



National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Canadian Theses Service Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

**Tales of People and Power:
Brazilian Telenovelas and the Politics of the Popular**

Liliam Beatris Chagas de Moura

**A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Communication Studies**

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

August 1991

© Liliam Beatris Chagas de Moura, 1991



National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Canadian Theses Service Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-68753-3

Canada

Abstract

Tales of People and Power: Brazilian Telenovelas and the Politics of the Popular

Liliam Beatris Chagas de Moura

This thesis examines Brazilian television drama productions in the light of theoretical debates informing the study of popular culture and popular television. The production process, narrative styles and the broad cultural context of reception construct the Brazilian telenovela as a unique televisual narrative. The overwhelming popularity of the programs within the national context is largely due to their appropriation of Brazilian subjects, settings and characters. Contemporary prime time telenovelas articulate a collective cultural imaginary specific to the Brazilian social formation. Plots and story lines illustrate the critical potential of Brazilian television's most popular genre. It is argued that telenovelas played a role in strengthening a national privately operated television industry, best represented by Globo Network. Lastly, Globo's worldwide export of dramatic serials and their popularity among international audiences gives way to a critique of the cultural imperialism thesis.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Jody Berland, for her interest, comments and guidance throughout this project, and to Dr. Martin Allor and Dr. Kim Sawchuk of my thesis committee for their suggestions.

I thank the Inter American Press Association and CAPES (Brazil's Post-Graduate Education Federal Agency) for financial support. Also, the Director of RBS TV in Porto Alegre and the staff at the Planning Department for their kind research assistance. I am grateful to Sérgio Caparelli and Angela Sander, who provided needed information and material. Many thanks are due to my family, for the unfailing support and encouragement. I would also like to thank my friends for their much appreciated company during the long and hot summer of 1991, in particular Miriam, Cândice, Odete, Murray and Richard for being more directly involved.

A special thanks to André, for being such an interesting, fun, and supportive partner.

A esperança não vem do mar
Nem das antenas de TV
A arte de viver da fé
Só não se sabe fé em que

Paralamas do Sucesso

Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Chapter One:	
Mass Culture, Popular Taste and Cultural Studies	5
Chapter Two:	
National Integration, Modernization and Popularity: The Logics of Television in Brazil	26
Chapter Three:	
The Evolution of a Popular Genre	66
Chapter Four:	
Revealing Telenovela Narratives: The Influential Discourse	100
Chapter Five:	
The Export of Brazilian Drama: 'blind spot' in Cultural Imperialism	133
Conclusion	146
Endnotes	149
Bibliography	155

Introduction

Telenovelas are drama serials produced and shown in television stations throughout South America. They are daily programs lasting between five and eight months and produced by nationally recognized writers, directors and actors. Since the early 1970s, telenovelas have become Brazil's foremost form of popular culture. Telenovela viewing is a daily habit for millions of Brazilians across the country; three of the major private networks broadcast them on prime time, reaching an average national audience of nearly sixty million .

Telenovelas are Brazilian television's greatest phenomenon they are popular, affordable and 'made in Brazil'. Rede Globo developed in the past two decades an efficient structure for drama production, which has pushed the entire industry towards more production and less imports. The result is that today Brazilian networks produce most of what is shown on the peak viewing times, and Globo is ranked the fourth largest private television network in the world.

A short summary of the present situation of the Brazilian television industry seeks to provide a better picture of organizational and programming patterns. Brazil is a country of one-hundred and forty million people and the national television audience is estimated to be over eighty million. Four TV networks, all privately owned and operated, **Globo**, **Manchete**, **SBT** and **Bandeirantes**, broadcast on a national basis and cover nearly 100% of the country. TV Globo is by far the leader in number of stations, volume of production and audience ratings. Also, Globo pulls over 60% of the total advertising expenditure in television. In addition to the

commercial networks, there is a public sector controlled by state governments. The public system is totally sponsored by government funding and is devoted to educational, community and cultural programs. With the exception of TV Cultura of São Paulo, the public system as a rule reaches a very limited audience. Pay TV services (through microwave) are available only in São Paulo and Rio (the major cities), and because it is relatively new its effects still cannot be measured. Regional stations, also private, are usually affiliated to one of the main networks but they also produce programs of interest for a specific region or locality, as in the case of RBS TV in southern Brazil.

Brazilians watch, on average, four hours of television daily. On prime time (5 pm to 11 pm) 95% of Globo's programming is produced by the network itself. Imported material ("canned" films and serials), including news footage, represent only 18 to 20% of programming (Marques de Melo, 1988). Telenovelas are the chief television programs in Brazil, and Globo has been the main producer since the seventies. Globo's weekly prime time schedule is comprised of four daily telenovelas, local and national newscasts, musical programs, humorous shows or feature films (usually American). The ferocious competition among the networks is fought over telenovelas. The first upset to Globo's prime-time supremacy in the latest years came in 1990, when the telenovela *Pantanal* increased Manchete Network's ratings from 4% to 20% finally changing the figures of audience ratings on prime time. One television executive in Brazil once observed that Brazilian TV was the only one in the world to have its prime time hour filled with *soap operas*. For this and other reasons, telenovelas have become a typically Brazilian genre.

It is my contention that prime time drama programming of Brazilian television is significantly different from North American and British drama productions, most notably because of thematic treatment, form of address and narrative styles. Brazilian television, especially the private monopoly Rede Globo, must be comprehended and situated in relation to the large international context of television broadcasting. Television in Brazil is dominated by national programs instead of American drama serials as happens virtually everywhere else (specially in the less industrialized countries).

This thesis is an attempt to assess Brazilian telenovelas by using the theory, the literature and the terminology arising from the heated debate about the emergence of popular culture forms in industrialized societies. Cultural studies provides a critical approach that frames popular culture as a site wherein political and social interactions are activated and struggles between 'dominant' and 'oppositional' meanings become possible. The first chapter is a review of theoretical formulations and critical positions which, I think, are the most relevant to the study of 'the popular' in contemporary media.

The second chapter explores the development of television in Brazil. The commercial model for television broadcasting, the strong role played by the State during the military regime and the fast trajectory of Globo Network are key factors in determining how Brazilian TV looks like and why. To explain Globo's leadership and growing success, I draw largely upon the concept of hegemony as advanced by Todd Gitlin and Stuart Hall.

The second part of the thesis is devoted to investigating the popular 'ethos' of Brazilian television. I watched many hours of telenovelas, all showed in the last ten years, and I became convinced of their complexities

as narratives of entertainment and as texts of popular culture. The primary task of my analysis of telenovelas is to point out the ways they articulate a genuine Brazilian cultural imaginary; why they are so engaged in telling stories related to Brazil of the past, the present and the future. Secondly, it is to suggest the positive potential of the genre in addressing questions motivated by concrete social and political consciousness of the cultural producers.

In short, the general goal of what follows is to investigate how the popular and melodramatic telenovela genre, with its stories about 'big' people in small towns and ordinary people in urban centers, articulates discourses about social struggle and about power. In the way, it stands out that organizational and economic conjectures involved in television broadcasting also determine how trivial or how progressive popular television in a developing country can be.

Chapter One

Mass Culture, Popular Taste and Cultural Studies

The wide spread of popular cultural forms on an international scale is one perceivable phenomenon shaping the politics of the present time. The debate about mass culture as the result of the mass society created with the development of industrial capitalism dates back to the eighteenth century (Hall, 1982). Mass culture, as something available to a large number of people, is intrinsically associated with historical developments such as the rise of urban cultural sites, mass education, political democracy and advanced industrial capitalism. A more common definition makes the association of cultural goods with commodities under economic systems based upon the principles of free enterprise, pluralism and technological mastery. On a theoretical level, a theory of mass culture was built upon two notions which, although coming from different ideological positions, were merging in its outcome. On one side, humanist critics rejected mass culture because of its aesthetic poverty and its lack of artistic value, while Marxist critics despised mass culture as they perceived it to be an ideological tool of capitalism for assuring control and domination over the masses. In both views, mass culture was contrasted and condemned on the grounds of its distance from high culture, seen as having greater artistic and revolutionary potential.

According to Modleski (1986), the classical humanist statement against mass culture is found in Dwight Macdonald's article "A Theory of Mass Culture", which is an elitist outcry against the rise of mass culture - "its

distinctive mark is that it is solely and directly an article for mass consumption, like chewing gum" (Macdonald, 1957 :59). The term 'mass culture' is preferred over 'popular culture' precisely to emphasize that it is imposed from above, unlike 'folk art'. Mass culture was directly opposed to high culture and Avant-garde art (Rimbaud, Joyce and Picasso are praised for their refusal "to compete"); mass culture was kitsch, cheap and vulgar, and standardization could only lead downward. Macdonald's view on mass culture shows more than a simple resentment of the debasement of taste in art and culture. It carries also a contempt for technology as he implies that the advent of sound film had made Hollywood movies "better entertainment and worse art" (p.64). The article also reveals the politically conservative standpoint from which this sort of critique was coming in the U.S.:

If there were a clearly defined cultural *élite*, then the masses could have their *kitsch* and the *élite* could have its High Culture, with everybody happy. But the boundary line is blurred. (p.61)

This statement leaves little choice but to agree that the hidden agenda behind the initial debate around mass culture was a fear that the masses could arise politically and revolt ¹. High culture functioned also as a device separating the ruling groups from the dominated masses. The decline of this cultural shield could well be seen as indicative of the rise of the masses as a social force.

Marxist theorists, though, did not embrace this view. Because mass culture was marketable, their interpretation of it fostered a materialistic critique of the cultural commodity. Since mass cultural forms were industrially produced and meant to sell, critics at the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, in Germany, forcefully argued that culture had become

an industry controlled by the mass media, a process that was manipulative of the proletariat by creating "false needs" for them. Adorno and Horkheimer, along with other German intellectuals, elaborated a powerful Marxist cultural theory which acknowledges the potentiality of culture to determine and transform social reality through ideology. The culture industry was understood as one way through which capitalist formations seek ideological domination, the products of this industry perceived as alienating and lacking the superior status of a 'true culture'. Although the Frankfurt School did not represent a unified and homogeneous set of theoretical assumptions about culture and society, its members articulated ideas that 1) questioned orthodox Marxist canons about the base/superstructure relationship, suggesting the power of the superstructure to influence social change; 2) tended to regard mass culture as responsible for the cultural decline of their time, thus weakening any possibility of a socialist revolution coming from the masses; 3) perceived mass society as passive victim of consumer capitalist culture. Paradoxically, the sharp Marxist critics of commercial culture had to leave Germany with the rise of Fascism, and came to the U.S., where mass culture was pervasive and an increasing force in the social formation. Not surprisingly, the Frankfurt School members' American-based writings carry "pessimistic forebodings" (Hall, 1982) and gloomy prognosis about the destructive effects commercial culture exert upon mass society as the former seems to have a sedative effect on people's minds. This appears clearly in the following excerpt from a text by Theodor Adorno on television:

The repetitiveness, the selfsameness, and the ubiquity of modern mass culture tend to make for automatized reactions and to weaken the forces of individual resistance. (Adorno, 1957 :476)

As the debate about mass culture evolved, and the subject achieved greater scholarly significance in institutions and in the literature, the Frankfurt School approach gradually lost its initial force as a Marxist paradigm to study culture in modern societies. Most contemporary critics identify the "economism" and the "oversimplifications" comprised in its arguments, although many still like to take Adorno and his colleagues as a starting point in their critiques of the modern cultural apparatus. Despite this sense of 'oldness' associated with the Frankfurt School, its critical theory was and is a crucial moment for mass media research. As a matter of fact, it still serves as a model for cultural criticism in many places below the equator. In Latin America, for instance, the paradigm underlying writings about the mass media is often that of the Frankfurt School. In this case, the audience is not only being allured by superficial consumer culture; this culture is most likely to be American, which provides for the central importance given to the problem of cultural imperialism.

What is interesting is that a German poet and writer, Hans Enzensberger, was one of the first to show the limitations of the Frankfurt School approach to mass culture (Modleski, 1986). In 1970, Enzensberger criticized the left for not going further than just condemning the exploitation of mass media by the dominant groups, thus failing to advance a socialist theory of the media (Caparelli and Hohlfeldt, 1985). In "Constituents of a Theory of the Media", he changed the 'tone' of criticism by forwarding a leftist analysis regarding the media in a positive light. Determinant to this

turnabout, in Enzensberger's own words², were the events in the late 1960s in Germany, when a major student movement was causing a social turmoil and, in that context, the mass media seemed 'democratic' at least. He was stunned to see that the left feared the mass media to such an extent, that it was blind to its democratic potential.

As Modleski points out, Enzensberger's contention that the media was becoming popular because it was appealing to "real needs and desires" of the people provided a way out of the Frankfurt School pessimism.³ According to her, this has influenced a whole generation of younger critics who "grew up on mass culture - literally danced to the kind of 'standardized' music which so alarmed Theodor Adorno..." (Modleski, 1986)

There is a number of different theoretical approaches to mass culture within a range of two extreme positions- total acceptance and absolute rejection. Michael Real (1977) attempted a classification of these approaches and ended up with six different categories, which come from the broad liberal, elitist and Marxist approaches to mass culture. Roughly summarized here, Real's classification starts out with the "liberal" approach, whose subscribers defend mass culture on the grounds of its democratic character: people are free to choose whether to consume commercial culture or not. Besides, it is positive overall because it makes 'culture' available to large audiences. This view is often that of broadcasters and cultural industries' executives. There are the 'Liberals Objectivists', whose work is largely empirical and descriptive. They are more concerned to describe mass culture phenomena than to make aesthetic judgments about them. 'Progressive Elitists' tend to contrast mass culture forms with classical art, being critical of its simplistic popular aesthetic, but not troubled by the industrial profit-based system behind it. The "Traditional Elitists" defend high art for its

superior artistic value and favor the raising of standards for mass-produced culture. Real asserts that this current has given the most powerful aesthetic criticism of mass culture products. The 'Cultural Separatist Radicals' are critics belonging to ethnic groups who like to frame their analysis according to their particular perspectives (Blacks, Hispanics, Gays, etc). Lastly, 'Marxist Structural Radicals' offer the traditional leftist criticism of mass culture. They are uncomfortable with mass culture's low taste but blame the capitalist system of production.

Real's classification depicts the major theoretical approaches in the study of mass culture. Newer critical approaches elaborate on existing ones or combine paradigms, and even if every so often critics call attention to the need for innovative leftist approaches (MacCabe, 1986), mass culture criticism has only changed the terms of its dichotomies: from alienating versus democratic, to hegemonic versus oppositional. Many contemporary critics of popular culture do not hide their appreciation for their objects of study, but seem to hold back any enthusiasm because there is, after all, the exploitative capitalist logic behind it. Culture and money simply do not match together, making theoretical inquiry a very problematic and sometimes contradictory field. Obviously the debate is not a simple one, and struggles go on continually to build a desirable leftist model for cultural criticism. Critics have to cope also with the increasing and stunning changes in the field of techno-pop culture, which makes it difficult to define boundaries in aesthetic terms as artistic categories are becoming increasingly blurred. Much of the problem is that the contemporary cultural scene no longer refers to the mass culture/high culture dichotomy. Luciano Pavarotti, an opera-singer, performing live in the opening of the last World Soccer Cup, a major international media event, may be an example of the trends

problematizing the definition of current cultural phenomena. Is it the vehicle, the distribution network or the content what defines what is popular culture today? Or, is Madonna's sexual politics less 'valuable' than an obscure off-Broadway play touching the same issues only because the former is more widely available for consumption?

These questions inform the debate on popular culture today, a debate that was subject to a stimulating theoretical outburst with the development of what is called now 'Cultural Studies'. The work of several British critics on working-class cultures, subcultural styles and resistance provided valuable theoretical and methodological inputs to the study of popular culture. Most important, though, is that criticism abandoned the term 'mass culture' in favor of 'popular culture', precisely to avoid the pejorative connotations previous critical approaches had originated. The realm of popular culture in urban industrial sites could not be seen as "imposed from above", as mass culture criticism assumed, and the dichotomy mass culture/high culture became also inadequate. Therefore, the shift from mass culture to popular cultural does not simply indicate a change in terminology, but in cultural theory itself.

The next section will discuss the study of popular culture within Cultural Studies.

Cultural Studies and the theoretical rescuing of 'the popular'

Cultural Studies attempts to think about the mass media not in relation to this or that isolated problem (violence, pornography, children) or institutions (politics, economy, family) or practice

(film production, conversation, advertising), but as elements, in Raymond Williams' phrase, "in a whole way of life". Societies, in this view, are complex, differentiated, contradictory, interacting wholes. They are threaded throughout, held in this complex unity, by culture: by the production and reproduction of systems of symbols and messages. (Carey, 1983)

This quote comprises two characteristics of Cultural Studies which, in my view, add strength to it as a critical paradigm: its holistic approach to society, taking the social to be an interaction of various forces, and its assertion about the power of culture to determine and inform what goes on in society. Cultural Studies is also attractive for its nuanced Marxism, that is, unlike orthodox Marxist theory which relegated the realm of culture to a secondary instance, Cultural Studies regards the production and consumption of meanings as a central process determining the politics of power and domination in society. The construction of meanings is thus closely related to the social formation and can only be understood thoroughly in relation to the broad historical context of this formation (Fiske, 1987). Also, Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci were sources for the Marxist-oriented works developed at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, under direction of Stuart Hall, Cultural Studies' most important theorist. By reinterpreting Althusser and Gramsci, Stuart Hall refuses the economic reductionism characteristic of traditional Marxist theory. He takes the Marxist concept of ideology, once understood as "false knowledge" that is generated by the bloc in power in order to maintain its class supremacy, and argues that ideology constitutes a "relatively autonomous" field wherein social struggles are articulated (Grossberg and Slack, 1985). There is no such thing as a fixed and static ideology

reproducing the values of the dominant class, plus ideology "also sets the limits to the degree to which a society-in-dominance can easily, smoothly and functionally reproduce itself" (Hall, 1985.113) Ideology, in this sense, commands everyday practices since it functions at the level of discourse and is contained within language and behavior. It comprises a set of practices and meanings that favors a given power structure, although it is not a mere reflection of it (in late industrial capitalism a state of dominance is not openly identified and defended as such). From Gramsci, Stuart Hall takes the concept of hegemony to name the dynamic and complex process by which the dominant bloc attempts to naturalize practices and meanings (ideology) that work for the maintenance of a "structure-in-dominance". Hegemony is the continuous struggle to establish common referentials that favors the interest of a ruling group. As such, hegemony does not mean 'ideological domination' *per se*, but rather a process of negotiation that is neither monolithic nor unchangeable. In the mass media, for instance, the concept of hegemony advanced by Hall signifies a 'struggle over meanings', i.e., a struggle that works in the realm of the symbolic, an attempt to make people perceive reality in a way that does not challenge the existing power structure. Whether these attempts are *always* successful may be another problem, given that the 'struggle over meaning' theory implies that people are potentially capable of making meanings opposing the dominant ideology. Early British Cultural Studies pursued this idea by looking at subcultural styles as a form of resistance to dominant cultures. Although the "resistance theory" developed within Cultural Studies was very much linked to a particular time (the 1970s), place (England) and culture (urban working-class culture), it meant a moment of 'euphoria' for cultural criticism. There were shortcomings of this approach. its overemphasis on class and initial

blindness to questions of gender and race provoked a reaction from feminist critics, for example, who succeeded in bringing new elements to the Cultural Studies agenda. Graeme Turner also notes that the kind of subculture research done by people like Hebdige and Chambers invites speculation about the relationship between "cultural theory and the specific historical conditions which produce it" (p.3).

In "Notes on Deconstructing 'The Popular'", Stuart Hall legitimizes Cultural Studies' interest in popular culture as he recognizes it as a site for political struggle:

Popular culture is one of the sites where this struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged: it is also the stake to be won or lost *in* that struggle. It is the arena of consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured. It is not a sphere where socialism, a socialist culture - already fully formed - might be simply 'expressed'. But it is one of the places where socialism might be constituted. That is why 'popular culture' matters. (Hall, 1981 :239)

In this essay Hall argues that popular culture is neither the genuinely popular traditions trying to resist cultural changes brought by modernization, or the commercial culture that is imposed from above. Popular culture means the arena where cultural transformations take place. Hall also emphasizes the difficulty in defining the term 'popular', and the subjects attached to it, 'the people', once the political right has appropriated it to its conservative rhetoric. He outlines three definitions. In the first one popular culture stands as a "battlefield" where positions can be won, lost and negotiated; the second definition regards popular culture as everything that is specific to the way of life of "the people", a definition that Hall rejects

because of its vagueness and for being purely descriptive. The third definition posits the 'popular' in relation to grass-roots activities of particular classes, which retains what Stuart Hall considers to be crucial to any definition of popular culture, i.e., the recognition of "a continuing tension (relationship, influence and antagonism) to the dominant culture" (Hall, 1981 :235). Even if Hall does not provide a descriptive definition of popular culture, he makes clear the need to conceptualize it politically and in opposition to the dominant culture. Tony Bennett, for example, sustained that "there is no such thing as popular culture"

... the concept of popular culture is virtually useless, a melting pot of confused and contradictory meanings capable of misdirecting inquiry up any number of theoretical blindalleys (Bennett, 1980 :18)

Departing from the notion (borrowed from Raymond Williams) that "culture is a shifting noun, so 'popular' is a shifting qualifier", Bennett describes four ways popular culture has been classified and suggests a definition that he believes is useful to the construction of a coherent 'pedagogic strategy'. Briefly, in the four major definitions depicted by Bennett popular culture is 1) what is well accepted accordingly to measurable indices of popularity, such as box-office sales and television ratings; 2) what does not resemble traditional bourgeois culture; 3) synonym of mass culture created by the cultural industries and 4) the expression of 'lived cultures' of the people (as against the elite). Bennett's final definition reverberates with that of Hall and is equally informed by Gramsci's concept of hegemony. He argues that the concept of popular culture, for the purpose of teaching, should always relate to the specific forms through which a

dominant order attempts to naturalize its culture over others (that of the subordinated), and to the possibility of resistance inherently in this process.

These definitions, and the discussions risen by them, demonstrate more than the sophisticated attempts to define popular culture as subject of study; as they show the serious attempt of critical theory to locate the realm of 'the popular' in political terms, and since the tendency here is a socialist one, in terms of the struggle dominant/dominated. Neo-Marxists' interest in popular culture also stems from the fact that the left has failed to provide a socialist culture, has failed to win 'the minds and hearts' of the people with its avant-gardism and "workerism of yesteryear" (Bennett, 1986). Despite Bennett's initial argument about the impossibility of a definition of popular culture, concerning which many critics seemed to have agreed, given the scarce attempts at further definitions (they are usually sketched only in order to be rejected), there is a definition implicit in virtually every writing on popular culture within British or North American Cultural Studies. And the existence of a definition, being for the sake of theory or not, seems fundamental for the breaking away from previous dominant pejorative accounts of popular culture. Popular culture is no longer identified with a culture made by and for 'the people' as a way to resist oppression, nor is it imposed mass culture created by capitalist enterprises and directed to a passive mass of consumers.

Rather, it consists of those cultural forms and practices -varying in content from one historical period to another- which constitute the terrain on which dominant, subordinate and oppositional cultural values and ideologies meet and intermingle, in different mixes and permutations, vying with one another in their attempts to secure the spaces within which they can become influential in framing and organizing popular experience and consciousness. (Bennett, 1986 : 19)

Television culture, wise audiences and the power of pleasure

Starting from certain notions that open up positive theoretical possibilities of 'the popular', Cultural Studies critics developed a vast body of work on television genres and audiences during the 1970s and 1980s. The intention here is not to examine such works, but to highlight some of the important theoretical and methodological contributions they have made. Following the rediscovery of popular culture as a site for social conflict over meaning, television research became largely concerned with revealing the possibilities for counter-hegemonic "readings". The treatment of television programs as "texts" comes from the wide use of semiotic and structuralist textual analysis. The premise underlying such research is the recognition "that struggles for social power are paralleled by semiotic struggles for meaning" (Fiske, 1987 :272). The other research tendency at work in Cultural Studies is ethnography, which is concerned in finding out how audiences interact with popular culture forms. Such studies focus on the researcher's "reading" of the audience's behavior rather than of the cultural text. In television studies, two classic examples of ethnographic research are found in David Morley's The "Nationwide" Audience. Structure and Decoding (1980) and Ien Ang's Watching Dallas Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination (1985).

Stuart Hall's theory of preferred, negotiated and oppositional readings brought new light to research on audiences. It is now widely accepted that television programs are "open texts" in that they can be interpreted in different ways by different people, and social class, Hall suggested, was the central factor determining how people perceive the television message.⁴ Further research such as Liebes and Katz's study (1988) showed that factors

other than social class, cultural background for instance, were also determinant of audience's interpretation of a show like *Dallas*. John Fiske calls attention to Morley's study on the "Nationwide" audiences for showing that Hall had overemphasized the importance of class in his preferred reading theory, and that the variety of interpretations could be greater than what Hall had suggested (Fiske, 1987).

It is clear that television research under the Cultural Studies paradigm retains for the most part the concepts of ideology and hegemony elaborated by Hall and others reading through Gramsci. Especially in the 1980s, critical works on television reverberate every so often with the optimistic tone of "resistance theory", even more when the focus of research shifts from the 'text' to the 'audience'. The theoretical assumptions behind this stream are that television programs are 'polysemic' by nature, that television audiences are heterogeneous and well capable of producing alternative meanings, and that the pleasure provided by television viewing is there to be understood and not ignored. This, combined with the ever growing popularity of television in western societies, provided a theoretically stimulating atmosphere in media studies which has generated a rich body of analysis cheering the 'cultural democracy' of television culture. Audiences were 'empowered' by their favorite television shows, drama serial's characters were scrutinized in that they provided positive role models, and moments of resistance to hegemonic and patriarchal orders were sought (and found). The celebration of this semiotic democracy of television went too far sometimes, as in the case of John Fiske's Television Culture (1987), where the author attempts to create a universal theory of television pleasure that proved to be simplistic and problematic, as if "*Miami Vice* will be empowering whenever and wherever people find it pleasurable" 5. The

search for moments of resistance through a theory of pleasure can make critics overlook the question of cultural differences, and this is precisely one weakness of current Cultural Studies research on television. The capitalist west, for instance, is often referred to as if it was an homogeneous bloc of nations sharing similar sociopolitical conjectures, something that is profoundly unrealistic. International audiences interact in very distinct ways with American popular television, so that it would be useful to Cultural Studies' followers to examine social contexts in which decoding takes place, or to adopt a broad cross-cultural perspective for the sake of their theoretical claims. Furthermore, Ellen Seiter et al. could not be more right to assert that:

... the popularity of US television programs on export around the world should not make us forget that other forms of television might also please (and, possibly, please better). In our concern for audiences' pleasures in such programs, we run the risk of continually validating Hollywood's domination of the worldwide television market. (Seiter, Borchers et al., 1989 .5)

One stream resembling the "resistance theory" that has had a great impact on contemporary television criticism and in which one finds the most provocative accounts is that bringing a feminist perspective to the debate. Mary Ellen Brown recently used the term "feminist culturalist television criticism" to define an approach that, putting it bluntly, investigates how television represents women and how these representations are used by female audiences (Brown, 1990). The "feminist approach" has forcefully showed how commercial television treats women as consumers and that network programming is meant to meet the household routines of women at home, which helps to legitimize their captivation within the domestic and out of the public (productive) sphere. Although not

questioning the above, feminist critics looking at television are also concerned with the possibilities of "women's genres" and female audiences to elaborate a feminine subjectivity in tune with feminist politics. This latter tendency has led feminist television criticism to identify resistance to patriarchal relations in the pleasures women derive from watching television. One example of this Jackie Byars' feminist reading of American prime-time television ⁶, in which she argues that a program like *Cagney and Lacey*, about female friendship and women in the workplace, articulates 'feminine discourses' about life that oppose those of mainstream (patriarchal) culture.

