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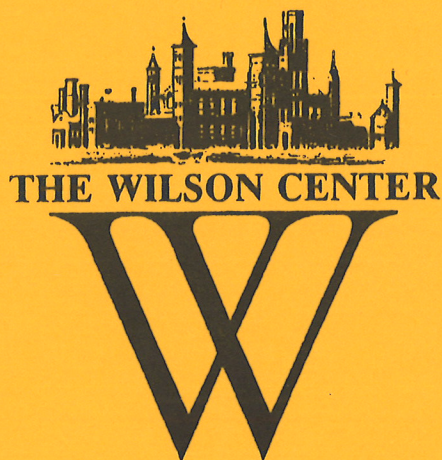
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LITERATURE, CULTURE AND AUTHORITARIANISM  
IN BRAZIL, 1930-1945

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COMMENTARY

by  
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RJ

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### Background and Theoretical Framework

During the past decade the period between the Brazilian Revolution of 1930 and the overthrow of Getúlio Vargas in 1945 has attracted increased attention from scholars in many disciplines. The social, economic, and political changes that followed the events of 1930, a year said to mark the birth date of modern Brazil, are sufficient to justify historiographical interest in the period. Perhaps more importantly, however, twenty-one years of military dictatorship (1964-1985) have provoked an interest among scholars in many disciplines in both the impact of military rule and, in a broader sense, the conservative and authoritarian nature of Brazilian society. Such a concern leads inevitably to the 1930s and especially to the Estado Novo (1937-1945), which, among its many other legacies, greatly expanded and centralized the state bureaucracy, created corporative structures of social and political organization, and redefined the relationship between intellectuals and the state.<sup>1</sup>

This reassessment has only recently begun to take place in literary studies, perhaps because the relationship between literary production and authoritarianism is less readily apparent--except in coercive terms-- and, at least on a surface level, less significant than that of other sectors. Moreover, the general contours of Brazilian literature between the Revolution of 1930 and the return to democracy in 1945 are well-known. Although constantly undergoing purely textual revisions and reinterpretations, the canon is fairly well established. Yet even a superficial consideration of the relationship between the Estado Novo and literary and cultural production evidences the importance of a critical revision that goes beyond the bounds of textuality. Although the literary field clearly possesses its own



specificity, many of the concerns, tensions and structures of the field in the 1930s are inseparable from those of the broader intellectual field and the social system of which it is part.

The general outline of the period's literary production is as follows. By 1930 the modernist movement qua movement had ended, largely due to ideological differences and personal disputes. Despite its dissolution as a unified or semi-unified movement, its achievements had been widely disseminated and consolidated, or to use the term Antônio Cândido borrowed from Max Weber's studies of charisma, they had been "routinized."<sup>2</sup> Mário de Andrade has described the movement's achievements as "the permanent right to aesthetic experimentation; the modernization of Brazilian artistic intelligence; and the stabilization of a national creative consciousness."<sup>3</sup> In other words, by 1930—a year which saw the publication of such works as Manuel Bandeira's Libertinagem, Carlos Drummond de Andrade's Alguma Poesia, Augusto Frederico Schmidt's Pássaro Cego, Murilo Mendes's Poemas, and Mário de Andrade's Remate de Males—there had occurred a maturation of modernist poetics.

By the mid-1920s, the dominant principle of legitimation within modernism had shifted from aesthetic renewal to questions of cultural nationalism. After 1930, concerns with the social role of literature and the political responsibilities of the intellectual came to dominate the field. Artists became politicized to an unprecedented degree and began to see themselves and their work as part of an intellectual field charged with a specific social mission. This increased politicization led to the polarization of writers on the Left and the Right as the impact of communism and fascism began to be felt throughout the cultural field. Certain sub-currents of modernism split

precisely along those lines, with the extreme cases being Oswald de Andrade, who entered the Brazilian Communist Party in 1931, and Plínio Salgado, who formed the fascist Ação Integralista Brasileira in 1932. At the same time, the state came to embody many intellectuals' aspirations and became the central actor in the process of national construction.<sup>4</sup>

Almost coinciding with the Revolution of 1930 a new generation of writers arose, and with it the neo-naturalist, sociological, and regional novel (Jorge Amado, Rachel de Queiroz, José Lins do Rego, Graciliano Ramos, et. al.). Equally important are the many interpretive social essays that appeared around the same time (Paulo Prado, Gilberto Freyre, Caio Prado Jr., Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda, to mention only the best-known). In the mid-1930s, often in explicit opposition to sociological fiction, a largely urban, intimate or psychological, frequently Catholic, novelistic current began to gain strength (Lúcio Cardoso, Octávio de Faria, Cornélio Penna, Lúcia Miguel Pereira). One critic has referred to the period between 1930 and 1945 as the "golden age" of the Brazilian novel. After 1940 there occurred a certain repudiation of regionalism and social literature accompanied by a tendency toward a greater cosmopolitanism and a renewed concern with literary form.<sup>5</sup>

Critics are virtually unanimous in recognizing the impact of the events surrounding and following 1930 on the literary field, and yet based, perhaps paradoxically, on the presupposition that literature represents an autonomous form of cultural discourse, most studies of the period's literature follow a charismatic mold which focusses on the "genius" of individual writers and isolated works. In this kind of analysis, the relationship between literature and society often reduces to a text's "representation" of reality. One of the presuppositions of this study, however, is that literature and



literary texts are neither totally autonomous nor entirely self-contained, nor simply "reflective" of social structures, but rather constitute dynamic systems or networks of social relations that are intimately bound up with frequently subtle relationships of authority and power.

Edward Said has argued that texts obtain their authority by virtue of what he calls "affiliations" (roughly what I am referring to as "social relations") or "that implicit network of peculiarly cultural associations between forms, statements, and other aesthetic elaborations, on the one hand, and, on the other, institutions, agencies, classes, and amorphous social forces." Such affiliations anchor writers and their texts in a complex system of cultural relationships which include the "status of the author, historical moment, conditions of publication, diffusion and reception, values drawn upon, values and ideas assumed, a framework of consensually held tacit assumptions, presumed background, and so on."<sup>6</sup>

Literary practice is thus defined relationally, both in terms of a discursive, primarily literary, "intertextuality" as well as the institutional framework in which literature emerges and is sustained. In the specific case of Brazil, where cultural production has developed in the shadow of or within the parameters authorized by the state, relationships to the constituted power(s) in society must be considered part of literature's multiple affiliations. This does not mean that intellectuals or writers are "contaminated" by their association with the state, that literature is necessarily at the service of the state, that it is directly subject to economic determinants, or that it simply "reflects" external political ideologies. Literature and literary practice, rather, participate in and in many ways express the cleavages that characterize elite social thought

generally. They serve, ultimately, to reproduce, in a market of symbolic goods, the hierarchichal structure of Brazilian society.<sup>7</sup>

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu provides particularly fruitful suggestions for the analysis of the complex relationships between literature and authority to which Said alludes. Bourdieu's theory of cultural practices constitutes a critique of essentialist theories of language and art, of Kantian notions of the universality of aesthetic taste, and of ideologies of intellectual, artistic and cultural autonomy from economic and political determinants, concepts which have been constructed by the agents involved in defense of their material and symbolic interests.<sup>8</sup>

Central to Bourdieu's theory is the idea that any social formation is structured by way of a hierarchically organized series of relatively autonomous fields (the economic field, the educational field, the political field, etc.), a field defined as a structured space in which human agents compete for control of the interests or resources which are specific to the field in question.<sup>9</sup> In the case of the literary field, which tends to disavow immediate economic interests, competition is for recognition, consecration, and prestige, all of which represent instances of symbolic power, or, in other words, the authority to determine the legitimate definition of literary practice. The intellectual (or literary, or artistic, or critical) field functions metaphorically according to the logic of a market of symbolic goods. Agents bring to the field unequal amounts of symbolic capital, which may be cultural, academic, social and so on. Their cultural, intellectual, or artistic activity represents a "strategy of investment," that is, an intervention in the field with the aim of reproducing the symbolic capital invested at the highest possible rate of



return. The symbolic profit derived may also take diverse forms, but almost always involves enhanced authority and prestige in the field.<sup>10</sup>

To say that the literary field reproduces the hierarchical structure of society is not to denigrate the value of literary or artistic work. Rather, it helps explain its power, authority and social function. In his discussion of affiliations, Said has shown that culture serves "authority, and ultimately the national state, not because it represses and coerces but because it is affirmative, positive, persuasive."<sup>11</sup> Literature and culture express the values, anxieties and concerns of a certain segment of society and thus possess an essentially positive value, at least for that segment. At the same time it is difficult to argue the universality of those values, even within a specific national context. Rather, by expressing the values of a specific class fraction and by reproducing itself, literary practice tends to participate in the work of social reproduction and thus reinforce those values and the social structure in which it emerges.

Said has argued that differing critical and cultural perspectives and productions are "competitors for authority" which attempt not only to earn a place for themselves but to displace others.<sup>12</sup> This is precisely the logic of the field, which, again, is structured by competition between its constitutive agents. The stakes of such competition differ according to the specificity of each field. In an autonomous literary field, what is at stake is the profit of consecration, or the authority to define the legitimate principle of consecration in the field and the legitimate definition of the literary work.<sup>13</sup>

## II.

### The Transformation of the Literary Field

In the 1930s and 1940s the Brazilian literary field experienced a profound restructuring. By 1945 the dynamics of the field had been irreversibly altered. Components of this transformation include: the redefinition of the role of intellectuals, the relationship between intellectuals and the state, the expansion of the publishing industry, the diversification of the field of reviews and the struggle for the legitimate definition of the literary work, and, finally, the rediscovered autonomy of the literary field.

#### A. The redefinition of the social role of intellectuals

Intellectual work occurs in specific social contexts inevitably intersected by a number of tensions. In Brazil of the 1920s and 1930s, some of these tensions concern political centralization versus the decentralized federalism of the First Republic, institutional modernization versus the continuation in power of traditional elite sectors, the creation of a self-consciously national culture versus the country's European cultural heritage, the desire for reform versus the need for self-preservation, a weak civil society versus an increasingly strong state, and the intellectual's self-perceived mission in the process of national construction versus real isolation from the centers of power.

