Weaving Brazilian Blackness in the United Kingdom: Nation, Race and Migration[1]

Katucha Bento

ABSTRACT: This paper aims to discuss the notion of Blackness by using the intersectionality of gender, race, nationality and migration as the key aspects of lived experiences of how Blackness is negotiated. I will present how the notion of racial democracy in Brazil is present in the racialisation process and construction of self-identification. Based on the conversations during my doctoral research, I will problematise the racialised identity of Diaspora in the United Kingdom in order to understand how Blackness can be negotiated and acquires particular meanings according to situated experiences. Weaving Blackness is a metaphor to understand discourses present in the building up of self-descriptions of racialised identities entangled with coloniality of power, resistance, and perceptions of the self in the practices/performances of the everyday. Vectors such as on indigeneity, national identity and migration form intersectionalities that are explored though epistemological lenses of Black Feminism and Decolonial Thought.

My PhD research entitled "Shackles of Colonialism: Lived Emotions of Black Brazilian Women in the United Kingdom" is dedicated to examining how Black Brazilian Women emotionally negotiate politics of "Othering" in the UK and how this negotiation is interlocked within an affect economy of coloniality and agency in the everyday lives of these women in the diaspora. I focus on Black Brazilian women as agents of historical processes (Collins, 1991) that produce identities, ideas of nation, knowledge values and sociabilities. To organise my fieldwork in order to map possible participants, I looked for Brazilian women who self-declared as

Black, taking into consideration the complexity of the Brazilian category related to Blackness, such as "*morena*", "*mulata*", "*parda*", to cite a few "mixed-race" colours in the racialisation politics in Brazil (about racial identity and racialisation in Brazil: Gonzalez, 1979; Souza, 1983; Paixão and Carvano, 2008; Guimarães, 2001 among others).

The issues of colour and race in my thesis are a key aspect which also inspires me to discuss how I understand the process of "weaving Brazilian Blackness" in the United Kingdom. The historiography of racialisation politics in Brazil shows us that the coexistence between a strong slave trade in the enslaving society with the increasing manumissions that were starting to form a new "class" of "free men" in the context was one of the factors that encouraged the social imaginary and intellectual production to reproduce the idea of a "racial paradise" (Guimarães, 2001, 2008).The markers of differentiation referring to race in Brazil are so dynamic that a "socially White" person could self-declare to be identified racially as being of the "*morena*" category, commonly used for those "dark Whites" with sun tanning (in this case the term is more common in Northern Brazil); or brown/very light skinned people (Guimarães, 2008).

Colour categories are tools to soften the racialisation processes and racial conflicts, generating the possibility to create, reproduce and popularise the notion of "racial democracy". Lelia Gonzalez and Carlos Hasenbalg (1982) say that believing in a racial democracy in Brazil implies the absence of racial prejudice and discrimination, and therefore, the existence of equal economic and social opportunities to Blacks and Whites. Gonzalez and Hasenbalg assert that the dissemination of racial democracy in the social thought (inside and outside academic production) is an "ideological weapon against Blacks in Brazil", as the social hierarchies, social inequalities, and the ideal of equal opportunity remain predicated by the racial terrain (Gonzalez and Hasenbalg, 1982, p. 84).

The experiences of racialisation are not only embedded by the issue of race, but also gender and class (Davis, 1981; Collins, 1991), an intersectionality that has many implications with regards to a shared but different experience of racism. In the case of Black Brazilian women, depending on the region they were located in Brazil, the identification of colour/race with Blackness, experiences, and perceptions of self, of each other, and of racism will vary based on such regional realities as well as being defined by class and social hierarchies in their life experiences.

Race/colour categories in different regions were present in the discourse of development – the advent of modernity as a national project in Brazil – which pointed to Northern Brazil as a 'not suitable' region for such transformation, where subaltern races and classes were the representations of tardiness of progress (Albuquerque Jr. 1999). The image of underdeveloped regions in Brazil were embedded with a racist repertoire using racial descriptions of "northern Brazilian" as a racialised category of "black/ mixed/ mulatto", forging the 'new racism in Brazil' (Guimarães, 1999). Naturalsing the image of Northern Brazilians as racialised peoples was also the strategy to differentiate development of Southern Brazil through a racist perspective, because the more South in Brazil, the concentration of white people increases and racialised people decreases. Therefore, a light skinned mixed raced person may be racialised as "black" in Southern Brazil, whereas the same skin colour may be considered as "white" in Northern Brazil. As Thales de Azevedo (1996) points out, this racialisation politics is not only about colour/race, but also physical features (hair, nose, and lips), dressing code, ways of speaking, good manners etc. (Guimarães, 1999).

Racialisation politics in Brazil is part of what Stuart Hall (1990) discusses metaphorically about Diaspora identities, as a complex process that is "constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (Hall, 1990, p. 235). What I mean by Diaspora identities in this paper is a reference to the key and inevitable tension between Black Brazilian women having a shared identification with regards to intersectionality whilst maintaining the specificity of their lived experience with Blackness. My interest in this article is to understand how such a complex construction of Brazilian Blackness – a Diaspora identity – is negotiated in the British context, where the intersectionality of nation, race, gender and migration form important markers of differentiation in the debate of weaving Blackness within oppression, struggles and agency.