Dramatic serials such as *Dallas* and *Dynasty*, the hallmark of American television in the world's screens, also have been "read" in a feminist fashion. *Dynasty's* character Alexis Carrington (Joan Collins) is celebrated for offering positive imagery for female pleasures:

Presented as strong, intelligent, independent and powerful (if destructively so), she continually fights to maintain and improve her position, manipulating and disturbing the patriarchal status quo. (...) Alexis has seized on those aspects of a woman's life which normally render her powerless and turned them into weapons. In her 'mothering' role, for example, there is no question of allowing her children to rule her life, of putting their interests before her own. (Budge, 1989 :106-107)

E. Ann Kaplan(1987) notes that it was only in the 1980s that a significant number of works on the representations of women on television started to appear. In Kaplan's view, the reasons for this were that feminist theory was primarily concerned with film and because television was not highly regarded as an academic subject. As such, it was seen as having little chance of helping academic careers of women scholars already struggling for

recognition in social sciences (Kaplan, 1987). The turning point was perhaps the growth of television analysis coming from British Cultural Studies and the perception that television addresses female audiences differently from male audiences. The flow of programming, the emphasis on seriality, repetition and distraction, and the commercial logic of television, were considered in terms of their relationship to the 'feminine'. In the context of the U.S., Tania Modleski's analysis of the women's gratification in watching soap-operas, the most female of all television genres, was original and highly influential. 'Feminist television criticism' brings to the popular culture debate not one but a variety of angles on the fundamental problem of pleasurable struggles against sexual, political and cultural subjugation.

Popular Culture and National Culture: a Brazilian dilemma

The concept of popular culture in Brazil is overwhelmingly linked to the question of national identity. Brazil, as a nation-state, identifies its cultural roots in popular cultural forms, which have been transformed through historical evolutions. Since the 1960s, for example, Brazilian popular culture includes ~~a/s~~ the products of the cultural industries. To put it in a pragmatic way, in the same way that Austria and Germany are identified with classical music, Italy with gastronomy, the U.S. with symbols of liberty and prosperity, Mexico with ancient civilizations, Brazil is readily identified with carnival and soccer. This example is not to subscribe to cultural stereotypes, many of them created for the sake of tourism, but to show that popular culture has become a generic term synonymous for

Brazilian national culture as a whole. Both concepts are overlapping and often taken as the same thing in the common understanding.

Following the exposition of the main theoretical frameworks which ground the critical appraisal of this paper, it will be useful at this point to situate the popular culture debate in the national context of Brazil. Although the debate dates back to the nineteenth century, there is not much written on the academic status of this debate. My attempt to situate the study of popular culture in Brazil is largely a summarization of sociologist Renato Ortiz's essay on this topic ⁷. It is, nonetheless, my own assessment of his accounts.

Ortiz makes a distinction between the concepts of popular culture and mass culture, and argues that is the Brazilian cultural reality (hardly comparable with the American) which forces us to acknowledge such distinction. Popular culture, in this sense, refers to the cultural manifestations peculiar to the popular classes (religiosity, language, music, dance, rituals, etc), while mass culture refers to entertainment made available through the mass media (radio, television, cinema). Since the mass media phenomenon is relatively young in Brazil (the early 1960s), Ortiz feels that not differentiating them would be misleading and incorrect. There is a history of popular culture (as something truly belonging to 'the people') that is previous to contemporary popular culture, i.e., 'mass culture' of the media age. The debate about popular culture in Brazil has happened primarily in the field of sociology. In fact, Ortiz rightly notes that the founding fathers of the social sciences in Brazil were concerned with 'the popular' when they chose themes such as the Brazilian folklore, African traditions and popular movements of messianic nature. Also, many early writings on popular culture were closely related to questions of ethnicity,

since the size of the black population of African origin was a determinant force informing any definition of 'the people'. For decades, popular culture was a subject for intellectuals who had rather romantic views about the native people, a miscegenation of christianized Indians, Africans and Portuguese colonizers, and their authentic culture. This is best exemplified in Gilberto Freire's conservative approach which saw popular culture as folklore. This notion dominated until the 1920s, when the "modernist movement" in the arts radically changed the course of the debate by forwarding the "anthropofagic" movement⁸. Under the circumstances stemming from the industrialization and urbanization tendencies, intellectuals in the 1950s advanced a new theory of Brazil, one that rejects the power of tradition and turns attention to the future that was about to come, which looked urban and modern.

Ortiz considers that the "leftist turnabout" came when the realm of popular culture was perceived as a site where changes could take place. This ideas were behind the most audacious cultural movements in Brazilian culture during the sixties. Popular culture was seen as a tool to raise political consciousness. This gave birth to Augusto Boal's "Theater of the Oppressed" and other political theater groups, as it influenced a whole generation of film makers who were committed to a cinematic aesthetic that exposes the 'colonial' situation of Brazilian society. Because cultural manifestations were not exposing the harsh reality of poverty, radical artists considered Brazilian society to be 'alienated' from its social reality and to live a state of 'cultural colonialism', referring to the influence of European aesthetics in Brazilian arts and culture. The idea informing the 'New Cinema' of Glauber Rocha was the 'aesthetic of hunger'. However, the political symbolism and hermetic nature of the "Cinema Novo" trend never really

reached the 'oppressed people' its idealizers wanted to 'save' from alienation. By this time, however, the "alienation theory" was well accepted and provided the framework to address the fast growing mass media. Critics of television, which was beginning to expand in the mid-60s, held the Frankfurt School tradition in their interpretation of television as an instrument of cultural imperialism and hegemonic domination (Vink, 1988). Artists and intellectuals believed they had a role to play and that it was to lead the way towards the desired changes in society. As their attempts failed, especially with the arrival of the military in 1964, there was an important shift in the debate of popular culture.

The military regime's commitment to capitalist development encouraged the emergence of the cultural industries, and the notion of popularity became related to indices of consumption. The State's cultural policies were promoting 'national/popular' culture in several instances, especially the music sector and television. The concept of popular culture became increasingly related to the products of the cultural industries. Television programs, such as the telenovelas, were addressing a national audience hitherto never perceived as such. The new cultural landscape accommodated the popular culture of pre-capitalist artisanal production, which continued to exist, and the popular culture produced by the cultural industries. Despite the presence of Americanized content in the products of these industries, it is nonetheless true that they absorbed the rich and colorful manifestations coming from the various regions of the country. Once again, popular culture was affecting and overlapping with the idea of 'national culture'.

According to Vink (1988), in the eighties the debate on popular culture was characterized by the attempt to find an intermediary position

between the alienation theory and the resistance approach, which achieved its strength during the 1970s when grass-roots popular movements developed despite the coercive presence of mass-mediated pop culture. Sociologist Marilena Chauí's stance represents a synthesis of these two positions. Her definition of popular culture, not surprisingly, is influenced by Gramsci's concept of hegemony: "a conglomerate of practices, representations and forms of consciousness with a logic of their own in an interplay of conformism, non-conformism and resistance" (quoted in Vink, 1988 :87).

The concept of popular culture, in the scope of this paper, refers to the spheres of contemporary symbolic production in which hegemonic dominant meanings are represented but not necessarily guaranteed, since popularity is only achieved by the rearrangement of truly popular codes and is mediated by consumption. Folk culture, on the contrary, is not implicated in a system of production/consumption and refers to practices specific to certain groups, like the rituals of Afro-Brazilian religions taking place at backyards known as "terreiros". Contemporary Brazilian popular culture, therefore, is a media event and it includes a wide range of cultural items available for consumption. Romantic ballads on AM radio, urban rock'n'roll on FM radio, music concerts, Scharwzenegger movies, television comedy shows and, the overwhelmingly popular and ultimately national, television's prime time telenovelas.

Chapter Two

National Integration, Modernization and Popularity: The Logics of Television in Brazil

The growth of Brazilian television is closely linked to two concomitant factors. On the one hand, there was the strong political will of the military regime in pursuing economic development and modernization at any cost, and on the other hand, the dynamics of a privately-operated television system financed by advertising and battling for sizeable audiences in order to survive. The former made television broadcasting a tool through which the State could pursue its aim of 'national integration', while the search for audiences forced broadcasters to produce programming capable of pleasing the largest possible audience. This, quite unexpectedly, turned television programming away from affordable U.S. imports and towards the more expensive path of local productions. This fact alone makes Brazilian television a special case in an international context, given that it is most unusual for a developing country such as Brazil not to rely on imported television programs and to become an exporter of television material.

There is a famous phrase by Nelson Rodrigues, a Brazilian playwright no longer alive, saying that "Brazil is neither worse or better than our television". Rodrigues has said this in reference to some low-quality live "auditorium shows", in which a charismatic host would turn miserable stories of poverty, death and illness into TV spectacles. If such shows were once predominant on television, one could suspect that they were indeed reflecting a troubling reality comprised of many miserable lives. Seen within

this context, Rodrigues' phrase is rather truthful. Nonetheless, in looking at the way television programming developed in Brazil what stands out is the overwhelming effort to display symbols of modernity and growth and make them look 'Brazilian'. From the institutional standpoint, a combination of economic, technological and political factors provided for the wide spread of television nationwide, and an audience highly differentiated by various regional cultures responded unanimously to the new medium. Contrary to the playwright's phrase, Brazilian television's development has made it look better than Brazil itself. Next will follow a historical overview of Brazilian television, focusing on the role of the military regime in the development of television and on the creation of a nationally-produced programming pattern that gives us the clue to understand why television in Brazil could hardly be more national and popular than it already is.

The military State and the development of television

Television signals were first seen in Brazil in September of 1950, as the result of personal efforts of Brazilian entrepreneur Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand, the owner of the then prestigious "Diários Associados" media group. TV Tupi, located in São Paulo, was the first television station in South America, although Mexico and Cuba also inaugurated stations in the same year. When Chateaubriand launched his station all the equipment was brought from the U.S., including the TV sets. All programming was done live and television was a privilege of few upper-class Brazilians. In bringing television into the country with no solid commercial or technological basis

for the medium, Chateaubriand was after political prestige for his media empire (Straubhaar, 1984). Caparelli (1982) divides the history of television expansion in two periods: Chateaubriand's monopoly of TV stations through the 50s is the first period, characterized by technical dependency on U S manufacturers such as RCA and General Electrics, by the borrowing of programs from radio and by the domination of national investors and capital. The second period begins in 1964 with the arrival of the military in power and with the injection of foreign capital in the economy.

The military *coup d'état* of 1964 overthrew João Goulart's liberal democracy in a time of political instability and generalized corruption. Mattos (1982) writes that according to the military regime's spokesmen, everything done by the post-1964 administration "has been aimed at the restoration of democracy and the salvation of Brazil from 'communism, corruption and chaos'" (Mattos, 1982:64). The military takeover is a major event in Brazilian history and it had a tremendous impact on the economic, political and cultural spheres. Capitalist relations were reinforced and multinational enterprises welcomed into the country as foreign investment was believed to vitalize the national economy in decay. Political pluralism was restrained and partisan opposition virtually dismantled. The military regime adopted the National Security Doctrine, which gave the ruling group absolute powers to defend and promote the "national objectives". Initially, the goals were the defense of the national territory through the militarization of frontier sites and the construction of roads, bridges and telecommunication facilities. The military were convinced that the ultimate goal of economic development via capitalism involved a thorough "national integration". In the words of Sergio Mattos, the 'national integration' concept consists of

... a set of programs designed to increase both societal and spatial integration and to diminish regional diversities by promoting, among other things, economic development, a more stable political system, internal cohesion, and national spirit (Mattos, 1982:33).

Under a strong State-supported capitalism and severe political repression, the military regime launched Brazil into a frantic pace towards modernization, industrialization and urbanization. The military State's fast-development ideology needed technical infrastructure for the reasons of national security and integration, and, according to Caparelli (1989), in order to motivate the population as consumers. Only an efficient telecommunication system would reach millions of people living in very different economic realities, some, as Caparelli notes, in pre-capitalist situations. Television, more than the other media, suited the needs of the new economic and political order established by the military. Television was perceived not as another sophisticated electronic medium, but as an ideological instrument in the pursue of concrete goals. The expansion of television in the Brazilian context paralleled the creation of a market for mass consumption and, with breakthrough technologies of sound and images, it has been crucial to the propagation of modernization values and to the reorganization of the social space (Sodré, 1984). The government needed to lure the public opinion to its project of economic development and the mass media, specially television, "became the means by which the [military] movement could persuade, impose, and spread its positions in order to maintain the post coup status quo" (Mattos, 1982:37).

The direct influence of the military regime on the development of television took place at two levels. First they provided the technological

apparatus and later they became concerned with TV content, calling for a 'high quality' programming upholding Brazilian culture and customs. Throughout the sixties, they created a series of technical facilities which made possible the creation of national TV networks. A series of regulatory federal agencies and communication policies were created and efficient satellite transmissions and nationwide microwave links made available for commercial stations. As a result, by the early 80s Brazil was the fourth largest stockholder in the international satellite system Intelsat (Mattos, 1982) Presently, Brazil has its own communication satellite on orbit (Brasilsat) and agreements are being finalized for the launching of a second one.

With the national territory electronically "integrated" and with a growing television industry ready to broadcast images of a "great and modern" nation, history was on the military's side on the occasion of the 1970 World Soccer Cup in Mexico. This was the first international event broadcast nationally on television and the Brazilian soccer team achieved a spectacular victory bringing the world championship to the land of soccer. Since then, it is as if Brazilians started a love affair with the small screen and welcomed it as mediator of their cultural experiences. The government capitalized politically on this victory, since the cathartic celebrations across the country worked as a moral uprising and as a catalyst for the 'national spirit' the military wanted to raise. Nationalist songs and slogans took over cities, streets and minds, reflecting the general feeling of national pride. One crucial song of the time had ufanist verses such as "90 millions in action/ move forward Brazil/ of my heart/ (..) All together we go/ move forward Brazil", and hallmark slogans were "Move Forward Brazil" and the classical "Brazil, love it or leave it". Paradoxically, many who loved it had to leave it

against their will. The spectacle the masses were not seeing on TV was the dirty and bloody underworld of political persecution, censorship, civil rights abuses and the forced departure of prominent politicians, artists and intellectuals to live in exile. The years of the Brazilian "economic miracle", when the National Gross Product (NGP) had a growth of 50% (Caparelli, 1989), are also known as the most repressive and authoritarian in the country's history. The economic boom affected the television industry in many ways, but the most effective was the increase in advertising expenditures. Along with the trends of industrialization and urbanization taking place in the central and southern regions, a middle-class population proliferated around the cities, making Brazilian television attractive to multinational advertising. By 1976, Brazil had become the fourth largest market for television advertising (Mattos, 1982). The military governments also granted four times more television licenses than the previous governments. From 1955 to 1964, twenty-two concessions were given, and from 1964 to 1979, a period of four different military administrations, ninety TV stations were licensed (Mattos, 1982).

Television in Brazil is primarily a private enterprise operating under government concessions. New licenses were given on a political basis, meaning that broadcasters were expected to be friendly to the regime. Television broadcasting is also seen as a public service and TV stations must follow general guidelines of educational and cultural nature. By law, the government has the right to request air time in all networks at any time, most often for presidential speeches. During the most harsh periods of military rule, those of Presidents Médici and Geisel (1969-1979), censorship of television and newspaper content was common practice. According to Caparelli (1989), the economic expansion helped to legitimize the military

coup, so that political propaganda was used more to promote technological progress and modernization than the government itself. Images on TV displayed Brazil as a potency-to-be. With international banks financing the "economic miracle" of the 70s, constructions of imposing grandeur such as the Transamazonian road, the Itaipu hydro plant, urban industrial areas and even a pretentious program for nuclear energy were shown off in the media as being the achievements of the regime. The State used repressive and ideological mechanisms in its struggle for "Order and Progress" (inscribed in the national flag). The role played by television was twofold: journalistic coverage helped to create a general feeling of acceptance and approval of the military technocratic State, while systematic advertising of consumer goods reinforced the industrial and consumption boom taking place. As for the nationalism of the time, the victory in soccer seemed to have more impact than the military mega-projects. In this context, president Garrastazu Médici said in 1973 that he was pleased to watch the news every night to see that "Brazil advances in peace towards development" (Carvalho, Kehl et al., 1979:31).

Other factors influencing the development of television in that period were an increase in the national production of television sets, which became fairly inexpensive, and the creation of a credit system making the purchase of sets even easier. Also, the introduction of color TV in 1973 added to the popularity of the medium. By 1980, there were more than twenty million TV sets in Brazil, ninety-four stations broadcasting programs and ads to an audience estimated at more than eighty million people (Mattos, 1982). Television became more of a necessity even for the poorest Brazilian families. As an object, TV stands as propagator of a modern rationale within

the domestic space (Leal, 1990), thus its importance has surpassed that of other household products such as radio and even refrigerators.

The advertising front also went through radical changes during the process (largely influenced by the State) in which Brazilian television became more and more involved with national interests, capital and culture. With the arrival of the military in power foreign corporations increased investments in the country and television was the medium wherein they advertised their products. In 1967, companies such as Volkswagen, Gillette, Gessy Lever, Nestlé, Coca Cola and Colgate Palmolive were among the major advertisers in the country (Mattos, 1982). In the early periods of TV, advertising agencies, mostly American, exerted direct influence on programming following a pattern already common in the U.S. Agencies such as Mc Ann Erickson took care of the entire process of producing a program for television, and then advertised consumer products according to the audience targeted. However, this structure started to change in the period post-1964, as a result of regulations and protective policies issued by the military regime which made foreign influence less dominant in the cultural industries. Mattos observes that seven out of the ten largest advertising agencies in the country are Brazilian, "thanks to a government policy of granting advertising accounts only to national agencies" (Mattos, 1984 :210 cited in Vink, 1988). The State remains today one of the most important advertisers in the country.

It is clear up to this point the enormous influence of the State on the development of television in Brazil, by means of creating the necessary technological and economic conditions in which commercial television could be built. However, the most direct influence did not take place until 1970, when president Médici called for higher quality in programming. As

discussed early, television arrived in Brazil in the 1950s not as a massive medium but as the newest electronic device to entertain the elites. As a result, programming was meant to satisfy the tastes and needs of a limited upper-class audience. With the changes brought about by the political and economic "new order" of the military regime, television stations proliferated throughout the country and the audience grew in size and diversity. Television programs had to be popularized in the late sixties in order to reach the lower strata of the population. Globo Network entered the scene in this period and followed the pattern of "popular" shows. "Popular" here referred to the language, ethics and religiosity of the lower classes of Brazilian society. As described by Inimá Simões, these popular shows did not have a defined profile and their ensemble consisted of :

a consolatory system, which offers justice for retail, distributes prizes, locates lost relatives, matches couples for marriage, judges fights among neighbors, something similar to a "problem-solving television" (Costa, Simões et al., 1986:79)⁹

This trend was launched by Globo Network as a strategy to attract bigger audiences, but it was readily followed by the leading stations of the time (TV Tupi and TV Record). In 1968 Globo was airing shows such as "Marriage on TV" and "SOS Love", which explored all sides of romance by exposing failed relationships and matching up new ones. "The Man in White Shoes" was a talk show exploring the darkest side of prostitution, crime and homosexuality, everything mediated by an anonymous host who never showed his face, only his white shoes. Muniz Sodré (1972) says that he once organized a "round table of beggars". The Rio de Janeiro based TV Record, prestigious for its musical festivals, followed with "Who is Afraid of the

Truth", in which known artists were paid to confess their moral and sexual deviations and then were judged by an studio audience. TV Tupi's hit of this kind was J.Silvestre's (one of the leading TV hosts) "Sunday of Truth", where several dramas of pain and despair were presented and the most sordid story would gain a prize in money ¹⁰. Many of these programs were live shows and usually included a studio audience, although audience participation was not common. Muniz Sodré argues that the *ethos* of live shows on Brazilian television refers to the concept of grotesque. For him, grotesque is a state of consciousness essentially critical, something like an accusing look that penetrates the structures until the point of revealing the toughness in them. It is the real, with a distorted face. As such, the "aesthetic of grotesque" in artistic works, for example, is potentially capable of demolishing myths. However, Sodré argues that the grotesque on these TV shows appears as pure bad-taste and that the critical instance is annulled as the show's host contextualizes the grotesque (the ugly, the physically deformed, the marginal) as being the "Other", who is there to be looked at and for the sake of exoticism (Sodré, 1972).

Considering the impact these programs were having on the ensemble of television programming, combined with the violent content of imported American serials, the government felt television was not contributing to the efforts to make Brazil culturally modern. In 1970, President Médici passed a decree prohibiting all content considered as "offensive to morals or good customs" (Mattos, 1982:69). Mattos also notes that from then on the State intervened directly and indirectly in television content to the point that official speeches often reverberated those of radical critics and educators against the presence of U.S. imports:

.. Commercial TV imposes upon children and youth a kind of culture that has nothing to do with Brazilian culture. . . Instead of acting as a factor of creation and diffusion of Brazilian culture, TV is playing the role of a privileged medium of cultural import, and is denaturing Brazilian creativity. (speech by Minister of Communications, Quandt de Oliveira, in 1974) (Mattos, 1982 :74)

The concern of the State with television programming was one factor influencing the "Brazilianization" of programming. In addition to this, national productions increasingly seemed to be more attractive to the audience. Research done by J. Straubhaar on the decline of American influence on Brazilian TV shows that, by the early 70s, nationally produced comedy and music shows, and telenovelas, achieved higher audience ratings on prime time, thus influencing programmers to increase local productions (Straubhaar, 1984).

The role of the military State in the history of Brazilian television was a major one. Indirectly, the economic and political conjectures built by the regime post-1964 made possible the rise of commercial television based upon advertising revenues. The concomitant trends of urbanization and industrialization created both an audience for the urban-based television culture and a mass of consumers for the advertisers' goods. In addition, the development of telecommunications for the purpose of "national integration" and the State regulatory policies in the field of mass communication came to benefit a television industry in transition from local stations to network-type organizations. As Mattos' study shows, the fast growth of television in Brazil occurred exactly in the same period of the military rule, from 1964 to 1984, and there is nothing accidental about this. Television, a far-reaching medium with a technological aura, was seen as an instrument in the service of a technocratic ideology that, for better or for worse, aspired to Brazil a

state of *progress* already available elsewhere. From this, it is not too difficult to reach the conclusion that, in Emile McAnany's words, "the military government of Brazil was a nationalist, capitalist movement which has succeeded in showing how self-reliance can overcome the threats of what some have called the chronic dependency state of Latin America, both economically and culturally" (McAnany in Mattos, 1982 VII). However, the authoritarian nature of the military State and the repressive apparatus it mobilized in name of "nationalistic" goals, make one question the worthiness of its achievements. There was a belief, which television helped to create, that industrialization and economic boom would be a quick way out of underdevelopment. Brazil of the present offers many indications that the military project has failed, that the economic miracle cost an almost inpayable foreign debt, and that fast urbanization ended up creating human "poverty belts" around major cities. It is out of the scope of this paper to discuss the losses and gains from the military regime, but it had a fundamental, and in many ways positive, sway in making television programming look "typically Brazilian in treatment, theme and style" ¹¹. Television is the most influential of the cultural industries in a country wherein political institutions are distrusted, democracy is fragile and the national economy lives under constant threat of wrecking. To uphold a system that is self-reliant in the creation and distribution of visual material destined to a "nationally-constructed" audience means, at least, to be culturally and economically alive. It would be an error of mastodonic proportions to minimize the presence and influence of foreign mass culture informing and transforming the Brazilian cultural scene, but it would be also rather inaccurate, and definitely not wise, to overlook the advantageous state of,

figuratively speaking, uttering one's language, tasting one's flavors, dancing one's rhythms and living up to one's own history.

The Growth of Globo Network

The history of Brazilian television after 1964 is largely the history of Globo itself. While TV Tupi of Chateaubriand's group, the leading station until the mid-sixties, maintained a centralized and personal kind of administration, Globo was created following modern management techniques inspired by the U.S. commercial networks. This meant long-term budget planning, up-to-date television equipment, programming based on audience research and marketing strategies. By the late sixties Globo had become a national network (which was facilitated by the telecommunication infrastructure provided by the State), and was able to sell advertising on a national basis. The network soon took the leadership in audience ratings thanks to its popular programming comprised of variety shows and locally produced telenovelas.

Perhaps because Globo's growth has become out of proportion for a Brazilian enterprise, critics every so often like to "explain" it by relating it to a controversial episode in the network's history. In 1962, Roberto Marinho, owner of a major newspaper ("O Globo") and of several radio stations, signed a cooperation agreement with the American media group **Time-Life** for technical assistance on matters of television broadcasting. In 1965 Marinho inaugurated Globo TV studios in Rio de Janeiro with financial backing and technical assistance from Time-Life Corporation, which was to receive 30% of Globo's future profits (Kehl, 1986). However, Brazilian legislation clearly

prohibited (as it still does) the participation of foreign capital in communication enterprises. Under pressure coming from Globo's rivals, the government called for a Parliamentary Inquiry Commission which declared the Globo/Time-Life agreement unconstitutional and Globo had to dismiss the contract in 1969. Globo's owner's friendly relationship to the military government kept the illegal contract from coming to public attention. As a result, what could have easily become the "Globo/Time-Life scandal" has become instead an ambiguous episode never totally clarified. Nonetheless, taken from what television critics have written, Time-Life invested six million dollars in Globo TV which, because of government intervention, was forced out of the deal and returned the interest-free capital invested. According to Straubhaar, "Time-Life left Brazil in 1971 feeling as though it had been exploited for providing free capital with no gain in return" (Straubhaar, 1984:236). Globo TV, in turn, gained technical and management know-how. Most critics seem to agree that the major influence of Time-Life was to introduce the American pattern of commercial television, which Globo adapted accordingly to the realities of the television market in Brazil. As a result, it can be inferred that the American influence on Brazilian television affected the organizational instance to a greater extent than programming patterns. Under the circumstances stressed previously, specially the technical infrastructure put in place by the state and the short-term help from Time-Life, Globo became one example of an efficiently-ran commercial enterprise in a 'modern' Brazil, while the other stations did not develop in a similar way. TV Tupi failed to adapt to the network system and was closed for bankruptcy in 1980 (Tupi's concession was split between SBT and Manchete in 1981; these two networks compete today for the number two spot in the television market). TV Excelsior, once a supporter of

president João Goulart's liberal administration, had its licence canceled in 1969 by the military for political reasons (Costa, Simões and Kehl, 1986). Globo Network had the highest indices of growth (ratings, advertising and television production) during the military regime, and it readily adapted its programming to meet the 'high quality' standards desired by the State. A former director of Globo's serials and telenovelas describes the alliance of interests which resulted in Globo's virtual monopoly of the television scene throughout the 70s and 80s:

A nice marriage happened between Globo and the image of a 'Great Brazil'. Globo became the representative of the ideals and dreams of the miracle, of the developmental pride, of the glamour, over and above the crises of the regime, over the ups and downs of the military system during these 15 years. Globo became a bastion of the middle class, floating above reality and selling to the viewer a pretty Brazil, well-succeeded, a Brazil of the miracle. It was affinity, it was not a Machiavellian plan put forth by someone. Globo is, without any doubt, the best-shaped and finest product of the dictatorship. Globo made concrete an abstraction: Order and Progress. (quoted in Carvalho, Kehl and Ribeiro, 1979 : 100)

The step taken to ameliorate the caliber of programming came with the concept 'Globo Pattern of Quality', which has dominated the network's programs ever since 1973 with the arrival of color TV. The 'Globo Pattern of Quality' also signified the 'modernization' of television visual aesthetics, which started to be dictated by Globo. In practice, it means "clean" images, modern settings and beautiful landscapes and people. Maria Rita Kehl, a sharp critic of Globo, gives the following assessment of it:

The electronic visual opulence created by the station contributed to erasing from the Brazilian *imaginary* the idea of misery and of

economic and cultural backwardness, and this glamorized image, luxurious or, at least, antiseptic (when you must show poverty, then better disinfect it: instead of miserable classes, a 'humble but decent' people, not to shock anyone) dominated the visual language of all sectors of cultural and artistic production aimed at the large public. (Kehl, 1979: 12)

Kehl criticizes Globo for not showing the profound contradictions brought by capitalist expansion, scenes such as a beggar picking food from trash cans and carrying it inside a boutique's bag, or television sets inside impoverished slum-homes, the ultimate "aesthetic of hunger" that the 'Tropicalist Movement' in music had exposed and played upon (Kehl, 1979). In the literature about Brazilian television Globo is essentially seen as the ultimate example of a modern enterprise idealized by the military regime, and its programs were reflecting nothing else but the modernizing trends being imposed on society (Caparelli, 1982, Carvalho, Kehl et al, 1979, Kehl, 1986; Ortiz, Borelli et al., 1988). The critique of 'modernization' in Brazilian popular culture, as in other South American sites, has replaced, at in least in part, the once dominant approach of 'cultural imperialism' in Latin American communication research. However, both streams seem to represent a one-sided positioning by giving attention almost exclusively to the economic effects of commercial television, leaving the realm of production and consumption of symbolic goods relatively unexplored

Television, modernization and consumerism

In the film **Bye Bye Brasil** (Brazil, 1980) a group of popular entertainers drives through small villages of northern Brazil, where its circus-like show used to be the greatest attraction. Astonished and disappointed, they gradually start to understand that great changes have taken their public away. Instead of the usual welcoming audience, what they see is a landscape dominated by hundreds of "fishbones" (television antennas) and local people hypnotized by the small screen. Poor peasants lured by the disco beat of the telenovela *Dancin' Days* and Amazon Indians carrying pocket radios and desiring to fly in an airplane are among the scenes of this new landscape. At a first glance, **Bye Bye Brasil** seems to be a forceful criticism of the destructive effects television and its commercial logic have had on Brazilian folk culture. However, in its radical and stereotyped portrait of a culture going through a (supposedly harmful) process of modernization, it soundly reverberates the thesis of 'cultural domination' wherein *imposed* trends violate and weaken a certain *purity* attached to all native cultures. In the film, as in television criticism, television remains central to the question of cultural transformations provoked by economic changes:

Regional cultures lose out in the face of the massive penetration of television images as the standards of powerful commercial television networks (especially TV Globo), geared largely toward the urban audiences of the south, are imposed upon Brazilians throughout the country, with no reciprocity possible. (Johnson, 1984:125)

One message of **Bye Bye Brasil** is that television has caused the destruction of folk cultures and cultural diversity, imposing upon impoverished rural populations the language, fashions and consumer culture of urban Rio de Janeiro. It is the modern (and often foreign) element simply and unproblematically conquering authentic, local cultures which remain powerless to face the 'invader'. It is interesting to note that the show of the "Caravana Rolidei" in the film also "represents an urban phenomenon trying to impose itself on the rural population" (Lopez, 1985). The 'foreign' element is clearly present in the show performed by the popular artists, when the magician "Lord Cigano" makes snow falls in the middle of *sertão* (the hottest and driest region of Brazil). However, this seems to be all right because is not mediated by technology, but performed live by the artist, while the disco dance craze proposed by the telenovela poses a *problem* because it is mediated by technical apparatus not available and not understood by the rural peasants. The problem is the medium, massive and unbeatable in its attractiveness. Television is often placed at the center of cultural processes allowing the replacement of an authentic and pure culture by a standardized and ephemeral "other", which is how television culture is perceived by the 'cultural domination' (on an international and national basis) approach.¹²

The general argument of **Bye Bye Brasil** not only articulates a positioning also found in the literature on television and modernization, but it reveals a serious contempt some Brazilian filmmakers developed for television as a mass medium. One can speculate that such discontent stems from the following reasons. Firstly, ever since the 1970s Brazilian television's amazing growth has lured the public away from the national cinema since television started to air quality programming and employ the best artistic talents hitherto only seen in the cinema. Secondly, the glamor

and cleanness characteristic of Globo's "pattern of quality" was popularizing a visual aesthetic which was in clear opposition to that of a whole generation of filmmakers. Glauber Rocha fathered the 'Cinema Novo' movement based on the principle that films should show the *real* face of Brazilian society, i.e., its ultimate condition as an oppressed and colonized people (oppressed by authoritarian political regimes and colonized by European and American cultures). This current informed the cinematic work of influential directors throughout the seventies, among them **Bye Bye Brasil**'s director Carlos Diegues, for whom the cultural 'modernization' represented by television was a hard one to swallow.

