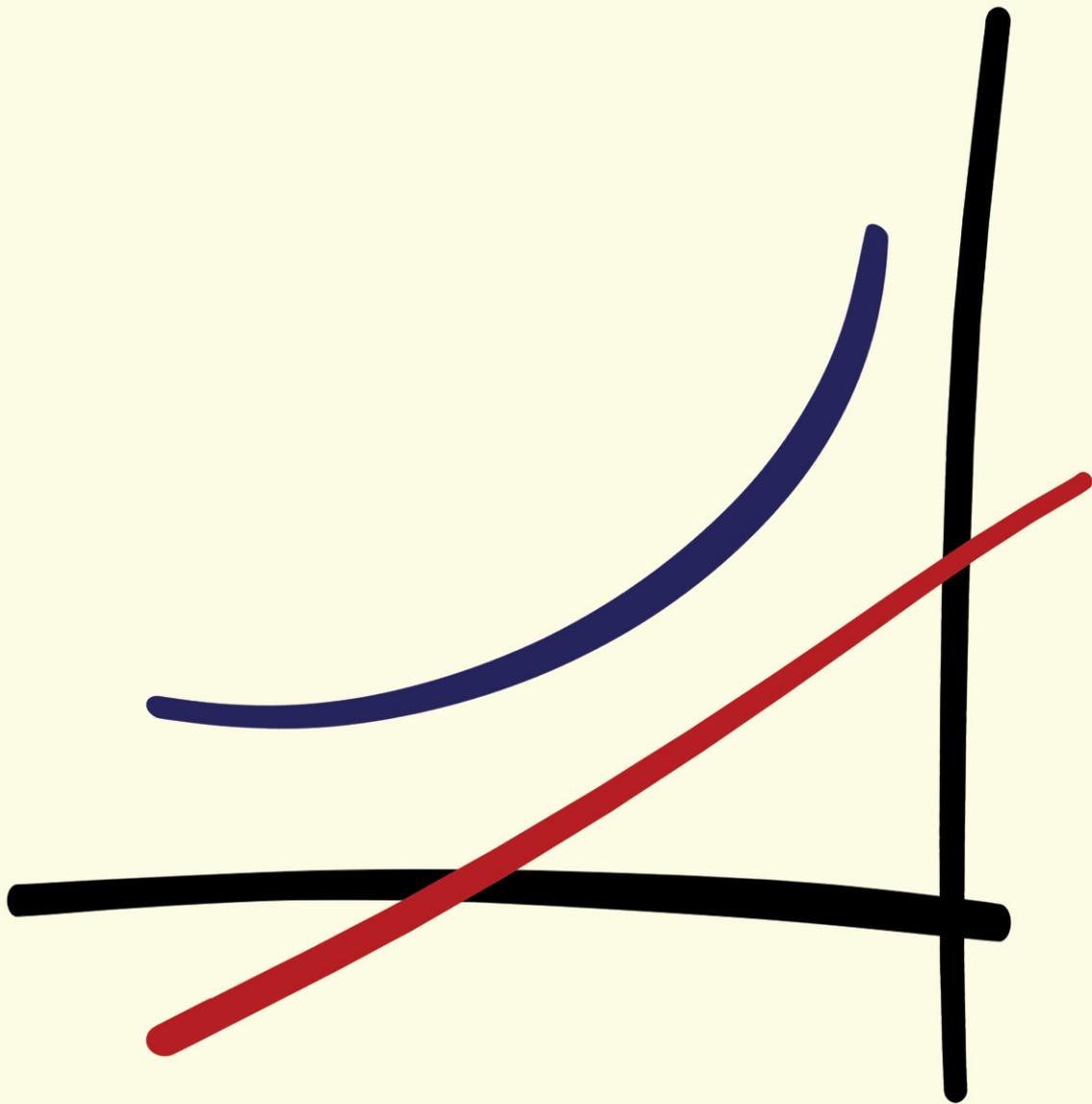


Sandra Reimao

# PUBLISHING IN BRAZIL

Translated by  
**Juliet Attwater**



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## Introduction

**A**cademics of Communication Studies generally concur that 1922, which saw the advent of national radio in Brazil, marked the start of Brazil's cultural industry. Radio introduced a system of mass communication that came to include series offering news and gossip about singers, the theatre, the record industry, and after 1929, about musical feature films and the national *Chanchadas* (comedy musicals).

Brazilian communication theorists also agree that the cultural industry in Brazil really only began to develop exponentially in the 1960s, with the launch of the TV daily news bulletin - the *Jornal Nacional* by Globo TV in 1969, and which was a milestone in Brazil's cultural industry.

Of the various sectors that make up the post-1960 Brazilian communications industry, the most written about has undoubtedly been that of television. This quantitative dominance is because in Brazil, television is the most influential means of mass communication, and the majority of our cultural production revolves around it.

There have also been numerous studies undertaken on the radio and cinema in Brazil, however, the Brazilian publishing industry as a means of communication is still one of the least studied branches of cultural production.

Our goal is to investigate and analyse this area of the communications industry in more depth. The questions asked are how did book production develop in terms of the development and evolution of the cultural industry in Brazil? What happens to the preferences of the reading public and why? Do these preferences suggest cultural "advances" or "setbacks"?

In order to try to achieve these goals, we have used three tools:

1. General (unspecified) quantitative data on the Brazilian publishing market: total numbers of titles and copies published and sold per year, sales points, divi-

sion of these titles etc. (even given the imprecision of data and variations depending on the source used);

2. Data on the best-selling books each year: this is not available for each of the years covered so is used to merely “flag” the dominant themes and concerns in the population that has access to books;

3. Historical and circumstantial data that help to shed light on, focus, and clarify sales’ data.

The first step for the research<sup>1</sup> that led to this book was to look objectively at the concepts of best-sellers, the literary market and market literature and to cast aside any “doomsday” or “integrated” approach (to use Umberto Eco’s expressions).

Our approach has been less prescriptive, due to the complexity of the issue in question. To underline this complexity, we must note that Habermas draws a key distinction between “economic facilitation “ and “psychological facilitation”. Where the former indicates the positive character of mass communication and the industrialisation of cultural products – which by becoming more affordable makes them more accessible to more people, the latter indicates the negative face of the same process, which can lead to the trivialisation and simplification of cultural production in the quest for quick success within an expanded market<sup>2</sup>.

In this context of positive and negative aspects and their effects on the relationship between cultural production and the market, we will also map the main conceptual approaches to the relationship between literature and the market, between highbrow and mass literature. “On the concept of best-sellers”, the published text that is now the first chapter in this volume, focused on these conceptual and theoretical issues.

Taking this initial question, and the above approach and theoretical precept, we then move on to look at Brazilian publishing as of 1960.

This period is discussed in the chapter entitled “The 1960s, the Qualitative Explosion of Personal Enjoyment”. Despite the difficulties in finding data on publishing over the period, we have managed to organise the relevant data and have successfully

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\* The study was undertaken between 1989 and 1994, and was enabled through the support of the CNPq (National Council for Scientific and technological development) which provided a grant.

1 Umberto Eco, *Apocalyptic and Integrated*.

2 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, ch. V.

created an initial mapping and signposting for how it can be interpreted culturally and economically. In an era as troubled as the 1960s in Brazil, local, national and broader global politics are essential to understanding Brazilian readers' different thematic preferences.

Following this, we will take a closer look at the publishing market in the 1970s. During this stage of the study, the significance of this period in terms of the publishing market became clear, as it shows the growth and industrialisation of cultural production.

Some basic facts of the Brazilian "economic miracle" such as the drop in illiteracy rates, the growth in graduate numbers, and the growth of GDP, help to explain the quantitative growth of the country's publishing market in the 1970s – the decade that finally broke the lamentable barrier of one book being published per inhabitant per year. However, it is the decade's best-seller lists that show readers' preferences more clearly, and the strong connection between the people and the development of cultural production. The categories within the publishing market became clearer and stronger, and this will be further discussed in the chapter, "The 1970s, and the Industrialisation and Categorisation of Culture".

The final chapter, "The 1980s, Eclecticism and Oscillations", sets out the quantitative data on the publishing market of the period, and looks at specific bestsellers against a wider backdrop.

There were numerous interesting and relevant results from this stage of the research; the connection between social circumstances, a particular political "mood", the change in the numbers of Brazilian authors on the best-seller lists - which rose slightly over the process of political opening and the campaign *Diretas Já* [Rights Now]. Looking at the specificity of titles, particularly in the field of non-fiction, this correlation becomes even clearer.

The chapters in this book have all been published in the form of articles and have therefore offered only partial results throughout the research process. The sites where the first editions of each chapter were published can be found in the respective introductions.

## On the concept of Best-Sellers

In the context of books and literature, the expression “best-seller” has two fields of meaning that do not always coincide.

The first is, in its most literal sense, is used to describe book sales in any given publishing market. The term “best-sellers” is used here to describe the books that have sold the most over a certain period in one place. In this sense, it is a quantitative and comparative expression relating to sales.

Continuing in the quantitative sense of sales, there have also been attempts to establish non-comparative criteria to define what a best-seller is. In a text from 1947, Frank Luther Mott suggests classifying best-sellers as “the books that, according to estimates, have total sales equal to 1% of the population of the continental United States in the decade in which they were published”<sup>3</sup>. This criterion was only valid for the USA, and required adjustments for other contexts.

In addition to the meaning being linked to sales in the publishing market, when applied to fiction, a best-seller also came to designate a particular type of text with the immanent internal characteristics of a particular type of fictional narrative.

Many authors, with a variety of different approaches, have sought to define the characteristics of a fictional text, a best-selling text - also known as para-literature, trivial literature, sub-literature, pulp fiction or lowbrow or mass literature.

There is a consensus that this kind of literature, a descendant of serialised literature, grew in popularity from the middle of the 19th century and especially so in the 20th century, and that such texts should be included in the list of the cultural industry’s first products, which, in turn, are linked to the growth of capitalism and the consumer society. Aside from this consensus, there are several other ways of defining popular literature.

\* This text was originally published in the magazine *Comunicação & Sociedade* [Communication & Society], 18 Dec. 1991.  
3 Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes: The story of best-sellers in the United States*, p. 303.

In his book *Teoria da Literatura de Massa*<sup>4</sup>, Muniz Sodré talks about the structure of light reading, and suggests there are four elements:

1. The presence of a male super-hero “[...] with romantic characteristics that emphasise the idea of destiny and a particular kind of rejection of social rules”;
2. Current affairs;
3. Mythical oppositions - “[...] good and evil, happiness and bitterness [...]”;
4. The preservation of a cultured rhetoric - “[...] the rhetoric of serialisation is simple, [...] (but) it is always based on that of more cultured literature (...Romanticism...Realism...)”.

This preservation of a cultured rhetoric is present in mass literature, not only in its structure, but also its content. Dieter Prokop underscores this fact in his entertaining description of, not the structure of mass fiction, but their explicit content:

Best-selling novels have a fascinating and uncompromising mix of what - seen from a strictly logical perspective - seem to be unrelated things: with combinations of literary culture, remnants of historical events, and also light-hearted obscenities (which, in general are hypocritically indignant); they also contain family feuds and symbols of status, economic power and luxury<sup>5</sup>.

