Lucky was a black and white film and Carmen's last while under contract with Fox. During the war Brastoff had been in the military where he designed and performed as "GI Carmen Miranda" for the Air Force show "Winged Victory." The play "Winged Victory" was eventually turned into a 1945 film of the same name for which Brastoff reprised his role (see Figure 38). Carmen saw Brastoff's stage performance and helped him to secure an assignment with Fox Studios to design her costumes for *If I'm Lucky* (Castro 2005: 409). The incident reflects what many of Carmen's contemporaries knew at the time: namely that she was self-aware of her performance and delighted in self-parody, impersonations of her and in teaching others how to parody her (Roberts 1993).

Brastoff's Carmen Drag was an admiring one. The photo of Brastoff in Carmen Drag belies none of the malice one sees seven years later in Jerry Lewis' cross-eyed Edith Head-designed Carmen Drag for *Scared Stiff* (1953), which I discuss more in-depth in chapter 4. When Brastoff designed ensembles for Carmen's role in *If I'm Lucky*, he did not go for any of the

exaggerated elements Wood used. Rather, his headdresses were relatively small and the ensembles were for the most part made understated and fashionable reflecting his admiration for the performer.

Shifts in Representation

Carmen was ‘in’ on the joke throughout her contract with Fox (1940-1946), delivering a self-parodying performance. Early in her career she famously instructed Imogene Coca and Mickey Rooney on how to impersonate her (Roberts 1993). The film scripts paired with Carmen’s performances frequently subverted stereotypical ethnic expectations even though her roles were clichéd Latin figures. Furthering her agency, Carmen often improvised musical lyrics or lines in Portuguese, which affirmed her Brazilian identity (Shaw 2013: 56). Carmen’s wartime Hollywood filmic persona is similar to her Brazilian filmic persona—both are carnivalized insofar as she connotes the carnivalesque in Hollywood and actual carnival in Brazil. When she dons a fantasia, an atmosphere of license emerges during the temporary suspension of quotidian life.



Figure 39: Sascha Brastoff in costume test as "GI Carmen Miranda" for *Winged Victory* (1945) (posted by "empireoftheimage" on flickr.com, accessed 10/20/13)

In the films released between 1940 and 1947, Carmen retains varying degrees of sex appeal. Film characters comment on her allure or otherwise express sexual interest even as late as *Nancy Goes to Rio* (1950) when Nancy's grandfather flirts with Carmen's character. In general, however, Carmen's sex appeal is diminished in the post-war films as her screen time gets reduced and she is meanly mocked. Though she is a comic figure through 1947, she is still portrayed as desirable if not as desirable as blonde leads. Some have argued that during this period Carmen is suitable for sexual relations but not for long-term romantic involvement, and is no leading lady (Ovalle 2011). This perspective asserts that sexist and racist attitudes towards the subaltern Latin/a American render her sexually available and unworthy of respect. Yet I would counter that Carmen's carnivalesque performances through 1947 in fact challenge normative expectations and demonstrate agency.

Popular 20th century Western ideas about femininity preferred imagined "natural" beauty such that one does not wish to appear to have actively altered the appearance and body. To do so would suggest artifice and deception, despite the fact that all beauty standards are socially constructed. While Carmen's appearance certainly has been naturalized, the degree of "artifice" in her appearance is so comically extreme that she can assume the role of a kind of carnivalesque jester who gets to reveal social truths that ordinary people cannot.

For example, in 1942's *Springtime in the Rockies* Carmen's character is far wittier and more attuned to the artifice of normative femininity than the blonde Betty Grable's character,

Vicki. In a scene that takes place in the cosmetics lounge of the women's room,⁶⁹ Carmen's character, Rosita Murphy, is seated at a dressing table, attired in over-the-top colorful clothing. As she touches up her make-up, she appraises Vicki's appearance, saying that she likes her hair and that maybe she (Carmen) should bleach her hair too. Grable coldly replies, "You're terribly witty, Miss Murphy, but I'm a natural blonde." "Well shut my mouse [sic]. Don't breathe it to a soul and no one will know the difference."

Vicki's response to Rosita's observation about her obviously bleached hair demonstrates a common unwillingness to acknowledge having intervened too much with nature to acquire such a hair color. In short, she reinforces ideas about femininity as deceptive. The other thing that happens in the exchange is that it highlights Rosita's role as a kind of court jester. Her (backhanded) compliment is delivered without malicious vocal inflections, which makes her intention ambiguous. In the carnivalesque spirit she is half-serious and half-playful. Finally, Carmen's mispronunciation of "mouth" as "mouse" reinforces her status as a comic figure and blunts the sharpness of truth-telling revelatory observations.

Further compounding Rosita's carnivalesque nature is the ambiguity regarding her ethnicity. Rosita's last name is Murphy. In an earlier scene she comically explains that her father was Irish and her mother Brazilian. *Springtime in the Rockies* was not the only film in which Carmen's characters were of ambiguous ethnic or national origins. *Greenwich Village* (1944), *Something for the Boys* (1944), *If I'm Lucky* (1946), and *Copacabana* (1947) also include

⁶⁹ "Women's spaces" such as powder rooms and dressing rooms have been the site for many pivotal, confrontational moments in camp classic films such as *The Women* (1939), *All About Eve* (1950), and *Valley of the Dolls* (1967).

scenes, character names, or plot twists that involve such ethnic or national ambiguities.

What these films share in common is the plausibility that Carmen's characters *might* possess 'mixed' ethnic ancestry. Her characters' ethnic hybridity is deployed to evoke laughter and is amusing in part because her presentation of self challenges expectations. She doesn't 'look' or 'act' in a way that meets popular expectations for an Anglo-American person in either *Springtime in the Rockies* or *Something for the Boys*, two films in which she is explicitly described as part-Anglo American. While other characters in the films that use this plot device express some surprise over her ancestry, no one disputes the likelihood. In this way Carmen's pre-war Hollywood films challenge expectations of what makes a person Latin/a American.

Released in 1947, the black and white *Copacabana* was a financial failure and spelled the end of Carmen's film headlining career. For her remaining post-war films—*A Date with Judy* (1948), *Nancy Goes to Rio* (1950), and *Scared Stiff* (1953)—Carmen was cast principally as a specialty act, a spectacle, with little screen time. While *A Date with Judy* and *Nancy Goes to Rio* were both MGM-made color films, the use of Technicolor reflected not so much Carmen's appeal as the studio's financial power and keen interest in promoting its musicals. The Paramount production *Scared Stiff*, which was filmed in black and white, provides Carmen's character with little narrative function.

After World War II the carnivalesque quality in Carmen Miranda's films underwent a transformation. The appealing, humorous figure who was an agent for plot advancement became the subject of derision in her later films. In *Nancy Goes to Rio* (1950), for example, her character performs the musical number "Ipse-Ai-O." As she sings and dances, a male audience member heckles her and then gets up from his seat to derisively mock her dancing style when

she turns her back. During the number Carmen parodies a cowboy's broad, bow-legged style of walking. Yet her performance is undermined by the burlesque, vulgarized impersonation that the audience member does behind her back. Carmen's character is portrayed as being unaware of the parody, not realizing that the diegetic audience is laughing at her rather than with her. She is no longer in on the joke but rather has become the joke. In contrast to earlier films, when characters and diegetic audiences are amused and delighted with her performance, the filmic audience ceases to laugh along with her witty interpretations. Rather, the act has grown stale and she has become the butt of mean-spirited mimicry.

By 1950 Carmen's performance and physical appearance had altered. Her exhaustion, forced cheerfulness, and weight gain are conspicuous in *Nancy Goes to Rio*. By the time she appeared in the film, Carmen was experiencing personal problems leading to drug and alcohol abuse that left her looking tired and bloated, as notes biographer Ruy Castro (Castro 2005: 471-75). Compounded with her diminished screen time in the film (only two numbers), the scornful impersonation of Carmen in "Ipse-Ai-O" seems that much more cruel. In comparison to her earlier films, Carmen's performance in *Nancy* is lackluster. She even performs barefoot for the musical number "Baião Ca Room 'Pa Pa," possibly because she no longer has the athleticism to dance deftly in platforms. Framing Carmen as a spectacle worthy of derision reflects broader post-war attitudes in the United States. A 'Latin' Carmen Miranda still serves her purpose as an exotic creature that entertains. Yet with re-opened global markets, placating Latin Americans with thoughtful—or at least intended to be thoughtful—film representations is no longer necessary. In a post-war era, Carmen's earlier comic agency has largely been stripped.

One gets a sense of how much agency and positive framing were lost by the 1950s when considering 1942's *Springtime in the Rockies* where she was portrayed with considerable agency. The script and direction are to her advantage and Carmen's performance and appearance are at their best. She is svelte and healthy looking. Her vocal delivery and physical movements are characterized by high energy and joyfulness. Among her musical numbers is a Portuguese version of the 1941 song popularized by Glenn Miller, "Chattanooga-Choo-Choo." Though she sings "Chattanooga-Choo-Choo" mainly in Portuguese, her unintelligible (to non-Portuguese speakers) verbal artistry and linguistic difference are highlighted though not as subjects for derision. Nobody mimics Carmen behind her back. Rather, the focus is on her as she moves across the room taking ownership of the space, making dancing in platforms look easier than it is. (Carmen's platform shoes were often at least 3" high.) Not even the garish Earl Luick-designed costumes she wears manage to eclipse the power of her performance. It is important to recall that the film was made at a time when the US wanted to promote hemispheric good will. In *Springtime in the Rockies*, Canada, the US, and Latin America are all brought together by way of 'Latin' performers and US performers converging at a Canadian resort. Like *That Night in Rio*, whose opening number, "Chica Chica Boom Chic," includes a reference to hemispheric unity – Don Ameche says "may we [North and South America] never leave behind us all the common ties that bind us" – *Springtime in the Rockies* refers overtly to the Good Neighbor policy.⁷⁰ In a scene when Dan first sees his secretary in a baiana fantasia he exclaims, "Good neighbors!"

⁷⁰ See Darlene Sadlier's discussion of *Springtime in the Rockies* in *Brazil Imagined: 1500 to the Present*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008.

Although the WWII-era films at times emphasized “good neighborliness,” I do not mean to suggest that they represented Latin Americans in an entirely positive light. Hollywood paid little attention to cultural nuances and shot its films on Hollywood sets. Yet there was nevertheless an effort to appeal to Latin American audiences and simultaneously to represent Latin/o/a Americans in a more positive light. In her WWII-era films, Carmen received greater screen time than in the post-war era. The pattern of diminished screen time in post-war films reflects diminished US interest in Latin America when global markets had been re-opened. Of course, it is also true that Carmen had been doing the same act for many years and was aging, two factors that may have also affected her popularity. Nonetheless, Carmen was a visual spectacle throughout her Hollywood career—at times a subject of derision, at times a self-parody.

When Carmen’s film career wound down after the war ended, she continued to perform at nightclubs and theaters “making her money with bananas,” which meant a rigorous schedule of up to ten shows per day (Castro 2005: 476).⁷¹ In addition to the songs she had popularized in Hollywood film, Carmen performed numbers composed in 1947 by Ray Gilbert and Aloysio Oliveira (Bando da Lua member and longtime Carmen collaborator), which satirized her star persona (Castro 2005: 438). These included “I Like to be Tall,” “I’m Cooking With Glass,” and “I Make my Money with Bananas.” As Carmen biographer Ruy Castro points out, in fact Carmen

⁷¹ To maintain her schedule, Carmen turned to prescription drugs: Benzedrine, Dexedrine, and Dexamil (Castro 2005: 477). She was also drinking heavily at the time. One friend and frequent visitor to the home Carmen shared with her husband, David Sebastian, noted that Sebastian always made sure Carmen had a full drink (Castro 2005: 496).

Miranda did not make her money with bananas—the United Fruit Company did, with its unlicensed use of her likeness, “Miss Chiquita” (Castro 2005: 438). Though Carmen was never officially a commercial banana purveyor, the American public continued to associate Carmen with the fruit, a point reinforced by the song “I Make my Money with Bananas” (see Appendix D for full lyrics).

Conclusion

Carmen’s Hollywood film repertoire consisted entirely of musical comedies. The genre itself was carnivalesque and lent itself to having highly extractable moments, e.g. musical numbers unrelated to the film’s overall plot. By always appearing in carnival-themed (Brazil) and carnivalesque (US) genre films, Carmen becomes a naturalized carnival symbol. This naturalization becomes a means for negotiating different social experiences (Hanks 1987: 689). In Brazil her carnival baiana was a naturalized means for portraying new understandings about racial and cultural hybridity. In the US during WWII her carnival image became a means for understanding Latin/a/o Americans as ‘good neighbors.’ Her earliest performances in particular, such as “Mamãe eu quero” in *Down Argentine Way*, were precedent setting in terms of establishing certain performance and appearance expectations. These qualities got exaggerated, further carnivalized, and parodied in later films. Moreover, the qualities of exaggerated appearance and distinctive performance style made the performances easily decontextualized from their film contexts. Carmen often appeared in films as a spectacle of gender and ethnicity even as she frequently retained a degree of agency. The easy decontextualization of Carmen’s look and appearance has contributed to the continued

circulation of her likeness and the many Carmen parodies, which I address in the following chapter.

Film scholar Shari Roberts (1993) observes that Carmen's Hollywood appearance and performance exaggerated social constructions of ethnicity and femininity for the sake of comedy. While it is easy to dismiss Carmen Miranda in Hollywood as a Latin/a American ethnic and gendered stereotype or as a "nonsexual camp female grotesque" (Roberts 1993), the patterns found in her films demonstrate agency and ambiguities that challenge expectations. Moreover, the presence of Carmen Miranda potentiated carnivalesque moments within the films. During these periods social norms are upended, facilitating enduring, if subtle, social transformations such as re-imagining Latin/a Americans who can have names like Chiquita Hart (Carmen's character in *Something for the Boys*) or who pose as Samoan, Portuguese, Gypsy, Irish, and Native American as Carmen's Querida does in *Greenwich Village*.

Patterns in Carmen films demonstrate that she frequently functioned as an exoticized figure. I have argued that her performance and look within the musical comedy film genre were so deeply rooted in the carnivalesque that their socially destabilizing effects meant she was more than a "commodifiable form of Latina representation" (cf. Ovalle 2011: 69). It is her exaggerated gender and ethnic constructions that led film scholar David William Foster to note that, "Miranda appears to be a woman playing a man playing a woman" (Foster 1999: 109). In her highly reflexive, carnivalesque appearance and performance, Carmen Miranda renders Carmen Drag camp and makes it ripe for imitation.

Chapter 4:

Ripe for Imitation

As a child in New York City, Puerto Rican performer Rita Moreno impersonated Carmen Miranda at Bar Mitzvahs, an experience she has addressed in a documentary about Carmen Miranda and in an autobiographical theatrical production (*Bananas is my Business* [1995]; *Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup* Berkeley Repertory Theater 2011-2012 season). Born in 1931, Moreno was a child when Carmen first arrived in the US and created a sensation. For Moreno, this early Carmen Drag marked the beginning of a long career in which she struggled against being ethnically typecast. By Moreno's account, Latin/a American women and girls could only ever be hotheaded, sexual, or some kind of Carmen Miranda figure who had set a precedent in Hollywood. Although Rita Moreno has struggled against the stereotype, others have deployed Carmen Drag to signify authenticity or to enact what may be a fantasy.

Other analyses of Carmen Miranda focus on the performer as a spectacle of ethnicity and gender (e.g. Augusto in Johnson and Stam 1995 [1982]; Roberts 1993), which is what the Emmy/Tony/Grammy/Oscar-winning Moreno addresses in her Berkeley stage performance. Yet Carmen Drag can signify a range of meanings and certainly stereotyped ethnicity is among them.

In this chapter I define what constitutes Carmen Drag noting that intention informs the meaning. I discuss why Carmen Drag is always a parody and consider the kind of laughter it can elicit, addressing the relationship between camp and parody.

My subjects for analysis include film, television, and advertising. I also look at Halloween costumes and what people wore in New Orleans for the holiday in 2009. Finally I include research I did working with Carmen Miranda impersonators in the San Francisco Bay Area from

2010 to 2011. In my analyses I show that Carmen Drag is never static because it is ultimately a context-specific sociocultural product and process (Hanks 1989: 95). I argue that Carmen's performances and Carmen Drag constitute sites where meaning gets created and interpreted within a broader social context (Hanks 1989: 96).

I find that Carmen Drag is consistently framed by the carnivalesque. Moreover, Carmen Drag is characterized by a distinctive appearance and performance that lends itself to easy re-contextualization. These qualities taken together—carnivalesque, distinctive look, an emphasis on performance where reflexivity is heightened to make the performance distinctive—mean that what often renders Carmen Drag cliché can also create space for testing the boundaries of normativity. Like carnival, a period when class stratifications and other social limitations are temporarily suspended, Carmen Drag can create a liberating space for identity exploration and testing social relationships.

Carmen Drag and its Functions (see Appendix B for notable examples of Carmen Drag)

The term “drag” to describe cross-dressing has been in English language usage as a noun or adjective⁷² since at least 1870 (*Oxford English Dictionary Online* accessed April 30, 2013). In the early 21st century, drag is popularly associated with a very specific gender and sexuality: namely cross-dressing homosexual men. Nonetheless the term has the flexibility to be used more broadly, regardless of gender or sexuality. Drag kings, for example, are typically lesbians in

⁷² The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines drag as a noun only though studies of drag culture have used it as such.

See for example Esther Newton's *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979 [1972].

iconic men's attire. Yet drag does not have to indicate gendered cross-dressing. It can also mean dressing to look the part for a range of different, identifiable social roles such as "sailor," "baiana," "pirate," or "chef."

My use of Carmen Drag aligns with how drag gets used in Jennie Livingston's 1990 documentary *Paris is Burning*. The film examines the lives of competitive drag ball participants held in eighties New York City. Livingston focuses on African-American and Latino/a "house" culture, which consists of mostly gay male kinship networks. House members have different ranks and together form a kind of team that competes against other houses at drag ball competitions. Houses emerged in the seventies and eighties among working class people of color, though their roots are connected to the interracial, high/low society Harlem Renaissance period, roughly 1919 to 1935 (Chauncey 1994; "Harlem's Drag Ball History," www.harlemworldmag.com, April 27, 2011).

The house ball culture portrayed in *Paris is Burning* includes competitions that extend well beyond cross-gendered, cross-dressing. "Town and Country" and "Schoolboy or Schoolgirl" are among the non-gender specific competitive categories. Participants are judged according to expectations for dress and performance. The performer's objective, according to veteran ball competitor and interviewee Dorian Corey, is to achieve "realness," to use Corey's expression, that is, looking like the "real" thing. According to Corey, in the everyday unfair world a poor gay black man isn't likely to be a corporate executive but he can compete in the ball's "Executive" category and have his performance and appearance assessed for credibility. Competing in the category gives the performer a means for enacting what racism, homophobia, and class challenges have turned into an unobtainable fantasy. By creating an "Executive" competition,

the ball's participants call attention to a socially constructed category that can be impersonated through dress and appearance. Executive drag, as Corey points out, can be a means for enacting a fantasy or otherwise creating an experience not possible in daily life. As a drag form, Carmen Drag functions similarly in that it can be deployed in ways that highlight what is constructed about social categories, e.g. gender or ethnicity. At other times Carmen Drag simply allows the individual to have experiences otherwise impossible in daily life.

What makes Carmen Drag distinctive is its association with a specific person, not unlike, for example, Marlene Dietrich drag. Yet at the same time Carmen Drag has signified more than a specific star. In this way it differs from Marlene Dietrich, Judy Garland, Mae West, and other star impersonations. Unlike Mae West drag, for example, Carmen Drag can be evoked to signify broader social categories, specifically 'Latina' in a US context. At times it functions to parody or mock strict social categories and at other times it can be a form of homage or aspiration.

In *Uneven Encounters* (2009), Micol Seigel coins the phrase "nation drag" to address 20th century African American performers' self-presentation as foreign born. This kind of drag challenges expectations for the social category African American. Those in nation drag did not simply "pass" as non-blacks but rather dramatized ambiguous racial categories tied to eroticized nationalities (Seigel 2009: 137-138). In one example of nation drag, African American performers dance with Katherine Dunham in the Warner Brothers film short, *Carnival of Rhythm* (1941) adopted Brazilian nation drag during shooting (Seigel 2009: 155). More specifically, the dancers appeared in the film short as baianas and baianos, domestic exotics within Brazil.

I define drag as follows: the presentation of self through dress and performance to satisfy recipient or audience expectations associated with a social category. Very often humor is

engaged to comment on the category. Such categories are only limited by the number of social categories in existence and can include types of nation drag, occupational drag, or Carmen Drag. My emphasis is on intention; that is, self-presentation intended to fulfill imagined social expectations. So depending upon to whom one's drag is directed, those imagined social expectations will vary. Technically speaking any sort of daily dress meant to meet social expectations could constitute drag. However my use of the term requires there to be a self-conscious element of parody present. In other words, drag is always a kind of commenting quotation since parody requires the presence of more than one 'voice,' which may at times position itself in direct ideological opposition to the parodied subject.

When Carmen Miranda first appeared in 1939's *Banana da terra* dressed as a baiana, other baiana costumes had already been circulating. Yet it was Carmen's version that was widely copied. Early Carmen Drag in Brazil was not simply an impersonation of the star but also an impersonation of the social category "Baiana." Carmen's baiana itself constituted a form of drag as I use the term. She dramatized "Baiana" and made it glamorous. As with all drag forms, Carmen's baiana required she be highly reflexive in her act of self-presentation. As discussed in chapter 2, Carmen's baiana was a fantasia that had an ironic element. Frequently irony is elemental to drag though the degrees of irony vary, as do the intended effects. *Paris is Burning's* Dorian Corey observes that his aim for "realness" in drag is not meant to be "satirical."

This observation about what Corey calls realness being valued over satire is instructive in that it highlights intentionality. While the documentary's interviewees have a range of preferences in terms of gender identification for daily life, the drag ball performance competitions reward those who best achieve what participants call "realness," which is driven by

admiration for the subject.⁷³ Competitors are not actually business executives, for example, but they aim to perform a close approximation of the category as they understand it. Where realness is admiring, satire on the other hand seeks to make a negative judgment about its subject (Hutcheon 1985: 44). Both realness and satirical impersonation are intertextual exercises that play with distance between the impersonator and impersonated subject to co-create new meanings with audiences. However, this does not mean that humor, irony, and parody cannot also be present in drag including the types documented in *Paris is Burning*.

Irony and parody are closely related. Both require a critical distance from their subject in order to create new meanings (Hutcheon 1985: 30). Though there is no consensus on what constitutes irony, frequently it entails saying or doing one thing with the intention of signifying its opposite. So for example, Carmen's first baiana was delivered ironically. In a Brazilian context she is obviously a white woman masquerading as an Afro-Brazilian. This is in contrast to the Katherine Dunham dancers whose nation drag has no discernible traces of irony. Yet the dancers' deployment of nation drag still functions similarly to Carmen's baiana – as a means for authenticating oneself as Brazilian despite being from the US and Portugal, respectively. Baiana to connote Brazilianness is desirable because of the associated eroticism, musical rhythm, racial ambiguity, and the traditionalizing effect that the stereotype implies.

In a vein similar to Carmen's first baiana, Executive drag in the Harlem ball is laced with irony. Many of the category's participants would not have the opportunity in daily life to be an executive. Yet no matter how convincing their performance and dress might be, no one in the

⁷³ In terms of drag being a kind of fantasia insofar as it fulfills a wish, another interviewee, the transgendered Venus Xtravaganza, comments that she just wants to lead the life of a spoiled rich girl in the suburbs.

audience mistakes the participants for being actual executives just as Brazilian audiences would not mistake Carmen's baiana for daily Bahian dress. For the drag ball participants – many black or Latino and gay – there is enjoyment in dressing up to convey “realness” – a kind of hyper-real drag – as Executive (implicitly white and heterosexual) while preserving and celebrating their (opposite) sexual and racial identities.

