

**Brazilian Science Fiction:  
The Construction of National Identity**

**By**

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**Candidate Declaration**

I certify that the thesis entitled “Brazilian Science Fiction:  
The Construction of National Identity” submitted for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy is the result of my own work under the supervision of a team of supervisors  
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### Abstract

This thesis sets out an analysis of Brazilian science fiction since the 1960s to the present emphasizing, in particular, the relationship between this genre and Brazilian national identity. During this study, I focus on the relationship of Brazilian science fiction to the Anglo-American tradition and explore their differences in terms of cultural and literary history. Thus, a comparative analysis is made in order to show different attitudes toward technology in Brazilian and Anglo-American cultures. Using a descriptive and analytic approach, I extend Elizabeth Ginway's ideas about science fiction and national identity by analyzing two works written during the 60s – “O Desafio” [The Duel] by Antonio Olinto and “O Menino e o Robô” [The Boy and the Robot] by Rubens Teixeira Scavone ; two works written during the seventies – *Umbra* by Plínio Cabral and *Asilo nas Torres* [*Asylum in the Towers*] by Ruth Bueno; one work from the 80s – “Stuntmind” by Bráulio Tavares; one work from the 90s – *O Demônio do Computador* [ *The Computer Devil*] by Márcia Kupstas; and one work from 2005 – *Tempos de Fúria* [ *Wrath Times*] by Carlos Orsi. These texts are analyzed in the light of Postcolonial theories, focusing, more specifically, on the ideas of Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Karolyn Merchant, Vandana Shiva and Ivone Gebara. Among other results, I show how that Brazilian science fiction is not only strongly related to issues of national identity but also to Brazilian political and economic reality. During the 70s, for example, the genre was used as an important vehicle of protest against the military regime and for this reason writers tended to focus on the political and economic situation in Brazil. The usefulness of postcolonial theory as a means of opening up Brazilian science fiction to a distinctive kind of reading, also leads to an interesting way of showing distinctions between Brazilian and Anglo-American science fiction. By combining close analysis of literary texts with the analysis of historical, political and cultural contexts, it is clear that Brazilian science fiction was and is used as a way of dealing with national identity and, more particularly, with colonialism/postcolonialism which, whatever view of these one takes, is an inalienable part of Brazil's heritage. The original critical analysis set out in this thesis proves that Brazilian science fiction provides a useful index of social changes at different points in the history of Brazil which enables a new set of readings of the genre to be made in the light of postcolonial and postmodern theories. Translations from Portuguese texts are mine except where identified otherwise.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

AGAPAN – The Gaucha Association for Protection of the Natural Environment

AI – Institutional Act

ALN – National Liberation Alliance

AP – Popular Action

CBTC – Confederation of Christian Workers

CENIMAR – Marine Information Center

CGT – Comando Geral dos Trabalhadores

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

DNSD – Doctrine of National Security and Development

DOI – Department of Information and Operations

GRD – Gumerindo Rocha Dorea

HWC – Higher War College

IMF – International Monetary Fund

IPMs – Military Police Inquires

JUC – Catholic University Youth

LC – Labour Code

MEB – Basic Education Movement

OBAN – Bandeirantes Operation

ORM – Revolutionary Marxist Organization

PCB – Brazilian Communist Party

PDC – Christian Democratic Party

PSD – Social Democratic Party

PSP – Social Progressive Party

SNI – The National Intelligence Service

UDN – National Democratic Union

WPA – The Women's Pentagon Action

### Epigraph

Not so very long ago, the earth numbered 2,000 million inhabitants, that is, 500 million human beings and 1,500 million natives. The former possessed the word, the rest borrowed it. Between the former and the latter, corrupt kinglets, feudal landowners and an artificially created false bourgeoisie served as intermediaries. In the colonies, the naked truth revealed itself; it suited the mother countries to dress it up; they needed the natives to love them, like mothers, in a way. The European elite set about fabricating a native elite; they selected adolescents, marked on their foreheads, with a branding iron, the principles of Western culture, stuffed into their mouths verbal gags, grand turgid words which stuck to their teeth; after a brief stay in the mother country, they were sent back, interfered with. These living lies no longer had anything to say to their brothers; they echoed; from Paris, from London, from Amsterdam we proclaimed the words 'Parthenon! Fraternity!' and somewhere in Africa, in Asia, lips parted: '...thenon', ... 'nity'. It was a golden age.

(Jean-Paul Sartre: preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, by Frantz Fanon)

## Introduction

The history of Brazilian science fiction has always been marked by the presence of foreign models and tendencies which, in one way or another, have contributed to shaping the genre into national perspectives. While it is true that the Anglo-American tradition has played a significant role in the development of a Brazilian genre, it is also true that this relation of dependence has generated a feeling – among Brazilian writers – that Brazil could not provide a framework for authentically produced works of science fiction. For the critic Andrea Bell, this is partly due to “the common and prejudicial corollary that science fiction speaks English and can be only weakly imitated in other languages” (2003: 1). Although this negative feeling persisted among the literary elite for a long time, some writers have persistently tried to transform these foreign tendencies into an essentially Brazilian genre.

Thus, Brazilian science fiction has been modeled according to historical and cultural aspects inherent to the Brazilian people. In other words, the writer’s literary experience has been not only aesthetic but also an expression of his perception of society as a discursive and ideological act.

The history of Brazilian science fiction, then, has shown how writers from different generations have accounted for how Brazilians have struggled toward asserting their own, distinctive national identity. Since the beginning, the genre has emerged as a weapon of combat in favor of an authentic nationhood. In this perspective, it is worth paying more informed attention to the alleged nationalist purposes of science fiction in the light of postcolonial theories since many writers, particularly in their works explored in this study, have certainly used this genre to deal with national and cultural issues.

Arguably, the first critic to highlight the importance of studying Brazilian science fiction through the lens of postcolonial theories was Elizabeth Ginway in her work *Brazilian Science Fiction: Cultural Myths and Nationhood in the Land of the Future* (2004). According to her, Brazil has long epitomized the Eurocentric patriarchal domination of the 'Other', represented by the large number of African slaves imported by Portuguese colonial masters to do forced labor, especially on sugar plantations (p.40). In general terms, the colonial system interferes in the imaginary of the colonized men and marks their representations in space and time. Thus, the colonizer disempowers the colonized people not only from their land but also from their cultural memories and history, generating a feeling of inferiority, impotence and dependence. This process of colonizing minds ensures the maintenance of colonial exploitation and perpetuates the expropriation of the colonized's cultural memories. Brazilian science fiction has witnessed the experience of being the 'Other' and has shown how this process has influenced Brazilian history in all its aspects – politic, artistic and linguistic.

Critics such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak have elucidated the dialectical encounters between the colonized and the colonizer at the same time as they have offered different insights into post-colonial cultural and literary interpretation. Their discussion of the dialectical encounters between Europe and its 'Other' has stimulated the reading of literary texts through the perspective of postcolonial theories that include combining the insights of feminism, ecofeminism, psychology, politics and literary theory. This is clearly what Ginway suggested in her work, though in a limited way. Ginway examines the genre in the periods before, during and after the dictatorship. Her analysis shows that a reading of Brazilian science fiction based on its use of paradigms of Anglo-American science fiction and myths of Brazilian nationhood provides a unique look into the metamorphosis of Brazil in the modern age ( 2004: 14).



Inspired by Ginway's insights, this research is an attempt to enrich the study of national science fiction by providing a more detailed analysis of the genre and exploring its relationship to postcolonial and ecofeminist theories. In doing so, I will point out some important aspects that are contrary to Ginway's arguments: for example, her idea that Brazilian science fiction from the sixties and seventies is apolitical. In order to counterpoint Ginway's ideas, I will make use of the historical and political context of Brazil in which the works were written and highlight aspects that would have influenced the writers.

To begin with, I provide a more consistent overview of Brazil's socio-cultural and political aspects emphasizing some important points not satisfactorily explored in her study but of fundamental importance to understand Brazilian science fiction. The government attitudes toward environmental issues during the seventies, for example, plays a significant role when analyzing Plínio Cabral's *Umbra* (1977) and Ruth Bueno's *Asilonas Torres* (1979), since both works are clearly a critique of the government's negligence regarding ecological problems.

During the eighties, important changes took place in the socio-political and cultural scenario which, somehow or other, contributed to the development of new tendencies in the national genre. After the dictatorship, Brazilians experienced a period of uncertainties, disillusion and a strong sense of hybrid identity. The nation seemed to suffer from a deep disbelief in techno-scientific development and the progress announced. This important historical period is well explored by Bráulio Tavares in most of his works, particularly in "Stuntmind", a work that – despite the national and international recognition it has received – is not explored by Ginway. Unlike Ginway, I pay particular attention to Tavares' work because of his involvement with the genre – both as a writer and a critic – during the four decades emphasized in this study as result of which his ideas have

influenced most contemporary writers who have been championed by science fiction enthusiasts.

In order to demonstrate some important tendencies that have emerged in the last twenty or so years, I analyze Márcia Kupstas' *O Demônio do Computador* (1997) and Carlos Orsi's *Tempos de Fúria* (2005) to make explicit the different phases of the genre in Brazil and its contribution as a register of social changes over the years. These last two works register the most important changes that occurred in the country in terms of social and cultural development and show a strong sense of literary independence, thus providing for the first time a more consistent freedom of styles and themes within the national literature. Thus, for didactic purposes, this thesis is divided into three parts.

Part I comprises one chapter divided into three sections which refer to the history of science fiction and its relationship to colonialism and subsequent forms. Section 1.1 gives an overview of traditional Anglo-American science fiction focusing on the Golden age and the New Wave. Section 1.2 gives a brief description of colonialism and its relationship to science fiction by showing how colonialism and imperialism are important and relevant parts of this genre's historical context. Section 1.3 focuses on the utopian and dystopian character of science fiction highlighting its colonial and postcolonial implications for subsequent manifestations of the genre.

Part II comprises three chapters organized in order to support the textual analysis in the following part. Chapter 2 provides a brief historical summary of the genre particularly during the sixties, as can be seen in section 2.1, and seventies, as shown in section 2.2; but it also shows important tendencies that emerged in Brazil after the military regime and more recently. Therefore, this chapter refers to the state of contemporary Brazilian science fiction. Section 2.3 gives a brief description of Brazilian science fiction after the military regime. It shows how, even today, Brazilian production tends to be strongly influenced by

the Anglo-American tradition and how writers have tried to change this picture by feeding their desire for a genuinely Brazilian production.

In order to show the relation between Brazilian science fiction and postcolonial discourse, chapter 3 comprises a theoretical background of ecofeminist and postcolonial theories including some insights into the emergence of feminist movements that arose in Brazil and in the world during the seventies. Because of some writers' special attention to Brazilian environmental problems, I engage on a discussion of ecofeminist theories in order to support the textual analysis I propose in this thesis. Following this discussion, chapter 4 addresses the political context of the Military dictatorship of the 1960s, 70s and 80s and its policy towards cultural expression in Brazil. It also presents an overview of Brazil's economical and political situation after the dictatorship to the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This chapter aims to show the environment in which works of science fiction were written, and how this political context contributed to the development of the genre during the military regime and after.

Part III deals with the textual analysis of the books chosen. It illustrates the relevance of the theoretical arguments I propose by giving close readings of seven works of Brazilian science fiction. My intention here is to show how these novels and short stories require a distinctive approach to analyse science fiction. In other words, I point out some inadequacies of an Anglo-American approach to Brazilian science fiction, and the relative usefulness of postcolonial and ecofeminist theories to analyze the genre in a national perspective. Given that, in Brazil, the genre of science fiction is strongly related to the issues of myth and utopia, both postcolonial and ecofeminist theories have greater relevance to Brazilian science fiction since they reconceptualise utopianism and myth, in different ways. Thus, chapter 5 is divided into seven different sections, each of which examines a different work chosen according to its importance for the development of the genre, as well as its bearing on national issues. In sections 5.1 and 5.2, I analyse two works

from the 1960s, Antônio Olinto's "O Desafio" [The Duel] and Rubens Teixeira Scavone's "O Menino e o Robô" [The Boy and the Robot] both written in 1961. The focus on the image of the robot attempts to show the writers' perspective on technology before the military regime. According to Ginway (2004), Brazilian authors appropriate a First World genre that deals with science and technology, and by transforming its paradigms make it antitechnological and national. In both texts the function of the robot is associated with the status of slaves in Brazil, thereby recalling myths of Brazilian national identity. My intention here is to extend Ginway's observation by analyzing these texts under the light of post-colonial theory which she omits to do. I will be drawing on Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) as well as other important perspectives in the field of postcolonialism, such as those presented by Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon explores the consequences of identity formation for colonized people (here slave/robot) who are forced to internalize a sense of self as 'Other'. The colonizer is civilized, rational, and intelligent; the colonized remains 'Other' incapable of being equal or better than the colonizer. Like Fanon, Said also explores the relationship between colonizer and colonized, but from a different angle. While the former emphasizes the colonized, the latter pays more attention to the colonizer. My analysis here will be focusing on the asymmetrical relation between colonizer and colonized, that is to say, the relation between the man/master and the robot/slave.

In sections 5.3 and 5.4, I analyse two novels from the 1970s: Plínio Cabral's *Umbra* [Shadow] (1977) and Ruth Bueno's *Asilo nas Torres* [Asylum in the Towers] (1979) both written during the military regime. The analysis of these novels shows the genre of science fiction as an important vehicle of protest against the military dictatorship. Here my intention is to analyse these works from the perspective of ecofeminist and postcolonial theories showing how these novelists' perspectives differ from those presented during the sixties and how they deal with issues of national identity during the military regime.

Besides the ideas of Frantz Fanon and Edward Saïd, I extend the analysis by using the contributions of theorists such as Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha to postcolonial studies, as well as the ideas of ecofeminists such as Karolyn Merchant, Vandana Shiva and Ivone Gebara whose works have stimulated a growing number of studies in Brazil and Latin America. Here, the ecofeminist insight is useful to explain the understandable gesture of cultural resistance vis-à-vis the fear of modernization, which threatens to destroy Brazilian culture and humanistic traditions. By analysing these works in the light of postcolonial and ecofeminist theories, it is possible to see how Brazilian identity is strongly linked to its colonial history and how this history is marked by an imperial hegemony. In other words, Brazilian science fiction can reveal the ways in which imperialism and colonialism have shaped Brazilian identity.

In section 5.5, I analyse Bráulio Tavares' "Stuntmind" (1989) as a representative work of the eighties, one, that, in my point of view, best describes the socio-political and cultural tensions that affected Brazil after the military regime. Tavares provides a good illustration of the revolution of information during the eighties and of Brazilians' disbelief in progress as a result of the techno-scientific development. In this same perspective, I analyse Márcia Kupstas's *O Demônio do Computador* [*The Computer Devil*] (1997), in section 5.6. Here, the computer is used as a way of exploring issues of sexuality, class and gender. By using this technological device, Kupstas critiques the role of woman in society and tries to offer an alternative way of encouraging social changes on behalf of women. However, because of her ambivalent discourse Kupstas seems to replicate colonial values instead of showing resistances to them.

The last section, 5.7, comprises an analysis of a representative of the most recent tendencies of Brazilian science fiction. Carlos Orsi's *Tempos de Fúria* [*Wrath Times*] (2005) offers both an illustration of Brazilian postmodern society with its contradictions and distortions and the larger experiment of the genre evolving toward a more independent

genre. Orsi seems to have found the right measures by which to fit Third World reality into a first world genre. His innovation in style and method resulted in a Brazilian mode to fit Brazilian reality. In general terms, contemporary writers tend to be extremely ambivalent in their discourse suggesting their ambiguous responses to contemporary Brazilian culture and society.

As stated above, one of the major themes in Brazilian science fiction is to allude to issues to do with Brazilian national identity. What precisely this entails is of course a vast subject in itself. While, for reasons of lack of space, this notion cannot be examined in great detail, it is nevertheless appropriate to recognize that Brazilian readers of Brazilian science fiction, who have finished at least high school, will consciously and sub-consciously recognize allusions in Brazilian science fiction to Brazilian history and the current and past ways of life. Therefore, for readers of this thesis who are neither very familiar with the politico-administrative history of Brazil nor its social history, I believe that it is important to share a very brief introduction to certain major historical events in Brazil and a few of its best-known central figures who for better or worse, stamped their ideas on the country and thereby contributed to how Brazilians saw and still see themselves. These facts and central figures remain a yardstick by which Brazilians judge how the country has changed or remained the same, and therefore how the minimally to well educated Brazilian reader interpreted and continues to interpret the science fiction works analysed in this thesis. This is, however, without intending to suggest that there is universal consensus about this.

The non-Brazilian reader should note that Brazil as a colony of Portugal (1500-1822) was ruled from Lisbon and the relationship was directly between the capitânias (the administrative areas into which the colony was divided) and Lisbon and that the capitânias made no major attempt to coordinate their requests and complaints. Lisbon refused to

allow any manufacturing whatsoever in Brazil in order to guarantee an outlet for products from Portugal.

There was no equivalent to an Aztec or Mayan civilization in Brazil prior to the arrival of the Portuguese. In general, the Indians of Brazil slowly retreated before the advance of the Portuguese and were more likely to be wiped out by disease brought by the Europeans than through acts of war and massacre. The dominant tribal grouping was of the Tupi Guarani on the Atlantic coast. There was little exploration or white settlement of the Amazon until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and even then was minimal. Most states of Brazil still contain remnants of Indian tribes but apart from in the Amazon, in most states, these peoples are not easily distinguishable from the local population of 'sertanejos' or rural workers.

From early times, slaves ran away from their masters and over time they formed communities later called quilombos in the interior. This became particularly prevalent in Bahia where, some records suggest, up to around 30,000 ex-slaves formed a group of communities. Rio considered these quilombos an affront to the nation and set out to destroy them. This led to a long series of armed conflicts between the Imperial power and these communities who in the mid-late 17<sup>th</sup> century were led by Zumbi who resisted the Imperial army for many years before finally being betrayed and executed. Zumbi has become a hero of the Afro-Brazilian political movement and today Afro-Brazilian consciousness is celebrated on 20 November, mention always being made of the symbolic significance of Zumbi. Bahia is also popularly known as the Black state, the historical district known as Pelourinho in the state capital of Salvador being a major centre of Afro-Brazilian culture and traditions.

In 1808 the flight of the King of Portugal, Dom João VI, from Portugal to Brazil, during Napoleon's advance, was made possible by the English who exacted exclusive trading rights from Brazil in exchange for this help. England then became the economic

colonizer, especially after Dom Pedro I declared independence from Portugal in 1822 and this became further consolidated when his son, ironically a modernizer, was deposed and the Republic declared in 1889. England remained the dominant economic power in Brazil until the First World War after which the United States steadily gained in influence and itself became dominant during World War II and from then to the 80s; some would argue this continues until today.

As to relatively modern major figures who have a continuing impact on national identity, two stand out: the ‘cangaceiro’, Lampião and the long-time leader of the Communist party, Luis Carlos Prestes. A ‘cangaceiro’ was kind of cowboy-cum-outlaw. They were semi-autonomous figures who sold their services to landowners in the interior of the Northeast, often by implementing violently what the landowner wished. The most famous was Virgulino Ferreira da Silva known as Lampião and his female companion Maria Déia better known as Maria Bonita. They and most members of their gang were eventually hunted down, killed and beheaded in 1938. Some of the tales about Lampião have a Robin Hood quality and he does seem to have had a strong code of personal values that typify the Northeast which he expressed in the very characteristic, strong idiomatic dialect of the Northeast. On balance he must be classified as a villain but his legend and the positive, different values of life in the interior are captured in many of the sayings he has said to have coined do survive and add to national pride in much the same way as Canudos does.

In summary, the verifiable historical acts of Zumbi, in Canudos and of Lampião, in a sense, symbolize what a life with little or no access to technology is like; that this has values for those who live this life; and deserves respect from city-dwellers, especially the middle classes and rich. In other words, national identity is also about respecting and enjoying a country that has a diversity of values.



## Part I

### 1 Science Fiction: A First World genre?

Science Fiction has been regarded as a First World genre for a long time. Its close relationship to developments in science and technology generated a feeling that only First World countries could produce works of authentic science fiction. From this malformed perspective, Third World writers are relegated to the position of mere reproducers/imitators of great science fiction narratives from the First World in which change comes about through science and technology to which, and the future of the world, are closely related to them. Although science fiction has often been perceived as being prophetic, the critic Adam Roberts (2000: 29) notes that most science fiction texts are more interested in the way things have been and because of this the future is relegated to mere stage dressing while the past is obsessively revisited and reconsidered.

More recent approaches have shown that it is possible to build an interesting dialogue involving science fiction and some concepts roughly linked to studies in the field of postcolonialism, imperialism, feminism and ecofeminism and so forth. These new approaches have suggested that analysing the genre of science fiction by taking other fields into account, allows more voices to be heard, particularly through the lens of postcolonial theories. According to the critic John Rieder in his work *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (2008), there is a connection between the early history of science fiction

and the history of discourses of colonialism. In his conception, colonialism forms a significant historical context for early science fiction; the utopian and satirical representations of encounters between European travelers and non-Europeans such as Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) are part of the genre's pre-history, as shall be seen further on.

According to Paul K. Alkon (2002) the term Science Fiction was coined in 1851 by William Wilson in *A Little Earnest Book upon a Great Old Subject*, and then forgotten. The phrase gained currency only after Hugo Gernsback reinvented it in 1926 to replace his less graceful neologism *scientifiction* as a description for the project of *Amazing Stories*, the magazine he founded in 1926. Since then, the term has been subject to much discussion. One important definition is that of Darko Suvin whose ideas have become the standard for many writers and critics of the genre:

SF is, then, a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main device is an imaginative framework, alternative to the author's empirical environment (2005a: 27).

Suvin's insight is focused on the concepts of estrangement and cognition which together imply a state of partial and imperfect knowledge. Cognitive estrangement is the result of coming to understand what is just within, and was formerly beyond, our mental horizons. In other words, the literature of cognitive estrangement involves a defamiliarization of aspects of the ordinary world through the labour of the author's and the reader's cognition. Perhaps the easiest way of understanding Suvin's perspective is to consider the way in which he distinguishes science fiction from myth. According to him, myth is opposed to the cognitive approach since it conceives human relations as being fixed and supernaturally determined: "Where myth claims to explain once and for all the essence of phenomena, science fiction first posits them as problems and then explores

where they lead to” (2005: 28). Suvin also states that the literary genre, in which the physical world is shaped, is, in some magic or religious way, determined by ethics, instead of being neutral toward the hero or the total human population of the present world; denies the autonomy of physics; and can be called metaphysical. But not all estranged genres result in making the reader aware of this contrast. Science fiction narratives, for example, offer no assurance as to the outcome of their protagonists’ endeavors.

In order to demonstrate his distinction between science fiction and metaphysical genres, Suvin uses the binary opposition of naturalistic/estranged, and cognitive/noncognitive. According to him,

Metaphysical genres shun historical time: myth is located above time, folktale in a conventional grammatical past which is really outside time, and fantasy in the hero’s abnormally disturbed, historio-sophically dislocated present into which irrupts a “black” timelessness of another extrahistorical time. Inversely, SF shares the omnitemporal horizons of naturalistic literature, ranging through all possible times. Though concentrating on the cognitively plausible futures and their spatial equivalents, it can deal with the present and the past as special cases of a possible historical sequence seen from an estranged point of view – since any empirical historical point or flow can be thought of as one realization among practically innumerable possibilities (2005b: 63-64).

Undoubtedly, Suvin’s ideas have played an important role for subsequent studies of speculative literature. However, I would argue that his explanation of myth is reductive and limited, since myth has played a significant role in the study of mankind's evolution in all its aspects. The most important themes about human existence are usually represented by mythological narratives which provoke a sense of self identification in the reader, as if he/she could learn more about his/her own identity through myth. Arguably, certain important themes are held in common between science fiction and myth. Both appeal to the dramatic dimension of life and deal with personified characters. These literary devices lead the reader to identifying personally with the situation and characters and to undergoing an emotional experience. In addition, the future is an integral part of both kinds

of narrative; the emotional dimension is usually transformed into inspiration which is somehow related to the future. In speculative literature, myth is a central element because it conjures up possibility. That is why some science fiction narratives have combined mythological aspects with modern perspectives, as we shall see in Brazilian science fiction.

Also important in this discussion is the way Suvin defines fantasy the structure of which, in his conception, derives from myth. "Fantasy is a genre committed to the interposition of anti-cognitive laws into the empirical environment" (2005: 27). Arguably, this definition is limited and reductive since it can be considered a subgenre of speculative fiction and therefore it shares certain commonalities and strengths with science fiction. When it comes to the difference between science fiction and fantasy the discussion could go further. Drawing on Suvin's ideas, James Gunn establishes some important aspects for both kinds of narrative:

Fantasy and science fiction belong to the same broad category of fiction that deals with events other than those that occur, or have occurred, in the everyday world. But they belong to distinctly different methods of looking at those worlds: fantasy is unrealistic; science fiction is realistic; fantasy creates its own universe with its own laws; science fiction exists in our universe with its shared laws. Fantasy is a private vision that one accepts for the sake of a vision; science fiction is a public vision that must meet every test of reality. The basis of fantasy is psychological truth; nothing else matters. The basis of science fiction is the real world... (2005: 10-11).

This distinction between fantasy and science fiction has been important for the study of the latter in Brazil where some readers and critics, possessing a superficial knowledge of the genre, have identified many science fiction works as mere variations of other genres such as magical realism. Arguably, this identification may be justified by the fact that both magical realism and science fiction have offered a similar way of presenting and responding to reality in modern times. For the Brazilian critic Irlemar Chiampi (1980: 20), the emergence of this new style of novel (Magical realism) during the 60s provided new perspectives in the literary field in Latin American countries. Works such as José

Maria Argedes' *Yawar fiesta* (1941), Jorge Luis Borges' *Ficciones* (1944), Miguel Ángel Asturias' *El Señor Presidente* (1946), Alejo Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* (1949), Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955) and Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien Años de Soledad* (1967) are among works which show the break with the traditional model of the realistic discourse. According to Chiampi (1980), this new model differs from the traditional style in many aspects:

... a desintegração da lógica linear de consecução e de consequência do relato através de cortes na cronologia fabular, da multiplicação e simultaneidade dos espaços da ação; caracterização polissêmica dos personagens e atenuação da qualificação diferencial do herói; maior dinamismo nas relações entre narrador e narratário, o relato e o discurso, através da diversidade das focalizações, das auto-referencialidade e do questionamento da instância produtora da ficção (1980: 21) [... the disintegration of the linear logic of the sequencing and consequence of the tale by slicing up the chronology of the fable, multiplying and there being simultaneity of action spaces; polysemic characterization of the characters and the attenuation of the qualification that differentiates the hero; greater dynamism in the relationship between the narrator and narratee, reporting and discourse, by means of diversifying focalizations, of self-referentiality and questioning the productive instance of fiction ].

Indeed, many of these characteristics are present in science fiction by Brazilian authors produced from the 60s onwards as if the magical realism model that had emerged in Latin America during the 60s influenced how the genre of science fiction developed in Brazil. In a way, magical realism frequently presents elements of science fiction and vice versa. Therefore, Suvin's ideas of estrangement and cognition have also played a significant role in making a distinction between those genres and have enabled Brazilian critics to rethink a definition that could include the particularities of a national genre. The novelist Damien Broderick (1995: 155), for instance, used Suvin's concepts in order to draw up a definition of science fiction that reflected 20<sup>th</sup> century cultural, scientific and technological changes of the twentieth century. According to Broderick, science fiction is a kind of storytelling that is native to a culture, which has been undergoing the epistemic changes implied in the rise and takeover of technical-industrial modes of production,

distribution, consumption and disposal (1995: 156). Broderick's perspective reflects the undercurrents of the late 50s and 60s, a turbulent and paradoxical era of changes for the genre, and a period when Anglo-American science fiction was eager to redefine its paradigms.

The American Paul K. Alkon (2002) unlike Suvin establishes a link between science fiction and myth. According to him, "science fiction might indeed be defined as the narrative use of science to create myths allowing new points of view to the imagination" (p. 7). But Alkon himself admits that his definition is normative rather than descriptive since not all science fiction succeeds in creating such myths, much less in creating myths as powerful as those established by the genre's masterpieces. In his words,

... this definition neither covers all works commonly termed science fiction nor does it suggest all the aesthetic consideration necessary for understanding as well as judging their artistry. Nor do any other definitions so far proposed (2002: 8).

However Alkon's considerations about science fiction and myths can be very useful when it comes to analyzing Brazilian production from the 1960s. As we shall see, cultural myths are an excellent point of departure for analyzing Brazilian science fiction. According to the science fiction critic Elizabeth Ginway (2004: 16) "the function of science fiction in Brazil is, in part, to capture the overwhelming experience of change, and because of this, one of its persistent features is the reference to myths of national identity". As an initial list of the most recurrent myths she includes those of Brazil as a tropical paradise, Brazil as a racial democracy, Brazilians as a sensual and docile people and Brazil as a country with potential for national greatness. Whether in literary or popular form, these myths offer a sense of continuity and serve as the base of Brazil's imagined community. The Brazilian literary critic, Roberto Causo (2003) also emphasizes the relevance of analysing Brazilian science fiction through national myths. According to him,

the myth is a central element in early Brazilian science fiction and it cannot be overlooked. Although incorporating myth into science fiction runs counter to Suvin's definition, this forms a distinctive aspect of Brazilian science fiction. Discussion on literature and mythology has extended the boundaries of science fiction and enhanced the possibilities of new perspectives on the genre. The close relation between these two narrative forms is undeniable. Arguably, science fiction has inherited many elements from mythological narrative and this is easily noted in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) or in H.G. Well's *The Time Machine* (1895). Both writers combined science fiction and myth in order to provoke in the reader to identify with their personified characters and usually depict the future as complex and multi-faceted. As pointed out by Thomas Disch (1998: 61), science fiction has become an integral part of our lifestyle and culture; through its characters, icons, stories and themes, it has inspired the reader and provides the raw material for turning the future into a personalized journey and way of life. From this perspective, science fiction and mythological narratives have, in part, the same breadth and scope and share the same themes regarding human existence while they connect the individual with the cosmic. Therefore, I would argue that Suvin's definition does not include all the experiences provided by the genre of science fiction.

After analysing numerous definitions provided by the Anglo-American tradition and considering Brazilian writing, Léo Godoy Otero (1987), one of the most important science fiction critics in Brazil, set out to formulate a definition which covered, at least, the most popular and critically important works from the 1930s to 1970s. He defines science fiction thus:

... Um método literário eminentemente especulativo, cuja constante deve ser a ciência e a tecnologia para as quais são estabelecidos fatos, os quais, uma vez elaborados no tempo, venham a produzir uma nova situação e uma nova estrutura para a ação humana... (1987: 15) [... an eminently speculative literary method, the constant of which should be science and technology for which facts

are established, which, after having been honed over time, start to produce a new situation and a new structure for human action...].

Otero goes on to state that there is a strong connection between science fiction and mythology because of myth's power to motivate and inform people as well as its ability to embrace contemporary issues. In his insight, Otero does not mention terms such as utopia, estrangement or cognition. Instead he summarizes his concept in three ordinary words: speculative, science and technology. By taking this position, he does not deny the presence of utopian speculation or cognitive estrangement but stresses what seems to be essential in the genre in Brazil: the writers' awareness of issues of modern life and their strategy of using national myths and science fiction icons in order to produce a national and distinctive hue to the genre.

Arguably, the problem with conventional definitions of science fiction is that they are not amorphous, i.e., they do not take into account the different meanings of science, technology and reason, in different cultural contexts. In this regard, Causo (2003: 295) suggests that it is important to take note of the "ideological distances" between Brazilian and the Anglo-American models of speculative literature and create different strategies in order to represent and explore Brazilian cultural contexts. Therefore, postcolonial and ecofeminist theories have been helpful when analysing and exploring Brazilian science fiction and reveal important elements that are distinct from those of international models.

The history of Brazilian science fiction has shown that the difficulties encountered in adopting definitions from the Anglo-American tradition are associated with these not being in accord with the distinctive culture and history of Brazil. Suvin's definition, for example, is inappropriate as an approach to Brazilian science fiction of the 60s and 70s, because the latter is explicitly concerned with questions of national myth. In addition, technological progress was not then seen as a positive phenomenon for the society as a



whole and many critics adopted the idea that science and technology would affect negatively Brazilians' behavior and identity negatively.

In many respects, Brazilian science fiction is closer to the British tradition than the American one. For example, one of the most prominent science fiction writers whose ideas played an important role in the formation of Brazilian science fiction was H. G. Wells, who trained in science, and based his fiction on extrapolation from biology and astronomy as in *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1886), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). In these novels, Wells expressed anxiety about empire exploring class differences, scientific experimentation and alien invasion, as stated the critic Aijaz Ahmad (2008). At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mirroring Wells's works, some Brazilian writers started to develop a different style of writing, the main characteristic of which was scientific experimentation, but which always focused on the myth of national identity, as we shall see in a later chapter.

Early American science fiction from the 1920s and 1930s, on the other hand, was more preoccupied with scientific optimism and utopianism. It was written for a newly literate class of Americans, eager to learn about science and technology. The science fiction of the pulp magazines edited by Hugo Gernsback during that early period presented a utopian view of the world which was informed by technological and social optimism. This attitude is, in part, justified by the cultural imperialism generated by the American economic expansionism at this time.

According to Brian Attebery (2003) Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* magazine was the first not only to limit its fictional contents to stories of scientific extrapolation and outer-space adventure but also to attempt to define the genre which the editor initially called 'scientifiction', but had begun to refer to as 'science fiction' by 1929. However, it was Gernsback's successor, John W. Campbell who insistently emphasized that science fiction needed to explore the social implications of technology and science, thus extending

its relevance to how this includes people's lives. This is clearly one of the main concerns of Wells who, in various ways, engaged on popular scientific education for the population at large but this thinking is more clearly seen in Isaac Asimov's robot stories. According to Patrick Parrinder (1979), Asimov's robot stories are deliberate attempts to counteract the view of technology as inherently self-destructive. He discusses the most efficient means of exploring the planet and asteroids on the solar system. For Asimov, Jupiter should be colonized both on account of helium and because it could contain life which might turn out to be edible.

Arguably, many of Asimov's ideas were decisive for the discussions that shaped the genre from the 1940s to the 1970s. His humanistic perspective contributed to an increasing number of science fiction works that reflect human and social values as a whole, particularly in Third World countries. Some Brazilian writers, for example, used his ideas in order to demonstrate the fear that technological progress can destroy human values that are deeply rooted in Brazilian identity and which in many respects differ from the Anglo-American tradition in many aspects. Tendencies that emerged with the movements of the Golden Age and the New Wave in England and the United States were central to the development of the genre in Brazil and other Latin American countries.

In order to understand the connection between Brazilian and the Anglo-American science fiction during the 60s and the 70s, it is worth mentioning how the Golden Age and the New Wave ideas contributed to how different perspectives in Brazilian science fiction were formed.

### **1.1 The Golden Age and the New Wave**

Distinguishing Brazilian science fiction from Anglo American is not that simple, in part because of the social-cultural differences between British people and Americans, and

in part because of how the history of science fiction in both places has changed. Prior to the 1960s, a group of writers including Isaac Asimov, James Blish, Frederik Pohl, Cyril M. Kornbluth and Judith Meril expressed their utopian optimism about the contribution of science and technology to humanity and tended to eulogize the scientist as an agent of social progress and economic stability. This period is known as the Golden Age of Science Fiction which is also characterized by its linear narratives and its idiom of technological adventure idiom. This period is marked by the existence of many science fiction magazines aimed at an adult audience which encouraged new writers and were a source of new ideas for established ones. *Astounding*, *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, *Amazing*, *New Worlds* and *Galaxy Science Fiction* were some of the most important magazines which exerted considerable influence on the form and subject matter of science fiction. Many of the most representative writers of the Golden Age were first recognized when their works were published in these magazines.

Although there were some alliances among writers, fan conventions and loose science fiction clubs sprang up during this period. Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein, for example, took different positions within the science fiction universe. According to Adam Robert,

Both positions are ideological but Heinlein's work and life took place much more deliberately in the arena of politics... The main thrust of Heinlein science fiction in the Cold War years was to advocate the perpetuation and growth of the military-industrial complex (2005: 202).

Heinlein tried hard and deliberately, through fiction, to make a true statement about the nature of his own society: that if technology changed, its foreign policy would have to change as would its morality and constitution and everything else. Another important writer whose production was expressively linked to the themes of wars was Philip K. Dick. Most of his works, written during the 50s, were concerned with interpreting the phantasmal

and the real, or the human and the machine, under conditions of perpetual war – including *The Gum* (1952), *Breakfast at Twilight* (1954), *Some Kinds of Life* (1953), and *The Variable Man* (1953). The idea that permanent war means permanent technical innovation was strongly suggested in his protagonists' acts. In Roger Luckhurst's words,

Dick wrote explicitly under the shadow of the Bomb, stating in his essay 'Pessimism in Science Fiction' that he was writing in the midst of a world-wide view that there had been a loss of faith in science and progress, and that to avoid the topic of war and cultural retrogression as some schools of science fiction writers and editors have done, is unrealistic and downright irresponsible (2005: 108).

Dick's critique of consumerism is justified by the fact that during the 1950s most science fiction publishers and editors were not worried about literary values and thematic contents but their main concern was packaged material for a fixed market. In a sense, the American science fiction in the era between 1945 and 1960 was complex and multiform, and since it was in this period that the dominant lines of the genre emerge, a description of it has had to be detailed. The English scene was no less complex, but it was also undoubtedly reactive to developments in the US on many levels. American post war science fiction was more bullish, can-do and outward looking. British writers, on the other hand, had a different tone; more introverted downbeat and pessimistic. But there are reasons which justify such divergences; In the 1950s the United States was an expanding nation while Britain was in a period of austerity which also saw the beginning of its formal loss of Empire, i.e. former colonies becoming independent. After the war, the MacMahon Bill made it illegal to share nuclear information with foreign powers, including the British. This was one of many measures which established that global power had shifted from Britain to the United States of America. Thus, it seems that British discourse about futuristic modernity was less confident than the American one. This British way of seeing modernity helped to establish

an indigenous science fiction scene almost as soon as restrictions on paper and print were lifted after the war. In this regard, the critic Roger Luckhurst wrote,

It is understandable that any nation should prefer its own individual style to develop, but it is equally non-understandable that so many British editors and publishers, to acquire a strictly British slant, should go back to the primitive slough from which American Science Fiction has been slowly climbing for so many years (2005: 122).

Luckhurst goes on to make a critical observation about British science fiction but he also emphasizes the contribution of British style to the genre as a whole. It is notable that Golden Age Science Fiction presents different characteristics and definitions in the United States and Britain, which makes it difficult to find a definition that might include all the tendencies presented by both American and British writers. In general however, most Golden Age writers cultivated a new generation of fans by combining utopian optimism and an idiom of technological adventure. Commenting on the impact of Golden Age Science Fiction, Roberts (2005: 228) stresses: “For many readers, the Golden Age is the real thing, the heart of the science fiction, the paradigm to which definitions of the genre should adhere”. For some critics, the Golden Age was a period when all the major writers were established, a time when people could really dream about a futuristic world.

However, with the advent of the 1960s the world witnessed important changes in the political, cultural and literary fields. The liberalization of laws on abortion, civil rights and censorship compete with moments when the same legal and political institutions panicked and sought to constrain these freedoms. This period was also marked by the generational dissent of the young, a clash of generations, and this included a rebellion against the establishment in art, fashion and music symbolized, for some, in the phrase of ‘Swinging London’ or through the drugs, rock music and counter-culture lifestyle of hippies in San Francisco. In the political field there was a scenario of liberalization in different parts of the world: the student uprising in Paris, American student-led dissent

against the Vietnam War and the announcement of many other alternative manifestos occurred during the 1960s, as illustrated by Luckhurst (2005: 142). Unsurprisingly, in Science Fiction history, these years are also regarded as an era of arguments between the generations, crisis and rebellion. More expressively in Britain, a group of writers led by Michael Moorcock, editor of the *New Worlds* magazine, wanted to redefine and revitalize the literary mainstream of science fiction. This new period was known as New Wave Science Fiction.

New Wave writers aimed to make a more direct intervention into society than previously, and took their various stands on a political base that was frequently adversarial. In this regard, Dick had a great influence upon subsequent writers since one of the challenges these writers had to face was to articulate New Wave Science Fiction within the wider cultural history of the 1960s. Themes like the Cold War, the Vietnam War and the assassination of the President Kennedy were common in many works of the decade. Heinlein's *Farnham's Freehold* (1964), for example, seems to have been a complex mixture of apprehension, panic and rage which indicates his conviction that in 1964 the future had at long last arrived.

According to Luckhurst (2005: 143), New Wave Science Fiction dismissed the space race as an exercise in thrusting nationalism and ideological mystification. He also states that some writers seemed to be very resistant to the cybernetic languages of capitalist efficiency that followed after the first real inroads of computerization into western economies. In this refusal to accept the glittering promise of technological modernity, New Wave science fiction echoed other cultural avant-garde movements of the time, which surged forth in the theatre, cinema, fine art and novel. This new generation represented by Brian Aldiss, J.G. Ballard and Michael Moorcock in Great Britain and Samuel Delany, Harlan Ellison, Robert Silverberg, Tomas Disch, Roger Zelazny, Pamela Zoline and Philip K. Dick in the United States, emphasized the dark-side of technology and reacted against

the conventions of the traditional method. Most of these writers regarded Golden Age science fiction as an exhausted mode of low culture trapped in a ghetto of its own construction, although many of them had been great contributors to this very period, as pointed out by Luckhurst (2005).

The English New Wave more clearly defined the shift from muscular adventure in outer space to psychological examination of inner space. In Christopher Priest's words,

The new Wave was always an essentially British phenomenon, because there was a genuine spirit of revolt within it, and the revolution was against the axioms of the American school. However, a number of independently minded American writers – notably Thomas M. Disch and Samuel Delany – visited London and became regular contributors to *New Worlds*, and in due course the New Wave crossed the Atlantic (1979: 199).

Among the American writers, there were those who somehow were divided between the paradigms of the Golden Age and the New Wave; Delany, for instance, had initially refused to identify himself with the New Wave observing that: "To say that I was, somehow, a representative of the New Wave is tantamount to saying that Science Fiction has no history" (Luckhurst, 2005: 162). Another important leader of the New Wave whose works are forged in both Golden Age and New Wave paradigms was Dick. It is unconvincing to argue that Dick wished to depart from science fiction within the framework of aesthetic discussion on the high and low culture which was self-consciously used by New wave advocates. Although, Dick wrote a number of novels within mainstream, broadly realist, conventions, he perceived himself as a writer, inspired by Van Vogt and Robert Heinlein and even suggested that the community of science fiction writers and readers could be the model for the humanitarian empathy he idealized in his fiction.

Another important aspect of this period is that migrant American writers began to stir what the notion of national identity meant to them in a melting pot. This arose because these writers had joined up with their British counterparts in a relatively new spirit of

science fiction internationalism, as opposed to their continuing to engage on the pan-Americanism of the early post- World War II period. In general terms, the New Wave movement changed the course of the history of the genre and its greatest contribution was to provide an outlet for the individual writer to proclaim publically, under different guises, the notion that reality might not be what it appears. The New Wave, thus, contributed to the emergence of new approaches in the universe of science fiction and this led to an increase in the number of studies that explored the relationship between the genre and other fields.

In this climate of change, the combination of science fiction and postcolonialism emerged as an alternative way to explore the impact of imperialism on the literary field. According to the science fiction critic Ericka Hoagland (2010: 6) postcolonial literature and science fiction share much in common; both have been perceived as literary outcasts; both have been used in explicitly political ways; both have attempted to make sense of a world that is startling in its complexity and brutality; both are inherently moralistic and ethics-driven; both have the 'Other' as one of the most important markers. Although Hoagland points out all these similarities, she also notes that each has been perceived as having a distinctive relationship to popular culture: "by comparison, postcolonial literature is a stranger to popular culture, specifically Western popular culture. If science fiction is plebeian, then postcolonial literature is patrician, an elitist literary genre". It is worth mentioning that post-colonial literature found a natural home among First World writers while science fiction found its natural home among Third World writers; however, this apparent distance between these two different ways of seeing the world started to shrink during the 1960s in works such as Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965) which is considered prototypical for postcolonial science fiction. After *Dune* there was a considerable increase in postcolonial science fiction or science fiction with postcolonial themes. According to the critic Gerald Gaylard (2010: 22), "this literature examines the spatio-political complexities



engendered by the uneven access to modernities and their technologies that is characteristic of colonialism and postcolonialism”. This could be a good description of some Brazilian writers’ works during the 1960s and 1970s, particularly those by André Carneiro, Rubens Teixeira Scavone, Antônio Olinto, Dinah Silveira de Queiroz, Plínio Cabral and Ruth Bueno. This group of writers shaped the genre by focusing on issues of race, gender, nature and their relationship to imperialism. This attitude reveals the strong relationship between colonialism and science fiction in Brazil. As we shall see in the next section, there is a close connection between the history of the genre of science fiction and colonialism which has been extended to subsequent sub-genres. By analysing this relationship it is possible to show how and why the genre of science fiction and its subsequent forms sometimes react against and sometimes reflect the values of colonialism.

## **1.2 Colonialism and its Relation to Science Fiction**

The connection between science fiction and colonialism can be illustrated through their shared preoccupations with discovering new worlds and wondrous journeys. Critics have demonstrated that similarities between colonialism (and its subsequent forms) and science fiction have been central to the appearance of new approaches and countless studies regarding the genre of science fiction and its subgenres. In this section, my intention is to establish some important points regarding how postcolonial science fiction emerged, which is defined by Hoagland (2010: 5) as a hybrid genre that reflects intriguing affinities between two genres the very parameters of which continue to be vigorously contested by writers and critics. In order to understand postcolonial science fiction, it is important to demonstrate the links between science fiction and colonialism.

In *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (2008), John Rieder discusses the connection between the early history of the genre of English-language science fiction

and the history and discourse of colonialism. Starting in the seventeenth century, he identifies Cyrano de Bergerac's *The Comical History of the States and Empires of the Moon and the Sun* (1657) as an important branch of the genealogy of science fiction. He states that the main target of Cyrano's satire is the question of celestial mechanics and the key element of the satire is the way the author mocks, parodies, criticizes and denaturalizes the cultural norms of his French contemporaries. According to Rieder:

The example of Cyrano suggests that the disturbance of ethnocentrism, the achievement of a perspective from which one's own culture is only one of a number of possible cultures, is as important a part of the history of science fiction, as much a condition of possibility for the genre's coming to be, as developments in the physical sciences. The achievement of an estranged, critical perspective on one's home culture always has been one of the potential benefits of travel in foreign lands (2008: 2).

Contact with different cultures enabled European colonizers to develop a scientific discourse about culture and mankind. Such a discourse played a strong role in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century science fiction. Behind the anxieties of competition between mercantile corporations and imperialist governments present in these fabulous narratives, there is always the imposition of a superior power over an inferior group whose cultural values tend to fade away. Paradoxically, early science fiction sometimes reacts against and sometimes reflects the values of early colonialism. In this regard, Rieder states that colonial invasion is the dark counter-image of technological revolution. With regards to technology, as in other contexts, the history, ideology and discourses of colonialism dovetail with a crucial, double perspective that runs throughout the genre: on one hand, the wondrous exploration of the new and to-be-marvelled-at encounter with the strange, but on the other, the post-apocalyptic vision of a world gone disastrously wrong in the name of progress. Arguably, the idea of progress and all other colonial values are shown in order to justify the destruction caused by the process of colonization. According to the critic

Frederic Jameson in his work *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science fiction* (2005),

Progress is the form of social memory demanded by capitalism, an awareness of qualitative social change that links the past to the present under the narrative logic of growth or development... Science fiction emerges as a counter-strategy that revitalizes the notion of progress by transforming our own present into the determinate past of something yet to come (2005: 149).