In this paper, I will first explain my exercise of weaving threads of Blackness in negotiation with the politics of racialisation, built with/ around/ against/ in resistance of stereotypes and marginalisation of Black people. Although Blackness is commonly identified with stereotypical hegemonic elements in the process of subjectification of non-White Western bodies, agency is implied in this space of negotiation, destabilising and re-signifying norms in order to place the marginalised Black at the centre (Arrizón, 2002; 2008). Weaving Blackness is a metaphor

to capture through my theoretical lenses – Critical Race Theory, Post- and Decolonial Thought and Black Feminism – how Black Brazilian Diaspora Women in in the United Kingdom are negotiating their non-White European identity. Secondly, I will present the particularities that, in their multiple ways, may entrench the notion of Blackness in the Brazilian setting as important threads in weaving the identification of race in the Diaspora (Hall, 1990; Gilroy, 1993; Brah, 1996). Such particularities are explored in more depth through the conversation analysis with one participant in order to deconstruct the notion of "racial democracy" within the discourse of Indigeneity, Blackness and Whiteness in Brazil and how it is lived in the British context. Finally, I conclude the paper by challenging the hegemonic Black and White binary constructing Blackness, suggesting a dialogical negotiation of weaving together racialised identities in the Diaspora.

Weaving Blackness: The heteroglossia of coloniality

The idea of *weaving* Blackness for me is a way of examining the aspects of coloniality and heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1986) present within the building up of racialised self-descriptions through the narratives of Black Brazilian women in this research. The articulation of race to classify the world's population into unequal social positionalities of capitalism and modernity, that Quijano (2000) calls "coloniality of power", is part of the discursive construction of meanings. The racial system was introduced by coloniality of power that "has been consistently perverse, violent, and demeaning, turning people into animals" (Lugones, 2008, p. 12). Considering coloniality of power in discourse analysis helps to shed light over the social and emotional production of racialised perceptions of the self in practices/performances of the everyday.

Discourses are entangled in utterance and dynamic in which Blackness is constituted and unconstituted. This is to say that Blackness is negotiated in the everyday experiences in which coloniality of power, racialisation processes, and racialised performativities are practices of languages impacting the social (de)construction of Blackness. I am using the metaphor of weaving to understand practices of negotiating Black identifications as the excellence of discourses. To begin aiming at extrapolating fixed binary structures, my effort is to raise a "redescription" (Fish, 1989) of how Blackness is constructed, by offering a critical and

political understanding of whose voices are centered and in utterance in the discursive construction of Blackness. Weaving together Blackness is a necessary act, in Susan Friedman's words:

> Groups who have been denied the agency and status of the individual for reasons of race, class, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual preference (and so forth) have traditionally felt excluded from "the American Dream" … Redefinitions of the Self to be (re)claimed have been critically important to these movements. (Friedman, 1991b, p. 157).

Friedman (1991b) points to the relevance of engaging with a multiplicity of meanings and experiences, which in this paper will be presented in one of the many and constant available (re)interpretations of Blackness that I call weaving Blackness. The main inspiration to the discursive action of weaving are my grannies. Both of them (from my father's and mother's families) used to weave. To illustrate this, I will use my granny's rituals of doing tricot: choosing the appropriate needle for the knit; deciding the texture, colour, thickness and length of the thread; sitting in a place they find comfortable; putting on their glasses; positioned in such a way that they could, not only see what they were weaving, but at the same time watch us (grandkids) playing. The ritual allowed them to produce different formats of clothes, change colours and threads during the weaving process, and even undo their knitting in case they made a mistake or changed their minds. One of my first jumpers weaved by one of my grannies during my childhood had different colourful stripes; each stripe with a different colour, texture and thickness of wool and my name in the centre. I remember my grannie unraveling certain parts of her weaving having missed the measure of one of my arms, and asking me which colour I preferred to be attached to the next stripe she was about to weave. Weaving something new, that can never be repeated, is embedded with the continuity[2] of the ritual in terms of the different possibilities of using what was woven to borrow, sell, donate in the process of being passed hand to hand, body to body in which the fabric would take different shapes, meanings, and emotions. This metaphor helps me grasp an answer to 'what could weaving mean for the construction of Blackness?'

Just as the process of my grannies' weaving did not end at the last knit, being reinterpreted according to the context; the process of construction of Blackness

also has the nuances of embodiment and particularities according to their performative agencies in the process of weaving the self-racial identification. Weaving, as a self-identification process does not seem to be a "solo project"; rather, it is always in dialogue with other voices (heteroglossia), the historical venues it took to become a form of expression, to whom it will be addressed and its relationship with space and time. I found intersectionality a suitable tool for this research, to understand the heteroglossia present in the construction of Blackness (Crenshaw, 1989) between race, gender, class and nation. The intersectionality of how multiple identities of Blackness, oppressions and agency are being validated on the ground of Diaspora is intrinsically related to coloniality of power (Quijano, 1991). The relationship with coloniality here indicates on one hand the cosmology, knowledge and organisation based on Eurocentric, White, male, hegemonic, Christian, heteronormative references that represent the pillar of power relations, system of production and exclusion in a modern society (Quijano, 1991). On the other hand, intersectionality exists in relationship with possible decolonised ways of self-representations and redescriptions (Fish, 1989); but in this case, not as a contradiction of the prior as opposite binaries, but as a process of transformation in which possible strategies for individual and collective identity take place (Arrizón, 2000).