While the enumeration of explicit content and the structural elements found in popular literature help to shed light on this area of the cultural industry, they do not define it, as all the elements listed can also be found in more highbrow literature<sup>6</sup>.

The characterization of para-literary texts has to go through the demarcation of distance, the difference between them and those that are representative of “high” literature, and through the distinction between mass culture and high culture.

### Popular literature and literary literature

Taking as a reference highbrow literature, also known as erudite, or literary literature (the designation preferred by Umberto Eco), Todorov and Ducrot characterize

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<sup>4</sup> Muniz Sodré, *Teoria da Literatura de Massa*, pp. 82-84.

<sup>5</sup> Dieter Prokop, “Fascinação e Tédio na Comunicação: Produtos de Monopólio e Consciência”, in *Ciro Marcondes Filho (org.), Dieter Prokop*, p. 150.

<sup>6</sup> As Muniz Sodré drew attention to in the above mentioned quote.

mass literature as something where “the individual work fully conforms to the genre and type”<sup>7</sup>, unlike more highbrow literature where each work has its own irreducible originality. Thus, “literary masterpieces do not usually belong to any other genre than that of their own, but mass literature is made up of books that best fit in their genre”<sup>8</sup>.

Although Todorov is emphasizing the issue of genres and in particular, the contrast of highbrow literature with the more structured genres of popular fiction (detective novels, adventure fiction, science fiction and romantic novels), this idea of a single irreducible originality encompasses narrative as well as personal and moral values. In the case of highbrow literature, these processes create a unique and unmistakable vision of the world.

The originality of highbrow literature, which is diametrically opposite to that of popular fiction, correlates to the question of the effort needed to read each type of literary text, as summarised by José Paulo Paes who on this point, refers to Umberto Eco:

Another criterion of differentiation is the effort [...], popular culture aims to save (the consumer) from making great efforts of comprehension, intelligence or even attention or memory [...]. Whereas, *highbrow* culture does not only confront all these values, but also the ways of representing them in works of art, challenging the reader to make the effort to interpret, and stimulating their critical faculties rather than dulling them<sup>9</sup>.

Originality in the narrative, and the subsequent effort required to absorb it are fundamental characteristics of highbrow literature, and mean that it is ideologically and socially opposite to popular literature.

As it lacks originality and demands little from readers’ perceptual and conceptual schemata, mass fiction ends up merely repeating and reaffirming the world “as it is”. And this eternal repetition then justifies itself: “The world is what it is, and it’s like this because that is how it should be.”

It is this repetition and justification of conventional approaches to things as they are structured in the real world that Umberto Eco refers to as the principal con-

7 Oswald Ducrot & Tzvetan Todorov, *Dicionário das Ciências da Linguagem*, p. 189. [Encyclopedic dictionary of the sciences of language]

8 Tzvetan Todorov, “Tipologia do Romance Policial” [Typology of Detective Fiction], in *Poética da Prosa* [The Poetics of Prose], p. 58.

9 José Paulo Paes, “Por uma Literatura Brasileira de Entretenimento”, in *A Aventura Literária: Ensaio sobre Ficção e Ficções*.

solation mechanism in popular fiction. Among the numerous consolation mechanisms in best-sellers (including happy-endings, comeuppance for the “baddies”, redemption for the “goodies), “[...] the most satisfactory and consoling is the fact that everything remains in its place”.

For Eco, it is this that gives readers the greatest satisfaction, and the greatest peace of mind. “Consolation through reiterating the expected”. It is the certainty that if anything does change, it is only “to ensure that everything remains unchanged.” That is why, for Eco, the literature of facilitation is a phenomenon that is part of the field of social psychology<sup>10</sup>.

On the other hand, the opportunity to create a unique view of the world and to change mechanised perceptions and conceptualisations allows highbrow literature to distance itself from empirical pettiness, from the eternal justifying of the conventional understanding of the world “as it is” and - an essential requirement for all true art and culture – facilitates the opening of the doors of promise, of what life could be but is not in our mechanised, alienated and reified world.

Adorno describes this opposition thus:

What we call culture in general wants - as an expression of suffering and contradiction - to fix the idea of a true life, but it does not want to represent simple existence (Dasein) or the conventional categories as presented by the culture industry as if they were true lives, or as if these categories were its measure<sup>11</sup>.

### **From the Step Theory to the Filter Theory**

The following will give an overview of the main evaluational elements of mass communication and will take a closer look at the range of issues that surround the concept of best-sellers.

A starting point for popular literature could be called the “step theory”, in that it conceives of light reading as a first step, a preparatory step for readers to enable them to read more highbrow literature. A supporter of this position is the Brazilian academic José Paulo Paes, who writes:

<sup>10</sup> Umberto Eco, *Apocalípticos e Integrados*, [Apocalyptic and Integrated], pp. 190-206.

<sup>11</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, “A Indústria Cultural” (radio presentations), in Gabriel Cohn (org.), *Comunicação e Indústria Cultural*, p. 292.

From the majority of readers of these last authors (Alexandre Dumas or Agatha Christie) comes the elite of readers of the others (Gustave Flaubert and James Joyce) and no truly integrated culture can discard having a light-fiction culture alongside a strong highbrow literary culture.

Another of Paes' passages reinforces this idea: "[...] It is in relation to this higher level, where an "average" literature, which stimulates readers' tastes and reading habits, takes on the role of helping to access the next level [...]"<sup>12</sup>.

This "step theory" differs from what "the theory of hiatus and regression" - the idea that there is an unbridgeable gap between highbrow and popular literature, and that the latter can never help access the former because it not only simplifies things, but also diminishes the faculties, does not enable independent critical thinking, and eternally repeats and justifies the *status quo*.

Habermas agrees with Adorno when he asserts that "close contact with culture energises the spirit, while the consumption of popular literature leaves no trace: it communicates something that instead of accumulating, leads to regression"<sup>13</sup>. In this case, the author is using the term "popular literature" in the sense of psychological facilitation.

A third approach to popular literature treats it neither as a step towards accessing highbrow literature nor as an absolute antagonist; it takes a different perspective.

This third posture - which we can call the "filter theory" - postulates that the pernicious effects of the culture industry can be diluted and even eliminated and reversed via consumer filters of rejection and selection.

Alfredo Bosi, one of the supporters of this approach, particularly for the common people, summarises his attitude thus:

The population assimilate things in their own way [...] There is a filter that rejects irrelevant content, and there are sensitive adaptations to relevant matter [...] incorporated or reincorporated through the gratitude of the popular imagination<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> José Paulo Paes, op. cit. We are looking at three critical positions here and will not mention other readings that may seem, by themselves, positive.

<sup>13</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Mudança Estrutural da Esfera Pública*, p. 196.

<sup>14</sup> Alfredo Bosi, "Cultura Brasileira e Culturas Brasileiras", in *Dialética da Colonização*, p. 329.

In a separate text, Alfredo Bosi comments that these filters are highbrow culture and popular culture. This implies that based on the products of the culture industry, people who experience only popular culture or highbrow culture will have an ability to filter, which comes from the resistance of these cultural spheres.

Individuals will only retain what their own cultural experiences allow them to filter and evaluate. However, to select and analyse messages, consumers need to be able to recognise rhythms other than those that come from the industry of signs. If this does not happen, within the limits of the system, one gets Marcuse's "one-dimensional" man, which comes with all the political risks that mass culture brings with it<sup>15</sup>.

However, Ecléa Bosi suggests that when one talks about popular culture as a filter of mass culture, one needs to encompass experiences of popular culture as a rooting; as "real, active and natural participation in the existence of a collectivity"<sup>16</sup>.

### **How to assess best-sellers in Brazil**

These three approaches to mass literature, which we will here refer to as the "step theory", the "hiatus and regression theory", and the "filter theory", can - even with their contradictions, help clarify various aspects of best-selling literature. However, each approach has different features when one considers the consequences of adopting them in terms of the Brazilian publishing market and social reality.

The scope of the "step theory" is limited considering that in Brazil, oral culture moved on to an electronic culture without any significant mediation from written culture,<sup>17</sup> and taking into account the undeniable national cultural hegemony of television, which is primarily dedicated to entertainment<sup>18</sup>. Because of this, one has to ask that if television in Brazil is already the predominant entertainment space, is it actually necessary to defend a similar style of literature?<sup>19</sup> By defending such literature, are we not ultimately defending a literature that follows in the wake of television and thereby reinforces it?

15 Alfredo Bosi, "Plural mas não Caótico", in Alfredo Bosi (org.), *Cultura Brasileira: Temas e Situações*, p. 10.

16 S. Weil, *A Condição Operária e Outros Estudos sobre Opressão*, p.317. Quoted by Ecléa Bosi in an epigraph, "Cultura e Desenraizamento", in Alfredo Bosi (org.), op. cit., p. 16.

17 . Cf. Hans M. Enzensberger, "Enzensberger: Poder e Estética Televisiva" (interview given to S. Caparelli & A. Hohlfeld), *Revista Brasileira de Comunicação*, 53, pp. 10-11. Also cf. José Paulo Paes, op. cit.

18 . Cf. José Marques Melo, *Para uma Leitura Crítica da Comunicação*, p. 79.

19 . Cf. José Marques Melo, *Para uma Leitura Crítica da Comunicação*, p. 79.

The “hiatus and regression theory”, is recognised for its accurate characterization of mass communication and the regressive effects that this can have. However, in terms of literature in Brazil today, it is questionable whether this kind of approach would not ultimately lead to stagnation or elitist radicalisation in terms of action and cultural analysis, particularly given the country’s high rate of illiteracy and the low percentage of regular readers.

The final “filter theory” is the one that most challenges Brazilian cultural thinkers, as for them the defence against the harmful effects of the culture industry and para-literature (which confirms that this approach has things in common with the “hiatus theory”) is not only to protect and safeguard highbrow culture and literary works of art (like the “hiatus theory”), but also different areas and issues such as citizenship, life experience, social interaction, forms of production and mechanisms of access to other, different and divergent cultural products of mass and popular culture.

## The 1960's

### The qualitative explosion of private enjoyment

According to Roberto Schwarz, the vibrant artistic-cultural manifestations in Brazil between 1964 and 1969 were “a kind of late blossoming, and were the fruit of two decades of democracy”<sup>20</sup>. This chronological displacement explains the presence of such an active and inclusive cultural movement at such a time of political shutdown in the midst of a dictatorship.

This period of just over fifteen years of democracy, when the cultural movement was accessible to the working and rural classes, resulted “in one of the most creative phases of Brazilian culture this century”<sup>21</sup>, and continued and even blossomed after democracy had been overthrown and shut down by the coup of 1964. This meant that this cultural “late blossoming” was yet again consumed by only one of the groups at the root of this equation - intellectuals, students, and the educated urban middle classes.