Jameson goes on to state that because of the ideology of progress the relationship of the present to the future inevitably took some of its tone from colonial discourse. Both science fiction and colonialism have a shared interest in exploring and encountering the unknown usually justified because of their upholding and promoting ideas of progress, as can be seen in works such as *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*. These ideas usually claim the unknown place as unclaimed and timeless space occupied by plants and animals but disorganized and without social and economic structures. Thus, the ideology of progress dictates a new way of life in which the present exists without any connections to the past. In response to this discourse, science fiction, and subsequently, postcolonial science fiction have provided a critical reflection on colonialism and postcolonialism, as well as a critical insight into neo colonial situations. According to Rieder,

Two aspects of the construction of a world-embracing capitalist economy are particularly relevant to the relation between colonialism and the emergence of science fiction. The first is the realignment of local identities that accompanied the restructuring of the world economy. As local economy ravaged by the new extractive industries (oil, rubber, tin, copper, precious metal) and regional specialization of agriculture (cotton, sugar, pineapple) became "underdeveloped" and dependent, so too the cultures that the traditional economies had supported often were thrown into shock and disarray (2008: 26).

Clearly these aspects are related to the ideas of modernization, civilization and savagery which are closely related to the contemporary colonial and imperial situation. In other words, Rieder discusses how some countries with a colonial past have been subjected

to a neo-colonial relationship to First World countries. In the case of Brazil, its colonial relationship to Portugal merged into a neo-colonial relationship with the US justifying the idea that imperialism led formerly colonized civilizations to accepting a cultural legacy. The history of Brazil demonstrates the perpetuation of the effects brought about by this cultural imperialism which is a key element in the international system of power.

Paradoxically, the ideology of progress tackles the opposition between civilization/modernization and savagery such that natural laws do not have any impact on 'the triumph of civilization'. In this perspective, to be civilized and modern means to be devoid of any kind of savagery; if there were any, this may suggest that has been a lack of progress in a civilized society. The opposition between savagery and civilization is particularly expressed in H. G. Well's *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) as an allegorical representation of the process of civilization but this is also emphasized in *The War of the Worlds* (1898).

Thus, in order to emphasize the connection between the early history of the genre of science fiction and the history and discourse of colonialism, it is worth mentioning that utopian and satirical representations of encounters between European travelers and non-Europeans – such as Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), Cyrano's *Comical History* (1657), and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) – may be said to represent part of the genre's prehistory. As stated by Rieder, the period of the most fervid imperialist expansion in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century is also the crucial period for the emergence of the genre (2008: 3). Jules Verne's *Voyages Extraordinaire*, for example, inevitably referred to the contemporary colonial and imperial situation. When it was translated into English in the late 1860s, it contributed to shaping the genre and extending the utopian and satirical representations of encounters between European travelers and non-Europeans. Indeed, utopia and satire are two key elements in Verne's narratives because they express the different ways in which early science fiction responded to colonialism. Verne critically shows that while everyone

receives a thrill from there being technological advances, not everyone benefits equally from them. In fact, technological advances produce an enormous difference in power between those who own the source of the advance and those who merely make use of or admire the advance.

Verne's marvelous journeys do not simply penetrate unmarked space. Often the travel gains its interest by defying political boundaries and threatening to render them meaningless. The opposition of the unbounded, anarchic sea to the national, political organization of the land is far more important to *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* than is the design or practicality of Captain Nemo's submarine (2008: 32).

Rieder goes on to state that Nemo introduces a new unevenness into technological development that potentially destabilizes the contemporary distribution of political, economic, and military power systems. Such technological breakthroughs inevitably contribute to an economic and cultural distribution that is uneven. No matter the destination – an island, somewhere underground, or the Moon – Verne's satire was a tellingly distorted reflection of the readers' culture and a platform for philosophical debate. In other words, no matter the ostensible destination of 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century science fiction, it invariably took a satirical look at the contemporary world. Thus, the main function of the features of the to-be-marvelled-at imaginary land was to provide critical, subversive analogies with the norm, the plot's point of departure in both a geographical and axiological sense; and the central effect of the voyager's journey and return was that his values had been transformed. The presence of colonial elements in 18th century voyages is undeniable. However, Rieder may have oversimplified discussion of 'the function of the imaginary land's marvelous features' because this function is associated with the writer's intention. Arguably, Rieder is projecting his own biased critical insight onto these texts. To what extent did these authors aim to provide a critical discussion on colonialism by means

of telling the tale of a fictitious 18<sup>th</sup> century voyage? The answer to this question is strongly related to the ambivalence with which these texts address colonialism.

Another important writer who has an ambivalent relationship with colonialism is H. Rider Haggard as exemplified in *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and his subsequent colonial narratives. Haggard depicts the scramble for Africa and the racial prejudices dominant in his time. While Allan Quartermain, his protagonist, shows some sympathy for black Africans, he demonstrates his belief that black/indigenous and white people must remain separate. Clearly, on many occasions during Haggard's narrative the indigenous peoples are depicted as the "others" – ignorant of European technology and customs, superstitious, savage, easily frightened and irrational. Examples of prejudice are scattered throughout the narrative. On many occasions Quartermain displays extreme prejudice. This is well illustrated in the episode in which the protagonist gives his luggage to an old native man to keep. The way he describes the native man, reveals his deepest feelings toward those indigenous people: "a savage whose greedy eyes I could see gloating over" (p. 69). If on the one hand Haggard seems to be an advocate of the colonialist ideology, on the other hand there are clear indications of his intentions to keep African traditional society.

In the closing segment of the novel, where Umbopa, the king of Kukuani, says he will not allow any white men to enter his kingdom because he needs to protect his people, Haggard's discourse is ambivalent:

[no] white man shall cross the mountains . . . I will see no traders with their guns and rum. My people shall fight with the spear, and drink water, like their forefathers before them. I will have no praying-men to put the fear of death into men's hearts, to stir them up . . . and make a path for the white men who follow to run on (p. 306).

If on the one hand the author does not suggest the possibility of true equality or unity among these two different races, on the other hand, he does acknowledge and support the existence of noble values inherent to both races. Thus, Haggard's narratives show both

the complexity of the colonial situation and reasons for being ambivalent about this in a very realistic way. Arguably, this ambivalence is partly justified by his experience as a colonial administrator of the British Government in Africa where he developed and maintained close relationship with the African people and their culture.

Also important for this discussion is H.G Wells's *The War of the Worlds* (1898) which is, arguably, one of the most prominent examples of science fiction that provides a critical reflection on 19<sup>th</sup> century colonialism. Wells' novel prompts the reader to think about the cruelty of colonization and the negative side of the technological progress while, at the same time, it illustrates the fear of being colonized by the other in the form of Martians, which can be interpreted as the British feeling that they may be losing their imperial power. In the first chapter of the novel, the narrator reflects on the nature of the Martians by showing the devastating effects of the process of colonization initiated by European immigrants:

... And before we judge them too harshly, we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and dodo, but upon its own inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit (p. 78).

At the same time that the narrator expresses his 'fear of the Other/ Martians', he demonstrates his feeling of superiority toward Tasmanians, showing both the complexity of the colonial situation and its ambivalence in the same way as Haggard's protagonist, Quatermain, does. In the passage above, there is an explicit critical reflection on Britain's empire building habits. By turning the situation around, and making the British subject to alien invasion, Wells, arguably, gets the British to think about what it might be like to be at the receiving end of colonialism. Wells's narrator asks his English readers to compare the Martian invasions of Earth with the Europeans' genocidal invasion of Tasmania. This

comparison is made not just to remind the reader that arrogant colonialists invaded and destroyed a technologically inferior civilization, but also that, given their hypertrophied brains and prosthetic machine, the actions of these colonialists can symbolize what may happen to the human race in the future. Indeed, the narrator's discourse may represent the uncertainties of his race's future or the possibility of the human race becoming the 'Other'. What is very interesting is the fact that the protagonist/narrator is 'unnamed' which may suggest his lack of identity. Thus, *The War of the Worlds* (1898) can be read in more than one way indicating an ambivalent attitude toward imperialism.

It seems that preoccupations with alien invasion in late 19th to mid-20th century science fiction are grounded in imperialism, as one can see in *The War of the Worlds*. Indeed, the confrontation of human and aliens in many science fiction narratives is very similar to the confrontation of colonizers and colonized during the process of colonization. Arguably, the popularity of this theme in British science fiction, for example, is due to the fact that it taps into anxieties about imperialism and colonialism which marked not only Europe but also mankind as a whole. Both forms of domination are mobilized by imperial principles: the desire to conquer, dominate and impose. For Hoagland (2010), the relationship of science fiction to imperialism has never been simple,

... While on the one hand science fiction either ignores the problems that exist between different human cultural groups or perpetuates the prejudices of the dominant culture, presenting alien races in such a way as to assuage imperialist guilt or affirm imperialist desire, on the other hand science fiction has long been critical of the far-reaching arm of empire (2010: 7).

Hoagland's statement is well illustrated in Wells's novel. While the protagonist expresses his fear of being destroyed by the Martians' destruction, he recognizes that his race has started this process first: "we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought". This self-reflection regards Martians and Europeans as potentially having the same propensity to destroy humans, which suggesting ambivalence



in terms of social values. From the protagonist's reflection, a perpetuation of the prejudices of the dominant culture is made evident: "Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness". This suggests that as reflected in the author's own discourse, individuals are in conflict with themselves over the correctness of the values of their society.

Thus, science fiction is a form of literature that may reflect upon both imperial and colonial practices and forms of power. From a colonialist perspective, the concept of the 'Other' is used to justify the invasion and exploitation arising from the process of colonization. However, much science fiction mingles the roles of self and the other that inform colonial and imperial discourse. Hoagland suggests that the same/other relationship is similarly complex in postcolonial literature (2010: 9). In both postcolonial literature and science fiction, questions of self-other distinctions are raised, that undermine colonial logic. Therefore, science fiction and postcolonial literature can reinforce, or reproduce self-other logic, while at the same time they can demonstrate inconsistencies and ambivalences about the meaning of colonialism. Thus, the same can be said about postcolonial science fiction which is currently seen as a difficult genre to define. Controversies around the term 'postcolonial' have given rise to endless debates in this area. For Hoagland,

Postcolonial is a deceptively neutral term, suggesting an apolitical nature to the discipline and assuming that colonialism has come to an end. As such, more appropriate terms particularly 'neocolonialism' which recognize colonialism's continued presence, albeit in different forms, have been proffered as a replacement for postcolonial (...) 'postcolonial' implies that the 'post' can be firmly situated at a specific date; that is just as the term appears to be politically neutral, so too does it present itself as temporally general and this occludes the fact that colonies did not become 'post' at the same time (2010: 10).

Indeed, the term 'post' is significant for both colonialism and science fiction. While the term can suggest that 'colonialism has come to an end', it can be taken as a synonym for future in science fiction or any other speculative genre. The idea of 'post' is usually associated with changes and transformations that may, opportunely, refer to the process of

modernization. After having been colonized or taken by aliens, any society would undergo a process of transformation, whatever the positive or negative effects of colonization. For the critic Ania Loomba (1998: 8) the term 'postcolonial' is not adequate for the task of defining contemporary realities in countries that were colonized. It is historically imprecise but may also obscure the internal social and racial differences of many societies. In fact, the process of colonization affects many aspects inherent in a society that cannot be easily defined and for this reason, the term does not specifically deal with them. Loomba (1998) also suggests that experience of colonialism within a society can vary at least according to gender and class. Thus, postcolonial science fiction is in a position to explore these difficult facets to society, though, at a high level of ambivalence.

Andy Sawyer in the foreword to *Science Fiction, Imperialism and the Third World* (2010), presents some important aspects of postcolonial science fiction in the Third World. The book is a collection of essays that examine both the position of the Third World in science fiction and the position of science fiction in the Third World, as well as the intersections of science fiction and postcolonial theories. According to Sawyer,

A postcolonial science fiction allows space for the different voices of science fiction in Europe, Latin America and the Asian and African Diasporas, and explores the nature of Otherness and futurity, and what happens when these ideas are expressed by those who were the subjects of the early versions (2010: 2)

In other words, the genre has been useful for critiquing both colonial and neo-colonial situations. Sawyer is, probably, indicating that there is a shift toward a more sympathetic representation of the other in later science fiction, in which the 'other' is given a voice in the text, whereas, arguably, in traditional science fiction the other is subject to the discursive logic of a protagonist who represents the familiar. Contradicting Sawyer's argument one could site Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) as an example of early science fiction which is critical of the colonial endeavor. Indeed, the history of the genre of

science fiction genre has shown that the relationship between colonialism, postcolonialism and science fiction has been strongly linked to the writers' viewpoint toward these imperial systems. For this reason, many science fiction narratives are ambivalent in relation to colonial/imperial ideologies. In Latin American science fiction, particularly that of Brazil, satire provided an effect that both protected and protested against the military regime. Some writers satirised the dictatorship and the capitalist economy that aimed to maintain the Third World nations in an underdeveloped, dependent position, as we shall see further on.

For the purpose of this research, the most appropriate concept of postcolonialism is that presented by Patrick Williams in his introduction to *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory* (1994). For him,

... the concept proves most useful not when it is synonymously with a post-independent historical period in once-colonized nations, but rather when it locates a specifically anti- or post-colonial discursive purchase in culture, one which begins in the moment that the colonizing power inscribes itself onto the body and space of its Others and which continues as an often occluded tradition into the modern theatre of neo-colonialist international relations (1994: 12).

In this context, neocolonialism has been regarded as a more appropriate term than postcolonialism. This is clearly the case of most Third World nations that were once colonized. Postcolonialism is challenged by the persistence of many of the effects of colonization which are linked to representations, reading practices and cultural values. That is why rethinking conventional modes of writing and reading is fundamental to postcolonialism. Therefore, Brazilian science fiction has tried to offer an alternative way to debate and provide postcolonial critical reflection.

For this reason, it is worthwhile examining science fiction that has been written by writers from the developing world. As I have said before, the genre is usually associated with the First World because of its concern with highly developed technology. However,

as Adam Roberts (2000) points out, the genre has always had sympathies with the marginal and the different and has shown particular interest in the unexplored, the non familiar and the exotic. These characteristics are ideologically linked to Third World countries as a means of justifying the permanence or reemergences of the trappings of imperial power formerly exercised by the metropolis of an empire which today may have been replaced by the Third World country's main trading partner or a multinational corporation, this Third World country being a land that still needs to develop its basic infrastructure. That is why many writers have, more recently, used science fiction to reimagine themselves and their worlds, offering an alternative way to think about imperialist power in the Third World countries. These writers were probably inspired by the works of Philip K. Dick and Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965) and its sequels.

*Dune* is a key example of this critique of imperialism in postcolonial science fiction; its plot explores the complex relationship between mankind, religion, technology and ecology in an interstellar empire and the novel reflects critically on the legacy of colonialism. In this regard, the critic Gerald Gaylard (2010) points out that *Dune* deals with the struggle against the imperial hegemony and has contributed to a modest proliferation of postcolonial science fiction or at least science fiction with post colonial themes. Among other important works, he cites Lucius Shepard's *Life During Wartime* (1987), Roger Zelazny's *Lord of Light* (1967), Mike Resnick's *Kyrinyaga* (1989), Jan Lars Jensen's *Shiva 3000* (1999), John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar* (1968), William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984). To this select group, I would add Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1998). All of these novels "examine the spatio-political complexities engendered by the uneven access to modernities and their technologies that is characteristic of colonialism and postcolonialism" (2010: 22). By analysing these works, how writers express future tendencies in a supposed postcolonial condition can be seen. In all of them, one can see how the colonial/imperial discourse seeks to impose the imposition of a

different way of life and to transpose of cultural elements thus providing a feeling of impotence and inferiority that might well affect the construction of any group's identity.

In the American science fiction novel *Parable of the Sower* (1993) by Octavia Butler and its 1998 sequel, *Parable of the Talents* (1998) the author focuses on the imposition of a completely different reality where people have to adjust their hitherto tranquil lives to a style of life based on turmoil. In order to get accustomed to this new life-style they have to forget their past experiences as if they have no memories and there were no relationship between present and past. The *Parable of the Sower* follows the story of Lauren, a fifteen-year-old girl who lives in a community that is walled off for protection from vandals, drug addicts, thieves, homeless people and all kind of danger. The story is set in California and covers a period of three years, from 2024 to 2027. When the narrative begins, global warming has let to the United States's geography, economy and society being disastrously affected. Lauren's community struggles to survive frequent attacks but the enclave is completely destroyed by groups of thieves and arsonists. After the destruction, Lauren is forced to flee northwards and takes some survivors with her. Because of her disbelief in the Christian God, she tries to convert her followers to her syncretic and newly invented sect called "Earthseed" in which the fundamental concept is "God is change". Dynamicity is central to Lauren's idea of God. Her commandments are based on her experience and observation that everything changes.

Butler depicts the transposition of the First World United States to a Third World reality in which poverty, violence and disease are reflections of a completely failed state. The society presented in *Parable of the Sower* is congruent with those marked by a colonial history and as a result of this, they are unable to develop an independent economy. Features of this economic failed state are described all the time:

... the cops knock the street poor around, rob them if they have anything worth stealing... We hear so much gunfire, day and night, single shots and odd bursts

of automatic weapons fire... Food prices are insane, always going up, never down (p. 48).

Outside the Lauren's walled community, people live without any perspective of housing, education, food, job, health care or security. Her description of how people in shanty housing live is the same as one can hear from some African failed states or American inner-city poverty: "living skeletons... skin and bones and a few teeth living in rag, stick, cardboard and palm frond shacks along the way into the hills (p. 82). Because of the lack of a strong and sustainable economy, Butler's fictional US has been colonized by the First World economic power-houses: Japan, Germany and Canada. This situation is well illustrated by Lauren: "This country is going to be parceled out as a source of cheap labor and cheap land... our surviving cities are bound to wind up the economic colonies of whoever can afford to buy them (p. 119). Here, Lauren's description is, arguably, based on the reality of most South American countries, including Brazil, during the 1960s.

By putting the United States in the position of an economically colonized nation, Butler invites the reader to rethink the way man has behaved toward the 'Other'. The novel offers a good example of the 'Other' who is represented as the evil antithesis of humanity that must be destroyed because it is seen as inferior. Although, Butler has tried to offer a critical response to colonialism, her discourse is sometimes ambivalent since there is also a representation of humans as motivated by a monstrous desire for power and wealth.

Indeed, imperial/colonial power invests in the capitalist social relations in order to maintain its ideology and expand its territories. In this discussion, Hoagland points out that "as a positive tool for social awareness, the theme of empire allows science fiction to seek out and identify the most problematic issues that attend the actual practices of empire" (2010: 8). Butler's *Parable of the Sower* illustrates how "practices of empire" can lead to nation being completely destroyed and shows, for example, that these practices can provoke the abandonment of consanguineous ties. *Earthseed* may be seen as abandoning

such familiar ties since it represents the rupture from traditional religious values and beliefs. On many occasions Lauren seems to express her lack of a deeper attachment to familiar ties:

... I think people who traveled to extrasolar worlds would be on their own, far from help... out of the shadow of their parent world... a living world might be easier to adapt to and live on without a long, expensive umbilical to Earth (p. 77).

In this perspective, Lauren idealizes the future for her new community: “The destiny of ‘Earthseed’ is to take root among the stars” (p. 204). Prosperity and progress are key concepts in Butler’s narrative suggesting a close relationship between the novel and colonialism.

Butler’s novel is also a good illustration of the relationship between literature and the imperial power at different points in time. First, there are early colonial encounters which are very much shaped by ideas of coming face-to-face with radically different, of defining the people that are come across as savage others and the imperial situation is one in which the economy of the colony is literally made to serve that of the colonizer. And then the aftermath of colonialism in which the ex-colony is still economically in thrall to powerful, external financial interests as many Third World countries were in the 60s and 70s.

Another possible way to analyze the relationship between science fiction and colonialism is through the dichotomy of utopia/dystopia. Works such as Wells’s *A Modern Utopia* (1905) and *Men Like Gods* (1923), Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932), George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Ursula K. LeGuin’s *The Dispossessed* (1974) show the trajectory of the genre and its relationship to imperial power in different ages, from different perspectives. Thus, it is appropriate now to enter on a discussion of the debate about utopian and dystopian science fiction since this will provide a deeper insight

into the historical dynamics of colonialism as viewed by science fiction writers from different historical contexts.

### **1.3 Utopia and Dystopia: Their Postcolonial Implications**

In order to analyze Brazilian science fiction and its relationship to issues of national identity, I feel it necessary to examine the concepts of utopia and dystopia from a Brazilian perspective. First of all, it is important to note that Brazilian utopian and dystopian narratives are strongly related to the idea of myth which is sometimes close to that of utopia. According to Laurence Coupe (1997: 197), myth can be appreciated as a mode of narrative that involves a continuous dialectic between the same and the other, the memory and the desire, the ideology and the utopia. In this perspective, myth and utopian narratives belong to the same literary category the main focus of which is an attempt to explain, in rational terms, events that are still misunderstood.

The concept of utopia has always been linked to the ideas of an ideal civilization or a fantastic and imaginary world where it is possible to live in a perfect society. The term is usually associated with Thomas More's most famous work *Utopia* (1516). In the novel, More presents a different and perfect society in which happiness does not depend on material things but on the practice of rewarding virtues and on improving of the mind.

Arguably, More was inspired by the extraordinary narratives of Américo Vespúcio about the lands he had discovered in 1503. It is possible to find some similarities in the way the colonizer first describes the discovered land and the way More describes his ideal place. In the European imaginary, the discovery of a virginal land inhabited by docile and exotic animals and full of different fruit plants is related to the utopian notion of America. Indeed, there are many close and evident connections between utopian and colonial narratives. According to the critic Brian Stableford (1984: 28), one of the literary genres



that was an ancestor of science fiction was the kind of story which imagined that the perfect society would be discovered at some future time, when the course of history reached its denouement. Thus, utopian narratives are strongly linked to history (the past) and the idea of an imaginary state whose society has been perfected, something which, according to such narratives, is not possible without the presence of past experiences.

A good illustration of this is Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward 2000-1887* (1887). The novel follows the story of Julian West, a young American who, falls into a deep, hypnosis-induced sleep towards the end of the 19th century and wakes up one hundred and thirteen years later. When he wakes up, in the year 2000, he realizes that his city Boston is a completely different place. The United States has been transformed into a socialist utopia which is somehow a fusion of capitalism and socialism. In the novel, Bellamy expresses his thoughts about improving the future through human action. His critique focuses on problems associated with capitalism and its consequences for all societies. Thus, he describes

a form of society which was founded on the pseudo self-interest of selfishness, and appealed solely to the anti-social and brutal side of human nature which has been replaced by institutions based on the true self-interest of a rational unselfishness, and appealing to the social and generous instincts of men (2009: 162).

Clearly, Bellamy's radical restructuring of society is a way of dealing with contemporary social problems such as crime, education and social exclusion and inequality. In doing so, he reveals his engagement with his story and, arguably, a nostalgic sense of humanity. This same attitude can be seen in some Brazilian science fiction from the 60s, as we shall see later on. In this regard, the novelist and critic Raymond Williams (1978) points out four different types of utopian narratives: (a) a paradise, in which happiness is described as something that exists elsewhere; (b) the externally altered world, in which a new kind of life is possible by an unlooked-for natural event; (c) the willed transformation, in which a

new kind of life is achieved by human efforts and (d) the technological transformation, in which life is possible because of a technical discovery. Although these types often overlap, they are useful as a means to identify the utopian narratives, as well as to distinguish them from the dystopian ones which are characterized by the negative of each type. Consequently, paradise is replaced by hell, happiness by unhappiness; achievements as a result of human effort are replaced by human social degeneration and life is worsened by technical development. For Williams, the element of transformation is crucial in order to show the distinction between the two modes:

The willed transformation can be conceived as inspired by the scientific spirit, either in its most general terms as secularity and rationality, or in a combination of these with applied science which makes possible and sustains the transformation. Alternatively the same impulses can be negatively valued: the modern scientific anti-heap or tyranny. Either mode leaves open the question of the social agency of the scientific spirit and the applied science... (1978: 48).

In the dystopian mode the willed transformation is usually dependent on the social and political context and therefore social elements are extrapolated. Dystopian satires commonly criticize the way society is transformed by scientific and technological development without taking into account human virtues and cultural values. Good examples of this literary mode are Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1931) and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). These writers critically project a futurist society transformed by technological advances where people seem to be mere products of this cultural and technological progress. For the critic Jessica Langer (2010: 174), both utopia and dystopia open the genre of science fiction to new dialectical possibilities, and more importantly, they acknowledge and foreground the disparate world views of colonized, formerly colonized and diasporic peoples. By diasporic peoples she means those who were dispersed from their originally homogeneous entity, such as language and culture by the process of colonization.

In this context, dystopian texts also deal with the formation of hybrid cultures. Indeed, Hybridity is a concept key both to the construct of utopia/dystopia and postcolonial theory. The term is usually associated with Homi K. Bhabha's ideas presented in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), as it contains many ideas concerning identity. Bhabha presents new ways of thinking about identity which emanated from the long history of the language and landscape of migration and diaspora and suggests that these ways of thinking about identity are related to new forms of postcolonial societies. He focuses on people who live 'border lives', on the margin of different nations, in-between contrary homelands and states that living on the border, at the edge, requires a new art of how to live in the present. Therefore, dystopian narratives present a critical reflection about post-colonial societies and explore what Langer calls the *transgression of boundaries*. She points out three sites of boundary transgressions which are related to the city, the body and the mind. Each of them represents an aspect of scaffolding postmodern reality:

Like layers of an onion, these boundaries are contained within each other, mind within body within city, and so each transgression is echoed doubled and perhaps trebled: they create an intricate web of radical inclusion which draws one's vision of the postmodern metropolis, and which invokes the postcolonial concepts of hybridity and double vision (2010: 174).

Postmodern reality deals with a combination of global and local cultures. In Zygmunt Bauman's work *Identity* (2005), there is a good illustration of the variety of aspects that contribute to the formation of the postmodern man's identity. The process of globalization has allowed the fusion of different cultures and traditions. In this context, the contemporary city is an ambivalent space formed by a set of multicultural riches and the achievement of technological progress and of imperial domination. In this regard, Langer states that a city is stratified both physically and socially and has been a space of contestation in both postcolonial and science fiction discourse, especially in literature which combines the two. In Postcolonial science fiction works, the city is the place that

best demonstrates the hostile and chaotic environment generated by the process of technological modernization. This is indeed so for the Brazilian science fiction novels Plínio Cabral's *Umbra* [ *Shadow*] (1977) and Ruth Bueno's *Asilo nas Torres* [ *Asylum in the Towers*] (1979), as we shall see later on in this thesis.

Characterizing the icon of the city and drawing on Mumford and Roszak's ideas, Gary K. Worfe states that

... Cities that were once social organizations to promote the protection of the individual from a hostile and chaotic environment must now devote more and more of their resources to the protection of the individual from the hostile and chaotic environment that the city itself has become. The innocent visions of the past have become the traps of the present and it is tempting to blame the visionaries... (p. 87).

Here, there is an inversion of values. On behalf of progress, the city has changed its function of protector and has become a hostile and dangerous place to live. Plínio Cabral's *Umbra* (1977) describes a city that moves quickly and devours its own inhabitants suggesting that people have lost their natural environment and everything that comes with it. Thus inhabitants have to adapt to living in an artificial world surrounded by machines and with little human contact. Thus, the body and the city are interrelated. Arguably, the boundaries of the bodies and those of the cities are unstable and mutable in most dystopian narratives. According to Langer,

A consequence of this changeability and uncertainty of the body is that it becomes less significant in representing the nature of one's personhood. The lack of necessary fixity not only removes gender and race from easy identifiability, but it also frustrates the dichotomy between perception and actuality in terms of these categories, and complicates the question of authenticity when posed in terms of the origin of one's gender or racial identity (2010: 179).

This 'lack of necessary fixity' is clearly a good illustration of how postcolonial societies tend to deal with one's gender or racial identity. Without a defined representation

of the body, all the other elements related to one's personhood can be regarded as inauthentic. The body constitutes the visible presence of a person in a space. If it is well constructed, this person tends to be best represented in the space; if it lacks concrete individual physical characteristics, then this person tends to be seen as less significant or strange in relation to the others. The transgression of bodily integrity represents a layer of collapsed and contested boundaries that characterize the postcolonial metropolitan space. In the Brazilian dystopian novel *Asilo nas Torres* [*Asylum in the Towers*] (1979), the author, Ruth Bueno, presents a hybrid society where some characters are half man and half machine and because of their improved body, they are in charge of the security and control of the others who are normally treated as prisoners. People and machines share the same space and behave as if there is no physical difference between them. Arguably, Bueno was aware of the possible consequences of the policies of technological development for Brazilian society and more precisely, how this could affect the national identity as a whole. Therefore, hybridity is integral to the novel.

Also important for the construction of utopian and dystopian narratives is the transgression of the mind which is, in my point of view, the basis for the transgression of the boundaries of the city and the body. For Langer, the boundaries of the mind

Include ideas as well as technological and supernatural means; whilst a literally open(ed) mind is vulnerable to abuse, it also represents the more conventional definition of an open mind: one which has not drawn a trench around itself, but has allowed itself to consider the possibility of including ideas, concept and tolerances beyond its current or comfortable bounds (2010: 182).

This idea of open mind seems to be perfect in postcolonial societies where a dominant culture tries to change the Other's mind by imposition. Langer goes on to state also that the idea that a mind can arise function outside its conventional boundaries throws open the door to radical inclusion not only of different states of embodiedness but also to different concepts of what the mind itself is. In this context, the concept of a hybrid mind is

thoroughly explored in utopian/dystopian narratives which tend to emphasize high technology and marginal forms of modern life, as in Cyberpunk, a science fiction subgenre that focuses on high technology and low life. For the critic Tom Moylan (2000), the first generation of cyberpunk writers did not go deeply enough into their critical opinion, despite their negative and dystopian depiction of high capitalism's social conditions and 1980s conservative politics. However, subsequent events led to a moment of "critical dystopia" which is concerned not only with textual strategies but also with political themes and people's level of social commitment. Moylan defines this category or stage of science fiction as:

A textual mutation that self-reflexively takes on the present system and offers not only astute critiques of the order of things but also explorations into the oppositional spaces and possibilities from which the next round of political activism can derive imaginative sustenance' and inspiration (2000: 3).

Thus, critical dystopia articulates a reflection on the effects of globalization and the new cultural colonization or neocolonization of mind, body or city. In some Brazilian dystopias, writers explore metaphor and irony as important strategies for their social critiques. In *Metaphors of Cyberpunk: Ontology Epistemology and Science Fiction* (1992), Ruth Curl explores the concepts of epistemological and ontological metaphors suggesting that in some postcolonial science fiction there is an interface of these two kinds of metaphors because some narratives show a process of forgetfulness that severs the link with the past, and forces the reader to shift his/her perspective toward an unknown future. For Curl, this interface includes an ontological metaphor similar to that commonly employed in literary texts and an epistemological metaphor that is created by a new image of computer processing. In the Brazilian dystopian *Asylum in the Towers* (1977) this epistemological metaphor is found in the characters' inadequacy to comprehend and go on a quest for the facts that happen around them. In this respect, Curl also adds that in

postcolonial science fiction metaphors constitute life in a process of autopoiesis as well as being reflected in an allegory of a set of figures from life (1992: 242).

On analysing the narrative and dystopian forms of life in the Mexican Cyberpunk novel *La Primavera Calle de la Solidad* (1993) by Gerardo Horacio Porcayo, Juan Ignacio Zapata found some similarities in the way many Latin American writers produce their novel's self-reflexivity. Among these similarities I would highlight three as the most expressive ones: the use of national myths, themes of wasteland and deserted towns and the position of women in society. All these elements are somehow present in Brazilian dystopias from the 70s, as we shall see further on.

In order to understand some specific tendencies in Brazilian science fiction, it is worth exploring its origin and evolution over time. In the next section, I shall explain the rise of Brazilian science fiction in greater detail. First, I will show the efforts of Brazil's literary elite to establish a national literature and the resistance of this same elite to the genre of science fiction. Then I will focus on the history of the genre and its contribution as a vehicle for a social manifesto, particularly during the 60s and 70s. In order to present an overview of Brazilian modern science fiction, I will also consider some important tendencies from the 80s on as a way of comparing and following the trajectory of the genre over time.

## Part II

### 2 Brazilian Science Fiction: A Brief History and Survey of the Genre

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the efforts of Brazil's literary elite to establish a national literature which would recover the roots of national identity. According to Alfredo Bosi in his book *História Concisa da Literatura Brasileira*: “existia a certeza de que as raízes Brasileiras, em particular, indígenas e negras, solicitavam um tratamento estético, necessariamente primitivista (1994: 341) [there was the certainty that Brazilian roots, particularly, indigenous and Black ones, required an aesthetic treatment, a necessarily primitivist one]. That was the primary theme of Brazilian Modernism, the main ideas of which were based on Oswald de Andrade's *Cannibalism Manifesto* in which the writer explores the dialectic of the self/other, import/export, influence/autonomy, and national/foreign. Andrade advocated the creation of a new and unique Brazilian culture through the process of cannibalization in which foreign influence would be devoured ruminated on and refashioned using a Brazilian approach to literature that would differentiate it from that of the Europeans and Americans which, especially since Independence, Brazilian writers had tended to follow slavishly.

Using this perspective, writers were encouraged to write about “Brazilian roots” which resulted in a growing number of works focusing on national identity. Works such as Mário de Andrade's *Macunaima* (1928), Oswald de Andrade's *Pau Brasil* (1924),



Cassiano Ricardo's *Martim Cererê* (1928), and Plínio Salgado's *O Estrangeiro* (1936) represent this period of nationalist literature. All these works – whether poetry or novels – explore social aspects of Brazil, and thus emphasize national myths and customs. That is why science fiction was not seen as a genre that could satisfy this agenda since science and technology were not considered part of the lives of ordinary Brazilians.

Under these circumstances, it was difficult for literary science fiction to gain credibility within Brazilian cultural circles since it was seen as a First World genre that did not correspond to the exigencies of the Modernist movement. Even in countries such as the United States and Britain where plenty of science fiction had been and was continuing to be produced, the genre did not achieve critical credibility until the 60s – prior to which most examples had been regarded as pulp fiction. However, despite the failure both within and outside Brazil to recognize the validity of Brazilian science fiction, it has a long history.

Although there are early examples of fantastic literature in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the formation of a body of Brazilian writing that today is recognized as being in the genre of science fiction began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Yolanda Molina-Gavilan in *Chronology of Latin American Science Fiction, 1715-2005* (2007), in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Brazilian authors begin writing tales of imaginary societies and voyages into the future in the mode of Jules Verne and Camille Flammarion. These descriptive works dealt mainly with political reforms through the depiction of future events or society, as in Joaquim Felício dos Santos's *Páginas da História do Brasil* [*Pages from Brazil's History*] (1868-1872) and Emílio Zaluar's *O Doutor Benignus* [*Dr. Benignus*] (1875). After the turn of the century, the genre developed with writers starting to focus on social and agrarian reforms, as well as eugenics and the social roles of women as in *Brazil no Ano 2000* [*Brazil in the Year 2000*] (1909) by Godofredo Barnsley and *O Reino do Kiato* [*The Kingdom of Kiato*] (1922) by Rodolfo Teófilo, *A Liga dos Planetas* [*The League of Planets*] (1922) by

Albino Coutinho and *A Amazônia Misteriosa* [*The Mysterious Amazonia*] (1925) by Gastão Cruls, among others. All these works are, nevertheless somehow derivatives of Anglo-European science fiction.

In 1926, the writer José Monteiro Lobato wrote *O Presidente Negro* [*The Black President*], a satire which relates the story of an ordinary man and a professor of physics who invents a time machine that is able to foresee the future of the United States until 3527. In this mood of invention, there is also a transport-radio able to transport things via radio, thereby solving all the traffic problems of a city. Among many other inventions, there is also a “theater of dreams” where people’s dreams can be projected on a screen. H. G. Wells’s influence is notable in Lobato’s narrative. Like Wells, Lobato uses a time machine as a literary device to explore Darwinian ideas. As suggested by Adam Roberts: “... the time machine is like a clock, a car, a weapon and all the various things that critics have read into the tale built around it” (2005: 146). Even in the last twenty years, most Brazilian science fiction critics do not consider *O Presidente Negro* as science fiction because it was written at a time when the genre had not been established; instead it is classified as fantasy or categorized as “a predecessor of the speculative genre in Brazil”, as pointed by Otero (1987: 185). As has already been noted in the first chapter, the term was only coined in the 1920s in relation to the American tradition. However, the key difference is that, in the US, the idea of science fiction took off – science fiction seemed to speak about American society – but in Brazil, it remained marginalized because this genre seemed to underpin the imperial ideology of First World technologically advanced countries. Also, Brazilian readers of science fiction were predominatly young upper middle class males, confirming Adam Roberts’ assertion: “science fiction has long been viewed as a genre produced and consumed by young white males” (2000: 29). Thus, the idea of using this speculative genre to allow space for different ‘voices’ to explore the nature of

Otherness and futurity was still far from one that most Brazilian writers would have chosen to explore.

Another interesting work written in this period was Adalzir Bittencourt's *Sua Excelência, a Presidente no Ano 2500* [*Her Excellency, the President in the Year 2500*], (1929) which portrays Brazil as a world power that has made reforms in the areas of health, urbanization and political organization. The author depicts Brazil as a country with "potential for national greatness" (Ginway, 2004: 18). However, for some critics, this period was a time of inauthenticity in Brazilian science fiction. In Molina-Gavilan's words:

Brazilian science fiction before the 1950s was heavily influenced by Portuguese translations of Jules Verne, Emilio Salgari, J. Aragon, Gustave L Rouge, and H. G. Wells, as may be discerned from titles such as Érico Veríssimo's *Viagem à aurora do mundo* [*Travel to the Dawn of the World*, 1939] or Gerônimo Monteiro's *3 Meses no Século 81* [*Three months in the 81<sup>st</sup> century*, 1947]. This lack of autochthonous models meant that what regional science fiction was prior to the 1960s involved the irregular efforts of isolated writers who, for the most part, had no particular commitment to the genre but found it a useful means of critiquing society, promoting a particular agenda, or continuing the *fin-de-siecle* fascination with the supernatural (2003: 4).

By the late 1930s, whereas the genre of Anglo-American Science fiction had already established a tradition that gathered writers and publishers who fed a broad readership, no such movement had been developed in Brazil. Moreover, there was no national masterpiece or authorial figurehead, who might, for instance, have been a critic as well as a creative writer who could have influenced these or other authors to develop themes already raised or to explore new avenues in subsequent works. The influence of the Anglo-American tradition during these initial steps toward a national model of science fiction in Brazil and in the whole Latin America is undeniable. However, it is also true that many genuinely national works were written during this formative period, contributing, in part, to the consensus that a national version of the genre gained recognition in the 1960s.

During this period, the genre started to be patterned using a genuinely Brazilian outlook and a growing number of Brazilian science fiction works started to be published in domestic and domestic magazines. In his study *Unique Motifs in Brazilian Science Fiction*, David Lincoln Dunbar (1976) states that Brazilian science fiction of the 60s is strictly associated with the Anglo-American New Wave but cultural elements make them different. With the advent of the first electronic and automobile industries, and prompted by the discourse of the New Wave writers, the number of science fiction works increased considerably and the idea that Brazilian writers were unable to produce science fiction was slowly replaced by a more positive perspective. However, I would argue that authors of quality science fiction, the themes of which are often derived from their observations on developments in high tech industries, but who themselves live and work in nations which are still in the process of industrializing, must have a very deep critical awareness of traditional religious, socio-cultural and other values in their society, and how these are being impacted by changes brought about by modernity. This critical sense seems to have been the key element in this process of nationalizing the genre. Writers' critical reflection allowed them to explore Brazil's colonial history and its neocolonial situation, as to the use of the genre as a means of exploring what some consider the factual bases and others the myths of national identity. Such reflection enables it to be seen that a nation, like Brazil, which for long was a colony and exploited as such, will clearly have a different sense of national selfhood, than a nation like England in which the sense of national identity stretches much farther far back into the past and the history of which includes colonizing others. All these factors contributed to the production of a distinctively Brazilian form of science fiction.

Another important aspect that can distinguish Brazilian science fiction from the Anglo-American tradition is the fact that during the 60s and 70s, the genre in Brazil emerged at a time when the country was governed by a regime that engaged on repression

in politics and the arts and therefore, science fiction became a useful tool in the struggle against repression. While most writers insisted on adopting a posture of resistance by criticizing the regime through autobiographical writings or reportage literature, science fiction writers camouflaged their critique by using strategies inherent to the genre and a figurative language based on irony and metaphor. After the military regime, particularly in the late 80s, writers tended to change the focus of their critique by showing the disastrous effects of authoritarian regimes for society as a whole, by emphasizing cultural, political and economic aspects, as we shall see further on.

## 2.1 The Sixties

Brazilian science fiction really began to develop and gain visibility and credibility during the 1960s with respect to the number of published works and their standing in the nation's literature. Many factors made this an era of unprecedented achievement within the genre. Among them, Molina-Gavilan stresses:

... the increased availability of translated US and European works; the broadening of the genre to embrace more of the thematic concerns of the social sciences and humanities; the appearance of foreign and domestic science fiction magazines that were willing to publish local writers; the emergence of small presses specializing in science fiction, and the trend in Latin America toward governance by bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes (2003: 7).

In fact, the development of New Wave contributed to themes dealt with by the genre being broadened in some Latin American countries where, according to Julio Ramos (2011), the censorship imposed by bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes tended to silence the voices of artistic movements. For Brazilian censors, the genre of science fiction did not represent any kind of threat since it was not considered a Third World genre and few

people were interested in it. On the contrary, censors considered it could be useful in distracting people and thus take their minds off reality.

In the early 60s, a group of writers which included Rubens Teixeira Scavone, Fausto Cunha, Dinah Silveira de Queiroz, Geronimo Monteiro, André Carneiro and Antônio Olinto were eager to define the direction of Brazilian science fiction by giving their works a regional style that was informed by specifically Brazilian cultural concerns. Another important figure from this period was Gumerindo Rocha Dorea, a Brazilian publisher who decided to promote national works as well as to translate the Anglo-American novels from the classical period 1934 to 1963; that is why the late 1950s and 1960s are known as the period of the Gumerindo Rocha Dorea (GRD) Generation or *Primeira Onda de Ficção Científica Brasileira: The First Wave of Brazilian Science Fiction*.

Whilst Brazilian writers were trying to establish their own style in the genre, there was a group of Anglo-American writers who seemed to have a similar attitude toward technology. As said before, New Wave writers also emphasized the dark side of science and technology and took a more ironic and unconventional approach to science fiction. Although one can find some similarities between Brazilian and Anglo-American production in the 60s, Ginway states that “for reason of chronology, this similarity of approach must be seen as coincidental, even though both are characterized by anti-technological attitudes” (2004: 39). Thus, Ginway dismisses Dunbar’s idea that Brazilian science fiction was influenced by the Anglo-American New Wave. According to her, the dates do not bear this out, since the stances taken in Brazilian science fiction started to be taken up in the late 50s while the most significant New Wave works were written between 1964 and 1972.

Furthermore, one of the most important and distinctive characteristics in Brazilian science fiction of the 60s is the centrality of national myths within these narratives, as I

have discussed before. The representation of the robot, for example, differs from that of the Anglo-American Science Fiction Golden Age and New Wave in many aspects; According to Gary Wolfe (1979), while in the Anglo-American tradition this icon is represented from an ambivalent perspective – a fantasy about robots as conduits for human progress, and a nightmare in which they come to subsume and transform the human (p. 145) – in Brazilian science fiction they are used as a way to explore the history of Brazilian slavery, the process of miscegenation and the myth of racial democracy. Thus, the discussion of the robot and race in Brazilian Science fiction could be seen as a strategic starting point from which to study Brazilian national identity. The Brazilian critic Zita Nunes states that:

This logic, which informed Brazil's discourse on race up to the beginning of the twentieth century and which also inhered in the quest to come up with a fixed identity was threatened by the reality of miscegenation... much of Brazilian literature related to the question of national identity is an attempt to solve the problem of miscegenation (1994: 115).

In a genuinely original way, the authors used traditional science fiction motifs such as the robot, space travel, aliens and nuclear war, by filtering them through the perspective of Brazilian society. Works such as Fausto Cunha's *Regresso* [*Return*] (1960) and *O Dia Que Já Passou* [*The Day That Has Already Gone*] (1960) demonstrate the idea that Brazilians reject technology because it can affect their sense of compassion and kindness or cultural identity because accepting technology is tantamount to assimilating technological power and foreign cultural values. For Molina-Gavilan, these works can be seen as anticipating the changes caused by the modernization and development policies initiated by the Brazilian military regime: "It could be said that these works anticipated the actual policies of modernization and development initiated by the Brazilian military beginning in 1964" (2007: 381). In *Fuga Para Parte Alguma* [*Flight to Nowhere*] (1961) and *Os Visitantes do Espaço* [*Visitors from Outerspace*] (1963), Jerônimo Monteiro deals with nuclear war and fearing non-humanoid aliens in a way that recalls the situation of

neo-colonial exploitation and impotence. This way of dealing with modernization is very different from the Anglo American tradition; Philip Dick, for example: “spoke with passion about his fears that human organisms might easily become ‘androids’ themselves: machinic, unfeeling, obedient to authority, predictable devices for totalitarian government”, as suggested by Luckhurst (2005: 163). Dick’s main concerns were the fragile reality and the boundary between the human and the machine. His satirical and psychological fictions associated with his political perspectives made him one of the most important writers of this period. But these preoccupations are not informed by a Brazilian awareness of the role of neo-colonialism in perpetuating inhuman relationships.

In an attempt to describe Brazilian Science Fiction of the 60s, Ginway notices that Brazilian science fiction writers demonstrate a basic distrust of science and technology in the hands of the humans due to a lack of confidence in the power of reason to control the excesses of human emotions (2004: 31). These writers’ perspective reflects the results of a number of factors which shape Brazilian responses toward technology. As a then Third World underdeveloped country, Brazil depended on imported technology which generated a feeling of impotence in both economic and cultural terms. Thus, “technology is also viewed as having a negative effect on social relations, destroying the personalized contact that is central factor in Brazilian culture”, adds Ginway (2005: 38). This negativity was strongly reflected in the way critics saw and wrote about science fiction which was often associated with developed nations such as the US and Britain. In this regard, the Brazilian literary critic, Antônio Cândido, states:

A longa soberania da literatura tem, no Brasil, duas ordens de fatores. Uns derivados da nossa civilização européia e dos nossos contatos permanentes com a Europa, quais sejam o prestígio das humanidades clássicas e a demorada irradiação do espírito científico. Outros, propriamente locais, que prolongaram indefinidamente aquele prestígio e obstaram essa irradiação. Assinalaremos entre os fatos locais a ausência de iniciativa política implicada no estatuto colonial, o atraso ainda hoje tão sensível da instrução, a fraca divisão do trabalho intelectual (2000: 120) [In Brazil, the long-lasting sovereignty of



literature has two types of factors. Some are derived from our European civilization and our permanent contacts with Europe, which are the prestige of the classical humanities and the lengthy irradiation of the scientific spirit. Others, particularly local ones, which extended that prestige indefinitely and hindered this irradiation. We emphasize from among the local facts, the absence of political initiative implied in colonial law, the backwardness still keenly felt today of instruction, and the weak division of intellectual work].

