

Space and Relationality in Rio's Favelas: *Asfalto* and *Comunidade**

Paul Sneed**

Seoul National University

Sneed, Paul(2018), "Space and Relationality in Rio's Favelas: *Asfalto* and *Comunidade*", *Revista Asiática de Estudios Iberoamericanos*, 29(3), 61-93.

Abstract In this paper, I offer reflections on contemporary popular culture in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to consider a common metaphor in everyday parlance that pits the objectifying formally urbanized city, called "asphalt," against the informal "communities" of its favelas. With nods to Paul Gilroy's understanding of the Black Atlantic world, Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue and psychiatric theories of attachment, I explore this contrasting word pairing to locate both a critique of conventional Eurocentric rationalist notions of space, time, knowledge, being and power and an affirmation of an alternative, Afro-Atlantic relational impulse regarding those same categories.

Key words favela, space, popular culture, relational philosophy

* This article was made possible with support from the Research Affairs of Seoul National University (Division of Research Support) for the Future Basic Academic Field Support Project grant I received in 2018. I gratefully acknowledge additional funding from the SNU Institute for Latin American Studies (SNUILAS). Special thanks, as well, to the editors of this volume and the anonymous reviewers for their invaluable insights and suggestions. I'm also grateful to colleagues at the VI International Congress of World Literature and Language at the University of Costa Rica for their feedback on this project, especially Professor Marco Mora Piedra. Gratitude, too, to Professor Travis Lamar Smith for edits made on an early draft and to activist/community educator Nino Mason for permission to use his photos. Finally, sincerest thanks to friends and former neighbors of Rio's favela of Rocinha for their love, support and ideas, which I have attempted to convey in this essay.

** Associate Professor of the Department of Hispanic Language and Literature, SNU & Affiliated Professor of the Institute of Latin American Studies, SNU.

Brazil is a democratic, capitalist nation and one of the wealthiest in the world, yet it has not been able to overcome the chronic social exclusion and violence that have plagued the country since its colonial beginnings.¹⁾ The geography of the city of Rio de Janeiro makes such social contrasts glaringly evident in the way it brings together lush, forested hills and seaside high-rise buildings with the city's hundreds of favelas, which many of the city's poor call home.²⁾ These contradictions, along with epidemic levels of homicide and the drug traffickers, police, and paramilitary units operating in many of the city's squatter towns have made Rio an example of the inequalities and injustices characteristic of Brazil and, in varying degrees, much of the rest of Latin America today.³⁾ The country's crisis of economic stagnation,

1) According to Anthony Faiola, "Brazil has one of the most marked disparities of wealth in the world, with the richest 10 percent of the population controlling more than 50 percent of the wealth, while the poorest 10 percent control less than 1 percent" (Faiola, 2002).

2) The stark descriptions of the ongoing crisis of social exclusion and violence facing Rio's favela residents today here are in no way intended as dismissive of the economic advances made and pride local people take in their communities. Much to the contrary. As a person who spent roughly five years total living and working in Rio's favela of Rocinha, from 1990-2009, I have witnessed first-hand an increase in economic development, improvements in infrastructure and a growing level of acceptance in Brazilian society in recent years, both from within and without. Sadly, however, it would be a gross exaggeration to claim favela residents and those of middle and upper-class neighborhoods in Rio have access to similar living conditions in public security, housing, healthcare, education, transportation, employment, etc. Indeed, as the intense period of gang and police violence in Rocinha from September 2017 throughout much of 2018 attests, there remain still many rivers to cross on the path towards social justice for the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and Brazil more generally (Extra Online, 2017; Glenny, 2018).

3) According to *Violência e criminalidade no Estado do Rio de Janeiro*, organized by Anthony Garotinho et al., homicide rates in Brazil and Rio de Janeiro specifically have remained among the highest in the world for years. In São Paulo, for instance, from 1992 through 2002 there were roughly 60 murders per 100,000 residents, exponentially higher than those of Washington, DC and New York City, which, it claimed, were 7.4 and 7.8 per 100,000 respectively. In the Rio metro area, the rate ranged throughout the nineties from 50 to 75 per 100,000—with that of the neighboring Baixada Fluminense ranging from about 67 to 85. In those times, in São Paulo approximately 11,000 people were murdered

political instability and massive levels of corruption in recent years have only served to exacerbate Rio's plight.⁴⁾

Over the decades, scholars and analysts of Brazilian society and culture have offered a wide range of spatial metaphors to make sense of the contrasting realities of Rio's rich and poor. In the early 90s, Journalist Zuenir Ventura characterized it as the "divided city" in his classic account of what he considered to be an undeclared, postmodern war raging between police and favela drug cartels (Ventura, 1994). In another groundbreaking treatise on urban space and power in Brazil, anthropologist Teresa Caldeira explored the fear, crime, and segregation that caused São Paulo to be transformed into a militarized "city of walls" (Caldeira, 2000).

Throughout the nearly five years that I lived in the favela of Rocinha from 1990 through 2009—as both a scholarly researcher and community educator working with a non-profit there—I regularly heard residents refer to the formally urbanized areas of the formal city surrounding favelas as the *asfalto*, or "asphalt." These officially urbanized areas they contrasted with their informal neighborhood, which they referred to as favela, often referring to it as *morro* ("hill") or *comunidade* ("community").⁵⁾ Labeling the formal city as asphalt in the everyday parlance of the favelas has its roots in the fact that

every year and in Rio, a considerably smaller city, around 6,000. See too, Julio Jacob Waiselfisz, "Sumário executivo: Mapa de violência dos municípios brasileiros."

- 4) In an editorial in the Washington Post on the heels of the recent election of ultra-right Jair Bolsonaro in October 2018, former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso pointed out that since the adoption of its post-dictatorship constitution in 1988, Brazil's presidential politics have remained in shambles. Out of the four democratically elected Brazilian presidents since that time, two have been impeached (Fernando Collor de Mello and Dilma Rousseff) and another is currently serving a twelve-year jail sentence (Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva) (Cardoso, 2018).
- 5) I first arrived in Rocinha as an exchange student from my native United States in 1990 and last lived there in 2009. In total, I spent some five years living in Rocinha, as a neighbor, researcher and director of a non-governmental educational center. Much of my research focused on Rio's gangster funk (*proibidão*), violence and community.

until the final few decades of the twentieth century, most favelas in Rio didn't have many of the paved roads of the officially planned areas of the city. Some still do not, especially newer ones—not to mention favelas in other, less affluent towns and regions across Brazil.⁶

Despite its similarities with Ventura and Caldeira's analogies, favela residents' use of the asphalt versus favela metaphor suggests a unique sort of reverse-geography that works to turn accepted mainstream values of Rio's social geographies on their head.⁷ In the face of spatial hierarchies dating back to the earliest colonial times in Latin America that hold up the formally urbanized area of the city as ritzy, glamorous, modern, safe, and civilized, favela residents cast it as an extension of an inorganic grid that is colder, faster paced, more rigid, and less human than favelas. The "asphalt," for these favela residents, is a space of desolation, estrangement, abstraction, and legalism pushing them even further to the bottom of the city social hierarchies. As characterized by this metaphor, places in Rio conventionally referred to as "noble neighborhoods" (*bairros nobres*), are no longer considered the areas of greatest humanity or culture in the city. Instead, it is the favela as a place of *comunidade* that offers a stronghold against the cold indifference of our mass society, especially in a context of discrimination in

6) In Rio alone, the official number of favelas recognized by City Hall in Rio de Janeiro went up in 2003 from 603 to 752 (Schmidt 2003, "Estudo aponta mais 49 favelas"). This statistic excludes favelas from the city's surrounding municipalities. In 2010, Janice Perlman reported that the greater Rio area had over 1000 favelas and the most significant favela population of any metropolitan area in Brazil (Perlman, 2010, p. 52). According to her study, its favela population had grown from 7% in 1950 to 18.66% by 2000, making up over a million total residents (55).