Parody

Present in these examples is a sense of ambivalence, which is related to drag's tendency to parody. Parody, which has long been connected to carnival, is characterized by its ambivalence (Bakhtin 1984: 127). While parody retains critical distance and creates new meanings, it does not necessarily have to ridicule. Rather it is “repetition with difference” (Hutcheon 1985: 32). In the New York eighties drag ball scene, competitions often parody hegemonic social structures and categories as a means for commenting. Parody requires “double voicing,” which is to say introducing one’s ‘voice’ into an existing discourse (Bakhtin 1984: 193). By injecting one’s voice into the discourse one has agency to articulate new perspectives that can be expressed in diverse ways (Bakhtin 1984: 194). For example, one might want to inject one’s voice to challenge hegemonic, white heteronormative social stratifications.

In his analysis of language-based parody, Bakhtin notes that the comic device is a metalinguistic commentary, which “is directed both toward the referential object of speech, as in ordinary discourse, and toward *another's discourse*, toward *someone else's speech*” (Morris [Bakhtin Reader] 1994:105). In parody the author or creator uses another’s voice while also inserting one’s own voice, playing with the intertextual gaps (Briggs and Bauman 1992) between voices for comedic effect but also to create a new semantic intention (Morris [Bakhtin Reader]

1994: 105). Thus, says Bakhtin, parody allows one to repeat “the statement of the other speaker, investing it with new value and accenting it in his own way” (Morris 1994:106). The parody’s polemic may be overt or hidden but it is necessarily double-voiced. Multiple voices allow the parodist to calibrate intertextual gaps in order to establish greater or lesser distance between the author and the subject not only in terms of performance style, but also in terms of differing ideologies. When parody is understood in this broad way – as not always intended to ridicule but rather to inject one’s voice into an existing discourse – then one sees that drag is always a parody.

For a range of audiences Carmen Miranda’s star image signifies multiple ambiguities such as ambiguous gender and ambiguous ethnicity. Her carnivalesque appearance and performance elicit ambivalent laughter. As discussed in chapter 2, as early as the twenties when she posed for studio portraits, there is the sense that Carmen Miranda is parodying herself and Hollywood aesthetics. In other words, her look and performance present a commentary that enters into an existing discourse. In thirties Brazil, her parodies comment on Brazilian modernity, Hollywood style, and shifting Brazilian ideologies about racial constructions.

A parodic performance, as cross-dressed examples of Carmen Drag often are, can “bring the production of identity into sharp focus” (Hall 2005: 126). In her analysis of *koti* performances in Delhi, Kira Hall studies the way these subversive performers parody cross-dressing hijra eunuchs and Western-style middle-class gays. The *kotis* incorporate, mimic, and exaggerate recognizable traits, manners of speech, and demeanor in their performances. In so doing they highlight the essence of the parodied subject(s). Their parodic performances are a

metacommentary on Indian sexuality and gender categories, which they regard as inflexible.⁷⁴

Throughout their performances the *kotis* play with the intertextual gaps (Hall 2005: 138) in order to comment on the superiority of their own flexible gender and sexuality—they are biologically male, dress convincingly as women and *hijras*, seduce and have sex with other men, and they marry women with whom they father children (Hall 2005: 141). Through parody the *kotis* make a cultural commentary, using others' voices as their source material (namely *hijras'* and middle-class gays' voices) while playing with distance and allowing for leakage between the different voices (Hall 2005: 138). Leakage and the use of different voices in performance as metacommentary are devices one sees in Carmen Drag, especially the cross-dressed variety.

Drag as Fantasia

Frequently drag is a fantasia insofar as it enables a fantasy. Marjorie Garber addresses this fantasy aspect in her analysis of Dustin Hoffman's cross-dressed performance in the 1982 film *Tootsie*, calling it not "merely a joke or a parody" (Garber 1997 [1992]: 6). Garber, of course, understands parody differently than I have just described it but her observations about drag to satisfy a fantasy are useful. Garber observes that attired as Dorothy, Hoffman's character gets to have experiences otherwise unavailable to him as a heterosexual man. While in Dorothy drag he has intimate conversations with women as a woman and develops empathy previously unknown to him.

Similarly, in the earliest Carmen Drag – that is, Carmen's *Banana da terra baiana* – her fantasia gives the middle-class white performer license to move across class and race categories.

⁷⁴ The performances are also arguably a critique of the inflexibility of heterosexuality even though the *kotis* do not appear to be performing for heterosexual audiences.

As a Portuguese citizen her baiana can even qualify as a form of nation drag insofar as it came to signify *brasilidade*. The fantasia Carmen Drag is a parodic means for enabling fantasy and at times interrogating normative identities and social expectations of nationality, ethnicity, and gender, to name a few categories. Of course context and intention for the different Carmen Drags have significantly shaped its social meanings with some Carmen Drags in dialogue with preceding examples.

“It’s the Way You Wear It”

An overwhelming number of Carmen Drag examples have been cross-dressed (see Appendix B). Drag of this sort is a particularly rich area of investigation because it is a highly reflexive type of performance. Often cross-dressing is subversive because it calls attention to what is socially constructed about gender categories (Butler 1999 [1990]: 177).

Drag queens are perhaps the most spectacular example of using parodic cross-dress to comment on social categories. Yet there is a whole spectrum of ways to dress that play with constructed gender roles. These can include androgynous attire such as the pop star David Bowie used to create his Ziggy Stardust stage persona in the seventies (see figure 40). Nonetheless, playing with gender categories is about much more than the garments alone. Bowie’s Ziggy Stardust persona, for example, was effective in part because of his performance style, his long lean body, angular face, and delicate features. The body itself and how one moves and manipulates it have a great deal to do with a performance’s meaning.

No body is “natural,” by which I mean that all bodies are a product of their environments. *Habitus*, as described by Pierre Bourdieu, is essentially one’s environment, which has been produced by social conditions and which in turn produces one’s social conditions (Bourdieu 1984

[1979]: 101). Habitus informs what a body is like, whether it is a body subjected to a childhood characterized by poor nutrition or years spent in the harsh sun. Of course different individuals have varying degrees of control over their bodily development and alterations such as through, for example, diet changes and exercise. Yet even these interventions are shaped by one's habitus. Related to this idea of bodily practices and kinesthesia, is Marcel Mauss' conception regarding "techniques of the body" (Mauss 2006 [1935]). A technique of the body is a learned way of using one's body such that, for example, anyone can "throw like a girl" because it is a learned physical practice that gets naturalized into a biological way of moving (Mauss 2006 [1935]).



Figure 40: David Bowie as Ziggy Stardust in the early 1970s (www.theguardian.com 6/22/12, accessed 10/20/13)

Joanne Entwistle astutely observes that the body is frequently treated as “a natural and not a social phenomenon, and therefore not a legitimate object for sociological investigation” (Entwistle 2000: 13). Engaging concepts of habitus and bodily techniques, she posits that dress is a situated practice (Entwistle 2000: 36). That is to say, individual garments are not merely decodable symbols (cf. Barthes 2006) – though individual clothing signifiers can carry particular weight and meanings – but rather have meanings that change depending on the bodily context. Bodies are products of the lived environment, e.g. reflecting access to healthy food, clean water, and muscle development through physical labor. At the same time people do make deliberate interventions on their bodies such as through exercise or dental implants. Such interventions are acts of agency that challenge the limiting nature of Bourdieu’s habitus. Actively intervening in this way empowers one to manage the impressions one makes. Straight white teeth, for example, can signify a privileged early life habitus regardless of what the actual early life environment was like. That said, availability of resources, of course, is also a factor in terms of the nature and degree to which one makes bodily modifications.

While people constantly alter their bodily forms, self-awareness about such actions varies. Artists, fashion designers, and drag queens, to name a few, understand that there is more to personal appearance than simply garments. Clothes most certainly do not make the person in drag. As Belgian fashion designer Dries Van Noten has commented, “It’s not always the garment itself. It’s the way you wear it—so you can’t really place if it’s masculine or feminine. It becomes part of the person, and I’m convinced this is something that goes beyond ‘fashion’” (*Vogue* May 2013, p. 192). What Van Noten seems to be suggesting is that the wearer’s bodily techniques and intentions influence how a particular garment is socially

received. In the case of Carmen Miranda, the performer presented her public image with a self-aware, self-parodying wink. Moreover, *how* she performed significantly shaped the performance's meaning (Schieffelin 1985). Her image and performance constitute a kind of quotation that can easily be re-quoted to create new meanings.

Though most of the recent examples of Carmen Drag in my study are not cross-dressed, historically many have been. Even so cross-dressed Carmen Drag is not a one-trick banana. It can be deployed in many ways such as in homage to the star, as a way of signaling cultural traditions, or to represent homosexuality.

Laughter

Bakhtin posits that daily life is transformed once carnival has ended. Although the status quo is seemingly restored at carnival's end, according to Bakhtin subtle shifts to the social order occur as a result of the temporary upending (Bakhtin 1984 [1965]: 49). In my analysis of an *I Love Lucy* episode deploying Carmen Drag, I show that Lucy's carnivalesque performance plays with social categories while the fantasia allows her humorously to appear Latina for her husband. The harmony in their relationship is restored after her performance when Ricky assures her that he loves her because she's different from him. Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball were famously married off-screen as well as on television. This widely known fact gives the episode the power to increase broader social acceptance of marriage between a Cuban-born man and a Caucasian woman, which had not previously been depicted on US television. This is not to downplay other factors contributing to social acceptance such as Arnaz's being light skinned and in some circles being perceived as white. Moreover, by the time *I Love Lucy* was on the air,

Arnaz was an established musician and from Cuba⁷⁵ rather than some less desirable Latin American country such as the Dominican Republic, which is more commonly associated with blackness. From the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898 until the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the US enjoyed special privileges that protected its political and economic interests making Cuba an ideal Good Neighbor (Grandin 2006: 27). By the forties and fifties Cuba's cultural, economic, and tourist appeal had become part of US popular culture as reflected in Carmen's third film *Week-end in Havana* (1941), when she plays Cuban performer, Rosita Rivas.

Another way to look at Lucy's carnivalesque moment in the 1951 episode is as a momentary social upending that functions as a "release valve" rather than as a means for changing the ideological landscape. According to this interpretation carnival is a temporary respite from daily life that ultimately aims to restore normalcy and re-state hegemonic discourses (Butler 1999 [1990]: 177). Carnival and carnivalesque moments elicit laughter but ultimately the norm must be restored. Whether one regards carnival and the carnivalesque as potentiating social transformation or as upholding the status quo, carnivalesque laughter is typically ambivalent laughter. Carmen Drag elicits such ambivalent laughter while being deployed in a range of ways to achieve different ends – sometimes to uphold the status quo and at other times to challenge normativity.

One way Carmen Drag gets used is to elicit corrective laughter that restores normativity. In such cases Carmen Drag is held up as a negative example to signify what one does not want to be: a Latin/a American woman. The proliferation in US popular culture of this Carmen Drag

⁷⁵ There is, of course, a sizable Afro-Cuban population in Cuba but many public figures have tended to be white creating the illusion of little black presence.

variant has led to conflicted responses to Carmen Miranda within the Latin/a/o American community. In the 1999 documentary *Hispanic Hollywood*, the Brazilian Bombshell is described as the “most famous and most parodied Latin figure of all time.”⁷⁶ When Carmen Drag is a metonym for all Latin/a/o American people the social stakes are considerably higher. While alive, Carmen Miranda participated in public culture as an identifiable individual star. Yet over time in the decades after her 1955 death, Carmen Drag’s use and meaning have changed in the shadow of the many different Carmen Drags that have followed.

Is it being so camp that keeps Carmen going?

Drag and camp both rely on self-awareness and reflexivity about social performance and social categories. Both use humor to comment on sociocultural norms. Frequently the most talented and prolific purveyors of drag and camp are gay men, though gay men are by no means the only ones who do both. Drag and camp are best categorized as queer endeavors where “queer” is a flexible category that encompasses a wide range of “non-, anti-, or contra-straight” ways of self-identifying or interpreting culture (Doty 1993: 3).

Susan Sontag’s *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (1966) initiated a scholarly discussion of camp, which Esther Newton furthered in her Chicago drag queen ethnography *Mother Camp* (1979 [1972]). Other significant works such as Jack Babuscio’s “Camp and the Gay Sensibility” published in Richard Dyer’s *Gays and Film* (1984) further widened the field of

⁷⁶The documentary provides a survey of “Hispanic” representations throughout Hollywood’s filmmaking history. I have no statistical data to confirm the claim that Carmen Miranda was the most famous and parodied Latin figure, though my personal observations of widespread Carmen parodies were certainly what triggered my interest in the topic.

discussion. By the 1990s scholars had begun more fully to address the topic of camp with no agreement. “Camp” like the term “queer” is slippery, contentious, and elusive of description (Cleto 1999). I use the term camp as an encompassing term, not limited to gay men. Rather it constitutes a queer sensibility per Doty’s use of the term cited above. Camp is a matter of perspective such that anything can be camp depending upon how the subject is interpreted and by whom. Camp finds humor in the socially constructed often highlighting details and relishing extremes of all sorts including tragedy, melodrama, and violence. Camp is, for example, noticing the dolls on Lily Powers’ (Barbara Stanwyck) bed in *Baby Face* (1933). Camp can even be standing on the edge of an idyllic lake surrounded by pine trees and mountains. When viewed from the world-weary camp perspective that has seen far too much bad sofa art depicting such scenes, the lake, trees, and mountains become derivative of the bad art and so many John Denver pop songs.

If camp is inclusive in terms of who gets to participate and define the terms, then one could go so far as to say that its universality makes it carnivalesque because theoretically anyone can participate. Carnival is a period that includes everyone and is characterized by ambiguity, ambiguous laughter, and an upending of social norms. Everyone and everything is subject to camp interpretation. There is no single way of being camp, queer, or even of doing drag. Though certain repeated drag forms may be intended to obfuscate and challenge normative expectations, drag performances are never the same.

Carmen Drag as a camp endeavor in the US has been around at least since World War II when Carmen Miranda was the most impersonated figure on US military bases at home and abroad (Bérubé 1990: 89). Gay WWII veterans have said that drag performances for troops were

common and gave one the freedom to engage in what would otherwise have been socially unacceptable behavior. Recalls one soldier: “I had never been in drag in my life before, but I was Carmen Miranda incarnate! ... We were a smash! The place fell apart. I was doing sambas in this really outlandish costume of red, yellow, and green beads and some fabric and I had piled fruit on my head. That must have happened in every camp in America!” (Bérubé 1990: 67).

Among the soldiers to impersonate Carmen was Sascha Brastoff. In 1943 Brastoff created a Carmen spoof called “G.I. Carmen Miranda” for a one week show, “Contact Caravan’s Pan Americana” that was a tribute to South America (Conti 1995: 23). Brastoff’s costume incorporated Army blankets, barracks bags, and mess hall supplies. The show was reprised for a civilian audience three months later on September 16, 1943, at Miami’s Lincoln Center (Conti 1995: 24). By November Brastoff’s act had been incorporated into the new play premiering in Boston, “Winged Victory.” Later that month the show moved to New York City leading to Brastoff’s Carmen Drag being featured in *Life* magazine on November 29, 1943. *Winged Victory* eventually was made into a film released in 1944. Carmen and Brastoff met when she saw his performance. Carmen, who delighted in being impersonated, had Fox hire the budding performer to design her costumes for *If I’m Lucky* (1946) (Castro 2005: 409).

Even after the war had ended, Carmen remained a popular figure for cross-dressed impersonations. A 1951 poll in *Variety* concluded that the Brazilian Bombshell was the most imitated person in the US among professionals and amateurs (cited in Castro 2005: 488). By one account, Carmen even attended a show in San Francisco where drag queens impersonated her and her frequent co-star Alice Faye (Castro 2005: 365). Throughout the forties and fifties Carmen remained a popular figure for gay men to impersonate. After the gay rights movement

gained momentum in the late sixties, cross-dressed Carmen Drag in the US dwindled.

Among the many historic Carmen Drag examples that have been cross-dressed there is often a tendency to parody gender. Shari Roberts (1993) has argued that this is because Carmen is already a parody of gender (and ethnicity); a parody of herself. Carmen Drag has been deployed at different times to disrupt a range of normative expectations, though the nature of the performance can make the impersonation more or less subversive.

Scholars in recent years have noted Carmen's significance as a gay camp figure (Fitch 2011; Ovalle 2011; Roberts 1992; Shaw 2013). Yet despite these claims, between 2007 and 2013, I found almost no evidence of queer or camp uses of Carmen Drag in the US. One Chicago drag club manager even told me that no one had done Carmen regularly since the nineties (personal communication 11/2009). Rather, my research suggests that the mid-nineties were the last surge for Carmen Drag in queer communities. A notable example is Cuban-American queer performer, Alina Troyano's "Carmelita Tropicana." Troyano's parody of Latina stereotypes first emerged in eighties New York's East Village club scene, when she appeared in high heels and dramatic femme costuming (Carr, C., "Two Latinas, Two Lesbians, Two Laff Riots," theatrical review of "Single Wet Female" 10/8/2002, *Village Voice*). As recently as 2002 Troyano has performed as "Carmelita Tropicana," though it would seem that her stage persona has evolved. In a 2002 performance she played what she described as a butch character (*ibid*).



Figure 41: Carmen teaching Mickey Rooney how to do “Carmen Miranda” for *Babes on Broadway* (1940) (Barsante 1994)

A Babe on Broadway (1942)

In the early 21st century Carmen Drag is a nearly extinct camp figure. At one time, however, she was a powerful means for camp expression as demonstrated by Sascha Brastoff's and Mickey Rooney's forties impersonations.

In 1939, the young Mickey Rooney was among those to flock to Carmen's earliest Broadway performances in "Streets of Paris." One of the production's performers, Magda Mastrogiovanni, recalls that night after night Rooney sat in the front row mesmerized by Carmen's performance ("Carmen Miranda: The Girl from Rio" documentary). It wouldn't be long before the two would meet and Carmen would tutor him on how to 'do' her just as she had tutored performer Imogene Coca for her impersonation in another Shubert Broadway production that ran simultaneous with *Streets of Paris* (Castro 2005: 230).

Mickey Rooney sought out Carmen's tutelage for his performance in *Babes on Broadway* (released in early 1942), a black and white MGM musical comedy in which he co-starred with Judy Garland. The film's plot centers on two New York kids (Rooney and Garland) trying to get a break on Broadway. Rooney and Garland are two aspiring performers with various hurdles to overcome. The plot provides Rooney and Garland with ample opportunities to showcase their singing and dancing abilities. The crescendo of the film's plot builds to when they manage to secure a performance space for their show. The show is important for their careers because a powerful producer is expected to attend and the hope is that he will 'discover' them for Broadway. During the showcase event they perform a range of musical numbers including Rooney's parody of Carmen Miranda's "Mamãe eu quero."

Rooney's performance is framed by a brief musical number "A Bombshell Just Fell Over Brazil," led by Garland. Garland and the other actors sing in front of the stage curtain preceded by a shot that focuses on an oversize, theatrical bomb's fuse that is lit in the orchestra pit. As the fuse burns, the camera follows its path onto the stage where there is a small explosion and the performers appear in a poof of smoke. The diegetic audience is warned to "Run for your lives!" and "Stay where you are!" because a bombshell has just fallen over Brazil. Brazilian Bombshell of course was Carmen Miranda's nickname in the press thus the lyrics index her and her Broadway success.

The lyrics' admonitions, "run" and "stay," are comic because they suggest ambivalence towards the bombshell's arrival. This ambivalence also adumbrates the ambiguity in Rooney's forthcoming performance. The chorus advises the audience to lay down their arms and run up their flag for they will soon "surrender to this jill."⁷⁷ When the film was made in 1941, Brazil had not yet positioned itself as a supporter of either Allied or Axis forces. At the time there were signs that Brazil might support fascist forces. As we saw earlier (chapter 2), the Vargas regime admired fascist approaches to media circulation in seeking to reach a broad audience. Yet sending Carmen Miranda to the United States as an unofficial cultural ambassador suggested that the Brazilian government could still be persuaded to support the Allies. Thus the ambiguity that Garland and the juvenile chorus express towards a Brazilian Bombshell belies a genuine uncertainty about the relationship between the two countries. Yet Carmen Drag is fantasia and one possible fantasy to be enacted through Rooney's performance is that of friendly US-Brazil

⁷⁷ According to the *Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang* (1997), the first usage of jill as a generic term for any young woman appeared in the 1934 film *Harold Teen*.

relations.

Before Rooney takes the stage, Garland sings about how the bombshell's contributions to the "art of elocution" are "apt to start a revolution among the ladies at the Ritz." Here the lyrics emphasize the bombshell's pronunciations, most likely meaning her *mispronunciations* such as singing "souse" for "south" in "South American Way." Such pronunciation is subject to ambivalent laughter because of the incongruity between "ladies at the Ritz" – coded as wealthy WASPs – and a Brazilian bombshell – coded as sensuous and Latin. Though there is incongruity between the different social categories, the song recognizes the desirability of mimicking Carmen whose style is "apt to start a revolution" because "in Rio de Janeiro when she sings *mama yo quiero* [sic], every *caballero* admits that it's a blitz." Garland's American English accent comes through powerfully in her pronunciation of the non-English lyrics, which incidentally are in Spanish not Portuguese. The linguistic conflation has the effect of conflating Rio de Janeiro, Brazil with the rest of Spanish-speaking Latin America.

In the final line of their introductory piece, the chorus sings, "Here comes that bombshell from Brazil," at which point Garland shimmies her shoulders and rolls her eyes mimicking Carmen's iconic movements in "Mamãe eu quero." Garland's physicality paired with the lyrics index Carmen who had by this time already appeared in three films, *Down Argentine Way* (1940), *That Night in Rio* (1941), and *Week-end in Havana* (1941). At no point in the musical number is Carmen Miranda mentioned by name, since it would have been unnecessary to cite the star. The assumption is that the audience would share the same frame of reference to recognize the indexed Carmen. Further, Garland's mini-Carmen Drag clarifies any uncertainties about to whom the song refers and foreshadows what follows.

The stage curtains part and from a set of doors emerges Mickey Rooney's character, Tommy Williams, dressed in Carmen Drag. Before he opens his mouth to sing, the viewer sees what have become classic signifiers of Carmen Drag. These dress symbols, created by costume design veteran Robert Kalloch, include the following: platform shoes; a sparkly long skirt that is close-fitting through the hips and has a bold patterned design evocative of the triangle cut-outs on Carmen's *Streets of Paris* skirt; a midriff-baring off-the-shoulders top; multiple necklaces and bracelets; large hoop earrings; and a turban headdress that is a combination of the one worn by Carmen for "O que é que a baiana tem?" (with rakishly askew miniature basket) and the *Down Argentine Way* turban with a spray of plastic foliage. Rooney's make-up also indexes Carmen. He has drawn-on dark eyebrows, false eyelashes, and lipstick applied in Carmen fashion – that is, the forties style that extends the outline of the mouth beyond the wearer's lips, emphasizing a rounded upper lip.⁷⁸

In terms of costume, Mickey Rooney's fantasia is strikingly similar to Carmen's look at the time. Yet the intertextual gap in his costume is widened by virtue of his being discernibly male. The film's costume designer, Robert Kalloch, had just moved from Columbia Pictures to MGM in 1941 (Leese 1991: 63). A skilled gown designer, Kalloch created looks for then foundering Columbia Pictures' actresses so that they had the elegance and modernity seen at the bigger studios (*ibid*). Though he specialized in women's dress, Kalloch nonetheless managed to create a costume for Rooney that exaggerated Carmen's look without delving too deeply into the absurd. He does this in several ways such as through the use of two rather than one elaborate decorations on the turban. The skirt also is designed to draw the eye to the body's lower

⁷⁸ Joan Crawford also famously applied her lipstick in this fashion in the 1940s.

extremities emphasizing sexuality and the carnivalesque lower strata generally. The bold line pattern at the pelvic level of Rooney's skirt resembles the geometric triangle cut-outs on the Travis Banton design for Carmen's skirt in *Down Argentine Way*. Excessive jewelry completes Rooney's Carmen Drag, creating a dramatic impression before he even begins to sing.