Cândido's words demonstrate a strong aversion to foreign literary movements because, according to him, the prestigious position that foreign literature occupies among Brazilian writers contributes to the lack of a national literary style; this idea is also shared by other Brazilian critics such as Zila Bernd (2006) and Thomas Bonnici (2005). By contrast, for Ginway, contact with Anglo-American science fiction stimulated Brazilian writers to create their own style. However, she also suggests that the influence that classic Anglo-American science fiction had on Brazilian writers is limited to a series of images or icons, such as spaceships, robots and aliens. In other words, while Brazilian authors use the parameters of the genre as depicted in Anglo-American science fiction, they invariably transform them to offer a view that is distinctly Brazilian. In many ways, these writers reflect a feeling that industrialization, especially in the form of technological imports is a repetition of the colonial experience. Modernization imposes a neocolonial reality, where technology represents what Val Plumwood (1997) calls "mastering reason", thus reducing Brazil once again to the status of slave, woman and the other. According to Plumwood, the modern process of economic development systematically continues to deny any mutuality between economic centre and periphery, in a continuing dualist relationship between 'developed' and 'developing' countries. As can be seen in the science fiction of the 1960s, technology, often viewed as white, male, and foreign, is seen as being imposed upon Brazilian culture, which is portrayed as black, female, and familiar. This way of representing society is closely related to the discussion I shall engage on later in this thesis about ecofeminism and colonialism. Referring to the way these icons are used in literary science fiction Ginway comments:

... the Brazilian point of view transforms them into something very different from the American concept. While American science fiction generally embraces technology and change, but fears rebellion or invasion by robots and aliens, Brazilian science fiction tends to reject technology, but embraces robots and find aliens to be generally indifferent or exotic (2005: 39).

This attitude toward robots in both countries is strongly influenced by cultural matters, more precisely by slavery and race relations during the colonial period. In works such as Rubens Teixeira Scavone's "O Menino e o Robô" (1961), André Carneiro's "Zinga, o Robô" (1961), Dinah Silveira de Queiroz's "O Carioca" (1960) and Antônio Olinto's "O Desafio" (1961), the robot protagonist recalls the role that domestic slaves once played in the traditional Brazilian patriarchal family. Indeed, the term 'robot' is derived from the Russian word for 'slave' – a robot first appears in a play in the mid-1920s as the utopian solution to labour<sup>1</sup>. Thus, as a representative characteristic of Brazilian science fiction in the 60s, the icon of the robot was used to represent cultural myths as well as traditional social structures.

Gary Wolfe states that robots, though they may seem to replace humans, are, in fact, alternative images of humanity: "Robots function as cultural images not only for the manner in which they remind us of the social institution of slavery, but for the fear of technology" (1979: 152). With few exceptions, in the history of Brazilian literature, writers have been overwhelmingly sympathetic toward the figure of the slave and it seems that the same attitude is prevalent in relation to robots. Thus, a distinctive aspect of Brazilian science fiction is the way in which it reawakens that association as a means of exploring Brazilian colonial history and its own history of slavery. Such relations appear to be different in American literature. Before the twentieth century, few writers bothered to

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<sup>1</sup> R.U.R (*Rossum's Universal Robots*) was a science fiction play written in 1921 by Karel Capek. This play introduced the term 'robot' to the English language and to science fiction as a whole. The main concern of this play is the function of technology and the possibility of robots replacing all human functions (WOLFE, 1979: 156).

include the black character as an important figure or depicted him as a human being with depth and character.

Whilst there is now a substantial body of science fiction work written by African Americans, for example, Octavia Butler and Samuel Delany, the Anglo-American canon of science fiction has been dominated by white men, with a white male agenda. Robot and androids have been used as ways of thinking about the self of a human being without acknowledging the problem of how to deal with the claims of the already marginalized to human equality. In Brazil, this was and still is a problem experienced by Africans and their descendants.

According to the historian Carl Degler in his book *Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States*, the American literary canon fails to fully include African and African-American literature. According to him, the African presence has been vital to the cultural and political development of the United States and characteristics of American literature such as individualism, masculinity, and social engagement versus historical isolation have been a response to this presence. Degler states that:

It is not until the twentieth century that the literature of the United States exhibited the realism and diversity of characterization of the Negro that was evident in nineteenth century Brazilian poetry, drama and novels... Negro writers are certainly not unknown in the nineteenth century in the United States, but they clearly do not figure among the major writers (1986: 14).

Also Toni Morrison in *Playing in the Dark* (1993) makes a similar claim about the strange absence of black Americans in the historical canon of the United States. Until quite recently, these writers have been seen as somewhat the Other compared to the more panoramic view of America which is somehow represented as having no color or gender but actually privileges the white and male. Degler goes on to state that prior to the twentieth century, the weight of slavery, prejudice and discrimination lay so heavily upon

the black population in the United States that there was only a narrow base from which a genius could spring. The vast preponderance of black people was simply untutored and narrowly restricted in their opportunity to express themselves. This attitude of seeing the black man as the 'Other' may explain why, in early American science fiction, robots are generally characterized as rebellious machines.

In Asimov's *I, Robot* (1950) stories, for instance, the author finds it necessary to establish the three laws of robotics to make sure that robots will not rebel against man, and in doing so, he depicts a harmonious relationship between creator and creatures. However, later science fiction is often interested in liberating the robot or android, as can be seen in Philip K Dick's work. Since then, the icon of the robot has assumed different connotations throughout the history of science fiction and its hybrid form can be seen as a significant turning-point in the style of American science fiction.

Attitudes toward robots, then, constitute a significant difference between Anglo-American and Brazilian science fiction in the 60s. As we shall see in the next section, the icon of robot is used to represent important aspects of Brazilian identity. On exploring the distinctive Brazilian use of robots we shall recall attitudes towards the figure of the slave in Colonial Brazil and we shall find that Brazilian writers of scientific fiction who deal with technology in this way are reflecting Brazil's view of modernity: this is a repetition of Brazil's past experiences. By comparing science fiction writing in Brazil and the US, two former slave societies, it becomes clear that, in part, attitudes towards robots as expressed in science fiction in the two countries reflect differing attitudes toward the shared legacy of slavery.

One important difference between slaves in Brazil and in the United States was the status of mixed-race offspring. In the colonial United States, for instance, mixed-race offspring were relegated to the non-white category, generating a bipolar system of race relations, which recognized only the categories of black and white. Brazil, like most of

Latin America, developed a third category: mulatto or *mestiço*. The concept of the 'mulatto' was current in the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; the difference is, perhaps, the significance attached to mixed-race status. The term 'mulatto' in the United States often carried with it the connotation 'tragic'. The 'mulatto' or 'mulatta' was seen as tragic because he or she did not 'belong' to one race; this person aspires to be white but is actually black. Thus, the category of mixed-race is a disconcerting contradiction in a culture that has a bipolar understanding of racial identity. Mulatto slaves were thus often seen as more rebellious and troublesome by slave owners and overseers in the United States. This dynamic does not work in quite the same way in Brazil.

According to Degler quoting Nelson de Senna, "The problem of racial assimilation and absorption among whites and blacks is a problem solved in Brazil, without conflict or hatred" (1986: 6). Although Senna's view is idealistic and simplified, it is fair to say that race relations in Brazil are different from many other countries, such as the United States where an impenetrable barrier of prejudice has historically existed between whites and blacks. In fact, the lack of a formal barrier between these two categories in Brazil has reinforced the idea of racial democracy. Degler adds that:

Brazilian colonial laws often discriminated against blacks, too, but the systematic separation of the races, whether legally or customarily, is a North American phenomenon. It has no analog in Brazil which lacks a tradition of formal separation of races... Not only are there no laws that stigmatize Negroes as inferior but the history of Brazil offers many examples of Negroes or mulattoes who achieved relatively high status in church and state in the nineteenth century (1986: 5).

Indeed, Brazilians have known and recognized for a long time that blacks have been part of their history. Some historians state that the contributions of Brazilians of African descent to the creation of Brazilian society are so many that it is impossible to enumerate them. For Degler, "We owe more to the African descent than to the Portuguese, as a race and even as a civilization" (1986: 8). Brazilians of African descent have been

included in Brazilian history as having made important contributions to the nation since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The American historian Thomas Skidmore (2005) emphasizes that black and mixed-race people played an important role at many levels of society long before total abolition in Brazil. They had succeeded in gaining considerable mobility in terms of occupations – entry into skilled occupations and even, occasionally, prominent positions as artists, politicians, and writers – even though slavery was still dominant throughout the country. Obviously though, there is a massive contradiction going on here: since this was happening whilst people were still subject to slavery according to their ethnic identity, this indicates a peculiar lack of a historical, national self-awareness. Somehow the myth of racial equality and the legacy of slavery are linked in Brazil.

The myth of racial democracy and the figure of the robot, then, are intentionally explored and inter-mingled in Brazilian science fiction of the 60s and linking these two elements forms an important point of distinction between Brazilian and American works of science fiction. Brazilian writers of the 60s assimilate the symbols of technology into their own national myths and past experiences, which is why Brazilian robots are shown as submissive and family retainers unlike those in American science-fiction literature, as we shall see in the following chapter.

During the 70s, national myths still played an important role in Brazilian science fiction, though with less intensity than in the 60s. Some writers preferred to deal with the repressive regime by using dystopian fiction so that they could reproduce the feeling that technological development had placed Brazil in a neocolonial situation, as we have seen in the earlier section on the political history of Brazil. In this context, writers are also aware of ecological issues such as environmental devastation and pollution generated by the technological process of modernization. Here, ecofeminism is used to deconstruct the myth of Nature and fertile land, as well as to deconstruct the discourse that characterizes women and the environment as the 'Other'. Therefore, the next section sets out to contextualize

Brazilian science fiction of the 70s in order to provide support to the textual analysis I will undertake in the next chapter.

## 2.2 The Seventies

Brazilian Literature of the 70s is characterized by a plurality of tendencies. Although most of them contain many aspects in common, it is worth observing that some of these aspects differ from each other. The irony, for example, present in countless works plays a distinctive role in the genre of science fiction. Because of the repression imposed by the military regime, literary authors had two possible routes: they could use disguises or return to old styles and tendencies. Those who chose to look back had to follow traditional styles such as regionalism, intimism, urbanism or psychological introspection all of which are characteristics of works by João Cabral, Carlos Drummond de Andrade and Lygia Fagundes Telles<sup>2</sup>. Those who opted for a new style had to be creative enough to combine irony, humor, metaphor and other linguistics elements which could, in one way or another, disguise their ideas about and criticism of the repression.

The distinctiveness of Brazilian from Anglo-American science fiction had to do with the genre in Brazil being developed against the backdrop of repression by a military regime. This distinctiveness is partly informed by Brazilian science fiction at this time emerging in a period when free aesthetic expression was not possible – the United States and United Kingdom by contrast were both stable democracies in which there was freedom of speech.

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<sup>2</sup> Important authors who led a post-modernist literary movement in Brazil.

In this context, science fiction writers had no choice but to use metaphorical discourse to avoid censorship. Unlike the authors of the 60s, those from the 70s were more critical of Brazil's military regime and less concerned with exploring Brazil's colonial past. By drawing on classical works such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1946) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) as models, they raised their political voices to protest against the military dictatorship and its policies for economic development and modernization. Much of the science fiction of this period is dystopian, written as an effective protest to critique current policies, as we shall see from the analysis of texts in the next chapter. According to Ginway:

The primary metaphor of dystopian fiction is society as a machine which uses technology for social and political control. By utilizing an imaginary futuristic world, dystopia effectively focuses on political themes and satirizes tendencies present in contemporary society (2004: 89).

Dystopia, then, appeared to have a perfect style for those who really wanted to protest against the modernizing and repressive policies of the dictatorship. In order to protest and trick the military regime, some authors got inspiration from their individual sense of childhood which led them to produce a kind of nostalgic dystopia, this is, they seem to find in the past a better world, one without sophisticated technology but free of oppression and suffering. Thus, they used the myths of Brazilian national identity as a way of opposing the repressive policies of modernization that arguably, threatened the harmonious relation between Nature and human beings; for this reason, how Nature, the environment and women are represented is critical in relation to modern society, according to the writers that we shall be discussing in the next section.

Policies of oppression and technological advances are strongly related to the patriarchal thinking that frequently puts women and Nature in the condition of the 'Other', as we shall see in the discussion of ecofeminism. For these reason, some Brazilian authors



use issues of gender and environment to instigate rebellion against technocratic regimes as we shall see when we analyze Ruth Bueno's *Asilo nas Torres* [*Azylum in the Towers*] (1979) and Plínio Cabral's *Umbra* [*Shadow*] (1977). Both authors portray resistance against technological progress as an allegory of Brazilians' rejection of the military dictatorship. According to Molina-Gavilan (2007) several mainstream authors turned to dystopian fiction to avoid censorship by the regime. They used futuristic tales to disguise their critiques of the regime's policies of fast-paced economic development.

The dystopian novels of this period are characterized by nostalgia for the past, especially in the idealized portrayal of Nature or women as repositories of authentic Brazilian identity as seen in works such as *Fazenda Modelo* [*Model Farm*] (1974) by Chico Buarque, *O Funcionário Ruan* [*Ruan the State Worker*] (1975) by Mauro Chaves, *O Fruto do Vosso Ventre* [*The Fruit of thy womb*] (1976) by Herberto Sales, *Um Dia Vamos Rir Disso Tudo* [*Someday We'll Laugh About All This*] (1976) by Maria Alice Barroso.

With few exceptions, these authors portray Nature and women as being at the same level, as being colonized subjects to be exploited. However, there is a kind of resistance to the traditional hierarchical relationship that subordinates nature, women and the racial other to masculine power. Illustrating the way this subordination is expressed in dystopian fiction, Ginway states that it is often played out in dualities:

... the central conflict often arises between the spontaneous, emotional, and passionate side of human experience (nature, female), which rebels against the rigid, collectivistic, technocratic side (technology, male). Because dystopian fiction relies on conflict of ideas rather than subtlety of characterization, it comes as no surprise that both male and female characters are generally limited to stereotypical or archetypal roles (2004: 93).

She goes on to state that most Brazilian dystopias portray women as variations on the Madonna/whore duality, including such archetypes as the nurturing vs. devouring mother, the saint vs. evil enchantress, virgin vs. harpy, and forgiving vs. vengeful Mother Earth.

However, I would argue that in the late 70s, there is a subtle attempt to show some changes in women's behavior particularly when it comes to their position in society. This is probably the result of the efforts of feminist movements that became frequent during the 70s and 80s in Brazil, as we shall see further on.

Another important feature of these works is the corruption of formal Brazilian Portuguese which shows the fear of losing identity by losing their liberty of expression. In this regard, Ginway stresses that:

Brazilian dystopian fiction insists on this feature more than science fiction does, mainly because its objectives are both literary and socio-political. The corruption of language is a means of criticizing the military whose manipulation and censorship of Brazilian culture entails interference in linguistic expression (2004: 91).

In fact, it was imperative to indulge in word play in order to divert the censor's attention. In his work *Zero, ou Como Escrever Livros Debaixo de Uma Ditadura* [*Zero, or How to Write Books Under the Dictatorship*] (2006), the Brazilian writer Ignácio de Loyola Brandão describes his anguish at not being able to write:

A idéia de um romance forte, agressivo, foi uma idéia que se instalou em mim. Que tipo de romance? Que tipo de história, de personagens? Como conduzir a ação? Lembro-me que tinha dentro de mim muita raiva de tudo o que via acontecer a minha volta. Era ódio e impotência... O livro poderia ser a minha bomba. Via um país estilhaçado, explodido, fragmentado (2006: 23) [The idea of a strong and aggressive novel, was an idea that caught hold of me. What kind of novel? What kind of story, characters? How should the actions be played out? I remember that I felt deep inside very angry at everything that I saw happening around me. It was hatred and impotence... The book could well be my bomb. I saw a country in smithereens, blown up, torn apart].

Brandão goes on to state that language was his unique instrument for combating the regime. Like him, many other writers were able to establish their own style of writing, using language as a means of protesting. In doing so, they reveal their preoccupations with the consequences of the military regime and its policy of oppression. In literary terms,

concerns with the results of this policy of oppression are more clearly stated during the 70s than during the 60s which are marked by a much greater level of technological optimism. Arguably, writers' preoccupations can be explained by the rise of feminism and environmentalism during the 70s in Brazil and also because this is affected by Anglo-American trends. In addition, the 70s are also shaped by specific cultural and historical concerns which, to a great extent, are linked to Brazilian colonial history. In general terms it can be seen that writers are aware of the disastrous consequences of the imperial/colonial/neo-colonial invasion upon Brazilian people.

After the military regime, writers tended to criticize the continuation of the same political practices, the results of which interfered negatively in social and cultural aspects of Brazilians' lives. In this context, the process of globalization occupies a prominent position as it was the most explored element during this period of social transformation. Thus, in order to show how Brazilian science fiction works written during the 60s and 70s differ from contemporary works, it is worth presenting an outline of tendencies that emerged after the dictatorship, a period in which most writers tended to re-shape the boundaries between national and international literatures. Thus in the next section, I provide a brief description of Brazilian science fiction post-dictatorship showing how writers have dealt with the process of globalization and how this is linked to economic and social problems generated by the technological and industrial process.

### **2.3 Contemporary Brazilian Science Fiction: The Post-dictatorship Era**

As we have seen in previous sections, Brazilian science fiction during the military regime, particularly during the 70s, is distinguished by a series of works in which writers used a futurist and imaginary world to denounce and criticize government policies. By using allegory to represent the regime, writers tended to focus on the effects of an arbitrary

and cruel technocracy which, in large measure, reflected changes in society as a whole. Starting during the 70s and extending into the 80s, significant realignments took place in the artistic, political and cultural fields. In this section, I offer an overview of contemporary Brazilian science fiction without going too deeply into the analysis of the texts cited.

In literary terms, many works were written that emphasized the disastrous consequences of the imperial government that Brazil was subjected to. Works such as *A Grande Arte* [*The Great Art*] (1983) by Rubem Fonseca and *Viva o Povo Brasileiro* [*Long Live the Brazilian people*] (1984) by João Ubaldo Ribeiro explore the psychic consequences of urban violence while, at the same time, they investigate the history of Brazilian identity. Also important in this context is Hilda Hilst's poetry, João Gilberto Noll's *A Fúria do Corpo* [*The Fury of the Body*] (1989) and Nélide Piñon's *A República dos Sonhos* [*The Republic of Dreams*] (1984). In *A Fúria do Corpo*, for instance, Noll articulates his narrative with degenerate characters such as beggars, the homeless, drug addicts and prostitutes in order to show a contemporaneous reality in which abandon, solitude and individualism are part of people's hybrid identities. In this perspective, protagonists do not express a determinant identity; instead, they demonstrate lack of representativeness, as can be seen from Noll's protagonist discourse:

O meu nome não. Vivo nas ruas de um tempo onde dar o nome é fornecer suspeita. A quem? Não me queira ingênuo: nome de ninguém não. Me chame como quiser, fui consagrado a João Evangelista, não que o meu nome seja João, absolutamente não sei quando nasci, nada, mas se quiser o meu nome busque na lembrança o que de mais instável lhe ocorrer. O meu nome hoje poderá não me reconhecer amanhã. Não soldo, portanto a minha cara um nome preciso. João Evangelista diz que as naves do Fim transportarão não identidades, mas o único corpo impregnado de um (1989: 09) [You can't have my name. I live on the streets at a time when giving your name is to raise suspicion. To whom? Don't take me for a simpleton: No name, no way. Call me what you want, I was consecrated to João Evangelista, but my name's not João, I've not the faintest when I was born, zilch, but if you want my name rack your brains about the most unsettling thing that will happen to you. My name today may not recognize me tomorrow. So I don't solder a specific name to my mug. João

Evangelista says that the spaceships of the End will not transport identities but the only body impregnated by one].

Noll seems to describe the contemporary subject as someone whose existence is marked by the absence of meaning and perspectives. In “My name today may not recognize me tomorrow”, the protagonist expresses all his uncertainties about the future as if time and place are not determinant elements for his own existence. Indeed, emphasis on the fragmentation of contemporary identities is a strong tendency among writers of the 80s and 90s.

The intense struggles of the late 70s and early 80s seemed to have burned out Brazilian artists so that few works were produced in the early post-dictatorship years. In 1988, in the preface to *Cadeiras Proibidas [Forbidden Chairs]*, the writer Ignácio de Loyola Brandão confessed that “there is a crisis of creativity affecting the older writers, who are producing nothing, and which is blocking the young”. Bookstores ran out of literary works which were, little by little, replaced by self-help books. Thus, readers seemed to turn inward, away from discussions on Brazil’s social problems and contemporary politics. By the early 90s, however, there was one constructive reaction from the authorial ranks, as described by Skidmore (1999):

Writers – especially journalists – published a series of outstanding biographies of leading historical figures. There was Jorge Caldeira on Baron Mauá (1995), the legendary nineteenth-century entrepreneur; Fernando Moraes on Assis Chateaubriand (1994), the twentieth-century newspaper and TV magnate; Rui Castro on Nelson Rodrigues (1994), Brazil’s preeminent playwright of the 1940s and 1950s; João Máximo and Carlos Dider on Noel Rosa (1990), the famous Rio samba composer of the 1930s. These books, all bestsellers, reflected a common desire to recapture the past through some unique personality. It was as if these authors were engaged in a common enterprise to reach beyond the nightmare of military rule to find the roots of a more authentic Brazil (1999: 211).

The “desire to capture the past through some unique personality” is also shown in some novels written in this period. Another common characteristic present in most works

is a critique of the process of technological modernization. Most writers point out that this process imposed changes that, somehow or other, contributed to increasing economic and social disparities within an environment of declining public investment in certain public services despite this being the period of the so-called Brazilian economic miracle. Indeed, public services in health, transport, housing and education, and stimulating the labour market were neglected, thus generating a feeling among the poorest sectors that they had been abandoned. Crime rates increased all over the country, particularly in major cities where technological and industrial development was the most visible. On pointing out the increasing social disparities during the 1980s and 1990s, Skidmore comments:

The gracious entries to the apartment buildings of Rio de Janeiro were now surrounded with elaborate metal gratings to stop vagrants from camping on the steps. Wealthy Brazilians withdrew to expensive new apartment complexes surrounded by electronically controlled fences and guarded by 24-hour patrols... the epidemic of kidnapping in Rio de Janeiro was a prominent example. They were committed by gangs, often in collusion with the police. And, although millionaires were the obvious target, even small businessmen fell victim. The response of the wealthy was to hire more bodyguards and ride in armoured cars. Shop owners, annoyed by the presence of hordes of street children committing petty theft, periodically hired off-duty policemen to scare them away and, sometimes, kill them (1999: 199).

As a consequence of the disastrous public administration during and after the military regime, Brazil witnessed one of the most deplorable violent acts in Brazilian history: during the morning of 23<sup>rd</sup> 1993 a group of well-armed policemen attacked a group of street children sleeping on the sidewalk in front of Rio's Candelária cathedral. Seven children and one adult were killed. This shameful occurrence illustrates one of Brazil's social problems during the 80s and 90s. With the emergence of new economic, political, social and cultural agents, as well as a more urban environment, unskilled and semi-skilled workers, domestic maids, hawkers, the homeless, pickpockets, etc seemed to have found themselves having new opportunities, for fair and for foul reasons, in this new political, economical and cultural context. This 'modern' reality affected people's behaviour and

factors inherent to social and cultural values. Thus, elements such as competitiveness and individualism which are central to human, economic and other achievements, yet not until then as keenly practised in Brazil as in the First World, became more prominent in Brazil. This new scenario is thoroughly explored in the cultural and artistic production of this period.

Regarding science fiction, important events contributed to significant changes in the shape of the genre in Brazil: in the scientific and technological field, the birth of the first Brazilian test-tube baby (1984) and the inauguration of the Itaipu Hydroelectric company (1982); in the political field, the end of the dictatorship (1985) and direct elections for President (1985); in the artistic field, an increasing number of Portuguese translations of Anglo-American science fiction classics and the transmission of series such as *Land of Giants*, *Lost in Space*, *Star Trek* on Brazilian TV, as well as the popularization of films such as *Blade Runner*, *Alien*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and *Star Wars*. The course of Brazilian science fiction during the 80s is, somehow, linked to all these events because they either inspired or provided elements to improve the genre in the national scene.

With the popularization of these international TV series and films, it is not surprising that Brazilian production continued to be strongly influenced by the Anglo-American tradition and tended to be very much focused on it. Thus, science fiction works which really focused on Brazilian issues were still limited. For this reason, there was still a strong desire for a genuinely Brazilian production and a greater interest in science fiction among mainstream Brazilian writers. Because of this visible influence of international works on Brazilian science fiction, the writer Ivan Carlos Regina wrote the *Manifesto Antropofágico da Ficção Científica Brasileira* [*The Brazilian Science Fiction Cannibalistic Manifesto*] (1988), a protest based on Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropofágico* [*Close Encounter of the Third Kind, Manifesto*] (1922). Both manifestos

expressed the feeling that Brazilian artists needed to create a form of art that reflects the specific concerns of Brazil. While Andrade's focus was on the literary field as a whole, Regina's criticism was focused specifically on producing science fiction, as we can see in the passage below:

Não viemos criticar a função da máquina, mas propor a estética do homem.

Precisamos deglutir urgentemente, após o Bispo Sardinha, a pistola de raios laser, o cientista maluco, o alienígena bonzinho, o herói invencível, a dobra espacial, o alienígena mauzinho, a mocinha com pernas perfeitas e cérebro de noz, o disco voador, que estão tão distantes da realidade brasileira quanto a mais longínqua das estrelas.

A ficção científica brasileira não existe.

A cópia do modelo estrangeiro cria crianças de olhos arregalados, velinhos tarados por livros, escritores sem leitores, homens neuróticos, literaturas escapistas, absurdos livros que se resumem as capas e pobreza mental, colônias intelectuais, que procuram, num grotesco imitar, recriar o *modus vivendi* dos países tecnologicamente desenvolvidos.

A ficção científica nacional não pode vir a reboque do resto do mundo. Ou atingimos sua qualidade ou desaparecemos.

[We have not come to criticize the function of the machine but to propose aesthetics for people.

We need to digest urgently, after Bishop Sardinha<sup>3</sup>, the laser-ray pistol, the mad scientist, the gentle alien, the invincible hero, the warp drive, the wicked alien, the heroine with lovely legs and a pea-sized brain, the flying saucer, all of which are as far from Brazilian reality as is the most distant star.

Brazilian science fiction does not exist.

The copy of the foreign model creates wide-eyed children, little old men horny for books, writers without readers, neurotic men, escapist literature, absurd books that are summarized on book jackets and summed up as mental poverty, intellectual colonies, seeking, in a grotesque way to imitate and re-create the *modus vivendi* of the technologically developed countries.

National science fiction cannot come on tow from the rest of the world. Either we reach its quality or we shall disappear]. (Ivan Carlos Regina in *Brazilian Science Fiction Cannibalistic Manifesto* (1988)).

With this manifesto, Regina advocated a more national genre and invited writers to explore Brazil's reality and culture instead of becoming mere imitators of Anglo-American production. By mentioning Brazilian legends and other cultural aspects, Regina demonstrates his anguish and concerns about writers' lack of authenticity. The episode of

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<sup>3</sup> Dom Pedro Fernandes Sardinha, the first Bishop of Brazil. According to history, he was sacrificed and eaten by the Caetés Indians in 1556. This episode is constantly used to illustrate the resistance of indigenous people to the imposition of the colonizer's customs and culture. In 1922, Oswald de Andrade also used the episode in his Cannibalistic Manifesto in favor of a form of art that reflects the specific concerns of Brazil. The word *sardinha* can also mean the fish, a sardine, which suggests a deliberate use of word-play for ironic effect.



Bishop Sardinha, illustrates his resistance to foreign tendencies while at the same time it suggests an incipient national struggle for cultural and intellectual independence. Although Regina's ideas were not shared by everyone in Brazil's science fiction community, I would say that it marked a watershed in Brazilian science fiction. Because of constant arguments on the shape and nature of the genre, writers were linked to one of three different groups: those who believed in a more traditional and universal genre; those who advocated the principles of the high arts and literary experimentalism; and those who supported a more nationalist genre.

Jorge Luiz Calife represents the most traditional and universalist line. His relationship to Arthur Clarke might well be a key point for how he constructed his style. After reading Arthur Clarke's interview in *Omni* magazine – in which Clarke said he would stop writing – Calife sent him some suggestions for the sequence for *2001: A Space Odyssey* and Clarke decided to use his ideas to give sequence to the narrative.<sup>4</sup> In Calife's perspective,

FC é a literatura mais adequada para a época de mudanças aceleradas em que nós vivemos. O mundo em que vivemos hoje é diferente do mundo em que nossos pais viveram e o mundo dos nossos filhos e netos será diferente do nosso. A tecnologia avança muito rapidamente, o mundo muda. Só a FC pode lidar com isso. Imaginar as possibilidades do futuro. A literatura mainstream se volta mais para o passado e o presente [SF is the most appropriate literature for the age of rapid changes in which we live. The world we live in today is different from the world in which our parents lived and the world of our children and grandchildren will be different from ours. Technology advances very quickly, the world changes. Only SF can handle it. Imagine the possibilities of the future. Mainstream literature tends to look toward the past and present (CALIFE interviewed by Ademir Pascale, 2007).

An important point of divergence between Calife and other writers is related to time. Unlike Calife, Bráulio Tavares and Ivan Carlos Regina invest in a style that reflects not only the future but also the past and present. Their experimentalist line includes the need to innovate by using technological advances without losing Brazilian cultural roots.

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<sup>4</sup> See Calife's interview with Ademir Pasquale in <http://www.cranik.com>: Accessed on July 24, 2012.

In general terms, most writers from the post-dictatorship generation focus on modern life and a loss of traditional values in contemporary Brazilian culture. According to the critic and historian Rachel Haywood Ferreira in *The Emergence of Latin American Science Fiction* (2011), Brazilian science fiction allows readers to see the crises of identity generated by the process of modernization. National fiction exemplifies the erosion of national identity because it is permanently influenced by cultural changes inherent to the process of globalization initiated during the 1990s. In other words, contemporary writers are concerned about the impact of globalization on Brazil's culture and values. Regina and Tavares seem to believe that the lack of a "pure identity" tends to induce people to alienating themselves from their culture. Their ideas have influenced subsequent writers who explore contradictions of the modern world, as well as concepts linked to post modernity, technology and cybernetics. This new generation of writers has attempted to shape the genre so that stereotypical notions of Brazilian identity frequently explored during the 60s could be discarded. By doing so, these writers embrace contradictions of modernity offering a more critical view of Brazilian society and its cultural myths, as we shall see later on.

Among the works written during the 80s that I regard as having been the most influential are: Jorge Luiz Calife's *Padrão de Contato* [*Patterns of Contact*] (1985) and *Horizonte de Eventos* [*Event Horizon*] (1986), Alfredo Sirkis's *Silicone XXI* [*Silicon 21*] (1985), Henrique Flory's *Sozinho* [*Alone*] (1989) and *A Aristocracia Eletrônica* [*The Eletronic Aristocracy*] (1989), Ivan Carlos Regina's *Pela Valorização da Vida* [*For Valuing Life*] (1987) and Bráulio Tavares' collection *A Espinha Dorsal da Memória* [*The Memory's Backbone*] (1989). All these works are somehow marked by the recent experience of the dictatorship. *Silicon 21*, for example, deals with the military government and the consequences of its corrupt ways on society. Metaphorically, Sirkis uses sexual violence to critique the way people misuse political power in favor of their own interests.

Like most works written during the 80s, the novel is strongly marked by an ironic and metaphorical language, usually constructed from obscene terms: “Tenho a melhor arma e o melhor peru. Fica duro uma semana inteira se precisar (p. 33) [I have got the best pistol and the best turkey. It can stay hard an entire week, if necessary]”. Here, ‘pistol’ can be taken as an allusion to penis and ‘turkey’ to sexual act; ‘stay hard’, besides referring to a male erection, refers to the state of readiness status of military forces in order to coerce and intimidate the population. This is clearly an attempt to satirize the dictatorship and show that freedom of speech was back. Satires from this period are more explicit than those written during an oppressive dictatorship; the combination of irony, metaphor, pornography and sensuality expresses the writer’s appropriation of linguistic elements in order to manifest freedom of expression.

Another important work that satirizes the dictatorship is Calife’s *Event Horizon*. It shows the devastating effect of the military regime for society as a whole. The novel offers a reflection on problems resulting from technological development and industrialization. By exploring the dark side of modern life, Calife shows how the process of modernization affects people’s emotionally and psychologically. Set in 3000, the novel follows the story of a democratic utopian colony called Eden 6 whose main authority is Angela Duncan, a woman made immortal by the alien Triad, whose cosmic powers are coveted by the Nictians, a parasitic alien race. Eden 6 becomes a target for outside forces, the Nictians. A glitch in the space-time continuum allows an armed spaceship from the 20<sup>th</sup> century to come into the colony. Ironically, this spaceship is called Brasil and is led by Luciana Villares, a Brazilian immortal who becomes Angela’s advisor and ally. Arguably, Calife’s attitude is a critique on the way the government invested in an image of Brazil that did not correspond to its political and economic situation. In other words, the government tried to obtain foreign investment by showing only the positive aspects of in-country technological

development. From this perspective, Brazil was economically and politically prepared to be part of the developed world.

Also important in the novel is the author's attitude toward women. In Angela Duncan and Luciana Villares, Calife seems to illustrate changes in the position that Brazilian women occupied in society. Indeed, the late 70s and early 80s are marked by the extent of changes in women's roles, as I have pointed out in previous sections. However, Calife's attitude toward women is ambivalent. If on the one hand, he attempts to offer an alternative representation of woman, different from the traditional female role, on the other hand, this representation is still stereotyped because, even though women seem to be controlling the situation, they are actually controlled by Triad. Thus, the writer's ambivalence may suggest that female passivity and obedience are key elements to maintaining the original state of peace and democracy in Eden 6. Actually, this ambivalent discourse toward female characters is present in most science fiction works written during the 80s in Brazil. Although Brazilian women have become increasingly active outside their homes since the 70s, writers permanently depict female characters in conventional roles – this is true of Brazilian literature in general.

During the 90s, writers seemed to be less focused on themes directly related to the military regime and more concerned about the impact of modern globalization policies on Brazilian society. In general terms Brazilian writers tended to show the process of globalization as a form of neo-colonization or a modern form of domination promoted by the First World countries, particularly the United States and accepted by Third World countries, including Brazil. Among the most significant effects of this process is the increase in the number of unemployed people, which, consequently, leads to increases in the rates of crime, poverty and social exclusion.

From this perspective, Brazilian writers were strongly influenced by the American Cyberpunk style which, unlike hard science fiction, is usually pessimistic and shows that

technology which is frequently connected to Cyberpunk's representation of globalization is dealt with in a clinical way. Writers like William Gibson and Samuel Delaney focus on the ways in which globalization has shrunk the world – partly through technology, but also because state boundaries have, to some extent, been eradicated and global, corporate capitalism has become the norm. In John Clute's words,

Cyberpunk had as it were overleaped the sheer vast mundanity of the information explosion, in order to create a *noir* megalopolis of inner space, imaginatively dense but clearly not directed towards explicating or illuminating the revolutions in the routines of individual and corporate life that were transforming the daylight hours, first of the industrialized world, and soon afterwards the world entire. Cyberpunk did not domesticate the future (2003: 67).

In this sense, Brazilian science fiction of the period takes up, transforms and adapts these cyberpunk strategies to a Brazilian agenda. I regard the most representative works in this tendency as including Fausto Fawcett's *Santa Clara Poltergeist* (1991) and Guilherme Kujawski's *Piritas Siderais: Romance Cyberbarroco* [*Outer Space Pyrites: a Cyberbaroque Novel*] (1994). Both novels critically explore issues of race, class and gender, at the same time as providing a discussion of the cultural exchange between the center and the periphery which is strongly related to the cyberpunk tradition as one can see in works such as William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984), for example. Building a parallel between Brazilian and American cyberpunk Elizabeth Ginway comments:

Both Brazilian and American cyberpunk share urban counterculture and the fusion between the natural and the artificial, yet in distinct ways. Anglophone cyberpunk portrays a world in which it is common practice for the human body to be mechanically or chemically enhanced, and where mind expansion through virtual reality has become the norm. The inhabitants of this cybernetic underworld strive to infiltrate the global corporate blocs and information systems that have total power. In contrast, Brazilian cyberpunk portrays a world in which only the protagonists have physically enhanced bodies and where the focus is on the urban underworld of its largest cities and the complex, national or international conspiracies in which they are involved, with an emphasis on physical sexuality and violence instead of events taking place virtually (2004: 152).

But I would argue that this is a reductive and simplistic way of characterizing Brazilian cyberpunk. While it is true that some works emphasize physical sexuality and violence, it should be pointed out that this is part of the writer's analogy with the increased pressures of a globalized economy imposed on Brazil. Arguably, a more appropriate description for Brazilian cyberpunk is that offered by Roberto de Sousa Causo in *Brazilian Science Fiction: the Anxiety of Influence* (2000) in which he identifies iconoclasm, mysticism, sensuality, humanism, and a Third world perspective as being key features of Brazilian cyberpunk. In other words, writers deconstruct the myth of Brazil as an exotic tropical land and offer the picture of a country with all the postmodern conflicts thrown up by the process of globalization. Causo also relates this tendency to: the continuing impact of Anglo-American science fiction on Brazilian production; the moving on of Brazilian writing; the impact of globalization, and the shift away from a concern with an explicitly oppressive state; and the idea of Brazil as a sprawling urban culture.

Considering that Brazilian writers tended to invest in a sense of national identity in a globalised culture, Causo opts for the name "tupinipunk", a term that combines the name of an indigenous Brazilian tribe (tupiniquim) and "punk" instead of the traditional term cyberpunk. This is clearly an attempt to recover Oswald de Andrade's discussion on cultural cannibalism which suggests that the artist must swallow foreign influence and transform it into a new and original product, essentially a national one. In general terms, tupinipunk writers combine the Brazilian modernist tradition of cultural cannibalism in a postcolonial reality with sex and high technology. In this regard, Ginway argues that

Despite Brazil's remarkable economic and technological production over the last forty years and its own burgeoning cybernetic culture, the genre seems to go against the general currents of Brazilian history, culture and Third World status. However, it is precisely this exotic image, combined with the kind of technology that Brazilian cyberpunk takes to an extreme, that allows Brazilian cyberpunk to contest American cyberpunk's literary hegemony and to self-

consciously parody elite notions of high culture in Brazil. In this sense, tupinipunk is related to both the Brazilian Modernist tradition of cultural cannibalism and a postcolonial sensibility (2004: 151).

Unlike American cyberpunk, tupinipunk narratives do not offer much action in cyberspace but focus on Brazilian landscapes to explore cultural diversities. While cyberpunk is characterized as a kind of post-modern fiction that combines high technology and low quality of life, tupinipunk takes an avant-garde stance and tries to include and emphasize the same themes as the modernist movement did in the 1920s.

In this perspective, Brazilian cyberpunk can be seen as an answer to Regina's Manifesto which is directly related to the national tradition of cultural cannibalism. Arguably, emphasis on the ostensibly primitive – though sometimes disguised in eroticism – is another important distinctive element between Brazilian and American cyberpunk. This emphasis on the primitive is more informed by Brazil's historical legacy. In this sense, the ongoing political, cultural and environmental questions around the status of the Amazon and of indigenous populations have played a significant role. While Brazilian business and the government may benefit enormously from exploiting natural resources, the implications for indigenous populations are disastrous, as one can see in Alfredo Sirkis's *Silicone XXI* (1985).

According to the critic Carl Freedman (2000), American cyberpunk effectively provides a description of a modern and technological world but it fails to offer any alternatives or utopian possibilities beyond its cynical, apolitical exposure of corruption and greed. In William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984), for instance, alienation and lack of identity is central for the construction of Case's and Molly's characters. In order to make Case understand his lack of identity, Armitage tells him:

You're a console cowboy. The prototypes of the programs you use to crack industrial banks were developed for Screaming Fist for the assault in the

Kirensk computer nexus... I was there, Case; I was there when they invented your kind (p. 41).

Molly is also an example of a being without an identity. Despite all her ostensible strength and control, she got to where she is by being a 'meat puppet', signaling lack of control. Indeed, her most significant feature is that she is specialized in modifying herself in order to give her function. Comparing these two characters from *Neuromancer* with *Santa Clara Poltergeist*'s protagonists, Clara and Mateus, one can identify some important elements of distinction between these two novels. To begin with, it is important to mention that both Clara and Mateus are cyborgs and have important characteristics that distinguish them from other characters in the novel: Clara, a former erotic dancer, has an electronic pelvis while Mateus, a black electronic expert, has an electronically enhanced brain. Noticeably, as with *Neuromancer*, female characters are sexualized whilst male characters tend to be associated with cerebral activity – Molly has her body transformed, and Case his mind – similarly Clara and Mateus. Here, there is an explicit reference to two important myths of Brazilian identity: Clara's features – erotic and dancer – remind us of the myth of Brazilians as a sensual and docile people; Mateus' blackness and his electronically enhanced brain, as well as Clara's electronic pelvis suggest the union of different races as an allusion to the myth of racial democracy.

Fawcett offers an alternative discourse that goes beyond the conventional in order to produce a site of cultural resistance. While Mateus is black, his brain is electronically enhanced. This is, clearly, an opposition to the imperial and colonial discourse that points the 'Other' as ignorant and dependent. Also present in this construction is the idea of a hybrid body which, in one way or another, recalls the myth of racial democracy. In fact, in Fawcett's discourse, the hybrid body is a place of harmony and salvation: in order to save Rio de Janeiro from total destruction caused by a bomb produced by a group of international energy terrorists, Clara has to detonate the bomb in her electronic pelvis. By



the end of the novel, Clara realizes that she has curative powers and therefore she is considered a saint and healer. Thus, Brazilian Cyberpunk employs Afro-Brazilian cultural elements and icons to provide national authenticity and offer a typically Brazilian style. However, I would argue that this reproduction of a stereotypical version of femininity in a technological form is problematic. One argument levied against American cyberpunk is that it tends to be quite sexist – orientated around an albeit countercultural masculine cool – women are generally hypersexualized, despite their strength and independence. In this sense, Brazilian science fiction writers do not do anything different.

Also important for contemporary Brazilian science fiction is the writers's attitude toward robot and computers. Although by the 1980s the robot had been displaced by AIs, many Brazilian writers continued to explore this icon as a replacement for the slave. Arguably, this attitude reflects the stories of the 1960s in which robots were often portrayed as servants and sexual objects. According to Bráulio Tavares in *O que é Ficção Científica* [*What is Science Fiction*] (1986):

A relação homem/robô na ficção científica muitas vezes não passa de uma reprodução de narrativas que giram em torno de patrão civilizado e em criado primitivo, onde um encarna a cultura e o outro a espontaneidade: um comanda e o outro comenta. O termo robô vem da palavra tcheca robota, que significa escravo. Não é mera coincidência (p. 63) [The relationship between man and robot in science fiction is sometimes a mere repetition of narratives that revolve around the civilized master and the primitive slave, in which one embodies culture and the other, spontaneity: One commands and the other comments The term robot comes from the Czech word robota which means slave].

To a great extent, this repetition can be seen as a critique of the way Brazil has been placed in relation to technologically developed nations. Analysing Brazil's process of technological development, it is possible to see that, until the 80s, Brazil had adopted a passive stance. In works such as Henrique Flory's *Sozinho* [*Alone*] (1989), José dos Santos Fernandes's *As Crianças Não Devem Chorar* [*Children Shouldn't Cry*] (1990), Cid

Fernandez's *Julgamentos* [Judgements] (1993), Júlio Emílio Braz's *Megalopolis* (1994) robots or androids are somehow humanized and play any form of servile role.

This is true for most contemporary works of Brazilian science fiction, even those written in the twenty first century. However, the opposite can be seen in Ivan Carlos Regina's *Pela Valorização da Vida* [For Valuing Life] (1987) in which robots rebel against their owner and start a series of violent acts. This attitude is clearly a critique on the dark side of technological development for which man can become the slave of a technocratic system the disastrous effects of which are usually more harmful to the lower classes.

When it comes to science fiction writing on the theme of how computers are used, writers' attitudes are divergent. Some computer stories explore themes such as women's sexuality, homosexuality and disease; others deal with family relationships, individual conflicts and security. However, most writers use the computer as a tool to rehearse social changes and transformation. I regard the most representative works of this tendency as including: Henrique Flory's *A Aristocracia Eletrônica* [The Eletronic Aristocracy] and *O Concertador* [The Repairman], both written in 1989 and Márcia Kupstas's *O Demônio do Computador* [The Computer Devil ] (1997) which I will analyse later on. In general terms, writers adopt conventional attitudes toward race and class but try to show some alternative possibilities for changes in traditional gender roles.

Arguably, these attitudes toward computers and robots are somehow related to both Brazil's colonial inheritance and its consequences for modern times. During the 70s and 80s, Brazil was the scene of important changes not only in the political and economic fields but also in the cultural and social fields. Discussions focusing on environmental issues and the impact of the globalization process worldwide as well as the process of decolonization were frequent among intellectuals and critics from different parts of the world. In this mood of changes, ecofeminism and postcolonial theories played an important role for the construction of different arguments and viewpoints since they deal with issues

regarding power relations, especially colonial power which is deeply present in Brazilian science fiction from the 60s to the present. They rethink ideas of the self and the other in a similar way: the ecofeminist critique of the delusion of isolated individualism has something in common with the border self, resisting linear, dualistic lines of power and ways of thinking. As multi-issue theories, both of them argue against ideologies which authorize injustices based on gender, race and class, as well as against exploiting and degrading the environment. Thus, the combination of postcolonial and ecofeminist theories discussed in this thesis, is justified by the need to highlight issues related to these two fields presented in the science fiction written in Brazil from the 60s to the present. By using these theories to read Brazilian science fiction, I will focus particularly on the writers' concern for social and cultural issues and how they address their criticism of the military regime and its consequences for modern society in Brazil.

### **3 Brazilian Science Fiction and its Relationship to Ecofeminist and Postcolonial Theories**

Literature as an act of individual and social expression has always been present in the struggle against imperialism and all its implications. The dominant capitalist economic system as well as globalization and its impact on the environment and the local population have been increasingly criticized from different points of view, in different modes of fiction around the world. Some Brazilian writers, for example, have found speculative literature to be a way of criticizing, denouncing and countering the hegemony present in Brazil from its colonial times.

Brazilian science fiction, particularly during and ever since the 70s, was and has been an important instrument of recording and denouncing the disastrous relationship between man and Nature in modern and postmodern times. In this sense, feminist movements have had an important and distinctive role. While throughout the world women were united against sex discrimination and championed equal rights, in Brazil the feminist movement had something more to deal with: women had to take a stance against the dictatorship in favor of the country's redemocratization, and of better living conditions. In addition, the government's decisions on the process of technological modernization did not take into consideration any ecological measure that could affect the smooth running of the development policies thus generating indignation and activism among women.

Also important in this discussion is the Brazilian government's efforts to transform a Third World country into a First World country overnight resulting in a visible dependence on international investments and so to finding itself with a lack of autonomy to govern over its own wealth. In other words, the race for technological advance led Brazil to becoming a (neo-)colony. Thus, analyzing Brazilian science fiction through ecofeminist

and postcolonial perspectives may contribute to a more precise analysis in terms of a conceptual framework, as we shall see further on.

### 3.1 Ecofeminist Theories

In his work *The Nature of Race: Discourses of Racial Difference in Ecofeminism* (1997), Noel Sturgeon starts by saying that:

Ecofeminism is a contemporary political movement operating on the theory that the ideologies which authorize injustices based on gender, race and class are related to the ideologies which sanction the exploitation and degradation of the environment (1997: 260).

From Sturgeon's words, one can infer that ecofeminism is a multi-issue and globally oriented movement that deals with environmental issues, particularly those related to the social domination and oppression of women. Ecofeminism has emerged as the third wave of the women's movement in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The approaches that it makes explore and invest in links between women and Nature, basically from points of view formed at various ideological-cultural and socioeconomic levels. On the ideological-cultural level, the idea reinforced is that women are closer to Nature than men. Many feminists have argued strongly against this assumed link between women and Nature, as it can be seen as having been used to justify much of why women have been dismissively regarded over the centuries, as irrational, passive, defined entirely in terms of sexuality, reproductivity, maternity, nurturing etc. Thus, these associations between women and Nature have also been used to the disadvantage of women.