Weaving of Blackness, for me and the participants of my research, is part of the dialogical process in which we authenticate each other's narratives of racialised identities through our performances, particularities, differences and similarities (Freire, 1999). We are weaving together notions of what Blackness may be through conversation (Bakhtin, 1986) used as the thread to negotiate our positionalities about our Black identities. The metaphorical thread of the 'position of voice' – marginalised, absent, through body language, among other tools to (re)produce meaning in the language game – on Blackness is part of the racialisation politics in Brazil. Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin helps me to understand the dialogic context in which Blackness is weaved:

> There is neither a first nor a last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends to the boundless past and the boundless future). (…) At any moment in the development of the dialogue there are immense, boundless masses of forgotten contextual meanings, but at certain moments of the dialogues

subsequent development along the way they are recalled and invigorated in renewed form (in a new context). Nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will have its homecoming festival. (Bakhtin, 1986, p.170).

There is a continuity of discourse through space and time such as voices of agency, identity, and coloniality of power – which predicates the institutional racism, hegemonic White, heterosexist power. These multiple voices, languages, body expressions are what Bakhtin (1986) calls "heteroglossia". The voices are in relation to each other, (in)forming and being (in)formed by each other, mixing different levels of sovereignty and subalternity; *affecting* the way we see ourselves, constructing our racial identities and establishing conversations in which all this will be (re)negotiated with new textures, formats, knits. In this sense, heteroglossia helps us to understand that there is no classification – whether it is material, emotional or psychological – nothing is static, fixed or crystallised (hooks, 1991; Hunter, 2012; Lugones, 2014; Tate, 2005, 2009, 2014).

Unraveling the voices present in a conversation will allow me to explore links with coloniality and its continuity through the racial classifications present in my participants' voices. As a tricot, I am suggesting that the idea of Blackness can be modified and remodeled; it never stops at the end of the last knit, or at the end of a conversation. In Bakhtin's words about conversation: "it always creates something that has never existed before, something absolutely new and unrepeatable, and moreover, it always has some relation to value (the true, the good, the beautiful, and so forth)" (Bakhtin, 1986, 119–20). This perspective is committed to the shared cultural values and sociabilities that Patricia Hill Collins (1991) considers part of the construction of Blackness. With this framework, I am referring to the Brazilian Black Movement's fight to promote Blackness in the political agenda, self-esteem – mainly of young Black people in the country – and its relationship with African elements to find the root of Brazilian Blackness. By presenting the possibility of understanding Blackness as a process that is weaved according to the local context in the heteroglossia, I intend to de-essentialise how we promote the negotiation of Black identity, not as a given fact, but as an everyday performativity lived and experienced with particularities that affect and are affected by coloniality (Tate, 2005; Arrizón, 2002).

Here, I am pushing my own limitations of being implicated in the research also as a Black Brazilian woman, breaking through the Cartesian Eurocentric thought

in an effort to explore the many possibilities that may be used to make Black Brazilian women feel their Blackness. This feeling of Blackness is part of the complex racial classifications in Brazil and the attribution of meaning in their migratory experience in the United Kingdom. Both contexts enrich the analysis with multiple voices of different nationalities, languages, institutions, emotions that are *affecting* the ideas and perceptions verbalised at the moment of conversation: the threads forming new shapes of texture. The multiple voices in a dialogue are present to formulate an idea that goes beyond the spoken language: the body language, the external voices (of friends, family, strangers, politicians, etc.) brought in during the talk, the situations or historical aspects that help to contextualise the understanding of the talk (Bakhtin, 1986; Tate, 2005). This is where the inherent tensions are manifested – through discourse – and negotiated, promoting the contradictions, oppressions and multiplicity of what it is like to be a racialised-gendered migrant. Not everything is directly spoken, but represented in many other ways during the dialogue, in this dynamic entanglement of discourse production (Bakhtin, 1986).