During the Estado Novo Getúlio Vargas called on intellectuals and writers to abandon the ivory tower they frequently occupied during the First Republic (1889-1930) and to participate actively in the task of nation-building. Speaking on the occasion of his induction into the Brazilian Academy of



Letters in 1943, Vargas criticized the previous role of the Academy and the isolation of intellectuals from the rest of society, advocating instead the "necessary symbiosis of men of thought and men of action." Vargas's entrance into the Academy, engineered by poet and Estado Novo ideologue Cassiano Ricardo, personified, on a purely symbolic level, this symbiosis.<sup>14</sup>

Vargas emphasized, on this and other occasions, a dual concern with modernization and tradition--that is, institutional modernization combined with the preservation of the nation's traditions--and his regime made concerted efforts to delineate and establish its cultural roots and intentions. This facilitated a convergence of interests between intellectuals and the state--and the incorporation of the former into the state apparatus--during the authoritarian Estado Novo.<sup>15</sup>

Multiple factors are of course involved in this convergence, not the least of which is the expansion of the federal bureaucracy and what Sérgio Miceli calls the "market of positions."<sup>16</sup> Apart from such institutional considerations, many intellectuals, including most modernists, answered the Estado Novo's call for participation in the process of national construction while others, endowed with a patriotic sense of mission, had since the mid-1920s expressed a desire to participate in public life. This self-attributed "mission," frequently assuming the shape of national "conscience," "guide," "mentor," or "voice," has long been characteristic of intellectuals in diverse national and historical circumstances.

In moments of crisis or political transformation, Brazilian intellectuals have often claimed and defended the right to intervene in the process of national organization, reorganization, or transformation. Shortly after Independence, Romantic writers--most closely associated with the Imperial

government--took upon themselves the herculean task of forging a national culture. Thus the concern, in the Indianism of such writers as Gonçalves and José de Alencar, with creating symbols of national identity. With the declaration of the Republic (1889), many intellectuals saw themselves as "guides" in the process of modernization and, armed with positivistic theories and ideological liberalism, instrumental in the remodelling of the state.<sup>17</sup>

In the wake of World War I and the perceived bankruptcy of liberalism, Brazil was seen as facing a severe crisis, and the theme of revolution was constant in cultural and political discourse. Writers such as Alberto Torres and Manoel Bonfim rejected traditional, determinist analyses of Brazil's relative backwardness, based largely on theories of social Darwinism and the "inherent" inferiority non-Aryan races, and argued instead for an examination of historical determinants.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, intellectuals of various ideological persuasions expressed concern with Brazilians' lack of knowledge of their own country and the need to free themselves and their culture from imported models.<sup>19</sup> In Oliveira Viana, for example, this concern takes the form of an opposition between the "Brasil legal" and the "Brasil real." The "legal" Brazil is the nation which exists only in the abstract, expressed in such documents as the constitution of 1891. It is a nation structured according to the principles of democratic liberalism, a political philosophy and system imported from Europe and therefore inauthentic, artificial, and alienated from Brazilian reality. The liberal state had failed to create a national unity, to provide the impetus for modernization, and to achieve a conciliation of social classes. Another formula, better adapted to Brazilian

reality, was needed.

The "real" Brasil, untainted by cosmopolitan ideologies, exists in its purest form in the hinterland, dominated by landed elites. It is "seignorial, autocratic, paternalistic, patriarchal, authoritarian and anti-democratic."<sup>20</sup> Thus, to preserve and guarantee national sovereignty and survival, Vianna proposed in liberalism's place an autochthonous, nationalist, specifically Brazilian authoritarianism dominated by enlightened, and if necessary reeducated, elites. The formula that resides at the core of Oliveira Vianna's thought--institutional modernization through nationalist authoritarianism--forms the matrix of most Brazilian political thought between the wars.<sup>21</sup>

In the 1920s, in short, the 'positivistic' concerns of Republican intellectuals were replaced with cultural nationalism and, to a very large extent, illiberalism, in a search for the roots of Brazilian-ness as part of a broader process of national discovery and institutional modernization. Whether on the left or the right, intellectuals saw themselves as having a specific mission in the task of national salvation. Despite different analyses and prognoses, the idea that the resolution of the crisis facing the country depended almost exclusively on an enlightened elite was common to all tendencies. The fear of revolution was implicit in both the critique of liberalism and the affirmation of the ignorance of the masses, and both progressive and conservative factions developed organic conceptions of society and politics. Institutional modernization and organization were means of impeding a true revolution and profound social transformation.<sup>22</sup> In other words, the 1920s generation discovered and made known a "national vocation" and the place intellectuals should have in the nation, but that vocation was

rarely linked to a desire for truly revolutionary transformations.<sup>23</sup>

Luciano Martins has argued, and I would agree, that in the 1920s a native intelligentsia began to be formed in Brazil as diverse groups demanded or aspired to social, political, cultural, economic and institutional modernization, the ultimate goal being the construction of a modern nation. This intelligentsia failed, however, when it came to structuring an autonomous cultural field, since the link that it sought between modernity and modernization led directly to the state. Thus, before it developed autonomous structures or institutions that would guarantee a certain independence of action, free from external demands, the cultural field became highly politicized and fell under the influence if not control of the state.<sup>24</sup>

#### B. Intellectuals and the State

The Estado Novo put its own particular stamp on cultural production and debate in at least three major ways, involving coercion, incorporation, and cultural orientation. First but not necessarily foremost, it institutionalized forms of political and cultural repression paralleled only by the excesses of more recent military regimes. Books were banned, seized, and burned, and writers were imprisoned, exiled, or otherwise persecuted for "ideological offenses." The government took over and in some cases permanently expropriated selected newspapers, magazines, and publishing houses, while censorship forced numerous small presses out of business and ultimately caused a decrease in the number of Brazilian authors published.<sup>25</sup> Writers navigated a sea spotted with mines. The regime did not tolerate open resistance, forcing opposition intellectuals to devise indirect or refracted



forms of subterfuge. Novelist, playwright and critic Guilherme Figueiredo has written that during the Vargas regime many intellectuals "became specialists in strategies which were invisible to the myopic eye of the censor yet abundantly clear to the acute eye of the reader. The Estado Novo made [them] subtle."<sup>26</sup>

Secondly, Vargas cast himself in the role of patron of the arts, greatly expanding the state bureaucracy and creating numerous governmental agencies which in various ways subsidized, incorporated or co-opted intellectuals and cultural production. Given the small market for the dissemination of elite culture products, the state has traditionally been a locus for social recognition and legitimation as well as, in a more immediate sense, employment. Carlos Drummond de Andrade once wrote, in fact, that Brazilian literature is a literature of "public employees." This was as true of the First Republic as it was of the Estado Novo, although in the latter period there occurred a marked change in the scale and degree of incorporation. The relationship between intellectuals and the state, however, is a complex one that cannot be reduced to a question of mere co-optation, especially if co-optation is understood in the strong sense implying "selling" oneself or one's principles to the state (the verb "co-opt" comes from "co(m)" [together] + "optare" [to choose]).

By the late 1920s and early 1930s many intellectuals tended to associate their activity with the state, which they identified as the "highest representation of the Nation" and to which they attributed the preservation of order, organization, and national unity. They saw their own role as inseparable from the larger goals of the state, and many tended to converge in their profession of authoritarian solutions based on social

demobilization. Their illiberalism and their mistrust of economic elites coincided with positions held by large sectors of political and military elites, while their frequently expressed desire to "rediscover" the true Brazil and construct a national identity found resonance in the state's attempts to build a sense of nationality and to forge an organic cultural and political unity.

Given this coincidence of purpose, the regime was successful at incorporating on a fairly large scale intellectuals of all stripes. Its definition of its cultural mission--constructing a sense of nationality and cultural unity through the rediscovery of the nation's cultural roots--fit well with that of many intellectuals. Culture and politics became inseparable. The state afforded intellectuals, constituted as privileged protagonists of the political realm, several basic roles. First, as ideologues they helped define the goals of the state's political action. Second, they represented the presence of civil society in the state apparatus. Third, with their supposed (and frequently self-proclaimed) capability of tapping the national collective unconscious, they served as intermediaries between the people and government, expressing the people's anxieties to the government and explaining and justifying governmental policies to the people. Finally, they provided an example of a collective actor working in harmony with the state's interests.<sup>27</sup>

The regime's ideologues saw Brazilian civil society as essentially disorganized and incapable of generating modern political and social institutions. Thus the extreme centralization of the state apparatus and the interventionist character of the Estado Novo.<sup>28</sup> Those same ideologues saw the common people as immature, indecisive and needing guidance, which was to

be provided by enlightened intellectual elites like themselves. In this sense they were key actors in such areas as education and propaganda, where the development of mechanisms of ideological persuasion to further the regime's designs was crucial and social reproduction guaranteed. During the Estado Novo, the state penetrated all areas of cultural activity, not merely through ideological control, but also by supporting the creation of professional associations and actively supporting diverse forms of cultural production through such organizations as the Serviço Nacional de Teatro [National Theater Service], the Instituto Nacional de Cinema Educativo [National Institute of Educational Cinema], and the Instituto Nacional do Livro [National Book Institute], all created in 1937. In other words, culture became the state's business.

Finally, the regime attempted to shape and direct cultural production on various levels, and literary intellectuals played a central role in the state's efforts. The Vargas regime's sophisticated propaganda agency, the Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda (DIP), used multiple forms of cultural expression to further its ends. DIP attempted to control the dissemination of information through rigid censorship and by transforming civil society's channels of expression--especially radio and the press--into spaces for the transmission of state ideology. Radio was particularly important, for it had a greater power of penetration than the other media, but film and popular music were also used. The government viewed free broadcasting and a free press with suspicion, since they could potentially undermine its pedagogical objectives.<sup>29</sup>

The regime saw the homogeneity of the cultural field as important for assuring the regime's organization and the defense of what it saw as

'national' interests.<sup>30</sup> A fascinating example of the regime's intervention in the cultural arena concerns its efforts to manipulate samba lyrics to discourage bohemian life styles and create a work ethic in the populace. Antônio Pedro has called such compositions "sambas of legitimacy".<sup>31</sup> It was also during the Estado Novo that Carnival festivities were "officialized" and began to be organized by DIP's tourism sector. Themes of nationalist exaltation became obligatory in Carnival sambas.<sup>32</sup>

Erudite cultural forms were not immune to such attempts at manipulation. In a speech delivered in February 1942, Vargas's Minister of Labor, Industry, and Commerce announced a literary contest sponsored by his ministry. Through the contest, whose expressed goal was to stimulate the production of literary genres that would "take an educational message to the men who toil in the factories," the Estado Novo attempted to co-opt and redefine the "proletarian novel" in accordance with Vargas's concept of trabalhismo.<sup>33</sup>

In his expression of the proper relationship between the intellectual and political elite, Vargas adopted an idea that had been advocated since the mid-1920s by the intellectuals associated with the Verde-Amarelo or Anta subcurrent of literary modernism, most of whom were actively engaged in the ideological justification of the authoritarian/corporative state as well as in various facets of the Estado Novo's propaganda efforts. Menotti del Picchia, Cassiano Ricardo, and Cândido Motta Filho successively served as director of the Sao Paulo division of the government's propaganda agency, the Departamento Estadual de Imprensa e Propaganda (DEIP). Cassiano Ricardo subsequently directed the government newspaper A Manhã, Menotti del Picchia-A Noite.

