Brazil on the Map: English-language Reception of Three Authors in an Age of Shifting Canons

by

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Abstract

According to David Damrosch, world literature is a locus of negotiation between a source culture and a host culture, and a "space defined in many ways by the host culture's national tradition and the present needs of its own writers" (*What Is World Literature?* 283). Damrosch also notes that "more and more works of world literature are now favored for displaying specific ethnic identity or cultural difference" (*What Is World Literature?* 187). With that in mind, in this thesis I use contemporary theories of world literature to interpret the twenty-first-century English-language critical reception of three canonical Brazilian authors, namely, Clarice Lispector (1920-1977), Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839-1908), and Jorge Amado (1912-2001). I also compare that reception to the one in the second half of the twentieth century. I focus on North America, although other Anglophone contexts that influence the North American one are not ignored. My observations fall into two main categories. First, although Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector were successful among academics and critics but not among the general public in the twentieth century, in the twenty-first century, retranslations of their works and the publication of deluxe collections of their stories have widened their visibility among the general English-language readership. Also, their recent critical reception tends to reveal a greater interest in their racial or ethnic background. In the case of Lispector, Benjamin Moser, her American biographer, has created a new persona within a Jewish literary tradition. Machado, who was the grandson of freed slaves, has been placed in a black literary canon and read from a racial perspective by North American critics. Second, while Jorge Amado became an international best-seller in the twentieth century, his work

generated mixed reactions from the critics and was often seen as full of Brazilian stereotypes. I note how his reception follows an opposite path to Lispector's and Machado's, amplifying his critical acclaim *after* having achieved success through sales and becoming the subject of studies that detached his work from its Brazilian context.

To the people of Brazil and its diverse, inventive culture,

which is still standing regardless of the ones who try to erase it.

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2020 was marked by a global health emergency, which, for many of us, meant changing plans, re-organizing routines, and adapting our activities to a new, indoor reality. With all the difficulties this pandemic has imposed, I was still lucky enough to be able to finish this project in a year like this. And this achievement would not have been possible if I did not have around me the right people and the right environment.

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Introduction

The dynamics of world literature are not static. Even though European literary writers are the ones who circulate more easily internationally, canons are often questioned extensively. In contemporary discourse, "no shift in modern comparative study has been greater than the accelerating attention to literatures beyond masterworks by the great men of the European great powers" (Damrosch, "World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age" 43). This shift, if not erasing centuries of exclusionary canons (especially because canons are, by nature, exclusionary), might open a wider space for new literary voices to emerge from obscurity. Therefore, understanding how a specific literary tradition travels further from home and which place it occupies on the map of world literature is, always, a work in progress.

That being said, one first question emerges in this thesis: How has the history of Brazilian literature as world literature changed in the last two decades, especially when it comes to its presence in the English-language literary system? Brazil is part of the Western Hemisphere. The only Portuguese-speaking nation in Latin America, it is the largest country south of the continent, both in territory and population, in addition to being the second largest democracy in the Americas. Culturally, we cannot say that Brazil has had no impact in the international scene. Yet, the work of the scholars I discuss below has already helped us understand that, historically, Brazilian *literature* has been overlooked by Anglophone audiences, especially in North America. But could that be changing at all in

recent years? Before trying to answer these questions, it is important to offer a general picture of the situation.

To understand such a trajectory, taking a look into the last six decades of the twentieth century, when English translations of Brazilian writers became more widely available, might be helpful. Studies by Latin America specialists such as Deborah Cohn, Irene Rostagno, Piers Armstrong, and Earl E. Fitz list various reasons why, differently from the case of Spanish American countries, Brazilian literature was not a successful trend by the end of the twentieth century. One important literary trend from the 1960s and the 1970s was the so-called Latin American Literary Boom. For Deborah Cohn, "the Boom was both a literary movement and a marketing phenomenon characterized by a dramatic increase in the publication, distribution, and translation of Spanish American works" (5). In that period, many Spanish American writers gained prominence with North American audiences. Among them are the Nobel Prize winners for literature Mario Vargas Llosa, from Peru, and Gabriel García Marquez, from Colombia, as well as the Argentinians Julio Cortázar and Jorge Luis Borges.

One can note, however, that Cohn limits this group to Spanish-speaking writers. For her, the Boom was not only about the reception of these writers by foreign audiences but "also a critical construct rooted in the authors' conception of themselves as a group, their connections to the leading critics of the day, and the concomitant promotion of their work in popular and academic media" (5). Similarly, Piers Armstrong shows that by the end of the twentieth century, the translation of Brazilian literature was "essentially a scholarly activity, with translations by academics commissioned by university presses or specialized publishing houses," while "the Spanish American boom writers, by contrast, have all successfully penetrated the commercial publishing market, each having a large number of

titles in translation" (153). In other words, while the Spanish Americans were successful both in academia and with the general public, the Brazilians in general stayed in academia.

What seems to be common ground among scholars is that what made this phenomenon possible was a combination of politics, the dynamics of the book market, a shift in the interests of North American audiences, as well as the necessities of both North American academics and North American writers. Irene Rostagno, for example, shows that the Boom was anticipated by the United States' Good Neighbor Policy, created by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933. The goal was to reinforce American influence over Latin American countries through cultural proximity rather than interventional policies in order to neutralize the influence of Communist and Nazi ideologies in those countries. During this time, many publicly funded initiatives made it possible to promote Latin American culture in the United States, and literature was no exception. As Rostagno shows, in the 1940s, the American publisher Blanche Knopf, who was looking for new books outside Europe due to wartime border conditions, "took advantage of the opportunity to travel in Latin America offered by Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy" (31) and capture new titles for her catalogue. Cohn, similarly, discusses the relation between the Latin American Boom and the Cold War. For her, in the 50s, not only "the Cuban Revolution sparked hopes of change and the possibility of self-dissemination throughout Latin America" (Rostagno 5), but it also had pre-Boom institutional impact on the continent's literary production. She points out the creation of the Casa de Las Américas by the Cuban Revolution, in 1959, only a few months after it was institutionalized. It was a "Cuban state-sponsored foundation committed to disseminating the new Latin American literature," which "became a magnet for intellectuals from Latin America, Europe, and the United States" (Rostagno 5). The Revolution was also a

facilitator for the Boom as it "opened up an audience interested in Latin America" (Cohn 10), creating curiosity by the American public towards their neighbouring region. Cohn also points out that the funding of Latin American publications by the U.S. government was politically profitable: "As public intellectuals, Latin American writers had the ability to influence public opinion in their native countries […] which helped to cultivate goodwill--and offset anti-Americanism--among the authors" (10).

Aside from politics, North American writers from the postwar era, in the mid-twentieth century, were also looking for new references to redefine American literature. Earl E. Fitz, for example, points out how John Barth's influential essay "The Literature of Exhaustion" (1967), in which he discusses the literature of Jorge Luis Borges as an innovative case, was important for the dissemination of this Argentinian writer as an important literary figure in the United States.[1] This shows how the work of American writers like Barth were important for the success of Spanish American writers in the U.S. Also, other American intellectuals were more connected to Spanish America. As Piers Armstrong highlights, "The greater body of critical scholarship on Spanish is related to its preponderance in university programs--Spanish is the number one second language and/or literature studied in the United States" (155).

The background above gives us an idea of what made space for the Boom and also offers some clues on why the Boom was a Spanish-language phenomenon. But some characteristics specifically related to Brazilian literature should not be taken for granted.

[1] "It is no exaggeration, in fact, to look back at Barth's witty piece as a milestone in inter-American relations, the first time that, in a serious, substantive manner, a major American writer and critic had publicly celebrated a Latin American writer, Borges, and actually argued that a Latin American author (Borges) could be looked to by Americans as the solution to their 'crisis of confidence'" (Fitz, "The Reception of Machado de Assis in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s" 28).

With the limited number of Portuguese translators in the U.S., some promising and acclaimed writers in Brazil were a challenge for publishers. João Guimarães Rosa, for example, who is known for his complex, inventive use of Portuguese, could have been a successful Boom author, since he was stylistically innovative, while offering context on Latin America with his regionalist, modernist stories, often placed in the Brazilian backlands (the Sertão). But if his style already imposed difficulties for native Portuguese speakers, "these difficulties multiplied when the work was brought into English" (Rostagno 43). Thus, "Rosa's obscurity outside Brazil provokes several hypothetical explanations, the first of which concerns the quality of the translation" (Armstrong 31). Moreover, as I explained, the Boom was related to an increasing interest in all things Latin American. Therefore, most of the writers of the Boom, maybe with the exception of Borges, were marked by their socially engaged literature and helped the English-language reading public to understand Latin American people, its culture, and history. Brazilian literature, in turn, was, in most cases, not what readers might have expected from the country's writers. With its reputation as an exotic, magical country, known for its celebration of *carnaval*, and for its myths of racial democracy promoted by the work of sociologists like Gilberto Freyre, whose book *Casa Grande e Senzala* (1933) had a significant impact in the way the Brazilian government sold itself internationally for purposes related to tourism and international relations, this imagined nation was not reflected in the country's literature: "In literature, however, the country tended to turn against simplistic notions of national identity. […] Yet, it is precisely the lack of essentialism, of recognizable national representation, that has cost Brazilian writers so dearly in terms of penetration of the international market" (Armstrong 15). With a literature that often flirted with the European philosophical tradition, some Brazilian writers were not safe investments for publishers like

Blanche Knopf. The twentieth-century writer Clarice Lispector, for example, was considered too hermetic, and also presented challenges to her translators when it came to her use of syntax. According to Rostagno, a publisher such as Knopf did not think Lispector would succeed in translation, and "was ambivalent about its value" (48).

There is one exception to this situation. Even though he cannot technically be considered a Boom writer, as the Boom was generally seen as a Spanish American phenomenon, the Bahian Jorge Amado (1912-2001) was, in the twentieth century, the only Brazilian writer to become a best seller in the Anglophone context. His novel *Gabriela, Cravo e Canela* (1958) was indeed the first work (Cohn) by a Latin American writer to be included in *The New York Times* best-sellers list, staying there for six weeks in 1962. With the success of Amado, "who has certainly sold more books than any of the Spanish Americans with the possible exception of García Marquez" (Armstrong 156), American publishers kept publishing his books. Amado's successful reception was due to many factors. Firstly, "his work has proven to be relatively easy to translate," as his prose is "quite simple" (Rostagno 36). Secondly, in his case, there are many identifiable national representations of Brazilian identity, as his books take place in a racially diverse Brazil of mulattas and *carnaval*. With strong leftist political views, Amado's work was populated by poor Brazilians and their struggles. In many ways, his depictions of Afro-Brazilian religions like *Candomblé* and *Umbanda*, with their spiritual entities and nature gods, resembled the magical realism of the Boom authors. These religions, brought from Africa by slaves and often syncretized with Catholicism, are a strong part of Brazilian culture, especially for its black communities. Their presence in Amado's literature was also illustrative of a more easily identifiable and mixed Brazil. There was, as well, the fact that Amado was already a best seller in his own country, with many successful adaptations of

his work, if not a critics' favourite. In addition, he was a political voice, affiliated with the Communist Party, having served in Brazil's parliament. His book *Terras do sem-fim* (1943) was one of the first to be published under Roosevelt's incentive programs.

Even today Amado is often singled out as the only canonical[2] Brazilian writer to have achieved international success, and as "the most important example of the international reception of Brazilian literature" (Armstrong 133). With this exception, even though authors like Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector are widely studied in English-speaking academia, Brazilian literature seems to have, throughout the twentieth century, fallen almost into international oblivion. However, today, 58 years after *Gabriela* became an international success, many things have changed. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, we have seen an increase in the publication of Brazilian literature. This can be partially credited to the Programa de Apoio à Tradução created by the Brazilian government in the early 1990s with the intention of promoting the publication of Brazilian literature abroad. This initiative, carried out by the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, has successfully attracted foreign publishers.[3] The most translated authors supported through this program are Clarice Lispector, Machado de Assis, and Jorge Amado, respectively, but the top 10 also include contemporary names such as Adriana Lisboa, Luiz Ruffato, and the up-and-coming writer Daniel Galera.[4] In addition, according to a study by Cimara Valim de

[2] The emphasis on "canonical" is due to the fact that the Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho is today one of the most translated writers in the world. However, Coelho is not considered canonical.
[3] A study by scholars Lilia Feres and Valéria Brisolara analyzes the impact of the initiative of the Brazilian Ministry of Culture and the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional on the presence of Brazilian publications internationally since 2010. Their study shows that, in 2010, only 9 countries participated in the program, none of them Anglophone, publishing only 13 Brazilian books abroad through government incentives. Nonetheless, in the following years, these numbers increased significantly. In 2013, for example, there were 30 countries participating in the program, and 193 Brazilian books were published abroad, mostly fiction. Many of the participating countries were now English-speaking.
[4] Data obtained via email from the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional in December 2019.

Melo on the publication of Brazilian literature in English, "between 2010 and 2014: twenty-seven translations were found among the data collected, not including re-translations and reprints," which, in only four years, " is close to the twenty-nine works found for the *whole* of the previous decade (2000-2009)" (Melo 27; emphasis added). Brazil has also amplified its participation in international book fairs. These include events such as the 2013 Frankfurt Book Fair, the 2015 Livre Paris, the 2014 Göteborg Book Fair, as well as FlipSide, a Flip-related (Festa Literária de Paraty) event in the UK.

Considering the increased exposure of Brazilian literature abroad in the twenty-first century, my thesis delves into its reception in the anglophone context, specifically in North America. I also recognize other English-speaking countries that influence Canada and the United States, such as the United Kingdom. I focus on Jorge Amado and on what I see as the two most compelling cases regarding the recent English-language reception of Brazilian literature: Clarice Lispector and Machado de Assis. The nineteenth-century master Machado de Assis (1839-1908) is regarded as the most important Brazilian writer of all times. Lispector (1922-1977), on the other hand, is probably Brazil's most important twentieth century writer. Yet, different from what happened to Amado, neither were able to achieve the international attention they had received in their homeland. I intend to show, however, that this seems to be changing. In my thesis, I look at two somewhat inverse phenomena. While Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector seem to be, in this century, emerging from the academic realm and finding popularity with the general public, Jorge Amado, who was already popular, seems to be, now, gaining more critical respect.

In Lispector's case, in 2009, the American historian Benjamin Moser authored a biography of her titled *Why This World*. Since then, Moser, alongside the New York-based publishing company New Directions Publishing, has coordinated a systematic process of

re-translating her work. In little more than ten years, 14 of her books were re-translated *and* re-issued in English, including eight novels, a children's book, and five books published in the same deluxe short-story collection in 2015, which, for the first time in any language, brought together all of her stories in a single volume. *The Collected Stories* was a success and culminated in the 2016 PEN Translation Prize for its translator, Katrina Dodson. The collection was also considered one of the Notable Books of the Year by the *New York Times*, besides being published into several languages, including Spanish, Italian, and even a Portuguese "translation." New Directions is still working on new translations of Lispector's work, and new volumes are yet to be published.

In the case of Machado de Assis, it was already exciting news when, in 2018, W.W. Norton's Liveright published, similarly to Lispector's case, a deluxe collection of his short stories translated by Margaret Jull Costa and Robin Patterson. However, the most impressive events came about in 2020, when two different translations of *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas*, one by Jull Costa and another by Flora Thomson-DeVeaux, an American scholar living in Rio, were simultaneously launched by Penguin Classics and Liveright. Even more thrilling, in May 2020, Thomson-DeVeaux's translation sold out both in the American Amazon store and Barnes and Noble booksellers just one day after its release, achieving Amazon's number-one position in the Latin American and Caribbean category (Meireles).

These recent events suggest a different scenario for Brazilian literature in comparison to its place in the twentieth century. Therefore, in this thesis, through a selection of critical perspectives on the work of Clarice Lispector, Machado de Assis, and Jorge Amado in English, I provide a panorama of the academic and literary reception of these three authors in the first two decades of twenty-first century, in comparison to the last

five decades of the previous one. I believe that, in this century, it is no longer possible to point to Amado as the only canonical writer with a successful case in the Anglophone context, given Lispector and Machado's combined critical prestige, commercial publishing success and other media repercussions. My objective is to *interpret* the critical discourse recently built around these three authors. Although the inclusion criteria might vary in each chapter, I have selected major works by influential critics, many of which are entire books, collections, articles, and paratexts in fiction publications. I put these pieces in dialogue with one another and try to point out what their significance is, together, in the international life of these Brazilian writers. This is important because it will offer some clues about what may have made the current situation possible and helps to build a more up-to-date picture of the reception of canonical Brazilian writers.

Some of my hypotheses are: Firstly, despite having been gradually more read outside Brazilianist circles, with figures such as Hélène Cixous or Susan Sontag praising their works, Lispector and Machado have, since the beginning of the current century, been the subject of studies that pay attention to the racial or ethnical aspects of their works, adding a layer of international appeal to their literature. Machado, who witnessed the abolition of slavery in Brazil, was the son of a black man and a white woman. His death certificate, however, classified him as a white man, a notion that was perpetuated by visual representations of him, and, for a long time, Brazil's most important writer was viewed as white. Lispector, on the other hand, was born in Ukraine and arrived in Brazil as a baby, escaping the persecutions against Jewish people in her homeland. In Benjamin Moser's project, for example, Lispector has been more clearly positioned in a Jewish literary tradition, alongside figures like Franz Kafka and Baruch Spinoza. In the case of Machado de Assis, recent studies promoting his racial identity as "afro-descendent" and representing

him as a black writer have become significantly popular in recent English critical pieces. If, as Damrosch points out in "World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age," there has been an effort to re-define canons beyond dominant voices, these new trends become significant for the dissemination of Lispector and Machado's work. Secondly, although Amado still has an important presence in the Anglophone system, Lispector and Machado have had, in this century, a wider presence in the Anglophone context. Among other reasons, detailed throughout this thesis, this is due to the fact that Amado has been, historically, too tied to Brazilian themes, and has often been viewed as a writer of inconsistent literary merit. Also, as in the twenty-first century, there are new publications that have tried to shed light on the overlooked merits of Amado's work as he seems to have followed the opposite path as his fellow Brazilian writers in that he first became known by general audiences and only achieved a clearer critical acclaim later.

My thesis is based on influential contemporary theories of world literature. I mainly rely on David Damrosch's *What Is World Literature?* (2003). I agree with his notion of world literature, defined not as a canon of masterpieces nor as the total amount of books ever published in the world, but as a mode of reading and of circulation, which encompasses all literary works that travel "beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language (Virgil was long read in Latin in Europe)" (*What Is World Literature?* 4) and that are actively present in a literary system outside their own. Also, his view of world literature as a "locus of negotiation" (*What Is World Literature?* 283) between a *source culture* and a *host culture*--key terms in this thesis--is very useful. If world literature is a "space defined in many ways by the host culture's national tradition and the present needs of its own writers" (*What Is World Literature?* 283) that can say a lot about how the new critical trends regarding Machado and Lispector can affect their

international prominence. For example: Damrosch discusses how "more and more works of world literature are now favored for displaying specific ethnic identity or cultural difference" (*What Is World Literature?* 187). In this sense, he shows that, in the case of Franz Kafka, for example, a "new wave of Kafka studies has revealed his multiple connections to his mixed cultural surroundings, prominently including his linguistic interests" (*What Is World Literature?* 189), re-connecting him to his Jewishness, and creating "a shift from a universal Kafka to an ethnic Kafka" (*What Is World Literature?* 189). In my thesis, I identify similar trends in the cases of Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector, but not so much in Amado's case.

In addition, Pascale Casanova is also important in this thesis. I borrow from the ideas she expresses in *The World Republic of Letters* (1999) and "Literature as a World" (2005) and try to think of world literature as a space of conflict in which "National and international writers fight with different weapons, for divergent aesthetic, commercial and editorial rewards" ("Literature as a World" 82). Also, her thoughts on how the central European traditions, because of the influence they exert over the peripheral ones, accumulate more literary and linguistic capital, and, therefore, circulate better in the world literary stage apply to the cases I am studying. She argues that "the oldest literary spaces are also the most endowed, which is to say that they exert an uncontested dominion over the whole of the literary world" (*The World Republic of Letters* 352). Although I believe that literary traditions such as the Brazilian one do have cultural autonomy, I also believe that a work from a tradition that influences more widely other Western literatures travels more easily into the peripheral host cultures than the opposite direction. Since many of the aesthetic values of the peripheries have their roots in Europe, it is expected that peripheral audiences pay attention to works from the centre.

Each chapter is dedicated to one of my three authors: Lispector, Machado, and Amado. These chapters are structured in similar ways, divided into sections that deal with different critical trends regarding these writers. Also, the chapters are organized in the order in which these authors appear in the Biblioteca Nacional's list of Brazilian writers with most translations funded by the institution.

Chapter 1 deals with Clarice Lispector. Because, more than any other critic, Benjamin Moser is at the helm of Lispector's recent rediscovery, here, I conduct an analysis of Moser's project focusing on his 2009 biography, *Why This World*, on pieces he wrote for the Anglophone media, and on his re-translation project with New Directions. My objective is to understand how Lispector is depicted in this time when her literature has become more popular. I argue, then, that Moser's project was based on creating, for Lispector, a new literary persona, one that is more linked to her Jewishness and more internationally appealing. In order to build this persona, he walked the following path: First, he located his Lispector in time and history. This was achieved through the publication of the biography, in which he reads Lispector's life and work in light of Jewish traumas, Jewish mythologies, and literary traditions. Second, he gives this persona a new voice by promoting re-translations that, he thinks, capture Lispector's *true* literary voice. In my analysis, I use, mainly, Damrosch's theories to interpret how Moser intends, and has been able to, position Lispector in a better place on the world stage. I do not mean to affirm that Moser is the only one responsible for Lispector's recent success, nor that he was the first to read her work from a more internationally appealing perspective or under a Jewish lens.[5] However, what differentiates his work is its unprecedented size and its media

[5] As I acknowledge in this chapter, French feminism, famously Hélène Cixous, had already picked Lispector as a main subject, which popularized her work in academic circles outside the Brazilian one. Also, Naomi

campaign, which promoted Moser's version of Lispector to many of the most important media venues in the Anglophone context, going beyond academia.

Chapter 2 deals with the case of Joaquim Machado de Assis. This chapter is divided into two main sections, each of them representing a different pattern in the reception of Machado de Assis. First, I analyze works by important Anglophone critics, both by specialists and non-specialists in Machado: Helen Caldwell, John Gledson, Susan Sontag, and, again, Benjamin Moser. Written from the 1950s until 2018, these works are deliberately analyzed in a chronological order to show how, throughout the time, Machado de Assis has had critical acclaim but, still, has been depicted, both within and outside Brazilianist circles, as an obscure Third-World writer, an overlooked genius lost in the periphery. This reveals that, although Machado seems to become more popular by the decade, for 60 years his literature has struggled to find its place in the Western tradition. This might be due to the fact that, frequently, comparative studies have portrayed Machado as a disciple of great authors such as Sterne or Shakespeare, but not always clearly delineating his *own* contribution as a writer. However, the second part of the chapter shows that, in the twenty-first century, Machado's racial background has been more frequently explored. I begin with studies by Earl Fitz and Hélio de Seixas Guimarães and analyze critical perspectives by Harold Bloom, Paul Dixon, Benjamin Moser, and G. Reginald Daniel, in addition to paratexts in recent publications of Machado and some depictions of him in the English media. It is unclear whether race-related criticism was responsible for Machado's recent sales success. Still, based mainly on Damrosch, I argue that, although the importance of Machado de Assis's work is far from being defined by these new racial-

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Lindstrom and Nelson Vieira, for example, dedicated part of their works to how Lispector dialogues with Jewish culture.

related readings of his work, they have the potential to open new spaces for him in world literature.

Finally, Chapter 3 deals with the reception of Jorge Amado. This chapter functions, in this thesis, as a counter example in relation to the two previous ones. This part is organized similarly to Machado's chapter, and two different trends are identified in Amado's reception. In the first part, I show how, different from what we see in Machado and Lispector's case, Amado's critical acclaim has not been very consistent. Initially, I analyze pieces dating from the 1940s until 2001, in order to show how even critics who are admirers of Amado tend to highlight his flaws and express mixed feelings regarding his work and even more strongly when it comes to his earlier more propagandistic novels. In addition, many of the strengths that critics pointed out in his work were related to the significance it had for Brazilian culture. Written by authors such as Bobby Chamberlain, Fred Ellison, Earl E. Fitz, David Gallagher, and Donald A. Yates, most of these pieces are major books on Amado that directly dialogue with each other, but two of them are pieces published in the *New York Times*, which are included here because Amado was successful beyond the academic context. In the second part, however, I show how in the twenty-first century, although Amado has not been through a "rediscovery" process like Lispector and Machado, some significant publications, including new editions of his works by Penguin, a special section in the *Comparative Literature Studies* journal, and a scholarly collection dedicated to his works have intended to activate new readings on Amado. These pieces not only tend to resignify Amado's earlier novels as works of art beyond propaganda, but also connect Amado to themes that go beyond Brazilian culture. Thus, Amado seems to be following a trajectory opposite to that of Machado and Clarice--from bestseller to a more highly acclaimed writer.

It is my hope that this thesis can deepen our understanding of the current status of Brazilian literature in the international scene. Furthermore, I wish to contribute to scholarly debate by showing that the history of the country's literature as world literature is being refashioned by new critical trends.

Chapter 1: Lispector After Moser: Judaism, Re-Translation, and the Creation of a Literary Persona

In a 2018 *New York Times'* review of the new edition of Clarice Lispector's *The Chandelier*, the literary critic Parul Sehgal writes that "the revival of the hypnotic Clarice Lispector has been one of the true literary events of the 21st century." For Sehgal, despite being popular in her home country, Clarice, as she is more commonly known in Brazil, "was neglected in the English-speaking world" until very recently. But what exactly does Sehgal call a "revival?" What has objectively changed in the reception of this Ukrainian-Brazilian writer who is now starting to be more extensively read in the English-speaking world?

Reductively speaking, there is one major change in Clarice Lispector's reception that could explain this new success of her work amongst an international readership, namely, the rise of the work of Benjamin Moser, an American scholar and historian who became a specialist in Clarice Lispector. After authoring her biography in 2009, Moser decided to work on new publications of her writing and its dissemination. Since the biography *Why This World* was published, more than 14 books by Lispector were re-translated, re-published, or published for the first time in English, including a deluxe collection of her short stories, and two different editions of her last novel*, The Hour of the Star*, with one of them issued as a hardcover publication celebrating the 100th anniversary of the author. These books have been widely well-received by critics, making prestigious lists like the New York Times 100 Notable Books. In addition, events called "A Hora de Clarice," organized to celebrate Clarice Lispector's birthday every December 10th, have started to take place since 2010 in major cities like New York, Paris, Madrid, Lisbon,

Frankfurt, Buenos Aires, and Mexico City.[6] However, Lispector's recent rise cannot solely be explained by the efforts of a single scholar promoting her work. It is important then to understand *how* this scholar has conducted his efforts. Why and how were Moser's plans more successful than previous attempts at turning Clarice Lispector into a major name in world literature is precisely the question I will be asking in this chapter. However, before presenting my hypothesis and thesis, I would like to discuss some theoretical approaches that will sustain my argumentation in order to better guide the reader through my arguments. I start with David Damrosch's thoughts on world literature, its definitions and mechanisms, which is the main theory that guides my thesis in general. Finally, I will explain how his theories can be applied to the case of Clarice Lispector's work as promoted by Benjamin Moser and how they help to formulate my hypothesis regarding which factors led to Moser's success.

In his illuminating book *What is World Literature* (2003), Damrosch sees world literature not as some sort of canon nor every single piece of literature ever written in the world. World literature for him is more about the circulation of literary texts and ways of reading them. It can be "any literary works that circulate beyond its home base" and is "actively present within a literary system beyond that of its original culture" (*What is World Literature?* 4). Damrosch also points out that even though "the world is looking much wider today" than it did before, "difficulties of circulation, translation, and assessment remain" (*What is World Literature?* 143). Therefore, being actively present within a foreign literary system is not so easy as it might look, and, for the scholar, what determines which works will be more successful in achieving such a goal is their importance and capacity to

[6] See "A Hora de Clarice" on the New Directions Publishing's website https://www.ndbooks.com/article/a-hora-de-clarice/#/

contribute to the host culture's understanding of its own culture and literary tradition(s) – in other words, the piece/author has to match the host culture's needs. The foreign readership, then, when encountering a new work, would ask the following question: what does this specific work have that can help me better understand my own culture, my own values, and my own artistic production?

Damrosch goes on to explain that being considered an important work in its homeland's literary tradition, though helpful, is not enough for a text or its author to find a prestigious place when they travel abroad. For him, world literature is "always as much about the host culture's values and needs as it is about a work's source culture," and a work that lives as world literature is "connected to both cultures, circumscribed by neither alone" (*What is World Literature?* 283). From Damrosch's point of view, "the pressures of local context are certainly reduced when a work travels abroad" (*What is World Literature?* 276), and "a work of world literature has its fullest life, and its greatest power, when we can read it with a kind of detached engagement […] even as we adapt it to our present context and purposes" (*What is World Literature?* 277).