7) Today, some activists, academics and more politically-minded residents of Rio's squatter towns avoid the term *favela*, using *comunidade* (community) in its place. Here I retain its use to re-signify it, respect its continued use by residents and distinguish it from the other applications of the term community at play in this essay. As for the term *morro* (hill), I avoid it here since technically it applies only to a reduced number of Rio's favelas since a great many are located off the hillsides of the city in flat areas.

Rio. It becomes the quintessentially human landscape—with all the music, creativity, faith, friendship, hard work and intelligence of its residents.

Beyond the more physical meaning of this metaphor for social geography, over the years it has occurred to me that aesthetically and philosophically the asphalt side of the equation is also more closely connected to Whiteness, Brazil's European legacy and Western rationalist thinking. The favela-as-community side, in contrast, is linked to the Afro-Atlantic world—as well as other alternative cultural contexts in which rationalism is less rooted, such as those throughout the pre-modern world (and even many other forms of non-rationalist Western thought).⁸⁾ The implication is that, in this sense, being at least partially off the grid in the more organic territory of favelas has offered a buffer against the full blast of the colonial legacy. The less formalized nature of the favela has given it a certain degree of privacy to carry on life more humanely, allowing it to be something of a hideout from the alienating hegemony of the mainstream status quo. More still, it serves as a warning about the consequences of overly rationalistic and objectifying notions of knowledge, power and being for our moral, social and political lives anywhere.

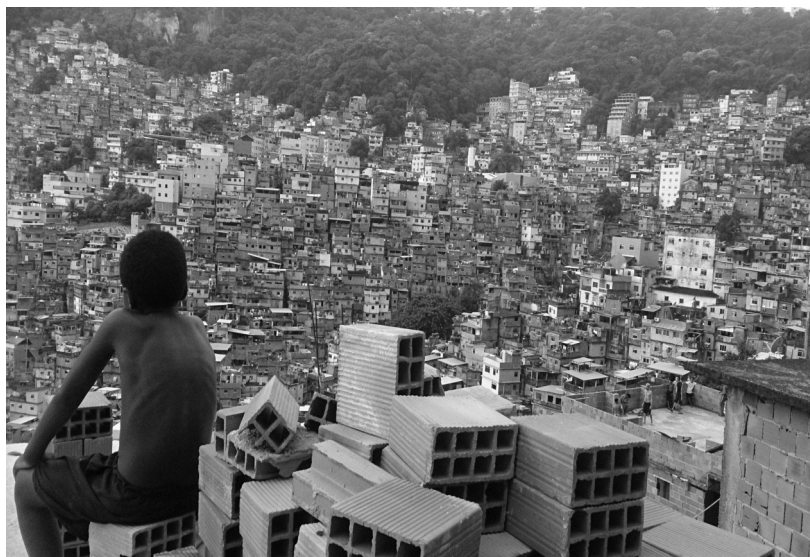
Ultimately, there is an even more radically countercultural impulse at the core of the simple distinction with which favela residents divide Rio's social geographies into asphalt versus favela. This inclination makes this metaphor compatible with the ideas of Martin Buber, the twentieth-century Austrian-born, Jewish-Israeli philosopher and theologian often considered the pioneer figure of relational philosophy or the philosophy of dialogue. Indeed, the

8) Here I use Afro-Atlantic in the sense of Paul Gilroy's notion of the Black Atlantic world. His main point was that people brought to the Americas from Africa as slaves, together with their descendants, developed a certain double-consciousness that allowed them to creatively and critically draw upon ideas of the European Enlightenment without adopting its rationalism (Gilroy, 1992).

asphalt versus favela-as-community split lines up with Buber's description of what he views as our twofold attitude towards the world around us, expressed in the word pairings "I-It" and "I-Thou" (the first expressing an objectifying attitude and the latter a relational one, as I will explain in the following section). Spatializing these binaries in Buber's thought, we can say that whereas the spatial mode of *asfalto* is "experiential," that of *comunidade* is "relational," depending upon a person's attitude. Reflecting on the differences between these modes of space and relationality is crucial for understanding the realities of Rio's favelas and the lives of those who live there.

I. Experience and Encounter

Over the years, the asphalt versus favela-community split has also been picked up by activists, journalists and intellectuals across the social classes.



Boy and Bricks (Courtesy of Nino Mason, 2017)

In her exhaustive work *Favela, Four Decades of Living on the Edge in Rio de Janeiro*, the fruit of forty years of research and relationships in Rio's favelas, Janice Perlman employs such a dichotomy repeatedly, contrasting the asphalt with favela, which she also often labels as morro or community.⁹⁾ In contrasting the formal city with its informal squatter towns, she offers an intriguing pair of spatial descriptors useful for the sort of consideration of space and relationality in this essay. For her, whereas the asphalt is "rectilinear," or related to straight lines, the favela-community is "curvilinear," or curved (Perlman, 2010, 31). Though she does not explicitly develop this comparison beyond its visual or physical aspects, it's worth considering the epistemological and ontological tensions it suggests.

This is where Martin Buber's relational philosophy offers essential clues in pointing towards a logic of straight, experiential space in opposition to curved, relational space. According to Buber, human nature is twofold, having twofold attitudes with which we regard the world around other people and us. The first, which he characterizes as the way of "I-It," is "experiential." His use of the term experiential does not entail one undergoing an occurrence or event, as the term is often used. Instead, he employs it rather more literally as that which is measurable by experiments or through solid contact with the observable facts of events. The other attitude to which Buber points, which he names "I-Thou" (often translated as "I-You"), is "relational."¹⁰⁾ Relationship, for him, is not just the ways parts fit together, organizationally, but being together with one another in the here

9) Perlman's research of Rio's favelas goes back decades with the work that led to the publication of *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro* in 1976. It helped usher in, "... a paradigm shift away from perceiving the urban poor as 'marginal' or irrelevant to the system to seeing them as tightly integrated into the system, albeit in a perversely asymmetrical fashion" (Perlman, 2010, xx-xxi).

10. As recently as Early Modern English, "thou" was used as the most intimate form of the second person singular pronoun, typically rendered as "you" today.

and now of the present moment, in an encounter.¹¹⁾ It is not merely “process” over “content,” but “presence” over “content,” as well. It is a presence-based relationality.¹²⁾ Only with this attitude and the encounter do we truly live, he claims. In perhaps his most often quoted passage, he sums this up with the phrase “All real living is meeting” (Buber, 2010, 11).