The 'modernization tale' on the popular culture of developing countries has been an issue for quite a number of cultural critics. The works outlined below are representative of this current, which has provided valuable and intelligent analyses on this topic. Michèle Mattelart (1986) frames her analysis of women's magazines according to the 'ideology of modernity' they put forward, which, in the context of popular magazines, **"helped both to disseminate a notion of change and to orientate the development of women in a direction compatible with the performance of their established social role as wife and mother"** (p.26). Jean Franco (1986) makes an argument according to which Mexican weekly comic strip books seek to incorporate readers (especially females) into the logics of an international division of labor. The narratives attempt to propagate a (modern) work ethic that contradicts traditional cultural values of Mexican society. Machismo and superstition, thus, are discredited because they preclude women from becoming as productive as men in the work force. Similarly, a study by Cornelia and Jan Butler Flora (1978) on Latin American photonovels shows that they focus on the integration of

women into the labor force and into consumer culture. Maria Rita Kehl (1979) asserts that Brazilian telenovelas of the 1970s evoked a central theme: the urbanization and modernization of Brazilian society. And Sérgio Caparelli (1982) argues that the role of telenovelas was to attract mass audiences and that television served to integrate different sectors of the population into the market rules of the international capitalist system. These studies document and discuss how popular culture in the mass media functions to propagate and popularize notions of cultural and economic 'modernity', and how this was related to capitalist diffusion in the countries concerned. They are also examples of critical communication research in Latin America, and must be acknowledged for breaking with empiricist models predominant in the imperialism/dependency literature (like, for instance, the Unesco-sponsored studies about the flow of television programs). This type of analysis has contributed valuable historical and theoretical accounts about communication and culture in Latin American contexts. The writings of Kehl and Caparelli about Brazilian television are specially important, and have been used here as sources for data and explanations. However, in focusing almost exclusively on the ideological effects due to television's commercial operation, they tend to overlook the relevance of other elements constituting the televisual apparatus, like the relationship of programming to national culture, to mention one. In addition to help promoting a mentality of acceptance for capitalist relations, commercial television in Brazil also developed a successful pattern of local production identified with Brazilian culture. There is something about Globo's programs, for instance, that makes them more attractive to Brazilians than fine products from the mecca of television production- the US based networks. The complex web of events enabling this situation has not been so

forcefully investigated by Brazilian television critics as has the capitalist logic of television operation. The overall leftist orientation of many texts about Brazilian television provides for the same kind of shortcomings identified in orthodox Marxist analyses of the mass media:

Studies about Latin America from this perspective view the audiences only as markets and the broadcast industry's purpose only as profit and fail to account for the existing complex relationships (De Lima, 1988 :109)

It is interesting to observe that in the Brazilian academic literature, core books about television (Caparelli, 1982; Carvalho, Kehl et al., 1979; Costa, Simões et al., 1986; Ortiz, Borelli et al., 1988; Pereira and Miranda, 1983, Sodré, 1972; Sodré, 1984; Pignatari, 1984) tend to be either very critical of the role of television or excessively descriptive of its programs and phases. An exception here is Muniz Sodré's (1972) analytical account of the "grotesque" as an aesthetic category useful to contextualize a certain period of Brazilian television. Arguments like those of Caparelli and Kehl, for example, frame television almost exclusively in terms of its role in diffusing and reinforcing the ideology of the bloc in power. Maria Rita Kehl asserts that Globo's drama reflected modernization trends. She argues that telenovelas of the 1970s served to propagate and enshrine the necessary values of a 'modern nation': social mobility, individualism, consumerism and homogenization of language and culture (Kehl, 1979, 1986). For Kehl, the *problem* of television lies in its construction of the modern individual by demobilizing his/her traditional values and making "happiness" conditional on the purchase of manufactured products and services. She is highly dismissive of television for its effects in terms of the creation of social

distortions, such as a homeless kid saving up to buy a truck toy made in U.S.A. (the "false needs" thesis), which are ultimately the distortions of capitalism itself. This is not to challenge the validity of Kehl's claim, but to argue that this approach is insufficient to assess Brazilian television's cultural production. Television's promotion of consumption is inevitable and undeniable, and it happens more or less the same way in every capitalist economy in the western hemisphere. What is questionable in assessments such as this is the one-sided, unilateral, biased positioning, almost entirely dismissing the entertainment function of television viewing in Brazil, or television's appropriation of leftwing ideas and personalities, or Globo's investment in local production rather than U.S. imports. These are true "blind spots" in Brazilian television criticism. After all, Globo TV became the leading network of a television market that is technically efficient and rather unique in creative patterns. Furthermore, the qualitative and quantitative growth of Brazilian television, with a history of decrease in foreign imports and increase in local production geared to national culture, is rare considering all the adverse conditions represented by economic and political instability common in developing countries, and Brazil is no exception on these matters. Not to mention that the rapid growth of the television industry stimulated growth in related fields, specially in the advertising and record industries.

Even at the risk of being too generic, I bring this up in order to suggest that Brazilian television criticism suffers from a chronic economic reductionism which has held critics from giving thorough assessments of the vast cultural territory comprised within Brazilian television. It is somewhat troubling to realize that one of the richest and most creative television systems in the world gets so poorly evaluated by those who seem closer to

getting a fine picture of it. In addition, Brazilian critics also fail to explain one fundamental feature of television in Brazil: its overwhelming popularity. Questions concerning reception, pleasure and empowerment in television viewing do not get discussed. When millions of people, a large portion of a whole population, spend serious time watching television programs of their choice, it is indeed awkward for intellectuals, usually guided by leftist ideologies concerned with the collective's welfare, to sustain theories of alienation and domination that give little credit to the people's ability to discern on matters of their lives.

Another example of this position is found in Michèle Mattelart's critique of Latin American pop culture aimed at women. After extensively describing the "alienating quality of the products of the cultural industries", and affirming that serialized drama such as soap operas tend to limit women's access to the time of history and action, and that by playing with a 'female subjective time' the programs confine women within domesticity by rewarding them with a secure repetition, she gets close to declaring viewers mentally ill:

But what continues to pose a problem (...) is the fascination these products still exercise over spectators (of either sex) who are perfectly capable of giving an acute analysis of the serials' alienating characteristics. What collective masochism, what suicidal group-attitude can explain this fascination? (Mattelart, 1982 72)

Telenovelas are often seen as being the foremost televisual narrative devoted to displaying modernity in all its symbolic manifestations. Not only their articulation of aesthetically modern settings and situations but also the dominant theme of upward mobility represent all together the

'modernization tale' on television. At the same time it is also true that narrative structure, themes, and humor are articulated around a cultural collective memory based upon oral traditions and experiences specific to the Brazilian cultures. This seems to be the key to Globo's amazing popularity among all spheres of the social strata. And that is why economic reductionist accounts are not so useful to explaining the success of a television apparatus whose effectiveness reaches far beyond questions of pure economic nature. Brazilian critics tend to put too much focus on television's role in advertising consumerism, a tendency that has kept many of them from giving a fair picture of the television experience as a whole, in which programming is an important aspect. The difficulty of coming to terms with the private ownership pattern and commercial nature of the Brazilian television industry still poses a problem since it confines criticism within Althusserian views of 'ideological apparatus' in service of a dominant ideology. It is important that television criticism examines more carefully the cultural product of Brazilian television. The theoretical positioning of popular culture as a site wherein cultural struggles take place, thus problematizing processes of domination, is of great relevance to such a task. Cultural hegemony is negotiated, popular television is one site wherein this negotiation may take place, and it is not ruled out that such negotiations might be pleasurable ones.

Globo TV and Hegemony

As a cultural industry, television exists as an economic institution and as producer of symbolic meanings, so that a thorough comprehension of its logics must, at least, recognize the complex interplay of factors involved in the television experience. Television has become indeed a very complex industry under capitalist economies. On the one hand, there is the concrete economic base in which television operates: it is a business funded by advertising, so that the starting point is to create attractions capable of holding audiences, whose viewing time is what is "sold" to advertisers. The more viewers a station has, the more advertisers will buy time to display products and services. The programs, as a result, must satisfy in one way or another the audience's expectations. In addition, commercial television in North and South America is primarily an entertainment medium. This is evident even in the way the news is presented. Specially in the high-tech reality of American private networks, facts are selected and presented in a certain manner, e.g., news items are edited short for it is assumed that viewers want fast and easy information. Sound effects, statistics, neat images, computer graphics, meteorological maps and reliable 'faces' are combined together in a journalistic show aimed not only at informing, but at conquering as well the viewer's attention with all these 'side shows'.

If this works for the news, prime time hours, the peak viewing time, is marked by even greater efforts on the part of broadcasters to reach out for the largest possible audience. Prime time entertainment is crucial to the smooth running of a privately-operated television system. Television producers find source material in the interplay of forces in society. In order to be successful, programs must 'ring a bell' in the viewer's mind, they must

speak to the emotions, to the imaginary, and to the history of audiences. Television is profoundly embedded in concrete cultural systems. It is clear, therefore, that television is both "an industrial process and a cultural process" (Meehan, 1986). To posit the discussion in the field of research, it seems logical to accept that

... for a holistic understanding of television, a political economist can not afford to lose sight of the cultural dynamics of television - just as the culturalist can not afford to overlook the economic base upon which televisual representations are constructed (Meehan, 1986 .455)

This discussion intends to follow up the point made in the previous section, in which the modernization literature is framed as reductionist precisely for not giving a fair account of the cultural dynamics at work in a televisual system. There are so many forces involved in the construction and consumption of meanings in the form of television programs, that explaining contemporary television through theories of ideological domination is to limit the television apparatus to its economic and ideological effects. In this context, other strategies were needed to provide more coherent and consistent analysis of television and popular culture in industrialized societies. It is here that the concept of hegemony appears most useful, precisely because the concept comprises a theory of cultural domination more subtle and more flexible to the continuous shifts in interests and tolerances by the structures in power. Most important, though, is that the negotiations involved in hegemony do not exclude the possibility for moments of resistance and opposition to the ruling ideology

'Ideological hegemony' is a Marxist concept which was defined by Marx himself as being the ability of a ruling class "to represent its interests as the common interest of all members of society, put in an ideal form: it will give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones" (quoted in Lazere, 1987 :17). The current use of the term 'hegemony' in critical theory, though, is largely due to Antonio Gramsci's articulation of it as opposed to 'coercion' in processes of ideological domination (Gitlin, 1982). According to Gitlin, the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci developed the notion of hegemony when looking for answers to the failure of working-class movements and the rise of Fascism in Italy in the 1930s. He became suspicious of the working class' inability to undertake revolutionary action and tried to explain it with the concept of hegemony: the peaceful attempt of dominant groups to inscribe its ideology into the common sense and lifestyles of the population, thus naturally winning its acquiescence. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who has drawn largely upon Gramsci's notion of hegemony in his writings on the ideological effects of the media, defines it in the following terms:

'Hegemony' is in operation when the dominant class fractions not only dominate but *direct* - lead: when they not only possess the power to coerce but actively organize so as to command and win the consent of the subordinated classes to their continuing sway. 'Hegemony' thus depends on a combination of force and consent. (...) Hegemony is accomplished through the agencies of the superstructure - the family, education system, the church, the media and cultural institutions, as well as the coercive side of the state - the law, police, the army, which *also*, in part, 'work through ideology'. It is crucial to the concept that hegemony is not a 'given' and permanent state of affairs, but has to be actively won and *secured*: it can also be lost. (Hall, 1977 :332,333)

In accordance with Hall's grasp of hegemony, a number of contemporary leftist critics no longer subscribe to the idea of monolithic structures of the state and the media flooding the social formation with bourgeois thoughts and beliefs. In fact, a substantial body of work is devoted to pointing out the existence of progressive political content and liberal ideologies in the mass media (specially film and television), as well as the media potential to generate anti-hegemonic messages (Lazere, 1987)

Hegemony operates through Globo Network's programming in a variety of ways. Firstly, it is important to stress that since the early seventies, Globo has held a monopoly over the Brazilian television scene, which has made the network one powerful influence on Brazilian public life. Globo represents an interesting case because it shows the extent to which a single media group can inform and determine social trends in a national context. Venicio de Lima (1988) states that Globo is "one of the most powerful political and ideological forces, central to constructing and maintaining the hegemony of the Brazilian ruling bloc" (p 115). De Lima calls attention to Globo's owner's attitude regarding the role of his media conglomerate:

Roberto Marinho behaves as if his media empire has a particular "public mission", and he sees himself as the self-appointed interpreter of Brazilian needs and aspirations, judging day-by-day what is good and bad for the country. (De Lima, 1988 :115)

One study done by De Lima identifies three events in which Globo TV deliberately manipulated journalistic coverage in favor of its own political interests. During the 1982 elections for governor of Rio de Janeiro state, Globo aired false information concerning the imminent victory of the

Socialist candidate Leonel Brizola; distorted information was aired on the occasion of the first major oil refinery (controlled by the Federal government) workers' strike in 1983; and Globo's newscasts suppressed information during the massive public campaign for direct presidential elections in 1984 (De Lima, 1988). Regarding the first example, it is openly known that Roberto Marinho sees the politician Leonel Brizola as a personal enemy. In an interview with *The New York Times*, Marinho is quoted as saying that Brizola "transformed the marvelous city that is Rio de Janeiro into a patio of beggars and peddlers. I came to consider Mr. Brizola harmful and dangerous and I fought" (De Lima, 1988). In the other two events, the distorted coverage may have something to do with the fact that Roberto Marinho's positions on political matters tend to agree with those of the Federal government, which explains the news favoring the government side on the event of the worker's strike and the government position opposing direct elections to elect the first civilian president after 20 years of military rule. However, the political ties between Globo and the government are not so tight as it may appear, and the network has changed positions to adapt to developments on the political scene. For example, in 1983 Globo's owner told president-General João Figueiredo that he was not going to support the government's candidate for the coming presidential election. Globo chose to support the then vice-president Aureliano Chaves, a decision that was changed later in 1984 as segments of the economic elite joined the national campaign for direct elections. Under the new circumstances, Globo could no longer ignore the power of the opposition and the popular demand for direct elections, starting to give fair coverage for the huge rallies going on in several cities. Despite the national mobilization for direct elections, the law regulating it was not approved by the Congress. The first civilian president

after 1961 was to be elected by members of the Congress and the Senate. In this election, Globo supported Tancredo Neves, candidate of the opposition coalition, who defeated the government's candidate. By changing positions in order to accommodate the emerging forces in the political scene, Globo maintained its hegemonic position by actively taking part in the new articulations of the group in power (De Lima, 1988). In the presidential elections of 1989, Globo's extensive coverage of the campaign of liberal rightist Fernando Collor de Melo is seen by many analysts as being decisive for Collor's close victory over the union leader Luis Ignácio Lula da Silva. Collor de Melo was the unknown governor of the inexpressive state of Alagoas (population of 2.5 million) until Globo's sympathetic coverage helped to construct his image as an youthful, active, and audacious politician determined to fight against corruption and inefficiency in the public sector. Without backing from any established political party and virtually no support in the Congress, Globo's marketing of Collor had a pivotal role in getting him elected president of Brazil with 35 million votes.

On the entertainment front hegemonic processes are also identifiable, although they appear in a less direct form. Most of the dramatic content produced by Globo TV, which as discussed previously is not interested in the spectacle of poverty, constructs a fictional individual who is perfectly integrated into a modern society. The average character, male or female, is granted a certain cultural and social competency translated into having a job, family, friends and, often, a well-equipped home. As Todd Gitlin has observed in relation to American television, "living rooms and kitchens usually display the standard package of consumer goods" (Gitlin, 1982). The omnipresent desire for upward social mobility may be 'read' as reflecting the concrete need of capitalism that individuals must have the means to

purchase goods. Unlike the American soap operas, by the way, money is an important subject in Brazilian telenovelas. Characters are very much defined by their social class and economic situation; financial problems get discussed in a realistic fashion, often with allusions to 'the difficult times the country is facing'.

The numbers of leadership

To put Globo's hegemony in better perspective, it is important to clarify the size of the Globo media empire, since its leadership among the cultural industries has not yet been seriously threatened. The television network is the major asset of the largest communications conglomerate in Latin America. Globo Network comprises seven fully-owned stations, six repeating stations and 36 affiliates across Brazil, covering 98% of all Brazilian cities with a potential audience of 110 million (De Lima, 1988; Marques de Melo, 1988). Roberto Marinho's media empire also includes the national daily newspaper "O Globo", thirty radio stations AM and FM, a video division (Globo Video), an advertising production house (Globotec), and the record label **Som Livre** which releases telenovela's soundtracks in records and cassettes¹³. Globo's publishing company - "Rio Gráfica" - controls 12% of the production of magazines and books, and the Roberto Marinho Foundation is a non-profit organization founded to promote and finance projects of public education (Vink, 1988). In 1985 Marinho entered the European television market with the purchase of Tele Monte Carlo (TMC), whose daily broadcasting of popular Brazilian programming to Italian audiences upset Italy's most potent private broadcaster Silvio Berlusconi. Press reports have

covered Globo's involvements outside the field of mass communication, such as transports, engineering, financial markets, and electronic equipment

In this context, Roberto Marinho seems to hold more power than any other Brazilian personality or institution. Globo's power to influence life in Brazil goes as far as getting the president of its choice elected. TV Globo's public campaigns on public health, for example, are most likely to be more effective than those launched by the government itself. There is always the need for a balance between the personal interests of the network's owner and the middle-class reality of Globo's audience, which is precisely what renders the concept of 'hegemony' particularly useful here. In order to attract and hold the attention of viewers, Globo relies on televisual narratives that became the utmost expression of Brazilian popular culture. A biased political view smuggled into the news may find a counter-effect in the form of a progressive message in a prime-time drama series, for example. As certain as Globo's services to the interests of the "structures in dominance" (although they sometimes conflict) is the operation of market forces (e.g. competition and audience expectation) pushing for high caliber television in technical and cultural terms.

This all leads to say that Globo's hegemony is "leaky" (a term framed by Todd Gitlin). However powerful the network is in organizing political and ideological agendas, its political enemies do get elected (Leonel Brizola has been elected twice for governor of Rio de Janeiro state despite the strong opposition from Globo, whose headquarters are located in Rio), voices and subjects left out of Globo do get heard through other media channels, and the capitalist propaganda embodied by Globo's commercial structure did not stop Brazilians from almost electing a socialist, working-class man for

president (the leftist Lula defeated Collor in the major cities of Brazil, including Rio, São Paulo, and Porto Alegre, in the last elections of 1989).

The focus of this critique of hegemony in Globo's programming intends to discuss one aspect of the network success: it has become a hegemonic medium, in the economic, political and cultural sense, thanks to its appropriation of narrative genres and subjects deeply and genuinely related to the popular imaginary.

What maintains Globo in power is the fact of its operations clicking. No amount of political wheedling and jockeying would be of avail if Globo's shows were not the most popular in the country, if it were not a slick, streamlined organization that spends huge sums on research, in keeping up the most modern equipment in Latin America, and identifying its own interests to a great extent with grass roots sentiments in the country. ¹⁴

Television and Popular Aesthetics

It is possible to observe worldwide that the status quo of television in society is closely linked to the popularity of its programming. In other words, television is more influential where programming concerns itself with the tastes of 'the people' and the task of entertaining. In order to subsist as an economic institution dependent on advertising expenditures, television stations are not simply after 'an audience' for its programs, but after 'the largest possible audience'. This large and heterogeneous audience has become a sort of abstract entity with an active role in various discourses concerned with television. Private broadcasters claim they offer 'what the audience wants to see' when justifying superficiality and mediocrity in

programming, while cultural critics bear upon the wit of audiences in exploring the radical potential of popular programs

In attempting to explain the overwhelming presence of melodrama in Latin American, Mexican writer Carlos Monsivais establishes a direct link between the genre and the social reality of audiences:

The national identity is not a theory, but a practice . . . We owe it all to melodrama. The massive catharsis and emotional reliefs it offers to any type of public organize the comprehension of reality. In melodrama we see the merging of the impotency and the heroic aspiration of a collectivity that does not have public exits. (quoted in Mattelart and Mattelart, 1987 :19)

While some writers have regarded melodrama as being the most suitable popular form to express values and practices of the dominant classes (through its representation of a middle class common sense informed by bourgeois ideology), others have aptly pointed out that the development of a genuine Latin American melodrama may represent a cultural statement against political and economic dependence (Lopez, 1985)

The cultural trajectory of the melodrama in Latin America suggests that we must consider modifying our notions of the cultural function of the dominant forces or dominant ideology of popular cultural discourses (. . .) Whereas the "dominant" in the developed world is a system that actively rewrites, incorporates and coopts differences and its own margins, we can argue that at specific moments in Latin America the establishment of dominant media/popular culture forms should be valued as itself constituting a break with cultural imperialism . . . (Lopez, 1985 :13)

The popular culture that came to dominate the television scene in almost all Latin America is best represented by the telenovela. The process through which the telenovela became the most important television/popular culture form in Brazil is self-explanatory if we look at the historical development of the genre and of the television industry itself. In the beginning, the great success obtained by radio soap operas throughout the continent (following American patterns) acted as a persuasive influence on television programmers. In fact, early Brazilian telenovelas were adaptations from Latin American hits on radio. When Globo TV arrived in the scene in 1965 its philosophy regarding management and programming was already different from the existing stations. Put bluntly, Globo launched the basis for commercial television in Brazil. Since the beginning, its strategy has been grounded in a consistent schedule for programming, dividing the day into segments and targeting programs to specific audiences. The station was also a pioneer in audience research at a time when television-making was highly amateurish and programs depended on individual efforts of directors and actors. In this context, telenovelas became increasingly an alternative for in-house production with the advantage of attracting loyal viewership. Many stations throughout Latin America had to fill out many hours of broadcast without really having the funds to do this, and the high costs of purchasing and dubbing U.S. imported show was not a solution. Stations had to find formulas at the same time inexpensive and capable of sustaining audiences and advertising (Lopez, 1985). Telenovelas were viable both economically and culturally, since the creative talent had been developed by radio. In Brazil, Globo's stronger financial situation, partly due to its initial ties with the Time-Life group, started to lure workers from the other stations. Since its early phases, Globo's dramatic production has

been signed by some of the best cultural workers available. Although there was a tendency among them to value theater as being superior to television, working for Globo meant the opportunity to communicate to audiences of thirty million instead of twenty thousands in the theater. In 1977, Dias Gomes, the most successful writer in bringing political content to telenovelas, 'justified' his work on TV as following: "In 68 theater was under strong surveillance; I had two options, I would be either a public servant or I would go for TV. But there is nothing to discuss: if you struggle for a theater for the masses, how to turn down a public of 20 million? Television may be good or not, depending on who makes it, and limitations also exist in the theater" (cited in Kehl, 1979). Playwright Oduvaldo Vianna Filho, a central figure in progressive political theater of the 60s, and author of many Globo' successes, used to say that to refuse to work on television in the 20th century was a sign of dumbness (Kehl, 1979). According to Kehl, progressive cultural workers went to work on television to escape the ostracism of the intellectual leftist movements of the 1960s. It is important to stress that, although having to adapt to the rules of the new medium, theater artists did not lose interest in the social and political agenda of their artistic production. Accounts by telenovela writers indicate, among other things, a concern with the quality of their work and that they are free to create their stories

I am not concerned in achieving success at any price. I have a story to tell and I will tell it as I think I should. I was hired to do this, to do 'my' telenovela, and Globo has up to now respected the agreement. This telenovela will have all the ingredients which formed my texts in the theater. It will have characteristics of a telenovela, but will be my own. I am not running away from what I am in the theater and in the literature. (Jorge de Andrade, 1973, cited in Ortiz, Borelli et al., 1988 :86) ¹⁵

In analyzing the work and press interviews of telenovelas writers, Nico Vink noticed that they worry about the popular audiences, and wish to provide "at least elements of a subversive discourse denouncing situations of domination as oppressive and presenting them as changeable" (Vink, 1988). Todd Gitlin posits cultural practitioners on one side of hegemonic process in television entertainment, sustaining that their views, values and practices do have a role in keeping ideological hegemony flexible (Gitlin, 1987). In this regard, Vink also found that the overwhelming majority of television creative workers in Brazil comes from the working class or lower middle class, and that it is from their class perspective that they approach their work on television. There seems to be space for counter-hegemonic meanings in the field of acting alone. The well-known actor Lima Duarte, for instance, has mastered the interpretation of popular characters - "I want to be the best interpreter of the average Brazilian man, and in my opinion this is the rural type" (quoted in Vink, 1988). His role as "Zeca Diabo" in Dias Gomes' novela *O Bem Amado* is a classical example: the character's rationality grounded in his modest background worked to expose the corruptness and triviality concealed behind the shadows of authority and power. It is known that the way an actor performs a character can affect the way the character will evolve in the story. Some actors take their roles so personally that their interpretation becomes passionate and thus leads to unexpected results. An example of this is found in Manchete's Network telenovela *Pantanal* (1990), which was entirely shot in the swampy Pantanal region and had the preservation of wildlife as a subtext. One secondary character scripted was of an uneducated, naive rural woman, who would 'wake up' and fight sexual oppression when she finds out her husband has cheated on her and has constituted another family in the city. Actress

Angela Leal, cast to play the character, described how she approached it in the following manner: "I will do my best to show that Bruaca has the guts to fight and conquer her space. When I realized I could create an unique character, I got myself focused, I almost went mad I was not doing it for me, but *for all Brazilian women*, and I feel that, specially those of the lower classes, to whom the character speak, are attentive" ¹⁶ Telenovela actors and writers, in particular, are well aware of the political potential of their work in a mass medium like TV. Actors even use their popularity to make critical statements about matters of society and politics. It is common that artists engage directly in political campaigns to support political parties and candidates. The end of 1989 provided a curious scene on national television, a clear example of the contradictions implicated in Globo's hegemony. Brazilian electoral legislation establishes that political parties are entitled to free daily air time on national television in pre-election periods, which has made TV a key instrument in political campaigns, since it is through these programs that the majority of the population gets acquainted with the candidate's ideas and platforms. According to the polls, the first two favorites running for president in 1989 were the liberal rightist Collor de Melo, who had Globo's owner support, and the leftist union leader Lula da Silva, candidate for the Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores). As election day approached and started to look like it would be disputed by these two, it became clearer that Collor was the candidate of the conservative forces (Roberto Marinho included) and Lula of the whole left. Many actors and actresses who were employees of Globo made public their support for Lula and appeared nationally in the Workers Party 'political programs' asking people to vote for him. At the same time, many of them were seen on telenovelas and other programs being aired, and also appeared

in Globo's institutional new year's commercial singing a jingle praising Globo's top leadership in the television market. In accounting for the ideological hegemony at work through Globo, one must, at least, admit the existing tension inscribed in the contradictions between the organization's economic reality and its production of cultural texts. The profile of the "organic intellectuals" of Brazilian television is one active force mediating the hegemonic process. Globo's dissemination of dominant values and practices is less obvious, less smooth and less effective when these 'hegemonic' messages are idealized and manufactured by cultural producers whose professional and political consciousness tends more to the oppositional than to the hegemonic. On the one hand, as a private network Globo stands as the perfect capitalist subject given the commercial nature of its operation and dependence on exchanges of values (good programs value the cost of audiences, and ratings value the cost of advertising time). In this sense, Globo Network represents dominant interests since in western societies there is hardly anything more hegemonic than the tightening of capitalist relations. On the other hand, however, Globo's leadership is ultimately maintained through its programs, which must consent and incorporate the ongoing changes in the social sphere. It is possibly true that Globo's programmers will go as far as they must in handling and pressing for social changes provided that this will keep the system running profitably and Globo's position as the "audience leader". Not only cultural workers want to express ideas and representations of social and cultural relevance, but the philosophy of programming itself is engaged in a constant search for novelty, originality and creativity in television making.