Taking such ideas into consideration, let us think, as an example, about the relationship between Europe and the Americas when it comes to literature. It is reasonable to say that many of the aesthetic values or literary ideals in the Americas today are, somehow, in dialogue with European literary traditions, or have many of their roots in the European literary canon. Also, what we in the Americas conceive as Western culture and values also has its roots in our European background as past colonies, and, therefore, as countries that are constantly influenced by European cultural production. Thinking on Damrosch's terms makes it easier, then, to understand why a European work of literature would circulate more easily in the Americas. For a work to take the opposite direction,

however, it would usually be a bit more challenging, as the cultural and local context brings less universality. Success comes easier when a travelling work "understands" that a space beyond its own national scope is "a space defined in many ways by the host culture's national tradition and the present needs of its own writers" (*What is World Literature?* 282). It does not mean, however, that the local context of a work will never be considered while traveling, it just means that it will be dissolved into a new reality. A work can exist as world literature in a foreign literary system as both a positive or a negative example of literature, but the ones that succeed the most are those considered "a positive model for the future development of its [the host culture's] own tradition" (*What is World Literature?* 283).

How do, then, David Damrosch's ideas on world literature help us understand Benjamin Moser's project regarding Clarice Lispector and its success? In this chapter, I will discuss how Moser created a new literary persona for Clarice Lispector. I argue that, in order to create this persona, he walked the following path: First, he gave this persona a story, a place in history. This step was achieved through the writing and publication of Lispector's 2009 biography and its massive advertising campaign, not only in academic circles, but, above all, in important media outlets. I show how this biography intends to place Clarice Lispector as a remarkable Jewish author inserted in the context of the Jewish collective trauma and diaspora. In order to demonstrate that, I conduct a reading of Moser's biography, alongside texts published by him in other media, such as websites and news outlets, where he promotes an interpretation of both Lispector's life and work in light of Jewish traditions, and through comparison between her and other important Jewish historical characters. By doing this, Moser's project illustrates what Damrosch's theories formulate on the circulation of world literature: that Clarice Lispector benefits from being

read as more than just an important Brazilian author and is presented in a more internationally-appealing 'package.' I argue that the Jewish community is present all over the globe. Additionally, there is an important scope of worldwide famous Jewish authors such as Franz Kafka, Baruch Spinoza, Marcel Proust, Susan Sontag, among many others. By presenting Clarice Lispector as an essentially Jewish writer, Moser positions her work as a "gap" in the history of the Jewish literary tradition and as an important source to understand how the persecution against the Jewish people affected literature worldwide.

Secondly, Moser gave this persona a new, unified voice. I argue that this step was achieved through the series of re-translations that he promoted with New Directions and other young translators. As I show further in the chapter, Moser has declared that previous translators of Lispector were not capable of capturing her unique, strange voice, and, for him, this, among other reasons, was due to a lack of organization in the way that her previous translations were made. There were many unconnected people, such as Elizabeth Bishop, Gregory Rabassa, and Giovanni Pontiero, translating her work. This, he thinks, would have led to a lack of unification in Lispector's literary voice, which would be solved by his new project. Although there would be many translators working on different texts, all of them would be under his supervision.

My hypothesis is that, by building this new literary persona for Clarice Lispector, Moser wanted to make her work more relevant for international audiences and literary traditions. By placing her in time and history, by inserting her in an existing and relevant literary tradition, and by searching for what he sees as her true and unique voice, Moser seems to be trying to: (1) turn Clarice's work into a more successful piece of world literature, in Damrosch's terms, and; (2) approach Lispector's English version to what would be her true voice, with an understanding that her previous translators practiced

excessive domestication when dealing with her texts. This is important because it contributes to an understanding of how Lispector, who is one of the most important writers Latin America ever produced, took so long to achieve a clearer prestige beyond her home country, and why it has changed now.

To establish the above claim, first I briefly review what other scholars have written on the reception of Clarice Lispector before Benjamin Moser. This is important for the reader to understand her position in world literature before her new biographer had started his project. I then go on to conduct an analysis of Benjamin Moser's biography of Lispector, alongside other texts he published on her. I also analyze his re-translation project and the reception of his work. Some questions that guide my analysis are: how does Moser insert Clarice Lispector into the Jewish literary tradition, and why? What do the texts and paratexts in these publications reveal? What was the critical impact of this new Lispector "boom"?

It is important to note that Moser was not the first to cast Clarice Lispector as a Jewish author. Nelson Vieira, for example, has a wide corpus of research on the Jewish diaspora in Brazil. As part of this research, he dealt with the work of Clarice Lispector in the Jewish context. His 1995 book *Jewish Voices in Brazilian Literature: A Prophetic Discourse of Alterity*, for example, devotes an entire chapter dedicated to the work of Clarice Lispector. Similarly, the respected literary critic and Latin Americanist Naomi Lindstrom, who has also studied Jewish literary voices in South America, has tracked Jewish influence in the recurrent epiphanies and mysticism in Lispector's work in articles such as "The Pattern of Allusions in Clarice Lispector." I also do not claim that Lispector was not read outside Brazilianist circles before, as the second section of this chapter takes account of her success among international feminist critics in the twentieth century. What is

different in Moser's case, however, is that his project has achieved mainstream readership, as he took advantage of mainstream media sources to advertise and complement his work, taking his version of Lispector beyond academic circles.

Lispector Before Moser

The reception and publication of Clarice Lispector has been widely researched by many scholars. Their work charts Lispector's presence in English before 2009 and her international reception in the twentieth century. I address this scholarship in this section to better understand the most recent literature; a contribution which I will make in the following section.

Brazilian scholars Luana de Freitas and Cynthia Costa have mapped Clarice Lispector's publications since she first appeared in English in the 60s. In the article "A internacionalização de Clarice Lispector: história clariceana em inglês" (2017), they detail a comprehensive list of items related to her English-language presence, including many of the initiatives spearheaded by Moser like *The Complete Stories* and the single books that had already been published by the date the article was written. Even though Freitas and Costa do not try to understand or interpret Moser's project – which is what I will be doing in this chapter – their work is important to illustrate how, by 2017, Lispector's work had almost completely been translated and published in English:

> Dos seus nove romances, apenas *O lustre* não foi traduzido; dos oito traduzidos apenas um não foi reeditado, *Uma aprendizagem ou o livro dos prazeres*. *A hora da estrela*, *Paixão segundo G.H.*, *Água viva* e *Perto do coração selvagem contaram*, cada um, com uma retradução. (...). No tocante aos contos, além de as coletâneas *Laços de família*, *Legião estrangeira* e *A via crucis* do corpo terem sido traduzidas,

> a recente empreitada de Moser em *The Complete Stories* e o sucesso alcançado por essa antologia parecem apontar para a solidez do lugar de Clarice naquele sistema literário. (Costa and Freitas 51)

It is important to note that, as of 2020, some things have changed regarding Costa and Freitas's results. One of them is that *O lustre* has now been published by New Directions as *The Chandelier*, with a 2019 translation by Magdalena Edwards and Benjamin Moser. Similarly, a new edition of *Uma aprendizagem ou o livro dos prazeres* has finally been announced by the publishing house: *The Apprenticeship or the Book of Pleasures*, translated by Stefan Tobler, already has a cover and will soon be on shelves in April 2021.

Before Moser, Lispector had already been widely translated into English, with important translators working on her texts, including Gregory Rabassa, Elizabeth Bishop, Giovanni Pontiero, and Elizabeth Lowe. Despite having had previous translations into other languages, Lispector's work first appeared in English in the 60s, which did not happen very easily. Benjamin Moser (*Why This World*) states that, by the beginning of this decade, Elizabeth Bishop had read Lispector. Bishop had been living in Brazil since 1951 and had a romantic relationship with the Brazilian architect Lota de Macedo Soares. Despite not being fond of her novels, Bishop started, at this point, to intensely admire her talent for short stories--saying that she found Lispector better than Borges--and invested in translating some of them into English. In a 1963 letter to her friend Robert Lowell, Bishop says that both *The New Yorker* and Alfred Knopf were interested in possibly publishing the Brazilian writer, but Lispector, despite enjoying Bishop's translations, stopped contacting her translator when Bishop was about to send the manuscripts to foreign editors (Moser, *Why This World* 256). It was only in the summer of 1964 that Bishop's translations of *The*

Smallest Woman in the World, *A Hen*, and *Marmosets* appeared in volume 26.3 of *The Kenyon Review*. Here, Lispector was under a section called "Five Stories from Hot Countries" (469). However, she was presented not as a Brazilian writer but as a writer "born in Russia" and who "has lived in Brazil most of her life […] becoming one of the nation's leading novelists" (Front Matter).

Despite Lispector's presence in the English-speaking literary context for nearly sixty years, she did not immediately please the critics outside academia. Nor was she seen by publishers as the type of Latin American writer who would succeed among English-language readers. In her book *Searching for Recognition*, in which she discusses the publication of Latin American literature in the U.S. in late twentieth century, Irene Rostagno discusses how--when Lispector fell into Knopf's hands with her 1961 novel *Apple in the Dark*--her work did not immediately attract the publisher's interests. As Rostagno explains, "with the exception of Harriet de Onís, who thought Lispector's style was 'extraordinary,' readers assigned to evaluate the book were either disappointed or clearly antagonized" (47). Knopf himself found the book too difficult, which, from his point of view, would make it hard for it to find an audience. When Knopf decided to publish the novel--which happened in 1967--it was not in Bishop's translation, as he desired, but in Gregory Rabassa's, who was an admirer of the writer's work, despite his difficulties in translating it.[7] As the following excerpt shows, Rostagno states that the reception was not so favorable. She indicates that the poor reception was due to the novel not matching the critics' expectations of what a Latin American writer should be:

[7] As Rostagno notes, Gregory Rabassa thought that Lispector was harder to translate than Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela*, which he had just finished translating. On his process, he wrote: "at times when I'm tired and I look at some other Brazilian book written in simpler prose, I say to myself, I wish I were translating that" (qtd. in Rostagno 47).

> In the *New York Times*, C.D.B. Bryan pointed to the author's lack of control: "Her overwriting flaws the novel, especially where she waxes lyrical about intellectual and emotional minutae." Conversely, in the *Saturday Review*, R.F. Goldman thought that the novel brought together themes common to most contemporary fiction: "The book is about many things: The relation between speech and act; knowledge and being; perception and awareness, reality and imitation." […] After reading his perceptive analyses, one senses that Lispector's poor showing was not due so much to the essential complexity of her novel but more to the fact that she did not quite fit the stereotype of a Latin American writer. Though she shared similar concerns with contemporary American writers, which should have assured a wider acceptance, her work was quickly dismissed. (Rostagno 48)

But if Lispector did not immediately succeed among non-academic critics, she shortly became very well regarded in academia, and it was precisely the work of a famous academic that, before Moser, came closer to giving her a most notable international prestige. This happened especially because such a scholar was precisely working closer to what Damrosch's theories formulate and adding to Lispector's work a more universal layer, positioning her as an author of feminist value, someone who was capable of expressing the feminine soul through her use of language. This person was the famous French feminist scholar Hélène Cixous. Even though Cixous was not an Anglophone writer, her work is very influential in the Anglophone context. It was through works such as the 1979 *L'heure de Clarice Lispector* that Cixous was able to tie Lispector's unique use of language, with unstructured, non-plot-focused narratives, to her concept of *écriture feminine*. This concept touches on the feminine nature of texts – not necessarily written by women – that subvert traditional forms of writing, looking for a freer and more fluid style, as in the case of

techniques such as stream of consciousness, very present in authors like James Joyce and Clarice Lispector. In 1987, Cixous published an English article in the *New Literary History* journal. In the piece, titled "Reaching the Point of Wheat, or A Portrait of The Artist as a Mature Woman," the French philosopher compares the works of Clarice Lispector and James Joyce--with a special focus on *Near to the Wild Heart* and Joyce's book that inspires the article's title in order to meditate on art, maturity, and growing as male and female. For scholars who study the reception of Clarice Lispector, Cixous had an unprecedent impact on the international dissemination of Lispector's work. In 1999, when discussing the impact of the work of Cixous in the international reception of Clarice Lispector, UK-based scholar Elena Carrerra wrote that "the form of commentary practised by Cixous, a break from traditional literary criticism, has inspired academic readers to follow in her intuitive steps and to convey to other readers her passion for Lispector's work" (85). Carrera thinks that, in many ways, Cixous's views on Lispector's writing were, at the time the article was published, dominant among Lispector's readership. For her, scholars in the academic context would avoid "critical evaluation of her [Cixous's] use of Lispector's texts as pre-texts for her own exploration of theoretical and ethical concerns" (86). She states that, after Cixous, more international publications from Lispector had arrived, and "French and Anglo-American readers no longer need to buy the very exclusive brand of Lispector which Cixous has chosen to import from Brazil, but inspired by Cixous's example, can fashion their own readings of Lispector to suit their needs" (86).

Another great disseminator of Clarice Lispector's oeuvre in the twentieth century was the British scholar and translator Giovanni Pontiero. Pontiero was also the translator of the Portuguese author José Saramago and a professor at the Victoria University of Manchester. From the 1970s until his death in the late-90s, Pontiero translated dozens of

works by Clarice Lispector, including books such as *Laços de família*, *A descoberta do mundo*, *A hora da estrela*, and *A cidade sitiada*. Most of Pontiero's translations were published by Carcanet Press, an independent but well-regarded publishing house. Even though Pontiero's work was very important for making available a fair amount of Clarice Lispector's work to Anglophone audiences, and influenced Benjamin Moser,[8] his translations have been criticized by scholars who have analyzed them. This subject will be better explored in the next section, but Luana de Freitas, for example, wrote that "it is noticeable that Pontiero prioritises content and his readership by naturalising Clarice's singular style" ("Clarice Lispector's Radically Translated into the English-Speaking Literary System" 252). Similarly, Tace Hedrick agrees with Freitas when she affirms that Pontiero prioritizes, in his translations, Lispector's content rather than her style based on his own views of the text. Hedrick argues that the translator "has overwritten Lispector's search through language for that not-word which itself will reveal the essential nature of the female" (58). She exemplifies her argumentation through examples such as *The Hour of The Star*, when the narrator says Macabéa is "grávida de futuro," and Pontiero chooses to change it into "enriched" with future. For her, Pontiero, who was more concerned with the philosophical echoes in Lispector's work, could not capture the feminine essence of her work.

If Lispector's work was already widely translated into English, and if it was well discussed in academia, why wasn't she able to achieve a consistent readership beyond the ivory tower before Benjamin Moser? Why does the work of Benjamin Moser represent a

[8] In *Why This World's* acknowledgments, Moser thanks "Juan Sager of The University of Manchester, who provided my research with an unexpected boost by giving me the Clarice materials collected by his late partner, Giovanni Pontiero, her English translator, who was working on his own biography at the time of his death" (390).

re-set in her trajectory when it comes to international publication or editorial prestige, with deluxe re-editions of her work coming out every year? This is what the next section of this chapter will discuss.

Why This World, *The Complete Stories*, and More

Benjamin Moser was born in Texas in 1976. Since 2009, in little more than ten years, he has published Lispector's biography, translated part of her work into English, and, with New Directions publishing, has coordinated the translation process for many of her novels and stories. In recent years, Moser has made his career as a reputable biographer. Shortly after writing about Lispector, he decided to profile another twentieth-century female figure of Jewish descent: *Sontag: Her Life and Work (2019)* won the Pulitzer Prize for Biography in 2020.

According to Moser himself, his interest in the literature of Clarice Lispector began casually. During his college years at Brown University, an institution with a notable tradition in Brazilian Studies, he gained interest in Lispector's work when he had to read small pieces by Brazilian authors for a Portuguese Language course taken exclusively to meet his graduation requirements (Rodrigues and Gabriel). He was 19 at the time, and after reading *A hora da estrela*, he was captivated by her writing, something which, he declares, had nothing to do with her nationality: "O que ficou óbvio para mim é que, além de ser brasileira, ela pertence à classe dos grandes autores internacionais," he affirms, completing that "grandes autores não têm nacionalidade. Eles são de todo o mundo" (qtd. in Rodrigues and Gabriel).

Moser's global views on the position of the literary fortunes of the world and on the circulation of literature, as expressed above, seem to have guided his later plans for the

dissemination of Lispector's work beyond Brazilian borders. This is precisely what will be discussed in this section. At the beginning of this chapter, I stated that his strategy to boost Lispector's reputation involved guiding readers to the Lispector that he wanted them to see and to read. He wished to give her a new more global persona, and to achieve such a goal, he divided his endeavour into steps. Let us start by analyzing the first step of his strategy.

Moser began by writing a biography of Lispector, which would give a story and a personality to her persona. He positioned her within the history of the Jewish diaspora and traditions, which propels her influence beyond the circle of Latin American Studies. The next step for Moser was to reformulate the translations of Lispector's work, which gave this persona a more uniform literary voice. If before, her translations were published by different translators with no connection to each other, the plan now was to have a clearer consensus as to how Lispector should sound in English. In addition to that, Moser wrote about Lispector in respected media outlets, presenting her to a broader public beyond specialized academics, promoting his own work and the writer he wanted to popularize. In order to show how Moser has constructed such a persona, this section starts from an analysis of excerpts from Moser's biography and continues with an analysis of his work in helping New Directions re-publish Lispector's stories. I also include in the discussion pieces he wrote on Lispector for media outlets and pieces written in response to his work both in academia and in the press.

It is worth mentioning that Judaism seems to have been an important point of contact between Moser and Lispector. *Why This World*, which, in addition to being published by Oxford University Press, was also published by Penguin in other Anglophone countries, is a ground-breaking book, and was later reissued in Brazil as *Clarice, uma*

biografia originally published by the now-defunct publishing house Cosac Naify, and currently, by Companhia das Letras.

Reading this book makes it clear that Moser wanted the reader to see Lispector as an important figure within Jewish history. But this emphasis is not only attributed to the simple presence of information on her origins. Since we are talking about a biography, it is expected that it would include details about Lispector's birth in Chechelnik, Ukraine, a land with a vast Jewish presence. One should also expect to learn about her family's immigration to Brazil in 1921, escaping the persecution and pogroms against the Jewish community, which became worse after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. These are all facts about Lispector's life. It is, however, how Moser *interprets* these facts that is very illuminating about the persona he is trying to build. "Can a place impress its traits on one who abandoned it in infancy?" (*Why This World* 14), he aks, while describing Lispector's place of birth. He goes on: "It would seem not. Yet the fact remains that a great mystic was born in an area famed for its great mystics" (14). In this passage, Moser is building a link between Clarice Lispector's fame as a hermetical, enigmatic writer; her secluded manners, avoiding interviews and public smiles, to the mysteries around Hasidic Judaism, a section of the religion famous for isolating themselves within their own communities to have a closer relationship with God. The movement has its roots in the region where Lispector was born. A few paragraphs later, Moser writes:

> Such was the fascination of Clarice Lispector's mysterious figure, and so little known about her origins, that in her own lifetime a whole body of legend sprang up around her. In this she resembled the Jewish saints of her homeland, the Hasidic *zaddikim,* "bearers of that irrational something," mystic figures in their own day, about whom an "overwhelming wealth of tales" indissolubly mix "triviality and

profundity, traditional or borrowed ideas and true originality." (Moser, *Why This World* 15)

As it is not possible to affirm that Lispector indeed borrowed such aspects of her personality from the Hassidic Jewish in her homeland--she immigrated to Brazil when she was one year old, and she professed no religion--such an affirmation appears here as Moser's interpretation of his subject. For Brazilians, Lispector could look foreign. Much of her so-called mystery, then, could be interpreted by the people in her new homeland as a trace of her family's cultural background. For foreign audiences, however, Lispector being an immigrant to Brazil is not enough to explain the strangeness that one could feel when seeing her or while reading her books. In this sense, the Hassidic community, which is, for example, a well-known part of the life in Brooklyn, New York, with its mysteries and secrets, seems to be used here as an element that could lead the North American reader to better assimilate Lispector's personality while at the same time re-connect her to her Jewish background. Moser's interpretation of Lispector's life under the lens of Judaism does not stop there, as it seems to guide the biography through its more than 400 pages. Actually, one passage related to the subject became polemic among Lispector specialists. First, it is important to note that when the biography hit the shelves in Brazil, it was received with mixed reviews. Moser's work was controversial: as I will show in the coming discussion, he was being accused of treating some obscure passages as concrete facts in order to better insert Lispector into the context of the Jewish diaspora. One example of such attempts is an alleged rape, described by the biographer, that Clarice Lispector's mother, Mania Lispector, would have suffered at the hands of Russian authorities during the period of pogroms in their homeland. From this rape, Mania would have contracted syphilis. According to him, the woman would have died due to complications related to such a disease. He writes:

> At the very end of her life, Clarice confided to her closest friend that her mother was raped by a gang of Russian soldiers. From them, she contracted syphilis, which in the ghastly conditions of the civil war went untreated. Perhaps if she had reached a hospital sooner she would have stood a better chance. But it would be another twenty years before penicillin, the most effective treatment, entered common use. By then, after a decade of horrible suffering, Mania, the elegant, intelligent, free-spirited girl from the Podolia countryside, would be lying in a Brazilian graveyard. (Moser, *Why This World* 27)

In the 2015 Brazilian edition published by Cosac Naify, the excerpt above is followed by an endnote explaining that Mania's health conditions, while still linked to the Jewish persecution, were not necessarily caused by syphilis: "Outras fontes atribuem a paralisia de Mania a um choque traumático (possivelmente um espancamento)" (Moser, *Clarice, uma biografia* 557, transl. Couto). Nonetheless, in the 2009 original by Oxford University, the note cannot be found, which could reveal the fragility of some aspects of the original edition since, when the book was published in Brazil, a context in which Lispector's story was more widely known, there was the need to add such information. Indeed, Mania's alleged syphilis, whether an imagined story or not, plays an important role in Moser's biography, as, according to him, it influenced Clarice Lispector's work as a writer. Moser uses a convincing but questionable argument to defend such an episode in Lispector's life. He uses her literary production – more precisely, her 1968 *crônica* named "Pertencer," in which she writes on the feeling of not belonging – to display evidence that Clarice Lispector was conceived to save her mother from the disease. In the *crônica*, a textual genre that, while usually considered non-fiction, can bring fictional situations within its corpus, she writes: "No entanto fui preparada para ser dada à luz de um modo tão bonito.

Minha mãe já estava doente, e, por uma superstição bastante espalhada, acreditava-se que ter um filho curava uma mulher de uma doença. Então fui deliberadamente criada: com amor e esperança. Só que não curei minha mãe" (Lispector, *A descoberta do mundo* 130). After citing an English translation of such paragraph, Moser explains that, in the conditions of the civil war, there was no proper medical assistance available to the residents of certain regions in Ukraine, which could have led the Lispectors to attempt desperate moves to try to heal the mother of the disease. According to him, "to this day, in Chechelnik, though not as close as Uman, only a few miles away, the local population believe that genital 'bubbles', or chancres, will disappear during pregnancy" (Moser 29). By linking her text to this local Ukrainian tradition, Moser also links Clarice Lispector to her past in Ukraine, as if the traumas of the Jewish persecution had not only determined some of her literary themes but also determined her existence per se. For him, this is not the only piece in Lispector's work that is marked by the frustration of not being able to save her mother: "Like the lost or hidden name, the dying mother, and her child's longing for her, would recur in almost everything Clarice wrote" (59), he writes, also referencing the fact that Lispector, when moving to Brazil, had to give up her birthname, Chaya, and became Clarice to better adapt in the country.

In fact, Moser also builds bridges between Lispector's metaphysical thoughts on God and spirituality, something so prominently present in her work (dedicating an entire chapter to the subject), and the alleged circumstances of her birth. More broadly, he also connects her obsession with the theme to her Jewish background. One good example of this connection is in his reading of her debut novel, *Perto do coração selvagem,* a coming-of-age story that reflects the influence of James Joyce in the title. But here, Moser is more interested in the influence of another prominent author: Spinoza. At first glance, this is not

different than existing scholarship on Lispector. As an example, her previous main disseminator, Giovanni Pontiero, was especially interested in her relationship with philosophy.[9] What sounds peculiar, in Moser's case, is *how* he connects Lispector and Spinoza, not just through common themes or the presence of intertextuality but through biography: "In Clarice Lispector's writings, there are echoes of another great Jewish thinker, another product of exile, who faced the death of God and sought to re-create a moral universe in his absence" (*Why This World* 109). As Moser points out, some sentences in the novel were originally written by Lispector in her annotations on readings of Spinoza, and "Spinozistic phrases recur throughout her work" (*Why This World* 111). But what the biographer seems to be suggesting, here, is that her interest in the philosopher's work was, for her, a way of understanding her own past, her own relationship with the mysticism that surrounds her background – and a Jewish philosopher who deals with the nature of God is the obvious choice. What seems to be Moser's interpretation is: what Clarice Lispector's writings reveal is that she was dialoguing with Spinoza to understand the meaning of her family's religious background, trying, this way, to understand the trauma through which she was born, and the reasons why she exists. "Clarice will often mock this 'conscious God of the religions,' but only because she so desperately longed for the same perfection and assurance that Spinoza, too, had rejected as impossible" (*Why This World* 110), he writes, before citing a long paragraph of *Perto do coração selvagem* in which the narrator, talking about the divine, writes that "God's perfection is proven more by the impossibility of miracles than by their possibility. For the humanized God of the religions, to perform miracles is to commit an injustice" (qtd. in Moser, *Why This World* 110). After highlighting

[9] See Giovanni Pontiero's *Afterword* in the 1985 Carcanet edition of *Family Ties*. Here, Pontiero compares the work of Clarice Lispector to the ones of philosophers such as Camus, Sartre and Heidegger.

the excerpt, Moser introduces a somewhat arbitrary biographical interpretation of it. "Perhaps Clarice was thinking of her mother as she wrote these lines, remembering her own failure to generate a miracle: the idea that 'a conscious God' have saved someone else instead might have been unbearable" (*Why This World* 110).

Passages like the one above, which show Moser engaging in biographical criticism, reveal that he was not simply trying to write a biography for Clarice Lispector the person but, above all, he was writing about Clarice Lispector the writer. He was, somehow, designing the genesis of her work, tracking the seminal facts that led her to create the way she did, and to write the way she did. He is clearly trying to guide her foreign readership into the religious and historical aspects of her books and stories, and through his interpretation, many of her more recurrent subjects, such as the nature of birth, of the divine, or womanhood, which have frequently been read under feminist or philosophical lenses, can be seen, as well, as meditations on her own birth, and on the allegedly religious connotation it had.

Even *A hora da estrela*, Lispector's last novel, gained a Jewish interpretation in this biography through Moser's eyes. This story, which has historically been read as her only explicitly political novel, and which is seen as Clarice's strange, metaphysical attempt to touch on issues such as social inequality, race, and social mobility, creates, as Brazilian critic Clarisse Fukelman has pointed out, a parallel between the relationship of its fictional, male narrator, Rodrigo S.M., with his main character, Macabéa, and the relationship between Brazilian elites and the poor. The character's name, Macabéa, is an obvious reference to the biblical Maccabees, "the band led by Judas Maccabeus, one of the greatest heroes of Jewish history" (Moser, *Why This World* 372). In his book, Moser deduces that, as "the Maccabees are the stars of the Chanukah celebration" (*Why This World* 372),

"Clarice would have known their story from childhood" (*Why This World* 372). The Chanukah (or Hanukkah), referred to here, is an eight-day Jewish celebration, starting on the 25th day of the Jewish calendar. This celebration pays tribute to the unlikely victory of the Maccabee over the Greeks, who fought against idolatry in the Holy Temple. As Moser himself narrates, "Judas Maccabees and his brothers defied the orders of a foreign king who desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem, ordered the Jews to worship false gods, and tried to destroy those who resisted" (*Why This World* 372). According to the mythological story, defiance was possible only because of the Maccabees' faith, as they were poorly armed. "Judas Maccabaeus's story of sacrifice and doomed struggle against impossible odds would have appealed, like the climax of his 'glorious good death', to Clarice Lispector" (*Why This World* 373), Moser thinks.

What I would like to point out in the previous excerpt is that the story of the Maccabees is a story of Jewish persecution, of Jewish believers trying to recover their background, their faith, and stay true to their beliefs. Therefore, what Moser seems to be trying to show is that Macabéa is not simply inspired by the Maccabees because, like them, she is an unlikely hero. It is not just because she, who is a Northeastern[10] girl, a "smelly, dirty, starving typist living with four other girls in a cheap boardinghouse in a scummy part of downtown Rio" (Moser, *Why This World* 373), even with her tragic fate, became the hero of her own novel. Moser is also building parallels between the Jewish heroes in the Bible, and Macabéa's real-life author, the modern Jewish hero he is trying to build, one that was also deprived from her Jewish background, her Jewish name, her Jewish language.

[10] Northeastern Brazil was, by that time, historically considered as one of the poorest and unprivileged areas in the country. Many Northeastern-born Brazilians move to the Southern states, carrying with them characteristic accents, looking for job opportunities while suffering discrimination within their own country.

By creating a strong connection between Lispector and her Jewish heritage, Moser is not simply illustrating historical aspects of Lispector's background. By pointing out her literary dialogue with Jewish stories or with Spinoza, he is also positioning her work within a Jewish literary tradition. If we think of such approach in Damrosch's terms, we will see that, by doing that, Moser places her work within what some international readers may understand as Jewish literature, since he is presenting, for some, a new but still widely influential writer of Jewish descent, who, not only inserts aspects of her own Jewish experience in her literature, but also builds a dialogue with other Jewish stories, thoughts, or narratives that have circulated as world literature.