The fantasia visually comments on what is similar and different between Rooney's Carmen Drag and Carmen's Carmen Drag, inviting audience scrutiny. As an adept performer, Rooney carefully calibrates the distance between his voice and Carmen's through the performance. One way he does this is by emphasizing his physicality and by making full use of the entire body to include hip movements, arm gestures, and even his tongue.



Figure 42: Carmen in a Travis Banton design on the poster for *Down Argentine Way* (1940) (moviepostershop.com, accessed 10/20/13)

When Rooney bursts through the doors – an index of Miranda’s entrance for “Mamãe eu quero” – his arms are raised, with elbows at shoulder height, and forearms and hands raising and lowering. What makes these gestures parodic is the rapidity with which he performs when compared with Carmen’s more graceful, slower timed gestures. He further emphasizes the kinesthetic contrasts by splaying his fingers and using large movements to convey a general lack of grace. For the parody to be successful, he must perform in such a way that the audience will recognize Carmen’s performance ‘voice.’ Rooney plays with the gap between the Carmen source and his performance via such devices as exaggeration. For example, his lower body movements include taking very large steps. In US culture this kind of stepping frequently connotes masculinity in part because it requires taking up a lot of space. It is also a movement that is done flat-footed. When Rooney does it, he appears to stomp, a gesture that has connotations of petulance, anger, assertiveness, and buffoonery, to name a few. These sentiments are largely ones that would be considered in stark contrast to the elegant, gliding femininity that Carmen conveys in her performances. The additional effect of his flat-footed stepping draws attention to the shoes.

Platform shoes such as those both Carmen and Rooney wear do not allow the wearer to flex the foot’s arch when stepping. Carmen moves in her shoes with small steps that keep her lower bodied controlled and contained even while her hips move from side to side. She makes moving in platforms look easy and at times appears to glide across the performance space. Conversely, Rooney exaggerates the shoes’ limitations through his stumps. At the same time he highlights his performance skills through the addition of little kicks done in time to the music—one, two, three, kick. Mickey Rooney’s performance overall conveys the pleasure he derives

from the impersonation.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Rooney's embodied performance, which is certainly absent from Lewis' performance, is the emphasis on sex appeal. Rooney transforms the physical register of Carmen's suggestive hip movements and sideways glances to a more overtly sexualized performance. He pushes out his rear, makes dramatic side-to-side hip thrusts, and even darts his tongue salaciously at one of the band members. In looking at the photographs documenting Carmen laughingly instructing Rooney how to hold the arms and move (Barsante 1994: 24-25), one cannot help but to wonder if she also explained the song's sexual implications to him.

Part of what is interesting about Rooney's parody is that he sings "Mamãe eu quero" rather than lip-synch to a recording. His *Babes* character Tommy is a kind of variation on himself, the star Mickey Rooney who sings and dances. As a performer playing a performer who impersonates another performer Rooney explores the full Carmen Drag envelope through his delivery.

Though Rooney sings primarily in Portuguese, there is one notable linguistic leak in his performance. He pronounces the song's refrain, "mamãe eu quero," with a Spanish accent as "mama yo quiero." As the song's title and most repeated lyric, the leak is significant. The effect is to create slippage in the song's meaning. While code-switching between Spanish and Portuguese was probably both unintentional and unrecognizable to non-speakers of the languages, the hybrid delivery homogenizes Latin America. Moreover, repetition of the song's primary lyric in Spanish sets a precedent that gets repeated in later iterations. With significantly more Spanish-speakers in the US than Portuguese, such a rendering would be more familiar to

the ears even for monolingualists. Other, later examples of Carmen Drag that engage the same song and use a Spanish variant and/or food names from Spanish-speaking countries include the animated “Baby Puss” (*Tom and Jerry*) and “Yankee Doodle Daffy” (*Looney Toons*), both from 1943.

Figure 43: Miss Chiquita Banana, created for the United Fruit Company's 1944 animated commercial (screen shot)



Chiquita Banana (1944)

“Baby Puss” and “Yankee Doodle Daffy” are by no means the only animated impersonations of Carmen. Bugs Bunny dons Carmen Drag in “What’s Cookin’ Doc?” (1944). Three years later *Merrie Melodies* incorporated an animated Carmen Miranda into “Slick Hare” so that Bugs could hide in her turban. More recently, Carmen Drag has appeared in episodes of animated TV shows *The Simpsons* (“Blame it on Lisa” 2002)⁷⁹ and *Family Guy* (“Road to Europe” 2002) and the animated film *Rio* (2011). Lisa Shaw observes that Carmen’s “‘cartoon character’ quality” has led to the many animated impersonations intended to evoke an imagined tropical, exotic Latin America (Shaw 2013: 94). The elaborate costumes and the dramatic and stylized gestures seem to invite impersonation.

Possibly the earliest animated Carmen Drag was an impersonation with a clear commercial objective: to sell bananas. In 1944 the United Fruit Company introduced a jingle⁸⁰ to consumers via radio and an animated commercial, ostensibly performed by “Miss Chiquita,” a Carmen-inspired animated character (see Appendix D for jingle lyrics). Carmen did not record the song, did not authorize the use of her likeness, nor was she consulted in the creation of the

⁷⁹ The episode’s title is itself an indirect reference to the 1984 film, *Blame it on Rio*, which portrays Brazil according to the usual stereotypes including as a tropical paradise where women frolic topless on the beaches. The movie stars Michael Caine and Demi Moore.

⁸⁰ In 1949 João de Barros (Braguinha) and Alberto Ribeiro composed “Chiquita Bacana,” inspired by French existentialism. The song’s refrain sounds suspiciously like the Chiquita Banana jingle, perhaps an ironic comment on outsiders’ perceptions of ‘Banana Republics’ and the tropics. It remains one of Brazil’s best-known carnival marches. See Appendix D for full lyrics.

half-woman/half-banana figure.⁸¹ Miss Chiquita, provocative in pumps, perversely sings about the care, preparation, and methods for eating her and her compatriots (Enloe 1991: 129). The anthropomorphized banana is clearly a Carmen Miranda impersonation complete with a fruit-filled hat, ruffled sleeves, ruffled low-slung skirt, and heels. Miss Chiquita certainly complicates the Carmen-banana-phallus connection causing one to wonder whether Miss Chiquita might be cross-dressed. In a queer, camp world, why not?

The term “chiquita” is an affectionate Spanish diminutive meaning “little one.” In coming up with a name for the Dik Browne drawn logo, it is possible that one of Carmen’s film characters inspired the United Fruit Company. The same year United Fruit’s Miss Chiquita appeared in advertisements, Carmen starred in *Something for the Boys* (1944) playing a character named Chiquita Hart. The double Chiquitas effectively reinforced Carmen’s association with bananas as well as situated her as a pan-Latin/a American from the tropics.

Over the years the Miss Chiquita logo has undergone changes. In 1987 she went from denoting bananas to connoting bananas when she underwent species re-assignment and became a brown-hued woman. Though she had transitioned from fruit to woman, Miss Chiquita continued to index Latin American femininity, exoticism, the tropics, and edibility. In 1990, the company officially changed its name to Chiquita Brands, a testament to the popularity of Miss Chiquita. The change also reflects an association of the Latin American tropics with produce and

⁸¹ On the Chiquita Brands website (<http://www.chiquita.com/Our-Company/The-Chiquita-Story/Miss-Chiquita.aspx> accessed 1/17/13) there is a mention of Carmen Miranda as *not* being Miss Chiquita. “Live models and personalities were hired to bring the “First Lady of Fruit” to life, beginning with Patty Clayton in 1944. Puerto Rico-born Elsa Miranda (no relation to movie star Carmen) was the most famous Miss Chiquita.”

natural abundance. One way to think of the logo is as an embodied trademark (Coombe 1998: 174) that is laden with meanings indexing the tropical, exotic, and edible.⁸² The female banana is a signifier of something to consume both as an edible fruit and as a corporate-stamped commodity. Through the logo and instructional jingle on how to care for and eat bananas, United Fruit distinguished itself in the market. By putting a sticker on produce, United Fruit could instill in its consumers a sense of goodwill and brand loyalty. Moreover, the logo let consumers know the fruit's point of origin, an exotic faraway place. For US consumers, Miss Chiquita helped to constitute an American identity in "racial, ethnic, and commercial terms" (implicitly white, middle class, and consumer driven) that distinguished the alterity of an "other," such as a Latin American, and the corporate brand (Coombe 1998: 177).

While the Chiquita Banana jingle is no longer used in advertising, the exotic fruit-be-turbaned Miss Chiquita, née Carmen Miranda, continues to appear on bananas sold in the US connoting the tropics – including Hawaii – and edibility.⁸³

⁸² In his beautifully illustrated biography of Carmen Miranda, Cássio Barsante includes print advertisements from France, England, and the Netherlands from the late 20th century that use Carmen Miranda or her likeness to sell products. In each of the advertisements her image—in conjunction with tropical fruits, specifically the banana—indexes exotic tropical culture. A French advertisement for yogurt indicates that its product contains "exotic fruits." Banana-based cosmetics from the Netherlands use an image of Carmen and urge consumers to "go bananas" [in English] (Barsante 1994: 232-234).

⁸³ Micol Seigel addresses the conflation of Brazil and Hawaii in the 1930s and 1940s in US popular culture (Seigel 2009: 70).

Figure 44: Chiquita Brand's Miss Chiquita as of 2013
(www.chiquita.com, accessed 10/20/13)



Figure 45: Lucille Ball in Carmen Drag. Ethel is dressed as a 'Mexican' to the left. From *I Love Lucy*, "Be a Pal," original airdate 10/22/1951 (screen shot)



“Be a Pal” (1951)

While Miss Chiquita is one of the most widely circulating examples of Carmen Drag, an impersonation from 1951 is a close second. The second episode of a new TV series, *I Love Lucy* aired on October 22, 1951. In that episode, Carmen Miranda is impersonated though never mentioned by name. *I Love Lucy* was the first show to be shot in front of a live studio audience and starred real life husband and wife Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz who also produced the series. A former model, Ball was a comic actress and her husband was a Cuban-American bandleader. In the series “Lucy” and “Ricky Ricardo” are newlyweds who rent an apartment from their best friends and neighbors “Fred” (William Frawley) and “Ethel Mertz” (Vivian Vance).

Originally on broadcast television from 1951 to 1957, *I Love Lucy* is one of the most popular television programs ever to have aired in the US. At the height of its popularity it was watched by more than half of all US households with a television. During its six seasons, the program received numerous Emmy awards and nominations. A number of popular press publications – including *Time Magazine*, *TV Guide*, and *Entertainment Weekly* – have named it one of the best television shows. It has aired continuously since the 1950s and as of this writing (2013) re-runs can be watched on the national network Me-TV. Since 2001, *I Love Lucy* episodes have been available on DVD.⁸⁴ Given the show’s popularity and durability in US popular culture, *I Love Lucy* has had a powerful impact in terms of circulating Lucy’s Carmen Drag, including

⁸⁴ On the 2005 CBS DVD of *I Love Lucy* each episode has its own menu of chapters. For “Be a Pal,” Lucy’s drag scene is called “Lucy’s ‘Little Havana’” and the song is entitled in Spanish as “Mama Yo Quiero” rather than the Portuguese “Mamãe eu quero.” The continued conflation of Spanish and Portuguese is a testament to the durability of ignorance about Carmen Miranda’s national origins.

beyond television. A simple Internet search for “I Love Lucy Carmen” yields a plethora of tchotchkies and Lucy in Carmen Drag costumes making Lucy’s Carmen Drag one of the most circulated if not better known than Carmen Miranda’s Carmen Drag (Fitch 2011).

In “Be a Pal,” Lucy worries that Ricky has lost interest in her. Ethel suggests she consider the advice given in the book-of-the-week selection *How to Keep the Honeymoon from Ending*. Working her way through the book’s chapters, Lucy first tries dressing more glamorously then getting involved in Ricky’s poker hobby. The book suggests that if these attempts fail, then the wife should try to “be a mother” to her husband by doing things that will remind him of his childhood. Ethel asks Lucy what she knows about Ricky’s childhood. Lucy says that his mother was a great singer and dancer but balks when Ethel suggests she sing and dance. “As a dancer I got two left feet and as a singer I sound like a bull moose pulling his foot out of the mud.” Ethel tells Lucy not to worry because they can buy a record while Lucy pretends to sing.

The next scene opens with the Ricardos’ re-decorated apartment, which now includes a live donkey, chickens, maracas, serapes, a caged tropical bird, and a potted banana tree in the living room. Completing the ‘Latin’ makeover is Ethel dressed in a striped serape poncho, sombrero, black wig, and a large black moustache in the stereotypical sleeping Mexican pose. Ricky enters the apartment expressing puzzlement about the animals and new décor. He addresses the disguised Ethel saying he must be in the wrong apartment. Ethel replies in a Spanish accent, “Oh no, señor. This is it, your apartment. Your mamá, she will be here in a momento.” She then dashes into the kitchen to play “Mamãe eu quero” on a portable record

player. While Ricky's back is turned, Lucy emerges from the bedroom in Carmen Drag⁸⁵ and lip-synchs to the record. She wears a white satin ensemble consisting of a long ruffled skirt that is slit high at the center front with a matching blouse that has full, ruffled sleeves. Rather than a bared midriff, a dark colored scarf is wrapped around her waist. Her shoes are sandal flats.⁸⁶ In addition to multiple bangle bracelets and dangly earrings, she wears a turban that has feathers and fruit (bananas, oranges, and grapes). Ruffles, fruit, a head covering, and lots of jewelry comprise the clothing signifiers that indicate this is a Carmen Miranda impersonation. The record is clearly an actual Carmen Miranda recording.

Part way through her performance, the record begins to skip though Lucy valiantly tries to keep pace by moving her mouth to the words. Ethel races back to the kitchen first mistakenly increasing the playback speed then slowing it down too much. Throughout the variant speeds and skipping repetitions, Lucy gamely moves her mouth along, first rapidly then very slowly. Lucy's lip-synching does not mock Carmen Miranda nor does it aim to highlight her own performance skills as superior. Based on the live studio audience reactions what makes Lucy's performance comic is her patent inability to keep pace with the record's differing speeds. Lucy's uncoordinated movements and general lack of grace also seem to elicit laughter from the audience. She uses wide flailing arm movements, trips over furniture, and at the song's end flops into a chair with her legs sprawled. The self-effacing performance style widens the

⁸⁵ The episode's credits do not mention who was responsible for the wardrobe and costumes, though we do know that Max Factor did the makeup.

⁸⁶ Ball and Arnaz appear to be about the same height when she is in flats, which may explain why her Carmen Drag does not include platform shoes so as not to draw attention to his diminutive stature.

intertextual gap between her performance and Carmen's, thus encouraging the audience's laughter. The 'leakage' of Lucy's voice into the recognizable Carmen voice is a source of laughter. The double-voicing parody also comments on the source subject, namely on Carmen Miranda specifically and 'Latin' culture more generally. Lucy's Carmen Drag is admiring and her parodic commentary suggests that she appreciates Carmen's artistry and probably Latin performers' artistry generally. As a parody, Lucy's drag is very diplomatic in that it highlights difference without hierarchizing. This is reinforced at the end of the performance when Ricky embraces Lucy and assures her that he loves her because she is so different from anyone he has ever known.

Ostensibly Lucy's Carmen Drag is meant to remind her husband of Cuba and 'Latin' culture. In this way her performance is comic in its disastrous failure: she performs as a Brazilian, not a Cuban; her back-up 'singer,' Ethel is dressed in stereotypical Hollywood 'Mexican' attire; Lucy does a miserable job lip-synching to the record; and she looks more awkward and gangly than sexy in her costume. Before she begins to sing, the studio audience laughs immediately upon her Carmen Drag entrance into the living room because she looks uncomfortable in her attire. Her performance elicits even greater laughter. Comic misfires and performance failures are a staple of the humor one sees on *I Love Lucy* generally. Lucille Ball engaged physical humor on the program and was unafraid to look silly for the sake of a laugh before the live studio audience.

At the end of her performance, Lucy collapses as the record slows down to a halt. The humor in her performance is not to mock Latin/a/o American culture but rather to poke fun at her own earnest, ignorant efforts to create a familiar environment for her husband. Through

costume, performance, and creating a ‘Latin’ environment that includes banana bunches on the furniture, Lucy temporarily disrupts social norms to create a carnivalesque moment. In that moment her fantasia allows her to play a different social role than that of the post-WWII white housewife. She temporarily, albeit inadequately, becomes the person she thinks Ricky wants her to be: a desirable Latin/a American performer.

Through the use of humor, the scene cleverly and indirectly negotiates the ambivalence that television producers – and possibly viewers – initially had about an Anglo “All-American” woman married to a Cuban (Sanders and Gilbert 1993: 28). Lucy’s Carmen Drag draws attention to ethnic and cultural differences between the spouses without privileging either. After the destabilizing carnivalesque moment has ended, it becomes clear that the appeal they have for each other is in their differences, perhaps prompting a subtle change in fifties social norms that frown upon an “All American” woman being married to a Cuban.



Figure 46: Jerry Lewis in Carmen Drag for a scene in *Scared Stiff* (1953) (screen shot)

Scared Stiff (1953)

Though Carmen Miranda herself received little screen time in her final movie, *Scared Stiff*, the film does include an example of Jerry Lewis in Carmen Drag that made a lasting impression. Possibly the last mediated example of Carmen Drag during the performer's lifetime (she died two years later), Lewis' rendering carries residue from earlier versions while adding his own voice. The conceit for Jerry Lewis' Carmen Drag is that Carmen is nowhere to be found in time to perform before a live audience. Lewis is therefore enlisted to put on her outfit and perform by lip-synching to a recording of "Mamãe eu quero," which Dean Martin's character plays on an off stage record player. Before beginning my analysis, I should say in the spirit of full disclosure that I am one of those rare Americans that actually think Jerry Lewis is funny. His Carmen Drag, however, strikes me as mostly uninspired. By 1953 Carmen Miranda was an easy object for unkind parody, which is the tack Lewis' performance seems to take.

In comparing Jerry Lewis' Carmen Drag with Mickey Rooney's one sees similarities and differences in how the intertextual gap gets calibrated. Performance-wise both received instruction from Carmen, though Rooney's movements in *Babes on Broadway* are far more hypersexualized than Lewis' in *Scared Stiff*. Of course Lewis' awkward movements for the number align with his overall identifiable physical performance style that frequently includes tripping, falling, and general lack of coordination. While Rooney exaggerated Carmen's sexuality, Lewis' parody downplays sex appeal, which may be more indicative of his own star persona as an awkward physical bumbler than his efforts to mock Carmen.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ I am grateful to Dan Suslak for pointing out that Jerry Lewis' Carmen Drag may not be mean-spirited so much as Lewis performing the stereotypical white guy who lacks physical coordination or sex appeal.

Another significant difference is that Rooney sings, while Lewis lip-synchs. The effect of actually hearing Rooney sing expands the intertextual gap between his ‘voice’ and Carmen’s, which he manages to do in a way that does not mock his subject. By contrast, Lewis lip-synchs yet calibrates the gap between his ‘voice’ and Carmen’s in a way that could be interpreted as ridiculing. The most striking similarity between the two examples is that they are both performed to “Mamãe eu quero;” just as Lucille Ball performed to the song and the singing cats did in the cartoon mentioned previously, *Baby Puss*.

Like Lucille Ball two years prior, Lewis lip-synchs to a record suggesting that, perhaps, Ball’s inspired his performance since he does sing in *Scared Stiff* and in other films. Similar to Ball’s performance, Lewis’ highlights a lack of coordination rather than skillful kinetic interpretation as Rooney’s performance does. Although Ball and Lewis both received instruction directly from Carmen (Shaw 2013: 79), the impression each makes is quite different. On the one hand the two performers use similar devices for eliciting laughter. Technical problems with the record cause it to skip and highlight what is already repetitive in the song. Mimicry of machines and drawing physical parallels between the mechanical and human behavior were popular as parodic comic devices in the early 20th century (Bergson 1917 [1911]: 33), famously exemplified in the Charlie Chaplin film *Modern Times* (1936). Yet there is a striking difference in delivery between the Lewis and Ball Carmen Drags. Lewis’ performance can be interpreted as drawing attention to his superiority to Carmen Miranda while Ball’s performance can be interpreted as emphasizing what she lacks in artistry and appeal.



Figure 47: Charlie Chaplin in a scene from *Modern Times* (1936) (screen shot)

For example, part way through the song Lewis undermines the verbal artistry for which Carmen was well known. He plucks a banana out of his turban, takes a bite, and continues to mouth the words while visibly chewing the fruit. Inexplicably and illogically the recording becomes garbled. Meanwhile, Dean Martin's character stands by the record player offstage looking confused. In this carnivalesque, cross-dressed moment Jerry Lewis is the court fool who defies reason through an earnestness that would be unachievable for the highly constructed Carmen Miranda. Although the turban and its fruit continue to signal the carnivalesque in Carmen's final film, she is no longer in on the joke. Rather she has become the butt of the joke.

Of course, Jerry Lewis' characters in other films from the era frequently are foolish innocents capable of defying logic (for example, briefly walking on water in *The Caddy*'s "Gay Continental" [1953] musical number). By 1953, it would seem that Jerry Lewis' comic persona – carnivalesque in its ability to defy reason – has the power to call into question the continued relevance of Carmen Miranda's comic persona. "Mamãe eu quero" was by now dated song, some thirteen years old. It would seem that like the needle on the record, Carmen was stuck repeating the same refrain. In *Scared Stiff*, her routine gets freshened up when Jerry Lewis' 'voice' leaks recognizably and illogically into the performance. This happens quite literally at the end of the routine when he stops moving his mouth yet his voice can be heard coming from the recording shouting, "Hey ma!"

Costume-wise, Jerry Lewis' Carmen Drag is evocative of earlier examples. Like Rooney, Lewis wears platform shoes, a turban, and plenty of costume jewelry. The film's costume designer, Edith Head, was a well established and respected figure in Hollywood by the time the

film was made.⁸⁸ Head needed to costume Carmen for the film and to create cross-dressed Carmen Drag that would include recognizable clothing symbols. Moreover, in the “Mamãe eu quero” scene Lewis is ostensibly meant to fool the diegetic audience with his impersonation. Head’s design for the tall, thin, male comic is relatively understated when compared with the fantasias Yvonne Wood had designed for Carmen from 1943 to 1945, which often mixed garish colors.

Since *Scared Stiff* was filmed in black and white, the impact of such mixing would have been lost. This probably explains Head’s decision to focus on parodying Carmen’s turban and shoes. Moreover, these were already important components of Carmen’s recognizable look and could easily be exaggerated without regard to color. Another advantage to bringing these two clothing symbols to the fore was that they further accentuated Jerry Lewis’ height and slenderness.