The popular culture of television may represent in a variety of ways practices and meanings from a perspective favorable to the bloc in

power, but it also may advance images and representations which reflect and construct non-hegemonic perceptions of reality. " It is necessary to conceive of these texts of popular culture as possible sites of hegemonic resistance and to rethink the concept of the dominant as a possible vehicle for cultural contestation" (Lopez, 1985 :12).

Chapter Three

The Evolution of a Popular Genre

Telenovelas are Brazil's foremost contemporary form of popular culture and Brazilian television's greatest phenomenon up to the present time. They account for much of television's prime time programming and the viewing of telenovelas has grown stronger ever since their appearance in the early sixties. To watch telenovelas has become such a daily habit for millions of Brazilians regardless of sex, age and social class, that the discursive features surrounding the telenovela text are profoundly incorporated in the social fabric of Brazilian society. The subjects matters and themes articulated on the prime time telenovela, especially during the 1980s, are often turned into media issues, which helps to raise the audience interest in the program as much as it locates television at the center of public life. When a given character gains the audience's sympathy, for example, it is common that people appropriate something of the character into their lives. Be it a slang, a joke, or language mannerisms, it will be spoken by Brazilians from north to south. In sum, telenovelas can exert powerful influences on vocabulary, behavior and consumption habits of the audience

Even though television critics in the Brazilian press like from time to time to declare a 'crisis' in telenovela production, asserting that the genre has outlived its dramatic possibilities, Globo Network has successfully managed to maintain the audience's appetite for telenovelas, surely the most watched programs and unarguably the most influential as well. Audiences

range from fifty to eighty million viewers in prime time. Considering that each telenovela lasts between six to eight months (then a completely new story and cast will follow in the next telenovela), telenovela's writers have particular styles of their own and thus some programs are more successful than others. As for the popularity of telenovelas, it should be understood beyond the quantitative instance, i.e., the estimated number of viewers, although this alone could speak for the popularity if we take the 'popular' here as being 'what is well liked by a large number of people'. However, the popularity of Brazilian telenovelas is better understood if one accounts for the flow of discourse generated by the telenovela narrative, or the effect that the telenovela experience has on the collective. Brazilian anthropologist Ondina Fachel Leal says she became interested in telenovelas as an object of study when she returned to Brazil after living abroad and noticed an excessive use of words and expressions totally unknown to her, all of which were coming from the telenovelas of the time.

George Lipsitz's argument regarding the rise of popular culture in post-war United States as cultural transformations occurring under specific historical conditions appears compatible with a general description of the telenovela experience. Considered in their own context and time, telenovelas also represent **"historically specific elements within commercial culture that allow for the expression of collective popular memory and the reworking of tradition"** (Lipsitz, 1990: 14). What is important in this assessment of popular culture as a force sharpening a 'collective popular memory' is that this possibility is an alternative to the notion of popular forms as conveyors of dominant ideological meanings. Lipsitz's final observations go against the minimizing of popular culture for its

ordinariness, when it may be the very site wherein the most effective changes take place.

By examining the relationship between collective popular memory and commercial culture, we may be on the threshold of a new kind of knowledge, one sensitive to contestations over meaning and capable of teaching us that a sideshow can sometimes be the main event. (Lipsitz, 1990 :20)

In this light, one argument to be made in favor of the telenovela genre is that, as being the 'main show' of Brazilian television and popular culture, it works as mediator of social and cultural transformations by setting trends, generating discourse, and influencing the formation (and transformation) of public opinion about subjects closely connected to the current social reality. That would be the case, for example, of a telenovela shown in 1988 in which the main plot was about white collar crimes, corporate corruption and impunity. Telenovelas, seen this way, are the foremost elements motivating what Lipsitz calls "collective popular memory". It is also very common to include themes connected to folk tales, myths and oral traditions of the Brazilian cultural heritage. One very popular character has been the tale of the werewolf, for example. This way, telenovelas are not confined within boundaries of 'modernity' (with its discourses, landscapes and consumerism fashions), they also function to rearrange and recuperate beliefs and customs belonging to lived cultural experiences.

Given the heterogeneity of the telenovela audience today, raging literally from the illiterate to the intellectual, the programs seem to respond to a variety of desires. These can be in the field of entertainment and pleasure as well as of information and education. By presenting a wide range

of plots and story lines, they simultaneously provide for pure entertainment, practical information, escapist fantasy, social criticism, vaudeville, comedy, and drama, depending on the situation from which they are seen or on the cultural capital of the receiver.

When referring to the popularity of *Dallas* in England, Stuart Hall talks about a 'secondary type of popularity' to describe the moment "**when people started using categories from it to help interpret their experiences**" (Hall cited in Ang, 1982: 5). The type of popularity acquired by telenovelas as a genre corresponds to this 'secondary type' described above. Particularly true for the audiences of the lower social classes, telenovela viewing is a daily activity not only helping people to interpret their experiences but also directly determining social norms and family relations. Household chores are made before or after the 'telenovela hour', visits are not welcomed during this time, and access to seats near the TV set respects a certain family hierarchy, i.e., the oldest persons and guests get the best seats while children seat on the floor (Barrios, 1988, Leal, 1986).

Even if Brazilian telenovelas find their origins in the Latin American telenovelas, many stylistic and thematic transformations have come about setting them apart. Brazilian telenovelas evolved in many different directions, especially regarding content, from its Spanish-speaking counterparts. Telenovelas on Brazilian screens, although still named as such, have come to mean something else. A thorough comprehension of this "something else" requires an examination of the telenovela as a television genre. The next section shows how contemporary critical television studies use and discriminate television genres, and seek to define the telenovela genre in comparison to other dramatic genres such as the daytime soap opera and the prime time continuous serials of American network television.

Telenovela as a Television Genre

We have become so naturally accustomed to making sense of literature, films and television by classifying them according to existing categories that nonexistence of classification mechanisms has become simply unconceivable. The practice of defining literary texts according to types and naming them evolved into a theory of genre, which later applied to film and then to television studies (Allen, 1989; Feuer, 1987). Genre studies is a useful framework to study television programs because it allows for the conceptualization of television genres, which do not necessarily correspond to the literary or cinematic genres inspiring them. Melodrama as a cinema genre "associated with the dramas of domesticity, woman, love and sexuality" (Mulvey, 1986:81) gave birth to television genres such as the soap opera and dramatic serials, although the classical melodrama film could hardly be recognized in contemporary television of melodramatic nature. Through a theory of genre it becomes possible to sort out television's own genres. Robert Allen, who wrote a book about the American soap opera, says the following about the *auteur* theory of cinema and genre studies:

[They] are important not only for providing organizational schema for the study of screen narratives, but also for foregrounding popular narrative forms (and in some cases critically despised forms) and making them the object of "serious" scholarly discourse. (Allen, 1989:46)

In the same essay, Allen shows how the term 'soap opera' has been used indiscriminately by critical scholars since its emergence in the late 1970s and early 1980s. 'Soap opera' has been used to name daytime drama

serials (Modleski), British serial drama (Hobson) and prime time serials such as *Dallas* (Ang) ¹⁷ Making the picture even more blurred, Jane Feuer merges daytime soaps with prime time serials by describing them as "television melodrama", while Annette Kuhn argues against the labeling of shows like *Dallas* and *Dynasty* as being 'soap operas' (Allen, 1989) The author wants to reject an indiscriminate use of the term 'soap opera' because, according to him, this will only prolong the usage made by traditional (empirical) mass communication research in the U S , which uses 'soap opera' **"in order to hierarchize media experiences and texts by gender, and having done so to create a large, undifferentiated "other world" to which they (those gendered texts and viewing experiences) could be conveniently consigned"** (Allen, 1989 53) Indeed, Allen's point leads to a crucial question concerning the adequacy of a term like 'soaps' to critical research today If traditional empiricist models' use of the term 'soap opera' has contributed much to debase the programs as belonging to some inferior category, why should contemporary critical writings, most of which carry a feminist agenda, keep using the term indistinctly?

In this regard, one major task of television critical studies has been to articulate the necessary redefinitions and reclassifications of television genres, specially because conditions of production and reception continually change, urging for more accurate accounts As Jane Feuer rightly observes, the programs generically labelled as 'soap operas' have changed considerably over time so that a redefinition of the term itself can no longer be avoided

Originally a derisive term used to condemn other forms of drama as being hopelessly "melodramatic," the term "soap opera" has been refined in a confrontation between such historical examples

as the afternoon serial drama, the prime time serials, and British soap operas. British "soaps," for example, cause us to question the equation of the term soap opera with the mode of melodrama, because their own mode might better be described as "social realism," possessing none of the exaggeration and heightened emotion and gestures of their American cousins. And the middle-class, plodding, woman-centered world of afternoon soaps bears little resemblance to the plutocratic worlds of *Dallas* and *Dynasty* (Feuer, 1987 :115)

As a result, the term soap opera no longer applies to describe the 'continuing serial format' of prime time shows, for example, nor the generic label "melodrama" to every dramatic content on television. On another level, no one is suggesting that scholarly literature on television should agree on static definitions or, worse, that these definitions should conform to the industry's definitions. However, to keep putting everything under the umbrella of 'soap opera' is to take the risk of endorsing the traditional view of soap operas as non-sophisticated narratives aimed at housewives, which is hardly a desirable strategy for those interested in rescuing "women's genres" from the 'back seats' of cultural experiences.

The following classification of some predominant genres on commercial television are offered for the purpose of mapping out the current television scene, they do not intend to dismiss other definitions that might be available. Under the broad category of television drama, it is possible to sort out many different programs. Examples of the classical soap opera (if it is possible to frame it that way) are best found on the afternoon soaps shown daily on American networks and historically aimed at female viewers. Since women account for 80% of its audience (Feuer, 1984), the daytime soap opera stands as the true "gynocentric" genre on television. Situation comedies are another genre highly successful in both daytime and prime

time U.S. television. Sitcoms are half-hour programs shown daily or weekly presenting a definite set of characters living different situations in each episode. Among the various sitcoms one could still differentiate the comic-sitcom (*Golden Girls, Perfect Strangers*) from the family-sitcom (*The Cosby Show, Full House, Family Matters*). The sitcom audience is much wider than that of the soap opera, including children of various ages and men. Prime-time continuous dramatic serial has its staple in the worldwide known *Kluge* and *Dynasty*, both of which have outlived their popularity and have been replaced by other serials. The prime time dramatic serials are usually one hour long, employ better known casts and are granted bigger production budgets. A significant difference between daytime and prime time serials lies in their content, since prime time serials have a "less conservative morality, deal with power and big business, and contain more action" (Feuer, 1984). Their audience is predominantly formed by adults, female and male alike. These programs are the main weapons in the battle for prestige and ratings in which networks are permanently engaged. Some recent examples of fine prime time dramatic serials on American and Canadian commercial networks are, respectively, *Thirtysomething* (ABC) and *ENG* (CTV).

The origins of the dramatic serials and soap operas of U.S. television have been identified in the Hollywood melodrama of the 1950s. The Latin American telenovela finds its remote origins not in the melodrama film but in the literary genre of *feuilleton*, a romantic narrative published daily in European newspapers during the nineteenth century. Speculation about these origins may provide initial clues to assess the existing differences between the telenovela and the soap opera, both serialized televisual fiction of great popular appeal. Soap operas are more restricted to the domain of the home or interior spaces (offices and hospitals) emphasizing the exchange

of ideas and feelings among people related by blood, friendship or love. Tania Modleski even argues that soap operas construct the viewer as "an ideal mother" by, among other things, presenting families menaced by disruption and thus activating responses of tolerance and forgiveness. As for the Hollywood melodrama, it **"drew its source material from unease and contradiction within the very icon of American life, the home, and its sacred figure, the mother"** (Mulvey, 1986:81).

Telenovelas, on the other hand, have (since the early sixties in the case of Brazil) incorporated content of social and political concern and started to explore contemporary problems and conflicts of society. As it is known, the *feuilleton* genre, ever since Eugene Sue and Balzac, has been concerned with the masses and the anxieties inherent in class societies. The ordinary man and his struggles has been a core subject for the nineteenth century *feuilleton*, an influence that is still strongly felt in the contemporary telenovela.

The classical *feuilleton* finds its ultimate representative in Eugène Sue, the French writer who revolutionized the world of popular romances with "Les Mistères de Paris" (1842). The dramas of the working class men, the rude language of sordid taverns and the miserable conditions leading to crime filled up the pages of *Le Journal des Débats*, becoming increasingly popular among the people of Paris (Eco, 1979). In a way, Eugène Sue's stories contributed to changing the status quo of popular romances, hitherto identified with worthless sentimentalism capturing the fantasy of bourgeois women like Madame Bovary in the famous novel by Flaubert. As it is known, his work influenced the emergence of popular movements in France in 1848 (Eco, 1979), and in 1850 Eugène Sue was elected by a majority of

working men to represent the city of Paris in the French Parliament (Mulvey, 1986).

The point in discussing the *feuilleton* as a popular narrative and the work of Eugène Sue as a master of the genre lies in the fact that its influence on the telenovela genre is always noted and widely accepted. Brazilian telenovelas have been described in the press as "electronic *feuilletons*" with a modern twist to the stories and adapted to television's codes. Even though a full explanation of what *feuilleton* means is hardly provided, it is always framed as if it was something of inferior status in relation to other forms of literature on the basis that it was a genre read by the popular classes. The continuous interest of telenovela narratives in class difference, as well as the emphasis on the desire and efforts of individuals to rise upward socially, finds a legitimate beginning in the literary *feuilleton* of the nineteenth century. By highlighting the discursive and political possibilities of the French *feuilleton* in its time, hopefully we open space to allow the telenovela, in its own context and time, similar possibilities.

The most important characteristic of the telenovela allowing for its conceptualization as a television genre different from the soap opera is found in its narrative structure directed towards a closure. The limited length (seven months in average) implies that closure is an important feature activating audience expectation and imagination. In terms of narrative structure, the telenovela is not as open-ended as the soap opera and story-lines develop in a more or less linear way (which does not mean that plots do not tangle and complicate, although this happens on a minor scale if compared to the never-ending daytime soap opera).

Considering all that has been said above about the importance of recognizing genre specifications, and about the influence of *feuilleton* novels

on the telenovela genre, the question now is: what is a telenovela? To begin with, it must be stressed that the word 'telenovela' is not the Portuguese or Spanish translation for 'soap opera' as it is often erroneously assumed. The link between them, at best, is that they are different variations of television serialized drama. Robert Allen (1989) has argued that one problem complicating a thorough definition of 'soap opera' lies in the fact that it "is a transnational and transcultural phenomenon", so that it may signify different things in each national culture. Allen even attempts a curious imaginary correlation with bird experts from different countries talking about different national species; regardless of their differences, they are all "birds". Curious, perhaps, but still a dreadful example because through this metaphor he grants the term 'soap opera' a semantic proportion it does not have. The historical definition of the genre soap opera is excessively marked by the industrial and common sense usage corresponding to the realities of U.S. network television and culture. Therefore, it is misleading to assume that the Latin American telenovela or the *téléroman* of French-Canadian television, for instance, are simply different types of soap operas, but still belonging to the category generally known as 'soap opera'. As stated previously, they may be compared on the grounds of their melodramatic nature and because of similarities such as seriality, but not as being 'national' versions of the soap opera.

The word telenovela has no literal translation in English¹⁸. It exists in both Portuguese and Spanish and it designates television programs of relatively long duration presenting tales of mass appeal using either historical or contemporary settings and plots. Important producers of telenovelas are Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina and Colombia, places where the increase in telenovela production often go hand in hand with a

decrease in importation of foreign television fiction. Speaking of the importance of the melodrama genre for Latin American popular cultures, Ana Lopez makes an interesting observation:

It is ironic that at the moment when the New Latin American Cinema rejected the melodrama as the embodiment of cultural dependency, television used the melodrama in order to establish a solid audience base and as a result, created a nationalistic (or, at least, pan-Latin American) form with which to begin to challenge that very same cultural and economic dependence (Lopez, 1985 :9)

Despite the common role of enhancing local production, and the fact that telenovelas are the most important television output below the equator, the Latin American telenovelas can vary greatly in style and content. Nonetheless, Latin America is considered to be "the supreme territory" for the telenovela genre (Mattelart, 1986), because of both its predominance over television programming and immense audience appeal. As such, the term telenovela seems naturally associated with the oral history and cultural imaginary of Latin American cultures, no matter how broad and differentiated it is. Accounting for the difference of the Brazilian telenovela, for instance, is the peculiar situation of Brazil within the continent itself. Brazil is not only the largest country of South America, but also the only one in which Portuguese is the language spoken. As far as mass culture goes, U.S. products circulate at a much higher proportion than those of neighbouring countries so that Brazilian television airs virtually no programming from other Latin American countries (the need for dubbing from Spanish to Portuguese makes such exchange even harder)¹⁹. Brazilian telenovelas are relatively common (thanks to Globo exports) in the other

Latin American countries while the inverse does not hold true. As a matter of fact, Brazilians are totally unfamiliar with television patterns and stars of neighbouring cultures. Given the very recent turmoil being caused by the exhibition of two Mexican telenovelas by SBT Network, which for the very first time is challenging Globo's prime time leadership, television critics are unanimous in judging the Mexican telenovelas as being of inferior quality, as being anachronistic melodramas of extreme bad taste. The *heroines* of such telenovelas have become the subject of mockery in the press. As for the Brazilian telenovela, its most important features are outlined in the following account by two Brazilian scholars.

[Telenovelas] deviate from the basic melodramatic formula, incorporating elaborate outdoor stagings, up-to-the minute fashions, trends and current events, and modern cinematic techniques. Irony, innuendo and political content are important elements of their texts. In addition, it is important to stress that novelas constitute a genre which employs nationally recognized writers, directors and actors. (Leal and Oliven, 1988 :84)

The distinctions between what is commonly called 'soap opera', with all the 'Americanism' underlying its meaning, and what is known as 'telenovela', with its links to an identifiable cultural and physical space, are outstandingly visible and quite irrefutable. As such, it is important that contemporary critical discourse differentiates the telenovela from the soap opera. It is extremely simplistic and quite inaccurate to regard melodramatic genres on television as a melting pot of soap opera genres. The basic reasons for identifying and labeling soap opera and telenovela as distinct television genres is because they refer to two different kinds of TV programs and because, as research on these genres grow, they should appear more and more contrasted rather than associated with one another.

Telenovela and Soap Opera: locating difference

Dutch anthropologist Nico Vink wrote a pioneer book defending the emancipatory potential of telenovelas for the Brazilian working class. Based upon extensive research, he writes that "soap operas are as different from telenovelas as the U.S.A. is from Brazil" (Vink, 1988). Leaving aside the sociological implications of this observation, it was chosen because it gets to the point quickly and makes it forcefully. Rather than list the similarities and differences between telenovelas and soap operas, what follows is a short discussion of textual and theoretical aspects of both genres intending to clarify as well as to delineate their boundaries.

Soap operas are daytime shows on American commercial networks broadcast from Monday through Friday from noon to the mid-afternoon. The soap opera audience is predominantly formed by housewives, although college and high school students have become loyal viewers over the years as the soaps inserted plots of interest to younger audiences. Although soaps make up an important share of network programming, and also provide guaranteed revenue for the networks, they do not share the status of prime time serials. They cost much less, and their cast is much less known by the general public. Robert Allen is one author affirming that "soap opera viewing still carries a social stigma for many viewers" (Allen, 1989). A soap opera does not have an ending, the stories can go on as long as twenty-eight years (e.g. *Love of Life*). Examples of soap operas that have been around for quite a long time are *Guiding Light*, *General Hospital* and *All my Children* (1970). The daily episodes vary in duration, from 30 minutes to one-hour long. Time for narrative development is a major feature of the

soap opera. As a result, there is an overdose of dialogues for very little action. Tania Modleski observes that soaps rely heavily on the capacity people have to talk about and listen to each other's problems: "there will always be time for a person to consider a remark's ramifications (. . .) action and climaxes are of secondary importance" (Modleski, 1982). What matters is not *what* happens to the characters, but *how* they react to the events in their lives. Characters also talk things over several times among themselves, e.g., Drucilla finally accepts to be the maid of honor in her sister Sofia's wedding, the two of them talk extensively about this, then in another segment Sofia tells her fiancé Nathan how happy she is because Drucilla will be her maid of honor. Two days later (real time) they will still be talking about this, now telling somebody else about Drucilla's decision and the happiness it has brought to her sister Sofia, who is getting ready to marry Nathan, etc and etc.²⁰ Family issues are a must and, as pointed out by Modleski,

Soap operas serve to affirm the primacy of the family, not by presenting an ideal family, but by portraying a family in constant turmoil and appealing to the spectator to be understanding and tolerant of the many evils that go on within a family (Modleski, 1982:268)

The ultimate goal is to achieve harmony and happiness in family life, something that appeals to motherhood, i.e., maternal feelings of understanding and patience are called upon, viewers are asked to accept people's mistakes and handle them with the tenderness believed to be characteristic of mothers. Mothers are indeed a central figure in most soap operas, and the relationship of mother/children, as that of father/son, is

treated as being the most sacred thing on earth. Mothers and fathers have a natural moral authority over their children and 'family unity' is one value continuously endorsed. Heterosexual marriage is another obsession in the lives of soap opera characters, people are either trying to get married or trying to get out of an unsuccessful marriage. As Jane Feuer has put it, "to be happily married on a serial is to be on the periphery of the narrative" (Feuer, 1984), so that there always will be a 'problem' in the way of happy couples.²¹ The world of soap operas is dominated by upper middle class professionals such as business executives, lawyers, doctors (always doctors, a professional laboring at limits of life and death), who live on the edges of personal problems and complications of all the sorts allowed by melodrama. Interior settings are the rule, which is related to the 'low budget' of daytime soap opera in relation to prime time serials. The all-indoor sets also reflect the close relationship of soap operas with domesticity and family. Homes, offices and restaurants or coffee shops are the most common locations. One hardly sees characters interacting in the outside world or doing ordinary things such as driving cars, shopping, or even eating. At best, they are shown sipping coffee or drinks. In the soap opera *The Bold and The Beautiful*, for instance, Jake is a professional tennis teacher in a club but all we get to see is the sweat on his face when the lesson is over and he offers ice-tea to his students at a small corner of what we imagine is the club. The spatial dimension of locations as well as activities implying action are left to the imagination of the viewer. There are identifiable patterns for lighting and set decoration, for example. Living-rooms and bedrooms look alike in all homes because of similar furniture and a subtle, soft light, while offices have a darker tonality, often designed in brown, grey and blue tones. Unlike many sitcoms' homes and rooms, which appear convincingly real, soap opera

settings are unreal and cold. The scenery, the lighting, the disturbing order and cleanliness of things make it difficult to imagine people living in there. The scenery on daytime soap operas, whether intentionally or not, constructs artificial environments inhabited by fellows who are up to either good or bad acts in their search for love, money, heirs, power, marriage or a lost memory. In their excessive emphasis on dialogues, and secondary importance ascribed to images (considering that television is primarily a visual medium), the American soap operas are structurally and narratively strongly attached to the conventions of early radio soap operas.

As we have seen, soap operas are television programs with no definite ending, which allows for many complicated entanglements in which problems are never resolved, they are only replaced by new ones. Dennis Porter (1977) defined the lack of an actual beginning and ending in the soap opera narrative as "an indefinitely expandable middle". Because soap opera emphasizes the personal rather than the public domain by playing on the complex nature of human life, and because it values conversation, interruption and repetition, two influential critical accounts claim that soap opera represents an alternative narrative to mainstream narratives. Robert Allen, for one, asserts that the general codes of the soap opera - community life, commercial breaks, lack of closure, complex network of characters - make the text an over-coded narrative form. His use of reader-oriented criticism leads him to state that.

the soap opera represents an alternative basis for narrative aesthetic pleasure in general - one that values complexity, repetition, and speech over simplicity, telos, and action. A soap opera viewer might find some aspects of a soap silly or uninteresting, but she knows that the nature of narrative engagement to be found in the soap opera is different from that

to be found in any other form of commercial television - perhaps in any other form of narrative (Allen, 1985: 94-95)

Tania Modleski's (1982) analysis of soap operas posits them as an alternative to traditional *male* narratives. Modleski makes an argument positing soap opera as a genuine form of female pleasure because it is closely linked to the rhythms of women working in the home. She considers soap opera as "a unique narrative pleasure" since it incorporates distraction and interruption in the text, something reassuring and pleasurable to female viewers who watch soaps while doing domestic labor. The soap opera constructs its viewer, Modleski argues, as an 'ideal mother' through its reassurance of the centrality of family to a woman's life. Modleski's account might be perceived as a feminist one, since her goals in framing soap opera as a 'feminine narrative' stem from a recognition that dominant literary and mass culture texts are essentially male-centered. A positive outcome of this thesis is that it raises a whole set of questions regarding the relationships among gender, genre and pleasure. As a matter of fact, the interest in soap operas within critical television studies was influenced by the feminist outbreak in film studies (Allen, 1989). There has been a tendency among feminist scholars to assess soap operas in a positive fashion on the grounds of its differences from mainstream (male) narratives as well as on the pleasures women derive from soap opera viewing. However, Modleski's praise of genuine "feminine texts" such as the soap opera also allows for a quite non-feminist interpretation. Considering that the *difference* of soap opera narratives lies in its slow pace, repetition, emphasis on dialogue rather than action, on the private rather than the public spheres of life, to use these codes to justify women's preference for them is somehow supporting the distinction between female and male sexuality in terms of passive/active

roles. In other words, to suggest that women enjoy the eternal and personal world of soaps because they are in tune with female rhythms is to make statements about 'femininity' which feminists would hardly be comfortable with. It is to affirm a troubling situation in which women 'talk' while men 'act'. These questions are complex and complicated because they go back to essential questions surrounding 'womanhood' ever since Freud started to make claims about human sexuality. Are women more "competent readers" (Allen's term) of soap operas because they are psychologically more suited to this task, or does their 'competence' stem from a combination of historical and socio-economic circumstances confining more women than men to the repetitiveness of domesticity? This questioning is legitimate and is worthy of further investigation, but it by no means dismisses the valuable contributions of works like those of Modleski and Allen to the study of soap opera as a unique narrative form.