The heteroglossia present in one narrative – with its relational dynamic as intertextuality/ intersubjectivity – can be identified in their relationship with other social voices (discourses), affecting and being affected through time and space. In the conversation analysis inspired by Bakhtin, affect circulates through the discourses shaping and being shaped according to the local context and knowledge (Gutierrez Rodriguez, 2010; Haraway, 1988; Hemmings, 2005; Ahmed, 2004; Tate, 2014). In my experience as a Black Brazilian migrant woman in the United Kingdom, I perceive that my own construction of Blackness comes from different venues where the Black movement, samba community, academic work are all embedded in the experience of being "Othered" through my Diaspora experience. I retake social voices (discourses) to contextualise the narratives of the participants[3] in order to critically explore the narratives and invoke the contextual discourses that are contouring the new possibilities of dialogue. What I find fruitful from centering Black Brazilian women's voices in this research is the investigation of the similarities and differentiation among their standpoints. Weaving Blackness with them, therefore, also requires troubling/non-acceptance of the prescribed criteria of legitimisation of the cannon of scholarships that crystallise ideas of Blackness, highlighting the diversity, richness, and power of Black women's ideas as part of a long-standing Black women's community (Collins, 1991).

Who is Black in the "Racial Democracy" of Brazil?

Race in Brazil plays a central role in the hierarchies and coloniality of power present within social relations. This centrality does not mean that it is directly manifested or debated. On the contrary, race is reflected by the dialectic of hyperconsciousness and negation that affects the racial democracy ideology (Vargas, 2004). João H. Costa Vargas (2004) presents such a dialectic of hyperconscious/negation, which is mutually constitutive of a discussion of how Brazilians understand social hierarchies in dichotomies where thinking about and repressing; interrogating and passively accepting; and justifying and ignoring obscure the role that race plays in the social structures of power. The idea of racial democracy therefore, while it reinforces the silencing of the importance of race in the social relations, also strengthens social inequalities (Vargas, 2004; Gonzalez, Hasenbalg, 1982).

The hyperconscious/negation of racialised people in Brazil is analysed by Joel Zito Araujo through his study on the representation of the Black woman in Brazilian dramaturgy, which demonstrates how the female Black figures are represented as part of the construction of a national identity, in the context of Brazil's racial democracy (Araujo, 2006; 2008). Araujo argues that the media reinforces the argument of marginalisation and positions Black people in "their places" as subjugated individuals (Araujo, 2006, 2008). Therefore, the negation of the importance of race in having present racialised peoples, denying race as a determinant factor in the Brazilian social hierarchies (Vargas, 2010). The invisibility of the "racial" issue naturalises the Black representation with "impure ugliness" and "social humiliation" faced by Black actors and football players seen by the Brazilian public in general with acceptance (Araujo, 2008). The hyperconsciousness of race lies within this argument as symptomatic, with vehement insistence in saying that race is manifested and represented to be denied (Vargas, 2004), forged as harmonic social relations of racial democracy (Hasenbalg, 1979).

The narratives of racial democracy runs through myth and ideology that forge an idea of a nation where all Brazilians "are equals and live without racially motivated conflict. The force of such a myth becomes impressive when we take into account that Brazil has the largest Afro-descended population in the hemisphere and is second only to Nigeria in the world" (Vargas, 2004, p. 445). Racial democracy gives the notion of equal contributions to the nation, regardless of the violence

imposed through colonisation and White power that is established. This apparent friendly aspect in racial relations entails the notion of equal representation of the Blacks, the Indigenous and the White Europeans forming the Brazilian society, culture, and language (Da Matta, 1983). This perception is one of the possible versions of the coloniality of power in Brazil. It reinforces the presence of the European, in detriment of the "other" Indigenous and African peoples, workforce, culture and language (Schwarcz, 1995). The Asian presence in Brazil is not even mentioned during the process of the construction of the Nation-State in Brazil.

It is with this myth that "race" appears as the fundamental – and visible (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000) – definition of national identity. At the same time that it is not debated racism is not confronted. Along with the racial hierarchies, miscegenation was an important element that makes cultural dynamics visible within national identity, such as samba for example, and gives the notion of peaceful racial relations, known as racial democracy (about racial democracy and visible/ invisible dynamics of racialisation in Brazil: Guimarães, 2001; Vargas, 2004). That is to say, these myths were lived paradigms of the everyday life in the formation of a nation-State where miscegenation, hybridity and *mestizaje* were powerful threads weaved by coloniality; political agenda of racialised groups (Indigenous and Black); and agency towards self-classification and racial performativity.

The daily, lived experience is a clever part of the mechanism of racism, which one of the participants, Tamara (34 years old, from Sao Paulo) narrated as part of her childhood at the private school where she studied the first years of her education. She was bullied, called "monkey" and "*neguinha da beija flor*" (this term is a reference to *Neguinho da Beija Flor*, an acclaimed Black samba singer from Rio de Janeiro who is part of the School of Samba called Beija Flor. The translation of his name would be "little Black guy from Beija Flor", therefore, the translation of this "name calling" is "little Black girl from Beija Flor"). Tamara also told me about racist songs the kids would sing to her at break time at school. This is one example of how racism is present in our everyday lives since early age as a joke, a song, something that seems trivial and can be "only in our heads". Tamara told me she knew that being called a "*neguinha da beija flor*" was not a way to praise her Black female body, but at school and at home this did not seem to be a problem of racism. "*Neguinha da beija flor*" is a reminder of her marginal place in that context of privet school with a majority of White students, or as Tamara says, "without

any Black representativity" (about children experiencing racism at school: Bicudo, 1955; Ginsberg, 1955; Telles, 2003). 'Monkey' is the animalistic category addressed to Black people since colonial times within European aesthetic conventions; the Western '*way of seeing*' and representing the "Other" (Hall, 1992, 1997).