The turban’s use in *Scared Stiff* demonstrates that one cannot take a strictly formalist approach to Carmen Miranda’s costume symbols. The symbols themselves are used each time in new emergent ways such that it is impossible to assign unchanging meanings to particular garments. To suggest, for example, that Carmen’s turban is a subtle signifier of blackness throughout her career is to miss the flexibility of the turban’s meaning that is shaped by how it

⁸⁸ Edith Head was one of Hollywood’s most enduring and successful costume designers. From 1938 to 1967 she was Paramount’s chief designer, continuing to work through 1982 (Leese 1991). While Head was not known for designing innovative fashions such as Adrian did at MGM (1928-1942), her reputation was built on creating the ‘right’ look for a character even if that look was not particularly distinctive or glamorous.

gets deployed (cf. Ovalle 2011: 63). As we saw earlier, the fashion shift that occurred after 1947 significantly depleted the glamour previously associated with Carmen's turban. By the time the turban sat atop Jerry Lewis' head in 1953's *Scared Stiff*, the clothing symbol was clearly a point of particular ridicule. In short, the turban functions here as a dated and silly costume accessory that reflects shifting attitudes towards Carmen's star persona. Overall Lewis' ensemble bears a resemblance to Lucille Ball's: his long fitted skirt has a ruffled embellishment at the front, full sleeves, and the illusion of a bare midriff. As previously mentioned he wears bracelets, dangly earrings, and a fruit bedecked turban.

Perhaps the most comic aspect of Lewis' ensemble are his platform shoes, which appear to have 6-8 inch soles sculpted to emphasize their enormity. Unlike Mickey Rooney who darted around the stage, Lewis' performance emphasizes the difficulty he has walking and moving about in platforms. He takes awkward short steps and hunches his back, further emphasizing his height and slenderness. It is possible that his performance is meant to draw attention to his own lack of coordination. It may also be that his parody comments on Carmen's star persona as out-of-date and tired. Regardless of the interpretation, there is no mistaking that this is a Jerry Lewis performance in which his signature physical comedy is incorporated to include crossed eyes, logic-defying elements (altering the recorded song by eating a banana), and the comic nature of his long, lanky body.

Tropicália and Carmen Drag

After Carmen Miranda debuted her baiana in 1939's *Banana da terra*, Brazilians from all walks of life dressed as Carmen's version of the baiana that carnival season. Many of those

people were men. Though cross-dressing has long been a part of carnival festivities, Carmen's baiana became an important means for gay men to both challenge and reinforce normative masculinity and femininity in the first half of the 20th century (Green 1999: 1). According to historian James N. Green, these "*falsas baianas*" [false baianas]⁸⁹ engaged Carmen Drag in a campy fashion in order to parody gender (Green 1999: 287 FN 5).

I have not been able to locate evidence of widespread Carmen Drag in Brazil between WWII and the mid-1960s, though it is possible she remained a popular carnival fantasia for gay men. Rather the most notable reappearance of Carmen Drag in Brazil comes in the late 1960s when Brazil was under a repressive dictatorship that was especially harsh towards non-normative sexualities. An artistic movement emerged in this climate to engage Carmen Drag and Carmen's carnivalesque connotations for political commentary and social transgression: tropicália.

Tropicália began in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil in the late sixties and was a "short-lived but high-impact cultural movement" (Dunn 2001: 1). Some of the tropicalistas' most influential members were intellectual, creative, and politically dissatisfied as they came of age during the dictatorship. Their movement snowballed in 1968 just as other countercultural happenings and protests were occurring around the world in Mexico City and Paris, for example. Like many of their international peers involved in social justice movements, the Bahian university students were educated artists, poets, and musicians.

⁸⁹ In 1944 a record entitled "*Falsa baiana*" was released, which may or may not have been a subtle critique aimed at Carmen's "Americanized" baiana (McCann 2004: 82).

An important piece of tropicália's aesthetics and ideology was the evocation of cannibalism, an ironic sensibility with precedent in Brazil. As discussed in chapter 1, the modernistas explored cultural cannibalism as a way to proudly signify *brasilidade*. Although the concept of cultural cannibalism emerged in the twenties, it did not gain broad traction until the sixties. The tropicalists worked in a range of media to put into practice the “devouring and assimilating” of foreign influences into Brazilian culture (Young 1998: 6).⁹⁰ Music and film were especially fertile areas for exploring the theme.

“Tropicália” was an assumed moniker; the name an ironic celebration of Brazil as a tropical country – caught between outsiders’ tropicalist fantasies of the nation as a natural paradise yet fraught with political violence and social inequity. In its imagery and music tropicália sought to evoke the stereotypes while counterbalancing them with pointed references to the misery so many Brazilians suffered. Tropicália mocked the bourgeoisie and generally challenged accepted notions about *brasilidade*. In terms of movies, filmmakers critiqued the government indirectly by making films set in mythical and colonial times. Among the films to do so and to incorporate cannibalism in their plots was *Macunaíma* (1969)⁹¹ and *Como gostoso era o meu francês* [How Tasty was my Little Frenchman] (1971).

⁹⁰ Interestingly, *comer* [to eat] in Brazilian Portuguese also has a slang sexual connotation. As has been widely documented (e.g. Fry 1991), the verb is used to indicate taking the ‘active’ role in penetrative sex, either between two men or between a man and a woman. In this way the movement has connotations associated with idealized Brazilian understandings of masculinity. To my knowledge penetrative sex between two women is not described according to these terms.

⁹¹ *Macunaíma* is a film adaptation of the modernist novel by Mário de Andrade (1928).

For many musicians in the movement, it was important to create *música popular brasileira* (MPB) that would be highly accessible while preserving a political and didactic edge (Veloso 2002 [1997]). Musicians Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil collaborated with other artists in 1968 to record *Tropicália ou Panis et Circencis* (Tropicália or Bread and Circuses [from the Latin; Juvenal's satire criticizing Roman excess]). The album engaged a mix of musical styles from around the world – exemplifying cultural cannibalism – to critique Brazilian socio-politics. One of the album's songs is Caetano Veloso's "Tropicália," which became the movement's anthem (see Appendix D for full lyrics). The song ironically evokes symbols of Brazilian patriotism from different eras including popular sexualized imagery of the mulata and romantic notions of the folkloric Indian figure, Iracema. The song opens with an early Western perception of Brazil as described in a letter from Portuguese explorer, Pero Vaz da Caminha to the Portuguese king and states "everything plants itself, everything grows and flourishes" (lines 1-7). Later lines in the song evoke images of poor, hungry children – "on her knees, a child smiling, ugly, and dead" (line 26) – that then get counterbalanced with ambivalent parodies of middle-class consumerism – "on the inside patio there's a pool" (line 32).

The song closes with a Carmen Miranda reference: "Carmen Miranda-da-da-da" (line 64). Composer/singer Caetano Veloso⁹² has said that for many Brazilians of his generation (b. 1942),

⁹² Of those involved in the tropicália movement, Caetano Veloso has by far been the most vocal in terms of publishing articles and books and providing interviews in which he addresses Carmen Miranda's significance to the movement. I do not include his observations in order deliberately to exclude the opinions of other tropicalistas but rather because others have not been so vocal, including the Afro-Brazilian Gilberto Gil who was eventually appointed as Brazilian Minister of Culture.

Carmen Miranda was the “culturally repulsive” embodiment of US cultural imperialism and the Hollywood-ization of Brazil (Dunn 1996). Evoking the star in a song filled with ambiguities by simply saying her name means acknowledging both her tragic relationship with Brazilian cultural representation and interpretation abroad and her contributions to MPB (Dunn 2001: 92).

The song calls attention to Carmen’s ambiguous Brazilian iconic status and does so poetically. “Carmen Miranda-da-da-da-da” echoes the sonic repetitions from earlier in the song, e.g. “Hail Ipanema-ma-ma-ma” (line 51). It also is also evocative of Carmen’s own vocal delivery style, which, as previously discussed, delighted in repetitions, e.g. “Mamãe eu quero.” “Carmen Miranda-da-da-da-da” has the added benefit of indexing the early 20th century avant-garde European movement, Dadaism.

Tropicália engaged ‘*antropófago*’ [anthropophagy] to re-use a range of pop culture artifacts including Carmen Miranda.⁹³ Cannibalism and Carmen Miranda references injected the movement with a carnival spirit that literalized consumerist consumption while reversing the social order. Cross-dressed Carmen Drag is especially appropriate in a carnivalesque context, such as depicted in the 1970 Carlos Diegues-directed film *Os Herdeiros* [The Heirs], a saga safely set between 1930 and 1964, before the military coup.⁹⁴ In one scene “Carmen” performs attired in her Hollywood baiana against a backdrop of the familiar Rio de Janeiro coast. The scene is meant to parody outsiders’ perceptions of Brazil as a tropical paradise filled with Carmens.

⁹³ In many ways, this re-use trend was not unlike the sixties pop art gaining traction in the US, best exemplified in Andy Warhol’s series of celebrity screen prints. Yet the tropicalistas were arguably much more lucid about their objectives than any US pop artist and certainly more political.

⁹⁴ Unfortunately I have been unable to obtain access to a copy of the film and have not seen it in its entirety.

Another notable example of Carmen Drag in the tropicália movement was when Caetano Veloso returned from political exile to Brazil in the early seventies. At that time he wore Carmen Drag and sang “O que é que a baiana tem?” for a number of concerts. He has described his drag as an effort to convey a complex array of meanings: to pay homage to Carmen, to subvert normative sexualities and genders, and to comment on *brasilidade* generally (Veloso (2002 [1997]). The performer has widely discussed and written about the importance to him of re-claiming/re-digesting Carmen Miranda whom his Brazilian peers perceived as an outsider’s caricature. Although the tropicalistas strove to parody and challenge outsiders’ stereotypes of Brazil as a verdant, natural paradise, the image is not one easily shaken. Often Brazilian irony gets misunderstood outside of Brazil.⁹⁵

After the tropicália movement of the late sixties and early seventies, Carmen Drag in Brazil seems to have gone on hiatus until 1984 when it re-emerged during carioca carnival. That year a group of gay revelers wore Carmen fantasias for their “Banda de Carmen Miranda,” a group that had splintered off from the Banda de Ipanema, which had been founded in 1966 in response to the 1964 military coup (Green 1999: 288 FN 9). Dressed as Carmen, the Banda de Carmen Miranda took to the streets of Rio’s beachfront neighborhood, Ipanema, publicly critiquing heteronormativity and celebrating gay pride (Green 1999: 2).

⁹⁵ While conducting research with Carmen Miranda impersonators in the San Francisco Bay Area, I went to a local bakery in September 2011 with a copy of Caetano Veloso’s *Tropical Truth* in my hand. As I approached the checkout, the cashier commented suggestively, “Tropical truth. Sounds steamy.”

Figure 48: Brazilian performer, Erik Barreto, in Carmen Drag with Luara de Vision at the Cabaret Casanova (www.brigittebeaulieu.blogspot.com, accessed 10/22/13)



Bananas is my Business (1995)

Some ten years after Banda de Carmen Miranda formed and over twenty years after the Tropicália movement, Carmen Drag re-entered popular culture to circulate more widely with the 1995 theatrical release of Helena Solberg's documentary *Bananas is my Business*, in which the director casts a Brazilian female impersonator for dramatic re-enactments of Carmen's life. In a *New York Times* review of the film at the time of its release, critic Stephen Holden commented that Carmen Miranda "embodied camp before the concept was invented" (Holden, Stephen, "Tragic Figure Beneath a Crown of Fruit," review of *Bananas is my Business*, 7/5/1995, *The New York Times*). Holden succinctly captures Carmen's enduring cultural significance, which I address here.

Bananas is my Business is a biographical documentary that draws upon the Brazilian documentarian's personal experiences as she grapples with her own ambivalence towards Carmen Miranda's forties and fifties Hollywood persona. In crafting a narrative, the filmmaker aims to resolve for herself and for viewers in the US and Brazil what Carmen signifies in terms of *brasilidade*. In so doing, the film also indirectly addresses Carmen's carnival qualities – masquerade and transgressing social boundaries – through the casting of a cross-dressed impersonator for re-enactment scenes.

Helena Solberg was born around the same time as Caetano Veloso (depending on the source, either 1938 or 1942) and shares that generation's ambivalence toward Carmen. Yet unlike Veloso who was raised in a relatively modest household in Bahia and became politically active as a young adult, Solberg grew up in Rio de Janeiro in a white middle- to upper-middle-class family and seems always to have led a bourgeois lifestyle. She is fluent in English and had

always considered herself white until she moved with her husband to Washington DC in the seventies (archives, Museu Carmen Miranda [MCM]). It was in the US that she first experienced being a ‘Latina’ minority. Although she does not address her encounters with racism in the film, in a Brazilian interview she says that this is what prompted her to make a documentary about Carmen (archives, MCM). One of the film’s key devices is to treat Carmen Miranda as a paradox while articulating the filmmaker’s ambivalence towards the star. In its exploration of doubling, the film also draws attention to the social construction of femininity.

Solberg’s narrative depicts Carmen Miranda as a tragic female star whose personal life is ruined by the Hollywood star system. The trope is a familiar one. For example, Marilyn Monroe (1926-1962) and Judy Garland (1922-1969), whose personal problems were publicly known, have long been iconic figures of this ilk (Dyer 1998 [1979]: 44). In the case of Garland, her talent, suffering, and iconic star status coalesced to turn her into a gay icon, including during the performer’s own lifetime (Dyer 1986). Yet unlike Garland, no such narrative about Carmen Miranda was in wide circulation prior to Helena Solberg’s film despite the performer’s popularity among cross-dressed impersonators. For the tropicalistas Carmen signified cultural imperialism and evolving notions of *brasilidade*. For the Banda de Carmen Miranda she was a means for parodying gender. But in neither of these examples did Carmen’s biography get evoked to convey a tragic personal narrative. Rather she was a playful subversive symbol. In what represents a cultural shift, Helena Solberg re-interprets Carmen Miranda according to pop culture narratives more commonly found in the US, which circulate biographies about tragic female celebrities.

To draw upon the trope is to appeal to audience expectations about what happens to female Hollywood stars who die at a relatively young age. Lauren Berlant (2008) has addressed the proliferation of circulating narratives about universal feminine suffering as women. She posits that often the narrative circulates publicly in the form of a tragic biography with which women fans can locate solidarity. Solidarity comes through fans' identification with the celebrity's oppressive experience of practicing normative femininity (Berlant 2008:22). Normative femininity is understood to be harmful yet necessary. A recurring theme in the tragic star narrative is the notion that a woman's 'true' identity is compromised by the very system that enables her fame.

We might expand the empathy such narratives can evoke to include the oppression one experiences by practicing normative heterosexuality, which normative femininity implies. Looked at in this way we can include gay men as another group that may also identify with the tragic narrative. As we saw earlier, WWII-era gay soldiers frequently performed Carmen Drag in order to escape the constraints of heteronormative society (addressed in the 1994 documentary *Coming Out Under Fire* and in the book of the same name) as did gay Brazilian men after 1939. Furthermore, since melodrama and tragic narratives appeal to gay camp sensibilities, audiences familiar with camp would be especially inclined to accept a narrative examining an iconic female star's life as it represents universal feminine suffering.

Additionally the tragic star narrative can appeal to Brazilian audiences ambivalent about what the star has meant for Brazil in terms of *brasilidade* and cultural imperialism. In a Brazilian context Carmen Miranda becomes not only a signifier of feminine suffering but also a metonym for Brazil and Brazilian suffering. Throughout the film Solberg implies that anything grotesque

or caricatured in Carmen Miranda's star persona was the result of external, US influences; the result of 'Americanization.' And yet the film wants to humanize and reaffirm Carmen's star status within the Hollywood system, itself a very American institution. In *Bananas* Carmen emerges more prominently as victimized and commodified and less as the savvy businesswoman who participated in the branding of her star image. The film ignores Carmen's career-long engagement with commercialization via product endorsements that began as early as 1930 when she promoted the Brazilian deodorant *Leite de Rosas* [Rose Milk] (Castro 2005: 61). Ironically, by crafting a narrative that victimizes the star, Solberg inadvertently commodifies Carmen's suffering. In this regard *Bananas* is in the tradition of tragic biographies parcelled as marketable stories that then come to be publicly identified with the celebrity's persona (Coombe 1998: 96).

To appeal to Brazilian audiences, Solberg uses an expository mode of documentary filmmaking, which means narrating the film in a voice-of-authority (Nichols 2001:105). The filmmaker provides narration in English for the US release and in Portuguese for the Brazilian release. Self-identifying early in the film as Brazilian, Solberg primarily addresses other Brazilians in a kind of insider's tone of confidentiality. She recalls being a child at the time of Carmen's 1955 death and what the event meant for her. Further situating herself, Solberg establishes her class background as she recalls not being allowed onto the street for the funeral procession because street activities were associated with the lower classes. Though she could not pay public homage in 1955, the filmmaker authenticates her experience through personal recollection. Such authenticating devices include the use of archival materials (e.g. still images of photos and letters, news footage, Carmen film clips) and talking head interviews with family

members and friends. These elements paired with the filmmaker's narration aim to address the viewer directly as Solberg comments on the material and guides the audience on how to interpret photographs and film footage. Taken together these expository conventions render the film's message as 'true.' These authenticating devices support the filmmaker's narrative about a woman whose 'true identity' was compromised by foreigners.

Carmen Miranda and her 'true identity' function as a symbol of Brazil and 'true' Brazilian identity that is compromised by the system – capitalist and participating in global markets – that has enabled the country's economic growth. Fittingly, Solberg includes 'bananas' in the title as the banana signifies Carmen Miranda, outsiders' perceptions of Brazilianness, and an actual natural resource that Brazil has exported. By evoking bananas in conjunction with the complex star image – caricature of Brazilians and cultural ambassador – the film tries to persuade Brazilian audiences concerned about US imperialism to perceive the star as exploited in the way Brazilian resources have been exploited. In this sense Solberg's documentary is in line with other Brazilian popular culture that has made this critique. As mentioned earlier, a number of Brazilian films have addressed imperialism and exploitation (e.g. Carlos Coimbra's *Iracema* [1975]). An important difference between Solberg's documentary and the earlier critical seventies narrative films is that she authenticates her film as 'true' while the other cited examples rely heavily upon irony and fictionalizing.

Bananas does not explicitly assign responsibility to the star for participating in the construction and sustainment of her celebrity persona, which the filmmaker finds so troubling. Rather the documentary is a noncritical affectionate portrait.⁹⁶ The filmmaker opts crafts a

⁹⁶ Solberg's refusal to be overtly critical may be in response to the very public harsh criticism Carmen received from

representation of her celebrity subject as an exceptional yet ordinary person who was exploited—key elements in the trope of tragic celebrity narrative. The narration, edited interviews, and archival materials allow her to create this meaning for the viewer (Nichols 2001:107) as a departure from the accepted image of the star as caricature. The interviews and archival materials therefore represent the ‘true’ Carmen. Revelatory personal information about the star paired with public footage has the impact of reinforcing the celebrity paradox: ‘stars-as-special’ and simultaneously ‘stars-as-ordinary’ (Dyer 1998[1979]: 43).⁹⁷

The film begins and ends with the star’s death. A dramatic re-enactment imagines her dying alone in her bedroom after having collapsed on *The Jimmy Durante Show*. Though shadows obscure Carmen’s facial features, a close-up shot of her platformed feet signals that it is the film’s subject who enters the room and drops to the floor. In the fall her handheld mirror cracks, representing a doubling and fracturing of Carmen Miranda – the ‘real’ Carmen and the Hollywood Carmen. Interestingly, the notion of a cracked hand mirror is a complete fiction since the performer’s actual hand mirror remains unbroken and safely housed in the Carmen Miranda Museum in Rio de Janeiro.

Significantly, for all of the re-enactment scenes of Carmen Miranda post-US arrival, Solberg casts a female impersonator. When asked about her decision to cast Erick Barreto for Brazilian journalists during her lifetime for becoming ‘Americanized.’ Carmen Miranda was criticized for her transnational performance in Hollywood, yet many other Brazilians enjoyed success without critique when they engaged in a similar kind of generic mixing and matching such as found the 1945 recording “Boogie woogie na favela” [Boogie Woogie in the Shanty Town] (McCann 2004: 157).

⁹⁷ For example, we see a rare home movie of Carmen dancing with friends after her arrival in Hollywood in addition to a studio-generated newsreel of the star at home.

the Hollywood Carmen scenes, the filmmaker says that gender had nothing to do with her decision but rather that she searched for Brazil's best Carmen impersonator and Erick was it (personal communication, July 2008). One does not know whether Solberg is being disingenuous. As we have seen, since she first performed "O que é que a baiana tem?" in 1939, Carmen's baiana was long a drag subject for Brazilian gays, which Solberg surely knows given her extensive research.

Casting a drag queen as Carmen allows the filmmaker to explore her ambivalence toward the spectacle of Carmen's femininity. Further compounding this ambivalence is the casting of a female actress to portray Carmen in her adolescence; during the period of the 'true' Carmen. These scenes are shot in black and white and according to a more realistic style than those portraying the Hollywood era Carmen. To further contrast the two Carmens, Erick Barreto is always filmed in color. His sequences, like his fantasia, aim to enact fantasies such as when he transforms from being a museum mannequin to being a living Carmen Miranda. The different actors paired with the respective film colors suggest a contrast in authenticity versus fakery. Black and white film here implies historicity and truth while color suggests colorful fantasy.

Bananas never draws overt attention to Erick's gender or sexuality. Rather it is left to the viewer to determine. His Carmen Drag performance throughout the film is a juxtaposition of half-seriousness and half-play; 'authenticity' and 'fakery.' The 'fake' Carmen potentially brings awareness to what is constructed about the star's celebrity image and femininity. Yet at the same time Erick's gestures and make-up are remarkably convincing interpretations of the star. Moreover, casting a drag queen encourages queer and camp interpretations, which may or may not have been the director's intention. For queer audiences, Erick's impersonation reinforces

Carmen's status as a camp figure.

The film plays with artificiality and the carnivalesque through the use of the 'subjunctive' documentary technique (Wolf 1999). That is to say, the simulations such as when Carmen comes to life in the museum portray for the audience "what might have been" (Wolf 1999:274). The museum is characterized as a dusty, dead place where things get locked up and are never seen again. Solberg breaks Carmen out of the museum 'tomb' and brings the dead to life through Erick in Carmen Drag. His is a true fantasia in the sense that he wears a costume and he enacts a fantasy. This and other fantasy sequences involving Erick parody Carmen's performance of gender and commercial brasiliade without ridiculing. Rather, Erick's is an admiring interpretation that is a subtle gender parody.

One of the film's most compelling scenes examines Carmen's 1939 New York arrival. Knowing only a few words of English, Carmen entralls the US press with her charm. For this scene there is an alternation between black and white news footage of Carmen waving to the press cut with Erick's color film re-enactment of the same scene. Shifting between the historical footage and the imagined footage blurs the line between what is true and false. This juxtaposition—of archival footage with imagined footage; black and white with color—wants to situate the 'lady in the tutti-frutti hat' as someone who got split or doubled when she came to the US. In her voiceover, Solberg comments on Carmen's interaction with the press (e.g. "I say money, money, money"), expressing her dismay and sense of betrayal. Interspersing archival footage with re-enactment footage provides a visual doubling that reinforces Solberg's perspective that Carmen instantly became false when she traveled to New York. Yet even Solberg's opinion of the 'false' Carmen is ambivalent.

In discussing Erick's fantasy sequences the filmmaker says: "We were trying to give a feeling of the overly staged, both as a criticism and a celebration of what is 'fake'" (Terrell 1996:53). Solberg's ambivalence towards Carmen gets explored by addressing authenticity or truth telling and imagined fakeries. Erick Barreto in *Carmen Drag*, a Carmen fantasia, demonstrates that what is 'false' can also be true; a fantasy brought to life.

In her voice over Solberg observes, "I always wonder what gets lost through the eyes of a foreigner. Would that have anything to do with what would happen to Carmen?" She maintains a reflexive tone throughout the film yet never enters the film's frame by, for example, including her voice or physical presence in the filmed interviews. Rather she puts herself into the documentary less directly. For example, she includes two photographs of herself from her childhood in order to draw a parallel between her life as a girl in Brazil and Carmen Miranda's life. She also includes a home movie made by a Solberg relative in the 1930s to contrast Carmen's working class experience in Rio de Janeiro with the upper class experience of her own family during the same time period. Finally, the film closes with a photograph of Solberg's mother with Erick Barreto in *Carmen Drag*. Each of these elements directly addresses the viewer and aims to support the film's biographical narrative rooted in authenticity.