His intention of finding a place for Lispector in the world canon of Jewish literature also becomes clear through the many times Moser compares Lispector to Franz Kafka, always linking them through their shared Jewish background:

> Like Kafka, she despaired; but unlike Kafka she eventually, and excruciatingly, struck out in search of the God that had hearkened back to the world she had left. Describing the soul of a Jewish mystic who knows that God is dead and, in the kind of paradox that recurs throughout her work, is determined to find Him anyway. (Moser, *Why This World* 12)

Kafka's name, perhaps one of the most influential literary names of all times, appears in several pages throughout Moser's biography. Here, he is presented as an author who, like Lispector, did not explicitly touch on Jewish themes in his literature, and yet, both of their writings were haunted by their religious background. "It is perhaps in Kafka where one feels with the greatest intensity the Jewish despair at the loss of God. Clarice Lispector's renunciation of God, in this context, was no more than a reflection of a loss that the Jewish world as a whole had experienced" (Moser, *Why This World* 107). Both

Lispector and Kafka are shown as examples of secular, Western Jewish thinking. What Moser sees in common in their Judaism is that they did not conform, and yet, at the same time, they search for God while rejecting him.

Moser's intention of positioning Clarice Lispector as a Jewish writer, and the path he follows in his biography to achieve such a goal, has been sometimes criticized in Brazilian academia, especially when it comes to certain aspects of her life. His version of Lispector's birth and his liability as a writer and biographer have been questioned. In a review of the book, scholar Benjamin Abdala Junior, for example, affirms that "Moser recorre, salvo dois ou três textos inéditos aí mencionados, a uma mesma massa documental já analisada pelas biógrafas que o antecederam" (287) and points out many structural coincidences between Moser's biography and Nádia Gotlib's *Clarice: uma vida que se conta*, published in 1995, considered the main biography on Clarice Lispector before *Why This World.* Abdala Junior seems to suggest, at some point, that Moser might have plagiarized Gotlib, who is a professor at the University of São Paulo:

> As semelhanças não estão só na trilha narrativa. Se no livro de Nádia Gotlib há um subcapítulo intitulado 'As receitas da bruxa', no de Moser há capítulo intitulado 'A bruxa'. No da crítica brasileira há 'Os diálogos possíveis', no de Moser há 'Diálogos possíveis'. Em Clarice, uma vida que se conta há 'O furacão Clarice', em Clarice, 'Furacão Clarice'. (Abdala Júnior 287)

He continues this analysis by pointing out that "Moser escolhe, para integrar parte final do último capítulo do seu livro, a mesma cena com que Gotlib termina o seu livro," (287), making a reference to the dramatic if not iconic scene that happened in Lispector's last days suffering from cancer, when she, while bleeding in a hospital, yelled at a nurse, accusing her of having murdered her character. The critic also casts doubt on Moser's

affirmations that Clarice Lispector's mother would have died from syphilis, as a consequence of rape by Russian soldiers, stating that Moser did not have enough documented sources to include such a statement in the biography, basing one of the main points in his book on interpretations of Lispector's literary production and a story that she would have told a friend: "Não se trata, propriamente, de um documento. Onde e com quem se encontra esse registro? Datas em que foram ouvidos ou registrados? Local em que foram concedidos? E quem afirma que ela contraiu sífilis? Foi ainda Clarice? Ou foi uma conclusão do autor Moser?" (289). Abdala Junior, however, recognizes Moser's biography as bringing one important contribution to the narrative around the author: "O elemento diferencial da biografia feita por Moser reside, no entanto, no enfoque voltado para as questões judaicas na vida e obra de Clarice" (288), he affirms, concluding that "convém recorrer ao livro de Benjamin Moser para buscar aí dados sobre a tradição histórica judaica que provocou a saga dos movimentos migratórios, incluindo os da família Lispector" (292). Naomi Lindstrom agrees. For her, *Why This World* is

> suited to readers who are especially intrigued by this celebrated writer's Jewish background, which she acknowledged but persistently sought to downplay. The quest to understand Clarice's relation to Jewish thought and tradition is made arduous, yet more fascinating, by the absence of overt Jewish thematic markers in her writing. (Lindstrom, "Review of Why This World: A Biography of Clarice Lispector" 192)

Whether or not Moser has forced certain interpretations on Clarice Lispector's story in order to create a Lispector that fits his own views of her, the fact is that his version of Clarice Lispector has convinced the media and the English-speaking world. In the international press, Moser's biography was very well advertised, receiving numerous

reviews, many of them interested in the author's Jewish roots. In a *New York Times* book review, Fernanda Eberstadt declares that "Moser, despite Lispector's avoidance of overt references to Jewishness, places her firmly in the tradition of Jewish mystics who were driven by historical cataclysm and personal trauma to create their own theology from God's absence." This, it is worth noting, was not the only article that the *New York Times* published about the book, with another piece by Dwight Garner days before. In this piece, Garner builds a profile for Lispector, largely based on the biographer's view of her. He affirms, without casting any doubt, that "Lispector's mother was raped by Russian soldiers and contracted syphilis." These two pieces by the *Times* reveal how the book was well-regarded. Not only because it had two different, long articles dedicated to it in one of the most important newspapers in the world, but also because of the high regard that the articles held of Moser's work, echoing, within their lines, the same version of Lispector that Moser had created.

Other international media outlets have maintained the same positivity about the biography. In the *London Review of Books*, journalist Lorna Scott Fox seems to understand Moser's strategy with this book when it comes to re-positioning Lispector's main identification from feminist ideas into Judaism. She writes that "Moser's fascinating and intricate biography tries to *wrest* Lispector from feminists like Hélène Cixous" (emphasis added), suggesting that, for her, Moser's project represents a new lens for viewing Lispector. *Los Angeles Times'* Natasha Randall, in turn, praises the biography as excellent and suggests that Clarice's dilemma of belonging portrayed in Moser's biography represents "all Jews whose lives were brutally rearranged by the violence of the 20th century." Similarly, *Spectator's* Ian Thomson published a review named "'She's the most important Jewish writer since Kafka!'," where Moser's biography is "spellbinding and

endlessly fascinating," and where Clarice's Jewish past and exile is explored. Thomson's title reveals that Moser's comparison between Kafka and Lispector seem to have resonated with others, as the title makes clear. Here, Thomson shows perplexity before such an important Jewish writer of whom he had never heard of.

These are not the only reviews for the biography, which was also analyzed by many other media sources, including *Jewish Book Council, Boston Globe, The Economist, Times Literary Supplement,* among others. Beyond these achievements, it was one of the *New York Times'* 100 Notable Books of 2009 and the *Los Angeles Times'* favourite non-fiction titles of 2009.

But Moser's efforts to boost Clarice Lispector's popularity did not stop at the biography. As Elizabeth Lowe explains: Moser convinced publishing house New Directions of conducting a series of re-translations of Lispector's books. This is what I see as the second part of his plan to build a new persona for Clarice Lispector: he wanted to give her a unique and uniform voice. As Lowe points out, "Moser felt that one of the problems with existing translations of Lispector was that they were done by different translators and that the voice changed from translation to translation" ("Clarice Lispector. The Complete Stories. Translated by Katrina Dodson and edited by Benjamin Moser" 62). Similarly, in his article "Brazil's Clarice Lispector Gets a Second Chance in English," Moser says that "almost immediately afterwards [the biography release], Barbara Epler, publisher of New Directions, got in touch to talk about the translations. And soon thereafter, Alexis Kirschbaum from Penguin Modern Classics in London also expressed her interest: the [re-translation] project would be launched simultaneously in both the UK and the US" ("Brazil's Clarice Lispector Gets a Second Chance in English"). In this piece, he affirms that before his biography, few people in the publishing market knew who Clarice

Lispector was, suggesting that the strategy of having a biography published before helped to build the author's reputation internationally.

Additionally, he justifies new translations by explaining that older translations of her work were "filling her every caesura with overly explicit phrasings that made her prose plodding instead of poetic." He also confirms Lowe's remarks, explaining that there were too many different unrelated people responsible for her translations, and these people saw her work differently. But that is not all: his point of view was that there were a lot of wrong assumptions regarding Lispector influencing her translations. Moser writes: "There was talk that she was a foreigner (she was, in fact, born in Ukraine, in 1920, but arrived in Brazil in earliest infancy) or that she was, as Elizabeth Bishop, her neighbor in Rio, assumed, more or less ignorant (she was actually one of the most highly educated and well-traveled women of her generation)" ("Brazil's Clarice Lispector Gets a Second Chance in English"). The strategy, then, was clear: even though there would still be multiple translators working on the new English translations, all of them would be coordinated by Moser in order to present a more consistent corpus of Clarice's work to English-speaking audiences. This way, there would be a common voice preserved in Lispector's presence in the Anglophone world. This common voice would be achieved by reducing the level of domestication in Lispector's new translations. "We deliberately selected a young group," he explains, adding: "there's an urgent need for more translators from the Portuguese, and we thought that by giving some younger translators the chance to work with a classic author, we could expand the pool a bit and encourage other publishers to translate Brazilian and Portuguese literature" (Moser, "Brazil's Clarice Lispector Gets a Second Chance in English").

Through this project, Penguin Modern Classics and New Directions have already published many of Lispector's works— some re-translations, some first-time English editions. The first publication was *The Hour of the Star*, in 2011, with a new translation by Moser himself, where the strangeness of the novel's language is closer to the original in comparison to Giovanni Pontiero's work, better preserving the author's unique use of language. According to a study conducted by professor Lenita Maria Rimoli Esteves, from the University of São Paulo, in which she compares around seven excerpts from Pontiero's 1992 translation with the ones by Moser, the later one "se aproxima mais do texto de Clarice, ao passo que Giovanni Pontiero muitas vezes suaviza, ou aplaina, o texto em português e insere nele explicitações que o deixam mais de acordo com as convenções da língua inglesa" (671). The scholar concludes that Pontiero might have made more adaptations because he maybe thought that following the logic of the original "provocaria muita resistência na cultura de língua inglesa numa primeira fase" (671).

In the 2011 edition of *The Hour of the Star*, with a foreword by Colm Tóibín, and an afterword by Moser, the story is presented by the translator as "Explicitly Jewish and explicitly Brazilian" (Moser, *The Hour of the Star* 81). In Moser's words in his afterword, "Clarice Lispector's weird word choices, strange syntax, and lack of interest in conventional grammar produces sentences – often fragmented sentences – that veer toward abstraction without ever quite reaching it" (*The Hour of the Star* 80). Yet, he affirms, "her books are not untranslatable. They are not littered with regionalisms, slang, puns, or inside jokes. Her meaning is almost always perfectly clear" (*The Hour of the Star* 80). For this reason, he thinks that "the translator must therefore resist the temptation to explain or rearrange her prose, which can only flatten it and remove from it that 'foreign' aura that is

its hallmark, and its glory" (*The Hour of the Star* 80). As Esteves and others[11] have stated, Moser's translation made a clear effort not to "fix" Clarice when she sounded strange or foreign. For him, it is precisely such a foreignness that preserves, in his own words, the "aura" (*The Hour of the Star* 80) of her work. But Moser was the one who wrote a whole biography placing Clarice Lispector in a life of diaspora and immigration. He also wrote, for *The New Yorker* magazine, in an adaptation from the introduction of *The Complete Stories*, that "new subjects require new language. Part of Clarice's odd grammar can be traced to the powerful influence of the Jewish mysticism that her father introduced her to" ("The True Glamour of Clarice Lispector"). Moser's reference to Lispector's aura seems, at times, to be almost in Walter Benjamin's sense, even if Benjamin's concept does not discuss literature. At times, he seems to believe that the work of Clarice Lispector is almost one single, unique piece, and, if "the uniqueness of a work of art is identical with its embeddedness in the context of tradition" (Benjamin 231, trans. Underwood), wouldn't Moser's effort to preserve such foreignness in Lispector's voice be an attempt to preserve, also, its history, its context and, therefore, restore its "aura"?

The answer might be yes, and a good indication of that is a comparison I would like to make between Moser's afterword in the 2011 edition of the book, with the afterword by Giovanni Pontiero in the 1986 *New Directions* one. As we saw before, Moser is more concerned with the translation issues in the work of Clarice Lispector. He is, indeed, concerned with her use of language, highlighting how Lispector herself desired to have her

[11] Laurieny da Costa Vivela: "Pontiero (1992) tende a reformular o texto de forma a produzir uma tradução em língua inglesa de acordo com a norma padrão da língua, modificando em grande medida os aspectos estilísticos analisados. Moser (2011) se mantém bem mais próximo do texto de partida, reproduzindo, na língua inglesa, as estruturas sintáticas truncadas e os estranhamentos da escritura clariceana."

book translated with awareness of her unique literary voice. In the text, he cites Lispector's response to a French translation of her *Perto do coração selvage*m, in which she writes that "I admit, if you like, that the sentences do not reflect the usual manner of speaking, but I assure you that it is the same in Portuguese" (qtd. in Moser, *The Hour of the Star* 79). For Moser, *The Hour of the Star*, is, indeed, harder for a foreigner to read than it is for a Brazilian because of her "subtle arrangement of everyday language" (*The Hour of the Star* 80), and, as I noted earlier, he believes that Lispector's writing is "foreign" (*The Hour of the Star* 81), even though he recognizes the novel's concerns regarding the issues of Brazilian northeastern migration to the southern states.

Pontiero, on the other hand, does not focus his afterword on the challenges that Lispector's style brings. He actually focuses it on her themes, and, for him, such themes are mostly on issues of Brazil, and on philosophical, existential matters. Pontiero only makes reference to Lispector's Jewish background in one sentence, while highlighting the novel's many references to God (94). For him, her "Jewish-Slavonic ancestry is important in this context," but nothing is said on its influence on the level of language or on Macabéa's own name, for example. If Moser believes that Lispector reads even stranger for a Brazilian, for Pontiero, "the grim social factors governing her bleak existence are too familiar in the lower strata of Brazilian society. Factually summarized, Macabéa's history suggests a stereotype from a sociological survey" (91). Additionally, Pontiero believes that the book brings a "subtle interplay of fiction and philosophy" (89) in which "she draws an interesting comparison between herself as the writer and the character she is creating, between reason and instinct, between knowledge and innocence" (92).

This comparison is very illuminating as it helps us think about the different approach that Moser proposes towards Lispector's work when compared to her previous

main translator. Pontiero seemed to think that the biggest value of Lispector was her meditations on the level of ideas. Moser, on the contrary, thinks that what can "restore the spines of the cactus" (*The Hour of the Star* 81) for Lispector is a recognition of her peculiar use of the Portuguese language, and "how much courage it took to write" (81) like her.

The scholar Lawrence Venuti discusses the ethics of translation, which may be illuminating to us when discussing Moser's view on Lispector's translations. As Venuti notes, "in the translation process, foreign languages, texts, and cultures always undergo some degree and form of exclusion" (*The Translator's Invisibility* 267), which is to say that it's not possible for a translator to achieve the true voice of an author or to be completely faithful to the source text. However, that is not the same as saying that the translator should not try to achieve a level of cultural respect towards the source text and its culture. For Venuti, "the ethnocentric violence of translation is inevitable" (*The Translator's Invisibility* 267), yet the translator should avoid domesticating the source text or subordinating its language to the target one. Therefore, Venuti proposes that the translator, instead of trying to sound excessively familiar to the reader, and instead of trying to pretend that what the reader has in their hands is not a translation, should have a foreignizing approach towards the target text, maintaining certain particularities of the otherness in the source text visible, whether they are at the level of vocabulary or syntax, even if it might sound unusual in the target language. Foreignization, for him, "does not offer unmediated access to the foreign--no translation can do that" (*The Translator's Invisibility* 24). Still, it can "be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism" (*The Translator's Invisibility* 16). Benjamin Moser, in this sense, seems to criticize what he sees as excessive domestication in Lispector's previous translations, searching for an approach

towards her text that takes into consideration the otherness of not only the Brazilian aspects of her writing but also the Jewish ones.

Aside from *A hora da estrela*, other publications in Moser's project include *Água Viva* (with the original title kept), translated by Stefan Tobler; *The Passion According to G.H.* (*A paixão segundo G.H.*), translated by Idra Novey; *A Breath of Life* (*Um sopro de vida*), translated by Johnny Lorenz; *Near to the Wild Heart* (*Perto do coração selvagem*), translated by Alison Entrekin*;* and *The Chandelier* (*O lustre*); translated by Moser and Magdalena Edwards. New Directions has also received funding from Brazil's Biblioteca Nacional to translate *Uma aprendizagem ou o livro dos prazeres.* Additionally, New Directions has recently announced that Lispector's children's book *The Woman Who Killed the Fish* (*A mulher que matou o peixe*), will be launched in June 2021 with a translation by Benjamin Moser. In both the British and the American editions, the books were released with beautiful design projects, sometimes with renowned people signing the foreword or cover notes.

In the beginning of *A Breath of Life*, for example, there are excerpts of emails sent from the internationally recognized Spanish film director Pedro Almodóvar to Benjamin Moser, in which the filmmaker says that the novel "has a similar effect on me as the first novels I read by J.M. Coetzee. Each phrase accumulates such a quantity of meanings; it is so dense, rotund, and rich" (XII). It is worth noting that Almodóvar initially declined Moser's invitation to write the preface, but Moser decided to use their email exchange as a paratext anyway, capitalizing on Almodóvar's renown to promote Lispector. On *Near to The Wild Heart*'s cover, we can find Jonathan Franzen's seal calling Clarice "A truly remarkable author." Although not necessarily Jewish names, linking people like Jonathan Franzen, Pedro Almodóvar, and Tolm Coíbín to Lispector, also helped position Lispector

with other literary traditions outside Brazil. If, as Damrosch explains, world literature is also a form of reading, if it is about the life of a literary work in a different literary tradition, showing that important and influential writers have read such an author would also suggest that this author has influenced American or European literary traditions and, therefore, can help us to understand them.

Yet, the most important book published in this ambitious endeavour was 2015's *The Complete Stories,* which included every short story by Lispector (even though there has been some debate on whether every text in the collection can be considered a story).[12] This was something unprecedented for Lispector even in Brazil, the author's home country, and the book was "translated" into Portuguese by Rocco, in an edition identical to the American version, which included Moser's notes, but not the translator's one, for obvious reasons. The translations were done by Katrina Dodson under Moser's guidance, and Dodson does exceptional work with Clarice's short stories. Luana de Freitas, for example, has compared Dodson's translation of the short story *A menor mulher do mundo* with Giovanni Pontiero's in 1972, and found out that, while "Pontiero interfered in the rhythm of Lispector's story, sometimes merging paragraphs and periods, sometimes dismembering paragraphs" ("Clarice Lispector's Radically Translated into the English-Speaking Literary System" 253), Katrina Dodson "maintains the extension of periods and paragraphs" ("Clarice Lispector's Radically Translated into the English-Speaking Literary System" 253). For Freitas, a comparison of this specific story's case with another translation from Pontiero,

[12] A specialist and biographer of Clarice Lispector, professor Nádia Battella Gotlib wrote the article *De cuentos reunidos a todos os contos*, in which she questions Moser's choice of including some journalistic texts by Clarice Lispector in the collection. Even though she recognizes that Lispector did not always follow a clear separation of literary genres, she does not think that Moser's choices are completely justified. See: https://revistacult.uol.com.br/home/de-cuentos-reunidos-todos-os-contos/

Near to The Wild Heart, launched more than 18 years apart from The *Smallest Woman*, in 1990, show that "the search for the normalization of the text" was Pontiero's translation strategy, but "Dodson's retranslation conveys a Clarice almost as singular and linguistically rich as our own" (Clarice Lispector's Radically Translated into the English-Speaking Literary System" 256), because it keeps Lispector's "radicality, that is, her unique use of language, in this case, specifically, rhythm, lexical choice, parallelism, and repetition" (Clarice Lispector's Radically Translated into the English-Speaking Literary System" 256).

The success of Dodson's work might be related to her understanding of Lispector's text. By analysing Dodson's own words about her work with Lispector, one can see that she maintains, in many ways, a discourse on Lispector's text that matches Moser's. As she herself writes in the *Complete Stories' Translator's Notes* section, "The most dizzying feature in Clarice's writing are the surprises on the level of the sentence" (629). Therefore, she makes, as a translator, her best effort to sound as strange as the original author. In the book's "Acknowledgements" section, Dodson's thanks her Brazilian friends "who answered endless questions like 'Does this sound strange in Portuguese?'" (644). In addition, Dodson's work seems to be more sensitive to gender aspects of the source texts, and, differently from Pontiero, who saw the animals in Clarice's work as representatives of "brute existence" (qtd. in Hedrick 76), she thinks that animals, many times, represent the feminine existence: "I decided to use the feminine pronoun 'she' for the chicken in many of these stories, where the chicken takes on the role of a particular character or has a strong resonance with female identity. [...]. In other stories, where an animal is just a passing

thing, I use 'it'" (qtd. in Smith).[13] It is important to state that, the "chicken" to which Dodson refers to, in the stories "Uma galinha" and "O ovo e a galinha," are, in the Portuguese original, feminine. In other words, it is a hen. However, Dodson chose to go with the word "chicken" because, for her, it "sounded more colloquial and more laughable" than a hen (qtd. in Smith).

Dodson's understanding of how Lispector's style is essential in capturing the meaning of her stories goes beyond her use of the pronoun "she" or "it" when it comes to animals. Let us compare an excerpt of her 2015 translation of the short story *Uma galinha*, originally published in 1960, and the one made by Giovanni Pontiero in 1985. The story presents a hen that will be killed to serve as lunch for a family, but fights for its life, running from death, until it is captured by the man of the family and, nervous, lays an egg. The chicken is then treated as a pet. For a while, the egg saves it from its fate. But at the end of the story, after serving the family, it is killed and eaten anyways. Here, the differences between Pontiero and Dodson's translations start with the title. While the first one decides to call it "The Chicken," the latter goes with "A Chicken." One more time, Dodson is closer to Lispector's original, where an indefinite article, "Uma," appears. Using "A" seems inappropriate because the chicken, in the text, is an ordinary one, with nothing special – nothing but a meal. Using "the" gives it some sort of singularity, which is not the case. The same problem is repeated in the text itself, as we can see in the table below.

Clarice Lispector (1960)	Giovanni Pontiero (1985)	Katrina Dodson (2015)
Era uma galinha de domingo. Ainda viva	*It was the chicken for Sunday's lunch.* Still alive,	*She was a Sunday chicken.* Still alive because

[13] Indeed, Dodson does not use the pronouns he/she every time Lispector refers to an animal. In the story *Dry Sketches of Horses* (*Seco estudo dos cavalos*), for example, in which Lispector emulates scientific annotations on what a Horse is, she refers to the horses by using the pronoun it. (*The Complete Stories* 451)

porque *não passava* de nove horas da manhã. *Parecia calma.* Desde sábado encolhera-se num canto da cozinha. *Não olhava para ninguém, ninguém olhava para ela.* Mesmo quando a escolheram, apalpando sua intimidade com indiferença, não souberam dizer se era gorda ou magra. *Nunca se adivinharia nela um anseio.* (156)	because *it was still only* nine o'clock in the morning. *She seemed placid enough.* Since Saturday she had huddled in a corner of the kitchen. *She looked at no one and no one paid any attention to her.* Even when they had chosen the chicken, feeling the intimacy of her body with indifference, they could not tell if she were plump or thin. *No one would ever have guessed the chicken felt anxious.* (28)	*it wasn't yet* nine in the morning. *She seemed calm.* Since Saturday she'd been huddling in a corner of the kitchen. *She looked at no one, no one looked at her.* Even when they selected her, feeling up her intimate parts indifferently, they couldn't tell whether she was fat or skinny. *No one would ever guess she had a yearning.* (127)

Table 1: Comparison: Giovanni Pontiero's and Katrina Dodson's Translations. Emphasis added.

In the original, Lispector does not use a personal pronoun to refer to the chicken in the first sentence of the story – which, in Portuguese, is not unusual and respects the rules of grammar. However, since it would sound strange in English, the translator must choose a pronoun and relate it to the chicken. While all over the text, Dodson uses the pronoun "she," Pontiero mixes "she" with "it." The reason for his choice is not clear but the choice can make the text sound confusing and, initially, the reader could have the impression that the sentence "She seemed placid enough" might be referring to a different character.

Actually, the whole sentence is a curious case in Pontiero's translation. In Portuguese, Clarice writes: "Era uma galinha de domingo" (*Todos os contos* 156) – which,

literally, can be translated as Dodson did: "She was a Sunday chicken" (*The Complete Stories* 127). Giovanni Pontiero, on the other hand, decides to change the phrase, stating: "It was the chicken for Sunday's lunch" (*Family Ties* 28). Here, he seems uncomfortable with Lispector's style. Therefore, he reorganizes the phrase to make clear that the chicken was a meal, which, in the original text, is already explicit in the second phrase. Additionally, he gives the chicken a singularity, whereas, in the original text, the animal is, for the family, just another Sunday dish.

Pontiero also intervenes with the text's rhythm. First, while in the original text the first two sentences form one separate paragraph, in his translation they are added to what, in the original, would be the second paragraph. The sentence "Parecia calma" (*Todos os contos* 156), which, in Portuguese, has only two words, becomes a four-word sentence: "She seemed placid enough" (*Family Ties* 28). The word "enough," added by him, does not contribute to the meaning of the text, and sounds like an unnecessary addition. Dodson, in this sense, is more economic. "She seemed calm" (*The Complete Stories* 127), she writes, reducing the number of words as much as possible. Her translation is more adequate, also, in the phrase "She looked at no one, no one looked at her" (*The Complete Stories* 127), following the same logic as the original "Não olhava para ninguém, ninguém olhava para ela" (*Todos os contos* 156). In the older version, Pontiero goes with "She looked at no one and no one paid any attention to her" (*Family Ties* 28), which is a peculiar choice, not only because he gets rid of the comma separation, but because, in Portuguese, both the chicken and the people were doing the same thing: not *looking*. In his version, on the other hand, while the chicken is "not looking," people are "not paying attention." Since the short story attributes human characteristics to the animal, making a differentiation only

contributes to loss of meaning and could lead the reader to understand that, while the human characters are capable of more complex perception, the chicken can merely look.

This comparison is important here as an example of how, even though most of the translations in the project were not done by Moser, there is, in these new editions, an understanding that Lispector's themes are linked to her style, and both are not inseparable. If there is a search for Lispector's voice, as Moser affirms, thus, this search should also be as close as possible to the Portuguese original, avoiding domestication.

This achievement, of course, would not have been possible without translators who shared a similar understanding of Lispector. Dodson's excellent work was recognized. Her translation won the 2016 PEN Translation Prize, and *The Complete Stories* has been translated into many different languages, attracting the attention of publishers in countries such as Poland, Germany, Hungary, and the Netherlands.

All of these publications have clearly had an impact on the publishing world outside the U.S. In addition to the Portuguese versions mentioned earlier, many translations and foreign editions of these works were published worldwide, including in German, Spanish, French, and Italian. It also inspired a republication of Clarice Lispector in Spanish, with Ediciones Siruela's project *Biblioteca Clarice*, which, among its publications, has *Todos los cuentos*, a Spanish edition *of The Complete Stories*. In Brazil, Rocco has also launched the books *Todas as cartas*, a collection of Lispector's letters, and *Todas as crônicas*. These books' cover and design resemble the ones in *The Complete Stories*.

Not just the publishing market has responded to these works. In the media, as well, many publications of Clarice Lispector were produced after the publication of *Complete Stories*. *The New York Times* considered it one of the Notable Books of 2015, and their collaborator Terrence Rafferty said the novel proves that, alongside Borges, she was "one

of the true originals of Latin American literature," highlighting Lispector's strange writing and praising Katrina Dodson's translation as "sensitively" conducted (Rafferty). *The Guardian* considered it as one of the best Latin American books of 2015 and affirmed that the books "helps contemporary readers understand more about current class issues in Brazil" (Collazo). Canada's *Globe and Mail* published a book review of *Complete Stories* in which Steven W. Beattie highlights the "uncanny" aspects of Lispector's prose in what he calls a "magisterial collection." Here, Lispector is once again placed among other great Jewish writers like Kafka, and the author affirms that "Lispector's writing – dense, often engaging in aspects of surrealism or disjunction, and steeped in a tradition of Jewish mysticism – is not easy, or particularly comfortable." *The New Yorker*, in turn, gave space for Benjamin Moser to publish, in their magazine, part of *Complete Stories'* introduction under the title of "The True Glamour of Clarice Lispector." Here, Moser writes a long profile for Lispector, highlighting her achievement as one of the only women and Jews of her time to attend the National Law Faculty of the University of Brazil (currently, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) and reinforces the subversive aspects of her stories: "Had any writer ever described a seventy-seven-year-old lady dreaming of coitus with a pop star, or an eighty-one-year-old woman masturbating?"

Like in *The Complete Stories'* case, the novels also deserved attention from the media. *The Boston Globe*, for example, published a joint piece of criticism about four of her novels, *Near to the Wild Heart*, *A Breath of Life*, *Água Viva*, and *The Passion According to G.H.*, in which Susan Straight highlights the atemporal value of her novels, expressing that it can help readers to understand our contemporary days.