Telenovelas, on the other hand, have not had a feminist treatment despite the fact that they have been strongly associated with the realm of the feminine. In fact, the classical account despising the telenovela genre regards it as being tales about love and happiness aimed at providing escapist fantasy for women. Writing about the Latin American telenovela, Michèle Mattelart only brings up its conservative agenda. " (...) reveals a highly normative message whose structure is Manichean: the good and the virtuous are rewarded. Love sanctioned by the legitimate union of marriage is better than passion, which is always punished by fate" (Mattelart, 1986: 69). This kind of evaluation of telenovelas prevailed until the mid 1980s, when critics began to acknowledge the evolution of the genre towards more complex plots concerned with contemporary issues of social relevance. It is noteworthy that by 1987 Mattelart had changed the terms of her criticism

by acknowledging the "power of seduction" of contemporary Brazilian telenovelas, and their far-reaching possibilities considering their impact on the social formation and national popular culture. Three books by European authors²² about the Brazilian telenovelas - Lasagni and Richeri (Italy, 1986), Armand and Michèle Mattelart (France, 1987), and Nico Vink (The Netherlands, 1988) - have contributed to rescuing the telenovela genre from a long history of intellectual and ideological disdain. But, before telenovelas reached Europe and attracted critical attention there, they were already outstandingly popular inside Brazil.

Unlike soap operas, Brazilian telenovelas are broadcast at night from Monday to Saturday by at least three national networks. Globo network has historically dominated both drama production and audience ratings. On average, its national newscast (*Jornal Nacional*) and the following 8 o'clock *novela* are watched by 70% of the national audience (this would be a spectacular figure in any other western country). In 1975 Globo started to show four telenovelas daily, each one with different characteristics and aimed at different segments of the audience. Generally known as "novela of 6, 7, 8 and 10", they only go on air at 6:10, 6:55 and 8:30. The 6 PM telenovela has historical themes, usually adaptations of literary classics or romantic novels by Brazilian writers of the 19th century. The audience is assumed to be formed by housewives and children, and the intention is often a pedagogical one - to teach younger viewers about the early history of the country. With the 6 o'clock 'historical' telenovela, Globo complies with federal regulatory policies to promote national culture and history. *Isaura, the Slave Girl* (1976), which has been seen by worldwide audiences, is the greatest hit of the 6 o'clock slot. The 7 PM telenovela is designed to entertain a wider audience with humorous, light and witty stories. The

settings are often unconventional ones, such as the world of buffet services, a perfume factory or a business run exclusively by women. *The War between the Sexes* (1983) was a big success because of its all-star cast, including two of the most acclaimed theater actors in the country and its open inspiration by classic American comedies of the Doris Day type (Kottak, 1990). The 8 PM telenovela is Globo's main weapon sustaining its long reign as "audience leader". The stories rely on realistic plots with a melodramatic component, although almost always with a certain dose of humor. Typical plots include romance, struggles for power, murders, and, as many critics like to emphasize, characters seeking upward social mobility. Also, discourses on sexual politics, women's' struggles, class difference, economic and political power have appeared in various telenovelas. Also, the opposition between the upper-class universe of glamour and power, and that of middle-class families, with their dramas and aspirations, provide an endless source for the plots. A former Globo marketing researcher explains the network's strategy for telenovela programming:

I start at six o'clock with a story that makes women remember the time of their grandparents, purity, romantism. At seven I throw something still light, but already with some problems, almost a photo-novel. In the eight o'clock novela, my friends, it is time for women to undergo a catharsis. This novela represents their own day-to-day life (cited in Vink, 1988 : 46)

The 10 PM slot worked as a laboratory for experimental telenovelas, allowing for daring subjects matters and deviation in narrative style. The attempt was to reach an adult, intellectual audience, whose relationship to the genre telenovela was one of contempt. Some themes explored were sexual repression, conservatism, urban pollution and political power. Two

telenovelas shown at ten o'clock became true legends in the history of television in Brazil. *Saramandras* (1976) was a striking piece of fantastic realism on television, and *Gabriela* (1979) was the TV version of Jorge Amado's (an outstanding Brazilian writer) best seller novel about the political scene in northeast Brazil when a few landowners dictated the rules. The 10 PM time slot was dismissed in 1979. One experiment tried at the narrative level was a telenovela having three different endings, and a final chapter in which all characters (alive and dead) were reunited (Kottak, 1990). The 10 PM telenovela was replaced by "national miniseries", another successful formula launched by Globo Network in the early eighties.

There are definitely more distinctions than similarities between the American soap opera and the Brazilian telenovela. To begin with, the former has an indefinite duration while the latter is limited to a certain number of episodes (or chapters), ranging from 150 to 180. After six months, the telenovela on air reaches an end, and is replaced by totally different plots written by another writer and performed by other actors and actresses. According to Modleski, the soap opera narrative, "by placing ever more complex obstacles between desire and fulfillment, makes anticipation of an end, an end in itself" (Modleski, 1982). Anticipation is experienced in another way by telenovela viewers, who, knowing in advance that situations *will* be resolved, seem to derive particular pleasure from anticipating resolutions. Furthermore, what the audience thinks about how a telenovela should end is taken very seriously by the producers, who already provided for last minute changes in final chapters so that audience expectations would not be frustrated. Thus, it is not only common practice to speculate about future plot developments and entanglements (also a task performed by the media), but viewers seem indeed to believe that their opinions matter

Globo has a Research Department which continually measures public response through examination of ratings provided by Ibope (the official organization for audience measurement), tele-marketing, letters sent to actors and writers, and reviews and media accounts.

This way anticipation is not an end in itself, but it represents a way through which audience's desires and expectations about the ending of a telenovela may be satisfied. Final episodes are so important to the telenovela experience that they have the potential to mobilize millions of people, finding a parallel only in a few occasions, such as the four-day carnival holiday and the games of the Brazilian team in Soccer World Cups. In some final episodes of popular *novelas* Globo's share of the audience reaches nearly 100% , something never experienced by any American program, not even the immensely popular Super Bowl final or a presidential debate (Kottak, 1990). Another important characteristic of Globo telenovelas is that current events, international or national, as well as political debates are often woven into the narratives. As a result, the fictional world of prime time telenovelas is constantly commenting on matters affecting the real life of millions of viewers. If the Brazilian government launches an economic plan freezing salaries and prices, for example, the fictional world of telenovelas will also be affected by the measures and characters will act accordingly.

Most probably due to the limited length, telenovelas narratives develop at a faster pace than that of soap operas. The scenes are shorter, editing more agile, and dialogues get to the point quickly. In episodes of forty-five minutes duration, several story lines move forward. In one hundred-eighty daily episodes, a similar complex network of characters have to explain their relationships and see their lives interact; problems must be

created and then worked out, audience interest must be activated, then maintained, and raised as the telenovela approaches its ending.

Although budgets expenditures are hardly revealed, telenovela's production gets the kind of money that it takes to keep the ratings, and the advertisers. Casts include some of the most talented (and costly) Brazilian actors, entire scenic cities are constructed for shooting, and stories often involve trips to foreign countries and to other Brazilian locations. Outside settings account for much of the attractiveness of telenovelas, since photography explores to the maximum the bright and colorful landscapes of Rio de Janeiro (where most telenovelas are made).

In sum, the kind of public and media attention mobilized by Brazilian telenovelas is not comparable to the kind of attention given to soap operas or prime time serials (with rare exceptions) of American television, or perhaps by any other serialized drama fiction in any place. In fact, the contemporary (post-1980) Brazilian telenovela represents a unique form of popular television that relates in rather unique ways to the social formation.

The beginning: melodrama from Cuba

When the telenovela genre arrived in Brazilian television in the early 1950s, "radionovelas" (radio soap operas) had already been a hit on radio stations throughout Latin America for more than one decade. On radio, the production of drama serials was organized directly by advertising agencies or by advertising departments of multinational companies of soaps and toothpaste, which is how the American radio and television soap operas

came into being (the name "soap opera", for instance, is due to the fact that the sponsors were producers of soaps). Despite the great success of radionovelas on Brazilian radio during the 1950s, the telenovela had a timid start on television. First of all, it was a genre "imported" from other Latin American countries, especially Cuba, Argentina and Mexico, and it was greatly influenced by the *feuilleton* genre and the melodrama of radio soap operas (Ortiz, Borelli et al., 1988). The CMQ studios in Cuba, under the direction of Goar Mestre, played a central role in diffusing the genre throughout Latin America. The Cuban radio soap opera *El Derecho de Nacer* ("The Right to be Born", 1948), from Goar Mestre's factory of melodrama, was broadcast in all countries of South America, was turned into a telenovela and became a hallmark of the genre. The reason Cuba became the center for radionovela production, according to Renato Ortiz, was because it had a well established system of commercial radio and, given its proximity to Miami, programming patterns and structure resembled that of U S radio. In 1930, there were proportionally more radio stations in the island of Cuba than in New York city (Ortiz, Borelli et al., 1988). Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa offers a dazzling account about the world of radio soap operas and its popularity in his novel *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* (1977). The protagonist envisages the Cuban empire of radio melodrama as a non-stop production line creating "eight hours a day, in silent typewriters machines, a torrent of adulteries, suicides, passions, duels, heritages, devotions, adventures and crimes which, from the Antillean island, spread throughout Latin America".

From 1951 to 1953, telenovelas were shown mainly by TV Tupi and TV Paulista of São Paulo once or twice a week, and comprised adaptations from Latin American texts or Brazilian writers' version of them. Ortiz

observes that most narratives carried a Manichean structure around the oppositions good/bad, victim/villain. A typical plot brings a woman divided between love and money, who is punished with death for betraying her true feelings (Ortiz, Borelli et al., 1988). After 1954, however, the melodrama Cuban-style loses ground to adaptations of literary classics by writers such as Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo, Bernard Shaw and Charles Dickens. According to Ortiz, the reason for this change is the following: melodrama was a suitable genre for radio because of the latter commercial structure and great popularity, the exact conditions lacking in early Brazilian television. Programming was aimed at a limited, elitist audience, and telenovela was not highly regarded by both television workers and entrepreneurs (Ortiz, Borelli et al., 1988). In this context, only with the expansion of television throughout the 1960s is that programming, hitherto dominated by theater and classical texts, becomes more popular in form and content, concomitantly with a significant increase in telenovela production (now recovering its melodramatic accent). The multinational companies of household products were not directly in charge of production, but they remained the main sponsors: 16 out of the 24 telenovelas on air in 1969 were sponsored by Gessy-Lever, Colgate-Palmolive and Kolynos (Ortiz, Borelli et al., 1988). This way, the introduction of daily telenovelas, partly pushed by multinational enterprises concerned with advertising needs, also worked as a strategy to win larger audiences.

The first daily telenovela to be shown on Brazilian television was *2-5499 Ocupado* ("2-5499 Busy") in 1963. Both the script and the director came from Argentina. The story was about a woman prisoner who worked as a telephone operator in her prison and, in the first episode, when she answers the phone, the man in the other side of the line immediately falls in

love with *that* voice... (Fernandes, 1987). The actors who played the two leading roles became later on famous names of Brazilian television, and their continuous work in telenovelas has made them more popular in the country than any other Brazilian personality. A central figure at this early period was a Cuban-exiled, Gloria Magadan, who helped to introduce and establish telenovela in Brazil. Magadan was sent by the American Colgate-Palmolive to work as the public relations person in the Brazilian affiliate. Later on she went to work for Globo, as head of the network's division of telenovela. The "Magadan" style, as it became known, was pure melodrama: exotic landscapes, dramatic romances, stereotyped characters and mysterious types (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1987). Some critics give credit to her for implanting a professional scheme for the production of telenovelas at a crucial time for Globo, which was starting its operations and trying to attract viewers. However, the epoch of Gloria Magadan was one of many aberrations. She made Brazilian writers place their stories in foreign countries, for she thought that Brazil lacked romanticism (Caparelli, 1982). Magadan's telenovelas comprised romantic tales set in distant foreign lands - in the realm of Arab princes, Russian emperors or European landscapes of the 19th century. Dias Gomes, one of the most successful telenovela writers of all times and a recognized playwright, signed his first telenovelas with the ridiculous pseudonym of Stella Calderon (it is not only a Spanish name but also a female's name), not wanting to be identified with the genre pushed by Magadan. Among the telenovelas Gloria Magadan produced were her own adaptations of Alexandre Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo*, which she titled "I Buy this Woman" (1966) and "The Sheik from Agadir" (1966), in which she dismissed one male actor because she thought he looked like Fidel Castro (Fernandes, 1987). The increasing dissatisfaction of Brazilian

telenovelists with Gloria Magadan's ideas and the pressures coming from the rival station TV Tupi, which started to use Brazilian subjects in telenovelas, ended Magadan's reign as the powerful 'queen' of telenovela production.

The turnabout came with TV Tupi's 1968 production *Beto Rockfeller* ("Bob Rockfeller"), a telenovela that brought about the 'nationalization' of themes and settings and marked a new and promising era for Brazilian telenovelas: the discovery of contemporary reality as a rich source for fictional plots. This telenovela subverted the hitherto dominant pattern of melodramatic tone, artificial dialogues and rigid acting. From *Beto Rockfeller* onward, the norm has been the use of colloquial language and slangs, natural acting techniques, improvisations, believable characters inspired by ordinary people and situations drawn from everyday life. Instead of Arab castles and desperate heroines of medieval Spain, TV Tupi proposed the simple story of a suburban salesman who manages to frequent high society's circles pretending to be a handsome millionaire. The character's double lifestyle was emphasized by his name "Beto", a common Brazilian nickname (equivalent to Bob), and "Rockfeller", a clear allusion to the American millionaire Nelson Rockfeller. *Beto Rockfeller* changed the face of telenovela heroes. The references to the contemporary scene, plus the series of contradictory lies and hilarious situations provided for the telenovela's astonishing success. *Beto Rockfeller* was not only inaugurating the popular figure of the anti-hero, but it also set the trend which came to define the Brazilian telenovela genre: its realistic and contemporary language. Ortiz notes that this telenovela also marked a change in authorship. Narratives that followed had realistic and genuinely Brazilian themes, and were created by writers coming from the more erudite backgrounds of theater and cinema, instead of radio (Ortiz, Borelli et al., 1988). The attempt was to

develop a new aesthetic and narrative language for telenovelas, one connected with the realities of Brazilian society, which, as discussed previously, was going through major economic and political changes in the early 1970s.

The 'Brazilianization' of telenovelas

The adoption of Brazilian subjects for telenovela texts paralleled a general trend of nationalization of programming in Brazilian television. The late sixties was a period of tight competition among TV stations set in Rio and São Paulo, among them the young Globo TV. For several reasons related to the military regime's doctrine of "national integration" and its investments in telecommunications (see chapter 2), Rio de Janeiro-based Globo TV took better advantage of that period and succeeded in becoming a network with affiliates all over the country. According to Straubhaar's figures, the percentage of imported television programs in the 1960s and 1970s never outnumbered that of local productions. By the early 1970s, he writes, Brazilian telenovelas, variety shows and musical programs had dominated prime time, and imported material was used to fill up marginal viewing hours (Straubhaar, 1984). As for Globo, owner Roberto Marinho soon realized that the initial option of targeting the upper class (as suggested by Time-Life experts) was not paying off, so he invested highly in telenovela and 'auditorium shows' in order to reach larger audiences. Globo's programming decision-making was given to Brazilian managers, who are partly responsible for the network reaching ascendancy during the the 1970s.

A series of factors contributed to Globo's hegemony launched at this period: better salaries and equipments attracted the best talents, increasing audience ratings raised advertising revenues and a "pattern of quality" designed to offer 'good television' to the masses (meeting demands from the government). Telenovelas had a crucial role in Globo's growth because they were (and still are) the network's most important and profitable productions. As a matter of fact, the "realistic approach" for telenovela narratives, which distanced the genre from its melodramatic heritage, was fully developed and improved by the creative workers working for Globo. From the total twenty-three "realistic" telenovelas produced between 1970 and 1980, eighteen were made by Globo (Ortiz, Borelli et al., 1988). Commenting on this, Maria Rita Kehl asserts that terms such as "realism", "Brazilian reality" and "real life" had become key words for telenovela's writers and directors. Kehl argues that the incorporation of the so called 'Brazilian reality' into the plot lines also increased the interference of television in people's lives. **"That which reproduces life as we are used to seeing it, also reproduces our ways of perceiving the real"**, she writes, suggesting that telenovelas were 'teaching' people about their own reality, which would appear ameliorated, or "glamorized" on the screen (Kehl, 1986). If society was going through a process of economic and cultural modernization, there is no surprise in the attempt of television to keep up with the new demography. Notwithstanding Kehl's point, the 'modern telenovelas' also reflect an evolution of the narrative. The 'modernization' of telenovelas (literally) refers to both textual and structural changes, i.e., traditional melodramatic formulas centered around romance evolved into more complex and contemporary narratives which could also include questions of class, gender, power and social relations. The urban settings of Brazilian cities

became the main stage, and middle-class characters brought the telenovela closer to the people watching it.

A television text alone does not have the power to either transform or maintain social structures. However, as cultural theorists have demonstrated, a combination of factors ranging from class and education to sex and race may influence individuals to 'read' certain texts in certain ways, and end up reading messages that can seem politically reactionary, or progressive. For the moment, it is important to acknowledge that popular cultural forms such as the telenovela have, at least, possibilities heading both ways. Charges of "alienation" and "manipulation" should be discarded for two basic reasons. Firstly, the grounding of stories in modern (or realistic) environments and the incorporation of characters reflecting the actual hierarchy of a class society seeks to bring the stories closer to the reality of the viewer, facilitating and calling for identification. Rather than alienate, the intention seems to be one of integration. Secondly, there is nothing so far indicating that telenovela's producers are intentionally 'manipulating' the course of the stories so that they will 'teach' something in the end. Or that the ethics of plot lines is totally thought out since the beginning, making sure it will not inspire any undesirable reactions. On the contrary, if there is a manipulation it is done by the audience itself, by showing approval or discontent about the way stories are being handled and thus influencing changes in the narrative.

The modernization of telenovela narratives also influenced the structure and economics of telenovela production. Because of the genre's tremendous success throughout the seventies, Globo ended up implementing a remarkable industrial scheme for drama production. Former Globo's Director of Production Daniel Filho has said that Globo represents for Brazil

what Metro Goldwin Mayer represented for the world in the 1940s [Kehl, 1979 #67] Until 1979 the network broadcast four daily telenovelas, from 6 PM to 10 30, not to mention other weekly programs such as comedy shows, current affair shows, news and music programs. Each telenovela mobilizes a sizeable cast and crew comprised of actors, extras, technicians, hair-dressers, make-up people, set-builders, etc, which work full time in what seems to be a well-planned working routine. Globo produces nothing less than 95% of what goes on air on Globo's prime time (5 PM - 11 PM) (Marques de Melo, 1988)

The seventies were undoubtedly the decade for the affirmation of telenovelas as Brazilian television's main output. Their percentage in total programming jumped from 2% in 1963 to 22% in 1977 (Straubhaar, 1984). Telenovelas were crucial elements in the process of 'nationalization' of programming in times when American penetration was common among other South American countries. Also, given Globo's virtual monopoly over the television market throughout the decade, the network dominated the production of telenovelas to such an extent that to speak of Brazilian telenovelas means to speak of Globo's telenovelas. In terms of creativity, this period was particularly fertile. In 1973 Dias Gomes wrote *O Bem Amado* ("The Well Loved"), the first telenovela shown in color and also a true legend of Brazilian television. This telenovela inaugurated Gomes' unique style of bringing elements of fantastic realism peculiar to Spanish-speaking Latin American literature (e.g. Gabriel Garcia Marques) into the telenovela narrative. The setting is the fictional city of Sucupira, whose mayor dreams of inaugurating the city's first cemetery in order to turn the event into a political victory. Despite all his attempts, including premeditated crime, nobody dies and the cemetery is finally opened when

the mayor himself passes away. A web of bizarre, nonetheless familiar, characters are given life: the corrupt womanizer and powerful mayor of the small town; three aged sisters, sexually repressed, whose main activity is gossiping; a fearless chief female police-officer, and an ingenuous and charismatic professional killer who dreams of becoming a dentist. The plots evolve around the mayor's sordid machinations and the ways outside forces influence life in Sucupira. The town is visited by UFOs and has its own version of the Watergate scandal (Fernandes, 1987). What is striking about this text is that, through its eccentricities and 'fantastic' literary dimension, it works as a powerful critical commentary on politics, culture and power. Faithful to his fantastic realism style and exploration of Brazilian culture's myths and folk tales, Dias Gomes created also *Saramandás* (1976) for the 10PM slot, which is a masterpiece of the genre, and *Roque Santeiro* ("Roque, the image maker") in 1986, which will be discussed further on. Another experience worth mentioning is the metanarrative of *O Espelho Mágico* ("The Magic Mirror", 1977), by Lauro Cezar Muniz, which was a telenovela about another telenovela. The characters in the story were involved in the making of a telenovela. Despite its low ratings, this text brought many surprises, including a controversial last chapter in which the protagonist, one of Brazil's finest male actors, delivered a real speech about the profession of actor in Brazil.

As stated previously, Globo dominated the production of telenovelas throughout the seventies. They were classified into four different types - "literary" (6 PM), "comic" (7 PM and 10 PM), "realistic" (8 PM and 10 PM), and "modern feuilleton" (7 PM and 8 PM). Among the four categories, a total number of 114 telenovelas were shown on Brazilian television between 1970 and 1980. Globo alone produced more than half of this total, 68

telenovelas (Ortiz, Borelli et al., 1988). The others were produced by three other networks.

In conclusion, it is possible to say that the 'modernization' of telenovela narratives has served to distance the genre from pure sentimental forms towards a growing concern with the social and political dimensions of life. The affirmation of telenovelas as television's principal programs also diminished the importance of imported shows in the assemble of programming.

Chapter Four

Revealing Telenovela Narratives: The Influential Discourse

For the last two decades, Globo's prime time telenovelas have been a significant element in the Brazilian cultural scene. It must be noted that some textual and structural characteristics of the telenovela narrative render it most suitable for commercial television. The serialized format, for instance, provides for the minimizing of costs since shooting locations and fixed cast will be the same for a period of six months or more. Also, the melodramatic nature of the narrative suits the entertaining function and the need for mass appeal. By presenting subjects of human interest, telenovelas call upon emotions and feelings that virtually anyone in the audience can relate to and identify with. However, what appears to be crucial to the long lasting success of Brazilian telenovelas is their attachment to contemporary national culture. Trends, habits, fashions and language mannerisms are either being launched or being expressed by telenovelas. On a broader level, many critics have noticed that telenovelas tend to reflect "moods" of the country - general optimism due to upcoming elections, despair due to economic crisis and so on (Vink, 1988). The writers themselves reveal intentions of making "comments" about what is going on in society through the fictional situations and plots of telenovelas. A typical example is *Roque, the Image Maker*, a telenovela that was censored in 1975 after having several episodes ready to air and was finally broadcast by Globo in 1986, achieving the highest audience ratings in the history of telenovelas (76% in average). Roque is based on a popular tale of Brazilian folklore in which a small town artisan is killed by a terrible bandit and is then transformed to a hero by the inhabitants of the town. The telenovela, however, is a story

about the exploration of a religious myth for commercial profit. The fictional town of Asa Branca functions as a microcosm of Brazil by talking about a community worshipping a myth. "Ten years ago the telenovela questioned the miracles attributed to a false saint, now it questions the miracle that didn't happen. Anyway, it provokes a discussion about this Brazil which needs to be released from its myths - like soccer, carnival, Formula One and the lottery", declared co-writer Aguinaldo Silva (cited in Mattelart and Mattelart, 1987).

In this context, it seems quite appropriate that a critical inquiry of telenovelas should adopt a 'theory of locality', i.e., must account for subjectivities and imaginary formations inscribed in a national system of thoughts and beliefs. The category of the nation is here understood, in John Caughie's terms, not as the 'nation-state' with a legal and political authority but as an "imagined community". This sense of 'locality' is relevant here because it forces us to accept difference and plurality in television making rather than ratifying universal claims. Considering that Brazilian television's commercial model was inspired in the American private system, and taking the financial foundations of both systems to be based upon advertising revenues, it is all too easy to take for granted that what is true in the American case also holds true for all other commercial systems influenced by it. This leads to misconceptions such as referring to telenovelas as being the "soap operas" of Brazilian television. Despite the organizational similarities that do exist, national broadcasting systems are also shaped by cultura' standards sometimes comprised within the boundaries of nationality.

This diversity and local specificity seems important, not as a point of national pride, or nationalist pique, but as a challenge to notions of the in-difference of an essentialized and universal

television. (. . .) ... the desire to locate television within local perspectives complicates assumptions and theoretical formulations about reception and representation and interpellation and identification in quite significant ways (Caughie, 1990 :48)

John Caughie rightly points out that while television critics are often sensitive to categories of gender and class, they do not take 'nationality' as an active element informing the encoding and decoding of television messages. This category seems quite useful, for instance, to frame the contemporary Brazilian telenovela. The text in question is not only inscribed in a national broadcasting system with its own particularities, but it also articulates ideas and feelings which refer to moments and problematic specific to a nation and addressed to a nationally-constructed audience. In order to perform a thoroughly competent 'reading' of a telenovela, the viewer must have at least a minimum awareness about recent or on-going national issues. To have a television drama series in which central characters are involved in illegal financial transactions with foreign banks may sound just like another plot for a North American audience. For a Brazilian audience, however, this fictional plot acquires a different ethos as it gives expression to a hidden skepticism regarding the intentions of the nation's economic elite. It is common knowledge that many Brazilian businessmen deposit capital in foreign banks in order to escape income tax declaration. As popular television tackles issues like this in the form of telenovela plots, it may be doing so just to "alleviate" social tensions, and even precluding them from coming out in the form of organized action. On the other hand, it also may work to assure that such practices exist and that something must be done. In addition, what Donald Lazere wrote about the programs "Roots" and "The Day After" is relevant here - "The artistic or ideological merits of

the programs may be debatable, but they are significant in that, for at least a few days after their showing, all around the country people could be heard discussing race relations or nuclear war instead of pro football" (Lazere, 1987:10).

In regard to content, ever since *Beto Rockefeller* brought contemporary Brazilian locations and themes to telenovela narratives, virtually *any* subject can be woven into the story lines. Brazilian folklore and popular literature, politics, the supernatural, sexuality, racism, the bourgeois lifestyle, the small town locale, and the world of corporate business have provided for many hours of dramatic climaxes. Polemical issues such as adultery, incest, gambling and struggles for power have proven specially successful because they attract greater attention from the media in general. Despite a history of strong media censorship, which was both political and moral, and the fact that Brazil has the world's largest Roman Catholic population, Brazilian television is much more liberal in regard to language and sexual content than, for example, North American television. There is not a simple explanation for this, but a starting point would be to understand this as a reflection of the overall tolerance in regard to moral and sexual matters in cultural manifestations. Liberal artistic movements and trends in literature, theater and cinema also influence television to be less conservative on these matters. As an example, the literary style of Brazil's best seller writer Jorge Amado is fully permeated by eroticism and sexuality. Also, the most consistent film production in Brazil is that of pornographic films. Although explicit sex is not shown on TV, eroticism is a strong feature in all Brazilian TV drama, characters talk openly about their sexual desires and nudity has increased greatly in telenovelas. 'Sensuality' is the term often used to describe the beauty of Afro-Brazilian ethnicities (the most stereotyped

images being the *mulatas* of Rio's carnival), and the Brazilian type is often taken as being the easy-going, musical, relaxed and always-tanned individual who lives by the ocean and wears little clothes all year around. Even if the above view cannot be generalized, it is realistic at least for the majority of telenovela characters, who seem to represent better the Rio de Janeiro subculture than that of other regions. In fact, telenovelas (with exceptions) tend to reflect the way of life of a 'modern' urbanized middle class, typical inhabitants of the southern parts ("zona sul") of Rio, who adhere to psychoanalysis and other fashions such as naturalism, body culture, yoga, etc. A study on sexuality in Brazil cited by Nico Vink shows a relationship "between the rise of a new middle class, the growth of a cultural industry and a new more permissive ethos" (Vink, 1988). The evolution in permissiveness on sexual matters in telenovelas is clear. If in 1980 the censors suppressed sex scenes between couples not officially married (Rector, 1990), by 1990 sexual intercourse is acceptable independently of marriage or emotional liaisons. The level of sexual content on telenovelas seems to be dictated more by audience tolerance than by censorship. Male homosexuality was first treated seriously by a Globo telenovela in 1982, but in 1988 the network was forced to end a relationship between two women because of censorship (in the last chapter, however, the lesbian relationship was restored). The telenovela *Mandala* (1987) faced opposition by both censors and audience because of an incestuous affair. The story was based upon the classic Greek tragedy "Oedipus King" by Sophocles, but two thirds of the audience disapproved of the idea of a love relationship between a mother and her son. On that occasion, a University professor observed, quite perplexed: "that which was tolerated by the Greeks a millenium ago in the theater, we cannot handle on television today".