With the dissolution of the contacts between culture and the masses, these cultural products became only accessible to those in the group that produced it and to those moving in the same social circles, but this did not halt its expansion. Initially, the military government “did not prevent the theoretical or artistic circulation of left-wing ideology, which flourished even though it was in a restricted environment”<sup>22</sup>.

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\* With a few small differences, this text was originally published in *Cadernos de Jornalismo e Editoração*, 11 (26), São Paulo, Com-Arte, ECA-USP, Dec. 1990.

<sup>20</sup> Roberto Schwarz. “Cultura e Política, 1964 – 1969”, in *O Pai de Família e outros Estudos*, p. 89.

<sup>21</sup> Chico Buarque & Paulo Pontes, “Apresentação” de *Gota d'Água*, p. XVI.

<sup>22</sup> Roberto Schwarz, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

## The Audience Explosion

The main groups behind the Brazilian cultural scene at the time - its proposals, developments, and limitations - were described by Roberto Schwarz in his article. For our purposes here, we should point out a common trait of the period: “the importance of public genres of theatre, posters, popular music and journalism that transformed the climate in celebration and demonstrations”<sup>23</sup>. It is in the audience’s solidarity and self-adulation, and other forms of public consumption and enjoyment, that sectors of the urban educated middle class, and producers and consumers of left-wing culture at the time, atoned for their ghosts and washed the dirty linen of the revolution that would leave them with the realisation that from then on, they were talking only to themselves. In this shared enjoyment, this repressed cultural production took on a tone of demonstration, celebration, solidarity and exaltation, a tone that was “uplifting and inspirational and that involved everyone and seemed to promote an emotional and hopeful response rather than reflection and critical distance”<sup>24</sup>.

In the context of bringing together public genres, literature, which since the 18th century<sup>25</sup> had been a peculiarly personal activity, moved on to the next stage.

Although in this period literature had a lesser reach than more popular genres, it was on the printed page in theory and fiction that many of the ideas and attitudes seen increasingly on the stage and screens of the time had their roots, development and challenges. As Zuenir Ventura noted:

The generation of ‘68 may have been the last literary generation of Brazil - at least in the sense that their intellectual learning and aesthetic perception were forged through reading. I was brought up reading, rather than watching<sup>26</sup>.

## The Publishing Market in the 1960s

This chapter will present data on the Brazilian publishing market in the 1960s and give a general overview, which will make a few observations and posit some hypotheses.

<sup>23</sup> *Idem*, p.80.

<sup>24</sup> Heloísa B. Hollanda & Marcos Gonçalves, *Cultura e Participação nos Anos 60*, p. 94.

<sup>25</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *op. cit.*, cap. V.

<sup>26</sup> Zuenir Ventura, 1968: *O Ano que não Terminou*, p. 51.

We will first look at some of the quantitative aspects of publishing at the time.

In 1960, there were 36,322,827 copies of books published in Brazil<sup>27</sup>. As the population of Brazil was 65,743,000, this gave an average of 0.55 books per capita per year (the total circulation was shared between 3953 titles).

## TABLE

### Relation of books per capita/year in some years of the 1960s.

Year	Brazil population	Total number of books published	Books per person/year
1960	65 743 000	36 322 827	0,5
1961	71 868 000	36 322 827	0,4
1962	74 096 000	66 559 000	0,9
1963	76 409 000	54 222 606	0,7
1964	78 809 000	51 914 564	0,6
1967*	86 580 000	154 899 825	2,1
1969	92 282 000	68 583 400	0,7

The Brazilian publishing market remained at these extremely low levels throughout the whole of the 1960s, with numbers that never exceeded the barrier of one book per inhabitant per year. This only changed at the beginning of the 1970s.

## The Best-sellers

A report in *Veja* magazine, issue 15, of 18 December 1968, which suggested books as Christmas gifts, said that the era was seeing a “publishing explosion” and that “readers could now find an average of six interesting new books per month.” Despite the publishing market still being small, several commentators from the 1960s shared this sense of an “explosion”, which should be credited more to the quality of the book than to the number printed that as we have seen, was low.

To give a brief overview of the publications and main reading habits of the time, we can look at 1968 and more specifically at the best-seller lists in *Veja* between 11

<sup>27</sup> The IBGE definition of books excludes leaflets (as in publications with fewer than 48 pages). Unless indicated otherwise, all data relating to Brazil have been taken from the *Anuários Estatísticos do Brasil* and the *Censos Demográficos* of 1960 and 1970 published by the IBGE.

\* The IBGE has no data on this for 1965, 1966, 1968 and 1970. It is possible that the data relating to 1967 cover the production of 1965 and 1966 as well. It is also possible that the production of 1969 may be overestimated.

September and 11 December<sup>28</sup>.

The 11 September 1968 was the first issue of *Veja* for which we used “best-selling books” data, and the 11 December 1968 was the final date, as this was the final issue to be published before the decree of Institutional Act 5 (13.12.1968), and was in general considered in cultural terms to be the final decade of the 1960s and the start of the 1970s.

The use of this sample however, has several problems and limitations, of which the most serious are:

1. The brevity of the period covered;
2. The lack of information on the criteria for, or locations of the data given;
3. The lack of uniformity of numbers of titles in the listings - the shortest of which (4 December 1968) includes just five books, and the longest of which has twelve titles - the average being ten.

We have not been able to find any other periodical or newspaper which published a similar section during the period in question; nor have we been able to find any data from the period on best-sellers in general, neither at the *Câmara Brasileira do Livro* [Brazilian Book Council] nor at the *Sindicato Nacional dos Editores de Livros* [National Publishers’ Union] or the *Editora Nobel*, all groups that currently keep these kinds of records. Other than the publications by the IBGE, which are general statistics and give no information about specific titles, it seems that the data collection in the publishing market only started to become more systematic after 1970, with the advent of the so-called “Brazilian miracle”.

Even considering these limitations, these data are useful, providing they are seen merely as “indicators” and “signs” of publications and reading habits of the time. With these caveats in mind, this is the listing.

The 14 weekly listings from 11 September to 11 December 1968 show the following best-sellers:

1. *Aeroporto*, Arthur Hailey, Nova Fronteira
2. *Um Projeto Para o Brasil*, Celso Furtado, Saga

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<sup>28</sup> Issues 15, 19, 22 and 24 of *Veja* published this up until 5 March 1968, though with some lacunae. After this, the section was intermittent and was eventually totally suspended for several years.

3. *Eros e Civilização*, Herbert Marcuse, Zahar
4. *O Desafio Americano*, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, Expressão
5. *Minha Vida, Meus Amores*, Henry Spencer Ashbee, Hemus
6. *Ideologia da Sociedade Industrial*, Herbert Marcuse, Zahar
7. *Materialismo Histórico e Existência*, Herbert Marcuse, Tempo Brasileiro
8. *Como Desenvolver a Memória*, Joyce D. Brothers, Distribuidora Record
9. *Homem ao Zero*, Leon Eliachar, Expressão
10. *Kama Sutra*, Vatsyayama, Coordenada de Brasília
11. *A Inglesa Deslumbrada*, Fernando Sabino, Sabiá
12. *Filosofia na Alcova*, Marquês de Sade, Contorno

The first observation for this list is on the title that sold the most - *Aeroporto*, by Arthur Hailey. This title, and its clear lead in sales numbers (it is top of all fourteen lists) shows the strength of the presence of so-called popular literature and the best-seller industry as early as the 1960s, when publishing was not as lucrative a business as it became in the 1970s.

If we take that popular literature is divided into *mass cult* - with products openly aimed at shallow throw-away enjoyment - and *mid-cult*<sup>29</sup> - with products as banal as the former, but that purport to be more “highbrow and polished” - , we find that the best-selling title of the period covered is closer to the *mass cult*, unlike the best-sellers of the 1980s, when *mid-cult* was more dominant.

A second consideration regarding this listing is Brazilian readers’ respect for Herbert Marcuse at the time.

In a recent article about the reception of Gramsci in Brazil, Carlos Nelson Coutinho offers a comparison with a coherent interpretation of Marcuse’s popularity in Brazil.

According to Coutinho, Brazilian Marxism up until 1960 used Soviet Marxist-Leninist manuals for its main “theoretical sources”,<sup>30</sup> and it was only at the turn of the

<sup>29</sup> Ideas from Dwight MacDonal taken up by Umberto Eco in *Apocalípticos e Integrados*.

<sup>30</sup> Carlos N. Coutinho, “Cidadão Brasileiro”, *Teoria e Debate*, 9, pp. 58-63.

decade - with the increased influence of the left and particularly the Brazilian Communist Party - in the country's political and cultural life, that Brazilian Marxism began to become more open. This opening up was not initiated by the BCP, but the BCP did not hinder the process either. In this pluralist space, Gramsci, Lukács, Goldmann and Marcuse, among others were published in Brazil.

Coutinho continues:

Gramsci and Lukács' historic-dialectic rationalism came to be seen as an expression of a conservative and anachronistic trend. Marcuse's "The Great Refusal" and Althusser's supposedly radical "Epistemological Revolution" were considered more suited to the tasks that were urgently required by the new position. As an eclectic mix with Mao Tse-tung and Régis Debray, Marcuse and Althusser took on a privileged place in the "New Left" culture, which believed that armed struggle was the only way to overthrow the dictatorship and resolve the country's problems.

Marcuse's "The Great Refusal" soon came to be seen as praise for irrationalism, and Marcuse himself as a counterculture theoretician - with the enemy being Western rationalist culture.

Coutinho places this change in the interpretation of Marcuse's work as something that took place Brazil in the 1970s, with the failure of the armed struggle. This makes sense, providing it is within a broad, but not exclusive reading, as we believe that the second version, the second vision of Marcuse as a counterculture theoretician, is something that sheds light not only at the level of readers, but is also in the texts themselves. One should also not forget that of Marcuse's three best-selling titles in Brazil between September and December 1968, the one that sold the most was *Eros and Civilization*, a homage to a humanized society where the pleasure instinct is no longer repressed by the instinct of reality due to a general reduction in aggression.

Marcuse was a non-orthodox, non-deterministic Marxist interested in Eros, who saw pleasure as something repressed by civilization and Western rationalism. One should remember that 1968 was atypical in terms of unrest and counterculture demonstrations throughout the world, and that Marcusean thinking was having significant international impact.

The most "right-wing" elements of political thinking in the 1960s found its

voice in the liberal writings of Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, the founder and editor of *L'Express*, and whose book *The American Challenge* is a manifesto against the left-wing anti-imperialist vision of the times. The writer of the introduction to the Brazilian edition, J. Sette Camera, focussed on the question: “*The American Challenge* cannot help but have a great impact in Brazil [...] we can still see the shadow of the Pentagon and the State Department behind every American private company”.

Also within the pluralistic opening that fed the left-wing reflections of the time, is Celso Furtado’s classic *Um Projeto para o Brasil*; a collection of three texts that, according to the author’s introduction, were written to “identify the causes of the economic system’s stagnation and, at the same time, open up a new horizon for reflection aimed at finding effective and viable solutions.”