But they were not the only modernists incorporated into the state

apparatus. Gustavo Capanema's ministry of Education became a new mecenas for many intellectuals. Throughout the Estado Novo Carlos Drummond de Andrade served as Capanema's chief of staff. Rodrigo Melo Franco de Andrade served as director of the Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (SPHAN). Mário de Andrade elaborated the first draft of the law creating SPHAN, collaborated closely with the agency, and elaborated a project for a Brazilian encyclopedia for the Instituto Nacional do Livro. Composer Heitor Villa-Lobos wrote the "Hino da Revolução de 1930" and directed the movement of choral music for the ministry. Architects Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, originators of Brasília's ultra-modern architecture, designed the ministry's new building. Plastic artist Cândido Portinari was commissioned to do murals. Sculptor Bruno Giorgi undertook the construction of a monument to youth. Augusto Meyer served as director of the Instituto Nacional do Livro, Prudente de Moraes Neto and Vinícius de Moraes on the government's film censorship board. Ronald de Carvalho, Ribeiro Couto, Murilo Mendes and Raul Bopp served in the diplomatic corps. Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda and Rubens Borba de Moraes held high-level positions in the Biblioteca Nacional. Manuel Bandeira was a member of the Consultative Council of SPHAN and, along with Jorge de Lima, professor at the federal Faculdade de Filosofia. Rosário Fusco, Marques Rebelo, and Graciliano Ramos all contributed to the DIP's journal Cultura Política. Oswald de Andrade served on the editorial board of DEIP's Planalto.<sup>34</sup>

One might of course argue, along with Antônio Cândido, that there is a difference between "serving" and "selling oneself to" the state, or, with Luciano Martins, that the ambivalence of many intellectuals led to a political "quasi-schizophrenia" as they found themselves situated within a



state whose authoritarianism they condemned, or with many others that there were few options available to intellectuals who wanted to participate in some significant way in the life of the nation. The fact remains, however, that literary intellectuals were incorporated into the state apparatus on a large scale and that modernism became institutionalized during and within the Estado Novo, thus serving to reproduce the literary/intellectual field's position within the broader field of power and to reinforce the state's role as an agent of intellectual and cultural legitimation.

### C. The expansion of the publishing industry

In Brazil the market for symbolic goods historically has been highly restricted and concentrated, especially given the lack of generalized access to public education and the high levels of illiteracy (1890 - 84%, 1920 - 75%, 1940 - 57%).<sup>35</sup> This situation has had rather severe implications for the development of an autonomous literary field. Although the decrease in illiteracy would seem to indicate an increase in the potential reading public, which could occasion a diversification of both publics and producers, legitimate literature (i.e., that which disavows commercial interests as a primary motivation and is recognized as "serious" literature by the critical establishment) has continued to be a form of cultural expression directed primarily at an educated elite despite the considerable expansion and growth of the publishing industry in the 1930s. The limited size of the market of symbolic goods has rendered the professionalization of the field problematic at best.

The 1930s witnessed the appearance and/or growth of such important publishing firms as Ariel, Schmidt, the Companhia Editora Nacional, Globo,

and, especially, José Olympio, which became the most important literary publisher of the period. This expansion, which included considerable investments in new cultural producers, and particularly in the new generation of novelists, created the possibility for the appearance of a small group of semi-professional writers (e.g., Jorge Amado, José Lins do Rego, Eríco Veríssimo). To appreciate the importance of this expansion, despite its limitations, one need only recall that most works published by modernists in the 1920s were financed by the authors themselves and some, like Manuel Bandeira, financed all of their editions until the 1940s.<sup>36</sup> A work of the importance of Mário de Andrade's Macunaíma (1928) had an initial print run of 800, a second edition in 1937 of 1000, and a third in 1944 of 3000. In other words, in the fifteen years subsequent to its publication, only 1800 copies of the novel had been printed.<sup>37</sup>

The industry's expansion at least partially resulted from the international economic crisis which had a severe impact in Brazil in the early 1930s. The rapid decline in the price of coffee and the subsequent devaluation of the mil-réis in relation to European currencies caused a sharp increase in the cost of imported books and a dramatic decline in the volume of books imported. Conditions thus existed for Brazilian books to become competitive in the local market for the first time since the early nineteenth-century, and space opened for the diversification and expansion of local production as well as for translated fiction. In a certain sense and on a very small scale, this functioned as a form of import substitution.<sup>38</sup>

The production of symbolic and cultural goods in Brazil is highly concentrated along the Rio-São Paulo axis, with some activity in Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre and other state capitals. In 1937 the states of Rio,

São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul possessed 61 percent of all publishing houses. Although the concentration of the production of cultural goods remained essentially unaltered, with Rio de Janeiro continuing to be the major locus of consecration and legitimation, the 1930s witnessed a remarkable expansion in the number of volumes published as well as an extension of distribution circuits. Whereas in 1929 the number of books published in the country was on the order of 4.5 million volumes, by 1937 the country's three largest publishers alone printed that many. The publishing industry in São Paulo experienced a growth rate of over 600 percent between 1930 and 1936.<sup>39</sup>

A full understanding of the dynamics of the literary field in the 1930s and 1940s would be impossible without a discussion of the José Olympio publishing house. Carlos Drummond de Andrade has suggested that the social direction Brazilian literature took during the period can only be understood in terms of the interaction among the intellectuals and artists who gathered daily in the José Olympio bookstore: Graciliano Ramos, Cândido Portinari, José Lins do Rego, Astrojildo Pereira, Amando Fontes, Gilberto Freyre, and many others.<sup>40</sup> Andrade's suggestion is no doubt correct, but it does not go far enough, for José Olympio also published the major figures of the psychological or intimist novel that arose in often explicit opposition to the social novel. With the single exception of Erico Veríssimo, José Olympio published every novelist now considered canonical and thus constituted an unprecedented concentration and centralization of authority, understood as the power of recognition and, ultimately, legitimation in the publishing field. It was as if publication under the José Olympio imprint were a sine qua non of consecration.

Virtually all of the cleavages in the intellectual and literary fields, and thus in the field of power as a whole, are evident in José Olympio's list. He published writers of the left and the right, social and psychological novels, modernists of both generations (1920s and 1930s), Catholic and secular ideologues, unknown writers and consecrated ones. On the one hand he created the prestigious Documentos Brasileiros series (1936), directed by Gilberto Freyre and initiated with Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda's- Raízes do Brasil, while on the other he published the Problemas Políticos Brasileiros collection (1934), which was largely a forum for Plínio Salgado and his fellow travellers in the Integralist cause. He was also the publisher of Getúlio Vargas's A nova política do Brasil and of DIP directors Lourival Fontes and Amílcar Dutra de Meneses.<sup>41</sup>

At least initially José Olympio was able to attract the best of the new generation of Brazilian writers primarily because of the economic advantages offered. By expanding the market reach of the Brazilian novel and by offering such advantages, José Olympio himself helped shape the field and stimulated the proliferation of social novels written during the period. As already indicated, this created the conditions for the existence of a small group of semi-professional writers who were relatively independent of the kinds of constraints and external demands placed on those who could not live at least primarily from their writing alone. Their position in the intellectual field, rather, derived from the "positive sanctions" of publishers and the reading public (sales, print-runs, literary prizes, etc.). Although the literary field was highly politicized and subject to any number of strategies of legitimation based on ideological affinities, even those writers explicitly aligned with a specific political creed were able to preserve their position

in the field only because of a certain degree of positive recognition from critics and the public rather than from their political stances alone. External determinants, in other words, were refracted by the specific logic of the literary field.<sup>42</sup>

José Olympio's domination of the field raises the question of internal cultural dependency and the centralization and concentration of the production of symbolic goods. One of the ironies of the literary field in the 1930s is the contrast between the proliferation of the regionalist social novel within the context of the extreme centralization of legitimate literary publishing. The success of the Northeastern novel and the Northeastern novelists was possible only in the institutional framework provided by the nation's capital. By the mid-1930s, all of the major representatives of the genre had established residence in Rio de Janeiro, although for the most part they continued to write about their state of origin. In this sense a homology can be drawn between the expansion and centralization of the publishing industry, and especially José Olympio with its ideologically heterogeneous group of writers, and the expansion and centralization of the state apparatus, with its incorporation of intellectuals of all political persuasions.

It is equally ironic that the social novel would find success only within the same publishing program that printed the most powerful figures of the Estado Novo and its propaganda apparatus. If I am correct in arguing that the José Olympio imprint became, in the 1930s, a sign of legitimacy, then the fact that both political extremes and the major figures of the authoritarian state's apparatus used the same source of legitimacy mitigates in and of itself the political efficacy of engagé literary discourse.



#### D. The field of reviews

Literary criticism constitutes a second level of evaluation of literary production (the first being the publishing industry), and thus a second instance of recognition and legitimation. Like the literary field of which it is a part, it develops its own rules of operation, its own hierarchies, and its own structures of authority. Criticism is, in fact, one of the conditions of the existence and sustenance of the literary work as such. As Bourdieu has put it, "Every critical affirmation contains, on the one hand, a recognition of the value of the work which occasions it... and on the other hand an affirmation of its own legitimacy. Every critic declares not only his judgement of the work but also his claim to the right to talk about it and judge it. In short, he takes part in a struggle for the monopoly of legitimate discourse about the work of art, and consequently in the production of the value of the work of art."<sup>43</sup>

The most significant transformation in the field of criticism would come only toward the end of the period in question, with the move toward university-based professionalization. Throughout the period the field of criticism continued to be dominated largely by the impressionistic literary roda-pé, that is, the weekly journalistic review by a single critic which normally occupied a fixed space in a newspaper.<sup>44</sup>

The critics who occupied the roda-pé frequently exerted an immense amount of power in their judgement of literary works. João Luiz Lafetá, for example, describes the critical power of Tristão de Athayde in the 1920s in the following terms: "All of the important works that appeared in this period passed through his judgemental sieve; he was the critic of modernism, the disseminator of the literary experiments of the period's avant-garde; his

word could be decisive, his opinion was capable of consecrating, his presence was constant and respected, his judgements were often received as definitive, putting an end to discussions."<sup>45</sup> Alvaro Lins, who was perhaps the leading critic of the 1940s, has been described as the "emperor of Brazilian criticism," the "regent of literature," the "master of criticism," the "prefect of critics," ultimately responsible for the "rectory of Brazilian letters."<sup>46</sup> The power of these critics was often such that their opinions affected both subsequent evaluation of literary works (a form of perhaps unintentional censorship, in the sense that lesser critics were intimidated by and thus reluctant to counter their proffered opinions) as well as sales of books, or, in other words, legitimation and consecration by the public.