Though Buber recognized the I-It posture as critical to human endeavors, for him it is incomplete. Such a mode is never of our “whole being” (3), as such, and therefore not one he considers as bringing about “real living” (11). He believes that in our contemporary world the first attitude has grievously overshadowed the second. The society we have built up around the I-It, he warns, has made it nearly impossible for us to engage in genuine dialogue or to “enter into relation” and the “realm of the spirit” (39). As a result, we are left to skim the surface, continually going somewhere other than the living moment of the present, driven by intentionality and a will to control.

But when we turn to one another as persons in the encounter, Buber proclaims, we do so with the fullness of our being. Indeed, much of his reasoning is based on his unique understanding of encounter, or what he calls *Begegnung*, in the original German. Encounter, for him, is a situation, an event, in which relation occurs (*Beziehung*). Because such meetings, for Buber, occur apart from experience, the person involved does not receive any object or thing that can be known, as such. Knowing, instead, comes through a

-
11. In his introduction to Buber's *I and Thou*, Ronald Gregor Smith preferred to emphasize “organizational” in his characterization of Buber's I-It instead of “experiential” (Smith, 2010, vii). While such a term would fit well with my concern for social space and power, I believe Buber's original emphasis on experience is better suited to the broader range of analytical categories I am pointing to here.
 12. My use of the term relational can also be taken to reference Edouard Glissant's aesthetics of relation and his notion of creolization, both invaluable for understanding the post-colonial Afro-Atlantic word (Glissant, 1997). Still, whereas Glissant's understanding of relation suggests a contrast between content and process, Buber's more co-existential meaning of relational pits content against presence, in encounter, as I will explore below.

transformational revelation of life, in the relationship of the “I” with another. As such, it is trans-substantial. Buber wrote, “Man receives, and he receives not a specific ‘content’ but a Presence, a Presence as power” (110). That power received in presence is life as coexistence, not merely in the sense of tolerating or of one living peacefully side by side with others but rather as “life with,” in the collective existence of relationality, community, fellowship and love.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Buber’s thought in the context of questions of space and relationality, for me, is that it applies not only to the way we regard other people as persons but also the world around us. This broader view includes encounters with non-human animals, trees and even mere heaps of stones (Hodes, 1972, 42). For Buber, each I-Thou relationship opens up a window giving a tiny glimpse of the ultimate “Thou” of God. Indeed, he states that God can only be addressed as “Thou” and never as “It” (Buber, 2010, 75). In this way, the life of dialogue Buber proclaims goes beyond the realm of human affairs or what we traditionally take for “interpersonal” to embrace interconnected relationality with everything around us.

Martin Buber’s writings are rich and complex—and numerous. I do not consider myself a particularly thorough student of his thought. Not from any comprehensive point of view, anyway. I do often find myself reflecting on his ideas, though, especially from his seminal work, *I and Thou*, from which I have drawn the quotes for this essay.¹³ Profoundly influenced by Buber’s contact with the mysticism of Hasidic Judaism, his thinking is often compared with Eastern religious and philosophical traditions, especially Zen Buddhism and Daoism.¹⁴ Somewhat as with the Daoist concept of *wu wei*—generally translated as “non-action” or “non-doing”—for Buber’s view of

13. The work was first published in German in 1923, as *Ich und Du*, and in English in 1937.

encounter there can be no aim, no purposefulness, idol or will to control. Such an encounter permits us to pass through the surface, in grace, diving into a deeper reality beyond space and time. He wrote, “The world of *It* is set in the context of space and time. The world of *Thou* is not set in the context of either of these” (100).

Though Buber considers encounter as something taking place outside of space and time, in the context of my activities and ethnographic research in the favela of Rocinha over these many years, I have begun to think of it in a more live sense, as a gathering, performance or group meeting. In the patent circularity of daily life in the favela—in “community encounters” like samba dance rings, a *candomblé* worship services, a *capoeira* dance/fight sessions or a gangster funk dance parties in the streets of the favela—clearly, there is space and time, as well. In this sense, I see the term *comunidade*, used as a synonym for favela, as more than “neighborhood,” per se, but also as a ground for smaller moments of community. These community encounters, in this sense, are spaces and times of communion or fellowship.

When we are in a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous, for instance, attending a Pentecostal worship service in a church or simply gathered with friends at a pizza place, we are immersed in a community encounter—not just between one person turning towards the world as “Thou” but multiple persons doing the same—as “You All.” Ever since human society emerged around the communal bonfires of early times, such moments of communal life were the dominant mode of interaction. Perhaps in Buber’s more bourgeois, modern, European experience, it made sense to think of encounters in relatively private terms, as one-on-one

14. Maurice Friedman, author of *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue* (1955), among many other works on Buber—and perhaps the all-time greatest Buber scholar—wrote extensively about Buber’s interest in Daoism. See “Martin Buber and Asia,” from 1976, in which he discusses Buber’s lengthy essay of 1911, “The Teaching of the Tao.”

meetings. Historically, however, in the Afro-Atlantic world people have enjoyed far less privacy and gatherings have persisted in orality, music and dance, song and religious practice—even in a great many forms of their work lives and leisure.

II. Pizza Dialogue¹⁵⁾

It's a Thursday night in July, around ten thirty at night. PizzaHot is packed, as usual. Dozens of people are seated in the restaurant, which is about the length of a bus, and many more are milling about the tables, chatting, drinking, eating, and smoking. Others stand out on the sidewalk on one side of PizzaHot and in the street down along another. The restaurant is well lit, the TV mounted in front of the restrooms inaudible over the roar of the vehicles rolling by an arm's length away. Mixing with the cigarette smoke and Rio de Janeiro's muggy humidity, exhaust fumes hang above the crowd from the traffic jam of cars, trucks, buses, vans, and scores of motorcycle taxis. Adding to the din, the booming bass of Brazilian gangster funk flows over the crowd from a pair of homemade wooden speaker cabinets protruding from the back of a small red car, parked next to the restaurant—boom, boom, boom.

Across the table from me, along the red handrail that separates the main dining area from the busy street, Rafael lights a cigarette. A free-lance journalist from a middle-class family in Tijuca, in Rio's Northern Zone, he's thin, in his late twenties, wearing jeans and a charcoal t-shirt, with a heavy shadow of a beard. It's wintertime in Rio and light jacket weather. After writing a feature article on Casa Zero, our non-profit community center, for

15. This semi-fictionalized ethnographic vignette presents a composite of various real life conversations I took part in at a pizzeria in Rocinha in 2009. Names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

an online magazine, he taught a photography course there and another one at a project based further up the hill, run by Rio's City Hall. While we wait for a friend, we've been discussing my new documentary film project about community encounters in the favela.¹⁶⁾

"Don't you see that the only actual link between these spaces you're talking about is you yourself?" he laughs. "It's a film about your life in Rocinha, man!" As he points out, I have at one time or another been personally attached to all the community encounters to be featured in the film, beyond my interests as a scholar or filmmaker, either through my own experiences or from having good friends who were involved get me acquainted with them. Rafael doesn't think I've applied enough rigor or objectivity in seeking out representative spaces. The fact that we are eating pizza right now—at the exact restaurant to appear in my film—seems to corroborate his suspicion; I do like pizza, a lot. We laugh together, and I wonder if Rafael is right that this lack of impartiality undermines my view.