We see that together with Marcuse the philosopher and political scientist, there is also Marcuse the counterculture theorist in a quest against repression. This means that *Eros and Civilization* can be considered both as part of the list that aims to describe the publishing market in 1968, and also as leading a third thematic section of this market - which is made up of texts that preach sexual and societal liberation. Zuenir Ventura refers to a study made in bookstores that states, “out of every three books [...] at least one was about sex”<sup>31</sup>.

As an anti-repression theorist, Marcuse shared themes with others in the list: there was the *Kama Sutra*, the first complete publication in Brazil of this Hindu classic on sexual physiology and morality, translated by Marcos Santarrita and with photographic illustrations of Hindu temples; the Marquis de Sade’s *Philosophy in the Bedroom*; and *My Secret Life*, by Henry Spencer Ashbee, an autobiographical account of an academic and collector of erotic art. One should not forget that it was in 1968 that the Beatles sang: “You say you’ll change the Constitution, Well you know, we all want to change your head”<sup>32</sup>.

Leon Eliachar and Fernando Sabino represent the fourth segment of the 1960s publishing market suggested by the best-seller listings we are using – that of national fiction. Fernando Sabino’s *A Inglesa Deslumbrada* is a collection of fifty short texts that had been published in the *Jornal do Brasil* and in the magazines *Claudia* and *Manchete* between 1964 and 1966, when the author was a correspondent working in

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<sup>31</sup> Zuenir Ventura, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>32</sup> As already noted regarding José Saffioti Neto’s theme in the “Introduction” to *Tropicália: 20 Years*, p. 13.

London. More than half the narratives describe the small comic problems of a Brazilian living abroad, and of how foreigners see the country.

Explicitly humorous, Leon Eliachar's book, *O Homen ao Zero*, brings together cartoons, jokes, and short essays, and is presented as a "brain decongestant" with a full set of instructions.

The tradition of blatantly comic literature portraying the country (first started by Stanislaw Ponte Preta, with *Tia Zulmira e Eu*, 1961, and *Festival de Besteira que Assola o Pais I*, 1965) that Leon Eliachar represents in the 1968 best-seller list, is further developed in the years following Eliachar (*O Homen ao Quadrado*, *O Homen ao Cubo*), and with the works of Millôr Fernandes as well as the weekly *O Pasquim*, which was launched in June 1969.

The book *Como Desenvolver a Memória* [*Ten days to a successful memory*] by Joyce Brothers, needs no explanation: it is an example of the category "Live better/Develop your skills", which has always had and, it seems, always will have a wide market. In the 1970s, the same American psychologist, and the same publisher released a similar title in Brazil: *Como Conseguir Tudo o que Você Quer na Vida* [*How to Get Whatever You Want Out of Life*].

If we look at the best-seller lists of September to December 1968 as indicators of what was being published and of the main reading habits in the 1960s, we can see in that some trends remain until today:

1. The predominance of non-fiction over fiction (excluding children's literature and textbooks);
2. The predominance of foreign authors in comparison with national authors;
3. The continuation of several themed categories such as sex and behaviour, politics and economics.

One also sees, however, that a current trend was not present: only three of the twelve best-selling titles can be described as products that were specifically designed to achieve sales (*Aeroporto*, *Minha Vida*, *Meus Amores*, and *10 Days to a Successful Memory*). Some other texts may have been opportunistically appropriated by publishers (the *Kama Sutra* for example), but these are not texts that had already targeted sales and best-seller figures in their creative process, and they were not merely the

fruits of “the best-seller industry” like those that seemed to predominate in the lists of the 1980s.

The focus of this study is on published books, but one should not forget that in the Brazilian cultural and publishing panorama, the 1960s also saw the emergence of political and cultural magazines that were extremely influential and provided platforms for debate on the country’s problems - of particular note are the *Revista Civilização Brasileira*, *Paz e Terra*, *Teoria e Prática* and *Parte*, published respectively in 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1968.

### Final remarks

The significant artistic-cultural manifestations of the 1960s in Brazil that were generally found in more popular genres - cinema (the Cinema Novo), theatre (*Arena*, *Oficina*) and music (the “engaged” phase of Brazilian popular music, *Tropicalismo*) - each contained in their own way a vision of Brazil and a proposal for action. There was no Brazilian fictional proposal that had the same energy. There are a few isolated books that could be considered to go in this direction, like *Quarup* (1967) by Antônio Callado, perhaps the last Brazilian novel with a totalising vision of Brazil, but there are no wider literary movements that had any impact in the same way. The publishing “explosion” in the 1960s did not come about because more polemic and relevant literary movements were appearing - as was the case of more popular genres.

We have seen that the publishing “explosion” in the 1960s cannot be put down to a merely quantitative analysis; we have also seen that it cannot be explained simply by using the market’s formal characteristics (dominant themes, the nationalities of best-selling authors, and the predominance of non-fiction over fiction). In addition, we have seen that, differently to other genres, it did not come about through the publication of texts representing major and controversial literary movements that reflected the Brazil of the times.

This “explosion” was a qualitative explosion that mutually reinforced ties between readers and publishers: readers who accessed other genres, controversial and respected works (created by cultural producers with literary backgrounds) and who were looking for the same quality and relevance in books, and publishers who, in order to keep up with this audience and sell their books needed to continue to improve in quality. This process appears to have been almost quashed in 1968.

## The 1970's

# The Industrialization and Categorisation of Culture

**U**nder the presidency of General Emílio Garrastazu Médici, who was inaugurated in 1969, between 1970 and 1973 Brazil experienced the “Brazilian miracle”, a climate full of “great potential”, and “accelerated development” of “a decade a year”\*. The middle classes began to buy household appliances, and spend their money in supermarkets and shopping centres that they were able to get to in their own cars. In the evenings, they stayed in to watch television – with 80% of urban households owning one. The network *Rede Globo* established its monopoly. The 15- minute long evening bulletin the *Jornal Nacional*, shown on the network, brought the country together, with high audience levels and its vision of the spirit of a “Great Brazil”<sup>33</sup>.

The saint who produced the miracle is well known [...]: the extreme concentration of wealth vastly increased one segment of the population’s ability to acquire durable goods, but at the expense of the majority. Forcing the accumulation of capital by reducing the income of the lower classes is nothing new. What is new and never seen before though, is the transfer rate of income from the bottom upwards<sup>34</sup>,

as Chico Buarque and Paulo Pontes stated in 1975. However, at the start of the

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\* This text was originally published in the magazine *Comunicação & Sociedade* [Communication & Society], 20. IMS, São Bernardo do Campo, São Paulo, Dec. 1993. A slightly modified version appeared in *Gêneros Ficcionalis, Produção e Cotidiano na Cultura Popular de Massa*, organised by Sílvia Borelli (São Paulo/Brasília, Intercom/CNPq/Finep, 1994).

<sup>33</sup> The historical data were taken mainly from: *Anuários Estatísticos do Brasil and Censos Demográficos*, IBGE; “Suplemento Especial AI-5”, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 13 Dec. 1978; *Memória Fotográfica do Brasil no Século XX, Nosso Século*, vol. V; Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva, *Muito além do Jardim Botânico*; Fernão Ramos (org.), *História do Cinema Brasileiro*; Laurence Hallewell, *O Livro no Brasil: Sua História*; Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira, *Desenvolvimento e Crise no Brasil. 1930-1983*.

<sup>34</sup> Chico Buarque & Paulo Pontes, “Introdução” de *Gota d’Água*, p. XVI.

1970s, the middle classes were unaware of this other side to their happiness.

The early 1970s were part of the period that Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira called the “second industrial cycle in Brazil”<sup>35</sup>. Over that period, GDP grew at an annual rate of 11.3%, and industry grew by 12.7% - rates that had been 3.2% and 2.6% respectively between 1963 and 1967 and that were 5.4% between 1974 and 1981.

Due to several internal factors linked to mistakes in the expansion process and to the external effects of the first oil crisis, 1974 saw the start of an economic downturn that resulted in the recession of 1981.

There was a cultural policy that correlated to the golden age of the “economic miracle”. Censorship and expurgation were integral to state actions relating to the production and broadcast of cultural products. From music to news, from the cinema to TV soap operas, cultural production is subjected to the scrutiny of censorship, and few things with any critical or controversial content got by this. There are numerous tales of censors’ poorly informed attitudes and also of the tactics used to get around them.

In a special supplement from 13 December 1978, the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* wrote:

Approximately 500 feature-length movies, 450 plays, dozens of radio programs, 100 magazines, more than 500 song lyrics and a dozen synopses and episodes for TV soap operas have been censored in the last ten years. The data are not precise as many works were not actually censured in the end. They were simply forgotten and, therefore there was no full disclosure of the numbers of prohibitions [...]. In the case of the cinema, there is not only complete prohibition, but also cuts and age restrictions imposed. Television and radio were also subject to limitations, and this affected all the programming [...].

Occasionally, some works with more critical postures did manage to reach the public, but there were not enough, and their voices were not loud enough to quell the sounds of the march *Pra Frente Brasil* or the chorus of *Eu te amo, meu Brasil*.

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<sup>35</sup> Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira, op.cit., p.218 (this entire paragraph is based on this text).

## More Books from the years of the “Economic Miracle”

According to the IBGE data, 1972 was the first in Brazil to exceed the barrier of one book per inhabitant per year. The population that year was 98 million, and 136 million books were published. In 1972, there were 1.3 books per capita published, compared to 0.8 the previous year. With some fluctuations, this proportion was to continue growing throughout the decade - reaching a rate of 1.8 in 1979.

### TABLE

#### Relation between the population of Brazil and the circulation of books in the 1970s\*

Year	Brazil population	Total number of books published	Books per person/ year
1971	95,9	80,1	0,8
1972	98,6	136,0	1,3
1973	101,4	136,0	1,3
1974	104,2	144,7	1,3
1975	107,1	137,8	1,2
1976	110,1	147,2	1,2
1977	113,2	164,8	1,3
1978	116,3	186,7	1,6
1979	119,6	222,6	1,8

\* Data in millions

What are the links between this period and the growth of the publishing market? How did Brazilian publishers perform over the 1970s?

### State Policies: Censorship and Directed Patronage

To be able to offer possible hypotheses for the above, one needs first to refine the question, and not cover the 1970s from a merely monolithic cultural perspective. Therefore, we will divide the 1970s into three major periods: the first, until 1974, was characterised by the absence of a cultural policy and by an attitude of suppression, repression and expurgation; the second, from 1975, was marked by the National Policy of Culture (PNC), drawn up by Ney Braga and the Federal Education Council, and the third was from 1979.

With the PNC, the authoritarian state sought to centralise its operations and introduced a “patronage” system in relation to artistic and cultural production via awards, incentives and funding.

A centralisation based on what? On the need to “revalidate Brazilian scientific and historical heritage”, with the aim of “saving the symbols of our history” [...]. State incentives for culture are not exempt either. An interested party, the military government took responsibility for judging the news - whether interesting or not, what is excessive, and for pointing out the “evils”, and encouraging what they deemed to be “quality”<sup>36</sup>.