Despite the dominance of a relatively limited number of critics writing predominantly in journalistic formats, the years between 1930-1945 did in fact witness an important diversification in the field of literary reviews, with such relatively non-partisan publications as the Boletim de Ariel (1931-1938), Dom Casmurro (1937-1945), Revista Nova (1931-1932), Lanterna Verde (1934-1938, 1943-1944), the Revista Acadêmica (1933-1945), the Autores e Livros supplement of A Manhã (1941-1945), and Clima (1941-1945). The period also saw the appearance of critical tendencies explicitly aligned with specific ideologies and published in periodicals functioning as organs of political movements (e.g., the ANL's A Manhã [1934-1935], the AIB's A Offensiva [1934-1938], and Cadernos da Hora Presente [1939-1940], which joined together sympathizers of the outlawed AIB, and, after the overthrow of Vargas, Literatura [1946-1948], associated with the Communist Party). In such cases the space of publication itself was often sufficient to define the critic's ideological orientation and literary preferences (e.g., Tasso da

Silveira in A Offensiva, Jorge Amado in A Manhã). In the 1930s literary debate concerned two major, interrelated issues: the status of modernism in the national literary canon and the legitimate definition of literary practice. Debates concerning the second issue were highly politicized, those concerning the first implicitly so. The aesthetic achievements of modernism may have been "routinized," but many critics were unwilling to grant the movement total consecration and legitimacy. The major critiques of modernism came from the right, which tended to identify the movement, rightly or wrongly (but no doubt simplistically) with the left. Typical among such critiques are Tasso da Silveira's sometimes exaggerated attacks in Definição do Modernismo Brasileiro (1931) or Octávio de Faria's infamous essay "Mensagem Post-Modernista" (1937).

In terms of the second issue--the legitimate definition of literary practice--the literary or critical field, largely divided between political extremes, reproduces ideological debates of society as a whole. The principle of legitimation is entirely external to the literary work itself, deriving from political positions assumed by the writer. Questions of literary form arise only with infrequency, and rarely among those most passionately involved in the debate. This is true of both the right and the left, as critics attempted to deny the status of novelist to works of different orientations:

Lúcio Cardoso:

My conception of the novel goes against those of the majority of modern novelists who favor an art based on pure observation, a photograph of reality. They want to capture the world we see and which expresses nothing because the truth is below ground. I do not recognize them as novelists,

but rather as reporters.

Marques Rebelo:

I don't understand and I can't tolerate the conception of documentary novel [romance-reportagem] in the sense that many modern writers use the term. Of course there is an element of reporting and documentation in the novel, as there is in other literary forms. But we should not give it this particular stamp that places the novel on the terrain of history and journalism. A novel is something else, it's a work of art.

Jorge Amado (on Em Surdina):

I still hope that Miss Lúcia Miguel Pereira... will decide to write novels and leave behind her preconceived ideas and explanations, which are fine in articles but useless in the pages of a novel.<sup>47</sup>

At stake here (and the examples could be multiplied indefinitely) is precisely the legitimate definition of the work of art, or, in this case, of the novel.

The ideological struggle within the field of reviews took a number of forms and involved not only critics but also the state and its strategies of cultural orientation and control. While the Estado Novo made concerted efforts to institutionalize, shape and control the production, reproduction, and diffusion of symbolic goods, the producers of such goods often managed to develop their own modes of resistance. In other words, in response to state pressure, intellectuals created their own forms of counter-pressure intended to undermine the designs of the state or to advance their own ideological projects (examples of this counter-pressure include the Revista Acadêmica's special edition in homage to Romain Rolland in late 1936 or the amount of space devoted to specific Brazilian writers, normally identified with the

left). Such pressure, however, is limited and ultimately conforms to the specific logic of the literary field, which tends to reject external demands in favor of its own rules of functioning or its own authority.

#### E. The autonomization of the literary field

Multiple factors are involved in the process of autonomization. Antônio Cândido provided a partial explanation when he argued that the most "accomplished" expressions of social thought and sensibility in Brazil, whether in literature, historiography or the social sciences, have almost always taken a literary or quasi-literary form. At least up until the 1940s literature "had been, more than philosophy or the social sciences, the central phenomenon in [Brazil's] intellectual life." As such, literature had frequently incorporated other discourses and had responded to demands external to the literary field. In terms of its very discourse Brazilian literature historically has thus lacked the independence and autonomy from external determinants that it possesses in other contexts. The regionalist novel of the 1930s, for example, served as a form of sociological and political knowledge as well as literary knowledge. With the increasingly differentiated division of intellectual labor, occasioned to a large extent by the growth of the social sciences, literature began to gain specificity and autonomy and assume a more properly aesthetic configuration, while at the same time losing its long-standing prestige as the culture's standard-bearer.<sup>48</sup> Although Cândido is certainly correct in his interpretation, other factors also enter the process of autonomization.

The expansion of the market of symbolic goods, albeit still on a limited scale, and the diversification of the reading public, which corresponds to



the diversification of producers, also contribute decisively to the process. Other factors are equally relevant. Politically speaking, it is important to recall that through a dual policy of repression and co-optation, Vargas had managed to neutralize or marginalize his opposition, which frequently developed indirect forms of resistance. I have already referred to the pressures of censorship and increased repression in the literary field. Certain kinds of discourse became unacceptable, and although the social novel continued to dominate throughout the 1930s, it suffered a marked decline after 1937. Censorship obviously had a chilling effect on writers' political intentions.

Because of the Estado Novo's similarity to and ideological identification with European corporative states--most notably Portugal, Spain and Italy--expressions of opposition to European fascism were indirect expressions of opposition to the Estado Novo. Brazil's entry into the war in February 1942 provided a rallying point for Brazilians of all political persuasions and created the tensions or contradictions that would eventually lead to the demise of the Estado Novo. Two facets of this new situation seem especially important for the autonomization of the literary field: the unification of intellectuals and the state around a common goal, which would soon turn forcefully against the regime itself, and the increasing influence of the United States in both political and cultural terms.

If, on the one hand, intellectuals supported and closed ranks with Vargas's decision to declare war on the Axis powers and enter the war effort, on the other hand pressure for internal democratization increased. How could Brazil fight Nazi-fascism in the name of democracy while at the same time sustaining an authoritarian, corporative regime? Attention in the literary

field shifted from the internal problems which had characterized much Brazilian fiction in the early 1930s (drought, hunger, class divisions) toward a concern with more universal values and the more immediate goal of redemocratization. Fiction by and large ceased being the arena of such discussions and debates. The writers who had created the social novels of the previous decade had either attained a certain level of consecration and had thus become the new orthodoxy (e.g., José Lins do Rego) or had transferred much of their political energies to other, more explicitly political endeavors (e.g., Jorge Amado's militancy in the Communist Party).

The shift of political struggle to other arenas occurred at least partially through the creation of professional organizations which represented the professional and political interests of their members. The Estado Novo was a corporative regime, and many social sectors, including intellectuals, were subject to corporative dispositions. The Ordem de Advogados Brasileiros was created in 1930, the Academia de Medicina in 1931, the Ordem de Engenheiros e Arquitetos in 1933. Such organizations give the category legitimacy, allow members to lobby the state in defense of professional interests, and provide an official definition of professional competency. They allow the category, in short, to act in a unified fashion and with a united voice. At the same time, through such organizations the professional intellectual is inserted in the organic construction of society and power.<sup>49</sup>

In 1942 a group of writers formed, in Rio de Janeiro, the Associação Brasileira de Escritores (ABDE). The association's original idea was to attend to problems of the profession such as royalties and relations between writers and publishers. But the major preoccupation, as Antônio Cândido

describes it, was the establishment of an association that would organize writers and intellectuals in opposition to the Estado Novo. As proof of this broader concern, Cândido notes the absence of the writers most closely associated with the regime, "either because they supported it ideologically, because they worked, with or without conviction, in official organisms of information and propaganda... or because they wrote assiduously in publications oriented in that direction."<sup>50</sup>

What Cândido does not note is that the ABDE was founded in the offices of A Manhã, a newspaper owned by the state which served as an official organ of the Estado Novo. A photograph taken at the time (reproduced in Cassiano Ricardo's memoirs as well as in the volume of Mário de Andrade's letters to Murilo Miranda), is remarkably suggestive for an analysis of the social relations of Brazilian literature in the early 1940s, revealing the ultimate indeterminacy of ideological divisions among intellectual elites.<sup>51</sup> Taken in the offices of A Manhã, the photograph is a group portrait of the ABDE's founders, representing two generations of writers of various political persuasions, ranging from the extreme right to the extreme left. Despite their different positions in relation to Vargas's regime, all of them shared a concern with the preservation and reproduction of the literary field, or what Bourdieu refers to as an "objective complicity."<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless, the association was important for organizing the field and galvanizing opposition to Vargas. The ABDE soon began to function as a sort of oppositional "united front" comprising diverse tendencies of the intellectual field. The organization's I Congresso de Escritores Brasileiros (First Congress of Brazilian Writers), which opened in São Paulo on 22 January 1945, bringing together delegations of writers from all regions of

the country as well as observers from foreign countries, marked an important step in the downfall of Vargas and the redemocratization of the country.<sup>53</sup>

Although the intellectual field continued to be highly politicized, with, as Raúl Antelo puts it, an "acceleration of ideological life," the literary text itself tended to cease being the forum of political debate and ideological positioning that it had been earlier.<sup>54</sup> As the Estado Novo came to an end, the possibilities of political participation expanded rapidly and in many different directions. In fact, the political nature and activist orientation of the ABDE soon began to concern some intellectuals, who felt that it should devote its efforts to the professional problems faced by the category and for which it was originally created.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the ABDE continued to function as an essentially political organization at least until the second writers' congress, held in Belo Horizonte in 1947 after the Communist Party had once again been proscribed. The second congress, in fact, revealed bitter divisions between communist and anti-communist factions of the ABDE.<sup>56</sup>

Other factors are also important for understanding the process of autonomization of the literary field in the 1940s, not the least of which was the creation of universities in the 1930s and the formation of a group of professional critics starting in the 1940s with their rejection of impressionism and their more specialized approaches to their subjects. This reorientation marks the true beginning of systematic studies of Brazilian literature in the country.<sup>57</sup>

Coinciding with World War II there also occurred an increase in the cultural influence of the United States, especially, although not exclusively, through the cinema and mass media. In the critical field this

influence is expressed by the impact of New Criticism, brought to Brazil largely by Afrânio Coutinho, who argued vehemently that the university, not the newspaper, was the proper site for the development of a "scientific" literary criticism.

