INTRODUCTION

SINCE its sixteenth-century foundation, Rio de Janeiro has been continually reshaped by newcomers, strivers and tricksters. Newcomers bring unfamiliar ideas and practices, changing and reinvigorating the city. Strivers make change, for themselves and the people around them. And tricksters trick: They specialize in misdirection, inversion and resignification.

Every city is continually reshaped by newcomers and strivers, and their presence in Rio is decisive but not unusual. But Rio has a special relationship with tricksters. If there is a single cultural archetype that represents this multifarious city, it is the *malandro*, or streetwise scoundrel – smooth-talking, nonchalant and well-versed in the poetry and percussion of samba. The *malandro* practices *jeitinho*, or the little way, the everyday strategies of circumventing bureaucracy and avoiding censorious authority that enable the underdog to triumph against the odds. Nearly all *cariocas* (residents of Rio) practice *jeitinho*, in fact, as it is sometimes impossible to accomplish a straightforward task such as getting the right stamp on the right document at the right time without using *jeitinho*. Times, stamps and documents are attributes of the workaday world, ruled by the *homens sisudos*, the fastidious men. And *jeitinho* is the workaround strategy for the workaday world. *Malandros* simply do it with more style.

Tricksters are central to Rio's self-image, and the *jeitinho* is a basic part of everyday life. But the newcomers and strivers leave their stamp on the city as well. Understanding how these three archetypes have interacted in the city, how they have

interpreted, challenged and reshaped the city they encounter, is vital to understanding Rio.

The Portuguese navigator Estácio de Sá officially founded Rio de Janeiro in 1565. That was after more than a half century of competing Portuguese and French efforts to extract wealth from this stretch of the Brazilian coast. And Tamoio and Tupinambá indigenous populations had lived in the area far longer. But this book starts in the early nineteenth century. Why? One reason is that it is impossible to cover everything. Another, more germane, is that Rio was – while fascinating – a secondary colonial settlement until 1763, when the Portuguese Empire moved its colonial capital in Brazil from Salvador da Bahia to Rio de Janeiro.

Even then, Rio remained a city of no more than 50,000 people through the late eighteenth century – a mere village when compared with Mexico City or Lima in the same period. It was not until the arrival of the Portuguese court in 1808 that Rio became a capital city worthy of the designation. The arrival of the court literally shifted the center of the Portuguese Empire to Rio – at least temporarily – laying the foundation for independence in 1822. Rio more than doubled in size between 1808 and 1822, a period that witnessed the foundation of many of the key institutions that would shape life in independent Brazil – the Bank of Brazil, the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts, the Botanical Garden, and various hospitals, theaters, prisons and customs houses. Rio became a major city in this period and this is the setting for Chapter 1.

Chapter 1 is not about the arrival of the court, however, nor about the crowning of King Dom João VI in 1816. Instead, Chapter 1 is dedicated to the lithographs made by a French painter based on his perambulations in the streets of Rio in the 1820s. The central moments studied in the remaining chapters are similarly idiosyncratic. I have chosen these moments out of necessity and

conviction. First, the necessity: Many authors have written eloquently about moments broadly recognized as iconic. I cannot add anything new to the discussion with a short chapter on the *Maracanazo* – that terrible day when Brazil lost 2-1 to Uruguay in the last game of the 1950 World Cup – nor in one on President Getúlio Vargas's suicide in office four years later, on August 24, 1954. A short book about such moments might be interesting to those new to the subject, but would be redundant and unsatisfactory for those who know the city well. Instead, I have chosen moments that have been less well covered, in hopes of writing a book that will be equally interesting to *cariocas*, to specialists on Brazil and to those coming to the topic for the first time.

Second, conviction: I believe that to explore these less well-known moments is to catch the city when it is unguarded, when this most informal of cities is most itself. These moments reveal the unconscious habits and underlying patterns guiding life in Rio. And if the moments are idiosyncratic, the patterns they reveal are central, and they have been decisive in shaping the city.

Chapter 1 explores the images created by French artist Jean-Baptiste Debret in 1820s Rio. Debret captured a Black city – one where enslaved and freed Africans were the vast majority of the population in the streets of the city. Debret's images reveal the ghastly violence of slavery, the dignity of the struggle for autonomy by the enslaved, and the cultural innovations of Africans and Afro-descendant Brazilians in nineteenth-century Rio.