The PNC used expurgation formulae together with directed patronage, and the Geisel government’s project of political distension (between 1974 and 1978).

The crisis of the “Brazilian miracle” – which had encapsulated the dreams of the majority of the middle-classes - came between these two eras. With this crisis, “a whole series of redefinitions and redeployments were set up in political and cultural life”, and this culminated with the formation of the PNC.

At a “slow, gradual and safe” pace, under Geisel’s government, the State began to manage the crisis that was forming in Brazil [...] the Geisel government started to prepare itself for the “transition”, and reserved an important place for intellectual and artistic production<sup>37</sup>.

These two major moments of state policy in relation to the cultural life of the 1970s can and should be defined and subdivided into numerous others that vary depending on the means of communication involved (TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, film). Even focussing on a single genre, censorship differed regarding intensity and strategy, and in certain cases highlighted the general lack of censorial criteria.

There is a third political-cultural moment in 1970s Brazil that also warrants attention. The biggest substrate of this third wave refers not to a new state approach to culture and art, but to a vigorous re-articulation of civil society at the end of the 1970s. This is the appearance of ABC unionism under the leadership of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva. The first half of 1979 saw a strike by 160,000 ABC metalworkers. Although on a larger scale, something similar also took place in April 1980, after the approval

<sup>36</sup> Flora Sussekind, *Literatura e Vida Literária*, p. 22.

<sup>37</sup> *Idem, ibid.*

of the formation of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) [Workers' Party] manifesto on 10 February 1980.

### **The Scene behind the Industrialization of Culture**

To return to the central issue: in 1972, the Brazilian publishing market finally exceeded the rate of one book per person per year. This rate, with oscillations, continued to rise over the 1970s.

Two key facts should be taken into account in order to address this information quantitatively. The first was the drop in the rate of illiteracy from 39% to 29% between 1970 and 1980 with regards to the total population over more than five years, and the second was the increase in the number of undergraduate students from 100,000 to almost one million over the same period.

This growth in student numbers was primarily due to the increased numbers of private “third-grade” teaching institutions. The authoritarian state transferred the task of expanding higher education, and part of primary and secondary education, to the private sector.

The drop in illiteracy rates was due in part to a variety of state, civil and church campaigns, including the ill-fated *Mobral* (Brazilian Literacy Movement), which as an initiative had no great effect. Shut down in 1975, *Mobral* was investigated by a parliamentary committee to look into suspected irregularities.

Alongside these educational and cultural data, it is also important to highlight the growth in GDP between 1967 and 1973, which gave certain sectors of society greater consumer power. This increased consumer power was also artificially stimulated by the introduction of consumer direct credit. In the golden period of the “economic miracle”, the Brazilian population bought and consumed more.

These facts are the backdrop to the scenario that saw a certain re-articulation of the Brazilian cultural industry post-1968. Mass communication, which had been introduced in Brazil in 1930, had by the 1970s become “entrenched”, “mature” and industrialised.

Another important factor for the growth of publishing in Brazil was a new law passed in 1968, which allowed a range of different retail venues such as chemists and pharmacies, supermarkets and petrol stations to sell books. However, the effects of

this law were not quantitatively significant: 2.2% of the total number of books sold in 1973 were sold at these venues, rising to 4.4% in 1978 and then falling to 2.1% in 1979. Nevertheless, this law was still something that helped to encourage access to books.

The number of book sales in newsagents and newsstands is quantitatively greater: in 1973, 9.6% of the total number of books sold were sold at newsagents and 2.2% at newsstands; in 1979, 6.0% were sold at newsagents and 20.9% at newsstands.

The publisher that most benefited from newsstand book sales was Editora Abril, with its collections of books and instalments to collect and file. *A Bíblia mais Bela do Mundo* [The Most Beautiful Bible in the World] was their first venture (April 1965) in the instalment sector. For its distribution and marketing, Editora Abril used the network of eighteen thousand newsstands that were already set up nationally and that already distributed the publisher's magazines.

From this followed many other collections, including the philosophy collection *Os Pensadores* [The Thinkers], which was launched in 1974, and the collection of books on economy, *Os Economistas* [The Economists], which began in 1982. The print-runs fluctuated between fifty thousand and five hundred thousand copies. This was a clear example of the professional industrialisation of the publishing market.

From the quantitative aspect of the early growth of Brazilian publishing in the 1970s, we will now look at the changes to the kinds of books sold in bookstores over the decade. We will also look at whether there are any connections between these predominant genres and the socio-cultural experiences of the nation at the time.

## The Expansion of Television and the Publishing Market

Television is the most influential means of communication in Brazil and therefore the cultural industry revolves around it. The authoritarian state played its own role in establishing this influence.

The rapid growth of television nationally was essential to the success of the economic model adopted from 1964. The State invested strongly in increasing the number of television sets in Brazil: it built a modern transmission system, it subsidised the purchase of receivers, and provided the infrastructure that was vital to its expansion. And its goals were not only ideological [...]. As of 1964, the function of television was to speed up economic growth and enable the form of monopolistic profiteering of the times<sup>38</sup>.

Focusing on this same question and on the period post-1969, Sérgio Mamberti, citing Eugênio Bucci, writes: “Without a doubt, the dictatorship’s great cultural project was to strengthen and expand national television networks, and it was very successful”<sup>39</sup>.

It is curious to note that it was only after 1969, and after the start of the introduction of national television networks, that Brazilian intellectuals turned their backs on this medium of mass communication and became more sceptical: “The supportive and even enthusiastic approaches to mass communication in the golden age of the 1960s became much more critical in the 1970s<sup>40</sup>.”

The overt and dominating expansion of television as the principal means of communication in Brazil favoured a particular category in the best-seller lists: those authors who were also influential in television.

Thus, in 1971, the book *Milho pra Galinha, Mariquinha*, by Marisa Caixa, a collection of 33 short stories published by Sabiá, sold ten thousand copies in a single week in Rio de Janeiro alone. Marisa was at the time a judge on the Flávio Cavalcanti TV Show.

<sup>38</sup> Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>39</sup> Sérgio Mamberti, “Comentário” to Muniz Sodré, “Álbum de Família”, *Rede Imaginária*, p. 230.

<sup>40</sup> Alfredo Bosi, “Cultura Brasileira e Culturas Brasileiras”, in *Dialética da Colonização*, p. 321.

In 1973, Chico Anísio, by then already a veteran TV comedian, had two of his books in the national best-seller list of the year: *O Enterro do Anão* (3rd) and *É Mentira, Terta?* (6th). The latter continued on the 1974 list as the 10th best-selling book in the country. In 1974, the author had another book in 5th place: *A Curva do Calombo*. In 1975, *Teje Preso* was the 5th highest selling book of the year in the national author category<sup>41</sup>.

The impact of the spread of television in the 1970s had a harmful effect on the film industry: cinema ticket sales plummeted from 2.1 tickets per inhabitant per year in 1971, to 1.3 in 1980.

### Literature and the Country

As of 1974, it became clear that the “Brazilian miracle” was not all it had been purported to be:

1974 appears to have been the start of an increasing decline in the “economic miracle”; diminishing cohesion between the forces behind the regime, a growing public dissatisfaction, and the gradual resumption of political debate<sup>42</sup>.

The middle classes became more interested in the state of the country, and cultural production again started to challenge the issue.

This interest in the current state of Brazil took place at the same time as the State’s introduction of its National Culture Policy. “This state intervention suggests there is a growing trend towards the institutional articulation of cultural production in Brazil”<sup>43</sup>. Market forces are a constant theme both for the State and cultural producers.

This resumption of national issues led to a separate form of politicised and engaged literature. Heloísa Buarque de Holanda divided this literary production of the 1970s into three types:

41 All data for the best-seller lists were taken from *Veja* magazine’s annual list for 1973-1978. The list for 1973 was published in *Veja* from 2 Jan. 74; is from 8 Jan 1974. 1975; that for 1975 is from 31 Dec. 1975; that for 1976 is from 29 Dec. 1976; that for 1977 is from 8 Jan. 1978 and that for 1978 is from 27 Dec. 1978.

42 Heloísa Buarque de Holanda & Marcos A. Gonçalves, “Política e Literatura: A Ficção da Realidade Brasileira”, in Armando Freiras Filho (org.), *Anos 70. Literatura*, p. 31.

43 *Idem*, p. 37

1. Political novels that promise to “tell the story, witness it and be current”<sup>44</sup>;
2. Memoirs and eyewitness reports;
3. “Symptom literature”, a literature that confronts oppression and the discomfort that was characteristic of the intellectual elite and artists of the time.

Of these three types of literature, the first – the “Political novel”, is what appeared most in the best-seller list of the 1970s.

This category includes:

*Incidente em Antares*, by Érico Veríssimo, the best-seller in the national authors’ category for 1973;

*Solo de Clarineta*, by the same author, top of the best-seller list in 1974, and 9th in 1975;

*Calabar*, by Chico Buarque de Holanda, in 4th place in 1974;

*Fazenda Modelo*, also by Chico Buarque, which was the best-seller of 1975;

*Gota d’Água*, by Chico Buarque and Paulo Pontes, the best-selling fiction title of 1976.

It should be noted that in the 1970s the growth of this kind of literature, which was so explicitly linked and engaged with the country’s recent history and was sometimes even journalistic, was an extrapolation of the feelings in Brazil at the time:

Fragmentation – which is the basis for allegory, is not part of the singularity of Brazil’s destiny at the time; rather, it is in the breadth of capital history and the impossibility of anyone being able to state any totality at any given moment. It is this that determines allegory and not simply the immediate position of the authoritarian government from year to year. Allegory came before the years of repression, the allegorical form came before<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> *Idem*, p.13

<sup>45</sup> Davi Arigucci Jr., “Jornal, Realismo, Alegoria: O Romance Brasileiro Recente”, *Achados e Perdidos*, p. 95.

## Market Categorisation

Em meados dos Alongside the political novels and books by television stars, the mid-1970s also saw other best-sellers that were more complicated to define. These included:

*Baú de Ossos*, memoirs by Pedro Nava, 3rd in the national author category for 1973;

*Balão Cativo*, memoirs by Pedro Nava, 6th in the same category for 1974;

*Chão de Ferro*, by Pedro Nava, the 4th best-selling book in 1976 in the fiction category;

*Água Viva*, by Clarice Lispector, which was in 8th place in the national author category for 1973;

*Avalovara*, by Osman Lins, 3rd in the same category for 1974;

*As Meninas*, by Ligia Fagundes Telles, in 5th place for 1975

and *Dora Doralina*, by Raquel de Queirós, in 6th place for 1975.

Authors who had already had been successful continued to hold their positions in the 1970s best-seller lists: Jorge Amado's novel *Tereza Batista* was the best-selling book in the national author category in 1973 and was in 7th place the following year. His book *Tieta de Agreste* was 3rd in the fiction list for 1977.