According to Muniz Sodré, since the late 1970s telenovelas started to move ahead of what was socially acceptable as normal behavior - "television became progressively pedagogical (moving ahead of the social elites in setting up behavior norms) in relation to practices and customs. It starts to 'launch fashions' in all different levels of human existence" (Sodré, 1984). This reverberates with Maria Rita Kehl's assertions about the Globo telenovela of the 1970s. She argues that the 8 pm telenovela's central characters were constructed around two central ideas: upward social mobility and modernization of behavior. *Dancin Days* (1978) is considered as Globo's most explicit text advancing the modernization theme. The female protagonist starts in a Rio de Janeiro prison and ends up as the most exciting personality of Rio's agitated night life. The motivation of Julia Mattos to ascend socially and economically is her desire to be friends with her spoiled daughter, who was raised by Julia's wealthy sister during the period she was in jail. The character undergoes a frantic series of changes in her trajectory: she finds a job, makes friends, finds a boyfriend, learns to speak, look, act and behave according to middle-upper class standards. After a trip to New York, she returns totally transformed and is finally able to 'belong' in society. Kehl points out similar trends in other characters: Cacá is a diplomat who becomes a film-maker, he turns to psychoanalysis to search the answers for his existential conflicts. "His sessions introduce psychoanalysis as the new element of the modernization ideology, one more ingredient of the 'discreet charm of the bourgeoisie' to mass consumption via video" (Kehl, 1986). Another modernizing trend is identified in the feminism of a female character, who influences her mother, a widow who was always depressed and was very dependent, to go out and work in order to 'rebuild' her life in a new fashion.

The Universe of Telenovelas

The claim being made is that contemporary Globo telenovelas are the single most influential cultural text advancing and mediating national culture to a massive audience. In an attempt to demonstrate this, the following analysis is concerned exclusively with the 8.30 pm telenovelas produced by Globo Network during the 1980s²³. First, it will be stressed how Globo telenovelas are manufactured, who are the producers and how they see their work, what are the constitutive elements of the telenovela text (images, text and music), who is the audience and what are the economics of telenovela production. Secondly, it will be inquired how telenovelas are grounded in reality, with examples of real events that inspire and inform what goes on in the screen. Thirdly, the political dimension and the commitment of telenovelas to genuine Brazilian subjects will be discussed.

From 1980 to 1990 Globo produced and aired a total of nineteen telenovelas in the 8:30 pm slot²⁴. They lasted in average seven months and were written by nine different authors. In the early eighties one author was responsible alone for the writing of the entire 180 episodes, which made the writing of a telenovela a full-time, tiresome job. Due to this, authors never wrote two consecutive telenovelas, but they alternated so that each one signed one prime time telenovela over a period of two years or more. There was also a limited number of directors throughout the decade, each telenovela was directed by two, often three directors. The number of characters varied from thirty-five to fifty in number, and were played by more or less the same actors and actresses who were employees of Globo (they are hired by the network for periods of time, during which they may be assigned to perform in any Globo program, not only telenovelas)

However, each new telenovela presents an entire new cast different from the previous one. In the early eighties plots were largely melodramatic in form and content, in tune with what writers described as the 'feuilleton' style: orphans and sibling rivalry (1980), twins separated since birth (1981), the search for love (1982) and inter-class relationships (1983). From 1985 onward plots were widened: struggles for power and career opportunities for women (1985), power, corruption, religiosity and myths (1986), white collar crimes (1986), the power of destiny in a modernized version of the Oedipus story (1987), and the emerging power of a suburban middle-class (1990). Some 'locales' explored in these telenovelas included the lifestyles of the bourgeoisie, a suburban site with its people, the subculture of gambling ("Jogo do Bixo"), the small town locality, corporate business, real estate, paranormality, eroticism and sexuality as liberating forces against conservative social mores.

The writers of prime time telenovelas are professionals of recognized talent and expertise in television writing. For the 8 o'clock novela Globo only hires writers who have been successful in other drama productions, and they are granted greater autonomy if compared to the writers of American soap operas, for example. Unlike in the U.S., telenovela writers in Brazil are public personalities, the viewers often know their names and their styles. When Janete Clair, whose telenovelas were huge popular hits, died of cancer in 1983, thousands of people attended her funeral in Rio de Janeiro. Famous for her romantic plots and strong female heroines, Clair declared herself more interested in the psychological side of her characters, giving priority to themes strong in sentiments and emotions. Although Clair had the disdain of intellectual critics, who prefer authors with a political and social agenda such as Dias Gomes, she was unquestionably a talented writer capable of

entangling plots and situations in ways hardly seen in other telenovelas

The task of writing a telenovela is seen by the writers as a major job. The writing advances as episodes are being aired, normally with only fifteen episodes ahead of the one being written. They write one episode per day (30 pages) without interruption for six or seven months, normally working eight to twelve hours a day. One writer defines the work as being a 'literary marathon'. This tight schedule allows for the incorporation of current events and feedback from the audience. It means also that the narrative can be modified as the author wishes. If he likes the performance of a particular actor he might increase his character's role in the story. When *Rainha da Sucata* (1990) was about to go on air, the federal government launched a drastic economic plan changing many things in the national economy, including people's access to their bank savings. Writer Silvio de Abreu rewrote in the last minute the first third of the episodes of the telenovela so that characters could make references to the new changes. Furthermore, when a telenovela is not doing well in ratings it is common to have a complete turnover in the story.

Writers have their particular styles and concerns when writing a telenovela. In the same way that Janete Clair was a master in romantic plots, her husband Dias Gomes is rather unique in using 'fantastic realism' to tell tales about power and oppression. Gilberto Braga, who created five prime time telenovelas during the 1980s, brings the realm of upper class circles and their obsession for status quo, prestige and wealth. Many of his texts play with the dichotomy between the artificiality of bourgeois values in decay and the endurance of hard-working middle class mentality. Even with the diversity of their concerns, it is clear that writers have very definite opinions about telenovelas and their audience. Gilberto Braga, who is

considered Janete Clair's successor given some similarities in their writing, says his telenovelas are aimed at entertainment and that he uses luxurious settings and situations because the audience likes it. Asked about the potential relationship between 'the devil' in his telenovela *Corpo a Corpo* ("The Clinch", 1985) with the myth of Faust in the literature, he replied: "I never read Goethe very carefully . . . the theme is about good and evil. In relation to the erudite, if I was concerned with them, I would not be writing telenovelas. I want to please the audience of telenovela and this audience expects a story that holds attention, easily understood, very entertaining. (.) To think that the erudite world is more important than the world of the popular, or whatever you want to call them, would be a great error" 25.

Other prime time writers express a concern in telling something more than just an amusing story. Lauro Cesar Muniz says he tries "to give the viewer as much information as possible, because this is a country basically lacking information, where no reading habit exists" (cited in Vink, 1988:144). Even someone as Silvio de Abreu, who specializes in the comic telenovelas shown at 7 pm, thinks it is important to talk about the homeless or about white collar crimes: "the melodramatic side - the hidden letter or who is the father of the child - does not interest me" (Ortiz, Borelli and Ramos, 1988). Dias Gomes is by far the best example of a writer marking his creative work with social and political content. Gomes authored the "intelligent" telenovelas of the 10 pm time slot before writing for the 8 pm audience. His career as a playwright and his leftist ideology (he was for 30 years a member of the illegal Brazilian Communist Party) provided for his 'critical-realistic' approach to telenovela writing. Gomes' stories are located in imaginary small towns with funny names (Sucupira, "White Wing") and main characters are so exaggerated, so kitsch, so transparent, that they function

more forcefully to get the message across, many times through the use of humor. In his fictional town of Asa Branca (in "Roque, the Image Maker"), the local elite is ridiculed as narrow-minded, corrupted and hypocritical (Vink, 1988). When asked how his critical thinking found a way into an organization such as Globo, he gave the following explanation

" The critical view of my work stems from a conception of the writer's role as witness of his time and mainly of the process of creation of a truly Brazilian theater. A Brazilian dramaturgy can only rise from the questioning of our society. Is there a risk of these critiques being diluted in the programming of a great monopoly such as Globo? If there is contradiction, it is of Roberto Marinho; I work and nobody interferes. Globo does not interfere in any way, it never did. The station broadcasts or not. When it goes on air, the ideas are mine, and there is no contradiction in this" (cited in Mattelart and Mattelart, 1987: 120)

Globo's telenovelas are produced at industrial scale which some have compared to the Hollywood studio scheme. The drama production division employs alone one-thousand-five-hundred professionals. Considering photography, scenic, acting, costumes, and editing, Globo prime time telenovelas are produced with cinematic quality. Telenovelas' visual seduction is mostly due to the fact that shooting is done on locations for the most part. For a telenovela like *Roque Santeiro*, for instance, a complete scenic town was built for the shooting in an area owned by Globo outside Rio de Janeiro. The fictional town of Asa Branca was put together in twenty days by one-hundred and eighty construction workers. Around the town's central square were the church, the city hall, a barber shop, a souvenir store, a bar, and a restaurant. Other locations were the fancy houses of the local powerful and a hotel. All settings were carefully crafted, even the indoors were provided doors and windows through which one could see the outside

There is one director and one crew for studio scenes (located at Globo's building in Rio de Janeiro) and a second director and crew for outside shootings. Pre-production involves the work of researchers, costume designers and clothing manufactures, and decorators.

Each episode of a Globo telenovela costs nearly US\$ 30.000, while the Mexican network Televisa (another important producer of drama fiction in Latin America) spends from US\$ 5,000 to 20,000 in each episode ²⁶. These costs are extremely low if compared to the cost of production in American television, wherein one episode of a daytime soap opera cost US\$ 70,000 in the early 1980s. Globo recovers production costs in two ways: advertising and *merchandising* (the plugging of consumer goods into the narrative). In 1988, thirty seconds on Globo's prime time telenovela was sold for US\$ 20 000 and merchandising on the same telenovela could worth twice as much (Ortiz, Borelli et al , 1988). The total investment made in a telenovela is estimated to be paid by the second month of broadcast, the other four months on air constituting profit for the network. In this context, it seems that actor/director José Wilker knew what he was talking about when he declared that "the telenovela pays for all Brazilian television" (cited in Ortiz, Borelli et al , 1988)

Since music is an important element in the telenovela narrative, Globo found a way to capitalize commercially via the soundtracks. It created the label "Som Livre" to release telenovelas' soundtracks, which come in two versions: national (with Brazilian songs) and international. Som Livre became the largest Brazilian record company controlling 24% of the record market. The 'national version' sells on average 200 000 albums while the international LP sells from 600.000 to 1 million units ²⁷. Music has a specific significance in telenovelas, for it is not only a decorative ingredient making

the program more attractive. Songs provide information about the profile of characters or about the telenovela's central theme. Some key characters have theme songs with lyrics indicating aspects of his/her personality. Telenovelas also have theme songs played at the opening sequence, they are usually created for this purpose by popular Brazilian singers and composers and almost always become radio hits. The telenovela *Tieta* (89/90) was about a woman who lived ahead of her time, and had in eroticism and daring sexuality symbols of her desire to break with the conservative mores imposed by the local community. The telenovela opening song refers to the character's provocative sexual behavior:

'Tieta wasn't made from Adam's rib
 She is woman-devil
 She is temptation itself
 Tieta is the serpent which tempted paradise
 She was brought into the world to disturb our sense' 28

Another example is the theme song of *Vale Tudo* (1988), a story alluding to the general feeling of disbelief due to the generalized corruption and dishonesty in all social spheres. The opening sequence was a videoclip of everyday images of Brazil transformed and merged through computer graphics:

'I wasn't invited to this poor party
 which 'the men' invented to convince me
 to pay without seeing / all this mess
 which has been in place since before I was born
 They didn't offer me any cigarette
 I stayed at the door parking cars
 They didn't elect me chief of anything
 my credit card is a knife

Brazil, show your face / I wanna see who pays
 for us remaining like this
 Brazil, what is your business
 the name of your partner / trust me ' 29

One foot in reality

There are so many correlations between national issues in Brazil and telenovela plots that it is hard to dismiss them with the old embarrassing excuse of "it's drama fiction, does not matter". Fictional plots of telenovelas are inspired by and based upon events and sentiments of the nation, thus functioning not so much as a 'reflection' of what actually happens but as a commentary about the social reality. Telenovelas are thus channelling subjects and issues rising from the social debate. It has been demonstrated that writers try to address issues of social relevance, and a way to do this is making direct references to current events, as if there was an unconscious need to remind everyone that the fiction has 'a foot in reality'.

The telenovela *Roque Santeiro* (85/86), a Dias Gomes' classic, was a perfect allegory for the socio-political situation of Brazil. *Roque* can be seen as a social chronicle, with the fictional town of Asa Branca functioning as a microcosm of society, full of satire and humor. A variety of bizarre characters engage in situations in which discourses about power, politics, seduction and religiosity are dominant. The main plot is about the creation and maintenance of a myth. The population of Asa Branca venerates the town's hero, Roque, who is believed to have died in trying to protect the local church from a robbery. In reality, Roque, who was a local artisan, had not

died, but had escaped. The story begins when the urbanized Roque returns to his home town seventeen years later and realizes he had become a hero and that the people worship a lie. His presence there threatens the local elite, who invented the story in order to turn Asa Branca into a religious site and a tourist attraction. The local elite -the rich farmer and his mistress, the mayor, the priest, and the businessman- had benefited from the economic progress that came along. The destruction of the myth would mean the death of the town. In disagreement with the whole situation, Roque allies with a progressive priest in order to destroy the myth and, consequently, the few powerful who maintain it. Parallel to this main plot, there are a variety of other subplots tackling themes related to national issues. There is a film crew in town making a film about Roque (the hero) whose members are constantly discussing the crisis in Brazilian cinema production. The characters of the two priests represent the present situation of the Church, an institution divided between traditional apolitical Catholicism and the progressive current that urges for a commitment to the oppressed (represented in Latin America by the 'Liberation Theology'). Oppression in gender relationships is talked about through the character of Lulu, whose husband deprives her of sexual pleasure. Asa Branca represents a microcosm of Brazil in several ways. The image of the powerful leader of the small town, who manipulates everyone and whose authority stems from his economic situation, is a faithful picture of politics in municipal levels. More broadly, the figure of 'Sinhozinho Malta' may allude to the provincialism permeating national politics, with the strong prevalence of personal will and financial power determining political action, overpowering public institutions and even the law. Also, the common interest of the mayor, the farmer, the businessman and the priest in maintaining the myth of "Roque Santeiro" is

guided by their intention to continue the commercial exploration of the hero's image. In other words, in *Asa Branca*, Brazil, the State, the ruling class and the Church come together when what is at stake is the capitalist order itself.

In the end, Roque gives up his attempts and leaves *Asa Branca* ³⁰, where everything comes back to what it was before, the myth is reinvented and more desperate people arrive looking for miraculous cures and solutions. In the meantime, however, the forces behind the myth were exposed one by one, showing that miracles are false solutions and that blind faith in the interference of supernatural forces is aimless. Indeed, there seemed to be something for everyone in this telenovela, even for intellectuals in the so-called Third World. Professor Astromar, the self-proclaimed erudite intellectual who was left out of all decision-making, does not see the crucial action taking place in front of him (which allowed for the recreation of the myth) because he is too concentrated on waiting to see an important moment for science—the Harley comet's appearance in the sky.

Another telenovela raising questions "concerning the entire country" was Gilberto Braga's *Vale Tudo* (1988). The question that inspired this program was— "is it worth it to be honest in Brazil of the present time?" ³¹ From this emerged the story of an unscrupulous daughter who steals from her own mother and never gives up dirty tricks in her search for wealth and power. Other situations exposed the corruption of power, illegal transactions in corporate business and the impunity of the powerful. In the last episode, the hard-working and honest female protagonist does not accept the idea that her lover is going to jail for a minor crime of corruption. Then the following dialogue takes place:

Raquel - They arrested a half dozen of poor people, the rich were not punished. Am I going to believe this country has a way? Why do you have to be the only one, for a minor error, when so many people out there . . . the politicians themselves . . .
(...)

Ivan - I prefer to think that instead of being the only one, I will be the first one. I don't think one crime is different from any other, I think all this must come to an end . . . Here in this country it is old-fashioned to be upright, it's old-fashioned to be honest, it's old-fashioned not to transgress any law, not to try to take advantage in everything

Lauro Cesar Muniz presented his telenovela *Roda de Fogo* ("Wheel of Fire") aired from August 1986 to March 1987 as being a discussion about power. "It is time to debate this subject, at this moment when the country is emerging from a dictatorship to a democratic regime. We are writing a telenovela about the Brazilian reality, the here and now. And we hope it will provoke discussion about this: the centralizing power, open corruption, white collar crimes, and raise all this dirt." ³² The main character is a powerful man, corrupt and insensitive, who undergoes radical changes as he discovers he has a brain tumor and may die at any moment. "From the reflection this man makes of his life, we want to make a reflection about the country itself" declared the author. The links between the fictional plot of *Roda de Fogo* and the momentum of Brazil in 1987 were suggested by the research material made available to the writers, which showed the interest of Brazilians in talking about the 'new times' of democratic civilian rule. One scene in *Roda de Fogo* that was clearly touching upon a question alive in people's memory was the meeting between a former leftist activist and her torturer in prison. Not long ago before the airing of this telenovela, something very similar had happened in 'real life'. When federal deputy Beth Mendes of the Workers Party joined president José Sarney in an official

visit to Uruguay, she recognized one man in the staff of the Brazilian consulate in Montevideo as being the man who tortured her in prison during the military dictatorship (when artists and intellectuals were arrested for being 'communists'). The incident was turned into a 'media issue' with sound protests against the idea of the 'New Republic' government (first civilian democracy after the military regime) having people linked to the repression period among its personnel. This event was echoed in the telenovela *Roda de Fogo*. The character of Maura Garcez was a former leftist activist and she has a son with the all-powerful Renato Villar, who helped her to get out of the country when persecuted by the military political repressive apparatus. She was sent to a clinic in Rome for rehabilitation from psychological traumas due to painful periods in jail. Back in Rio she has an apparently normal life, working for a non-profit organization. One day, the morbid chamberlain of Renato Villar's corrupt lawyer appears in her workplace making allusions to their previous acquaintance, and Maura Garcez has a nervous breakdown suggesting that she recognized him as her torturer. This indicates, on one hand, the relationship between telenovela plots and subplots with what goes on in the Brazilian contemporary reality, and on the other hand, that telenovela characters have a recognizable memory and history that reproduces, ultimately, the history of Brazil's people and institutions.

In 1989 a general feeling of optimism and excitement could be felt in all spheres of public life which, according to political analysts, was due to the direct presidential elections scheduled for November 1989. The 8 pm Globo telenovela, once again, was set to reflect the "mood" of the nation. *O Salvador da Pátria* ("The Saviour of the Nation", 1989) was described by its author Lauro Cesar Muniz as "a parable of leadership" : "I wanted to talk

about a strong Brazil, not one that is sad, decadent, where 'all is possible' (referring to the title of a previous telenovela about corruption and dishonesty). We are beginning a decisive year in our history, when we will have a president elected by the people. So, this is a year of hope, of euphoria, of breathing fresh air. I want to talk about a Brazil which believes there is light in the end of the tunnel" 33. In order to do this, Muniz placed the story in the wealthy industrial milieu of São Paulo's countryside. Brazil is the world's largest exporter of concentrated orange juice, most of which is produced in that region. According to Muniz, many cities in the state of São Paulo are prosperous and live a 'First World' reality. In these places, people believe there is a way out of economic underdevelopment. In "The Saviour of the Nation", Sassá Mutema is a member of the working-class population employed by a large factory of orange juice who becomes a leader in the region. The theme of 'leadership', not to mention the name of Muniz's telenovela, are totally congruent with people's expectations regarding the election of a new president. Some conspiratorial minds went as far as to think there was a relationship between this telenovela and Globo's support for Collor de Melo, whose youthful image and liberal political discourse was significantly different from that of traditional politicians. However, a more coherent explanation is given by Lins da Silva

Collor had an enormous political sensibility to perceive what were the most simple aspirations of the majority of people (fight corruption, for example) and these aspirations had also been perceived by telenovela writers, and that is why the content of Collor's discourse and that of the telenovela had many common points (Lins da Silva, 1990:126)

The subject of the telenovela *Rainha da Sucata* ("Queen of Scrap", 1990) was based upon research done in São Paulo indicating that financial power is changing hands in the metropolis. According to data gathered by a private research company, the traditional families who once were the powerful in São Paulo with prestigious family names and huge fortunes still hold the prestige but the money now belongs to an emerging self-made middle class. The research indicated that the new rich in São Paulo live in the northern suburbs of the city, and form a new social class: they have the comforts that money can buy but do not follow the lifestyle of the traditional Brazilian upper class. They enjoy, for instance, Sunday's family barbecues around swimming pools but do not go to Europe for vacations or frequent art galleries. This new reality inspired writer Silvio de Abreu to create his "Queen of Scrap", in which the upper class is totally broke but maintain the status quo, and the real rich is a suburban woman, whose father was a Portuguese immigrant who built an economic empire out of a scrap iron business

The first third of the chapters of this telenovela were being produced when the newly arrived president Collor de Melo launched a harsh economic plan to control inflation. The plan had enormous consequences in people's lives because it limited the amount of money one could withdrawn from bank savings accounts (taking as reference today's exchange rate from cruzados to US dollars, the amount that could be withdrawn was US\$ 128.00, the rest being confiscated by the government for a period of two years). Money invested in overnight operations in the financial market, a common operation in inflationary economies, was also confiscated leaving many businesses without cash. This happened before the release of "Queen of Scrap", which had the first chapters rewritten in the last minute so that

dialogues would agree with the country's new economic reality. The character of Laura, a woman whose rich family was penniless but she would not admit it, has a line in which she explains their bankruptcy.

"- the financial carnival which was always on our side has ended!"

Laura also refers to the government plan as "this devilish plan which has left us penniless", referring to the fact that no one knew about the measures. One intention of the government's plan was to punish businessmen who used to speculate in the financial market instead of investing in production. In the telenovela, the character of Dona Armenia, who owns a parachute school run by her three sons, says she cannot pay for her son's wedding party because all her money has been seized, and suggests to the scrap iron's owner widow that her family knew about the plan and took all their money out of the bank. The widow promptly replies

" - They knew nothing about the plan. Anyway, they did not speculate, all the company's money was being invested in the opening of a new business."

Another similarity of this telenovela with real life can be found in Dona Armenia's strong accent making her spoken Portuguese sound funny and incorrect. She has Turkish origins and has all the characteristics associated with the Turk immigrants in Brazil she knows how to negotiate well and does not 'throw money away'. It is too coincidental not to be intentional, but they made Dona Armenia's accent sound identical to the accent of Brazil's Central Bank president of the time, a Brazilian economist with Turkish origins.

The Political Dimension of Telenovelas

Even if central narratives of prime time telenovelas are almost always devoted to romantic relationships, the more contemporary stories often have a 'political dimension', which is precisely what renders them innovative and interesting to follow. When the text is talking primarily about love or personal relationships, it is often contextualized in situations involving something bigger than just "love". Gender relations can embrace questions such as the status of women in society. Discourse on women's issues, it would be fair to acknowledge, have none of the didactic and paternalistic tone often present in mass culture texts addressing such topics. Leading female characters are seldom dwelling in the dichotomy between motherhood and a career, they are normally presented as working individuals who regard professional life as being something natural in the lives of people, not as a 'choice' (as opposed to motherhood) or as a hobby. In this regard, the ones who stay most often at home are women of the upper class, whose economic situation allows for a life excluding work.

The tendency to frame romantic love as not exclusively a matter of sentiment and passion can be traced back to 1980, with *Agua Viva* ("Living Water"). The female protagonist Ligia invests highly in self-education in order to seduce a rich plastic surgeon. When the man finally declares his love, Ligia (now after his brother) confess she had been pretending to be educated, that it was all external appearance. His reply:

" - Maybe you have tried to do so, but for me you have always been transparent. (...) How naive to think you could fool me. That kisses given by you were only part of a campaign. You like me, Ligia. Those books and notes are a proof of it. You have struggled to get me with the few weapons you have at your disposal. And I

have fallen madly in love not with a woman talking about Truffaut, but with a woman struggling to win my love " 34

Sol de Verão ("Summer Sun", 1983) is a text about relationships at various levels. Based on the writer's premise that "nobody is the same after a long and intense summer", the action takes place in the surroundings of an old building in a Rio de Janeiro suburb, where everyone seem to be in search of the same things: to escape the heat and to find love. And yet, this apparently apolitical and unpretentious theme acquires a feminist dimension if we take into account the protagonist Raquel. It is the story of a middle-aged woman who releases herself from a secure straightforward marriage to live up to her feelings (Fernandes, 1987). She rejects an 'ideal' married situation in order to experience passion. It is interesting to note how different viewers from different social classes in Brazil perceived this character. In fact, some ethnographic studies of television audiences show that the working-class tends to have a more conservative interpretation of programs (Leal and Oliven, 1988; Sarques, 1982, Press, 1989). According to Leal and Oliven (1988), viewers of the upper class saw "Summer Sun" as being "positively innovative", while the protagonist's actions nearly shocked one female working-class viewer:

I understand the reasons why Raquel separated and is flirting like that. She has her own reasons that are right for her, and she speaks, and her speech explains everything very well. Everything is right, but for her. It is that I think is very dangerous, because the girls from here [working class neighborhood] watch it and want to do the same, because, when you can [do it] on the 8 pm soap opera, it's because you can do it. But it's not the same thing, if we did like that here, we would be whores, because it would not be for Raquel's reasons. Raquel is very different from us, those things that Raquel thinks, the girls from here don't think, but they want to do the same.

This example illustrates that a text primarily concerned with personal relationships was turned into a feminist tale about a woman who has the courage to deviate from the norms in the name of what she thinks is best for her. The issue of emancipation for women is dealt through sexuality; the fact that Raquel is 'liberated' makes her independent. This is, however, one possible 'reading'. For the working-class viewer, watching from the perspective of her social class, emancipation is not perceived as 'sexual liberation', since what the women in her position seek is emancipation from poverty (which a secure and straightforward marriage can sometimes provide). The above quote clearly demonstrates the importance of class as a force determining the interpretation of television texts, something well documented and argued in many studies about television audiences. The working-class viewer's rejection of Raquel's attitude as not being right for her and the women in her neighborhood shows her perception of class difference and how this class perception dominates her view of the world. Her account may not represent that of the entire working-class female population, but it indicates nonetheless the possibility for resistance: in refusing to accept the message of emancipation as a matter of sexual liberation, the working-class viewer rejects the 'preferred meaning' of the text. This seems to validate, in a way, Nico Vink's claim that telenovelas present its viewers notions of a class society which is neither natural or unchangeable (Vink, 1988).