The heteroglossia around Brazilian Blackness, therefore, is embodied with arguments that rely on the Western European considerations of who is racialised (Fanon, 1952; Hall, 1992) as well as arguments of agency and self-identifications, very often deliberating that everyone has a Black/Indigenous heritage somehow, making racial identification a complex entangled dynamic between skin shade and possibilities of racial classifications. What makes this racial identification process more complex than simple binaries between Black and White is the colonial way to undermine the Black and Indigenous people, the reaction of the Black and Indigenous moments around the design of a political agenda, and the way Brazilian people incorporated both in the mythical construction of agency in their racial self-identification process (more about the myth of racial democracy and the formation of Brazil with three races on Schwarcz, 1993, 1995, 2012). Here, I am interested in exploring the multiple possibilities through which Black women perceive their Blackness. The next example is the beginning of my conversation with Fabiola (37 years old, from Espírito Santo, Brazil):

1   K: Tell me a bit more… Why do you consider yourself part of the research? How do

>2   you self-classify racially?

3   F: In Brazil I classify myself as parda [brown], mainly because of the lack of option in

>4   having something intermediary between Black and White, I guess. I don't see myself

>5   as White, although this is something for lots of discussions around the table of pubs

>6   among my friends.

7   K: Ok.

8   F: Because they think I'm White. But as it is… Self-declaration, anyway, I don't see

>9   myself as White…

>10   Here I define myself as 'mixed other', because in fact, I think that I am a mixture of a

>11   bunch of things. Now, I, I… In my opinion, in Brazil is always very difficult to

>12   associate… race with social status, right? You can be more or less White depending

>13   on how much money you have in your bank account and that makes it very difficult.

>14   Ultimately, people declare themselves as… Something different than White. Mainly

>15   who is mixed…

16   K: I understand…

17   F: Because if you say that you are Black doesn't mean necessarily that you are poor,

>18   but in the collective imaginary, it is much closer to a lower social class, or not.

19   K: Uhum

20   F: And maybe, I think that my ensign of declaring myself as parda is to show that

>21   there is nothing related with social class, but in how you see yourself, I guess.

22   K: I understand. Sure. And what is the venue you trace to classify yourself as

>23   parda?

24   F: I think it is a mixture of Black and Indigenous and White, too, you know?

25   K: Uhum

26   F: Certainly. But on the spectrum, if we would trace a rainbow of races, I would see

>27   myself halfway. Right there. With a huge Indigenous influence…. And Black, too.

28   K: Ok.

29   F: That is why I declare myself as parda.

This excerpt gives me the opportunity for a wide range of analyses about racial classifications in Brazil. In this paper, I will explore three aspects of how Blackness is weaved in this conversation: 1) the construction of Blackness among Indigenous and Black identities; 2) The intersectionality of Black challenging the stereotype of class; 3) The racial self-declaration in Brazil and whether it remains in her migratory project. The first analysis about the self-declaration asserts Fabiola's potency of how she wants to negotiate her positioning (line 3 and 8) in the "rainbow of races" (26) based on the cultural-political awareness of racial self-classification during the 90's in Brazil. The heteroglossia of this conversation along with institutional voices of how self-declaration is an ongoing racial negotiation is related more to colours – the marker of differentiation through skin shade and miscegenation – than the idea of race – the origin of kinship and generation (Nogueira, 1985).

Self-declaration during the 70's was in strong demand by the Brazilian Black movement under the slogan "*não deixe sua cor passar em branco*". The literal translation would be "do not allow your colour go by unnoticed", but the play with the words in Portuguese as "*passar em branco*" has a double meaning of "passing as White" and "passing unnoticed". The claim puts forward a powerful argument

for a racial and political visibility of Black people during a period of dictatorship when Black cultural activities (religion, music, civil organisation) were violently repressed. In Nella Larsen's words on passing she states that "passing asks us to read the 'error' of identity to acknowledge that when talking about passing we are also talking about the story that passing enables us to tell, the story of Identity as necessarily always displaced" (Larsen, 2003, p. 52). As a result of the pressure from the Black movement, the 1976 census adopted the racial self-declaration style, resulting in 136 different expressions for self-declaration (Moura, 1988). It represents 136 ways to perceive Blackness. This research was made public on national television and didactic books under the ideology of a multi-racial country in a racial democracy. After that, Census decided to keep only five categories of colour for its demographic study, which are: *negro* (Black), *pardo* (brown), *vermelho* (red), *amarelo* (yellow) and *branco* (White). Census uses the colours in the questionnaires for self-declaration; race is used to compile the data that will indicate the race of the Brazilian population. The colours *pardo* and *negro* would represent the Black race; red, the Indigenous; yellow the Oriental (in a broad general way "Oriental race" is much more related to the Japanese migration to Brazil during World War II) and the White colour would be the White race (Schwarcz, 1995; 2012).