Coutinho's frequently virulent campaign against journalistic criticism corresponded with the appearance of a new generation of poets--the so-called "generation of 1945"--advocating a return to more traditional aesthetic form. Both represent attempts, with different degrees of success, to reshape the Brazilian literary system.<sup>58</sup> Flora Süssekind has correctly suggested that Coutinho's campaign attempted to establish new relations of power in the literary field, based no longer on the personality, articulateness, or rhetorical eloquence of journalistic reviewers, but rather on aesthetic criteria, textual analysis and the substitution of the newspaper by the university as the "temple" of literary culture. In this sense Coutinho's choice of Alvaro Lins, the "emperor" of criticism in the 1940s, as his major target was significant, since his defeat would imply the defeat of the literary system he represented. Again, what was at stake in Coutinho's struggle to redefine principles of legitimacy was power in the field.<sup>59</sup>

In the 1940s an urban-industrial society was consolidated with the expansion of the working class and middle sectors, an increase in the urban population, the development of a tertiary sector and new forms of more rational business management. Coinciding with the increasing urbanization of Brazilian society and an increasingly specialized division of intellectual labor was a diversification of cultural forms and publics through the expansion and modernization of the cultural industry, especially film, radio, mass circulation magazines, and, as we have seen, the publishing industry.



Publishing, however, did not accompany the growth of other sectors of the cultural industry. The number of volumes published in São Paulo in 1956 (5,980,968) was only marginally superior to the figures for 1946 (5,650,395).<sup>60</sup> These figures would tend to suggest that the diversification in cultural forms available led much of the newly-incorporated urban population to prefer other forms of leisure activities to literature, which continued to be a form of cultural discourse aimed primarily at an educated elite.<sup>61</sup>

Another factor that has had a long term effect on the critical field needs at least a passing reference. The defeat of Nazi-fascism in Europe and the end of the Estado Novo led to the delegitimation of the right in cultural discourse. In his memoirs, Viagem no Espaço e no Tempo, Cassiano Ricardo recounts the virtual exodus of intellectuals from the staff of A Manhã in early 1945, presumably to establish oppositional credentials or fearful of being identified with the now discredited authoritarian regime.<sup>62</sup>

Since 1945 the left has maintained a hegemonic position in the cultural field, which amounts to a sort of inverse relationship between political power and cultural discourse, since the left has never held power in Brazil. This situation has had several consequences. First, writers clearly aligned with the right have largely been excluded from the literary canon and very frequently from even the most elementary forms of analysis. Secondly, the word "conservative" has largely become taboo in the cultural field. The automatic self-identification of intellectuals with the left not only empties the category of any real meaning--except in those cases where political militancy accompanies the identification--but also results in a distortion of the true dynamics of the literary field as well as in a frequent

misrecognition of the true relationship between intellectual work and the power relations of Brazilian society.

### III.

#### Case study: Octávio de Faria

In the 1930s Octávio de Faria (1908-1980) was a prominent and often provocative figure in Brazilian intellectual circles, active--indeed, combative--in both political and more properly literary or cultural debates. His intellectual project, affiliations, and position in the intellectual field reveal some of the major cleavages in Brazilian social thought of the period, representing a rather extreme response to the multiple transformations then underway in Brazilian society, a conservative and ultimately reactionary stance toward social and cultural modernization.

With his brother-in-law Alceu Amoroso Lima (1893-1983) and Affonso Arinos de Melo Franco (1905), among others, Faria belonged to a group of intellectuals Alberto Guerreiro Ramos refers to as a jeunesse dorée. Coming from traditional, wealthy families, these intellectuals were by and large uninvolved in direct political action through party affiliation and concerned primarily with intellectual life. The jeunesse dorée saw the transformations leading up to and following the Revolution of 1930, which implied a restructuring of political power and a loss of prestige for their class, as resulting from a lack of mental, intellectual, and social discipline rather than from economic or political factors. Their analysis, in which politics reduces to an essentially moral problem, led to an emphasis on psychological or moral solutions. The nation's crisis could be overcome, they believed,

only through the country's "re-Christianization," the political dominance of educated elites, and the improvement of the national character through increased spirituality.<sup>63</sup>

The jeunesse dorée, like many other intellectuals of the period, advocated authoritarian, elitist forms of social organization, frequently reflecting condescension if not outright scorn for the masses and middle-sectors, whose political awakening had contributed significantly to the social crisis of the early 1930s. They called for a regeneration of elites and the political leadership of enlightened intellectuals like themselves.

Politically speaking, Faria was perhaps the most doctrinaire of Brazilian novelists of the 1930s, rivalling even Jorge Amado, who tended to express a fairly orthodox Stalinism in his early fiction. In many ways, Faria and Amado epitomize the political extremes of the literary field at the time, and their indirect and sporadic polemic between 1933 and 1937 on the nature and function of literature exemplifies those extremes. Unlike Amado, however, Faria's first major intervention in the intellectual field was as a political essayist and polemicist. Before publishing his first novel, Mundos Mortos (1937), he wrote three book-length essays--Maquiavel e o Brasil (1931), O Destino do Socialismo (1933), and Cristo e César (1937)--which expound a rather elaborate political theory. Influenced by European thinkers such as Nietzsche, Maurras, Maritain and Berdiaef, as well as Brazilian Catholic social thought, Faria's essays are confessedly fascist in ideology and allegiance.

Faria's fascination with fascism combined a fear of change and the loss of privilege with an fetishistic concern with preserving social order, the "nation's" traditions (defined essentially as his class' traditions), and the

authority of the Catholic church. His initial presence in the intellectual field came just prior to the Revolution of 1930, when it was still unclear what direction the inevitable political and social transformations would take. Like many others of his generation, Faria thought Brazil and the modern world were on the edge of an abyss.

It was in this ambience of what he saw as imminent political catastrophe that Faria presented his thesis, titled "Desordem do Mundo Moderno" ("Disorder of the Modern World") at Rio de Janeiro's Law Faculty in 1930. He would later develop the thesis into Maquiavel e o Brasil and Destino do Socialismo. The thesis title goes a long way toward explaining the underlying motivation of Faria's thought. "Disorder," a constant in Faria's political theory, translates as liberal democracy, socialism, the presence of the masses in political life, and any rebellion against or disrespect for authority, be it cultural, social, political, or spiritual. In the Tragédia Burguesa disorder appears as decadence and, especially, sin.

On one level, the whole of Faria's intellectual endeavor represents an appeal for order through allegiance to temporal and spiritual authority, embodied by the state on the one hand, and the Church on the other. Or in other words, Cristo e César. In his analysis, however, authority itself--expressed variously as power, truth, morality, or tradition--tends to become an absolute value. His obsession with authority helps explain his political and creative writing as well as his attitude toward Brazilian modernism and his opposition to sound in film, for both had strayed from the established canon.

Faria's Tragédia Burguesa, an immense, Balzacian roman-fleuve comprised of fifteen volumes published between 1937 and 1979, is unprecedented and

unparalleled in Brazilian literature for both its extension and its obsessive nature, revealing the spiritual failure of a generation that grew up in Rio de Janeiro between the wars. The Tragédia concerns the bourgeoisie's anguish, despair, decadence, and sin in a context of political, economic, philosophical and moral chaos characterized by an excess of freedom, a loss of faith, and a lack of respect for authority. The Tragédia's fifteen volumes interweave a number of narrative lines, each focussing on a shifting and ultimately interrelated set of personages in conflict with themselves, with each other and with God. Uniting them is a common inability to resist being dragged into "o lodo das ruas" (the title of the Tragédia's third volume).

In Faria's view, adolescence is the transitional period that marks the characters' fall from the grace of childhood into the often sordid degradation of adulthood. It is the moment of sexual initiation which leads to a permanent crisis of conscience in a Manichaeian struggle between good and evil, between God and the Devil. The bourgeois is the "Devil's favorite son," and his "tragedy" is closely tied up with the inability to resist sexual temptation. In Faria's words, "It is the tragedy of the bourgeois in freely choosing the way of the Devil, which is also the way of sex."<sup>64</sup> In a constant recasting of Adam's original sin, his failure to establish the dominance of the will over bodily instincts, Faria equates sex and evil. Succumbing to the desires of the flesh is the same as submitting to the designs of the devil.

The Tragédia Burquesa presents a stream of characters struggling against or, more frequently, giving in to sins of the flesh. Mundos Mortos opens with Ivo attempting to resist masturbation. Like Ivo are dozens of other characters, vainly resisting homosexuality, infidelity, prostitution, and

seduction in various forms. The only character throughout the Tragédia who does not succumb or cynically lead others astray is Carlos Eduardo in Mundos Mortos, and he dies, run over by a car. Frequently referred to as an "angel," Carlos Eduardo becomes a symbol of an impossible goodness and purity. Faria's dark vision of human beings and society is evident in the titles of some of the Tragédia's constituent volumes: Dead Worlds, The Mud of the Streets, Angel of Stone, The Renegades, Portrait of Death, The Unworthy.

Faria's authoritarianism is closely linked to a fear of disorder and a desire for a return to a past in which traditional values were respected and revered. The Tragédia Burguesa is his fullest expression of his desire for order and stability in both spiritual and political terms. If the bourgeois in the Devil's favorite son, liberalism is the corresponding political evil. Os Caminhos da Vida (TB, II) presents a clear allegory of the politics of liberal democracy in the fraudulent election for editor of a school journal, symptomatically titled Século XX (20th Century). The novel's (and the Tragédia's) central character, Branco, is defeated by the dishonest machinations of his arch-rival, Pedro Borges.