The literary website *Literary Hub*, in turn, has published numerous articles dedicated to Lispector's work in the last few years. One of them, from 2019, is a piece by

Moser, in which he reviews the novel *The Besieged City*, launched the same year. In this piece, Moser reinforces the biographical interpretation of Lispector's work he does in the biography. Again, the Jewishness of the novel is highlighted. Moser opens the piece in a curious way, narrating the experiences of Isaac Babel--the soviet journalist and writer--when reporting the consequences of the war in Ukraine, in 1920, close to when Lispector was born. Moser affirms that Babel, while travelling with Bolshevik soldiers and watching the road, highlighted how the horses seemed to be disappearing from the landscape, as "that indispensable creature was gradually being replaced by motors" (Moser, "On the Great Clarice Lispector"). In the next paragraph, he correlates this "dehorsification" that Babel observed with Lispector's work:

> Twenty-five years later, "dehorsification" would provide the most poignant metaphor in a book Chaya—by then a Brazilian named Clarice—was writing. The Besieged City tells of a girl's transformation into a woman, and a township's transformation into a city. The settlement's "civilization" makes its formerly humble denizens slick and chatty; and as São Geraldo expands, words, possessions, and marriage progressively dehorse Lucrécia. She is grateful to be domesticated — but the animals retreat, and The Besieged City ends with their surrender: "the last horses had already emigrated, surrendering the metropolis to the glory of its mechanism" (Moser, "On the Great Clarice Lispector").

Pieces like this one show how Moser, ten years after the release of *Why This World*, keeps echoing the ideas presented in his book. His Jewish Lispector, haunted by her Jewishness, which has deeply influenced her work, is taken out of the book pages and placed in a showcase where she is more visible. This way, he projects his interpretation of her work beyond academic circles. *The New Yorker, The New York Times, The Boston*

Globe, The Literary Hub— all of these venues are now populated by a Jewish Brazilian writer born in Ukraine.

As one final note before concluding, it is important to reiterate that, as in the case of the biography, Moser's retranslation project was also criticized. Elizabeth Lowe, who has also translated Clarice Lispector, while giving Moser credit for Lispector's success, writes that "it is also important to honor, rather than dismiss, the work of the translators who laid the foundation for the reading of Lispector in English" ("Clarice Lispector. The Complete Stories. Translated by Katrina Dodson and edited by Benjamin Moser" 62). Furthermore, she says that Dodson's translation "while careful, is not perfect" ("Clarice Lispector. The Complete Stories. Translated by Katrina Dodson and edited by Benjamin Moser" 63), and states that Lispector "was very irritable about being 'pinned down,' resisting efforts to link her to 'influences' or genres. Thus, the premise that a single 'voice' for this author is possible is a betrayal of her unique creative spirit. In fact, the idea of anyone appropriating her 'voice' would have offended her" (Clarice Lispector. The Complete Stories. Translated by Katrina Dodson and edited by Benjamin Moser" 64).

There are many aspects in Lowe's observations with which I agree. Indeed, it is not possible to claim a single way of interpreting an author's voice. As Lawrence Venuti writes, "a translation always communicates an interpretation, a foreign text that is partial and altered, supplemented with features peculiar to the translating language, no longer inscrutably foreign but made comprehensible in a distinctively domestic style" (*The Scandals of Translation* 5). Therefore, it does not seem possible to preserve, in the target text, exactly the same effect that the source text creates. Yet, much of the evidence in this chapter has shown, the clear vision that Moser and other translators in the New Directions' project, like Dodson, had regarding the importance of Lispector's voice to communicate the

meaning of her writing has resulted in target texts that are less domesticating and more representative of her Portuguese originals.

Besides Lowe, Magdalena Edwards, who is credited alongside Moser as a co-translator of *The Chandelier*, wrote, for the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, a piece entitled "Benjamin Moser and the Smallest Woman in the World." Here, Edwards writes that, initially, she was supposed to be the only translator for the book. Even though Moser and Edwards were long-time friends, she says that Moser tried to get her fired, "arguing that my completed manuscript was not up to snuff, that my level of Portuguese was insufficient, and that he would have to rewrite every line of my translation," basing himself, according to her, on only a draft. Edwards also accused Moser of erasing her, Katrina Dodson, and other translators when advertising the books. She points out the fact that, when signing a book review for *The New York Times*, Moser's bibliographical note would display himself as the only translator of *The Chandelier*. This specific piece by Moser, in which he reviews the book *This Little Art*, by Kate Briggs, was criticized in a *Times* Letter to the Editors for being a "scanty and distorted notion of the book" (Bernofsky et al). This would not be important to mention here if, among the letter's authors, there was not also the name of the translator Katrina Dodson.

Final Notes: New Winds for Lispector's Work

Leaving controversies aside, this chapter shows how Moser's project was able to create new winds for the story of Clarice Lispector as an author of world literature. Basing myself on the theories formulated by David Damrosch, I highlighted how the steps Moser followed were an effort to position Lispector within another literary tradition outside the Brazilian one. I am aware that there are examples of Jewish literature in different national

traditions. Therefore, I believe that placing Lispector as a Jewish writer who not only contributes to understand the shared pain and diaspora of the Jewish community, but also dialogues with other writers of Jewish origin, can reinforce her role as "a positive model for the future development" of different host cultures, and allows her to circulate better in "a space defined in many ways by the host culture's national tradition and the present needs of its own writers" (*What Is World Literature?* 282).

Nonetheless, having his own very clear vision of what Lispector represents as an author, as exemplified in his writings about her, including the biography, also helped Moser bring together a very organized dissemination project for Lispector – one never seen before in the history of Brazilian literature. Moser's search for Lispector's true voice might be questionable. Still, this effort resulted in excellent translations that contribute positively to Lispector's presence across the English-speaking world.

But something that should not be taken for granted is the fact that, more than a scholar, Moser is also a talented salesman. He was able to circulate content into media outlets and make them publish the work of an author who was not known to the wider reading public in circles outside academia.

Moser's discourse on Lispector's work, as well, values the genius of her style. Her Jewish background, for him, is not simply present in her literature on the level of her thematics, but it also influenced the *way* she wrote. His work, in this sense, is also concerned with the aesthetic value of her bibliography rather than simply focusing on its social intersections. Alongside the marketing and awareness raising of his project, this may also be one of the reasons why he was more successful than other talented and important scholars such as Giovani Pontiero or Hélène Cixous who, previously, tried to attach her to philosophy or feminism. Today, we can safely affirm that Lispector is closer to matching

her popularity in academia with her popularity in the market. There is, for sure, a new space opening up for this author in world literature. But she is not the only one. In the next chapter, I show how Machado de Assis, as well, seems to be occupying new spaces.

Chapter 2: Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis: Overlooked Genius and Black Literary Master

Despite his undisputed position in the Brazilian literary canon, the nineteenth-century novelist and short-story writer Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis still occupies a complex position on the world literary stage. On one side, it does seem like he has been more widely and internationally read outside Brazilianist circles. Susan Sontag, Harold Bloom, Woody Allen, Michael Wood: these are just a few of the figures outside of Brazilian Studies who have written about or have pointed out Machado's influence on their work. This suggests that his literature has, directly or indirectly, influenced the legacy of well-regarded creators internationally. As well, Machado's writings are widely available in English. Some of his stories were translated into English already in the 1920s and, in the 1950s, with the translation of novels such as *Dom Casmurro* (1899) and *Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas* (1881), his work started to be more prominently published in that language (Alves da Silva). With the 2018 release of a highly praised collection that brings together his complete short stories to Anglophone audiences by W.W. Norton's Liveright, and with his novels being translated and re-translated every once in a while, there is not much to add in terms of accessibility to his work. In 2020, something surprising and unprecedent in the history of Brazilian literature happened: two different English translations of Machado's *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas*, frequently pointed out as his most important novel, were almost simultaneously released: one by Penguin Classics, translated by Flora Thomson-DeVeaux; and another by Liveright, translated by Margaret Jull Costa. The cherry on top came in the turbulent month of May, when Thomson-DeVeaux's translation sold out on both the American Amazon and Barnes and Noble

websites, with the book becoming the number-one best-seller in Amazon's Caribbean and Latin American Literature category, all this more than 100 years after its original Portuguese debut. Nonetheless, there is a stigma that still surrounds Machado de Assis: that of an overlooked genius. Is this changing at all? If so, how?

First and foremost, let me explain two theories that are important in the argumentative line of this chapter. Before formulating my thesis or trying to answer the questions I made earlier, in the next few paragraphs, I'll explain two views on the dynamics of world literature: Pascale Casanova's literature-world, or world republic of letters, and David Damrosch's views on world literature as a mode of reading and of circulation. I'll then expound how both Casanova and Damrosch guide the rest of the chapter.

While trying to understand the dynamics in the circulation of literature internationally, French critic Pascale Casanova develops the hypothetical existence of literature as a world, or, of a world literary space. Although such a space would be relatively free from the influence of economic and political affairs, Casanova also affirms that it has its own hierarchies, inequalities and conflicts. "Exerted within this *international literary space* are relations of force and a violence peculiar to them—in short, a *literary domination*" (*The World Republic of Letters* xii). There is, therefore, no harmony in this so-called world, as the author argues, and "National and international writers fight with different weapons, for divergent aesthetic, commercial and editorial rewards" ("Literature as a World" 82) in a race for literary legitimacy. Casanova explains that this "literature-world" (xii) is dominated by the centre-- meaning the literatures that accumulate more literary capital, resources, and traditions, in other words, European literatures and other literatures of dominant languages impose their aesthetic values on the peripheries. This way, "the territories of literature are defined and delimited according to their aesthetic

distance from the place where literary consecration is ordained. The cities where literary resources are concentrated, where they accumulate, become places where belief is incarnated, centers of credit, as it were" (*The World Republic of Letters* 23). In addition, "the oldest literary spaces are also the most endowed, which is to say that they exert an uncontested dominion over the whole of the literary world" (*The World Republic of Letters* 352).

For Casanova, in this context, "the effects of consecration by the central authorities can be so powerful as to give certain writers from the margins who have achieved full recognition the illusion that the structure of domination has simply disappeared" ("Literature as a World 87"). However, as "the unequal distribution of literary resources is fundamental to the structure of the entire world literary space" ("Literature as a World" 83), this illusion serves to "perpetuate the legend of the great literary enchantment and to disarm writers from the periphery who are seeking recognition strategies that would be both subversive and effective" ("Literature as a World" 88) to legitimize their own aesthetic values.

Although David Damrosch diverges from Casanova in many aspects of her argumentation,[14] his work also observes some sort of complex dispute in the world literary stage, as "the worlds of world literature are often worlds in collision" (14). If, for him, the dynamics of world literature are "always as much about the host culture's values and needs as it is about a work's source culture" (*What Is World Literature?* 283), or, in other words,

[14] Damrosch sees Casanova's book as "an unsatisfactory account of world literature in general" (27) but "a good account of the operation of world literature within the modern French context" (27). He gives the example of the dynamics of world literature in Brazil, which is not simply dominated by the European traditions, but it is "shaped by a very different set of forces" (27), in a "two-way process, one that is grounded as muchin Brazil's dynamic heterogeneity as in French cultural authority" (27).

a literary work, in order to succeed in foreign lands, needs to add something to or help to understand the local cultural and literary traditions, then it is also implicit that works from countries with more widely spoken languages, older literary traditions, or more cultural influence over larger numbers of nations encounter less resistance when circulating in the international scene. Works from more peripheral literary traditions, to use Casanova's terms, then, would face more challenges when trying to penetrate the more central ones. Still, this is not impossible as Damrosch recognizes that "a work can enter world literature by embodying what are taken to be universal themes and values, so that local cultural detail can be considered secondary or irrelevant" (213). Nonetheless, this process would involve lots of convincing that there is a space for such an author to occupy in the world literary stage, which could be achieved through a critical engagement that reads this foreign author, not only based on what they represent in their home nation but based also on the issues and subjects that concern the new territory. With both Casanova and Damrosch in mind, I discuss, in this chapter, some changes and patterns in the reception history of Machado de Assis in English. My two main arguments are, first, that even though Machado is becoming more and more known outside Brazilianist circles, he has been historically seen as a lost genius, meaning, some author who is a hidden treasure in the periphery and who was never fully acknowledged by the general Anglophone public. My point is that being overlooked--as much as being good and original--has become part of the discourse on Machado's identity in the English-speaking world. His peripheral position in the world literary stage has been tied to his international image among critics--and his reputation is in a strange cycle of an author constantly trying to not simply exist in world literature, but enter some sort of international canon, which might reinforce his peripheral position rather than displaying him as a world author. Secondly, I argue that, as this is a time of increased

interest in racial issues in the cultural industry in general, Machado's reputation benefits from that. Even though he used to write about the white elites of Rio de Janeiro, Machado de Assis was the grandson of freed African slaves, and, despite already being a middle-aged adult when slavery was abolished in Brazil, in 1888, managed to become a renowned writer, a member of the country's Academy of Letters, and Brazil's most venerated author to date. Since the beginning of the twenty first century, the recent English reception of his work uses race to add value to his literary production, not merely mentioning it as a biographical note but as a major subject of study, and there has been a willingness to read his writings from a racial perspective even when these issues are not explicitly present in them. This new attention to race, in an age in which "more and more works of world literature are now favored for displaying specific ethnic identity" (Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* 187), adds, I believe, a new layer of international appeal to his work, and has the potential to project his art and attract new audiences for his writing. Recognizing both patterns is worthy of notice as it indicates a few things: even though Machado is crucial to understanding the history of Brazilian literature, and even though he has influenced authors internationally, critics have, historically, had difficulty in finding a space for him to occupy in English-speaking literary systems. This happens because, by simply comparing him to other great Western authors or treating him as some sort of Brazilian "miracle," critics have failed to position him as an important figure to understand the history of Western literature, regardless of his literary talent and of the possible universality of his themes, such as the comedy of life or the failing nature of subjectivity. Now Machado holds editorial prestige in the market. Although things are not necessarily linked, this has happened after his work started to be more frequently read from a racial perspective. My work, then, explores a critical trend in Machado's literature that is related

to these racial subjects. It is true that Machado was important in Brazilian literature regardless of his race. However, as I show here, black movements and critics argue that Machado de Assis's race has been erased, even with visual representations of him being historically whitened. Also, when authors leave their original national context, their work can gain new meanings or symbolic values. With his blackness being more recurrently acknowledged both in criticism and in his visual representations, his literature gains a new layer of internationality. The black communities are both present and underrepresented in Anglophone literary traditions. If Machado can become a black literary genius in the canon of Western literature, then his work can be an important piece, as Damrosch points out, to fulfill the host culture's needs by helping diversify the general understanding of who are the world literary geniuses. I am not saying that the value of Machado's body of work relies on his race. However, recent criticism shows a combined acknowledgment of both his literary and social value.

To address the complexity of Machado and the changing reception of his work in the English world, this chapter consists of three parts. Firstly, and more briefly, I bring an overview of previous works of critics such as Roberto Schwarz, Michael Wood, Earl E. Fitz, and Piers Armstrong, who have touched on issues such as the *universality* of Machado's work and his international reception in the twentieth century. My contribution starts in the second section, in which I analyze the depiction of Machado de Assis as an overlooked genius from the periphery in a selection of critical pieces on him published both by Brazilianist and non-Brazilianist academics and in North American media venues, starting from the 1950s until 2018. These pieces are by important and influential names such as Helen Caldwell, John Gledson, Susan Sontag, and Benjamin Moser. The third section, in turn, analyzes pieces of criticism, recent Machado publications, and media

publications from 2002 to 2020 that interpret or promote Machado's work from a race perspective. The analysis in this section takes into consideration, as well, the historical contexts of race relations in Brazil and how they add complexity to the subject of race in Machado's case. I intend to interpret these two patterns through the lenses of Casanova's and Damrosch's theories of world literature to understand which place Machado might occupy in the world literary scene.

Previous Discussions on Machado de Assis's International Reception

In this section, I bring the work of four different critics who have previously worked with the reception of Machado within the international context and have preceded my work. I discuss opposite views on the importance of local versus universal aspects of Machado's work by two important literary critics: Roberto Schwarz and Michael Wood. I then bring in the works of Earl E. Fitz and Piers Armstrong that deal with the reception of Machado de Assis in North America in the twentieth century.

For the Brazilian critic Roberto Schwarz, in order to understand the literature of Machado de Assis, one should read it within the Brazilian context. In his book *Um mestre na periferia do capitalismo* (1990), Schwarz reads the work of Machado focusing on *Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas*, to argue that the formal choices in Machado's work are directly influenced by the organization of the Brazilian society. For him, Brazilian society, which would coexist, at the same time, with bourgeois, liberal values while still in a slave-based context, would be built with complexity and contradiction, which is reflected in Machado's novel. This way, "o procedimento literário de Brás Cubas — a sua volubilidade — consiste em desdizer e descumprir a todo instante as regras que ele próprio acaba de estipular" (*Um mestre na periferia do capitalismo* 139), which would be not only an

influence from foreign authors such as Laurence Sterne, but an artistic materialization of the society Machado is portraying in his narratives. In a later publication, "Leituras em competição" (2006), Schwarz reinforces these ideas, but goes further, applying them to an interpretation of both Brazilian and North-American criticism on Machado. For him, although foreign critics have given important contributions to the work of Machado de Assis and his local and international reception by, for example, comparing him with Shakespeare,[15] there is a risk of reading Machado de Assis with a social detachment when ignoring the importance of Machado's critique of Brazilian society in the construction of his form. This detached reading, Schwarz believes, would lead to the presence of Machado in the world canon in which "o artista entra para o cânon, mas não o seu país, que continua no limbo, e a insistência no país não contribui para alçar o artista ao cânon" ("Leituras em competição" 68). The critic says that it is important to remember that "Bentinho não é Otelo, Capitu não é Desdêmona, José Dias e o Pádua não são Iago e Brabantio, nem o Rio de Janeiro oitocentista é a Europa renascentista" ("Leituras em competição" 70) and questions why "a experiência brasileira tenha interesse apenas local, ao passo que a língua inglesa, Shakespeare, o New Criticism, a tradição ocidental e tutti quanti seriam universais?" ("Leituras em competição" 72). Schwarz argues that Machado was "anotador e anatomista exímio de feições singulares de seu mundo, ao qual se dizia que não prestava atenção; e em idealizador de formas sob medida, capazes de dar figura inteligente aos

[15] Schwarz, here, is referring to the work of Helen Caldwell, who, in her book *The Brazilan Othello of Machado de Assis* (1960), has forever changed the criticism on the novel *Dom Casmurro* (1899). By comparing Machado with Shakespeare, she highlighted the psychological aspects of the protagonist Bentinho, suggesting that he was not a reliable narrator. Further details on Caldwell's work will be given later in this chapter.

descompassos históricos da sociedade brasileira" ("Leituras em competição 65), and, therefore, can only be fully appreciated when this context is taken into consideration.

"Leituras em competição" was, in some ways, a response published in disagreement with a *The New York Review* article by Michael Wood. The article in question, named "Master Among the Ruins" (2002), was, as well, a review for a translation of Schwarz's *Um mestre na periferia do capitalismo*, among other books. Wood, while praising what he calls Schwarz's "lucid and passionate critical writing," notes that the Brazilian critic does not take into consideration what would make Machado's literature interesting for a reader who is not engaged by the Brazilian factor: "What if we are not captivated by the 'Brazilian ideological comedy' on display, or if the secret dissatisfaction of a class, historically fascinating as it is, seems too monotonous a topic for a whole masterpiece?" Therefore, Wood calls for a reading of Machado that would take into consideration his international "mystery." In this sense, Wood says that Machado's "preoccupations recur in all kinds of places, like cloud formations or political protests," and Machado's "interplay of appearance and desire, the world of unfocused contingency, the necessity and impossibility of choice--have their home in Machado's Brazil, but we certainly find them in other locations too, and are not likely to stop finding them" (Wood, "Master Among Ruins"). The reading that Wood makes on *Esaú e Jacó* (1904), a novel that is an allegory for the political conflicts in the context of Brazil's transition from monarchy to republic, is illustrative of his view. For Wood, the twin brothers Pedro and Paulo, protagonists of the story, are not only representative of the opposite political views in Machado's Brazil but also an invitation "to think not only about the choices we make, but also about the possibility of choice itself, about all those moments when we do not know, in

spite of all the appearances of freedom, exactly how free we are" (Wood, "Master Among Ruins").

My approach in this thesis aligns with aspects of both Schwarz's and Wood's views on Machado's work, especially because I conceive of world literature as a "locus of negotiation" between two cultures (Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* 283). Even though Schwarz argues there is no clear reason to consider the context of the centre as more universal than the ones of the peripheries, I also believe that the way a work is received also depends on what it represents for the host culture. For this reason, as Brazil has not had an obvious influence in the cultural formation of European or North American countries, it is harder for its literature to offer an obvious contribution to the understanding or development of Anglophone literary traditions, as it is a matter of cultural and linguistic capital, as Casanova argues. I understand, then, that while the Brazilian context is crucial for a complete understanding of Machado's work, making international-appealing readings of it, as Wood proposes, can be, for readers interested in world literature, a port of entry into his work, while contributing to a further understanding of it. An author survives time better when the understanding of his work adapts to the development of history as well.

Having highlighted Schwarz and Wood's different views on Machado's enduring qualities in world literature, I now move to studies that display a more concrete overview on the reception of Machado de Assis in the twentieth century Anglophone context. Firstly, I would like to start with Earl Fitz. In 2008, he carried out a study on the early reception of Machado de Assis in the United States, during the 1950s and 1960s, a context in which the first English translations of three of his works, *Epitaph of a Small Winner* (*Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas*), *Dom Casmurro*, and *Philosopher or Dog?* (*Quincas Borba*), were being published. The publication of these books happened during or close to the

emergence of the Latin American Boom era. This literary movement was mostly linked to Spanish American authors, but the Brazilian Jorge Amado is sometimes cited as a *Boom* author as well. In his study, Fitz analyzes pieces of criticism published in media venues such as *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* by critics such as S.M. Fitzgerald, Dudley Fitts and William Grossman. He finds out that, even though critics had, then--with some exceptions--a positive impression of Machado de Assis's works, they did not pay attention to elements that, according to Fitz, reveal Machado's true genius. He writes:

> This happened, I believe, because they did not expect to find such subtlety and sophistication in a writer most of them had never heard of, and from a place, Brazil, that they did not associate with high quality literature, as they did with such nations as France, Germany, England, and Russia. The rich and diverse literary heritage of Brazil, the epitome of *différance* in the New World, was being almost totally overlooked and undervalued. More than this, the continual referencing of Machado's novel with Laurence Sterne and *Tristram Shandy*, had the effect of relegating *Epitaph* to the status of a mere imitation of a renowned text from the English novelistic tradition and, thus, to dismiss it as inherently inferior. (Fitz 21)

As Fitz points out, Machado was often seen by non-Brazilianist critics as an imitation of European writers. Good, but not original. The conflict that Casanova describes in her theories is here very obviously illustrated: the periphery with little or no right to originality, not capable of existing outside the tradition of the centre. In addition, Fitz, in his study, shows that, although Machado was being published when the Latin American Boom was happening in America, his work was ignored by American critics who facilitated the reception of Latin American literature in the U.S. For example, he discusses John Barth, who was an admirer of Machado, but does not cite the Brazilian author in his influential

essay, “The Literature of Exhaustion,” which highlighted Latin American literature, especially Borges, as a reference for the future development of the North American literary tradition. Fitz also cites John Updike who, although mentioned Machado de Assis when he wrote about Latin American literature in the 1960s, “does not discuss him or any of his many narrative innovations or compare him to Borges” (29). This lack of emphasis on Machado de Assis’s work, Fitz argues, led to a lost opportunity for Machado’s rediscovery during the Boom days.

Piers Armstrong has something similar to say regarding Machado’s reception by the end of the twentieth century. In *Third World Literary Fortunes* (1999), he--among other writers--proposes a study on the English reception of Machado de Assis. He discusses, primarily, the publications of the author in English. In this text, Armstrong contrasts Machado’s reputation in Brazil versus his moderate performance abroad. He highlights that, while alive, Machado’s “literary genius imposed itself within Brazilian society,” culminating in “his uncontested leadership and inaugural presidency of the newly created Brazilian Academy of Letters” (129). After his death, he argues, “Machado de Assis’s work entered both the literary canon and the school syllabus, and was widely circulated in paperback editions for popular consumption” (129). But Armstrong notes that, while Machado’s dominance was also true among the Brazilianists in the United States, for the general public or even specialists in other literary areas that was not the case. Armstrong demonstrates that, because of Machado’s high reputation at home, publishing houses in the United States by then, would give him a chance here and there, publishing translations of his works, and by the late 90s, the writer had “a respectable portfolio in translation at a series of levels - major commercial operations, minor independent publishing houses, and finally University presses” (130). However, the impact of these translations, Armstrong

reveals, was not very significant, causing his works not to be re-printed. “In commercial translation Machado de Assis’s work has tended to slip into ‘out of print’ mode” (130), he writes, adding that Machado, “cannot get more than a toehold in the external marker” (131). For him, “Although Brazil occupies a significant place in the world imagination, the image is not located in its literary heritage” (131). By reading Armstrong’s book, we see that Machado had, in the late twentieth century, an inconsistent presence in world literature. If, from one side, he was well regarded by critics in the United States, this ‘out of print’ mode shows that he was not very known by the general public, and that his active presence in the English literary system was, by then, imperfect and incomplete.

Eternally “The-Writer-You’ve-Never-Heard-of-But-Should-Be-Reading?”

The previous section shows two things: One, although Machado’s work brings many international-appealing subjects within it, it can be complex to understand it with a detachment from his local tradition. Two, earlier Anglophone critics, while not fully aware of many aspects of his work, indeed saw value in Machado with the first few English translations, and this led to his work being extensively translated into English. Also, as Earl Fitz shows, American critics have, initially, given moderately positive reviews of his work. However, these translations and publications have never led Machado to occupy the same space as major authors from other countries, and many critics did not see him as a truly remarkable author.

In contrast, there have been critics, in both Brazilianist and non-Brazilianist cicles, that would see Machado as a genius and a singular writer. *Nonetheless*, the history of the English reception of Machado de Assis still serves as an illustration of the problem that Casanova presents: peripheral literatures face many potential difficulties while travelling

away from home. The work of many of the most enthusiastic English critics of Machado, as I show in the coming pages, is historically marked by a resentment towards the fact that, even though Machado is considered by them to be the greatest writer in Brazilian literature and one of the greatest Portuguese-language authors, his work does not receive the international attention that critics think it deserves. Machado's work is almost 200 years old. Still, his international reception seems to perpetuate an eternal image of a peripheral author, an overlooked genius that should be read but is not. It is expected, of course, that critics have compared the work of Machado to other well-known authors of his time or his predecessors. But reading these texts can also serve as a demonstration of what Casanova discusses regarding the legitimacy of an author from the periphery having to be in harmony with the high expectations of literature of the centre. I analyze this tendency in the work of four critics, two publishing on Machado in academia, and two publishing in media outlets—All of them, however, are influential within or outside the Brazilianist scope. These critics are Helen Caldwell, John Gledson, Susan Sontag, and Benjamin Moser. The organization of the analysis is chronological precisely because I aim to highlight how the impression of Machado's work being overlooked in the Anglophone context has not changed from the 1950s until the 2010s, which would suggest that his work, while increasing in readership, has always failed to occupy a space in the world literary scene.

As expected, there have been efforts from Brazilianists and other admirers of Machado to reinforce his uniqueness. In earlier reactions to and scholarship on his work, it should not come as a surprise to find an introductory text on Machado's work as some sort of "lamentation" for the fact that it had taken too long for Machado to be translated, and how his name has been disregarded. After all, it had been only very recently that the author had arrived on English-language shelves. Starting with Helen Caldwell's early criticism on

Machado, let us look at some of the first works written on the author in American academia. Caldwell was a very important critic in literary studies. Her most important contribution to Machado's work was regarding the novel *Dom Casmurro*, as she was responsible for popularizing the idea that the book had an unreliable narrator, changing forever how the story was read. In 1953, Caldwell was the first to translate *Dom Casmurro* into English. What Caldwell had to say about Machado then was very respectful and knowledgeable. She obviously saw Machado as an original writer.

In her 1952 article "Our American Cousin, Machado de Assis," she discusses the relevance of the author's work for American audiences. It is interesting that, even when publishing for a foreign audience that was not very familiar with the Bruxo do Cosme Velho,[16] Caldwell does not waste time with introductory notes about Machado. In the first paragraph of the article she states: "We whose mother-tongue is English have no less cause to be proud of Brazil's great novelist, Machado de Assis, than the Brazilians themselves" ("Our American Cousin, Machado de Assis" 120). Caldwell legitimizes Machado's erudition based on his knowledge of the English language--his knowledge of Sterne, Fielding, Shakespeare, Poe, and Dickens-- but differently from the tendencies Earl Fitz points out in his aforementioned study, she does not simply mention him as a product of these authors. On the contrary, she shows how he used these authors to read his own language and his own country, creating an original voice. She finds 160 references to Shakespeare in Machado's work, which demonstrates how he admired and knew the Anglophone tradition. However, she also acknowledges that "if Machado de Assis was fond of us, madness and all, if he loved the English language, naturally he was more fond

[16] Bruxo do Cosme Velho is a famous nickname by which Machado is known in Brazil. The nickname makes a reference to the neighbourhood of Cosme Velho, in Rio de Janeiro, where Machado lived.

of Portuguese, of Brazil, of Rio de Janeiro, which he calls 'the good city that saw my birth and will see my death'" ("Our American Cousin, Machado de Assis" 123) and that "for us North Americans, his work is a veritable open-sesame to the vast treasured wealth of Brazil. All that is necessary (as Machado himself said), is to read with attention" ("Our American Cousin, Machado de Assis" 129). Such statements, despite their efforts to make a connection between Machado de Assis and the Anglophone literary tradition while still recognizing his originality, also tie Machado's writings to their importance for Brazil but not necessarily make it clear why an American should open space for Machado in an international canon other than understanding the English influence in peripheral countries. If, according to her, Machado did not simply admire Shakespeare but "he copied him, he adapted him, he absorbed him to such degree that, like us, he had him in his blood. For this reason, probably, Machado de Assis speaks more directly to our spirit than any other Brazilian author" ("Our American Cousin, Machado de Assis" 121-122), then Machado still would lack his own contribution to world literature. He would be important for the American audience only in two circumstances: if someone is trying to understand the Anglophone influence in world literatures or if someone is trying to understand Brazilian literature itself. In Caldwell's text, it is not Machado who is universal, but Shakespeare, who, through Machado, could be applied even to the Brazilian context.