Bananas is my Business is comprised of ambivalences and paradoxes. According to Solberg Carmen crafted an outlandish costume and persona but concealed her 'true' self; she introduced the US to Brazilian culture yet she 'betrayed' her people through her stereotypical performance. The film suggests that the star combined falsity (through her commodified celebrity image) with authenticity (through her pure artistic talent). Carmen is portrayed at once as a US-made commodity that inspired jewelry and clothes and as a simple Brazilian girl who

only needed a “bowl of good soup and the freedom to sing” in order to be happy. The Brazilian Carmen is an authentic artist. Brazil is where she learned to sing and dance. Brazil is where she experienced ‘true love.’

The archival materials and interviews that Solberg chooses to include reinforce the film’s polemic that love and true identity for Carmen were in Brazil. For example, the filmmaker devotes a great deal of screen time to reminiscences by Carmen’s Brazilian boyfriend from her adolescence, Mário da Cunha (the Olympic swimmer that biographer Ruy Castro describes as a notorious philanderer). The elderly da Cunha nostalgically recalls their relationship as being real and special. Carmen’s sister, Aurora Miranda, also authenticates the romance by saying that had they stayed together Carmen’s life would have been different and that she might even be alive. The contrast in the film’s representation of Carmen’s marriage to David Sebastian could not be greater. There are no interviews with Sebastian, his friends, or his family regarding their relationship. All interviews about their marriage are conducted with Miranda family and friends who concur that Sebastian was abusive. Nobody mentions the possibility of real affection ever existing between the two. This despite the fact that a Brazilian journalist, Dulce Damasceno de Brito, befriended Carmen in Los Angeles in the early 1950s and later wrote a book (1986) about Carmen suggesting the star and her husband loved each other. Instead, the film implies unambiguously that Carmen Miranda’s marriage to David Sebastian led indirectly to her death by virtue of his pushing her to overwork and making her unhappy. Not only was her identity

false in the US but so too was her marriage to an American.⁹⁸

Of course, personal narratives are rarely this straightforward. In the case of Carmen Miranda, we know that she was packaged to be a star from the beginning of her career in Brazil when she signed a contract with RCA Victor in 1929 to become the company's exclusive star. Being photogenic and open to crafting an official star biography that downplayed her Portuguese birth were essential to garnering her RCA Victor contract. Yet the film excludes this information, which complicates the film's romantic notion that the star was commodified only in the US.

Bananas is my Business helped generate renewed interest in Carmen Miranda and helped to soften Brazilian attitudes toward the star. For example, following the film's release Swarovski Crystals made recreations of Carmen's jewelry, which it sold in Brazil shortly after the film's release (archives [*O Globo* – Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2/17/1996], MCM). Significantly, the documentary crafted a tragic star narrative for Carmen Miranda that breathed new life into the performer's iconic status and cultural significance. The inclusion of Erick Barreto's Carmen Drag affectionately and more firmly situated Carmen as a gay camp icon drawing attention to the star's constructed persona.

⁹⁸ Fabiano Canoso, a Carmen Miranda fan and curator of a Brazilian exhibit on the star, told me that after talking extensively with members of the Miranda family (including Aurora), he was convinced that their dislike for the Jewish David Sebastian stemmed from anti-Semitism (personal communication, March 2011).

The O'Reilly Factor (2009)

Another more recent example of Carmen Drag evokes the star in a US context to index ethnicity. Unlike Lucille Ball's vaguely Cuban Carmen Drag, this version indexes another spoil from the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico. In this example a Puertorriqueña Ivy League graduate is elided with the Portuguese-born performer to elicit corrective laughter that restores straight, white, male legislative hegemony.

In May 2009 President Barack Obama nominated Second Circuit court judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court to replace retiring judge David Souter. Sotomayor was born and raised in the Bronx, New York to Puerto Rican born parents. As she entered the national spotlight during confirmation hearings, the judge's career and past public speeches came under scrutiny. Among the issues to come to the fore was a speech Sotomayor had delivered in 2001 at the University of California Berkeley Law School as the keynote speaker at the symposium "Raising the Bar: Latino and Latina Presence in the Judiciary and the Struggle for Representation." In her speech, Sotomayor discussed judicial wisdom. Though a court comprised entirely of white males might make wise decisions, she said, women and people of color have been essential for changing the legal landscape. Sotomayor went on to say that there is no universal definition of wise and that she "would hope that a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experiences would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a white male who hasn't lived that life" (Sotomayor 2001 in *UC Berkeley News* online, May 26, 2009). Conservative critics took the phrase out of context and said that Sotomayor's comments were evidence of a racist agenda. Incendiary radio commentator Rush Limbaugh was among those to run wild with the expression "wise Latina" and exercised his reach via conservative press

platforms. At the height of the controversy Carmen Drag was used on the television program *The O'Reilly Factor* to evoke corrective laughter about Latinas.

The O'Reilly Factor is a daily news commentary program named for its host Bill O'Reilly and is televised on the Fox News Channel, a network with a reputation for political conservatism. The show's white male host frequently has guests on his program including white comedian Dennis Miller who makes a weekly appearance for the "Miller Time" segment. During a May 27, 2009 episode, O'Reilly asks Miller for his opinion on a reality television program documenting the lives of a couple with eight children. Miller responds:⁹⁹

Segment One:

1. **Miller:** *"First off, officer O'Reilly, I want to preface my answer by saying that it's not nearly as textured and rich as it could be . . . if I had led the life . . . of a Latino [sic] woman!"*
[Miller bares his teeth and puts a flower between them as he raises his right hand over his head and brings his left hand in front of his chest, snapping his fingers twice. He shifts footing, sets the flower aside and straightens his jacket.]
3. *"Sorry. It's my Sonia Sotomayor joke."*

Later in the same episode, O'Reilly and Miller address another topic, which Miller says he "begged" to get out of discussing. At that point the comedian breaks frame, puts the flower between his teeth again, and begins to snap his fingers in the same fashion as earlier while humming a tune that sounds like a variation of Ravel's "Bolero." O'Reilly laughs hysterically:

Segment Two:

1. **O'Reilly:** *"You are . . . you are creating . . . Miller I can't let you work over the judge. [Miller removes the flower and stops snapping.] I mean I . . . it's just. She's not here to defend herself. You're making her look like Carmen Miranda."*

⁹⁹ See both clips at <http://mediamatters.org/tags/dennis-miller?p=3&s=15> (accessible as of 4/10/13). Scroll down page to the entry: "You're putting her out as Ricky Ricardo's mother, and that's not fair."

4. **Miller:** "She's the one who said it . . . she's the one. Don't . . . don't lean on me. She's the
5. one who said out loud 'I would probably make better decisions than a white guy.'" [Laughing almost tearfully.]
6. **O'Reilly:** "Well, she probably will, Miller! I mean, come on! You're putting her out as . . . as .
7. . . Ricky Ricardo's mother and that's not fair."
8. **Miller:** "Alright. She can go work on that. I'll go marry Xavier Cugat."
9. **O'Reilly:** "A Charo reference. I got that. Dennis Miller everyone."



Figure 49: Dennis Miller in Carmen Drag on *The O'Reilly Factor* in 2009
(www.foxnews.com, screen shot)

Each of these exchanges is brief and the entire segment takes up just under two minutes airtime. Yet fascinating cultural work happens in the carnivalesque frame-breaking moments. First, O'Reilly and Miller at no point have a serious conversation about Sotomayor's nomination to the Supreme Court. Rather, her nomination is discussion-worthy exclusively in a derisively mocking context. For these white, heterosexual men with conservative ideals, there is something potentially disruptive about a highly educated, childless, unmarried Latina who defies stereotypical expectations of being domestically oriented and uneducated. The appointment of a Puertorriqueña threatens the hegemonic social order that ensures they are powerfully positioned. A Latina ought to be at US society's lower social rungs yet is potentially entering a lifelong appointment, which induces anxiety. To minimize this anxiety Miller deploys ridiculing parody, which allows him to comment on Sotomayor's appointment specifically and Latin American ethnicity generally. Although O'Reilly does not parody, he participates in and facilitates Miller's parody by treating Sotomayor as a metonym for all Latin/a/o Americans by equating her with other figures that have similarly served as metonyms – Charo and Carmen Miranda.

The exchange between O'Reilly and Miller begins with O'Reilly using serious tones to request Miller's opinion on an unrelated subject. Miller's response is initially delivered in tones that emulate the host's delivery before he breaks frame by shouting. Additionally, the two men initially use an economy of physicality. Miller's frame-breaking double-voiced parody requires that there be two distinct 'voices' present. The Latina voice is made distinctive by evoking qualities associated with the ethnic gendered stereotype: passion, hysteria, drama, and movement. The parody is ostensibly funny because it is in such stark contrast to news

commentary ‘voicing,’ which uses measured speech, an un-raised voice, and minimal physical movements—all qualities Miller conveys at the beginning of the exchange.

O'Reilly immediately recognizes Miller's frame-breaking performance as “Carmen Miranda” (segment two, line 3). Based on O'Reilly's gentle chastising delivery (segment two, lines 1-3), the implication is that equating the two is a negative characterization. Next O'Reilly says that Miller is making Carmen look like “Ricky Ricardo's mother” and that “that's not fair” (segment two, lines 6-7). As discussed previously, Desi Arnaz (1917-1986) was a Cuban-born bandleader best known for his role as Ricky Ricardo on the US television comedy series *I Love Lucy* (1951 to 1957) in which he played husband to his real life spouse, Lucille Ball. Interestingly, “Ricky Ricardo's mother” is probably a reference to Lucille Ball's Carmen Drag, a testament to the continued cultural resonance the 1951 performance has had.

For Miller, it is laughable that the judge would dare say “out loud” that she would “probably make better decisions than a white guy” (segment two, line 5). His frame of reference for what it means to be “Latino” [sic] comes from notable international entertainment figures whose careers span from the 1920s into the present.¹⁰⁰ Miller creates a carnivalesque moment via Carmen Drag to elicit corrective laughter about Latinas in order to preserve white straight male hegemony in the US judicial system. Though he remains in his business casual attire, we can call Miller's moments Carmen Drag because his performances evoke the performer sufficiently for O'Reilly to recognize Carmen Miranda in the actions. This speaks to the profound connection in the popular US imagination between Carmen and Latin America. She never

¹⁰⁰ The Spanish performer, Charo, has an active career again after a hiatus in the eighties and nineties to raise her child.

danced with a flower between her teeth in any of her Hollywood films. The image, rather, is one more frequently associated with parodies of Argentine tango. Yet because she has become such a potent signifier of Latin America as a whole, it is unsurprising that several disparate 'Latin' iconic poses and gestures would get bundled together.

As the 'straight man' in their exchange, O'Reilly gamely articulates the cultural connections between Miller's mini-performances and Latina as undesirable social category. Miller's Carmen Drag challenges Sotomayor's claims to authenticity and simply categorizes her as someone belonging to an undesirable gender and ethnic category. Furthering the carnivalesque moment by playing with normative gender roles, Miller comments that he is going to "marry Xavier Cugat" (segment two, line 8). O'Reilly responds, "A Charo reference. I got that" (segment 2, line 9).

Xavier Cugat (1900-1990) was an internationally renowned Spanish-born musician who spent his formative years in Cuba. His fifth marriage at the age of sixty-six was to the Spanish performer, "Charo," who was in her teens at the time. Charo entered the public eye as Cugat's young bride and eventually gained her own fame performing as a voluptuous comic on sixties US television. Though a talented, trained Spanish guitarist, she became best known as a sexy bimbo who mangled English and recorded the song "Cuchi-Cuchi" in 1977. By evoking Cugat and Charo, Miller takes advantage of the carnivalesque moment to play with normative sexuality roles and to reinforce the laughability of what constitutes Latina in the US popular imagination.

Each of Dennis Miller's Carmen Drags breaks news commentary frame for carnivalesque moments. Though O'Reilly comments on Miller's performance as making Sotomayor "look like Carmen Miranda," (segment two, line 3) the primary aim appears to be to signify Latina more

generally. Miller's mocking parody criticizes the ethnic category that Carmen Drag signifies as one not to be taken seriously while diminishing Sotomayor's claims that Latinas might in some way have access to insights unavailable to white men. Ethnic and racial categories are at stake in this example. For Sonia Sotomayor, a lifetime ascribed to the category of Latina has given her experiences that she regards as enriching and which she suggests facilitates empathy for a range of marginalized people. For Dennis Miller the category of "wise Latina" is an invalid oxymoron worthy of derision, hence his Carmen Drag.

Rio (2011)

Another recent Carmen Drag example is also parodic and plays with distance in a very obvious way, which is useful for illustrating that different meanings can emerge from Carmen Drag. Targeted towards a children's audience, the 2011 animated film *Rio* was directed by Rio de Janeiro native, Carlos Saldanha. The plot centers on a tropical bird named Blu who was born in Brazil and raised in Minnesota. Blu has no memory of his early Brazilian life and enjoys living as a caged bird, unable to fly. He leads the life of a beloved pet belonging to Linda who owns a bookstore. Because Blu is the last surviving male bird of his species, a carioca ornithologist invites Blu and his owner to Rio so that the bird can mate with a female. The film is a musical-comedy-adventure of the sort commonly made for children. In the movie Linda and Blu experience a series of challenges and thrills as they encounter a foreign culture. Early in the movie, the two leave their small town nestled in Minnesota's snowy landscape to arrive in a bustling city with beaches and colors and music to stimulate the senses. Further emphasizing the contrast between sleepy Moose Lake, Minnesota and Rio, part of the film's action takes

place during carioca carnival creating opportunities for the inclusion of fantasias and general carnival chaos.

In a Brazilian magazine interview, Carlos Saldanha was asked about his incorporation of Rio beaches and carnival into the film. He replied, "People say that these are clichés, but this is what Rio de Janeiro is made of. I can't show an American audience the Rio de Janeiro that exists in Barra da Tijuca [an upscale neighborhood away from the beaches where the director grew up and coincidentally where Helena Solberg lives]. It wouldn't make sense" (*Tam nas nuvens* April 2011: 91-95). In portraying a Rio de Janeiro that does not disrupt North American audience expectations yet is true to the carioca experience, it is unsurprising that he includes a cross-dressed example of Carmen Drag.

Carmen Drag and its variants are part of the cross-dressing carnival experience. Including it in a film with international distribution means appealing to Brazilians and non-Brazilians. Moreover, drag that is specifically Carmen Drag reinforces Brazilianness for *Rio*'s international audiences.

Figure 50: Promotional material for the film *Rio* (2011) (www.foxmovies.com, accessed 5/2011)



The character that wears Carmen Drag in the film is a secondary one, the bulldog Luiz. Luiz drools uncontrollably and is butch in his ability to break through a chain that ties Blu to his designated mate. The birds have been kept in captivity and seek the garage dog's help in their escape. Tracy Morgan, who animates Luiz's voice, is an African-American comedian that has spoken and written openly about his personal background. Morgan's experiences have included growing up in Brooklyn projects and selling drugs to finding a successful comedic career onstage and in television on *Saturday Night Live* and *30 Rock*. I mention Morgan's background because he has been rather public about his personal challenges and tough upbringing, which in turn has the potential to frame his performance as a bulldog in a scrappy Rio de Janeiro garage. Yet the film appeals to children, a segment of the audience unlikely to be familiar with Morgan's biography. Regardless of what one knows about the performer, Luiz is drawn and animated as a tough, hyper-masculine character.

In the carnival scene in question, the film uses the parodic device of playing with distance between different 'voices' for comic effect. Humor is derived from the contrasts and shifts between a drooling stout bulldog and his cross-dressed Carmen Drag comprised of lamé skirt, bandeau top, and fruit-bedecked turban. Luiz's drooling is a literal leakage between the butch bulldog's 'voice' and the exaggerated displays of idealized femininity that pervade carioca carnival. For example, one does not see drooling stout women on floats in the Sambódromo [a large parade space for the Rio de Janeiro samba schools].

At the same time Luiz's fantasia plays with social tensions about expectations for a male butch bulldog and perhaps parodies anticipated North American audience expectations about what Brazilians look like. After carnival, the bulldog will return to the mechanic's garage.

Nonetheless, we have seen his feminine fruity Carmen side so easily evoked by a tutti-frutti hat.¹⁰¹ Unlike the Miller parody, Carmen Drag in *Rio* is much more in keeping with the Brazilian tradition that challenges normative gendered behavior expectations. Moreover the kind of laughter the drag is meant to elicit is one that children can easily appreciate without any knowledge of Carmen Miranda.

¹⁰¹ On the arts and crafts website Etsy, a vendor called Sweethoots sells crochet and knit hats for dogs that includes a “Carmen Miranda Fruit Bowl” hat (http://www.etsy.com/listing/68863505/dog-hat-carmen-miranda-fruit-bowl-made?ref=shop_home_active, accessed 8/6/13).

Figure 51: Rio de Janeiro carnival revelers parodying characters from the film *Black Swan* (2010) (author photograph, 2011)



“Sexy Hot Cha Cha Adult Costume”

One way people use Carmen Drag in the US is to signify ethnicity during the carnivalesque holiday Halloween. Although Mardi Gras is technically more akin to Brazilian carnival than Halloween is, Halloween is certainly the more popular event to get celebrated in the United States. As an exploratory field research project in 2009, I decided to spend Halloween weekend in New Orleans searching for examples of Carmen Drag. In advance of the trip, I spent some time looking for the availability of commercially produced Carmen Miranda costumes.

That season I found many Carmen Miranda or Carmen-inspired mass-produced costumes readily available for purchase. While a homemade costume can be more interesting visually, commercial costumes are nonetheless valuable in terms of the ideological work they achieve. That they are mass-produced and widely sold and rented tells us that there is a demand for them (Appadurai 1986). At costumecraze.com there were items called “Banana Basket Hat,” “Sexy Cha Cha Girl Costume,” “Deluxe Carmen Miranda Hat,” “Super Deluxe Carmen Miranda Costume,” and “I Love Lucy’s Spanish Rumba Costume.” Such styles appeared on web pages with ‘similar’ costumes: “Latin Dancer Costume – Spanish or Mexican Costumes.” At the purecostumes.com website where I found “Sexy Hot Cha Cha Adult Costume” and “Latin Dancer Adult Costume,” a side panel helpfully suggested that I might also like the “Banana Deluxe Adult Costume” (a giant banana), the “Spanish Lady Adult Costume,” “Senorita [sic] Plus Elite Collection Adult,” “Senorita [sic] Elite Collection Adult,” or the “South of the Border Adult Costume.” Many of these mass produced costumes can be purchased either online or in one of the pop-up seasonal brick and mortar Halloween costume shops. The proliferation of Carmen

Drag costumes suggested I would likely find at least several Carmens in New Orleans.

Halloween fell on a Saturday that year and as I had never been to the city, I decided to stick to the French Quarter where out-of-towners and locals would converge. A friend and I spent the evening from about 9pm to 2am wandering through the French Quarter taking photographs and chatting with people when the opportunity arose—something that happened less frequently as the night wore on and people became increasingly intoxicated. Among the places we visited were Bourbon Street and Frenchman Street as well as a number of bars in the area. One of our earliest stops was at the gay Golden Lantern Bar where many of the people present had made their own Halloween costumes. On the more heteronormative Bourbon Street, people tended to wear mass produced Halloween costumes. Overall, the costumes we saw reflected the carnivalesque emphasis on masquerade and decadence (candy consumption for children and sex and alcohol for adults).

For young women in particular, Halloween is often seized upon as an occasion to wear scant clothing. Prior to the trip I asked a group of about fourteen Midwestern female college students what they planned to wear for Halloween, all but one said she was wearing a 'sexy' costume. When I asked why they wanted to be, for example, a 'sexy cop' I was told that Halloween was an opportunity to be "slutty" unlike everyday life. For these young women Halloween creates an opportunity to participate in an upside down world where they can transgress social norms and enact fantasies. Dressing "slutty" in daily life is a taboo that could suggest agency over their sexuality. Dress "slutty" for Halloween provides them with a unique opportunity to be more sexually aggressive than they might be in daily life. Observations on the street and searches for women's costumes through on-line costume retailers support the notion

that ‘sexy’ costumes for women are among the most popular.

As my friend and I wandered through the chaotic streets we crossed paths with six different Carmens. Among the Carmen Drags was a commercially licensed Lucy version. I also saw several Carmens accompanied by ‘Mexicans,’ that is, a man dressed in a poncho and sombrero, frequently sporting a large, fake, black moustache. The pairing of the two most likely has to do with the precedent set on *I Love Lucy* when Ethel cross-dresses as a ‘Mexican’ in the scene. All of the Carmens were women who appeared to be in their twenties or thirties and all wore some or all of the costume signifiers associated with Carmen Drag: bared midriff, turban, ruffled skirt, copious jewelry, and fruit accessories. While I do not know if the women would call their costumes “Carmen Miranda,” what we can take from these examples is that Carmen Drag is comprised of certain iconic dress elements that when put together are a recognizable costume category, possibly a “Sexy Hot Cha Cha Adult” or pan-Latina.

The costumed women in New Orleans demonstrated varying degrees of personal innovation from wearing an entirely store-bought costume with little additional accessorizing to a completely original tossed salad headdress. The costumes – worn by women who appeared to be either white or African American – suggest that in this context Carmen Drag is an ethnic masquerade to use in a carnivalesque setting.¹⁰²

I did not observe a single cross-dressed Carmen during Halloween 2009, a trend that extended into the research I later conducted with Carmen Miranda impersonators.

¹⁰² I do not know if any of the women who allowed me to photograph them self-identify as Latina. It seems unlikely given that as a carnivalesque event Halloween is a period for masquerading as someone other than what one is in everyday life.



Figure 52: Woman wearing a mass-produced Carmen Miranda costume during Halloween 2009, New Orleans, Louisiana (author photograph, 2009)



Figure 53: Woman wearing a homemade tossed salad headdress evocative of Carmen Miranda on Frenchman Street in New Orleans, Halloween 2009 (author photograph, 2009)

Figure 54: Celebrity impersonator, Catherine, as Carmen Miranda (1990s)
(www.catherinegrillos.com, accessed 10/20/13)



Two Celebrity Impersonators

In some ways Carmen Miranda's pop culture icon status resembles that of Elvis Presley. Both were white performers who interpreted black music to reach mainstream audiences. Their iconic images continue to resonate in popular culture and the museums dedicated to their careers help perpetuate their celebrity status. Both stars have also been widely impersonated, contributing to their cultural relevance.

In fall 2009 I searched for cross-dressed Carmen Miranda impersonators in Chicago, New York, Miami, New Orleans, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. When I spoke to the manager at a well-known Chicago drag bar that caters to tourists, he told me that people had not done Carmen Miranda since the early nineties. At the manager's suggestion, I began searching for Carmens via entertainment production companies specializing in celebrity impersonators. By spring 2010 I had found four San Francisco Bay Area performers who seemed willing to participate in an ethnographic study. In the end I only had the opportunity to work with two performers between April 2010 and January 2011. Nonetheless the data I collected via interviews and participant-observation is instructive when situated within the larger body of Carmen Drag data I have collected.

When I first met Catherine G. she was fifty-two-years-old and had been performing for well over three decades. Growing up her family moved around a lot. In the process Catherine learned how to adapt well to new environments. She is funny, outgoing, vivacious, and talented. For Catherine, performing has been "everything" to her and is the reason she left college before graduating despite having a scholarship to study opera at a Midwestern liberal arts college. She told me she would "rather be doing than talking about" how to do theater or opera. Catherine is

a free spirit and her love of performance is palpable. As a singer and dancer who makes ends meet by accepting jobs as they come up, Catherine is remarkably resourceful, nimble, and chameleon-like. I once met her at a salon where she was having her haircut and did not recognize her because she was plainly dressed and without makeup. It took her insisting to me that she really was Catherine for me to believe my eyes. Afterwards we drove together from the salon to a house where a party was being held in her honor. As we sat in the van I observed her completely transform her appearance in under fifteen minutes. After rummaging through clothes heaps, she pulled out a suitable cocktail dress and accessories and used cosmetics to go from unrecognizably ordinary looking to quite glamorous and attractive.