An authentic marriage between a love affair and a commitment to political discourse is articulated through the character of Albano, the progressive priest in *Roque Santeiro*. The description by actor Claudio Cavalcanti yields the trajectory of his character and, perhaps, the 'secret' behind his growing popularity:

" Father Albano went through episode after episode without doing anything. He talked about land reform, but very superficially. After long speeches, he opened a kindergarten in episode 40 and I thought now he is finished. But no, he started to speak about political themes like constituent assembly, and really organized the people for community work. Then the authors decided he would start a love affair with Tania. I said to myself, my God, there has to be strong pressure and they have been forced to abandon his social side. But after some time, I perceived that the intention of the authors was a different one. The question of celibacy is not only a polemic topic making Albano's role in the story more important. The consequence has been that everything Albano said was noticed and evaluated more by the audience" (cited in Vink, 1988 : 194)

Some telenovelas approach the political dimension more directly, as seems to be the case with *Mandala* (87/88). The story is freely based on the myth of Oedipus, a classical Greek tragedy about a son who kills his father and marries his mother without knowing it. Dias Gomes' version is only partly faithful to the original, for in the telenovela Oedipus does not marry his mother Jocasta (but they fall in love) because of protesting echoes from both censors and public opinion (people interviewed on the streets considered a relationship between mother and son to be "too much" for moral standards). The telenovela was presented as being about "the inexorability of destiny" ³⁵. The Jocasta of Brazilian television was a beautiful and rich blonde, who participated actively in student movements during the 1960s when she studied sociology, an experience which gave her socialist ideas. Her father was a communist and her grandfather an anarchist. The beginning of the telenovela is a flashback of their lives in the sixties, with the unstable political climate which was followed by the military coup of 1964. Jocasta's father goes to jail for political reasons. Laio,

the father of Oedipus, was a playboy who kept dancing rock'n'roll as the government fell. This flashback gives a history and a profile to the characters, helping to contextualize them in the narrative's present time. Furthermore, these brief moments of historical revival justify the characters' future actions and exemplify the political dimension attached to the story.

What is being formulated here is the unmistakable potential of telenovela narratives to deliver, quite effectively, discourses about politics and power. The melodrama genre's prime focus has been traditionally on strong emotions and the realm of personal lives. This still continues alive and well in many televisual and cinematic manifestations worldwide. What one cannot dismiss, however, is the genre's infinite possibilities for other discourses, most importantly those regarding class, gender and race. The following and last example is perhaps excessively melodramatic, but it certainly pushes an issue, and an important one in cultural politics. The plot: an influential father strongly opposes the marriage of one of his sons to a certain woman to the point of insulting her with cruelty. Later on this man has an accident and needs an instant blood transfusion. The woman he hates and wants badly out of his family's life happens to be the only one with his blood type and, upon request, is willing to provide the blood that will save the life of her oppressor. When he finds out about this, he faces this woman in the eyes and, before the whole family in tears, he says the following in a highly emotional scene:

" - No, Sonia, I won't ask you to forgive me . . . I will ask you to marry my son and give my family the honor of being one of us . . . I want to look at my grandchildren one day and tell them how proud I am because they are born from the belly of a black woman . . . " 36

This single line, addressed to an audience of 60 million or more, is a forceful statement against racism very likely to persuade. The offenses the white male directs at this black woman are openly and soundly on the basis of her color, using the most dramatic performances to confront the social and political problematic of racism. What seems undeniable is the rhetorical power of popular texts in expressing and channeling concerns emerging from society.

The political potential of humor

The 'political dimension' of telenovela narratives finds a fertile form of expression through irony, satire and humor. In the specific case of Globo's 8 pm telenovelas, for instance, devices such as innuendo and humor were also used by writers as a way of coping with government censorship on political issues. There seemed to be a general belief that humor was more tolerated than realistic approaches. Quite different from the soap opera, telenovelas always bring at least one comic subplot (often more than one). The political function of humor at work in a telenovela has a good example in the relationship between the widow Porcina and her housemaid Mina in *Roque Santeiro*. The female protagonist Porcina is extremely cruel and rude in dealing with her servants, but these scenes are comedy-like and are considered funny. Porcina is the mistress of the powerful Sinhosinho Malta, who invented the story about Porcina being the widow of the town's hero Roque, this way she is respected and loved by the local community. Porcina is a middle-aged woman who came from a poor environment and was suddenly given power and money. She wears extravagant clothes, is always

covered by expensive jewelry and uses excessive make-up. She speaks loudly and do not use the official middle-class Portuguese, which also indicates her poor background. Porcina is an attractive character precisely because of her vulgarity, she is an impeccable incarnation of kitsch, and is the only one capable of dominating the scoundrel Malta. Porcina has two servants who constantly surround her, a black male who is the driver and personal guard, and a white female who does the housework. They are both extremely loyal to her, the way the black male looks at Porcina suggests he is also sexually attracted to her. The way Porcina treats them, specially the maid Mina, gets closer to the extremes of slavery. She yells aggressively at her, calls her stupid, dumb and 'animal', and the maid stays pathetically passive. She never complains and the more Porcina bosses around her the more she is willing to serve. When Porcina wants the maid, she screams loudly and when Mina appears she keeps screaming hysterically because she was not fast enough, and throws away a series of insults so crude that no one in her normal senses would possibly take them.

Housemaids are very common in Brazil, even the middle class can afford to have them. They are paid the minimum wage plus social benefits and the relationship between maids-employers is generally friendly since it takes place in the intimate realm of people's homes. The relationship between Porcina and her maid Mina is caricatured and exaggerated, and that is precisely why people can laugh at it. Nonetheless, the situation represented in these scenes touches upon an embarrassingly delicate matter which is the task to serve and the privilege to be served, something directly determined by the economic situation of individuals in capitalist societies. What is ultimately being dealt with through this caricatured narrative is the power relation intrinsic to 'master/slave' situations.

The theoretical articulation of the 'grotesque', as Muniz Sodré sees it, may elucidate how humor functions politically in the Porcina/Mina scenes. Sodré described the grotesque as an aesthetic category that could define the ethos of live programs in Brazilian television. "This category", he wrote, "is near the comic, the caricaturing and even the monstrous. (.) it is a 'second' state of consciousness, essentially critical. It would be a reflection about life, born out from a comparison between things as they are in profundity and as they appear on the surface" (Sodré, 1972). The character of Porcina also suits Sodré's definition of the clown's role. He sees the clown as the professional madman, and as such, he is able to loudly laugh at life and this way he leads us toward a recognition of our tragicomic condition. The mimic of the clown, like the exaggerated composition of Porcina, represents our ridiculous quotidian - "our repetitive habits, our stereotypes" To make us laugh at reality, he unconsciously gets away from it, revealing it in the same way that the grotesque reveals it (Sodré, 1972).

What makes the scenes of Porcina's treatment of her maid possible is the fact that they are intended to be humorous (they are written as such , and acted as such). If the dialogues were not to be exaggerated, or if Porcina was not the incarnation of kitsch, then there would be nothing funny in this subplot. Critics would most likely 'crucify' the telenovela for showing disrespect and cruelty toward housemaids. In short, if not through humor, this representation of a typical master/slave narrative would not be possible on prime time television. The whole thing, extravagant and hyperbolic, becomes a great joke. Indeed , Freud's book on jokes (1960) "suggested that jokes allow us to express thoughts and feelings that would otherwise be censored. In a joke, such taboo thoughts could slip through into consciousness" 37.

Telenovelas and Brazilian Subjects

" - Our people is intrinsically mystic, believes in everything and at the same time does not believe in anything. I think this is one characteristic of oppressed people, hopeless, sufferers, who have had so many deceptions, who need to believe in something" ³⁸

With these words writer Dias Gomes explains his interest in the topic of mysticism. Gomes himself is a declared agnostic, but mystical characters and subject matters abound in his telenovelas. And, given the politicized view the author has about religiosity, it is usually the poor who are portrayed as believers of supernatural phenomena and superstition. In *Roque Santeiro*, for instance, people's adherence to religious cults appears in diverse ways. Housewives follow orthodox Catholicism, although their involvement in the church has to do more with social gatherings (gossiping in front of the Church) than with Christian faith. The poor peasants living in the "Misery District" of Asa Branca follow the Liberation Theology of priest Albano. And another group of poor people follows the sect of Beato Salu, the insane father of Roque who affirms he is a messenger of his son in Asa Branca. These stories have an undisguised critical purpose, since none of the religious groups seem to get anywhere with their attachment to churches and sects. As important as this, though, is that such stories also echo the religiosity of Brazilian society in its multiple forms. Despite the fact that Catholicism is Brazil's official religion, the clerical Catholic Church subsists together with a great variety of religious subcultures. Afro-Brazilian religions such as Candomblé and Umbanda have thousands of adepts nation wide, and evangelical churches are being joined by a mammoth population of working-class people. These religions form all together an important part

of the Brazilian cultural imaginary, and their influence and presence is so evidently rooted among the popular classes that their articulation by telenovela narratives is naturally justifiable.

In *Mandala*, also written by Dias Gomes, the first episode shows images of a sect's site in the central region of Brazil, where a certain "Miss Neiva" (she is now dead) built a huge outdoor temple for the believers in the effects of supernatural forces. In the same telenovela, Léo finds out that 'death' will be involved in the course of his life with son Oedipus because a "Pai de Santo" foresees it ("Pai de Santo" is the highest entity in the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé), which makes for a curious blending of Greek mythology with Brazilian popular religiosity. *Sétimo Sentido* ("Seventh Sense", 1982) addresses the supernatural in the central story of Luana Camará, a woman whose overdeveloped sensitiveness renders her susceptible to spiritual incarnations. She 'receives' the spirit of an Italian actress who simply take over her physical being for periods of time.

There is no doubt that popular practices provide a rich source material for telenovelas, the foremost example may be "Jogo do Bixo", an illegal lottery game very popular in the streets of Brazil. *Bandeira 2* (1971), a Dias Gomes' smash of the 10 pm time slot, introduced gambling in the telenovelas. The character of Tucão, whose full name was "Arthur of the Divine Love", a big boss of Jogo do Bixo in Rio, is said to have pleased so much the real "Bicheiros" bankers that one of them accepted to carry the coffin of Tucão in his funeral (Vink, 1988). At the 8 pm telenovela, Jogo do Bixo and carnival, two true Brazilian popular 'institutions', made the central story of *Partido Alto* (1984). In 1987 Dias Gomes created another memorable gambler in *Mandala*. Tony Carrado controls the 'game territory' in several neighborhoods of Rio. His funny language, intentionally incorrect

but very authentic, made the character extremely popular. Expressions used by his character became the slangs of the moment: "My Goddess" in referring to the beautiful Jocasta, "My Darlings" in approaching his staff of gamblers, and "is no little honey on dummy" referring to difficult tasks. In the following excerpt Tony explains to Jocasta about the fights in the world of gambling, implying that his rivals want to use the game's points to sell drugs, and ends up making a speech about the place of "Jogo do Bixo" in Brazilian culture:

" - Gambling is crime, but is not harmful to the health of anyone, it doesn't kill anyone too, that is why repression is made in a different form ... This business of drugs makes good money, but it will pass ... gambling no, 'Jogo do Bixo' continues, it comes from father to son, it is eternal. 'Bixo' is a part of the popular culture, drugs not. Drugs come from abroad, and the money is sent abroad as well. With gambling, the money stays here, it helps the carnival, soccer teams, things of social interest, you understand ?! "

Globo 3 pm telenovelas offer a creative space through which elements informing the Brazilian cultural imaginary are advanced and discussed. It is not a simply matter of 'reflecting' or 'mirroring' society and its manifestations. Given the social and political awareness of telenovela writers, in particular, of the social reality of the country and their commitment to this reality, issues are articulated in a critical fashion, like, for example, the need to believe in mystic forces. Finally, television's appropriation of genuine Brazilian practices such as "Jogo do Bixo" and carnival and of contemporary national issues situate the programs within a specific cultural terrain, common to producers and receivers alike, making them part of a defined system of cultural production. This justifies the usefulness of the

category of 'locality' in analyses of such programs, and also invites investigation about their popularity among international audiences.

Chapter Five

The Export of Brazilian Drama: 'blind spot' in cultural imperialism

Globo Network entered the eighties with an absolute monopoly of the Brazilian television market and with a growing list of exports comprised of telenovelas and drama serials. Initially targeted at other Latin American countries, where the telenovela genre already dominated television programming, they became soon a potential export product to other parts of the world. Partly due to the trend of privatization of television stations in Europe, causing an enormous increase in demand for programs, Globo telenovelas suited the needs of the new European television panorama. Their serialized format, long duration, attractive visuals and relatively low cost made them a programming alternative for foreign broadcasters. A clear evidence of this is that by 1983 the only European countries that had not purchased Brazilian drama were the Soviet Union and Albania (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1987). In countries such as Portugal (the most obvious market because of the common language), but also in Poland and Cuba, the Brazilian telenovelas have been an audience smash.

This situation brings into light some interesting aspects of the contemporary international cultural scene. The situation created by the large penetration of Brazilian drama into European screens makes it possible to draw a compelling picture: a peripheral country, once controlled economically and culturally by its European colonizer, totally inverts the relation center/margin by becoming an important producer/exporter of culture. Given the definite and unquestionable dominance of U.S. cultural industries over the international television market, it is quite unusual for a

developing country such as Brazil to become independent, self-reliant and then a worldwide exporter of television programs. The state of dependence on foreign sources to fill up air time, a reality for most of the developing world, has been completely overcome. The specific circumstances under which television developed in Brazil led to a situation in which the major private networks rely heavily on national programs. Globo Network's mastering of telenovela production has been crucial to the hegemonic position conquered by Roberto Marinho's media conglomerate. In an international context, the telenovela offers the example of

... an internationally popular TV genre made under excessively industrialized conditions which is neither American or Anglo-Saxon. Because it is produced to the most sophisticated technical standards by the TV industry of a Third World country, it offers an antidote to the pessimism of the media imperialism thesis (Garnham, 1988 :527)

The interest in investigating the international career of Brazilian telenovelas is largely related here to its implications in the study of transnational media and international communication. The cultural imperialism thesis, as well as the 'dependency theory'³⁹, are paramount paradigms in mass communication research in an international level. Beginning with the UNESCO empirical studies on the international flow of television programs⁴⁰, which diagnosed a one-way flow from a few exporters (mainly the U.S and the U.K) to the rest of the world, a considerable number of works came out exposing the state of cultural dependency of Latin American media on U.S. capital and cultural products. The conclusions of Beltran and Fox de Cardona are a typical example. They point out the large influence of U.S capital, multinationals, advertising agencies and cultural

products on the private media of Latin America and treat it almost as a case of 'foreign domination' (Beltran and Cardona, 1979). The foremost account of cultural imperialism, though, is that advanced by Herbert Schiller, who sees the international expansion of American television "as part of a general effort of the American military industrial complex to subject the world to military control, electronic surveillance, and homogenized American commercial culture" (Tunstall, 1987: 540). National and native cultures remain powerless, losing ground and color in the face the 'American attack' in form of TV programs, which is believed so sharply powerful that only few industrialized nations could withstand it. Latin American private television stations seemed to be the greatest victims, given their openness to American investments and the overall political dominance of the U.S over the entire continent.

This near-monopoly of North American television programming within South America distorts entire economies away from "producerism" and toward "consumerism." Madison Avenue picture tube imperialism has triumphed in every Latin American country except Cuba. (Tunstall, 1987 :541)

It should be acknowledged nonetheless that underlying the cultural imperialism thesis is the fair assumption that cultural products, not only but specially in the form of television and film, have come to constitute a pervasive force determining the output of political and economic relationships among and within nation states. The main problem of such approach, however, lies in its conspiratorial tone. It is assumed that the circulation of cultural products internationally is intentionally manipulative. 'Cultural imperialism' authors do not only seem to believe that the export of programs is *intended* to create and reshape world views according to the

interests of the U.S., but they also seem to assume that this process is actually accomplished. In this way, cultural imposition and consequential political dominance appears to find no obstacles whatsoever, as if it operates above all forces at work in cultural industries around the world (local market structures, prevalence of national culture, audience preference, etc) Complicating still more the acceptance of the cultural imperialism thesis is that it seems to be an easy road leading to what Michael Tracey has called "the seeds of paranoia" in media analysis. Another attack on the reductionist tendency in theories of cultural dependency is offered by Sarti ⁴¹ "Because it uses a mechanistic approach, which creates the mirage of a dichotomy in the social reality, 'cultural dependency' is unable to untangle the knot of colors and emotions we call 'Latin American culture'" (cited in Lins da Silva, 1986:94). One last awkward assumption deserving attention is that the cultural imperialism thesis implies and somehow ratifies the omnipresence and popularity of American television throughout the world, something in desperate need for updated evidence (the effect of U.S. programming abroad depend largely on the time and frequency of broadcast, and size of the audience watching it).

In the case of television alone, it has become indeed difficult to accept the thesis of cultural imperialism in Latin America when the largest and most populous country in the region has a television system that not only produces a lot, but also exports its productions to foreign markets Transnational capital and foreign material have been involved in Brazilian cultural industries in several ways, most notably in the importation of technology, techniques, production concepts and feature films (Lins da Silva, 1986).

Nevertheless, a concomitant strengthening of autonomous national enterprises in the culture industry can be observed, as well as the transformation of Rede Globo television network into a production center for television programs exported to other Latin American countries and Africa, thus consummating the internationalization of production observable for some time in other areas of the economy. (Lins da Silva, 1986 :96)

As Joseph Straubhaar (1984) has pointed out, the history of Brazilian television is one of growing independence from U.S imports toward locally produced programs. His data comparing the percentage of audience-hours for imports and Brazilian productions in the period ranging from 1963 to 1977 show that(1) the preference for local productions has always outnumbered that for imported material, and (2) the increase in telenovela viewing paralleled a decrease in the viewing of foreign series ⁴². "Brazilian TV programmers increasingly used imports as filler material, to be used in hours when the audience size did not support the cost of a Brazilian production" (Straubhaar, 1984:230). Michael Tracey uses the case of Brazilian television to provide empirical evidences challenging the cultural imperialism thesis and the inevitable dominance of world screens by U.S. programs. Tracey claims that national cultural preferences have a much greater role in determining television output. *Dallas*, the hallmark of American television in the world screens, has not been so popular in countries with locally produced drama serials, such as Brazil and Japan. "*Dallas*, in 1982, occupied 69th position in the Brazilian ratings, and 109th in Mexico" (Tracey, 1988 17). In fact, in October 1990 64% of viewers in São Paulo were tuned in Globo's 8:30 telenovela, while 1% was watching the *Dallas* episode being aired at the same time by another channel ⁴³. The top ten programs of Brazilian television in August 1983 were all Globo

productions, three of which were telenovelas. Given that Globo relies exclusively on in-house productions (Manchete Network also buys programs from independent Brazilian producers), Globo is possibly the single network producing more programs per hour in the world.

Brazilian Telenovelas and the International Market

Brazil and Mexico are the leading Latin American exporters of television material and, according to Michèle Mattelart, they are also sharp examples that commercial TV is the easiest to internationalize (Mattelart, 1988). She calls attention to the fact that the exporters in both countries are commercial monopolies, TV Globo in Brazil and Televisa in Mexico, and that the dramatic serialized *telenovelas* are their main product in the international market.

The paradox is that in these countries, whose economies are much less independent than those of the large industrialized countries, a commercial monopoly like the television monopoly in Brazil can compete successfully for prime time hours using programs made at home. (...) In Europe, on the other hand, vulnerability to American series and more generally to the American mode of production has led to a doctrine of privatization, a doctrine with a long history, passing through many phases before yielding the current policy of deregulation. (...) The success of the American series is only a symptom of dependency on a model in which the standardized series, particularly the American type series, has a natural place (Mattelart, 1988: 433)

The European broadcasting system is clearly undergoing changes leading toward privatization and internationalization, the most revealing

example being the Italian case. The shift from public to private broadcasting is seen as being highly problematic given the dependence of the private networks on foreign programming, making Italian television the top purchaser of programs from the United States, Japan and Brazil (Richeri, 1986). European writers tend to see the trends of privatization taking place more vividly in Italy, France, Spain and West Germany with undisguised pessimism and concern. Michèle Mattelart, for example, decries the commercial model of French television because, "among the three functions it is supposed to perform - to inform, to educate, to entertain - [it] chooses to emphasize the third- to entertain" (Mattelart, 1988). Giuseppe Richeri sees the sudden change from many years of public monopoly in Italy to a private system controlled solely by rules of the market and competition as being very negative. According to his assessment of the Italian case, the leading stations have become mere distributors of standard programming, "mainly bought from abroad and lacking in any informative, educational or original cultural value and without any relationship to true local requirements" (Richeri, 1986).

This trend toward commercialization, perceived with sadness by some scholars, has a natural impact in television output as a whole. What has happened in Europe in the 1980s, as put by Casetti and Odin (1990), is the abandoning of the pedagogical model of the "paleo-television" in favor of the interactive model of the "neo-television". The programs in this neo-television are bound up with notions of the everyday, and there has been a major change in the ethos of television discourse: "Authority is no longer derived from the discourses of the 'well-informed' or the 'educated' -the *really* knowledgeable. Instead it is derived from what 'most people' think..." (Connell and Curti, 1986). The "neo-television" being discovered by

European critics seems to be, in effect, a new version of American television culture.

It is precisely this trend toward commercialization so sadly received by scholars which create the conditions for the penetration of Brazilian television into European screens. Globo drama production is perfectly able to compete internationally in both volume and quality with the products offered in the international market, including American ones. However, the real impact of Brazilian telenovelas abroad has not yet been totally understood, and the contradictions in media and academic accounts have heated the debate but have not helped much to clarify it. Combining what many have said, it is generally known that Brazilian telenovelas entered the European market in the early eighties; they are usually shown on marginal hours of late morning, afternoons and late night, and have received an optimal public response in most European countries despite some negative reviews by media critics. The original program in Portuguese is considered too long by European standards and they are often re-edited and reduced for broadcasting abroad. In addition, the two telenovelas most widely exported have been *Escrava Isaura* (1976) and *Senha Moxa* (1986), which are historical telenovelas shown at Globo's 6 pm time slot. They are both tales about slavery, focusing the narrative on the struggles of a female heroine played in both telenovelas by actress Lucélia Santos.

The amazing success of *Escrava Isaura* ("Isaura, the Slave Girl") in foreign countries was decisive to Globo's launching into the international television market. The telenovela was a television hit without precedent in Poland, where 86% of the national audience watched the program and sociologists came out in defense of it counter to critical reviews in the press (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1987). The compelling story of the white slave

Isaura and her tireless struggle against oppression and slavery also paralyzed Communist Cuba. On the occasion of the Conference on the Latin American Foreign Debt, held in Havana in 1985, actress Lucélia Santos was a special guest of Fidel Castro's government (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1987). It is worth mentioning here that Lucélia Santos took advantage of Isaura's international popularity to propagate worldwide her political commitment to the causes of the socially disadvantaged in Brazil and environmental issues.

In a recent issue of a Brazilian journal of communications ⁴⁴, Busato and Caparelli (1990) authored an introductory article titled "The telenovela seen from abroad" in which they suggest that Brazilian accounts about the expansion of telenovelas in foreign countries are exaggerated and work to ratify telenovela's hegemonic existence inside Brazil: "Europe is a pretext, an echo cave that permits to amplify the internal legitimation (in Brazil, but also in Latin America where it supplanted the Mexican and the North American series) of the telenovela". They argue that the discourse employed is one of self-reference and enchantment, leading the Brazilian public to feel assured about the effectiveness of its 'national culture', and thus justifying all the consumerism behavior of the telenovela. This is indeed an interesting point of view, although the authors' appraisal insistently excludes the possibility that the discourse on telenovelas' international success might as well be echoing a concrete enthusiasm of foreign audiences in relation to them (they are attractive television programs, after all). In effect, the reasoning forwarded in the article in question is not thoroughly supported by the accounts by European researchers on the place of telenovelas in their countries published in the same publication. Busato and Caparelli state that the 'discourse of enchantment' presupposes the existence in Europe of a middle class similar to the Brazilian middle class, which they reject saying

that this correlation is symbolic; it "does not have a sociological reality". A few pages further, the researchers from Spain explain the good acceptance of telenovelas by suggesting that the Brazilian middle class represented in Globo productions is similar to the Spanish middle class, allowing for an easy identification with settings and characters.

In Belgium, *Escrava Isaura* and *Sinhá Moça* were successful among the public of Dutch language despite some adverse circumstances (Biltreyst, 1990). B.R.T., the public web which had the monopoly of broadcasting in Dutch, showed them sparsely, dislocating the time of broadcasting at will, not respecting the need for seriality intrinsic to the telenovela genre. Both telenovelas were shown in the short version directed to the European market. Also, press reviews published before the release of the telenovelas were negative; Biltreyst affirms that journalists were not sympathetic to the Brazilian series. However, ratings demonstrate that more than one Dutch-speaking Belgian in each three watched the last episode of *Escrava Isaura*. In 1985, *Isaura* was among the ten most popular episodes, challenging the long lasting reign of *Dallas*. The popularity acquired by the telenovelas, despite the discontinuity and criticism, suggests to this Belgian researcher that "the audience follows in fact only the mysterious rules of pleasure" (Biltreyst, 1990).

In West Germany, media critics were more divided in their opinions about the new foreign serials, but were far more aware of the cultural and social significance of telenovelas in Brazil. According to Gerlinde Frey-Vor, the renowned newspaper **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung** acknowledged the "artistic sophistication" of the telenovela in comparison with American soap operas. The short version of *Isaura* (40 episodes) was first shown in Germany in 1986 by the public television ARD, which used the telenovela to

increase the entertainment share in the afternoon. "ARD has broadcast a fully restructured afternoon programme since summer 1988 and the novela *Sinhá Moça* was seen as vital part of that renewed structure" (Frey-Vor, 1990). *Isaura* had a rerun in 1989 given its previous success in attracting viewers to the public channel. For 1991, ARD had scheduled to show the contemporary telenovela *Vale Tudo* (1988), following its plan of showing one Brazilian telenovela each year.

On the one hand, the purchase of Brazilian drama by one German public TV may indicate, as one critic wrote, "the shallowness of German television in pursuit of ratings" (Frey-Vor, 1990), but it also indicates that German public television searched for programming alternatives outside the list of U.S. drama serials when it had to accommodate the fast growing European trend of less education and more entertainment in the television screens.

The evidence available to this analysis somehow limits what can be said about the reasons for telenovelas popularity in foreign countries because they concern almost exclusively the historical narratives of *Isaura* and *Sinhá Moça*. The ultimate subject matter in both texts are freedom and justice, something that audiences everywhere are likely to grasp as being universal values, and they also tell stories about slavery, another universally recognized subject that world cinema and television like to explore from time to time. Contemporary telenovelas have also been shown in Europe, some having tremendous cultural impact (*O Bem Amado* and *Gabriela* in Portugal); it is nonetheless difficult to draw any conclusive remarks about their international acceptance. One reasonable answer is that telenovelas operate within the boundaries of 'human values' that have become 'natural codes' universally. In the case of the contemporary prime time telenovelas,

informed as they are by a specific cultural and organizational reality, and highly referential to current Brazilian popular culture, it suffices to say that their 'power of seduction' is linked to the packaging of a 'cultural imaginary' which has systematically insisted to stay marked by difference rather than in-difference.

To finalize, the point of view expressed in the following excerpt articulates the most compelling reasoning assessing why Brazil became a world exporter, a case study that profoundly problematizes media theories advocating dependency and imperialism in the international exchange of television programs.

In the moment of internationalization of program production, the television narratives originated from extremely diverse cultures have, without doubt, a good part of their 'power of seduction' stemming from the fact that they seem to constitute answers to the fatigued *logos* of the western modernity. (...) Today, in the era of serialized production, the Western confronts its mental image and its latent dream with the products from one image industry. What does it discover? Discovers that countries like Brazil have a lived quotidian, and still live a modernity of image, a technological era, an experience of making whose lines make an inseparable link between technical rationality and collective imaginary. (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1987 :206)

The nature of the changes operating in television systems in many parts of the world indicate the exhaustion of the public sector's approach to television making. The increasing concern for ratings and competition in Europe, which will only increase as the tendencies toward privatization and commercialization develop, create a great demand for programs, and serialized drama fiction has been the most suitable and the most available. In this context, Brazilian telenovelas, with their significant differences from Anglo-Saxon television drama and with a certain taste from the tropics,

stand out as an alternative for audiences who have had enough of J.R.s and Sue Helens.