It's true that I first came to Rocinha in 1990 through friends who lived there who I met in a twelve-step recovery program similar to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA); I trained in capoeira with the Grupo Abadã da Rocinha in 1996, 1998, and 2000 and then continued to visit the *roda* dance/fight circles afterward, remaining friends with several of the *capoeiristas*; I have attended numerous candomblé sessions over the years at the home of a close friend who was a *pai-de-santo*, or priest, of Xangô, the *orixá* of justice and thunder; I went to street parties and other musical get-togethers socially

16. That documentary is titled *Atalhos e Encontros* (Sneed, 2012). I made two others featuring the stories and viewpoints of Rocinha residents, *Rocinha: Em Casa no Morroão* (Sneed, 2007) and *Pacificação da Favela: Encontro com Pai Almir* (Sneed, 2012). Additionally, much ethnographic material is provided in the various written accounts I've published over the years on funk carioca and other expressions of music, religion and popular culture in Rocinha (see Sneed, 2003; 2007; 2008; 2012; 2013). Most recently, I have a book in press due for release in the spring of 2019, *Machine Gun Voices: Favelas and Utopia in Brazilian Gangster Funk*.

as a community member and fan—in addition to those I visited specifically as fieldwork for my dissertation; and I became a Christian in Rocinha in 1992 (though I remained a non-practicing one until 2003).

As far as PizzaHot specifically, I have been a regular there since it first opened in 1998, about the same time Casa Zero started. PizzaHot quickly became our unofficial hangout for meeting after night classes. Since PizzaHot is open almost all night, over the years I've also come here before or after capoeira practice, church services, candomblé sessions, or gangster parties and other musical festivities held throughout Rocinha, which often start after midnight and end near dawn. In 2000, while I was director of Casa Zero, PizzaHot's owner, Sérgio, graciously offered us space for a phone line and computer in his office in a back room, an arrangement that lasted until we were able to get our own space about six months later. During that time, I ate lunch and dinner at PizzaHot nearly every day, in addition to being present at my desk in more than a few awkward managerial situations, when the owner had to reprimand or even fire some of his employees.

For a journalist, Rafael explains, such a deep level of involvement is problematic. Besides, the central thread of the film doesn't make sense to him. It's easy enough to understand including a non-profit educational center in a video about community-based learning. He can even see how I might associate a capoeira group, AA meetings, or evangelical church with alternative knowledge and power. One can argue that people go to religious services and recovery groups specifically to learn, he says. It is easy to imagine, he points out, that things like music, song, dance, prayer, testimonies, and the like can help induce altered, supra-rational, or even mystical states of rapture and ecstasy through which people can collectively connect with sources of knowledge and power.

Even gangster dances might be able to bring on some mass hypnosis that can shape the minds and hearts of those present, through rhythm and

flashing lights and the erotic emotion of people as their bodies press together. Indeed, some people attending see funk music as a means of promoting class and ethnic solidarity and raising awareness of social injustice. Still, Rafael isn't convinced of the gangster dances, he says, because machine guns and crime are flaunted there, along with drug and alcohol abuse, irresponsible sex, the objectification of women (and men), and ostentatious materialism. Any learning going on seems to him mostly destructive.

As for gatherings in the pizza place, that strikes him as the most irrelevant of all. What knowledge and power are made available here? Where is the agency? There is no real "encounter" or performance—not in any self-conscious way, at least. Nobody, he says, comes to a pizza place to learn anything; they come to escape, in entertainment, leisure, and fellowship. It's like that theme song from the television show, *Cheers*, he suggests. "Sometimes you want to go where everyone knows your name, and they're always glad you came." It's nice and it feels great, he says, but it's not "learning"—especially not the kind of learning taking place in a non-governmental organization, or in schools and university classrooms.

I like his description of the types of alternative knowledge, being and power in the community encounters, I say. I'm not sure I could have said it better myself. But still I disagree that simple moments of communion like the ones of his *Cheers* analogy are not learning experiences, I tell him. Community is not a given. A person can be "alone in a crowd," surrounded by life and people without being a part of things, without joining in. Entering into community requires a capacity for intimacy, a certain openness to communicate (a word sharing a common root with community, I point out), to be in dialogue, mutuality, reciprocity, and exchange that comes from being able to release others from control, to accept them, to share with them and be honest, to love them.

These abilities are both learned and natural, I tell Rafa, like linguistic

abilities. People have an innate capacity for language, but whatever a person's language, it must be learned. Education and learning, I suggest, are not questions of "content" or "arguments" as much as a person's capacity to move beyond apprehending other people and things in the world as objects through a state of openness that allows for mutual relationships. It's what allows a person to join with others in creating community encounters as co-authors and co-actors.

"That's all fine," Rafa retorts, "but it's still a crock of shit!"

I laugh with him, shaking my head.

After a pause, he laughs again, "Love and learning are two separate things."

Well, not totally, I answer, although I'm getting the feeling I'm not going to convince him. So I switch over to the question of my lack of objectivity. It's a legitimate concern, no doubt. But still, if I hadn't gone into these community encounters as participant and neighbor first and researcher second, I might not have connected with them as spaces of knowledge and power or noticed that learning was occurring there. Indeed, I tell him, I am convinced that comparison will reveal that places like non-profit community centers could be the weakest spaces of community-based learning on the list and that places like PizzaHot figure in somewhere near the top.

Rafa shakes his head. "You're welcome to keep trying to convince me," he jokes, "but I wouldn't make any bets!" In the meantime, he'll take another glass of beer. I stick my fork into another piece of our pizza. There is a pause in our conversation as the two of us briefly survey the scene in and around the pizza place.

PizzaHot is located in an area of Rocinha known as Curva do S, or the "S Curve," named for twin hairpin curves in the road. It sits at the intersection of two of the most heavily traveled paths through the favela: the Estrada da Gávea, the only thoroughfare allowing bus and passenger vans, and the Caminho do Boiadeiro, which descends sharply to the

enormous outdoor market that takes place every Sunday in the lower basin of Rocinha, on the São Conrado side. A constant stream of pedestrian traffic passes as people head to and from work, come home from night school, or head out to meet with friends. Seven nights a week PizzaHot stays open until around five or six in the morning.

On the Estrada da Gávea side, the restaurant sits slightly above the sidewalk. Here is the take-out/delivery window and the area for the delivery drivers' motorcycles. Along the edge of the sidewalk are two or three tall tables with no chairs, each surrounded by patrons. Along the Caminho do Boiadeiro, eight or nine tables inside are separated from the street by a waist-high wall, the one with the red metal handrail. Because of the curve in the road, it's easy for people on the street to talk to those officially inside the restaurant, blurring the separation between inside and outside. Ten or twelve people stand socializing over the handrail, leaning over to make jokes and get pieces of pizza, glasses of draft beer in hand. On the other corner of the street, about ten paces away, a group of ten or eleven people, mostly men, sits on the steps in front of a small soda and beer stand. People at both spots crisscross the street to mingle.