The election reveals Faria's vision of Brazil's political and moral chaos, which derives from the corruption and spiritual weakness of its citizens, led astray by intellectuals such as the Liceu's director, Luiz Veloso, who is an atheist, a positivist, and a political liberal. The fraudulent election, the novel seems to be saying, is a "natural" outcome of such thought.

More important than thematic elements for understanding Faria's literary authoritarianism is the role of the novel's narrator in substantiating its ideology. The Tragédia Burguesa is an immense roman à thèse, a genre Susan Suleiman defines as "a novel written in the realistic mode (that is, based on



an aesthetic of verisimilitude and representation), which signals itself to the reader as primarily didactic in intent, seeking to demonstrate the validity of a political, philosophical, or religious doctrine." It normally posits an authority in the text --the omniscient, intervening narrator, in the Tragédia--which echoes outside authority and interprets the text's meaning in such a way as "to eliminate ambiguity and... delimit the [reader's] range of interpretation." In this sense, it is an authoritarian genre. In Suleiman's words, the roman à tese "appeals to the need for certainty, stability, and unity that is one of the elements of the human psyche; it affirms absolute truths, absolute values."<sup>66</sup> Although indicative of the Tragédia's authoritarianism, the genre per se is not, obviously, a casual factor. Rather, it provides a particularly appropriate vehicle for the author's expression of fundamentally authoritarian social vision.

The Tragédia Burguesa's narration is almost totally lacking in subtlety. Faria, along with others of his generation, has long been criticized for his neglect of style. Bernardo Gerson suggests that Faria's concern with the revelation of "truth," the unmasking of human nature, and the relations of force that shape individual destiny leads to a disdain for literary forms.<sup>67</sup> In the preface to Destino do Socialismo, Faria asserts that "he has no intention of making literature (writing pretty sentences and avoiding the repetition of words for forty lines)." <sup>68</sup> The same holds for the novel, as message clearly takes precedence over style.

The Tragédia's authorial voice is, to risk a tautology, authoritarian. In Mundos Mortos (TB, I) the narrator explicitly defines himself as male and Catholic. He intervenes frequently in the narration, not with the wry irony of a Machado de Assis, but in a humorless fashion, condemning, praising, or

otherwise passing judgement on his characters, telling the reader what he (the reader always masculine) should think about them, or subjecting the reader to sometimes lengthy expositions of the narrator's thought, normally of a moralistic nature.

Such narrator interventions in the Tragédia Burguesa have the effect of closure. There can be no reader participation, only reader submission, no interpretation other than that given incessantly by the narrator. His narrative is teleological and moves inexorably, if slowly, to its predetermined end. As Pedro Américo Maia, puts it, Faria proposes not only a meaning, but also an axiology, a non-ambiguous and inviolable system of values remitting to a doctrine existing outside the text itself. Octávio de Faria, as narrator, sets himself in the position of a superior being who abdicated his role as writer to assume that of tutor.<sup>69</sup> The authoritarian relationship between the narrator and his readers is thus homologous with that of the Prince and his subjects.

## NOTES

1. Some representative studies are: Carlos Guilherme Mota, Ideologia da Cultura Brasileira (1933-1974) (São Paulo: Atica, 1977); Gilberto Vasconcelos, Ideologia Curupira: Análise do Discurso Integralista (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1979); Kenneth Paul Erikson, The Brazilian Corporative State and Working-Class Politics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Laurence Hallewell, Books in Brazil: A History of the Publishing Trade (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1982); Simon Schwartzman, et.al., Tempos de Capanema (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1985); Héliogio Trindade, Integralismo (São Paulo: Difel, 1974); and José Miguel Wisnik, "Getúlio da Paixão Cearense (Villa-Lobos e o Estado Novo)," in Enio Squeff and José Miguel Wisnik, Música (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1983).

On the role of intellectuals, see Luciano Martins, "A gênese de uma intelligentsia: os intelectuais e a política no Brasil, 1920-1940," Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais, no. 4, vol. 2 (June 1987), 65-87; Jarbas Medeiros, Ideologia autoritária no Brasil: 1930/1945 (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1978); Sérgio Miceli, Intelectuais e Classe Dirigente no Brasil (1920-1945) (São Paulo: Difel, 1979); Lúcia Lippi Oliveira, et. al., Elite Intelectual e Debate Político nos Anos 30 (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1980); Lúcia Lippi Oliveira, et.al., Estado Novo: Ideologia e Poder (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1982); Daniel Pécaut, Les intellectuels au Brésil: de la construction de la société à celle de la démocratie. Vol. III of Le Role Politique Des Intellectuels en Amerique Latine (Paris: Centre d'Etude des Mouvement Sociaux, 1986); Maria Teresa Aina Sadek, Machiavel, Machiavéis: a tragédia octaviana (São Paulo: Símbolo, 1978); Mônica Pimenta Velloso, Os Intelectuais e a Política Cultural do Estado Novo (Rio de Janeiro: CPDOC, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1987).

2. Antônio Cândido, "Literature and the Rise of a Brazilian National Self-Identity," Luso-Brazilian Review, V, 1 (June 1968, 22-43. Wilson Martins refers to this process of "routinization" as the transition from "modernism" to the simply "modern." História da Inteligência Brasileira, VI (São Paulo: Cultrix, 1978), xxx.

3. "O Movimento Modernista," in Aspectos da Literatura Brasileira, 5th ed. (São Paulo: Martins, 1974), 242.

4. Daniel Pécaut, Les intellectuels au Brésil, 27.

5. Afrânio Coutinho, Introdução à Literatura no Brasil (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria São José, 1966); Antônio Cândido, "Literatura e Cultura de 1900 a 1945," in Literatura e Sociedade, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1965).

6. See Edward W. Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983). I have cited from the British edition (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 174.

7. For a theoretical exposition of the cultural field's symbolic

reproduction of the field of power, see Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed," tr. Richard Nice, Poetics, 12 (1983).

8. Bourdieu's critique of Kantian aesthetics is outlined in "Postscript: Towards a 'Vulgar' Critique of 'Pure' Critiques," in Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, tr. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 485-500. See also Nicholas Garnham, "Bourdieu's Distinction," Sociological Review, 34 (May 1986), 423-433.

9. Garnham, 425. For a more extensive discussion of the notion of field, see Pierre Bourdieu, Questões de Sociologia, tr. Jeni Vaitsman (Rio de Janeiro: Marco Zero, 1983), 89-94; "Intellectual Field and Creative Project," tr. Sian France, in Knowledge and Control, ed. Michael F.D. Young (London: Collier MacMillan, 1971), 161-188; and "The Field of Cultural Production."

10. Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, cited by Nicholas Garnham and Raymond Williams, "Pierre Bourdieu and the Sociology of Culture: An Introduction," in Media, Culture and Society: A Critical Reader, ed. Richard Collins, et.al. (London: Sage Publications, 1986), 123.

11. Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic, 171.

12. "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies," in The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post-Modern Culture, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983), 139, 149.

13. Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production," 323.

14. Velloso, Os Intelectuais e a Política Cultural do Estado Novo, 8-12. In reference to the literary field during the First Republic, Nicolau Sevcenko has shown convincingly that those intellectuals, such as Euclides da Cunha and Lima Barreto, with a more critical perspective tended to be marginalized within the cultural field. See Literatura como Missão: Tensões Sociais e Criação Cultural na Primeira República (Sao Paulo: Brasiliense, 1984).

15. Oliveira, "As Raízes da Ordem," in Revolução de 30: Seminário Internacional (Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília, 1982), 508.

16. Miceli, Intelectuais e Classe Dirigente no Brasil, especially 130-140.

17. Velloso, Os Intelectuais e a Política Cultural do Estado Novo, 1-2.

18. Thomas E. Skidmore, Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 116-119, 123-123.

19. Marilena Chauí, "Notas sobre o pensamento conservador nos anos 30: Plínio Salgado," in Reginaldo Moraes, et.al., org., Inteligência Brasileira (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1986), 28.

20. For an excellent summary of Oliveira Vianna's thought, see Medeiros, Ideologia Autoritária no Brasil. Citation from page 164.

21. Ibid., 159, 175.
22. Pécaut, 14, 30.
23. Pécaut, 24, 30; Chauí, "Notas sobre o pensamento conservador.
24. "Luciano Martins, "A gênese de uma intelligensia...", 65-87; Pécaut, 32.
25. Hallewell, Books in Brasil, 272.
26. Guilherme Figueiredo, Cobras & Lagartos (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1984), 10.
27. Pécaut, 72-75, 90-96; Velloso, Os Intelectuais e a Política Cultural do Estado Novo, 17-18.
28. See debates following the section "Intelectual e Ideologia," in A Revolução de 30: Seminário Internacional, 567-572.
29. Velloso, Os intelectuais e a Política Cultural do Estado Novo, 22, 29.
30. Ibid., 24.
31. Antônio Pedro, "Samba da legitimidade," M.A. Thesis, Universidade de São Paulo (1980).
32. See Cecília Meireles, "Samba e educação," A Manhã, 18 January 1942; Velloso, 34-35.
33. Alexandre Marcondes Filho, "O Governo e os Intelectuais," Cultura Política, II, 13 (March 1942), 7-10.
34. Antônio Cândido, "A Revolução de 1930 e a Cultura," 27-36; Luciano Martins, "A gênese de uma intelligentsia," 84; Miceli, Intelectuais, 129-197.
35. Antônio Cândido, Literatura e Sociedade, 137. Figures also cited by Renato Ortiz, A Moderna Tradição Brasileira: Cultura Brasileira e Indústria Cultural (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1988), 28.
36. Hallewell, Books in Brasil, 184. Much of the information in this section is taken from Hallewell's study, the most comprehensive available.
37. Silviano Santiago, "História de um Livro," Papéis Avulsos 4, Centro Interdisciplinar de Estudos Contemporâneos, Rio de Janeiro (1988).
38. Miceli, Intelectuais, 77. Miceli provides substantial statistical information about the industry in the 1938-1943 period.
39. Miceli, 84; Hallewell, 246.
40. Hallewell, 268.