The "rainbow" that Fabiola refers to in line 26 is the representation of this perception of harmonic colours united as a nation. Not only does she points out the treads of how to weave *her* Blackness, but also her location, "in the middle". Despite her autonomy, there is a reluctance to self-declare, after all, there is not a word on this ("lack of option", line 3) for someone who believes herself to be a mixture of White, Indigenous and Black in Brazil. This lack of wording Blackness beyond the mixture of Black and White is part of the aforementioned way in which racial democracy is forged, situating miscegenation discourses through the 'conception' of Whiteness. Here, Fabiola promotes a redescription the meaning of "*parda*", weaving the constituted Black and White mixture into a dynamic self-declaration process, not only in terms of miscegenation of Black, White and Indigenous but also in how she negotiates that beyond around the table of pubs (5), in the everyday and with me at the moment of our conversation. In my point of view, Fabiola has a light skin that could be socially considered as White in the Brazilian context and she is aware of this possibility, but confronting it (line 4 to 6) with her own of Blackness.

The negotiation present in Fabiola's narrative also points to the intersection of race and nationality, suggesting a criticism of how people racialised as Black are usually associated with poverty (lines 12, 13) and her detachment of class in her racial self-declaration (lines 17, 18, 20, 21). Intersectionality is reinforced here by her denial to recognise class as part of the reality of racialised groups. The privilege of how she navigates with her Blackness through the White, Black and Indigenous identity of "*parda*" allows her to be a smaller target of being racialised as marginalised poor considering her light skin shade. Moreover, a smaller target to suffer violent backlashes of racism and discrimination, including in her migratory experience as a Brazilian woman. This privilege speaks also from her middle class background, which allows her to navigate spaces of poverty – Fabiola grew up in an area near the favela where she was used to play with the kids there – and upper middle class – she also frequented tennis courts and private schools during her life. Nowadays she can afford to self-fund the living costs and courses to launch her career, paying fees of international students in London, where the cost of living is known to be one of the highest in Europe. I am pointing out here that dismissing class from the racialised identity may be part of the privileges that are not particularly related with the working class struggles, in which intersectional oppressions could be more present/ violent.

To be "*parda*" is usually related to being of a lighter skin of Black, usually associated with the miscegenation between Black and White, despite heritage or origin. In this particular conversation with Fabiola, she critically points to the limitations in the "measure" of racialised groups in Brazil. At the same time, she denies her friends' statements about her being White while also denying the institutional options for what she believes to be her racialised identity. The challenges she faces in negotiating her claimed Blackness in Brazil somehow finds comfort in the category of "mixed other" in the United Kingdom. This leads to another debate about the (in)visibility of "others" in the British context and the reproduction of the "rest" in relation to the "West" (Hall, 1992; Schwarz, 1996). I would argue that finding comfort in the category of "mixed other" could be another trap of racism. In times of the Brexit, when migrants are institutionally portrayed (politics and the media) as a threat for jobs and the moral integrity of national identity, the "mixed other" is a target of racism. At the same time, the "mixed other" is indeed, anything that can be/ wants to be racialised. This racial category that Fabiola feels represents

her Blackness is also the quality of her location, the place of race and national-ity indicating she is not "originally" from here. These classifications take different meanings in her condition of migrant, requiring a different negotiation process of addressivity (Bakhtin, 1986): how she wants to self-identify and how she wants to be addressed by others. It is a weaving process that she does not do alone, but with the discourses present through time and space around/ within coloniality, her friends' ways of radicalising her and my positionality as "Black" inquiring her about her Blackness. The meaning of "race" has a different national context where the Great Britain, Britishness and Englishness are playing a new role in the process of racialization and nationality. Weaving Blackness with Fabiola is understanding the continuity of making meanings with politics of racialisation that, the way we perceive and feel our racialised identities, needs to be re-inscribed, de-construct-ed, and remodelled.

Final Considerations

This conversation opens venues for further analysis on how Blackness is weaved in the social fabric where race, class, gender and nationality play such important roles to define, classify, mark and differentiate one another. For now, this paper provides a partial approach to studies on Diaspora that consider the discourses and practices as important aspects in the everyday experiences of racialised peo-ples. The focus of this analysis was an attempt to challenge the ways in which the hegemonic power is articulated through the colonial perspective of "the West" and negotiated from the agency and resistance of Black Brazilian migrant women in the United Kingdom. The conversation with Fabiola shows how crucial it is to move away from binaries or fixed notions of race, embarking on notions of what constitutes intersectionality in this situated way to weave Blackness through dia-logue (Bento, 2011; Gonzalez, 1979; hooks, 1991; Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014; Tate, 2005).