Again, in her 1960 book *The Brazilian Othello of Machado de Assis*--one of the most important works in Machado studies worldwide, including Brazil, Caldwell *starts* with the same tone of the previous article: Machado is Machado, and there is no need for introducing him in detail. To give some context, in this book, Caldwell analyzes the intertextualities between Shakespeare's *Othello* and Machado's *Dom Casmurro*. Here, she introduces the idea that Bentinho--the protagonist of the story who becomes obsessed with

the supposed infidelity of his loved one, Capitu, with his best friend Escobar, and the possibility of his son, Ezequiel, being, in fact, his friend's child--is an unreliable narrator. For her, Capitu, just like Shakespeare's Desdemona, was in reality faithful, and the story we have in our hands is actually a description of Bentinho's own neurosis--the evidence that he has for the adultery, or his *handkerchief*, could not be more subjective: Ezequiel's resemblance to Escobar. Here, Caldwell adds another layer of sophistication to the story. By highlighting Machado's ingenious dialogue with the Shakespearean work, she positions him as an author who was in full dialogue with the world literary conversation.

Despite writing on Machado as an author for whom there was no introduction needed, Caldwell is not unaware of the fact that she is writing about a considerably unknown writer. Even though, as it is the case of an academic book, most of the readers who would read it would probably have a previous interest in the subject, it was still a work on a Brazilian writer who had been barely published in English. What she decides to do, then, is to make use of an appendix at the end of the volume to call for a wider circulation of the writer in the U.S. "Although three of Machado de Assis's novels have now been translated into English, his name is still absent from our encyclopedias and biographical dictionaries" (169), she starts, before going on to provide a biographical note on him and talking about his remarkable legacy in his home country. Especially in the first paragraph, here we see Machado being portrayed as an overlooked author to whom Americans ought to pay attention. This is expected, of course, as this was only the first decade that a larger portion of his work was made available in English. Later, in another book, Caldwell declares that Machado is now definitely placed as a world author. But the reading of further criticism that I present below does not seem to confirm Caldwell's declaration.

Machado's reputation has never left this strange cycle, and until now, sixty years after Caldwell's book, he is still "this Brazilian author you've never heard of, but you should be reading." We can find a range of further examples--regardless of the period in history-- in both specialized academia and the press. The following pieces by John Gledson, Susan Sontag, and Benjamin Moser show how the criticism on Machado still carries an introductory language, discursively tying him to his peripheral position.

John Gledson is an important British translator and specialist in Machado studies. His book *The Deceptive Realism of Machado de Assis*, from 1984, is an important contribution to scholarship on the author in English. It was written before Schwarz's *A Master on the Periphery of Capitalism* was published and could be translated into English, although it builds on the Brazilian critic's previous works, and it is the kind of reading that Schwarz would desire to see regarding Machado. This is the case because Gledson's book reads the *Machadian* narrative--with a special focus on *Dom Casmurro*--with the political, historical, and moral trends of Machado's *milieu*. For him, reading *Dom Casmurro* as precursor of the modernist movement can deliver a distorted criticism of Machado's book. This is, for Gledson, an essentially realist work, and even though he acknowledges the formal value of the book, he thinks that it is a mistake to isolate it from its *milieu*. For Gledson, the book tricks readers by making them think they are facing a narrative about the daily life of a Brazilian home, a family drama, but in reality, they are dealing with characters who are metaphors for historical periods, commentaries on the patriarchal society of that time, and reflections on politics and religion.

Unlike Caldwell, Gledson feels the necessity of presenting Machado to the reader in the first paragraph of the introduction. Here, the Brazilian writer is described as "one of the great writers of the nineteenth century--certainly the most remarkable Latin-American

novelist of the period" (1). It is peculiar, however, that Gledson writes that Machado is also one of the most important writers in "the Hispanic world" (1), which is simply not true, as Brazil is not a Hispanic country but a Lusophone one. Gledson is not a layman but a specialist, so we see clearly, here, the necessity of positioning Machado in a tradition that is more recognized by the centre for its literary and cultural capital: The tradition of the Spanish-language literature--except that it is Portuguese. In the following sentences, Gledson affirms that *Brás Cubas*, *Quincas Borba*, and *Dom Casmurro* were different from the novels that Machado's readers at the time were used to reading from the author, and that these books are "as outlandish within the central tradition of the European novel of the period as, say, Melville or Dostoyevsky" (1). He goes on to contrast Machado's reputation with its success abroad: "It is a curious fact, however, that Machado's readership has never been as wide as his reputation justifies; this is a *succès d'estime*, as is witnessed by the sporadic and seemingly haphazard history of publications of English translations" (1). By pointing out Machado's *succès d'estime*, Gledson highlights a perception that the work of Machado de Assis, while well regarded by specialists, would not reach the general public. This is precisely the same impression that Caldwell had almost 30 years before. But if, in his book, Gledson works on Machado within the Brazilian context, and tries to add international appeal to him by labelling him as a "Hispanic" author, then this work, while important for making more critical sources on Machado available in an accessible language, also ties Machado to this image of a not well-known genius from the periphery. If Machado is essentially Brazilian, and if, to be legitimized, he needs to be tied up to foreign traditions (even if these traditions are not at all related to him), then how would Machado fulfill the English host culture's needs?

Further readers of Machado display the same tendency, picturing Machado as an overlooked author. And now, I would like to move from academic pieces to articles published in the general media to demonstrate how the same discourse remains. *The New Yorker* magazine alone, has, among its many publications, two different articles that intend to introduce Machado de Assis for English audiences and lament the fact that he is not well read--one from 1990 and another from 2018.

The first article is by a well-known non-Brazilianist name: Susan Sontag. In this piece called "Afterlives: The Case of Machado de Assis" (1990), Sontag discusses Machado's work focusing mainly on the novel *Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas*. This novel, it is worth recapitulating, is the fictional autobiography of Brás Cubas, an already deceased author, or, in Machado's words, a "defunto-autor." Initially, Sontag basically tells a description of the book--its plot, its narrator, its talkative style-- and brings up the associations it led her to make, comparing it, mainly, with *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy,* by Laurence Sterne. Sontag does not see Machado's work as a simple imitation of Sterne, but as a tribute: "That Brás Cubas begins his story after his death, as Tristam Shandy famously begins the story of his consciousness before he is born [...] that, too, seems an homage to Sterne" (104). Indeed, for her, while still bringing this "Sternean playfulness" (106), the novel goes way beyond its literary influences and is relevant for being the only "example of that enthralling genre the imaginary autobiography which grants the project of autobiography its ideal--as it turns out, comical--fulfillment," in which "the reader is invited to play the game considering that the book in hand is an unprecedented literary feat: posthumous reminiscences written in the first person" (102).

However, a considerably large portion of the piece is dedicated to wondering why Machado de Assis is so little known outside Brazil, even though, as she believes, he is "the

greatest writer ever produced in Latin America" (107), followed by Borges. The title of the text--*Afterlives*--itself, is very suggestive of what is about to come. It refers not only to the defunto-autor Brás Cubas, the already dead narrator of his own memoir, but also to the critic's call for a new life for Machado de Assis in the world literary space, in Walter Benjamin's sense, "a transformation and a renewal of something living" ("The Task of the Translator" 256), in this case, a transformation for Machado's literary legacy. Sontag opens the article by proposing a game to the reader, inviting him to imagine a nineteenth-century writer who is unlikely to exist:

> Imagine a writer who in the course of a moderately long life, in which he never travelled farther than seventy-five miles from the capital city where he was born, created a huge body of work - A nineteenth-century writer, you will interrupt, and you will be right: author of a profusion of novels, novellas, stories, plays, essays, poetry, reviews, political chronicles, as well as reporter, magazine editor, government bureaucrat, candidate for public office, and founding president of his country's Academy of Letters; a prodigy of accomplishment, of the transcending of social and physical infirmity (he was a mulatto in a country where slavery was not abolished until he was almost fifty; he was epileptic), who, during this vividly prolific, exuberantly national career, managed to write a sizable number of novels and stories deserving of a permanent place in world literature, and whose masterpieces, outside his native country, which honors him as its greatest writer, are little known, rarely mentioned. (Sontag 102)

In the next paragraph, however, Sontag "surprises" the reader by informing us that, yes, this author indeed existed alongside "his most original books, which continue to be discovered" (102), and says that "It is in the afterlife of a great writer when the mysterious

questions of value and performance are resolved" (102). She concludes by saying that "Perhaps it is fitting that this writer, whose afterlife has not brought his work the recognition that it merits, should himself have had so accurate, so ironic, so endearing a sense of the posthumous" (102). By bringing to the discussion both Benjamin's concept of afterlife (although there is no direct mention of Benjamin), which refers to the presence of a work of art throughout generations, to the social and philosophical questions in Machado's novel, Sontag positions *Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas* as a work of dubious existence: from one side, it is a piece of literature that is capable of remaining relevant throughout history. On the other hand, it is a piece that remains unknown in the Anglophone literary tradition.

Later in the text, Sontag comes back to the discussion of Machado's lack of international presence: "I am astonished that a writer of such a greatness does not yet occupy the place he deserves" (107). This "place" to which Sontag refers, of course, is outside Brazil, since, as she notes, not even other Latin American countries pay attention to his work. Sontag blames it on prejudice against Brazilians in general--not simply against Machado--and also on a Eurocentric view of world literature. There is, in her discourse, points of connection to what Casanova discusses about how the cultural, linguistic, and literary capital of a certain country can determine its literary success abroad. She believes that if Machado were from the centre, he would have occupied a fair place among the greatest: "if he hadn't been Brazilian and hadn't spent his whole life in Rio de Janeiro--if he were, say, Italian or Russian, or even Portuguese" (108) his international presence would be different. She finishes the text by saying that *Brás Cubas* is one of the least provincial books ever written, pointing out what she sees as a provincialism towards Machado's work.

Sontag's text talks about the conflicted relations between the periphery and the centre but also touches on the dispute between peripheral literatures. Indeed, she points out that Jorge Luis Borges--who for her may be the second-best writer from Latin America, after Machado, but for many is the best--probably never read Machado.[17] I do not think, though, that it makes sense to measure Borges's and Machado's "greatness" side by side, as both of them respond to different times and literary traditions. This, instead of revealing Machado's value and influence, may take Machado out of the world literature dialogue, and lead to questions on the value of his legacy. If Machado only helps one to understand the storyline of Brazilian literature--and, even in Sontag's argumentation, Brazil is not seen as a literary stronghold--why would one bother to read him anyway?

Almost thirty years after Sontag's article was published, the *New Yorker* would publish another piece on Machado with a similar tone. Coincidentally or not, this 2018 piece was written by Benjamin Moser, who is a biographer of Sontag herself, and who is also one of the major names responsible for the recent "rediscovery" of Clarice Lispector abroad, as discussed in Chapter 1. The difference, however, is that the reason for Moser's article is the realization of an important step in Machado's life as world literature: *The Collected Stories of Machado de Assis*, a book published by Liveright (W.W. Norton & Company) and translated by Margaret Jull Costa and Robin Patterson. With this book, for the first time in history, Machado's complete short-story collection appeared in English translation, reunited in a single deluxe volume, with translations that sound very fluent and, perhaps, even more contemporary than the original Portuguese texts. In the article about it,

[17] Scholar Rhett McNeil questions such an affirmation from Sontag in his article "Just How Marginal Was Machado de Assis? The Early Translations and the Borges Connection" (2013), in which he displays documental evidence that Borges could actually have read Machado.

Moser chooses a similar argument to Sontag's, and argues that Machado looked like a writer that could be found in every country: "Machado, like Kafka […] and Cavafy […] wore prim suits, lived in nondescript neighborhoods, worked bureaucratic jobs, and rarely stirred from the city where he was born." But this lifestyle was unlikely for him since "people of visibly mixed race were rare in the higher society that Machado entered while relatively young." My discussion on Moser's article will continue in the next section regarding its racial content, however, at this moment, I want to point out that what differs in Moser's argumentation from those of the previous critics I've discussed is that he chooses to portray Brazil--and consequently, Brazilian literature--as an important piece to understand the Western World: "Despite centuries of efforts to play up its exoticism, which Brazilians often encouraged, Brazil was always, for better and for worse, fully a part of the Western world" ("He's one of Brazil's Greatest Writers"). Thinking of this discourse around Brazilian culture through Damrosch's theory of world literature, one will notice that, by doing that, Moser is trying to ensure that the Anglophone public do not see Brazil in a neutral way, "as an image of radical otherness against which the home tradition can more clearly be defined," but rather as a "positive model for the future development of its [the host culture's] own tradition" (Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* 283). This, as we saw in the previous chapter, was, although not in such a limited extension, the same mode of thinking that seems to have guided Moser's work with Clarice Lispector. Still, the article and its title, "He's one of Brazil's Greatest Writers. Why Isn't Machado de Assis More Widely Read?," shows that, for the public, and even for some specialists--as it is the case of Moser--the very same question that Sontag was asking 28 years earlier had yet to be answered. Sontag may have finished her article by predicting that Machado would soon occupy the place he deserves, but this publication that comes years later in the very same

magazine shows that it has not yet happened. It is still necessary for a major publishing house like Norton to justify the publication of a collection like this by an author no one has heard about.

The very persistence of such discourse around Machado's work reveals that the discourse around his modest fame has not helped him to climb his path in the world imaginary as a remarkable, indispensable author, an author that, indeed, helps to tell the story of literature. From Caldwell in the 1950s to Moser in the 2010s, critics have stated that Machado is overlooked, which is, then, based on a perception that he has not occupied the place he deserves, but it is very hard to determine what place that is. As Damrosch says, the success of a certain author, or a literary piece, in foreign contexts depends as much on the host cultures as on the source culture. In this sense, being one country's greatest writer does not guarantee success abroad.

I do not argue, with that, that Machado has not penetrated the field of world literature yet. Especially because I am working here with Damrosch's definition of world literature as a mode of circulation, as stated earlier, I believe that he is a world author. His most important works like *Dom Casmurro*, *Quincas Borba*, *Esaú e Jacó*, *Memórias póstumas*, among others, are available in translation, and he has been read and criticized within and outside Brazilianist circles, as we have seen.

It has been only in the last two years, however, that Machado's legacy has reached its highest peak so far. The aforementioned *Collected Stories of Machado de Assis* shows that foreign publishers believe his work deserves to be published in outstanding editions. Though there is not much information on when editor Bob Weil, from Norton, came up with the idea of launching Machado's *Collected Stories* in English, it came out in 2018, and

took between eight to twelve months to be translated.[18] It seems very reasonable, then, to say that *The Collected Stories of Machado de Assis* might have been influenced by the launch of *The Complete Stories* by Clarice Lispector, from 2015, which was a big success as discussed in the previous chapter. This new interest in translating and publishing Machado's work does not end there. Penguin Classics released, in May 2020, a new translation of *Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas* (as *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*) by Flora Thomson-DeVeaux. Margaret Jull Costa's translation of the same book was released shortly after, in the same year. On their website, Penguin Classics states that "This new English translation is the first to include extensive notes providing crucial historical and cultural context. Unlike other editions, it also preserves Machado's original chapter breaks--each of the novel's 160 short chapters begins on a new page-- and includes excerpts from previous versions of the novel never before published in English," which shows a concern in positioning Machado's work in its original context in order to make it more comprehensible for the foreign reader, while still showing a concern for its style. This re-translation emerged from academia as a result of Thomson-DeVeaux's doctoral dissertation. The fact that a major publishing house like Penguin has decided to launch a special edition of Machado's novel, when combined with Liveright's anthology, reveals that, in concordance with his historically *succès d'estime*, publishing houses have now decided to give special attention to Machado's legacy. Could the 'lost, overlooked genius,' then, be finally getting rid of his adjectives? While it is not possible to predict the future, in

[18] I personally communicated with Margaret Jull Costa and Robin Patterson via email on January 2020. Costa says that the translation process took maybe "six to eight months," whereas Patterson refers to "12 months or so."

the next section I discuss how one interesting phenomena regarding the criticism on Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis is activating new discussions regarding his work.

Before digging into this subject, I would like to allude to Earl Fitz once again. When writing the 2002 study on the 50s and 60s reception of Machado de Assis, as I mentioned, Fitz wondered: "Why, as evidenced by Prudencio (of *Epitaph*) and, in *Philosopher or Dog?,* the black Brazilian kitchen slave who has to hide behind the door as the Big House is run by white servants imported from Europe, was Machado not read in the United States as a writer who had something important to say about race relations?" and "how he would have fared in United States of the 1950s, or the racially turbulent 1960s, if he had been seen as someone from a culture that had a lot to teach Americans about issues of race - to say nothing about issues of social and economic justice, the effects of poverty, class conflict, and the status of women" (27). This new wave of Machado publications we are seeing has a lot to say about this, as I will discuss in the following section. We may never know what would have happened if race-related criticism had been linked to Machado in the 1950s and 1960s, but in the twenty first century, we are seeing Fitz's questions starting to be answered more extensively. And this seems to have more potential in positioning Machado as a well-known name.

In the following paragraphs, I dig into works published between 2002 and 2018 that point towards race-related readings of Machado de Assis or use his racial background in order to add value to his writing or highlight his genius. These articles and books were published both by specialists/scholars such as Harold Bloom, Paul Dixon, Benjamin Moser, and G. Reginald Daniel, in addition to important media venues. Also, I analyze this same tendency in the discourse used by his current publishing houses, Penguin and Norton, when advertising his work. My objective in doing this is to show how these race-related readings

of Machado, while still acknowledging his importance as an author, can signify a new step into his life as an author of world literature, as they are capable of not simply inserting him in the context of Brazil or Latin America but also help fulfill a demand for literature written by racial minorities.

A Racialized Machado in the English-Speaking World

I would like to start this section by going back to Fitz's question. For Fitz, in the context of the turbulent racial relations of the 1950s and 1960s United States, if Machado had been presented as an author with much to say about blackness and other social matters--such as women rights, social inequality, and so on--he might have been more widely read. In this present time, the sociopolitical situation is very different, but there has been obviously an intense urge for greater racial and gender diversity, especially as social media has intensified race debates. In Trump's United States, the Black Lives Matter movement achieved massive results. Initiated on the internet in 2013 with the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag going viral, it inspired millions of people to take to the streets especially in 2020, when the brutal murder of George Floyd, a 46-year old black man, by a white police officer was recorded and posted online.

The book industry and literary studies have not been unaffected by this recent racial debate. Damrosch himself writes that "no shift in modern comparative study has been greater than the accelerating attention to literatures beyond masterworks by the great men of the European great powers" (Damrosch, "World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age" 43), and that "more and more works of world literature are now favored for displaying specific ethnic identity or cultural difference" (*What Is World Literature?* 187). Also, Penguin Random House UK, for example, has launched a program

to accelerate the publication of books by racial and gender minorities under the program 'Books for everyone, by everyone,'[19] which intends to expand their catalogue to reflect the diversity in British society by 2023. In 2018, in the U.S., the same publishing house formed a Diversity and Inclusion Council, through which they have partnered with the NGO We Need Diverse Books, founded in 2014, to create affirmative-action initiatives such as the black Creative Fund, which intends to fund and incentivize the work of black authors seeking publication.[20] In addition, racial or female narratives in both the movies and the publishing industries are revealing to be potential best-sellers and award-winning, and we can cite authors like Tommy Orange, Rupi Kaur, and even the Brazilian Geovani Martins who are attracting interested publishers.[21] In other sections of the culture industry, it has become clear that, nowadays, a list of nominees consisting of only white, heterosexual, cisgender men will not stand without facing incisive criticism on the Internet. Hashtags such as #OscarsSoWhite or the #MeToo movement are known for calling for more respect and recognition for racial or gender minorities in the entertainment world. But if in the 1950s and the 1960s, Fitz did not see many race-related discussions on the work of Machado de Assis, even though the race debate was in vogue in the United States, in the twenty first century the situation has changed.

Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis was the grandson of freed slaves, the son of a mulatto painter and a white *lavadeira*. His story was an exception. In Brazil, a country

[19] The program is detailed on the "Creative Responsibility: Inclusion" page of the Penguin Random House website: https://www.penguin.co.uk/company/creative-responsibility/Inclusion.html
[20] See 'Social Impact', by Penguin Random House: https://social-impact.penguinrandomhouse.com/
[21] Orange, an author of Native-American background, has become a best-selling author with his novel 'There, There' (2018), which was a finalist for the Pullitzer Prize; Kaur is an Indian feminist poet, and a number-one New York Times best-seller; even before it was published, Martins' short-story anthology O *sol na cabeça* , which brings stories on black characters in Brazil's favelas, had already been sold to nine different publishing houses around the world.

deeply founded on racial hierarchies, it took hundreds of years for slavery to be abolished. The racial debate was suffocated by policies that celebrated a fabricated racial harmony while ignoring deep historical wounds. Because of this troubled racial history, only a few black writers, including Lima Barreto and Cruz e Sousa, are part of the literary canon.

Machado, it can be said, is also a black author in the Brazilian canon. However, his case is different because he was not always clearly seen as a black author or an author of black origin in Brazil. The work of scholar Hélio de Seixas Guimarães--a notable specialist in Machado de Assis--has a lot to say about this. In "Race and Color in the Reception of Machado de Assis" (2017), Guimarães focuses mainly on the Brazilian reception of the author, and what that means regarding perceptions of Machado's race throughout the years. He also sheds some light on how Machado's race was discussed in the United States. In this piece, he demonstrates that Machado started to be whitened from the moment of his death: while his birth certificate did not indicate his race, his obituary declared he was white. However, Machado's racial background was not ignored while he was alive. Some of his contemporary critics and opponents, such as Augusto Fausto de Sousa and poet Sílvio Romero, used his race to diminish his work:

> In an article about Machado's first novel, *Ressurreição*, dated 1872, Augusto Fausto de Sousa, while drawing attention to the esteemed reputation the writer had already attained by that point as a poet, critic and playwright, mentions the "obscuridade da sua origem" and thereby implies as much the ignorance as the possible blackness of his forebears. He even refers to his "trigueiro" countenance, i.e., dark in color, like that of ripe, brown wheat and associates it with the writer's features. This characterization of physical appearance stands in contrast to the "beleza interior," the "limpeza d'alma," and the "límpido espelho de consciência:" (Guimarães 13)

Guimarães also notes that, in Brazil, Machado's race only came to be highlighted and referred to in a positive way in the late 1930s. For the critic, it is connected to Gilberto Freyre's ideas which celebrated Brazilian racial miscegenation. From that point forward, "Machado also becomes a symbol of reconciliation among the classes of society because he had crossed a social gap" (Guimarães 19). In contrast, Guimarães shows how, in the United States, already in the 1960s Machado was catalogued as a "Negro" writer in various libraries and dictionaries. He also discusses how the response of Brazilian critics on American publications who referred to Machado as black tried to minimize and, to a certain degree, deny his blackness.

One important thing that Guimarães notes, however, is that, recently, in Brazil, there has been a movement to reaffirm Machado's blackness. He comments on a famous case of backlash against the Brazilian public bank Caixa Econômica Federal for a TV advertisement clip which displayed Machado – portrayed as a famous client of Caixa - played by a white actor. After facing criticism, Caixa re-launched the commercial with a black actor in the main role, justifying the change "em respeito ao povo brasileiro." This time, the actor chosen for the role had even darker skin than Machado. Something that Guimarães does not cite but is relevant to cite in this narrative, as well, is the project "Machado de Assis Real," by the Faculdade Zumbi dos Palmares, which has the objective of spreading a digitally-coloured image of Machado de Assis with darker skin. The project encourages people to print the new picture of Machado and stick it over the black and white pictures shown in the books, which tend to whiten Machado's image. "Machado de Assis era um homem negro. O racismo o retratou como branco. É hora de reparar essa injustiça" (Faculdade Zumbi dos Palmares), their website declares (I return to this project later in the chapter, but I have cited it at this point just to contextualize Guimarães's article).

Nonetheless, as Guimarães himself recognizes, pieces of criticism that discuss Machado's race in English did not start to be published only recently--they were already present in the past century. One important work that he briefly cites is *The Negro in Brazilian Literature* (1956), by Raymond S. Sayers, a scholar of Portuguese and Brazilian studies in the United States. In the section dedicated to Machado, this book argues that it was true that Machado was not very proud of his black background and that he did not feature black characters as main subjects of his stories. However, Sayers also points out that Machado was sympathetic to abolitionist ideas, and that the reason why he did not have so many black characters among his protagonists was because "The Negro [in Machado's time] could not serve as a subject for the irony of Machado, for the Negro could never determine his own conduct or his own position in society; he was not a free agent, and therefore he could not be made a subject for satire" (Sayers 204). The scholar also points out that Machado, in his context, "could only illustrate his theme of man's essential puniness by using as his personages members of the upper classes, people who did not have enough imagination to use their privileged economic position as a means of obtaining spiritual freedom" (208). Sayers also claims that Machado has more black characters than many other writers in the urban tradition, and that they are almost always portrayed with sympathy.

As Guimarães's work shows, the subject of race in Machado de Assis is complex, and not necessarily easy to read in his writings. But the complexity of race in Machado is, in many ways, explained by the complexity of race relations in Brazil as a nation. The country was the last one in the Americas to legally abolish the slavery of black people in 1888, when Machado was nearly 50 years old. And, as the Brazilian historian Lilia M. Schwarcz explains, the consequences of slavery are alive. Slavery in Brazil, for her,

"transformou-se num modelo tão enraizado que acabou se convertendo numa linguagem" (*Sobre o autoritarismo brasileiro* 22), creating "uma sociedade condicionada pelo paternalismo e por uma hierarquia muito restrita" (*Sobre o autoritarismo brasileiro* 23). This slavery language which Schwarcz refers to is present in Brazilian society today, and is visible in different ways, from the lack of black people in positions of power to architectural phenomena such as the maid's room in modern middle-class houses and apartments, or the service-exclusive elevators in Brazilian buildings, destined exclusively to people in service-related positions. These have survived slavery precisely because the abolitionist law in Brazil, known as Lei Áurea, "não previu nenhuma forma de integração das populações recém-libertas, inaugurando um período chamado pós-emancipação, que teve data precisa para começar mas não para terminar" (*Sobre o autoritarismo brasileiro* 26). Another consequence of slavery in Brazil has been the shame that many Brazilian citizens have felt, historically, in relation to their African ancestry, which has led many people of black descent to identify themselves as non-blacks. As Schwarcz points out, figures from the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) show that from 1995 to 2009, there was a 23% increase in the black population in Brazil, and the white population decreased from 54,5% to 48,2% (Schwarcz, *Sobre o autoritarismo brasileiro)*. This, however, is not related to birth rates among these populations but rather to changes "na forma como essas pessoas têm se autodeclarado" (*Sobre o autoritarismo brasileiro* 29). This complexity in racial self-identification among Brazilians is linked to the fact that many if not most Brazilians are of mixed-race, and such figures show how the black population in Brazil has, historically, gone through a symbolic whitening process. This characteristic in Brazilian society is what allowed Machado de Assis to be identified as a white man at his

death, regardless of his racial background, and also allowed him to exist, until recently, as a non-black historical figure in Brazilian history.

Still, by the second half of the twentieth century Machado started to be more frequently recognized as a mixed-race author, even if not necessarily among the majority of the Brazilian population. This is, in many ways, related to the efforts of black movements to reclaim an accurate view regarding the race of the country's most important author, but also to the racial policies of President Getúlio Vargas, in the 1930s and 1940s. In this period, in order to try to create a unified national identity, Brazil was presented as some sort of racial democracy in which racism was minimized and the mixing of races was welcome and celebrated. These ideas, influenced by the work of sociologist Gilberto Freyre, have been commonly contested by contemporary scholars such as Schwarcz herself. In this period, as well, Machado's race was more frequently mentioned when Anglophone critics were writing about his books, even if mostly in a peripheral way. Caldwell, for example, does cite Machado's background as bibliographical information in her *Brazilian Othello*, although the book's discussion itself does not touch on race. Similarly, in a 1953 *New York Times* review of the biography *Machado of Brazil: The Life and Times of Machado de Assis*, by Brazilian author José Bettencourt Machado, William Grossman, who is a translator of Machado, highlights his race. Here, Grossman, rather than pointing interesting or weak aspects of the book he is reviewing, chooses to trace a profile of Machado himself, calling him an "enigmatic Brazilian mulatto" (135), and comparing him to authors such as Cervantes, Blake or Hemingway. The reviewed book itself, *Machado of Brazil*, although written by a Brazilian author, was, in 1962, a small biography available to Anglophone readers, which provided information on Machado's racial background and his struggles with poverty in certain periods of his life.