Catherine told me that she has been impersonating Carmen Miranda or a Carmen-inspired character since the mid-nineties. Mostly she has done these impersonations as singing telegrams or for special events. She said that the first time she did Carmen Miranda she was first asked if she could sing a Carmen song. She said yes and then promptly did her research by purchasing a Carmen Miranda CD. Catherine is white and, though monolingual, prides herself on singing in Portuguese and having learned correct pronunciation from a Brazilian acquaintance. The same acquaintance also translated Carmen's lyrics for Catherine, which she says helped her grasp the songs' meanings.

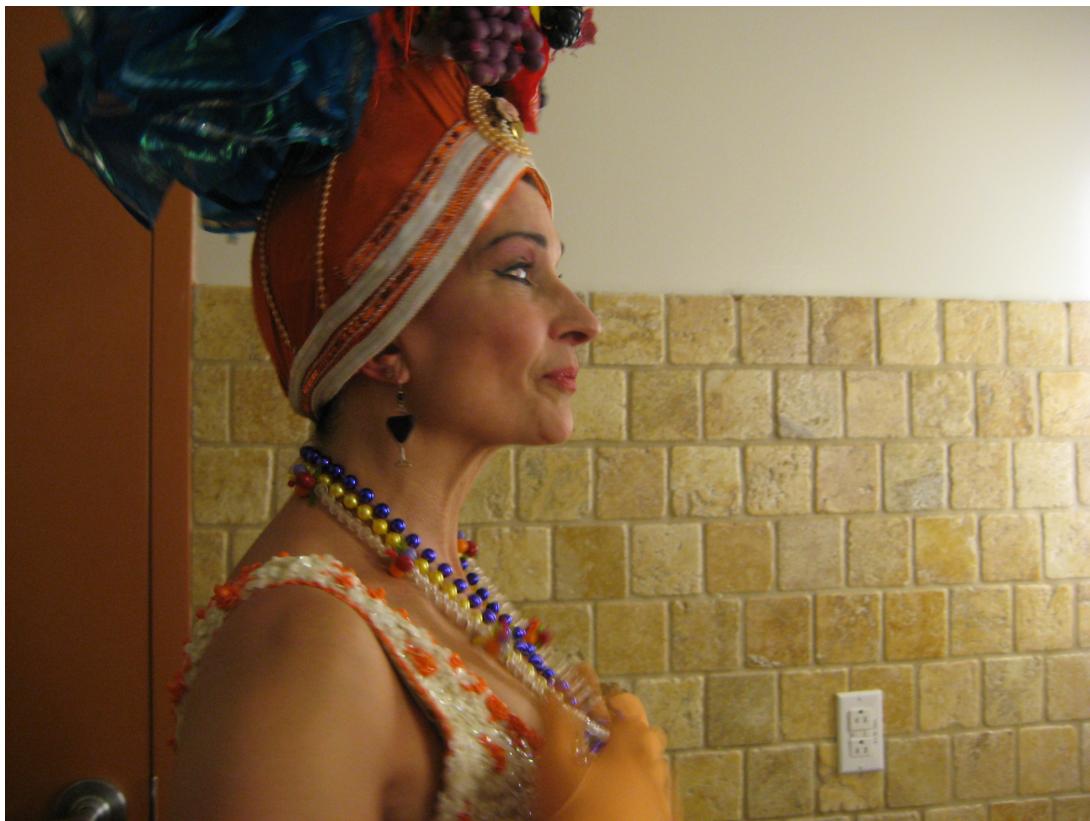


Figure 55: Valeriana in Carmen Drag preparing for a 2010 performance (author photograph, 2010)

Catherine told me that when she does Carmen she likes to re-imagine the star for contemporary audiences. So, for example, Catherine sings in a band that plays sixties surf music and does cover songs. Because they are a “show band” sometimes they dress up in costume. On these occasions Catherine has performed as Cher, Nancy Sinatra, Marilyn Monroe, and Carmen Miranda. She said that when she does Carmen for these gigs she likes to ask herself, “What would it be like if Carmen Miranda was here and she sang with a surf band?” (interview with the author, April 17, 2010). So attired in Carmen Drag she will sometimes sing “Hot, Hot, Hot” (written in 1982 and popularized by Buster Poindexter in 1987), or lead a conga line. Although Catherine likes to remind her audiences that Carmen was Brazilian and sang in Portuguese, she nonetheless deploys Carmen Drag in a way that aligns with the idea that Carmen signifies Latina more generally.

The other Bay Area Carmen Miranda impersonator I worked with was Valeriana Q. A Berkeley-based producer assured me that Valeriana was the Bay Area’s best Carmen impersonator and also Latina. Like Catherine, Valeriana was probably in her fifties when we met though she never revealed her age. Valeriana is a very attractive San Francisco native whose parents were also performers. Valeriana’s father moved to the US from Mexico with his family when he was fifteen while her mother was of Irish descent. Because Valeriana had regularly booked gigs at North Beach nightclubs, I had the opportunity to see her perform many times with her jazz and Latin jazz bands over the course of four months.

At the regular performance events, she does not impersonate Carmen but rather performs as a nightclub jazz singer in glamorous cocktail attire. Typically Valeriana’s performances include moments when she talks to the audience about her heritage, both

ethnically and as a performer. What she expresses to her audiences is consistent with the way she describes herself on her website and in the conversations we had. She likes to say that her father was a talented Mexican percussionist who played in San Francisco's North Beach and Tenderloin neighborhoods during the fifties and that her mother was a beautiful comic performer of Irish descent. Her father, she says, taught her a number of Latin songs and her mother taught her how to sing and do impersonations. Valeriana's ethnic "mix" as she calls it, is important to how she defines herself. She told me that it gives her "more depth" and a better understanding of different cultures.

Although Valeriana seldom does Carmen Miranda impersonations, she did perform as the Carmen-inspired "Pineapple Princess" on and off for twelve years in the long-running San Francisco production *Beach Blanket Babylon*. In the biography section on her website, Valeriana says that she does a number of celebrity impersonations:

"My specialty and favorite is Carmen Miranda. Carmen is so colorful and I am of Latin decent [sic], so I am right at home."
(www.valerianaq.com, accessed July 2013)

She told me that she likes to do Carmen Miranda because "she's Latin and I'm Latin. I mean, she's Brazilian, Brazilian. I'm Mexican but I mean it's still all Latin. We still connect, you know? It just really inspired me as a kid" (interview with the author, January 21, 2011). For Valeriana, doing Carmen Drag is a means of asserting her authenticity as a Latina.

Although I only had a few occasions to see Valeriana (twice) and Catherine (once) in Carmen Drag, there were some consistencies in their costumes that aligned with what I have found in other examples. Both wear elaborate turbans, which each performer proudly told me she had constructed herself. Catherine wears a good quality commercially produced Carmen-

style dress while Valeriana wears a vintage full-length gown. Both women embellish their appearance with elaborate costume jewelry and both re-interpret well-known Carmen songs either in their entirety or as medleys. The songs in their repertoires overlapped and included “South American Way,” “Tico Tico,” “Mamãe eu quero,” and “I, Yi, Yi, Yi, Yi (I Like You Very Much).” When in character, both women talk to the audience in a Spanish-Portuguese hybrid accented English. Both engaged comedy in their performances and enjoyed incorporating the carnivalesque by sitting on audience members’ laps, for example. Although they do not seem to have frequent requests to perform Carmen Drag, their interpretations are consistent with other examples I have found which emphasize ethnicity and Carmen’s Hollywood-era look.¹⁰³

Conclusion

Frequently Carmen Drag marks a carnivalesque moment meant to elicit ambivalent laughter. The carnivalesque and its accompanying laughter revel in social transgressions and oppositions. Moments of Carmen Drag – which include Carmen’s own Hollywood performances – are liminal in which common themes for exploration include: social role reversals; cross-dressing; and grotesque, exaggerated body parts (e.g. oversize phallic bananas) (Bakhtin 1984 [1965]). Carmen Miranda fashioned her carnivalesque look and performance with a wink. She encouraged and taught others how to parody her. In so doing she facilitated the possibility that future parodies would follow. Moreover, in framing herself as crnivalesque she created a generic framework for others to do Carmen Drag. While all the Carmen Drags I have located are

¹⁰³ Valeriana and Catherine had both been performing Carmen Drag in the Bay Area since the nineties though neither could name a single cross-dressed example of Carmen Drag in San Francisco.

framed by the carnivalesque, their ideological implications vary depending upon the ways in which the performers calibrate distance between their voice, other examples of Carmen Drag, and Carmen's voice.

I have examined Carmen Drags that carry 'residue' of past social interactions – to use Silverstein and Urban's phrasing (1996) – in the drag sign vehicle. These include Carmen Drags that index other Carmen Drags such as the *I Love Lucy* version. Carmen Drag operates metadiscursively to connect Carmen in particular ways to the broader social order. We have seen Carmen Drag get produced in many different ways: sometimes people use assemblage (Shukla 2008: 216)¹⁰⁴ of purchased mass produced items, as many of the New Orleans Halloween revelers did; sometimes people create entirely original costumes that index Carmen in the way that GI Sascha Brastoff did during WWII through his original costume creations that incorporated mess hall supplies; at other times Carmen Drag is chiefly a matter of performance as in the case of Dennis Miller's mean-spirited parody. What is consistent in the examples is the transportability of look and performance as well as the carnivalesque framing device. Intention, anticipated responses, and targeted audiences inform the different types of Carmen Drag. In the mediated examples such as in the documentary *Bananas is my Business*, the film becomes both a reservoir and a reference point in the way that Zambian radio does in Debra Spitalnik's research (Spitalnik 1997: 161) for new understandings about what the star signifies. Moreover, for those unfamiliar with Carmen Miranda's film repertoire, such media become a new means for circulating her image and performance.

¹⁰⁴ Shukla defines assemblage as the technique wearers use in the industrialized world in which they "purchase readymade commodities and arrange them into new units" (Shukla 2008: 216).

Conclusion

Carmen Miranda injected her dress and performance with joy, kinesthetic energy, humor, and creativity. In so doing she has been loathed, loved, mocked, re-used, re-interpreted, cannibalized, and impersonated. As an iconic star her image has meant many things to many people. That her likeness continues to circulate is a testament to the durability of “the lady in the tutti-frutti hat’s” look. And yet the Hollywood re-imagined baiana is the primary image to survive despite the ten preceding years when she was a glamorous “Queen of Brazilian Cinema.” Even in Brazil, few today know anything about her successful thirties recording and film career. Carmen’s dress, performance, and career were infused with irony, and yet her influence on Brazilian culture has largely been forgotten. Nonetheless she pervades popular Brazilian culture.

From knick-knacks at tourist gift shops to samba school baianas to carnival marcha classics, Carmen Miranda lives on in Brazil. Wherever there are tourist attractions in Brazil, one finds Carmen. At the Pão de Açucar gift shop, she is on tote bags and pillows. She is at the Tom Jobim international airport as a baiana doll. She is at the Brazilian Cultural Center on a sequined purse. For the fashion forward, her sense of style continues to get evoked. When a Brazilian fashionista adorns herself with excessive jewelry and gigantic necklaces, she is “uma autêntica Carmem [sic] Miranda” [an authentic Carmen Miranda] (*O globo*, July 2008). European crystal jewelry manufacturer Swarovski even made replicas of some of Carmen’s brooches for a São Paulo exhibit and display in one of their shops (*O Globo*, February 17, 1996), and Brazilian fashion designers have put her Hollywood image onto swimsuits and clothing for their annual “Fashion Week” (*Gazeta Mercantil*, March 16, 2001).



Figure 56: The gift shop at Pão de Açucar, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2008) (author photograph, 2008)

One of Carmen's most significant contributions to Brazilian culture was popularizing carioca carnival for the rest of country at a time when people were trying to ascertain just what it meant to be Brazilian. Today carioca carnival is the world's largest celebration of its kind with millions of people crowding the streets each day of the festival. Every few years, Carmen is remembered affectionately through homage on a float as she was on the 2011 Salgueiro samba school's float for the Rio de Janeiro Sambódromo parade. Salgueiro's theme that year was Brazilian cinema yet their representation of Carmen was from her Hollywood years even though one of her early Brazilian films – *Alô, alô, carnaval!* – continues to circulate in Brazil.

Carmen Miranda was also highly effective in her thirties representation of cultural hybridity. At a time when conflicting ideologies about race were present – preference for a white beauty aesthetic juxtaposed with a growing appreciation for Afro-Brazilian cultural contributions to Brazil – she managed to balance these oppositions with humor and grace. In her innovative and glamorous interpretation of what has become a domestic exotic folk figure, the baiana, Carmen Miranda re-imagined what Brazilian 'race' could look like. In the context of thirties Brazil where artists, intellectuals, politicians, and ordinary people sought to create a homogenous national identity, Carmen provided a visual complement to emergent rhetoric that characterized Brazil as 'mixed' – racially and culturally. Carmen's carnival baiana was a form of ironic drag insofar as it presented a social type while inserting the creator's own commenting 'voice' into the presentation. It blended modernity – Hollywood-inspired styling – with 'tradition' – the Afro-Brazilian baiana's stereotyped dress signifiers. Her fantasia was an intertextual composite that drew from a range of sources including imported films, the baiana vendors' attire she saw on the Rio de Janeiro streets, carioca samba school carnival baiana

costumes, and whomever she may have observed on her earlier visits to Salvador da Bahia. Though other performers (e.g. Aracy Cortes, whose baiana Carmen may have seen) had donned a baiana fantasia in the past, Carmen's baiana, which circulated widely via the 1939 film *Banana da terra*, was arguably the most successful fantasia worn by a performer. Her baiana's success was due to at least two reasons. First, she was a popular film and music star who already had a national reputation for glamour. Possibly people wanted to emulate her carnival costume's playful glamour. Second, her baiana circulated more widely than other artistically interpreted baianas from the era. Other baiana representations were in live theater or were visual art forms (e.g. paintings, photographs) that many Brazilians would not have had access to. Since her baiana debuted in the context of the highly accessible (in terms of affordability, distribution, and exhibition) musical film, other circulating baiana representations simply could not compete with regard to audience reach. Within weeks after *Banana da terra* debuted, cariocas from all walks of life copied her fantasia that carnival season.

Some eighty years later circulating popular Brazilian rhetoric continues to assert that Brazil is a racial democracy by virtue of its racial and cultural blending. Though it would be an overstatement to say that Carmen Miranda's 1939 carnival fantasia singlehandedly transformed popular Brazilian conceptions of *brasilidade*, one cannot help but to wonder at the continued significance of her hybrid baiana. Bakhtin (1984 [1965]) posits that the social transgressions of carnival irreversibly and incrementally transform quotidian life. The success of Carmen's carnival baiana and its continued circulation suggest that this has been the case in Brazil. What was initially a parodic interpretation of an Afro-Brazilian baiana and a fun carnival costume has become a significant source of contempt and celebration for many Brazilians. Whether one

regards Carmen's baiana as a grotesque caricature or a playful interpretation, judging by its continued circulation the look has not lost its social relevance (see figure 56).

My project began in 2007 at the *Museu Carmen Miranda* (MCM) [Carmen Miranda Museum] in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The museum is situated in Rio's Flamengo Park, a small strip of land surrounded by traffic and far from the touristy hustle and bustle of zona sul. The small dusty park and the museum that is shaped like a space ship have few visitors though Flamengo Park is close to residential and commercial areas. The 1962 Modernist wonder that now houses the Carmen Miranda collection was designed by Affonso Reidy and was originally intended to be a municipal park building. Though the museum has been retrofitted to control the climate and make it more suitable as a museum, the space often poses problems for its staff with its circular layout. At the building's center is a small open-air space featuring a garden designed by the acclaimed Brazilian landscape architect, Burle Marx.

I have spent a total of about four months conducting research in the costume collection and archives at the MCM and observing their public programs. When I first began this project I had intended it to be an ethnography of an exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of Carmen's 1909 birth. Although I was unable to be in Brazil for the planning and opening of the exhibition, I have nonetheless accumulated a wealth of information about the museum. This I save for a future project that will compare the MCM with Frida Kahlo's la Casa Azul [Blue House] in Mexico City, Mexico, and the Museo Evita [the Eva Perón museum] in Buenos Aires, Argentina.



Figure 57: Exterior of the Carmen Miranda Museum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (author photograph, 2008)

Much as I wanted to address the museum in the context of this project, it never quite fit with the other issues I wanted to address about crafting *brasilidade*. Nonetheless, the MCM is fascinating as a repository for national remembering and as a place for Brazilians to interpret themselves for foreigners. This became clearer to me after spending a month at the museum in 2011 followed by a visit to the Eva Perón Museum in Buenos Aires.

As I strolled through the Eva Perón Museum I was struck by the reverential treatment of this historical figure that so many Argentines today hate. Housed in a former orphanage, the rather large museum (for one of its kind devoted to a single person) was filled with beautifully displayed couture garments and countless photographs of the photogenic former first lady. In a side gallery was a contemporary art exhibit by the artist Juan Maresca called “Imaginemos . . .” [Let’s Imagine]. The exhibit imagined that Juan Perón and his wife Evita had been born in Brazil while Getúlio Vargas and his wife Darcy had been born in Argentina. According to this scenario Juan Perón would become João and Evita would become Evinha. The opening text read:

“Evinha seria una morena y hermosa Bahiana . . .”
[Evinha would be a morena and beautiful Baiana]

Although the exhibit made no mention of Carmen Miranda, the darkened be-turbaned Evinha was evocative of Carmen’s baiana, an image that says much about what constitutes Brazilianness to a foreigner. The quintessential Brazilian is a mixed race baiana in Carmen Drag.

Figure 58: A piece from the 2011 Juan Maresca exhibit, which re-imagined the Peróns as Brazilian and the Vargas president and first lady as Argentine. Museu Evita in Buenos Aires, Argentina (Leituras Favre blog, accessed December 13, 2013)



On the flight back to Rio, I thought again and again of the Museo Evita, the Museu Carmen Miranda, and la Casa Azul and the clothes that seemed to make the women legends. Shortly after her August 1955 death, Carmen's widower, producer David Sebastian, traveled to Rio de Janeiro for her funeral. There he spoke to the Brazilian press and promised that a museum would be erected in her honor. Meanwhile, in the midst of their grief, hoping to placate adoring fans, Carmen's Rio-based family members gave away solitary platform shoes whenever mourners came to their door (Carmen de Carvalho interview, 2008). Eventually Sebastian shipped Carmen's wardrobe to Brazil, donating it to the state. The objects traveled around the country and between the constant movement and poor recordkeeping over some twenty years, many pieces disappeared. A permanent museum was finally established in 1976 where it remains today in Flamengo Park.

Since the museum first opened there have been reports that soon it would merge with the Museu da Imagem e do Som (MIS) [Museum of Image and Sound], though that has yet to happen. Those who have wanted to see the Carmen Miranda collection be integrated into the MIS say that she was an important figure in Brazilian film and MPB history. Even the MCM's director, César Balbi, has been vocal about why the collection should be integrated into the larger narrative about Brazilian popular music and film. Yet year after year nothing changes.

Though the MCM's wall text addresses Carmen's thirties Brazilian career, its primary focus is on the Hollywood Carmen. This has mainly to do with the fact that collection holdings consist almost entirely of objects from 1940 on. Nonetheless, the museum does aim to document her Brazilian career and even includes a reproduction of her "Primavera no Rio" gown in its exhibits.

In addition to museums, many of those who have helped to keep Carmen's, Evita's, and Frida's images alive and in circulation have been fans and admirers. From the actress/producer Salma Hayek's film interpretation, *Frida* (2002), to the Andrew Lloyd Weber Broadway show-turned film, *Evita* (1996), to Solberg's documentary, *Bananas is my Business* (1995), these three iconic Latin American women remain culturally salient signifiers of their respective nations. Exercising reflexivity and considerable control over their self-presentation, these women used dress – what might even be called drag forms – to fashion their self-created public images.

Appendix A: Carmen Miranda Films and Broadway Performances

Carmen is thought to have had minor roles in two Brazilian films in the 1920s but no photographs or other documentation have been found to confirm this (Castro 2005: 567).

Brazilian Films

O carnaval cantado de 1932 [Carnival Song of 1932]; also identified as *O carnaval cantado no Rio* [Rio Carnival in Song], documentary. Directed by Vital Ramos de Castro, Cinédia, released March 1932. Filmed among the people on Rio's streets. Film considered lost.

One song: “Bamboleô” [Sway]

A voz do carnaval [The Voice of Carnival]. Directed by Adhemar Gonzaga and Humberto Mauro, Cinédia, released March 6, 1933. With Palitos, Lamartine Babo, Jararaca, and Ratinho. Film considered lost.

Three musical numbers performed at the Mayrink Veiga radio station including “Goodbye” and “Moleque indigesto” [Unbearable Boy]. “Goodbye” is a critique of the fashion for using anglicisms in contemporary speech.

Alô, alô, Brasil! [Hello, Hello, Brazil!]. Directed by Wallace Downey, João de Barro and Alberto Ribeiro, Waldow-Cinédia, released February 4, 1936. With Aurora Miranda, Dircinha Batista, Elisinha Coelho, Francisco Alves, and Mario Reis. Film considered lost.

Appears in closing number “Primavera no Rio” [Springtime in Rio].

Estudantes [Students]. Directed by Wallace Downey, Waldow-Cinédia, released July 8, 1935.

With Mesquitinha, Mario Reis Barbosa Junior, Aurora Miranda, Bando da Lua, Irmãos Tapajós, and Almirante. Film considered lost.

Carmen plays a young radio singer in her only narrative role in a Brazilian film.

Two musical numbers: “E bateu-se a chapa” [And the Photo was Taken] and “Sonho de papel” [Paper Dream]

Alô, alô, carnaval! [Hello, Hello, Carnival!]. Directed by Adhemar Gonzaga, Waldow-Cinédia, released January 20, 1936. With Jorge Murad, Barbosa Junior, Jayme Costa, Aurora Miranda, Alzirinha Camargo, Francisco Alves, Mario Reis, Irmãs Pagãs, Bando da Lua, Oscarito, and Luiz Barbosa. Film intact.

Two musical numbers: “Cantor as do radio” [Radio Singers], performed with her sister, Aurora, and “Querido Adão” [Dear Adam].

Banana da terra [Banana of the Earth]. Directed by João de Barro, Sonofilms (Wallace Downey), released February 10, 1939. With Oscarito, Aurora Miranda, Dircinha Batista, Linda Batista, Almirante, Jorge Murad, and Emilinha Borba. Only the musical number “O que é que a baiana tem?” remains.

Two musical numbers: “Pirolito” and “O que é que a baiana tem?” [What does the Woman from Bahia Have?]

Laranja da China [Orange from China]. Directed by Rui Costa, released 1940. “O que é que a baiana tem?” from *Banana da terra* re-used in this film.

Broadway appearances (from IBDB, Internet Broadway Database, accessed 4/11/13):

“Streets of Paris” June 19, 1939 to February 10, 1940

Musical Revue, Featured Performer

“Sons o’ Fun” December 1, 1941 to August 29, 1943

Musical Comedy Revue, Principal

US Films

Down Argentine Way, color. Directed by Irving Cummings, Twentieth-Century-Fox, released October 11, 1940. With Betty Grable, Don Ameche, Charlotte Greenwood and Bando da Lua.