Exploring how weaving Blackness has its continuity and meaning negotiat-ed in the experiences of the everyday, at the local level of race politics it makes sense to understand how racism is placed through/within the conjuncture of its dynamic. The possible structures of racism is what makes intersectionality useful to me: as a tool to understand lived oppressions and resistance in the experiences

of the everyday wherein Blackness is performed, negotiated, and *felt*. As a final consideration, I must point to: (1) the importance of exploring in more depth how the dynamics of power within the politics of racialisation is used to represent the "other" in the British context, in order to explore and locate marginalised diasporic experiences within other such contexts. (2) To understand the marginal narrative as part of a multiplicity of voices (heteroglossia), which *affects* and is *affected* by different dimensions of voices that can point to hegemonic discourses and discourses of resistance/ agency, weaving new meanings of racialised experiences in Diaspora. (3) Moving away from binarisms in my effort to explore how Blackness is negotiated raises the need to go beyond Black African centered references of Black identities. This enables new understandings of positionalities among Brazilian Indigenous and other racialised groups in Brazil that are weaving together identities/ performativity/ discourses of Blackness. Weaving is a way to reclaim the Black identity with particularities of our multiple racialised selves.

Endnotes

[1]   This paper was presented at the event "Challenging Academic Debates on Womanhood: A Decolonial Approach on Caribbean and Latin American Identities" organised at the University of Leeds on July 1, 2016.

[2]   In this paper, I am referring to continuity as a process that is not fixed, crystallised in time and space. I argue that such continuity is not linear. Rather, it is embedded with tensions, fragments, dimensions, and contradictions that are part of the weaving process.

[3]   By centralising Black Brazilian women's voices, I would also like to call attention to the inevitable tensions in the power relations during the research process in which my position as a researcher of data promotes an imbalance of power.

Acknowledgments

"Challenging Academic Debates on Womanhood: A Decolonial Approach on Caribbean and Latin American Identities" and hosting this special edition. Tasnim Al-Ahdal, I really appreciate your effort and sisterhood in being there, planning and organising the event and this edition with me, putting all the energy you could during the struggles and simultaneously lived/felt at this moment.

References

Ahmed, S. (2004). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Albuquerque Jr., D. M. (1999). *A Invenção do Nordeste e Outras Arte*s. São Paulo/Recife: Cortez/Fundação Joaquim Nabuco.

Arrizón, A. (2000). Mythical Performativity: Relocating Aztlán in Chicana Feminist Cultural Productions. *Theatre Journal*, *52*(1), 23–49.

Arrizón, A. (2002). Race-ing Performativity through Transculturation, Taste and the Mulata Body. *Theatre Research International, 27*(2),136–152.

Arrizón, A. (2008). Latina subjectivity, sexuality and sensuality. *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory, 18*(3), 189–198.

Azevedo, T. (1996). *As elites de cor, um estudo de ascensão social*. Salvador: Edufba.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: four essays*. Texas: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Texas: University of Texas Press.

Bento, B. (2011). Política da diferença: feminismos e transexualidade. In: Colling, L. (ed.). *Stonewall 40+ o que no Brasil?* (79–110). Salvador: EDUFBA.

Bicudo, V. L. (1955). Atitudes dos alunos dos grupos escolares em relação com a côr dos seus colegas. In: Bastide, R. & Fernandes, F. *Relações raciais entre brancos e negros em São Paulo*. (227–310). São Paulo: Editora Anhembi/UNESCO.

Brah, A. (1996). *Cartographies of Diaspora: contesting identities*. London and New York, Rutledge.

Câmara, B. (2016, March 8). The solitude of the Black woman. *Plus 55*. Retrieved from: http://plus55.com/culture/2016/03/the-solitude-of-the-Black-woman

Collins, P. H. (1991). *Black feminist thought: knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment*. New York; London: Routledge.

Collins, P. H. (2000). Gender, Black feminism, and Black political economy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science [H.W.Wilson – SSA]*. 568:41.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). *Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Legal Forum.

Da Matta, R. (1983). *Relativizando: Uma introdução à antropologia social*. Petrópolis: Vozes.

Davis, A. (1981). *Women, Race, and Class*. New York: Random House.

Fanon, F. (1952). *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto Press.

Fish, S. (1989). *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies*. London: Duke University Press.

Freire, P. (1980). *Conscientização, teoria e prática da libertação: uma introdução ao pensamento de Paulo Freire*. São Paulo: Moraes.

Freire, P. (1999). *Pedagogia da Autonomia. Saberes Necessários à Prática Educativa*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra.

Friedman, S. S. (1991a). Post/Poststructuralist Feminist Criticism: The Politics of Recuperation and Negotiation. *New Literary History, 22*(2): 465–490.

Friedman, S. S. (1991b). Weavings: Intertextuality and the (Re)Birth of the Author. In: Clayton, J. & Rothestein, E. (eds.). *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Gilroy, P. (1993). *The Black Atlantic*: *Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge: Harvard UP.

Ginsberg, A. M. (1955). Pesquisas sôbre as atitudes de um grupo de escolares de São Paulo em relação com as crianças de côr. *In:* Bastide, R. & Fernandes, F. (eds.). *Relações raciais entre brancos e negros em São Paulo*. (311–361). São Paulo: Editora Anhembi/UNESCO.

Gonzalez, L. (1979, May 10). O papel da mulher negra na sociedade brasileira. (mimeo) *Spring Symposium the Political Economy of the Black World*. Los Angeles.