41. Hallewell, 263-264. As Miceli describes it, Olympio's authors "include both the regime's organic intellectuals, recently coopted by the central government (Azevedo Amaral, Alceu Amoroso Lima, Pontes de Miranda, Oliveira Viana, Octávio Tarquínio de Souza), and the figures of greatest literary prestige among the new novelists (Graciliano Ramos, José Lins do Rego, Rachel de Queiroz, Octávio de Faria, Cyro dos Anjos, Lúcio Cardoso, João Alphonsus), plus a whole category of writers who obtained the [publishing] house's approval because of their activity in the bureaucratic circles of the state apparatus." Intelectuais e Classe Dirigente no Brasil, 89, n. 26.
42. Miceli, 95.
43. Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production," 317.
44. Adélia Bezerra de Meneses Bolle, A obra crítica de Alvaro Lins e sua função histórica (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1979), 23-24.
45. João Luiz Lafetá, 1930: A Crítica e o Modernismo (São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1974), 57.
46. Descriptions from Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Roberto Alvim Correa, João Cabral de Melo Neto, and Carlos Gesteira. Cited by Bolle, 48.
47. Citation by Lúcio Cardoso in Brito Broca, "Os intelectuais pensam: Da imaginação à realidade... A palavra de Lúcio Cardoso," Dom Casmurro, II, 54 (9 June 1938). Marques Rebelo in Brito Broca, "Os intelectuais pensam: Marques Rebelo falou," Dom Casmurro, II, 62 (6 August 1938, 7. Amado in "Em Surdina," Boletim de Ariel, III, 4 (January 1934), 97.
48. Cândido, Literatura e Sociedade, 130-136. More recently, Hayden White has pointed out the proximity of historiographical and literary discourses. See Tropics of Discourse (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).
49. Pécaut, 65-66.
50. Antônio Cândido, "Os escritores e a ditadura." See also Carlos Guilherme Mota, "Cultura e Política no Estado Novo (1937-1945)," Encontros com a Civilização Brasileira, 7 (January 1979), 87-94.
51. The photograph is reproduced in Cassiano Ricardo's memoirs, Viagem no Espaço e no Tempo (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1970), and in Mário de Andrade, Cartas a Murilo Miranda (1934-1945) (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1981).
52. According to Bourdieu, all of the agents engaged in a specific field have a certain number of fundamental interests in common, especially regarding the functioning and perpetuation of the field itself. Thus a certain objective complicity tends to underly surface antagonisms. Such complicity is evident in the founding of the ABDE. Bourdieu, Questões de Sociologia, 90. See also "O Mercado de Bens Simbólicos," tr. Sérgio Miceli, in Bourdieu, A Economia das Trocas Simbólicas (São Paulo: Perspectiva,



1982), 99-181, especially 106, n. 7.

53. For an overview of the congress see Carlos Guilherme Mota, Ideologia da Cultura Brasileira (1933-1974) (São Paulo: Atica, 1977), 140-141. Also Cândido, "Os escritores e a ditadura."

54. Antelo, Literatura em Revista, 235.

55. See Carlos Drummond de Andrade, O Observador do Escritório (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1985), 25-26; also Antelo, 201-202, n. 38.

56. Antelo, 287-290, n. 8.

57. Wilson Martins, A Crítica Literária no Brasil, II, 2nd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1983), 597-598.

58. Ibid., 608-627.

59. Flora Süssekind, "Do rodapé criticofobia (reflexões parciais sobre a crítica literária brasileira da década de 40 aos anos 80)," paper presented at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 3-5 March 1986.

60. Ortiz, A Moderna Tradição Brasileira, 65-68. Figures on the publishing industry, cited by Ortiz, are from Olímpio de Souza Andrade, O Livro Brasileiro: 1920-1971 (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Paralelo, 1974).

61. Silviano Santiago, "Vale quanto pesa (A ficção brasileira modernista)," in Vale quanto pesa (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1982), 25.

62. Cassiano Ricardo, Viagem no Espaço e no Tempo 169-178.

63. Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, A Crise do Poder no Brasil (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1961), 152-167. See also Robert M. Levine, The Vargas Regime: The Critical Years, 1934-1938 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 22; Margaret Patrice Todaro, "Pastors, Prophets and Politicians: A Study of the Brazilian Catholic Church, 1916-1945," Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University (1971), especially pp. 185-202; Margaret Todaro Williams, "The Politicization of the Brazilian Catholic Church," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, XVI (1974), 301-325; and Alceu Amoroso Lima, Memórias Improvisadas (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1973), 151-153.

64. "Octávio de Faria Fala Sobre o Seu Novo Romance," A Manhã (Letras e Artes), 11 January 1948, p. 5.

65. Faria is perhaps the first Brazilian novelist to incorporate the Devil as a central focus in his work. See Tristão de Athayde's three-part "Satan nas Letras," Diário de Notícias, 16, 23, 30 March 1958; Antônio Carlos Villaça, "O Demônio no Romance Brasileiro," Jornal do Brasil, 11 January 1972 (rpt. Tragédia Burguesa, I, 285-288); Villaça, "Octávio, o padre, o adolescente, o Demônio," op. cit.

66. Susan Suleiman, Authoritarian Fiction: The Ideological Novel as Literary

Genre (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 7-11.

67. Bernardo Gerson, "Octávio de Faria: Problemas de um Romancista Católico," O Estado de São Paulo (Suplemento Literário), 27 August 1960, rpt. Tragédia Burguesa, 255-257. For additional comments on Faria's style, see Léo Ivo, "Octávio de Faria," O Estado de São Paulo, 01 February 1958, rpt. Tragédia Burguesa, 255-257; Wilson Martins, "Romance Confessional - II," O Estado de São Paulo, 31 March 1962; Osmar Pimentel, "Releitura de Mundos Mortos," O Estado de São Paulo, 29 April 1967, rpt. Tragédia Burguesa, 277-284.

68. Destino do Socialismo (Rio de Janeiro: Ariel, 1933), xxiv.

69. Pedro Américo Maia, A Tragédia Burguesa da Adolescência (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1980), 161-178.

## COMMENTARY

by

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After reading two versions, long and short, of Professor Randal Johnson's essay, "Literature, Culture and Authoritarianism in Brazil, 1930-1945," I believe we have in this scholarly paper, a major study, reflecting meticulously well-documented research as well as impressively articulated analyses. In writing a vivid sociology of Brazilian literature for this important historical, cultural and literary period, Professor Johnson has not only provided a critical revision of the implications of the period's literary production, he has above all defined the complex and contradictory nature of the Brazilian literary/cultural field in view of its persistent and insidious association with a hierarchical mode of dependency to the State that is frequently elusive and difficult to articulate. Reading this project, I found myself, attracted to the veritable founts of information and data that are absent from most literary studies, but moreover, I was forced to rethink questions of literary and social ramifications that have to do with modernism, literary theory/criticism, cultural nationalism, aesthetics, cultural politics, and by extension, the nature of the post-modern scene in Brazil's present-day vulnerable culture of pós-abertura, with its overly optimistic hopes for the New Republic, its political and economic dilemmas, and its struggle for liberalism/democracy in the wake of a cultural past fraught with authoritarian experiences.

Considering the trajectory of Brazilian 20th century history, culture and literature, Professor Johnson's study contributes an incisive assessment of authoritarian characteristics and structures deeply embedded within Brazilian culture and society because it defines and analyzes a paradigmatic socio-cultural reality, crystallized within the Vargas period, but one that harbors serious implications and insights for the historical past as well as for the troublesome present. Undoubtedly, the overall value of this study lies in its strong emphasis upon and clear exposition of Brazilian cultural production developed in the shadow of the State. In reading this study, one may appreciate how the quest for and the realization of literary legitimation and consecration can become euphemisms for cultural authority and what is considered "genuine" art or "high" art, labels which, no matter how aesthetically sound they

may be, by their very nature perpetuate an authoritarian proclivity that encourages hierarchies and centralization--cultural givens in Brazilian society.

In registering how deeply politicized the Brazilian cultural field became at this time, Professor Johnson, in a fashion, deconstructs Vargas's heretofore heralded dual program of modernization and tradition as a form of corporate and repressive institutionalist modernization, broadly engineered via a program of nationalist authoritarianism but with propaganda suggesting cultural revolution--an audacious trick of illusion that another totalitarian regime in Brazil attempted to pull off more recently. In other words, the absence of "true revolution and profound social transformation" during this period was the result of carefully orchestrated institutional incorporation and organization of culture. What makes Professor Johnson's study especially useful is his ability to juxtapose a clear analysis of the regime's ideologies and policies alongside the complex and non-autonomous position of Brazilian literature, particularly in its seeming independence, considered to be so due to its search for a cultural identity, frequently interpreted as an autonomous and nationalist rediscovery and expression of its cultural roots. By focussing upon the Vargas period as a significant case study of cultural power, tactics and practices, Professor Johnson has delineated the ramifications of a socio-political phenomenon that for Brazil can be recognized as extensive and symptomatic but only now is being understood in analytical and deep structural terms. To my estimation, herein lies the theoretical and important value of Professor Johnson's research.

Professor Johnson discloses with breadth this deep structure of authoritarian cultural power, intermittently challenged by combative or subversive expression in Brazilian literature, but ultimately dominant in its socio-political pervasiveness and entrenchment. Without diminishing the significance of Brazilian antagonistic literature of the period, Johnson also makes a good case for explaining how leftist literature's impact was mitigated by the State's long tentacles of cultural production. While there may be room for debate regarding such a term as "surface antagonism" related to leftist/subversive novels that today are recognized as classics, it is evident, according to Johnson, that the State's incorporation of culture or its "apparatus" or network of "affiliations" cannot be ignored. Johnson executes his analysis of this process most deftly, and his allusion to Althusser's socio-literary observations are most appropriate.

However, from my point of view, Professor Johnson's work harbors a particularly insightful and underlying theme which I find to be of major importance--that is, the description of a Brazilian center of power, be it cultural, literary, social or political. He has addressed and

explained a difficult concept with which Brazilianists of all persuasions have been grappling in their scholarship and teaching. The concept of a Brazilian logocentric arena of cultural power has to do with the notion of Brazilian cultural hegemony or authority, often viewed as an autocratic imposition of a cultural homogeneity, a concept that is constantly resurfacing in socio-literary discussions (see Schwarz in *Que Horas São?* and Roberto Da Matta's "Você sabe com quem está falando?") and in the fiction of today's post-modernist/post-structuralist ideology and society, where forms of marginalized expression struggle against an imposing cultural center of thought that is difficult to identify and to locate.