Conclusion

The case of Brazilian television, depicted here in its most representative production, the telenovela, allows for conclusive remarks in a variety of fronts. The central idea is to situate the telenovela genre in relation to contemporary theories of the media that appear less reductionist and more appropriate to grasp the dynamic forces operating in commercial television, complicated here by the fact of Brazil being a part of the developing world.

Traditional views regarding the melodramatic on television as empty of any content other than emotions and sentiments appealing to female audiences are no longer addressing the contemporary telenovela genre in Brazilian television, which finds in Globo Network a pre-eminent representative given both the quantity and the quality of its drama production. The telenovela genre allows for much more than just feminine entertainment. Throughout the 1980s and at the present time, television's prime time in Brazil is substantially loaded with symbolic representations of Brazilian society, traditions, and culture, which incorporate social trends and generate discourse in complex ways. Due both to organizational and cultural factors affecting the development of television in Brazil, the telenovela is becoming a true Brazilian genre.

In the early period of television broadcasting, telenovelas were used in attempts to popularize the medium. In the early seventies, with stimulus coming from State policies and signs of commercial viability for the medium, telenovelas suited the needs for mass appeal and profitability, and these were reasons for making plots harmonize with the general trends of modernization of Brazilian society. In the eighties, the theme of

modernization exhausted, the tendency was to entertain Brazilians with stories related to national issues. The critical realism of Dias Gomes' texts proved successful and opened a whole range of possibilities for telenovela narratives. The telenovela *Pantanal* shown in 1990 explored a universe far from the studios and landscapes of Rio de Janeiro; its slower rhythm, nudity and ecological subtext raised the ratings of Globo's number one rival. Competition among prime time telenovelas has grown stronger ever since, with Globo's leading position being constantly under threat. Now that audiences are becoming more aware of the other networks' potential for drama production, they switch channels with more frequency. This is likely to bring new developments in telenovela narratives and styles, which become increasingly more sophisticated and attractive.

The fact that telenovelas are the most watched programs has led television networks to invest in other formats of drama production, which has also kept them relatively away from foreign formulas and programs. The export of telenovelas did not change the one-way flow in the trading of television programs internationally, but it has been important enough to posit Brazil as an exporter of television fiction

One last consideration to be made concerns the practice of studying television. Since the medium is so intrinsically bound by cultural and sociological processes, any analysis of television today implies almost always an analysis of culture (in its broadest sense). Although my purpose was not to assess Brazilian contemporary popular culture in an anthropological manner, I bring it into light as much as needed in order to investigate television's relationship to national culture, since one basic argument here is that Globo's telenovelas are an expression of this very culture. Themes and subjects are substantially related to the customs, beliefs, and practices of

Brazilian society; the stories also make reference to Brazilian cinema, theater and literature and often incorporate real people playing themselves in fictional plots. Telenovela's articulation of current events and their open references to national issues seem to recover and construct a collective cultural experience highly bound up with Brazil's cultural and social formation. This way, telenovelas function as a forum for contemporary Brazilian culture.

Endnotes

- 1 See Andreas Huyssen article "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's other", in T.Modleski (Ed.) Studies in Entertainment, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.

- 2 An interview with Hans Enzensberger was published in INTERCOM - Brazilian Journal of Communication- in the occasion of his visit to Brazil in 1985 (Caparelli,S. and A.Hohlfeldt, "Enzensberger: poder e estética televisiva", INTERCOM- Revista Brasileira de Comunicação, Vol.8, No.53, 1985: 5-11)

3. In the above mentioned interview, Enzensberger is more skeptical about the media democratic potential , admitting that he had overlooked the power of capital in the operation of the media and that his early positioning carried a geat deal of 'utopia'. Notwithstanding this, Modleski's point is still valuable because she is not assessing the 'correctness' of his contentions, but arguing that his essay had an influence in appointing new directions to mass culture criticism.

4. Hall's three categories of "decoding" are exemplified in John Fiske's differentiated readings of the television show *Magnum PI* , in Fiske, J. "British Cultural Studies and Television", Channels of Discourse, R.Allen (Ed.), Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987.

5. Bee, J. "First Citizen of the semiotic democracy?" (Book review), Cultural Studies , Vol 3, No.3, 1989:353-359.

6. Byars, J. "Reading feminine discourses: Prime-time television in the U.S." Communication, Vol.9, 1987 289-303

- 7 Ortiz, R. "Cultura Popular no Brasil: Iluminados e Alienados". Boletim INTERCOM 49/50, Ano VII, 1984. ("*Popular Culture in Brazil: Illuminated and Alienated*")

8. The concept of "anthropofagia" was launched by a group of avant-garde artists identified with the 'modernist movement' taking place in the arts in the 1920s. Its premise was that Brazilian culture could resist foreign influences (largely European) by assimilating, devouring and transforming it. Instead of denying the foreign element in culture, the idea was to pervert

it. The 'anthropofagic' manifest in the arts was echoed by Brazilian theater, cinema and literature; the underlying idea was one of cultural resistance. A typical 'anthropofagic' allegory was the film "How Tasty was my Frenchman", in which a bunch of savage Indians eat foreigners.

9. My translation from Portuguese.

10. Simões, I. "A TV se Moderniza", in Costa, A.H., Simões, I. and Kehl, M.R. Um país no Ar. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1986.

11. Mattos, S. The Impact of the 1964 Revolution on Brazilian Television (p 96)

12. A counter-argument to the cultural domination thesis is easily found in the effects of video technologies and television on various Brazilian Indian tribes. When the Caiapós Indians saw themselves on a video, they did not like what they saw: too much "white man" clothes, too little body painting and no ornaments. They then asked to be filmed again, this time (un)dressed and painted like real Caiapós. In another tribe, Indians themselves made a video about the practice of nose-piercing, a custom that had disappeared from the tribe's culture. In sum, a series of videos made by the *Movimento Indigenista Brasileiro* demonstrates how video technologies are being used by Indians to document and propagate secular customs and rituals. Tribe leaders appear saying that they want film everything so that newer generations can learn and keep their traditions.

13. "Globo has Brazil TV in its pocket", Variety, March 25, 1987 : 131

14. Idem, p.136

15. My translation from Portuguese.

16. In Revista Manchete, June 30 1990. My translation from Portuguese

17. See Modleski, T. Loving with a Vengeance (1982) ; Ang, I. Watching Dallas (1982) ; Hobson, D. "Crossroads". The Drama of a Soap Opera London Methuen, 1982.

18. In Portuguese, a short word for telenovela is 'novela', which is how the programs are commonly called. The Webster's Dictionary has the word 'novella', but it means "a short prose narrative, as any of the tales of Boccaccio". The most likely translation, then, would be 'telenovel', as being a

novel ("a relatively long fictional prose narrative with a more or less complex plot", in the literary sense) shown on television.

19 This was true until very recently. However, since June 1991 the Brazilian press has been reporting a "Mexican invasion" on Brazilian television. SBT, the network owned by the former TV host Silvio Santos, whose programming strategy is aimed at the popular classes, is presently airing two Mexican telenovelas that are luring viewers away from Globo Network.

20. These characters and situation are from the soap opera *The Young and the Restless*, shown daily on CBS. All my further examples belong to this soap opera or to another one called *The Bold and Beautiful*, also shown on CBS.

21. Following the previous example about Sofia's wedding in *The Young and the Restless*, when she and Nathan finally make it to the altar, with sister Drucilla as maid of honor and everything, they cannot "consummate" their marriage. Nathan, still recovering from appendicitis surgery, could not make love to his new wife.

22. It is not accidental that these books were published in Europe, where the arrival of Brazilian telenovelas on the television systems of various European countries during the 1980s was provoking a great deal of discussion about the "new" TV genre coming from the "tropics".

23 . The decision to limit the analysis to the 8:30 time slot is easily justifiable. In the hierarchy of telenovela production, the "8 o'clock" novela comes in first place because of its prime time status, higher ratings, and more expensive production. In short, it is the most watched program of Brazilian television, by far the most influential and often the most controversial. I am particularly interested in the 8 o'clock telenovela because it allows for more daring themes, and are the ones more compromised with on-going events and "moods" of society. Globo's prime time telenovela has become a cultural institution in contemporary Brazil.

24. From this total, the 10 most watched (according to ratings from IBOPE, Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics) are listed below with year of broadcast and average yearly ratings (calculated nationally unless otherwise indicated):

* Roque Santeiro (85/86).....	76%
* Baila Comigo (1981).....	66%
* Agua Viva (1980).....	64%
* Coração Alado (80/81).....	64%
O Salvador da Pátria (1989).....	62%
Vale Tudo (1988).....	60%
Roda de Fogo (86/87).....	59%
* Corpo a Corpo (1985).....	59%
Rainha da Tucata (1990).....	58%
† Mandala (87/88).....	57%

* average calculated between Rio and São Paulo

† average audience in Porto Alegre

Sources: IBOPE reports and Ortiz, Borelli and Ramos (1988),p 187.

25. Interview with Gilberto Braga published in Boletim de Programação da Rede Globo "Corpo a Corpo", 1985

26. Revista Veja, July 31, 1991.

27. "Som Livre Diskery Grew from start in novela records", Variety, March 25, 1987.

28. My translation from the original verse in Portuguese.

"Tieta não foi feita da costela de Adão
É mulher diabo / a própria tentação
Tieta é a serpente que tentava o paraíso
Ela veio ao mundo pra virar nosso juízo"

29. Song by popular singer Cazuza, translated from original lyrics in Portuguese:

"Não me convidaram pra esta festa pobre
que os homens armaram pra me convencer
a pagar sem ver / toda essa droga
que já vem malhada antes de eu nascer
não me ofereceram nenhum cigarro
fiquei na porta estacionando os carros
não me elegeram chefe de nada
o meu cartão de crédito é uma navalha
Brasil mostra a tua cara / quero ver quem paga

pra gente ficar assim
 Brasil qual o teu negócio/ o nome do teu sócio
 confia em mim"

- 30 In the original tale "The fabulous story of Roque Santeiro and his widow; the one who was without ever being one", Roque is killed by the inhabitants of Asa Branca in the end. They prefer to have a prosperous town with a dead hero than a living hero in a town economically destroyed (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1987)
- 31 Boletim de Programação da Rede Globo - Especial Vale Tudo, 14/05/88
- 32 Boletim de Programação da Rede Globo - Especial Roda de Fogo.
- 33 Boletim de Programação da Rede Globo - Especial O Salvador da Pátria, 7/01/1989
34. Cited in (Vink, 1988)
35. Boletim de Programação da Rede Globo - Especial Mandala. 10/10/87
- 36 Dialogue from a scene of *Corpo a Corpo* ("The Clinch"), on air from November/84 until June 1985.
- 37 Zillmann, D. "Humour and Communication: Introduction to Symposium", in Chapman, A. & H.Foot, It's a Funny Thing. Humour: International Conference on Humour & Laughter. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1977.
- 38 Boletim de Programação da Rede Globo - Especial Mandala, 10/10/87
39. In Latin America, 'cultural imperialism' articulators locate the 'problem' on outside forces which are considered harmful, while the 'dependency theory' current recognizes the effect of other forces, sometimes within the national sphere, contributing to a general state of economic dependency (McAnany, 1986).
40. Nordenstreng, K and T Varis, Television Traffic - A One Way Street? , Paris. UNESCO, 1974
- 41 Sarti, I. "Comunicação e Dependência Cultural: Um Equívoco", in J Werthein (ed.) Meios de Comunicação: Realidade e Mito. São Paulo: Nacional, 1981.

42.	1963	1965	1967	1969	1971	1973	1975	1977
Foreign Series	25%	34%	15%	16%	11%	4%	9%	17%
Telenovelas	2%	12%	13%	18%	17%	22%	20%	22%

Source: Straubhasr, 1984.

43. Source: Central Globo de Marketing, Globo Research Department Report, October 1990.

44. "Telenovela made in Brazil", INTERCOM - Revista Brasileira de Comunicação, 62/63, Ano XIII, São Paulo, 1990.

Bibliography

- Adorno, T. "Television and the Patterns of Mass Culture". In B. Rosenberg and D. M. White (Ed.) Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America. New York: The Free Press, 1957
- Allen, R. Speaking of Soap Operas. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985
- Allen, R. (Ed.), Channels of Discourse. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987
- Allen, R. "Bursting Bubbles: 'Soap Opera', audiences, and the limits of genre". In E. Seiter, H. Borchers, G. Kreuzner et al. (Ed.) Remote Control: Television, Audiences, and Cultural Power. London: Routledge, 1989
- Ang, I. Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination. New York: Methuen, 1982
- Attallah, P. Situation Comedy and 'The Beverly Hillbillies': the unworthy discourse. Working Papers in Communications, Montreal: McGill University, 1983.
- Barrios, L. "Television, Telenovelas, and Family Life in Venezuela". In J. Lull (Ed.) World Families Watch Television. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1988
- Beltran, L. R. and E. Fox de Cardona. "Latin America and the United States: Flaws in the Free Flow of Information". In K. Nordenstreng and H. Schiller (Eds.) National Sovereignty and International Communication. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1979
- Bennett, T. "Popular Culture: A Teaching Object". Screen Education, Spring 1980 (34), 1980: 17-29
- Bennett, T. "Theories of the media, theories of society". In M. Gurevitch, T. Bennett, J. Curran et al. (Eds.) Culture, Society and the Media. New York: Methuen, 1982
- Bennett, T. "The Politics of 'the Popular' and popular culture". In T. Bennett, C. Mercer and J. Woollacott (Eds.) Popular Culture and Social Relations. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986

- Brown, M. E. "Introduction: Feminist Cultural Television Criticism - Culture, Theory and Practice". In M. E. Brown (Ed.) Television and Women's Culture: The Politics of the Popular. London: Sage, 1990a
- Brown, M. E. (Ed.), Television and Women's Culture. The Politics of the Popular. London : Sage, 1990b
- Budge, B. "Joan Collins and the Wilder Side of Women: Exploring Pleasure and Representation". In L. Gamman and M. Marshment (Eds.) The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture Seattle. The Real Comet Press, 1989
- Busato, L. and S. Caparelli. "A novela vista de fora". Intercom - Revista Brasileira de Comunicação, 62/63 (Ano XIII), 1990 . 57-60
- Byars, J. "Reading Feminine Discourse: Prime-Time Television in the U S " Communication, 9 1987 : 289-303
- Campedelli, S. Y. A Telenovela. São Paulo: Atica, 1985
- Caparelli, S. Televisão e Capitalismo no Brasil. Porto Alegre: L&PM, 1982
- Caparelli, S. Ditaduras e Indústrias Culturais. Porto Alegre: Editora da Universidade/UFRGS, 1989
- Caparelli, S. and A. Hohlfeldt. "Enzensberger: poder e estética televisiva". Intercom - Revista Brasileira de Comunicação, 8 (53), 1985
- Carey, J. "The origins of the radical discourse on cultural studies in the U.S " Journal of Communication, 33 ,1983
- Carvalho, E., M. R. Kehl and S. N. Ribeiro. Anos 70 - Televisão. Rio de Janeiro Europa, 1979
- Casetti, F. and R. Odin. "De la paléo- à la néo-télévision: Approche sémiogrammatique". Communications (Paris), 51 ,1990 : 9-26
- Cassata, M. and T. Skill. Life on Daytime Television. Tuning-in American Serial Drama. Norwood (NJ): Ablex, 1983

- Caughie, J. "Playing at Being American: Games and Tactics". In P. Mellencamp (Ed.) Logics of Television Essays in Cultural Criticism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990
- Communication Research Trends. "Soap Opera". 10 (No.1), 1990
- Connell, I. and L. Curti. "Popular Broadcasting in Italy and Britain: Some Issues and Problems". In P. Drummond and R. Paterson (Eds.) Television in Transition. London: BFI, 1986
- Costa, A. H., I. F. Simões and M. R. Kehl. Um País no Ar : História da TV Brasileira em 3 Canais. São Paulo: Brasiliense/Funarte, 1986
- De Lima, V. "The State, Television, and Political Power in Brazil". Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 5 (No.2), 1988 : 108-128
- Duarte, M. L. B. "Imaginário, Telenovela e Merchandise". Revista Comunicações e Artes, Ano II (No.14), 1985
- Eco, U. Apocalípticos e Integrados. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1979
- Fernandes, I. Telenovela Brasileira: Memória. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987
- Feuer, J. "Melodrama, Serial Form and Television Today". Screen, 25 (No. 1) 1984 : 4-16
- Feuer, J. "Narrative form in American network television". In C. MacCabe (Ed.) High Theory/Low Culture: Analysing Popular Television and Film. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986
- Feuer, J. "Genre Study and Television". In R. Allen (Ed.) Channels of Discourse. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987
- Filho, C. M. Quem Manipula Quem? Poder e Massas na Indústria da Cultura e da Comunicação no Brasil. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1986
- Fiske, J. "Television: Polysemy and Popularity". Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 3 (No.4), 1986
- Fiske, J. "British Cultural Studies and Television". In R. Allen (Ed.) Channels of Discourse. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987

- Franco, J. "The Incorporation of Women: A Comparison of North American and Mexican Popular Narrative". In T. Modleski (Ed.) Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986
- Frey-Vor, G. "Brazilian Telenovelas in West Germany: A New Type of Programme in a Changing Television Culture and a Programme Market in Transition". Unpublished Paper, 1990
- Gamman, L. and M. Marshment (Eds.), The Female Gaze. Seattle . The Real Comet Press, 1989
- Garnham, N. "Book Review: Le Carnival des Images, by A. & M. Mattelart. Media, Culture & Society, 1988
- Gitlin, T. "Prime Time Ideology: The Hegemonic Process in Television Entertainment". In H. Newcomb (Ed.) Seeing Television. 1982
- Gitlin, T. Inside Prime Time. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983
- Gitlin, T. "Television's Screens: Hegemony in Transition". In D. Lazere (Ed) American Media and Mass Culture: Left Perspectives Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987
- Grossberg, L. "Strategies of Marxist Cultural Interpretation". Critical Studies in Mass Communication, Vol. 1 (No.4), 1984 :392-421
- Grossberg, L. and J. D. Slack. "An Introduction to Stuart Hall's Essay" Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 2 (No.2), 1985 : 87-90
- Grossberg, L. "On Postmodernism and Articulation: An interview with Stuart Hall". Journal of Communication Inquiry, Vol.10 (No.2), 1986 : 45-60
- Gruneau, R. "Introduction: Notes on Popular Culture and Political Practice" In R. Gruneau (Ed.) Popular Cultures and Political Practices Toronto Garamont Press, 1988
- Gurevitch, M., T. Bennett, J. Curran et al. (Eds.), Culture, Society and the Media. London : Methuen, 1982
- Hall, S. "Culture, the Media and the 'Ideological Effect' ". In J Curran, M. Gurevitch and J. Woollacott (Eds.) Mass Communication and Society Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977

- Hall, S. "Encoding/decoding". In S. Hall (Ed.) Culture, Media, Language: working papers in cultural studies, 1972-79. London: Hutchinson, 1980
- Hall, S. "Notes on Deconstructing 'The Popular'". In R. Samuel (Ed.) People's History and Socialist Theory. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981
- Hall, S. "The rediscovery of 'ideology': return of the repressed in media studies". In M. Gurevitch, T. Bennett, J. Curran et al. (Eds.) Culture, Society and the Media. London: Methuen, 1982
- Hall, S. "Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-Structuralist Debates". Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 2 (No 2), 1985 : 91-114
- Hall, S. "Cultural Studies: two paradigms". In R. Collins, J. Curran, N. Garnham et al. (Eds.) Media, Culture and Society. Newbury: Sage, 1986
- Huyssen, A. "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other". In T. Modleski (Ed.) Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986
- INTERCOM - Revista Brasileira de Comunicação, "Telenovela Made in Brazil", Ano XIII 62/63
- Johnson, R. "What is Cultural Studies Anyway?". Social Text, 16
- Johnson, R. "Film, Television and Traditional Folk Culture in *Bye Bye Brasil*". Journal of Popular Culture, 18 (No.1), 1984 : 121-132
- Kaplan, E. A. "Feminist Criticism and Television". In R. Allen (Ed.) Channels of Discourse. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987
- Kehl, M. R. "Um só povo, uma só nação, uma só cabeça". In E. Carvalho, M. R. Kehl and S. N. Ribeiro, Televisão- Anos 70. Rio de Janeiro: Europa, 1979
- Kehl, M. R. "Eu vi um Brasil na TV". In A.H.Costa, I. F. Simões and M. R. Kehl Um País no Ar. História da TV Brasileira em três canais. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1986a

- Kehl, M. R. "Três Ensaio sobre a Telenovela". In A. H. Costa, I. F. Simões and M. R. Kehl, Um país no Ar: História da TV Brasileira em Três Canais. São Paulo: Brasiliense/Funarte, 1986b
- Kottak, C. Prime-Time Society: An Anthropological Analysis of Television and Culture. Belmont (CA): Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1990
- Kuhn, A. "Women's Genres". Screen, 25 (No.1), 1984 : 18-28
- Lazere, D. "Introduction: Entertainment as Social Control". In D. Lazere (Ed.) American Media and Mass Culture: Left Perspectives. Los Angeles University of California Press, 1987
- Leal, O. F. A Leitura Social da Novela das Oito. Petrópolis. Vozes, 1986
- Leal, O. F. "Popular Taste and Erudite Repertoire. the place and space of television in Brazil". Cultural Studies, 4 (No.1), 1990 : 19-29
- Leal, O. F. and R. G. Oliven. "Class Interpretation of a Soap Opera Narrative the case of the Brazilian Novela *Summer Sun*". Theory, Culture & Society, 5 1988 : 81-99
- Lee, C. Media Imperialism Reconsidered. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979
- Liebes, T. "Cultural Differences in the Retelling of Television Fiction" Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 5 (No.4), 1988
- Lins da Silva, C. E. "Transnational Communication and Brazilian Culture" In R. Atwood and E. McAnany (Eds.) Communication and Latin American Society. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1986
- Lins da Silva, C. E. "Indústria da Comunicação. personagens principais das eleições presidenciais brasileiras de 1989" INTERCOM - Revista Brasileira de Comunicação, Ano XIII (No 62/63), 1990 : 121-127
- Lipsitz, G. "Popular Culture: This Ain't No Sideshow" Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture. Minneapolis University of Minnesota Press, 1990
- Lopez, A. "The Melodrama in Latin America. Films, Telenovelas and the currency of a Popular Form". Wide Angle, 7 1985 : 5-13

- MacCabe, C. "Defining Popular Culture". In C. MacCabe (Ed.) High Theory/Low Culture: Analysing Popular Television and Film. New York: St Martin's Press, 1986
- Macdonald, D. "A Theory of Mass Culture". In B. Rosenberg and D.M. White (Eds.) Mass Culture. The Popular Arts in America. New York: The Free Press, 1957
- Marques de Melo, J. Comunicação Social, Teoria e Pesquisa. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1970
- Marques de Melo, J. As Telenovelas da Globo: Produção e Exportação. São Paulo: Summus, 1988
- Mattelart, A. and M. Mattelart. O Carnaval das Imagens. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987
- Mattelart, M. "Women and the cultural industries". In R. Collins, J. Curran, N. Garnham et al. (Eds.) Media, Culture & Society: a critical reader. London: Sage, 1986a
- Mattelart, M. Women, Media, Crisis: Femininity and Disorder. London: Comedia, 1986b
- Mattelart, M. "Can Industrial Culture be a culture of difference: A reflection on France's confrontation with the U.S. model of serialized cultural production" In L. Grossberg and N. Carey (Eds.) Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture. Urbana: Univ. Of Illinois Press, 1988
- Mattos, S. The Impact of the 1964 Revolution on Brazilian Television. San Antonio, Texas: V. Klingensmith Independent Publisher, 1982
- McAnany, E. "The Logic of Cultural Industries in Latin America: The Television Industry in Brazil". In V. Mosco and J. Wasco (Eds.) The Critical Communications Review Vol. II. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1984
- McAnany, E. "Seminal Ideas in Latin American Critical Communication Research: An Agenda for the North". In R. Atwood and E. McAnany (Eds.) Communication and Latin American Society. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1986

- Meehan, E. "Conceptualizing Culture as Commodity: The Problem of Television". Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 3 (No 4), 1986 . 448-457
- Modleski, T. Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women New York: Routledge, 1982
- Modleski, T. "Femininity as mas(s)querade: a feminist approach to mass culture". In C. MacCabe (Ed.) High Theory/Low Culture Analyzing Popular Television and Film. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986a
- Modleski, T. "Introduction". In T. Modleski (Ed) Studies in Entertainment Critical Approaches to Mass Culture. Bloomington Indiana University Press, 1986b
- Mulvey, L. "Melodrama in and out of the home". In C. MacCabe (Ed) High Theory/Low Culture: Analysing Popular Television and Film New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986
- Novaes, C. "A Escrava Isaura Ganha o Coração do Povo Cubano" Intercom, 49/50 (Ano VII), 1984 : 20-22
- Ortiz, R. "Cultura Popular no Brasil: Iluminados e Alienados". Intercom, 49/50 (Ano VII), 1984 : 43-55
- Ortiz, R., S. H. Borelli and J. M. Ramos. Telenovela : História e Produção São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1988
- Pereira, C. A. and R. Miranda. Televisão. São Paulo. Brasiliense, 1983
- Pignatari, D. Signagem da Televisão. São Paulo. Brasiliense, 1984
- Porter, D. "Soap Time: Thoughts on a Commodity Art Form" In H Newcomb (Ed.) Television: The Critical View New York: Oxford University Press, 1982
- Press, A. "Class and gender in the hegemonic process: class differences in women's perceptions of television realism and identification with television characters". Media, Culture and Society, 11 1989 229-251
- Rakow, L. "Feminist approaches to popular culture. Giving patriarchy its due". Communication, Vol 9 1986 · 19-41

- Real, M. Mass-Mediated Culture New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1977
- Rector, M. "A Telenovela Brasileira dos Anos 90". (Unpublished Paper), 1990.
- Richeri, G. "Television from Service to Business. European Tendencies and the Italian Case". In P. Drummond and R. Paterson (Eds.) Television in Transition. London: BFI, 1986
- Rogers, E and L. Antola. "Telenovelas: A Latin American Success Story". Journal of Communication, Vol. 35, 1985
- Rosen, R. "Soap Operas: Search for Yesterday". In T. Gitlin (Ed.) Watching Television: A Pantheon Guide to Popular Culture. New York: Pantheon, 1986
- Sarques, J. "Telenovelas, Ideología y Sexo". CHASQUI - Revista Latino Americana de Comunicacion, (No.4), 1982 : 28-35
- Seiter, E, H. Borchers, G. Kreuzner et al. (Eds.), Remote Control: Television, Audiences, and Cultural Power. London : Routledge, 1989
- Sodré, M. A Comunicação do Grotresco. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1972
- Sodré, M. A Máquina de Narciso: Televisão, Indivíduo e Poder no Brasil. Rio de Janeiro Achiamé, 1984
- Steeves, H L and M. C. Smith. "Class and Gender in Prime-Time Television Entertainment: Observations from a Socialist Feminist Perspective". Journal of Communication Inquiry, 11 (No.1), 1987 : 43-63
- Straubhaar, J. "The Development of the Telenovela as the pre-eminent form of Popular Culture in Brazil". Studies in Latin American Popular Culture, Vol 1, 1982 : 138-150
- Straubhaar, J. "Brazilian Television: The Decline of American Influence". Communication Research, 11 (No.2), 1984 . 221-240
- Straubhaar, J. "Estimating the Impact of Imported versus National Television Programming in Brazil" Studies in Communication. Ablex Press, 1985
- Straubhaar, J "Television" In H a. Tatum (Ed) Popular Culture in Latin America Greenwood Press, 1986

- Tracey, M. "Popular Culture and the Economics of Global Television".
Intermedia, 16 (No.2), 1988 : 9-19
- Tunstall, J. "Media Imperialism?". In D. Lazere (Ed.) American Media and Mass Culture: Left Perspectives. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987
- Turner, G. " 'It works for me'; British Cultural Studies, Australian Cultural Studies, Australian Film". (Unpublished paper)
- Variety, "Globo Has Brazil TV in its Pocket", March 25, 1987
- Vink, N. The Telenovela and Emancipation: A Study on TV and Social Change in Brazil. Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute, 1988
- Young, S. "Feminism and the Politics of Power: Whose Gaze is it Anyway?". In L. Gamman and M. Marshment (Ed.) The Female Gaze Seattle: The Real Comet Press, 1989