Ecofeminism, then, redefines and reinterprets the long term association of women and Nature in order to make a political argument about the relationship between gendered identity and environmental politics. From this perspective, it is more aligned with body,

matter, emotions and the animal world, as can be seen in works by authors such as Carolyn Merchant, Vandana Shive, Eliane Potiguara, Rosemary Ruether, and Susan Griffin. This is discussed in greater depth later on in this section.

On the socioeconomic level, women have traditionally been placed in the sphere of reproduction, child raising and household chores, a sphere which is given little value in relation to the public sphere of the world of work where man and masculine authority predominate. This is, of course, a contentious issue. However, ecofeminism seeks to use this link as a way of empowering women. It therefore invests in a different relationship with the environment and shows a new way of thinking about power. Sturgeon also states that

As activists, ecofeminists have been involved in environmental and feminist lobbying efforts, in demonstrations and direct actions, in forming a political platform for the US Green party, and in building various kinds of ecofeminist cultural projects such as ecofeminist art, literature, and spirituality. Ecofeminist activists have taken up a wide variety of issues, such as toxic waste, deforestation, military and nuclear weapons policies, reproductive rights, and domestic and international agricultural development (1997: 262).

Among other important events that have boosted the ecofeminist movement, Sturgeon identifies the *Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the 1980s*, conference held in Amherst in 1980. From this conference grew The Women's Pentagon Action (WPA) of 1980 and 1981, in which two thousand women demonstrated and practiced civil disobedience outside the Pentagon. The politics behind these early ecofeminist actions were based on making connections between militarism, sexism, racism, classism, and environmental destruction. However, a constant and ongoing focus of ecofeminist critiques has been on how to conceptualize the special connection between women and Nature presumed by the designation 'ecofeminism'. According to the ecofeminist and theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether:

Some ecofeminists do claim that there is some truth in the ideology that women are closer to Nature. They see this closeness as having been distorted by patriarchy to dominate both women and Nature as inferior to male humans. But this distortion is rooted in an essential truth that women by virtue of their child-bearing function are more attuned to the rhythms of Nature, more in touch with their own bodies, more holistic. Women need to claim this affinity with Nature and take the lead in creating a new earth-based spirituality and practice of care for the Earth (2005: 93).

Ruether goes on to state that whilst retaining the association of Nature and women, ecofeminism resists this essentially biological understanding of women. Most ecofeminists, she argues, see this concept of affinity between women and Nature as a social construct that both naturalizes women and feminizes nonhuman Nature, making them appear more alike. She also adds that by socially positioning women in the sphere of bodily and material support for society, women may also suffer more, due to the natural world being abused and hence also, women become more aware of this abuse. However, this is a matter of their experience in their particular social location, not because they have a fundamentally different 'nature' to men. I would argue that the way society sees women can also contribute to this affinity: throughout recorded history, in most societies women have been seen as sensitive and fragile beings, unable to defend themselves. Discussions on the meaning of the word 'women' have been heated and some ecofeminists are accused of being essentialist. For the ecofeminist Susan Griffin, the term conjures up a creature who does not really exist, who is an absence, a social construct: the fantasy of cultural and political power structures. Griffin argues that as the word 'woman' exists in and is marked by these structures, it is inseparable from them (1997: 213).

In fact, any feminist movement would require this word as a way of identifying the main subject under discussion. However, since the first steps of the ecofeminist movement, the idea of essentialism has always been present. Some followers of the movement are accused of using the word 'woman' as pure idea or pure matter without taking into account the more sophisticated knowledge that 'woman' is a fiction of the social construction of

gender. In this regard, Griffin states that to accuse early feminists of being essentialist is oddly ahistorical, since the work of feminist thinkers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century created the very ground on which gender became visible as a social construction (1997: 214). Ecofeminism has played an important role in the struggle against the imperial and capitalist idea that has transformed the world into an enormous machine for making money, no matter the consequences. In spite of the criticisms levied against it, ecofeminism is fundamentally a very useful theoretical tool. In the Brazilian context, it can be used to open up the potential of Brazilian science fiction during the 70s, as we shall see in other sections of this study.

In this vein, in her discussion of the role of ecofeminism, Griffin goes on to state that in order to correct a misreading of ecofeminism, it is important to clarify what ecofeminism is and what it is not. She argues that:

What is critical in the emergence of ecofeminism is the meeting between ecology and feminism. Concepts of ecosystems, of natural processes which precede and yet also include human consciousness are at the heart of the ecofeminist approach. And these concepts accompany and illuminate the ecofeminist understanding of both the oppression of women and the social construction of gender (1997: 215).

By this concept, Griffin suggests the need to rethink the traditional women's role, in modes of consciousness. In this perspective, woman is said to be less alienated and her closeness to Nature is understood as a result of the social construction of gender and the socialization and division of labor which is also a consequence of this construction. Here, the words 'woman' and 'Nature' belong to a system of thought in which hidden significance makes the meaning of the word 'woman' dependent on a certain idea of Nature.

Although there is not a consensus among ecofeminists about the reasons for affinity between women and Nature, they all agree that ecofeminism's challenge to social domination extends over and beyond all classes and gender, because the domination of



gender, race, and class and that of nature are mutually reinforcing. In this regard, ecofeminism may make a valuable contribution to literary criticism because it offers a unique combination of literature and philosophical perspectives. Such a combination gives literary and cultural critics a special lens through which they can investigate the ways Nature is represented in literature and the ways representations of Nature are linked with representations of gender, race, class and sexuality. One of the primary projects of this hybrid criticism is analysis of the cultural construction of Nature, which also includes an analysis of language, desire, knowledge and power. According to the ecofeminist literary critic Gretchen Legler in her work *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism* (1997), the profession of literature has not paid sufficient attention to environmental issues:

Environmental concerns have mysteriously not made their way, until recently, into the profession of literature. Ecocritics argue that what appears to be a deepening global environmental crisis makes it necessary that the profession pay attention to environmental issues, specifically by addressing how literature influences human behavior with regard to the natural world... dealing with practical environment problems is both an ecological and a feminist task because the uses and abuses of the environment that have led to what they see as the potentially catastrophic present are largely due to a patriarchal environment ethic that has conceptualized land as 'woman' (1997: 227).

Indeed, few Brazilian writers had explored environmental issues until the 70s when a wave of feminist and ecological movements emerged in Brazil and writers started to see the representation of nature in literature as an important part of forming a more viable environment ethic. In Legler's view, the constructions of Nature as female are an essential part of why this harmful environmental ethic is maintained and are essential to maintaining hierarchical ways of thinking that justify the oppression of various 'others' in patriarchal culture by ranking them closer to Nature or by declaring their practices 'natural' or 'unnatural'. Legler also stresses some important questions that the combination of ecological literary criticism and ecofeminist criticism allows us to ask: "What is Nature writing? Does it include fiction or does it only include nonfictional, pseudo-scientific

essays, written by those who are already alienated from the natural world? How are race, class and gender related to Nature?" (1997: 228). All these questions are linked in some way to the issues being examined in this thesis.

Contemporary writers such as Ursula Le Guin and Alice Walker have included important ecofeminist issues in their writings which have formed a rich field for ecofeminist literary critics. In *Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences* (1990), for instance, Ursula Le Guin gives animals voices and desires while civilized man is said to be deaf because he only hears his own words making up the world:

By climbing up into his head and shutting out every voice but his own, 'Civilized Man' has gone deaf. He can't hear the wolf calling him brother – not Master, but brother. He can't hear the earth calling him child – not Father, but son. He hears only his own words making up the world. He can't hear the animals ... This is the myth of civilization, embodied in the monotheisms which assign soul to Man alone (1990: 11).

Here, there is a clear intention of reflecting on the relationship between the human and nonhuman world. Le Guin takes up a post modern construction of human relationships with Nature in the same perspective as that informed by ecofeminist theories. Like Le Guin, Alice Walker ponders on environmental issues in some of her works. In *Am I Blue* (1988b), for example, Walker reflects on the possibility of communication between humans and animals. The story is about a fond relationship between a horse and a woman. Using rhetorical techniques including metaphors, irony, anecdote and personification, the author suggests that animals are in a sense, linked to humans. In this regard, Legler states that:

Walker connects the realization about our notion that 'beasts' cannot feel grief or happiness with similar notions about women not being able to think, about black being 'naturally' lazy, about slavery being a 'natural' institution, and children enjoying being frightened, about oppression justified by 'natural' fact (1997: 231).

Indeed, the connection between our notion of the human and natural world is undeniable, and this constitutes an important issue for ecofeminist literary criticism, the main subject of which is human relationships with the natural world. Calling writers' attention to their important role and effort in reimagining Nature and human relationships, Legler suggests that contemporary women writers might employ some emancipatory strategies such as: re-mything nature as a speaking, bodied subject; erasing or blurring boundaries between inner and outer landscapes or the erasing or blurring of self-other distinctions; historicizing and politicizing Nature and the author as a participant in Nature; affirming the value of partial views and perspectives, the importance of bioregions and locatedness of human subjects, and so forth (1997: 230). Intentionally or not, these strategies are present in important literary works that deal with ecological feminism issues. In Brazilian science fiction, for example, it is possible to see how some writers explore ecological devastation as a result of an uncontrolled process of modernization, as we shall see later on.

Adopting the same perspective as Legler, the philosopher and ecofeminist Karen J. Warren points out that "important connections exist between the treatment of women, people of color and the underclass on one hand and the treatment of nonhuman nature on the other" (1997: 3).

Thus, Warren argues that any feminism, environmentalism or environmental ethic which fails to take these connections seriously is grossly inadequate. Establishing the characteristics of these connections, particularly women-Nature connections, and determining which are potentially liberating for both women and nonhuman Nature is a major project of ecofeminist philosophy. Warren also understands ecofeminism as a movement committed to the elimination of male-gender power and privilege.

In other words, ecofeminism deals with the oppression of women, Nature and underclass and opposes any kind of domination that is maintained or justified by the logic

of patriarchy. For a number of ecofeminists, the domination of women and nature starts with colonization. The counterpart to the assumed link between woman and Nature is a link between man and authority over, and manipulation of, the natural world, of which exploration, expansion and colonization are, arguably, examples of this manipulation and control. The ecofeminist and Cherokee woman Andy Smith in her work *Ecofeminism Through an Anticolonial Framework* (1997) argues that:

Most native women probably feel the impact of colonization on our everyday lives more than other forms of oppression. One reason why colonization seems to be the primary issue for Native women is that most forms of oppression did not exist in most native society prior to colonization (1997: 22).

Smith's observation is made with specific reference to some native societies which might be described as matriarchal, in which women were accorded status and prominence. Describing an indigenous society, Eliane Potiguara<sup>5</sup>, a Brazilian member of a Women's Group for indigenous education, points out some important features that differentiate some indigenous tribes from modern society based on capitalism. Firstly, barter, not money, is the basis for the exchange of staple foodstuffs and objects of necessity. Thus, indigenous society is communal. Labour is communal. Having no basis in power, relations between parents and children, husband and wife, etc. are usually harmonious. Indians do not accumulate material goods. They produce only that which they need to survive. Thus, indigenous society is different from a society which encroaches on customs, traditions,

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<sup>5</sup> Eliane Potiguara participates actively in a number of Brazilian organizations, such as the Union of Indigenous Nations. She has organized a nationwide network of indigenous women in an effort to guarantee a better future for Brazil's 220,000 Indians. In her researches, she traveled to Paraguay, Uruguay, and southern Brazil to study the Guarani Indians, particularly the societal role of women. Eliane has organized the Group of Indigenous Women Educators, known as GRUMIN. So far, there are twenty-six regional coordinators implementing a basic program of education and consciousness-raising among women in hundreds of villages. The women are given an eighty-page booklet that in simple, clear terms and pictures explains the history of indigenous people in Brazil, and their contribution to the country's history. For most of the women, it is the first time they have been made aware of events occurring outside their communities and given an opportunity to reflect about their own situation as women and native Brazilians. In the process, the older women are encouraged to share their knowledge of the indigenous group's history and traditions. Craft workshops are organized to keep local customs alive (<http://www.elianepotiguara.org.br/aautora.html>).

history, economy, social politics and religion (1997:143). Although Potiguara's perspective appears to be very idealistic, her ideas have influenced many ecological movements in defense of indigenous people in Latin America and more strongly in Brazil. In her studies, she makes some links to Said's explanation of Orientalism. He describes how the opposition between East and West is understood in terms of a series of associated opposites, including female (the body, emotion, infantile, indolent, etc.) and male (the mind, reason, adult, active, etc.). The key to the justification of colonialism is the assumption that male virtues are essential to keep order in the feminine East. The logic of colonial authority, then, is thought through in terms of assumed values associated with masculinity and femininity.

The process of colonization undoubtedly changed the reality of indigenous society. For this reason, Smith believes that it is essential that ecofeminist theory engages seriously with the issues of colonization of native lands, in its analysis of oppression. According to her,

Because Native people suffer the brunt of environmental destruction, it is incumbent upon ecofeminist theorists to analyze colonization as a fundamental aspect of the domination of nature. This is true not just because we should all be concerned about the welfare of Native people but also because what befalls Native people will eventually affect everyone. Radiation will not stay nicely packaged on Indian land; it will eventually affect all the land (1997: 24).

Although Smith is referring to the environmental destruction caused by the US government on Native American land, her analysis can be extended to any other colonized and exploited land, including Brazil and other Latin American countries.

As a pioneer in ecofeminist analysis in Brazil and Latin America, Ivone Gebara speaks of doing her studies "between noise and garbage". Noise refers to a crowded neighbourhood with machinery, trucks and cars that lack silencers, but also the shouting and the music people play as they find ways to survive each day. Garbage is the waste of

society disproportionately discarded where the poor live, with little organized clean-up. To engage on ecofeminist criticism is to be aware daily of the oppression of the poor and the degradation of their environment.

Gebara goes on to state that an ecofeminist understanding of the human being starts with the person in a network of relationships. Nobody exists first and then assumes relationships, but the person is constituted in and by relationships. One does not seek to extricate oneself from relationships in order to become autonomous. Such autonomy is a delusion based on denial of the others on whom one depends. Rather one seeks to become ever more deeply aware of the interconnections on which one's own life depends; ultimately the network of relations of the whole cosmos. One seeks to shape those relations in ways that are more life-giving and reciprocal, to respect the integrity of the other beings to whom one is related, even as one is respected by them and respects oneself. To be is to be related; shaping the quality of those relations is the critical ethical task. All this discussion is in some way linked to the constructions of Nature and human relationships explored by Brazilian science fiction writers, particularly during the 70s. Also, the idea that technology and the process of globalization affect human relations by making man more individualist and self-reliant is central to important works written during the 80s and 90s.

Although Gebara does not make any explicit reference to the discourse of those who defend the process of globalization as the best way to socialize and interconnect human beings for a better world, she implicitly opposes it. Unlike ecofeminist understanding, globalization requires the imposition of power over others; there is an effort to concentrate economic power in the hands of a few groups. The aggressive expansion of globalization is closely linked to the impoverishment of both the earth and the majority of its people. For most ecofeminists, this system of economic power aggravates environmental destruction, disables authentic democracy, undermines cultural diversity,

destabilizes social integrity and increases the gap between rich and poor worldwide. For Ruether,

What is being discussed today as globalization is simply the latest stage of Western colonialist imperialism. We need to see these current patterns of appropriation of wealth and concentration of power in the West, now especially in the hands of the elite of the United States, in this context of more than 500 years of Western colonialism (2005: 1).

Obviously there are counter-arguments in this respect. In the last 20 or so years, the world has witnessed a shift in power from West to East, as can be seen when one compares the economic relations between Brazil – The United States and Brazil – China. However, Ruether wants to call our attention to the perpetuation of the imperial ideology that has sunk deep roots throughout the world from time immemorial. If the process of globalization is a stage of Western colonialist imperialism it is not surprising that its consequences repeat those of 19<sup>th</sup> century colonialism. The gap between rich and poor has steadily grown and this gap fuels conflicts within and between nations. In many ex-colonial nations, the former settler minorities have been the overwhelming recipients of the wealth created by globalization while the impoverished majority is primarily black or indigenous. In this regard, Ruether states that:

Those who seek alternatives to globalization need to be much more cognizant of the ethnic factor in the division between rich beneficiaries and impoverished victims of free trade policies and the danger of a backlash against globalization turning into genocidal crusades against privileged local minorities. Reasoned struggles to change the system that is impoverishing the majority can be deflected into symbolic targeting of privileged groups and their institutions. Ethnic and religious differences between privileged groups and the poor majority add racist and religious rhetoric to such backlashes, with easy appeal to inflamed emotions (2005: 10).

Both globalization and colonization imply the deprivation of poor and defenseless communities of their rights and natural resources. Even when the rich beneficiaries' aims are to protect the environment, the impoverished victims suffer the consequences. If

domination and oppression of women, nature and the underclass started with the process of colonization, as stated by Smith, the agents of globalization are in charge of perpetuating them. Thus, it is feasible for ecofeminist theories to discuss the issues of colonization as an integral part of their object of study since both fields emerged from the necessity of struggling against the domination and oppression suffered by the underclass.

### 3.2 Postcolonial Theories

Like ecofeminist theories, postcolonial studies emerged in the 1980s from the necessity of bringing into focus the centrality of imperial and colonial issues. Works such as Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) have influenced critics from different parts of the world and inspired them to re-read literary texts from a postcolonial perspective. While Fanon shows the effects of colonization at a psychological level for the colonized man, Said demonstrates the legitimization of the Empire for the colonizer. From both perspectives, new forms of textual analysis emerged combining the insights of philosophy, psychology, politics, anthropology and literary theory in dynamic and provocative ways. According to the postcolonial theorist John McLeod (2000: 23), three forms of textual analysis became popular in the wake of *Orientalism*. The first one involves re-reading canonical English literature in order to examine if past texts perpetuate or question the latent assumptions of colonial discourses. This form of textual analysis proceeds along two avenues. In one direction, critics look at writers who dealt manifestly with colonial themes and argued about whether their works were supportive or critical of colonial discourses, as in the case of Joseph Conrad's novel about colonialism in Africa, *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Here critics debated whether Conrad's novel perpetuated the colonialist view of the alleged inferiority of other peoples, or if it questioned the entire colonial project, dissenting from colonial



discourse. In another direction, critics analyse texts that seemingly have little to do with colonialism but can be read from the perspective of colonial discourses as in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) or Charlotte Brönte's *Jane Eyre* (1847).

The second form of textual analysis explored by McLeod (2002) is related to the post-structuralist thought of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan whose ideas focus on the representation of colonized subject in a variety of colonial texts, not just literary ones. The third form of literary analysis deals with literatures from countries with a history of colonialism. Here the work of Fanon and Said, and later Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak are central to the emergence of new ways of reading and writing by giving voice and expression to colonized and once-colonized people.

As a good start, *Orientalism* (1978) showed the importance and urgency of academic studies dealing with the relations between Western economic/political global domination and Western intellectual production. In this regard, literature presents a wide field; it offers one of the most important ways in which these new perceptions are expressed. Working as a vehicle for protesting, making denouncements and raising awareness, literature has been essential for registering the process of transition which former colonial societies have undergone since their first steps toward the process of 'decolonization'. Therefore, postcolonial theories have played a significant role. Said's *Orientalism*, for example, worked as a point of departure for many other important postcolonial theorists such as Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak whose works opened a wide variety of theoretical issues in colonial discourse theory. According to McLeod (2000), "Bhabha explored the possibility of reading colonialist discourses as endlessly ambivalent, split and unstable, never able to set up securely the colonial values they seemed to support" (p.24). He explores the relationship between a colonized and a colonizing subject in a perspective that crosses the border from the physical to the imaginary.

Bhabha has become one of the leading voices in postcolonialism since the 1980s. Like Said, he argues that colonialism is informed by a series of assumptions which aim to legitimate its view of other lands, people and culture. According to him,

The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction (1994: 70).

From this perspective, the colonizer is the subject who intends to restructure this degenerate population thus justifying the process of colonization. Bhabha goes on to state that colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an 'Other' and yet entirely knowable and visible. Stereotyping people and cultures is a way to legitimate the practice of colonialism.

In his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha starts to develop ideas concerning identity. He gives special attention to those who live 'border lives' on the edges of different nations, in between contrary homelands. For him, living 'in no man's land' requires a new 'art of the present'. This depends upon embracing the contrary logic of the border land and using it to rethink the dominant ways we represent things like history, identity and community. Borders are important thresholds, full of contradictions and ambivalence. They both separate and join different places. They are intermediate locations where one contemplates moving beyond a barrier.

In colonial discourse, this barrier seems to interfere in the way some writers present their viewpoint since it allows the possibility of rethinking and questioning the assumptions and values of the colonizer's culture and way of life. Bhabha describes the border as a place where conventional patterns of thought are disturbed by the possibility of crossing. Here, present and past, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion are mixed as if it was a game of imagination, thought and reality. The border, then, is the place of culture and identity. In regard to Bhabha's ideas, McLeod states that:

Bhabha turns the possibility of such imaginative crossing against received notions of identity and subjectivity which precisely depend upon fixed binary definitions: such as native/foreigner and master/slave. These are contested as ideologically suspect and inappropriate; the 'art of the present' requires a habit of mind in which movement and crossing are paramount (2000: 218).

From this perspective, postcolonial critics have the difficult task of going beyond the borders – cultural or uncultured, physical or psychological, present or past – in order to draw characteristics related to identity and culture. Furthermore, there is the possibility of identifying new hybrid identities resulting from the constant movement of language and culture. A colonized people will, in some ways, incorporate some aspects of the colonizer's culture, for example, borrowing words and expressions from their language, using their currency, adapting local business etiquette, adopting or adapting their way of dress and accepting their technology. Thus, colonial discourse is characterized by both ambivalence and repetition. In this regard, literature has been one of the most appropriate vehicles for analysing this ambivalence and repetition of discourse. Even in modern postcolonial narratives produced in the wake of colonialism, such as some Brazilian science fiction works, the discourse can be a mere repetition of ideas that have been perpetuated since colonial times. The idea that Brazil will always be economically dependent in terms of science and technology perpetuates the colonial thought that suggests that a colonized nation can never change its colonized status. If in American science fiction, technology can be superior to man and surpass expectations, in Brazilian science fiction it is usually inferior and subservient. In terms of colonial values, this is an important difference between relations to technology in Brazil and in the US that is, somehow, present in the literary production, as we shall see more fully in the following sections of this thesis.

Also important for this discussion is Spivak's *Can the subaltern speak?* (1994), in which she explores the problem of whether or not it is possible to recover the voices of

those who had been made the subject of colonial representation, particularly women.

According to Spivak:

In seeking to learn to speak to (rather than listen to or speak for) the historically muted subject of the subaltern women, the postcolonial intellectual systematically unlearns female privilege. This systematic unlearning involves learning to critique postcolonial discourse with the best tools it can provide and not simply substitute the lost figure of the colonized (1994: 91).

In other words, Spivak calls the intellectuals' attention to their role as analytic and interventionist subjects. Critics must speak to women and not for women. They must be willing to learn the limits of their approach through an encounter with women in different contexts which would be able to show the real position and experience of a female subject. For McLeod (2000: 186), Spivak has consistently advocated that critics must always look to the specifics of their own positions and recognize the political, cultural and institutional contexts in which they work. For her, the space from which we speak is always on the move, criss-crossed by the conflicting and shifting discourses of things like our social class, education, gender, sexuality and ethnicity. It is very difficult to assume that the critic can ever speak on behalf of anybody, because the position of both the critic and her/his object is never securely fixed. Furthermore, the different cultural contexts in which women are exposed generate a huge blockage between what is present and past, real and imaginary which can, in many ways, confuse the critic regarding his/her object.

Spivak constantly instigates and confronts the immense problem of the subaltern women's consciousness. She insists on showing them as investigating subjects. In this regard, Spivak states that

Part of our 'unlearning' project is to articulate that ideological formation<sup>6</sup> – by measuring silences, if necessary – into the object of investigation. Thus, when

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<sup>6</sup> Here Spivak refers to the deep ambiguity of Freud's use of women as a scapegoat which is a reaction-formation to an initial and continuing desire to give the hysteric a voice, to transform her into the subject of hysteria (Sarah Kofman, 1980).

confronted with the questions, Can the subaltern speak? And can the subaltern (as women) speak? Our efforts to give the subaltern a voice in history will be doubly open to the dangers run by Freud's discourse (1994: 92).

She goes on to state that there is a satisfying symmetry in such an allegory, but she would rather invite the reader to consider it a problem in 'wild psychoanalysis' than a clinching solution. Her insistence on giving the subaltern a voice is a way of changing postcolonial literary criticism. It seems that the problem is not if women can speak properly but what position they occupy in the discourse. Do they speak about themselves or does someone do it for them? This question can generate other ones. For example, can someone who has not experienced the same suffering of the other speak on his/her behalf with the same intensity? How do cultural and social aspects interfere in someone's discourse? These questions are related to experience of life which is affected by the socio-cultural factors experienced by the speaker.

Commenting on Spivak's view, McLoad states that Spivak complicates the extent to which women voices can be easily retrieved and restored in history. According to him "she must be willing to explore how divergent cultural contexts may reveal hitherto unseen problems in her approach" (2000: 185). Undoubtedly Spivak's arguments and ideas involve a high level of abstraction; however this does not reduce the importance of such ideas for colonial discourse analysis.

Both Bhabha's and Spivak's arguments are beyond conventional modes of representation. They keep open the possibility of giving subaltern voices power so that they can make their own representation. Not surprisingly, they suggest that literature is the perfect vehicle to understand and represent the unspoken, uncanny and unrepresented experiences and lives of those who have an etherized history. For these reasons, the ideas of both Bhabha and Spivak will be useful, in Part III, as a means of analysing Brazilian science fiction written within a neocolonial context. Although they do not relate specifically enough to science fiction, one can find important links between the concerns of

science fiction and of postcolonial/ecofeminist ideas I have outlined above. For example, science fiction, like ecofeminism and postcolonialism, explores the limits of individualism and the liberal humanist subject. Figures such as aliens, robots etc. become means of exploring different modes of identity. Similarly, much science fiction is concerned with exploring social and political relations and power structures (the utopian, dystopian thread) and attitudes toward otherness (the alien or the colonized subject). It is also often concerned with the impact of science and technology on the world. Brazilian science fiction writers explore the genre in order to denounce imperialist power and also the male capitalist world order. In doing so, they explore the binaries that mark colonial discourse – white/ black, science/ counter-science, male/ female, European/ non-European, dependent/ independent, etc. – and the question of the subaltern's silence in order to criticize the current political regime.

In Part III of this thesis, I have aimed to show that both ecofeminism and postcolonial theory deal with issues regarding power relations, especially colonial power which is deeply present in Brazilian science fiction. By rethinking ideas of the self and the other in a similar way: the ecofeminist critique of the delusion of isolated individualism has something in common with the border self, resisting linear, dualistic lines of power and ways of thinking. As multi-issue theories, both of them argue against ideologies which authorize injustices based on gender, race and class, as well as the exploitation and degradation of the environment. Thus, the combination of postcolonial and ecofeminist theories discussed in this thesis, is justified by the need to highlight issues related to these two fields present in Brazilian science fiction. By using these theories to read Brazilian science fiction, I will focus particularly on the preoccupation of writers with social and cultural issues and how they addressed their criticism to the military regime and its consequences for Brazilian society as a whole.

Thus, in order to understand the criticism present in the works I will analyse in chapter 5, it is important to contextualize Brazilian society from the 60s to the present so that the reader may have an overall picture of Brazil's political, economic and cultural context. In the next section, I will look at these social aspects by providing a discussion on the military dictatorship, its contribution to Brazilian technological independence and its consequences for cultural development. In addition, I will focus on Brazil's post-dictatorship highlighting some important aspects regarding its current economic and political situation.

#### **4 Brazil's Political and Economic Context from the 1960s to the Present**

This chapter seeks to give an overview of the political and economic context in Brazil from the 1960s to the present. My intention here is not to enter into a detailed description of each historical event that took place during this period but to offer the reader a brief description of the most relevant aspects of Brazil's process of economic development and modernization since having such background information is central to a more complete understanding of Brazilian science fiction.

Brazil's political and economic situation during the 60s and 70s was a result of its long process of modernization which was initiated after World War II. It was in a mood of optimism that Brazilian politicians confronted the postwar world and altered the course of politics in the country. According to the American historian Thomas Skidmore, after the war, economists believed that Brazil was well placed to succeed: the most populous country in Latin America had the possibility of opening up new markets, bringing in new immigrants and exploring its immense natural resources (1999: 132). However, this imminent development could not happen without the approval of its so-called benefactor, the United States. While Brazil had always had some trade with the US, Brazil's dominant international partner remained the United Kingdom until the Great Depression of the 1930s. Brazil flirted with fascism in the guise of the Integralist Party which arguably can be seen in retrospect as a populist alternative to Communism and the Vargas government, in part mindful of the large immigrant population from Germany and Italy settled in the South and the growing number of immigrants from Japan in the state of São Paulo, kept its options open as to supporting either the Axis or Allied forces on the outbreak of war. When German submarines began to sink Brazilian merchant shipping, Vargas's hand was



forced and the city of Natal in the Northeast of Brazil became the centre and base from which American troops landed in North Africa. The Brazilian army later sent troops to Italy who were involved in some fierce fighting. These events sealed the partnership with the United States while the influence of the British, who were struggling with the economic and political consequences of the war, waned in the post-war years.

Although Brazil seemed to enjoy an enviable economic situation, as pointed out by Skidmore (1999: 132), its industry was limited to a few large cities and there was no serious talk about promoting industrialization. The economy continued to depend on the export of coffee. By 1949, the international lines of conflict in the Cold War were drawn, with the US government pressuring Brazil to join the US in confronting the Soviet-led bloc. The intelligence agencies of both the United States and Soviet Union gave financial and training assistance to their favoured Brazilian organizations, often in clandestine circumstances. For the Brazilian historian Paulo Vesentini,

As relações do Brasil com os EUA extrapolam largamente o relacionamento entre dois Estados nacionais. Além das relações oficiais bilaterais e dos vínculos econômicos ... existe a identidade de um segmento da elite brasileira com o “grande irmão” do norte, com forte conotação político-ideológica (2011: 268) [Brazil's relations with the US extrapolate by far the relationship between two national states. Apart from official bilateral relations and economic ties ... a segment of the Brazilian elite identified itself as having a "big brother" of the north, which had strong political and ideological connotations].

Furthermore, Brazil is located in a zone where the US's hegemony had been strongly established. In this post-war period, a wide range of Brazilian politicians and organizations received money and structural help from Washington. The Brazilian military absorbed US doctrines propagated by institutions such as the CIA and other agencies and thereby the Higher War College<sup>7</sup> (1999: 132) was founded. Thus, Brazilian institutions

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<sup>7</sup> The Higher War College was founded in 1949, with the help of French and American advisers, to train “high-level personnel to direct and plan for national security. Its role was expanded that same year to include the development of a method to analyze and interpret political, economic, diplomatic, and military factors that condition strategic conception and planning. The development of cold-war theories led to an emphasis on

began to be heavily influenced by the US and many Brazilian politicians and intellectuals began to share a view of the world shaped in Washington; consequently the nation's independence both culturally and economically was compromised. This was pounced on by the left and some intellectuals. Indeed, the notion of national independence as a rhetorical ideal that ignores the reality and necessity of interdependence seems to be central in this period to Brazilian critics of Washington's influence. According to the Brazilian political scientist Cristina Soreanu Pecequillo,

Muitas vezes os Estados Unidos foram responsáveis por uma definição negativa do interesse nacional Brasileiro, com o país pensando primeiramente nas prioridades da agenda bilateral do que essencialmente, nas possibilidades e oportunidades de projeção regional e global do Brasil (2012: 12) [Frequently the United States was responsible for a negative definition of Brazil's national interest, with the country focusing primarily on the priorities of the bilateral agenda instead of thinking essentially on possibilities and opportunities for the regional and global projection of Brazil].

In fact, it was from the late 30s to the early 50s that this tendency became more and more visible. However, there was promotion of the idea that Brazil's situation was more privileged than before, i.e. Brazil was said to be a subregional leader in South America while the US was said to be a world leader.

In this mood of optimism, Democracy had finally returned to Brazil, the presidential election that took place in 1945 was primarily a contest between two military officers. It was won by General Eurico Gaspar Dutra, who led a party composed of party bosses of the states and some São Paulo businessmen. During his government he had the support of many state governors and senior political figures who wanted to preserve their influence under the new democratic regime. The major surprise of the 1945 election was the support garnered by the Communist Party candidate, Yeddo Fiúza, who received 10

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the interpretation of political, economic, psychosocial, and military factors in formulating national security policy, and a priority was increasingly assigned to training in development theory. Because of the high level of training provided at the Higher War College, it became known as the Sorbonne of the military establishment (ALVES, 1990: 6).

percent of the votes. The Communists' success is in good part explained by strong worker discontent over the rapid inflation created by World War II and a popular protest against US influence. Dutra governed from 1946 to 1950 and his government was not as successful as his supporters thought it could be. In 1951, Getúlio Vargas, a military officer who had governed Brazil from 1930 to 1945, won the election and invested in the process of industrialization and ensuring Brazil would have its own supply of oil which adversely affected the interests of the international oil companies and the US. As pointed out by Pecequillo,

... em um context de Guerra Fria estas ações não atraíam um interesse positivo norte-americano, e sim pressão adicional sobre Vargas. Para os EUA, estas movimentações brasileiras, bem como o nacionalismo crescente na America Latina, eram percebidas como ameaças (2012: 27) [... in a context of Cold War these actions did not attract a positive interest from the US, but rather additional pressure on Vargas. For the US, these Brazilian actions, as well as the growth of nationalism in Latin America, were perceived as threats].

Yet, in 1952, a military agreement between Brazil and the United States attempted to reinforce the partnership within the “Atom for Peace Program” from the American government. This program was preceded by the creation of the National Research Council in 1951 and the Tecnological Agreement between Brazil-US for the setting up of nuclear reactors for research. Indeed, the United States was aware of the economic and political crisis that was setting in throughout Latin America.

In this perspective, Vargas faced serious trade problems and an economic crisis that made his government politically vulnerable. His frustration at his attempts to overcome the crisis failing led him to committing suicide on August 24<sup>th</sup> 1954.

In 1955, a new hope for Brazilian economic development seemed to arise. The new president, Juscelino Kubitschek – who had been mayor of Belo Horizonte, the state capital of Minas Gerais, and the governor of the state – launched an ambitious economic development programme, the main goals of which were to build a new federal capital city,

Brasilia, and to solidify industrialization. However, it was almost impossible to carry out this programme since Brazil's domestic savings were too low and there was not sufficient foreign capital to raise Brazilian investments to the level needed for sustained growth over the long run. Kubitschek's programme ensured continuing balance-of-payment deficits and growing inflation which stimulated intervention from outside Brazil. The president was forced to negotiate a stabilization agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). With such an agreement, tighter credit controls, wage restraints and cuts to the budget were required.

As a consequence Brazilian interests were subordinated to the IMF and the US government's interests. The president was severely attacked by the opposition which led him to break with the IMF in his last year in office, though he knew that his decision would slow down Brazil's rush to modernity. According to Skidmore,

Kubitschek's gamble paid off politically but disrupted relations with the world's economy. Brazil had the thrill of defying orthodox financial experts, particularly in the United States, but there would be a heavy price to pay in reduced access to future foreign financing (1999: 148).

Brazil still suffers today from the consequences of Kubitschek's policy. However, Brazil consolidated its manufacturing technological industries and saw the growth of a national market supported by an intensive road-building programme. Brazilian industrialists and managers began to believe that they could perform at world standards. In Skidmore's view, this was an important psychological change related to the elite's long-standing doubt that Brazil could ever compete with the advanced nations (1999: 149). However, in subsequent years the Brazilian economy did not live up to such optimism. With the rise in inflation and the deficit in the balance of payments, the only way of controlling the crisis was by running down Brazil's foreign exchange reserves or by increasing its foreign debt.

Thus, in 1963, the new president, João Goulart, had no choice other than to negotiate new agreements for US and IMF support in return for a coherent anti-inflation programme at home. Despite this, as 1963 continued, Brazil sank further into economic disrepute abroad. Foreign investment ceased and foreign suppliers were demanding immediate payment for their sales. By March 1964, the annual inflation rate was over 100 percent. The government was severely attacked by the opposition which started to join forces to end Goulart's presidency by bringing about a coup d'état. The coup organizers found support among officers who arrested Goulart's supporters. On March 31-April 1, 1964, military units seized government offices in Brasília and Rio. The government did not have enough supporters to resist, thus facilitating the military and police action.

According to the political scientist Maria Helena Moreira Alves in her book *Estado e Oposição no Brasil* (2005):

O desenvolvimento dependente e os específicos interesses internacionais e nacionais a ele associados formam o pano de fundo indispensável à avaliação da conspiração civil e militar que derrubou o governo constitucional de João Goulart, no Brasil, a 31 de março de 1964. Esta conspiração foi consequência direta de uma série de tendências e contradições que vinham ganhando vulto nos anos anteriores. O governo de Goulart promovera uma série de restrições aos investimentos multinacionais... (2005: 24) [The dependent development and the specific national and international interests associated with it, form the essential background for understanding the civil and military conspiracy that brought João Goulart's constitutional Government down, in Brazil, on March 31<sup>st</sup> 1964. This conspiracy was a direct consequence of a series of tendencies and contradictions that had been gathering force in the preceding years. Goulart's government had imposed a series of restrictions on multinational investment...].

In other words, Goulart's politics emphasized a more independent and nationalistic economy, though Brazil did not have enough technological and financial support. Whereas, the government insisted on this economic independence, the military forces seemed to be trained to think the opposite. In the Higher War College, they were taught about national security according to the American model, which in some ways saw to it that imported ideas and interests prevailed. In Alves's words:

A tomada do poder de Estado foi precedida de uma bem orquestrada política de desestabilização que envolveu corporações multinacionais, o capital brasileiro associado-dependente, o governo dos Estados Unidos e militares brasileiro – em especial um grupo de oficiais da Escola Superior de Guerra. Documentos recentemente tornados públicos demonstram que o governo Norte-americano, através da CIA, agiu em coordenação com civis e oficiais militares, no preparo e realizações de planos para desestabilizar o governo Goulart (2005: 27) [The immediate antecedent of the seizure of state power was a well orchestrated destabilization policy, which involved multinational corporations, associated-dependent Brazilian capital, the US government, and Brazil's military – in particular, a group of military officers of the Higher War College. Documentation recently released shows that the US government, through the Central Intelligence Agency, acted in coordination with civilians and military officers, to plan the destabilization of the Goulart government].

In fact, the Higher War College was an important instrument through which developed countries such as the US could promote and expand their own national interests. Given that Brazil was the biggest and richest country in Latin America, it was no surprise that developed nations demonstrated special interest in its economy and politics.

During Goulart's period there was a significant and effective organization of the Brazilian working class; the government sought the workers' support in order to generate the idea of democratic government. With the decentralization of the political and economic system, the States had more autonomy in making politics in accordance with people's needs. For this reason, workers' unions, organized groups and associations demanded more participation in the government's decisions, and requested negotiations on wages, work conditions and trade union issues. This hitherto little practised relationship between the government and the working classes worried the upper class the interests of which could have been threatened. In order to put pressure on the government, the dominant class spared no effort to oppose government decisions, which generated conflicts and a tense atmosphere. Because of uncertainty and fear of losing space and power, the dominant classes considered they had no option other than to join the military forces in bringing down Goulart's presidency. In this regard, Alves (2005: 27) states that it was in response to such a crisis that Brazil's clientele classes played a crucial role in creating and enforcing an

authoritarian form of capitalist state. And it is in this context that the ideology of national security can be understood as a tool used by the dominant class, associated with foreign capital, to justify and legitimate the continuation, by nondemocratic means, of a highly exploitative model of dependent development.

Alves's statement gives us an insight into what the military regime represented to Brazilian society during its twenty years of existence. From 1964 to 1984, Brazilian history is marked by all too frequent examples of oppression, repression, terror, fear and division including retaliatory actions by some groups. Democracy did not exist other than in the rhetoric of politicians who opportunistically used the term to defend the military regime. In practice, the political views of the left could find no public political expression after the military regime took over and in that sense democracy no longer existed other than in the empty rhetoric of politicians. This was the context in which the works I am going to analyse in chapter 3 were written. In the next section, I am going to look at the military regime and its policy toward cultural expression. My intention, then, is to provide a brief description of the impact of the dictatorship on the artistic field, particularly the literary one.

During the military regime, literature became an important vehicle to denounce the atrocities committed by the government as well as to avoid people's absolute silence. However, to transmit a political message without this being noticed by the censor was not that simple. Thus, writers had no option other than to produce their critiques by using allegories, metaphor, irony and their individual talent for representing reality.

#### **4.1 The Military Regime and its Policy Toward Cultural Expression**

Because of the repression suffered by many artists, culture in the military years was a reflection of Brazilian artists' confrontation with the different realities of oppression

suffered by large sections of the population. Allegedly for the sake of national security, the military government threatened, arrested, terrorized and tortured whoever was identified, rightly or wrongly, as a threat. According to Skidmore:

It was not only armed opponents the military rebels were after. They also wanted to seize those subversive leaders allegedly leading Brazil to communism. Thousands were arrested across Brazil in 'Operation Clean Up' (Operação Limpeza). Targets included the Catholic Church organizations MEB (Movimento de Educação de Base, or Basic Education Movement), JUC (Juventude Universitária Católica or Catholic University Youth), and others whose organizing or charitable activities aroused the suspicion of military intelligence or DOPS, the political police (1999: 24).

Skidmore goes on to point out that organizers of the peasant league and left-wing political activists were closely watched. Many were arrested and underwent forms of torture which acquired names such as 'the telephone' (slapping open palms against the victim's ears, often bursting the ear-drums), 'the parrot's perch' (the victim suspended by his/her ankles and wrists bound to a pole supported by wooden stands at either end, and subjected to beatings or electric shocks), and the "Chinese bath" (plunging the victims head into a vat of sewer water or oil until they almost drowned).

The torturers believed their prisoners held vital secrets such as names of their Russian contacts or of the Brazilian military officers to be liquidated. This created a climate of fear not only among those who had ties with foreign powers who were seeking to change the political and economic system in Brazil but also those who realized that their strong opposition to the military regime would not be tolerated. Thus, some Brazilians who opposed the military regime started journeying into exile as early as 1964, but the outflow accelerated in 1968-69. Those who fled included leftist politicians, intellectuals, academics, and artists, all convinced that they had no choice but to reconstruct their lives outside Brazil. Many of them used the exile period, to produce – by artistic means – their own way of confronting, resisting or critiquing the military regime.



Alves (2005) points out that many Brazilians went to Chile, a democratic refuge where political pluralism still existed. Chile was also attractive as a traditional ally of Brazil and as the centre which had articulated a Latin American strategy of development. Other fleeing Brazilians joined intellectual and artistic circles in Mexico. Europe, especially France, also got its share of Brazilian refugees. France had long been the ideal refuge for restless Brazilians, and Paris soon had a large Brazilian exile colony. A small number went to Cuba and Eastern Europe, to live under socialist regimes. Some exiles chose the United States but the number was relatively small because its conservative climate made it less attractive. For those who were passionate Brazilian patriots, including those who were considered or declared themselves to be of the far left, exile was a severe punishment. In exile, most began reexamining and writing about Brazilian history or simply repeated the Marxist or populist analyses they had been producing since the 1950s. Some authors, however, saw that the populist ideology of the early 1960s, increasingly leavened by radical nationalism, had proved bankrupt and the optimism so celebrated before 1964 was replaced by pessimism and uncertainty. Glauber Rocha's film *Terra em Transe* (1967) is a good example of this pessimism. The film's events occur in the imaginative state of El Dorado where the populist provincial governor, Felipe Vieira, chooses not to fight off a coup headed by a rightist populist, Porfirio Dias: the Mexican authoritarian president. The analogy with Goulart and the 1960 coup is clear. Most of the film is taken up with a flashback depicting Vieira's political rise, complete with a carnivalesque crowd scene and frenetic behavior. Rocha ironically contrasts the tragic political situation with the idea of this unfolding within a friendly Brazilian-style culture.

Meanwhile in Brazil, by 1968, the cultural scene was subjected to strict censorship. All suspect material was confiscated and burned. For the historian Oscar Pilagallo (2009: 56), the year of 1968 was a symbol of students' resistance and rebellion. First, demonstrations were called for and took place because of dissatisfaction with the school

system. Students protested against the lack of vacancies in universities, against the quality of schools and abusive fees. Then, the protests overflowed into other areas and the students started to manifest their indignation at American imperialism and its imposition on other cultures. Such movements paralleled other protest movements throughout the world such as those in Paris and the United States.

In the field of music, this period is marked by a mood of agitation and lack of consensus among artists. During the International Festival of Popular Music (1968) artists were clearly divided into two different groups: On the one side, there were musicians who invested in the music of protest and on the other side those who chose to Brazilianize foreign tendencies such as English and American pop. According to Pilagallo there was an explicit divergence between singers and composers:

Eles divergiam sobre tudo: a importância do folclore, o uso de guitarras elétricas, a temática social, o lirismo alienado, o recado ideológico – não escapava nem mesmo o modelo do terno que usavam (2009: 59) [They disagreed about everything: the importance of folklore, the use of electric guitars, social issues, lyricism that alienated, the ideological message – Nothing escaped, not even the model of the outfits they wore].

In some aspects, music and literature shared the same idea of cannibalism first introduced by the modernist writer Oswald de Andrade in 1928. In his *Manifesto Antropófago* [*Cannibalist Manifest*] Oswald de Andrade proposes the adoption of ‘a cultural anthropophagy that consists of devouring and swallowing the European model and then transforming it into a Brazilian one’. This tendency seems to be frequent in some of the most important Latin American writers as pointed out by the critic Gemma Robinson when referring to the Guyanese writer Wilson Harris in her most recent article, *The Reality of Trespass: Wilson Harries and an Impossible Poetics of the Americas*. According to Robinson (2013), this writer “seeks not to jettison historical vocabularies of the Americas, but find a way to convert their dualities, ambivalences and atrocities into a new set of

ethical and aesthetic dimensions”. Such an assertion can be extended to most Brazilian science fiction writers from the sixties on. During the Military Regime, they tended to focus on their resistance to the new government and its policy of repression. Some writers did criticize the military regime in their narratives. Among them I would point to Antônio Callado’s *Bar Don Juan* (1971), for instance, which depicts a small guerrilla movement and Loyola Brandão’s *Zero* (1974) which lays out a disconnected series of tableaux located in a mythical country “America Latindia” as a way of showing the contrasts of a huge country, great wealth existing alongside extreme poverty. Because of their explicitly critical character, both books were banned by the military censors and were published years later in Italy. Another important book written at the height of the repression in 1970 was *A Festa [The Party]* (1976) by Ivan Ângelo. Like Glauber Rocha, Ângelo depicts the disillusion of a nation with the regime. There is also an attempt to show the inability of people to deal with the state of repression in which the country was immersed. For this reason, the book was also banned by the military censors. According to Skidmore:

Newspapers, magazines and novels proved easy to control. Direct pressure on the editors and owners was enough to create self-censorship, which made prior censorship regularly necessary on less than ten publications. The government had many other weapons, including manipulation of state-sponsored advertising and court actions against individual journalists, writers, editors and owners. The stakes were also lower with the print media, since no paper had a circulation of more than a few hundred thousand (such as *O Jornal do Brasil* and *O Estado de São Paulo*) and Brazil was not known for being a newspaper-reading country (1999: 171).

In this context of repression, the government’s target was the middle class rebels since few poor people had access to print media given the high incidence of functional illiteracy and the relatively high cost of books. Furthermore, as Pilagallo points out:

O controle da informação mantinha a opinião pública distante do lado execrável do regime. Com a censura, a repressão nos porões dos quartéis não vinha à luz (2009: 78) [The control of information kept public opinion away from the

horrendous side of the regime. With censorship, repression in the basement of the barracks did not come to light].

