

Acknowledgments

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This study also owes much to several hundred *folheto* buyers. I have often thought back on one particularly sunny afternoon in the Recife market when I got into a conversation with a would-be customer, who, questioned about his attitude toward films, replied, "Oh yeah, movies, I'm crazy about them. You know, there's a great one playing right now, how about it?"

Hot and weary, I told him, "Look, friend, you don't understand. I am a university professor, and I ask everyone these questions because I am writing a book about these stories and people who read and write them."

The man looked taken aback for a moment but then winked and grinned. "Oh sure, baby," he said, "sure you're a professor! But look here, even if *you* were crazy enough to run around in the blazing sun asking

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people like me silly questions, who would ever pay you to write a book about us? And what is more, who the devil would ever want to read it?"

I am grateful to many people in the numerous markets I visited for their good humor and forbearance. I hope their voices remain audible in the following pages.