Chapter 2 analyses the connections between the author Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis and the martial art of capoeira. As far as we know, Machado de Assis never practiced capoeira. He did not write about it extensively, but he did so eloquently, in ways that reveal deeper power dynamics in the second half of nineteenth-century Rio. Both the capoeiras (practitioners of

capoeira) that roamed the streets and Machado de Assis himself were tricksters, subverting order and hierarchy.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to "Corta-jaca" ("Jackfruit Cutter"), a popular composition by Chiquinha Gonzaga, and to Gonzaga's extraordinary career. "Corta-jaca" synthesizes the magic of popular musical invention in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Rio. And Gonzaga's career reveals the restrictions imposed on women and the breaches in the structure that allowed a few creative figures to claim autonomy and attain wider influence.

Chapter 4 uses the 1936 best-of-three, season-ending tournament between soccer clubs Flamengo and Fluminense to explore race and soccer in Rio. Flamengo's 1936 team featured seven Black players, challenging elite preconceptions and changing the game forever, serving as a laboratory for the emerging Brazilian style of play.

Chapter 5 offers analysis of *Aviso aos Navegantes* (*Warning to Sailors*), a 1950 *chanchada*, or low-budget, slapstick musical comedic film. The *chanchadas* dominated Rio's mid-century film industry, responding to and shaping popular tastes. *Aviso aos Navegantes* starred Oscarito and Grande Otelo, the great comic actors of their era. The film's strengths and weaknesses, as well as its popular success, embody the characteristics of Brazil's mid-century entertainment industry. The triumph of Oscarito and Grande Otelo against powerful enemies reveals the predilection for trickster narratives within that industry and their connection to understandings of Brazil's national identity.

Chapter 6 explores the 1960 creations of sculptor Lygia Clark and author Clarice Lispector. Each of these extraordinary women struggled to navigate the social restrictions of upper middle-class *carioca* society while remaining true to a radical artistic vision. Their art, and their lives, tell us a great deal about

Rio's cultural vanguard in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and about the inner worlds of women who pushed against convention.

Chapter 7 triangulates the 1969 burning of the Favela Praia do Pinto and its replacement by a middle-class apartment complex, the construction of the Cidade Alta housing project across the city, and the rising influence of TV Globo, Brazil's dominant television network. The connections between these phenomena reveal the way the military regime's program of *favela* removal impoverished and marginalized *favela* residents while transferring wealth to the middle class, as TV Globo crafted compelling visions of middle-class life.

Chapter 8 studies the urbanization of the Pavão-Pavãozinho and Cantagalo *favelas* between 1983 and 1986. This ambitious initiative, executed under the administration of socialist governor Leonel Brizola, is emblematic of Rio in the period of redemocratization, after two decades of military rule. And it was pivotal for the changing experience of *favela* residents in a city that offered some new rights and opportunities while remaining deeply unequal.

Chapter 9 investigates the moving of the Feira de São Cristóvão (St. Christopher's Fair) from an open field to the inside of a glorious modernist pavilion in 2003. Analysis of this controversial transition serves as an opportunity to explore the ways migrants from northeastern Brazil have reshaped Rio de Janeiro, and the evolving manifestations of informal commerce in the city.

Chapter 10 explores the aftermath of the horrific 2018 assassination of Marielle Franco. Marielle's death set off a wave of mobilization and protest, leading to the election of a cohort of young Black women to legislative office later that year. The investigation into the assassination reveals the networks of power that perpetuate violence and inequality in the city. But Marielle's presence and example continue to inspire efforts to transform

Rio, working toward the more inclusive and just city she envisioned.

Chapter 10 thus brings us full circle to the themes of Chapter 1 – the combination of violence, resistance and creative innovation that make Rio simultaneously heartbreaking, frustrating, joyful and breathtaking. It is always compelling. Like any great city, Rio is constantly reinventing itself. But it reinvents itself in continuing patterns, rejuvenating enduring themes. This book is an attempt to use ten moments to illuminate those continuing patterns and enduring themes, while explicating the variations and innovations within those themes.

Inevitably, this requires leaving out more than I would like. As a scholar who has written extensively about the history of popular music in Rio, I have deliberately avoided making this a book primarily about that subject, turning instead to other aspects of cultural and social history. (Like Rio itself, I eventually revert to form, in this case in the Epilogue.) Readers who associate Rio most strongly with Ipanema Beach or with Carnaval may wonder why there is not more on those topics. These are fair questions and I have asked similar questions myself throughout the writing of this book – a process that has included various partial chapter drafts subsequently abandoned. There is no perfect list of moments, nor cluster of themes, that can define any great city, surely not kaleidoscopic Rio. Ultimately, my hope is that these ten moments draw readers more deeply into the city, to explore new paths through its complicated history and conflicted present. I can assure you it will be time well spent.