José Mauro de Vasconcelos reappeared in the mid 1970s with *O Veleiro de Cristal*, which topped the national author charts for 1973, and *Vamos Aquecer o Sol*, which was 8th in the same category for 1974.

Most of the best-selling foreign literature titles were North American fiction like *The Exorcist*, which was the best-seller in the foreign literature category in 1973 and 1974, and 9th in 1975; *Sharks*, which was 2nd in 1975, Arthur Hailey, Morris West, and J. Susann with *Uma Vez só é pouco* [Once is not enough] and Richard Bach's *Fernão Capelo Gaivota* [Jonathan Livingstone Seagull].

The end of the 1970s saw the boom of Latin American "magic realism": Gabriel Garcia Marques' *The Autumn of the Patriarch* was 2nd in the fiction category for 1976; Mario Vargas Llosa's *Conversation in the Cathedral* came 1st in the fiction category for

1978, and *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*, by the same author, was 2nd in the same category the same year.

These annual best-seller listings for the 1970s show a wide range of cultural production: books connected with television stars, political novels, more highbrow and formal national literature, pulp fiction and light reading by recognised national authors, all alongside the mass literature produced by North American authors, and the Latin American “magic realism” boom. This random shared space came about because market growth and its consolidation created more categories.

### **The End of the Decade: Interest in Brazil**

The democratising winds that blew through the country in 1978 and 1979 with the emergence of strong trade unionism and the process of opening up that was set in the Amnesty law of August 1979, had repercussions on the publishing market, and more so on non-fiction than fiction.

The ten best-selling non-fiction books in 1978 were:

1. *As Veias Abertas da América Latina*, E. Galeano
2. *A Ditadura dos Cartéis*, Kurt Mirow
3. *O Governo de João Goulart*, Moniz Bandeira
4. *Depoimento*, Carlos Lacerda
5. *Cuba de Fidel*, J. L. Brandão
6. *Anarquistas e Comunistas no Brasil*, J. W. Foster Dulles
7. *O Relatório Hite* [The Hite Report], Shere Hite
8. *Lições de Liberdade*, Sobral Pinto
9. *Os Militares no Poder II*, Carlos Castello Branco
10. *Bagaço de Beira Estrada*, Mário Lago.

Concerns about the history and interpretation of facts relating to recent events in Brazil are glaringly obvious from this list.

This concern with the fate of the country and with keeping the memory of its recent history in the category of non-fiction is set alongside fiction titles predominantly by foreign authors that are not directly related to Brazilian reality like *Illusions* by Richard Bach, and J.M. Simmel's *Encontro no Nevoeiro* [Encounters in the Fog]. The disparity between these two sectors in the publishing market led to the following commentary in *Veja* (27 Dec.78, p. 75): "It has already been said that this nation's readers like to have fun in English and to worry in Portuguese."

The theme of controversy and political conflict that became so strong in 1978 was a trend that had begun in 1974. In 1974, Solzhenitsyn's *August 1914* was 3rd in the list of foreign best-sellers, and in this same category, *The Gulag Archipelago* came 4th in 1975.

In the non-fiction category for 1976, there were two texts that focused more on national politics: *Os Militares e a Política*, by Alfred Stepan (5th) and *O Governo Kubitschek*, by M. V. M. Benevides (6th). The best-seller of 1977 for the non-fiction category was Fernando Morais' *A Ilha*, which was a report of his journey around Cuba.

*O que é Isso Companheiro?* – the huge best-seller that recounts the memories of the former political activist and exile Fernando Gabeira, could hold a place between the so-called fiction and non-fiction categories in 1979. The book sold 80,000 copies in 1979, and Gabeira's text reignited a spark that was to develop more in the early 1980s.

This boom in national themes within the non-fiction category appears to have been the reason behind why *Veja* changed the way it counted best-sellers annually. The magazine created separate categories for national and foreign authors for 1973, 1974 and 1975, and for fiction and non-fiction in the lists for 1976, 1977 and 1978<sup>46</sup>.

To sum up, the most important data relating to the growth of the publishing market in the early 1970s are: the drop in illiteracy rates, the growth in undergraduate numbers, the industrialisation of publishing and sales – including those at newsstands, and the increase in GDP, all of which were related to the "economic miracle".

The following section will focus on the different book genres sold in bookstores in the 1970s.

<sup>46</sup> Maria Elena O. O. Assumpção has a different hypothesis. cf. Maria Elena O. O. Assumpção, *O Romance Brasileiro Contemporâneo enquanto Produto Editorial*. In her opinion, there was a level of paternalism in relation to Brazilian literature and the growth of this category made any former separation otiose.

We have seen that the primary focus of the expansion of mass communication in Brazil at this time was television, and this was linked to the substrate of one particular category in the publishing market - which were publications with links to television stars.

The failure of the “economic miracle”, the awareness of the high human and social costs that the country had had to pay for it, and general concern regarding the future, saw the increase in sales of a particular kind of political fiction in the mid-1970s. These concerns after the opening up and the amnesty further boosted sales in this non-fiction category.

The categorisation of cultural production for the market, itself increasingly segmented, makes it difficult to identify one single standard in Brazilian publishing. There is a complex mosaic of themes and different levels of complexity that can indicate this segmentation.

The “Industrialisation of cultural production” was the term most commonly used when trying to understand and describe the world of Brazilian publishing, sales and literature in the 1970s. The fact of focussing on the 1970s as a period when the culture industry and mass cultural production<sup>47</sup> became embedded in Brazil does not mean necessarily that there was a global vision of the time as a “cultural void.” The important element here, due to the specificity of the publishing market, is on the quantitative aspect of cultural production at the time, and on its predominant genre variations. This is not to say that, even if it did not impinge on the market significantly, there was no quality cultural production<sup>48</sup> that was transmitted along other paths and directions to those of the ever-growing mass culture.

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47 One should remember that for the vast majority of the Brazilian population, the opposite to mass culture is not high culture, but rural culture. Cf. Sérgio Miceli, *A Noite da Madrinha*, “Conclusões”.

48 Examples of studies and analyses of cultural production in the 1970s that experienced cultural industrialization were, among others, the marginal poetry of Carlos Alberto Messeder Perreira, *Retrato de Época: Poesia Marginal dos Anos 70*, and in the alternative press, Bernardo Kucinski, *Jornalistas e Revolucionários: Nos Tempos da Imprensa Alternativa*.

## The 1980s

### Eclecticism and Fluctuations

Two institutions collected and disseminated quantitative data on book publications in Brazil in the 1980s: the *Sindicato Nacional dos Editores de Livros* [National Union of Book Publishers] (SNEL), and the *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* [the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics] (IBGE). Data from neither cover the whole of the decade: SNEL did not collect data for 1983 or 1984, and for this topic, the IBGE collected data for only 1982 to 1985.

SNEL used data provided by the publishers themselves; and as this supply was voluntary, there is the possibility of inaccuracies. The IBGE tabulates data collected and provided by federal agencies such as the Education and Culture Statistics Service, which was then part of the Department of Education, and Culture. Both arrived at quite differing results.

This means that there is no single source of reliable quantitative information about the Brazilian publishing market that covers the whole of the study period.

Despite these caveats, one can say that in Brazil between 1980 and 1989, the annual average number of books published per capita was around 1.5 books, with peaks between 1980 and 1982, and in 1986.

Aware of the difficulties in finding data on the subject, in 1992 the *Câmara Brasileira do Livro* [Brazilian Book Council] formed an agreement with the *Fundação João Pinheiro* and took on responsibility for collecting and tabulating data on the Brazilian publishing market as of 1990. The Foundation's procedure is based on estimates from a sampling of publishers. It should be noted that its results for 1990 are very divergent from those from SNEL.

The Brazilian index of books per inhabitant per year is significantly different from that of the United States, which was around ten books per head<sup>49</sup>, however, it was not the worst on the planet. The latter can be confirmed by looking at the consumption of kilos of printed paper (excluding newspapers) or paper used for writing per head, given “that it is a good indicator of the production capacity of written material, including books”, and because obtaining data about books in underdeveloped countries and developing countries is fraught with difficulty. The countries with lesser impact are those in Africa and the Middle East<sup>50</sup>.

The national index for the total book circulation in relation to population is more significant if one takes into account the illiteracy rate and the large swathe of the population who lived hand to mouth, with little access to consumer goods or cultural production.

**TABLE**

Year	Brazilian population* (a)	Total circulation of books published according to different sources		
		Snel(b)	IBGE(c)	F. João Pinheiro(d)
1980	121,3	242,7		
1981	124,1	218,8		
1982	126,9	245,9	206,9	
1983	129,8		181,3	
1984	132,7		178,8	
1985	135,6	161,9	197,2	
1986	138,4	209,1		
1987	141,6	186,5		
1988	144,4	161,6		
1989	147,4	155,5		
1990	150,4	115,0		239,3
1991				303,4

\* Data in millions

<sup>49</sup> According to the President of the Brazilian Book Council, Armando Antongini Filho, in an interview to *Abigraf*, N145, XVIII year, Mar./Apr. 93, p.64.

<sup>50</sup> *Unesco Sources*, N14, Nov. 1990, p.7. These data refer to 1987.

- (a) Projected Brazilian population. *Anuário Estatístico do Brasil – 1990*, IBGE, 50th edition, p.63, which has the following note: “The estimated population (referring to 1980) is higher than the 1980 Demographic Census of 1980 (119 002 706), considering the underestimation that is inherent to statistical surveys”.
- (b) *Produção Editorial Brasileira 1987/1988, 1989 e 1990*, Sindicato Nacional dos Editores de Livros, SNEL.
- (c) *Anuários Estatísticos do Brasil*, IBGE. A book is defined as a “printed single publication with a minimum of 49 pages not including the covers”, *Manual de Instruções ECO 7 – Bibliotecas Universitárias e Especializadas*, Fundação IBGE / MEC / Secretaria Geral.
- (d) *Diagnóstico do Setor Editorial Brasileiro*, Câmara Brasileira do Livro/Fundação João Pinheiro, Belo Horizonte, April 1993.

While on one hand this situation is tragic from a political and human point of view, on the other hand, it shows the huge potential of the publishing market in Brazil, as even with such a tiny number of the population who are able to read and buy books, the above ratio was achieved.

In addition, the group that was buying books faced a further complicating factor due to poor marketing and distribution, and the tiny national network of bookshops and sales points.

Taking into account all of these obstacles to the expansion of the Brazilian publishing market, and considering that, despite them, the market was already becoming more influential, the potential for growth is clear. It should be noted that in spite the Brazilian book index per inhabitant per year being low, the fact that the population was one of the largest in the world makes Brazil a potentially vast market compared with other countries: Brazil is in seventh place in the world book market<sup>51</sup>. So in the framework of a market this size, the question is: what do people read in Brazil?