In other words, Pilagallo is saying that because of censorship, independent of evidence from journalists of torture taking place was not available in the media and therefore those who may have supported the regime or were indifferent to it, especially the professional classes, had no objective proof of the regime acting excessively and therefore there were no opportunities for a groundswell of enlightened opinion to build up that would lead to protest against breaches of human rights. There is a grain of truth in this but perhaps, given that those with university-aged children could not be unaware of crackdowns on student protests, it might be truer to say that the professional classes preferred to turn a blind eye to excesses as they were unsure how to act collectively to bring about change.

Also important for this discussion is the changing position of women during the military regime. For decades, the dominant middle-class feminine stereotype was a passive submissive being whose existence was limited to the roles of dutiful daughter and patient wife. Women faced a male-dominated society that blocked their professional advancement in all fields except, especially, teaching and nursing. Life was even harsher for the vast majority of working class women who had to combine child rearing, often of upwards of 3 or 4 children, and very poorly paid work in order to survive. The military government had no wish to change this state of affairs. However, two consequences of military rule after 1964 helped provoke women into challenging their traditional role: the harsh repression suffered by young men, primarily from middle and upper-middle-class backgrounds which generated rising protests among mothers; and the fall in real terms of wages paid to working-class women.

Given this general dissatisfaction among women, associations and unions were created in order to strengthen subsequent struggles. It is worth mentioning that some

Roman Catholic organizations such as JUC (Catholic Youth Workers) and JEC (Catholic Youth Students) were primarily formed by women and for this reason the Roman Catholic Church played important role in women's struggle toward changes. In this regard, Skidmore states that:

As censorship eased in the late 1970s women organized widely noticed protest rallies that were the harbinger of a new brand of political activism among elite women. It was also at this time that many of these white middle-class women were gaining entry into the male dominated professions thanks to the growth of the technocratic state and the rapid increase in female university graduates [...] The miserable working environment and the propinquity of the women to one another led them to organize powerful rural unions (1999: 204).

Thus, the generals were unintentionally politicizing women of all classes. In the literary field there were important advances in feminist writing. Writers such as Dinah Silveira de Queiroz, Ruth Bueno, Clarice Lispector, Nélida Piñon and Lygia Fagundes Telles began to offer a female perspective on a traditionally male-dominated society. In Ginway's words: "They capture the female experience of this time of social, political, and economic transitions" (2004: 105). In this way, literature became an important instrument for registering the process of how women's lives began to change during the military regime. In this atmosphere of change, some exiled literary dissident and politicized women found the genre of science fiction to be a means by which the repressive regime could be denounced and criticized. Thus, Brazilian science fiction is, in particular, to be seen as a genre that lent itself to the task of guarded political critique, and also, specifically, to women's resistance to the *status quo*, and their rejection of their traditional roles within Brazilian culture.

Undoubtly, this process of change, initiated during the 70s, continued to play a significant role in the struggle toward democracy. During the 80s, with the revival of a multiparty system, the PT (Workers' Party) emerged, the core members of which were from the working class but it also attracted a significant number of intellectual leftists, leaders of

Roman Catholic movements especially those who supported the so-called Liberation Theology, students and a portion of the middle class. Indeed, the PT represented an important new political force, the ideology of which spread quickly in all states of Brazil and became the most important opposition party during the 80s and 90s.

During the elections of 1982, the PT managed to elect federal deputies in São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, besides some state deputies, mayors and city councillors throughout Brazil. The election results not only confirmed a dramatic response to the then prevailing difficult political and economic climate in Brazil but also contributed to an increase in challenging the legitimacy of indirect elections.

In early 1983, a young and unknown Congressman from Mato Grosso, Dante de Oliveira, introduced a constitutional amendment proposing direct elections. Although few politicians had paid attention to this amendment, it was the beginning of an organized movement towards bringing the military dictatorship to an end. In a few months, this movement gained the support of important politicians such the governor of São Paulo, Franco Montoro; the governor of Rio de Janeiro, Leonel Brizola who was the brother-in-law of the deposed President, João Goulart; and the president of the PT, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva; other important political figures included Ulysses Guimarães, Tancredo Neves, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Mário Covas, Teotônio Vilela, José Serra and Eduardo Suplicy. Besides politicians, the movement was also supported by artists such as Milton Nascimento, Fernanda Montenegro, Gilberto Gil, Bruna Lombardi, Fafá de Belém, and Chico Buarque de Holanda and Journalists such as Henfil, Osmar Santos and Eliel Ramo Maurício. In addition, more than 200 civil social organizations also supported the movement.

In January 1984, in São Paulo, thousands of people thronged into Cathedral Square where they remained for 12 hours, calling for direct elections under the slogan of “Diretas Já”. This was the most significant demonstration of popular power against the government

there had been since the military take-over. The “Diretas Já” movement gained supporters in all states of Brazil and is considered the largest popular movement in Brazil’s history. These acts were widely publicised in the local and national media, particularly on Globo TV, the most influential TV broadcaster in Brazil, which had hitherto been generally regarded as, at best, uncritical of the military regime.

Although the “Diretas Já” movement aimed to press members of Congress to approve the constitutional amendment that would restore direct elections for the presidency, leaders of this movement knew that Congress would never approve such an amendment. Indeed, the predictable happened. The amendment was not approved but no politician could ignore the power of civil society from that moment on; the popular will demonstrated on the streets showed people’s wish to change the basic structure of Brazilian politics. The rallying cries had faded away on the streets but their echo remained in the Ministerial offices where the last President of the military regime would be chosen.

On January 15, 1985, after many rounds of negotiations and entering into various agreements with the military, Tancredo Neves was elected president in the last indirect election in the history of Brazil. However, three months later, he died from an intestinal disease and José Sarney, the vice-president, assumed the Presidency. Sarney had two important and difficult tasks: to re-introduce a full democracy and to strengthen the Brazilian economy. That was the beginning of a new phase in the history of Brazil.

#### **4.2 Toward Democracy: Brazil Post-dictatorship**

In 1985, Brazil’s economic situation was far from being considered stable or promising. Sarney’s words accurately describe the scenario in which he became the President of the Republic:

I, without wishing it, without having any time to prepare myself for it, became the holder of the largest foreign debt on the face of the earth, as well as the greatest internal debt. My inheritance included the deepest recession in our history, the highest rate of unemployment, an unprecedented climate of violence, potential political disintegration and the highest rate of inflation ever recorded in our country's history – 250 percent a year, with the prospect of reaching 1,000 percent (1986)<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, Sarney faced a continuing foreign debt crisis stimulated by the savage recession of 1981-1983, the worst since the Great Depression. In other words, Sarney inaugurated the “New Republic” in an economically precarious situation. Most newspapers, TV stations, church representatives and young economists from the most important Brazilian universities pressed the government for immediate actions against the inflation.

Thus, in late 1985, a group of innovative and young economists designed a heterodox economic plan (The Cruzado Plan) inspired by the Austral plan introduced in Argentina the month before. The Austral Plan was an economic program that implemented a new currency, wage and price controls which brought down inflation and restored the confidence of international bankers. Like Brazil, Argentina had faced a continuing foreign debt crisis and reached an economically precarious situation in the early 1980s; the Austral plan, thus, worked as if it had created an economic miracle, as stated by Carlos Abraham (2005).

In this perspective, the Cruzado Plan came into effect in February 1986 and initially it seemed to be a brilliant and promising plan. Prices, the exchange rate and wages were adjusted and frozen and indexation seemed to have disappeared. Sarney called on all Brazilians to join in the struggle against inflation. He invited citizens to be price inspectors at their local stores, denouncing shopkeepers who raised prices in violation of the price freeze. People did meet his expectations; the plan was an instant success with the public, and overnight Sarney became a sort of national hero. However, this rapid economic growth

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<sup>8</sup> José Sarney in “Brazil: A President’s Story”. *Foreign Affairs*, LXV, Nº 1 (Fall 1986).



was not enough to change Brazil's international image. In terms of the US-Brazil bilateral relationship this was a period of growing tensions. According to Pecequillo,

Os choques se tornaram frequentes no âmbito bilateral e multilateral, com pressões norte-americanas diretas atingindo o Brasil na forma de retaliações comerciais, inclusão na Lista Negra do Departamento de Comércio, suspensão da venda de supercomputadores, acusações de protecionismo e desenvolvimento de programas bélicos, dentre outros (2012: 43) [Clashes became frequent in the bilateral and multilateral context, with direct US pressure affecting Brazil in the form of trade retaliation, inclusion on the Blacklist of the Department of Commerce, suspension of the sales of supercomputers, accusations of protectionism and development of weapons programs, and so forth].

Without foreign support the Cruzado Plan would soon show its negative effects. Frozen prices allowed consumers to go on a spending spree causing an excess demand immediately. There was a noticeable shortage of essential products such as meat, milk and household appliances. In addition, car buyers faced delays of several months which caused the price of second hand cars to shoot up. In other words, Brazilians did not believe that the miraculous effects of the Cruzado Plan would be lasting so they had to take advantage of that economic moment. By December 1986 inflation started to accelerate again as excess demand favored the violation of the official price freeze. For the historian Daniel Aurélio (2010: 96), the most notable sign of failure came in February 1987 when the foreign exchange reserves fell and the government had to suspend interest payments on the foreign debts owed to private banks. Thus the Cruzado Plan had failed and, as a result, inflation reached 1,038 percent in 1988 and 1,783 in 1989, the highest in Brazil's history.

The failure of the Cruzado Plan was the Achilles' heel of the government during the electoral campaign for the Presidency in 1989. For Brazilians, the time was ripe for a complete change and there was mood in the country that any candidate would be better than the one endorsed by Sarney and thus a complete break with the past was needed. In this turbulent political atmosphere, the electoral campaign during the first direct elections

since 1964 ie by popular vote and not one by Congress to be later ratified by the military, was characterized by a climate of uncertainty. Debates and public attention were concentrated on two opposition candidates, the young and unknown Fernando Collor de Melo from the PRN (National Renovation Party) and the leader of the PT, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva. Both candidates distanced themselves from the traditional profile that Brazilian politicians had hitherto presented to the electorate. While Collor had a modern vision rooted in the neoliberal Washington Consensus, the economic policies of which emphasised opening up the domestic market to foreign competition, a drive for exports, privatization and cutting back on social policies, Lula had established himself as a leader of the opposition, the architect of strikes for better wages and democratizing the political and administrative system in Brazil. Lula advocated a thorough reform of a social character within the country as well as the continuation of 'global- multilateral action, which was independent of the stance taken by the US on these issues. In Lula's perspective, Brazil's status as a Third World leader in international governmental organizations would be preserved. For Torquato (2012: 29), both proposed resistance to the agenda of the military regime: Lula focused on Brazil's potential to be *primus inter pares* of what were later to be called the emergent nations of the Third World while Collor focused on Brazil's potential to join the club of First World nations.

In different ways, Lula and Collor promised political, economic and social reforms that would lead Brazil to a new international and global scenario. However, in the context of the Cold War, Collor's ideas seemed to be more realistic and viable. According to Pecequillo,

Foi construída uma imagem negativa do que propunha o PT e do candidato, que passava a ser associados a um modelo fracassado de políticas diante da derrota do socialismo, simbolizado pela derrota da URSS na Guerra Fria e a ascensão dos EUA universalizando os valores e princípios da política e economia liberais (2012: 50) [A negative image was constructed of what the PT and its candidate were proposing, and this began to be associated with a failed model of policies

due to the defeat of socialism, symbolized by the defeat of the USSR in the Cold War and the rise of the US, and thus the values and principles of liberal politics and economics were universalised].

Thus, Collor defeated Lula and became the first President to have been directly elected by the popular vote in Brazil since 1964. In order to reach his objectives Collor had to strengthen international relationships and reform internal policies in the modes of the Washington Consensus. In this perspective, he initiated his plan by focusing on privatizations, reducing public spending, cutting back social policies and freezing prices in order to control inflation. Furthermore, to connect Brazil to the international political scenario, Collor had to sign up to international agreements that had not been accepted during Sarney's government. In the field of Human Rights, Brazil formalized its adhesion to the American Convention on Human Rights; as to issues to do with the environment, Brazil sought to reduce its vulnerability to criticism by hosting the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

In order to implement his economic policies, Collor used a flood of provisional measures ie Presidential Decrees that do not require to be debated and passed by Congress. He showed that he had little ability to negotiate with Congress which aroused strong opposition. Congressmen contested the legitimacy of the tactic of governing by decree and in February 1991 the opposition threatened to limit the powers of the President to do so. Collor then had no choice but to negotiate with Congress which did not hesitate to challenge his economic program. By early 1992, the government's plan to break inflationary expectations had failed. Suspicions of corruption at the highest levels of government allied with the lack of agreement between the President and Congress resulted in an unsustainable climate of disorder. Collor and his ministers were now targets of a thorough investigation and soon an unprecedented scheme of corruption, apparently planned from the top, would be uncovered. Collor tried to buy off the Congressmen who headed the Inquiry that was set up but his efforts were in vain.

Citizens who, four years previously, were clamoring for direct elections in the “Diretas Já” movement on the streets, were now clamoring for Collor’s impeachment. On September 29, 1992, the Chamber of Deputies voted to impeach the president (441 votes for and 38 against). In the Senate, 76 voted in favor of Collor’s impeachment and 5 against. For the first time ever, a Brazilian president had lost his political rights not by military coup or military ultimatum but by the orderly vote of Congress. This is, sadly, a good illustration of democratic government and corruption in Brazil always going hand-in-hand. While, because democracy had been restored and thus the Brazilian people had freely elected Collor as President, because, unhappily, significant and widespread corruption had been masterminded from the top and the President impeached, the Constitution required the automatic transfer of power to the Vice-President. In other words, the people were once more to be governed by someone who was not directly elected president. Once again, Brazil was to be governed by someone (Vice-President Itamar Franco) who, ostensibly, did not have the skills or experience needed to run a country immersed in economic chaos.

Itamar Franco was just as lacking in technical know-how and experience to deal with this economic chaos as his predecessors had been but one of his ministers made the difference, Fernando Henrique Cardoso. After constantly making changes in Ministerial appointments, Franco appointed Cardoso as Minister for Foreign relations. For Skidmore (1999: 222), the choice seemed ideal because the highly intelligent, multilingual Cardoso was well known internationally. However, recognizing Cardoso’s multiple abilities, Franco quickly switched him to another Ministerial position, that of Minister of Finance. When Cardoso took over at the Finance Ministry in 1994, Brazil was the only Latin American country that had failed to control inflation and it was at the top of the IMF’s black list. Thus, Cardoso and his collaborators set about formulating a complex plan to fight inflation. This was divided into three steps as described by Pilagallo (2012: 69): The first involved creating a currency equivalent deemed a unit of value (URV in Portuguese) into which all previous

currency values were converted thus creating a dual set of prices. Here the idea was to induce people not to think in terms of the existing currency values. The second step included drawing up a balanced budget for 1994 and introducing a new currency, the *Real*, and the third then included creating a two-stage transition to the *Real*. Although the Real Plan met much initial skepticism, it would positively change the directions of Brazil's polity and ways to tackle bringing and keeping the economy under control.

For the journalist and political scientist Gaudêncio Torquato (2012), there are many reasons for the success of the *Real* Plan, amongst which was the fact that the plan was intelligently conceived and implemented and Cardoso was able to take advantage of the high level of foreign exchange reserves that he had inherited. Indeed, Cardoso finally put an end to hyper-inflation, the arch-villain that had ravaged the Brazilian economy for a great many years. This achievement was to be the herald of his presidential campaign in 1994. Lula was, again, the candidate of the opposition, and he attempted to show, as the central plank of his political platform, that, at bottom, the *Real* Plan was simply a device that the government had manipulated in favor of its candidate, Cardoso. During the election campaign, Lula tried to convince people that the alleged success of the plan in ending inflation had been at the cost of worsening the economic plight of poor people. However, after a heated dispute, Cardoso won the election in the second round and a long battle toward stabilization started.

Nobody can deny that Cardoso's government played an important role in stabilizing the economy in Brazil. Besides putting an end to hyper-inflation, he improved Brazil's standing in the eyes of the international community and thus Brazil was re-admitted to it. This can be viewed as the basic instrument that Cardoso used to start a process of social transformation in Brazil. In other words, he engaged Brazil in international partnerships that transformed Brazil by gradually turning it into a well-regarded member of an open global economy. For Pecequillo,

O sucesso do Plano Real e a eleição de Cardoso, bem como sua presença em Miami, sinalizaram a retomada da prioridade de se estabelecer boas relações com os EUA... Nesse contexto, as ações do Brasil eram medidas por seu grau de eficiência no sentido de provar sua confiabilidade e respeitabilidade no sistema diante dos EUA (2012: 63) [The success of the *Real* Plan and the election of Cardoso as well as his presence in Miami (*to attend the FTTA (ALCA in Portuguese) Conference*), signaled the resumption of establishing good relations with the US as a priority... In this context, the actions of Brazil were measured by their degree of efficiency with a view to proving Brazil's reliability and respectability in the system in the eyes of the US].

Indeed, Cardoso's administration aimed to adjust Brazil's agenda to the US interests. While as President, he tried to introduce Brazil into a First World role, he visibly distanced Brazil from Third World nations. That was, arguably, Cardoso's biggest mistake. Without the support of Brazil's neighbors, it was more difficult to expand its role in world trade. By 1998, Brazil was less optimistic both economically and politically. The *Real* Plan had not put the Brazilian economy back on the path to strong, sustainable growth so that it would have the competitive capacity to expand its role in world trade. In addition, the financial crisis that had hit the so-called Asian tigers such as Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Phillipines and South Korea, was now on its way to Brazil. Like Mexico in 1994, Brazil was not able to face up to the dark implications of its strategy for economic development, for example, extending social policies was sacrificed to pay international debt or to pay for investments in support of industry. Even so, in the presidential election of 1998, people decided to give Cardoso the opportunity to re-work his Plan. He was reelected in an election in which, once again, Lula was his main challenger.

Cardoso's second term was marked by crisis not only economic but also within his political party. In general terms, the economic profile of Brazil had changed. The indices for Health and Education had improved. The number of people officially designated as poor had decreased from 60 million in 1993 to 53 million in 1999. However, the number of unemployed people doubled, income distribution remained the most unequal in the world and interest rates the highest in the world. Unlike most industrialized countries, Brazil did

not develop policies to invest in human capital and seemed to be indifferent to the need of the least fortunate. By the end of 2002, Brazil was economically and politically weak and Cardoso's team seemed to be incapable of facing up to the crisis which made people believe that it was time for a radical change. Finally Lula's turn had arrived.

In the presidential elections of 2002, Lula overcame Cardoso's candidate and became the President of the Republic. Apart from being the founder of the PT and a main architect of its political platform, Lula in a personal capacity represented a radical change from any of his immediate predecessors: he came from a very poor family in the Northeast, a region that the South and Southeast of the country tends to despise; he identified himself as having been a radical trade union leader; and he often recalled that he had had a minimum of formal education and above all had no experience of higher education. This could not have offered a sharper contrast with the urbane Cardoso who prior to his political career had been a respected university professor of sociology. At the same time, Lula had always been recognized as a gifted public speaker whose mode of expression caught the imagination of the poor and the left, sometimes because of rather than despite his use of non-standard Portuguese. His political ideas won support from the intellectual left and Lula's personal charisma more than compensated for gaffes in language or behavior that the right snidely attacked him for. In sum, Lula was the first ever President of Brazil who was a true son of the people but also one renowned for adept organizational skills. As President, Lula clearly needed to search for alternative policies. Not only in Brazil but also in other countries of South America, there was a tendency to elect candidates of the left. Thus, the policies of Hugo Chaves in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Michelle Bachellet in Chile and Lula in Brazil represented a barrier to US projects. Indeed, as pointed out by Pecequillo (2012: 87), American diplomacy initially considered Lula a risk for the US. In this perspective,

O primeiro desafio de Lula após sua eleição foi sinalizar aos norte-americanos que sua presidência sustentaria os compromissos internacionais previamente assumidos nas arenas política e econômica (2012: 87) [Lula's first challenge after his election was to signal to the Americans that his Presidency would continue to support international commitments previously made in political and economic matters].

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003) himself would reaffirm Brazil's diplomatic projects as instruments for national development:

No meu governo, a ação diplomática do Brasil estará orientada por uma perspectiva humanista e será, antes, de tudo, um instrumento do desenvolvimento nacional. Por meio do comércio exterior, da capacitação de tecnologias avançadas e da busca de investimentos produtivos, o relacionamento externo do Brasil deverá contribuir para a melhoria das condições de vida da mulher e do homem brasileiro (2003) [In my government, the diplomatic action of Brazil will be guided by a humanistic perspective and will be, above all, an instrument of national development. Through foreign trade, training in advanced technologies and the pursuit of productive investments, Brazil's foreign relations shall contribute to improving the living conditions of Brazilian women and men].

In fact, that was Lula's most important project over the period 2003 to 2010. Arguably, his tactic worked. To deal with problems such as income distribution, unemployment, interest rates, health and education, Lula operated with the help or technical support of other developing countries, always in accordance with the Millenium Goals of the United Nations (2000): the eradication of poverty and hunger, universal access to primary education, gender equality, reducing infant mortality rates, improving maternal health services, combating HIV, malaria and other epidemics, environmental sustainability and development. Lula seemed to have internalized the United Nations' discourse.

When it comes to the bilateral relationship between Brazil and the the United States, Brazil opted for a more autonomous stance instead of one that was subservient and passive. According to Celso Amorim, the Minister for International Relations (2008)

O grande diferencial é que deixamos de lado a velha dicotomia. Melhoramos nossas articulações coma Africa, China, Índia – mas sem hostilizar os EUA e



União Europeia que tem tido conosco um diálogo muito privilegiado (...) Por outro lado, não preciso olhar para EUA e Europa para enxergar o Oriente Médio e a África (2008) [The big difference is that we put aside the old dichotomy. We improved our dialogue with Africa, China, India – but without antagonizing the US and the European Union that has had a very special dialogue with us (...) On the other hand, I do not need to look to the US. and Europe in order to grasp what the Middle East and Africa are like] (Interview with Fred Paiva).

Arguably, this new profile gave Brazil a more comfortable position in its international relations. While there were many vulnerable points in the Brazilian economy which continued to need internal adjustments, Brazil demonstrated autonomy in its conduct of negotiations at a multilateral level.

Although Lula's government changed the Brazilian economy positively, his administration was marked by a series of scandals involving his team and party. Corruption and political scandals were two major issues in Lula's second term. Although Lula constantly tried to show his own lack of awareness of and innocence in all cases of corruption that occurred during his administration, his discourse does not convince those who have a basic knowledge of how political administration works. According to the journalist Ipojuca Pontes (2006: 120), the Mensalão scandal<sup>9</sup>, for example, is the most scandalous crime of corruption in Brazilian history and Lula is the leader of the gang.

Indeed, the many corruption episodes that took place during Lula's administration did affect his popularity by the end of his second term but they were not enough to prevent his candidate, Dilma Rousseff, to be elected President in 2010. She was the first woman to assume the Presidency of Brazil. Unlike her predecessor, Dilma has been seen as a very precise and direct leader and seems to be less tolerant of any occurrences of corruption in her government. In August 2012, Rousseff was named by the business magazine *Forbes* as the third most powerful woman in the world after Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel and

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<sup>9</sup> The name Mensalão refers to a monthly payment received by some deputies in order to vote in favor of laws that would benefit the ruling party.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. However, only the future will tell us how different she is from her Party colleagues and her close friend, Lula.

### Part III

## 5 Analysing Brazilian Science Fiction

The following sections (5.1 to 5.7) are devoted to an analysis of some Brazilian science fiction novels written between 1960 and 2005. By examining these novels, I shall attempt to prove that the genre of science fiction in Brazil has become a vehicle which expresses issues of both national identity and protest against policies of repression and alienation. It is worth pointing out that three of the seven novels analyzed in this chapter were written by writers who held political office which may explain their ambiguous stance at some points in their narratives. Although they opposed the technocratic and repressive regime, none of them experienced exile nor did any of them suffer any kind of physical torture, arguably, because of the style of writing they used. By using an ambivalent way of making a critique, Antônio Olinto (5.1) and Rubens Scavone (5.2) register the period prior to the military coup when the possibility of technological and industrial development was imagined as a distorted reflection of the expansion of an advanced economy that would occur during the 60s. By using dystopian fiction, Ruth Bueno (5.3) and Plínio Cabral (5.4) register the tension produced by the military regime during the 70s, the impact of non-effective policies of technological development for society and its disastrous consequences for the environment. Thus, Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the thesis are addressed to novels as representative of science fiction of the 60s. Both novels explore the image of the robot and its relationship with human beings. In a similar way, these works show that the very different ideas about racial identity in Brazil are

linked to the nation's experiences of colonial power and slavery. These experiences are particularly important because they produced a category of science fiction that was distinct from that of the United States tradition, for example.

Sections 5.3 and 5.4 are addressed to novels as representative of science fiction of the 70s. By analysing these novels we shall explore the way in which writers deal with Brazil's neocolonial situation; its policy of repression; and environmental and feminist issues. Given that most science fiction works produced during the 60s and 70s were not re-issued, translated or kept in print, it is difficult for readers to find them in bookstores or libraries. For this reason, I hope the reader will find it useful to have a summary of each novel I am going to analyze in this thesis in order that the reader may have an outline of the plot and therefore have a better understanding of the basis for my analysis of them and the conclusions that I draw as to their allegorical meaning at the time the novels were written.

As representatives of science fiction of the 80s and 90s, I chose Bráulio Tavares' "Stuntmind" (1989) and Márcia Kupstas' *O Demônio do Computador* [*The Computer Devil*] (1997) (see Sections 5.5 and 5.6). The former was written a few years after the end of the military regime and therefore it can be seen as a watershed of the national genre. The latter is regarded by some critics as the most representative work of science fiction written by a woman in contemporary times. It includes most of the existential conflicts generated by the unplanned process of technological advance and shows society from a feminist perspective.

In order to conclude this textual analysis, I chose Carlos Orsi's *Tempos de Fúria* [*Wrath Times*] (2005) as a representative of the most recent tendencies in Brazilian science fiction (see Section 5.7). Here, it is possible to see how the genre is beginning to come into its own in Brazil. Since there has been an exponential increase in critical studies of the genre, as well as a sharp growth in the number of readers and writers of science fiction, the

genre in Brazil seems to be becoming more and more prominent which may mean a break with the Anglo-American tradition. Note that I have included what I regard as the main theme(s)/ issue(s) of the 7 novels after the title of each.

### **5.1 Antônio Olinto's "O Desafio" [The Duel] (1961): The Legacy of Slavery in Brazil**

Antônio Olinto's "The Duel" was published in 1961 in the *Histórias do Acontecerá* collection, edited by Gumerindo Rocha Dorea. As a teacher of English, French, Portuguese, Latin, Literature and History of civilizations, Olinto had deep knowledge of Brazilian cultural history and Anglo-American literature, as well as African culture for which he demonstrated a special interest<sup>10</sup>. As a writer, he was a poet, a novelist and a literary and political critic. In the political field, his criticism was based on current and local policies, though in a subtle way, probably because of his involvement with local government in which he occupied the position of Secretary for Public Works in his state, Paraná.

Antônio Olinto's "The Duel" tells the story of T-55, a robot with abilities superior to any other robot of its epoch, in the year 2455. It can speak and is able to unify images and associate sounds and senses; it is almost a human being except for its lack of emotions. At the beginning of the story, T-55 meets Lactea, a girl whose name means milky, the daughter of its boss, Flávio, and since then, every time it sees the girl, it behaves in a different way. Seven years have passed and the robots (Transitórios, as they are called) have day by day become ever more modern and sophisticated. Inspired by the surprising characteristics of T-55, scientists talk about the possibility of making robots which can reproduce themselves, and which have emotions.

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<sup>10</sup> Reference: Academia Brasileira de Letras.

As T-55 has a special talent for languages, Cláudio, who works with it, decides to teach it Latin and poetry so that it can participate in the poetry challenge which happens every year and gathers inhabitants from different planets and galaxies. The challenge consists of reciting poems created spontaneously in response to other participants' poems. In preparation for the challenge, T-55 studies Virgil, Horatio, Ovid and many other important poets; for the first time in history, a man and a robot were to compete in a poetic duel. There were some protests against T-55's participation in the contest but the Olympic commission allowed it to enter.

Months before the duel happens, a falling spaceship injures Flávio's daughter and she dies. T-55 was the first to arrive at the place of the accident. For some minutes T-55 seems to have lost its senses; it stands still and distracted. The accident shocks everybody in the company. And T-55 has to be transferred to a department specializing in poetry so that it can be well prepared for the challenge.

The day of the duel comes. T-55 and its adversary Márcio Mistral are presented to the audience. The contest is transmitted by all means of communication across the Earth and other planets. The language is Latin or any other language spoken on Earth. Initially T-55 is the favorite to win; its poems are more creative, grammatically correct, and linguistically and conceptually rich. However, in the last few minutes Márcio recites a poem, the contents of which remind T-55 of Lactea and although it tries to continue a poem using the word lactea (milky), it stops and repeats the word 'lactea' over and over and over again as if it were a child mumbling a song. First it stood still, and then it collapses on the stage. The whole universe watches that scene. Cláudio and Flávio approach T-55 and try desperately to find a reason for its breakdown, since the life span of a robot is 10 years and it is only 8. Suddenly they remember that T-55 has broken down repeating the name Lactea which is Flávio's daughter's name. At this moment they realize that the reason for T-55's complete breakdown is the feelings it has for Lactea.

As Ginway points out, Antônio Olinto deals with issues of race in "The Duel". For her, "the story deals with the issue of race, or, more specifically, the idea of racial whitening, the alleged solution to Brazil's racial problem that developed after abolition in 1888" (2004: 50). In fact, the significance of the name and the whiteness of the girl is closely related to the theme of whiteness so explored by the colonial discourse in which color is a determinant element in the dualistic representation of classes. It is also a good reference to the myth of racial democracy. Such a myth is related to the way people dealt with slaves and non-white people in the past. During the colonial era, it is estimated that most of the population of Brazil were Indians, blacks, mulattos and slaves; until 1600, slaves were primarily Indians. Soon thereafter, however, as the Indians were seen to be unfit for such work, they were increasingly replaced by Africans captured in and shipped from Africa as slaves. This notion of a white minority ruling over a majority non-white population continued until the 1880s, when a large number of European immigrants began to arrive in the country, especially in the southern states and an immediate process of whitening started to occur in the population.

Communities of white immigrants, especially from Germany and Italy, tended to marry within their communities or those with some capital or those who were quickly successful in Brazil would tend to marry into (relatively) well-to-do local families which had at least some Portuguese blood.

In earlier times, a difference between Brazil as a colony of Portugal and, say, the United States or Canada, as colonies of Britain is that settlers from Britain arrived in family groups eg the Pilgrim Fathers or later on, families driven away from Ireland by the potato famine or from Scotland on account of the Highland Clearances, while Portuguese men tended to travel to Brazil alone, their idea being to make money in Brazil and then to return to Portugal and marry. It was therefore inevitable that Portuguese men would enter into informal relationships in Brazil, in the absence of women of their social standing, and

this became a norm. Their issue were not necessarily discriminated against although it was rare, but not unheard of, for them to reach positions of influence when adults. In this sense, miscegenation in Brazil was looked on almost as an inevitable consequence of living in Brazil. In the Anglo-Saxon world, miscegenation was normally regarded with moral opprobrium.

It is held that miscegenation in Brazil began to be noted in the 1600s: the outcome of Portuguese colonists entering into relationships with their slaves. The most important demographic change in this period was the emergence of a people of mixed race, predominantly the offspring of unions between the white Portuguese, the indigenous population and Africans which resulted in a great number of *Caboclos* (white/black and Brazilian Indian) and mulattoes. This kind of union produced a racial group who often served as intermediaries between blacks and whites.

Although the novel's setting is futuristic, its plot recalls the colonial era. The story takes place in the year 2462, in a period called the Second Renaissance (II Renascença), a time in which technology and science play a very important role in men's lives. There are robots for all kinds of work so that it is impossible to think of a world without them; their tasks vary from household chores to office work. However, their existence cannot exceed 10 years; after which time they are destroyed. The Second Renaissance, as the name implies is also a time of regaining the practices of poetry and writing. As in the colonial era, few people are literate or educated, only the ones who have had the opportunity of having an instructor or an intellectual mentor. Olinto depicts a society in which culture is predicated on the invisible labor of the 'other' suggesting the repetition of a discourse which recalls a past situation. In regard to this kind of discourse, one can link it to the figures of speech – strangeness, difference, exotic sensuousness, etc. – associated with the Orient in Said's *Orientalism*,



They were handed down through the Renaissance. They (figures of speech) are all declarative and self-evident; the tense employed is timeless eternal; they convey an impression of repetition and strength; they are always symmetrical to, and yet diametrically inferior to, a European equivalent, which is sometimes specified, sometimes not (2003: 72).

This is exactly the way T-55 is seen: ‘always symmetrical to and diametrically inferior to’ human beings. It does not have any experience of life other than that imposed by its owner. In this sense, T-55 is an alienated subject whose language and customs have been rendered unprivileged by the imposition of a “new life” provided by a colonizing power. The way T-55 is characterized illustrates the view that colonized people have no meaningful culture prior to the arrival of the colonizer. The imposition of language, then, constitutes an important aspect in this symmetrical discourse of imperialism. T-55 does not have its own language, it speaks that imposed by human beings.

There are many aspects in Olinto’s work which bear witness to the novel’s relationship with colonialism. In general terms, technology represented by the robot is clearly seen as the ‘precise economic equivalent of slave labor’. Thus the relationship between man and robot is very similar to that of master and slave; at the same time that men and machines seem to live in perfect harmony, there is a relation of superiority and power, the former having more power than the latter despite its spectacular skills. For example the idea that a *Transitório* (robot) cannot exceed 10 years, – as determined by its manufacturer – shows the power of man over it. The only reason for this short period of existence is the ultimate power of determining life and death. Short life ensures that the superior being stays in its place while the inferior one, in effect, remains a child, unable to develop into a fully autonomous adult. Here one can make a parallel with slavery, which was sometimes justified with the idea that Black people were unable to look after themselves, that is, they were, in effect, like children.

Os robôs haviam recebido o novo nome de transitório a partir do momento em que, tornando-se mais eficientes, mais vivos, quase humanos, tinham também diminuído o tempo de duração para dez anos (p. 51) [The robots had received the new name of transient from the moment when, having become more efficient and smart, almost human, their existence had also been reduced to ten years].

The more efficient and smart that robots become, the more their existence is reduced. This paradoxical statement recalls the colonial idea that a slave could never become like a master, a free and intellectually superior man; it also suggests that the colonized subject does not have any history and past. Here, one can also point out some similarities with the discourse present in 19<sup>th</sup> century Brazilian ‘mulatto’ fiction. The way the robot is depicted as a timeless subject in “The Duel” can be associated with the past of the mulatto blotted out, in order to avoid discovery, as can be seen in José de Alencar’s *Mãe* (1860)<sup>11</sup>. In Brazilian literature, it is common to find characters who try to hide their roots at all costs. This behavior is well demonstrated and identified by Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) as a direct consequence of the colonial undertaking. According to him:

The black man possesses two dimensions: one with his fellow Blacks, the other with the Whites. A black man behaves differently with a white man than he does with another black man. There is no doubt whatsoever that this fissiparousness is a direct consequence of the colonial undertaking (2008: 1).

Although Fanon is referring to the black Antillean, he suggests that critics shall enlarge the scope of his description to include every colonized subject in whom an inferiority complex has taken root. In “The Duel”, having an inferiority complex plays an important role in T-55’s behavior. Its shyness and loneliness seem to represent a lack of

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<sup>11</sup> This novel was published in 1860, during the time of slavery in Brazil. The central figure in *Mãe*, is a black skinned woman, Joana, who pretends to be the slave of her son to hide his origin as the offspring of a slave and a white man. Her son is a medical student who thinks he is descended from a white family. However, he is supported by the earnings of his slave-mother who washes and irons clothes. Joana sacrifices herself to help and give her son comfort, including prostituting herself. Nevertheless, when the truth comes out she is humiliated by him and his friends. She commits suicide with the words “my son” on her lips.

confidence and self-esteem similar to that generated by the colonial undertaking justifying the idea that the white/colonizer must be always in the control of any event and the existence and progress of the black/colonized, here represented by the robot, depends on the former's manipulation. Commenting on this asymmetrical relation, Edward Said (2003: 40) states that "what gave the Oriental's world its intelligibility and identity was not the result of his own efforts but rather the whole complex series of knowledgeable manipulation by which the Orient was identified by the West". This colonial discourse is well illustrated by Antônio Olinto in the way he shows the humans' attitudes toward the robot which represents the other – the black man, slave, colonized and Orient – in a more technological and modern world.

This idea of the robot as 'almost' human is also explored by some Anglo-American writers; however, their robots are not racialised as in Brazilian science fiction. The American writer Philip Dick, for instance, sets the relationship between man and machines as one of his most important themes. In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), for example, he explores the way in which human identity is cast adrift under the technological imperative in the same way that Olinto does in "The Duel" but with a slight and significant difference regarding the thematic issues of temporality. While in "The Duel" there is no perspective of future life for robots since they have a short time life and no perspective of changing this reality, in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Androids have acquired some independence and because of that they do not accept the idea of being replaced or destroyed. Because of their rebellious behavior, androids represent a threat for American society which fears the possibility of losing control of them. Arguably, the novel can be seen as a critique of colonialism and an illustration of the American racial segregation and Civil war. In this perspective, both stories are related to issues of national identity. However, because of Brazil's status as a Third World country and because of its 'peaceful' colonial history, Brazilian technology will never be able to be independent and

achieve the same fulfillment of a country without a colonial history or which has dealt with colonialism in a different way. It is worth pointing out that Olinto's story preceded Dick's, despite Dick's having become canonical.

Also interesting is the way the writers deal with language. T-55 is a good Portuguese speaker but it has to learn Latin which is considered the language of the intellectual elite. This is a very important issue emphasized by Fanon in *Black Skin White Masks*:

To speak means being able to use a certain syntax and possessing the morphology of such and such a language, but it means above all assuming the culture and bearing the weight of a civilization... the more the black man assimilates the French language, the whiter he gets – i.e., the closer he comes to be a human being... (2007: 1).

As can be seen from Fanon's words, to be considered a human being, the Negro must speak not his own language but French which is the language of the metropolis and the elite. So, to assimilate it means to acknowledge the world expressed and implied by it. Fanon also adds that all colonized people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local cultural originality has been committed to the grave, position themselves in relation to the civilizing language. In "The Duel" this same exigency is imposed upon the robot. Here, the language of power is Latin – hence the Latin poets that T-55 becomes familiar with – which was also the language of the elite in the colonial era. To speak Latin meant, above all, being able to understand the world and control it. T-55 was able to speak Portuguese and presented great linguistic abilities but it was not enough, to achieve a higher position it had to learn Latin. However, T-55 showed some difficulties in applying the vocative for it had to take the initiative of using it and T-55 could not do so easily.

... As relações dos transitórios com o Latim eram curiosas. Homens sentiam-se ligados a uma linha de tradição. Os transitórios, não: apresentavam-se soltos de qualquer nó anterior... A linguagem anterior havia se tornado tão impessoal que

abolira os chamados diretos. Já os transitórios não se habituavam ao emprego natural do vocativo. Talvez o problema tivesse ainda na relativa falta de iniciativa do transitório porque na verdade o vocativo é uma iniciativa... [... The relations of the transients with Latin were curious. Men felt themselves linked to a line of tradition. The transients didn't; they were loose ends of whatsoever prior knot. The former language had become so impersonal that it had abolished the so-called direct objects. The transients do not get used to the natural use of the vocative. Perhaps the problem was in their relative lack of initiative because in fact the vocative is an initiative...] (p. 55).

This passage illustrates the attitude of the colonized subject toward the imposed language. If on the one hand, he accepts this imposition and posits himself in the position of a subject without any culture, any civilization and any historical past; on the other hand he is not able to learn the colonizer's language properly. In Fanon's conception, this attitude results in a vicious circle in which Whites consider themselves superior to Blacks and Blacks want to prove at all costs their wealth of intellect and equal intelligence. Here the emphasis is on the idea that there will always be an asymmetrical relation between colonized and colonizer.

In this regard Said (2003: 40) comments that the essential relationship, on political, cultural, and even religious grounds, was seen to be one between a strong and a weak partner. While the colonizer is seen as rational, virtuous, mature and normal, the colonized is seen as irrational, depraved, childlike and aberrant/abnormal. By its nature, T-55 kept most of these characteristics; "Logo que a fábrica o entregara, todos compreenderam que se tratava de um tipo diferente de transitório... (p. 51) [when the factory had delivered it, everybody understood that it was a different kind of transient...]". Here, the robot can be deemed a childlike figure since it is remote from the influence of historical change. Moreover, its status does not allow it to grow up and be independent or to live on its own, as we have seen before.

The fact of being different constitutes a very painful mark for the colonized or black man, here represented by T-55. Olinto's protagonist seems to understand that a robot is extremely different from human beings. There is a huge barrier between its world and

man's world. No matter its poetic talents, it would never be a real man. Clearly Olinto is using the colonial discourse that consists of making the 'Other' believe that he could try to be similar to the Whites but he will never be one of them.

This idea seemed to be internalized in T-55's mind; the white girl would never have any kind of relationship with the robot. The way it behaves when the girl appeared in the company demonstrated that it hid any kind of feeling for her: "... sempre que a menina aparecia ele se alheava um pouco (p. 10) [... every time the girl appeared it shied away a little]". T-55 acted as if he had internalized the colonial idea that it would never be more than a slave of the modern world. If on the one hand, T-55 had developed a strong relationship with Cláudio, Flávio and other workmates, symbolizing the harmony between different races; on the other hand, there was a huge distance between the robot and the girl which suggests that such harmony can only be possible insofar as it satisfies the man's interests. Olinto seems to embrace a positive image of racial democracy, but, undercutting this, there is an anxiety about interracial sexual contact, at least when the woman is white. This behaviour calls into question my earlier comments about the relative ease with which Brazilians accept miscegenation.

As I have pointed out before, the girl's name, Lactea, is hugely suggestive of some of the assumptions present in colonial discourses. The whiteness of the girl – as well as the whiteness of other characters – seems to raise an unbreakable barrier between the protagonist and her; to be white means to be inaccessible and untouchable. Indeed, there is no dialogue or contact between the two characters, despite T-55's talent for speaking. What child, on seeing a robot, would not approach and talk to it? We would expect children to react in this way toward robots. In "The Duel", however the opposite happens, the girl acts as if T-55 did not exist which reflects an uncommon behaviour for a child since in most modern narratives children are always playing and making use of robots. Olinto's decision to maintain a distance between the girl and the robot reflects the logic of

colonial power and, arguably suggests the author's complicity with such power or his difficulty in outmanoeuvring it in his discourse, as pointed out by Fanon (1988).

Paradoxically, at the same time that Olinto invests in a good image of Brazil as a racial democracy, he insists on giving a colonial end to his novel, suggesting that the robot is only replacing the black slave and because of that it cannot have a happy relationship with the white girl.

In discussing the prejudice between whites and blacks, Fanon relates the episode of Jean Veneuse, a black poet who falls in love with a white girl but could not break down the barrier of prejudice and had to understand that he lived in a world that was not his.

... Here is our black man who through his intelligence and hard work has hoisted himself to the level of European thought and culture, but is incapable of escaping his race... Jean Veneuse believed in this culture and had begun to love this new world he had discovered and conquered for his own usage. What a terrible mistake!... Feeling that he would be unable to live without love, he dreams it into being through poetry: 'When you fall in love, you must never say so, better to keep it a secret from oneself' (2007: 47).

The similarity between the ways in which the two writers deal with race is undeniable. It is possible that Olinto had read Fanon by the time he wrote "The Duel" which could have influenced him in some aspects of his work. Although Olinto is not of African descent, he visited Africa and had a passionate interest in African music and culture. Fanon's intention to enlarge the scope of his description to include every colonized subject means that the facts he sets out are not isolated in time and space but represent a worldwide view generated by the phenomenon of colonization.

Although Olinto wrote "The Duel" during the 60s, he opts to adopt a discourse which advocates the values of colonization and imperialism as necessary for a nation. By humanizing T-55, Olinto opens a range of possibilities of reading the story from a colonial perspective. T-55 dies, instead of stopping working. According to Claudio: *Os Transitórios*

*não morriam: deixavam de funcionar* (p. 64) [*The Transitórios did not die, they stopped working*] That was the first time that someone used the verb ‘to die’ to refer to a robot.

– Morreu sim. Sabe por quê? Por ter conquistado a fraqueza e a ternura. Foi a ternura que matou T-55 (p. 64) [T-55 did die. Do you know why? Because he had acquired weakness and affection. It was the affection that killed T-55].

The robot died repeating the Latin expression ‘*Lactea nomen habet, candor notabilis ipso*’ which comes from Ovid and means: “Tem o nome de Lactea, notável pela sua brancura” (p. 65) [She has the name Lactea, notable for her whiteness]. Undoubtly, this is a reference to racial issues and the overvaluation of being white as a fundamental aspect of superiority and social ascent. In his attempt to contemplate aspects inherent to Brazilian identity, Olinto does not show any resistance to this vicious circle, as we can see from the end of the story. Instead, he is inspired by the attempts to copy the dominant trends in the literature of the colonized power, as described by McLeod (2000: 86). In so doing, he joins a group of writers who according to Fanon, are in danger of identifying more with the middle-class bourgeoisie of the colonizing nation rather than with the *indigenous* masses. Thus, as a white Brazilian writer who occupies both a position of neocolonial subjection – given Brazil’s relation to the US in the 1960s, as discussed previously – and a position of belonging to the race that had historically, held colonial power in Brazil, he maintains the colonial discourse, though non-intentionally. If, on the one hand, readers are driven to sympathize with the robot and become sensitive about its situation which might be subversive in relation to colonialism, on the other hand, the narrative reinforces received ideas about racial hierarchy instead of racial democracy.

Comparing Olinto’s “The Duel” (1961) to Henry Kuttner’s *The Proud Robot* (1943), it is possible to highlight some important points of divergences in terms of the writer’s position toward colonialism. Kuttner’s story is a satire of how technological society may lose control of its inventions. After designing a robot named Joe, the inventor



Gallagher forgets the original reason for which Joe was being designed. As a consequence, the robot starts to behave like a human being and becomes proud of itself which could be a threat for its inventor. Knowing that machines without specific purposes might turn in on themselves and rebel against human beings, Gallagher manages to hypnotize the robot in order to discover its initial function so that he could program it to obey only one command to do the job he was made for.

Like Joe, T-55 was distorted from its original function. However, while Kuttner recognizes the possibility of a rebellion and opts for taking control of the situation and reconnects his robot to the purpose it was made for, Olinto does not give his robot the possibility of restoration but rather opts to tackle the evil at its root. This attitude may suggest his adhesion to the colonial idea that there is no possibility of ascent for the inferior race. Thus, as a Brazilian intellectual, arguably, Olinto opts out of involvement in the people's struggle against colonialism.

## **5.2 Rubens Teixeira Scavone's "O Menino e o Robô" [The Boy and the Robot] (1961): A Racial Democracy?**

"The Boy and the Robot" was published in 1961, in Scavone's short story collection *O Diálogo dos Mundos* [*The Dialogue of the Worlds*], in which he demonstrated originality in style and inaugurated a new era of science fiction in the national literature. As a lawyer and professor, Scavone was more aware than many of his contemporaries of the political and economic problems Brazil was dealing with during the 60s. In this respect he is potentially more knowing than Olinto. However, he occupied an important post in the State justice office, a fact which apparently silenced his criticism of the government and its current development programs. According to Roberto Causo (2004), Scavone opted to be an apolitical critic and writer but his writings contemplate humanity in its most persistent

dilemmas which are frequently consequences of social and cultural events. Thus, Scavone, unlike Olinto, did not hesitate to describe Brazilian society with its political and economic deficiencies.

“The Boy and the Robot” follows the story of a boy whose father is an interplanetary urban planner who spends more time on Venus and Mars than on Earth. As a way of compensating for his absence in the boy’s life, the father decides to buy him a modern sophisticated robot to keep the boy company. In the store, he describes the kind of robot he wants: “a robot for general purposes, which speaks at least three languages; it should have no aggressive instinct except when it is required in defense of the boy; it should also be telepathically connected with the boy’s brain waves (p. 47)”. The salesman says the robot will be in perfect synchronization with the boy’s brain waves, anticipating his every thought.