Rafa takes another gulp of beer and begins listing various educational opportunities that have come about through Casa Zero. Relying almost entirely on volunteers, he says, it offers many small-scale educational projects, workshops, and classes for Rocinha residents in subjects such as English (and other languages, mainly French and Spanish), reading, computer technology, visual arts, dance, capoeira, fitness, public health, financial education, business management, photography, video production, and an after-school tutoring program. The center helps Rocinha residents address immediate and practical personal goals. It increases employability, he says, and helps people pass the Brazilian college entrance exam—the *vestibular*. It has led dozens of educational field trips for children to areas of Rio outside

Rocinha. A small number of our students and staff have been able to participate in academic and professional conferences in Rio, the United States, and Europe. Others have had opportunities to acquire experience in social science and humanities-based research, helping researchers doing fieldwork in the favela.

Perhaps even more importantly, he points out, Casa Zero serves as a sort of “organic university” that brings together people from various social classes, nationalities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, educational backgrounds and life experiences, fostering mutual learning and greater solidarity. Such interactions aid local people in attaining the broader cultural literacy and sharper critical consciousness necessary to achieve greater access to the full array of social and political institutions in Brazil. Additionally, he says, it’s an effective way to help researchers and volunteers understand poverty in Rio’s favelas in a much more personal way, through deep-seated and persisting friendships with residents of the community.

Just then, Wellington, a community activist from Rocinha, joins us at our table. With him is Vítor, a computer tech with a local favela Internet provider, who’s been waiting at another table for his buddies Cícero and Alex, friends planning to go with him to a special Thursday night funk dance party at the Emoções Club when they get off work at the nearby Intercontinental Hotel. The two shake our hands and briskly pat our backs as they pull up chairs to the table. Rafael signals our waiter to bring three more beers. Wellington, a former student from Casa Zero’s very first English class in 1998 when he was 13, is now fluent and makes extra money as a favela tour guide. Vítor is in his late twenties, thin and muscular, with several tattoos, including a line of Japanese characters up the side of his neck.

Rafael looks around PizzaHot with a bemused smirk and asks the two, as native residents of the favela, if they think PizzaHot is a space of relational knowledge, being and power or if anyone here is doing any “organic-

learning.” This provokes a big laugh from the two, who assume he’s kidding. After he presses on, getting them up to speed on our conversation, they still don’t think anything of the kind, at least not at first glance. Rafael finishes explaining, “... and this guy thinks that of all those spaces this pizza place is the one that’s like the most intense community encounter!”

Wellington, who recently graduated from Universidade Veiga de Almeida with a degree in History, makes the argument that a commercially driven capitalist enterprise like a restaurant can never truly embody community; it’s inevitably a space of fetishism and social exclusion. Because of the violence and exploitation of the system, he says, not everybody in the favela has the money to come and eat here.

Vítor can’t resist the opening. “That never kept you from coming here and bumming off your friends!” The four of us laugh.

“That’s true!” Wellington agreed, after a pause, “This is as good a place as any to start redistributing the wealth!”

I add in, almost under my breath, “Out of all the spaces we’re talking about, the encounter here at PizzaHot is the most presence-based. The other ones spring up around more specific objectives and goals, strategies. It makes it harder to have a genuine encounter when we have some other intentions pulling us out of the present moment, towards some future aim.” I glance around the table without much hope anyone is tracking my thinking. “Our would-be ‘organic university,’ Casa Zero, is the least presence-based, in that sense. It’s way more content-based.”

Wellington is bumming a cigarette off Rafael. “So what you’re saying, basically, is that Casa Zero is a little piece of the asphalt in the favela-community.”

I blink a few times, surprised at how much sense he’s managed to make out of my attempts at pointing my thoughts into words. “Well, yeah,” I say, “unfortunately, I think it is, in a way. Casa Zero is like a piece of the asphalt

set up in the favela.”

Rafa and Vítor laugh from the bottom of their bellies.

“Sem nexo, cara!” Rafa says. “That makes like zero sense, man!”

Looking around us in the warm night, amidst the din of dishes and the murmur of the crowd, punctuated in periodic bursts of laughter and the beeps of motorcycle horns, I can tell that I haven’t come close to putting into words the powerful sense of community encounter I feel. Maybe if Rafa knew the stories of the patrons around us, many of whom are my friends, he’d understand, especially since they represent people coming from almost every kind of community group in Rocinha imaginable, including most of those to be highlighted in my film.

Next to us is a young girl’s birthday party, filled with adults young and old from the Grupo Rocinha of the local Alcoholics Anonymous. There is a little group of street children sitting with some motorcycle-taxi drivers, who are giving them food and a moment of respite from life on the (formal) city streets. I see teenagers from Rocinha’s Midsummer’s Dream Ballroom Dance troupe relaxing in the party room, just off the back of the main floor. With them is Rebeca, a thirtysomething transgender woman who is sensuously flirting with a friend and former student of mine, Erick, a nineteen-year-old dancer and expecting father who laughs nervously, pretending not to notice her advances.

On the sidewalk, a group of women in their mid-forties in Capri-length workout pants and sleeveless tops lean against a table, where they’ve stopped on their way back up the hill from the R1 Gym to chat with some *capoeiristas*. One of the women shrieks in delight as she catches sight of Ligeirinho, a twenty-nine-year-old man I’ve known since he was eleven, when I rented a room from his family. He got his nickname, which means Speedy Gonzalez in Portuguese because he grew up to be one of the fastest, most daring motorcycle pilots in the favela. He’s just back from serving time in Bangu

III, one of Rio's maximum-security prisons, used for members of the Amigos dos Amigos (ADA) gang. After three years in a cell with fifty men, eating maggot-ridden rice and beans, it's his first night back in Rocinha and he's at PizzaHot, surrounded by family and friends.

Wellington notices Ligueirinho and tells Rafael who he is.

"Yeah, so what about the drug traffickers, anyway? You think they're 'learning' anything good in the gang?" Rafael asks grinning, then winking at me.

"Not likely, bro." Vítor answers, "They're incompetent. They're ill-equipped to rule and unprepared to be successful in business." He looks around to make sure no one else is listening. "My brother-in-law was in the *firma* ("gang") and tried to recruit me. He was a great guy, but the rest of them were a bunch of morons. I could never put up with that shit, you know? I studied business for two semesters! And I worked in a bank! You need real education to run a drug business."

"Yeah," Wellington said, "But the gangsters do throw pretty good funk parties, right? Like the one you're going to tonight!"

Vítor was un-fazed by Wellington's ironic tone. "Even that they screw up most of the time." I'm sure it's a reference to the baile funk gangster party we attended days before at the *quadra* dance hall. Just about the time we were heading home around five AM, gang members killed two people in separate incidents, supposedly by accident. The gang buried the bodies in the woods above the favela to cover it up. Laughing and shaking his head, Vítor adds, "I just go for the girls... and I keep my head low!"