A note on racial terminology: Understandings of race and the vocabulary used to describe it have changed dramatically since early nineteenth-century Rio and even in the last twenty years. Brazilians are increasingly aware of the ways racism and racial inequality have shaped the country. This growing awareness,

coupled with a changing political context, has resulted in an embrace of Blackness. It is now more common for Brazilians of African ancestry to self-identify as *negro* (Black) than it was in the past. The Brazilian census includes racial categories for *preto* (Black) and *pardo* (Brown). It is now common practice (although not universal) for scholars and journalists to use *negro* to encompass both these categories. I follow this practice, using the English term Black to encompass both *preto* and *pardo*. It bears noting in this regard that *pardo* is rarely used in everyday life, and use of the term *mulato* to describe Brazilians of mixed racial ancestry, common in the recent past, is now rare in scholarly and journalistic publications.

Changing racial terminologies entail, or accompany, reconsiderations of history. Was Machado de Assis a Black author? Was Chiquinha Gonzaga a Black composer? Both were the grandchildren of enslaved Brazilians of African ancestry (Machado de Assis's paternal grandparents, Gonzaga's maternal grandmother). Neither self-identified as *negro* in their lifetime – but then, of course they did not: In the nineteenth century, the term *negro* implied enslaved status. Blackness was associated with servitude or marginality. Thankfully, times have changed in that regard. To recognize the African ancestry of these artists, and the recent experience of enslavement in their family history, is vital to understanding their trajectory and their titanic achievements. Negotiating and overcoming racism and racial inequality were necessary to their careers. Intriguingly, while it is has become common (although again, far from universal) to refer to Machado de Assis as a Black author, it remains rare to refer to Chiquinha Gonzaga as a Black composer, a nuance that suggests that terminologies and understandings are still in flux – and perhaps always will be.

These are active debates in Brazil and it is not my role here to weigh in. Instead, my goal is to adopt current Brazilian scholarly practices, while explaining how the historical understandings of race have changed over time. What has not changed is the enduring legacy of the history of slavery, and of resistance to slavery, in shaping life in the city. The images of Jean-Baptiste Debret remain one of the most vivid and powerful interpretations of the presence of slavery in the streets of the city. For that, we turn to Chapter 1.

1

Jean-Baptiste Debret in the Streets of Rio, 1826

THE first moment for our consideration is the appointment of French painter and lithographer Jean Baptiste Debret as instructor in the new Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in 1826, and his simultaneous – and far more important – private work, documenting life in the streets of Rio de Janeiro. Debret arrived in Rio in 1816 and served as a court painter to Portuguese Prince Regent João, who was soon to become King Dom João VI. Debret remained close to the court under João's son Pedro, who declared Brazil's independence in 1822, becoming Dom Pedro I, Brazil's first emperor. Debret made a visual record of Pedro I's court, and in this capacity was named instructor in the new Imperial Academy. Debret remained in Brazil until 1831. His output as court painter from that period is tedious to anyone who lacks enthusiasm for the finer details of Brazil's imperial iconography.

His work in the streets of Rio, in contrast, is fascinating and revealing. That work was at its peak in the late 1820s, in the same period that he served as instructor at the Imperial Academy. Debret compiled a visual record of life in the streets of Rio, in watercolors and drawings. Several years after he returned to France, those watercolors and drawings became the basis for a three-volume collection of lithographs, offering a vision of Brazil that contrasted with the polite paintings of royal ceremonies. Debret's *Voyage Pittoresque et Historique au Brésil*

(*Picturesque and Historic Voyage to Brazil*), published in Paris between 1834 and 1839, presents us with a contradiction typical of early nineteenth-century European perspectives on enslavement. In the written text introducing and accompanying the images, Debret hardly appears sympathetic to the struggles of enslaved and freed people in Rio. Instead, he appears to view slavery as an inevitable stage in Brazil's halting progress toward civilization. Debret's images of the streets, however, captured something both darker and richer: Their details reveal the violence of slavery and the struggle of the enslaved to build a life for themselves. Even a cursory survey of Debret's images confirms that elite society relied entirely on slavery and that the essence of slavery was violent exploitation. At the same time, close analysis of the images reveals that the enslaved used every opportunity they could find to wrest a little autonomy from those who exploited them, and that in that capacity they were creating a new kind of urban life in the tropics, one unlike anything previously documented.

Perhaps for these reasons, Debret's images were unacceptable to Brazil's aristocracy. It took over a century for Debret's works to circulate in Brazil and even in the twentieth century they caused scandal and consternation. For these reasons, Debret is the first inventive newcomer of our story, one who revealed a Rio de Janeiro that its own elite preferred to keep hidden.

The Black City

In the three centuries between 1550 and 1850, over 2 million enslaved Africans arrived in the port of Rio de Janeiro, more than in any other city in the Americas – more, even, than arrived in Salvador da Bahia, often described as the Black Rome, and considered the most African city in Brazil. The majority of those