The boy had been asking for a robot for a long time. So, now that his dream has become true, he treats the unnamed robot like a brother. They do everything together; the robot plays with the boy and helps him with his homework; the only thing it cannot do is to go to school with the boy because his mother does not allow it. Everything seems to be a dream come true for the boy; he sends his father messages talking about his happy relationship with the robot. At the end of the second month the boy is taken ill. For three days the robot stays by his bed side, watching over him, silently and sadly. The doctor decides to disconnect their brains but the robot stays in the corner, ostensibly disconnected but nevertheless aware that once disconnected, it cannot do anything to help the boy who dies from a mysterious fever. Some days later the robot produces an electrical overload and destroys itself and finally the boy’s parents realize the robot had human characteristics.

It is not difficult for an attentive reader to notice how essentially similar this story is to Antônio Olinto’s “The Duel”. In both cases the issue of robotic emotion is explored using a similar scenario, the robot’s love for a human who dies. This theme of robotic

emotion is, as I have pointed out in the earlier section on Brazilian science fiction of the 60s, something that is also a common theme of the United States science fiction of the period. However, because of Brazil's colonial history and slavery, Brazilian science fiction treats the theme differently.

Rubens Teixeira Scavone's "The Boy and the Robot" is another example of how science fiction was preoccupied with issues of race in the 60s. The way Scavone deals with technology recalls many aspects of Brazilian society during the colonial period. The beginning of the story is marked by a strong feeling of nostalgia. The new house, despite its sophistication, is compared unfavorably with the old one which was simple but comfortable.

Nada para ele justificava a mudança... a casa antiga era confortável e sempre supria as necessidades da família... O [novo] lugar podia ser mais bonito do que a velha casa, mas era deserto, mergulhado na floresta de abertos, escorado nas encostas da montanha... (p. 48) [For him, nothing could justify the change... the old house was comfortable and always supplied the family's needs... The new house was more beautiful but in a deserted place, plonked into the forest with clearings, clinging onto the slopes of the mountain...].

Here, there is an explicit exaltation of the past presented as if the modern and technological environment were not able to fulfill all human aspirations. The author seems to be aware of the harm technology can cause to people's lives. The description the scientist gives of the place where his house is situated, suggests complete isolation and solitude; if for his wife, the new suburban and modern house represents peace, comfort and prestige, for him, it represents isolation and sadness. The existential conflict to which the family succumbs can be seen as a reflection of the political and economic crisis Brazil faced in the late 50s and early 60s. If on the one hand Brazil showed some technological advance, on the other hand it could not support itself in economic and policy-setting terms. This paradoxical situation generated the idea that Brazil had become a colony again. This

feeling of ‘coming back’<sup>12</sup> to the past is very well illustrated by Scavone in the movement of the family from an urban to a suburban area, as well as in the figure of the robot whose main function is to be the boy’s ‘mucama’<sup>13</sup>.

For the society depicted by Scavone, to have a robot represents prestige and economic ascent, recalling slave ownership during the colonial period. The robot’s task is the same as that of a domestic slave: for general purposes, and to provide the boy with company and protection.

Assim não ficará mais isolado em sua ausência. Ficarei mais tranqüila com a guarda feita pelo robô e ele não terá mais inveja dos amigos... (p. 48) [That way he will not feel isolated in your absence. I will feel safer with the security provided by the robot and he will not be envious of his friends...].

The robot’s role has little to do with technology; it functions as a playmate, servant and friend. In fact, the boy recognizes that a human brother would not be better than the robot. The harmonious relation between the boy and the robot recalls the myth of Brazil as a racial democracy. For the boy, the robot is more than a brother. However, this harmony is contradictory if one thinks about the functions the robot develops: “Jamais se sentava (p. 51) [it never sat down]”. The robot is always close to the boy ready to do whatever is necessary to make him happy, as if it does not exist on its own; the only reason for its existence is the boy. Here, Scavone seems to highlight the limits of the ‘racial democracy myth’ and the idealized, paternalistic myth of the ‘good’ side of the slave owning society.

This is also a good illustration of how the West sees the Orient. The robot’s labor is important and necessary to modern society. In the same way that the boy’s loneliness justifies the purchase of the robot, Orientalist representations function to justify Western

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<sup>12</sup> During the 60s, the social hierarchy retained much of the flavor of Brazil’s colonial era. Brazil’s rapid urban growth attracted huge populations, most of whom had to find casual jobs or jobs not covered by labor legislation (known as the informal sector) because the cities lacked the formal sector jobs to support their populations. The rural masses chose to move to the city because they considered their economic opportunities would be better there. The country was not prepared for such a huge change. It gained invaluable technology, although often only through foreign investments which compromised its political and economic dependence.

<sup>13</sup> Slave whose main function is to serve his/ her master’s son or daughter.

colonial rule over Eastern lands. For McLeod, the natural structure of a society legitimates the domination of other peoples and “lubricate[s] the political and judicial structures which maintain colonial rule through physical coercion ( 2000: 43). According to Said,

Subject races did not have it in them to know what was good for them... One of the convenient things about Orientals is that managing them, although circumstances might differ slightly here and there, was almost everywhere the same. This was, of course, because Orientals were almost everywhere nearly the same (2003: 37).

If the robot represents the slave in Brazilian society, its attitudes would be similarly servile since the domestic slave is often described as a docile, friendly and submissive person who almost always demonstrates affection for his/her masters. In Scavone’s work, there is no fear of rebellious behavior from the robot; under no circumstances do his parents show any sign of being worried about the relationship of their son with the robot. The fact of their brains being connected is another factor that indicates the robot’s limitation and submission. The robot has all its senses telepathically controlled by the boy’s brain. And even its ability to speak three different languages does not give it any power or prestige since it does not have any independence or voice. Although the text is constructed by direct and indirect discourse, there is only one record of the robot’s voice:

O menino apenas pensou a pergunta. Imediatamente a antena vibrou...  
 – Seu pai chegou ontem a Venus. É noção elementar que a astronave, deslocando-se com velocidade cósmica número dois, atingirá o segundo planeta em 22 dias, duas horas e treze minutos (p. 51)  
 [The boy only thought the question. Immediately its antenna vibrated...  
 – Your father arrived on Venus yesterday. It’s an elementary notion that a spaceship moving at cosmic speed number two, will reach the second planet in 22 days, two hours and thirteen minutes].

As can be seen from the quotation above, the only reference to the robot’s voice is to answer the boy’s unvoiced question and curiosity about his father trip; even with its linguistic efficiency, there is no space for autonomous, distinctive self expression. Its

function was to meet the boy's needs. In this respect, its status can be compared to that of the Black man described by Fanon: "Whether he likes it or not, the black man has to wear the livery the white man has fabricated for him" (2008: 17). And here 'livery' can be taken as all the characteristics that the family at the store requires the robot to have. The robot speaks not because it is able to but because it is fabricated to do that. Like Olinto, Scavone deals with language issues as a way of showing that the dominant class imposes its language and culture on the inferior class. This is also a good illustration for Fanon's ideas that "all colonized people in whom an inferior complex has taken root and whose local culture has been committed to the grave, position themselves in relation to the civilizing language" (2008: 2).

Scavone's robot can also be seen as a representation of Brazil as a technologically dependent nation. According to Skidmore (1999: 46), during Juscelino Kubbitschek's government, Brazil had achieved rapid economic development and industrialization. By 1961 it had an integrated motor vehicle industry and was on the way to creating the many ancillary industries vital to vehicle production. There were also impressive gains in electricity generation and road building. However, this growth strategy stemmed from the way it was financed. Brazil's domestic savings remained chronically low, with few investments. The government needed foreign capital to supplement domestic investment; without foreign support the growth in inflation and the mounting balance-of-payment deficits would become unbearable. This economic fragility stimulated intervention from outside Brazil which resulted in political impotence and economic dependence. Although the country had shown some technological advances it was submissive to the developed nations. This situation is quite similar to that of the robot which behaves like the boy's slave although it is in many aspects superior to him.

The feeling of impotence, inferiority and dual existence is strongly emphasized by Scavone through the conflictual life of the scientist who also seems to represent the nation

as it experiences the crisis of modernization. The description given by the scientist of his impressions and feelings during his trips into space recalls the way many economists described Brazil in the late 50s and early 60s. According to Skidmore (1999: 152), the country's accelerating population growth rate led to an increase in the ranks of job seekers. To create those jobs, Brazil badly needed to diversify its economic base. The debate over economic strategy in Brazil was polarized by the Marxists and statists on the left and the neo-liberal on the right. In 1960, President Juscelino Kubitschek had tried to combine elements from both ideologies. In the end, his balancing act had failed. He had given new life to the trade-off between left and right. But with the succession of Goulart in 1961, Brazil faced a recurrence of the confrontation of 1954 – a populist president, this time with an unstable political base and limited parliamentary power, versus the military. Everything gave the impression of impotence and failure. This feeling seems to be illustrated by Scavone's representation of the scientist:

... O pior não é a distancia. É a impressão de dupla existência. Toda vez que entramos na nave, temos a impressão de penetrar em outra vida, como se fossemos outras pessoas, como se não fossemos nós. Tudo se torna irreal, impalpável. Não sei, temos pensado muito nisso sem chegar a qualquer solução... Só as fisionomias são iguais. No resto, somos estranhos, pertencemos a outra realidade, a outra vida, personagens saídos do sonho, da memória, do subconsciente... (p. 47) [... Distance is not the worst of it. What is, is the impression of dual existence. Every time we get into the spaceship, we have impression of penetrating into another life, as if we were other people, as if we were not us. Everything becomes unreal, impalpable. I don't know, we have thought a lot about it, without reaching any solution, though... Just what we look like is the same. As to the rest, we are weird; we belong to another reality, to another life, characters who've emerged from our dreams, memory and subconscious...].

This is clearly an allusion to the government's impotence vis-à-vis the political facts. The character lives in a modern and different world but he feels as if he were not the same person, as if something had changed his personality and identity. He depicts himself as the 'Other': limited, inferior, impotent and weird, in search of recognition. In this regard, he can be compared to the black Antillean man described by Fanon: "Whenever he

is in the presence of someone else there is always the question of worth and merit” (p. 186). He does not possess a personal value of his own and is always dependent on the presence of the other. Interestingly, the robot is the proof of his power and wealth but is also his substitute on Earth, the one who will keep the boy safe while he is in space; hence the two characters seem to share some common characteristics. If on the one hand the scientist represents the master/owner of the robot, on the other hand he is cast as a colonial subject, lacking in self-confidence and autonomy, who somehow takes on the role of colonial authority figure over the robot, perhaps in order to control his own insecurities and sense of inadequacy. Referring to this ambivalence in the colonial discourse, Bill Ashcroft states:

The dominant discourse constructs Otherness in such a way that it always contains a trace of ambivalence or anxiety about its own authority. In order to maintain authority over the Other in a colonial situation, imperial discourse strives to delineate Other as radically different from the self, yet at the same time it must maintain sufficient identity with the Other to give value to control over it. The Other can, of course, only be constructed out of the archive of ‘the self’, yet the self must also articulate the Other as inescapably different (1989: 103).

This ambivalent discourse can also be associated with Scavone’s position as a writer and a member of the government. His ambiguous critical relationship with it is arguably attributable to the absence of intellectuals who might have assumed an individual critical position against the imperial discourse constructed by the colonial system. In the novel, the scientist seems to be the figure who best describes Brazil in its first years of technological development and industrialization – apparently richer and more developed but supported by private investments and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The robot, then, can be seen as the result of this complicated process of modernization, and so, it is not portrayed as an autonomous and self-confident figure.



Thus, the robot will never be more than a robot, despite its 'almost human' characteristics. It will always be seen as a slave for general purposes, a mechanic doll, the 'Other' without a history, a family or someone who can change his/her destiny or objectified status. As in Antonio Olinto's "The Duel", the only way of showing the robot's human characteristics is that it dies, which suggests that the 'Other' will always be defined as such, no matter how similar he is to his counterpart. Furthermore, if the robot represents the result of the technological development in Brazil, this is shown in a very negative light which reflects the way Brazilian critics associated technological development with a neo-colonial experience. In this respect Scavone seems to reproduce colonial discourse as part of the Brazilian inheritance although he sometimes advocates a more dynamic and vacillating relationship between the present and the past.

Both Scavone and Olinto fail to produce a discourse which does not celebrate the obedient colonized subject. Without resisting the medium of colonial discourses while dealing with issues of Brazilian colonial history, they explore myths of national identity such as the myth of racial democracy and a docile people and produce science fiction works from a perspective that is very different from that of the Anglo-American tradition. At the same time that these writers usefully show the then prevailing political situation in Brazil, they draw parallels with Brazil's colonial history in order to demonstrate that the desire for technological progress has led Brazil to a neocolonial situation.

In the following two sections we shall explore two novels as representatives of Brazilian science fiction from the 70s. Unlike the writers mentioned above, writers from the 70s are more concerned about environment themes, the role of women in society and Brazil's policies for economic development and modernization. By using dystopian texts, these writers protest against the technocratic military regime while at the same time showing the genre's relevance to the social context in Brazil.

### 5.3 Plínio Cabral's *Umbra* [Shadow] (1977): The Portrait of a Devastated World

Plínio Cabral's *Umbra* is a portrait of a devastated world. Its plot takes the reader to the future as a projection of present day reality. Flowers, clean water, rivers and fresh air are all disappearing. Little by little pollution is poisoning the planet and its wildlife, making man an irrational being unable to stop the consequences of his own action. The novel is divided into three parts: *The Old Man*, *The Legends* and *The Boy*.

In the first part of the novel, mankind has been reduced to living in a giant factory that artificially provides for all his needs. The novel follows the life of an old fisherman, who is extremely uncomfortable with life in this artificial world. He is one of the few who is able to cross the huge riverbank (a *grande margem*). Every afternoon he wanders beyond the confines of the factory where he meets up with a nameless black boy to whom he intends to pass all his knowledge about life. Both of them walk toward the great bank in order to catch *Mosqueixes* (*transliteration: Mosqish ie a play on mosquito + fish*), the only species of fish that has survived the effects of pollution. It is not an important activity since they do not need to find their own food, the factory provides everything: food, clothes, sophisticated rooms for entertainment and meetings to discuss the future. Fishing for them is an activity that means both personal liberty and a more authentic relationship with the environment. In the evening the automatic gates are closed. The factory has its own system of protection. Strange beings wander beyond the high walls. Nobody has ever seen them because they cannot approach the Factory, so impenetrable is the security.

One day the boy does not show up. Frustrated, the old man continues his search for *Mosqueixes*. Thick, black bubbling water drifts toward the bank. It seems dangerous. He has to choose the best place to avoid being caught by the High Tide (*Grande Marechal*), which sometimes comes surging in unexpectedly and sucks up the distracted. He stares at

the movement of that black water until the *Mosqueixes* appear. He cannot wait any longer. It is dangerous. During the night, indescribable creatures (*Indefiníveis*) appear. He catches some *Mosqueixes* and returns to the Factory. The door opens, the old man enters and breathes in the fresh air deeply. Nobody can live outside the factory. Most people stay there, feeling the heating of the walls or walking to the centre, talking, making questions about the past or remembering old histories and legends.

When they are together, the old man tells the boy legends. There are thirteen, all of which are related to the degradation of the environment and which explain the origin of the Factory. They are told as short parables with a male hero who has been reincarnated many times in order to prevent the destruction of the natural world. For each legend, he has a different name: Eric, Aric, Deric, Teric, Talaric, Taric, Alaric, Laric, Daric, Valderic, Galderic, Genseric and Goderic. In the first legend, *Eric vence a cidade morta. E morre também*, [*Eric conquers the Dead City and also dies*], Eric, the hero, decides to fight against the Dead City, the villain, which increases its power the more pollution it effects. The more man pollutes, the stronger the city becomes. Symbiotically, man is suffocated by the City. Although everybody hates it, nobody knows how to destroy the City. After a long discussion Eric understands that the only way to destroy the City is to leave it. However, in doing so, Eric would destroy himself since there is nowhere else to go. The next three legends refer to the struggle of the hero to destroy the Dead City. However, in order to destroy the City, the hero has to destroy himself.

In the following seven legends, the heroes try to save some natural resources: a tree, a bird, a flower, the wind, the river, but all of them are destroyed. Using these legends, the protagonists show how the natural world was devastated and how people lived before the Factory. In the twelfth legend, people find the *Marental* and build the Factory. They have lost their memories. The earth is dry and the heat is unbearable. The night is darker and longer; Nature is dead, no more roots or fish. People wander aimlessly until they get tired

and then disappear, diving into the sand. Genseric, the hero, insists on living. He wants to get married and have children so he returns to the Dead City and discovers that they can live there. With the remaining machines, they start to construct the Factory. It takes seventy years. Genseric is old and tired so he decides to walk out of the factory where he can lay down on the sand and rest forever.

In the third part of novel, *The Boy*, the old man meets the boy at High Tide (Grande Marental) but the boy does not want to fish. Surprised, the old man asks him why. The boy says he has decided to go out, to the low land, to the Dead City, to the People of the Stars, to the forest and the river. The old man tries to convince him that those are legends and he might die if he leaves the Factory. His efforts are in vain; the boy leaves in search of legends. The old man then is the last fisherman and he does not have anybody to whom to pass on his knowledge. When the boy leaves, the old man stops and realizes that humanity has destroyed itself so he lies down on the sand and sleeps forever. It seems that the boy is the last reincarnation of Eric.

Let us now turn to read Plínio Cabral's *Umbra* in the light of some of the ideas we have assembled so far. In what follows we draw on some of the ideas implicated in both postcolonial theories and ecofeminism criticisms. We shall also look at some mythological aspects present in the novel in order to illustrate how Brazilian science fiction diverges from Suvin's theory about science fiction as opposed to myth. Firstly, we will stress the large extent to which the novel targets environmental issues and how this is linked with representations of gender, race and class in forming national identity. At this point, the analysis will be focused on the ideas of ecofeminists such as Carolyn Merchant (2003), Vandana Shiva (1993), Rosemary Ruether (2005) and Ivone Gebara (2000) whose works have stimulated a growing number of studies by literary critics in Brazil and Latin America. Following this ecofeminist approach, we will focus on the novel as an allegorical reflection of neo-colonialism in Brazil.

From the very beginning of the novel, issues related to colonialism in Brazil and Latin America can be identified. For example, the use of the factory gates reminds us both of the way in which slaves were enclosed in the *senzalas* (slave quarters) after six in the evening and the original colonial settlements in which a city had walls and could therefore be regarded as a fort, the gates of which were closed at 9pm every night. Another important allusion to this time is the way people die: “some suffocate by pollution; others kill themselves or go mad”. This is exactly what happened to the original natives: many died of illness caused by the colonizer forcing them to live in overcrowded conditions and many also chose to commit suicide rather than submit to the horrors of slavery under a colonizer. Another important matter that bears witness to the continuing impact of colonial history on Brazil during the 70s is the way Cabral represents most characters: nameless, homeless, submissive, dependent and hopeless, unable to take decisions on their own.

O Moço conversava com os signos: aprendera com o anterior que aprendera com seu anterior que aprendera do anterior do anterior (p. 14) [The Lad talked to the signs: He had learnt this from his predecessor who had learnt from his predecessor who had learnt from his predecessor's predecessor].

Given that a ‘name’ is central to an individual’s sense of identity, Cabral denounces the lack of identity in *Umbra*’s characters. Expressions like ‘the young boy’, ‘the old man’, ‘predecessor’ are used to name the characters as if they do not have real names because if they had real names, they too would gain importance as characters in tales that resemble myth and fairytale.

Also important is the idea of homelessness present in the novel. This is clearly illustrated by a frequent movement of people looking for a better place to live in. Paradoxically, there is no other place where they could settle and build a better future; In fact, Cabral reflects on the lack of perspective for Brazilian society during the 70s: the characters behave as if they already know the future – “*they meet to discuss the history of*

*the future*” – which is not possible literally since the word ‘history’ is usually related to something that happened in the past. This narrative point of view can support the idea that *Umbra* is strongly related to issues of colonization which are not just to do with Brazil’s past but also with its current and potentially future political and economic status.

Thus, our analysis will underline the extent to which the novel draws on colonial and neo-colonial realities based on the arguments of important critics such as Fanon, Said, Spivak, Bhabha and the Latin Americans Nestor Canclini and Enrique Dussel. For methodological reasons, the first part of the analysis will focus on ecofeminist criticism and will be followed by discussion of postcolonial issues.

Given the fact that this novel was published in 1977, it is pertinent to highlight that its publication coincided with some important ecological movements that arose in Brazil during the 70s. Another important issue to stress is the particular significance of the environment for Brazilian national identity which is associated with the myth of *grandeza*, or national greatness. This myth goes back to images of Brazil’s wealth and beauty, its forests and fertile lands, as we have pointed before in early sections.

In 1971, the agronomist José Lutzenberger founded the first ecological association in Brazil and Latin America – The Gaúcha Association for the Protection of the Natural Environment (*Associação Gaúcha de Proteção Meio Ambiente Natural – AGAPAN*). It was located in Rio Grande do Sul state where Plínio Cabral was born. Among other important actions of AGAPAN one can mention: preserving the fauna and flora, combating industrial and vehicular pollution, combating the indiscriminate use of insecticides, fungicides and herbicides, fighting against water pollution caused by industries and against the destruction of natural landscapes. From 1971 to 1974 these actions were severely repressed by the military regime; any attempt to raise awareness of these ecological problems could be taken as an insult to governmental authority since ecological activists deemed the government as the body mainly responsible for the destruction of Nature. Its

countless enterprises did not take into account the preservation of the environment. During the 60s and 70s, industrial production increased sharply and toxic wastes used in agriculture were thrown into rivers, putting water resources at dangerous levels of risk. Uncontrolled gases expelled by industries and motor vehicles were the principal cause of the increase in respiratory illnesses. According to the sociologist Eduardo Viola in his work *Meio Ambiente, Desenvolvimento e Cidadania* [*Environment, Development and Citizenship*] (2005), the height of absurdity, when it comes to ecological issues, was when Brazilian president Medici put an advertisement in international newspapers and magazines inviting first world companies to move to Brazil where they would not face any expenses due to anti-pollution legislation.

As a journalist, lawyer and member of the government, Plínio Cabral occupied important posts in cultural and political fields, amongst which his performance as Chief Secretary of the State of Rio Grande do Sul is with mentioning. His holding of this post enabled him to see and discuss the problems of environmental devastation during the military regime. Although his position as a member of the government did not allow him to join AGAPAN, his writings reveal his deep awareness of ecological issues. For Ginway (2004), Cabral is among the first to popularize environmental themes and contest the cultural myths of Brazilian sensuality and of the lush and fertile land (p. 33). As a writer, he has been critical of modern society and its relationship to the natural environment. His use of metaphor and allegories can be understood as a necessary response to censorship. The allegory of the Dead City, for example, is clearly a reference to the consequences of the lack of ecological policies that could curb the further deterioration of the environment which the government had started to provoke during the 70s. In the novel, Nature is humanized and suffers the consequences of human beings' greed.

Another important allegory is the giant factory in which people have to live as prisoners. Despite its technological sophistication, the factory reminds us of the *senzalas*

(slaves' quarters) and the system of imprisonment during the slavery period. By using an imaginary futuristic city, Cabral's dystopia effectively focuses on political themes and satirizes tendencies present in contemporary society, particularly those related to cities, mind and body; this is a good illustration of what Stuart Hall wants to show in his work *Identidade Cultural nas Pós-Modernidade* (2003). In this perspective, it is possible to make a link both Hall's and Langer's ideas about postmodern cities and the concepts of hybridity and double vision. For Langer,

What makes these cities dystopic is not inclusion, difference and hybridity in and of themselves, but rather the way in which those things are born out of exclusion and are marginalized, as they are in a colonial context (2010: 185).

As I have pointed before, the factory seems to be a modern *senzala* and people are slaves of this modern system of slavery – or globalization – one of the important results of which is that the environment is destroyed.

According to Ginway (2004), Plínio Cabral's *Umbra* is the first Brazilian dystopia to focus exclusively on ecological disaster. Given the fact that the novel was published during the military regime when the government wanted technological advancement at any cost, and censorship did not allow any opposing views, it is no surprise that the author used allegoric discourse as his most important instrument in order to protest against the depletion of Brazil's natural resources. The idea that everything could be replaced by technology is strongly stressed by Cabral right from the first chapter:

Nada era importante: cada um fazia o que era necessário fazer, desde tempos imemoriais. E ninguém se importava com o resto. A fábrica fornecia tudo: roupa sintética, alimento concentrado, figuras visuais e reuniões onde se debatia a história do futuro (p. 10) [Nothing was important: everyone did what they had to do, since time imemorial. Nobody worried about the rest. The factory provided everything: synthetic clothes, concentrated food, visual pictures and meetings to discuss the history of the future].



Little by little the natural environment is replaced by an artificial one and not only the environment, but also people's values. With the expression "nothing is important" the reader can see how the natural order is put aside; there is no need to cultivate or preserve the natural environment since technology provides whatever is necessary. However, at the same time that man is shown as intellectual, scientific and superior to Nature, he seems to be an irrational being, enslaving himself. This attitude can be associated with the invading colonizers who scorned the indigenous people's harmonious relationship with the natural world. In this regard, Herbert Marcuse (1970: 144) argues that a society that projects and undertakes the technological transformation of Nature alters the base of domination which results in replacing personal dependence with dependence on the objective order of things. In this sense, this modern kind of domination generates a higher rational society whose hierarchical structure exploits natural and mental resources even more efficiently. Marcuse claims that

The limits of this rationality, and its sinister force, appear in the progressive enslavement of man by a productive apparatus which perpetuates the struggle for existence and extends it to a total international struggle which ruins the lives of those who build and use this apparatus (1970: 1440).

In accordance with Marcuse's ideas and drawing on Merchant's critiques of Western techno-scientific instrumentality and epistemology, Vandana Shiva (1993) defines Western science as based on an epistemology of male domination over women and Nature. This epistemology abstracts the male knower in a transcendent space that lies outside Nature and reduces Nature itself to dead matter that is pushed and pulled hither and thither by mechanical forces. Thus, the *homo scientificus* is given supremacy over Nature, which is to deny the symbiosis between humanity and the natural world. From this perspective, the modern scientist is a man who creates Nature as well as himself, through his own intellectual power as he lives in a world where there is no God. Echoing

Merchant's argument, Cabral seems to advocate the idea that man and nature are in constant symbiosis; reflecting this argument at the end of most legends, the hero joins with a natural element: sand or water, as can be seen in the second legend:

Um dia, por fim, chegou à beira de um rio. Era calmo e silencioso. Aric, então, deixou-se ficar ali. Já não podia mais caminhar. Não tinha forças. Abraçou-se ao rio e chorou misturando-se com a água e nela tornou-se. E assim, correndo com o Rio, continuou a nadar. Até o fim do mundo (p. 33) [One day he got to the river's edge. It was calm and silent. Aric, then, stood stockstill there. He could not walk anymore. He was weak. He embraced the river and wept, he merged with the water and became part of it. And thus, keeping pace with the River, he continued to swim. To the end of the world].

Here, the dynamic interaction of man (hero) and Nature emphasizes the fact that the non-human world, animals, plants, celestial bodies are not simply under human control. They also have their own purpose, their own relation to God, as expressed by Ruether (2005: 68). Unlike the non-human world, modern man has lost contact with Nature; instead of being a part of it he has alienated himself from it and therefore abuses it. Allusions to important biblical ideas are also an important strategy used by Cabral in order to reinforce the idea that Nature has its own vitality and it is strongly related to God. In the ninth legend, the hero Daric dies to save Nature in the same way that Jesus Christ dies to save humanity:

Depois ergueram o lenho e o corpo a ele preso, e olharam: Daric de braços abertos, a cabeça sobre o peito... Os homens, então, sentiram medo. A terra parecia tremer. Chegara a noite, embora fosse dia. O céu estava ficando violeta e roxa. Em breve estaria negro... Correram todos, desesperados, gritando. A noite, porém, descia sobre eles, furiosa, escura, mais negra ainda, medonha... (p. 67) [After that they lifted the beam and the body fixed to it, and looked: Daric with his arms opened, his head on his chest... The men, then, felt sore afraid. The earth seemed to shake. Night had fallen, though it were day. The sky was turning violet and purple. Soon it would be black... Everybody ran off, in despair, wailing. The night, however, descended upon them, furious, dark, blacker than ever, fearfully].

In this passage, important aspects are to be found of the patriarchal paradigm with its hierarchical structure and methodology of thought which is closely linked to Judeo-Christian ideas of man's innate superiority over Nature. These ideas are discussed by the historian of science Lynn Townsend White in her article *The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis* published in 1967. White suggests that an alternative worldview is necessary, and this alternative must be religious. She also believes that science and technology were so tainted with orthodox Christian arrogance toward Nature that no solution to our ecological crisis can be expected from them alone<sup>14</sup>.

According to Gebara (2000: 111) patriarchal epistemology bases itself on eternal unchangeable 'truths' that are the presuppositions for knowing what truly is. In the Platonic-Aristotelian epistemology that shaped Western, Christianity, this means eternal ideas that exist *a priori*. The Western Church added to this the hierarchy of revelation over reason. Revealed ideas come directly from God and thus are unchangeable and unquestionable, compared to ideas derived from reason. This religious way of seeing reality shows, somehow, that Cabral's discourse is ambivalent. As a practicing Roman Catholic, he seems to transfer, unconsciously or not, his beliefs to his texts. Gebara criticizes this kind of discourse, because according to her, experiences are the most important subject for any discourse; they cannot be translated into thought abstract thinking, finally and definitively. They are always in context, in a particular network of relationships. This interdependence and contextuality includes not only other humans but the nonhuman world, and ultimately the whole body of the cosmos in which we are embedded in our particular location. Theological ideas are not exempt from this embodied, contextual questioning. Gebara goes on to state that changing the patriarchal paradigm for an ecofeminist one starts with epistemology; with transforming the way one thinks, for example, with transforming the way one constructs one's thoughts and the means one uses

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<sup>14</sup> Science, vol. 155 (March 10, 1967), 1203-7. Reprinted in *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature and Environment*, Roger S. Gottlieb, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1996), 184-93.

to do so. Such an effort to dismantle patriarchal epistemology in order to engage on ecofeminist thinking includes re-examining the nature of the human person.

In *Umbra*, patriarchal epistemology is also reproduced in the hero who seems to be a disembodied self that is presumed to exist prior to all relationships. From this perspective the ideal self is autonomous, has extricated itself from all dependencies on others and stands outside and independent of relationships as a 'free subject'. Interestingly *Umbra*'s hero always reincarnates with other names and without any family ties or 'network of relationships', as if he existed by himself. In an ecofeminist understanding of the human person, such autonomy is a delusion based on the denial of all the others on whom one depends. This attitude is also expressed at the end of the novel when the nameless boy decides to leave alone on his serach for a better place to live. Ironically, he is supposed to be a hero but he fails to understand the necessary reconceptualization that is needed. Whilst the novel is strongly critical of environmentally destructive policies, it reproduces individualistic and transcendent ideas that are, according to ecofeminism, incompatible with environmental awareness.

Whilst Cabral's hero can successfully reincarnate himself in other bodies, the opposite happens with Nature. The promise of planting more and better plants has never been kept (p. 43). The idea that technology is able to renew Nature is dismissed. Here, one can make a link to Merchant's criticism of human attempts to civilize Nature. From this angle, science and technology are restoring human dominion and thus transforming primitive, disorderly Nature into civilization. Influenced by Merchants' ideas, Ruether (2005: 121) states that, this task of setting out to civilize Nature is the white man's burden<sup>15</sup>. This reference seems to be ironic. The white Western male is subduing the whole world, first Europe and then the colonized areas of the Americas, Asia, and Africa and

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<sup>15</sup> This expression was probably taken from the title of a poem by Rudyard Kipling addressed to the entrance of the United States into the club of colonizing countries by its taking possession of the Phillippines from Spain.

elevating them to a higher order. And by “areas” one can include all individuals living within them: indigenous people, women, black people and slaves, etc. Merchant goes on to state that this system of patriarchy or elite male domination is further developed in Western colonialism and modern scientific technology and economics. These patterns of domination lead to the impoverishment of most humans and the natural world and rapidly produce a crisis that threatens survival on Earth. Cabral illustrates this same feeling of devastation by male domination in modern society; because of the effects of pollution, men lose their natural habitat and have to survive in inhuman conditions:

Naquele tempo quase não falavam. Não havia o que dizer. Deixavam-se ficar ali, protegendo-se do frio ou do calor, olhando o horizonte, cavando a terra, sem esperança. De quando em quando alguém aparecia com raízes velhas, sem água, esfarelando-se como a própria terra. Mastigavam os pedaços, depois cuspiam sangue, a boca seca, lábios cortados. Assim era a vida. E de tanto sofrimento, um dia perguntaram: por quê viver? (p. 82) [At that time, people hardly ever spoke. There was nothing to say. They used to stay there, protected from the cold or the heat, looking at the horizon, digging the earth, without hope. Sometimes someone turned up with old roots, without water, crumbling with the earth itself. They chewed the pieces, then, spat blood, with dry mouths, cracked lips. That was how life was. The suffering was so much that one day they asked: what’s the point in living?].

Cabral’s writing reflects the concerns of ecofeminism, but in some respects it is also subject to criticism from the perspective of ecofeminism. His work can also be usefully read in the light of postcolonial theory. The degeneration of men, for example, is strongly emphasized in *Umbra*, suggesting the destructive impact of colonization on human identity; like technological development, the process of colonization generates people without memories, dreams or hope. The novel depicts the idea that people have lost their memories, history and imagination, and because of this, they have lost the desire to procreate; this can be taken as an allusion to what Edward Said claims are stereotype epithets on the Orient: timeless, feminine, weak, cowardly and lazy. Cabral seems to denounce the effects of foreign policies that have put Brazil in a neocolonial position,

namely, it is dependent and unable to develop by itself. Cabral's criticisms reflect Edward Said's observations about the attitude of the United States to underdeveloped nations:

Because governments are relatively powerless to affect US policy toward them, they turn their energies to repressing and keeping down their own population, which results in resentment, anger and helpless imprecations that do nothing to open up societies where secular ideas about human history and development have been overtaken by failure and frustration... (*Orientalism's* Preface, 2003).

In Brazil's case, the authoritarian government with its repressive acts generated a feeling that progress and economic development are never used in favor of the majority of the population. According to Alves (2005: 259), after 1974, the state resumed its previous effort to find a balance between selective repression and a more flexible mechanism of representation that would allow it to extend its base of support among middle and upper class groups, now disaffected because of the violence of the repression and the end of the economic miracle. This economic model imposed extremely heavy burdens on the majority of the population; the trend toward ever-greater concentration was most pronounced in rural areas, where the poorest 50 percent of the population suffered a 33 percent reduction in its share of the national income. Cabral also registers this specific period of history in his novel at the point when the government imposed a high level of tax on the poorest population:

Os homens, porém, sentiam-se tristes. Envelhecidos, cansados. A pele secava, tanto era o trabalho. Da divisão por quatro, uma parcela dividia-se por três. Era a maior. Gigantesca. Foram então aos reis do mundo e reclamaram... O povo queixava-se, comia menos, vivia mal. Era difícil entregar a parcela dos Reis (p. 71) [Men, though, felt sad. Grown old and tired. Their skin had dried, so hard was their work. From the division of four, an installment was divided into three. It was the biggest one. Gigantic. They therefore went to the kings of the world and complained... The people grumbled, ate less and lived in bad conditions. It was difficult to come up with the Kings' installment].

This is a remarkable intermediate moment in the novel. Prior to this passage, people had gone looking for a king who could govern them; they felt the need to have

some kind of leader. According to Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (2001), this attitude is created by the culture of submission experienced by exploited people in colonized countries (2001: 29). Fanon's ideas made a significant contribution to the development of cultural and postcolonial studies in Brazil and Latin America. Inspired in his works, Latin American writers such as Enrique Dussel and Nestor Garcia Canclini have enhanced studies in this field. Dussel (2005) rethinks the process of colonization and domination through a new epistemology. According to him, in order to overcome an oppressive and discriminatory discourse being formed present in modern society, what is needed is to discover the 'other face' of modernity: the periphery of the colonial world which means the sacrificed indigenous peoples, the enslaved man, the oppressed woman and the alienated culture. By understanding the effects of colonization suffered by Latin American oppressed people it is possible to begin the process of 'decolonizing the minds' suggested by Fanon. However, this process is not that simple. To change minds is a challenge to both colonized and colonizing nations. This process includes rethinking people's understanding of the order of things and re-examining received assumptions of what they have as being natural and true which is very unlikely to be so.

In this regard, Cabral reflects on the way in which the government replicates neo-colonial power structures. The repetition of the colonial experience might also be seen in the reference to 'Kings' in the passage above which, in many ways, recalls the colonial age. After being governed by the Kings of the world, the people run away in search of a better place to live and then, they decide to build the Factory in which they live. Initially, the Factory works as a hope for people who have lost everything. It promises to provide a new way of living: it is more comfortable, healthier, safer, more intelligent and modernized. But they still need someone who can govern them: "Agora precisamos de um chefe. Quem dirá o que devemos produzir? Quem repartirá o que produzirmos?... (p. 85) [Now, we need a boss. Who will tell us what we should produce? Who will share out our

production?]”. Re-reading *Umbra* in a post colonial context, it is possible to say that the Factory confers on the characters a neo-colonial reality; if on the one hand, men feel free to do whatever they want, on the other hand they are unable to administer their freedom. This attitude can be explained because, according to McLeod (2000: 22), overturning colonialism is not just about handing land back to its dispossessed peoples, returning powers to those who were once ruled by Empire. It is also a process of overturning the dominant ways of seeing the world, and representing reality in ways which do not replicate colonialist values. Here it is worth mentioning that in terms of post-colonialism, the Latin American context is different from the situation that pertains in Africa and Asia, where the colonized peoples won back their independence and rights to govern themselves; in Brazil, for example, the indigenous peoples were largely wiped out or displaced, so these colonized people were marginalized by their colonizers. The anti-colonial, independence movements then were primarily creole which may explain the feeling that colonization is not over in Brazil. In other words, to a considerable extent, the creoles who have governed Brazil since Independence were and are from families that held administrative or legal authority or local political influence under the Empire and with rare exceptions, creoles from families without such positions of influence under the Empire have never held power, even at a meaningful local level, under the Republic and this is even truer for indigenous peoples or black people. McLeod goes on to state that if colonialism involves colonizing the minds, then resistance to it requires ‘decolonizing the mind’. Thus, it would be no exaggeration to say that, in several parts of the novel, Cabral seems to represent the way in which Brazilian people are still ‘orientalized’. In other words, Cabral denounces the way in which colonization is still present in Brazilian people’s mind and culture. In this perspective, his writing can be described as an attempt to ‘decolonize mind’.

Attempting to analyze the cultural effects of colonization in Latin America, Canclini (1997) starts his studies by emphasizing the hybrid identities in Latin American



culture. In his book *Culturas Híbridas: Estratégias Para Entrar Y Salir De La Modernidad* (1997), he postulates the need for a multicultural approach in order to understand contemporary Latin American culture. Like Bhabha, Canclini believes that hybrid identities are never total and complete in themselves because they are marked by multitemporal heterogeneity. His concerns about modernity and the new configuration of Latin-American metropolis enabled him to enter into a wide-ranging, yet in-depth reflection on post-modernity and globalization. According to him,

As grandes cidades, dilaceradas pelo crescimento errático e por um multiculturalismo conflitante, são o cenário em que melhor se manifesta o declínio das metanarrativas históricas das utopias que imaginaram um desenvolvimento ascendente e coeso através do tempo (1997: 130) [Large cities, lacerated by uncontrolled growth and by a conflicting multiculturalism, are the perfect scenario in which the decline is manifested of the historical metanarratives of utopias which imagined a rising and cohesive over time].

By using different devices, Cabral and Canclini present a similar critique of the way large cities are transformed in a scenario of a conflicting multiculturalism. Although Cabral's intention cannot be easily identified because of his constant use of metaphors and allegories, he denounces the way cities are developed without preserving the historical and cultural aspects of people's lives. For him, the city is a key element in these contradictory processes of modernization in which men become slaves of their own creation, as can be seen in this passage:

...Trabalhava-se para a Cidade. Exclusivamente. Eram escravos do monstro. Não podiam se libertar. Ela cobria a terra, ia quase até o fim do mundo. Inchava, putrefata. Contribuições, dízimos, taxas, impostos, parcelas – devorava tudo. E pedia mais. Tanto, tanto que ninguém agüentava (p. 25) [Everybody worked for the City. Exclusively. They were the monster's slaves. They could not set themselves free. The city covered the earth, it went almost to the end of the world. It swelled up; it putrified. Contributions, tithes, taxes, tributes, installments – the city wanted them all. And asked for more. So very much more that nobody could bear it all].

For both authors the process of modernization is a mechanism that transforms the subject into an object. The passages above suggest the impossibility of idealizing a system without dehumanizing people. For this reason, these authors denounce the mechanism through which neocolonialism is able to reduce the individual to a state of inauthenticity. Here, one can build a parallel with Bhabha's hybridity:

Hybridity is the name of this displacement of value from symbol to sign that causes the dominant discourse to split along the axis of its power to be representative, authoritative. Hybridity represents that ambivalent turn of discriminated subject into the terrifying, exorbitant object of paranoid classification – a disturbing questioning of the images and presence of authority (1994: 113).

Bhabha and Canclini show that the process of hybridization discloses the impurity inherent in postcolonial society. Their critiques are centered on the effect of different imperial policies imposed by modernity's mechanism for controlling society. The motifs of reproduction and representation are key elements to their critiques. Both writers draw up a plan for dismantling modernity and any kind of neocolonialism. Because of its contradictions, modernity is a situation of unending transit in which the uncertainty of the modern world will always be present. In *Umbra*, Cabral represents this 'uncertainty' of the modern world by showing people's refusal to look for another place to live in. They are afraid of leaving the factory because they do not know what is outside it.

Interesting enough is the way Cabral reacts to this colonial discourse; at the end of the novel he describes the boy as someone prepared to face any obstacles he might find on his journey; like a hero, the bizarre black boy intends to find what nobody has found so far – a better place to live.

O menino aproximou-se. Era alto, a pele escura, quase preta. As pernas compridas, muito finas, sustentava um corpo atarracado, curto. O tórax era

largo, abrigando pulmões desmesuradamente grandes. Do nariz saiam tufos de cabelos e estes cabelos é que filtravam o ar... (p. 94) [The boy approached. He was tall with dark (almost black) skin. His long, very thin legs supported his short thin body. His thorax was broad, and gave shelter to his unfathomably large lungs. Tufts of hair protruded from his nose and these could filter the air].

At the same time that Cabral uses the discourse of colonialism to describe the boy – a radically strange creature with a bizarre and eccentric nature is the cause of both curiosity and concern (McLeod 2000: 52) – this description seems to be an attempt at presenting a new type of hero whose characteristics could represent a colonized subject essentially outside Western culture and civilization. The refusal of the boy to be the old man's student can be seen as a rupture from the discourse of colonialism which attempts to domesticate colonized people.

In spite of the negative depictions of the long-lasting disastrous effect of modernization on people's lives, the novel presents new perspectives for a better world. Unlike Olinto and Scavone, Cabral resists the continuing agency of colonial discourses by exploring their contradictions and shortcomings and showing the possibility of revealing different experiences, histories and representations.

#### **5.4 Ruth Bueno's *Asilo nas Torres* [*Asylum in the Towers*] (1979): Feminist and Environmental Issues during the Military Regime**

*Asilo nas Torres* [*Asylum in the Towers*] was first published in 1979 and has frequently been identified as one of the most expressive science fiction works written during the military regime. As a lawyer, a professor and a feminist, Ruth Bueno advocated the struggle against imperial authority and became an important voice in favor of women's rights. As a feminist activist, she represented Brazil on several

occasions in Europe and the United States, participating in United Nations programs and conferences on human rights.

*Asylum in the Towers* is the author's contribution to science fiction. Its relevance for the purpose of this research is justified by the fact that its plot has some similarities to *Umbra*, in terms of thematic parallels. For example, both novels explore ecological and postcolonial issues such as unstable identity and the social construction of gender; In terms of language, there is a similar use of allegory, discontinuous narratives and irony, as well as some use of corrupted language.

*Asylum in the Towers* is set in a city of towers located on Saturn. It tells the story of life in this city and how the inhabitants' activities are controlled and curtailed. Special attention is given to three white towers which are equal but of different heights. One of them goes up to infinity, nobody can see its top which is hidden by clouds. The other one is shaded by three palm trees which cast their shadows on the white of the tower. It is distinguished from the others by its whiteness. In the garden, only iúcas – completely white flowers – are allowed to be planted. The king lives in the third and less luxurious tower called the Tower of Wind where doors and windows are never open. Inside this tower, there are the most important characters of the novel: the King; Salomé, the queen of the harpies, half bird half woman; Assunta, a young virginal woman, and 'the King's favourite poet'. Salomé, Assunta and a prostitute named Maria Leque are the few characters who are called by their names; the others are called by their first initial. Assunta is a lovely woman who is always trying to find in the past reasons to continue living. Her frequent monologues represent her past as if she had once been happy. She is the only one who seems to bother Salomé, probably because of Salomé's relationship with the poet. Salomé is always trying to poison Assunta with her aromatic oils.

The towers are always monitored by specialized groups, prepared for any emergency. Some workers are allowed to sleep at home, outside the towers; any attempt to escape means punishment. Machines are programmed to break up any group of people who intend to organize; Men are not allowed to talk to each other in the corridors or during their work. As a consequence, some of them learn to talk only by moving their lips, without sound, so that their voices cannot be recorded and registered. Even with such strict rules, for each man that leaves the towers, fifty others want to enter. Although the inhabitants of the towers do not appear to have any affective relationships, they are called the family of the towers; a big family united by undruptive ties. There is a group formed of asylum seekers, who live in silence and feel like prisoners.

Another group is formed from a large crowd, people who live their lives as if they were members of a large dysfunctional family in which competition is the most important instrument of survival. In the towers, women do not have any opportunity to express their ideas, except Salomé who can bewitch her many husbands with her magic and so has an important function in the towers. She is the king's protector and advisor; her magic can move the wind and change the weather conditions so that everybody is afraid of her. She is not on the King's committee but as she has some knowledge of alchemy and magic, she can easily convince him to do her favors. The King represents absolute power; he makes only one public appearance during the year, as a way of maintaining his authority and mystery. People have no hope that there will be political change.

In the towers, there is no past, only present; day and night are irrelevant. The towers are like the City in *Umbra* – an enclosed, self-defining artificial space. The towers exclude sunlight and moonlight; their holophotes are enough to give light and life. Everything is new and modern: new ideas, new people, new machines, new dreams, new formulae, and new standards. People are unexpressive. They appear to accept

whatever the King orders them to do; even the day for shaving their beards is regulated. As a way of protesting, however, some men use obscene words while shaving. They feel suffocated by the rules imposed inside the towers. G is one of those who cannot get accustomed to so many impositions. Nobody can understand him which is why he is always alone. There are also some women who are punished because of their morally reprehensible lives. They act as prostitutes and challenge the towers' rules. Maria Leque is one of them, when she walks up and down the towers men remember the unforgettable experience of having sex with her; most of them have slept in her arms and she dies mysteriously.

The novel ends with the death of the poet who commits suicide and dies in Assunta's arms. When Salomé realizes that even death cannot separate Assunta and the poet, she goes crazy and dies. After that Assunta is bewitched by the song of the cigarras (crickets). She starts to bleed from her breast as if it were water ceaselessly gushing out. She dies and a rainbow appears in the sky bringing with its colors the announcement of daybreak. Assunta's blood feeds the ground and renews the circle of life.