Gonzalez, L. & Hasenbalg, C. (1982). *Lugar de negro*. São Paulo: Marco Zero.

Guimarães, A. S. A. (1999). Raça e os Estudos de Relações Raciais no Brasil. *Revista Novos* Estudos, *54*. Retrieved from: http://novosestudos.org.br/v1/files/uploads/contents/88/20080627_raca_e_os_estudos.pdf

Guimarães, A. S. A. (2001). Democracia Racial: O ideal, o pacto e o mito. *Novos Estudos, 61*, 147–162 Retrieved from: http://novosestudos.org.br/v1/files/uploads/contents/95/20080627_democracia_racial.pdf

Guimarães, A. S. A. (2008). *Preconceito racial: modos, temas e tempos*. São Paulo, Cortez.

Gutierrez Rodriguez, E. (2008). Lost in Translation: Transcultural Translation and Decolonization of Knowledge. *Translate: On-line Journal for Cultural Theory and Cultural Studies*, *6*. Retrieved from: http://eipcp.net/transversal/0608/gutierrez-rodriguez/en.

Gutierrez Rodrigues, E. (2010). *Migration, domestic work and affect: a decolonial approach on value and the feminization of labor*. New York: Routledge.

Hall, S. (1990). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In: Rutherford, J. (ed.) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Laurence and Wishart.

Hall, S. (1992). Cultural Identity in Question. In: Hall, S., Held, D. & McGrew, T. (eds). *Modernity and its Futures.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hall, S. (1997). The spectacle of the "other". In: Hall, S. (ed.) *Representation*: *Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London/Thousand Oaks, CA/New Delhi: Sage.

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies, 14*(3), 575–599.

Hasenbalg, C. (1979). *Discriminação e desigualdades raciais no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro, Graal.

Hemmings, C. (2005). Invoking Affect: Cultural theory and the ontological turn. *Cultural Studies.19*(5), 548–567.

hooks, b. (1991). *Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics*. London: Turnaround.

Hunter, S. (2012). Ordering Differentiation: Reconfiguring Governance as Relational Politics. *Journal of Psycho-Social Studies*, *6*(1), 3–29.

Larsen, N. (2003). *Passing*. New York: Penguin Group.

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister Outsider: Freedom*. California: Crossing Press.

Lugones, M. (2008). The Coloniality of Gender. *Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise,* Spring.

Lugones, M. (2014). Rumo a um feminismo descolonial. *Revista Estudos Feministas, 22*(3), 935–952.

Moura, C. (1988). *Sociologia do Negro Brasileiro*. São Paulo: Ática

Nogueira, O. (1985). *Tanto preto quanto branco: estudos de relações raciais*. São Paulo: T.A. Queiroz.

Pacheco, A. C. L. (2013). *Mulher negra: afetividade e solidão*. Salvador: EUFBA.

Paixão, M. & Carvano, L. M. (2008). A variável cor ou raça nos interior dos sistemas censitários brasileiros. In: Sansone, L. & Pinho, O. A. *Raça*: *novas perspectivas antroplógicas*. (eds.). Salvador: Associação Brasileira de Antropologia : EDUFBA.

Quijano, A. (1991). Colonialidad, modernidad/racialidad.*Perú Indígena*, *13*(29), 11–29.

Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of Power, Ethnocentrism, and Latin America. *Nepantla*, *1*(3), 533–580.

Seshadri-Crooks, K. (2000). *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race*. London: Routledge.

Schwarcz, L. K. M. (1993). *O Espetáculo das Raças: Cientistas, Instituições e Questão Racial noBrasil de 1870–1930*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras.

Schwarcz, L. K. M. (1995). Complexo de Zé Carioca. Notas para uma identidade mestiça e malandra. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais, 29*, 49–63.

Schwarcz, L. M. (2012). Do preto, do branco e do amarelo: sobre o mito nacional de um Brasil (bem) mestiçado. *Ciência e Cultura*, *64*(1), 48–55.

Schwarz, B. (1996). The only White man in there: the re-racialisation of England, 1956–1956. *Race and Class*, *38*(1).

Souza, N. S. (1983). *Tornar-se negro: as vicissitudes da identidade do negro brasileiro em ascensão social.* Rio de Janeiro: Eduções Graal.

Tate, S. A. (2005). *Black skins Black masks: Hybridity, dialogism, performativity*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Tate, S. A. (2007). Foucault, Bakhtin, Ethnomethodology: Accounting for Hybridity in Talk-in-Interaction. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *8*(2), Article 10. Retrieved from: http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/247/545.

Tate, S. A. (2009). *Black beauty: Aesthetics, stylization, politics*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Tate, S. A. (2014). Racial affective economies, disalienation and race made ordinary. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *37*(13), 2475–2490.

Telles, E. E. (2003). *Racismo à brasileira*: *uma nova perspectiva sociológica*. Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará.

Vargas, J. H. C. (2004). Hyperconsciousness of Race and its Negation: The dialectic of White Supremacy in Brazil. Identities, 11(4).