Three musical numbers, no narrative role: “South American Way,” “Bambu bambu,” and “Mamãe eu quero” [Mama, I Want Some]

That Night in Rio, color. Directed by Irving Cummings, Twentieth-Century-Fox, released April 4, 1941. With Alice Faye, Don Ameche, S.Z. Sakall, J. Carroll Naish, Maria Montez, and Bando da Lua.

Three musical numbers: “Chica Chica Boom Chic,” “Cai, Cai” and “I, Yi, Yi, Yi, Yi, I Like You Very Much”

Week-end in Havana, color. Directed by Walter Lang, Twentieth-Century-Fox, released October 17, 1941. With Alice Faye, John Payne, César Romero, and Bando da Lua. Four musical numbers: “A Week-end in Havana,” “Rebola, bola” [Roll the Ball], When I Love I Love,” and “The Ñango”

Springtime in the Rockies, color. Translated as “My Brazilian Secretary” [*Minha secretária brasileira*] for Brazilian release. Directed by Irving Cummings, Twentieth-Century-Fox, released November 6, 1942. With Betty Grable, John Payne, César Romero, Charlotte Greenwood, Edward Everett Horton, and Bando da Lua.

Two musical numbers: “Chattanooga Choo Choo” and “O tic-tac do meu coração” [The tick-tock of my Heart]

The Gang’s All Here, color. Directed by Busby Berkeley, Twentieth-Century-Fox, released December 24, 1943. With Alice Faye, Edward Everett Horton, Charlotte Greenwood, and Benny Goodman and his orchestra.

Five musical numbers: “Aquarela do Brasil” [Brazilian Watercolors] “The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat,” “Paducah,” “You Discover You’re in New York,” and “A Journey to a Star”

Four Jills in a Jeep, b&w. Directed by William Seiter, Twentieth-Century-Fox, released March 17, 1944. With Alice Faye, Betty Grable, Kay Francis, Martha Raye, and Dick Haymes. One musical number, no narrative role: “I, Yi, Yi, Yi, I Like You Very Much”

Greenwich Village, color. Directed by Walter Lang, Twentieth-Century-Fox, released September 27, 1944. With don Ameche, Vivian Blaine, and William Bendix.

Five musical numbers: “O que é que a baiana tem?,” “Quando eu penso na Bahia” [When I think of Bahia], “Give me a Band and a Bandana,” “I’m Just Wild About Harry,” and “I Like to be Loved by You”

Something for the Boys, color. Directed by Lewis Seiler, Twentieth-Century-Fox, released November 1, 1944. With Vivian Blaine, Michael O’Shea, and Perry Como.

Three musical numbers: “Batuca, nego” [Play the Rhythm, Black Boy], “Samba Boogie,” and “Wouldn’t it be Nice?”

Doll Face, b&w. Directed by Lewis Seiler, Twentieth-Century-Fox, released July 1945. With Vivian Blaine, Dennis O’Keefe, and Perry Como.

One musical number: “Chico, Chico (from Puerto Rico)”

If I’m Lucky, b&w. Directed by Lewis Seiler, Twentieth-Century-Fox, released September 2, 1946. With Vivian Blaine, Perry Como, and Harry James and his orchestra.

Three musical numbers: “Batucada” [Rhythm], “Follow the Band,” and “Bet Your Bottom Dollar”

Copacabana, b&w. Directed by Alfred Green, United Artists, released April 1947. With Groucho Marx, Gloria Jean, Steve Cochran, and Andy Russell. Five musical numbers: “Tico-tico no fubá” [Tico-tico Bird in the Cornmeal], “How to Make a Hit with Fifi,” “Je Vous Aime” [I Love You], “Let’s do the Copacabana,” and “I Haven’t a Thing to Sell”

A Date with Judy, color. Directed by Richard Thorpe, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, released June 21, 1948. With Jane Powell, Elizabeth Taylor, Wallace Beery, Robert Stack, and Xavier Cugat. Three musical numbers: “Cuanto le gusta” [As You Like], “Cooking with Glass,” and It’s a Most Unusual Day”

Nancy Goes to Rio, color. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, released March 10, 1950. With Jane Powell, Ann Sothern, Barry Sullivan, Louis Calhern, Scott Beckett, Frank Fontaine, and Bando da Lua.

Two musical numbers: “Baião caroom ‘pa pa’ and “Ipse-Ai-O”

Scared Stiff, b&w. Directed by George Marshall, Paramount, released April 27, 1953. With Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Lizabeth Scott, Dorothy Malone, Frank Fontaine, and Bando da Lua. Two musical numbers: “The Bongo Bingo” and “The Enchilada Man”

Appendix B:
Notable Carmen Drag Examples

Date(s)	Performer	Performance Event	Medium	Producer/Creator/Director
Sept. 29, 1939 to Dec. 2, 1939	Imogene Coca	“The Straw Hat Revue”	Broadway theatrical performance (Ambassador Theatre in New York, NY)	Music and lyrics by James Shelton and Sylvia Fine; Lee and J.J. Shubert, producers
1942	Mickey Rooney as “Tommy Williams”	“Mamãe eu quero” in <i>Babes on Broadway</i>	Musical film	Busby Berkeley, director; Robert Kalloch, costume designer
1943	Animated cats	“Mamãe eu quero” in “Baby Puss,” <i>Tom and Jerry</i>	Theatrical cartoon short	William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, directors
1943	Daffy Duck (animated character)	“Boom Chica Boom” in “Yankee Doodle Daffy,” <i>Looney Toons</i>	Theatrical cartoon short	Friz Freleng, director Tedd Pierce, writer
1944	Miss Chiquita (animated half-woman/half-banana)	Chiquita Banana advertising jingle	Animated advertisement	Dik Browne, artist
1944	Bugs Bunny (animated character)	“What’s Cookin’ Doc?,” <i>Merrie Melodies</i>	Animated television cartoon	Bob Clampett, director
Military base performances, 1942; Film released 1945	Sascha Brastoff as “GI Carmen Miranda”	“Winged Victory”	Military show and film	Sascha Brastoff; George Cukor, film director
1940s	Unknown	WWII-era impersonation; <i>Before Stonewall</i> (1984)	Archival footage in documentary	Robert Rosenberg and Greta Schiller, documentarians

Date(s)	Performer	Performance Event	Medium	Producer/Creator/Director
1940s	Unknown	WWII-era impersonation; <i>Coming Out Under Fire</i> (1994)	Archival footage in documentary	Arthur Dong, documentarian; Allan Bérubé, writer
1945	Jo Ann Marlowe as "Kay Pierce"	"South American Way" in <i>Mildred Pierce</i>	Film	Michael Curtiz, director
1947	Animated Carmen Miranda	Improvised lyrics (?) in "Slick Hare," <i>Merrie Melodies</i>	Animated cartoon	Friz Freleng, director
1947	Bob Hope as "Hot Lips Barton"	Dances to "Batuque no morro" in <i>Road to Rio</i>	Film	Norman Z. McLeod, director
Original airdate: Oct. 22, 1951	Lucille Ball as "Lucy Ricardo"	"Mamãe eu quero" in "Be a Pal," Season 1, Episode 2 of <i>I Love Lucy</i>	Broadcast television	Marc Daniels, director; Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh, and Bob Carroll, Jr., writers
1953	Jerry Lewis as "Myron Mertz"	"Mamãe eu quero" in <i>Scared Stiff</i>	Film	George Marshall, director; Edith Head, costume designer
1970	?	<i>Os Herdeiros</i>	Film (Brazil)	Carlos Diegues, director
Early 1970s	Caetano Veloso	"O que é que a baiana tem?"	Music concerts (Brazil)	Caetano Veloso, musician/composer
Original airdate: March 5, 1986	Extra	"Masquerade," Season 6, Episode 139 of <i>Dynasty</i>	Broadcast television; nighttime soap opera	Esther Shapiro and Richard Alan Shapiro, series creators
1994	Erick Barreto as	<i>Bananas is My Business</i>	Documentary	Helena Solberg, director
Original airdate: Oct. 16, 1996	Ellen Degeneres as "Ellen Morgan"	"The Parent Trap," Season 4, Episode 4 of <i>Ellen</i>	Broadcast television; situation comedy	Gil Junger, director; Tracy Newman and Jonathan Stark, writers
2000	John Michael Higgins as "Scott Donian"	<i>Best in Show</i>	Film	Christopher Guest, director; Christopher Guest and Eugene Levy, writers

Date(s)	Performer	Performance Event	Medium	Producer/Creator/Director
Original airdate: March 31, 2002	Bart Simpson (animated character); voice by Nancy Cartwright	"Blame it on Lisa," Season 13, Episode 15, <i>The Simpsons</i>	Broadcast television; animated series	Steven Dean Moore director; Bob Pendleton, writer
Original airdate: Feb. 7, 2002	Stewie (animated character); voice by Seth MacFarlane	"Road to Europe," Season 3, Episode 20 of <i>Family Guy</i>	Broadcast television; animated series	Don Povenmire, director; Daniel Palladino, writer
2003-2004	Extra	Multiple episodes in season 1 and 2, <i>Arrested Development</i>	Broadcast television; situation comedy	Mitchell Hurwitz, series creator
Original airdate: April 22, 2009	Various aspiring fashion models	"The Amazing Model Race," Cycle 12, <i>America's Next Top Model</i>	Broadcast television; reality series	Tyra Banks, series creator
2011	Luiz (bulldog); voice by Tracy Morgan	<i>Rio</i>	Animated film	Carlos Saldanha
Original airdate: April, 20, 2011	Aubrey Anderson-Emmons as "Lily"	"Someone to Watch Over Lily," Season 2, Episode 20, <i>Modern Family</i>	Broadcast television; situation comedy	Michael Spiller, director; Bill Wrubel, writer
2011	Rita Moreno	<i>Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup</i> , Berkeley Repertory Theater 2011-2012 season	Performer's personal photograph as part of set; theatrical production	Rita Moreno and Tony Taccone, developers; David Galligan, director
2013	Yvette Tucker	<i>Gangster Squad</i>	Film	Ruben Fleischer, director

Appendix C:
Costume Designers for Notable Baiana Fantasias

Year	Costume Designer	Film or Performance	Performer
1930s	Aracy Côrtez	Brazilian stage performances	Aracy Côrtez
1933	Walter Plunkett and Irene (uncredited)	<i>Flying Down to Rio</i>	Etta Moten
1935	Possibly Elisa Coelho	Brazilian stage performance at Cassino Urca, Rio de Janeiro	Elisa Coelho
1936	Possibly Heloísa Helena	<i>Alô, alô, carnaval! (Brazil)</i>	Heloísa Helena
1938	Carmen Miranda	<i>Banana da terra (Brazil)</i>	Carmen Miranda
1938	J. Luiz (Brazilian)	For Brazilian stage performances	Carmen Miranda
1939	Gilberto Trompowski (Brazilian)	For New York stage performances	Carmen Miranda
1940	Travis Banton	<i>Down Argentine Way</i>	Carmen Miranda
1941	John Pratt	<i>Carnival of Rhythm</i>	Katherine Dunham dancers
1941	Travis Banton	<i>That Night in Rio</i>	Carmen Miranda
1941	Gwen Wakeling	<i>Week-end in Havana</i>	Carmen Miranda
1942	Earl Luick	<i>Springtime in the Rockies</i>	Carmen Miranda
1943	Yvonne Wood	<i>The Gang's All Here</i>	Carmen Miranda
1944	Yvonne Wood	<i>Four Jills in a Jeep</i>	Carmen Miranda
1944	Yvonne Wood	<i>Greenwich Village</i>	Carmen Miranda
1944	Yvonne Wood	<i>Something for the Boys</i>	Carmen Miranda
1945	Yvonne Wood	<i>Doll Face</i>	Carmen Miranda
1946	Sascha Brastoff	<i>If I'm Lucky</i>	Carmen Miranda
1947	Barjansky	<i>Copacabana</i>	Carmen Miranda
1948	Helen Rose	<i>A Date With Judy</i>	Carmen Miranda
1950	Helen Rose	<i>Nancy Goes to Rio</i>	Carmen Miranda
1953	Edith Head	<i>Scared Stiff</i>	Carmen Miranda

Appendix D:
Song Lyrics (Alphabetical by Title)

“*Chiquita Bacana*” (1949), João de Barro and Alberto Ribeiro

Chiquita Bacana

Lá da Martinica

Se veste com uma casca

De banana nanica

Não usa vestido

Não usa calcão

Inverno pra ela

É pleno verão

Existencialista

Com toda razão

Só faz o que manda

O seu coração

Elegant Chiquita

From Martinique

Wears the peel

Of a dwarf banana

She doesn't wear a dress

She doesn't wear underpants

Winter for her

Is full spring

An existentialist

With all reason

Just does what

Her heart demands

“Chiquita Banana”¹⁰⁵ (1944), Garth Montgomery, Leonard Mackenzie, William Wirges

I'm Chiquita banana and I've come to say
Bananas have to ripen in a certain way
When they are fleck'd with brown and have a golden hue
Bananas taste the best and are best for you
You can put them in a salad
You can put them in a pie-aye
Any way you want to eat them
It's impossible to beat them
But, bananas like the climate of the very, very tropical equator
So you should never put bananas in the refrigerator.

“I Make my Money with Bananas” (1947), Ray Gilbert and Aloysio de Oliveira

I'd love to wear my hair like Deanna Durbin
But I have to stuff it in a turban
A turban that weighs five thousand tons
forty-four and one-half pounds
And besides that I have to wear those crazy gowns

Chorus:

Oh, she-run-pum-pum-pum-pum
She-run-pum-pum-pum-pum

¹⁰⁵ The Chiquita Brand website describes Miss Chiquita's history as follows (<http://www.chiquita.com/Our-Company/The-Chiquita-Story/The-Chiquita-Jingle.aspx> accessed 1/17/13):

“Chances are, you can sing, or at least hum, a few bars of the famous Chiquita Banana jingle. The song first hit the airwaves in 1944 when Miss Chiquita made her debut. It was written to help teach Americans how to ripen and use bananas, which were, at the time, an exotic tropical fruit. At its peak, the jingle was played 376 times a day on radio stations across the United States. It was one of the most successful commercial jingles of all time.

The song was created by an ad agency team led by Robert Foreman. Foreman and his staff developed the jingle using office talent, an old piano and a box of paper clips shaken to simulate maracas. Garth Montgomery wrote the lyrics and co-worker Len Mackenzie provided the music. The singer in the original 1944 recording was Patti Clayton, the first in a long line of Miss Chiquitas.”

She-run-pum-pum-pum-pum
She-run-pum-pum-pum-pum

I'd love to play a scene with Clark Gable
With candle lights and wine upon the table
But my producer tells me I'm not able
'Cause I make my money with bananas

Chorus:

She makes her money with...
She makes her money with...
She makes her money with...

I make my money with bananas!

Jane Russell was another nice sensation
Her figure was a talk of all the nation
But what I got is not an imitation
And I still make my money with my bananas!
What I do is the bunch chic chic
I'm getting sick of the bunch chic chic
My throat is troubled ay ay ay
She can see ky-ky-kow ----- boy!

Chorus:

She makes her money with...
She makes her money with...
She makes her money with...
She makes her money with...

Oh, but if I quit my job it's not disturbing
I'd use very often a liter of bourbon
'Cause I can sit and in one minute eat my turban
And still make my money with my bananas
It isn't even funny that I make a little more money
than that little Mickey Rooney with bananas!

Chorus:

Red tomatoes?

No, bananas!

Chorus:

New potatoes?

No, bananas!

Chorus:

Oh, bananas!

Oh, bananas, yes!

And no matter I used to like them than their bananas!

Olé!

Yes, sir!

“O que é que a baiana tem?” (samba baiano, 1938), Dorival Caymmi

O que é que a baiana tem?

Tem torço de seda tem

Tem brinco de ouro tem

Corrente de ouro tem

Tem pano da Costa tem

Tem bata rendada tem

Pulseira de ouro tem

Tem saia engomada tem

Tem sandália enfeitada tem

What does the baiana have?

She has a silk turban

She has gold earrings

She has a gold chain

She has a shawl

She has a cotton peasant blouse

She has a gold bracelet

She has a starched cotton skirt

She has decorated sandals

E tem graça como ninguém

O que é que a baiana tem?

Como ela requebra bem

O que é que a baiana tem?

Quando se reuebrar

Caia por cima de mim

And has grace like no one else

What does the baiana have?

Look how well she shakes her hips

What does the baiana have?

When she moves her hips

I'd like her to land on me

Mas o que é que a baiana tem?

Só vai no Bomfim quem tem

Um rosário de ouro

Uma bolota assim

Just what does the baiana have?

The only one who can go to Bonfim¹⁰⁶

Is the woman with a gold rosary

With beads

Oi, quem não tem balangandãs

Não vai no Bomfim

Oi, não vai no Bomfim

Oh, anyone without balangandãs¹⁰⁷

Does not go to Bonfim

Does not go to Bonfim

¹⁰⁶ The church of Bonfim is a Catholic church located in Salvador da Bahia, which has strong significance for

practitioners of candomblé. Baianas and mães de santo have been performing rituals at Bonfim since the 18th

century.

¹⁰⁷ Balangandãs was a term little known outside of Bahia until Dorival Caymmi wrote “O que é que a baiana tem?”

The term was used in the 19th century to refer to the amulets or charms – usually made from silver - that candomblé priestesses wore. The term eventually became associated with Carmen's costume jewelry worn in *Banana da terra*.

“Mamãe eu quero” (marchinha, 1937), Jararaca and Vicente Paiva

Mamãe eu quero	Mama, I want some
Mamãe eu quero	Mama, I want some
Mamãe eu quero mamar	Mama, I want to suckle
Dá a chupeta	Gimme the pacifier
Dá a chupeta	Gimme the pacifier
Dá a chupeta pro bebê não chorar	Gimme the pacifier so baby doesn't cry
Dorme filhinho, Do meu coração	Go to sleep my son, of my heart
Pega a mamadeira	Take the pacifier
e vem entrar no meu cordão	and come into my festive group
Eu tenho uma irmã	I have a sister
Que é fenomenal	That's phenomenal
Ela é da bossa e o marido é boçal	She has skill and her husband is an idiot
Mamãe eu quero	Mama, I want some
Mamãe eu quero	Mama, I want some
Mamãe eu quero mamar	Mama, I want to suckle
Dá a chupeta	Gimme the pacifier
Dá a chupeta	Gimme the pacifier
Dá a chupeta pro bebê não chorar	Gimme the pacifier so baby doesn't cry
Eu olho as pequenas Mas daquele jeito	I look at the little ones but this way,
Tenho muita pena	It's too bad
Não ser criança de peito	that I've been weaned
E eu tenho uma irmã	I have a sister
Que se chama Ana	whose name is Ana
De tanto piscar o olho	She's blinking
Já ficou sem pestana	so she's lost an eyelash
Mamãe eu quero	Mama, I want some
Mamãe eu quero	Mama, I want some
Mamãe eu quero mamar	Mama, I want to suckle
Dá a chupeta	Gimme the pacifier
Dá a chupeta	Gimme the pacifier
Dá a chupeta pro bebê não chorar	Gimme the pacifier so baby doesn't cry

“South American Way” (samba-rhumba, 1939), Jimmy McHugh and Al Dubin (Aloysio de Oliveira, uncredited)

Ai, ai, ai, ai
É o canto do pregoneiro
Que com sua harmonia
Traz alegria
In South American Way

Ai, ai, ai, ai
E o que traz no seu tabuleiro
Vende pra ioiô
Vende pra iaiá
In South American Way

E vende vatapá
E vende caruru
E vende munguzá
E vende umbu
No tabuleiro tem de tudo que convém

Mas só lhe falta, ai, ai berenguendéns

Ai, ai, ai, ai
É o canto do pregoneiro
Que com sua harmonia
Traz alegria
In South American Way

Ai, ai, ai, ai
Have you ever danced in the tropics?
With that hazy lazy
Like, kind of crazy
Like South American Way

Ai, ai, ai, ai
Have you ever kissed in the moonlight

Ay, ay, ay, ay
It’s a song of the pregoneiro (?)
that with his harmony
brings joy
in South American Way

Ay, ay, ay, ay
And brings with his board
Selling over here
Selling over there
in South American Way

And sells vatapá¹⁰⁸
And sells caruru
And sells munguzá
And sells umbu
On the board there’s everything that
should be there
All it needs are berenguendéns¹⁰⁹

Ay, ay, ay, ay
It’s a song of the pregoneiro
that with his harmony
brings joy
in South American Way

¹⁰⁸ Vatapá, caruru, munguzá, and umbu are all dishes from the Northeastern Brazil and are popular street vendor foods in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro.

¹⁰⁹ A type of silver amulet associated with candomblé priestesses.

In the grand and glorious
Gay notorious
South American Way?

“Tropicália”¹¹⁰ (1967), Caetano Veloso

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Quando Pero Vaz Caminha | When Pero Vaz Caminha |
| 2 Descobriu que as terras brasileiras | Discovered Brazilian lands |
| 3 Eram férteis e verdejantes, | They were fertile and verdant |
| 4 Escreveu uma carta ao rei: | He wrote a letter to the king: |
| 5 Tudo que nela se planta, | Everything plants itself |
| 6 Tudo cresce e floresce. | Everything grows and flourishes |
| 7 E o Gauss da época gravou | And Gauss of that time recorded |
| | |
| 8 Sobre a cabeça os aviões | Over my head, the planes |
| 9 Sob os meus pés os caminhões | Under my feet, the trucks |
| 10 Aponta contra os chapadões | Points against the high plains |
| 11 Meu nariz | My nose |
| | |
| 12 Eu organizo o movimento | I organize the motion |
| 13 Eu oriento o carnaval | I guide the carnival |
| 14 Eu inauguro o monumento no planalto central | I inaugurate the monument in the central plateau |
| 15 Do país | of the country... |
| | |
| 16 Viva a bossa-sa-sa | Hail the bossa-sa-sa |
| 17 Viva a palhoça-ça-ça-ça-ça | Hail the shack ack, ack, ack, ack |
| 18 Viva a bossa-sa-sa | Hail the bossa-sa-sa |
| 19 Viva a palhoça-ça-ça-ça-ça | Hail the shack ack, ack, ack, ack |
| | |
| 20 O monumento é de papel crepom e prata | The monument is made of crepe paper and silver |
| 21 Os olhos verdes da mulata | The mulatto girl's green eyes |
| 22 A cabeleira esconde atrás da verde mata | Her hair hides behind the green forest |
| 23 O luar do sertão | The moonlight from the outback |
| | |
| 24 O monumento não tem porta | The monument has no doors |
| 25 A entrada de uma rua antiga, estreita e torta | The entrance is an ancient road, narrow and twisted |
| 26 E no joelho uma criança soridente, feia e morta | And, on her knees, a child, smiling, ugly and dead |
| 27 Estende a mão | Reaches out her hand... |

¹¹⁰ Translation comes in part from lyricstranslate.com accessed 4/2013.