Yet, like Fitz indicated before, I also note here that, although, as the examples above show, Machado's racial background was sometimes acknowledged in scholarly production, even if rarely as the main theme, mention of Machado's race in the press was rare, and remained as such until the end of the twentieth century. Dudley Fitts did not touch on the subject when reviewing, in 1963, Caldwell's translations of *O Alienista* and other short stories, for example. Charles Poore did not either, in 1965, when reviewing *Esaú e Jacó*, a story in which the social context is key, and neither did Jenny McPhee in the year 2000, when reviewing the same story.[22] But in the twenty-first-century critical material on Machado de Assis, by both Brazilianists and non-Brazilianists, both in the press and in academia, Machado's race is being used to add value to his literature, and it has become unlikely that an author will discuss Machado's writings without also mentioning his race.

In order to develop this point, let us start with the analysis of the articles I mentioned in the beginning of this section. First, I would like to start with a piece by a non-Brazilianist, Harold Bloom, one of the most important literary critics in North America. In 2002, Bloom included Machado in his book *Genius*, dedicated to listing 100 outstanding creative minds in the world, such as William Shakespeare, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Miguel de Cervantes. In the pages dedicated to the Brazilian writer, Bloom states that "The genius of irony has given us few equals of the African-Brazilian Machado de Assis, who seems to

[22] (1) Dudley Fitts, a prominent American writer and scholar, wrote, in 1963, a review of Caldwell's translations of *The Psychiatrist and other stories*. In his piece, Fitts describes Machado as "a Brazilian Master," and does not offer many biographical notes on Machado. Rather than doing that, he decides to trace parallels between the short stories he is reviewing with Machado's *Brás Cubas* and *Dom Casmurro*. (2) Charles Poore was a critic for The New York Times and served as a chairman for the Yale Literary Magazine. In his review of Caldwell's translation of *Esau e Jacó*, Poore highlights the novel metaphor for Brazil's transition from empire to republic, and even cites the country's abolitionist movement. Still, he does not take into consideration Machado's position in that society. Also in the *Times*, Jenny McPhee has reviewed, 35 years later, a retranslation from the same story by Elizabeth Lowe. *Esaú e Jacó*, here, is once again contextualized in the Brazilian society but not Machado himself.

me the supreme black literary artist to date" (674). Bloom goes on to talk about his surprise in finding out that Machado de Assis was not white: "I had fallen in love with his work, *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas* in particular, before I learned that Machado was a mulatto, and the grandson of slaves, and this is in a Brazil where slavery was not abolished until 1888, when he was almost fifty" (675). Bloom affirms that, while reading Machado, he "first wrongly assumed he was what we call 'white.'" Here, Bloom calls attention to the fact that Machado de Assis did not have race as one of his main themes but would, in turn, "adopt a rather decadent Portuguese-Brazilian white perspective" (675). Still, he describes Machado as a "miracle," a "demonstration of the autonomy of the literary genius in regard to time and place, politics and religion" (675).

What Bloom's article clearly reveals is that, for him, Machado became a more interesting writer after the race factor was discovered. He makes it clear that he already admired the writer's work before being aware of his blackness. However, this discovery worked for him as the icing on the cake, as it revealed Machado's capacity of appropriating the lives of the white elite and satirizing them, although Machado himself came from a mixed-race background. For Bloom, Machado's race also functioned as some sort of proof that a genius mind worked relatively independently from its social context. Machado's race made him an author who defied the obvious ways of writing one's story both in his life and in his literature. However, while highlighting such autonomy, Bloom inserts the adjective "black" before the noun artist when describing Machado de Assis as "the supreme black literary artist to date" (674). This adjective makes a difference in Bloom's discourse, as it automatically implies the existence of a general literary canon, which would include writers of different backgrounds, and a *black* literary canon. Machado appears in this book in a dual position. Firstly, among white European writers such as Samuel Beckett or James

Joyce, and, secondly, an adjective is given to the canon he occupies. Additionally, Bloom's article is an example of what Damrosch discusses in his book, as the Afro-Brazilian background of Machado has given a new appeal in Bloom's vision. His work has gained new significance as it was not simply a Brazilian writer writing about the Brazilian elites, but a *black* Brazilian writer writing about the *white* Brazilian elites.

This impression that Machado's race makes a positive difference in the way North American readers see his work can be perceived not only in Bloom but also when one reads the non-academic critical reception of his recent anthology, *The Collected Stories*. In venues such as *The New York Times* or *The New Yorker*, we clearly see a willingness to read Machado de Assis's works as subjects of racial-oriented analysis, this being a factor that would add to the writer's quality. Starting with the *Times*, in a 2018 review titled "A Master Storyteller From 19th-Century Brazil, Heir to the Greats and Entirely Sui Generis," Parul Sehgal, a journalist and critic, highlights the author's many facets, showing how he leads the reader to make connections with authors that range from Vladimir Nabokov to Alice Munro. In her article, she reflects on Machado's biography, describing it as a complex historical factor when considering his social position in the Brazil of his time: "The protean, stubbornly unclassifiable Machado was born into poverty, the mixed-race grandson of freed slaves. He had no formal education or training." Sehgal expresses her frustration over Machado's "refusal to write more explicitly about slavery. He might not have dared; slavery ended in Brazil only in 1888. His stories stay trained, sometimes monotonously, on the elite, slaves flitting through in silence" (Sehgal, "A Master Storyteller From 19th-Century Brazil, Heir to the Greats and Entirely Sui Generis").

However, she goes on to say that "Yet Machado is always writing about liberation in his way, which to him begins with the freedom — *the obligation* — to think," and

concludes by stating that "To Machado, your identity and the contours of your world are formed not just by your circumstances but by what you think about habitually. You are what you contemplate, so choose wisely. These stories are a spectacular place to start" (Sehgal, "A Master Storyteller From 19th-Century Brazil, Heir to the Greats and Entirely Sui Generis"). Here, I would like to call attention to some word choices made by Sehgal. "Identity," "freedom," "circumstances:" these words, the way they are placed, are there clearly to position Machado as a black person who subverted the context around him. We finish Sehgal's text with the impression that, yes, even though Machado did not write so explicitly about slavery, there was a political statement in his stories, which is linked to his race. It is as if Machado was trying to send a message, as if his refusal to write about race was almost an act of subversion--as if Machado had been freed by the knowledge he perceived and therefore produced. One's social context is very likely to reflect on one's artistic creations. Machado was born in poverty, and, taking into consideration he was very closely related to freed slaves and that slavery has its consequences even in today's Brazilian society, we can safely affirm that his class situation would have had a connection to his racial background. In this sense, Sehgal's interpretation of Machado's writings make sense, as his literature was, indeed, a way of transgressing the social boundaries he faced as a descendent of forced African workers. When Machado was writing, Brazil had abolished slavery very recently, and his choice to not write explicitly about race could have been due to the limitations that society would have imposed on someone of his background. Sehgal's reading is interesting, as the ambivalence of Machado's race might have played a role in his worldview.

In addition to Sehgal's review, I would also like to bring, once again, Benjamin Moser's *New Yorker* review previously discussed in this chapter. This time, I would like to

focus on the racial aspects in it. As I already explained, Moser is not exactly an outsider in Brazilian studies, but his article also contributes to this racial narrative around Machado. Here, Moser notes that Machado's ancestry "is often the first fact mentioned about his life," and calls attention to the fact that this is the first detail mentioned in the introduction to the collection. Although Moser thinks that Machado de Assis would not have been proud of his racial background ("It is not a label he would have elected"), and states that this emphasis on his race often "obscures other surprising facts about his life," he himself walks in this direction. Here, Moser gives an extensive context on the racial situation in Brazil historically and emphasizes the fact that Machado had suffered racism in his lifetime, as "some found him too black," probably making a reference to the same critics previously discussed in Hélio de Seixas Guimarães's text. He also notes that, although being mixed-race and poor has almost never been remarkable in Brazil, "people of visibly mixed race were rare in the higher society that Machado entered while relatively young." Again, as in Bloom's work, Machado is, therefore, portrayed as the exception, as someone whose talent has overcome social boundaries.

The first paragraphs in Moser's article also bring this sense of ambiguity regarding Machado. Moser affirms, initially, that "Most countries have a writer like him: the bearded eminence whose face adorns postage stamps" and compares Machado to writers that look like "emblems of the petit bourgeois." With that, Moser was trying to impart on the reader the same feeling of surprise that Bloom described having felt when he found out Machado was of African descent, since, in the coming lines, we are presented with a writer who, although being the most important literary figure in his country, an author whose place in literature is surrounded by clichés regarding his venerability, also represents an exception,

something extraordinary. Moser's narrative goes in the direction of, first talking about a boring author who, little by little, reveals his true colours in both senses of the word.

The fact that both Sehgal and Moser's articles touch on Machado's race is not at all decontextualized from the anthology they are reviewing. Indeed, *The Collected Stories* itself invites us to think about the work of Machado de Assis from the point of view of its racial significance. Not only are we provided with Harold Bloom's quote placing Machado as "the supreme black literary artist to date," and information on his racial background in both the book's cover and the introduction, but also the foreword by Michael Wood delivers a race-oriented reading of his work. The critic notes that "slavery was finally abolished in Brazil in 1888, by which time Machado had published four of his seven volumes of stories" (xiii) and that "slaves are everywhere in these works, a fact of life, and not often commented on" (xiii). He writes that, through Machado's stories, "We can be sure that Machado has little sympathy for the woman who complains of her 'feckless slaves,' or the man who alternately smashes plates over slaves' heads and calls them by 'the sweetest, most endearing names," even though, "generally, slaves are just slaves, part of the subjugated work force taken for granted" (xiii). However, he infers that Machado is actually silencing his opinions by letting readers make their own judgement of the characters, by letting their humanity prevail over their social position. After reading this foreword, a new reader of Machado is unlikely to enter the pages of the book without looking for Machado's views on the racial situation.

The Collected Stories, also, is not the only recent publication of Machado de Assis that focuses on his race when promoting the book. The aforementioned Penguin Classics' edition of *Brás Cubas*, a best-selling translation by Flora Thomson-DeVeaux, was also advertised with a focus on this subject. It is interesting to note that, on the book's official

page, there is as much emphasis on Machado's race as on the book itself. The website's title reads, "A revelatory new translation of the playful, incomparable masterpiece of one of the greatest black authors in the Americas," and starts by saying that "The mixed-race grandson of ex-slaves, Machado de Assis is not only Brazil's most celebrated writer but also a writer of world stature, who has been championed by the likes of Philip Roth, Susan Sontag, Allen Ginsberg, John Updike, and Salman Rushdie." One should not take for granted that the Penguin Classics label, itself, is an indicator of canonization. We see, here, however, a calling for Machado's position in the black literary canon. This description is the same as Harold Bloom's label: There is an adjective before the word "authors." The presence of the word black, here, affects the meaning of the noun, implying, again, the existence of a black literary tradition in which Machado de Assis would be inserted. He is not simply one of the "greatest authors in the Americas," he's one of "the greatest *black* authors in the Americas" (Penguin Random House; Emphasis added). The emphasis on his race might not be applied, in this page, to the context of the novel itself. Still, it is surely not there without a purpose. Perhaps Random House was willing to emphasize Machado's social position as a writer, showing how he is not just another important writer from a remote literary tradition, but one that is also capable of holding importance in an international context. One that could occupy a space in the American literary tradition as host culture, as he is, in the foreign context, a new example of a non-white genius.

One side note on this edition: it is hard to pinpoint why Penguin Classics' *Brás Cubas* was so successful in sales. Perhaps all of these articles I have been analyzing here, along with many others, have paved the path for Machado's triumph as a more widely known writer, since, with names such as Susan Sontag or Harold Bloom citing his works, one should expect that he would have reached a bigger readership. Still, even though I do

not intend to do a hasty or hurried co-relation here, one should also acknowledge that his book sold out precisely when the Black Lives Matter protests were at its highest peak in May. This adds, at least, a symbolic layer to such event.

Whether the two things are connected or not, and, again, I do not intend to affirm that they are, it is a fact that the news about Machado de Assis's blackness being claimed by the Brazilian black movement had reached the American public one year before, in 2019. That year, *The New York Times'* Shannon Sims wrote an extensive article titled "In Brazil, a New Rendering of a Literary Giant Makes Waves." This publication, which is not a piece of criticism but a report, talks about the aforementioned "Machado de Assis Real" movement, a project that intends to shed light into the whitening process in which Machado has been a historical character, since the "traditional historical photo of him shows a man whose skin is nearly as light as his crisp white dress shirt." This project, created by the Universidade Zumbi dos Palmares, in Brazil, has digitally recreated the skin colour of Machado de Assis, revealing a darker tone than the classical black-and-white version. The movement encourages readers to stick Machado's digitally-coloured version to his books, replacing the older, whiter photos.

The *Times* report hosts, on its cover, a picture of Machado de Assis in black and white next to his digitally-coloured image. It also includes interviews with Brazilian students who talk about how, in school, they have always been taught that Machado de Assis was white. "I am certain that if the skin color of an author so important was at the very least discussed during my experience at school, my black friends would have felt more represented," says the testimony of the 29-year-old interviewee Ricardo Martins. The story also highlights that, in 2019, poet Marco Lucchesi, president of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, received, from the Zumbi University, a coloured picture of Machado to replace his

whitened picture that the Academy use to hang on their walls, as Machado himself was a member of the Academy. I wanted to mention the existence of this article here because the simple fact that a newspaper outside Brazil had published news about the new racial discourse around the author shows how Machado's social ambivalence is an interesting story for the English-speaking audience. The rediscovery of his race as a tool for bringing more visibility to the black community and its prominent characters can serve as a model for redefining canons.

In English academia, however, the discussion is more complex, as it not only has defied the idea that Machado de Assis, as a writer, was not interested in race, and also for pointing out that Machado de Assis, as a mixed-man, would carry racial duality in his thoughts and writings, increasing the scope of a race-related interpretation of Machado's work. In 2010, for example, scholar Paul Dixon published an article in the *African-Hispanic Review's* special issue dedicated to the African Diaspora in Brazil. Here, Dixon argues that, while Machado's race was a recurrent theme in his reception, "many readers have underestimated the amount of attention Machado did pay to the topic" (40). Here, the critic rescues early narratives of Machado where slaves and descendants of slaves are the main characters. This challenges the usual discourse that says that Machado chose not to represent his racial peers in his stories but silences the moment when he did so. He reads the stories "Virginius and Mariana," and the narrative poem "Sabina," published between 1868 and 1875. These are more immature narratives, but they touch on matters of the difficulty of social mobility for African descendants and cruelty against slaves.

This article, admittedly, is talking about "minor" works by Machado, but it sheds light on the subjectivity of African descendants writing about this experience. Dixon draws attention to the necessity of reading these texts that usually remain overlooked. This is an

important step in Machadian criticism, as the story of the writer's race starts to be re-discussed. As Dixon argues, it may not be enough to position Machado as an African American writer, but from my point of view, Dixon's article, and the texts it deals with paint the portrait of a writer in the beginning of his career, struggling to find a theme, and in which the most obvious first theme is his own context. Dixon's study is important in my discussion because it is an attempt to challenge the discourse that Machado does not have much to say regarding his experience as a black person. Benjamin Moser, as showed in Chapter 1, pulled the theme of Jewishness from between the lines of Clarice Lispector, and positioned her as a Jewish voice. Much the same, studies like Dixon's, by pointing out race as a subject that firstly explicitly appeared in Machado's writings but was later diluted in his most important novels, present Machado to understand how relevant black artists might have had to silence their opinions in order to gain prestige. What Dixon would be doing, then, is projecting Machado's voice as a black man writing about blackness, and this could also bring international attention as there is, especially in the United States, a call for the amplification of black voices.

Inside the world of academia, a whole book written in English and dedicated to the racial issue in Machado's works was released in 2012. Although this book has a different approach towards Machado's race than Dixon's article, it also searches for a racialized reading of Machado's *work* and not of Machado as a historical character, and challenges the idea that Machado did not have race as a literary topic. *Machado de Assis, Multiracial Identity and the Brazilian Novelist* was written by G. Reginald Daniel, a scholar from the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Daniel's scholarly production has been, for years, looking at multiracial identities in both the United States and Latin America, as well as at the subjectivities involved in being multiracial. The author

has other publications on Machado's racial identity, but the work in question here is very comprehensive, going from Brazilian racial formation, to Machado's biographical notes, and touching on Machado's position in literary history. Daniel argues that Machado's racial identity is *both* black and white, and at the same time, neither, and that such ambiguity leads him not to deny his race identity, but to become a "'meta-mulatto,' that is, a mulatto whose writing grappled with the universal questions of duality and ambiguity in all human existence-- miscegenation in a higher sense" (120-21). Here, the author is challenging the common idea that Machado tended to ignore the racial conflicts, affirming that his works have a hidden racial text, and that "Machado's writings reflect the paradoxical vantage point of an esteemed individual of African descent whose rise to social and literary prominence called into question the entire notion of dominant and subordinate by subverting the line between black and white" (138). This way, "Machado's criticism of modernity is, by extension, an interrogation of the Eurocentric dichotomization of the subjective (internal) and objective (external) aspects of human identity into mutually exclusive and antagonistic categories of experience" (152).

There are two interesting aspects about Daniel's book. The first one is that Daniel's career is mostly focused on racial matters, and Machado exists in his scholarly corpus to add to the multiracial discussion he has been building. This shows that Machado, as a subject of study in the English sphere, has crossed the field of Brazilianist and even literary studies, and has now reached Sociology and race studies. This certainly looks like the path of a writer who has started to leave the stigma of an overlooked genius to make his own contribution to the world's history. Secondly, Daniel's interpretation of Machado's ironic and ambiguous voice as a reflection of his mulatto condition is very telling of the

willingness to find, in Machado's text, something that can contribute to deciphering the complex race relations not only in Brazil but in the world.

This section began with a question by Earl Fitz, in which he wondered what would happen if Machado were seen as someone who had more to say to the world than just about Brazil, but about black and women's conditions as well. I would like to acknowledge that Fitz himself wrote an entire book that deals with the representation of women in Machado's nine novels, and even though I won't discuss this book here, it shows that the critic is also approximating Machado to identity issues that matter today.

Final Notes: New Colours for Machado de Assis

In this chapter, I have identified two different patterns in the English reception of Machado de Assis, and how his image has changed among international readership, both in academia and in the press. Since Machado was first published in the Anglophone context, he started to be represented by critics as an unknown, misunderstood genius, who was lost in a peripheral country outside of which he was not widely known. Although this lost-genius stigma regarding Machado is still alive today, the twenty-first century has also represented the rise of Machado de Assis as a subject of race-related studies in literary criticism. The intention of this chapter was not to have a clear answer as to why Machado de Assis has not achieved the same prestige that authors such as Balzac or Dickens has but rather interpret what is the significance of these two patterns in his literature under the light of world-literature theories by David Damrosch and Pascale Casanova.

Even though, in the twentieth century, Machado was the subject of study for many Anglophone critics, from Helen Caldwell to Susan Sontag, these critics, while still making

an effort to add international appeal to his work, would insist in portraying him as a third-world overlooked writer. This label was very tied to Machado's image and it was difficult to find one text that would cite Machado without putting him in this obscure place. Also, the comparison between Machado and authors such as Sterne or Shakespeare, while important to position his work in dialogue with other world-literature authors, was, in many ways, placing Machado as someone who reproduced these more widely-known authors in the Brazilian context, which, in many ways, reinforce what Pascale Casanova writes about the literatures of the periphery: Because they are not armed with the same amount of linguistic and cultural capital as the centre, they are frequently seen as being subordinated to European aesthetic values. In this context, this trend has not clearly stated which gap Machado de Assis could occupy in the world literary stage. I am not saying that this was the intention behind the work of the critics I cite in the second section. On the contrary, these works, many times, intended to present Machado's work to a foreign readership. However, many of them, while highlighting Machado's influence from European writers, are better examples of how these writers have added to a literary context outside of their own than of how Machado de Assis was significant to other literary traditions outside the Brazilian context. This seems to have, on the level of discourse, solidified Machado as a peripheral author.

Nonetheless, the third section shows how recent scholarship has found, through a racialized reading of Machado de Assis, new meanings for his work in the Anglophone context. As we saw, Machado, as a historical character, has been whitened in Brazil. More recently though, the Brazilian black movement has claimed his racial background as an important factor to be acknowledged when talking about his literature. This trend, as we saw, has also appeared more in English scholarship and publications on/by Machado de

Assis, and his race has played an important role in Machado's studies. Some of these studies, as in the case of Dixon or Daniel, are challenging the idea that Machado, despite being a black man, has not touched on racial issues with his literature. It is true that Machado de Assis has now appeared on best-seller lists in the United States, but if this is due to these new racial readings of his work is undetermined.

What these studies do, when positioning Machado as a black writer whose work is important to understand the history of black literature, is indicate an effort to add a new layer of international appeal to his work. Of course, the importance of Machado de Assis's literature is far from being determined only by his race. Still, being black and the most important writer in a country marked by controversial race relations is an extraordinary achievement, especially in the Brazil of his time. If, as Damrosch argues, a piece of literature succeeds abroad when it adds something to the understanding of a host culture's own literary tradition, the narrative about a black writer, who, to be accepted, had to whiten his literature and his own image, and who, defying the normality of his milieu, has produced a literature of the highest quality and with a high level of erudition, can definitely, alongside with a deeper discussion on how these issues appear in his works, make space for him in the world literary stage as his case is, if not the only one, one of the few of its kind.

The sales success of Machado de Assis in 2020, and the recent deluxe editions of his works indicate that Machado is now further established on the world literary stage, abandoning what Gledson called *succès d'estime,* and being better positioned as a writer that matches his critical reception with his acceptance among the public. Future scholarship might want to investigate how this case develops. In addition, a deeper study of these new translations and their paratexts might also offer an important contribution to this discussion.

If Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis is increasing in popularity, the next chapter of this thesis investigates the case of Jorge Amado, an author who may be walking the opposite direction in comparison to Machado and Lispector. Amado, who is frequently pointed out as the only canonical Brazilian author with international success, now, given the recent success of his fellow Brazilian writers, might no longer be considered as the canonical Brazilian writer with better international prominence. The coming pages show why.

Chapter 3: The Success and Reputation of Jorge Amado: A Bittersweet Journey

If one is discussing sales, there is no denying that Paulo Coelho followed by the Bahian author Jorge Amado are the most read Brazilians outside of their home country. Coelho is indeed the most translated living author in the world. But there is one thing he has not conquered in his own nation: the respect of literary critics and the literary establishment. When Amado was alive, similarly, many would snub his extremely popular writing, but nineteen years after his death, it is hard to meet a Brazilian child who has left school without having read at least excerpts of his stories. In the history of Brazilian literature, Amado is surely remembered, among the canonical authors, as the one who best succeeded abroad. But I would like to start this chapter with one or two questions: Can Amado still be considered as Brazil's most canonical writer *internationally*? And may two other authors be replacing him, as the main points of reference in Brazilian literature outside the country?

Although the previous chapters in this thesis suggest that the answer for the second question might be "yes," before starting to look into Amado's case and actually trying to answer these queries, let me explain two theoretical concepts that guide my argumentation in this chapter: Firstly, I return to David Damrosch's ideas on world literature, and, secondly, Silviano Santiago's concept of "entre-lugar," or, in English, the "space-in-between" occupied by Latin American literature in the Western literary tradition.

David Damrosch argues that an important characteristic of world literature today, that is to say, in an age of globalization, is variability. In his words, "different readers will be obsessed by different constellations of texts" (*What Is World Literature?* 281), and, even

though there are authors that retain a significant canonical status, like Kafka and Dante, "these authors function today less as a common patrimony than as rich nodes of overlap among many different and highly individual groups" (*What Is World Literature?* 281). That being said, for Damrosch, all texts that actively circulate beyond borders and which, based on his notion, are therefore part of world literature, seem to share some resemblance and follow some rules. One of these rules is that "World literature is an elliptical refraction of national literatures" (*What Is World Literature?* 281). With that, Damrosch is saying that, differently from what comparatists in the postwar era wanted to believe, literature does not have the power to cure "the ills of nationalistic separatism, jingoism, and internecine violence" (*What Is World Literature?* 283). In his metaphor, just like how light or other waves are re-directed when passing through different mediums with different densities, the significance of a piece of literature is also redirected when travelling out of its original context. However, this refraction to which Damrosch refers to is a double refraction, since it happens with both "the source and host cultures providing the two foci that generate the elliptical space within which a work lives as world literature, connected to both cultures, circumscribed by neither alone" (*What Is World Literature?* 283).

In other words, a literary work, when travelling, will always carry its original context within itself but the original context will always be affected by the host culture's view of it. For the critic, the fact is that "virtually all literary works are born within what we would now call a national literature" and that "works continue to bear the marks of their national origin even after they circulate into world literature, and yet these traces are increasingly diffused and become even more sharply refracted as a work travels farther from home" (*What Is World Literature?* 283). A good example to understand what Damrosch is saying would be what Roberto Schwarz writes on the work of Machado de

Assis, as stated in the previous chapter. While he recognizes, for example, the contribution that Helen Caldwell made to the understanding of *Dom Casmurro* when comparing Machado de Assis to Shakespeare, the influences that the Brazilian society had on the way Machado wrote are not erased. Yet, as world literature happens as this "locus of negotiation between two different cultures" (*What Is World Literature?* 283), there are different ways in which a work might be received by the host culture:

> as a positive model for the future development of its own tradition; as a negative case of a primitive, or decadent, stand that must be avoided or rooted out at home; or, more neutrally, as an image of radical otherness against which the home tradition can be more clearly defined. World literature is thus always as much about the host culture's values and needs as it is about a work's source culture [...]. (Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* 283)

Among these three cases, Damrosch seems to think that the first one is a more desirable place for a work to occupy outside its homeland rather than being strongly seen with a sense of otherness, something that exists as too different in relation the host culture's literary traditions or, worse, to serve as a bad example. This becomes clearer later in the essay when the critic argues that when a work of literature is too associated with its historical and milieu contexts, it becomes harder to take it further and discover its new layers and meanings. He says: "The more committed today's Shakespeareans become to understanding literature within cultural context, the less likely they are to feel comfortable in comparing Shakespeare and Kalidasa" (*What Is World Literature?* 285).

Moving from Damrosch, I would like to explain a second theory that, more peripherally, will be used in this chapter, specifically in the second section. For Brazilian critic Silviano Santiago, in his essay "O entre-lugar do discurso latino-americano" (1978),

twentieth-century Latin American literature and its discourse are not superior nor inferior to the European ones in the Western tradition. They rather occupy the "entre-lugar," or, a "space-in-between," in the Western Canon, especially because it subverts, breaks away from, and questions the limits of the European forms of literature. For Santiago, the Latin American writer, while not able to reject the original model, re-signifies the European tradition, and "brinca com os signos de um outro escritor, de uma outra obra. As palavras do outro têm a particularidade de se apresentarem como objetos que fascinam seus olhos, seus dedos, e a escritura do segundo texto é em parte a história de uma experiência sensorial com o signo estrangeiro" (21).

This experience, nevertheless, "se organiza a partir de uma meditação silenciosa e traiçoeira sobre o primeiro texto, e o leitor, transformado em autor, tenta surpreender o modelo original em suas limitações, suas fraquezas, em suas lacunas, desarticula-o e o rearticula de acordo com suas intenções" (20). Here, Santiago is highlighting the relevance of the dominated culture that builds some sort of counter-discourse out of the dominant ones. He echoes the *Cannibalist Manifesto* of the *modernistas*, where in order to create relevant Brazilian art (or, in this case, Latin American), the artist must bring together European references and piece them apart like a puzzle while mixing them into a local-culture cauldron.

Santiago exemplifies his argumentation, also, with the short story "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote" (1939), by Jorge Luis Borges. For him, the story works as "a metáfora ideal para bem precisar a situação e o papel do escritor latino-americano, vivendo entre a assimilação do modelo original, isto é, entre o amor e o respeito pelo já-escrito, e a necessidade de produzir um novo texto que afronte o primeiro e muitas vezes o negue" (23). It is worth remembering that, in this piece, written as a simulation of a critical

publication, Borges tells the story of a fictional author, Pierre Menard, who had the ambition of re-writing the novel *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, by Miguel de Cervantes, word by word. Santiago explains that, in the story, "se Cervantes para construir seu texto não tinha 'rejeitado a colaboração do acaso', o escritor argentino tinha 'contraído o misterioso dever de reconstruir literalmente sua obra espontânea'" (24). In this sense, "a originalidade do projeto de Pierre Menard, sua parte visível e escrita, é consequência do fato de ele recusar aceitar a concepção tradicional da invenção artística, porque ele próprio nega a liberdade total do artista" (25). This way, Borges's short story would, for Santiago, symbolize the Latin American writer who re-signifies the European modes of literary-making.

With Damrosch and Santiago in mind, my chapter begins with the works of scholars such as Marcia Rios da Silva, Irene Rostagno, Deborah Cohn, and Piers Armstrong. They have already demonstrated that Amado's work was, in the twentieth century, successful in the Anglophone sphere primarily because it helped foreign audiences to understand Latin America. However, here, I argue that while Machado and Lispector's works, as we have seen in previous chapters, are viewed today as Damrosch's first example, a positive model for the future development of the home country's own tradition, Amado's work, in comparison with the first two authors, has been more frequently read as something in between the two later ones: An image of radical otherness and, to a smaller extent, a work that should be rooted out of home. I am not arguing, however, that Amado is not canonical nor that he has no critical acclaim. I am rather challenging the notion that he can still be considered as Brazil's main literary reference in the Anglophone context.