To look at what was read in Brazil in the 1980s regarding subject matter, types of narrative and authors, we will use the lists of the top ten fiction and non-fiction best-sellers for each year, published by *Leia Livros* as of 1980. For some years, there were no annual lists or the lists had fewer than the traditional ten titles in each category. In these cases, monthly lists have been used to supplement the annual lists. For 1988

51 Cf. *Abigraf* (Associação Brasileira da Indústria Gráfica), São Paulo, ano XVII, n.142, Sept./Oct. 92, p. 86.

and 1989, as *Leia Livros* changed their listing format and no longer made a distinction between fiction and non-fiction categories as is customary in other countries, we used the lists drawn up by Datafolha and published in the *Folha de S. Paulo*.

These best-seller lists were drawn up based on a sample of bookstores. One needs to bear in mind that according to SENL data, these bookstores represented<sup>52</sup> only around 40%-45% of total book sales. It is also important to note that it is rare for textbooks or children's literature to be in best-seller lists, because there are so many different titles. However, these categories take up between 45% and 70% (this estimate varies due to different sources) of the total publishing market.

Even with the inaccuracy of this kind of survey, these lists can still be considered as indicators of what was being read voluntarily in Brazil.

The aim of this study is to characterize the Brazilian publishing market in the 1980s. After setting out this data, we will then look at the yearly best-seller lists and their variations, separating them into categories – fiction and non-fiction, and national and foreign authors.

### **The Presence of Brazilian Novelists**

It has been said that on the subject of reading, Brazilians “take Portuguese seriously, but have fun in English”, which characterises the small number of Brazilian fiction writers in readers' reading habits and preferences in comparison with those who write non-fiction. In the 1980s, readers could look for reflection and information from Brazilian writers, but they preferred foreign writers when reading for pleasure or aesthetic enjoyment.

Throughout the 1980s, the number of Brazilian writers in the list of ten best-sellers in the fiction category fluctuated. There were two titles in the lists from 1981 and 1986; three in 1980, 1982 and 1984; four in 1983 and 1989, and five in 1985. There were no national authors in the lists for this category in 1987 and 1988.

The low of 1986 reversed in 1989, with four books written by Brazilians, two by the same author: Paulo Coelho's *O Alquimista* [The Alchemist] was second in the list for 1989 (and first in 1990), and *Diário de um Mago* [The Diary of a Magus] was the fifth in the listings for 1989 (and second in 1990).

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<sup>52</sup> Let us look at for example, *Produção Editorial Brasileira. Análise de Resultados 1987/1988*, SENL, item: percentual de vendas por vias de comercialização [Results Analysis 1987/1988, SENL, item: sales percentages according to outlets].

The best-selling Brazilian writers in the top ten lists for the 1980s were Fernando Sabino (with five) and Luiz Fernando Veríssimo (with four). These were followed by three publications by Jorge Amado and two each by Rubem Fonseca, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, João Ubaldo Ribeiro and Paulo Coelho. With one book apiece are Antônio Calado, Eça de Queiroz, Ignacio de Loyola Brandão, Dias Gomes, Marcio Souza and Marcelo Rubens Paiva.

The following are the Brazilian novelists who appeared in the lists of the 1980s.

1980 (Leia Livros, January 1981)

1st *O Grande Mentecapto*, Fernando Sabino, Record

4th *A Tragédia da Rua das Flores*, Eça de Queiroz, Moraes

8th *Farda, Fardão, Camisola de Dormir*, Jorge Amado, Record

1981 (Leia Livros, January 1982)

3rd *A Falta que Ela me Faz*, Fernando Sabino, Record (short stories)

4th *Sempre Viva*, Antonio Calado, Nova Fronteira

1982 (Leia Livros, December 1982)

1st *O Analista de Bagé*, Luiz Fernando Veríssimo, L&PM (humour/short stories)

5th *Não Verás País Nenhum*, Ignácio de Loyola Brandão, Codecri (science fiction)

6th *Sucupira, Ame-a ou Deixe-a*, Dias Gomes, Civilização Brasileira

1983 (monthly lists published by Leia Livros throughout the year)

3rd *O Menino no Espelho*, Fernando Sabino, Record

6th *O Analista de Bagé*, Luiz Fernando Veríssimo, L&PM (humour/short stories)

8th *A Ordem do Dia*, Márcio Souza, Marco Zero

9th *Outras do Analista de Bagé*, L. F. Veríssimo, L&PM (humour/short stories)

1984 (the first five titles were taken from *Leia Livros*, January 1985, the others were calculated based on the publication's monthly listings)

6th *A Grande Arte*, Rubem Fonseca, Francisco Alves (detective)

7th *O Gato Sou Eu*, Fernando Sabino, Record (short stories)

9th *A Velhinha de Taubaté*, L. F. Veríssimo, L&PM (humour/ short stories)

1985 (listing based on the monthly listings in *Leia Livros*)

3rd *Viva o Povo Brasileiro*, João Ubaldo Ribeiro, Nova Fronteira

5th *Tocaia Grande: A Face Obscura*, Jorge Amado, Record

6th *Amar se Aprende Amando*, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Record (poetry)

7th *A Faca de Dois Gumes*, Fernando Sabino, Record (short stories: the story homonymous with the book's title is considered a detective story)

8th *O Corpo*, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Record (poetry)

1986 (*Leia Livros*, January 1987)

5th *Bufo & Spallanzani*, Rubem Fonseca, Francisco Alves

10th *Blecaute*, Marcelo Rubem Paiva, Brasiliense (science fiction).

1987 (*Leia Livros*, December 1987)

There are no Brazilian writers.

1988 (Folha de S. Paulo, 30 December 1988 [E-5])

There are no Brazilian writers.

1989 (Folha de S. Paulo, 30 December 1989 [F-2])

2nd *O Alquimista*, Paulo Coelho, Rocco

5th *O Diário de um Mago*, Paulo Coelho, Rocco

7th *Tieta do Agreste*, Jorge Amado, Record

9th *O Sorriso do Lagarto*, João Ubaldo Ribeiro, Nova Fronteira

Of the hundred titles in the top ten best-seller fiction lists of the 1980s, 26 were written by Brazilian authors, just slightly over a quarter of the total sales.

The list presents an eclectic selection of titles and therefore it is hard to try to find any constants. Nevertheless, there are some common traits.

It should first be noted that novels tend to predominate over short stories and poetry. Of the 26 books in question, seventeen are novels, seven are short stories, and only two are poetry.

Of the 26 books listed above, only seven can be clearly defined according to genre: four are humorous, two are science fiction and one is a detective novel. We have indicated the texts that clearly apply to a specific genre in brackets. Perhaps this low adherence to such an explicit literary genre is because Brazilian fiction writers seem to always aspire to writing their “great work” and do not consider creating merely entertaining literature<sup>53</sup>.

It is clear that the complexity of the genre issue means that it escapes these classifications and definitions, and that one needs to be flexible in one’s approach to these data. Although they cannot be clearly identified here, there are several texts on the listings that cannot be assigned a particular genre. For example, Rubem Fonseca’s *Bufo & Spallanzani* and Fernando Sabino’s short story *A Faca de Dois Gumes* – which

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<sup>53</sup> According to José Paulo Paes, in “Por uma Literatura Brasileira de Entretenimento (ou: O mordomo não é o único culpado)” in *A Aventura Literária: Ensaios sobre ficção e ficções*, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1990, pp. 25 - 38.

gave the collection its name show elements of film noir; and in Dias Gomes' blatant comedic parody<sup>54</sup> *Sucupira, Ame-a ou Deixe-a*.

The most common themes in the best-selling lists are regional esoteric traditions; a specifically *Brazilian* spirit of Carnival, and an appreciation of carnal love.

There are also two common factors that increased book sales and contributed to these listings: audience loyalty to familiar authors (Jorge Amado, Fernando Sabino), and broadcasts by authors or television adaptations of their works. Dias Gomes' book was clearly boosted by an adaptation of one of his stories that was shown on a major national TV network, and set in the town of Sucupira - the name of which appeared in the book's title, and Eça de Queiroz's book was boosted due to one of his stories having been adapted for television.

Paulo Coelho, who appears in the 1989 list of best-sellers with two titles, initiated what was perhaps the most noteworthy Brazilian publishing phenomenon in decades. After two books that had had little impact (*Arquivos do Inferno* and *Manual Prático do Vampirismo*), 1989 saw the author emerge as a true champion. His four books *O Alquimista*, *Diário de um Mago*, *Brida* and *As Valquírias* [*The Alchemist*, *Diary of a Magus*, *Brida* and *The Valkyries*] together sold 3.1 million copies nationally up to July 1993. *The Alchemist* alone had sold 1.65 million copies around the world up to June 1993. According to a survey at the end of June 1993 and cited in Guinness: *Book of Records 1994*, Paulo Coelho stayed in the best-seller lists for four years - 208 weeks.

### **Foreign Novelists -The majority in the best-seller lists**

Of the one hundred titles in the annual lists of best-selling novels in Brazil between 1980 and 1989, 74 were by foreign writers. Of these, Sidney Sheldon and Milan Kundera were the most popular, as their texts appeared six times in the lists. They were followed by Frederick Forsythe, Colette Dowling, Regine Déforges and Marion Zimmer Bradley - each with four appearances.

There are three commonly accepted levels of culture (highbrow, middlebrow, and mass culture), which Umberto Eco<sup>55</sup> used based on Van Wyck Brooks proposal reviewed by Dwight MacDonald, however, Eco's caveats to these are:

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<sup>54</sup> If one looks at detective fiction in Brazil one can note how this genre moved nationally towards exaggerating its comic traits.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Umberto Eco, *Apocalípticos e Integrados*, pp. 31 a 67.

1. The three levels do not correspond to social classes. Alfredo Bosi noted that, in Brazil, “highbrow culture flourishes more in the upper classes and the more privileged segments of the middle classes”, and mass culture”, cuts vertically through all levels of society, although it increases more significantly once it reaches the middle classes”<sup>56</sup>;

2. The three levels do not represent degrees of complexity, and one product may be enjoyed on more than one level, or may alternatively be assimilated via a level that is different from its original;

3. The three levels do not correspond to the three aesthetic levels;

4. The transmigration of a product down into lower spheres can mean various things, including the evolution of collective taste.

If one accepts this distinction between the three levels of culture and transposes it to literary circles, one can postulate the existence of a highbrow literature, a middlebrow literature, and a popular mass literature. The latter two “are useful to distinguish between what at its most basic level targets a less discriminative audience, from what at a more elaborate level tries to reach more discerning readers”<sup>57</sup>.

Of the 74 titles in question, only two can be considered as highbrow literature: Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*, reissued by Globe (eighth place in the best-seller lists of 1981) and T.S.Eliot’s volume of *Poetry*, published by Nova Fronteira (which came in sixth place in 1981). All the others can be considered as middlebrow or mass literature, although the majority are classed as middlebrow.

Middlebrow literature written by authors like Morris West, Manuel Puig and Milan Kundera counts for 51% of the best-sellers. Mass literature represents 40%, the main authors of which are: Sidney Sheldon, Harold Robbins and Regine Déforges. What is known as highbrow literature represented 8%, with authors such as Marcel Proust, T. S. Eliot and Dino Buzzati.