By defining the complex process behind the planned production of cultural homogeneity, where the State as the powerful central agent/actor becomes an implacable force with a vocation or mission for constructing a nationalist cultural consciousness, Johnson sets in motion the far-reaching implications of such a practice. In so doing, he demonstrates how the State, with complex strategy, was able to incorporate heterogeneous factions of diverse political persuasions without seriously sacrificing its ultimate goals or authoritarian aspirations. In another sense, Johnson also shows how this authoritarian ideology was in fact taken on or practiced by intellectuals of both camps--those adhering to the regime and those making up the opposition (see pp. 10, 14 and 23). With an historical and literary analysis that sheds light upon the treacherous web of authoritarian rule, so characteristic of Brazilian socio-political dynamics, Johnson outlines an arena of power where central control repeatedly succeeds in reducing the possible manifestation of decentering and divisive "differences," either by excluding these differences or incorporating them, on the surface, into a corporate system of elite cultural production under the guise of national sovereignty, order and unity. (In 1975, President's Geisel's *Política Nacional de Cultura* sought to open up cultural avenues as a gesture away from the regime's authoritarian approach to culture during the late 60s and early 70s. Albeit an "opening up," even this program reflected a rather corporate and hegemonic attitude toward the production of culture.)

Given the Brazilian proclivity toward a hierarchical center of cultural homogeneity, frequently discussed by scholars in very vague or rather abstract terms and unlike the concrete and documented detail identifying networks, agencies and agents of cultural power found in Johnson's study, one can see the lasting value of his meticulous project. With its aim of mapping out the machinations and nature of this center of cultural power that was intimately tied to the State and its ideological affiliates--the military, elites, or intellectuals of the extreme Right--, this study zeroes in on the precise elements of authoritarian culture. In light of Johnson's

exegetic presentation, one is better equipped to grasp the full ramifications of the State's creation of culture, particularly its hierarchically-bent creation of a special and powerful "aura" around "Culture;" one, as Johnson states, similar in fashion to Oliveira Viana's authoritarian plan for the *Brasil real* (of patriarchal hegemony) instead of one for the *Brasil legal* (of liberal humanism). This process of repressive manipulation and hierarchical consecration of Culture forces one to reconsider how culture is valued and practiced in such a society. Responding to demands external to literature, intellectuals and artists did in fact become "competitors for authority" as Johnson states, using most appropriately Edward Said's terminology. Johnson captures the essence of this practice when he states:

By the late 1920s and early 1930s many intellectuals tended to associate their activity with the State, which they identified as the "highest representation of the Nation" and to which they attributed the preservation of order, organization, and national unity. They saw their own role as inseparable from the larger goals of the State, and many tended to converge in their profession of authoritarian solutions based on social demobilization. (p. 14)

This scramble for a place in the nation's cultural sun helps one to follow the upward climb through the corporate labyrinth of power inherent in Brazilian State and Society. Tracking this socio-cultural and political pathway toward cultural power, leads one to see potentially serious consequences for the dynamics and poetics of literature because one begins to question the motivation behind the cultural quest for national identity and interests--in other words, whose interests and whose identity? Along these lines, the prevalence of a high/low dichotomy in the evaluation of culture is linked to Brazil's persistent cultural allegiance to educated elites and to those in power, despite the co-existence of extreme political discourses--Left or Right. During the 20s and 30s, the State's calculated maintenance of such a high/low barometer contributed to its continued hostility toward the low and the popular--except for the latter's "cultivated" space in modernist poetics and also in the later social realist novel, an otherwise international, and not specifically Brazilian, literary construct, albeit the originality of an author such as Graciliano Ramos. Without relinquishing cultural space for the true expression of social differences, the State of the 1930s alienated along the way any significant revolutionary art or politics since the government promoted an homogenized and unified image of culture with its special aura, centralized in a patriarchal society and supported by culturally educated elites with little regard for true expression of the diversity or the transgressive found in the popular and the marginal. In the process, authentic expressions of the popular were of course kept at a



distance from the towers of power.

As mentioned earlier, the implications of this study, to my mind, relate significantly to literary poetics and aesthetics, in particular to the nature of Brazilian Modernism because of its purported aesthetic difference from European and North American Modernism, precisely in its non-autonomous nature of seeing literature within a socio-political context, as opposed to the autonomous and purist nature of high modernism in other cultures of the world. On the other hand, because the non-autonomous nature of Brazilian modernism can, on one level, suggest the expression of socio-political and popular themes that convey a notion, albeit false, of a true expression of non-elitist voices in Brazilian modernist literature, Johnson's study, with its basic premise about authoritarian culture, undermines that illusion of a very early expression of the popular in Brazilian literature. On the contrary, Brazilian Modernism reflects an essentially elitist stance, given its high cultural status, one that warrants serious revision because of how this proclivity impinges upon the period under study as well as later decades which continued to witness the prevalence of a high, hegemonic regard or respect for culture that was promoted by the State and supported by other elements in society, such as corporate or institutional hierarchies or networks of culture.

Professor Johnson is correct in viewing the role of popular culture as one of "inspiration" for modernists and that its articulation, distant from authentic expression of the popular, was voiced for the most part by artists and intellectuals for an audience recognized as the educated cultural elite. Although Professor Johnson mentions this point, I believe that it demands stronger emphasis. In other words, as a friendly suggestion, this aspect of his study could be further developed by an additional but brief discussion of comparative modernist aesthetics with the aim of redefining the true nature of the Brazilian modernist thrust within the context of authoritarian culture and power, showing how the elitist modernist stance influenced the time prior to and after this era. I am not suggesting a separate detailed study of Brazilian modernism and its vanguard, but rather a more clear definition of modernist aesthetics of high art and how these are related to authority and power, especially with regard to modernism's actual distance from popular culture or other forms of expression and its prejudices toward the popular which in the Brazilian frame includes a wide span of society and the *povo*.

Because the Brazilian quest for national identity is involved with unearthing popular cultural roots, misunderstanding occurs as to the precise nature and implications of Brazilian literary Modernism and its position vis-à-vis the high/low dichotomy. Since Professor Johnson has so clearly characterized the authoritarian thrust in Brazilian society for the Vargas period and

since modernism covers such an extensive time in this century, I believe more commentary about modernist aesthetics would strengthen his thesis on the pervasiveness of authoritarian strains in Brazilian culture. Especially since he skillfully traces the persistent contradictions, one could almost say 'oxymoronic complexities' within Brazilian culture, where authority and cooptation intertwine to produce a somewhat deceptive cultural reality of a diverse nationalist expression, one whose diversity primarily manifests itself on the surface. In order to underscore the multiple ramifications of this socio-cultural deception, a few statements overviewing literature's relation to power within the realm of modernist aesthetics, which he treats rather succinctly, would clarify more the insidious and complicitous nature of authoritarian rule in relation to literature in Brazil (then and now) as well as characterize the contradictory complexities that explain the surprising ambiguities inherent in Brazilian cultural life. As just one theoretical source for further developing this point, I would recommend Andreas Huyssen's After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986. Besides a firm discussion of modernist characteristics, Huyssen points to the role of modernist aesthetics vis-à-vis social issues, ultimately showing how popular culture became Modernism's "other" in the latter's conception of "high art." Modernism's anxiety of contamination or true contact with popular culture finds, in part, its objective correlative in Brazil's conceptions of high art/genuine art, cultural authority, literary consecration, and the high 'status' of modernism, cultural views that all continued to manifest themselves in the 20s, 30s, 40s and even later.

This aura of high culture along with modernism's high status in Brazil requires more scrutiny in light of Professor Johnson's comprehensive research for it has long-range implications for the recent emergence of cultural differences that are attempting to manifest themselves in contemporary Brazil--such as feminist, ethnic/minority and Afro-Brazilian discourse. The present-day attitude among many of Brazil's intellectuals, artists and cultural elites toward popular or mass culture is indeed linked to maintaining cultural power (the status quo) in Brazil's hierarchical social structure. Since Professor Johnson points to this argument, I believe inclusion of a more delineated aesthetic discussion related to modernism's conception of high art will only strengthen his exegesis.

Although it is difficult to provide substantial constructive criticism that could improve upon Professor Johnson's excellent study, as a form of conclusion to these brief remarks, I would like to make one more minor suggestion concerning Professor Johnson's introductory statements about the increasing scholarly inquiry into authoritarianism and culture. Since today there

exists a healthy interest in this topic, in Brazil and abroad, one could also make the point of stressing the extremely topical nature of this theme in Brazil's best-selling fiction of the 1980s, where such novelists as João Ubaldo Ribeiro, Silviano Santiago and Jorge Amado redramatize the Vargas period respectively in Viva o Povo Brasileiro (1984), Em Liberdade (1981) and Farda. Fardão. Camisola de Dormir (1980). They, along with other writers of plays and films, do so with the expressed aim of depicting the intrinsic and repeated appearance of authoritarian forces and periods in Brazilian culture. This present-day thematic attention to the Vargas period, in its portrayal of an authoritarian tradition hovering over Brazil's fragile image of national identity, dramatically unmask the heavy weight of authoritarianism pressing down upon Brazil's weaker social structures and, in particular, its lowly masses.

Contemporary Brazilian fiction's conscious portrayal of authoritarianism's intermittent presence throughout Brazilian history strives to depict the difficulties in establishing a Brazilian democratic way of life. My reference to the thematic re-emergence/resurgence of the Vargas period in contemporary novels is designed to show the important relevance of Professor Johnson's comprehensive research to present-day issues in Brazil. Furthermore, reference to such novels adheres to his most appropriate non-essentialist approach of viewing literature within the frame of socio-political relations. These contemporary novels which express Brazil's past as well as present socio-political reality, not only point to the nagging and frustrating reappearance of authoritarian forces but also to the repeated suppression of "against-the-grain" cultural differences as well as the existence of the contradictory relationship between intellectuals and governmental forces in Brazilian culture. In concert with Professor Johnson's study on the Vargas period, an early reference to these contemporary novels, perhaps in his introduction, may also help the reader to understand the Brazilian State's dogged preoccupation with cultural homogeneity and authoritarian power in which cultural heterogeneity becomes a potentially threatening situation to a State wary of cultural differences, especially when these try to express themselves authentically in the socio-cultural arena and in Brazilian literature.

In view of the Brazilian postmodernist period of the last two decades, which has witnessed the very slow process of bridging the gap between high and low, between the canon (of venerated titles) and the popular, Professor Johnson's study, as very pertinent socio-literary background to the present cultural scene, prepares the reader for a more lucid explanation as to why this closing of the cultural ranks has been so resistant and late in the Brazilian literary field. With its picture of the Brazilian State's past resistance to true cultural diversity and the educated

elites' sense of cultural hegemony and power, Johnson's incisively synchronic study indirectly, but most evocatively, also suggests a diachronic image of this authoritarian impulse which, I believe, still lurks within the established centers of power ruling Brazilian culture.