This is important because it helps us understand this moment when an old truth (that Amado is the world's biggest name when it comes to Brazilian literature) might not be

applicable to our times, as the works of Lispector and Machado are occupying, along with the Bahian writer, a place as the country's most successful canonical writers abroad, combining prestige and success in the publishing market with a more consistent critical acclaim. Just as a reference, a quick search for the terms "Jorge Amado," "Clarice Lispector," and "Machado de Assis" on the *MLA International Bibliography*[23] database shows how Lispector and Machado generate, historically, more critical discussion than Amado. Limiting our search from 1945 to 2000, among journal publications, theses, dissertations, books, and book chapters, Jorge Amado results in 239 items, Lispector in 360, and Machado in 631. If we limit the language to "English" only, these numbers go down, respectively, to 62, 159, and 167. The period between 2001 and 2019, on the other hand, shows Amado with 129 publications in general and 64 in English, Lispector with 366 in general and 131 in English, and Machado with 425 in general and 143 in English. By presenting such figures, I am not trying to promote a discussion on which of these authors is closer to becoming part of a *hypercanon* of Brazilian literature, similar to what David Damrosch does in his famous 2006 essay "World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age." The reason why I decided to display such numbers is to contextualize how Machado and Lispector have more commonly been picked as subjects of critical pieces, both in Brazil and internationally, which suggests that Amado's sales success has not been matched by his academic prestige, which, combined with the material I will be analyzing in the next sections, can help give a broader sense of my argumentation.

In order to prove the points that I have made in the previous paragraphs, I will be walking the following path in this chapter:

[23] Last consulted on November 16th, 2020.

First, I start by recovering Amado's trajectory in the United States in the context of the late twentieth-century's growing interest in Latin American literature in North America, which was strongly motivated by Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy and its programs that aimed at disseminating Latin American culture in the U.S. My contribution to the field does not start here as this historical context has already been richly explored by authors like Irene Rostagno, Piers Armstrong, and Deborah Cohn, which will guide me in this section.

It is in the second section that my analysis will begin. At this point, I will be analyzing key mid-twentieth century to early twenty-first-century English-language criticism on Amado's work, by both specialists in Brazil and non-specialists, and both in academia and in journalistic criticism. The inclusion criteria are explained in the beginning of the section in question. With these sources, and guided by Damrosch's theories on world literature, I aim to interpret the critical discourse around Amado's work and show that, if he was indeed famous in the English literary system, the Anglophone criticism on him is marked by mixed opinions regarding his merits as a writer. His literary achievements are frequently tied to his representation of Brazil, and his work, even if canonical, is commonly portrayed as inconsistent and, sometimes, as propagandistic rather than artistic.

The third section, however, is dedicated to analyzing important twenty-first-century critical publications on Amado. I show how, since 2001, his work has also been re-published by important publishing labels. In addition, important academic journals and scholars have published compelling studies on his work. However, his presence in the English system, even if still existent, has not been, in our times, as lively as Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector. This is due to various reasons but also indicates a dispute for the most prestigious place in the imaginary competition of canonical Brazilian literature as world literature. Yet, I aim to demonstrate how some old, negative notions about Amado's

literary skills have been questioned, and how these new major publications on him have, indeed, activated new interpretations of his literature, detaching it from things strictly Brazilian, and exploring more universal questions on his bibliography. Differently from what has happened in the previous chapters, we might not be able to say that we have been witnessing a rediscovery of Amado. But, as newer scholarship starts to see Amado as a more innovative writer, with much more to contribute to the Western tradition, he achieves a clearer place in the Western literary system, if we take into consideration Santiago's theories on the role of Latin American literary discourse.

Amado Conquers the World

Thanks to the work of different scholars-- Marcia Rios da Silva, Irene Rostagno, Deborah Cohn, Piers Armstrong, among others--we can, today, understand how Jorge Amado was, until the end of the twentieth century, the only Brazilian writer to become an international best seller. In this thesis' introduction, I already discussed how this happened. However, to contextualize the next sections, it is important to briefly inform the reader on Amado's complex relationship with the public and the critics.

Overall, we can say that scholars Marcia Rios da Silva, Irene Rostagno, Deborah Cohn, and Piers Armstrong tend to agree that a combination of factors have induced Amado's successful early life as world literature, from the middle to the end of the past century: (1) Amado's easy-to-translate fiction, with simple and captivating plots, (2) The success of popular TV shows based on his novels, (3) A growing interest in Latin America by North American audiences, motivated by cultural, political, and historical processes, and (4) His similarities with other successful Latin American writers who were part of the Latin American Boom. This boom was a publishing and academic phenomenon, which, in the

1960s and the 1970s, resulted in a greater interest from international audiences in Latin American Literature, and in the rise of authors such as Júlio Cortázar and Jorge Luis Borges, from Argentina, Gabriel García Marquez, from Colombia, and Mario Vargas Llosa from Peru. Although Amado was not a Spanish writer, in the same period, he fell into the readers' grace as well.

Amado's journey to success starts in his own country. Way before reaching schools' reading lists, Amado, who started to publish in the 1930s, was a publishing phenomenon--a best-selling writer who went beyond the literary language and reached other forms of media. Mid-twentieth century Brazil was experiencing an authoritarian government[24] which, in order to unite the country and attract tourists, worked to build a national identity that was based on a mix of the country's African, Indigenous, and black heritages. This period signified the ascension of *carnaval* and samba, a rhythm of African origin enjoyed also by white people, as symbols of Brazil's cultural heritage, and even the combination of black beans and white rice, popular in the country, became a "representação simbólica da mestiçagem" (Schwarcz and Sterling, *Brasil: uma Biografia* 378). Although Amado, a communist, was persecuted by Vargas (he was imprisoned, exiled, and his books were out-of-print until the early 1940s), the cultural legacy left by this regime was a facilitator for a writer whose stories were inhabited by popular music, mulattas, and racial diversity. There are dozens of plays, movies, *telenovelas*, and TV series based on his works--many of them reaching outstanding audience ratings. To cite just one example, his 1958 novel *Gabriela,*

[24] The Estado Novo dictatorship whose leader was the popular President Getúlio Vargas ruled Brazil from 1937 to 1946. Historians Lilia M. Schwarcz and Heloisa Sterling call it a "pequeno fascismo tupinambá" (*Brasil: Uma Biografia* 374). With anti-communist ideals and an "autoritária, modernizante e pragmática" (Schwarcz and Sterling 375) nature, this regime worked to strengthen Brazil's national identity. Extremely popular, this government left a legacy in Brazilian society: Its efforts to define the country's culture and some Worker's Protection Laws are examples.

cravo e canela inspired three different Brazilian *telenovelas* between 1961 and 2012. Similarly, between 1975 and 2019, the 1966 novel *Dona Flor e seus dois maridos* was made into a movie, a Brazilian TV series, a Mexican *telenovela*, and an off-Broadway play in New York City, just to cite a few adaptations.

However, as the scholar Marcia Rios da Silva, an important Brazilian specialist in Amado's reception, shows, Jorge Amado has not garnered respect in Brazil so easily. Regarding the rise of modern culture in Brazil, the most accepted narrative is that modernism was inaugurated in the country by the São Paulo Modern Art Week of 1922, an event that intended to present a new movement in Brazilian art, which, influenced by European modernists, wanted to break with its predecessors and produce art that was more experimental, free, and less elitist. This movement was led by artists such as Tarsila D'Amaral, Mario de Andrade, and Oswald de Andrade, and had cultural anthropophagy as one of its main values, which advocated for the appropriation of foreign artistic values and their adaptation into the Brazilian cultural context. When Amado started to write in the 1930s, modernist ideals of art were still prevalent in Brazil and the world. He is, indeed, often included as part of the second generation of Brazilian modernists, known as Geração de 30, which was making a political literature, where the regionalist, contemporary reality and inequality were prominent themes. Unlike his fellow writers such as Graciliano Ramos and Erico Veríssimo, however, Amado was accused of writing on these topics with political naivety. As Rios da Silva states: "Amado was fiercely criticized for writing under a partisan doctrine: the defenders of autonomy in art accused him of turning literature into an instrument of propaganda" (200). His intention, in many ways, especially in the novels of his so-called first phase (which ends with *Gabriela*) was to write proletarian novels that could connect to the workers' struggles, as he himself has admitted in life: "To write a

proletarian novel was, evidently, a pretension from my part. The proletarian conscience was still in formation in a country that had just begun to industrialize itself and in which did not exist, properly speaking, a working class" (qtd. in Rios da Silva 207). In addition, many of his stories were very chronological, plot-focused, and did not propose any subversion of language and aesthetics. All of this, to an extent, contributed to viewing Amado's work, in the Brazilian literary establishment, as literature with a lowercase "l." As Rios da Silva argues, intellectuals did not value his art and leftists did not see his connections with mass media with positive intent. The public at large, however, was on his side. His love stories, his simple language, the adaptations of his work--everything led him to become a celebrity in a country that, proportionally, did not have that many readers. This, of course, caught the attention of international publishers who were looking for Latin American writers to publish. This included the U.S., a market that, historically, has been a challenge for Brazilian books.

Regarding Amado's international endeavour, as the introduction to this thesis has shown, the works of Armstrong, Cohn, and Rostagno have elucidated that the historical context in the United States facilitated Amado's entrance into the market. The Good Neighbor Policy, the growing interest in Latin America, the difficulty of publishing European writers due to wartime conditions: Everything was working in his favour. But Amado's style was also an advantage. Blanche and Alfred Knopf were admirers of Brazilian literature and "often lamented American lack of interest in things Brazilian" (Rostagno 35). But if, according to Rostagno, publishing Brazilian writers who were not Latin American enough, like Clarice Lispector, or who were difficult to translate, like Guimarães Rosa, has contributed to some monetary losses for the Knopf company, Amado became a safer investment:

> On the one hand, his novels were documents of an exotic, sensuous culture that fit the most popular image of Latin America, and on the other, some episodes of his work displayed craftsmanship that would permit his being considered more than a popular author or an exotic curiosity. (Rostagno 36)

Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon, then, became, in 1962, one of the first Latin American best-sellers in the United States, staying on the *New York Times'* list for six weeks. As Rostagno says, the "Knopf were surprised by the financial success of this lively novel" (37), and "the reasons for the appeal of *Gabriela* were many: it was humorous; it moved swiftly and contained adequate supply of romantic plot" (37). Amado's success, then, precedes the Boom. But if his work is comparable to that of his fellow Latin Americans, there are also some differences. First, naturally, there is the language. Second, most of the Boom writers were avant-gardists, interested in challenging the old forms of Western literature. This has granted them a solid reputation, and authors like Jorge Luis Borges seem to be the standard. Also, the Nobel Prizes for García Marquez, Vargas Llosa, and Miguel Angel Asturias speak for themselves. However, in the next section, I show how Amado's reputation in the Anglophone system has, for decades, consistently received mixed reactions.

A Mixed Reputation

Two points in the previous section deserve attention: First, in the twentieth-century, Amado was a best-seller both in Brazil and in the United States. Second, while his success with the public was undeniable, his work faced skepticism among Brazilian critics for its explicitly political message, and for its lack of innovation on form. But if Amado's work

was prosperous to the point that he, unlike most Brazilian authors, managed to achieve international success while still alive, did this success reflect on the English criticism on him? What have Anglophone critics of Amado written about his work in the second half of the twentieth century?

This is precisely what this section intends to take account of. In the following pages, I read and analyze pieces of criticism on Amado, published in the Anglophone context. By doing that, I point out how, if in the case of Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector we could see their work being well-regarded by literary critics both inside and outside Brazil, even if not initially successful among the general public, in the case of Amado we observe, to some extent, the opposite. Amado became a best-seller way earlier than his fellow Brazilian writers in question. However, differently from them, he experienced success but not consistent critical acclaim. While Machado, for example, was frequently portrayed as an overlooked genius, Amado's flaws as a writer would be frequently noted, not only by general critics in the media, but even by specialists of his work. In both contexts (media and academia), critics, while seeing value regarding Amado's work--especially when it comes to plot development--would frequently have some reservations regarding his style or writing skills. To demonstrate such trend, I start by looking at two pieces published on *The New York Times*--one by David Gallagher, and another by Donald A. Yates. My choice to include these pieces was due to the fact that Amado was well-known among the general public. It is therefore important to understand how he was presented to his readership outside academia. Second, I move to pieces by academics who are, indeed, specialists in Jorge Amado and Brazilian studies. All of the selected texts, here, are books by influential scholars that have Amado as their main subject or one of their main subjects. I show that these specialists, while more specific and knowledgeable in their approach to Amado's

work, reveal mixed opinions regarding his skill as a writer. In academia, I have selected publications by the following scholars: Bobby J. Chamberlain, Fred P. Ellison, and a compilation of works co-edited by Keith H. Brower, Earl E. Fitz, and Enrique Martínez-Vidal.

Starting with the analysis, when Amado's books first appeared in English, they received somewhat warm reviews. These reviews did help to sell his books during a time when curiosity about Latin America was rising, and they could also make readers who were looking for an easy Sunday read pay attention to Amado's works. |However, when discussing Amado, they were not talking about a remarkable author or someone who would mark his place for generations to come.

Two examples of these earlier Amado reviews can be found in the press. A 1969 *New York Times* piece by critic David Gallagher, author of books such as *Modern Latin American Literature* (1973), by Oxford University Press, on *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands*, opens by highlighting socio-economic differences between Southeastern and Northeastern Brazil. Gallagher notes that, in the past, Amado used to write strong political novels, and, since *Gabriela*, he had become less explicit in this sense. The critic praises the novel's world of *mulatas* and the characters who depict the image of a happy, laid-back Brazil. He writes: "No one who knows Brazil needs to be reminded that this is an immensely happy country, even in the North-East. Practically everyone in Amado's galaxy of characters exudes a reckless *joie de vivre*" (125). Even if the overall tone of the piece is positive, and Gallagher sees *Dona Flor* as a good novel for its "coolness" and its character building, which in his words help us readers "learn to take exoticism and magic in our stride" (125), he ends the piece by substantially criticizing Amado's style. "It is a pity that Amado mars his achievement by often writing flatly, without discipline or tension. His

refreshing exuberance is diminished by the novel's almost aggressive repetitiveness. Cut to half its size, it would have been a better book" (125), he writes.

In this piece, Gallagher clearly roots Amado in Brazil. Amado's writing, for him, depends on the way the author captures his own country's essence through his characters and situations. This is where Gallagher feels the value of the novel resides, despite its repetitiveness, flatness, or lack of tension. His characters are fun because they are Brazilians, and Brazilians are fun. Amado, in Gallagher's words, has an "exuberance," a word that evokes exoticism. If we think of this text in terms of Damrosch's possible ways of reading a work of World Literature, we notice that Amado is being presented by Gallagher as the other. In this sense, the critic seems to be especially interested in the insertion of Afro-Brazilian religious elements in the novel, which he sees as part of the magical realism movement in Latin America: 'Fantasy in many Latin American novels is a real, active dimension in the characters' lives (...). In 'Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands' it is the Devil-God Exu who resuscitates the body of Vadinho and restores it to Dona Flor.' The Exú here referred to is an entity related to the Yoruba mythology, very present in Brazilian religious life, especially when it comes to the Afro-Brazilian community. For Gallagher, however, these magical elements add, not only value to the novel, but also exoticism. He writes: "Like them [the characters] we learn to take exoticism and magic in our stride" (125).

In addition to the article by Gallagher, *New York Times* had, three years earlier, published a piece by Donald A. Yates, a Latin Americanist who was one of the first translators of Jorge Luis Borges as well as a translator for other Spanish American writers such as Adolfo Bioy Casares. In this 1966 publication named "Latin America," Yates comments on the Spanish and Portuguese works from U.S. neighbours published in North

America. The piece does not go into the specifics of each work but it is illustrative of my argumentation precisely for the difference of treatment between the work of Amado and his Latin American peers. The commonality of the books listed by Yates is that all of them are examples of Latin American literature and serve as recommendation for readers interested in the region's contemporary authors. However, while some books are praised for their literary innovation, others are presented as mere objects of curiosity. Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela*, known in English as *Hopscotch*, for example, is regarded as "more than a 'modern novel' in its theme and style" but also an "intellectual novel" with an "extravagant intelligence, wit, and sophistication" (334). Other Spanish-speaking authors, such as Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares, and Juan José Arreola are described with adjectives such as "distinguished," "imaginative," "elegant," and "cerebral" (334). All these writers, one should note, are very inventive--*Rayuela* was indeed written with the ambition of challenging the novel as a genre. These authors, like Santiago suggests, are very well positioned in the "*entre-lugar*" of the Latin American literature because they take models from the centre – like the classical novel – and question their limits by, for example, letting the reader choose from which chapter they should start reading the story or by creating critical, metafictional narratives. Even though Jorge Amado was writing about essentially Brazilian things, if we compare how these previous authors are described in this piece with the description of Jorge Amado's work, we can see that, even though the author was, at that time, more widely read than his peers, he was not as equally respected.

In this piece, Amado is described as being part of "representative novels of the Brazilian writers who have produced works that illuminate the people and customs of Brazil's great northeast region" (334). Differently from the previous authors, Amado is not being recommended because of the merits of his literary voice, nor even for his captivating

plots, as in the case of Gallagher: He is s being recommended because his work can have a didactic function, as a way of learning more about Brazil. One surely should not ignore the fact that Yates, the author of this piece, is a specialist on Spanish America, having written a book about the life and work of Borges himself, and may carry a bias. Still, this is the *New York Times*, which pretty much anyone would see as a major publication for the canonization of authors. It becomes clear that Amado was not necessarily seen as a promising literary voice--he was more of a publishing phenomenon.

In these two journalistic pieces of literary criticism, we can see that Amado, although not disregarded as a bad author, was not highly praised for his style. His merits, in both publications, rely on what his writing can teach regarding Brazilian culture. When moving to English academic criticism, as the following examples show, one can, similarly, find balanced opinions regarding Amado's merits as a writer, in which both his merits and failures are recognized. Frequently, however, academics go further in their interpretation of Amado's writing, pointing out the value also in his style, especially when it comes to the use of humour and irony as sophisticated tools for political commentary, or the use of oral Brazilian traditions in his novels. Still, even among academics and specialists of his work, his inconsistency as a writer is highlighted.

In this sense, a first example is the 1990 book *Jorge Amado*, by professor Bobby J. Chamberlain, an important Brazilianist, who was once on the executive committee of the MLA Luso-Brazilian Division and a chairman of the AATSP Task Force for the Promotion of Portuguese, Emeritus Professor at the University of Pittsburgh, and a scholar who devoted a fair amount of his research to Amado and his writing. This volume was published

in the Twayne's world authors book series,[25] and, here, Chamberlain intended to trace the changes in Amado's writings throughout the years. The overall idea in the book, besides presenting Amado's work, is to show how the social criticism of Amado's early years, his proletarian novels, his strong left-wing political views, are still present in his so-called second phase, which starts with the novel *Gabriela* (1958). However, Chamberlain argues that, after this novel, Amado's political commentary increases in sophistication. With that, the explicit deception of class conflicts, with poor characters being often romanticized, is replaced by the use of humour, irony, parody, and pastiche, which allowed Amado to make better use of his political views. Chamberlain presents important biographical background information on Amado's writing, noting the persecution he suffered during Getúlio Vargas' Estado Novo (1937-1946), his time as a member of the Brazilian Communist Party, his service in the Brazilian congress, and his opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship (1964-1985).

In addition, Chamberlain notes that the social realism of Amado's earlier novels "was motivated first and foremost by a desire to correct social injustice" (16). Therefore, he claims that, in his first phase, which included novels such as *Terras do sem-fim* (1943), *Capitães da areia* (1937), and *Cacau* (1933), among others, "Amado grappled constantly with the problem of striking a balance between 'social document' and 'literature.' His initial attempts, which he seemed to regard as 'proletarian novels,' were weighted heavily in favor of exposing societal inequities, often to the detriment of artistic quality" (16).

[25] A famous series with more than 100 volumes. The books, written by important scholars, bring information on canonical writers around the world. Lispector (1985), Machado (1989), Guimarães Rosa (1978), and Graciliano Ramos (1974) are Brazilian writers included in the series with books written, respectively, by Earl E. Fitz, Jon S. Vincent, and Richard A. Mazzara. The publication shows Amado's canonical status in Brazil. But the fact that Guimarães Rosa and Graciliano Ramos are also profiled in this series suggests that, not necessarily, the international significance of an author was taken into consideration in the inclusion-exclusion criteria of this series.

Although recognizing the problems with this first phase, Chamberlain sees artistic value in certain aspects of some of these books. One example is *Terras do sem-fim*, which tells a story of political conflicts related to cocoa plantation lands in Northeast Brazil. Even if Chamberlain does not think of this novel as a "a wholesale break with earlier Amadian patterns," since, like in the other ones, it "is the poor and the blacks who receive the most inhumane treatment from the ruling classes" (28), the critic *does* think that, in order to write "this 'epic of cacao,' Amado had to sharpen his literary tools and refine his understanding of history and the human soul, forsaking the constraints imposed by a narrow ideological view" (28). Yet, Chamberlain sees *Terras do sem-fim* as an *exception* in Amado's first phase when it comes to a greater literary refinement: "Part of the work's uniqueness stems from the fact that it would be some years before he would again reap the fruits of this lesson" (28).

If the first phase was not Amado's best literary moment, Chamberlain does believe that, after 1958, Amado shows an increase in artistic sophistication. The scholar recalls the fact that many critics saw, in *Gabriela* and in the works that followed, a new Amado. However, from his point of view, while, after *Gabriela,* Amado was seen by many as a different author, "divorced from Marxist ideology and dedicated to the cultivation of picaresque humor" (97), one should also take into consideration that Amado's so-called second phase was actually his same political views gaining maturity in his literature, when "the novelist seemed to have veered away from prescriptive socialist realism, but regarded Gabriela more as a switch of tactics than as a wholesale retreat from a leftist worldview" (97). For Chamberlain, "most scholars were in agreement that Gabriela constituted a watershed in the author's literary development" (97). Still, he goes on to remind us that in recent years, which is to say, in the 80s, Amado had increasingly become the target of

criticism by young Brazilian and non-Brazilian literary scholars where the "principal allegations involve such things as populism and the consequent romanticization of poverty, sexual and racial stereotyping, inordinate prolixity and repetition of episodes and characters, pandering to the values of the marketplace" (100). Such criticisms also involved allegations that Amado was a poor narrative developer, who built Manichaean worlds and did not offer much when it came to style innovation. Although Chamberlain agrees, in part, with such criticisms, he thinks they are sometimes overdone:

> There is no denying the long-windedness of Amado's narrative style. Unamuno's well-known characterization of writers as being either oviparous or viviparous would undoubtedly include the Bahian novelist in the latter category. Part of his reputation as a storyteller has always been based on his reported habit of composing his novels on a typewriter without previous drafts and with little or no subsequent revision. Never at ease with the lean prose style of a Ramos or a Hemingway, Amado seems to have turned to parody of bygone and popular genres, starting with Gabriela, in a deliberate attempt to make a virtue of necessity. He appears indeed to have strengthened his traditional reliance on verbal excess in the process, at times fairly reveling in the discursiveness of his narrators as if to reaffirm his own affiliations with the Latin oratorical tradition. Nor is there any doubt that the author has frequently appropriated earlier episodes and characters for use in subsequent novels. He has openly admitted to having reprised several strike scenes, for instance, simply to see how his previous treatment of them would be altered by greater infusions of humor and farce.

Excerpts like the previous one function to answer one of Chamberlain's main questions in this book: Was Jorge Amado a "Man of Letters or Literary Hack?" (97). The

simple existence of this question regarding Amado's merit, although not endorsing all the criticism the author has received, is a demonstration of his mixed reputation as a writer, even in specialized criticism. Chamberlain is not trying to answer whether the above described characteristics are real problems or not, and he does think that these critics have difficulties in viewing the author's literary *merits* such as his "desacralization of canonical discourses and the perspicacity of his social satire escape" (101) through "the leisurely verbosity of the narrative style, the presence of chatty, bumbling narrators, the tongue-in-cheek imitation of older and popular literature, and even the author's recourse to superannuated literary models often belie the fundamental sophistication of the works" (100-101). He acknowledges, however, that such criticisms are not invalid (101), and recognizes that there is room for criticism on Amado's populist ideas and that "There is likewise something to be said for the notion that Amado's later fiction persists in the 'closed,' authoritarian molds of the nineteenth-century novel, often leaving little for the reader to supply" (102).

The reader leaves this book with a clear sense that, even though Amado was a best-selling author internationally, there is no consistent view on his literary value. However, one can also feel Chamberlain's efforts to build a more balanced reading of Amado's work. If "The novelist's devoted admirers will undoubtedly continue to deny the inevitable contradictions in his latter-day fiction, while his most vocal detractors will point to its flaws, but refuse to concede its esthetic qualities and sophistication" (103), Chamberlain is looking for a more tempered criticism of the Bahian's writings. However, Amado is widely presented, here, as a sales phenomenon with a troubled reputation regarding his writing skills. Chamberlain could even find room to question whether Amado was a real man of letters or not, a question that is left unanswered by him. The author also attributes much of

Amado's literary value to his use of the Portuguese language, his insertion of the language of the people into the literary space, and I would like to point out that such literary skills may not interest a foreign reader looking for innovative works whose contact with the book is through translation. Chamberlain's book is sympathetic to Amado's work but still is about a writer whose literary legacy is inconsistent. Amado is a world literature author, acknowledged by the public, but whose merits are yet to be disputed.

In Anglophone academia, the view of Amado as an author of disputed merits has not been limited to Chamberlain. Before his first phase, this discourse could be even less positive. This is the case in Fred P. Ellison's book *Brazil's New Novel* (1954). Ellison was an important disseminator of Luso-Brazilian studies in North America. A professor at the University of Texas, he was also a translator of Rachel de Queiroz and had published a book on the relationship of the Mexican writer Alfonso Reyes with Brazil. In *Brazil's New Novel*, he deals with the work of four Northeastern Brazilian writers: Rachel de Queiroz, Graciliano Ramos, José Lins do Rego, and, as expected, Jorge Amado.

This book is an extensive study on Brazil's literary production outside the Rio-São Paulo axis. Ellison sees, in the Northeast novel of that time, "possibly the most noteworthy artistic triumph of recent years in Latin America" (165), and here, he conducts an almost descriptive analysis of his subject authors, presenting the significance of their poetics and their themes within the Brazilian literary tradition. When listing the common characteristics among them, for example, Ellison highlights their strong criticism of society. However, he notes that most of these authors conduct such criticism with sophistication, and "rarely does the reader gets the impression that he is being subjected to political propaganda" (159). Nonetheless, Ellison makes a note: "An exception must be made for Amado, almost all of whose books have urged the class struggle and class solidarity among the oppressed" (159).

Yet, Ellison is sympathetic to Amado, and, similarly to Chamberlain, he sees in the 1943 *Terras do sem-fim* the important promise of a more refined author who is yet to come. Differently from Chamberlain, however, Ellison is writing before the publication of Amado's post-*Gabriela* works, which makes his judgement of the Bahian author significantly less exciting.

The depiction of Amado in Ellison's book is that of a writer who prioritizes politics over art; an author who is not in control of his own literature: "Amado seems to write solely by instinct," he asserts, completing that "Of conscious art intellectually arrived at, the result of reflection and high craftsmanship, there is relatively little" (108). He criticizes the structure of most of Amado's novels, saying that chapters were not well connected and that Amado "has always depended on episodes, not always well integrated, to give moment to the novel" (107-108). For Ellison, Amado's work, especially his novels set in Salvador, such as *Capitães da areia* (1937) and *Suor* (1934), brings "moments of supreme artistry but, probably more often, moments when art is absent" (92). Such statements, I would like to point out, reveal the paradoxical nature of Amado's international reputation. Even if he is a world literature author, one who is worthy of a book chapter, he is still not always seen as a true artist. This question of Amado's dubious artistic value is present, not only here, but also in Chamberlain's book, as previously discussed. Although Chamberlain and Ellison have different perspectives on Amado's work, and, because they are writing decades apart from each other, they give different dimensions to Amado's flaws, both books have non-conclusive answers to whether Amado is a true artist (or a "Man of Letters") or not. But if Chamberlain thinks that Amado is an author defined by both his merits and flaws, for Ellison, "The European as well as the Brazilian vogue of Amado has often been the result of political rather than literary qualities" (83). Ellison does not completely dismiss

Amado's literature, but he does think that Amado's ideological views can be of grave harm to his work, and "from the strictly literary standpoint, however, it must be observed that such a philosophy, when projected in the novels, has grave consequences for art" (85). Still, he already sees a search for literary refinement in the Bahian's most recent works, especially in *Terras do sem fim*, which, for him, is "Amado's masterpiece" (89). Again, however, Amado's merits, in Ellison's opinion, are strongly linked to what it does to and with Brazilian culture: "Without his Northeast, Amado would, we suspect, be no novelist at all" (86).

The Amado depicted in Ellison's book is not a talentless author. He is, nonetheless, an author in development. In 1954, the year of the book's publication, it is worth noticing, Amado was the best definition of a contemporary author: a young writer in his forties, who, although still unbeknownst to readers, was about to launch his most important works. In this sense, it is interesting to contrast it with Chamberlain's book. Although Amado was still alive in 1990--he died in 2001--his body of work was, by then, almost complete. To some extent, I see both pieces as a defense of Amado's work, though for Ellison this defense is more cautious. For him, Amado has the potential to be explored, and, because he is so well known and his stories are important to understand the Northeastern culture, Amado is worth reading, especially because, for Ellison, he seemed yet to develop his writing skills. Chamberlain, on the other hand, has a broader view on what Amado's limitations and achievements are. He is searching for a more balanced reading of Amado while debating with both his critics and admirers. Yet, put side by side, these two scholars show that Amado's dubious reputation has travelled throughout decades-- which has not stopped there.