Such a skeletal summary of *Asylum in the Towers* does little justice to the writer's style but even in this brief account it is possible to see how deep Bueno goes into issues of gender, race and nature. Women's social position and their relationship to Nature and a military regime are prominent themes in Bueno's novel. Given that this work was written in a period when issues of feminism were being discussed for the first time in Brazil, and Ruth Bueno participated in many of the first debates about feminism, it is worth highlighting some of the most important achievements that took place at this time.

During the 1970s there was a significant growth in the number of women who were admitted to University. In 1971 women represented 41.5% of university students

and in 1975 this number grew up to over 50%. For this reason, questions of women's identity and status started to be seriously discussed in academic debates both inside and outside the universities. Ruth Bueno's article *A Estrutura dos Direitos e Deveres da Mulher no Anteprojeto do Código Civil* [*The Structure of Woman's Rights and Duties in the Parliamentary Draft Bill for the Civil Code*] (1972), Maria Lúcia da Silva's *Emancipação da Mulher* [*Woman's Emancipation*] (1973) and Heloneida Studart's *Mulher, Objeto de Cama e Mesa* [*Woman, a Bed and Table Object*] (1974) were among the most prominent to emerge from countless events organized to debate women's position in society. In identifying and discussing the treatment of women in Brazilian society, Bueno calls attention to the way women have historically been voiceless, submissive and exploited. Her article stimulated many other publications which addressed issues related to sexuality, race, gender, culture, politics and religion. In addition to feminist issues featuring in academic debates, such themes started to appear in artistic productions, including theater, literature and cinema, though, in a discreet way. Not surprisingly, these debates were influenced by the actions of movements that had already happened during the 60s in other countries such as the United States. However, as pointed out by the feminist Cláudia de Lima Costa (1994: 138), in Brazil, women's studies differed from counterpart studies in the US where feminists questioned institutional sexism, scientific fundamentalism and its neutrality and objectivity. According to her, the lack of financial resources in this field put Brazilian feminists in a delicate position; they had to give in to the institutional criteria which meant that it was difficult for them to question issues such as institutional sexism or scientific fundamentalism. Because they needed financial support for their researches, they had to show that this research was rigorously scientific and objective. In other words, while the academic community required them to have scientific neutrality, the feminist movement urged them to make a more political commitment.

Most academic women were linked to feminist movements and left-wing discourses which were primarily against authoritarianism and social inequalities but they had to express their opinions in such a way that censorship could not detect any kind of rebellious behavior. Any direct opposition to the military dictatorship could end in physical repression. Thus, the best way of avoiding censorship was by using metaphors or irony so that only those who belonged to the same group could understand the real meaning of the words. Thus, *Asilo nas Torres* is strongly marked by both ironic and metaphorical expressions. Silence was also an important form of literary dissent during the regime.

Commenting on the oppressive situation of many artists during the military regime, Elizabeth Ginway highlights the role of silence in artistic and cultural sphere: “Words, which had been so important in contesting and challenging the regime, were now rendered ambiguous and powerless and the power of silence had become one of the most important weapons” (2004: 120).

For some activists, silence did not represent the end of the protests against the regime but a time to rethink ways of contesting it. Furthermore, the regime could not repress those who had withdrawn into silence. Thus, the government believed that the censorship had finally silenced its literary critics. In Bueno’s novel, Assunta, the female protagonist is a prisoner of her own dreams and memories. If on the one hand, her silence seems to perpetuate the patriarchal discourse which tends to eroticize women or epitomize them as the ‘Other’, on the other, she represents a rupture in the system. She is the one who is able to walk unnoticed by the security guards. Probably because, apparently, she could not represent any threat to the system.

Clearly, Bueno makes use of this political, deliberate silence against the military regime and its impact on woman’s role in Brazilian society. In doing so, she combines feminist and postcolonial perspectives showing that feminist activism can be a



constructive part of the field of post colonialism. In the novel, Bueno explores the interrelated concerns of post colonialism and feminism with patriarchy. Like colonialism, the term patriarchy refers to social, material and imaginative systems and it manifests itself in both concrete and abstract ways. Describing the relationship between patriarchy and postcolonial feminist criticism, McLeod points out that

... patriarchy asserts certain representational systems which create an order of world presented to individuals as 'normal' and 'true'. Also like colonialism, patriarchy exists in this midst of resistances to its authority. Furthermore, as a singular term, 'patriarchy' can be misleading. As much feminist criticism has shown, there are many different forms of patriarchy each with its own specific effects: indeed, this latter point is particularly important in postcolonial feminist criticism. So, feminism and postcolonialism share the mutual goal of challenging forms of oppression (2000: 174).

In *Asilo nas Torres*, patriarchal systems seem to be the most representative pattern of domination. The novel is clearly centered on men's action, women being no more than subjects whose function is to satisfy men's will. However, Bueno creates a subtle rupture of this system via Assunta's actions:

Assunta desceu pelas escadas olhando em torno para ver se vinha alguém; dirigiu-se para um dos jardins, desaparecendo atrás das pilastras brancas. Nesse dia não voltou, deixando o descampado antes que o arco-íris aparecesse no céu. Levava consigo papéis e livros, tantos que seu peso forçava-a a inclinar-se para um lado buscando o equilíbrio (p. 59) [Assunta went down on the escalator looking around to see if someone was coming; she walked to one of the gardens and disappeared behind the white columns. That day, she did not come back, leaving the wilderness before the rainbow appeared in the sky. She took many books and papers with her, so many that the weight forced her to lean to the side so as to keep her balance].

This passage demonstrates two important elements of Bueno's feminist discourse: first, she presents woman and Nature as accomplices. The garden, the rainbow and the sky appear to be Assunta's allies, representing her safe place; from this perspective, discrimination against women and Nature is aggravated by the process of modernization. In the same way that nature is devastated and displaced by technology,

women are put aside as if they were not able to contribute to the progress of society, a mere subaltern without a voice and ideas. Secondly, Bueno demonstrates an indication of changes in women's behavior expressed by Assunta's closeness to 'papers' and 'books' which suggests the intention of doing something different. Not surprisingly, given the circumstances in which the work was written, Bueno's style requires a careful reading so that her real intentions can be identified. Spivak argues that the role of the writer is to invest in the transaction between speaker and listeners because women's muteness is created by the fact that even when women utter words, they are still interpreted through conceptual and methodological procedures which are incapable of understanding their intervention accurately. Here, Spivak refers to the ways in which women are seen stereotypically in patriarchal systems as voiceless and unchangeable beings. She goes on to state that it is not true that the subaltern woman does not speak, but rather that others do not understand her. That is, there is a failure of communication in the transaction between speaker and listener, thus, "the silence of the female as subaltern is the result of a failure of interpretation and not a failure of articulation" (1994: 289). In this respect, Bueno's investment is ambiguous: apparently, Assunta is a traditional submissive woman behaving as she is told to do, not contesting the system; this is the way the regime allows woman to behave. However, in a deep analysis it is possible to identify Assunta's rebellious behavior which is expressed, either by her silence or by her enigmatic and metaphoric language:

Monólogo de Assunta vivendo lembranças na sala de escuta.

– Pensa um pouco, tudo passa e isso de dizer que tudo passa é lugar comum. Tomo pra mim essa realidade e considero a vida feita de mil mortes, instantes somados fazem as vivências, logo tu bens vês que, morrendo vivo.

– Morrendo a cada instante, bem entendido.

– Esse minuto de agora, há pouco já partiu.

– Olho pra trás, mas vejo as coisas mortas, e, no entanto elas vivem.

– Perdi muito, tanto, quando ainda não pensava assim (p. 90)

[Assunta's monologue, thinking about memories in the eaves-dropping room.]

Think a little, everything passes away and saying that everything passes away is a commonplace. I drink in this reality and consider life is made from a thousand deaths, instants added up make life's experiences, thus you see assets that, by dying I live.

- Dying at each instant, well understood.
- This minute is now, just a tick ago, it passed.
- I look back but I see dead things, and yet they live.
- I lost a lot, a great deal, when I still did not think like that...].

Assunta remembers past and present as if she had lived both times and witnessed the experience of an unchangeable society. Apparently, she does not believe in social changes but at the end of her monologue she makes us understand that her mind has changed and she thinks in a different way now: 'when I did not think like that...'. Bueno's style is probably a strategy to escape from the censorship, which is why her discourse seems to be addressed to a selective audience, that is, only a few people could understand her real message. In this regard, one can make a parallel to what Gemma Robinson (2004) says about the role of the poet in society, when analysing to Martin Carter's poems: "if poets do not simply write for themselves, they must, on some level, write for the people with whom they share the world" (2004: 46). In Bueno's case, her audience is formed by intellectuals who share the same feelings about the Military Regime.

In fact, the writer is bound by that ambiguous and complicit silence to which I have already referred. The idea that women's role could change in society during the first years of the Military Regime, was perceived only by a small group of intellectuals who opposed the government's decisions. Most people did not believe in any kind of change. From the following passage, one can infer the extent to which people felt that there was no hope of there being political changes:

Eles não discutiam a fala do rei porque sabiam que todas as falas de todos os reis são parecidas e que se as torres mudassem de rei, pouca coisa mudaria (p. 11) [they did not discuss the king's speech because they knew that all speeches of all kings are similar and that if the towers changed king, very little would change].

In showing how the government discourse had been perpetuated over the years, Bueno points out not only the repetition of discourse but also the maintenance of the colonial regime which is now presented in modern dress. Ironically, even in a modern environment the figure of the 'king' is still untouchable: "O carro veloz em que o rei viajava era feito à prova de todos os males... (p. 10) [The fast car in which the king traveled was made to be proofed against all ills]". In other words, it was not just bullet-proof but ensured that discontent voiced by the people did not reach the King's ears. The reference to the image of the king is also present in *Umbra*.

As has already been established, in the late 1960s and early 1970s the Brazilian political landscape was not that promising; its dependence on international help entailed that in many respects it had returned to being a colony. According to Skidmore (1999), financial help from the United States was important in establishing an environment for growth. The United States, as a single actor, could commit loan funds more rapidly than the international agencies. The sums were not large in relation to the size of Brazil's economy and its foreign debt, but the symbolic impact of US aid was powerful, made more so by the praise of US businessmen, besides that of the US government, heaped on Brazil for its economic turnaround. In other words, what seemed to be a jump in the economy or "The Economic Miracle"<sup>16</sup> would later be seen as having been the opposite. In political terms, Bueno is extremely ironic. She does not hesitate to describe the optimistic atmosphere of The Economic Miracle:

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<sup>16</sup> The period of industrial growth between 1968 and 1973 has become known as Brazil's "Economic Miracle". During these years, Brazil experienced double-digit growth rates. While gross domestic product increased, the inflation rate was held down to an average of 20 percent during the period. Overall growth was largely due to the industrial sector; the agricultural sector continued to stagnate, except for a surge in 1971 caused by investment in the central plains and Amazon regions. The increase in the growth rate was due both to an increase in total foreign investment and to extensive state investment that applied funds from international lending institutions (ALVES, 2005: 106).

... Os discursos não variavam de tom: tudo nas torres ia muito bem, a produção crescendo, todos bem ajustados em seus postos, o número de acidentes diminuindo, a assistência ao corpo para a boa saúde, bem aparelhada, as chefias escolhidas pelo critério do mérito, e o programa do desenvolvimento em franco progresso (p. 11) [... The speeches did not vary in tone: everything was going very well in the towers, production was growing, everyone well fitted into their jobs, the number of accidents was decreasing, health care for staff was well equipped, the bosses were chosen by merit, and the development program was progressing well].

Clearly, Bueno is criticizing the false optimism generated by the so-called Economic Miracle. In fact, this development program not only failed to ease the problems of severe poverty and extreme human suffering but actually intensified them. Describing the real situation of the majority of Brazilian people during that period, Alves (2005) points out that the process of impoverishment and income concentration continued. The human costs entailed, it has become abundantly clear, are to be understood as the sacrifice of the present generation for the good of future descendants. The Marxist view of this situation is to say that the ruthlessly enforced sacrifices were imposed on most Brazilians for the present benefit of the small elite that keeps the former in bondage. However this may be, in practice, to deal with a situation of absolute poverty, a working class family must see to it that all its members work. This clearly has a drastic effect on the extent to which child labor is used. That government policies were considered to result in an increase in child labor led women's movements to challenge their traditional role and begin to take group action against the unjust outcomes for the whole of society, and not just the interest groups they represented, of government policies. According to Skidmore,

The first stimulus was the harsh repression of 1968-75, which took the greatest toll among the young guerrillas of primarily middle and upper-class background. This was exactly the social sector that had supported the coup most strongly. Now their sons and daughters were being tortured in the police and military dungeons. ... It was also at this time that many of these white middle-class women were gaining entry into the male-dominated profession thanks to the growth of the technocratic state and the rapid increase in female university graduates (1999: 204).

From a patriarchal perspective, this change in woman status is dangerous for society as a whole because these movements threaten to reverse men's position by equalizing women's educational, social and political status. Ruether (2005: 27) states that fundamentalists want fathers and husbands to be strictly dominant over daughters and wives. They believe that men and women should be defined as having totally different natures and roles, rooted in divine law and hence not subject to modification or change. Women should be confined to the home, to child-raising and service to their husbands. This fundamentalist patriarchal point of view is deeply emphasized in *Asilo nas Torres*; In their work, women are typically obedient and voiceless:

São machos e fêmeas, mais machos que fêmeas, os machos comandam, as fêmeas cumprem. Poucas, pouquíssimas mandam e mesmo mandando pouco, cumprem. Fêmeas que servem trazem os pratos e os copos nas mãos. Fêmeas que não querem ter vez. Poucas fêmeas falam; a maioria espreita (p. 25) [Males and females, more males than females, males give orders, and females carry them out. Few women, just a tiny few, give orders and even those who give a few orders, they too carry out orders. Females who serve bring dishes and glasses in their hands. Women who do not want to, wait for their turn. Few women speak; most of them eavesdrop].

This passage characterizes the dominant and ancient tradition that identifies women as inferior. During the 70s, this picture starts to change because of ideas of Brazilian feminists and the specific situation of and politicization of Brazilian women. At the same time that Bueno criticizes this patriarchal point of view, she highlights the urgent need for women to raise their voices and change their attitudes. In this regard, sexuality is crucial. The author emphasizes the strong association that exists between a woman's status and her sexuality, the latter being frequently defined as the property of her husband, to be totally at his disposal, not under the woman's own control. In the novel, the author seems to reject this traditional morality by showing freer forms of sexuality. In doing so, Bueno risks contributing to the perpetuation of the discourse that

describes women as sexual objects. But, clearly, the prostitute Maria Leque represents not only the traditional image of woman as sexual object but also the rupture of the epistemology of male domination. Her rebellious behavior combines the ability to dominate men by the sexual act and the ability to change her own destiny. Although she is a prostitute, before her death she gets married and generates a completely different public image of herself. It is worth highlighting that, even if one considers marriage to be another form of submission to patriarchy, Maria Leque uses it to show her control over any situation. Rereading *Asilo nas Torres*, Ginway states that Bueno's strategy is dangerous because it appears to contribute to the repetition of the patriarchal discourse. Moreover, despite Bueno's intention of showing possibilities of changes in women's attitudes, both Maria Leque and Assunta die which seems to suggest the impossibility of a real social change. In Ginway's words,

It is paradoxical, however, that Bueno, a practicing lawyer and feminist social critic, relies on the devouring harpy and the sacrificial virgin to represent the struggle against the regime, representing the conflict in deductive terms of good vs. evil, nature vs. technology (2004: 118).

Ginway goes on to state that at the same time that Bueno captures the female experience of this time of social, political, and economic transition, the role of women remains somewhat limited. For Ginway, Bueno's view does not differ so much from other authors who do not show any serious involvement with women's struggle for a better position in society. In this regard, I do not agree with her position. In my view, Bueno does succeed in showing an alternative for women, but she does so in an almost imperceptible way by using metaphors and ironies. These are two important elements for the construction of her own style which is very similar to the way some male song-

writers<sup>17</sup> criticized the government during the Military Regime. Music's potential for ambiguity allowed the censors to approve lyrics with a double meaning.

Se ele conseguiu um pedaço do céu, ninguém sabe; foi transferido para outro setor, e de um dia para outro, sumiu sem despedida como era de praxe nas torres (p. 30) [If he managed to get a piece of heaven, nobody knows; he was transferred to another sector, and disappeared overnight without saying goodbye, as was the praxis in the towers].

Metaphorically, Bueno is criticizing the government's mechanism of repression which frequently fired people or changed their positions. During the first months after the takeover about 50,000 were arrested and many of them disappeared overnight.

Apparently, Bueno's criticism is less direct and offensive, firstly because she was a woman and so, ironically received less attention from the censors. Secondly, in literary terms, science fiction was seen as a foreign genre and for that reason it could not represent any national reality. Thus, at the time of publication, few people could understand Bueno's critique and because of her option for using a predominantly metaphorical language, the novel was not well received even by those who liked a speculative genre.

Another important aspect to be discussed here is the novel's postcolonial agenda, and its relation to Nature. Bueno uses Nature as an important instrument to criticize Brazil's colonial inheritance which took root in the national identity. From the beginning of the novel, there is a persistent use of the colour white which is necessary for harmony in the towers. Rereading the novel from a postcolonial perspective, it is possible to infer that the colour white is, metaphorically, the representation of the

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<sup>17</sup> The master of this game was Francisco Buarque de Hollanda (Chico Buarque) who had a knack for writing and singing songs that appealed both to a sophisticated audience and the ordinary Brazilian. Such compositions as "A Banda" (1966) and "Roda Viva" (1967) quickly established his fame. He eventually found the more militarized climate intolerable and spent 1968 through 1970 in exile in Italy. Upon returning to Brazil, his first song, "Apesar de Você" (In Spite of You), was immediately banned because of its thinly veiled attack on military rule. Although rejecting the label of protest singer (he did not want to be typecast as an outsider), Chico continued composing and singing despite the censors' constant intervention (SKIDMORE 1999: 170).



colonizer who can be both European, representing Brazil's past colonial situation, and American, representing Brazilian neocolonial characteristics.

As iúcas brancas brancas brancas, tão brancas de estames brancos não colorem o descampado e prolongam o claro das torres das quais não se destacam... Aquele símbolo de neve, presença constante nas torres, desafiava através de seu enigma, o silêncio das indagações que não podiam ter vez (p. 9) [The white white white *lúcas*, so very white with stamens do not color the desert and prolong the clarity of the towers from which they do not stand out... That symbol of snow, a constant presence in the towers, by being an enigma challenged the silence of the questions that could not be brought up].

What might seem to be merely a repetition of the word 'white', in fact, expresses a feeling of complete impotence in the face of a regime that uses neocolonial power in order to maintain its existence. 'The silence of the questions that could not be brought up' is a perfect representation of the silence generated by repression and censorship. In this regard, *Buenos* does not present any possibility of dialogue between the non-white past which is related to Brazil's colonial status and a white future, represented by the idea of progress and development which gives Brazil a neo-colonial status. The emphasis on the present seems to dismiss the past as if it were possible to replace or renew an existing history.

In *Bueno's* work, even in the modern environment provided by the towers, people are happy because they are supposed to forget their old lives, identity and history. Assunta is the one who represents *Bueno's* intention of showing the present situation of women in society is changing. For the literary critic Weaver, writers can use this way of writing to critique the Eurocentric political and historical system and reveal an alternative history, ideally with the consequence of challenging the reader's perceptions of history and society. According to Weaver,

Postcolonial literature is apocalyptic because it resonates with themes of the end of the world annihilation of tribes and cultures, and also because the colonial

search for new worlds inevitably involves the ending of one (indigenous ) world and the imposition of another (white) one (2010: 101).

In *Asilo nas Torres*, Bueno presents a new world in which people have to live without any past as if everything has been destroyed by that time: “O sistema de ontem morria. As torres não tinham passado, viviam com o presente (p. 31) [The system of yesteryear was disappearing. The towers did not have a past, they lived with the present]”. Little by little old costumes were replaced by new ones. Without a past, no harmonious relationship could be cultivated among people who behave as if no familiar tie were necessary for them to live in this modern world.

A multidão se unia de manhã, dispensava-se à tarde, todos estranhos uns aos outros, a amizade em mimetismo, através do convívio frio e distante imposto pelo sistema vigente nas torres. A amizade entre eles era frágil como as velas cujas chamas se apagam ao mais leve sopro (p. 20) [The crowd gathered together in the morning and dispersed in the afternoon, everybody strangers to each other, friendship in mimetism through the cold and distant social intercourse imposed by the system in force in the towers. Friendship among them was as fragile as the candles, the flames of which are snuffed out with the lightest puff of breath].

This passage is obviously an allegory to the style of life the regime imposed on society as a whole. While it is clearly a critique to the government, it was not spotted by potential censors since science fiction was seen as an international genre and did not offer any kind of threat or resistance to the national defense. As described by an omniscient narrator, this new environment provides a very different style of life which affects the way people relate to others. Given the fact that one of the most recurrent myths related to Brazilian identity is that of Brazilians being a docile and friendly people, Bueno's representation of such detached relationships is clearly critical. Close relationships do not seem not to exist anymore and this change in people's behave is clearly influenced by the process of modernization which tends to dehumanize man and generate a new kind of civilization. Weaver states that there is a strong tendency in

speculative texts towards linear accounts of time that dismiss history and emphasize the present (2010: 100). Likewise, in colonial discourse there is a rejection of the past, particularly if this past is related to minority, disadvantaged or less fortunate groups. Bueno was aware of the impact of the modern environment imposed by the military regime on Brazilian people particularly on those who do not have any kind of benefits in society. Thus she represents the situation as neocolonial.

The devastation caused by the need to replace replacing the old environment with a more technological one is very similar to that presented in colonial times when the colonizers rejected indigenous history and imposed their innovation and costumes. Intentionally, Bueno reveals the reality that the process of both modernization and colonization tend to hide. In this regard, Weaver adds that colonization entirely rejects history in favour of new beginnings. It is an ending for the colonized people but a start for the colonizers who begin a new world as if nothing has gone before (2010: 110). This constitutes a significant, distinctive aspect of Brazilian science fiction: while the Anglo-American tradition is orientated to the future, the concern with history and the past is central in Brazilian science fiction that reflects the neocolonial situation of Brazil. In *Asilo nas Torres* what can be seen is the presence of colonial and contemporary times, though the colonial heritage is hidden by the technological environment.

Assunta marks the presence of this colonial heritage. She lives in a new world but, clearly, keeps in mind old memories as if she were the only survivor of a country that had been laid to waste. For Ginway, Assunta, whose name alludes to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven, plays the role of a virginal maiden and guardian of the people in the Towers (2004: 117). In my conception, she is the one who guards the cultural values that this futuristic environment tries to destroy. Through her death, she restarts a new circle in history. Her blood feeds and renews the earth which

suggests a continuation of the history, though with a strong tendency towards cultural changes.

Compared to other writers examined in this thesis, Bueno shows a particular interest in feminist and environmental issues. She explores the debate surrounding Spivak's ideas about women's silence and resists the continuing agency of colonial discourse. In so doing, she expresses her contestation of projects of patriarchy and colonialism which are deeply rooted in Brazilian society. In her discussion regarding environmental issues, Bueno denounces the way Brazil's government deals with Nature, devastating and polluting in the name of technological progress. An analysis of the novel reveals that Bueno criticizes the way in which technological development has driven Brazil to a neocolonial situation. However, in *Assunta*, Bueno ends the novel by showing new perspectives for women and society as whole. Indeed, this attitude toward women's new perspectives tended to be extended in subsequent works as can be seen in trends that emerged during the 80s and 90s.

### **5.5 Bráulio Tavares' "Stuntmind" (1989): The Post-dictatorship Uncertainties**

The previous four textual analyses set out to show how Brazilian science fiction written during the 60s and 70s responded to socio-cultural and political aspects of Brazilian society as a whole. During the 80s, the genre continued to be used in response to important changes and tendencies that emerged after the military regime, particularly to the quickening pace of globalization and growth of information economies. In this context, Bráulio Tavares occupies a prominent position: he is probably the most important contemporary writer of Brazilian science fiction. His importance for the genre is due to his contribution in the last 30 or so years, not only as a writer but also as literary critic.

Tavares was born in 1950, in Campina Grande, Northeast of Brazil but moved to Rio de Janeiro where he started a career in journalism while undertaking other jobs as a writer, namely those of Songwriter, TV writer and translator (he has translated important science fiction books by H. G. Wells, R. L. Stevenson, Isaac Asimov, Tim Powers etc.). In 1989 he won the coveted Caminho Award for Science Fiction, in Portugal, with his collection *A Espinha Dorsal da Memória* (*The Backbone of Memory*) where “Stuntmind” was first published. He is considered a major national literary figure in speculative fiction and his science fiction works have been published in countries such as the US, Canada, Portugal, Russia and Spain. Discussing the future of Brazilian science fiction and its relationship to Anglo-American writers, Tavares admits the absence of models other than Anglo-American ones that have influenced Brazilian writers. In an interview on the blog *From Bar to Bar* (2011), he states that

We have to learn with everyone. Our problem in Brazil is that we only drink from Anglo-Saxon sources. I’ve read very little French SF. I don’t remember reading any SF from Italy or Spain. I’ve read only a dozen books of Russian SF. I have no idea about SF in the Netherlands, in Germany, in the Czech Republic, in India... OK, someone may say that those countries have not produced outstanding, memorable SF. But, then again, the same can be said about ourselves!<sup>18</sup>

Tavares goes on to state that if Brazilian writers paid more attention to other writers such as Stanislaw Lem from Poland, the Strugatski brothers from Russia, and recently Zoran Zivkovic from Croatia, they could be closer to discovering the road to a Brazilian genre because they would begin to see a number of elements that are foreign to British-American science fiction, elements that may be seen as these nations’ new contributions to science fiction. Indeed, Tavares represents a group of writers who argue for a more literary and experimental science fiction which could represent a national model or style. Although

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<sup>18</sup> See: [frombartobar.wordpress.com/2011/07/18/from-bar-to-bar-interviews-braulio-tavares](http://frombartobar.wordpress.com/2011/07/18/from-bar-to-bar-interviews-braulio-tavares). Accessed on July 22, 2012.

he criticizes the strong influence of the Anglo-American writers upon Brazilian literature, this influence can be seen in many of his writings. In "Stuntmind", for instance, he starts the narrative with an explicit reference to Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). The way the narrator of "Stuntmind" depicts Van Dali's photo at the opposite end of the large marble room, as if it were in an art gallery, is very similar to the way the picture of Dorian Gray is depicted by the painter Basil who identifies himself with the picture: "I come here every day, before breakfast. I look at this photo and I think about me" (p. 216). The photo also recalls the giant faces on the cinema screens and advertising posters which may suggest a more general reflection on glamour and celebrity culture.

"Stuntmind" tells the story of Roger Van Dali, someone who was predestined to be a 'stuntmind' i.e. a person whose mind was, for some random genetic reason, suitable for mental contact with outsiders. Millions of government agents combed the world to find potential stuntminds. Whenever one was found, he/she was enrolled, trained, and taken in a space shuttle to the Orbital Station, where an Outsider scout ship subjected him to another series of tests. Some were turned back, without explanation. Those approved were taken to the main Outsider ship and put in mind-contact with the Outsiders by a process, the details of which were kept secret by the aliens. After a period of mind-contact, the man was taken back to the station.

Van Dali was thirty-two when he was discovered and sent to a Contac Mission where he stayed for two weeks. When he returned to Earth, he was physically exhausted, "no more than a zombie, but a prolific zombie nonetheless". He came back to Earth with the blueprints of the topological structures of the Interwoven Universe in his mind. It was only after this that the nations of Earth could master the projection of physical objects in Hypertime. Stuntminds created and developed the most eccentric mathematical formulac and wrote things without their having an inkling of understanding of what they had written. However, when their information was exhausted they were officially retired, mentally ill

and were withdrawn from the world to spend their last years like sheiks, maharajas, mandarins, in mansions with ninety-nine rooms. In these mansions there are rooms for everything: swimming rooms, rooms full of fishbowls, rooms full of children's toys, rooms full of books. They can have whatever they wish to be distracted or have fun.

The narration is divided into a series of alternating first- and third-person sections. Some of them are told from the perspective of Van Dali, and the other parts from the perspective of the outsider, as if there were two different narrators. In the first part, the narrator is an outsider who awoke in Van Dali's body after the Contact and stayed in his body forever. He lives in Van Dali's mansion and because of that he has to talk to Van Dali's biographers and answer their questions. In fact, Van Dali and the outsider became two in one. So the reader's initial confusion about alternating point of view resolves into an understanding of hybrid identity, where the continuing presence of the human is uncertain. Some newspapers regard the stuntminds as useless parasites of mankind. The multistate companies spend more and more money on stuntminds every year, because every Contact, every message demands a new untouched brain. For the narrator,

“... the countries of the Earth needed stuntminds who gave their minds to be raped by equations, by aliens' formulae, by data that Earth scientists eagerly receive and examine with wonder; something for which a scholar would give half his life, and which billions of people pay homage to but do not understand” (p. 219).

Despite the intellectual superiority of the stuntminds and the sophisticated life they have when retired, their lives are empty, lonely and monotonous.

In the other series of sections, the story is narrated by Van Dali. According to him, men “can thank the Outsiders for the keys to Hypertime and for opening the doors of the universe” (p. 222) but he also thinks that what outsiders really want is to live on Earth and to be like men. Van Dali has some negative ideas about men's persistence in discovering

the secret of the universe. He does not understand this human greediness for space, since the Abyss is only the abyss.

“Stuntmind” is, arguably, the most notable example of a work of Brazilian science fiction that deals with issues of cultural cannibalism and alienation in modern life. For Brazilian modernists, inspired by Oswald de Andrade’s ideas, cultural cannibalism means an aesthetic-cultural attitude that aims to critically devour and assimilate foreign cultural values which were introduced in Brazil by the colonizer, as well as to emphasize national-cultural values which were repressed by the process of colonization. During the 80s, these ideas were taken up again and contextualized in line with the impact and collateral effects of globalization on the way of life, customs and traditions in Brazil and not forgetting the impact of the English language on Portuguese especially but not only in terms of lexical borrowings from English. One example of course is the very title of this book “Stuntmind”: ‘stunt’ has no cognate in Portuguese and that ‘mind’ and ‘mente’ are cognates would not be immediately apparent to most Brazilians.

In “Stuntmind”, for example, Tavares critiques the way that the process of globalization transforms people into products to be used whenever they are useful and necessary to a commercial negotiation:

And I awoke in Van Dali’s body after the Contact, like one who emerges from a throbbing abyss. I came to Earth and was given this face of mine. They taught me my name, told me my life, gave me a mountain of money and then forgot me: and now here we are... I and I (p. 221).

In this passage it is possible to see two important aspects of modern society: the idea that life does not have a consistent meaning other than that imposed by the capitalist ideology offered by the process of globalization and the idea that such ideology has transformed men into empty, lonely and sad creatures. In this sense, men can be dehumanized or hybridized in accordance with social or political interests. Also, this can



be seen as an illustration of what Canclini (1997) has called 'hybrid culture' in Latin America, as we have discussed in previous sections. For Canclini (1997), these texts are suggestive of a new form of culture, seamlessly incorporating disparate elements, without succumbing either to the temptation of elite art and literature or to the coercive forces of the mass media and marketing. Indeed, Tavares has always shown special interest in issues to do with different forms of art, particularly in literary terms. He argues that art is part of everyday life and it cannot be taken as an isolated element of social expression. This idea is lightly touched upon at the beginning of the story: "It's not a matter of mere politics anymore: those groups claim to have created a new form of art" (p. 216). Interesting enough is Tavares' reference to Venezuela which is, within the story, the country that introduced the procedure of this new form of art. Tavares does this as if he wanted to emphasize the idea that Brazilian artists have always been influenced by foreign tendencies, and in literature ever since the 1920s, particularly in the genre of science fiction. And not only in art, but also in political and economic fields this influence is present:

During his training, with dozens of physicians around him, he asked what he was supposed to do. "Someone will say something in your mind", they answered. "You will listen, and then you will tell us" (p. 217).

This could also be seen as a reference to the political spying service so common during the military regime for which someone was paid to infiltrate a group or political party in order to keep the government informed about any different actions or movements that could be considered a threat, an act of rebellion or opposition to the regime. At the same time, it could also be an allusion to Brazilian institutions, perhaps even companies, sending Brazilians to other countries to study new subjects, at first little understood in Brazil, and then they return and help their superiors replicate what they have seen and learned.

Considering that “Stuntmind” was written four years after the ending of the military regime, it is possible that Tavares used life under the regime – and immediately thereafter – as inspiration for part of the narrative. In this sense, the story can be read as an allusion to the climate of uncertainty that swept Brazil after the dictatorship. In a powerfully ambiguous way, the text allows the reader to think that the alien is a purely mental entity that has transferred to Earth or has merely established a telepathic link with van Dali while remaining physically elsewhere. Paradoxically, if on the one hand, the alien is the one with superior power who comes to Earth and takes over Van Dali’s body and life, on the other hand he represents a sense of loss and lack of identity and representation, unable to take decisions or to raise his voice: “we are a guild of silent people” (p. 221). In order to adapt himself to this strange world, the alien has to take advantages of his numerous abilities combining them with other elements provided by the environment in which he has to live:

I have been tied to the propeller of a plane and had the engine turned on... I have fought rattlesnakes with my teeth, with my hands tied behind my back. I have jumped from a plane at six thousand feet, tied to an elastic cord. I have been entombed for six days and six nights (p. 221).

In general terms, this passage could be read as a criticism of First World decadence but it could also be seen as a reference to the Brazilian political and economic scenario. In the late 80s, Brazil was said to be in a prominent position in its economic standing in the world due to its making ever increasing technological advances and competing with other countries in the global market. Hence, it moved from being deemed a Third World country to that of being an emerging nation (and more recently, that of being one of the four leading emerging nations called the BRICs: Brazil China Russia and India). However, paradoxically, Brazil’s population continues to show high rates of poverty, illiteracy, and other social inequalities, as if its economic and political independence were limited no

matter its status as an emerging country. In the science fiction field, this period is marked by the appearance of an increasing number of Portuguese translations of Anglo-American works and the transmission of series such as *Land of Giants*, *Lost in Space*, *Star Trek* on Brazilian TV, as well as the immense popularity of films such as *Blade Runner*, *Alien*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and *Star Wars*, as I have pointed out before. All these factors contributed to a literary production that focused on the social changes arising from the uncertainty of Brazil's political situation and the struggle to found a national form of artistic expression.

In order to demonstrate Brazil's paradoxical situation, Tavares seeks to stimulate and exploit readers' imaginations by calling his attention to what is real and what is representation. According to him,

A FC sempre questionou o nosso paradigma de Realidade, mas o conjunto de sua produção atual nos dá um aviso que pode ser condensado na fórmula: *Somos cada vez menos capazes de distinguir o que é o real e o que é sua Representação...* e nessa fusão entre *o-mundo-em-si* e *o-mundo-como-o-percebemos*, a FC sugere que Matéria e Espírito são uma só coisa e que o que chamamos de Linguagem ou Pensamento é o canal que serve de ponte entre os dois (2005: 73) [The SF genre has always questioned our paradigm of Reality, but the set of contemporary production gives us a warning that can be condensed into a formula: *We are increasingly less able to distinguish what is real and what is its Representation ...* and in this merger between the-world-in-itself and the world-as-we-perceive-it, SF suggests that Matter and spirit are one and the same thing and that what we call Language or Thinking is the channel which serves as a bridge between two].

In this perspective, Tavares tries to improve the national genre by raising its literary quality. In other words, he proposes a style which could question the concepts of reality and its representation at the same time that it explores the ambiguities present in the fictional discourses. In "Stuntmind" the reader is led to believe in the possibility of two different realities for the characters which causes the reader to constantly question the text and to grapple with its uncertainties.

“Stuntmind” is arguably the best representation of Tavares’ literary approach. While he calls for a more literary science fiction, he also suggests that the writer should focus on everyday life and social context should always be in evidence. However, Tavares’ ambiguous style opens a range of possibilities of reading and enables the reader to form different interpretations and viewpoints. Therefore, the alien, in “Stuntmind”, may represent the paradoxical situation of post-dictatorship Brazil: strange, neutral, passive, lost, without direction, curious, the other.

From 1985 to 1989, the political scenario in Brazil was marked by economic crisis, administrative excesses and corruption, as well as various economic plans that attempted to to reduce (hyper-)inflation. At the same time that the government tried to show Brazil’s image of a powerful nation at all costs, there was a social tension in relation to the future of the country. One of the most important national goals during the 80s was to raise the Brazilian economy to the model of the Western industrial nations which means that modern technologies were at the top of list for Brazilian investments. For the economist Maria Helena Alves (2005: 368), adopting the technologies of the most developed countries required choices that would lead to a succession of irremediable mistakes that would affect more specifically the poorest people. Tavares seems to be aware of the adverse effects that this exaggerated quest for technology could bring to the population:

The multistate companies spend more and more money on stuntminds every year, because every Contact, every message, demands a new, untouched brain... It is said that our Xanadus insult the poverty of the world’s billions of people. But the countries of Earth needed us (p. 219).

Given that stuntminds are the representation of what is most sophisticated and modern in terms of scientific and technological development, Tavares seems to denounce the uncontrolled investment made by the Brazilian government in the technological field to reach an economy modeled on those of First World countries. The way Tavares describes

the mansions where stuntminds live bears witness of his critique toward this disordered investment.

I have dozens of rooms whose furniture recreates other times and other places. I have the dark crypt where Aleister Crowley performed his ritual. I have the room where Paris loved Helen of Troy, and also Messalina's sultry alcove, and the huge canopy bed of Christine, Queen of Sweden. I have the room where Marilyn Monroe died, and in that room lives a professional Marilyn double, almost a clone (p. 218).

This passage could be seen as a reference to what all new empires do: collect spoils/treasures of previous civilizations but it could also be read as a satire of the way the government uses public money to fulfill the desires of a small elite group as if the technological advance would never become part of most Brazilian's lives. Therefore, there is an explicit reference to the retirement of politicians, particularly those who received absurdly generous pension benefits in the form of a so-called life annuity after being in political administration for only eight years. According to Alves (2005: 118), this life annuity was decreed during the military regime in the form of Amendment nº 1 of 17 October 1969. This benefit was initially only for the President but soon it served as a model for States and Municipalities to follow. The States created this benefit for their former Governors and, in some cases, as in the State of Pará, even for former mayors of their municipalities. Also many of the 5,500 Municipalities (at the time, there were 4,000), in Brazil, created these pensions through municipal laws, despite the municipality being extremely poor. In case of death, the benefit was extended to the politician's family.

Although Tavares dedicates part of his critique to the military regime, his emphasis is on modern society and his rejection of modernization. While focusing on the elite, Tavares criticizes the vices, greed, corruption and alienation generated by people's relentless pursuit of power and prestige in a technocratic society. In "Stuntmind" and other stories of his collection *The Backbone of Memory* (1989) he shows his negative view and

distrust of the process of modernization via technological development. This negativity is clearly illustrated in the last paragraph of “Stuntmind”: “I cannot understand this human greediness for space, since the Abyss is only the Abyss, and nowhere is there a planet so full of perverse beauty as this world of yours” (p. 222). These final sentences suggest an existential conflict in which present, past and future are key elements. The way Tavares uses the tense to illustrate his critique, is well explored by Carl Abbott in his work *Frontiers Past and Future: Science Fiction and the American West* (2006). Contentious issues are always present in Tavares’ life and works, as one can see from this passage from an interview:

We live in an age that could be called The Omnipresence of the Present. The present moment is suffocating our capacity to think about the Past or the Future, because there is a frightening amount of information about the present hour, the present day, the present week... (2011).

In general terms, Tavares’ works reflect a distrust of the process of modernization as an alternative form of social and cultural development. In the story, some references to the purely informational transfer mechanism of colonization can be seen; there is no bodily interaction, only a flow of information. The aliens are like executives safely out of reach, not vulnerable to hacking. In this regard, Tavares shares the same feelings as his fellow countryman, the philosopher Fernando Magalhães for whom technology has been transformed into an instrument of plundering and human exploitation. According to Magalhães (2004),

O avanço da ciência, especialmente da informática, proporcionou uma revolução na estrutura do conhecimento que ampliou o caráter da dominação, tanto técnico quanto econômico... Em consequência dessa mudança tecnológica, alterou-se, igualmente a estrutura de poder, passando a ser exercida, agora, transnacionalmente, através da economia global (p. 42) [The advancement of science, especially information technology, has brought about a revolution in the structure of knowledge which has broadened the character of domination, whether this be in technical or economic terms... As a result of this technological change, the power structure has altered to the same extent and has started to be exercised, transnationally, through the global economy].

Arguably, the figure of stuntminds represents this transference of power structure in which the dominant economy devours the weakest ones in order to become only one, as in a cannibalistic process.

For some period of time, the minds of Earthling and the alien vibrated and pulsed together, becoming a whole; then they were separated again, and the man was taken back to the station. When Van Dali returned to Earth, he was physically devastated, weighing twenty pounds less than he had two weeks earlier, when he had shaken hands with nine presidents as he prepared to enter the shuttle... (p. 217).

This passage captures some important aspects of the so called global economy: on the one hand, the idea of a uniform economy in which developed and underdeveloped nations would be equally benefited; on the other hand, the situation of the economically weakest nations being devastated and becoming ever more dependent on the strongest ones. The phrase ‘when he had shaken hands with nine Presidents’ can be seen as an allusion to trade agreements that were frequently signed by the Brazilian government during the 80s in order to gain new markets and expand the offer of products. More precisely, it can be regarded as alluding to the congratulatory handshakes seen at G20 and similar meetings, affirming entry into a superior international club.

Taking into consideration that Tavares was aware of Brazil’s economic and political context and its social disturbances in the late 80s, it is feasible to say that “Stuntmind” is a work that reflects particularly the search for technological advance and its social implications in a period of transition between two important historical moments – authoritarian and democratic regimes. Tavares is arguably the writer who best describes the anxieties and fears brought on by the uncertainties of a new reality imposed by the process of globalization.

### 5.6 Márcia Kupstas's *O Demônio do Computador* [*The Computer Devil*] (1997): A Reflection on the Adverse Effects Caused by the Processo of Modernization

Márcia Kupstas is a descendant of a Russian Ukrainian and was born in São Paulo in 1957. She grew up during the dictatorship and the turmoil of the 60s and 70s. Since a child, she has been interested in National and international literature, which is why she became a literature teacher and a writer. Anglo-American writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, D. H. Lawrence, Graham Greene, John Steinbeck, Agatha Christie and Conan Doyle, and Brazilian writers such as Machado de Assis, Graciliano Ramos, José Mauro de Vasconcelos and Jorge Amado are central to the construction of her own style. As a writer, among other awards she has received the 1988 *Mercedes-Benz de Literatura Juvenil* prize and the 2005 *Jabuti* prize. Her critical acclaim seems to set her apart from the earlier writers I have discussed so far and may suggest a new respect for the genre in Brazil and a new openness to potentially critical literary voices. Her works have achieved not only significant critical acclaim but also widespread commercial success; most notably for popularizing a literary style that combines horror, fiction, magical elements and events in otherwise ordinary and realistic situations close to those present in the literature of Magical Realism. Some of her most important books include *Crescer é Perigoso* [*Growing up is Dangerous*] (1996), *O Misterioso Baú da Vovó* [*My Grandmother's Mysterious Trunk*] (2003), *Eles Não São Anjos Como Eu* [*They're Not Angels Like Me*] (2005), and *O Senhor do Passado* [*The Lord of the Past*] (1985). As a teacher, she taught Brazilian literature in some schools in São Paulo but, currently, writing is her only economic activity. Unlike many important Brazilian writers, she has never occupied any governmental position which makes her free to critique political decisions without any restrictions. In her writings, she usually explores aspects of modern life by focusing on issues of gender, class and sexuality. In *O Demônio do Computador* (1997) Kupstas critiques the disastrous



relation between Brazilians and technological progress showing how the latter has affected family relationships and how it has been an element of social and cultural transformation.

Márcia Kupstas's *O Demônio do Computador* follows the story of Tadeu, the young male protagonist who lives in a lower-middle-class neighborhood and works as a bank teller. Tadeu lives with his sister, a mother of three, her alcoholic unemployed husband, Adailton, and Edilene, Adailto's sister towards whom Tadeu seems to feel some sexual desire. Because of his extraordinary ability to write, Tadeu decides to buy a computer in order to participate in a competition of erotic short stories, the prize for which is a trip to the Caribbean and two thousand dollars to spend there. He buys a second-hand computer from a guy called China. Initially, everything is fine with the computer which apparently is in perfect condition. Tadeu starts and finishes his first erotic short story, reads it carefully and corrects it before going to bed. Next day he decides to change the ending of the story when he suddenly has a surprise: his story has been modified. The ending is different from the one he had written. Instead of a romantic ending, there were episodes of perversion and domination. Tadeu does not understand what is happening but he continues to write his stories. Each time he tries to print them, he observes that the endings are changed. Thus, his nightmare starts; he becomes obsessive and completely involved with his stories. The computer devil incites Tadeu to rape Edilene and she accidentally falls to her death, Tadeu runs away, fearing he will be accused of murder. He becomes a homeless person on the streets of São Paulo when he met Anastácia, a witch, who rescues him and takes him to her home. Together, they manage to free his characters from the computer devil. At this point, Tadeus discovers that his characters are real individuals.

Some of his characters behave violently: they seduce, kill and enslave other people. Tadeu has lost control of his own creation. The demonically possessed computer transforms Tadeu's imaginary narratives into cruel and bloody stories that overcome the imaginary barrier and become real. The first of these stories is about a succubus, a female

devil who seduces a human male. This devil is embodied in a perverted sensual child-like creature, Carmen, who seduces and kills those who are taken by sexual desires, even though she looks only nine years old.

The second story is about Bianca, a beautiful girl who is seduced by an incubus, a male devil who manifests his seductive acts by using an inherited magic bed which belonged to her aunt, Albertina. Bianca comes from a family of witches but she does not know how to get rid of the charm that transformed her into a sexual slave. With the help of Anastácia and Albertina, Tadeu decides to confront the computer's power and causes it to short-circuit and burn. Anastácia dies in this operation but Bianca gets rid of the charm. Bianca and Tadeu get married, Bianca assumes her witch identity and Tadeu becomes an amateur writer who is admired for the volunteer work he does in his community.

Undoubtedly Márcia Kupstas's *O Demônio do Computador* is a combination of science fiction fantasy with a gothic flavor which reflects both the hybridization of the genre in Brazil and its commitment to socio-political and cultural issues. While the novel is clearly a reflection on the adverse effects caused by the process of modernization for Brazilian society, it also explores a number of persistent western practices crucial to colonialism, post-colonialism and imperialism. The distinctive way in which Kupstas combines myth and technology makes her writing different from Anglo-American cyberpunk, though arguably more similar to a 'post-cyberpunk' writer like Jeff Noon, a British writer who imagines post-industrial landscapes that are imbued with pre-industrial myths. Gender issues, for instance, are central to the construction of the narrative.

As in many post-colonial societies, women in Kupstas's novel are relegated to the position of the 'Other', marginalized and in a metaphorical sense, colonized. This is the case of both Bianca and Margarida, Tadeu's sister, whose characters are strongly marked by the silence inherent to the subaltern woman. Although Margarida is the only one who

works to maintain the house financially, she accepts all kind of oppression from her husband who intimidates her with a simple touch or glance:

Adailton aproximou o corpo da mulher, que se encolheu. Era o gesto comum de Margarida, mesmo que soubesse que não viria pancada naquela hora (p. 17) [Adailton got closer to his wife who shrank away. That was Margarida's common gesture, even though she knew that she would not get a beating at that moment].