It seems it would be pretty useless right now to comment on the different people in and around PizzaHot to demonstrate how together we make up a community encounter. I could probably get them to acknowledge PizzaHot as an "organic university" in this sense of being a contact zone bringing together different types of people. But to convince them that it

was also an “organic university” in the more primordial sense—as a live space of community encounter where people practice turning to one another in openness and intimacy—that would be more difficult. It would probably be even harder to explain why I think the ability to enter into spaces of community like these—in acceptance, cooperation, sharing, and humility—also happen to be the basic ingredients for social and global justice. So I tell them that pizza is a form of bread and that we are in the proverbial act of “breaking bread.” I also remind them that the Latin root of the word *companheiro*, or “companion,” means “person sharing bread” and that in Christianity taking the Eucharist, or Holy Supper, is the supreme act of communion between the members of the church and God and among each other. Sharing pizza is breaking bread, too. This comment gets an even bigger laugh out of them than anything else I’ve said so far.

“Typical college professor!” Vítor laughs.

It doesn’t matter much to me whether or not they agree with me intellectually, I suppose; the light in their eyes makes me think they can feel it anyway, as the three continue to joke at the table in high spirits.

To me, this is a liminal moment and a space of heightened equality and fraternity in which we accept one another as we are and open ourselves to each other. It is a limbic space. The fact that it is somewhat of a refuge in the panorama of social exclusion and violence in Rio today only intensifies this sense. The people around us are not sitting home alone watching TV, stuck in traffic in cars, or even on FaceBook; we are not interacting with objects or facsimiles but have chosen to come together here with real people in a real inter-subjective place. Satisfied to give our friendly debate a rest, I lay back and breathe in the moment.

III. Content and Presence

Since the latter half of the twentieth century, psychologists have explored in depth affinities between Martin Buber's thinking, attachment theory and what some call "attachment-oriented therapy" (Flores 2005, 307-310). The terms of attachment theory take on particular relevance for the sorts of concerns about shared spatiality and temporality that are so central to the view of mutual and collective relationality I have attempted to represent in the vignette above. We can draw from such perspectives to think about community encounters as examples of what one could term "limbic space." Here, I use the word limbic in the sense of biological psychology. Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini and Richard Lannon relate it to our neurological make-up as organisms that have evolved with needs of affect and community as physiologically essential as our needs for food, water, sleep and shelter (Lewis et al. 2000). They classify three types of interpersonal limbic activities, all of which they regard as holding essential implications for collective encounters: *limbic resonance*, *limbic regulation* and *limbic revision*.

Limbic resonance, for them, is "...a symphony of mutual exchange and internal adaption by which two mammals become attuned to each other's inner states" (Lewis et al., 63). Limbic regulation is the "mutually synchronizing exchange" through which mammals adjust and fortify one another's "fragile neural rhythms" (85). Limbic revision is for them the "revising the code that directs emotional life" (176). It is the way that mammals help each other restore the microanatomy of one another's brains, especially in the presence of trauma and emotional disorders (See 169-182 for a detailed discussion of all three categories). Building upon their views, psychologist Philip Flores explains the efficacy of limbic revision for group therapy, especially in the context of addiction recovery in groups like Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous (Flores, 2005, 221-239).

For my purposes here, by extension, the interpersonal limbic framework schematized by such thinkers provides an interesting perspective from which to consider the sorts of resistance and resilience of gatherings such as those familiar throughout the favela and indeed the larger Afro-Atlantic world, historically and today—in moments of music, religious life or simple collective leisure—as moments of refuge and healing. Thinking about Buber’s relational philosophy in the collective context of the asphalt versus community metaphor—and things like public pizza meals, capoeira circles, candomblés rituals and narco-funk carioca dance parties in the streets of favelas—brings questions of spatiality and temporality to the forefront, in these limbic terms. As a metonymy, the favela itself, as a communal refuge from the harshness of the asphalt, can be seen as a large-scale community encounter, in the live sense, like a crowd as a mega sports event, concert, religious procession or ceremony.

As stated above, for Buber, the I and Thou encounter is all about the infinite and eternal moment, outside of space and time. Even so, there is a kernel of spatiality present in Buber’s thought. Audrey Hodes, one of the best-known scholars of his thinking, explains the encounter in spatial terms, writing, “When a human being turns to another as another, as a particular and specific person to be addressed, and tries to communicate with him through language or silence, something takes place between them which is not found elsewhere in nature. Buber called this meeting between men the sphere of the between” (Hodes, 1972, 72). It’s not such a huge step, perhaps, to move from this “sphere of in-between” to “relational space,” in this sense. Indeed, Dan Avnon, another accomplished Buber scholar in his own right, makes the point, “...the reality of ‘space’ that is between persons is the focus of Buber’s philosophy” (Avnon, 1998, 5).

Still, in the more collectivist context of Afro-Atlantic cultural expressions like the gangsters’ street dance parties in Rio’s favelas, I have come to see

the need to expand on the use of singular pronouns in his famous “I and Thou” formulation to pluralize both sides as “We and You All.” For our purposes here, then, when an encounter is between members of a group, as opposed to a meeting between Buber’s singular “I” and “Thou,” the spatial and temporal aspect becomes more crucial. This space-time resides in the “in-between” and the “limbic reality” that forms among people. There is a shape to such a group encounter, not in the absolute terms of content but rather in the presence of those joining together.

Furthermore, just as Victor Turner famously claimed regarding his notions of *communitas* and *liminality*, I see no reason a communal encounter cannot be paradoxically both in and out of space and time (Turner 2007, 90). The “liveness” of pizza gatherings, narco-funk dance parties, capoeira training circles and candomblé sessions as gatherings taking place in a here-and-now moment, in this sense, is vital. Such is not to say that, even so, as communal encounters of “We and You all” such meetings do not also reach beyond space-time into the infinite and eternal, in the sense of Buber intended for his one-on-one encounters.

When we view the epistemological and ontological dimensions of the asphalt versus community division, along with its spatial contours and implications for power, it lines up with Buber’s I-It versus I-Thou in intriguing ways. Such is especially so when we set it as the singular I-It versus the pluralized “We and You All.” These aspects of the asphalt versus community metaphor become even more apparent when we emphasize a fundamental issue of space that all too often gets left out in much Western thinking: the present time. Space, as is now commonly accepted, is inseparable from time. It is as space-time.

If we think of the spatial mode of the asphalt as experiential and that of favela-as-community as relational in this shared sense, we can derive a series of fundamental philosophical tensions between these two poles:

Asfalto versus *Comunidade* (as Content versus Presence)

Spatial Mode	Experiential	Relational
Knowledge	Object-Centered	Person-Centered
Being	Existence	Coexistence
Power	Control	Love

The logic of the asphalt, as a spatial mode, is that of the wheel, which glides in a line across the limited, wholly temporary surface from past to future, diachronically and experientially. “Man travels over the surface of things and experiences them,” as Buber wrote (Buber, 2010, 5). It is intentionality and purpose, strategy and aims, experience and objects. In this I-It mode, the best one can do it to “acquire” knowledge, as a thing. The asphalt, in this sense, is about isolation, separateness, (inter)objectivity and monologue. We could say that in the space of the asphalt words merely lead to more words, just as space only leads to more space. It is a space in which objects point to more objects.