In the early twenty-first century, too, the debate about Amado's merits was still alive, and defenses of his work continued being published. One example is the book *Jorge Amado: New Critical Essays* (2001) edited by scholars Earl E. Fitz, Keith H. Brower, and Enrique Martinez-Vidal. This publication has much to say about Amado's mixed legacy, but it also serves as a transition to our next section, where new readings of Amado in the twenty-first century are discussed. The book, which is a collection of academic articles by 18 different scholars, including Bobby Chamberlain, Elizabeth Lowe, and Paul Dixon, includes an introduction by the organizers which is very important for the topic we are discussing here. The introduction in question is, indeed, more sympathetic to Amado's work if we compare it to Chamberlain's 1990 book, and even more if compared to Ellison's work. Here, Amado's work is, undoubtedly, treated with much respect. His merits as a writer are solidly highlighted. For the authors of the introduction,

> Amado has always been a realist in terms of recreating the defining details, customs, and problems of the common people whom he chooses to depict in his writings, yet at the same time he manages, in his best works, to achieve a level of poetically rendered universality that makes him immediately accessible to readers everywhere. […] Indivisibly linked to the people of Bahia, their picturesque speech patterns, their culture and their struggles, Amado transforms the language of these unlettered people into poetry and achieves the fullest expression as a writer when, often by means of loose, digressive plots (again echoing the oral tradition), rich, pungent descriptions, and ironic metafictional commentary, he brings these characters to life and becomes their spokesperson, arguing for their just treatment in modern Brazilian society. (Brower, Fitz, and Vidal 3)

The previous excerpt is important because it values Amado's work from the stylistic point of view. Here, Amado is presented as a relevant author not only for understanding Brazilian culture but also as a writer whose writing techniques can be universally enjoyed. Amado's digressive plots, if criticized by David Gallagher in 1969, are here presented as a deliberate choice of the Bahian, used to simulate the digressions in oral speech patterns. Fitz, Brower, and Vidal are convinced of Amado's universality. For them, "Like Colombian novelist and Nobel Prize winner Gabriel García Marquez, with whom he is sometimes compared, Amado knows how to make the local or particular express the universal" (3). Indeed, both Amado and García Marquez, although dealing with the particularities of Latin America, were very successful internationally.

If more affirmative than the previous scholarly publications I have discussed, the introduction to the book, however, still recognizes Amado's inconsistency as a writer. The authors point out that Amado's work "may be flawed, and sometimes even crippled by the faults mentioned above" (3), and that part of his work, especially in his early publications, is "marked by a fairly crude style and a rather simplistic political vision (one in which evil capitalists ruthlessly exploit innocent workers)" (2). The authors also highlight the fact that Amado is definitely not universally praised, as for some he "is deprecated for writing not serious literature and for pandering to the worst aspects of popular culture" (2). What this publication aims to do, however, is to highlight what Amado has positively achieved, even if not trying to prove that Amado is a talented author or not: "It is our hope that the essays contained in this book will allow the individual reader to come to her or his own determination about this important, if controversial, twentieth century Brazilian master" (3). It is, again, a defense of Amado's work. A search for a more balanced reputation for his legacy.

Regarding the essays contained in this book, not all the discussions in them are necessarily unexpected in Amado's critical history, like the title of the collection *might* suggest. Bobby J. Chamberlain, for example, pens the article "Striking a Balance: Amado and the Critics" which, basically, deals with the same points of his book published 11 years prior to this 2001 publication, trying to find a balanced opinion between Amado's detractors and defenders. In the piece, Chamberlain himself recognizes that his "own research has moved to other areas" (*Jorge Amado: New Critical Essays* 31). Other articles, while offering insightful contributions to previously existing discussions regarding Amado's work, do not necessarily take his literary production into unexplored contexts. One example is Charles A. Perrone's "From *Lundu* and *Modinha* to *Samba de Enredo* and MPB: Popular Music and the Fiction of Jorge Amado," which tracks the use of popular music in Amado's work as an expression of *brasilidade*. Still, there are articles in this book that try, for example, to shed new light onto Amado's early novels, which are often considered his weakest phase, as discussed in the next section.

Before moving on, it is worth noticing that, in Jorge Amado's case, the reputation as an inconsistent writer does not indicate that he is not canonical. On the contrary, we have seen that he is, indeed, discussed in academia, and this, in Damrosch's terms, is an indication that he has an active presence in the Anglophone literary system. Nonetheless, it does not necessarily reveal that Amado is consistently seen as "a positive model for the future development of its own [in this case, the host culture's] tradition" (Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* 283). As we have seen in the previous chapters, this is the case with Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector, who, before achieving commercial success, already counted on almost unanimous critical praise.

In this sense, if Amado was never seen as an obscure, or lost author, as in the case of Machado de Assis, his critical reputation was also not as warm as those of his fellow Brazilian writers. Yet, one cannot securely declare that Amado is seen, by English critics, "more neutrally, as an image of radical otherness against which the home tradition can more clearly be defined" (Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* 283), even less that he is seen as "a negative case of a primitive, or decadent, strand that must be avoided out at home" (283). However, we can see that, more than Lispector and Machado, Amado's reputation has some aspects of these latter modes of reception that Damrosch points out. We saw that his reception is marked by some *otherness*, since Amado's merits are frequently linked to what his literature can teach or reveal about Brazil, and, sometimes, seen as a *negative* case, when some of his works are seen as bad or naïve literature. Also, the talk that Amado's work is too tied to the traditional forms of the novel can also be seen as some sort of *decadence*. Still, his case contains some of the three ways in which, according to Damrosch, a receiving culture can use foreign material. This might show, now that Lispector and Machado have also achieved success with the public, that Amado's reception is more neutral if compared to the ones of the other canonical Brazilians in question.

Rethinking Amado's Work in the Twenty-First Century

What also might be indicative that Amado now has a more neutral reception when compared to the other authors in this thesis is that there has not been much news regarding his literary life in the twenty-first century. This, for sure, might also have something to do with the fact that, by the end of the past century, the Bahian was already well published and

translated into English, while in the case of his fellow Brazilian writers there were more gaps to be filled. Still, new material on Machado and Lispector both in scholarly production and in the book market give them a better literary life in recent times.

This is not to say that Amado has now been forgotten. The past two decades contain, indeed, some interesting critical pieces and new publications of or about his work. However, when it comes to the dimension and impact of such publications, they cannot be compared to what has happened to Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector and their deluxe collections, biographies, or serial re-translations. Amado's publications are also more organic, which means that they are smaller in scope and less organized. In this section, however, I analyze some interesting pieces of critical reception on Jorge Amado published in the twenty-first century. The pieces I am going to analyze here are publications that tend to reinforce the author's important position in the world canon while activating new interpretations of his work.

For this section, I have selected, again, major publications on Amado by important scholars and publishing labels, all which dialogue with the works presented in the previous section. I start with the recent re-publications by Penguin Classics, focusing primarily on the introduction by the Irish scholar and writer Colm Tóibín for the book *Captains of the Sands*, and how it diverges from the earlier discourse around Amado's first phase. Later, I return to Fitz, Brower, and Matínez Vidal's *Jorge Amado: New Critical Essays*, with a focus on the article by Cathleen E. Anderson, which directly questions the works of Ellison and Chamberlain regarding Amado's first phase. Finally, I discuss a special section called "Jorge Amado and World Literature," published in the *Comparative Literature Studies (CLS)* journal in 2012 and edited by Thomas O. Beebe. Regarding the *CLS* publication, I

mainly focus on an article by the scholar Waïl S. Hassan, which reads Amado's work beyond Brazilian studies.

In 2013, some of Amado's books were re-issued by Penguin Random House under the label Penguin Classics. This label itself reveals Amado's distinct position in the English system, but some details about these publications are also very telling. The re-issued books in that year were *Capitães da areia* (1937), as *Captains of the Sands*, *A descoberta da América pelos turcos* (1994), as *The Discovery of America by the Turks*, *A morte e morte de Quincas berro d'água* (1959), as *The Double Death of Quincas Water-Bray*, and *Terras do sem-fim* (1943), as *The Violent Land.* The first three titles were translated by Gregory Rabassa, the second one being a first English translation and the third one a new translation. The fourth title is a new issue of Samuel Putnam's 1945 translation. It is also worth noticing that two of the novels, *Capitães da areia*, and *Terras do sem-fim*, are part of Amado's so-called first phase, which, as we saw, is often considered his weakest period as a writer. This reputation, however, has not denied these titles the label of important classics by an outstanding publishing house, which might suggest that these novels, especially *Capitães* (*Terras* was already considered to be Amado's best first-phase book), have achieved new significance in the more recent years.

It is not only the label that suggests such a turn. The introduction of *Captains of the Sands* also points towards a new reading of this small novel. The piece was written by Ireland's celebrated writer, critic, and Columbia University professor Colm Tóibín, who is an admirer of Brazilian literature, though not a specialist. The choice of Tóibín as the introduction author, as it happens in the re-translations of Clarice Lispector, is an indication that the publishing house is trying to associate a renowned name with Jorge Amado. The other books also bring well-known names in their forewords. A piece by Amado's good

friend [26] and Portuguese Nobel-Prize winning writer, José Saramago, for example, is used as the foreword in *The Discovery of America by the Turks* while the contemporary Canadian-American novelist Rivka Galchen introduces *Quincas Water-Bray.* Even more interesting is what Tóibín writes in his introductory piece.

Here, Tóibín compares the Brazilian and the Irish literary traditions. For him, Brazilian novelists "came to play with language and tone and structure rather than offer representation for the same reasons that such writers as Joyce, Flann O'Brien, and Samuel Beckett in Ireland set out to destroy the line in narrative and replace it with the circle or the jagged form" (ix).[27] Tóibín is echoing Borges's "The Argentine Writer and Tradition," and, here, he does cite this essay:

> It was enough, the fact of feeling Irish, different, to become innovators within the English culture. (...) South American writers in general, are in an analogous situation; we can handle all the European themes, handle them without superstition, but with an irreverence that can have, and does have, fortunate consequences. (Borges, qtd. in Tóibín, *Captains of the Sands* x)

To some extent, the ideas expressed in the previous citation resemble Silviano Santiago's notion of the *entre-lugar* of Latin America literature, as both Borges and Santiago deal with the resignification of the European forms when used by Latin American writers. And, indeed, differently from the discourse we saw in the previous section, Tóibín does not see Jorge Amado, nor this first-phase novel of him, as an author or work of

[26] Amado and Saramago's friendship is documented in the book *Com o mar por meio: uma amizade em cartas*, edited by Paloma Jorge Amado, Bete Capinan, and Ricardo Viel.

traditional forms. In contrast, he sees Amado as an innovative writer comparable to James Joyce.

What leads Tóbín to make such an unlikely comparison is that, for him, what other critics saw as a lack of "innovation" is precisely what positions Amado as an important Latin American author, since he, inheriting from the tradition of European literature, "felt free to do as he pleased with it" (x). For Tóibín, *Captains of the Sands* echoes the work of Dickens--which he probably asserts with stories like *Oliver Twist* in mind--but applied to the poor of Brazil, with a lack of character development or a seamless structure. He sees in Amado something of the "orderly house of fiction" (x), but he also highlights that *Captains of the Sands* has many elements of "collage," making a reference to the structure of the novel, which is based on the presentation of short episodes and fictional newspaper excerpts. Tóibín does not see in the novel a lack of revision or poor storytelling skills. Rather, he believes that Amado, like Joyce, who also "came from a world that lacked richness and texture" (here meaning the richness and texture of the ancient European tradition, evoking an essay by Henry James on the subject), had to invent "their textures and the forms that would display them to the world" (xii). For the critic, similarly to what Joyce did with Dublin, Amado turned Bahia into "the very center of the universe" (xii) and "set about making the periphery the center of the known world while remaining true to its darker and stranger contours" (xii).

It is interesting to read Tóibín's essay after the previous discussion. Some previously mentioned specialized critics would, like Ellison, believe that Amado was not always in full control of his writing. If, for Ellison, Amado's episode-based structure is a problem, for Tóibín it is a deliberate choice. Others, like Chamberlain, would focus on Amado's second phase, considering it as his most sophisticated one. They, alongside with

Gallagher or Yates, also link Amado's merits to their display of Brazilian culture. Tóibín, a critic whose concentration is English language and Ireland, brings a comparatist reading to Amado's work, one that, while still evoking the deep roots that the Bahian's work has in his homeland, looks for signs that globalize his literary production. In this piece, the critic does not point out the flaws in Amado's work, which is interesting especially because *Captains of the Sands* belongs to Amado's first phase, the one that is more explicitly political and, which many will say, propagandistic. It is true that he does see some naivety in Amado's book, as, for him, Amado "was writing to save his country's soul" (xi) in a type of narrative that "veers with sociology and mythmaking" (xi). But what I feel is that, for Tóibín, the merit of such naivety or sense of liberation is that it does not fall into utopia. In his vision, there is no romanticization of poverty here, as the Bahia of Jorge Amado "is not written for tourists" (xi). In this sense, this introduction is a good example of the refraction to which Damrosch refers in his theories. Tóibín's examination of *Capitães da areia* is set in this locus of negotiation between Brazilian culture and his own culture; the culture of Ireland.

Tóibín's piece is not the only one in the twenty-first century that tries to rescue the value in Amado's first phase through *Capitães da areia*. Now, I would like to comment on one of the articles in the 2001 book *Jorge Amado: New Critical Essays*, which I introduced at the end of the previous section. The name of the piece is "Religion and Revolution: The Allegorical Subtexts of *Capitães da areia*," by Cathleen E. Anderson. Anderson is a specialist of the work of José de Alencar, and also of Brazilian women writers. Her piece is included in Brower, Fitz, and Martinez-Vidal's collection as an attempt to reshape the perception of Amado's first phase.

Anderson's article is a direct response to the works of Ellison and Chamberlain. For her, these critics "quickly dismiss his [Amado's] first novels" (5), even if "they do contain elements which deserve critical study" (6). She asserts that, while Ellison sees the absence of art in Amado's earlier works, Chamberlain tends to dismiss these novels and "shy away from them" (6). Although she also believes that Amado's earlier works have some flaws, she thinks that there are things that need to be further investigated in these pieces. Anderson states that *Capitães da areia* is a good example to be discussed because "it has been, to a certain degree, ignored by the critics" (6). She, then, uses scholar Angus Fletcher's thoughts on the allegory to show that much of what critics see as "flaws" in Jorge Amado's novels, like the melodramatic scenes or "episodic structure, a strong socio-political bent" (6) can be seen, also, as "elements of a tightly structured literary work" (6) that are used to build allegories.

In this sense, Anderson believes that many aspects of Amado's *Capitães*, from the isolated episodes, to the name choices for the characters, if seen as allegories, could turn into a more sophisticated way the writer found to pass on his social-political message. The story focuses on a group of kids living in the streets of Salvador, their relationship, and their strategies to get food and money. Anderson sees as allegories, for example, the names of two of the main characters. She points out that Padre João Pedro, who is a Catholic leader trying to rescue the kids from their path and guide them to a decent life, would represent Saint Peter, the founder of the Church. In this sense, the priest would also be a path for the children's liberation from poverty through religion. On the other hand, the leader of the group of kids, Pedro Bala, who becomes a communist militant in the end, represents the foundation of a new reality for his homeless friends, as his name is also Pedro. This liberation would come through a revolution, since the word Bala, which means

bullet, “implies the use of force and violence” (17). Anderson notes that “In the end, it is Pedro [Bala] who acts, while Father José Pedro travels to the far-off land to serve in whatever capacity is required of him” (17). From examples like this, Anderson concludes that:

> Whereas at first glance *Capitães da areia* is just a sub-par novel which depends on an episodic structure to capture the attention and emotion of the reader, when analyzed more closely, it becomes apparent that the novel is much more than that. Amado employs an allegorical structure to this work not just to tell a story, but to impart a message as well: in order for the poor to improve their plight, they need to do more than rely on religion. (Anderson 18)

Anderson’s assertions on *Capitães da areia* are interesting because while, as we have discussed, Chamberlain and Ellison would call Amado too explicit in his social-political messages, she suggests that, already in the 30s, Amado was trying to look for less-explicit ways of building political allegories. In this sense, works like hers might have created the opportunity for novels like *Capitães da areia*, often dismissed by critics, to be later published under the *Penguin Classics* label. Both Tóibín and Anderson try to read the novel, not as political propaganda, but as a piece of art. They do not believe that art is absent here, but that, maybe, it just was not what the critics were looking for. Their contribution, thus, represents a critical shift in the twenty-first century regarding Amado’s earlier novels. As I discussed in the previous section, not only Anderson’s piece, but the whole book *Jorge Amado: New Critical Essays* seems to be an attempt at activating new discussions regarding Amado, although not every article included does that. I chose Anderson’s article to illustrate that, but the book brings other contributions that also encourage new conversations of his work.

Finally, another interesting publication for Jorge Amado's English reception in the twenty-first century was in 2012, the year of his centenary, when the important journal *Comparative Literature Studies* (*CLS*) published a special section dedicated to the author, entitled "Jorge Amado and World Literature." By then, the editor-in-chief was the renowned professor Thomas O. Beebe, from Penn State University, and he worked with his then assistant and graduate student Taylor Dawn, who researched Jorge Amado, to compile five articles on the Bahian, most of them by Brazilian authors. One curious aspect of this section is that the articles, in general, deal with Amado in the context of World Literature, whether they read his novels in a comparative context or deal with more universal themes in Amado's work, highlighting his significance for non-Brazilian host cultures. A tribute like this in a journal such as *CLS* reveals Amado's canonical position in the Anglophone context, and how his literature, although historically tied to Brazil by critics, can also activate intersections with other cultural contexts.

One compelling example in this special section is the article by Waïl S. Hassan named "Jorge Ahmad." A professor at Illinois, Hassan is a scholar interested in the Arab world and its interconnections with other cultures through orientalism or immigration. As the author or contributor of books such as *Immigrant Narratives: Orientalism and Cultural Translation in Arab-American and Arab-British Literature* (2011), and *Literatura e (i)migração no Brasil* (2020), he has conducted studies on the Arab influence in Brazil, specifically. And, in the article in question, he uses his academic interests to interpret Amado's depictions of Arab immigrants.

Here, Hassan argues that Amado used positive stereotypes in order to highlight "for the first time, the cultural contributions of immigrants previously known only for their commercial activities, and in so doing he underscores Brazil's connections to the Arab

world" (403). The scholar talks about Amado's interest in Arab culture, and how it comes from the fact that the Bahian grew up in a neighborhood with various Arab immigrants. But more than biographical curiosities, the article analyzes Amado's work. The case study, here, is Nacib, a Lebanese character and one of the protagonists of *Gabriela*.

Just to have a broader sense of the article's main point, the novel displays the Bahia city of Ilhéus as a place of sexist culture, in which husbands kill their unfaithful wives to keep their honor and move on without punishment. Hassan highlights that stereotypes about Nacib are important in the book because "Part of the humor of the novel results from the contrast between Nacib's and Gabriela's perceptions of marriage, and part of it arises from Nacib's earlier boastful fabrication of stories about Lebanese machismo" (403). Yet, Hassan notes that, when Nacib finds his own wife, Gabriela, in bed with another man, he, who supposedly comes from a sexist culture, does not follow the city's tendency, and decides not to commit murder. As Hassan points out, "The next time a violent cocoa lord finds himself betrayed by his mistress, he, too, refrains from murder" (402), which happens because of Nacib's influence, since the Arab character is a respected man in Ilhéus. The Middle Eastern character, then, would represent the positive influence that an immigrant could have on Brazilian society.

In Hassan's article, what is more interesting for my argument here is not the discussion he promotes but what it represents. The article, which is part of Hassan's larger project of understanding Arab influence in Western societies, and which appears in a special section dedicated to understanding the life of Jorge Amado's work as world literature, is in contrast with what we saw in the previous sections of this thesis. The bibliographical review in section one shows that, in the twenty-first century, Amado became a best seller precisely because there was a broader interest in Latin America and its

countries. In section two, we saw critics often highlight Amado's significance for Brazilian culture. In Hassan's case, Amado's work contributes to studies of Orientalism and understanding the impact of non-Brazilian culture in the rest of the world.

The cases presented in this section reveal some important points about Amado's twenty-first century reception in the Anglophone context. First, he has not been the subject of some sort of revival like Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector and, until this point, his fellow Brazilian writers seem to be having a more important editorial impact and a livelier critical reception in our century. This might be due to the fact that Amado was the first to achieve success among the public, but one should also not take for granted the reality that he, as a writer, has never had the same critical acclaim as the other ones.

At the same time, even if not as important, the new publications of his books, and the publications on him reveal that his work, if no longer a best seller, has survived in the Anglophone literary system. More than that, these re-publications, represented by Tóibín's introduction, and the existence of *Jorge Amado: New Critical Essays*, illustrated by Anderson's article, show that, his earlier novels, historically dismissed by the critics, are now encouraging new, redemptive readings regarding their literary value. These articles talk about these pieces as innovative literary works. And this, I believe, helps to place Amado in what Santiago calls the space-in-between of Western Culture. If he, now, is being seen as an author who not simply reproduces but adds substance to Western literary traditions, this shows a clearer contribution from his work to non-Brazilian literatures.

Also, if we look at the comparison that Tóibín makes between Amado's fiction with the Irish literary tradition, and also take into consideration the nature of Amado's special section on *CLS* and of articles such as Hassan's, we can see that Amado's work is capable of going beyond Brazilian studies. Earlier criticism would often point out Amado's use of

the Portuguese language and his celebration of Brazilian culture as his main merits. Highlighting these points of significance when read in the context of other cultures, can according to Damrosch's theories, guarantee Amado a more active existence as a world literature author.

Final Notes: Opposite Directions

Amado is historically described as the main international reference point for Brazilian literature. Indeed, he was the first Brazilian success outside of its borders. However, as I hope to have shown in this chapter, Amado's reception in the Anglophone world is marked by mixed reactions regarding his literary value. Even if canonical, he has been frequently portrayed as a controversial or inconsistent author, differently than the other subject authors in this thesis, who were almost unanimously considered positive literary cases.

The twenty-first century, nonetheless, shows some redemption for Amado's reputation. This indicates an opposite path if compared to Lispector and Machado. First, he gained success and only later began to reach more solid critical acclaim. What we should also take into consideration, however, is the fact that Amado's contemporary literary life in the Anglophone context has not been so active when compared to the ones of his fellow Brazilian writers, which leads to my next point in this chapter.

The recent discussions of Brazilian literature as world literature show that it is no longer possible to confidently speak of Amado as the main or the only Brazilian point of reference for international audiences. Whether Amado's recent moderate performance has to do with the fact that he was a known author before, or due to the fact that he never had unanimous critical acclaim, the contrast is that Lispector and Machado have now gained

publishing prestige and interest from the public. This, combined with them having always been successfully received by the critics, places them in a privileged position in the Anglophone system when compared to the Bahian.

Thinking about this in Damrosch's terms, we see that these three authors are well positioned in world literature, with available translations and critical reception. However, Amado is the one who is more commonly seen by the host culture as a negative example or as the image of otherness, as his literature is frequently tied to the Brazilian context. Recent publications suggest, however, that we might be on the edge of a new Amado rediscovery. Future scholarship might want to look into how this trend develops.

Conclusion

Throughout the course of my thesis, we see that the first two decades of the twenty-first century have offered exciting new critical approaches to the works of Clarice Lispector, Joaquim Machado de Assis, and Jorge Amado in the English literary system. Historically, only Amado could have been considered as having a presence in the Anglophone context which combined scholarly production of his work with prestige in the publishing market. Today, not only have Machado and Lispector had their corpus of criticism further developed by new critics, but also their works have appeared in ambitious and successful endeavours in the book market.

The three cases studied in this thesis are illustrative of Damrosch's theories on world literature. They represent the "locus of negotiation" (*What Is World Literature?* 283) to which he refers, as they maintain their Brazilian importance while scholars pinpoint aspects in their work with which the Anglophone audience identifies, such as their Jewishness or blackness. This proves the importance of the host culture's needs to determine whether a work of world literature will succeed or not outside their source culture. Damrosch also notes how, in contemporary history, canons are being redefined, and more attention is being paid to the ethnic background of writers. We have observed such a trend in the cases of both Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector.

Regarding Lispector, much of the recent efforts in disseminating her literature have been concentrated on a single, well-structured project. One interesting thing about Benjamin Moser and New Directions' endeavour is that it has combined translation, historiography, criticism, and marketing in order to present Lispector to foreign audiences

in a well-defined manner. This is the most compelling case among the three chapters, and something unprecedented in the history of Brazilian literature.

An analysis of Moser's project also reveals that his Jewish Lispector comes to add a new international appeal to the already modestly known writer of feminist interest. His biography was a space in which Lispector's significance for the traumatic history of the Jewish community has been underlined. Moser looked for Jewish symbols in Lispector's writing and life, while pointing out the similarities with other well-known authors of similar descent. His search for her *real voice* might be questionable, but what leaps out is that his project seems to be guided by an understanding of how important it is to find a clear space for an author to occupy when trying to position their work in a different literary system.

The case of Machado de Assis is also interesting. As Brazil's most important writer, he had, already in the twentieth century, reached the work of some specialists outside Brazilianist circles. Wood, Sontag, and Bloom's pieces on his work are illustrative of that. His work has been travelling deeper within the English literary system with each new publication. As we have seen, this has come at a moment when new publishing endeavours on Machado de Assis are achieving successful sales figures. While we can safely affirm that, part of the reasons for this, are years and years of critical production on Machado, it is still too soon to determine what factors contributed to this achievement. However, the simple fact that two different publishers have decided to re-publish and re-translate his *Memórias póstumas* is an indication that, differently from Lispector, there has not been one concentrated effort to promote his work. His reputation has reached different places, as one of the books was translated by an American and the other one by a British translator.

Indeed, efforts have been made by multiple critics throughout the years to give him the international prestige he deserves.

Yet, Machado kept being historically seen as an overlooked, obscure writer. This reveals a difficulty in positioning Machado's work in the English literary system. In a certain way, his critical history reveals an effort to answer the following question: What does Machado represent in the Western tradition? Why is he different from other Great Masters in different countries? To answer these questions, critics have relied on interactions between his works and the ones of other world masters but also in aspects of his biography. All of these are valid approaches, and they seem to work when Machado's influence on respected world-famous creators or his importance to understand the exclusionary mechanism of the world canons are in vogue.

Aside from being the time in which Machado became an international best seller, the twenty-first century represents the surge of race as a main subject in the Anglophone studies of Machado de Assis. In a time when canons are being redefined, as Damrosch argues, this might be part of an effort to find a clearer definition of the space that Machado can occupy in the Anglophone system. Race, I believe, is not the most important thing in Machado's oeuvre, which is capable of capturing the tragic irony and comedy of human existence. However, in the case of a writer whose race was hidden for a long time, works like Daniel's or Dixon's carry an important symbolism.

And then, there is the third and most particular case study in this thesis. Amado was, while still alive, an international best seller. He is, indeed, part of world literature, and his translations have never gone out-of-print. Yet, some aspects of his faulty reputation should be considered. First, his impressive sales performance never resulted in an impressive critical reception. Published in English for the first time when the host culture's demands

seemed to match his literary interests, he fell into the readers' taste but received hesitant reactions from the critics. Still, critics like Chamberlain, Fitz, and Ellison never completely dismissed his work. Scholars acknowledged his merits, and while not as frequent as in his fellow Brazilians' case, discussions of his work continued and articles kept being published.

If not always being considered as a positive model for its host culture, Amado's work has been the subject of interesting new readings in the past two decades. Works like Tóibín's, Anderson's or Hassam's try to re-define some old truths about Amado, like the modest value of his earlier works. Although the recent reception of Amado has been mostly happening in academia, and he has not been the subject of a rediscovery, this century has also been important for him. In a certain way, we can say that, like Lispector or Machado, he has been occupying new spaces; just walking a slower, different path and going in a different direction. The ethnic shift that Damrosch sees in Kafka's reception or that I see in the case of Lispector or Machado does not happen with Amado, and, since he is a white, privileged Brazilian writing on underprivileged, racialized people, it is difficult to predict this possibility. Still, recent critics show that there are areas still to be discovered in his work.

World literature is a dynamic system, and future scholars might want to track possible new changes in the reception of the discussed authors. Also, as I was more concerned with critical pieces, other academics might want to focus their research specifically on the textual side of the new translations of Machado and Lispector, for example, showing how they differ from the older ones, which was not the objective of my study. In addition, as new translations of Brazilian literature are about to be published--Katrina Dodson is working on Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma* and Alison Entrekin is

working on a new translation of *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, by João Guimarães Rosa--it might be interesting to keep track on how these publications are received. The case of contemporary authors like Raduan Nassar, published under the Penguin Modern Classic label, and whose translations have been nominated for the Booker Prize International 2016, and Giovanni Martins, who, even before his debut book was published, had already been acquired by various publishing houses around the world, can help deepen the understanding of the current situation of Brazilian literature in the Anglophone context.

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