<sup>56</sup> Alfredo Bosi, “Cultura Brasileira”, in D. T. Mendes (coord.), *Filosofia da Educação Brasileira*, Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 1985, pp. 159/160.

<sup>57</sup> José Paulo Paes, *idem*, p. 28.

The presence of T. S. Eliot in the annual best-seller lists is also an exception from the point of view of form, as his is the only volume of poetry. The most predominant genre is novels, and there were no collections of short stories.

After 1986 with Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon*, (sixth place in the fiction category of that year, and first in 1987 and 1988), in 1989, the esoteric theme took off in the national fiction category with Paulo Coelho's works.

There were also some detective fiction titles amongst the best-selling fiction titles by foreign authors in the 1980s: *The Murder at the Vicarage*, Agatha Christie (in 10th place for 1980), *Gorky Park*, by Martin C. Smith (in 3rd place for 1982), *The name of the Rose*, by Umberto Eco (in 1st place for 1984), and *Perfume* by Patrick Süskind (in 3rd place for 1987). Spy novels are represented by John Le Carré's *Little Drummer Girl* (in 2nd place for 1983), but it should be pointed out that although they are not explicitly defined as such, there are numerous examples of spy and thriller novels in the lists referred to. Science fiction is represented in the same lists with just a single title: *2010: A Space Odyssey 2*, by A.C. Clarke (in 7th place in the fiction category for 1983).

In general, focusing on the fiction category in Brazil in the 1980s, the prototype for any best-seller was a novel by a foreign author aimed at a middlebrow audience without any particular sub-genre.

### **Brazilian Authors - most of which are in the non-fiction best-seller lists**

Apart from 1987 and 1988, Brazilian writers were responsible for at least half of the titles in the best-seller lists in the rest of the 1980s every year in the non-fiction category. Of the one hundred titles that comprise the ten annual top ten best-seller lists, 55 were by Brazilian writers, with the "peaks" being in 1984 and 1986.

The Brazilian authors with the highest number of best-selling titles in the non-fiction category were:

Fernando Gabeira

1st *O que é isso Companheiro*, 1980

5th *O Crepúsculo do Macho*, 1980 and 4th, 1981

2nd *Entradas e Bandeiras*, 1981

Marta Suplicy

4th *Conversando sobre Sexo*, 1983

9th *A Condição da Mulher*, 1984

5th *De Mariazinha a Maria*, 1985

Marcelo Rubens Paiva

1st *Feliz Ano Velho*, 1983 and 1st, 1984

Fernando Morais

1st *Olga*, 1986 and 4th, 1987

Among the authors cited above, with two “entries” each, but with a lesser total score, are: Marina Colasanti, Marilena Chauí, Eduardo Mascarenhas, J. C. de Assis and João Uchôa Jr., the last of whom wrote about diet, nutrition and recipes.

In relation to subject matter, the best-selling non-fiction titles by national authors in the 1980s were:

Politics and/or the current or recent economy	36 %
Memoirs, biographies and autobiographies	30 %
Sex, education, psychology and/or feminism	21 %
Travel writing	9 %
Health and Nutrition	5 %
Others	10 %*

\* The total sum is greater than 100 because some of the titles were included in two classifications.

### Foreign authors of non-fiction books

The same subjects that come up in the national non-fiction best-seller list are also seen in those by foreign authors. However, there is a reversal of the order. The best-selling titles in the 1980s by foreign authors in the non-fiction category can be described as follows:

Sex, education, psychology and/or feminism	40 %
Memoirs, biographies and autobiographies	33 %
Politics and/or the current or recent economy	22 %
Scientific Research	8 %
Health and Nutrition	4 %
Others	8 %*

\* The total sum is greater than 100 because some of the titles were included in two classifications.

Comparing the lists of foreign and national authors, changes in the order of the first three non-fiction best-seller categories may seem negligible, but is actually significant. The fact that the subject “politics and/or the current or recent economy” was 1st place in the national author category and 3rd place in the foreign author category, emphasises the importance to Brazilian writers as being the “decoders” of their own country.

The foreign authors with the most best-selling titles in the non-fiction category were: Colette Dowling (*The Cinderella Complex*, 2nd in 1984 and 1st in 1985; and *Perfect Women*, 3rd in 1989), and Robert Johnson (*She*, in 1st place; *He*, in 2nd place, and *We*, in 9th place; all three in 1988). Alex Comfort, Alvin Toffler and Lee Iacocca also had two “entries” each.

### Two Observations

These data and comments help to explain in a general sense the fluctuations in Brazilians’ reading choices at the time.

1. The first correlation that seems clear is the link between social position, a kind of political humour and the greater or lesser presence of Brazilian authors in the best-seller lists.

The 1980s started with a political, “slow and gradual” process of opening up. The ex-exiled Fernando Gabeira became a lever for other returners who were wanting to tell the country’s story and to take part in its present.

This optimism about breaking down boundaries and reflecting on potential are social elements that boosted sales by Fernando Gabeira and other authors like Alfredo Sirkis on the same theme. Setting aside the subject of autobiography and focussing more on conceptual issues, this context of relative hope and desire for information helped fuel the success of Marilena Chauí’s book *O que é Ideologia* in 1981.

1985 saw a “peak” in sales by national fiction authors, and around the same time there was also a similar spike in writers in the non-fiction category. It is easy to see a correlation between this “peak” and the climate of optimism and desire to participate in public life that the campaign *Diretas Já* was promoting. The correlation is even stronger if one looks at the best-sellers of the time: *Viva o Povo Brasileiro*, by João Ubaldo Ribeiro; *Olga*, by Fernando de Moraes; *Brasil nunca mais*, *O Complô que Elegeu Tancredo* and *Mandarins da República*.

While the optimistic and participatory climate is qualitatively important in understanding the increased presence of national author in the best-seller list of 1985, the increase in the number of editions published in 1985 and 1986 can also be explained by economic growth, which came out of the *Plano Cruzzeiro* and its repercussions the following year. This growth came on the heels of the recession of 1981-1984, and then began to slow down again towards the end of the decade<sup>58</sup>.

2. Looking at the titles in the best-seller lists from the 1990s could suggest that a text relies on two bases in order to achieve established sales figures. These criteria are based on elements that are internal to the narrative, and also to other external elements. Internal elements include the subject, plot, narrative techniques, style etc. External elements include, among other things, the writer’s popularity, which may come from publicity about their personal lives or their work through media such as newspapers, magazines, television, marketing campaigns etc.

As the main problem of the publishing industry in Brazil is perhaps a breakdown in the cycle of disinformation, which isolates potential readers from the literary world, these external factors seem to be the most important in attracting readers. Laurence Hallewell says of this isolation: “The majority of Brazilians don’t buy books to read for

58 Cf. Vilmar Faria, “A Conjuntura Social Brasileira”, *Revista Novos Estudos Cebrap*, São Paulo, n. 33, June 1992.

pleasure because, apart from the authors they studied and hated at school time, they simply don't know what to read"<sup>59</sup>.

To confirm the necessity to break the cycle of disinformation, it should be noted that to sell a book many of the authors of the books published in this period, particularly Brazilians, also had other strings to their bows, with activities that publicised themselves and thereby reinforced sales. For example, in parallel with the publication of her first books, Marta Suplicy hosted one of the most popular daytime television programmes in the country; and Fernando Sabino and Luiz Fernando Veríssimo were columnists on national newspapers and magazines.

### **New Trends from the start of the 1990s**

Despite the limited time period of this study, it is impossible not to comment briefly on the changes to Brazilian publishing that the data from the start of the 1990s indicate.

According to the João Pinheiro Foundation, in 1990 there were 239 million books published (with 212 million copies sold), and in 1991 there were 303 million books published (with 289 million sold)<sup>60</sup>, with the same estimated number for 1992 and 1993.

Looking at the annual best-seller surveys by Datafolha (*Folha de S. Paulo* 29 Dec. 1990, 21 Dec. 1991, 20 Dec. 1992 & 2 Jan. 1994), the early 1990s saw a considerable increase in the number of national authors in both the fiction and non-fiction categories. . . .

The increasing popularity of Brazilian authors in the non-fiction category continued, but their presence in the category of fiction also grew in comparison with the 1980s. Of the forty non-fiction titles in the best-seller lists, 27 (67.5%) were by Brazilian authors, and nineteen of the forty best-sellers in the fiction category (47.5%) were of Brazilian authorship. The presence of national authors in both sectors is proportionally greater than that recorded the previous decade.

Middlebrow literature without any specific genre continued to predominate in the fiction category. There are only four titles that can be explicitly defined in terms of

<sup>59</sup> Laurence Hallewell, *O Livro no Brasil*, p. 571.

<sup>60</sup> *Diagnóstico do Setor Editorial Brasileiro*, Fundação João Pinheiro/Câmara Brasileira do Livro, Belo Horizonte, April 1993, pp. 60 & 61.

genre: three adventure/spy novels by foreign authors, and one detective novel (*Bullet Needle*, by Marcelo Rubens Paiva, which was in 6th place for 1993).

In the fiction category, of the 18 best-selling titles by national authors for 1990, 1991, 1992 and 1993, Paulo Coelho was the author of fourteen, with his books *The Alchemist*, *Brida*, *Diary of a Magus* and *The Valkyries*, which were seen repeatedly over these years. Other than Paulo Coelho, the Brazilian authors who also figured in the annual fiction best-seller lists between 1990 and 1994 were Chico Buarque (*Estorvo*), Rubem Fonseca (*Agosto, Romance Negro and Other Stories*) and Marcelo Rubens Paiva (*Bala na Agulha*).

The publishing phenomenon of Paulo Coelho involved two complex issues, neither of which are easy to define. However, despite – or perhaps because of this, they cannot be ignored.

The presence of national authors in the best-seller lists is not always an accurate reflection of how relevant or timely the text is. The first consideration on this boom is a relative sense of euphoria and premature praise.

The other reflection, which is very important in the scope of this study, and raised by the Paulo Coelho phenomenon, is regarding the need to make the distinction between fiction and non-fiction categories when researching and analysing the publishing market. Although this categorisation can be useful as an overall indicator in some specific cases, it can also be problematic and may require further consideration. It makes no sense to say that Paulo Coelho's works are literary fiction in the same sense as those by Carlos Drummond de Andrade or Eça de Queiroz. Additionally, for many of Paulo Coelho's readers, his books are not read as fiction but as a door to "another reality" and as instruction manuals and mystical exercises.

While esoteric themes dominate the fiction category, the category of non-fiction was filled with self-help books. Alongside the other foreign authors writing on similar themes, the Brazilian doctor Lair Ribeiro sold swathes of books with his advice on how to earn money, and how to become successful and beautiful. There are, however, two surprises in this category that deserve to be mentioned: Gilberto Dimenstein's *Meninas da Noite*, a report on under-age female prostitutes (in 10th place for 1992) and Maria Mariana's entertaining diary *Confissões de Adolescente*, (in 8th place for 1993).

Nevertheless, in general, four years is a short space of time to try to define the

trends for an entire decade, as these could be either consolidated or reversed in the following years, though we suspect that the former is the most likely.

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