This attitude toward women also shows Kupstas's ambivalence which is arguably depicted according to patterns of modernity. These patterns are based on a discourse that masks women in her neo-colonial situation. Spivak, in her studies on the double subjection of colonized women and her discussion of the silencing of the muted native subject, in the form of subaltern woman, calls critics's attention to the fact that there is no space from where the subaltern subject can speak, as we have seen in earlier sections. By implication, this subaltern subject extends to all kinds of marginalized males, females and natives. From this perspective, feminist and post-colonial discourses have aimed to reconstruct the marginalized vis-à-vis the dominant. In doing so, they invert the structure of domination, substituting a male-dominant tradition for a more feminist one. Both cases are explored in Kupstas's novel. If Margarida and Bianca represent this male-dominant tradition, Carmen, the female devil, represents the rupture of this male dominant canon. Arguably, this is also a good illustration of the author's reproduction of gender stereotypes which proves that subversion of this patriarchal literary form may not be a conscious aim of the author but a reflex of the ideological conflict generated by modern styles of life.

The text also evidences what critics of post-colonial discourse have on many occasions called the 'double colonization of women' as some characters seem to be subservient to imperialist and patriarchal values. It shows how woman is seen as a mere object of sexual desire. Indeed, eroticism and pornography are central to Kupstas's depiction of woman in *O Demônio do Computador*. Edilene is the female character who

best illustrates Kupstas's attitude toward sex, eroticism and pornography. She is the one who, through her sexuality, provokes Tadeu and makes him feel impotent, inferior and ignorant; her only function in the novel is to 'deconstruct' Tadeu's masculinity.

Eu queria ter uma resposta inteligente, articulada e feroz para lhe dar... eu queria bater nela ou xingá-la... mas ela sempre andava com aquele maldito shorts e suas coxas eram redondas, grossas o bastante para atrair todo o meu olhar. E ela sabia que tinha um umbigo pequeno, na barriga sempre à mostra, com pelinhos morenos rodeando o buraco... sabia que sua bunda era grande – e o que tinha de bunda, ela devia ter de desprezo por mim... (p. 19) [I'd like to have an intelligent, articulate and fierce response to give her... I'd like to punch her or swear at her... but she was always wearing those wretched shorts and her thighs were round and thick enough to attract my full attention. And she knew that she had a small navel, on her belly which she always had on display, with brown hairs, curling round the hole... she knew that her backside was big – as big as her contempt for me...].

Kupstas shows this patriarchal view even when there is an attempt to dismantle the discourse that marginalizes women, as in Carmen's case. It seems that, explicitly at least, she is reproducing patriarchal assumptions – significantly as well, she is a woman but writing from the perspective of a boy/man. The construction of both Edilene's and Carmen's character is based on the concept of a hybrid body in which the body becomes a place of conflict, where the presence of the other is necessary to prove its existence and function. For Tadeu's eyes, Edilene's body has a mutant form which changes according to his imagination in the same way that Carmen changes her own appearance in order to seduce those who get closest to her. Here it is pertinent to draw a parallel with Langer's discussion on the 'boundaries of the body', as discussed previously. In this perspective, a consequence of the changeability and uncertainty of the body is that it becomes less significant in representing the nature of one's personhood. The personification of the demonic computer, for example, shows that personhood is no longer a characteristic of human beings.

By analyzing Edilene's and Carmen's figures according to Langer's conception, it can be seen that the construction of their bodies is closely linked to their lack of identity. Indeed, another important issue explored by Kupstas in the novel is the women's lack of identity. Carmen, for example, is described in many different ways: a black woman, a white woman, a gypsy, an Egyptian queen, a witch, all exotic *clichés*.

Como ela era? Assim a mistura dos sonhos de adolescência. A mulher morena. Branca de Neve e Elizabeth Taylor, a cigana e a egípcia de toda a literatura romântica. Iracema dos lábios de mel e o corpo de artista pornô. Tudo isso... (p. 34) [What was she like? Like a mixture of teenage dreams. The copper-colored woman. Snow White and Elizabeth Taylor, the gypsy and the Egyptian of all romantic literature. Iracema<sup>19</sup>, the virgin with honey lips and the body of a porn artist].

It is also made up entirely of stereotypical, mythical versions of femininity that express a way of thinking beyond the traditional notion of identity based on ideas of rootedness and a hybrid, cultural, racial and national purity but a stereotypical one at the same time. Arguably, Kupstas's attitude toward feminine stereotypes is similar to that of Angela Carter, a British writer who does subvert feminine stereotypes by transforming and combining them. Because of her affinity to feminist, magical realism and picaresque works, it is possible that Kupstas had read some of Carter's works and suffered some kind of influence in terms of style and theme which may suggest a resumption of Anglo-American concepts and styles when it comes to feminist issues.

In the quotation above, we can find an illustration for what we have called a 'hybrid identity' which is never total and complete in itself. Carmen, like other characters in the novel does not have a singular representation; she changes from a beautiful girl into a sanguinary murderer who is magically hidden in a sweet girl. What is interesting is the way Kupstas uses representation of different cultures in order to form Carmen's character:

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<sup>19</sup> Iracema is the most expressive character of José de Alencar, the greatest romantic and indianist Brazilian writer.

Elizabeth Taylor can be seen as a representative of American culture and its impositions and domination; Iracema, the copper-colored woman and Snow White illustrate the mixture of race so determinant for Brazilian identity; gypsy and porn artist seem to be an allusion to some Brazilian national myths that refer to women's sensuality and sexuality. Contrasting Kupstas' exploration of gender with the earlier feminist writer, Ruth Bueno, it seems that ideas of gender have been transformed by ideas of hybridity and cyborgisation illustrating tendencies of postmodern reality.

Rereading *O Demônio do Computador* in the light of some ideas we have gathered so far, it is possible to draw a parallel between Kupstas's writing and Edward Said's argument that Western representations of the East are based primarily on fantasies, desires and imagining. From this perspective, the discourse of colonialism is frequently populated with terrifying stereotypes of savagery, cannibalism, lust and anarchy. In Kupstas's novel, most characters are stereotyped in the same way that the 'Orient' is: domesticated, knowable, harmless. Paradoxically, they are also harmful, mysterious, dangerous, wild subjects. This complex way of describing the 'Other' shows that an ambivalent representation of the colonial subject is always in motion. Tadeu, the protagonist and narrator, for example, describes himself in two different ways, one before the computer devil's actions and the other thereafter:

Eu: magro, miúdo, cabelo negro e muito liso (quando criança, foi cacheado – mas isso porque mamãe o enrolava em rodinhas para eu ficar com “cara de anjo”). De olhos escuros e um tanto puxado, talvez pela herança índia do mato. De nariz... hã... um nariz “quase branco”, meio pro pequeno. A pele puxou pro moreno-claro, mas Moreno (p. 27) [I: thin, small, very straight black hair (when I was a child, it was curly because my mother used to roll my hair so that I could have an “angel face”). With black slant-eyes, perhaps because of the indigenous inheritance. With a nose... ha... an almost white nose, getting on for being a small one. My skin tended towards being light brown, but Brown I am].

[...]

Eu estava – e estou – mais alto, tenho cavanhaque e barba cerrados, talvez um nariz um tanto aquilino, pele mais clara (p. 361) [I was – and I am – taller, I wear a goatee and a full beard, perhaps a slightly aquiline nose, and a lighter skin].

In the first quotation, there is an explicit reference to indigenous appearance – something not discussed in the earlier texts. This attitude is probably related to a new awareness/politics around indigenous rights. In this sense, later science fiction is far more explicit because it does not need to hide anything behind allegory, as happened during the 70s and early 80s. Kupstas embarks on a new, interesting discussion on the ‘whitening of appearance’ which marks an important difference from Anglo-American cyberpunk, where the transformation of identity may relate to idealized beauty, but it does not explicitly relate to racial identity. This focus on the ‘whitening of appearance’ marks a significant difference because it shows that race matters in Brazil, perhaps, in a way that can be more easily ignored in North American literature.

Because of unexplainable events that happen in Tadeu’s life, he has no choice other than to change his personality and appearance which, somehow, reflects his lack of identity. Arguably, this kind of attitude demonstrates the lack of conviction within colonial discourses. From this perspective, texts seldom embody just one view. Usually, writers bring different points of view into play without favoring any one of them. Particularly in literary texts, there are always elements that generate ambivalence in relation to the ideologies they seem to be reproducing. The critic Dennis Porter in his work *Orientalism and its Problems* (1993), points out that even the most apparent Orientalist text can articulate counter-hegemonic views within itself. For him, literary texts are mobile and often contradictory affairs, positing several opinions rather than just one. Thus cross-currents of Orientalist or counter-Orientalist thinking can exist simultaneously within a single text. Porter’s statement can be extended to colonial discourse in different parts of the world. In Kupstas’s case, although she seems to deconstruct the discourse that replicates colonialist values, she invests in a kind of text in which its ambivalent characters contribute to the construction of a work that is sometimes supportive and sometimes

critical of colonial discourses. Drawing a parallel between Kupstas's *O Demônio do Computador* and Scavone's "O Menino e o Robô", for example, it can be seen that, in part, there is a continuity indicating that Brazilian science fiction is still, to some extent, dealing with the same issues; although, in contemporary texts, it is ostensibly in a much stronger position than in the 60s.

Also important to mention here is Kupstas's attitude toward Brazil's political situation. As the novel was written in 1997, it reflects many important aspects of Brazil's economic situation during the 90s. According to Skidmore (1999), in 1993, annual inflation had reached 2,489 percent, the capital set aside for investments virtually disappeared, and the average Brazilian found personal economic planning to be impossible. By the end of 1994, with the Plano Real in place for only six months, inflation had declined by more than half, to less than 1,000 percent. Even more dramatic results came in 1995, with inflation falling to 22 percent; in 1996, to 11 percent; and in 1997, inflation was about 4 percent. This was clearly a remarkable record; the Plano Real had proved to be a brilliant success – drastically reducing inflation, inducing the public to think in real economic terms, and sanitizing a bloated financial system – however, it had not put the Brazilian economy on a path to significant growth. Nor was it clear, that Brazil had the competitive capacity to expand its role in world trade. Indeed, people were uncertain about the real economic situation of Brazil. The industrial and technological development process was not independent enough to establish its own policies.

Kupstas's critique of Brazilian policies of technological and industrial development is well expressed by the relationship between Tadeu and China, his former computer teacher from whom Tadeu buys the computer. While Tadeu represents lack of technology and progress, China is the one who detains the technological knowledge and development, that is, the former depends on the later. The characterization of China raises the issue of the shift in economic power – away from the US and toward Asia. Again, this is something



with which much North American cyberpunk is concerned, but clearly, from a different economic position. Paradoxically, the ‘technology’ offered by ‘China’ is problematic and dangerous so that it can destroy Tadeu’s dreams and life. In fact, because of the computer, Tadeu loses his job, his family, his friends and everything that belongs to him, including his personality and appearance. These disastrous consequences suffered by Tadeu illustrate the continuous movement in the political and economic background in Brazil, which was strongly marked by uncertainties and questions:

O que eu fiz, o que pensei, que horror me atingiu, e com que intensidade? Como passei de mocinho que trabalhava de terno e gravata para virar aquela figura mendicante, à porta de um albergue? (p. 217) [What did I do, what did I think, which horror struck me, and how intense was it? How did I change from being a nice lad who wore a suit and to work, to being that beggar figure, loitering around the door of a hostel?].

Tadeu’s reaction to the disastrous results of his previous acts is similar to the way people look at the fluctuations in Brazil’s economy, particularly those who believed in a fast and sustainable solution. Another important aspect explored by Kupstas in the novel is the constant foreign influence in both political and cultural terms. This influence can be easily demonstrated in the novel through people’s everyday language which is frequently ‘enriched’ by foreign terms that recur throughout the book: ‘office-boy’, ‘boys’, ‘light’, ‘short’, ‘flash’, ‘page up’, ‘page down’, ‘Halloween’, ‘shopping’, ‘enter’. It can also be seen as a critique on the impact of globalization on ordinary people’s lives. There are also frequent references to foreign writers such as Isaac Asimov, Emily Brönte, Bram Stoker, and Boccaccio, suggesting that Brazilian art is also influenced by international tendencies, particularly in literary terms. By doing so, the writer seems to be shifting away from a fairly simple allegorical way of writing to a much more intertextual, ambivalent one.

Comparing *O Demônio do Computador* to earlier science fiction works we have discussed here, a more complex, and sometimes ambiguous, representation of Brazil can

be seen. This may be justified due to Brazil's economic and political reality in which the process of globalization plays a significant role in constructing new values and conceptions. Therefore, contemporary science fiction writers critically reflect the impact of globalization on Brazilian culture. Like Kupstas in *O Demônio do Computador*, most writers critique the exaggerated influence of the First World on the Brazilian economic, political and cultural system. However, they do not offer any kind of resistance to this reality, instead, most of Kupstas's characters depict the passivity inherent in colonized people.

### **5.7 Carlos Orsi's *Tempos de Fúria* [*Wrath Times*] (2005): A Contrastive Image of Brazil in Modern Times**

Having analyzed some important works produced during the 60s and 70s and shown some important tendencies that emerged in the genre after the end of the Military Regime, it is now time to outline and comment on more recent Brazilian science fiction so that we can provide a general overview of the genre from the 80s to the present day. Although the genre has not received the same academic attention as other national genres, it is noticeable that science fiction is beginning to come into its own in Brazil. After analyzing the most recent manifestations of the genre in Latin America, the critic Rachel Haywood Ferreira calls attention to recent developments in the field:

Not only has there been a wave of publication in science fiction in the past two decades, but there has been an exponential increase in critical studies of the genre, particularly in the areas of bibliography and genre history. These recent trends have meant that writing, reading, teaching or researching in the field of Latin American science fiction is now a vastly different experience from even a few years ago (2008: 352).

In Brazil, the increase in critical studies of the genre may be, in part, attributed to Ginway's work which, in many respects, gave guidance to other researchers. In terms of literary production, new perspectives can be seen in the field and this 'different experience' mentioned by Ferreira (2008) is easily observed in works such as Carlos Orsi's *Tempos de Fúria* [*Wrath Times*] (2005) and Tom Azevedo's *A Missão* [*The Mission*] (2011) both characterized by the authors' engagement in social and political issues. Carlos Orsi's *Tempos de Fúria* [*Wrath Times*] (2005) is probably the work which best represents Brazilian science fiction during the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century. It offers a trenchant critique of the new cultural and socio-economic realities created by the process of globalization and its impositions on Third World countries.

Carlos Orsi is a journalist and writer born in Jundiaí, São Paulo in 1971. His science fiction works have been widely popularized in important national magazines such as *Isaac Asimov*, *Play*, *RPG Dragão Brasil* and the *American Crypt of Cthulhu*. My reason for choosing Orsi is justified by the fact that, unlike most writers studied in this research, Orsi has been broadly recognized as a science fiction writer, inside and outside Brazil. As he is a contemporary and famous writer, his works can be found in any national bookshop which facilitates readers' access. Orsi's first notable work was *Aprendizado* [*Learning*] published in the *Isaac Asimov Magazine* in 1992 and since then he has made important contributions to the genre of Brazilian science fiction. Among his most important works are *Medo, Mistério e Morte* [*Fear, Death and Mystery*] (1996), *O Mal de Um Homem* [*Man's Evil*] (2000), *Guerra Justa* [*Just War*] (2010) and *Nômade* (2010). Some of Orsi's early writings were influenced by Howard Phillips Lovecraft's *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928) which is based on the Cthulhu Mythos. Lovecraft was an American writer of horror, fantasy and science fiction whose works were based on what he termed cosmicism which explores the idea that life is not comprehensible to human minds. Therefore, the universe and humankind are on opposite sides justifying Lovecraft's indifference to human affairs

and beliefs. For the Brazilian critic Oscar Cesarotto in the preface for Lovecraft's *O Horror Sobrenatural em Literatura*<sup>20</sup> (2008: 7), Lovecraft's writings avoid any kind of realism; the supernatural is present from the very first pages and horror is the main attraction. His characters do not have everyday habits and their attitudes are never trivial. Within the history of science fiction Lovecraft is usually associated with issues to do with degeneration, atavism and the occult that characterized fin-de-siècle Anglo-American Gothic Fiction, and preceded the Golden Age of science fiction when it was identified as a new genre.

Thus, Orsi tries to show that his writings go beyond Lovecraft's influence. According to Orsi (2007)<sup>21</sup>, two elements are central to Lovecraft's work: the sense that humanity is utterly helpless and the deep sense of irony about the human position in the universe; such elements constitute an important point of divergence between these two writers:

O que me distancia um pouco da obra dele, hoje, é um certo provincianismo que passei a sentir em seus trabalhos, nesse negócio de os personagens ficarem loucos ao notar como a raça humana é insignificante. Dá vontade de gritar... [What distances my work from his work, today, is a sense of provincialism that I began to feel in his works, in this business of his characters going crazy when they realize how insignificant the human race is. It makes me want to scream...] (*Sombrias Escrituras*, 2007).

Indeed, the idea that the human race is insignificant permeates most of his works, particularly *Wrath Times* (2005). This work is a collection of six short stories entitled: "Estes 15 minutos" [These 15 minutes], "Questão de Sobrevivência" [Matter of survival], "Pressão fatal" [Fatal Strain], "Planeta dos Mortos" [Planet of the Dead?], "Designios da noite" [Designs of the night] and "A Aventura da Criança Perdida" [The Adventure of a

<sup>20</sup> Originally *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, first published in 1927.

<sup>21</sup> Interviewed by Sr. Arcano from *Sombrias Escrituras* in August 2007: <http://www.sombriasescrituras.net/products/carlos-o-martinho-agosto-de-2007/> Accessed on June 12, 2012.

lost child]. In this work, Orsi offers a merger of life and death in a way that it is possible to see the existential crises in which contemporary society is immersed. By using textual strategies, he produces his dystopian critique toward modern times for Brazilian imperialist policies. This attitude seems to be a trend not only in Brazil but in most Latin American countries. Commenting on the way the Latin American writer Gerardo Horacio Porcayo deals with themes of imperialism in his postcolonial science fiction novel *La Primera Calle de la Soledad* (1993), Juan Zapata states;

It is in this way that dystopia becomes critical in an epoch of the global and local trend of fusion. PCS elaborates strategies of negotiating the passage from late – capitalist and apparently post-ideological Anti-utopia, in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to change it to a Utopia of justice [*sic*] (2010: 199).

Both Porcayo and Orsi demonstrate the double vision that societies have acquired by the process of globalization. Orsi's first story, "These 15 minutes", tells the story of two central characters, o Gordo (the fat guy) and o Magro (the thin guy) who have just returned from a trip to Colombia, Merdistão, Porriquistão, Cuziquistão<sup>22</sup>. The narrative begins in a dirt floor bar where the two characters and a bandit gang named "Men of the Command" meet to plan a bank robbery. The Men of the Command are the ones who control the drug trade and other kind of crimes. Command here refers to the Headquarters of a paramilitary, criminal organization. (In real life they are often corrupt police officers and politicians). Gordo and Magro, nicknames which the Brazilian reader associates with those given in Portuguese to the American comedy duo Laurel and Hardy, are the ones who execute the crime but are not part of the Command, that is, they do not gain any kind of prestige or advantages other than a very small part of the profits. Suddenly, Gordo starts to talk about

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<sup>22</sup> These imaginary places seem to be a reference to third world countries that seem to be independent but are still economically dependent on First World countries. The fictitious names that three of them are given ..., Shitistan, Prickistan and Assholekistan are clearly intended to refer to living conditions in them, and, by listing them with Colombia, would appear to include it, too.

issues such as the formation of the universe, transcendentalism, image projection and movie photography among others. All these come across in the story as forms of scientific and technological knowledge. Gordo does not show any interest in this conversation, first because he does not understand Magro's words and secondly because all of that discussion seems to him a waste of time. In his opinion, Magro had travelled to Acre (one of the poorest states of Brazil located in the North region) and returned with those idiot ideas.

Despite Gordo's lack of interest in participating in the conversation, the Men of the Command demonstrate great interest in Magro's ideas and listen to them attentively. Thus, Gordo has to be quiet and listen too. After Magro's long speech, they finally start to plan the bank robbery. Now, drugs, pornography and obscene words are frequent in the dialogue particularly when they see Magro's wife dancing and provoking men. Magro's wife (Loira) is a sexy and provocative blonde whose body is the object of sexual desire. Apparently, because of her lack of knowledge, she does not offer any danger to the gang. The assault is successful and 50% of the money is given to the Command. After discovering where Magro hides his money and drugs, Loira kills him. She is part of the Command and acts on their behalf. After Magro's death, the leaders of the Command plan to kill the other participants in the robbery (including Gordo) as a way of destroying all traces of evidence. The story ends with the assassination of all participants of the robbery, except the Men of the Command.

In this first story, "These 15 minutes", Orsi depicts a society in which technological advance and progress are still far from forming part of ordinary and poor people's lives and thus technology and scientific knowledge are important elements of subversion. From the very beginning of the story, Orsi presents the reader with the contrasts of a society that excludes, marginalizes and exploits the 'Other' in the name of an endless search for power and personal advantages. In this context, lack of knowledge and little education are

decisive for the perpetuation of poverty in a society that sustains itself internally by maintaining social exclusion and inequality,

Fim de tarde num boteco de chão de terra batida... As mesinhas de armar (e cadeiras idem) foram, um dia, vermelhas por causa da tinta mas agora deviam a cor à ferrugem...

– E se eu disser pra você que tudo, o mundo inteiro, foi criado há menos de 15 minutos?

– Eu diria, ou melhor, *repetiria*, que estamos aqui discutindo essa merda de assunto, já faz mais de meia hora...(p. 9)

[Evening in a bar with a tramped down earthen floor... The old tables and chairs were once upon a time red because of the paint but now this colour is due to the rust...

– And what if I tell you that everything, the whole world was created 15 minutes ago?

– I would tell you, I mean, *I would repeat*, that we are talking about this shitty subject for more than half an hour...].

Orsi's decision to start his work by describing a scene typical of Brazilian suburbs is arguably a strategy to produce science fiction without losing his focus on Brazil's experiences arising from the economic and cultural conditions that global capitalism gives rise to. It is worth observing that contradiction is an important element in the society Orsi wants to describe; in the story, although characters are in a dirt floor bar, there is someone who insists on talking about technological and scientific progress, something that is not part of those people's worlds.

Analyzing Brazil's political and economic picture during the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century, the time when the story was written, one could easily observe two different realities: one of them claims Brazil is an emerging nation alongside Russia, India and China and the other reality shows that, in spite of its advancement in terms of technology, Brazil has one of worst income distributions in the world. Discussing this contrasting image of Brazil in contemporary times, the journalist Gaudêncio Torquato points out some important data:

... depois de décadas de inflação alta, conseguiu forjar uma moeda estável; apresenta bom superávit na balança comercial; exhibe, em alguns setores, tecnologia de ponta; é competitivo em nichos como o agronegócio; baixou o risco-País e até liquidou a dívida com o FMI. Em outra escala, entre 177 nações, exhibe o quarto pior coeficiente que mede a distribuição de renda entre indivíduos, com 47% da renda nacional nas mãos dos 10% mais ricos; enterra anualmente, 50 mil vítimas da violência por armas; tem uma taxa de investimento de cerca de 20% do PIB (na China, esta taxa chega a 45%); e é líder mundial no ranking das taxas de juros e da carga tributária, essa atingindo 37% do PIB... (2012: 224) [... After decades of high inflation, (Brazil) managed to forge a stable currency; it shows a good surplus in the balance of trade; displays in some sectors, cutting-edge technology; it is competitive in niches such as agribusiness; lowered the country risk and settled the debt with the IMF. On another scale, among 177 nations, it shows the fourth worst coefficient that measures the distribution of income among individuals, with 47% of national income in the hands of the richest 10%; buries annually, 50,000 victims of gun violence; It has a rate investment of about 20% of GDP (in China, this rate reaches 45%), and it is the leader in the ranking of interest rates and taxes, reaching 37% of GDP ...].

This contrastive image of Brazil is clearly emphasized by Orsi in “These 15 minutes” and it is illustrated by the huge difference, in terms of techno-scientific knowledge, between the two central characters. It is worth mentioning that the whole scientific conversation takes place in a bar with a tramped-down earthen floor, a place where people would never meet up to talk about scientific development. This contrast permeates the whole narrative starting with the description of the nameless protagonists: a fat and a thin guy.

O Magro. O Magro é um sujeito engraçado, pensou o Gordo. Traficantezinho de merda. Sumiu por uns tempos, e agora voltou com essas idéias cretinas. Disse que tinha passado uns tempos na Colômbia, com as Farc, e depois no Merdistão, Porriquistão, Cuziquistão, vá lá saber, um daqueles lugares onde fazem ópio, heroína (p. 10) [The thin guy is a funny chap, thought the fat one. A 2-bit trafficker of shit who disappeared for a while and returned with these cretinous ideas. He said he had spent time in Colombia, with the Farc, and then in Shitistan, Prickistan and Assholekistan; who the fuck knows, one of those places where opium and heroin are produced].



If on the one hand the thin guy is the one who holds knowledge and progressist ideas, on the other hand he represents the idea that techno-scientific knowledge is not enough to acquire economic and political independence. Although Magro has demonstrated his intellectual superiority, it is not enough to be part of the Command, instead he is just a ‘traficantezinho’ (a 2-bit, very small time trafficker) whose only function is to carry out the Command’s orders. This may suggest the paradoxical situation in which Brazil has immersed since the turn of the century and which has been subject of countless reflections and discussions. For Torquato (2012) the paradoxical backdrop to Brazil is due to the fact that:

Somos uma expressão geográfica de peso, mas estamos ainda longe de constituirmos uma pátria, assim entendida como sincronismo de espíritos e de corações solidariedade sentimental de raças, comunhão de esperanças, sonhos comuns, decisões coletiva para marchar juntos (2012: 225) [We carry geographical weight but we are still far from achieving nationhood, defined as a synchronism of spirits and hearts, a sentimental solidarity of races, of a communion of hopes, common dreams, and a collective decision to march together].

While Torquato makes a case for a strong sense of nationality, he denounces the lack of identity as part of the Brazilian colonial inheritance. This attitude is well illustrated by the figure of the nameless characters named according to their physical characteristics: ‘o Gordo’ (the fat guy), ‘o Magro’ (the thin guy), ‘a Loira’ (the blond woman). There is no character whose name could express any sense of identity or individual representation. The author’s reference to foreign influence on Brazilians is interesting; the thin guy changed his behaviour and ideas after living abroad. Although he has not been to the First World, he demonstrates that his knowledge came from the countries he visited which suggests that he was, somehow, influenced by foreign ideas. According to Molina-Gavilan (2003: 15), international relations are a frequent theme in science fiction from Latin America and Spain; some stories reflect current events as they imagine a new political and economic

alliance among nations or explore issues of sovereignty. This tendency is clearly present in “These 15 minutes”. However, Orsi opts to explore this alliance in its negative side showing that interational relations are usually harmful to Brazilian society as a whole.

From this perspective, Orsi depicts a world without any consistent values, as if it were not possible to improve what has been done or what is still to be done: *O mundo é cheio de remendos... Emendas malfeitas entre os pedaços de 15 minutos... Costuras ruins [The world is full of patches... Badly made amendments made between the pieces of fifteen minutes... Poor seams]* (p. 15). This negative way of seeing the world is closely related to that presented by Lovecraft. Also, Orsi’s text bears witness to the writer’s disbelief in better times for the economic and political scene in Brazil. If at the turn of the century most people really believed that Luis Inácio Lula da Silva (the President elected in October 2004) would be the best choice in an attempt to change the course of Brazilian politics, in 2005 there was a strong feeling of deception and disillusion toward Lula’s government. Lula had become President in 2002. However, changes did not come as they were supposed to; scandals of political corruption among other crimes were frequent during the first years of Lula’s administration. In December 2004, after analyzing the two first years of Lula’s government, the journalist and writer Ipojuca Pontes demonstrates his deep disbelief toward new perspectives on Brazilian political context:

O grande enigma para as consciências livres não é mais saber o que de promessas, escândalos e arrochos aguarda a população brasileira no próximo ano, mas sim, em que escala, amplitude e proporção elas ocorrerão (2006: 95)  
[The great enigma for free consciences is no longer to know what promises, scandals and squeezes await the Brazilian population next year but rather in what scale, amplitude and proportion they will come].

Both Orsi and Pontes seem to share the same negative feeling toward Brazil. Scandals involving congressmen and government ministers were the topics of innumerable

debates and discussions in all sectors of society, particularly in academic circles and the public sector. Although there was evidence that members of Lula's party (the Worker's party) used illegal money to fund Lula's election campaigns, he insisted on saying that he did not know about the scheme. Thus, the expression "I didn't know" was ironically used to refer to the President's lack of competence to govern Brazil. As a journalist, Orsi was aware of all scandals involving members of the government and because of that he deploys the genre of science fiction to critique the way in which the actions of corrupt politicians have affected Brazilian population. In "Estes 15 Minutos", his critical reflection emphasizes the involvement of the government in illegal activities the consequences of which affect particularly the less favored class. The omissions and participation of the government in these illegal activities are clearly expressed in the end of the story:

Os homens do Comando estão lá, mas não se comunicam. A centímetros uns dos outros, mas não se tocam. Gritam, mas nenhum deles é sequer capaz de ouvir a própria voz. O vazio penetra por suas bocas escancaradas e os preenche. Em breve, nenhum deles será mais capaz de ouvir os próprios pensamentos (p.21) [The men of the Command are there but do not communicate with each other. A few centimeters from each other but they do not bump into each other. They shout out loud but none of them is even able to hear his own voice. The void penetrates their gaping mouths and fills them. Soon, none of them will be able to hear their own thoughts].

In this passage, there is an explicit reference to the gang formed by the president's ministers and personal friends denounced in the first years of Lula's administration. The expression "the Men of the Command" seems to refer to Lula's team – José Dirceu (Lula's chief of staff and a minister), Waldomiro Diniz (Dirceu's aide) and José Genoíno (the president of Lula's party) – whose negative images were getting worse each day (within the real political scenario in Brazil). Although there has not been any consistent proof of Lula's personal participation in the crimes committed by his team, public opinion considers Lula as the most important mentor of the crimes. For Pontes:

Lula bateu todos os recordes...conseguiu corromper todo o tecido político, institucional e administrativo do país, em especial comprando votos, permitindo negociatas, omissão diante de fraudes impetradas contras os recursos públicos, gerindo, ele próprio, o aparelhamento do Estado, para fins de perpetuação do poder (2006: 51) [Lula beat all records... He managed to corrupt the entire political, institutional and administrative fabric, specially by buying votes, allowing under-the-table negotiations, omission vis-à-vis frauds perpetrated against public resources, he himself managed the apparatus of the State in order to perpetuate his power].

Any attentive reader would note the similarity between Pontes's and Orsi's discourse. As journalists who both live in São Paulo, it is possible that they have participated in the same group of intellectuals who tried to initiate the impeachment process against Lula. Once again Brazilian science fiction offers an alternative way of discussing Brazilian socio-political problems. Since ancient times, literature has been used as a way of registering or denouncing practices that effect, oppress or destroy a society or group. In contemporary times, this function has been expanded due to the increasing involvement of writers in the social events they want to register. Brazilian contemporary science fiction writers, for example, are mostly professional journalists which facilitates their having access to information that ordinary people do not know. Thus, Brazilian science fiction has reaffirmed the genre's relation to history as well as its emphasis on social and ethical issues. In this perspective, the genre has been used as suggested by Hoagland as: "an ethical enterprise packaged as entertainment; and a forward looking project that is frequently rooted in anxieties about the present" (2010: 9). Contemporary Brazilian science fiction then draws critical attention to how colonialism/neocolonialism and all its practices have been constructed and maintained throughout Brazilian history.

Unlike most works analyzed in this study, Orsi's *Wrath Times* seems to initiate a new moment for the national genre. As a 21<sup>st</sup> century science fiction writer, Orsi uses science fiction to express his critique of the modern kind of political, economic and

cultural domination faced by Brazilian people today. He offers a combination of reality and the imaginary in which man is in the middle of an existential conflict generated by the complexities of a mediated world of new technology and globalization. Among other stylistic resources, I would point the kinetic narrative as the one which best differentiates his style from other contemporary writers. The constant movement of time allows characters to have a subjective experience of life which goes from present to future without any commitment to the real:

No vácuo entre os Universos, não há luz. Nem som, ou cheiro. Nem toque... Não há como medir o tempo. Não há nada para lembrar um homem da própria existência (p.21) [In the void between Universes, there is no light. No sound, nor smell. Nor touch ... There is no way to measure time. There is nothing to remind a man of his own existence].

Orsi brings up characters marked by the inversion of values provided by rampant capitalism and all its derivatives. In this sense, the characters' existential conflicts are deeply linked to the inconsistency of Brazil's political and economic development. The great economic insecurity that Brazil faced in the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century created a social tension that affected people's lives at all levels: social, affective, family and spiritual, and so forth. While this visible existential conflict may reflect the lack of perspectives for those who are victims of an inhuman and corrupt system, it may suggest the possibility of a new beginning without any connection to the past: Eles rezam para que tudo acabe logo, e cada oração dura um segundo ou um milênio, quem poderá dizer? [They pray for it all to go away, and every prayer lasts a second or a millennium, who can say?] (p. 21). Throughout the text, Orsi invites the reader to reflect on events that seem to be unimportant for society as a whole. This attitude is fundamental to his strategy of resistance which is constructed by the confrontation of the real with the imaginary, truth with untruth, corruption with non-corruption. Although some of Orsi's early works were influenced by Lovecraft's style, his recent works have demonstrated his individual growth

in the science fiction genre showing a personal style and a unique ability of dealing with contemporary themes, particularly in the political and cultural field.

In general terms, Orsi's works deal with socio-political and cultural aspects of Brazilian society emphasizing a variety of post-modern issues such as neo-colonialism and all its forms of oppression and domination, organ transplantation, ecological disaster, human corruption, terrorist activities and human evolution, etc. His style differs from others on account of his extraordinary ability of presenting the reader with a world in which reality and fiction go hand in hand. He makes use of current political and economic events to detail his criticism toward the Brazilian government and to project his own anxiety about the modern world. Within the literary context, Orsi's regional flavor or style may well represent a growing independence of Brazilian science fiction genre from the Anglo-American tradition.

## Conclusion

The science fiction genre has shown that its diversity of styles has contributed to the emergence of a boundless range of possibilities for dealing with social issues. Brazilian writers have made use of these possibilities in various exciting and productive ways. The misconception that science fiction is a genre of First World countries is contradicted by works of a large number of writers in Brazil and other Latin America countries. The genre's multidisciplinary features have allowed Brazilian writers to explore a wide range of social issues by using a Brazilian perspective. During the 60s, these writers showed special interest in demonstrating how the process of modernization could affect Brazilian national identity. In doing so, they used important icons of science fiction, such as the robot and the city to project Brazilian cultural myths. Analyzing Antônio Olinto's *O "Desafio"* (1961) and Rubens Teixeira Scavone's "O Menino e o Robô" (1961) I give special emphasis to the icon of the robot as an important substitute for the colonial slave. Here, I have discussed the ways in which Brazilian writers criticize and, sometimes perpetuate, the colonial discourse that places the subaltern classes as subject to the whims of the agents of imperial power.

In both works, the image of the robot is depicted with the same characteristics as those attributed to Brazilians – kind, domestic, servile, and powerless. In colonial discourse, most of these characteristics belong to the 'Other' – colonized, Negro, Asian, Oriental. This attitude demonstrates the way some writers see and describe Brazil in this new social and cultural context – the neo-colonial era. Doing so, these writers repeat the same colonial discourse almost always present in literary works written during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The native intellectual, then, produces what Fanon (1961) calls the literature of 'just-before-the-battle' when writers begin to reflect upon the past of the people but still

stand apart from the mass of the people and maintain 'exterior relations' with them only. This attitude seems to be justified by the fact that most writers from this period maintained close collaborative relations with the government. Indeed many of them occupied important governmental positions in their states and because of that some of them opted to stand apart from the mass of people and their social problems.

Critics have shown special interest in the works published during the 60s because this period is marked by a series of important changes in the political and economic fields and some science fiction writers used the genre to register these changes and offer the readers their critical view of the socio-political events. If on the one hand, Brazil seemed to be becoming more developed and technologically equipped, on the other hand, its political strategies and programs were not completely independent of foreign investments which generated permanent interference and a lack of confidence in the national economy. Brazilian science fiction of this period responded to this situation by exploring myths of national identity and Brazil's colonial history in order to demonstrate that technological progress seems to put the country in a neocolonial situation. Thus, unlike much of the Anglo-American tradition, Brazilian science fiction does not endorse technology and development but deals with neo-colonial ideas, individual alienation, and subjective reactions to modernization.

Through reading the aforementioned texts one can infer that because of its uneven experience of modernization during the 60s, Brazil seemed to live in several ages simultaneously – colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial – providing a series of socio-cultural conflicts inherent to the national identity. This is clearly a perfect scenario for the development and expansion of science fiction as a national genre which frequently shows the process of modernization as a kind of re-colonization of Brazil via technology. Thus echoing colonial Brazil is an important theme in the works produced in the 60s. The colonial discourse emerges sometimes as a way of criticizing the return of a past situation



and sometimes as a way of reproducing the dominant trends in the literature of colonizing power.

Brazil's colonial past helped to shape the cultural myths that emerged after independence from Portugal was declared in 1822. The relationship between colonial discourse and Brazilian science fiction seems to be a very authentic way of portraying the modernity that was forged in Brazil during the 1960s. Despite its efforts to modernize its economy, Brazilian society still suffers from many of the pressing social problems that modernization set out to redress. The introduction of new technologies, the expansion of Brazil's industrial base and its transport and communications networks have contributed to changing Brazilian society, while increasing the gap between rich and poor. This explains, in part, the ambivalence of Brazilian science fiction towards technology, as well as the underlying social and political concerns it addresses. By analyzing the figure of the robot, for example, it is possible to see this ambivalence discourse: no matter how sophisticated the robot is, it remains obedient, submissive and dependent just like Brazil is with regard to its main trading partners who source the technology and know-how.

Until very recently, one could say as a broad generalization that the impact of technologies was above all in urban environments, manifested in the growth of industrial areas and the negative impact that the skills needed by these industries had on the traditional way of life in Brazil. This negative impact does of course include the products of these industries which replaced the need for local trades and crafts and the pollution or other environmental damage that the new industries brought in their wake. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that there was a population explosion in Brazil throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In rough figures, this moved from around 17 million in 1900 to 52 m in 1950 and to about 170 million in 2000. This demographic explosion only became sustainable because many people from the interior migrated to the cities, sometimes on a seasonal basis. One consequence of this is that even today, whether it is a question of the

rich with land and homes in the interior now being largely based in the cities, not least to allow their children to complete high school and go to university or whether it is the poor in urban favelas with family still in the interior, at the human level there is still a strong connection between the urban and the rural/ interior, and this is an important element of national identity. Therefore, while in the 50s and 60s apart from any major construction projects such as hydroelectric stations or the building of highways, to a large extent, technologies had little impact in the interior and for the majority who lived there, even the products of the new industries tended to be beyond their means. This is a form of alienation not just of those who cannot afford to take advantage of the products but also of townspeople who see their kith and kin fall further and further behind their own urban living standards. This wounds pride in national identity. If more recently, it has been possible for those in the interior to derive some advantages from the new industries, then inevitably this will have a strong impact on the rural way of life which many will regret even if the benefits ostensibly outweigh what is being lost.

Although Ginway characterizes Brazilian science fiction from the 60s as apolitical, it seems that most works published during this period are closely related to the political and economic context to which the country was subjected. Some science fiction writers, such as Scavone and Olinto, seemed to be worried about and aware of the impact of the technological and industrial development on national identity. Among the fears associated with this new social and economic context was “the fear that modernization would destroy Brazilian culture and its humanistic tradition”, as pointed out by Ginway ( 2004: 88).

Although one can find some distinctive aspects in “The Duel” and “The Boy and the Robot”, there is not a concrete intention of depicting Brazil in a different way or showing new perspectives for Brazilian society. Instead, both writers are ambivalent in many occasions. The ambivalence in Scavone’s discourse, for example, seems to be the result of his non-resistance to the ‘colonial authorities’. This attitude may also be the

reason for which Brazil's future is generally constructed as humanistic, female and black, whereas in the Anglo-American tradition, the future is generally depicted as scientific, masculine and white. This identification with the colonized is not surprising in the light of Brazil's colonial and neo-colonial experience, its racial identity, its struggle with poverty and its desire to escape Third World political and economic status.

During the 70s, the years of repression under the military regime, writers' attention seemed to be more specifically focused on political issues. The growing wave of protest coming from the universities, churches and other sectors of society required a more critical position in the artistic field. Writers, then, were caught up in the same currents that were radicalizing university students, Church and industrial workers. In order to manifest their protest against the government's decision, some writers had to develop an individual style to avoid censorship.

In this context of conflicts and manifestations, dystopian writings appeared to be the perfect form to criticize without being in evidence. Here, Nature and woman were in a prominent position which can be justified by the fact that during the 70s how women were represented in society had undergone important changes. Writers such as Plínio Cabral and Ruth Bueno show special interest in the change in women's roles and their relationship with Nature. In the form of dystopian fiction, these authors work at their criticism of the military regime and develop innovative ways of denouncing and dealing with imperialist ideologies and neocolonialism.

Given that the 70s witnessed important advances in terms of colonial resistance, it is not surprising that Brazilian writers have shown their literary participation in the struggle against imperial power. The national political and economic situation along with changes in the political map of the colonized world through the process of decolonization, offered different possibilities for writers to rethink and re-examine society. Here, the acts of reading and writing are central to show different views in this new literary context. In

this regard, John McLeod (2000) lists, at least, three possibilities of reading postcolonial texts: reading texts produced by writers from countries with a history of colonialism; reading texts produced by those that have migrated from countries with a history of colonialism; and re-reading texts produced during colonialism in the light of theories of colonial discourse. Following McLeod's perspective, I analyzed texts produced after the colonial era in Brazil but concerned with the workings and legacy of colonialism in either the past or present. Because of increasing discussions on colonial discourse influenced, particularly, by Frantz Fanon's and Edward Said's ideas, it seems that writers from the 70s were more concerned about the importance of reflecting on the operations of colonial discourse. Consequently, they try to express their own sense of identity questioning the entire colonial project, and dissenting from colonial discourse.

By reading Plínio Cabral's *Umbra* (1977) and Ruth Bueno's *Asilo nas Torres* (1979) provocatively in terms of colonial discourse, it is possible to note that these texts are actively engaged in a process of questioning and travestying colonial discourse. Among other important characteristics there is one that seems to be central to both writers' discourse: the representation of Brazilian people as colonized subjects in a postcolonial and modern era. By exploring the condition of Brazilian women in the 1970s, for example, Bueno criticizes the way women have been otherized and consequently silenced in society. In so doing, she instigates the intellectual to rescue the authentic voices of women from their mute condition. Here, Spivak's insights in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* are helpful to illustrate the kind of discourse that has labeled women as voiceless and subaltern individuals even in contemporary societies. Although Bueno's *Asilo nas Torres* and Cabral's *Umbra* depict a modern and economically developed society, it reflects the disastrous collision of colonial and post-colonial values.

The post-colonial experience demonstrated in the novels reveals the frustration of living in a post-colonial era within a colonial system. What characterizes this experience is

not simply the history of colonial oppression or the intersection of cultures but the permanent struggle for power. The disastrous consequence of men's constant struggle for power is significantly emphasized by Cabral in *Umbra* suggesting the engagement of the writer in socio-political problems. However, because a literary text can bring into play different ways of seeing without pointing which one is true or the most appropriate, and also due to the contradictions of the post-colonial discourse, ambivalence is a central characteristic of Brazilian science fiction from the 70s. Because of the ambivalent discourse present in these narratives, some works seem to be both supportive and critical of colonial discourse illustrating the contradictions inherent to a postcolonial society.

In general terms, post-colonial literature, particularly postcolonial science fiction, is a means of exploring neocolonial and postcolonial situations in Brazil. Therefore, in order to understand science fiction from the 70s, postcolonial theories have been usefully explored. As expressed by Ericka Hoagland and Reema Sarwal in their introduction to *Science Fiction, Imperialism and the Third World* (2010), in both postcolonial literature and science fiction the representation of the encounter with difference, Otherness and alterity is an important marker. For them,

The function of the 'Other' is intriguingly similar in both genres: the 'Other' consolidates difference as well as solidifies the norm; as both a theoretical concept and a tangible object, the 'Other' is used to justify the exploitation and annihilation of peoples, whether red, black or green (2010: 10).

In order to show, how Brazilian people are 'othered' by an imperial system that has been perpetuated since colonial times, writers from the 60s and 70s took advantage of the combination of science fiction and postcolonial literature. The use of allegory, cognitive estrangement, and also techniques such as irony and metaphors allowed these writers to inaugurate a new circle of writing in Brazilian science fiction which differs from the Anglo-American tradition. Using postcolonial theory to read Brazilian science fiction, it is

possible to see some of the key differences between Brazilian and the Anglo-American science fiction. If on the one hand Brazilian science fiction uses the same icons and images as those of Anglo-American tradition, on the other hand these icons are used according to Brazilian political and cultural aspects.

During the 80s, important events contributed to the emergence of innumerable individual styles whose main characteristics were based on the Anglo-American tradition. With the end of the military regime, writers tended to explore the social context focusing on the contradictions of the process of modernization and its negative results for Brazilian society. In this context, writers do not hesitate to combine technology and cultural alienation in a Third World political perspective. By analyzing Bráulio Tavares' "Stuntmind" it is possible to see his critique to the effects of globalization toward Brazilian culture. Tavares also explores cultural diversity as a positive result of the postmodernity. Also important in this period is the resumption of the cultural cannibalism ideas, so intensely discussed during the twenties. Regina's *Brazilian Science fiction Manifesto* is an attempt of calling writer's attention to the importance of redefining the genre with national elements using a genuinely Brazilian style.

Regina's manifesto played fundamental importance for the emergence of tendencies that would initiate, in a wide variety of ways, a long process of nationalization of the genre in Brazil. The influence of Latin American magical realism, for example, helped to shape the genre according to Third World perspectives but still very close to the Anglo-American pattern.

During the nineties, the idea of nationalizing the genre was still in evidence which encouraged writers to experience new ways of writing science fiction breaking with the past tradition of being in the shadow of the First World models. The nineties, I would argue, represented to the national genre a moment of intense desire for detachment of foreign influence. By analyzing some important works written during and after the

nineties, it is possible to see a high level of innovation in terms of style, theme and approach. In this context, feminist issues occupy an outstanding position, particularly when it comes to discussions related to sex, prostitution and sensuality, or even, women improving their status in society as a whole. Márcia Kupstas' *O Demônio do Computador* (1997) and Carlos Orsi's *Tempos de Fúria* (2005) are a good illustration of how contemporary writers have developed a writing style exploring the imaginary of Brazilian technological society. Both Kupstas and Orsi present the conception of man and machine from the perspective of a third world country which is apparently a technological developed nation but it is still essentially dependent and submissive. In this perspective, technology, particularly the computer, is shown as extremely harmful and destructive to human relationship affecting people's behavior and conception about friendship and fraternity. While woman is pointed as an object of desire and machination, it is also she who could change the course of history. And indeed this is currently reflected in the projects of many non-governmental organizations whose activities in the interior of Brazil are based on encouraging women to be the protagonists of change and in the cities by the call for women to break through the glass ceiling of organizational hierarchies and occupy their rightful position in due measure as leaders in commerce, industry and the public services.

In this climate of innovation, the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is marked by a great number of writers who continued to develop their own styles by combining the relationship between reactionary nationalism and postcolonialism and the complexity of both nature and cultural politics, as well as by focusing on Brazil's socio-economical situation. Unlike tendencies that emerged throughout the twentieth century, 21<sup>st</sup> century writers are more anxious to gain space in the literary milieu. As a consequence, the number of science fiction readers and writers has increased considerably in Brazil and this has caught the attention of critics not only inside but also outside Brazil. It remains to be

seen what impact writers will have on their readership and opinion-formers in bringing about women occupying their rightful place at all levels of society including the top, in creating a climate that leads to a significantly smaller gap between rich and poor, in overcoming underprivileged and in finding an appropriate identity for Brazilians in a world that seems to be leaving the notion of the nation-state behind.



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