28 Viva a mata-ta-ta	Hail the forest-est-est
29 Viva a mulata-ta-ta-ta-ta	Hail the mulat-ta-ta-ta-ta
30 Viva a mata-ta-ta	Hail the forest-est-est
31 Viva a mulata-ta-ta-ta-ta	Hail the mulat-ta-ta-ta-ta
32 No pátio interno há uma piscina	On the inside patio there's a pool
33 Com água azul de Amaralina	With water as blue as the ones from Amaralina
34 Coqueiro, brisa e fala nordestina e faróis	Coconut tree, breeze and the northeast speaking and headlights
35 Na mão direita tem uma roseira	A rose in the right hand
36 Autenticando eterna primavera	Authenticating everlasting spring
37 E nos jardins os urubus passeiam a tarde inteira	And in the garden vultures stroll all afternoon long
38 Entre os girassóis	Between the sunflowers...
39 Viva Maria-ia-ia	Hail Maria-ia-ia
40 Viva a Bahia-ia-ia-ia-ia	Hail Bahia-ia-ia-ia-ia
41 Viva Maria-ia-ia	Hail Maria-ia-ia
42 Viva a Bahia-ia-ia-ia-ia	Hail Bahia-ia-ia-ia-ia
43 No pulso esquerdo bangue-bangue ¹¹¹	On the left wrist, the bang-bang
44 Em suas veias corre muito pouco sangue	Running through the veins is very little blood
45 Mas seu coração balança a um samba de tamborim	But the heart beats a samba tambourine
46 Emite acordes dissonantes	Emits dissonant chords
47 Pelos cinco mil alto-falantes	Through five thousand loud-speakers
48 Senhora e senhores ele põe os olhos grande	Ladies and gentlemen, he rests his big eyes
49 Sobre mim	On me
50 Viva Iracema-ma-ma	Hail Iracema-ma-ma
51 Viva Ipanema-ma-ma-ma-ma	Hail Ipanema-ma-ma-ma-ma
52 Viva Iracema-ma-ma	Hail Iracema-ma-ma
53 Viva Ipanema-ma-ma-ma-ma	Hail Ipanema-ma-ma-ma-ma

¹¹¹ Bangue-bangue is a colloquial Brazilian Portuguese expression (from the English “bang! bang!”) that refers to Hollywood Western films or Brazilian “Westerns,” which are typically set in the Northeast, e.g. *O cangaceiro* [The Bandit] (1953). In the context of this song, it signifies a gun while evoking the romanticized Brazilian Northeast.

54 Domingo é o Fino da Bossa
55 Segunda-feira está na fossa
56 Terça-feira vai à roça
57 Porém

58 O monumento é bem moderno
59 Não disse nada do modelo do meu terno

60 Que tudo mais vá pro inferno, meu bem
61 Que tudo mais vá pro inferno, meu bem

62 Viva a banda-da-da
63 Carmen Miranda-da-da-da-da
64 Viva a banda-da-da
65 Carmen Miranda-da-da-da-da
66 Viva a banda-da-da
67 Carmen Miranda-da-da-da-da

On Sunday, it's the best of the Bossa
On Monday, it's the blues
On Tuesday, goes to the countryside
But!

The monument is pretty modern
Didn't say a thing about the design of
my suit
Damn everything else, my dear
Damn everything else, my dear

Hail the band
Carmen Miranda-da-da-da-da
Hail the band
Carmen Miranda-da-da-da-da
Hail the band
Carmen Miranda-da-da-da-da

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Vogue magazine archives, on-line accessibility.

Live Performances:

Rita Moreno: Life Without Make at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Berkeley, CA, September 2-October 30, 2011.

Music Recordings

“Bambu bambu,” Teixeira, Patrício and Donga, with Bando da Lua, Decca, from the Broadway show *Streets of Paris* and the film *Down Argentine Way*, 1939.

“Boneca de piche,” Barroso, Ary and Luiz Iglesias, with Almirante, Odeon, 1938.

“Cai, cai,” Martins, Roberto, with Bando da Lua, Decca, from the film *That Night in Rio*, 1941.

“Cantoras do rádio,” Ribeiro, Alberto and João de Barro, with Aurora Miranda, Odeon, from the film *Alô, alô, carnaval!*, 1936.

“Caroom’ pa pa baião,” Teixeira, Humberto, Luiz Gonzaga and Ray Gilbert, with Bando da Lua and the Andrews Sisters, Decca, from the film *Nancy goes to Rio*, 1950.

“Chattanooga Choo Choo,” Gordon, Mack and Harry Warren (Aloysio de Oliveira, uncredited), with Bando da Lua, Decca, from the film *Springtime in the Rockies*, 1942.

- “Chiquita bacana,” de Barro, João and Alberto Ribeiro, performed by Emilinha Borba, Brazil, 1949.
- “Chica Chica Boom Chic,” Warren, Harry and Mack Gordon (Zaccarias Yaconelli, uncredited), with Bando da Lua, Decca, from the film *That Night in Rio*, 1941.
- “Eu gosto da minha terra,” Montenegro, Randoval, Victor, Brazil, 1930.
- “Give me a Band and a Bandana,” for playback in the film *Greenwich Village*, 1944.
- “Good-bye,” Valente, Assis, Victor, Brazil, from the film *A voz do Carnaval*, 1932.
- “I Make my Money with Bananas,” de Oliveira, Aloysio with Ray Gilbert, for live performances, 1947.
- “I’m Cooking with Glass,” de Oliveira, Aloysio with Ray Gilbert, for live performances, 1947.
- “I, Yi, Yi, Yi (I Like You Very Much),” Warren, Harry and Mack Gordon, with Bando da Lua, Decca, from the film *That Night in Rio*, 1941.
- “I’m Just Wild About Harry,” originally written in 1921 by Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake for the Broadway show *Shuffle Along*. For playback in the film *Greenwich Village*, 1944.
- “The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat,” Robin, Leo and Harry Warren. For playback in the film *The Gang’s All Here*, 1943.
- “Mamãe eu quero,” Jararaca and Vicente Paiva, with Bando da Lua, Decca, from the Broadway show *Streets of Paris* and the film *Down Argentine Way*, 1939.
- “O nego no samba,” Barroso, Ary, Marques Pôrto, and Luiz Peixoto, Victor, Brazil, 1929.
- “Pra você gostar de mim [Taí],” de Carvalho, Joubert, Victor, 1930.
- “Primavera no Rio,” de Barro, João, Victor, Brazil, from the film *Alô, alô, Brasil*, 1934.
- “O que é que a baiana tem?,” Caymmi, Dorival, with Dorival Caymmi, Odeon, Brazil, from the film *Banana da terra*, 1938.
- “Rebola bola,” de Oliveira, Aloysio, Nestor Amaral, and Brant Horta, with Bando da Lua, Decca, 1941.
- “South American Way,” McHugh, Jimmy and Al Dubin (Aloysio de Oliveira, uncredited), with Bando da Lua and Garoto, Decca, from the Broadway show *Streets of Paris* and the film *Down Argentine Way*, 1939.
- “Tic-Tac do meu coração,” Pires Vermelho, Alcyr and Walfrido Silva, with Bando da Lua, Decca, from the film *Springtime in the Rockies*, 1942.
- “Tico-Tico (Tico-Tico no Fubá),” de Abreu, Zequinha, Erwin Drake, and Aloysio de Oliveira, Decca, from the film *Copacabana*, 1945.
- “Tropicália,” Veloso, Caetano, Brazil, 1968.
- “Ypsee-I-O,” Gilbert, Ray (Aloysio de Oliveira, uncredited), with Bando da Lua and the Andrews Sisters, Decca, from the film *Nancy goes to Rio*, 1950.

Film, Television, and Internet Media Sources

For Carmen Miranda films only, see Appendix A. For Carmen Drag examples, see Appendix B.

All About Eve. Mankiewicz, Joseph L., director. Twentieth-Century Fox, 1950.

Alô, alô, Brasil! Downey, Wallace, João de Barro, and Alberto Ribeiro, directors. Waldow-Cinédia, Brazil, 1936.

Alô, alô, carnaval! Gonzaga, Adhemar, director. Waldow-Cinédia, Brazil, 1936.

“The Amazing Model Race,” Cycle 12, *America’s Next Top Model*. Original airdate April 22, 2009.

Arrested Development. Episodes from seasons 1 and 2, 2003 to 2004.

Babes on Broadway. Berkeley, Busby, director. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1941.

Baby Face. Green, Alfred W. Twentieth-Century Fox, 1933.

“Baby Puss,” a cartoon short of *Tom and Jerry*. Hanna, William and Joseph Barbera, directors. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Original theatrical release date December 25, 1943.

Banana da terra. de Barro, João, director. Sonofilms (Wallace Downey), Brazil, 1939.

Bananas is My Business. Solberg, Helena Solberg, director. Fox-Lorber, 1995.

“Be a Pal,” Episode 3, Season 1 of *I Love Lucy*. Original airdate October 22, 1951.

Before Stonewall. Rosenberg, Robert and Greta Schiller, directors. First Run Features, 1984.

Best in Show. Guest, Christopher, director. Castle Rock Entertainment, 2000.

Bird of Paradise. Vidor, King, director. RKO Radio Pictures, 1932.

Black Swan. Aronofsky, Darren, director. Twentieth-Century-Fox, 2010.

“Blame it on Lisa,” Season 13, Episode 15 of *The Simpsons*. Original airdate March 31, 2002.

Blame it on Rio. Donen, Stanley, director. Sherwood Productions, 1984.

The Caddy. Taurog, Norman, director. Paramount Pictures, 1953.

O cangaceiro. Barreto, Lima, director. Companhia Cinematográfica Vera Cruz, Brazil, 1953.

O carnaval cantado de 1932 [Carnival Song of 1932]; also identified as *O carnaval cantado no Rio* [Rio Carnival in Song]. de Castro, Vital Ramos, director. Cinédia, Brazil, 1932.

Carnival of Rhythm. Martin, Stanley, director. Warner Brothers, 1941.

Carmen Miranda: The Girl from Rio. Cork, John and Lisa Van Eyssen, directors. DVD (Documentary extra on *Something for the Boys*, Twentieth-Century Fox, 2008).

Cloverland Productions, 2008.

Cleopatra. DeMille, Cecil B., director. Paramount Pictures, 1934.

Coal Miner’s Daughter. Apted, Michael, director. Universal Pictures, 1980.

Coming Out Under Fire. Dong, Arthur, director. DeepFocus Productions, 1994.

Como gostoso era o meu francês [How Tasty was My Little Frenchman]. Pereira dos Santos, Nelson, director. Condor Filmes, Brazil, 1971.

Copacabana. Green, Alfred E., director. United Artists, 1947.

A Date with Judy. Thorpe, Richard, director. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1948.

Dinner at Eight. Cukor, George, director. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1933.

Dirty Dancing. Ardolino, Emile, director. Great American Films Limited Partnership, 1987.

Doll Face. Seiler, Lewis, director. Twentieth-Century-Fox, 1945.

Down Argentine Way. Cummings, Irving, director. Twentieth-Century Fox, 1940.

Dus Lakh. Goel, Devendra, director. Goel Cine Corporation, India, 1966.

Estudantes. Downey, Wallace, director. Waldow-Cinédia, Brazil, 1935.

Evita. Parker, Alan, director. Hollywood Pictures and Cinergi Pictures, 1996.

Flying Down to Rio. Freeland, Thornton, director. RKO Radio Pictures, 1933.

Four Jills in a Jeep. Seiter, William, director. Twentieth-Century-Fox, 1944.

Fox News Website; page for *The O’Reilly Factor*, May 27, 2009, episode.

Frida. Taymore, Julie, director. Miramax/Ventanarosa, 2002.

The Gang’s All Here. Berkeley, Busby, director. Twentieth-Century-Fox, 1943.

Gangster Squad. Fleischer, Ruben, director. Warner Brothers, 2013.

Greenwich Village. Lang, Walter, director. Twentieth-Century-Fox, 1944.

Harold Teen. Roth, Murray, director. Warner Brothers, 1934.

The Hatchet Man. Wellman, William A., director. Warner Brothers, 1932.

Os Herdeiros. Diegues, Carlos, director. Brazil, 1970.

Hispanic Hollywood. Bianca, Stephanie, director. Passport International Productions, 1999.

If I'm Lucky. Seiler, Lewis, director. Twentieth-Century-Fox, 1946.

Iracema: uma transa amazônica. Bordansky, Jorge and Orlando Senna, directors. Embrafilme, 1975.

Imitation of Life. Stahn, John M., director. Universal Pictures, 1934.

Laranja da China. Costa, Rui, director. Brazil, 1940.

Letty Lynton. Brown, Clarence, director. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1932.

Macunaíma. de Andrade, Joaquim Pedro, director. Condor Filmes, Brazil, 1969.

“Masquerade,” Season 6, Episode 139 of *Dynasty*. Original airdate March 5, 1986.

Mata Hari. Fitzmaurice, George, director. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1931.

Mildred Pierce. Curtiz, Michael, director. Warner Brothers, 1945.

Modern Times. Chaplin, Charles, director. United Artists, 1936.

Morocco. von Sternberg, Josef, director. Paramount Pictures, 1930.

Mutiny on the Bounty. Lloyd, Frank, director. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1935.

Nancy Goes to Rio. Leonard, Robert Z., director. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1950.

“The Parent Trap,” Season 4, Episode 4 of *Ellen*. Original airdate October 16, 1996.

Paris is Burning. Livingston, Jennie, director. Miramax Films, 1990.

The Postman Always Rings Twice. Garnett, Tay, director. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1946.

“Road to Europe,” Season 3, Episode 20 of *Family Guy*. Original airdate February 7, 2002.

Road to Rio. McLeod, Norman, director. Paramount Pictures, 1947.

Scared Stiff. Marshall, George, director. Paramount Pictures, 1953.

“Slick Hare,” a cartoon episode of *Merrie Melodies*. Freleng, Friz, director. 1947.

“Someone to Watch Over Lily,” Season 2, Episode 20 of *Modern Family*. Original airdate April 20, 2011.

Something for the Boys. Seiler, Lewis, director. Twentieth-Century-Fox, 1944.

Springtime in the Rockies. Cummings, Irving, director. Twentieth-Century Fox, 1942.

Tarzan and his Mate. Gibbons, Cedric, director. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1934.

That Night in Rio. Cummings, Irving, director. Twentieth-Century Fox, 1941.

Valley of the Dolls. Robson, Mark, director. Twentieth-Century Fox, 1967.

A voz do carnaval [The Voice of Carnival]. Gonzaga, Adhemar and Humberto Mauro, directors. Cinédia, Brazil, 1933.

Week-end in Havana. Lang, Walter, director. Twentieth-Century-Fox, 1941.

“What's Cookin' Doc?,” a Bugs Bunny cartoon episode of *Looney Tunes*. Clampett, Bob, director. 1944.

Winged Victory. Cukor, George, director. Twentieth-Century-Fox, 1944.

The Wizard of Oz. Fleming, Victor, director. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939.

The Women. Cukor, George, director. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939.

“Yankee Doodle Daffy,” a Daffy Duck cartoon episode of *Looney Tunes*. Freleng, Friz, director. Warner Brothers. Original theatrical release date 1943.

YouTube Website; “*Carmen Miranda-O que é que a baiana tem?*” posted by Doni Sacramento April 2, 2007.

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Curriculum vitae

Education

- December 2013 PhD, Department of Communication and Culture, Anthropology minor, Indiana University
1998 MA, History of Religions, The University of Chicago
1993 BA, Philosophy, Michigan State University

Dissertation

- "Carmen Miranda: Ripe for Imitation"
Advisor: Jane Goodman

Publications

Peer-reviewed articles

- 2013 "Carmen Miranda and Brasilidade: Hollywood Glamour and Exoticism Reinterpreted" for *Film, Fashion and Consumption* (forthcoming)

Reviews

- 2012 Book review. *River of Tears: Country Music, Memory, and Modernity in Brazil* by Alexander Sebastian Dent. *e-mesférica*, 9, no.1

- 2011 Exhibition catalog review. "Mestre Vitalino e artistas pernambucanos" for *Museum Anthropology Review* 5, no.1-2

- 2010 Journal review. "Fashion Practice" for *Museum Anthropology Review* 4, no. 2

Other publications

- 2008 Photographs. "Email My Heart: Remediation and Romantic Break-ups" by Ilana Gershon. *Anthropology Today* 24, no. 6 (December)

- 2007 Policy memo. "Border Bicultural Personality Traits Among Mexican American Undergraduates," *PoliMemos: UTSA Educational Leadership and Policy Studies* <http://utsa.edu/polimemos/thepolimemo.htm>

In preparation

- Essay (in preparation). "Cocktail Culture, Idealized Femininity, and the Post-War Cocktail Dress"

Technical writing/editing

2012-2013 Writer and editor for in-house instructional documents pertaining to sewing and sewing machine use. TechShop, San Francisco, CA

2010-2011 Writer for online sewing instructions. ehow.com

Professional Museum, Collections, and Historic Sites Experience

2013 Assistant for Special Projects, Textile Arts Conservation Studio, Los Angeles, CA

2012-2013 Curator of Collections (seasonal), Temple Israel Synagogue and Museum (restored 1884 synagogue), Leadville, CO

2013 Volunteer Cataloguer for the Siegfried Strauss Collection (textile component), Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, University of California, Berkeley, CA

2010-2013 Tour Docent, Paramount Theatre of the Arts (National Historic Landmark), Oakland, CA

2009-2010 Archival Specialist, The Roy and Sophia Sieber African Art Collection, Bloomington, IN

2009 Curator, "Clothes, Collections, and Culture . . . What is a Curator?" (Exhibition dates: April 2009-May 2010), The Mathers Museum of World Cultures, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

2008 Cataloguer for the Royce Collection of Isthmus Zapotec Textiles and Clothing, The Mathers Museum of World Cultures, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

2007 Catalogue Data Specialist for Costumes, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, IL

2007 Graduate Intern for Acquisitions Processing, Chicago History Museum (renamed from the Chicago Historical Society), Chicago, IL

2004-2006 Collection Manager for Costumes, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, IL

2002-2004 Collection Technician, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, IL

- 2001 Exhibition Assistant for "Fashion, Flappers 'n All That Jazz," Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, IL

2000-2001 Volunteer in the Costume Collection, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, IL

Graduate Assistantships

- 2011 Graduate Research Assistant to Micol Seigel for the Hemispheric Institute in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, México, funded by American Studies Department, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

2010-2011 Editor/Graduate Assistant, Latino Studies Program Newsletter, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

Graduate Teaching Appointments

- 2006-2010 Associate Instructor (sole-taught all courses), Department of Communication and Culture, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. Courses taught: "Public Speaking," "Interpersonal Communication," and "Communicating through Clothes" (designed upper-level course)

Other Teaching Experience

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| 2008 | Visiting Instructor for Resource Development and Design as Ensemble Member of Plasticene Physical Theater Company, Theater Department, Miami University-Ohio, Miami, OH (weekend workshop) |
| 2005 | Visiting Instructor, Resource Development and Design as Ensemble Member of Plasticene Physical Theater Company, Theater Department, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, IL (weekend workshop) |
| 2004-2005 | Adjunct Instructor, Design Department, International Academy of Design and Technology-Chicago, Chicago, IL. Courses taught: "History of 20 th Century American Dress" (introductory course) and "Film and Fashion" (re-designed this upper-level course) |
| 2004 | Workshop Instructor, "D-I-Y Grassroots Political Activism," Estrojam Music and Culture Festival, Chicago, IL, September 2004 |

Graduate Fellowships and Grants

- 2013 Travel Grant in Support of Conference Participation, Department of Communication and Culture, Indiana University

2011	Tuition remission to attend the Hemispheric Institute's "Art and Political Resistance" Summer Program in Mexico, Indiana University
2011	Grant-in-Aid for Doctoral Research, Graduate School of Indiana University
2010-2011	Latino Studies Dissertation Fellowship (tuition remission plus stipend), Latino Studies Program, Indiana University
2010-2011	Latin American Fellowship (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), Office of International Affairs, Indiana University
2008-2009	Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Academic Year Fellowship (tuition remission plus stipend) for Portuguese/Brazilian Area Studies, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Indiana University
2008	FLAS Summer Fellowship (tuition remission) for Language and Culture Program through Duke University in Brazil, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Indiana University
2008	Tinker Field Research Grant for Latin America (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Indiana University
2008	Travel Grant in Support of Conference Participation, Department of Communication and Culture, Indiana University
1997-1998	FLAS Academic Year Fellowship (tuition remission plus stipend) for Portuguese/Latin America Area Studies at The University of Chicago
1998	Tinker Field Research Grant, The University of Chicago (declined)
1997	FLAS Summer Fellowship (tuition remission plus stipend) for Portuguese/Latin America Area Studies at The University of Chicago
1996-1998	Partial tuition remission, The Divinity School, The University of Chicago

Other Awards

2007	American Association for Hispanics in Higher Education Graduate Fellow
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Peer Reviewed Conference Presentations

2014	"Cocktail Culture, Idealized Femininity, and the Post-War Cocktail Dress" presenter at Cocktail Culture: A Conference, Louisville, KY, April 2014
2013	"Ripe for Imitation" presenter on "Hispanic and Latina/o Performance in US Film and Television: Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexuality" panel, Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference, Chicago, IL, March 2013
2009	"Writing a Museum Narrative with Women's Zapotec Dress," American Folklore Society Annual Conference, Boise, ID, October 2009
2008	"Imagining Carmen Miranda, Imagining Brazil," American Folklore Society Annual Conference, Louisville, KY, October 2008
2008	"The Carmen Miranda Look," Symposium on Dress and Adornment, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, April 2008
2006	"George Washington's Corset: From Candy Man's Curio to Museum Artifact," Annual Symposium for the Costume Society of America, Hartford, CT, June 2006

Invited Presentations

- 2011 "Carmen Miranda and the Carnivalesque in the Hollywood Musical," for the "Carmen Miranda: uma latina em Hollywood?" Conference at Universidad de Puerto Rico, April 2011
- 2009 "Dress In Sports," Department of Communication and Culture, "Sports and the Media" course, taught by Travis Vogan, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, July 2009
- 2009 "In Circulation: The Persistence of Carmen Miranda," Department of Communication and Culture Colloquium Series, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, March 2009
- 2007 "Performing Hillbilly Woman: Why White Trash is Bad for People of Color," CIC-SROP Conference, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, July 2007
- 2006 "George Washington's Corset: From Candy Man's Curio to Museum Artifact," Annual Meeting of the Costume Committee of the Chicago History Museum, Chicago, IL, June 2006
- 2004 "Crafting a Design Career," for "Advanced Theater Design" course, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, IL, October 2004

Professional Costume Design and Artistic Experience

- 2001-2012 Costume Designer and Ensemble Member (annual performances), Plasticene Physical Theater Company under artistic direction of Dexter Bullard, Chicago, IL
- 2009 Contributing Artist (egg tempera painting), Boxcar Books and Community Center Staff Art Show, Bloomington, IN
- 2007 Performance Artist, Plasticene's "Clearly," a sonic/video/live performance installation for John Cage's Musicircus, Chicago, IL, October 2007
- 2005 Contributing Artist (textile-based work), Madhatter's Ball Benefit for Lookingglass Theatre Company, Chicago, IL
- 2005 Installation Artist (textile-based work), 3rd Annual PAC/edge Festival, Chicago, IL, April 2005
- 2004 Curator and Contributing Artist (textile-based), "33 1/3" art exhibition, Chicago, IL, May 2004

Other Professional Experience

- 2012 Project Assistant to Clothing and Textile Appraiser, Melissa Leventon, Curatrix Group Museum Consultants and Appraisers, San Francisco, CA

Academic and Community Service

- 2009-2010 Graduate Student Mentor, Department of Communication and Culture, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
- 2008-2010 Volunteer Collective Member and Bookseller, Boxcar Books and Community Center, Bloomington, IN
- 2007-2008 Textile Arts Instructor, Shalom Community Center, Bloomington, IN

Additional Related Training

- 2011 “Art and Resistance” (Latin American political art history) taught by Diana Taylor and Jesusa Rodríguez, Hemispheric Institute, Chiapas, México.
Institutional scholarship to attend
- 2004 “Textiles Care for Museum Standards” taught by textile conservator Harold Mailand, Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies, Mount Carroll, IL. NEH scholarship to attend
- 2003 Artist’s Apprentice to Tony Fitzpatrick, Big Cat Press, Chicago, IL
- 1999-2000 Coursework in Costume Design, Film Studies, and Theater, Columbia College Chicago

Professional Affiliations

- American Alliance of Museums
California Association of Museums
Latin American Studies Association
Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Member of Latino/a Caucus

Languages

Brazilian Portuguese (written/spoken proficiency), Spanish (basic spoken), French (reading proficiency), studying Hebrew

Media Appearances

- 2012 Newspaper interview in Leadville, Colorado’s *Herald Democrat* discussing the opening of the Temple Israel Museum (9/5/2012)