“Community,” in contrast, in the “I and thou,” is presence-based and relational. The logic of community is that of the circle. It’s coexisting in the here and now of a living moment. In the communal encounter, one is allowed to go past the surface, like walking into a room full of friends. One is allowed to be both in space-time and outside of it, in infinity and eternity. One is transformed through relational intimacy, inter-subjectively. It is an open loop in which words do not lead merely to more words but beyond words altogether. It is space not leading only to more space but beyond space—and time not just pointing to more time but past time itself. It is persons pointing to more persons.

This added spatial and temporal dimension of the communal encounter, compared to Buber’s one-on-one view of meetings, might also entail an essential change in direction from his belief that all contacts with the “thou” of a person, a tree, or a piles of rocks leads back to the encounter with the

ultimate “Thou” of God (Buber 2010, 75). Perhaps we could reverse this to say that each encounter with the “Thou” of God also leads to everything and everyone else. Because once we meet the ultimate “Thou,” not through any effort or control but in grace, our relationship to all the other possibilities of “thou” of the world around us—with its persons, trees and stones—is forever changed. We can love, not as an act of will or control, but because we were loved first, as it says in the first epistle of John in Christianity’s New Testament.¹⁷ We don’t have to master the world or dominate it, as a result, but can live together as a part of it in coexistence. The encounter with the ultimate “Thou” of God, in this sense, is never only one-on-one. It is always a communal encounter. It is an encounter with a “Thou” connected to everything, inside and outside of all space and time.

Perhaps the most salient point of connection between Buber’s individual encounters and the community side of the asphalt versus favela metaphor is the aversion both reveal regarding any links between the “acquisition of content” and genuine knowledge and authentic being. Instead, both emphasize the transformational immersion into the “presence” of moments of communion and collective life. For both, the central idea is that a person does not emerge from an encounter the same as he or she enters (Buber, 2010, 109). The same could be said regarding the communal existentialism of the Afro-Atlantic world, more generally, in music, dance and the body. Even so, from the Afro-Atlantic collectivistic relational perspectives of funk carioca and other musical, religious and cultural expressions—and everyday life—the encounter does not always happen merely in the first and second person singular together, grammatically, as Buber’s “I” and “You,” or even primarily so. Instead, communal encounters have the potential to be even more profoundly imbued with a spirit of plurality, as “We and you all,”

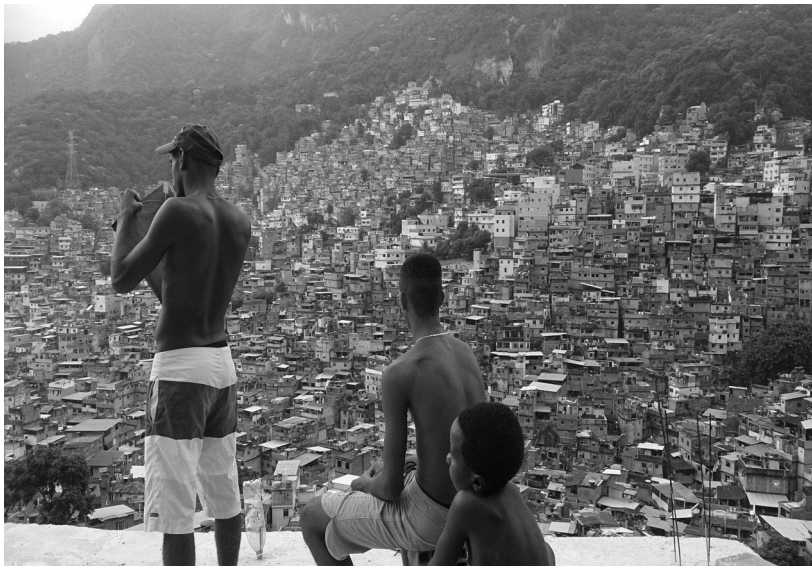
17. “We love because he first loved us” (1John 4:19, NIV).

collectively.

Viewed through such a relational perspective, the ontological and existential aspects of the asphalt versus community metaphor become even more apparent when we consider it not only concerning space but also regarding time. Indeed, it reminds us that the two are inseparable. The asphalt versus community metaphor drives this point home in a way that challenges more dominant Western notions of space and time by emphasizing the synchronicity of the present here and now moment at the heart of community over the linear passage of time along the asphalt from past to future, diachronically. As such, the division also points toward tensions in thinking about such things as time-space, being, consciousness, knowledge and power.

086

087



Kite Fight (Courtesy of Nino Mason, 2017)

IV. Where the Asphalt Ends

From an ideological perspective, regarding this experiential versus relational split, it is also possible to see asphalt as a form of writing. In this sense, we can say that the power relations of the city, in all its components, are written in asphalt. We can think of the city thus as less of a mere map and more a full-blown literary text—or performance. The “narrative” the asphalt tells is one about the ebbs and flow of people connected to the city in different ways, according to their social status. Written this way—in asphalt, cement, bricks, steel, wood and glass—the city tells a “story” of the workings of knowledge, power and being regarding class, race and gender, among other things. This asphalt-writing is not merely descriptive of such relations but also serves to produce and reinforce them. The stretches of asphalt throughout the city grow up as an intricate, ever-expanding network of flat walls dividing people up into haves and have-nots. In such a way, the pavement should be seen as just as much a feature of public power as jails, psychiatric wards, police stations and legislative assemblies. Similarly, its impact ideologically is like that of the religious texts, literature, journalism, songs, and other forms of writing.

Epistemologically, one might say that the asphalt differs from community in the way similar to the division of types of knowledge in Portuguese into the more object-centered *saber* and the more relational *conhecer*. But there is an essential ontological contrast at play, as well, in its emphasis on relationality, collectivity and coexistence. The result is not merely a relational way of thinking, but a relational way of being, too, in the plural numbers of community encounters. The “asphalt” side of the metaphor is reminiscent of Weber’s observation that the “care for external goods” at the heart of capitalism had become an “iron cage” constricting the human spirit through increasing rationalization and institutionalization (Weber 2005, 123), ushering

in a “polar night of icy darkness and hardness” (Weber 2001, 128). The weaker presence of the institutionalization and rationalization of the “asphalt” in the favelas leaves them, for their residents, “communities,” or living, breathing spaces of warmer, more intimate person-to-person interactions.

The asphalt versus community division finds echoes in similar dichotomies referenced throughout expressions of Afro-Brazilian youth culture, like the “system” (*sistema*) versus “periphery” (*periferia*) split common in Brazilian hip hop or the “city” (*cidade*) versus “mangrove swamp” (*mangue*) trope so central to Recife’s Manguebeat music scene of the mid-nineties. In the culture of funk carioca, the *asfalto* versus *favela-as-comunidade* split is constantly referenced, both explicitly in lyrics and at a conversational level and implicitly in the favela aesthetic of the style. Tellingly, to this day live funk carioca dance parties in the streets, alleyways and bus depots of Rio’s favelas are still referred to as *bailes de comunidade*, or “community dances.”¹⁸⁾

While favela residents affirm a view of Rio as a divided city that relegates them to the margins, they go on to proclaim an alternative cartography that places themselves and the favelas in which they live at the top of an inverted city. Like the city of walls analogy, the “asphalt” versus “community” formulation entails awareness that the roads crisscrossing Rio comprise a tangle of flat walls serving to reinforce established social hierarchies. It’s not meant, however, as a romantic gesture categorically dividing asphalt from favelas in any essentialist way. Experiences and relationships are parts of human life everywhere. It is more the recognition of how favela residents have survived across the years—and even thrived, when possible—in the

18. For a study of the countercultural impulse at the core of the São Paulo hip hop scene, see Pardue (2008). For a nuanced reading of Recife’s Manguebeat, see Avelar (2011). For analyses of Rio’s funk carioca, see Facina and Carvalho Lopes (2012) and its narco-funk offshoot, see Palombini (2013).

face of such horrors as slavery, the decimation of native peoples, societal neglect, discrimination, exclusion, violence and so on. In juxtaposing the hard spaces of the formal grid with the soft spaces of the flow of human interaction and intimacy, however, favela residents suggest much more than the militarization of the city as a security zone, instead redefining the territoriality of Rio de Janeiro as a “city of people.”

Bibliography

- Avelar, I.(2011), “Mangue Beat Music and the Coding of Citizenship in Sound”, Idelber Avelar and Christopher Dunn(eds.), *Brazilian Popular Music and Citizenship*, Durham: Duke University Press, pp 1-27. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822393603>
- Avnon, D.(1998), *Martin Buber: The Hidden Dialogue*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Buber, M.(2010), *I and Thou*, Ronald Gregor Smith(trans.), Mansfield Centre: Martino.
- Cardoso, F. H.(2018), “How the Unthinkable Happened in Brazil” *Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2018/10/29/bolsonaro/?utm_term=.a0dc55d02242.
- Extra Online(2018), “Tiroteio na Rocinha deixa um morto e um ferido.” *Extra Online*, <https://extra.globo.com/casos-de-policia/tiroteio-na-rocinha-deixa-um-morto-um-ferido-22681925.html>.
- Facina, A. and Lopes, A. C.(2012), “Cidade do funk: Expressões da diáspora negra nas favelas cariocas”, *Revista do Arquivo Geral da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 193-206.
- Faiola, A.(2002), “Brazil’s Elites Fly above their Fears: Rich Try to Wall Off Urban Violence”, *Washington Post*, 1 June, p. A1.
- Flores, P. J.(2005), *Addiction as Attachment Disorder*, Lanham: Jason Aronson.
- Friedman, M.(1955), *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Friedman, M.(1976), “Martin Buber and Asia”, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 26, No. 4, pp. 411-426.
- Garotinho, A., Soares, L.E., Soares, B., Sento-Sé, J.T., Musmeci, L., and Ramos, S.(1998), *Violência e criminalidade no Estado do Rio de Janeiro: Diagnóstico e propostas para uma política democrática de segurança pública*, Rio de Janeiro: Hama Editora.
- Glenny, M.(2017), “One of Rio de Janeiro’s Safest Favelas Descends into Violence, the Latest Sign of a City in Chaos.”, *The Intercept*, <https://theintercept.com/2017/09/25/rocinha-favela-rio-de-janeiro-violence/>.
- Gilroy, P.(1993), *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Glissant, E.(1997), *Poetics of Relation*, Betsy Wing(trans.), Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press.
- Hodes, A.(1972), *Encounter with Martin Buber*, Allen Lane/Penguin.
- Lewis, T., Amini, F., and Lannon, R.(2000), *A General Theory of Love*, New York: Random House.
- Palombini, C.(2013), “Funk proibido”, Avritzer, L., Bignotto, N., Filgueiras, F., Guimarães, J., and Starling, H.(eds.), *Dimensões políticas da justiça*, Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, pp 647-657.
- Pardue, D.(2008), *Ideologies of Marginality in Brazilian Hip Hop*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Perlman, J.(1976), *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Perlman, J.(2010), *Favela: Four Decades of Living on the Edge in Rio de Janeiro*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schmidt, S.(2003), “Estudo aponta mais 49 favelas na cidade: Novo levantamento aerofotogramétrico da prefeitura mostra que o Rio já tem 752 comunidades carentes”, *O Globo*, 20 April.
- Sneed, P.(2003), “Machine Gun Voices: Bandits, Favelas and Utopia in Brazilian Funk”, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Sneed, P.(2007), “Bandidos de Cristo: Representations of the Power of Criminal Factions in Rio’s Proibidão Funk”, *Latin American Music Review*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 220-241.
- Sneed, P.(2007), *Rocinha: Em casa no Morrão (Rocinha: At Home on the Big Hill)*,

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17Trg2o0QoU>.
- Sneed, P.(2008), “Favela Utopias: The Bailes Funk in Rio’s Crisis of Social Exclusion and Violence”, *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 43, No. 2, pp. 57-79.
- Sneed, P.(2012), *Atalhos e encontros (Pathways and Encounters)*, <https://vimeo.com/49417397>.
- Sneed, P.(2012), *Pacificação da favela: Encontro com Pai Almir (Favela Pacification: Encounter with Pai Almir)*, <https://vimeo.com/50384580>.
- Sneed, P.(2013), “Acts of Love: Popular Performance and Community Encounters in the Favela”, *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, Vol. 31, pp. 28-49.
- Sneed, P.(2013), “Infotainment and Encounter in the Pacification of the Rocinha Favela”, *Interface: A Journal for and About Social Movements*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 204-228.
- Turner, V.(2007), “Liminality and Communitas”, Henry Bial(ed.), *The Performance Studies Reader*, 2nd ed. Routledge, pp 89-97.
- Waiselfisz, J. J.(2008), “Sumário executivo: Mapa de violência dos municípios brasileiros”, Brasília: Latin American Technological Network.
- Weber, M.(2001), “Politics as a Vocation”, Gerth, H.H. and Wright Mills, C.(eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Hans Heinrich Gerth, & Charles Wright(trans.), London: Taylor and Francis Group, pp. 77-129.
- Weber, M.(2005), *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Talcott Parsons (trans.), London: Taylor and Francis e-Library.

Paul Sneed

Seoul National University
paulsneed@snu.ac.kr

Submission: November 20, 2018

Revision Date: December 18, 2018

Approval Date: December 27, 2018

Espacio y Relacionalidad en las Favelas de Rio: *Asfalto y Comunidad*

Paul Sneed

Universidad Nacional de Seúl

Sneed, Paul(2018), “Espacio y Relacionalidad en las Favelas de Rio: *Asfalto y Comunidad*”, *Revista Asiática de Estudios Iberoamericanos*, 29(3), 61-93.

Resumen En este trabajo, ofrezco reflexiones sobre la cultura popular contemporánea de Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, para considerar una metáfora común en el argot popular que contrasta la ciudad formal deshumanizante, llamada de “asfalto”, contra las comunidades informales de sus favelas. Partiendo de conceptos de Paul Gilroy sobre el Atlántico Negro, la filosofía de diálogo de Martin Buber y teorías psiquiátricas de apego, exploro esta metáfora para identificar, por un lado, una crítica de nociones convencionales eurocéntricas racionalistas sobre espacio, saber, ser y poder, y por otro, una afirmación alternativa relacional Afro-Atlántica sobre esas mismas categorías.

Palabras clave favela, espacio, cultura popular, filosofía relacional